

TEACHFORAMERICA

North Carolina · Fourth Quarter Legislative Report

June 2017

“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 fourth quarter, we have the honor of welcoming our newest group of teacher leaders to the state as they prepare to teach in the 2017-2018 school year. They join the growing network of Teach For America corps members and alumni across the state committed to providing an excellent education to North Carolina’s, and the nation’s, students.

We are particularly excited to share that eight of our incoming corps members were themselves taught by a Teach For America teacher. We are honored that they will be in classrooms inspiring the next generation of leaders in our state. Not only will these incoming corps members have the opportunity to receive training and support through Teach For America, they also have the profound opportunity to impact students like themselves. We are excited to spotlight four of these leaders below.



Name: Itané Coleman

Placement Region: North Carolina Piedmont Triad

Placement Subject: Middle School Social Studies

Hometown: Charlotte, North Carolina

College/University: University of North Carolina-Greensboro

Taught by: Susan Summers, former Charlotte corps member

I was drawn to apply to Teach for America for several reasons: my high school experience with a Teach For America teacher, the background I share with many of the students we serve, and my passion for social justice and equity. I am excited to teach in North Carolina because of my hometown roots and connection to education in this state! I am a huge voting rights advocate, so I cannot wait to inspire leadership and democratic engagement among my students!



Name: Roger Powell

Placement Region: Charlotte

Placement Subject: High School Science

Hometown: Oxford, North Carolina

College/University: University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Taught by: Allison Urbanski, former Eastern North Carolina corps member

I applied to Teach For America because I was not exactly sure what I wanted to do after college ended but I knew I wanted to give back to the North Carolina community. Then I thought about the good experiences I had with my high school teachers and thought it was a great program for me to go into. I am excited to teach in North Carolina because I think I will be able to relate to my kids and I will be giving back to a state that has given me so much throughout my entire educational career.

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Name: Kara Patrice Mitchell
Placement Region: Charlotte
Placement Subject: High School Math
Hometown: Charlotte, North Carolina
College/University: University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Taught by: Sam Stuckey and Amar Vedi, former Charlotte corps members

I decided to apply to Teach for America because I am passionate about education equity and reforming classrooms for students of color. I am excited about teaching in North Carolina, and specifically in Charlotte, because I am familiar with the community in which I will be teaching. I graduated from a Title I high school in Charlotte, so the local community is very important to me.



Name: Noel Lucy Tapper
Placement Region: Charlotte
Placement Subject: Elementary
Hometown: Charlotte, North Carolina
College/University: University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Taught by: Alec Kristobak, former Charlotte corps member

I decided to join Teach For America because my experiences with Teach For America teachers in the classroom have always been enjoyable. The teachers were always enthusiastic and knew how to make learning fun! This is also a great way to give back to my community and instill and bring to light the qualities, such as determination and curiosity, that I have learned from my Teach For America teachers to current students. I was especially drawn to Teach For America because it provides me with the opportunity to positively impact other individual's lives and grow from the experience myself. I am most excited to teach in Charlotte, North Carolina because I grew up with the individuals I will have the opportunity to teach, and this is a great way to give back to my community and express my thanks to my former teachers and mentors.

Through the continued support of the state of North Carolina, Teach For America has established a pipeline of teachers and leaders that affects not just one generation of students, but leaves a lasting impact on the state for decades to come. We are pleased to update you on our progress from the fourth quarter.

Statewide Impact

Teach For America develops diverse, innovative leaders who partner with communities to ensure that all children have access to an excellent education. In North Carolina, our total impact is over 1,900 individuals strong, working toward educational equity in our state. More than 60 of our alumni are principals, assistant principals, deans, or heads of their schools, and we continue to provide the most effective source of early career teachers, according to the North Carolina Teacher Portal Study.

Our alumni base across the state has grown from 1,358 last year to 1,500 this year—a growth of 10%. This growth includes both individuals who completed the corps in North Carolina as well as those who we have actively recruited from out of state.

Across North Carolina, our three regions look forward to June when we welcome our newest corps of incoming teachers to the state. Every year, they inspire us as we watch them learn and gear up to be the best teachers possible for the students across North Carolina. This year is no different.

