

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: \$2.87 Million Contract Received for Teacher Recruitment *Recruitment Center Will Aid Districts Locally and in Other Areas of the State Find Highly-Qualified Teachers*

Visalia – The Tulare County Office of Education is pleased to announce that its Teacher Recruitment Center has received a 17-month, \$2.87 million state-wide contract from the Sacramento County Office of Education to address the recruitment of teachers in the high-need areas of Kindergarten through twelfth-grade special education and seven through twelfth-grade math and science instruction.

The Teacher Recruitment Center will focus its efforts on three geographical regions of California identified with critical teacher shortages in these subject areas. The regions are: the Heartland – which encompasses the San Joaquin and Salinas Valleys; Los Angeles County; and the Inland Empire – which encompasses San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. Teachers are being sought primarily for schools that perform in the lowest three deciles of California's statewide Academic Performance Index (API) rankings. Special attention will be given to recruiting minority teachers, who are often underrepresented in these schools.

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The California State University (CSU) is a primary partner in the project, which has teacher recruitment objectives that conform closely to the priorities of the state system. As part of its long-term compact with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, the CSU system has committed to doubling its production of math and science teachers. Students earning credentials in these fields and in special education, throughout the CSU system, will have the opportunity to teach in high-need schools in any of the three targeted regions of the state.

“This project expands our excellent partnership with the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association,” says CSU Chancellor Charles B. Reed. “This collaboration will help meet the critical shortage for highly-qualified teachers in math, science and special education in geographic areas that are most in need.”

“Dr. Reed has consistently made teacher preparation a priority,” says Tulare County Office of Education Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Jeanne Nava. “Recently, he provided \$75,000 in teacher recruitment project support to the campuses to use in encouraging math and science students to enter the teaching profession. We are delighted that the CSU campuses will share in our mission to place 2,000 highly-qualified teachers under this contract. They will be an enormous help in identifying seniors who may be interested in entering the field as special education, math or science teachers, particularly minority candidates.” More than 53 percent of CSU students are minorities, which is more than twice the national average for four-year public universities. In addition to the CSU system, the Teacher Recruitment Center

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will work with public and private colleges and universities within the three geographic areas to connect teachers prepared at their institutions with school districts.

The Teacher Recruitment Center will also work with school districts to create a database of their staffing needs and any incentives they can offer candidates. Throughout the three geographic areas, Teacher Recruitment Center staff will also hold community information events for adults looking for a new career in education, as well as attend teacher recruitment fairs. The program will also send recruiters to out-of-state teacher fairs. “Our goal is to institutionalize the process of connecting new teachers with school districts,” says Ms. Nava. “We need to bridge the gap between education and employment.” All teachers must be “highly qualified” under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) laws, which means that they are either fully-credentialed, or have obtained subject matter competency and are enrolled in an intern program.

On an ongoing basis, the Tulare County Office of Education Teacher Recruitment Center provides 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.

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“This grant award is evidence of the success our staff has had in the area of teacher recruitment for some of the most high-need schools in California,” says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak.

“Since the time that we led the Central California Regional Teacher Recruitment Center to today, our recruiters have built a reputation for innovative service.”

For more information about the Teacher Recruitment Center, contact Donna Glassman-Sommer at (559) 730-2549.

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