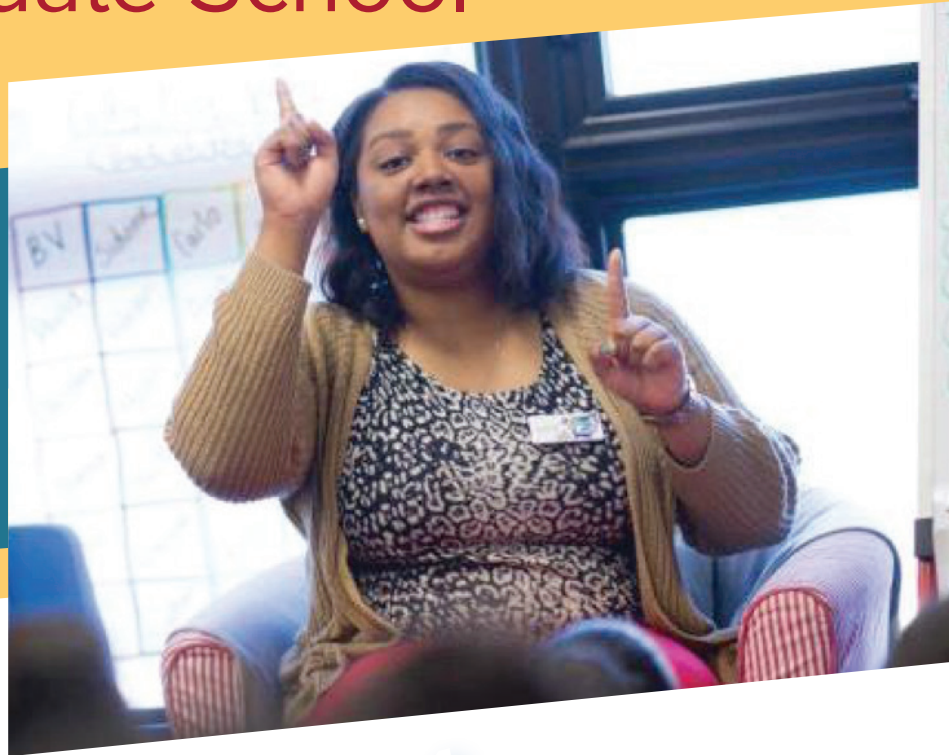


# Sposato Graduate School of Education

#5 in a series of ERN issue briefs on innovative approaches to teacher preparation

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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Sposato Graduate School of Education (SGSE) is a division of Match Education, a non-profit organization that opened its first charter school in 2000 with the aim of providing an innovative, high-quality education to urban K-12 students. Match now operates three charter schools in Boston serving approximately 1,250 children. *Newsweek* and *U.S. News & World Report* have ranked Match High School as one of the best in the nation. SGSE is a two year program that leads to a Master in Effective Teaching degree and emphasizes clinical practice, rigorous coursework, and a commitment to addressing racial inequities in educational opportunity and outcomes.

*“A dreamy gaze washes over Lindsey Holmes’ face when she talks about going back to Detroit one day to open a performing arts school for boys. In a prelude to her dream, the recent Spelman College graduate chose first to study to become a teacher at the Match Teacher Residency.*

*“That means that four days a week, Holmes, 21, gets dressed in a dorm-style room, heads down a flight of stairs, opens a door and emerges in the buzzing halls of Match High School.”<sup>1</sup>*

## SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Match began training and licensing teachers in 2008 through the Match Teacher Residency (MTR) and founded SGSE in 2010 to allow participants to complete a Master in Effective Teaching (MET). The SGSE program is broken into four phases that include a combination of intensive coursework, interactive coaching, student teaching, and, finally, full-time teaching.

**Phase 1.** Participants complete graduate courses taught by SGSE faculty. Topics include classroom management, building relationships with students and families, instructional strategies and techniques, subject-specific methods and content, and use of data to gauge student progress and inform pedagogy.

**Phase 2.** Coaches observe participants engaging in simulated classroom teaching, leading 40 short lessons in groups with five other participants. Both peer participants and coaches provide feedback after each simulated lesson. At the end of this phase,

participants must successfully complete a high-stakes performance assessment called the “Gateway” through which trainees are assessed on classroom management and instructional skills, such as their ability to respond to student behavior, assess students’ thinking, and deliver appropriate feedback.

**Phase 3.** Participants spend the late winter and spring of the first year as student teachers. Coaches from SGSE observe participants and provide feedback. In March, trainees apply for jobs for the following school year, and in June complete additional graduate coursework and focus on long-term and unit planning before serving for two months as summer school student teachers. Participants earn their initial teaching license after successfully completing the first year of the program and passing all required Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure.