- The average GPA is 3.47
- 41% come from a low-income background¹
- 39% are people of color
- 49% will be teaching math or science
- 31% are the first in their families to graduate from college
- 3 served in the military

Among these includes a large number of our new teachers (in their first or second year of teaching) who were nominated as outstanding beginning teachers for their respective school districts:

- **Eastern North Carolina Region**
 - Kenya Arnold, Northwest Halifax High School
 - Hannah Ross, Conway Middle School
 - Carr Cody, Northampton High School
 - Julia Ricotta, William R. Davie Middle School
 - Symone Simmons, Central Elementary School
 - Laura Hall, Scotland Neck Elementary School
- **North Carolina Piedmont Triad Region**
 - Rookie Teacher of the Year Winner*
 - Tara Tran, Eastern Guilford High School
 - Rookie Teacher of the Year Nominees*
 - Jonathan Moore, Eastern Guilford Middle School
 - Will Cornett, Northeast Guilford High School
 - Jacob Hicks, Ferndale Middle School
 - Kiy Benton, Welborn Middle School
- **Charlotte Region**
 - Beacon Rookie Teacher of the Year*
 - Sanchetta Ferguson, Winterfield Elementary School
 - Outstanding First Year Teacher*
 - Kayla Wilmer, Ranson IB Middle School
 - Jennifer Swiger, Vance High School
 - Michelle Faggert, Martin Luther King Middle School

¹ As identified by receiving a full or partial PELL Grant

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.

This year, we committed to making more personal, one-on-one connections to local applicants than ever before. As the demand for quality teachers across our nation continues to rise, we believe that fostering a sense of commitment and excitement about teaching in North Carolina is critical to motivating candidates to consider joining the corps in North Carolina. As such, we have had individual phone calls with 190 candidates this year, compared to 70 candidates last year. Additionally, we had 189 candidates join our webinars this year, compared to 72 candidates last year. As we begin the planning phases for next year's recruitment, we are committed to building systems that allow us to continue to connect with an increasing number of applicants.

As we build relationships with our North Carolina connected applicants, we are always excited to hear about their passion to join Teach For America in our state. Rebecca Finney, a sixth deadline applicant and accepted North Carolina corps member, said of our outreach:

I wanted to thank you for the webinar about teaching in North Carolina for Teach for America. I was so inspired by what the corps members and administrators had to say and I thoroughly enjoyed hearing about their personal experiences. I had my interview earlier this week, and was able to draw upon many of the points you all made in my interview and I would not have been able to do that about the webinar. I wanted to express my appreciation for your help with my application process and am hoping to become a part of an organization that gives back so much to the community.

In the 2017-2018 school year, we will have 189 corps members who identify as part of the North Carolina Teaching Corps. One hundred and forty-seven of them graduated from a North Carolina college or university and 164 of them are North Carolina natives. Our NCTC corps members represent 85 colleges across the United States including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University, Duke University, Davidson College, Howard University, and Harvard University. Our North Carolina connected corps members make up a diverse group of teachers and leaders across the state:

- The average GPA is 3.49
- 48% come from a low-income background²
- 52% are people of color
- 51% are teaching math or science
- 32% are the first in their families to graduate from college
- 4% served in the military
- 19 were taught by a TFA teacher when they were in grade school

² As identified by receiving a full or partial PELL Grant

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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:

- **Junior Recruitment:** We partnered with our national recruitment team to begin recruiting applicants during their junior year. These recruited applicants give us a strong foundation to build upon as we recruit throughout the year. In the 2016-2017 calendar year, we recruited 20 junior applicants who will join our corps in the 2018-2019 school year. Several of our North Carolina recruiters exceeded their goals in junior recruitment and have directly attributed their success to our strong NCTC partnership.
- **One-on-One Outreach:** We conducted 190 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 hosted nine webinars for North Carolinians moving into final round of interviews. Two hundred and two applicants joined webinars throughout the year—an all-time high in our history of local recruitment in North Carolina. 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 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.
- **Recruitment Events:** Throughout the year, we collaborated with our national recruitment team to attend several recruitment events across the state to amplify interest in Teach For America. Events include: Zeta Phi Beta Southeast Region Conference, Reading Partners presentation, University of North Carolina- Charlotte presentation to 45 Greek Organizations, University of North Carolina- Charlotte panel, and Davidson College presentation.

Regional Updates

- **Eastern North Carolina**

The Eastern North Carolina team launched its second summer residency training on June 19. The summer residency program focuses on training incoming teachers to be best-in-class educators and leaders for North Carolina's students. Our teachers will be providing free summer school for nearly 500 students across Lenoir and Northampton counties.

