

**TEACHFORAMERICA**  
North Carolina · Second Quarter & Annual Legislative Report  
December 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 27 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 leaders 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, we celebrated Veteran’s Day by recognizing and showing our gratitude to individuals and their families who sacrifice their lives in exchange for our freedom. Across North Carolina, we have seven veterans who are now in their first or second year of teaching with Teach For America. They embody humility, courage, and resilience. They are intentional about their relationships with their students and the desire to strengthen their communities. They have a strong impact on our mission at Teach for America, and we are humbled to elevate their work, their stories, and their passion for educational equity and excellence.

Sequoia Aldridge, a 2015 Eastern North Carolina corps member, is one of these veterans. She was recently featured in *Honored Online*, highlighting her military service as well as her time in the classroom with Teach For America in Eastern North Carolina.



*Sequoia Aldridge with her students at EB Frink Middle School in Lenoir County*

*Born and raised in Cleveland, Mrs. Aldridge graduated from high school and joined the Marines on September 11, 1984. She had no way of knowing at the time that she would spend the next three decades in its ranks.*

*[...] Sequoia Aldridge liked the Marines, and the Marines liked Sequoia Aldridge. In 1998, after she rose to the rank of gunnery sergeant, the Corps selected her to join the ranks of its warrant officers – a specialized collection of officers who in some ways bridge the gap between the enlisted and officer ranks in each service.*

*[...] Mrs. Aldridge began to look for a career outside the Marine Corps following her mandatory retirement at 30 years, and teaching carried a special attraction*

*“I first went to a Troops to Teachers event: the goal is to help retirees navigate the lateral entry process into teaching. But through that I heard the brief on Teach for America and was impressed by the training they had on offer.”*

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*When Teach for America made her an offer, she immediately knew she wanted to teach science, and that she wanted to teach at the middle school level.*

*[...]Mrs. Aldridge is under no illusion that what she does today is any less important than what she did in the Marine Corps. "I think about these young kids," she says, "and their opportunity for education can be life and death too."*

*[...]The most important thing that Mrs. Aldridge bestows on her students is the drive to succeed – the will to push through obstacles. To improvise. To adapt. To overcome. This too is the Marines. "I try to bring this mentality to the kids," she says. "You can do this!"*

*[...] And so Mrs. Aldridge plans to stay in the classroom for quite some time, pushing her students ever farther. Her husband Rory still serves in the Marines, leading a nearby unit in North Carolina.<sup>1</sup>*

We are honored to see veterans choosing to continue to serve our nation through teaching. We are grateful that we are able support the leadership of our corps members and alumni across the state, like Sequoia. We are thankful for the state's continued investment, which allows us to find promising leaders, develop and cultivate their leadership skills and mindsets through classroom teaching, and support them throughout their lifetime.

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's greatest contribution continues to be the diverse, innovative, and courageous leadership force that we bring to North Carolina and support across our state. Our network of individuals continues to expand opportunity for children through working in classrooms, schools, and from every sector, field, and place where people shape the broader systems in which schools operate.

Today, 27 years since we began partnering with North Carolina, we are over 2,000 individuals strong living and working in nearly two thirds of the counties in our state. This year, we are committed to leveraging the scale and diversity of our network to make sure we are learning faster and smarter. In just four years, we have more than doubled the number of Teach For America alumni school leaders in the state and we have the seventh largest alumni body in the nation. Below is a spotlight on a few of the talented individuals in our network and the work they are leading in North Carolina.

- **My Future NC**

We are honored to report that four Teach For America alumni were selected to serve on the My Future NC commission. My Future NC will bring together top North Carolina thought leaders from the education, business, philanthropy, faith-based, and nonprofit communities and ex officio representatives from the North Carolina House of Representatives, Senate, and Governor's office to discuss state education and training needs, identify obstacles to meeting those needs, and generate policy recommendations. The effort will be led by a team of co-chairs — Dale Jenkins, Chief Executive

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<sup>1</sup> Exum, Andrew. "Meet Honored's Newest Honoree!" Honored, 1 Aug. 2017. See Appendix B

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Officer of Medical Mutual Holdings; Andrea Smith, Chief Administrative Officer of Bank of America; and Margaret Spellings, President of the University of North Carolina.<sup>2</sup>

The Commission will rely on a steering committee co-chaired by Teach For America alumna Jennifer Haygood, Acting President of the North Carolina Community College System, and alumnus Mark Johnson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction as well as Ann Goodnight of the Goodnight Education Foundation, Anna Spangler Nelson of the UNC Board of Governors, and MC Belk Pilon of the John M. Belk Endowment.

