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Executive Summary

Since 2004, Teach For America-South Dakota has placed corps members in schools on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations in South Dakota's most impoverished and undeserved communities. We provide a critical source of well-trained teachers who are helping break the local cycle of educational inequity. Our corps is comprised of outstanding college graduates who commit two years to teach in low-income public schools and become life-long leaders in the effort to expand education opportunity for Native students in South Dakota.

Rationale and Approach

Problem

Teach For America-South Dakota (TFA-SD) works to close the vast achievement gap that persists between students in low- and higher-income communities in South Dakota.

In South Dakota, the achievement gap persists along racial lines, with our state's Native American students lagging far behind their non-Native peers. Living on remote reservations, far from amenities and opportunities available in large population centers, Native students attend schools that struggle to attract qualified and motivated teachers. We currently place our teachers in schools on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations, located on two of the poorest counties in the United States. We see the effects of poverty and low expectations manifested in test scores and in high school and college graduation rates.

In the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress, 45% of all Native students in South Dakota scored below basic in reading, while only 18% of white students fell in this lowest category. At the other end of the spectrum, 44% of white students read at a proficient or advanced level, compared with only 17% of Native students performing on grade level (Nation's Report Card). The 2010 results

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on the Dakota STEP, our state's high-stakes exam, reveal the disheartening fact that among students living on reservations, just one in five demonstrates grade-appropriate math skills, and one in three read on grade level (South Dakota Department of Education).

According to the South Dakota Department of Education, 92% of white students graduate from high school, compared with just 65% of their Native peers. This enormous disparity has severe implications for the life prospects of our state's Native students, as the National Indian Education Association reports that just 13% of our nation's Native Americans successfully complete a bachelor's degree, compared with almost 25% of the general population.

The consequences of the achievement gap are not limited to low-income communities. The achievement gap between students in low-income communities and those in wealthier communities ultimately results in a \$400 billion to \$670 billion loss to the national GDP each year, the equivalent of "a permanent recession." (McKinsey & Co "The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools," 2009)

We believe that the achievement gap is caused by three cyclical factors. First, while children in low-income communities have the same potential as their high-income peers, they face many extra challenges -- lack of access to high-quality pre-school programs, adequate healthcare and housing. Second, schools and districts don't have sufficient capacity to help students overcome the extra challenges they face. Third, our prevailing ideology hasn't led to the necessary policies and investments. Among other things, we are hampered by societal beliefs that schools cannot make a significant difference in the face of socioeconomic disparities.

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TFA-SD chooses to address this problem because we believe that the educational inequity that persists along socioeconomic and racial lines is our nation's greatest injustice. As such, TFA-SD serves as a human capital pipeline for our state's underserved communities, providing highly qualified teachers to schools that struggle to attract such talent.

The achievement gap in South Dakota runs along ethnic lines--our state's Native students perform far below the level of their non-Native peers. TFA-SD seeks to remedy this disparity by carefully identifying those schools on our state's Native American reservations where our corps members are most needed. Our current partners are the Todd County School District, St. Francis Indian School, Wounded Knee School, Little Wound School, and American Horse School. We work closely with the administrators at our partner schools to assess their teaching vacancies for the upcoming year.

Central to our placement strategy is the "clustering" of corps members in our partner schools. Corps members' collective impact is far more powerful than individuals spread far and wide across South Dakota's rural, isolated reservation schools. In the 2009-2010 school year, the high school at St. Francis Indian School made AYP (adequate yearly progress, as defined by No Child Left Behind, and determined by the Dakota STEP test) for the first time. Their principal attributes this success to the presence of our teachers, six of whom teach at the high school there. Additionally, all the schools in Todd County where TFA-SD teachers make up more than half of the teaching staff also achieved AYP last year -- another indicator that our teachers are extremely successful and offer their students an excellent education.

The demographics of our partner schools are aligned with our mission to vastly improve the quality of education afforded to our state's Native students. Over 95% of our students are Native American and

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fully 100% qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Solution: AmeriCorps Member Roles and Responsibilities

As a professional corps program, TFA-South Dakota addresses the problem of educational inequity by recruiting and placing qualified participants as teachers in communities that lack an adequate number of such professionals. Our corps members often fill teaching positions in high-need subject areas, which districts often find difficult to fill, such as math, science, and English/language arts. In addition, TFA provides low-income schools with candidates commensurate to those teaching in the world's top performing school systems. We believe that "lacking an adequate number of such professionals" does not just refer to communities that simply do not have enough candidates, but also to communities that do not have a pool of highly-qualified candidates.

Research consistently demonstrates that high-quality teaching is the most important factor in student learning. ("The Real Value of Value Added" Education Trust, 2004, citing multiple studies) Despite this evidence, low-income students are less likely to get effective teachers in their classrooms than wealthier students; they are far more likely to have teachers who scored poorly on college and licensure exams. ("All Talk, No Action: Putting an End to Out-of-Field Teaching," Education Trust, 2002) Because of the additional challenges facing students in low-income communities and lack of capacity in schools to address these challenges, low-income communities have a higher than average need for highly-effective teachers, but often lack a sufficient supply relative to the level of need.

A recent McKinsey study of the world's top performing school systems reveal that 100% of their teachers come from the "top third+" of college students. In the U.S. only 23% come from the top third; 14% in high poverty schools. McKinsey coined the term "top third+" to refer to those students

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that are in top third academic cohort, and are rigorously screened for other qualities believed to be predictors of successful teachers -- perseverance, ability to motivate others, and organization and communication skills. (McKinsey & Co "Closing the Talent Gap: Attracting and Retaining top-third graduates to careers in teaching," 2010) TFA brings exactly these types of candidates to low-income schools. The average GPA for 2010 TFA corps members is 3.6, with SAT scores in the 94th percentile; our extensive interview process screens all applicants for these "plus" characteristics.