The program invests a significant amount in rural North Carolina communities throughout the year including housing and expenses, and additional funds to support the hiring of local instruction partners, master teachers, principals, and school operators to help facilitate the summer residency program.

Andrew Lakis, the executive director of the Teach For America, Eastern North Carolina region explains the rationale behind hosting a regional residency, saying:

Part of what we want is corps members who are effective and can have a meaningful impact right away, but we also want more of our alums to stay long-term in the classroom, in school leadership, and in other sectors of the community in eastern North Carolina.³

- **North Carolina Piedmont Triad**

In their third year of partnership with Guilford County Schools, our Teach For America corps members are delivering significant results across their classrooms. Anna Kathryn Barnes teaches at Andrews High School. The school had a school-wide English II proficiency of 43% and her students achieved 94% proficiency on the English End of Course Exam under her leadership. Caroline Cheek teaches at Northeast High School and led her students to 82.67% proficient on the biology End of Course Exam and 80.67% college and career ready on the End of Course Exam. At Eastern Guilford Middle School, Nina Cameron took her eighth grade students from 68% proficient and 57.5% college and career ready in the 2015-2016 school year to 84% proficient and 78% college and career ready in the 2016-2017 school year.

Principals across Guilford County remain highly satisfied with the Teach For America teachers at their schools. Teach For America partners with an external researcher, RAND, to administer a National Principal Survey in each of its region. One hundred percent of principals surveyed 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.

- **Charlotte**

Three years ago, Teach For America, Charlotte launched the Leroy Pop Miller Fellowship, designed to support alumni teachers in year three, four, and five of teaching. We believe that in order for all students, regardless of the school they attend or the neighborhood they live in, to receive an excellent education - we need more educators, specifically our corps members, serving in classrooms, schools, and in education for longer than their initial two years. The purpose of the fellowship is to maximize our alumni base as a force for change in the local education system, while ensuring that our alumni have opportunities to develop their skillsets as effective educational leaders.

Laura Thrash is a corps member who has committed to joining the Leroy Pop Miller Fellowship. At the end of this year, one of her classes had 100% of students scoring a level four or five on their Science End of Grade exams-- 75% of whom earned the highest level.

When Laura began teaching, her school had seen three years of 35% proficiency or less on the Science End of Grade exam. Last year her students increased to 60% (growing an average of three years in one), and this year her students achieved just under 70% (a growth exceeding three years in one). We are excited to support teachers like Laura who, in just two years, were able to double student proficiency. We are also excited to have leaders like Laura committing to serve students longer term through the Leroy Pop Miller Fellowship.

³ Osborne, Molly. "Place Matters: Why Teach for America Created Residency." EducationNC. EdNC, 07 May 2017. Web. 26 June 2017. (see Appendix A)

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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 2016 (the most recent data available), we earned a perfect four-star rating from Charity Navigator for the fourteenth straight year for exemplary financial health (see appendix B). 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 September quarterly report.

Place matters: Why Teach for America created Residency

 www.ednc.org/2016/08/15/place-matters-story-teach-americas-residency-program-eastern-north-carolina/

By Molly Osborne

August 15,
2016

A few weeks ago I had the chance to visit Teach for America's newest training program in eastern North Carolina, called Residency. With the goal of creating educators rooted in their communities, Teach for America has created a unique opportunity for incoming eastern North Carolina corps members. Utilizing both school district partners and community partners, Teach for America is building a new model for what teacher training looks like.



The Old Model

I look back on my Institute experience as one would a bad dream – thankful that I do not have to relive it. Institute is Teach for America's training program for incoming corps members. Each region is assigned to a specific Institute. As a 2012 Greater New Orleans corps member, I was assigned to the Atlanta National Institute along with corps members from Atlanta, South Carolina, and Ohio.

I spent five weeks at Institute, staying in Georgia Tech dorms, teaching in an Atlanta elementary school, and barely getting five hours of sleep a night as I struggled to get all my materials ready for the next day's lesson before waking up at 5:30 AM to board the bus by 6:15. At the end of the five weeks, I said goodbye to the two people I had grown closest to, my two co-teachers who were both teaching in different regions, and made the eight-hour drive to my new home, New Orleans.

