A Future **Worthy** of **Teaching** for America

The teaching residency may be one of the most important reforms of teacher education, Ms. Darling-Hammond asserts. If TFA were to adopt this model, it could help address the teacher-quality problems in our urban schools.

By Linda Darling-Hammond

THE vision Megan Hopkins offers for the future design of Teach for America (TFA) combines the appeal of TFA — a pathway into teaching for able college graduates who are willing to work in high-need schools — with recognition that to serve their students well, such schools must have highly skilled teachers who are able to address a wide range of learning needs from their first days on the job. The idea of a teaching residency, which couples strong training and mentoring with well-supported pathways into urban teaching, could allow TFA to capitalize on its existing strengths and contribute more effectively to a better future for both low-income students and the schools that serve them. The teaching residency also provides an important vehicle for the nation to begin working on the critical problem of teaching quality for our most underserved students. In the long run, this idea may be a stepping stone to a system that ultimately provides the stable, high-quality learning environments children need and deserve.

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THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM

Megan Hopkins has identified the critical need for the well-prepared teachers who are crucial to this nation's future. Substantial evidence supports this point. Recent studies indicate that the low rankings of the U.S. on international assessments are primarily a function of dramatic inequalities in educational opportunity for low-income students and students of color — especially their inadequate access to well-qualified teachers. Although the U.S. has slid to 25th place out of 30 OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries in mathematics achievement and 21st in science,[1] these statistics mask the existence

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of two Americas. White and Asian students score above the OECD average in all areas of science, while African American and Hispanic students score far below.[2]

This is largely because, in contrast to European and Asian nations that fund schools centrally and equally, the wealthiest school districts in the U.S. spend 10 times as much as the poorest. Within states it is not uncommon for wealthy suburbs to spend twice what central cities, serving much needier students, can afford. Poor rural areas spend even less.[3] These differences translate into differential salaries and working conditions for teachers and dramatically different learning conditions for students. Teachers working in wealthy districts can earn substantially more than those working in poor ones,[4] and they work with much smaller classes, luxurious facilities, plentiful books and computers, and a variety of specialists and supports for teaching. These teachers, who often have had the highest-quality preparation available, receive ongoing support for enhancing their skills and become increasingly effective over the course of their careers. Meanwhile, in poorer districts, teachers who earn much less have to spend more of their own resources buying books, paper, and other materials for their students — and they often receive little mentoring or support to improve their own knowledge and skills, despite the extensive challenges presented by their students, who are more likely to live in poverty, be new English learners, and have a range of special needs. In this arena of American life, as in so many others, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, creating a vicious cycle for children and their teachers who do not have supported opportunities to learn.

These disparate opportunities — most pronounced in schools serving concentrations of low-income students of color — have been documented in school finance lawsuits across the country.[5] Analysts consistently find that the most inequitably distributed resource — and the one most predictive of student achievement — is the quality of teachers.[6] Many schools serving the most vulnerable students have been staffed by a steady parade of untrained, inexperienced, and temporary teachers,[7] and studies show that these teachers' lack of training and experience significantly accounts for students' higher failure rates on high-stakes tests.[8]

The results are increasingly tragic, as students who were not taught adequately are ever more likely to join the school-to-prison pipeline. The threefold increase in the U.S. prison population over the past 20 years is strongly associated with inadequate education in black and Latino communities. Most inmates are high school dropouts and have literacy skills below those required by the labor market.[9] The failure to give children teachers who can teach them to read in elementary school leads to a predictable process of academic despair, dropping out, and unemployability. This has led to a situation in which there are now more young African American men in the criminal justice system than there are in higher education.[10] And several states now spend nearly as much on their prison systems as they spend on higher education.[11] Ironically, growing investments in incarceration are increasingly replacing needed funding for education and other social services that would underwrite productive lives for those now tossed away.

The importance of investing in a stable, highly qualified teaching force in all schools is well appreciated by nations that lead the way in international rankings in education. The highest-achieving countries in the world — including Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Korea, and Hong Kong — have poured resources into teacher training over the last decade. These top-ranked countries routinely prepare their teachers more extensively — underwriting free tuition and a stipend for all candidates while they complete a three- to four-year program of preparation. They pay teachers well and provide them with mentoring and 15 to 20 hours a week for joint planning and professional learning. They also distribute well-trained teachers to all students by offering equitable salaries and working conditions, sometimes adding incentives for harder-to-staff locations.

A recent 25-country study, *How the World's Best-Performing School Systems Come Out on Top*,[12] notes that leading nations recognize that three things matter most: 1) getting the right people to become teachers, 2) developing them into effective instructors, and 3) ensuring that the system is able to deliver the best possible instruction to every child. The U.S. has not yet tackled the policy challenges that would provide such universally high-quality teaching for all its children. While some states and districts have eliminated shortages by overhauling hiring practices, creating strong teacher education partnerships, raising salaries, improving working conditions, and providing mentoring in high-need schools,[13] many others have addressed shortfalls of teachers in poor districts by lowering teaching standards rather than improving conditions and increasing incentives for teachers to work in the highest-need schools.