AmeriCorps is crucial to our efforts as it allows us to bring in qualified corps members from all communities including people that would not otherwise be doing this work. Specifically our growing number of corps members from low-income backgrounds depend on the education award, loan forbearance and interest accrual payments to make joining the corps an economically viable option.

TFA corps members address the three causes of the achievement gap in three key ways:

First, corps members commit to teaching two years in low-income schools throughout South Dakota. Our corps members provide a critical source of teachers who help ensure their students have the educational opportunities they deserve, despite compounding socioeconomic factors. A member's typical day includes teaching a full class schedule, lesson planning, participating in professional development, and often leading extracurricular activities.

Second, our corps members are charged with improving the academic achievement of their students. In succeeding with their students, members gain added conviction that educational inequity is a solvable problem and a grounded understanding of problem and solutions in all its complexity. Corps members influence the prevailing ideology by demonstrating that children in low-income

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communities can achieve at high levels.

Third, our network of more than 28,000 -- corps members and alumni -- work directly for change at every level of our education system. TFA alumni work to minimize the extra challenges facing children growing up in low-income communities, build the capacity of schools and school systems, and change the prevailing ideology through their examples and their advocacy.

TFA-South Dakota is requesting 60 fulltime education award slots. Fulltime enrollment in AmeriCorps accurately reflects our members' service as fulltime teachers.

AmeriCorps Member Selection, Training, and Supervision

SELECTING:

TFA conducts internal studies to identify the characteristics that differentiate our top performing corps members, resulting in a selection model that enables us to accept applicants who have the greatest likelihood of success. In particular, our highest-performing members show perseverance, strong critical thinking skills, ability to influence and motivate others, organizational ability, and hold high expectations for children and families in low-income communities.

TFA recruits at more than 350 colleges and universities. Our recruitment campaign is a highly sophisticated effort designed to compete with top corporations for the best young talent in the country. We have 54 Recruitment Directors who build relationships with deans, professors, and student leaders to identify prospective applicants. They then build target lists of potential applicants; as of October 2010 we compiled the contact information of 184,554 seniors. We meet with these top students to discuss TFA's role in closing the achievement gap. By highlighting the existence of the achievement

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gap and its solvability, we are able to recruit many individuals who might not otherwise have applied to become AmeriCorps members.

Through this intensive targeted recruitment effort and mass marketing, more than 46,000 people applied to join the 2010 corps. Among last year's applicants were: more than 5% of graduating seniors at 120 schools and nearly 12% of Ivy League seniors. Our 2010 members represent some of our nation's most promising future leaders. They earned an average GPA of 3.6 and 89% held leadership positions on their campuses.

Recruitment directors based in Colorado and Minnesota work with students attending South Dakota colleges and universities to recruit them to join the corps. We also have recruitment directors working nation-wide to actively recruit Native American students and increase their representation in our corps. At TFA-SD, we believe it is vitally important to provide our students with role models of success from their communities, and are dedicated to increasing our current numbers of Native corps members.

We recruit people of color because we recognize the importance of providing children with role models who have similar backgrounds. More than 87% of the students we reach this year receive free or reduced-price lunch and more than 95% are African American and Latino. We recruit heavily at historically black colleges and universities, and work aggressively on our target campuses to recruit top students of color. This year 32% of our corps is people of color and 28% received Pell Grants. TFA has a higher percentage of African American (11% v. 5%) and Latino corps members (7% v. 6%), than the graduating classes in the top 340 universities in the country. (U.S. News & World report; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary

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Education Data System.)

TRAINING:

TFA provides intensive pre-service training and ongoing professional development to corps members. We aim to ensure that our members are effective in leading their students to significant academic achievement while simultaneously providing an experience that will inspire them to become lifelong leaders to eliminate educational inequity.

The bedrock of our training and evaluation model is a framework we call Teaching As Leadership (TAL), which include the six strategies that we have found drive effective teaching:

- Setting an ambitious vision
- Investing students and families in that vision
- Planning purposefully to meet ambitious goals
- Executing plans effectively
- Working relentlessly to achieve their vision
- Continuously reflecting and improving

Each of these strategies corresponds to a series of 28 teacher actions, which comprise the TAL rubric. Our training and support model is based on helping members successfully employ these teacher actions, which happens through the general training timeline listed below.

INDUCTION -- At the beginning of the summer, members spend a week in South Dakota learning about the communities in which they will serve. They meet with community, tribal, and school district leaders to learn about Lakota traditions, the unique characteristics of each school, and gain

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insight into the history of the reservation system. AmeriCorps pre-service orientation is conducted, so members learn about the responsibilities and benefits of AmeriCorps membership before they begin serving.

INSTITUTE -- Next, corps members attend a rigorous five-week residential summer training institute in Phoenix, AZ to prepare them for teaching in a low-income classroom. There are two main components of the institute: summer school teaching and curriculum sessions.

Members teach summer school classes as part of a four-person collaborative that is supervised and mentored by both a veteran teacher and TFA staff member. Corps members receive regular feedback about their teaching, reflect and refine their practice to ensure that students meet summer school goals. They also observe one another and videos of themselves teaching, allowing corps members to see which teaching methods are most effective.

Corps members attend daily curriculum sessions where they gain the foundational knowledge needed to become highly effective beginning teachers. We have created a 6-textbook curriculum based on years of research and input from education experts: Teaching As Leadership, Elementary/Secondary Literacy, Learning Theory, Instructional Planning and Delivery, Classroom Management & Culture, and Diversity, Community & Achievement.

ORIENTATION -- After institute corps members return to South Dakota to create their first unit plans, assessments and tools to track their students' progress. With these elements established before the school year begins, our teachers are better prepared to move their students forward.

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ONGOING SUPPORT -- Building on the foundation received during the summer training, TFA-South Dakota program team provide intensive training and professional development. There are four main components to our ongoing professional development model.

First, corps members are paired with a Program Director (PD), typically a former successful corps member. PDs conduct observations of the member's class, and provide corps members with feedback and support. Throughout the year, corps members and PDs engage in what we call one-on-one "co-investigation" conversations, during which they review student data to identify and find solutions to problems or gaps in student achievement. This approach builds corps members' abilities to independently evaluate student outcomes, identify causes of problems, and seek solutions.

