

**“One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.”**

*--Vision of Teach For America*

This year marks 26 years of partnership between Teach For America and the state of North Carolina. As a partner, Teach For America has committed to maximizing our contribution to the state by recruiting, training, and supporting excellent, diverse teachers and growing our number of alumni living and working in North Carolina. We are also committed to strengthening the North Carolina Teacher Corps.

In the second quarter, Teach For America celebrated Veterans Day. On Veteran’s Day, we show our gratitude as a nation to the brave men and women who sacrifice their lives for our country. In addition to expressing our appreciation for the unwavering commitment of our service men and women, it is also imperative that we help empower them as they reintegrate into their communities. We must recognize the assets our veterans are to our nation after their military service: they are individuals with strength, tenacity, and commitment, bringing unique and diverse skill sets to continue their impact in communities across the country. Teach For America aims to become a part of the broader effort to help veterans and military families find their next opportunity to launch a new career in the service of this great nation.

At Teach For America, we are proud that many veterans and military family members have chosen to teach both across our country and in our state of North Carolina. The reflections below are from Roel Escamilla and Joe Jenkins, two Teach For America alumni who have channeled their desire to serve and to change their communities into serving our country’s students:

*Often I am thanked for my service.*

*As a veteran, I never know what to say. “You’re welcome” sounds too much like self-adulation. “It was my pleasure” sounds too much like self-deprecation. Generally, I don’t say anything at all.*

*Usually people connect being a veteran with being a teacher in my school among my students. “That combat experience must come in handy,” they’ll quip. I never laugh. One, because too often veterans are believed to be broken, bruised, damaged. Two, because our students, too, are seen that way; their families are seen that way; their communities are seen that way. Generally, at those times, I don’t say anything either.*

*Veterans bring with them years of leadership and sacrifice. We are committed to our service to country. I have never met a veteran who expected to be rewarded for their service, nor asked for thanks. I have never met a student who thought combat experience was a prerequisite for living in their community.*

*We are prepared to lead. We are prepared to serve. We have made service and sacrifice part of our very being. And we will allow our students and our results to speak for themselves.* Roel Escamilla, Jr. (Jacksonville ’14)

*Today, America seems increasingly divided along lines of race, gender, religion, and politics. We are faced with societal woes that challenge us as a nation. In these trying times ahead, our greatest hope sits in classrooms across America: our students. Now more than ever, we need veterans in there with them.*

*The young men and women who have made the safeguarding of our nation’s principles their own civic responsibility have set aside the few things that divide us for the countless things that unite us as Americans. Our veterans are not bruised and battered heroes to be thanked; rather, they are a wellspring of energy, momentum, and transformational change—a group that knows that their commitment to serving their communities and their country does not stop, even after taking off the uniform. As a Marine veteran and Teach for America alum, I have seen firsthand the impact that veterans can have on education. Across the country, veterans choose to continue their service by making a difference in the classroom.*

# TEACHFORAMERICA

North Carolina · Second Quarter and Annual Legislative Report

December 2016

*This Veterans' Day, let us not only pause to thank vets for their service. Let's encourage them to continue that service where this nation needs it most: working directly with the young change agents in our schools. We can't think of a better way to work toward a better tomorrow. Joe Jenkins (Dallas-Fort Worth '12)*

There are nine veterans who are Teach For America corps members teaching in their first or second year across North Carolina (see appendix B for a spotlight on five of them). We are honored to see more and more veterans choosing to continue to serve our nation through teaching. With the state's partnership, we are able continue to train and support great teachers across the state each year. We are pleased to update you on our progress in the second quarter as well as share our annual metrics (see appendix A).

## Statewide Impact

Teach For America, North Carolina alumni come from all over the United States. Some remain in teaching, others in school leadership, graduate school, medicine, law, or business. Our alumni are a diverse group but are all tied together by their Teach For America experience serving students, families, and communities across the country.

Realizing the potential of our growing alumni base, Teach For America's National Board issued a giving challenge for alumni to invest in the next generation of teachers. During the month of November, every dollar donated by a Teach For America alumni was matched by the National Board, up to one million dollars. Additionally, the board is currently offering a participation challenge with a goal to double the number of alumni giving to Teach For America by May 2017.

Across North Carolina, we have the opportunity to unlock \$150,000. This gift allows us to continue to strengthen our network, while fueling the impact Teach For America corps members and alumni are having across the state and the nation. As a state, we have unlocked \$75,000 and are confident that we will meet the \$150,000 mark by May.

We are proud of the impact that our alumni are having across the nation and in the state of North Carolina. Below is a spotlight on the work of some of our North Carolina alumni.

### ***Spotlight on North Carolina Alumni Leadership:***

- *Mark Johnson, North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction*  
Mark Johnson began his work in education as a Charlotte corps member. After his time in the classroom, he went to law school. *The News & Observer* said, "Johnson was moved by his Teach for America experiences with poor children who were in his classrooms. 'I realized that opportunity is not available to every student in this country, and it needs to be.'"<sup>1</sup>
- *Alyssa Sharpe, National Director, Project Scientist in Charlotte*  
Alyssa Sharpe moved to Charlotte from Florida in 2009 to join the Teach For America corps. She is now the National Director of Project Scientist, a non-profit STEM education program for girls. Project Scientist works to educate, coach, and advocate for girls and women with an aptitude, talent, and passion for STEM. Launched in 2013, Project Scientist partners with top universities and STEM companies to provide girls with successful role models in these fields to show that there are women from diverse backgrounds excelling in STEM careers. In addition to serving girls, the program commits to recruiting girls from low-income families.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bonner, Lynn. "Next NC Superintendent's Teach for America Work Was Foundation for Education Views." *The News & Observer*, 15 Nov. 2016. Web. 21 Dec. 2016. (See Appendix C)

<sup>2</sup> "Featured Local: Alyssa Sharpe." *Charlotte Lately*, n.d. Web. 21 Dec. 2016. (See Appendix D)