Additionally, Tammi Sutton, Teach For America alumna and Executive Director of KIPP Eastern North Carolina, will serve on the postsecondary commission committee and Liz Chen, Teach For America alumna and public health researcher at Chapel Hill, will be on the P-12 commission committee.

- **MyHealthEd**

Co-founded by Teach For America, Eastern North Carolina alumna Liz Chen, MyHealthEd is using technology to make health education more accessible for teens. Their flagship product, Real Talk, is a mobile app that uses real stories from teens to impart relevant sexual health information. It also allows them to talk about sexual health with peers, friends, partners, and parents. Liz was recently awarded the prestigious Forbes *30 Under 30* Award for her work with MyHealthEd.<sup>3</sup>

- **Digi-Bridge**

Founded by Teach For America alumnus David Jessup, *The Charlotte Observer* named programs like Digi-Bridge as a way to help low-income, bright students succeed.<sup>4</sup> *The Charlotte Observer* explains:

*Charlotte-based nonprofit Digi-Bridge uses corporate donations to provide Saturday science, math and technology sessions at no cost to students in two high-poverty CMS schools and one community center. Those sessions, which cost \$25 for paying students, provide extra enrichment for high-scoring students at schools such as Ashley Park, which has to focus most of its efforts on helping low-scoring students catch up.*

*Principal Meaghan Loftus says this year's STEAM Saturday enrichment for eighth-graders, paid for with a \$50,000 grant from the OrthoCarolina Foundation, provided 'a next critical step in our work.'*

For the second year in a row, Teach For America's National Board issued a giving challenge for alumni to invest in the next generation of teachers. From October 17 to November 28, every donation of \$10 or more to a Teach For America by alumni and staff was matched one-to-one by the Teach For America National Board. Donations from brand new donors and monthly gifts were matched two-to-one.

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<sup>2</sup> "My Future NC to Develop Statewide Attainment Goal and Education Plan." University of North Carolina, 17 Oct. 2017. See Appendix C

<sup>3</sup> "30 Under 30 2018: Social Entrepreneurs." Forbes, Forbes Magazine. See Appendix D

<sup>4</sup> Neff, Joseph, et al. "5 Ways to Help Bright Low-Income Students to Excel." *The Charlotte Observer*. See Appendix E

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This matching gift allows us to continue to strengthen our network, while fueling the impact that Teach For America corps members and alumni are having across the state and the nation. Over 350 North Carolina Teach For America alumni raised \$118,500 for our work across the state, including matches from the Teach For America National Board.

Our alumni give for a variety of reasons, all connected back to their experience in the classroom as a Teach For America corps member. One alumni shared, “I give for my two former students who are 2017 Teach For America teachers in North Carolina. Might have been the proudest moment of my career to see them at the pre-service day when I saw them as teachers.”

We are proud to share the meaningful work our alumni are leading in partnership with communities across the state. We are excited to continue to share their stories in future reports.

### **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 here. 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.

In 2013, the year before we began our local recruitment efforts, only 20% of our corps had North Carolina connections. Now, just four years later, 42% of our first and second year teachers went to a North Carolina college or university and/or identify North Carolina as their home state. We are proud of the progress we have made in recruiting native North Carolinians and are encouraged by the long-term effects we are seeing. Eighty three percent of our 2014 corps (the first corps where we began recruiting locally) stayed in the state a third year—the ninth highest retention in the country. We believe that our North Carolina connected corps members are not only themselves choosing to put down roots in the state, but are inspiring other corps members (who may not have a previous connection to North Carolina) to stay as well.