Second, corps members have access to TFAnet -- our private website of resources designed to help members create data-driven, student achievement- focused classrooms.

Third, members meet regularly in content- or grade-level-specific learning teams led by experienced teachers to discuss ongoing challenges, share best practices, and work together on professional development.

Finally, members participate in a certification program designed to ensure that members meet state certification requirements. These programs prepare corps members to stay involved in the movement to end educational inequity beyond their two-year commitments.

CREATING LIFELONG ETHIC OF SERVICE:

TFA's mission is to build the movement to end educational inequity by enlisting our nation's most

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promising future leaders in the effort. Accomplishing our mission requires that we provide corps members with a transformational experience.

Leading students in low-income communities to achieve significant academic outcomes transforms corps members' sense of possibility and urgency regarding closing the achievement gap. Although just 10% of incoming corps members report that they had an interest in teaching prior to joining TFA, 63% of our nearly 20,000 alumni currently work in education. Additionally, 93% report that they support TFA's mission through career, philanthropy, volunteer work, or graduate study.

TFA works to reinforce a culture of service by providing opportunities for members to take on increased responsibility. Corps members have the opportunity to develop and conduct professional development sessions, work at our summer training institute, and recruit at their colleges and universities. During their service, we host discussions designed to help members reflect on the causes of educational inequity and fostering a sense of responsibility to address these issues.

After successfully completing their service, members become part of TFA's alumni network. We employ a two-part strategy to foster the leadership of our alumni base. First, we build community among our alumni and keep them connected to TFA through regional alumni summits and an alumni magazine. Second, we support the career development of our alumni through a series of initiatives that fast track the pathway to leadership in several key sectors--school leadership, teaching leadership, political leadership, policy and advocacy leadership, and social entrepreneurship. Our focus on these sectors is based on alumni interest and their potential to have a significant impact on the problem we address. Currently, over 550 alumni are serving as school leaders, over 6000 are still teaching, 45 are elected officials, over 500 alumni work in public policy, and more than 20 are social

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entrepreneurs.

In South Dakota, we view our alumni as an extension of our corps. Unlike alumni in more urban regions, almost all of our alumni in South Dakota are still teaching at their original placement school on the Pine Ridge or Rosebud reservations. Keeping our nearly 30 alumni actively engaged in our mission ensures that we continue to positively impact as many students as possible every day. As we seek to expand our presence by 2015, we are focused on increasing our corps member tenure to an average of 3 years, so that we may truly become a transformational force across our state.

SUPERVISING:

TFA-SD's plan for supervising corps members may differ from the majority of AmeriCorps program because we are a professional corps. First, all TFA corps members are college graduates who have gone through a rigorous application process that is designed, in part, to measure their ability to work effectively in a professional setting. Therefore, our supervision plan is concerned with corps member development and evaluation. Second, since our corps members work as full-time professional teachers, they are directly supervised by school officials.

Each corps member is matched with a Program Director (PD) -- highly effective alums who manage a cohort of current members. Our PDs are corps members' first point of contact with TFA. They perform regular observations of member classrooms. Throughout the year, PDs meet with corps member to review student data with a focus on progress to date as demonstrated by benchmark assessments, and strategies for overcoming current challenges. PDs refer corps members to targeted resources based on strengths and weaknesses. At the end of the year PDs and corps members analyze student growth based on final assessments.

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Outcome: Performance Measure

Throughout the three-year grant cycle, TFA-SD expects to effect immediate and long-term change in efforts to expand educational opportunity that further the results described below.

IMMEDIATE IMPACT

In the short-term our corps members must close the gap for their students and they must prove their efficacy through measurable results. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. released an independent study in 2004 using a research methodology widely regarded as the gold standard. This study found that students of TFA corps members made more progress in a year in both reading and math than would typically be expected. The study also found that corps members were working in the highest-need classrooms in the country, where students begin the year on average at the 14th percentile against the national norm. ("The Effects of Teach For America on Students: Findings from a National Evaluation," Mathematica Policy Research, June 2004)

A 2008-2009 Urban Institute study found that TFA corps members were, on average, more effective than non-TFA teachers in all subject areas even when compared with experienced and traditionally certified teachers. Additionally, the study found the positive impact of having a TFA teacher was two to three times that of having a teacher with three or more years of experience. (The Urban Institute/CALDER Research Center, 2009)

LONG-TERM IMPACT:

Our ever-expanding group of alumni -- now nearly 20,000 strong -- is a powerful force for change by providing key leadership in education and non-profit organizations, and a critical workforce that

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builds ongoing capacity. For example:

- TFA-SD alumni Anna Dibley '06 and Shannon Brady '06 worked closely with one of their middle school students last year and mentored her to win the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke scholarship, which provides a mentor and financial support for secondary, post-secondary and graduate education, as well as for enrichment activities--an achievement that will truly be transformational to that student and place her on a different life trajectory.

- Daniel Seibel '08 decided to teach for a third year so that he could create and implement the Lakota Professionals Program with his seventh graders. This rigorous curriculum brings members of the community into the classroom to instruct the students about a particular profession to emphasize to students what they are capable of achieving, given hard work and dedication to achieving in school.

MEASURING RESULTS:

TFA-SD opts into the national performance measure pilot:

 ED1 Number of students who start in an AmeriCorps education program.

 ED2 Number of students who complete participation in an AmeriCorps education program.

 ED12 Number of AmeriCorps members who begin serving as teachers through a Teacher Corps program.

 ED13 Number of AmeriCorps members who completed serving as teachers through a Teacher Corps program.

 ED14 Number of individuals teaching in high needs schools.

 ED16 Number of individuals teaching in schools in the year after term of service.

 ED17 Number of teachers remaining the education field, but not teaching in a school after their term of service.

