

LAUREN STUART

National Board Certified Teacher in ELA and Early Adolescence | Hope Street Group National Teacher Fellow

Current Position: 8th grade English teacher at El Rodeo School (5% free and reduced lunch), Beverly Hills School District

Previous Position: 8th grade English and 8th grade social studies teacher, at John A. Sutter Middle School (Title 1 school, 78% free and reduced lunch), Los Angeles Unified School District



Number of years in the teaching profession: 8

Number of layoffs: 3



Lauren Stuart moved into teaching as a second career. Upon completing her training, she got a job at the John A. Sutter Middle School, working with the exact student population she wanted to affect. “I loved working with diverse learners and high need urban students.” Then she got her first pink slip. Luckily, the school’s principal was able to bring Lauren back to the school.



Lauren got her second pink slip during her second year at Sutter. This time, coming back to the school proved more challenging. “Even though I’m an English teacher, the principal told me I needed to get a social studies credential in order to stay at Sutter. I moved quickly to secure a new credential.”



Lauren got her third pink slip in year three. “I was always looking for ways to innovate in my classroom. The kids in the classroom next door had to sit quietly for 50 minutes completing a workbook. That teacher was able to stay –due to seniority– while I was let go.”

“After a while, it almost becomes a joke. You know every year you will receive a pink slip. The reality is, you don’t know if you will be able to pay the rent. This is emotionally draining for the entire family.”

In year three, Lauren’s principal wasn’t able to bring her back to Sutter. Lauren moved districts and, for the past four years, has taught at the El Rodeo School in Beverly Hills. “I love my current school, but I wanted to stay in a high needs school. I truly believe that the students lost out.”

“My story is a success story. Of course, not all stories end like this. I wasn’t the only who was laid off; many colleagues and former colleagues didn’t go back to teaching.”

Now, Lauren is bringing her story to policymakers to make sure that teachers are part of the conversation on LIFO. “I want to see teaching qualifications and effectiveness as a teacher become one of the reasons why you keep your job – not simply the date when you signed your contract.”