# TEACHFORAMERICA

## North Carolina · Second Quarter and Annual Legislative Report

December 2016

- *Mario Jovan Shaw and Jason Terrell, founders, Profound Gentleman*  
Both former Charlotte corps members, Mario Jovan Shaw and Jason Terrell founded Profound Gentleman, an organization aimed at supporting black males in the education profession. Free to join, the community started out with 48 black, male educators last year in Charlotte. Shaw says they now have more than 500 members in 26 cities and two other countries.<sup>3</sup>
- *Steve North, founder, MY Health-e-Schools Network*  
Steve North was a 1993 Eastern North Carolina corps member who currently is running a school-based telemedicine clinic called MY Health-e-Schools Network, which provides the latest solution to providing rural health care. The network operates like a standard clinic out of three school nurse offices, but with remote doctors and high-tech equipment. North uses Bluetooth technologies to diagnose patients virtually, which saves them both money and time. North's telemedicine network operates in 14 of Mitchell County's 16 schools, serving 4,000 students.
- *Patrick O'Shea, co-founder, MedServe*  
O'Shea began his work in education as an Eastern North Carolina corps member. After his time teaching, he founded MedServe, a program that the Triangle Business Journal says could revolutionize rural health care. Intended to be a "Teach For America for health care," MedServe will connect college graduates with rural healthcare providers. The fellowship lasts two years at which point fellows leave the program, possibly to attend medical school. Fellows are paid \$20,000 per year with the clinics where they work shouldering a portion of the cost. MedServe also raised money from sources that include the government, UNC and Duke and foundations to supplement what health care centers cannot afford.<sup>4</sup>
- *Liz Chen, Grayson Cooper and Dale Hammer, co-founders, ENC STEM*  
While teaching high school science in Northampton County, Chen saw the need for summer programming to help students become stronger students, particularly in STEM subjects. Along with fellow Teach For America alumni Grayson Cooper and Dale Hammer, Chen founded the organization ENC STEM, which provides high quality STEM learning opportunities and leadership training to students in Northampton County. Liz now works as the Director of Fundraising & Outreach for ENC STEM while simultaneously pursuing her doctorate in Global Public Health at UNC Chapel Hill. She plans to devote her career to bridging the gap between public health and public education in rural North Carolina.
- *Erin Swanson, Director of Innovation, Edgecombe County Public Schools*  
Over the past 14 years, Erin has worked for educational equity in Eastern North Carolina. After teaching in Warren County, she joined Teach For America staff for six years, working first as a program director and then Executive Director. In 2012, Erin joined the North East Leaders Academy. She was the founding principal of Martin Millennium Academy, and this year has moved into the role of Director of Innovation for Edgecombe County Public Schools.
- *Keisha Campbell, Founder, Bilingual Babes*  
After her time with Teach For America, Keisha Campbell, bilingual herself, founded Bilingual Babes in Greensboro. Bilingual Babes is a bilingual (English-Spanish) childcare center designed to provide a variety of high-quality early childhood experiences for the children of working families. Campbell believes that second language acquisition, as well as an appreciation of multiculturalism, will develop our children's cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and language skills. She implements these through hands-on, interactive, dual-language learning experiences. To build better futures, Keisha plans to offer Greensboro's only Spanish-immersion childcare center.

---

<sup>3</sup> Glenn, Gwendolyn. "Profound Gentlemen' Provides Support For Black, Male Teachers." WFAE. National Public Radio, 21 June 2016. Web. 21 Dec. 2016. (See Appendix E)

<sup>4</sup> DeBruyn, Jason. "How Two MD/MBA Students Might Revolutionize Rural Doctor Training." Triangle Business Journal. N.p., 16 June 2016. Web. 21 December. 2016. See Appendix D. (See Appendix F)

## North Carolina Teacher Corps (NCTC)

Teach For America is committed to partnering with the state to inspire more North Carolinians to teach and lead as educators in our state. While we know great teachers exist across the nation, we believe that teachers with personal ties to North Carolina can make a unique contribution to our state, bringing a special sense of urgency and commitment to educating North Carolina's children. During the second quarter, Teach For America's national organization shared North Carolina's tailored recruitment language with all of the regions across the country as a model due to our success recruiting local, home-grown leaders to our state.

This year, we rebranded our webinar and outreach to appeal to the millennial generation that is applying to the Teach For America corps. While our old webinar featured photos of our teachers and students, our new webinar highlights photos taken by our current teachers and shared on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook. Candidates are encouraged to engage with us early in their application phases by tweeting and using Teach For America, North Carolina specific hashtags. We have tailored our communications to capitalize on the themes and messages most persuasive and resonant with the millennial generation. Finally, we have incorporated texting our applicants to remind them of upcoming deadlines. These changes have been well-received and applicants have shared positive feedback:

*Thank you so much for all the wonderful information provided through the webinar and through my individual phone call. I would love to work and teach in North Carolina. During my interview, I learned that Texas didn't provide the same opportunities to applicants, so I'm extremely grateful for the information you all shared. I'm sure you're already aware of how great the webinar is, but I felt much more prepared than some of my fellow applicants because I participated in both the webinar and informational phone calls. -Katie Totten, applicant*

*Thank you for coordinating the webinar! I enjoyed learning about the many TFA opportunities in NC. After last night's webinar, if accepted, I am going to seriously consider joining the corps in NC! -Jennie Wagner, applicant*

*I spoke with a Teach For America alum last Friday morning. She was very helpful and willing to speak about her experience in the Charlotte area. I will definitely say that she increased my interest in Charlotte. -Dezbee McDaniel, applicant*

We currently have 46 incoming corps members who identify as part of the North Carolina Teaching Corps. Thirty six of them graduated from a North Carolina college or university and 31 of them are North Carolina natives. Our NCTC corps members represent 102 colleges across the United States including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Johnson C. Smith University, Duke University, Davidson College, Harvard University, Stanford University, Vanderbilt University, and the College of William and Mary. Our North Carolina connected corps members make up a diverse group of teachers and leaders across the state:

