

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

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For Immediate Release

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces: \$2.6 Million Grant Received for Teacher Recruitment *Funds Will Support Minorities Seeking to Become Teachers*

Visalia – The Tulare County Office of Education is pleased to announce that its Teacher Recruitment Center has received a three-year, \$2.6 million grant to address the recruitment of minority teachers in the high-need areas of special education and most single-subject areas – specifically math, science and English. The Teacher Recruitment Center's mission is to provide assistance to member school districts and teacher-preparation agencies in seeking, screening, referring and supporting potential new teachers. Though the center is housed at the Tulare County Office of Education, it serves 40 districts and County Offices of Education in Tulare, Fresno, Kern, Kings and Merced Counties.

The grant, entitled: “A Face Like Mine,” was one of only 20 awarded nationally through the U.S. Department of Education’s Transition to Teaching program. Its purpose is to recruit, train and support minority teachers, closing the gap between the ethnic distribution of teachers and their students in high-need Central Valley districts.

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Page 2

“Many of our rural districts in Tulare County are experiencing critical shortage areas in single-subject math, science and special education teachers,” says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak.

“This grant will not only help fill these vacancies, but also help realize gains in academic performance afforded by staff with specialized subject matter training.”

The combined resources of the grant will specifically target the recruitment and professional development of underrepresented minority groups. This includes the use of technology in the classroom and subject-matter preparation in the content areas like math and science. The grant will also be used to recruit and train two cohorts of 35 teachers into an alternative certification programs and support their professional development over their first four years of teaching. Further, it will support a pipeline that will nurture the development of teachers beginning in their junior and senior years of high school and will encourage paraprofessionals who complete their associate’s degree and commit to becoming a teacher.

“The need for our underrepresented youth to have a teacher who is also a role model is an important one,” says Recruitment Director Donna Glassman-Sommer. “Students benefit from teachers who demonstrate that the path to higher education offers opportunities to honor and enrich their own heritage.” For more information about the Teacher Recruitment Center, contact Donna Glassman-Sommer at 730-2549.

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