### Sposato Graduate School of Education / Master in Effective Teaching

	Year 1	Year 2
Coursework	80%	20%
Clinical Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 hours per week in partner residency*</li> <li>• Student teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-time teacher</li> </ul>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gateways</li> <li>• MTEL (state tests)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal evaluation</li> <li>• Student survey data</li> <li>• Student achievement data</li> <li>• Data from external evaluators</li> </ul>
Credential / Degree Awarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher license</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master in Effective Teaching (MET)</li> </ul>

\* Partner residencies: Match Teacher Residency, Match Associate Teacher Program, UP Teaching Fellowship, Excel Teaching Fellowship, Community Day Teaching Fellowship

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*“Laura is light years beyond a traditional first-year teacher. In hiring a graduate of the Match program we got more than a great teacher, we hired a practitioner who never stops learning and growing her own practice.”*

— JASON SINGER, PRINCIPAL, KIPP KING, SAN LORENZO, CA

**Phase 4.** In the fourth and final phase, participants transition to full-time teaching. Participants also complete their final graduate coursework through distance learning, focusing on use of data to improve teaching practices. Those in the Boston area also receive continued coaching from SGSE staff for the first few months of the school year.

Since graduating its first MET cohort in 2013, SGSE has prepared 190 teachers, in addition to the 69 teachers trained through the Match Teacher Residency program from 2008-2011 prior to the founding of SGSE.

SGSE is authorized by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education to award master’s degrees and is also pursuing accreditation through the Commission of Career Schools and Colleges to allow participants to qualify for federal financial aid and to allow SGSE to train teachers in other states. Authorization to award teacher licenses is granted by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education through the MTR program, which allows the program to certify graduates of both Match and partner organizations’ residency programs.

## MATCH TEACHER RESIDENCY

Match Teacher Residency (MTR) participants gain teaching experience through Match Corps, tutoring students one-on-one and in small groups 40 hours per week. Match Corps pays participants a stipend and offers on-site housing, a feature that allows corps members to develop mentoring skills and provides students with supports they would not get otherwise. In the spring, residents begin student teaching.



*Above: Panelists present to MTR residents in a required course entitled “Culture, Community, and Context” designed to help trainees understand inequity in education and interrogate their own biases, social identity, and class privilege.*

MTR training sessions are intense. Not unlike medical residencies, the approach stresses long hours as a way to prepare for the rigorous demands of teaching. Residents receive highly directed coaching from master educators and repetitive practice of basic teaching and classroom management techniques.

Admission to MTR is highly selective. While there is no minimum requirement, residents have an average 3.5 GPA. Additional criteria include strong communication skills, self-confidence, experience in urban communities, and command of intended teaching subject. A performance component entails observing applicants tutoring students and executing a lesson plan. Less than 10% of applicants are accepted, approximately one-third of which identify as people of color.

## COST

The total cost for the two-year SGSE MET program is \$24,000. Costs are covered through participant tuition (\$12,000), placement fees to hiring schools (\$8,000), and philanthropic funding. Participants are not eligible for federal financial aid because the program does not yet have national accreditation.

Participants earn a stipend of \$17,000 to \$34,000 plus health benefits, depending on the residency program, during the first year and a teacher's salary during the second year. Participants in the Match Teacher Residency also qualify as AmeriCorps participants and are eligible for education awards.

## OUTCOMES

All residents who successfully complete the first year of the SGSE program are hired for full-time teaching positions for their second year. Approximately 67% of each cohort successfully completes the two-year program. Almost half of SGSE program completers earn certification in elementary education, and the other half earn subject-specific certification in history, English, math, or science.

<b>Location</b>	Boston, MA
<b>Program Length</b>	2 years
<b>Average GPA of Trainees</b>	3.5
<b>Credential Awarded</b>	Initial teaching license Master's degree
<b>Cost to Participants</b>	\$12,000
<b>Annual Enrollment</b>	75
<b>Total Program Graduates</b>	259
<b>Completion Rate</b>	67%



The most recent cohort outperformed a control group of novice teachers by 10 percentage points in blind classroom observations by independent experts and outperformed the control group by 20 percentage points in scores assigned by their supervising principals, student surveys, and student growth data on state assessments. Principals who hire Sposato graduates on average rate first-year, Sposato alumni as a 70.4 out of 100, looking at instructional performance, classroom management, and professionalism, compared to 57.6 for non-Sposato first-year teachers.



*Left: Match High School Graduate Shaniqua Choice with student. In her first teaching job after earning her B.A., Shaniqua (Match High School Class of 2009) says she tried the approach lots of first-year teachers gravitate to: “Being cool. It didn’t work—the kids didn’t respect me,” Through her training at SGSE, Shaniqua says she has now “made a conscious effort to marry high expectations and love: ‘I love you, so I want you to do well.’”*

## SOURCES

Sposato Graduate School of Education  
(<http://www.sposatogse.org>)

1. “States of education: Massachusetts charter schools are few but mighty,” Chastity Pratt Dawsey, *Bridge Magazine*, re-published at MLive, October 9th, 2014.