We currently have 189 corps members who identify as part of the North Carolina Teaching Corps who are teaching in their first or second year in the classroom. 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 28 different North Carolina colleges and universities including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University, Duke University, Davidson College, and Wake Forest. 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 background<sup>5</sup>
- 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

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

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Our North Carolina Teacher Corps initiative is continuously cited as a model for the entire organization, and we remain committed to improving our program year over year. Our strategies for the upcoming year include:

- **Alumni Outreach:** We are strategically matching our North Carolina alumni callers with final round applicants based on their interests and career paths. We have conducted over 65 calls over two recruitment windows. 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 four webinars specifically for North Carolinians moving into the final round of interviews. These webinars highlight stories of current corps members, alumni, and students with North Carolina ties who choose to lead in our state. Over 45 applicants have joined our webinars.
- **Strategic Stewardship:** Our staff is calling and texting all applicants with North Carolina ties who are rated as the most competitive and highly likely to be admitted to the corps. These applicants often have competing offers and we plan to use these calls as an opportunity to share more about the education landscape in North Carolina and why their leadership is needed in our state.
- **Statewide Calendar of Events:** We built a statewide calendar of events across our regions that is shared with our national recruitment team. This allows recruiters to easily advertise our local events to prospective applicants.

#### **Regional Updates**

- **Eastern North Carolina**

Teach For America's greatest contribution has always been diverse, courageous leadership. We are a network of individuals who expand opportunity for children, working from classrooms, from schools, and from every sector and field and place where people shape the broader systems in which schools operate. The Eastern North Carolina team is committed to maximizing this broad network of alumni across the region.

Earlier this month, nearly 50 alumni gathered at RTI International in the Triangle for a day of learning and network-building. One activity that participants engaged in encouraged them to self-organize according to the question, "What are you most devoted to when it comes to addressing educational inequity?" Groups formed around access, the teacher pipeline, in-classroom experiences, and many more.

Also in the second quarter, 60 middle and high school students from Halifax County gathered at William R. Davie Middle School for an interactive day of learning to cultivate their leadership potential. Led by Stepheny Hine, an Eastern North Carolina corps member, and several other corps members, alumni, and community members, the Empower Conference included workshops on service learning, the college application processes, and coding.

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- **Charlotte**

As Teach For America's presence in the state matures, we are seeing more and more corps members who themselves were taught by Teach For America teachers. Yvonya White, a former Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools student and Wake Forest student, recently found out that she will be a Charlotte 2018 corps member. After celebrating with her mom, the first person Yvonya called was her seventh grade math teacher, Carla Clements. Seven years earlier, Carla taught Yvonya as a Teach For America corps member at Eastway Middle School. That time in the classroom had such a profound impact on both their lives that for years after, they kept in touch – sharing dinners, phone calls and even hours of proofing college essays together.



*Carla and Yvonya*

While at Wake Forest, Carla introduced Yvonya to Kayla Romero, a 2011 Charlotte corps member, who gave Yvonya her first internship through Students For Education Reform, an organization that fueled Yvonya's passion for educational equity. Yvonya excelled in her internship and ultimately decided to apply to the 2018 Teach For America corps. She will begin teaching in Charlotte next fall, working to improve academic outcomes for students just like her.

- **North Carolina Piedmont Triad**

In their fourth year of operating, the North Carolina Piedmont Triad is seeing excellent results across Guilford County. Since the region was founded in 2014, there have been five North Carolina Piedmont Triad teachers names Rookie Teacher of the Years of their respective schools; totaling 15 teachers.

### **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 F). Less than one percent of all nonprofits nationwide have received this many consecutive four-star ratings, putting us in the 99<sup>th</sup> 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.



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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, 2016- May 31, 2017.

<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 48,800 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 2,027 applications from North Carolina residents. Eight hundred and eighty 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, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, Duke University, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and Wake Forest university. Additionally, 102 candidates recently obtained a graduate degree representing a range of universities and programs.</p> <p>Seven hundred and eighty were mid-career level and lateral entry industry professionals. Twenty 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 289 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 sixty four accepted applicants were placed in North Carolina. One hundred and one 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 102 teachers impacting over 5,700 students. Charlotte had an incoming corps of 116 teachers impacting nearly 7,200 students and the North Carolina Piedmont Triad had an incoming corps of 21 teachers impacting over 1,302 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	One hundred and thirty five incoming teachers were STEM teachers. One teacher in the incoming corps was a veteran. Twenty four 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 1382 last year to 1520 this year—a growth of 10 percent.</p> <p>Of 2014 corps members placed in our TFA Charlotte and Eastern North Carolina regions, 83% of them remained in North Carolina. Of those, 72% remained in education*</p>