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TFA-SD will use internal tracking systems to address the above performance measures. Our performance measure targets are determined based on our previous experience in South Dakota schools and trends within our larger national corps.

TFA has developed internal metrics to measure the academic growth of our corps member's students, and which will allow us to address optional performance measure ED15 -- number of students in AmeriCorps teacher classrooms with improved academic performance.

TFA measures performance based on the impact our corps members have on student achievement. This includes measuring the growth students make throughout the year and/or students' ability to demonstrate mastery of content at the end of the year. Each corps member administers a diagnostic test in the beginning of the year to each student, and is then required to monitor student growth through ongoing and end-of-year assessments.

To ensure that our corps members lead their students to significant academic growth, progress is tracked by our internal gains measures, in which corps members report students' progress throughout the year based on audited and validated performance assessments. Teachers that progress their students 1 to 1.4 academic years are considered to have made "solid gains," and teachers who advance their students 1.5 years or more are considered to have made "significant gains." This year, we anticipate that 76% of our corps members will make at least "solid gains."

Volunteer Generation

TFA recruits volunteers to expand the impact of our program:

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1. We strongly encourage corps members to recruit community members to volunteer in their classrooms by reading aloud to students, assisting in completing class projects, and tutoring.
2. We have built significant capacity to engage our nearly 20,000 alumni in taking greater responsibility for the organization's well-being. In the past two years in South Dakota, over 80% of our second-year corps members have shown their support and dedication to our mission by donating money back to our region.

In addition to creating opportunities for community members to volunteer, we also encourage our members to volunteer; 82% of our corps members participated in extracurricular activities. Our members increase the number of clubs, teams, and other activities available to at-risk youth.

Partnerships and Collaboration

TFA-SD's impact on closing the achievement gap is dependent upon our ability to form partnerships with local school districts and certifying bodies, in addition to building a large and sustainable base of supporters.

DISTRICT AND PARTNERSHIPS: Our partner districts identify their staffing needs each spring and request our assistance in meeting them. We foster an ongoing relationship with each partner conducting meetings with principals and the superintendent of each district to ensure that they are satisfied with our teachers' performance. Currently, we place in 9 high-need schools in the Todd County School District, as well as in the following Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools: American Horse School, Little Wound School, St. Francis Indian School, and Wounded Knee School.

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A 2009 survey of our partner principals in South Dakota found that:

* 100% rated our corps members' impact on student achievement as better than that of other beginning teachers;

* And 91% were satisfied with the support TFA provides its corps members.

CERTIFYING BODIES: Once placed, our corps members work with the South Dakota Department of Education to earn the teaching certification they need to be classified as "highly qualified" under No Child Left Behind.

SUPPORTERS:

TFA-SD's many supporters ensure our sustainability in South Dakota. From our inception in 2004, we have maintained and cultivated positive relationships with stakeholders at the state and community level. For example, former superintendent Richard Bordeaux of the Todd County School District was instrumental in bringing TFA to South Dakota. As our first district partner, Mr. Bordeaux made connections and championed our mission to help us expand to other schools and districts. Other community stakeholders and partners are the Oceti Sakowin Education Consortium, the Office of Indian Education, Indian Education Advisory Council, Dakota ASSETS and GEAR UP. We also work closely with the tribal colleges Oglala Lakota College and Sinte Gleska University, as all of our corps members work towards their certification in conjunction with these schools.

Sustainability

Schools serving high-poverty communities have an ongoing need for mentor teachers and school leaders; school districts and the policy community need leaders with experience teaching effectively in

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high poverty areas. During his confirmation hearing Secretary Arne Duncan said: "[Teach For America has] done an extraordinary job in bringing the best and brightest from around the country into teaching...Not only are there great teachers coming through the program but it's a great pipeline of talent, so you get these people with this great vision and this entrepreneurial spirit and a willingness to innovate."

Beyond the term of this grant, TFA will continue to meet the needs of our communities through the capacity-building and knowledge sharing efforts of our corps members and alumni. Many corps members assume leadership roles within their schools, often sharing with their peers and school community the training and resources they received from TFA.

These efforts extend beyond corps members' terms of service. For example, in 1997 TFA corps members started an after-school program in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV), which has become IDEA Public Schools, a network of 10 schools across the RGV. Their flagship school, IDEA Academy and College Preparatory, is on U.S. News & World Report's list of the nation's top 20 schools. As teachers, school leaders, social entrepreneurs and elected officials, TFA alumni are building the capacity of their communities to take on the root causes of educational inequality.

Multi-site Programs Only

TFA-SD proposed sites include: 9 high-need schools in the Todd County School District, as well as in the following Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools: American Horse School, Little Wound School, St. Francis Indian School, and Wounded Knee School.

We begin meeting with district officials to identify the highest need schools and teaching positions in

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South Dakota in advance of placing members. We enter into contracts with interested districts; as part of this process, we receive \$1500- \$3,000 from each school district per teacher we place in their schools. Corps members interview at the school site and compete for open positions along with other new teachers.

We work closely with our partners throughout the year to align our pre-service training and ongoing support with district needs, and engage in an ongoing dialogue with school leadership to ensure they are satisfied with our teachers' performance.

Organizational Capability

Organizational Background

The primary contact for this grant application is Marion Katz, the manager of operations of TFA-SD.

The secondary contact is Catherine Pozniak, the executive director of TFA-SD.

TFA has effectively managed large-scale federal grants through both AmeriCorps and the Department of Education. We have received unqualified A-133 audits every year, and have built significant internal capacity to manage both the financial and programmatic components of a national AmeriCorps program.

TFA's national staff provides support to South Dakota in a number of different areas, including finance and grants management. At the national office, a number of well-qualified specialists are available to meet and guide regional staff on AmeriCorps compliance, budget creation, and general grant management. Our finance team reports to the auditing and finance committees of our board, and works closely with our development team and budget trackers to coordinate cash-in and expenses throughout the organization. In particular, our finance team coordinates our A-133 audit, our annual audit and our monthly reconciliation processes, and produces and monitors our projected budgets for

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each site and the organization. We use our Financial Edge database to help track funding streams and expenses by department and program element. This centralization allows national staff to provide assistance to TFA-South Dakota with federal budget requirements, and ensure compliance with programmatic elements. Currently, 11 of Teach For America's 39 regions receive state AmeriCorps funding.