- The average GPA is 3.54
- 48% come from a low-income background<sup>5</sup>
- 56% are people of color
- 32% are teaching math or science
- 35% are the first in their families to graduate from college
- 2% served in the military

---

<sup>5</sup> As identified by receiving a full or partial PELL Grant

# TEACHFORAMERICA

## North Carolina · Second Quarter and Annual Legislative Report

December 2016

We are building on this success by supplementing Teach For America's national recruitment methods with strategies tailored to North Carolina candidates. Tailored strategies include:

- **One-on-One Outreach:** We have conducted 33 individual conversations with final round applicants from North Carolina. North Carolina staff and alumni use these calls to inspire applicants to choose to teach in North Carolina rather than choosing to teach out of state.
- **NCTC Webinars:** We have hosted three webinars for North Carolinians moving into final round of interviews. Forty three applicants have attended these webinars thus far. These webinars highlight stories of current corps members and alumni with North Carolina ties who chose to lead in our state. Our data shows that candidates who attend one of our webinars are significantly more likely to preference one or more of our North Carolina regions when making their regional assignment decisions.
- **School Visits:** In partnership with our recruitment team, we have hosted three school visits across the state for prospective applicants to Teach For America. These school visits give applicants a line of sight into the work they would be leading as a first year teacher in North Carolina. Applicants had the opportunity to ask questions of Teach For America alumni and staff and provide an excellent lever for helping prospects complete the final stages of their application. One applicant said of her visit:

*Thank you for letting me come visit West Charlotte. I really enjoyed the tour! Going into the classrooms and seeing the students made me even more excited to start teaching!*

- **Recruitment Events:** In the second quarter, we hosted three college recruitment events across the state. These events reached nearly 100 qualified candidates. These candidates represent a broad and diverse set of organizations across their campuses, including Greek organizations, Bonner Scholars, Collegiate 100, 100 Black Women, D.I.V.A.S Mentoring Organization, and the Multicultural Greek Council.

### Regional Updates

- **Eastern North Carolina**

In 2014, the Eastern North Carolina region received a \$1,600,000 grant over five years from the Biogen foundation. The grant was to provide recruitment, training, and professional development opportunities to the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) teachers in the Teach For America teaching corps. The partnership also created high-quality, hands-on STEM learning experiences for students in under-resourced schools.

This year, the Biogen Foundation opened their labs up to Eastern North Carolina's Teach For America teachers and their students. The Biogen Community Lab is a state-of-the-art, real-world facility where middle and high school students were able to engage in hands-on biotechnology experiments and interact with Biogen employees.

These visits ignited the curiosity in students today to help shape the scientists of tomorrow. Ninety one percent of students agreed that they learned something in the Community Lab program that they can use in their science class at school.

- **North Carolina Piedmont Triad**

In their third year of operating, the North Carolina Piedmont Triad continues to deliver excellent results in partnership with Guilford County Schools. In the 2015-2016 school year, five Teach For America teachers were named their respective schools' "Rookie Teacher of the Year." In the 2014-2015 school year, 100% of principals surveyed from Guilford County Schools reported that they would hire another Teach For America corps member if they had a teaching vacancy at their school. Eighty-seven percent of principals reported that Teach For America corps members contribute positively to school culture and faculty collaboration.

December 2016

It is with these results that the Guilford County School Board unanimously voted to extend Teach For America's contract in the district for three years and asked for additional teachers. We are honored that Guilford County chose to extend our contract so we can continue to serve students across Greensboro.

- **Charlotte**

Motivated by empowering her students, Hillary Hollowood, a Charlotte 2015 corps member and teacher at Garinger High School, encouraged her students to speak at an upcoming school board meeting. Hollowood and her students met on the weekends and afterschool to prepare their remarks for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board meeting which would also be aired live on television. The topic was on school assignment.

The Charlotte Observer writes about how Hollowood worked to prepare her students, saying:

*Hollowood coached them. They read CMS documents, mastered the vocabulary and studied the concepts. Hollowood urged them to tell their own stories while looking up facts to bolster their views. About 30 students gave speeches for class. Seven were so gung-ho they decided to work up presentations for the school board. That meant coming in after hours. Few have cars, so they took city buses, walked or got a ride from their teacher.*

*Hollowood wasn't about to let them settle for a first draft, or a second. "I was hard on them," she recalls, grinning. "They hated me a bit."<sup>6</sup>*

By October, her students were ready to give their remarks. Compliments began to roll in, including positive words from the school's principal, Kelly Gwaltney, who said, "What we know at Garinger is our kids are resilient. They took the ball and they ran with it. That was their thoughts, their research, 100 percent."<sup>7</sup>

The outcome was positive:

*On Nov. 9, the board voted unanimously on its magnet plan. Some of the students' requests, such as translators and outreach to families that lack home computers and cars, were already included. Some, such as more and better magnet programs in east Charlotte, will be part of next steps, said school board Chair Mary McCray.*

*"We heard them loud and clear," McCray said. "Those are our future board members."<sup>8</sup>*

We are thankful for the continued investment from North Carolina which allows us to support incredible teachers and leaders throughout the state.

## Financial Reporting

Teach For America is steadfast in maximizing the state's investment through fiscal responsibility and investing donors in our important work in North Carolina. In 2014 (the most recent data available), we earned a perfect four-star rating from Charity Navigator for the 13th straight year for exemplary financial health. Less than one percent of all nonprofits nationwide have received this many consecutive four-star ratings, putting us in the 99th percentile among all nonprofits.

We remain grateful for the state's investment and are committed to making every public and private dollar work hard for students across our state. We look forward to updating the state on our progress in our March quarterly report.