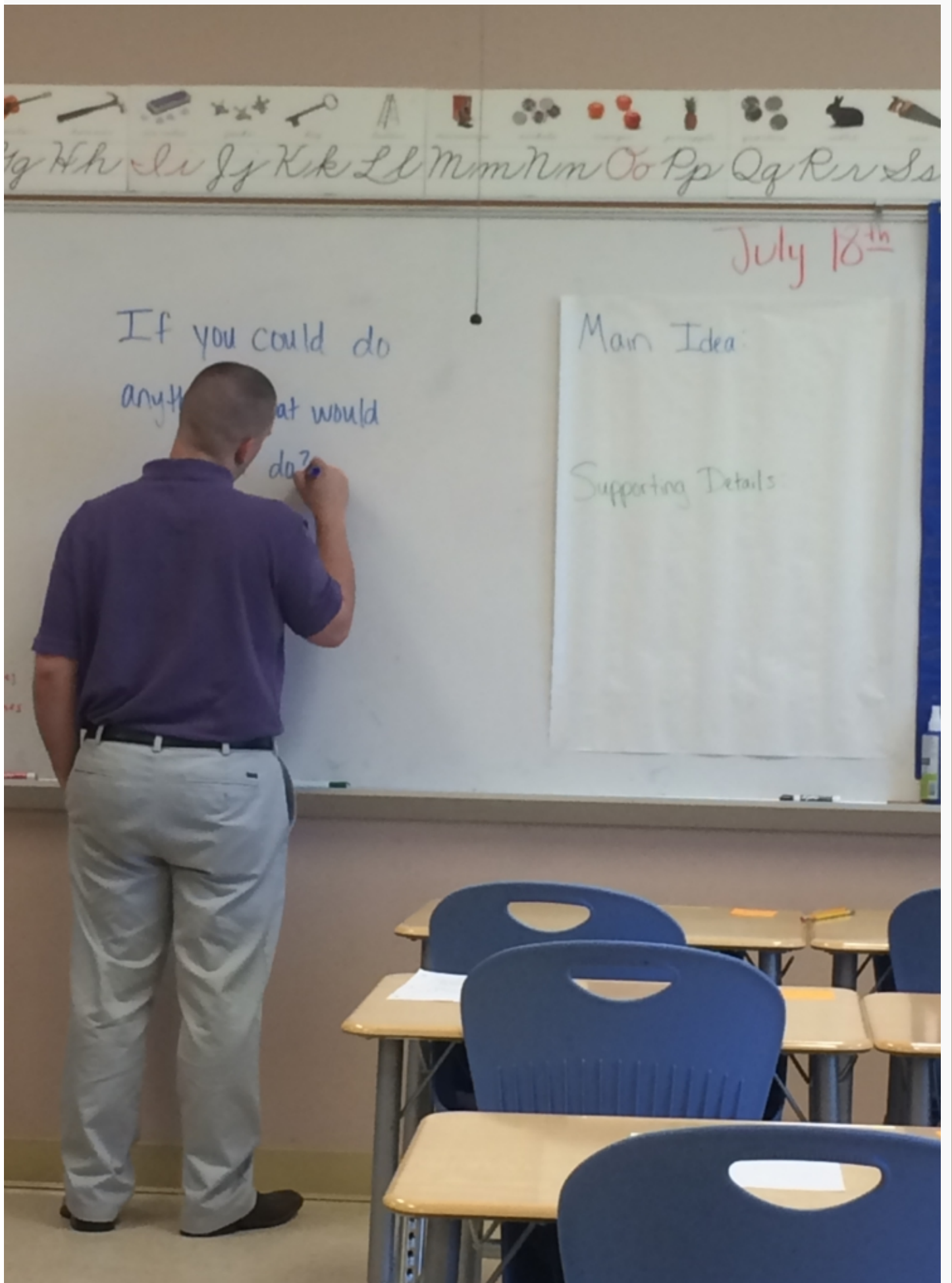
I had visited New Orleans before, but one visit is a drop in the hat in terms of understanding New Orleans' rich historical and cultural context. At Institute I learned a good amount about Atlanta but very little about the place where I was about to spend two years teaching. As someone who grew up in Massachusetts, where saying hello to someone on the street will only get you strange looks, I needed all the help I could get as I entered my school for the first time.

I say all this not to criticize Teach for America's training program – I learned more in those five weeks than probably any other five-week period in my life. Instead, I describe my experience in order to provide a context through which to understand Teach for America's newest regional institute in eastern North Carolina.

On-the-Job Training with a Community Focus

Teach for America's first eastern North Carolina institute is called Residency. "We decided to call it Residency to reflect the on-the-job training you get in medical school," Caty Gray Urquhart, Director of Elementary Content, told me as she gave me a tour.