Creating these conditions — and breaking the cycle that assigns the least prepared and least experienced teachers to the neediest students — calls for a purposeful nationwide policy agenda that will provide top-quality preparation and support for teachers who take up the challenge of working in low-income schools, en-

couraging them to stay in teaching while improving the overall quality of education their schools provide.

THE PROMISE OF THE TEACHING RESIDENCY MODEL

The teaching residency model holds particular promise for addressing the problems of teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention for high-need districts — and may constitute one of the most important reforms of teacher education generally. Based on the successful work of Chicago's Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL), the Boston Teacher Residency Program, and the Boettcher Teachers Program in Denver, residencies are being launched in a number of districts across the country. These programs carefully screen and recruit talented college graduates who are interested in a long-term career in urban teaching, offering them a yearlong paid residency under the tutelage of master teachers. During the year, while they learn to teach in the classroom of an expert teacher, recruits take carefully constructed coursework from partner universities who work closely with the residency sponsor. The courses, which lead to certification and a master's degree, are designed to connect to the clinical experience. Rather than trying to learn to teach through a sink-or-swim model without ever seeing good teaching, these recruits watch experts in action and are tutored into accomplished practice.

In the Chicago program, after candidates take eight weeks of initial summer coursework, which launches a tightly constructed yearlong curriculum taught by faculty members at National-Louis University and the University of Illinois at Chicago, they undertake their residency with a master teacher at one of six Teaching Academy schools run by AUSL as part of the Chicago school system. These schools, which serve low-income students of color, are themselves an important part of the innovation, as they are designed to exemplify best practices in urban schooling and are staffed by highly effective, experienced teachers from the Chicago Public Schools, who are paid an additional 20% of their salary to serve as mentor teachers and leaders. Similar to teaching hospitals in medicine, such schools can provide state-of-the-art education for both children and professionals-in-training.

Candidates become teachers of record in the year following their residency. Having learned to meet the needs of their students by studying effective practices at the elbow of a successful urban teacher, they continue to receive mentoring for two years more. Their master's degree is underwritten by a loan that is forgiven as they teach. In return, they are expected to teach for at least five years in the district, the point at which most teachers commit to the profession. The Chicago program has even begun to take on turnaround schools and restaff them with master teachers and graduates of the residency program, upgrading the quality of education for the system as a whole.

The residency models have high standards, both for entry and for graduation. They select high-ability candidates with needed characteristics and skills and graduate them into teaching positions only when they have demonstrated that they are ready to teach effectively. In Boston's residency program, 53% of entrants are candidates of color, and 59% of the middle and high school recruits have backgrounds in math or science. Experience shows that the vast majority of these recruits stay on and teach successfully in high-need schools. Data on both Chicago's and Boston's programs show retention rates in teaching of more than 90% for the first four cohorts of graduates.[14]

Like TFA, the teaching residency model creates a pipeline that channels recruits directly into urban districts; even better, it allows districts to develop strong training models so that their recruits are prepared for what they will encounter on the job and will be encouraged to stay on and become leaders in the district. While there are upfront costs for recruits' stipends during the residency year (ranging from $10,000 to $32,000 per candidate, depending on the city), these are paid back by the strong performance and high retention of teachers. The costs of attrition for beginning teachers are estimated to range from $8,000 to $48,000 per candidate who leaves, depending on the cost model.[15] Furthermore, research consistently finds that teachers are more effective when they have three or more years of experience.[16] Consequently, the retention of candidates after their first two years of practice — and the fact that they do not need to be replaced with less effective beginning teachers — increases a district's overall teacher effectiveness and productivity, reducing levels of student failure and costs for student remediation, grade retention, summer school, special education, and other services.

Strong residencies also do something that most alternative and many traditional teacher education programs fail to do: they give recruits the opportunity to learn under the direct supervision of expert teachers working in schools that serve high-need students well. This approach is critical to solving the most serious problems of our teacher training system: most alternative-route teachers get little or no student teaching, while many traditional candidates experience student

teaching either in a school serving low-income students poorly (so they observe problematic practice) or in a school serving more advantaged students well (so they see good practice that assumes well-supported students with strong prior learning).

In either case, prospective teachers rarely see in action the sophisticated practice of great teachers who know how to work with students who encounter the range of challenges associated with living in poverty, have little prior educational support, and may be learning English for the first time. Effective teaching strategies cannot be learned merely from reading about them or being told what to do by a mentor. The ability to observe expert practices and to practice them with support is essential to building a cadre of school teachers who will enter classrooms with the competence to work effectively with the neediest students and the confidence to stay in teaching in these areas. Combined with critical coursework that illuminates all the ways in which students develop and learn, supports knowledge about how to build effective curriculum and teach challenging content to diverse students, and enables teachers to continually refine their practice, such a model can improve upon the preparation offered by many traditional and alternative programs alike.