---

<sup>6</sup> Helms, Ann Doss. "As Officials and Parents Debated Their Future, Garinger High Students Decided to Speak up." The Charlotte Observer. N.p., 18 Nov. 2016. Web. 21 Dec. 2016. (See Appendix G)

<sup>7</sup> Helms, Ann Doss. "As Officials and Parents Debated Their Future, Garinger High Students Decided to Speak up." (See Appendix G)

<sup>8</sup> Helms, Ann Doss. "As Officials and Parents Debated Their Future, Garinger High Students Decided to Speak up." (See Appendix G)



**North Carolina · Annual Legislative Report**  
December, 2016

In addition to our quarterly reports, the state has requested an annual update on the information below. This chart contains information regarding Teach For America’s operations from June 1, 2015- May 31, 2016.

<b>Legislative Language</b>	<b>Teach For America Results</b>
Total number of applications received nationally from candidates seeking participation in the program	Teach For America received 37,000 applications
Total number of applications received from candidates who are residents of North Carolina and information on the source of these candidates, including the number of (i) recent college graduates and the higher institution the candidates attended, (ii) mid-career level and lateral entry industry professionals, and (iii) veterans of the United States Armed Forces	<p>Teach For America received 2,010 applications from North Carolina residents. Nine hundred and six of these candidates were recent college graduates representing a range of colleges. UNC-Chapel Hill was the largest source of applications from recent college graduates, followed by UNC-Charlotte, North Carolina State University, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State, and UNC- Greensboro</p> <p>Additionally, 193 candidates recently obtained a graduate degree representing a range of universities and programs.</p> <p>Nine hundred and eleven were mid-career level and lateral entry industry professionals. Fifty of these candidates were veterans of the United States Army.</p>
The total number of North Carolina candidates accepted by TFA	Teach For America accepted 308 candidates from North Carolina.
The total number of accepted candidates placed in North Carolina, including the number of accepted candidates who are residents of North Carolina	Three hundred and fifty five accepted applicants were placed in North Carolina. One hundred and forty six of these applicants were North Carolina residents.
The regions in which accepted candidates have been placed, the number of candidates in each region, and the number of students impacted by placement in those regions	Eastern North Carolina had an incoming corps of 86 teachers impacting over 4,000 students. Charlotte had an incoming corps of 84 teachers impacting over 5,200 students and the North Carolina Piedmont Triad had an incoming corps of 23 teachers impacting over 1,800 students.
Success of recruitment efforts, including the Teach Back Home program and targeting candidates who are (i) working in areas related to STEM education, (ii) mid-career level and lateral entry industry professionals, and (iii) veterans of the United States Armed Forces	Sixty nine incoming teachers were STEM teachers. Eleven teachers in the incoming corps were veterans. Eighty teachers in the incoming corps were mid-career level and lateral entry industry professionals.
Success of retention efforts, including the Teach Beyond Two and Make it Home programs, and the percentage of accepted candidates working in their placement communities beyond the initial TFA two-year commitment period and the number of years those candidates teach beyond the initial commitment	<p>Our alumni base across the state of North Carolina has grown from 1208 last year to 1382 this year—a growth of 14 percent.</p> <p>Of 2013 corps members placed in our TFA Charlotte and Eastern North Carolina regions, 53% of them remained in North Carolina. Of those, 78% remained in education and 70% taught a third year.*</p> <p><i>*This includes only FY16 alumni survey data. All alumni employment data is self-reported, largely on our annual survey.</i></p>



North Carolina · Annual Legislative Report  
December, 2016

Category	Eastern North Carolina	Charlotte	North Carolina Piedmont Triad
Funds expended by region of the state	3,284,425	2,096,140	619,435
Recruitment, candidate selection, and placement	670,986	478,522	121,721
Preservice training and preparation costs	506,614	252,892	56,681
Professional development and support	1,722,853	963,870	413,119
Alumni Support	383,972	400,855	27,914
Public Affairs & Engagement	-	-	-
Human Assets	-	-	-
Administration	-	-	-
Information & Technology	-	-	-
Finance	-	-	-
<b>Funds received though private fundraising, specifically by sources in each region of the state</b>			
	Eastern North Carolina	Charlotte	North Carolina Piedmont Triad
Foundation	869,500	1,042,765	998,226
Individual	205,384	877,369	8,717
Corporate	57,816	386,587	33,500





# VETERANS RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE

NORTH CAROLINA



**JACQUELINE SMITH** 2008 Charlotte Corps Member

**Current Position:** Science and Math Interventionist; Albemarle Road Elementary, Charlotte, NC

**Military Affiliation:** Personnel Service Specialist/US Army

**Favorite Thing About Military Life:** The best part about my military life was the natural feeling of community and collectivism, "the group is more valued than the individual." I loved meeting and relating to people of various ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic classes. This experience helped me to approach situations and people with different personalities in different ways.



**BRETT JENKINS** 2007 Phoenix Corps Member | Stationed in Eastern North Carolina

**Current Position/Military Affiliation:** CW2 Brett Jenkins; UH-60M Blackhawk Aviator; 2nd Battalion (Assault) 82nd Airborne Division

**Favorite Thing About Military Life:** I'm continuously astounded at the degree of diversity around me - people from all walks of life performing scores of different jobs and tasks to accomplish a single mission. When you place service before yourself, it's surprising how easily everything else falls into place.



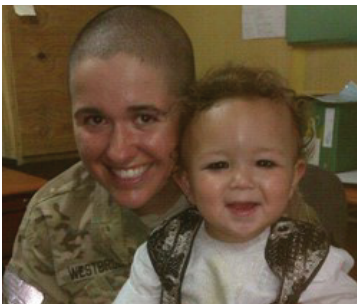
**SEQUOIA ALDRIDGE** 2015 Eastern North Carolina Corps Member

**Current Position:** 7th Grade Science Teacher; EB Frink Middle School, La Grange, NC

**Military Affiliation:** Chief Warrant Officer-5, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret)

Served from 1984-2014. Duty assignments: Quantico, VA, Okinawa, Japan, Corpus Christi, TX, San Diego, CA, Camp Pendleton, CA, Camp Lejeune, NC, Iwakuni, Japan, Iraq, and Arlington, VA

**Favorite Thing About Military Life:** The sense of camaraderie and relationships that I've developed over the years. I was also continuously energized by the daily opportunities to improve the quality life for other service members and their families through assistance, mentorship, and encouragement or by implementing systemic changes that improved customer service.