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Appendix A

*\*This includes only FY17 alumni survey data. All alumni employment data is self-reported, largely on our annual survey.*

Category	Eastern North Carolina	Charlotte	North Carolina Piedmont Triad
Funds expended by region of the state	2,996,703	2,144,466	858,831
Recruitment, candidate selection, and placement	645,858	350,953	147,187
Preservice training and preparation costs	403,704	115,009	45,564
Professional development and support	1,713,946	1,280,711	556,241
Alumni Support	233,195	397,793	109,839
Public Affairs & Engagement	-	-	-
Human Assets	-	-	-
Administration	-	-	-
Information & Technology	-	-	-
Finance	-	-	-
Funds received through private fundraising, specifically by sources in each region of the state			
	Eastern North Carolina	Charlotte	North Carolina Piedmont Triad
Foundation	889,000	1,026,667	185,150
Individual	295,643	1,014,305	52,073
Corporate	806,041	586,631	12,500



## APPENDIX B

*Sequoia Aldridge*

*E.B. Frink Middle School, La Grange, North Carolina*

*STORY BY: Andrew Exum, Contributing Editor, Atlantic Magazine*

There are no former Marines.

All of the men and women who have worn the famous globe and anchor of the United States Marine Corps are once and forever Marines. The Corps' identity and values – unique among the nation's four services – bury themselves deep within the men and women who volunteer for America's most spartan service.

*The few.*

*The proud.*

Frely Fuentes discovered this the first day he walked into Sequoia Aldridge's 7th grade science class at E.B. Frink Middle School.

Right from the beginning, Frely knew Mrs. Aldridge was something different. Something special.

Born and raised in Cleveland, Mrs. Aldridge graduated from high school and joined the Marines on September 11, 1984. She had no way of knowing at the time that she would spend the next three decades in its ranks.

What attracted Mrs. Aldridge to the Marines was what attracts all young men and women to the Corps. Whereas the other three services – the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force – often lure men and women through promises of skills training or college credits, the Marines challenge recruits, questioning whether they truly have what it takes.

*Are you up for the challenge? If not, that's okay. There's always the Navy.*

A young Sequoia Aldridge knew that if she joined the Marines, she would be held to the same high standards as everyone else. It didn't matter that she was an administrative specialist, or a woman: she was expected to be – like every other Marine – a rifleman first. She was expected to be a warrior and, if required to do so, to fight. And to *win*.

Sequoia Aldridge, whose mother died when she was just 11 and had been fighting all her life, wanted that challenge. And so she traded in her old family for a new one, arriving at Parris Island one fall day to take her place in America's warrior caste.

Sequoia Aldridge liked the Marines, and the Marines liked Sequoia Aldridge. In 1998, after she rose to the rank of gunnery sergeant, the Corps selected her to join the ranks of its warrant

officers – a specialized collection of officers who in some ways bridge the gap between the enlisted and officer ranks in each service.

"I think about these young kids, and their opportunity for education can be life and death too."

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Sequoia Aldridge

Along the way, though, Mrs. Aldridge became something else – an identity that fills her with even more pride than that of being a Marine: she became a mother. And as Chief Warrant Officer Aldridge watched her daughter Javaria grow up, she grew frustrated by what she saw in her daughter's schools. She grew frustrated that as Javaria became a teenager – critical years in any child's development – she wasn't getting the mentoring she needed from her teachers, and Mrs. Aldridge wasn't getting the communication she wanted back from Javaria's teachers.

When Mrs. Aldridge looks back on those years, she realizes now those were the toughest years for her daughter. "It's a great age – but a tough age."

So when Mrs. Aldridge began to look for a career outside the Marine Corps following her mandatory retirement at 30 years, teaching carried a special attraction.

"I first went to a Troops to Teachers event: the goal is to help retirees navigate the lateral entry process into teaching. But through that I heard the brief on Teach for America and was impressed by the training they had on offer."

When Teach for America made her an offer, she immediately knew she wanted to teach science, and that she wanted to teach at the middle school level.

"High school is when it counts," Mrs. Aldridge tells her kids, "but the work you put in now will benefit you when you get to high school."

In the classroom, Frely says, the students all know what Mrs. Aldridge did in the first 30 years of her career. "When the class is being disobedient," he says, "she has a strong voice that can control the whole room."

