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# Policy and Advocacy Leadership

**TEACHFORAMERICA**

## A Career and Leadership Center Newsletter

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### February 2008

Dear Corps Members and Alumni,

I would like to thank the increasing number of alumni contributing content to this newsletter. This month's content contributors include Drew Furedi, Sandy Escobedo, Sophia Pappas, Katie Shogan, and Lin Yang. I hope this is a trend that will continue among alumni in the coming months.

Next, in response to a recurring theme amongst policy and advocacy workers, we are starting a new feature – an organizational profile – which will help all of us make sense of the diverse kinds of organizations that engage in policy and/or advocacy work. The [Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy](#) is this month's featured organization.

Finally, given the increasing numbers of Teach For America corps members placed into early childhood settings, and with so much attention being paid to Early Childhood Education (ECE) policy as a lever for K-12 education reform in this election cycle, you'll notice we have a number of ECE opportunities and resources throughout the newsletter.

As always, please remember to share policy or advocacy-related alumni news, volunteer to be profiled, contribute ideas for content, or weigh in about the policy debates featured in this issue by directing correspondence to [sanjiv.rao@teachforamerica.org](mailto:sanjiv.rao@teachforamerica.org) or by creating a profile on [Leadership for Educational Equity \(LEE\)](#), Teach For America's sister organization designed to promote political leadership and civic engagement.

All the best,  
**Sanjiv Rao (Bay Area '94)**  
Director, Policy and Advocacy Leadership Initiative  
**Teach For America**

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## Newsworthy

### Alumni News

#### **Education Secretary Spellings hosts Teach For America reform roundtable**

Education Secretary Margaret Spellings hosted a roundtable with Teach for America alumni and corps members including **Aisha Crumbine (Houston '99)**, **Anthony Jewett (N.Y.C. '03)**, **Mark DiBella (Houston '99)**, and **Aaron Brenner (RGV '95)** to discuss the NCLB Act, up for reauthorization, and a new fellowship program for teachers that is modeled after the prestigious White House Fellows program. The U.S. Department of Education will pick five teachers to work in the Washington, D.C., office for a year and 20 others to act as consultants while continuing to teach in their own classrooms. Visit the Teaching Ambassador Fellowship program's [website](#) to learn more.

*CLC is hosting a webinar about the Teaching Ambassador Fellowship program on March 13th. [Learn more about this webinar here»](#)*

#### **Alumni provide leadership in Los Angeles Unified School District's new Innovation Division**

The Los Angeles Unified School District has launched the Innovation Division (iDivision) to move decision-making authority and responsibility to the school site level for groups of schools (clusters) that vote – through a majority vote of teachers and parents – to work in this new model. Clusters will work with external network partners (operating as educational management organizations under district auspices) under agreement with LAUSD. Starting in July 2008, stakeholders at the school level will work their network partners to develop new site-based governance structures, and act on the autonomy to make decisions about instructional choices, professional development, staffing, and budget allocation.

The union has played a key role in advancing these reforms, and Teach For America alumni at two newly approved iDivision schools have been leading voices in this effort. Each working with different network partners, teacher leaders and United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) chapter chairpersons, **Alex Caputo-Pearl (Los Angeles '90)** at Crenshaw High School and **Kirti Baranwal (Los Angeles '99)** at Gompers Middle School advocated for the process that led to the successful vote to join the iDivision. In addition, alumnus **Drew Furedi (Baltimore '93)** heads one of the three external network partners as the Executive Director of the LMU Family of Schools, and has led the dialogue with the seven schools in the Westchester High School cluster, three of which have already voted to adopt the iDivision decision-making and reporting structure. Many congratulations for this big win, Alex, Kirti, and Drew!

*Keep your eyes open on [Leadership for Educational Equity \(LEE\)](#) for more information on iDivision and the alumni who helped make it happen.*

#### **Four Teach For America Alumni Selected as Policy Fellows at the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy**

Four Teach For America alumni – **Michelle LaMarca (Baltimore '05)**, **Kelly Langan (Chicago '02)**, **Maggie Slye (Los Angeles '99)**, and **Doannie Tran (Bay Area '03)** – are among the 16 teachers selected as Policy Fellows at the [Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy](#). The program aims to offer current teachers opportunities to engage in policy discourse and advocacy regarding the retention of high quality

teachers into a second stage of their careers. This first cohort of Policy Fellows will work with the Rennie Center over the next two years to learn about policy and participate in the policy process by writing position papers and leading public events on the future of the teaching profession. Congratulations and good luck Michelle, Kelly, Maggie, and Doannie! [Read the Rennie Center's full organizational profile here»](#)

### **Lin Yang (Delta '05) Submits his Take on Last Month's Policy Debate on NCLB**

Lin taught high school mathematics for two years in West Helena, Arkansas, and is currently an MPP candidate at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, concentrating in U.S. education policy. In response to last month's call for perspectives on the reauthorization of NCLB, Lin has sent in an op-ed piece he wrote recently.