**MATT WESTBROOK** 2015 North Carolina Piedmont Triad Corps Member

**Current Position:** 7th and 8th Grade Math Teacher; Mendenhall Middle School, Greensboro, NC

**Military Affiliation:** SGT Matt Westbrook Enlisted into the United States Army in 2006 as a Combat Medic/Practical Nurse; served two deployments to Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

**Favorite Thing About Military Life:** Everyday was a learning experience. I am constantly amazed at what individuals from all walks of life could complete collectively when simple barriers were broken down.



**STACY MEBANE** 2015 Eastern North Carolina Member

**Current Position:** Science and Math Teacher; Roseboro Salem Middle School, Roseboro, NC

**Military Affiliation:** Enlisted in the United States Army in 1989 as a tank crewman. Began with the 2nd Armor Battalion/68th Armor Regiment in Baumholder, Germany. Culminating assignment as a transportation operations supervisor at the US Army Central Headquarters at Shaw Air force Base in South Carolina.

**Favorite Thing About Military Life:** A new assignment every 24 months; different places, experiences and training; and of course meeting and getting to know people from all walks of life.

## APPENDIX C

### **Next NC superintendent's Teach for America work was foundation for education views**

LYNN BONNER

[lbonner@newsobserver.com](mailto:lbonner@newsobserver.com)



Republican Mark Johnson comes to the job of the state's education chief promising to shake off the status quo, and is himself a nontraditional choice for state superintendent of public instruction.

Johnson is a lawyer for a technology firm in Winston-Salem who has been on the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County school board for about two years. In last week's elections he defeated Democrat June Atkinson, who has been the state's education chief for 11 years and worked at DPI for about 28 years before she won the statewide office.

Two years as a Teach for America corps member at West Charlotte High School helped shaped Johnson's views on public education, convincing him that problems need "hands-on solutions."

#### ADVERTISING

He taught earth science to ninth-graders in a school where many students lived in poverty and struggled with classwork. Some students didn't know whether they would eat at night. He knew one student lived in a motel.

In Johnson's classes, he had students older than the typical freshmen; they had been held back. He tells the story about a 17-year-old student, someone who did not regularly attend class, who came to class one day eager to do the assignment. The student sat down for the silent reading exercise, but confessed to Johnson a few minutes later that he could not read it.

"I realized that I was ready, if given the opportunity, to devote my life to making sure in my lifetime that all students have the opportunity to succeed," Johnson said. "Through my experiences, I realized that opportunity is not available to every student in this country, and it needs to be."

He also became convinced that "more of the same" won't improve public education in the state, he said.

Later, Johnson concluded through his work on the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County school board that local districts need more support from DPI for their ideas, and that the state requires too much

testing. [A new federal law](#) has given the state the opportunity to evaluate its testing program and focus on tests that help students, he said.

The department is working to finalize a plan on how the state will measure student knowledge and school quality. Johnson will take office before the state sends the final version to Washington.

Johnson is proud of the work the Forsyth district has done to jump-start one of the state's lowest-performing schools, Cook Elementary, giving it some of the flexibility afforded charter schools in hiring, pay and setting the school calendar.

The school has a new name and new teachers. It uses some of the "outside-the-box" elements Johnson espouses. Employees make more money than their counterparts in other schools, and members of the "design team" for elementary literacy were paid stipends. The school gave teachers the chance to be leaders in the school and make more money for taking on extra responsibilities.

"It's exciting, because we realized continuing to do the same thing year after year at Cook wasn't working," he said.

David Singletary serves with Johnson on the local school board. Johnson, as chairman of the board's building and grounds committee, worked with district staff to evaluate school needs in preparation for a \$350 million bond referendum that passed this month, Singletary said.

"He was instrumental in helping streamline our bond package," Singletary said.

Singletary and Johnson were elected to the local school board in November 2014. Singletary said he wasn't surprised when Johnson announced less than a year later that he was running for statewide office.

"Mark has a lot to offer, whether he offers that on a local level or whether he offers that on the state level," Singletary said.

Johnson grew up in Louisiana the oldest of four sons. He attended public schools there, graduating from that state's public residential high school, Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts, which he describes as equivalent to the N.C. School of Science and Mathematics.

He went to college at Emory University in Atlanta and remains close to friends he met freshman year.

"He wanted to figure out a way to be useful and serve," said Vikas Kumar, a friend from Emory who works in Washington. "He's always had a passion for education issues."

Johnson was the drummer in a band while at Emory with friend Scott Gold, who is now a management consultant in the nation's capital.

"When he puts his mind to something, he's more likely than not going to achieve it," Gold said.

After two years teaching, Johnson attended law school at UNC-Chapel Hill. Johnson is leaving his job as corporate counsel for technology firm Inmar in Winston-Salem, and moving to Raleigh with his

wife, Rachel, and their 3 1/2-year-old daughter for his new job running the state department that employs more than 1,000 people.

As a manager, Johnson said he puts most of the detail work in the hands of people he trusts.

“I find that is the way to get things done,” he said. “If you try to micromanage everything, you’ll be drinking from a fire hose. Find the right people and trust those people to handle the tasks.”

*Lynn Bonner: [919-829-4821](tel:919-829-4821), [@Lynn Bonner](https://www.instagram.com/Lynn_Bonner)*

Make sure to follow along with us on instagram



# *charlotte* lately

celebrating food + lifestyle around the queen city. connecting local business with the community

HOME

FEATURED

LATELY

MARKETPLACE

CONTACT



# Featured Local: Alyssa Sharpe

A true adventurer and innovative thinker, Alyssa moved to Charlotte from Florida in 2009 to join Teach For America. With her constant tenacity and passion for inspiring children, Alyssa continued to seek out-of-the-box ways to encourage a love for learning. Over time she developed a love for science & experimental learning and a commitment to engaging and empowering young girls to pursue the same. Alyssa became the National Director of Project Scientist in Charlotte, a national non-profit STEM education program for girls.