But the students also see another side of Mrs. Aldridge, the more tender side of her that's in the classroom today because of Javaria.

“We’re her own children,” Frely says. “She treats us like her own children.”

What the students don’t realize, though, is that this too is a side of Mrs. Aldridge that comes from the Marines. This is the human component of leading troops, and it’s the servant-leadership that is engrained in every Marine leader.

As Mrs. Aldridge puts it, “the biggest thing I took from the Marine Corps that I bring into the classroom, frankly, is that I care.”

Working to support the Marines in the field over 30 years – which included a combat deployment to Iraq – Mrs. Aldridge learned that you have to do your job thinking of the men and women you’re serving. “You have to take care of others better than you would take care of yourself.”

And so Mrs. Aldridge walks into class each day, ready to serve and shape her students at a critical stage in their development. “I’m a teacher, a mentor, a life coach,” says Mrs. Aldridge, pausing before adding, “who just happens to teach science.”

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## "We’re her own children. She treats us like her own children."

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And Mrs. Aldridge is under no illusion that what she does today is any less important than what she did in the Marine Corps. “I think about these young kids,” she says, “and their opportunity for education can be life and death too.”

And so she cares.

“She’s very verbal and visual about her teaching,” Frely reports. “She draws on the board and explains each process step-by step.”

She’s also “really fun,” he added. “We do fun activities around three times a week. We’ll have to solve a puzzle, and then we’ll rotate and do another activity.”

But the most important thing that Mrs. Aldridge bestows on her students is the drive to succeed – the will to push through obstacles.

*To improvise. To adapt. To overcome.*

This too is the Marines.

“I try to bring this mentality to the kids,” she says. “You can do this!”

“She tells me to keep dreaming big,” Frely says, “and to accomplish those dreams, little by little.”

And so Mrs. Aldridge plans to stay in the classroom for quite some time, pushing her students ever farther. Her husband Rory still serves in the Marines, leading a nearby unit in North Carolina.

But the Marines are no longer the only family business.

Her daughter Javaria, the one who struggled through middle school?

Now also a teacher. And that makes Mrs. Aldridge as proud as any of the kids in her own classroom.

## APPENDIX C

# MY FUTURE NC TO DEVELOP STATEWIDE ATTAINMENT GOAL AND EDUCATION PLAN

By Communications

*NC one of only a few states without a strategic plan from pre-K through postsecondary education*

MOCKSVILLE – The leaders of the North Carolina public education systems, including the President of the University of North Carolina, the Acting President of the North Carolina Community College System, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, have partnered to create My Future NC, a new statewide commission on educational attainment. The Commission's work is being underwritten by grants from The John M. Belk Endowment, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Goodnight Education Foundation.

My Future NC will bring together top North Carolina thought leaders from the education, business, philanthropy, faith-based, and nonprofit communities and ex officio representatives from the North Carolina House of Representatives, Senate, and Governor's office to discuss state education and training needs, identify obstacles to meeting those needs, and generate policy recommendations. The effort will be led by a team of co-chairs — Dale Jenkins, Chief Executive Officer of Medical Mutual Holdings; Andrea Smith, Chief Administrative Officer of Bank of America; and Margaret Spellings, President of the University of North Carolina.

"We have two North Carolinas when it comes to education and opportunity—the affluent, well-educated population centers—and the small towns and rural communities that have been left out of the rising economic and educational tide that has lifted our state," said President Spellings. "And North Carolina is one of only a few states without a comprehensive strategic plan from pre-K through postsecondary education. The goal of this effort is simple but by no means easy: to develop a multi-year education plan that recommends a robust attainment goal for the state and a broad-based agenda for a stronger and more competitive North Carolina. We can do better and we should do better—the future of our great state depends on it."

The Commission will rely on a steering committee co-chaired by Ann Goodnight of the Goodnight Education Foundation, Acting President Jennifer Haygood of the North Carolina Community College System, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mark Johnson, Anna Spangler Nelson of the UNC Board of Governors, and MC Belk Pilon of the John M. Belk Endowment.