Yang argues that, "*As the debate for reauthorizing No Child Left Behind (NCLB) begins this election season, many educators are asking whether schools in our low-income communities can possibly reach the same levels of achievement as their wealthier counterparts.*"

Thanks for voicing your opinion, Lin! [Read his full op-ed here»](#)

**Got news?** If you have policy and/or advocacy related alumni news to share, please send to [sanjiv.rao@teachforamerica.org](mailto:sanjiv.rao@teachforamerica.org)

## **General News**

### **The Assessment Debate in Early Childhood Education**

The recent Head Start reauthorization bill illuminates the critical debate around accountability and assessment that is all too familiar in the K-12 world as well. **Sophia Pappas (Newark '03)**, Director of Growth and Development for the Early Childhood Education Initiative at Teach For America, tells us that the 2007 Head Start reauthorization eliminated the National Reporting System (NRS), an assessment system for all four-year-olds in Head Start focusing on math, literacy, and language skills introduced by the Bush administration in 2003. Pappas says:

*"The [NRS] system was really controversial in the ECE community because of concerns that the scope of the skills assessed was too narrow, the system would penalize programs already struggling financially if students didn't perform, and that the narrow focus on early literacy and math skills would lead to the narrowing of services provided through Head Start. These are similar to concerns around NCLB, and it is interesting to see how the testing, standards, and accountability debates are playing out in the context of federal ECE policy. The rejection of NRS calls into question the value of narrowly defined assessment systems and raises further questions about how best to evaluate ECE programs"*

Find more background on the NRS [here»](#)

**What do you think?** Submit your take on this policy issue by sending a brief comment or reaction to [sanjiv.rao@teachforamerica.org](mailto:sanjiv.rao@teachforamerica.org).  
Selected comments may be posted in next month's newsletter.

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## **Alumni Profile**

### **Sandy Escobedo (New York City '03)**

## Palevsky Fellow, California Community Foundation

Following her two-year commitment as a corps member teaching pre-kindergarten in the South Bronx, Sandy earned a Master of Government Administration degree from the Fels Institute of Government at the University of Pennsylvania, where she also worked as a data analyst with the SchoolStat project in Philadelphia. As the first Palevsky Fellow, Sandy is currently working on the Los Angeles Preschool Advocacy Initiative to build support for preschool programs among elected officials, community leaders, and the policy community.

### Here are a few excerpts from her profile:

*"As a former pre-kindergarten teacher, I am uniquely positioned to understand the needs of children in this critical developmental stage in their lives and how the opportunities they have access to can shape their educational success in the future."*

*"I work to ensure that we figure out how to best engage parents in their children's education and as advocates. By doing this, our initiative will reflect their priorities when it comes to accessing preschool for their children and not solely the work of policy wonks."*

Read her full profile [here»](#)

**Be Profiled!** Are you working in the policy and/or advocacy fields? Would you like to share your experience with alumni working or interested in either field?  
Contact [clc@teachforamerica.org](mailto:clc@teachforamerica.org) so that your profile can be featured in a future newsletter.

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## Organizational Profile

### The Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy (Cambridge, MA)

The **Rennie Center's** mission is to develop a public agenda that informs and promotes significant improvement of public education in Massachusetts. The organization advances effective education policies through independent research, civic engagement, and effective action. A number of Teach For America alumni are affiliated with the organization as Policy Fellows. In addition, alumna **Katie Shogan (Bay Area '03)** works as an intern at the Rennie Center while pursuing a graduate degree at Harvard University. Katie and Rennie Center Research Director Celine Coggins have put together the Policy and Advocacy Leadership Newsletter's first organizational profile.

