

## Ohio State Budget Testimony

04.16.15

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Thank you for your consideration.

My name is Holly Trifiro. I've am the executive director of Teach For America in Northeast Ohio and have served in the position since we began our work in the Ohio in 2012. You heard from my colleague, Ben Lindy, earlier this week who shared a bit about Teach For America's mission and impact. We are a non-profit organization that works to recruit, train and develop diverse educators who commit to teach in high-need public schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to expand educational opportunity in under-resourced public schools.

My own career in education began as a Teach For America corps member. After graduating from Ohio University in 2007, I moved to Baltimore to become a corps member – the term we use to describe our teachers in their initial two-year continuum of training – and met a group of students who changed my life forever. They showed me beyond the shadow of a doubt what is possible in our public schools. Over the past three years, I've seen this reinforced again and again in the classrooms of the 270 teachers we've brought to the state, as well as from the now hundreds of alumni of our program working as teachers, deans, instructional coaches, principals, administrators and advocates for equity across Ohio.

As Ben shared, our teachers are fully licensed and certified. They work in some of our hardest to staff classrooms and lead their students to outstanding outcomes. In 2013, a study by Mathematica Policy Research found that students in corps members' classrooms again an additional 2.6 months of learning over the course of a school year.

In light of this, and with demand for our educators increasing each year – particularly in high-need subjects like math, science, special education, and English as a second language (ESL) – we now look to the state to provide the kind of investment that would allow us to accelerate our fundraising work, grow to meet this considerable demand, and create a model of public-private partnership. A \$3M allocation in the state budget in each of the next two years would put us in a position to raise \$10M to support local public education over that two-year period, with a specific focus on three priorities:

- First, increasing the number of corps members in the state by ramping up recruitment efforts at local colleges and university and offsetting the cost of training and support;
- Second, extending and improving the extensive coaching and development support that has allowed our first three cohorts of corps members to be so successful;
- And third, to expand our alumni support such that we retain alumni to continue working in local schools and also attract TFA alumni from other states to come to Ohio to work teachers, principals, instructional coaches and other essential personnel.

We're committed to continuing to be part of a broad, inspiring community working to open the doors of opportunity for all Ohio students and charting a brighter future for our state. Thank you for your consideration and I'd welcome any questions.