The Commission's foremost responsibility is creating a multi-year education plan and a broad-based agenda for a stronger and more competitive North Carolina. In particular, the Commission will improve the current education policy environment by:

- Developing a comprehensive statewide education plan, from early childhood through postsecondary education, which recommends clear attainment goals, identifies key benchmarks, and proposes promising reforms to guide the future of education in North Carolina.
- Breaking down silos and coordinating key stakeholders to make the best use of all educational resources in the state.
- Debating the key issues and needs of the state to garner higher levels of public awareness and engagement.

To reach these objectives, the Commission will address three primary questions:

- What goals should North Carolina set for its education system across the education continuum, from early childhood through postsecondary education and into the workforce?
  - Develop evidence-based goals to increase the state's educational attainment and foster greater public awareness around the needs of the state and its students.
- What barriers stand in the way and keep us from fully leveraging the resources we have?
- Clearly identify the primary obstacles to attainment in North Carolina.
- Assess reforms and initiatives that promise to improve results.
- What solutions can improve outcomes?

"Higher education is an absolute imperative for the future of our state and our workforce," said Andrea Smith, Bank of America CAO and My Future NC co-chair. "Two of every three new jobs now require some form of post-secondary education – whether that's training credentials, an associate degree, a four-year degree or higher. This reality underscores how critical education is to career growth and how important it is to increasing economic mobility."

For more information about My Future NC, visit [www.myfuturenc.org](http://www.myfuturenc.org).

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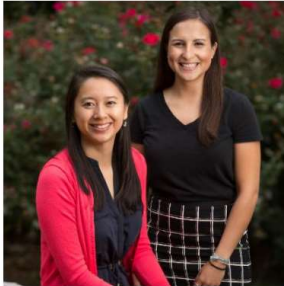
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Tuesday, October 17, 2017



## APPENDIX D

Forbes / PROFILE / [MyHealthEd](#)



### MyHealthEd

Cofounders, MyHealthEd

MyHealthEd is using technology to make sex education more accessible for teens. Their flagship product Real Talk is a mobile app that uses real stories from teens to impart relevant sexual health information. It also allows them to talk about sexual health with peers, friends, partners and parents.

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#### STATS

#### ON FORBES LISTS

**30 Under 30 - Social Entrepreneurs**

2018

## APPENDIX E

# 5 ways to help bright low-income students to excel

BY JOSEPH NEFF, ANN DOSS HELMS AND DAVID RAYNOR

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## DURHAM

For the first three weeks of this semester, ninth-grader Damian Ochoa Obregon sat in a math class he had passed last year.

He didn't understand why – he's a gifted student who earned a C in Math 1, a high-school level course, at Durham County's Neal Middle School. But he figured Southern High School in Durham must have had some reason for putting him in the same class again.

It turns out his counselor had simply scheduled Damian for the math class most students take during their freshman year at this high-poverty school. It was only when his mother, who struggles with English, met with teachers to review his progress that the mistake was revealed. Damian was moved to Math 2, but he'd already missed an opportunity.

“He could have handled a more rigorous course, an honors class, but we caught him too late,” said Raymond Robinson, his Math 2 teacher.

It would be easy to blame Damian's counselor, but that counselor is responsible for 415 freshmen, well above the national recommendation of no more than 250.

Huge caseloads for counselors are one of the reasons high-achieving students from low-income households get overlooked in North Carolina's schools. An investigation by The News & Observer and The Charlotte Observer reveals that thousands of low-income children who score at the highest level in end-of-grade tests aren't getting picked for advanced classes – and that they are excluded at a far higher rate than their more affluent classmates who earn the same scores.

The trend is consistent but defies simple explanation. Experts, educators and parents cite a range of causes: Educators can unwittingly stereotype low-income and minority students as low achievers. School assignments can leave high achievers with few academic peers or advanced classes. Testing and screening consistently favor middle-class, white and Asian students. Overworked faculty

must sometimes fill gaps for families that lack ability to advocate for their children. And a range of costly private help is available to affluent families whose children compete for recognition and opportunities.

Opening doors to opportunity will likely require a mix of public spending, private investment and policy change. Here are five possibilities:

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### **#1 Hire more school counselors**

Counselors play a critical role for students, mapping their route through school. This guidance is especially important for students who come from homes where English is not spoken or those whose parents may have only high school diplomas.

Teens, regardless of their family background, can't always be relied on to push for classes that may bring harder work and more risk. Damian Ochoa, for instance, describes himself as lazy but says his favorite teachers have been those who make him work hard.