### Here are some excerpts:

*"Our impact can be felt in districts, at the state level, and even in the national conversation on school improvement. At the state level, our research and advocacy routinely informs how the state establishes education priorities, develops legislative language and makes budget decisions. Finally, our research has led to a considerable amount of consulting and public speaking outside the state, filtering lessons learned in Massachusetts to a national audience."*

*"Policy decisions should also be guided by experience and knowledge about the realities of urban schools and the consequences of policy on students. [Teach For America] alumni can bring this perspective into policy discourse through policy work and/or advocacy. Finally, while small pockets of positive change occur across the country, systematic change is also necessary to ensure that all students have access to excellent*

*schooling opportunities."*

**Read the full organizational profile [here»](#)**

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## Upcoming Events

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## Featured Opportunities

### **Launching in March! New Social Entrepreneurship Newsletter**

CLC is excited to be launching a Social Entrepreneurship Newsletter, which will explore the evolving practice of social entrepreneurship, introduce you to existing and aspiring social entrepreneurs among you and highlight resources for social entrepreneurs. If you have, or are currently, launching a new social venture, want to know how social entrepreneurship ties into policy-making or simply seeking to connect to like-minded peers, then this newsletter is for you! [Sign up here](#) to begin receiving our first issue, due out in March!

## **Graduate School Opportunities**

### **University of Houston, Graduate College of Social Work: Political Social Work and Leadership, Administration, and Advocacy**

Application deadline: March 31, 2008

In addition to their clinical program, the [University of Houston's Graduate College of Social Work](#) offers a policy-focused track in Leadership, Administration, and Advocacy, and a certificate in Political Social Work. These focus areas prepare graduates for leadership in urban settings, working as advocates or policy leaders in roles ranging from community development, public agency work, or for elected officials. The program features an emphasis on policy, administrative practice, leadership, and community development strategies. Learn more about the program by visiting their [website](#).

### **University of Michigan School of Social Work**

Application deadline: March 1st, 2008

The University of Michigan's program focuses on social change through research, policy, and practice with an eye toward providing leadership across sectors and roles. Students in this master of social work program select a concentration in an area of method and practice. Methods choices include community organization, interpersonal practice, management, or social policy and evaluation. Practice areas include aging, children and youth, community and social systems, health, or mental health. Visit their [website](#) to learn more about the program.

## **Internship/Fellowship Opportunities**

### **The Teach For America – Metro IAF Summer Fellowship Program (Various locations)**

Teach For America and the [Metro Industrial Areas Foundation \(Metro IAF\)](#) continue to field interest in this new partnership. IAF Lead Organizer and Teach For America alumnus **Mark Fraley (S. Louisiana '92)** will field questions from alumni interested in participating in the Summer Fellowship Program which will place, train, and mentor a number of Teach For America alumni as community and political organizing Fellows. Fellows will develop experience in organizing through a paid, professional, full-time employment for a minimum of eight (8) weeks in Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, New York City, or Washington, DC during the summer of 2008.

*Selection packets are in development, and will be available in late-February, with application deadlines in early April.*

### **Paid Lobbying Research Internship at the Center for Responsive Politics**

From disclosure reports to insider views of the legislative process, [Lobbying Research Interns](#) at The [Center](#)

for [Responsive Politics](#) will work closely with the Lobbying Researcher and other staff to identify and investigate specific legislation lobbied on by the largest, most influential organizations in Washington. Read more about duties, qualifications, and the application process [here»](#)

### **Summer Education Policy Internships at the Progressive Policy Institute**

Are you ready to define and promote a new progressive politics for America in the 21st century? Be a summer education policy intern at the [Progressive Policy Institute](#) and learn vital policy making and analysis skills; you will not be relegated to paperwork and data entry! Details about this unique opportunity and instructions for how to apply can be found [here»](#)

### **Paid Internship, New America Foundation's Asset Building Program in California**

Gain invaluable policy making experience and help create new policy solutions to California's most pressing problems. In 2004, the [New America Foundation](#) launched the [New America's Asset Building Program](#) to address California's numerous policy problems as well as nurture a new generation of public policy writers and thinkers in the state. Learn more about the internship and how to apply [here»](#)

## **Job Opportunities**

### **Policy Associate, Education Sector (Washington, DC)**

The [Education Sector](#), an independent education think tank, is looking for a qualified candidate to help develop and implement research and policy strategy. Topic areas include school choice, K-12 accountability, undergraduate education, and teacher quality. Learn more about the Policy Associate position and how to apply [here»](#)