Project Scientist is an education nonprofit founded in Charlotte, NC that inspires girls ages four to 12 with an interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Launched in 2013, Project Scientist partners with top universities and STEM companies to provide girls with successful role models in these fields to show that there are women from diverse backgrounds excelling in these careers. In addition to serving girls, the program commits to recruiting girls from low-income families. 40% of program participants receive a full scholarship to attend the program. Project Scientist exists to change the world's view of 'who' a scientist is and 'what' a scientist does. Our goal is to change society's perception of girl's interest and aptitude in STEM.

Personal favorites: her cat Charlie, teaching indoor cycling classes at CycleSouth, enjoying Okra, Dish and Legion in Plaza Midwood, or a hike up to the Blue Ridge Mountains.

If you would like to partner with this amazing charity, or have girls between 4-12, please follow the link below.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PROJECT SCIENTIST



# 'Profound Gentlemen' Provides Support For Black, Male Teachers

By [GWENDOLYN GLENN](#) · JUN 21, 2016

Research suggests that students of color perform better academically and are disciplined less when they have teachers of color. But there aren't a lot of teachers of color, especially African-American men. In CMS, just over 5 percent are black men and, nationally, it's 2 percent. A Charlotte group called Profound Gentlemen is working to strengthen the support system for black male teachers, in hopes of increasing their numbers.



*Profound Gentlemen co-founders, Mario-Jovan Shaw (r) and Jason Terrell (l) working out of a local restaurant on ways to provide support for African-American male teachers.*

Instead of an office, most days Mario-Jovan Shaw and Jason Terrell can be spotted in coffee shops or restaurants around the city, intensely working on their computers and cell phones. These two former CMS teachers left the classroom because they wanted to create a network where black male teachers could connect with each other for support. Shaw and Terrell say most black men quit because they feel isolated.

"Oftentimes our educators are the only ones in their school building, black males, and can't relate to anyone," says Shaw.

"A black man across the hall from me guided me my first, second, and third year. I would not have stayed had it not been for him. I was lucky to have another man of color in my building, but a lot of black men don't have that," says Terrell.

So this past school year they launched Profound Gentlemen to provide a support network for African-American male educators. Initially the focus was recruitment, but that changed as they delved into research on the issue.



“There’s actually not an issue of black men being interested in education,” Terrell said. “Brothers are interested in giving back to kids. But the issue is being prepared to go in the classroom and also staying invested in education over time.”

Through Profound Gentlemen, Shaw says advice on a lesson plan, help with a problem student or parent, or a pep talk are only a phone call, text message, or computer screen away.



“I get a lot of phone calls every single day,” he said.

Other members, like veteran educators and teachers with specialized classroom training, also give advice. In addition, there are conferences and special events held throughout the year. The group is supported through grants and small contracts with six school districts that include Chicago, Washington, D.C. and CMS.

It’s free to join the organization. The first step is downloading the Profound Gentlemen App. All members are assigned to groups of 20 or fewer. They meet monthly and also use texting or Internet discussions to share resources or encourage members.



*Profound Gentlemen founders Mario-Jovan Shaw (r) and Jason Terrell (center) participate in a panel discussion on the need for more African-American male teachers.*

“There have been times where we had to discuss or motivate people, like you can do this, don’t give up,” said Raheem Roberts, a first-grade teacher at Sugar Creek Charter School. “We tell them, 'It seems hard but in the end there is a bigger picture you have to realize.’”

Roberts has been teaching for eight years and, for much of that time, has been the only black male at his school. He says in addition to providing classroom support, Profound Gentlemen makes him feel less alone.



*Raheem Roberts is usually the only African-American male teacher at Sugar Creek Charter School, where he teaches first grade. He said Profound Gentlemen makes him feel less isolated.*

“It’s like a community where we can come together and network and collaborate and support one another and share ideas and just be that backbone for the other male educators doing the same thing we’re doing in the classroom and build that community of black, male educators,” says Roberts.

That community started out with 48 black, male educators last year in Charlotte. Shaw says they now have more than 500 members in 26 cities and two other countries. At a group meeting last month in Charlotte, about 70 teachers gathered for a panel discussion on the need for black male teachers.

“I might be the only professional black male that some of our children see on a regular basis and I take that responsibility seriously in how I dress, communicate because they are watching,” Terrell told the in-person and online audience. “I might be countering what they are seeing in other environments.”

Sedgefield Middle School seventh grader Marquise Crawford fits that description. He participated in a video produced by Profound Gentlemen on the issue and spoke at the meeting.

"I feel like the African American teachers really connect with African Americans and I think black men should be in more schools because black male students really need the connections," said Crawford who wants to be a pilot one day. "I'll miss that if I don't have a black male teacher next year."

Edward Chilton, who was also at the discussion, says he feels more comfortable opening up to his black male teacher about problems, such as his struggles to keep his anger in check.

"I'm not trying to be racist, but a white teacher would tell me I need to calm down and get my act together, but a black male teacher would ask me what's wrong, what I'm feeling, or where I'm hurting to make me angry. When we get to the bottom of it, I'm usually alright," Chilton said.



When they were teachers, Terrell and Shaw say many of their students never had black male teachers before them. And Terrell says growing up in Atlanta, he never had a black male teacher until he was a junior in college.

"That changed my life and led to me being a teacher and feeling that it was okay to be smart and be black and male," Terrell said. "Growing up I hid my smartness because I had to fit an image and being academic wasn't the thing to do."

Terrell talks to Profound Gentlemen members about this experience and others to keep them motivated. Teacher Raheem Roberts says it is working.



*Profound Gentlemen founders Jason Terrell (l) and Mario-Jovan Shaw (r)*

“Just to know there are hundreds of others out there doing the same work you’re doing makes you feel a part of somewhere you fit in and belong and where the other people look just like you, even if it’s outside of your school,” Roberts said. “I’m part of a community of educators who look like me, who are black and male.”