"If I do too good, they'll put me in hard classes with more homework," he said. "But I think I can do more."

Tracking high achievers in middle and high school requires a juggling act. Schedules are set in spring, before students have taken year-end exams. Ideally, educators say, someone checks again over the summer to see if a top score in the previous grade merits a more advanced course in August.

But the caseload at Southern Durham High isn't a fluke. North Carolina averages almost 400 students per counselor, and the load is much higher at many schools.

In Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, for instance, elementary schools don't get a second counselor until enrollment tops 725 students. CMS has 38 elementary schools, many with very high poverty levels, that have 500 to 724 students, which means each counselor serves more than 500 students.

North Carolina pays for counselors based on a district's enrollment. When the American School Counselor Association tracked state ratios in 2013-14, North Carolina's level of 391 students per counselor was below the national average of 491 and comparable to the neighboring states of South Carolina, Virginia and

Tennessee. Only three states fell below the recommended 250, and 11 averaged more than 500 students per counselor.

CMS and Wake County schools have both turned to county commissioners to reduce caseloads further.

Wake is seeking nearly \$10 million this year to start a three-year plan to bring the number of counselors and social workers up to the recommended levels.

CMS is seeking \$4.5 million in 2017-18 to add 42 elementary school counselors, along with 12 social workers and six psychologists. That would allow the district to add a second elementary counselor when enrollment hits 500.

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## **#2 Fill gifted classes with high achievers**

Many school districts have strict cutoffs for entrance into gifted classes, where veteran teachers challenge high-performing students with advanced material. Typically, this requires top-level scores on aptitude and achievement tests and sometimes includes teacher recommendations.

In some schools, there may be a small number of students who meet those requirements. Why not fill empty seats in the classes with high-achieving students who fell just short of the gifted cutoff?

A study of gifted programs in Florida found this delivered big benefits.

Laura Giuliano and David Card studied the Broward County school system to determine who was placed in gifted classes and how. Their most powerful finding was a coattail effect.

Gifted students were selected through IQ tests. The school system required a full classroom even if there was only one child labeled gifted in the grade. Teachers used end-of-grade scores to fill the remaining slots. Those high-achieving students who filled the empty seats benefited greatly from learning among smart students from a highly qualified teacher. Poor and minority students posted the biggest gains in math and reading.

“Their performance went way, way up,” said Giuliano, an economist at the University of Miami. “If there were 20 students in the class, we found huge effects for the kids ranked 15 to 20.”

This could be most useful in high-poverty schools with few students at the gifted threshold and many who fall just short, said Linda Robinson, a gifted teacher in Wake County and past president of the N.C. Association for the Gifted and Talented.

“There are students who need something above the standard instruction in our school,” Robinson said. “They need to be pushed by others.”

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### **#3 Hire more teachers of color**

When James Ford was a history teacher at Charlotte’s Garinger High, he started by telling his students the game was rigged against them. While some of them were brilliant, almost all were black, brown and poor.

Their families’ poverty was shaped by a history of systemic racism, he told them. And their skin color meant even the best-intentioned educators and employers might overlook their potential.

Now Ford is program director for the Raleigh-based Public School Forum of North Carolina, which has identified unconscious bias and lack of advanced opportunities for minority and low-income students as some of the biggest challenges facing public education. The forum is pushing for better recruitment of teachers of color, more culturally sensitive lessons and efforts to counteract biases that result in academic and disciplinary disparities.

This year 80 percent of North Carolina’s public school teachers are white, compared with only 49 percent of students. In Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, where white enrollment is only 29 percent, 66 percent of teachers are white. Wake County’s teaching force is 82 percent white, compared with a student body that is 48 percent white.

The N&O/Observer investigation focused on low-income students, rather than race. But some of the same trends show up for black and Hispanic students – and African American parents say their children face stereotypes even if they’re from middle-class homes.

In Charlotte, a group of leaders that spent the last two years studying opportunity and upward mobility has tapped Ford to lead the next step, which includes confronting the role of race in education.

Shelagh Gallagher, a Charlotte-based expert in gifted education, says recruiting more teachers of color to teach the brightest students would open doors to students who are currently overlooked or not being challenged.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has sent all top administrators and some of its teachers through cultural competency training, designed to help them understand the hidden race and class biases that can hinder all educators from seeing and developing the best in their students. The CMS Foundation is seeking grants and donations to pay for all teachers to complete that training.