Since TFA members are provided salaries and benefits from the school districts, our costs relate solely to supporting our members. An AmeriCorps grant will cover a percentage of the costs that enable TFA to place, train, and support corps members so that they are prepared to make academic gains with their students. Our 2011 budget is approximately \$1.2 million. Therefore, we depend on other funding sources to raise the additional funds needed to support our corps members.

We will raise the necessary resources from a variety of sources: foundations, corporations, individual donors, and public sources. We are actively seeking to grow funding across all sources going forward and expanding across South Dakota where both funding and placement opportunities exist.

TFA-SD had a very successful fundraising year in FY 2010, bringing in revenue across all funding streams. We were able to bring in over \$80,000 from foundations, \$27,500 from corporations, \$31,000 from individuals, \$173,000 from our school district partners, and over \$300,000 from state funding. We face a more difficult funding landscape in FY2011, as we came to the end of a three year non-renewable grant from a state partner.

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To overcome this challenge and ensure our sustainability, we have prioritized new prospect research and forming new partnerships with foundations, corporations, and individuals across South Dakota. This group will only be as powerful as it is diverse, so we must engage with many leaders and a variety of sectors to gather the momentum required to effect significant change.

FOUNDATIONS: There are fewer foundations in South Dakota than in major metropolitan areas, but we are taking advantage of the available opportunities and leveraging existing connections and resources to build new partnerships. Our efforts have already yielded successful new grant proposals as we endeavor to raise awareness of our presence and work in our state's most under-served schools.

CORPORATIONS: Our aggressive prospect research is not limited to foundations--we are also working to significantly increase corporate and individual contributions to our movement. In addition to research, we are using our existing partnerships in the corporate world to do outreach on our behalf and drive up competition for the visibility associated with supporting our work. This will further expand our pipeline of corporate supporters.

INDIVIDUALS: In FY11, we are working in increase the revenue from our Sponsor A Teacher program, a \$5,000 individual gift campaign. We have identified a number of high-wealth individuals in South Dakota, and are beginning outreach to cultivate these prospects and engage them in our mission.

PUBLIC FUNDING: TFA-SD benefited greatly over the past 3 years from a significant state grant, administered through Dakota ASSETS and Technology and Innovation in Education. This funding allowed us to grow from 45 corps members and a handful of alumni three years ago to over 60 corps

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members nearly 30 alumni today. It is in this funding stream that this AmeriCorps grant would be critical to our sustainability, and allow us to continue our growth plan to reach as many Native students across our state as possible.

We have set an FY11 fundraising goal of \$475,000 raised locally. The proposed AmeriCorps grant represents approximately 25% of our fundraising goal, and 10% of our operating budget in FY11. Additional funds will be raised from foundations, corporations, individuals, and our school district partners.

TFA has been an AmeriCorps program since 1994. However, in the past five years, funding from the national AmeriCorps grant has gone to pay for national initiatives -- recruitment, admissions, summer training -- that are not included on our regional AmeriCorps budgets. The only CNCS support TFA-SD has received in the last five years has been education awards for our corps members. We are very excited about partnering directly with AmeriCorps, such funding is key to growing our impact in South Dakota.

By 2015 South Dakota will be the national proof point for what is possible in Native education. If we grow our incoming corps to 50 teachers each year, we will be positioned to reach half of the Native students in our state. Through goal-driven, transformational teaching we will measurably close the achievement gap between Native students and their non-Native peers; the high school graduation rates of our district partners will increase, and more Native students will be prepared to enter and complete college.

In other contexts, it is difficult to imagine that attaining the capacity to grow to 50 incoming teachers

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could so transformative, but doing so in South Dakota would position Teach For America as a catalyst for change in Native education broadly. We see this as the critical time to build upon the national momentum around education reform and bring about lasting changes in our state.

Due to funding constraints, in 2010 we were forced to reduce the size of our incoming corps to 25 members, down from 37 members in 2009 and 35 in 2010. Reducing our numbers to 25 corps members leaves us far short of our goal of bringing in 50 new teachers by 2015. Support from this AmeriCorps grant is critical to our success. Funding from this grant, as opposed to Teach For America's national grant, will go directly toward supporting corps members in South Dakota. By partnering together, we can accelerate the broader education reform movement in our region and demonstrate what is truly possible for Native students in the underserved, low-income reservation communities across our state.

AmeriCorps is a natural fit for our program, since we are a full-time national service program that addresses a serious education issue -- the achievement gap that persists between students in low-income communities and their peers in wealthier communities.

TFA-South Dakota ensures compliance with all AmeriCorps requirements. All incoming corps members participate in a series of orientation sessions designed to familiarize them with the expectations, requirements, and benefits of being an AmeriCorps member. In addition, we continue to reinforce these requirements for member compliance during monthly email blasts and during corps member general meetings.

Staffing

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TFA-SD has 4 full-time staff members: an executive director, a manager of operations, and two program directors, and a part-time director of teaching and learning. We each partner with national team members who support us across our functional areas: development, program, alumni affairs, budgeting and analysis, communications, etc. As explained above, TFA-SD does not have a regional board at this time.

As Executive Director, Catherine Pozniak is responsible for maximizing the organization's impact in the region. Catherine Pozniak is a 2004 South Dakota charter corps member who taught for Todd County School District on the Rosebud Reservation. Catherine graduated with a BA Honours I in History and European Studies from the University of Sydney and a Master of Philosophy in Modern European History from the University of Cambridge.

As Manager of Operations, Marion Katz is responsible for supporting corps members and staff in the areas of program, development, and operations. Marion Katz is a 2007 South Dakota corps member who taught third grade at He Dog School in the Todd County School District on the Rosebud Reservation.

