

Good Evening. My name is Susan Andrews-Salmond. I teach 9th grade social studies and US history at Highline High School and the HEA secretary.

When I decided to seek a career in teaching, I returned to college to earn my teaching certificate through St. Martin's University in Lacey, WA. I already had 8 years of experience working with students and teachers in the Kent School District, years of working in scouting, and children of my own.

While teaching at HHS, I earned my master's degree in Language, Literacy and Culture from the University of Washington. Within a few years, I was working on my National Board certificate and became a National Board Certified teacher this Fall. In between, I have taken numerous seminars from such respected organizations as the Foundation for Teaching Economics, the East Asian Resource Center, and the Gilder Lehrman Institute for Teaching History.

My experience is not atypical. Professional educators hone their craft over years of teaching and learning.

Teaching is not just placing a warm body with a group of students — even a bright, excited warm body recruited from a prestigious college by Teach for America.

The fundamental premise of Teach for America is wrong. It assumes that anyone can teach... and with a minimum of training and experience. TFA ignores the complexity of community; it ignores the hard work of teacher collaboration over years; it ignores the shifting demands of meeting student needs over a period of 7 years in elementary school or 4 years in high school – the lifetime of a student.

The Seattle area attracts many talented, trained and experienced teachers. Local colleges and universities graduate educated and highly-trained teachers. Our students deserve to be taught by these Professionals.

Our challenging, diverse, bright, wonderful students in Highline District deserve better than to be taught by short-timers who receive a few months of education training and have an eye on a career in a better-paid, better-respected field when the 2-year teaching stint ends and the economy recovers.

As Board members who represent the interests, needs and desires of our diverse community and its students, please insist the Highline School District continue to hire real teaching professionals for our schools. Reject plans to bring Teach for America UN-professionals into our classrooms.