



ASPIRE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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College for Certain Newsletter February 2015

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe it's already February and we are in the last half of the school year. This is the time of year when our systems are in full gear and we start looking ahead.

One of our foci this time of year is identifying new talent for the year ahead. With a March 13 application deadline approaching for its sixth cohort, the [Aspire Teacher Residency](#) (ATR) continues to grow our pool of high-quality teachers. The ATR program has received numerous accolades. This month we are pleased to share a story summarizing findings in a report on our ATR program. Almost 80% of ATR graduates remain teaching in Aspire classrooms today. One of those graduates is an Aspire Alumnae, Bianka Mariscal. Her

LA Times

About Us

Aspire Public Schools operates 38 high-performing public charter schools serving over 14,600 students in under-served communities across California and Memphis, TN.



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Help our students achieve college readiness



story, like those of so many of our students is truly inspiring and we're excited that she returned to Aspire to train as one of our teachers. Read more about Bianka below. She will share more of her experience as a featured speaker at our [Annual College for Certain Dinner](#) on May 20th.

Part of our mission is to develop effective educators, including our school principals, who are the key drivers of *College for Certain* success across our 38 schools. We are committed to ensuring their internal and external professional development remains current, collaborative and effective. Recently, many of our principals attended the Courageous Principals program, sponsored by Deloitte University and founded by one of Aspire's newest board members, Jim Quigley. Read more about how the principles applied in the business world can translate effectively to schools.

I hope you enjoy learning about how we are working to ensure all students are prepared to earn a college degree. To learn more visit www.aspirepublicschools.org. Thank you for your continued support.

Together we can!

James Willcox
Chief Executive Officer

Aspire Teacher Residency Cited in Recent Report

Report Offers 'Lessons Learned' From Teacher-Residency Programs

By Stephen Sawchuk, Reprinted from Education Week | November 18, 2014

Teacher 'residency' programs are among the most-discussed models for preparing new teachers to enter the classroom ready for its daily challenges. Now a recent report outlines what makes certain residency programs stand out, offering specific lessons both for other residency programs and the teacher-preparation field as a whole.

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Meet Bianka Mariscal: Aspire Alumna Returns as a Teacher

Bianka Mariscal, a former student at Aspire East Palo Alto Charter School (EPACS), dreamed of giving back to her community through teaching. After graduating from Mills College, she applied for Aspire's Teacher Residency (ATR) program to make that dream a reality. She was accepted, and successfully completed the program. Now she teaches first grade at the same Aspire school she attended as a child.



Of all the facets of her Aspire education, Bianka most remembers the educators that shaped her years as a student. *"The teachers I had at EPACS were nurturing, loving and extremely supportive even throughout my years in high school and college. They always believed in my abilities and what I could do. With their support, mountains became conquerable, walls became small hurdles and obstacles that were in the way of my dream became easier to overcome."* Her teachers, and their support, ultimately led her to a career in teaching. *"I wanted to be the same for kids coming from East Palo Alto. I wanted to show these kids that despite the odds against them, they too can succeed and that, no matter what, I am here to support them and make that happen."*

Bianka will be a featured speaker at this year's Aspire College for Certain Dinner, on May 20th in San Francisco. To learn more, [click here](#).

Living our Mission: Aspire's Courageous Principals

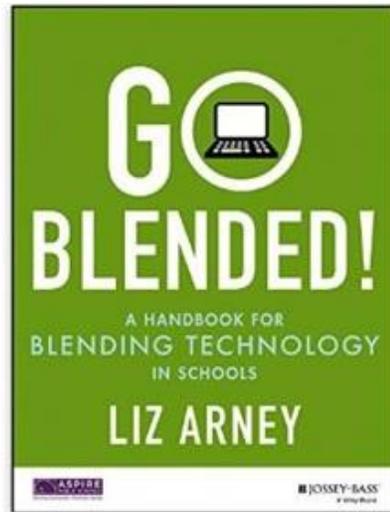
Aspire's principals are at the heart and soul of our ability to ensure a quality education to our students. In addition to being the instructional leaders at their school, each principal is the manager of their school community. Ensuring our principals receive the support and professional development to be highly effective school leaders is a priority. Recently, 22 Aspire principals attended the three-day Courageous Principals program hosted by Deloitte US in Dallas.



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In Case You Missed It - Go Blended! Now Available

Aspire's First Sharing Successful Practices Publication



College for Certain Dinner



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College for Certain

Founded in 1998, Aspire Public Schools is a national K-12 school system focused on improving public education by preparing underserved students for college, training highly effective teachers and sharing innovative best practices. Aspire serves more than 14,600 students in 38 open-enrollment public schools in underserved communities across California and Memphis, Tenn.

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