That sense of community is Profound Gentlemen’s mission.

# How two MD/MBA students might revolutionize rural doctor training

Jun 16, 2016, 3:07pm EDT Updated: Jun 17, 2016, 1:22pm EDT



*Dr. Shauna Guthrie uses an otoscope to examine the ears of Cynthia Henderson at Vance Family Medicine in Henderson on Thursday, Nov. 12, 2015. As a rural health care provider, Guthrie knows first-hand the challenges of providing health care in underserved areas.*

Two MD/MBA students put their heads together to launch a program that could revolutionize rural health care.

“We call ourselves a Teach For America for health care,” says [Anne Steptoe](#), a dual MD/MBA student from Brown University’s Alpert School of Medicine and Duke’s Fuqua School of Business.

The program they created is MedServe and is being hailed as a first-of-a-kind program that will connect recent college graduates with rural health providers in desperate need of help.

There is a common refrain in health care that the United States faces a physician shortage. That’s not exactly true. It would be far more accurate to say that the United States faces a physician distribution problem. Specifically that there are too few physicians in underserved and rural areas. Just 12 percent of medical students nationwide are choosing to enter primary care.

During her first year of medical school in 2011, Steptoe proposed a research project that would connect students with rural health providers. “I was promptly told that it was awfully ambitious for a research project,” she says.

Around the same time, [Patrick O’Shea](#) was finishing a stint as a middle school teacher in Henderson. He had taken the position through Teach For America, the organization that matches young teachers with underserved schools. He applied to medical schools, but

was rejected being told that he needed more clinical experience. He earned a Certified Nursing Assistant license and looked for work to build up experience, even shadowing providers when possible.

Now, he's a dual MD/MBA student from the UNC School of Medicine and Fuqua, where he connected with Steptoe. Together, they formed MedServe.

Students with an undergraduate degree apply to MedServe and are matched with a rural health provider. The fellowship lasts two years at which point fellows leave the program, possibly to attend medical school. Fellows are paid \$20,000 per year with the clinics where they work shouldering a portion of the cost. MedServe also raised money from sources that include the government, UNC and Duke and foundations to supplement what health care centers can't afford.

The inaugural group of 13 fellows was selected from more than 80 applicants and includes a mix of graduates from many North Carolina universities, including UNC-Chapel Hill, N.C. State, Duke, Wake Forest, East Carolina and UNC-Pembroke, as well as Ivy League institutions, including Harvard, Yale and Brown.

Put simply, the goal of MedServe is to improve the health of communities across North Carolina while exposing potential future doctors to the impact that a primary care physician can make in a community.

"We believe that by showing our fellows the best of rural and community-based primary care, we can encourage the next generation of primary care physicians to think more broadly about where their career in medicine can occur," Steptoe said.

In other areas of the country, groups are looking to improve rural care as well. Universities are teaming up to launch and jointly operate new medical schools. Last week, Arkansas State University rededicated Wilson Hall as the home of a new college of osteopathic medicine, which will be run by the New York Institute of Technology. It's NYIT's second med school site. "We train students in big metro areas. Is it really a surprise that they don't want to leave those areas?" says Dr. Shane Speights, associate dean of clinical affairs at the new NYIT location in Arkansas.

**Jason deBruyn**

Staff Writer

*Triangle Business Journal*

# As officials and parents debated their future, Garinger High students decided to speak up



BY ANN DOSS HELMS

[ahelms@charlotteobserver.com](mailto:ahelms@charlotteobserver.com)

The seven teens piled into their teachers' cars were jittery as they drove toward uptown Charlotte.

The Garinger High students had spent hours preparing. They stayed after school and came in on weekends, fueled by honey buns and Cheetos that debate teacher Hillary Hollowood bought with her own money.

But how could they not be nervous? They were about to speak to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board, on live television, about issues that divide the community.

For months, as the board discussed changes to student assignment and sign-toting parents packed meetings, the teens had heard adults discuss what to do about schools like theirs, schools that get stuck with labels such as "high poverty" and "low performing."

Now the students – four Hispanic, two black and one white, ages 16 and 17 – wanted their turn. They would describe life in a school where many parents don't speak English and don't have cars. They would lace those stories with facts gleaned from hours of research, trying to show the world that they're intelligent young adults with solutions to complex problems.

With a board vote just two weeks away, they hoped their stories could still shape decisions about their community and their school.

“It was pretty surreal for us. When we were walking up there, we were all shaking,” said 17-year-old Sydney Rodriguez.

When experts talk about breaking the link between poverty and failure, they talk about the need for teachers to forge meaningful relationships with their students. They say complex assignments with real-life significance must replace drills designed to bump up test scores.

The way Hollowood, a 26-year-old Teach For America recruit, got her students ready to speak to the school board is a case study in how that works.

### **Hear our voices**

Evelyn Valdez, a 17-year-old senior, went first at the Oct. 25 meeting. The first 30 seconds of her 2-minute speech were delivered in rapid-fire Spanish. Then she switched to English.

“Did you feel uncomfortable, or worried that you were missing out on important information?” she asked the board.

That, she said, is how many Garinger parents feel when trying to keep up with policy discussions in English. “How would you feel,” Valdez asked, “if your child’s education was dependent on what I just said?”

Hollowood and the other students were watching the board react. They could see comprehension, even hear sounds of acknowledgment.

The students began to realize they could give a voice to east Charlotte, an international community where families who don’t feel confident in the halls of power often go unheard.

Garinger relies heavily on young teachers. Teach For America finds and trains promising, idealistic people willing to take on assignments in hard-to-staff schools. Most of them didn’t major in education but want to spend a two-year stint teaching, often before moving to other jobs in education or public policy.

Garinger Principal Kelly Gwaltney knows she can’t keep many of those teachers, but believes the passion of people like Hollowood makes the arrangement worthwhile.