Program Directors Kimberly Marsh and Dennis Robillard manage and develop corps members to ensure that they achieve ambitious academic goals with their students and works directly with corps members to increase their effectiveness and maximize their impact both in the classroom and beyond their corps experience. Kimberly Marsh is a 2006 South Dakota corps member who taught second grade at He Dog School for Todd County School District on the Rosebud Reservation. Dennis Robillard is a 2008 South Dakota corps member, he taught 11th and 12th grade English and reading at Saint Francis Indian School.

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As Director of Teaching and Learning, Tricia Noyola oversees the broad professional development of corps members and ensures the qualities of tools and assessments. Tricia Noyola graduated in 2006 with a BA in History from St. Edward's University before joining the Rio Grande Valley corps. In 2008, she was a founding teacher and leader at IDEA College Prep in Mission, Texas, a high performing charter school district founded by two Teach For America alumni.

TFA's national staff provides support to South Dakota in a number of different areas, including finance, grants management, and program support. At the national office, a number of well-qualified specialists are available to guide regional staff on AmeriCorps compliance, budget creation, and general grant management. In addition to these specialists, our national server is constantly being updated with document resources and tutorials on these same topics. Additionally, the national team provides on-going trainings and assistance for all regional staff positions via conference calls, regional and national conferences, and on-line tutorials.

The national office of TFA also includes a well-staffed technology department that is available to assist with any technical problems that should arise at the regional level. Our staff in South Dakota reaches out to the technology team via email and telephone and have the capacity to interface with our personal computers in South Dakota. As part of standard new staff training, TFA-SD personnel are trained on all software and programs that enable and improve work function.

Special Circumstances

As a group, Native Americans achieve the lowest levels of educational attainment of any ethnic group in the nation. Much of the education reform discourse is centered on inner-city African-American and

Narratives

Latino youth, but we must not overlook the achievement gap in our country's rural corners being perpetuated against Native students. To this end, TFA launched our Native Achievement Initiative last year.

Spearheaded by the TFA regions that currently serve Native students (South Dakota, New Mexico, Hawai'i, and Oklahoma), the NAI is focused on growing our presence in those regions, and expanding to other areas of the country where Native students lack access to quality education. The NAI is working to create a national partnership between TFA and the Bureau of Indian Education so that we can serve ever-increasing numbers of Native children. In light of the growth we are aiming to achieve, this AmeriCorps grant is critical to our success.

Through our diverse fundraising efforts over the past seven years, we have demonstrated that we are a sustainable presence here in South Dakota. However, a partnership with AmeriCorps is critical for us to achieve our ambitious growth plan by 2015. To build the movement toward educational equity, we cannot just maintain the status quo; we must grow to bring in 50 new teachers each year to reach far more of our state's underserved students and schools.

The state of South Dakota, and particularly the reservations on which we operate, do not have the financial and philanthropic capacity of large urban and population centers. There are very few large corporations with headquarters in South Dakota. Shannon County and Todd County, home of the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations, are two of the top ten poorest counties in the United States, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Todd County is rated a 9 on the Beale scale, meaning it is a "nonmetro county completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, not adjacent to metro area," which is the most rural a region can be rated. As an extremely rural region, it is challenging to seek

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out the funding sources necessary to support our critical work in our severely under-served communities. The population we serve has historically been relegated to the margins of American society, and the repercussions of that history are among the causes of the achievement gap today.

Our regional goals see us becoming the flagship non-profit organization in South Dakota, raising awareness of our work, and compelling other leaders and organizations across the state to join with us in ensuring that all students in South Dakota are receiving an excellent, transformational education that they all deserve and are entitled to. We hope that AmeriCorps will partner with us to deliver a quality education to our state's Native students.

As South Dakota does not have a state commission, the corporation has chosen to wrap us into the national grant over the past several years. However, this hasn't resulted in us getting funding beyond the education awards for our corps members, as the national AmeriCorps grant is used to cover national expenses. Due to funding constraints, we are projected to cut our incoming corps size by one third. A direct partnership with AmeriCorps would bring TFA-SD closer to achieving our 2015 vision by enabling us to increase the number of highly qualified, motivated and passionate teachers to South Dakota each year.

Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

Cost Effectiveness

TFA is recognized by outside groups for its efficiency. Charity Navigator, a non-profit watchdog group, gave TFA its highest 4-star rating in past years. We are requesting 60 full time member slots at \$2262/MSY.

These expenses are directly linked to outputs and outcomes -- the AmeriCorps grant will cover a

Narratives

percentage of the costs that enable TFA to train and support corps members so that they are prepared to make academic gains with their students and engage community members in their classrooms.

As a professional corps, our members are provided salaries and benefits from the school districts. Therefore, our costs relate solely to recruiting and supporting our members. These expenses are directly linked to outputs and outcomes -- the AmeriCorps grant will cover a percentage of the costs that enable TFA to train and support corps members so that they are prepared to make academic gains with their students and engage community members in their classrooms. Our overall FY11 budget is currently almost \$ 1.2 million. Therefore, we depend on multiple funding sources to raise the funds needed to support our 60 corps members. We firmly believe in diversifying our funding in order to ensure the continuation of our programming. To that extent, our funding portfolio represents a wide distribution of sources. We are currently funded 26.5% by foundations, 12% by individuals, 26.5% by corporations, and 34% by public funding.

Special Circumstances

South Dakota is a unique placement site among TFA's regions. With just over half a million residents in the entire state, South Dakota does not have the robust philanthropic and business communities of larger metropolitan areas. The Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations are economically distressed counties with unemployment rates of more than 80% in some communities. AmeriCorps' investment in education will show the nation and the state that low-income and Native students can achieve at the same levels as their more affluent peers. The students we serve should not be overlooked simply because they live in a remote and impoverished region. The problem of the achievement gap is not intractable. But it takes a strong network of leaders across all sectors of society to join together. AmeriCorps' support is critical to our work here in South Dakota.