### **Senior Community Organizer/Sustainable Communities, Community Voices Heard (New York City)**

[Community Voices Heard \(CVH\)](#) is an organization led by alumna **Sondra Youdelman (Los Angeles '94)** that works with community members to influence policy change around issues that impact the lives of low-income families. CVH is looking for an experienced organizer to build and direct the organization's work around community and economic development in Harlem. Learn more about this opportunity [here»](#)

### **Special Assistant to the Superintendent, Denver Public Schools/Janus Educator Alliance (Denver)**

The [Denver Public Schools/Janus Educator Alliance](#) aims to support and develop aspiring educators and ensure the academic success of 74,000 Denver public school students. The Special Assistant will report directly to the Superintendent and will be an integral member of the district's senior leadership team as well the primary point person between DPS and all outside partners involved with this initiative. Learn more about the initiative and the Special Assistant position [here»](#)

### **Massachusetts State Director, Stand for Children (Boston)**

[Stand for Children](#) is a grassroots lobbying organization comprised of parents, community members, and professional organizers that works to improve policies and programs that affect children, including school reform and early childhood education. The Massachusetts State Director will focus on issues of organizational scale, impact, and financial stability, and will lead a team of community-based field organizers and statewide staff. Duties include partnering with the Governor's office, engaging in legislative advocacy, establishing a long-term policy vision, ensuring effective field organizing, fundraising, and managing statewide campaigns. Read more about the organization's policy wins, position details, and application instructions [here»](#)

Several other positions are currently open for individuals ready to support existing Stand for Children Chapters and to build volunteer bases in critical legislative districts. Read about other available positions at Stand for Children in Massachusetts, Oregon, or Washington [here»](#)

### **Senior Government Affairs Advisor, Family Economic Security Program**

### **National Women's Law Center (Washington, D.C.)**

This position is responsible for developing and implementing policy and legislative strategies to advance the goals of the Center's Family Economic Security program. The work encompasses issues important to the economic security of low-income women and their families, including tax and budget, early care and education, retirement security, and income support. Duties include monitoring and influencing federal legislative and regulatory developments; conducting research; preparing varied written materials; participation in and leading of coalitions; and providing an effective presence on Capitol Hill. Find more details [here»](#)

### **Regional Communications Director, Teach For America (Flexible)**

Position Teach For America for success in our regions. The regional communications director will work with our regions' executive directors, ensuring that communications tactics are aligned with the regions' unique strategic priorities. The regional communications director will also serve as the key liaison between Teach For America and all media outlets within assigned regions. Learn more about this opportunity and how to apply [here»](#)

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## Spotlight

## Job Sampler

Jobs listed below represent a sampling of the opportunities that can be found on the Career and Leadership Center's [Job and Opportunity Board \(JOB\)](#) . Please note that you will be prompted to log on to JOB once you click on your first link selection.

### Great Opportunities in Policy and Advocacy

- [Public Policy & Communications Assistant](#), Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (Washington, DC)
- [Early Childhood and Education Policy Analyst](#), Colorado Children's Campaign (Denver)
- [Researcher](#), Garden State Alliance for a New Economy (GANE) (Newark, NJ)
- [Project Director, Policy & Research](#), The New Teacher Project (San Francisco)
- [Policy Director](#), Center for U.S. Global Engagement (Washington, DC)
- [Development Manager](#), Pacific Council on International Policy (Los Angeles)
- [Policy Director](#), The Early Care and Education Consortium (Washington, DC)
- [Policy & Research Analyst](#), The New Teacher Project (Washington, DC)
- [City Hall Fellow](#) (Houston)
- [Director of Policy and Programs](#), Latinos United (Chicago)

### Opportunities to Work at Teach For America

- [Executive Vice President](#), Growth Strategy and Development Team (Flexible)
- [Chief of Staff](#), Office of the Chief Executive (New York City)
- [Executive Director](#), Regional (Multiple Locations)

Recruitment director, program director and director of design deadlines are in full swing with an upcoming deadline on **Sunday, February 17**. Find more information [here](#)»

Learn more about a suite of full-time staff opportunities across the country through a virtual information session: Sunday, March 2, 4:00-5:00 pm EST. Register [here](#)»

Interested in being on the forefront of education reform? Join us in an online information session on Wednesday, February 20 from 7:30-8:30 pm EST as we discuss staff opportunities to impact the direction of **Teach For America Greater New Orleans**. Register [here](#)»