In previous years, eastern North Carolina corps members were sent to Institute at either the Mississippi Delta or Tulsa, Oklahoma. These national institutes were equipping corps members to be effective teachers, but something was missing. Andrew Lakis, interim Executive Director of Teach for America in eastern North Carolina, explained how the motivation to create Residency came from the very real problem of brain drain in the rural eastern North Carolina school districts. He told me, "Part of what we want is corps members who are effective and can have a meaningful impact right away, but we also want more of our alums to stay long-term in the classroom, in school leadership, and in other sectors of the community in eastern North Carolina." Their theory of change is that if they



can get their corps members rooted in the community during their summer training, they will not only be more effective educators, but they might end up staying in these communities long term.

Building Community Partnerships



Northeast Elementary in Kinston

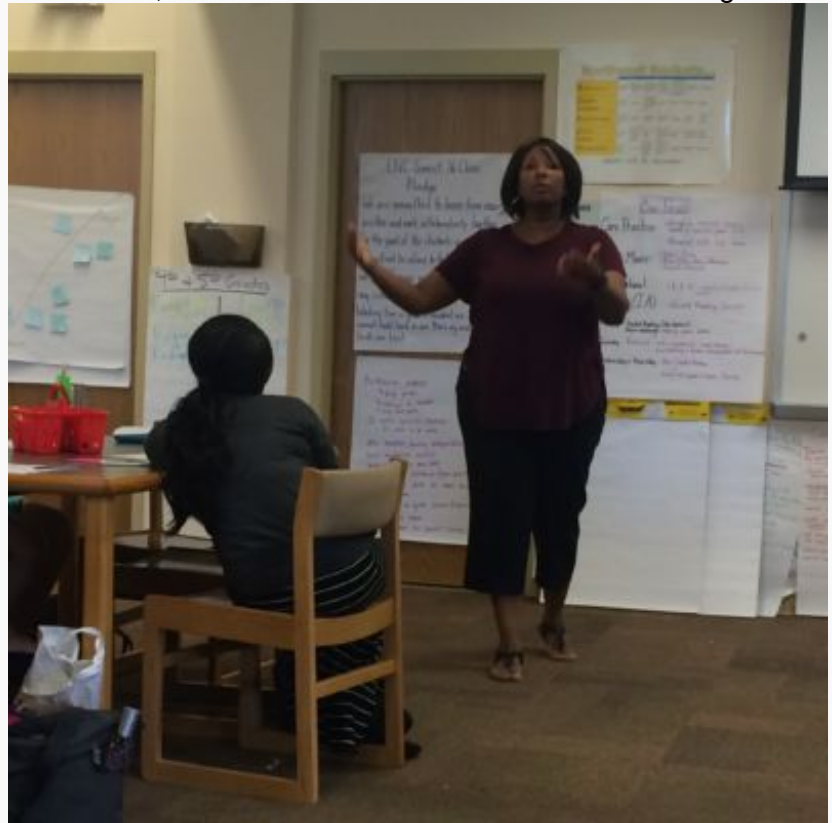
Teach for America has partnered with Lenoir County Public Schools and Northampton County Schools to offer summer school for local students while corps members train. 240 students are enrolled in Lenoir County at Northeast Elementary and Kinston High and another 470 students are enrolled in Northampton County.

The training corps members receive reflect this partnership. In the morning, corps members teach classes while Master Teachers observe them and give real-time feedback. These Master Teachers are veteran teachers from the district, not Teach for America staff members. In the afternoon, corps members receive training on curriculum and instruction led by community partners. At Northeast Elementary, Carla Gilchrist, an experienced educator from Chapel Hill City Schools, leads these sessions. Additionally, the School Director and School Operations Manager at each school site are district staff, unlike national institutes where Teach for America staff hold these positions.

These partnerships are a win-win for Teach for America and the school districts. Teach for America corps members

gain experience teaching students who are representative of the students they will teach in the fall – in fact some corps members will teach in these same schools. Moreover, the same Teach for America staff overseeing Residency are the ones working all school year in the region. After observing corps members all summer, the Teach for America staff can tell the districts what additional professional development each corps member needs. As Urquhart stated, “This sets us up for success as a region.”