As Edward Morris, Jr., a Chicago Academy graduate, now lead science teacher at a Chicago elementary school, described his preparation: "I had an insider's perspective on how to apply what I learned in the university classroom. The first year of teaching, I hit the ground running."[17]

Spreading this model to other districts and university partners holds promise for developing long-range solutions to the lack of high-quality teaching that deprives so many students of color in low-income schools of the opportunity to learn. Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) and Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D-Ill.) introduced separate legislation in the Senate and House, now integrated into the Higher Education Act, that could provide the resources to enable districts to afford this more far-reaching solution, addressing central issues of preparation, induction, and school reform that can help us make progress toward the high-quality urban schools our nation needs to remain a First World power in a knowledge-based economy.

We can ill afford to continue the policies that routinely undereducate a large share of our citizens. We owe it to all of our children to give them well-qualified teachers every single year they are in school, and we owe it to our urban school systems to help them build a strong and stable teaching force. Were it to adopt a residency model, Teach for America could become part of this systemic solution, along with other residency programs that are beginning to address the root of our nation's teaching-quality issues. With a clear vision and a purposeful approach, we can muster the will and the resources to recruit, prepare, and retain good teachers for all of our nation's public school students, as they deserve.

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2. Elizabeth Stage, "Why Do We Need These Assessments?," *Natural Selection: Journal of the BSCS*, Winter 2005, pp. 11-13.

3. *The State of Inequality* (Princeton, N.J., Educational Testing Service, 1991); and Jonathan Kozol, *The Shame of the Nation* (New York: Crown, 2005).

4. See, for example, Linda Darling-Hammond, "Access to Quality Teach-

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ing: An Analysis of Inequality in California's Public Schools," *Santa Clara Law Review*, vol. 43, 2003, pp. 101-239.

5. For a review, see Linda Darling-Hammond, "The Color Line in American Education: Race, Resources, and Student Achievement," *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, vol. 1, 2004, pp. 213-46.

6. See *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future* (New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996); Julian R. Betts, Kim S. Rueben, and Anne Danenberg, *Equal Resources, Equal Outcomes? The Distribution of School Resources and Student Achievement in California* (San Francisco: Public Policy Institute of California, 2000); Laura Goe, "Legislating Equality: The Distribution of Emergency Permit Teachers in California," *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 14 October 2002, http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v10n42; and Linda Darling-Hammond, "Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of State Policy Evidence," *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 1 January 2000, http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n1.

7. Jeannie Oakes, "Investigating the Claims in *Williams* v. *State of California*: An Unconstitutional Denial of Education's Basic Tools?," *Teachers College Record*, vol. 106, 2004, pp. 1889-1906; and Patrick Shields et al., *The Status of the Teaching Profession* (Santa Cruz, Calif.: Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, 2001).

8. Linda Darling-Hammond, "The Color Line in American Education"; Goe, op. cit.; and Mark Fetler, "High School Staff Characteristics and Mathematics Test Results," *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 26 March 1999, http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v7n9. Moreover, studies demonstrate that students of new uncertified teachers achieve at significantly lower levels, after controlling for student characteristics and teacher experience, than those of fully prepared and certified teachers. See Donald Boyd et al., "How Changes in Entry Requirements Alter the Teacher Workforce and Affect Student Achievement," *Education Finance and Policy*, vol. 1, 2006, pp. 176-216; Thomas Kane, Jonah E. Rockoff, and Douglas O. Staiger, "What Does Certification Tell Us About Teacher Effectiveness? Evidence from New York City," Working Paper 11844, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, Mass., March 2006; and Linda Darling-Hammond et al., "Does Teacher Preparation Matter? Evidence About Teacher Certification, Teach for America, and Teacher Effectiveness," *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 12 October 2005, http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v13n42.

9. Paul E. Barton and Richard J. Coley, *Captive Students: Education and Training in America's Prisons* (Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1996).

10. In 2000 there were an estimated 791,600 African American men in prison or jail and 603,000 in colleges or universities. See Vincent Shiraldi and Jason Ziedenberg, *Cellblocks or Classrooms? The Funding of Higher Education and Corrections and Its Impact on African American Men* (Washington, D.C.: Justice Policy Institute, 2002), www.justicepolicy.org/content.php?hmID=1811&smID=1582&ssmID=28.

11. Ibid. See also Maya Harris, "Prison vs. Education Spending Reveals California's Priorities," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 May 2007, p. B-5.

12. Michael Barber and Mona Mourshed, *How the World's Best-Performing School Systems Come Out on Top* (London: McKinsey, 2007).

13. For examples, see Linda Darling-Hammond and Gary Sykes, "Wanted: A National Teacher Supply Policy for Education: The Right Way to Meet the 'Highly Qualified Teacher' Challenge," *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*, 17 September 2003, http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v11n33.

14. Bess Keller, "Residencies Set Up to Train Urban Teachers at School Sites," *Education Week*, 1 November 2006.

15. A. D. Benner, *The Cost of Teacher Turnover* (Austin: Texas Center for Educational Research, 2000).

16. Studies consistently find that teacher effectiveness rises sharply after the first few years in the classroom. See, for example, Eric Hanushek, John Kain, and Steve Rivkin, "Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement," Working Paper 6691, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, Mass., August 1998; and John Kain and Kraig Singleton, "Equality of Educational Opportunity Revisited," *New England Economic Review*, May/June 1996, pp. 87-111.

17. Keller, op. cit.