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#### **#4 Pay for extra opportunities when parents can't**

For middle-class and wealthy students, learning doesn't stop when school is out. For kids whose parents can't afford summer camps and after-school programs, philanthropists, businesses and nonprofit groups often step in.

For instance, the Charlotte-based nonprofit [Digi-Bridge](#) uses corporate donations to provide Saturday science, math and technology sessions at no cost to students in two high-poverty CMS schools and one community center. Those sessions, which cost \$25 for paying students, provide extra enrichment for high-scoring students at schools such as Ashley Park, which has to focus most of its efforts on helping low-scoring students catch up.

Principal Meaghan Loftus says this year's STEAM Saturday enrichment for eighth-graders, paid for with a \$50,000 grant from the OrthoCarolina Foundation, provided "a next critical step in our work."

In Raleigh, the nonprofit [Daniel Center](#) provides summer and after-school math, science and technology enrichment for low-income students.

High-priced summer programs often offer financial aid. Duke University's [Talent Identification Program](#), for instance, offers income-based aid for three-week camps that cost more than \$4,000. But financial aid alone isn't sufficient, said Matthew Makel, TIP's research director. The program has been evaluating the effectiveness of supporting students by email, online mentoring or face-to-face contact.



“Providing opportunities is not enough,” Makel said. “We need to establish a relationship and trust with the families so they can make the most opportunity out of this.”

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## **#5 Make better use of student data**

For 25 years, Janet Johnson has dissected educational data in North Carolina. An analyst at Edstar Analytics, a Durham consulting firm, she has been hired by school districts, the state and private foundations to analyze and interpret education data.

She’s not getting close to working herself out of a job.

That’s because, for the most part, educators can’t access data to make their own decisions: “The data is not available in a way to make it easy for people to use,” Johnson said.

Data is collected at the local level and flows up, from the school to the district headquarters, from there to state offices in Raleigh. For the most part, the data does not flow back down to teachers and administrators at the local level, Johnson said.

There are exceptions, such as the state’s annual report cards, Johnson said, but those provide only basic statistics. The state’s PowerSchool program allows parents, teachers and principals to track an individual student’s progress.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Superintendent Ann Clark says the key is individual tracking. In high schools, for instance, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools now has counselors reviewing each student’s transcript every year to make sure the student is getting appropriate classes to meet his or her goals, whether that’s earning a diploma or building up advanced credits to be competitive for a top university.

But even in a district like Charlotte-Mecklenburg, which has long prided itself on being data-driven, there are gaps. Brian Schultz, the district’s chief academic officer, said he was surprised to see the N&O/Charlotte Observer data showing that the district had placed just over 500 students who had scored a 4 or 5 in eighth grade math into a lower-level class in ninth grade in 2014. He had believed such placements were rare.

Schultz and Frank Barnes, the data chief for CMS, said a breakdown can occur because ninth-grade schedules are made before students take their end-of-grade exams. Foundation classes, which prepare students to take Math 1, don't count for a math credit, but they may be appropriate for grade-level students who need extra time and teaching to ensure they'll pass the crucial Math 1, Schultz said. But CMS asked all high school principals to review the results of eighth-grade math exams to make sure their freshman math assignments are appropriate.

Johnson, the Edstar analyst, said the most useful data tool available to teachers is the assessment system EVAAS, a computer program owned by SAS, the Cary-based software and analytic giant. For 10 years, the state has hired SAS to provide EVAAS to every teacher and principal.

Principals and administrators can use EVAAS to measure the effect of a new program or intervention on groups of students, she said.

Teachers can use EVAAS to help decide when a student is ready to take a Math 1, the first high school math class, and whether a student needs extra support to succeed. Johnson believes EVAAS is underused: she said she has conducted several training sessions in the past two years where she found administrators and teachers who had never logged into the program.

There is a hunger for more data-based analysis.

When The N&O and the Observer showed the results of their data analysis to teachers, principals, elected officials and administrators around the state, a common question popped up: Where did you get this data and who did the analysis?

The Department of Public Instruction gave the data to The N&O, where database editor David Raynor performed the analysis.

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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