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Budget Adequacy

Our corps members are charged with the ambitious task of significantly improving the academic performance of students who traditionally enter the classroom 2-3 grade levels behind their peers in wealthier communities. It is imperative that we invest in providing the training and support necessary to be transformative teachers. Our regional costs are those associated with our training and support models, which have proven to be critical to maximizing our impact. A growing body of research shows that our corps members are more effective than other teachers, including certified and veteran teachers. ("The Effects of Teach For America on Students: Findings from a National Evaluation," Mathematica Policy Research, June 2004; The Urban Institute/CALDER Research Center, 2009) Additionally, TFA corps members are more likely than other new teachers to return for a second year of teaching. In South Dakota, 100% of our 2009 corps returned for a second year of teaching. In contrast, about 83% of new teachers in low-income communities return for a second year. ("No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children" (2003) National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. Washington, D.C)

By 2015, 100 corps members will be reaching more than 50% of South Dakota's most disadvantaged students. Corps members' efforts will change students' lives and produce a new pipeline of diverse leaders for college campuses and our nation at large. At the same time, a force of 50 TFA alumni will provide new leadership in South Dakota and our nation. Funding is the only barrier to achieving this goal. The financial support and education awards provided by state AmeriCorps and our match partners will enable us to collectively move the needle in closing the achievement gap, changing the conversation about what is possible and how to achieve it, and rapidly move our nation toward the tipping point at which the movement to end educational inequity becomes unstoppable.

Narratives

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Budget Clarification Items:

1. Supplies

Program supplies are only charged at 75% because the balance of the cost are covered by other funding sources.

2. Member Training Costs

Member Training Costs are budgeted for 8 months throughout the year. The workshops - designed for corps member professional development - are spread out to avoid months with breaks and periods with heavier than usual demands on the corps members time.

3. Other Program Operating Costs

All costs listed are charged to this grant according to their actual percentage of usage for the program.

Programmatic Clarification Items:

1. Criminal History Checks

Teach For America submitted an ASP to CNCS on December 23, 2010 in preparation for the new requirements to the criminal history check regulations outlined by the Serve America Act effective on April 21, 2011. In our ASP, we propose a continuation of our current criminal history check procedure, in which NSOPR and FBI fingerprint checks are conducted on all corps members prior to the start of

Narratives

our enrollment in AmeriCorps. The Teach For America South Dakota site was included in this ASP request. We are awaiting a response from CNCS on our ASP for 2011. Given our admissions cycle we have already begun conducting Criminal History Checks on our incoming 2011 corps members (we have 5 application deadlines: 1DL, 2DL, 3DL, 4DL, 5DL) . Our 2011 Criminal History Check policy states that all corps members must be checked against the National Sex Offender Public Registry (NSOPR) database prior to AmeriCorps enrollment. In addition, an FBI fingerprint check must be initiated on all corps members no later than their enrollment in AmeriCorps. Any corps member with a pending FBI check at the time of our 30-day AmeriCorps enrollment will be prohibited from AmeriCorps enrollment until their check is completed. Alternatively, any corps member enrolled in AmeriCorps with a pending FBI check must be accompanied by a supervisor while teaching students until their check is returned and cleared. Supervision must be well documented to ensure full compliance with AmeriCorps regulations.

Regarding staff background checks, we are applying for a Professional Corps fixed amount grant and as such checks are not required for staff per CNCS' Frequently Asked Questions National Service Criminal History Checks (updated April 15, 2010).

2. Labor Union concurrence

Labor union concurrence forms are required for program applicants who:

- (1) Propose to serve as the placement site for AmeriCorps members; and
- (2) Have employees engaged in the same or substantially similar work as that proposed to be carried out by AmeriCorps members; and
- (3) Those employees are represented by a local labor organization, must include in their application the written concurrence of the local labor organization representing those employees. Written concurrence can be in the form of a letter or e-mail from the local union leadership.

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As stated above, the labor concurrence requirement applies to programs that are serving as both program applicant and service site. This requirement does not apply to Teach For America-South Dakota because we do not serve as the placement site for AmeriCorps members.

3. Displacement

Because Teach For America-South Dakota is a professional corps, our corps members are hired employees of the school districts in which they work. Therefore, our corps members do not displace hired employees because they are hired employees.

4. Executive summary has been adjusted.

5. Please explain how volunteer generation will contribute toward meeting the identified need in South Dakota.

Parental and family involvement, as well as the support and engagement of community members, is critical to closing the achievement gap between Native students and their non-Native peers in South Dakota. By generating volunteers to assist in daily classroom activities, our corps members increase communities' sense of what is possible for their students. Our fight to ensure that all students in South Dakota have access to an excellent education is made all the more powerful by the partnership of our communities and our students' families. Their presence as volunteers in our corps members' classrooms is actively linked to the success of our movement in South Dakota. We are extremely excited about the creation of a state commission in South Dakota to link us to other service programs throughout the state, so we can coordinate volunteers and AmeriCorps members to better serve the needs of our students.

Narratives

6. Please explain how the school site supervisors will inform the TFA South Dakota staff of members' progress or report any problems. Also, please describe how the applicant organization will monitor school sites for compliance.

TFA-SD's staff regularly visits schools both to observe in corps members' classrooms, but also to check in with school administrators. These pop-ins serve to build friendly and professional relationships between our staff and our schools. Our administrators do not hesitate to communicate with our staff about our corps members' performance--both in praise and, at times, in concern. These open and comfortable relationships are integral to our success. The second portion of TFA-SD's school site communication plan, involves TFA-SD's Executive Director meeting with the superintendent of each district partner regularly. The Executive Director's efforts will culminate with an end-of-year principal satisfaction survey, which will provide our organization with quantitative measurements regarding our programs strengths and growth potential.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Performance Measures

SAA Characteristics

- AmeriCorps Member Population - None c Geographic Focus - Rural
 Geographic Focus - Urban Encore Program

Priority Areas

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Futures | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans and Military Families | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Services | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 60

Service Categories

Other Education

National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-South Dakota places corps members as teachers in low-income schools. Each corps member teaches an average of 35 students, therefore the number of students who begin in our program is 2280.