Hollowood majored in history and rhetorical studies at UNC Chapel Hill and went to work for a real estate appraisal office. Coaching a soccer team inspired her to work with teens, so she applied to TFA and landed at Garinger last year, teaching history and speech/debate.

This year, the first assignment she gave her speech and debate class was to research a community problem and propose a solution. Not surprisingly, many students focused on education.

### **Living the debate**

As the students prepared their speeches, the school board was moving toward a first round of decisions in a student assignment review that aimed to reduce concentrations of poverty and disadvantage at schools like Garinger.



Staff and consultants were hashing out a new system that would map Mecklenburg County into blocks of high, medium and low socioeconomic status, using those labels to shape the 2017 magnet lottery. The plan called for expanding the menu of magnets and giving priority to students who want to leave the district's lowest-scoring schools.

Earlier in the year, board members had agreed that schools like Garinger, where the vast majority of students come from low-income homes, are at an academic disadvantage.

At public hearings in the spring, some suburban parents voiced fear that their children might be sent to schools where they believed families didn't care as much about education as they did.

Garinger students knew that made them feel lousy, but they weren't sure how to talk about it.

Hollowood coached them. They read CMS documents, mastered the vocabulary and studied the concepts. Hollowood urged them to tell their own stories while looking up facts to bolster their views.

About 30 students gave speeches for class. Seven were so gung-ho they decided to work up presentations for the school board.

That meant coming in after hours. Few have cars, so they took city buses, walked or got a ride from their teacher.

Hollowood wasn't about to let them settle for a first draft, or a second. "I was hard on them," she recalls, grinning. "They hated me a bit."

### **Ready to speak**

By late October, their theme had emerged. They supported the board's push for diversity, but they worried that schools like Garinger could end up worse off.

They wanted people to understand that just because parents don't turn out for meetings doesn't mean they don't care. They hoped to convince the board that they could be just as successful as students from wealthier neighborhoods, but it takes more support.

They had their two-minute speeches lined up in sequence. After Valdez set the stage with her remarks in Spanish, Estephani Cruz talked about her mother, who doesn't speak English and works two jobs.

"How are you going to make the enrollment process equitable ... to the non-English speaking parents who want their children to pursue their dreams?" Cruz asked.

Daniela Ramirez added that many families lack the internet access needed to participate in a magnet lottery, or the transportation to get to meetings. She urged CMS to work with houses of faith to reach such families.

Isabel Pratt and Tinya Little said letting students transfer to magnets might help some individuals but could leave Garinger and schools like it stripped of its best students. Instead, they said, their school and others in east Charlotte need to attract middle-class families and strong scholars.

Rodriguez and Gwendolyn Love said they don't want programs to train students for a trade. They said they and their classmates want to go to four-year colleges and become professionals.

"They have the drive," Love said. "They have the passion."

A college-prep magnet, she said, would give them the skills.

### **Another round**

Kudos rolled in almost immediately. Hollowood replayed the meeting video for anyone who would hold still.

Their principal loved the message her students had sent.

“What we know at Garinger is our kids are resilient,” Gwaltney said. “They took the ball and they ran with it. That was their thoughts, their research, 100 percent.”

The students were thrilled.

“We all love Garinger. We want it to be seen as a better place,” said Pratt, 17. “It just felt nice to have people who were going to listen.”

When Hollowood showed the video to her speech and debate class, more students wanted to take part. There would be one more public hearing before the board voted on Nov. 9.

Some students weren’t ready to speak in public, but used artistic skills to create signs.

Some decided they were ready to try.

Carlos Figueroa Marin hadn’t been able to take part the first time because he has to hurry home after school to watch his 10-year-old sister. This time he walked to school for a Sunday prep session, and told the board about his aspirations to attend a four-year college and become a teacher.

Asnina Maingua, born in Kenya to Somali parents, told the board CMS should provide translators for all the languages spoken by CMS families, not just Spanish.

Liana Cruz, the youngest speaker at 15, talked about the preponderance of refugees, single-parent homes and low-rent apartments in the Garinger zone. “Students from east Charlotte have different sets of needs than students in other areas of CMS,” she said. “In the race to attain an excellent education, many students start a mile ahead of students from east Charlotte.”

Some came back for a second round. Love, 17, talked about the importance of extracurricular activities for college-bound students. She suggested that CMS pay for after-hours transportation so classmates who don’t have cars can participate.

To drive her point home, Love noted the contrast between her school and a counterpart in south Charlotte.

“At Garinger we have 281 parking spaces reserved for students, but just 20 students currently have the means to provide their own transportation,” she said, “whereas Ardrey Kell currently has a wait list for 533 parking spaces solely for junior and senior students.”

### **Message delivered**

At the Nov. 9 meeting, Hollowood also spoke. She wanted the board and the public to understand how students like hers can shine, and why that requires extra support.

Hollowood talked about making two-hour drives to pick up or drop off students, and about spending more than \$200 for snacks and supplies while her kids worked on their speeches.

“If you’re wondering how I managed this on a teacher’s salary, feel free to stop by Heist Brewery this weekend and ask for my station and we can discuss it,” she said, citing a weekend job she uses to boost her pay.

Hollowood concluded: “This is what it takes for our kids to succeed: Not equality but equity. When you give them time, resources and opportunity, they can be, as one email I read claimed, mesmerizing.”

On Nov. 9, the board voted unanimously on its magnet plan. Some of the students’ requests, such as translators and outreach to families that lack home computers and cars, were already included. Some, such as more and better magnet programs in east Charlotte, will be part of next steps, said school board Chair Mary McCray.

“We heard them loud and clear,” McCray said. “Those are our future board members.”

CMS is now ramping up a second phase of student assignment decisions, expected to be even more controversial than the first. This time the board will look at boundaries and feeder patterns for neighborhood schools.

The students of Garinger will be watching – and speaking.

*Ann Doss Helms: [704-358-5033](tel:704-358-5033), [@andosshelms](https://twitter.com/andosshelms)*