For the school districts, this partnership means that they can offer free summer school to over 700 students for the first time. The districts provide the schools, meals, and transportation, while Teach for America provides the teachers. The district staff involved in Residency, such as the Master Teachers, are also learning alongside the corps members. They are learning to be effective coaches, but they are also gaining the opportunity to reflect on their own teaching practice. Lynn Morris, one of the Master Teachers at Northeast Elementary, asked Urquhart if she could come observe her classroom in the fall and give the same real-time feedback to Morris that she gives to her corps members.



Carla Gilchrist leads a session on guided reading

This anecdote illustrates Teach for America’s vision for Residency, “Growth for All.” Through their partnerships with the school districts, Teach for America is having an exponential impact beyond the impact their corps members will have in the classroom. They are seeing growth for the students who are participating in summer school for the first time, growth for their corps members, and growth for their district partners, including the master teachers.

Building Community Understanding

To introduce eastern North Carolina corps members to their local community, Teach for America has branched out from the national institute model. Instead of living in dorms as I did, corps members in Kinston live in houses recently renovated by Stephen Hill, co-founder of Mother Earth Brewing Company. They receive a stipend for living expenses, meals, and gas, which they use to support local businesses. From the beginning, corps members have been encouraged to buy locally. When I visited, lunch was provided by the Peach House, a locally owned café in Kinston. Emma Todson, a corps member from New Jersey, described how they were “encouraged to be part of the community from day one,” adding, “It really does feel homey already.”





To further their understanding of the community, Teach for America instituted a day of community exploration every week. Lakis explained, “We realized early on that the best way to help our corps members understand the local context and build meaningful relationships was to have them in our community hearing from parents, local leaders, and community members.” One week this involved bringing all staff and corps members to Rocky Mount, where they heard from community members from Rocky Mount and Tarboro who are working in education and social justice.

The community has embraced this partnership. Corps members have received free meals from local restaurants and brewery tours at Mother Earth Brewing Company. For me, this is one of the most important results of this experiment. After teaching in an area where Teach for America did not have strong community support, I fully appreciate the importance of establishing these bonds.

Building a Community of Support

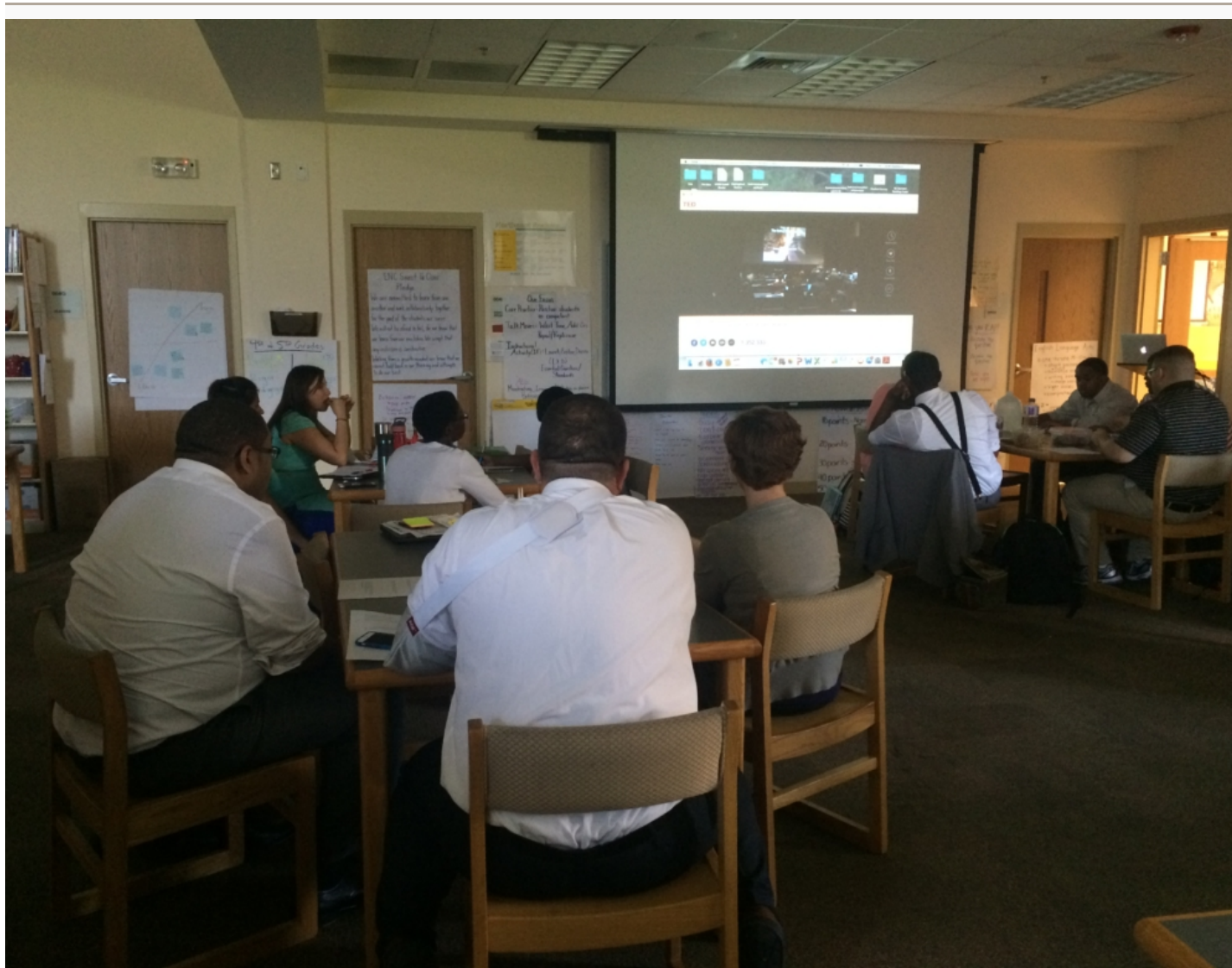
During their seven-week training, corps members have formed their own community of support. Instead of teaching with corps members from several different regions who they will likely never see again, the eastern North Carolina corps members get the chance to develop strong relationships with each other that will continue to grow throughout the school year. Teach for America staff have helped foster that bond by holding barbecues and weekly dinners for corps members.

At week five, the sense of community is strong. Ellie Beam, a corps member from Pennsylvania, told me, “We’ve really bonded and formed a support system already.” Walking through the halls of Northeast Elementary, I could feel it.

About the author

Molly Osborne is a policy analyst for EducationNC and the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research. Molly grew up in

Essex, Massachusetts and attended the local public elementary, middle, and high school. She graduated from the University of Virginia in 2012 with a bachelor's degree in economics and global development. After graduating from college, Molly joined Teach for America and taught 5th and 6th grade English Language Arts in Algiers, a neighborhood in New Orleans. ... [Read full bio »](#)



Corps member staff meeting at Northeast Elementary



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October 1, 2016

Elisa Villanueva Beard
Teach For America
25 Broadway
12th Floor
New York, NY 10004

Dear Elisa Villanueva Beard:

On behalf of Charity Navigator, I wish to congratulate Teach For America on attaining the coveted 4-star rating for demonstrating strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

The nonprofit sector is advancing and expanding. As our organizations evolve, so do the desires and interests of our supporters. Astute donors are yearning for greater accountability, transparency, and for concrete results from us. With more than 1.5 million American charities, Charity Navigator aims to accentuate the work of efficient and transparent organizations. The intent of our work is to provide donors with essential information to give them greater confidence in both the charitable decisions that they make and the nonprofit sector.

Based on the most recent information available, we have issued a new rating for your organization. We are proud to announce Teach For America has earned our fourteenth consecutive 4-star rating. This is our highest possible rating and indicates that your organization adheres to sector best practices and executes its mission in a financially efficient way. Attaining a 4-star rating verifies that Teach For America exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in your area of work. Less than 1% of the charities we evaluate have received at least 14 consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that Teach For America outperforms most other charities in America. This exceptional designation from Charity Navigator sets Teach For America apart from its peers and demonstrates to the public its trustworthiness.

Forbes, *Business Week*, and *Kiplinger's Financial Magazine*, among others, have profiled and celebrated our unique method of applying data-driven analysis to the charitable sector. We evaluate ten times more charities than our nearest competitor and currently attract more visitors to our website than all other charity rating groups combined, thus making us the leading charity evaluator in America. Our data shows that users of our site donated more than they planned to before viewing our findings, and in fact, it is estimated that last year Charity Navigator influenced approximately \$10 billion in charitable gifts.

Your achievement and the 4-star rating will enhance your organization's fundraising and public relations efforts. Our favorable review of Teach For America's financial health and commitment to accountability & transparency is now visible on our website.

We wish you continued success in your charitable endeavors.

Sincerely,

Michael Thatcher
President and CEO