Result: Output

Result.

Teach For America-South Dakota estimates that 2280 students will start the year in our corps members' classrooms.

Indicator: ED1: Students who start in an AC ED program.

Target :Teach For America-South Dakota estimates that 2280 students will start the year in our corps members' classrooms.

Target Value: 2280

Instruments: Teach For America-South Dakota uses an internal tracking system to track the number of students each corps member teaches.

PM Statement: Teach For America-South Dakota will use an internal tracking system to track the number of students being taught by Teach For America-South Dakota corps members, estimating that this will be 2280 students.

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-South Dakota estimates that 2052 students will complete participation in our program due to schedule changes and relocation.

Result: Output

Result.

Teach For America-South Dakota estimates that 2052 students will complete the year in our corps members' classrooms.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) ED2: Number of students who complete an AC ED program.

Target :Teach For America-South Dakota estimates that 2052 students will complete the year in our corps members' classrooms.

Target Value: 2052

Instruments: Teach For America-South Dakota uses an internal tracking system to track the number of students each corps member teaches.

PM Statement: Teach For America-South Dakota will use an internal tracking system to track the number of students who complete the year being taught by Teach For America-South Dakota corps members, estimating that this will be 2052 students.

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

National Performance Measures

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-South Dakota partners with local school districts and charter networks to place corps members who are teachers in low-income schools.

Result: Output

Result.

Teach For America-South Dakota will place 60 AmeriCorps members as teachers.

Indicator: ED12: AmeriCorps members who begin serving as teachers.

Target :Teach For America-South Dakota will place 60 AmeriCorps members as teachers.

Target Value: 60

Instruments: Teach For America-South Dakota uses an internal tracking system to track the number of corps members placed as teachers

PM Statement: Teach For America-South Dakota will use an internal tracking system to track the placement of 60 AmeriCorps members as teachers.

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-South Dakota regularly improves our evaluations, allowing us to refine our ability to recruit successful applicants, and improve our ability to train and support our corps members. As we make further enhancements to our program, our members will be even better trained and supported, which will help us maintain and even increase member satisfaction and retention.

Result: Output

Result.

Teach For America-South Dakota estimates that 57 AmeriCorps members complete their service as teachers.

Indicator: ED13: AmeriCorps members who complete serving as teachers.

Target :Teach For America-South Dakota estimates that 57 AmeriCorps members complete their service as teachers.

Target Value: 57

Instruments: Teach For America-South Dakota uses an internal tracking system to track the number of corps members who complete serving as teachers.

PM Statement: Teach For America-South Dakota will use an internal tracking system to track the number of corps members who complete their year of service as teachers, estimating that 57 will do so.

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-South Dakota partners with local school districts and charter networks to place corps members

National Performance Measures

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)
are teachers in low-income schools.

Result: Output

Result.

Teach For America-South Dakota will place 60 AmeriCorps members as teachers in high-need public schools.

Indicator: ED14: Individuals teaching in high-need schools.

Target : Teach For America-South Dakota will place 60 AmeriCorps members as teachers in high-need public schools.

Target Value: 60

Instruments: Teach For America-South Dakota uses an internal tracking system to track the number of corps members who teach in high-need public schools.

PM Statement: Teach For America-South Dakota will use an internal tracking system to track the placement of 60 AmeriCorps members as teachers in high-need public schools

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-South Dakota provides extensive training and professional development to instruct corps members in making and tracking the academic achievement made by their students.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Teach For America-South Dakota estimates that 1733 students will make improved academic achievements of at least one year's worth of growth in one academic year or grade-level sufficient mastery of content standards.

Indicator: ED15: Students with improved academic performance.

Target : 1733 students will make improved academic achievements of at least one year's worth of growth in one academic year or grade-level sufficient mastery of content standards.

Target Value: 1733

Instruments: Teach For America-South Dakota uses an internal tracking system to track the academic achievement that is made by the students taught by our corps members.

PM Statement: Teach For America-South Dakota will use an internal tracking system to determine students that will make either at least one year's worth of growth or grade-level sufficient mastery of content standards, with 1733 students.

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-South Dakota encourages corps members to continue teaching in public schools in the year after their term of service. Additionally, the training that corps members receive while in the corps through TFA and

National Performance Measures

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)
our university partners' enable alumni to remain in teaching.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Teach For America-South Dakota estimates that 15 former AmeriCorps members will remain teaching in the year after term of service.

Indicator: (DELETED) ED16: Teachers in schools in the year after service

Target :Teach For America-South Dakota estimates that 15 former AmeriCorps members will remain teaching in the year after term of service.

Target Value: 15

Instruments: Teach For America-South Dakota uses an internal tracking system to track the number of alumni (former AmeriCorps members) who continue teaching in public schools in the year after their term of service.

PM Statement: Teach For America-South Dakota will use an internal tracking system to track the number of alumni (former AmeriCorps members) who continue teaching in public schools in the year after their term of service, an estimated 15 members.

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-South Dakota encourages corps members to remain in the education field after their term of service. Additionally, the training that corps members receive while in the corps' through TFA and our university partners' enable alumni to remain in education.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Teach For America-South Dakota estimates that 9 former AmeriCorps members will remain in the education field after their term of service.;

Indicator: ED17: Teachers remaining in education field but not teaching after service.

Target :Teach For America-South Dakota estimates that 9 former AmeriCorps members will remain in the education field after their term of service.

Target Value: 9

Instruments: Teach For America-South Dakota uses an internal tracking system to track the number of alumni (former AmeriCorps members) who continue remain in the education field after their term of service.

PM Statement: Teach For America-South Dakota will use an internal tracking system to track the number of alumni (former AmeriCorps members) who remaining in the education field in the year after their term of service, an estimated 9 members.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Not Applicable

Federally Approved Indirect Cost Agreement

Already on File at CNCS

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable