



**Teach For America**  
North Carolina



**AmeriCorps**

**Teach For America**

**North Carolina's**

**2023**

**Annual Report to the**

**North Carolina General Assembly**

*One day, all children will have the opportunity  
to attain an excellent education.*

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This report will be submitted to the North Carolina General Assembly’s Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the offices of the President Pro Tempore of the NC State Senate and the Speaker of the NC House of Representatives, the Chairs of the Senate Appropriations / Base Budget Committee and the House Appropriations Committee, the Senate Appropriations Committee on Education / Higher Education, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on K-12 Education, and the NCGA Fiscal Research Division on or before January 1, 2024 as required by the North Carolina General Assembly, per S.L. 2019-165, Section 3.6(b); S.L. 2013-360, Section 8.21.(b); and S.L. 2013-360, Section 8.21.(e).

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# Who We Are

## Vision

One day, all children will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

## Mission

Teach For America finds, matches, develops and supports leaders to transform education and expand opportunity for all children.

## Our Why

We envision a world where educators, policymakers, parents, and students are working together to ensure that their communities' children have the foundation they need to learn, lead, thrive, and shape a better future for themselves and all of us.

## Our 2030 Goal

In 2020, we set a 10-year goal for our organization's work. By 2030, twice as many children in communities where we work will reach key educational milestones indicating they are on a path to economic mobility and co-creating a future filled with possibility. Specifically, here in North Carolina, we are working to ensure that **by 2030 twice as many children across North Carolina will reach key educational milestones in 3rd grade reading** indicating they are on a path to economic mobility and co-creating a future filled with possibility.

## Our Work

Teach For America is a leadership development organization for those who want to co-create a more just world alongside young people in their communities. Today we are a network of nearly 70,000 leaders who started in the classroom and remain in lifelong pursuit of the vision that one day, all children will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

Our approach draws on historical lessons of what enduring change requires:

- Leaders both inside and outside of the system, working to challenge the status quo and demonstrate what's possible.
- Those most directly impacted by injustice shaping the effort, alongside others with proximity to the complex issues.
- A broad and diverse coalition of people united around common purpose and shared values, translating lessons into policy and practice.



### **Talent Recruitment and Matching**

We recruit, select, and match tutors, teachers, and principals to schools, and system leader candidates to districts, CMOs, and state agencies.



### **Leadership Development**

Our programs and strategic partnerships grow leadership, accelerate career paths, and increase the impact of TFA members and their teams, from schools to statehouses.



### **Network Support**

We connect, convene, and catalyze a network of leaders working to disrupt, change, and reinvent systems to work for students and communities.

## **A Theory of Systems Change**

Solving this problem will take many interventions from many directions over a prolonged period of time: no single solution is sufficient to bring about an equitable and excellent education for all children. Our mission and approach draws on three lessons from enduring systems-change efforts throughout history. First, change requires sustained leadership inside and outside of the system challenging conventional wisdom and the status quo by demonstrating what's possible. Second, change requires a broad and diverse coalition of people united around common purpose and shared values, working together to translate insights from proof points of possibility into policy and practice. Third, the effort must be shaped by those most directly impacted by the problem, and led by those with personal proximity to the problem and its complexity.

## Our Approach

1. **We find promising leaders:** The questions underlying educational inequity demand the imagination and sustained focus of our nation's most promising leaders. We recruit outstanding and diverse leaders early in their careers, who have demonstrated evidence of the values and leadership necessary to expand opportunity and access for all children inside and outside of the classroom. We ask leaders to make a lifelong commitment that begins with two years' teaching in a public school, partnering with children and families most acutely impacted by educational inequity.
  
2. **We develop and cultivate the leadership skills and mindsets necessary for systems change through classroom teaching:** We develop leaders who go beyond traditional expectations to advance the academic and personal growth of their students and help to strengthen their schools. In doing so, they expand their perspectives, knowledge, and skill as educators, advocates, and systems change leaders. Great teaching is necessary to ensure children realize their potential and have the full agency they need and deserve in life. Teaching is also a profound act of leadership, and foundational for courageous individual and collective

leadership in the long fight for educational equity and excellence. In partnership with schools, parents, families, local universities, other organizations, and businesses in the community, we provide initial training, ongoing professional development, and access to an unparalleled resource and support network.

- 3. We support the individual and collective leadership, relationships, and learning of those in our network throughout their lifetime:** Throughout their lives, as their careers take shape, we help alumni connect with each other and with high-impact opportunities to continue to grow and learn in pursuit of collective impact. Informed and inspired by their students, many alumni choose to teach in high-need schools and communities beyond their two-year commitments. Others lead from many sectors that shape the context and conditions in which schools operate. They are school and district leaders; policymakers; founders of advocacy organizations; social entrepreneurs; and business, philanthropic, and civic leaders working to make change.

## TFA's Core Values

**Pursue Equity:** We work to change practices, structures, and policies to realize educational equity for all children. As we do so, we actively examine our roles in perpetuating inequitable systems.

**Strengthen Community:** We assume responsibility for our collective strength by developing relationships, building diverse and inclusive coalitions, and challenging one another to be our best. We act with empathy and extend grace to ourselves and others.

**Achieve Impact:** We pursue ambitious, meaningful outcomes that lead to access and opportunity for all children. We hold ourselves to high standards, make data-informed decisions, and orient to long-term success.

**Choose Courage:** We act on our beliefs and values, especially when it's hard. We center our efforts on the aspirations of our students and their families.

**Act with Humility:** We acknowledge the limitations of our perspectives. We seek different points of view and historical context to evolve our thinking and actions.

**Demonstrate Resilience:** We see every challenge as an opportunity to think expansively about solutions. When faced with obstacles, we deepen our resolve, adapt, and persist with optimism.

**Learn Continuously:** We operate with curiosity and embrace new ideas to innovate and constantly improve. We take informed risks and learn from successes, setbacks, and each other.



Nationally, Teach For America works in partnership with communities to expand educational opportunities for children facing the challenges of poverty. Today, Teach For America is represented in 57 regions nationwide. Currently, over 70,000 members of the TFA network are driving toward equity and excellence for all, including 1,500+ tutors, 3,500+ corps members, and 65,300 alumni. Of those 65,300 alumni, there are nearly 3,000 principals, assistant principals, and deans; more than 550 system leaders; and over 100 school board members. Teach For America works toward the day when every child has the opportunity to attain an excellent education. We do this by finding and nurturing leaders who commit to expanding opportunity for low-income students, beginning with at least two years teaching in a public school.

Teach For America (TFA) came to North Carolina in 1990. Since then, thanks in part to the strong support we have received from the North Carolina State Government, we have trained 4,000+ teacher leaders in our great state, impacting more than 250,000 students. The North Carolina General Assembly's (NCGA) continued investment in our organization ensures we can recruit, select, match, support, and develop hundreds more teacher leaders in school districts and charter school networks across Charlotte, Eastern North Carolina, and the Piedmont Triad each year. Moreover, we leverage our public funding to further develop the leadership of the 2,200+ Teach For America alumni who continue to live, work, and worship across our great state.

When TFA NC started in 1990, it was solely focused on placing first- and second-year teachers in hard-to-fill classrooms. While we continue to do that (it's our bread and butter), we've grown into an organization focused on broader leadership development. Here are some highlights of how TFA works to source, match, and develop talent in innovative ways:

- We have trained 4,000+ teacher leaders in our great state, impacting more than 250,000+ students from across North Carolina.

- This school year, 800+ exceptional TFA educators, including TFA corps members, alumni teachers, and high-impact tutors, will be working with 82,000+ students across North Carolina.
- Additionally, over one hundred TFA alumni are serving in school and district leadership roles impacting the educational outcomes of 48,000+ students from every corner of the Old North State.
- TFA’s “Ignite Tutoring Fellowship” provides high-impact tutoring to low-income students to tackle learning loss. There currently are 82+ Ignite tutors serving 208+ NC students. These folks are current college students, who we recruit, train, and support as they tutor 2-4 students for 3-5 hours per week every single week. Last year, 43% of eligible Ignite Fellows applied to join TFA as a corps member (full-time teacher for 2+ years), so we’re excited to leverage Ignite and other programs like it to recruit more full-time teachers too.
- TFA North Carolina’s Reinvest in Student Excellence (RISE) Fellowship is one of our “Teach Beyond Two” initiatives focused on

teacher retention and the ongoing leadership development of TFA alumni in the Old North State.

- TFA's 65,000+ alumni from across the country have gone on to do some really incredible things. We continue to support their leadership development in several different ways.

This past year, Teach For America North Carolina built upon its return to a statewide model in 2021 to more effectively pursue our vision of every child having the opportunity to attain an excellent education. We are proud of the work and achievements of TFA NC's staff, tutors, corps members (first- and second-year teachers), and alumni serving inside and outside of the classroom. We are proud of their work and achievements both in 2023 and since our inception in 1990.

For example, Henderson Collegiate, a public charter school in Vance County founded by Teach For America alums Eric and Carice Sanchez, recently achieved the number one spot in all North Carolina charter schools for academic growth according to metrics established by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) & the NC State Board of Education. In the 2021-2022 school year, 33 Teach For America teachers worked at Henderson Collegiate. TFA was excited

to celebrate this success, which was made possible in part by the NCGA's continued investment in our organization, and we are looking forward to ensuring even more TFA teachers and alumni leaders deliver exceptional results for North Carolina's students in 2024 and beyond.

TFA NC also sees promise from both our longstanding and blossoming "Teach Beyond Two" programs, which motivate TFA teachers to teach at least an additional two years in North Carolina public schools. Two of our most prominent Teach Beyond Two programs are our "Reinvest in Student Excellence" (RISE) and "Leroy 'Pop' Miller" Fellowships. These programs incentivize TFA teachers from NC to stay in NC classrooms and bring TFA alumni from across the country to the Old North State. Nationally, about 60% of TFA teachers stay in the classroom at least a third year beyond their initial two-year commitment. These partnerships succeed because of TFA NC's ongoing collaboration with TFA alumni, school administrators from across our great state, and the elected school board members who graciously serve our communities.

Teach For America North Carolina continues to benefit from the full strength of the entire TFA organization that consistently supports our North Carolina network and team. Together, we are leading the way for accelerated network impact.

For example, as TFA North Carolina enhances its efforts to develop alumni leadership through improved and expanded programming, we are more effectively working towards the promise of every North Carolina student attaining an excellent education. This includes both TFA alumni who served in the corps in North Carolina who we successfully retained through our “Teach Beyond Two” programs, and those TFA alumni who we successfully recruited to the Tar Heel State from other TFA regions through our “Teach Back Home” initiatives. This robust alumni programming supports TFA teachers who continue to teach in the classrooms that need them the most. In total, there are more than 2,200+ Teach For America alumni who live, work, and worship in the Old North State. Through engaging our alumni in new ways, whether they live in Charlotte, Eastern North Carolina, the Piedmont Triad, Wilmington, the Triangle, or somewhere else in North Carolina, we can demonstrate that our promise to North Carolina’s students is unwavering.

We have been working with members of our national team to determine what the education system needs to do differently to really achieve better outcomes for our kids in the next decade, and how Teach For America itself needs to change to have the greatest possible impact on students. That is why we set a new goal for ourselves to double the number of students in our communities who are on a path toward achieving greater economic mobility. We have launched into our new

2030 strategic vision to make the next decade transformational for students growing up in low-income communities.

This work began long before the COVID-19 pandemic, but has taken on new urgency now. We are stronger because Teach For America set an ambitious goal to guide our work through 2030. And we know this goal is attainable because we have seen it's possible right here in North Carolina: in Northampton County where the KIPP Gaston network doubled the number of college graduates in that region (Whitmire, 2019). Reaching our ambitious new 2030 goal will require us to do more and work differently to have the greatest impact on students. This is only possible because of the ongoing support we receive from the North Carolina General Assembly and the collaboration taking place between so many stakeholders.

Teach For America North Carolina strives to be the preeminent destination for TFA tutors, teachers, alumni, and staff based upon the tremendous and incredibly positive impact we have on North Carolina's students and communities. We work towards a shared future in North Carolina where success or struggle is not predictable for our students based solely on their zip codes or homelives. We set out to be "the place" that attracts exceptional leaders. We want to do our part to help ensure North Carolina remains the United States' top state for business and becomes the United States' top state for education too. We believe we are achieving impact in North Carolina through meeting the hopes

and ever-changing needs of our communities alongside TFA teachers and external partners. We consistently build, implement, assess, and adjust a strong strategy that focuses on recruiting and developing talented teacher leaders, supporting TFA alumni and staff, and accelerating our impact to ensure every North Carolina student attains an excellent education. This annual report outlines the work we are doing to help distinguish North Carolina as the preeminent destination for TFA teachers and staff to live, work, worship as they try to move our country closer to TFA's vision of #OneDay.

Eastern North Carolina, Charlotte, and the Piedmont Triad have benefited from Teach For America's presence for years. Those benefits are the direct result of the North Carolina General Assembly's consistent investment in our organization. Now, that investment is allowing us to grow our impact not only in those regions, but across all of North Carolina.

This year, we are continuing to learn about the impact of COVID-19 on school districts' and the necessary changes to meet the needs of our school communities. Additionally, our organization's new strategic direction presented a unique opportunity for statewide collaboration and strategic alignment in North Carolina. As Teach for America continues to pursue our 2030 goal, having one leader over our North Carolina regions has helped unify educational equity efforts across our state while ensuring each region moves forward implementing

strategies that will distinctly serve individual communities and our network of TFA teachers. We have been excited to work towards a shared vision for education in North Carolina with one leader. We believe this shift has been a natural evolution, has created important efficiencies in our work, and more effectively empowered our network through the creation of an aligned statewide long-term plan and strategy. This decision was made after considerable reflection from our regional staff members and extensive counsel from our Advisory Boards and organizational leaders. With centralized leadership within each distinct site—Charlotte, ENC, and the Piedmont Triad—we can best meet the needs of our stakeholders, maintain financial sustainability, and maximize our impact across our existing communities. This model sets us up in the long-term to potentially expand our presence to other regions in North Carolina where our footprint has not previously been as pronounced.

Our separate local regional boards have remained autonomous. We are, however, eager for board members to continue to connect, collaborate, and learn from one another. As Executive Director for both regions, Dr. Monique Perry-Graves has engaged with each board, while ensuring operations and priorities remain clearly aligned to maximize impact. Our aim has been to both foster meaningful statewide collaboration while also distinctly serving individual communities and our network of TFA teachers and other TFA alumni in both regions.

We plan to maintain a TFA teacher presence throughout Charlotte, Eastern North Carolina, and the Piedmont Triad. We will continue to prioritize our current school district partners regarding TFA teacher placement. Additionally, our TFA teachers will continue to be assigned to specific sub-regions (Charlotte, Eastern North Carolina, and the Piedmont-Triad).

We are undergoing a team restructure designed to maximize collaboration and efficiency across the state. While uncertainty is always present amid transition and change, this remains clear: as we enter the third year of our transition back to a statewide model, the Teach For America North Carolina team still aims to support the priorities of the State of North Carolina in our work and presence. Since Teach For America arrived in North Carolina in 1990, we have served the students, parents, and families of our great state with fidelity and through collaboration. While our specific roles may be connected to a particular community, our path forward is accountability to the life outcomes of communities throughout the entire state. Dr. Perry-Graves has maintained a statewide presence. She holds a multitude of personal and professional ties across North Carolina. She grew up in the Raleigh area, where her parents still reside. She has family in the Nash and Wilson County areas, and her son lives in Greensboro. While her home residence is in Charlotte, she has made frequent trips to all of our sites on a regular basis. Moreover, Dr. Perry-Graves, alongside other staff

members, has prioritized a regular dialogue between Teach For America North Carolina and the esteemed members of the North Carolina General Assembly. Teach For America recognizes North Carolina state legislators as an invaluable partner in our pursuit of educational equity for every North Carolina student.

This was not a formal merger so much as a statewide strategic alignment and unification. We recognize that the three sites where we place first-year TFA teacher candidates in North Carolina—Eastern North Carolina, Charlotte, and the Piedmont-Triad (and all the different counties and communities therein)—all hold beautifully unique and disparate identities. With that, our ultimate aim is to meet the distinct needs of the individual communities and our network of TFA tutors, teachers, and other TFA alumni. We will continue to take an inclusive and community-responsive approach.

In light of our 2030 goal, we are moving toward a greater focus on leveraging TFA alumni to accelerate impact. We are going to expand our reach and impact, not only galvanizing a new generation of diverse leaders to enter the classroom as first-year teacher candidates, but by also cultivating a stronger, and even more impactful, alumni network to deliver for our students and community. TFA alumni are leaders working in every sector in education—as teachers, coaches, principals, school counselors, school and district leaders, and education non-profit leaders. They also take on inequity from outside the classroom as well,

in community, nonprofit, and government service. More than two-thirds of our alumni are working in education or in low-income communities, working to advance the causes of excellence and equity.

We have staff members supporting our communities where there are TFA teachers and where there is a high density of TFA alums, including Charlotte, the Piedmont-Triad, Eastern North Carolina, and the Triangle. These staff members are dedicated to TFA teachers and TFA alumni engagement work. They are excited to foster connections among our 2,200+ network members currently living in North Carolina. We continue to provide our TFA teachers and TFA alumni with training and resources on a variety of topics that include best practices on leadership, wellness, data-driven instruction, relationship-building, and more. With this strategic shift, we have leveraged our alumni network to pursue and achieve systems change by developing, supporting, and tracking the degree to which our alumni are making purposeful impact. As a result of our alumni development strategy, we will be on a path to realize:

1. an increased number of alumni in key systems roles, and those alumni having sustained impact
2. a network that is continuously spreading knowledge in ways that accelerate student learning;

3. and the introduction of innovative learning, school, and systems transformation models that yield breakthroughs in outcomes.

Why now? We have an opportunity – and obligation – to respond to this urgent moment and to reimagine a different future for our students that is more equitable, just, and fair. A world where all students can lead, learn, and thrive. Teach For America is working intentionally and in innovative ways to best support our students and families. We are working fast to be responsive to the changing needs of our communities in alignment with our 2030 goal. Our shift to a statewide operating model is just one example of this. We deeply believe in the work of our organization in shaping what new realities may exist for education not only in North Carolina, but across our nation.

TFA teachers are still absolutely central to the work we do. Placing and supporting first-year TFA teacher candidates in high-need vacancies remains the bread and butter of our work. We know our kids are counting on us and our mission is more critical than ever. That is why we are focused this year to ensure students have educational opportunities in an extraordinarily difficult year, and that teachers can do so safely and effectively. Furthermore, that is why we cannot wait any longer as a country to take on the big systemic problems that hold kids back. This next decade will need to be transformational, so these barriers are finally knocked down and we never return to a system where students are left out and left behind.

We will be spending the rest of FY24 gaining further clarity on our 2030 goal and identifying the strategies and priorities that will help us achieve said goal. 2023 will be a year of learning, strategizing, shaping, and dreaming. We will be intentionally seeking input from our stakeholders—parents, students, legislators, donors, TFA teachers, TFA alumni, business leaders, community partners, et al.—to reimagine what needs to happen to ensure that twice as many children in communities where we work in North Carolina will reach key educational milestones indicating they are on a path to economic mobility and co-creating a future filled with possibility. We will continue this work until every student in North Carolina has the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

The financial support we receive from the North Carolina State Government fuels TFA NC's efforts to recruit and retain teachers, including both those with existing ties to the Old North State and those from a national pool of diverse, exceptional leaders. TFA NC delivers teachers to NC classrooms whether they have deep roots already established in their placement community or if they never have visited North Carolina before beginning their Teach For America training. Moreover, our public funding also contributes to TFA's high-impact tutoring program in North Carolina, titled the "Ignite Fellowship." The Ignite Fellowship is designed to address learning loss North Carolina students experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ignite

Fellowship has accelerated student learning and helped us further grow, diversify, and strengthen our applicant pool.

Teach For America North Carolina continues to deliver teacher leaders to the Piedmont Triad region (the area within and surrounding the three major cities of Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and High Point). We also continue to expand our efforts to place teacher leaders in Eastern North Carolina and throughout Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Additionally, as our statewide alumni base continues to grow, TFA NC is investing in new strategies to further develop our alumni inside and outside of the classroom. That includes establishing innovative partnerships and scholarships with the Aspen Institute, the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), and Western Governors University (WGU).

A financial accounting of how TFA NC implemented our State funding this past year is included later in this annual report. This accounting includes information on how our State funds were used throughout each subregion and for various program costs, including teacher candidate recruitment, teacher candidate selection, teacher candidate placement, teacher candidate training, and other relevant operational and administrative costs. Moreover, we continue to leverage State funds to raise the necessary additional private funding to achieve the aims of our organization. Fundraising information is also outlined later in this report.

Teach For America is a nonpartisan education nonprofit with bipartisan legislative champions. We know that, together, we can achieve great things for North Carolina's students and communities. We are committed to working with folks from both sides of the political aisle and from all across the political spectrum to ensure every child attains an excellent education. Moreover, we are committed to working with parents, students, teachers, principals, district & charter leaders, members of the business community, and other relevant community partners to turn TFA's vision into a reality. We thank you for your continued support.

# What The Research Says

A large and growing body of independent, rigorous research shows that students taught by Teach For America teachers are learning and achieving at the same rates as students being taught by non-Teach For America teachers in the same or similar schools. **TFA alumni teachers in particular often perform at better rates than non-TFA teachers.** Research studies also show that Teach For America's impact extends to other areas that are crucial to achieving educational equity, including lowering disciplinary rates, diversifying our educator workforce, and deepening educators' understanding of systemic injustice.

## Instructional Impact

- Teach For America corps members' students perform as well as other teachers' students on standardized tests of math and reading. This is true when compared to both novice and experienced non-Teach For America teachers.
- **In some cases, TFA teachers' students perform even better than non-TFA teachers' students,** and that is especially the case for TFA educators teaching science and social sciences, as well as for TFA alumni teachers across subject areas.
- Research findings on TFA teachers' instructional impact—which span multiple regions, subject areas, and grade levels—have remained consistent throughout the

organization’s history, suggesting that the results are not due to chance, error, or the particular statistical method.

**Recent Research**

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| <p>RAND Corporation (2023)</p> <p>Time Period Covered: 2009–2022</p> | <p>Teaching and Leading: An Evaluation Of The Impacts And Professional Trajectories Of Teach For America Participants In Indianapolis</p> <p>TFA teachers in Indianapolis were, on average, more effective at increasing student achievement than non-TFA teachers, and this effect is especially strong in schools with 5 or more TFA teachers. There is also a net positive effect of hiring TFA educators on student achievement, even when accounting for negative effects from higher TFA teacher turnover—resulting in the need to hire more novice teachers who are initially less effective—as well as positive effects due to TFA Indianapolis teachers’ differential impacts on student achievement.</p> |
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CALDER Center at the American Institutes for Research (2023)

Time Period Covered: 2010–2021

Persistent Teach for America Effects on Student Test and Non-Test Academic Outcomes

TFA teachers in Miami-Dade County Public Schools have been effective at raising the test scores of their students in math and ELA (relative to other teachers in the schools in which they are placed). Students taught by TFA math teachers go on to have better math grades the following year. Students in TFA classrooms are also less likely to miss school due to absences and suspensions

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| <p>Virginia Lovison<br/>(2022)<br/>Time Period<br/>Covered:<br/>2012-2019</p> | <p>The Effects of High-performing, High-turnover Teachers on Long-run Student Achievement: Evidence from Teach For America</p> <p>TFA teachers who choose to keep teaching as TFA alumni in New York City improve at double the rate of non-TFA teachers over the first five years of their careers. After accounting for differences in turnover rates for TFA and non-TFA teachers it is estimated that a long-run strategy of TFA hiring increases steady-state student achievement by 0.05 standard deviations (approximately 23 days of additional learning per year).</p> |
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| <p>SMU Center on Research &amp; Evaluation (2020)</p> <p>Time Period Covered: 2017-2019</p> | <p>Texas Impact Update: Evaluation Report For Teach For America</p> <p>Across 5 regions in Texas, students of TFA-affiliated teachers were as likely as or more likely to pass the STAAR assessment than students of non-TFA-affiliated teachers. TFA alumni are the most effective group of teachers compared to corps members. There was variation in TFA teacher performance across the 5 regional sites.</p> |
| <p>Mathematica (2017)</p> <p>Time Period Covered: 2012-2013</p>                             | <p>Impacts of the Teach For America Investing in Innovation Scale-up</p> <p>In this randomized controlled trial evaluation, Teach For America corps members teaching in elementary grades were as effective as other teachers in the same schools. Students of corps members in pre-K through second grade outperformed their peers in reading by the equivalent of an additional 1.3 months of learning.</p>    |

## Values and Beliefs

- Being a corps member changes you. Through their service, corps members experience an increased understanding of systemic injustice and a decrease in prejudice.
- Teach For America participants are more likely to be involved in social change, policy, and advocacy as alumni.
- Teach For America participants are more likely to pursue careers in education or careers impacting the field of education. Approximately 63 percent of our current TFA alumni base is working in the education field.

### Recent Research

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| <p>Katherine Conn,<br/>Virginia Lovison,<br/>Cecilia Mo<br/>(2022)</p> | <p>How Teaching in Underserved Schools Affects Beliefs about Education Inequality and Reform: Evidence from Teach For America</p> <p>Participation in TFA causes heightened awareness of structural inequality in education over belief in individualistic explanations for poor student outcomes. TFA participation also makes teachers more enthusiastic about policies and programs that expand resources and services for students, and leads to greater optimism and faith in the potential of schools to provide all students with an excellent education.</p> |
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| <p>Cecilia Mo,<br/>John<br/>Holbein, and<br/>Elizabeth Elder<br/>(2022)</p> | <p>Civilian National Service Programs Can Powerfully Increase Youth Voter Turnout</p> <p>Serving as a teacher in the Teach For America national service program has a large effect on civic participation—substantially increasing voter turnout rates among applicants admitted to the program. This effect is noticeably larger than that of previous efforts to increase youth voter turnout.</p>   |
| <p>Cecilia Mo and<br/>Katherine Conn<br/>(2018)</p>                         | <p>When Do the Advantaged See the Disadvantages of Others? A Quasi-Experimental Study of National Service</p> <p>Teach For America corps members experienced an increase in perceptions of systemic injustice against the disadvantaged, decreases in both class-based and racial resentment, increased beliefs that situational or environmental factors are the root cause of outcomes, a decrease in prejudice (measured by implicit racial biases tests), and an increase in identification with disadvantaged minorities.</p> |

Diversity Matters

- Research shows that when students of color have teachers of color their attendance improves, disciplinary infractions decline, and academic achievement and college enrollment rise. A diverse teaching force also strengthens a sense of self-efficacy and improves racial attitudes among all students (Olson 2023).
- 48 percent of our current corps members identify as people of color, markedly higher than the 20 percent of teachers nationally who identify as people of color.
- 59 percent of our current corps members come from low-income backgrounds and 41 percent are the first in their family to graduate from college.
- Currently, there are approximately 520 Teach For America alumni across the country who identify as people of color leading schools as school principals, and 350 serving as school system leaders.

Ongoing Research

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| SMU Center on Research & Evaluation (CORE) | CORE is currently engaged in a new study analyzing the impact of same-race teacher-student matches on student outcomes, generally, and for TFA teachers specifically. Results from this study will be made available by the end of 2023. |
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| Forthcoming<br>in 2023 |  |
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Multiple rigorous studies from North Carolina show that students taught by Teach For America teachers are learning and achieving at the same rates—and often, at better rates—as students being taught by non-Teach For America teachers in the same or similar schools. North Carolina TFA teachers are especially effective in math and science.

Students of TFA teachers perform as well as, or sometimes better, than students of non-TFA teachers. In the most recent study, students of TFA corps members are showing gains ranging from 29 to 94 additional days of schooling compared to students in non-TFA corps member classrooms.<sup>1</sup>

### TFA NC’s Impact on Math<sup>2</sup>

| Study Nickname                   | Years Of Data | Teachers                 | Elementary School | Middle School | High School |
|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 2014 UNC Impact Study            | 2005-2010     | Corps Members and Alumni | ✓ 0.07            | ✓ 0.14        | ✓ 0.19      |
| 2016 UNC Impact Study            | 2009-2014     | Corps Members and Alumni | ✓ 0.05            | ✓ 0.08        | ▲ 0.19      |
| 2019 Penner North Carolina Study | 1999-2011     | Corps Members            | ✓ 0.04            | ✓ 0.05        | ✓ 0.13      |

*Green checkmark = TFA teachers perform significantly better than non-TFA teachers.*

*Yellow triangle = TFA teachers perform as well as non-TFA teachers.*

### TFA NC’s Impact on Reading

Students of TFA teachers generally perform as well as students of non-TFA teachers in reading assessments. Studies show that the impact of TFA teachers on reading is even more positive in high school.

### TFA NC’s Impact on Reading<sup>3</sup>

| Study Nickname                   | Years Of Data | Teachers                 | Elementary School | Middle School | High School |
|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 2014 UNC Impact Study            | 2005-2010     | Corps Members and Alumni | ✓ 0.04            | ▲             | ✓ 0.08      |
| 2016 UNC Impact Study            | 2009-2014     | Corps Members and Alumni | ▲                 | ▲             | ▲           |
| 2019 Penner North Carolina Study | 1999-2011     | Corps Members            | ▲                 | ✓ 0.02        | ✓ 0.04      |

*Green checkmark = TFA teachers perform significantly better than non-TFA teachers.*

*Yellow triangle = TFA teachers perform as well as non-TFA teachers.*

### TFA NC’s Impact on Science

Though fewer studies explore the impact of TFA’s teachers on science, the evidence is overwhelmingly positive – students of TFA teachers perform better than students of non-TFA teachers in science.

The effects are quite large, meaning students of TFA teachers show gains ranging from 57 to 151 additional days of schooling compared to students in non-TFA classrooms.<sup>4</sup>In high school science alone, this could mean TFA teachers’ students are almost a year ahead than their counterparts.

## TFA NC's Impact on Science<sup>5</sup>

| Study Nickname                   | Years Of Data | Teachers                 | Elementary School | Middle School | High School |
|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 2014 UNC Impact Study            | 2005-2010     | Corps Members and Alumni |                   |               | ✓ 0.19      |
| 2016 UNC Impact Study            | 2009-2014     | Corps Members and Alumni | ✓ 0.08            | ✓ 0.19        | ✓ 0.21      |
| 2019 Penner North Carolina Study | 1999-2011     | Corps Members            |                   |               | ✓ 0.19      |

*Green checkmark = TFA teachers perform significantly better than non-TFA teachers.*

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| <p>Henry et al. (2014)<br/>[2014 NC Impact Study]</p> <p>Published in Education Finance and Policy Journal</p> | <p>This research study uses rigorous quantitative techniques to estimate the impact of teacher preparation policies on student achievement in North Carolina. They find that “Teach For America corps members are more effective than traditionally prepared teachers.”</p> <p>Time Period Covered: 2005–2010</p>   |
| <p>Bastian and Xing (2016) [2016 NC Impact Study]</p> <p>Report by Education Policy</p>                        | <p>This study conducted by the Education Policy Initiative at Carolina (EPIC) examines the distribution, characteristics, performance, and persistence of teachers entering the profession with different forms of preparation in North Carolina. The authors estimate value-added models across nine grade level/subject-areas, and find that “Teach For America</p> |

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| <p>Initiative at<br/>Carolina</p>   | <p>corps members are more effective in elementary and middle grades mathematics and science and high school biology” than UNC system prepared teachers.</p> <p>Time Period Covered: 2009–2014</p>  |
| <p>Penner (2019)<br/>[2019 Penner NC Study]<br/>Published in<br/>Educational Policy<br/>Journal</p> | <p>This research study examines the effect of TFA on achievement across elementary, middle, and high school using a unique data set from the state of North Carolina, spanning the school years 1999–2000 to 2010–2011. The author finds that “the relationship between TFA and student achievement is positive in every subject and grade except elementary reading.”</p> <p>Time Period Covered: 1999–2011</p> |

The studies described above examine the impact of TFA teachers on student outcomes and were conducted by external research partners, sometimes in partnership with TFA and sometimes independently.



# LATEST IMPACT RESEARCH AND EVALUATIONS

July 2023

## OUR IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

### Headlines:

- Teach For America corps members' students perform as well as other teachers' students on standardized tests of math and reading. This is true when compared to both novice and experienced non-Teach For America teachers.
- In some cases, TFA teachers' students perform even better than non-TFA teachers' students, and that is especially the case for TFA educators teaching science and social sciences.
- Students of TFA alumni teachers generally perform as well as or better than students of non-TFA alumni teachers across multiple subject areas.
- Research findings on TFA teachers' instructional impact—which span multiple regions, subject areas, and grade levels—have remained consistent throughout the organization's history, suggesting that the results are not due to chance, error, or the particular statistical method.

## RECENT RESEARCH



**Master et al (2023): "[Teaching and Leading: An Evaluation Of The Impacts And Professional Trajectories Of Teach For America Participants In Indianapolis](#)"** RAND Corporation. Time Period Covered: 2009–2022

TFA teachers in Indianapolis were, on average, more effective at increasing student achievement than non-TFA teachers, and this effect is especially strong in schools with 5 or more TFA teachers. There is also a net positive effect of hiring TFA educators on student achievement, even when accounting for negative effects from higher TFA teacher turnover—resulting in the need to hire more novice teachers who are initially less effective—as well as positive effects due to TFA Indianapolis teachers' differential impacts on student achievement.



**Backes & Hansen (2023): "[Persistent Teach for America Effects on Student Test and Non-Test Academic Outcomes](#)."** CALDER Center at the American Institutes for Research. Time Period Covered: 2010–2021

TFA teachers in Miami-Dade County Public Schools have been effective at raising the test scores of their students in math and ELA (relative to other teachers in the schools in which they are placed). Students taught by TFA math teachers go on to have better math grades the following year. Students in TFA classrooms are also less likely to miss school due to absences and suspensions.



**An & Koedel (2021): “[How do teachers from alternative pathways contribute to the teaching workforce in urban areas? Evidence from Kansas City.](#)” AERA Open. Time Period Covered: 2012–2018**

Teach For America teachers in Kansas City raise test scores by 0.11 standard deviations in math and 0.03 standard deviations in ELA compared to non-TFA teachers of similar experience levels.



**Lovison (2022): “[The Effects of High-performing, High-turnover Teachers on Long-run Student Achievement: Evidence from Teach For America.](#)” Annenberg Institute at Brown University EdWorking Paper No. 22–675. Time Period Covered: 2012–2019**

TFA teachers who choose to keep teaching as TFA alumni in New York City improve at double the rate of non-TFA teachers over the first five years of their careers. After accounting for differences in turnover rates for TFA and non-TFA teachers it is estimated that a long-run strategy of TFA hiring increases steady-state student achievement by 0.05 standard deviations (approximately 23 days of additional learning per year).



**Wright et al (2020): “[Texas Impact 2020 Update: Evaluation Report for Teach For America.](#)” SMU Center on Research & Evaluation. Time Period Covered: 2017–2019**

Across 5 regions in Texas, students of TFA-affiliated teachers were as likely as or more likely to pass the STAAR assessment than students of non-TFA-affiliated teachers. TFA alumni are the most effective group of teachers compared to corps members. There was variation in TFA teacher performance across the 5 regional sites.



**Penner (2019): “[Teach For America and Teacher Quality: Increasing Achievement Over Time.](#)” Educational Policy. Time Period Covered: 1999 to 2011**

In North Carolina, Teach For America teachers’ positive effects on student achievement were sustained over time and even increased in certain subjects. Having a TFA teacher was associated with significantly higher achievement in high school social studies, as well as elementary and middle school math, and slightly higher achievement in high school English. TFA’s sustained effects on student achievement are due to a combination of factors that contribute to a trend of incremental, positive improvements over time.

## OUR ALUMNI IMPACT

### Headlines:

- Being a corps member changes you. Through their service, corps members experience an increased understanding of systemic injustice and a decrease in prejudice.
- Teach For America participants are more likely to be involved in social change, policy, and advocacy as alumni.
- Teach For America participants are more likely to pursue careers in education or careers impacting the field of education. Approximately 63 percent of our current TFA alumni base is working in the education field.

## RECENT RESEARCH





**Conn, Lovison, & Mo (2022): [“How Teaching in Underserved Schools Affects Beliefs about Education Inequality and Reform: Evidence from Teach For America.”](#) *Public Opinion Quarterly*.**

Participation in TFA causes heightened awareness of structural inequality in education over belief in individualistic explanations for poor student outcomes. TFA participation also makes teachers more enthusiastic about policies and programs that expand resources and services for students, and leads to greater optimism and faith in the potential of schools to provide all students with an excellent education.



**Mo, Holbein & Elder (2022): [“Civilian national service programs can powerfully increase youth voter turnout.”](#) *PNAS*.**

Serving as a teacher in the TFA national service program has a large effect on civic participation—substantially increasing voter turnout rates among applicants admitted to the program. This effect is noticeably larger than that of previous efforts to increase youth voter turnout. voter turnout rates among applicants admitted to the program. This effect is noticeably larger than that of previous efforts to increase youth voter turnout.



**Common Good Labs (2022): [Alumni Networks, Key Roles, And Systems Improvement: Insights From Eight U.S. Cities.](#)**

Through social network analysis of alumni in eight cities, researchers found that connections and relationships are critical for creating systems change, but high connectivity is not enough. Organizing to create systems change requires a combination of alumni working in advocacy and alumni in formal positions of influence, such as local public district executives and elected officials. They found that key roles associated with ecosystem change in communities were elected officials, advocacy/nonprofit leaders, state and local education executives, and principals. Also, the network analyses showed that systems leaders play “bridging roles” between alumni in advocacy and alumni in schools.



**Mo, Conn, & Anderson-Nilsson (2019): [“Youth National Service and Women’s Political Ambition: The Case of Teach For America.”](#) *Politics, Groups, and Identities*.**

By exposing women to issues of systemic inequity in education and integrating them into networks that foster continued civic participation, participating in TFA causes women to be more politically ambitious. Compared to similar female applicants who were not accepted into the program, TFA alumni are, on average, 10 percentage points more likely to be interested in running for political office and 6 percentage points more likely to participate in political campaigns.



**Kalina & Clifford (2019): [“Teach For America Alumni Impact: The Case for Orleans Parish School Accountability Policy.”](#) *American Institutes for Research*.**

Through interviews and social network analyses, researchers found that 35 educational leaders were considered central to policy development in shaping a new local educational policy that shifts school oversight responsibility from the state back to the local school board—eight of whom were TFA alumni. The researchers concluded that the TFA alumni continued to remain active in New Orleans long after their teaching commitments were completed, and TFA alumni continued to drive educational improvements through policy change. The alumni successfully built coalitions and spearheaded efforts that eventually led to policy development.



**Mo & Conn (2018): [When Do the Advantaged See the Disadvantages of Others? A Quasi-Experimental Study of National Service.](#) *American Political Science Review*.**

TFA corps members experienced an increase in perceptions of systemic injustice against the disadvantaged, decreases in both class-based and racial resentment, increased beliefs that situational or environmental factors are the root cause of outcomes, a decrease in prejudice (measured by implicit racial biases tests), and an increase in identification with disadvantaged minorities.

## DATA AND RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF A DIVERSE NETWORK

### Headlines:

- 48 percent of our current corps members identify as people of color, markedly higher than the 20 percent of teachers nationally who identify as people of color.
- 59 percent of our current corps members come from low-income backgrounds, and 41 percent are the first in their family to graduate from college.
- Currently, there are approximately 520 Teach For America alumni across the country who identify as people of color leading schools as school principals, and 350 serving as school system leaders.

## EXTERNAL RESEARCH



**Research shows that when students of color have teachers of color their attendance improves, disciplinary infractions decline, and academic achievement and college enrollment rise.**

A diverse teaching force also strengthens a sense of self-efficacy and improves racial attitudes among all students ([Olson 2023](#)).



**Previous studies have found positive impacts on student perceptions of school for students of color**

taught by race/ethnicity-congruent teachers (Atkins et al., 2014), academic outcomes for Black students when taught by a Black teacher (Clotfelter et al., 2007; Dee, 2004; Easton-Brooks et al., 2010; Eddy & Easton-Brooks, 2011; Egalite et al., 2015; Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010; Redding, 2019; Yarnell & Bohrnstedt, 2018), female and ethnic-minority student persistence in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM; Price, 2010), as well as fewer negative behavioral referrals for students of color (Lindsay & Hart, 2017).



**Hujar et al (2023): "Academic Impact of Student-Teacher Race/Ethnicity Matching for Black and Hispanic Students." Working paper (TFA partnership with SMU)**

Research across Texas' TFA and non-TFA teachers showed positive effects on student academic outcomes for Hispanic students and their race/ethnicity congruent teachers in elementary reading and mathematics as well as middle grades mathematics; for Black students and their race/ethnicity congruent teachers, significant, yet small, positive effects were found for elementary reading only.

## Research on KIPP Schools

Mathematica released a new study on 9/12/23: "[Long-Term Impacts of KIPP Middle and High Schools on College Enrollment, Persistence, and Attainment.](#)" The study found that attending both a KIPP middle school and a KIPP high school had large, positive impacts on students' college enrollment and college persistence rates; and KIPP middle and high schools also had a large and statistically significant combined effect on college graduation rates. The study also found that the impact of attending a KIPP middle and high school, extrapolated nationwide, would be large enough to entirely close the degree-completion gap between white and Black students and nearly close the degree-completion gap between white and Latinx students in the United States.

Resources:

- ★ Mathematica: [Long-Term Impacts of KIPP Middle and High Schools on College Enrollment, Persistence, and Attainment](#)
- ★ KIPP: [New Independent Research Shows KIPP Public Schools Are Closing the College Completion Gap](#)
- ★ *The74*: [KIPP Middle and High School Students Have Far Higher College Completion Rates](#)

★ *The Washington Post*: [KIPP charter grads finish college at higher rates than their peers](#)

These findings position education thought leaders at Teach For America to celebrate the positive achievements of KIPP students, shining a light on optimistic news about what is possible, and what we can learn from the 280 KIPP public schools in communities across the country, particularly as we work towards our 2030 goal. Teach For America thought leaders are well-positioned to speak to the way that TFA alumni and corps members have been in partnership with KIPP students and families for almost two decades. Teach For America can also elevate the perspectives of KIPP school leaders, who can speak firsthand about their students' successes, what they see as contributing to their success, and the role that the TFA network plays in their holistic talent strategies to meet students' needs.

- A new study from Mathematica shows that students who attended both KIPP middle and high schools were 31% more likely to enroll in a four-year college and 19% more likely to graduate from college compared to peers who did not attend a KIPP school.
- In the research sample, the effect of attending both a KIPP middle school and high school was so large that if it were applied to all students nationally, the longstanding college completion gap

between Black and Hispanic students and their white peers would nearly close.

- KIPP and Teach For America both share a deep commitment to students. TFA serves as a valuable talent pipeline for KIPP, providing educators and school leaders that are deeply committed to their students and going above and beyond to ensure every child has what they need to learn, lead, and thrive to and through college.
- KIPP was founded by two TFA alums in Houston in 1994. And since that time, KIPP schools have been among the 1,500 schools across the country that partner with Teach For America as an important part of their schools' holistic talent strategies.
- In the most recent school year, TFA alumni made up an estimated one-third of KIPP school leaders, and TFA corps members and alumni totaled 5% of KIPP teachers.
- Over the last decade we've had between two and four hundred corps members teaching at KIPP schools across the country annually, impacting over 15,000 students each year, and 160,000 KIPP students in the last decade.
- KIPP cites strategic use of data, its strong network, and direct support to alumni during college and early career as reasons for students' successes.

# Recruitment & Selection

The North Carolina General Assembly's (NCGA) continued financial investment in Teach For America (TFA) North Carolina helps make it possible for us to recruit, train, support, and retain teachers to serve in North Carolina's public schools.

TFA NC remains committed to the central tenets of the NC Teacher Corps, but continues to build off of its work through innovative strategies. This includes our "Teach Back Home" initiatives, which convince more North Carolinians to either stay in or make it home to North Carolina to teach. TFA NC leverages both local and national recruitment strategies to deliver on this promise. Our organization recruits both first-time teachers and TFA alumni from other states to help address the teacher shortage.

This past year Teach For America North Carolina reallocated existing resources to boost its investments in recruiting diverse and exceptional leaders from the Old North State to serve the NC students who need them most.

TFA NC reallocated existing resources to invest in a recruiter to focus solely on recruiting diverse and exceptional leaders from North Carolina to teach in North Carolina. So far this year, 50% of the prospective students this recruiter met with have applied to Teach For

America. This recruiter will work in tandem with six other recruiters from Teach For America's national recruitment team. Those seven recruiters will collaborate to recruit diverse and exceptional college graduates from North Carolina and across the country, mid-career and lateral entry professionals from North Carolina and across the country, folks with academic and/or professional backgrounds in STEM from North Carolina and across the country, and Military Veterans of the United States Armed Forces from North Carolina and across the country to serve the NC students who need them most.

Our TFA NC recruiter is focused on recruiting diverse and exceptional leaders from every corner of the Old North State to serve the NC students who need them most. We are laser-focused on finding the most diverse and exceptional leaders from all 100 NC counties. These prospective applicants are in addition to the diverse and exceptional leaders we are targeting from the entire country. That includes leaders with and without previous ties to North Carolina. The tremendous success of our recruitment efforts centers on sourcing the best talent already from the Old North State, sourcing the best talent from across the country, and then matching, training, developing, and supporting that talent. We are determined to find folks who will ensure every child earns an excellent education.

Our TFA NC recruiter is spending time connecting with folks both virtually and in-person who hail from all across the Old North State. That

includes students from East Carolina University (ECU) in Greenville, North Carolina State University (NC State) in Raleigh, Fayetteville State University (which has a large population of Military Veterans of the United States Armed Forces), North Carolina Central University (NCCU) in Durham, and Winston-Salem State University. This is in addition to TFA's enterprise-wide recruitment efforts, which includes in-person and virtual recruitment efforts that focus on Duke University in Durham, UNC Chapel Hill, UNC Greensboro, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical (NC A&T) State University in Greensboro, Appalachian State University in Boone, Davidson College, and Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem. Our collaborative recruitment efforts are also focusing on recruiting diverse and exceptional leaders from North Carolina Wesleyan in Rocky Mount, Saint Augustine's University in Raleigh, Bennett College in Raleigh, Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, Elizabeth City State University, Livingstone College in Salisbury, UNC Pembroke, and Wingate University. We are working every day to maintain and expand our recruitment-related relationships.

Teach For America recruits diverse and exceptional leaders from the entire country. TFA is finding diverse and exceptional leaders from a national pool of talent to address North Carolina's teacher shortage. Moreover, TFA's efforts bring folks from other states to our great state. Some of these diverse and exceptional teacher candidates have deep ties to North Carolina but left for a period of time, some maybe are

loosely connected through family vacations or distant cousins, while others have never visited the state before agreeing to serve NC students through TFA. TFA is growing North Carolina's population, economy, and education talent pipeline through its national recruitment efforts. TFA is committed to sourcing, matching, and developing diverse and exceptional leaders who will positively impact students inside and outside of the classroom.



**Photo Caption:** *Chanelle Gainey, TFA NC's Manager of Regional Recruiter, speaks with diverse and exceptional leaders from NC State University's Cheerleading Squad about applying to Teach For America.*



**Photo Caption:** *Leandra Clay, TFA NC's Managing Director of Alumni Network Strategy for the Eastern North Carolina & Triangle Regions, joined Chanelle Gainey, TFA NC's Manager of Regional Recruiter, at a job fair event at NC State University in Raleigh, NC. Leandra is an alumna of both Teach For America (ENC '14) and North Carolina State University, where she earned a Master of Education (M.Ed.) as part of NC State University's Educational Leadership Academy (NELA). Leandra previously worked as an Assistant Principal with Duplin County Schools. Leandra and Chanelle spoke with dozens of diverse and exceptional leaders at this event, encouraging these prospective applicants to consider joining TFA NC to ensure every child can attain an excellent education.*



**Photo Caption:** Chanelle Gainey, TFA NC's Manager of Regional Recruiter, leveraged the leadership of Stafford Daniels, TFA NC's Director of Alumni Leadership Development, at a recruitment event at East Carolina University (ECU) in Greenville, North Carolina. Stafford has coached hundreds of TFA corps members and alumni in pedagogy, content, and teacher leadership. Stafford is based in Pitt County, North Carolina. Stafford served 12 years on active duty as a commissioned officer, at both Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia and Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, North Carolina. He was honorably discharged from the United States Army as a Captain. Chanelle asked Stafford to join her at this event because of his ability to connect with Military Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, diverse and exceptional leaders from Eastern North Carolina, and anyone interested in ensuring that every child has the opportunity to attain an excellent education.



**Photo Caption:** Chanelle Gainey, TFA NC's Manager of Regional Recruiter, bumped into Rameses at a job fair at UNC Chapel Hill.



**Photo Caption:** *Chanelle Gainey, TFA NC's Manager of Regional Recruiter, spoke with prospective applicants from Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina about joining TFA to help ensure that every child has the opportunity to attain an excellent education.*



**Photo Caption:** *Chanelle Gainey, TFA NC's Manager of Regional Recruiter, visited Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina to encourage students to apply to TFA to help ensure that every child has the opportunity to attain an excellent education.*



*Photo Caption: Chanelle Gainey, TFA NC's Manager of Regional Recruiter, visited North Carolina Agricultural and Technical (NC A&T) State University in Greensboro to encourage students to apply to TFA to help ensure that every child has the opportunity to attain an excellent education.*



**Photo Caption:** Chanelle Gainey, TFA NC's Manager of Regional Recruiter, visited a recruitment event at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina. Chanelle is a proud alumna of Bennett College. At this event, Chanelle encouraged students to apply to TFA to help ensure that every child has the opportunity to attain an excellent education.



**Photo Caption:** Chanelle Gainey, TFA NC's Manager of Regional Recruiter, has traveled all across the Old North State to market TFA to diverse and exceptional leaders interested in ensuring that every child has the opportunity to attain an excellent education.



**Photo Caption:** Chanelle Gainey, TFA NC's Manager of Regional Recruiter, has traveled all across the Old North State to market TFA to diverse and exceptional leaders interested in ensuring that every child has the opportunity to attain an excellent education.



**Photo Caption:** Teach For America recruits at traditional career fairs on and off of college campuses. We also leverage digital recruitment strategies, including posting to job boards like Handshake, advertising TFA on social media channels, sending prospective applicants emails, and leveraging our website to market TFA to diverse and exceptional leaders interested in ensuring that every child has the opportunity to attain an excellent education.



**Photo Caption:** Chanelle Gainey, TFA NC's Manager of Regional Recruiter, visited UNC Chapel Hill's 2023 Fall Career Fair. It was amazing! Pictured at Chanelle's recruitment table is Kim Miller, a TFA ENC alum and TFA recruiter who focuses on recruiting diverse and exceptional talent from the Southeast Region, including North Carolina.



**Photo Caption:** Chanelle Gainey, TFA NC's Manager of Regional Recruiter, is also focused on growing the pipeline of diverse and exceptional educators by recruiting at the K-12 schools served by TFA. These "Grow Your Own" initiatives are a powerful component of TFA's recruitment work. Chanelle is pictured here with two other TFA NC staff members during an information session at Garinger High school.

TFA’s local, statewide, and national recruitment efforts delivered incoming first-year teachers from the following colleges and universities, including colleges and universities from both inside and outside of the Old North State, to North Carolina classrooms for the 2023–2024 school year:

|   |
|---|
| Agnes Scott College                         |
| Appalachian State University                |
| Belmont Abbey College                       |
| Berea College                               |
| Bowling Green State University              |
| Capella University                          |
| City University of New York City College    |
| Clayton University                          |
| College of Charleston                       |
| Colorado State University                   |
| Columbia University in the City of New York |

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| Cornell University   |
| Davidson College   |
| Duke University  |
| East Carolina University (ECU)   |
| Fayetteville State University  |
| Furman University  |
| Georgia College & State University                                     |
| Howard University  |
| Kennesaw State University  |
| Liberty University   |
| Malone College   |
| Metropolitan College of New York                                       |
| Norfolk State University   |
| North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University<br>(NC A&T) |

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|--|
| North Carolina Central University                      |
| North Carolina State University (NC State)             |
| Northern Arizona University                            |
| Other US University                                    |
| Our Lady of the Lake College                           |
| Penn State University Park                             |
| Rowan University                                       |
| Saint Gregory's University                             |
| Shaw University  |
| Spelman College  |
| Stevenson University                                   |
| The Ohio State University Main Campus (Columbus, Ohio) |
| Union College - Kentucky                               |
| University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff                   |
| University of Georgia                                  |

|   |
|---|
| University of Maine   |
| University of Michigan–Ann Arbor                              |
| University of Nebraska - Lincoln                              |
| University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC Chapel Hill) |
| University of North Carolina at Charlotte                     |
| University of North Carolina at Greensboro                    |
| University of North Carolina at Pembroke                      |
| University of Phoenix   |
| University of South Carolina - Columbia                       |
| University of Tennessee                                       |
| University of Virginia  |
| University of Wisconsin–Madison                               |
| Valley Forge Christian College                                |
| Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University           |
| Wake Forest University  |

|                                |
|--------------------------------|
| Washburn University            |
| Western Carolina University    |
| Winston-Salem State University |
| Winthrop University            |

Teach For America has recruited more than thirty-four Military Veterans of the United States Armed Forces to serve in the Old North State as public school teachers since 2014. This is in addition to the hundreds of other Military Veterans of the United States Armed Forces who TFA recruited to serve in classrooms throughout the United States, including Military Veterans of the United States Armed Forces who were trained in and/or originally from North Carolina.

Teach For America recruits from a national pool of talent to ensure Mid-Career Professionals move to the Old North State to become educators. Here is a testimonial from one TFA corps member who represents both someone TFA recruited from another industry and someone we recruited from a national pool of talent to relocate to North Carolina:

*“My name is Tyeisha Hodges. I was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. Growing up, I loved to sing, work with youth, and to learn! I am a proud alumna of Cass Technical High School (Detroit, Michigan) and Bowling Green State University (Bowling Green,*

Ohio), where I studied Environmental Science. I am excited to start my third career change; having prior experience in both Youth Environmental Education in the non-profit sector and management in retail sales. **Teaching has always been my dream. It is because of the support of Teach For America that I can finally live out that dream.** In the classroom, I hope to inspire students to reach their full potential! I want to share with them my story in hopes that they understand life is a balance of holding to your passions and dreams while leaving room to be surprised about what other things you may love!"

Teach For America is committed to partnering with the State of North Carolina to inspire more North Carolinians to teach and lead as educators here. While we know great teachers exist across our great nation, we believe that teachers with personal ties to North Carolina can make a unique contribution to our great state, bringing a special sense of urgency and commitment to educating North Carolina's children. Their perspectives and ability to connect with students is valued by all.

Last year, Teach For America received 18,280 applications from candidates seeking participation in our national program. Of these applicants, 871 were residents of North Carolina based on the mailing address used to submit their application to TFA. Teach For America found these candidates through a variety of recruitment strategies, including partnerships on college campuses and military bases, social media and other forms of digital advertising, career fairs, and word of mouth. These 871 North Carolina applicants included undergraduate

students, graduate students, and mid-career professionals. The 2023 Teach For America National Corps totaled 3,771 accepted first-year teacher candidate applications from 18,280 applications submitted (20.63% acceptance rate). Ultimately, 164 North Carolinians, out of 871 North Carolina applicants, were accepted by TFA last year to teach as first-year teacher candidates as part of the 2023 TFA Corps (18.83% acceptance rate). Therefore, 18.83% of North Carolinians who applied to Teach For America were accepted, compared to a 20.63% national acceptance rate. Moreover, 4.35% of all first-year teacher candidates accepted by Teach For America were originally from the Old North State. Of the 3,771 first-year teacher candidates who were accepted to teach as part of our national program, ninety were placed in North Carolina. That included thirty-eight teacher candidates from North Carolina and fifty-two from our national pool of leaders from outside of North Carolina (i.e., TFA helped fifty-two people move to NC). These data points represent TFA's unmatched ability to source talent both locally and from a national pool of leaders. Moreover, the first-year TFA teacher candidates from NC are just a small example of the success of TFA NC's "Teach Back Home" programs, which encourage North Carolinians to live, teach, and worship right here in the Old North State. As part of our efforts to ensure all of our first-year teacher candidates obtain teaching licensure from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), all of our first-year teacher candidates establish

North Carolina residency and receive training from both Teach For America and East Carolina University's (ECU) Education Department.

Working shoulder to shoulder with parents, students, and other educators and community members, Teach For America teachers enhance the academic and personal growth of students. TFA teachers' service in the classroom inspires a lifelong commitment to their students and shapes the trajectory of their lives and careers. Teach For America brought ninety new first-year teachers to North Carolina last year. There are now 800+ Teach For America tutors, corps members, and alumni teachers working alongside students, parents, and community leaders in North Carolina. That includes fourteen new TFA Eastern North Carolina first-year teachers who serve eight hundred and fifty students. Furthermore, there are twenty first-year TFA teachers teaching twelve hundred students in the Piedmont Triad. Additionally, there are fifty-six first-year TFA teachers teaching four thousand five hundred students in the greater Charlotte area as a result of TFA's efforts to recruit, select, and match talent. The approximately one thousand four hundred other TFA alumni in North Carolina are often tackling wicked policy problems in industries adjacent to education, with a leadership style that is deeply informed by their time as a classroom leader. TFA alumni are extremely passionate about public service, citizenship, and ensuring systems are efficient, fair, and effective for everyone. Thanks in large part to the generous and

forward-thinking support we have received from the North Carolina General Assembly, TFA NC is able to support 800+ TFA educators and 2,200+ total TFA alumni from across North Carolina each day. In turn, these TFA leaders partner with parents, students, and folks from throughout our communities to help ensure North Carolina remains America's top state for business and becomes America's top state for education too.

Through our State Funding, Teach For America North Carolina continues to increase our targeted recruitment efforts of teacher candidates from North Carolina (including recent graduates of NC colleges and universities), teacher candidates from backgrounds related to STEM education, teacher candidates who are mid-career level and lateral entry industry professionals, and teacher candidates who are Military Veterans of the United States Armed Forces.

Of the 871 applications from North Carolina residents, 296 were recent graduates of NC's colleges and universities. The majority of candidates came from the nine North Carolina campuses we most frequently partner with, which includes: the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill, NC State University, Duke University, North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University (NC A&T), NC Central, UNC Charlotte, UNC Greensboro, Wake Forest University, and Davidson College. For example, forty-eight students from UNC Chapel Hill, thirty-five students from NC A&T, twenty-nine students from UNC

Greensboro, twenty-three students from Davidson College, twenty-two students from Duke University, twenty-one students from UNC Charlotte, twenty students from Wake Forest University, twelve students from NC Central University, ten students from East Carolina University, nine students from North Carolina State University, nine students from UNC Pembroke, eight students from Appalachian State University, and five students from from UNC Wilmington applied to Teach For America last year. Dozens of other students from other NC colleges and universities applied as well. We believe North Carolina has the greatest potential of all of the states in part because of the brilliance of the students and expertise of the faculty and staff at our colleges and universities. That is why a key pillar of our recruitment strategy is to leverage in-person and digital touchpoints to persuade the best and brightest from NC colleges and universities to apply to become a teacher via Teach For America.

A vast majority of the first-year TFA teacher candidates are STEM educators who come from academic and professional backgrounds in STEM. In fact, roughly 61.4% of first and second-year TFA teacher candidates teach at least one STEM subject and 13% previously gained professional experience in STEM prior to joining TFA. Last year, Teach For America received 10,775 applicants from folks who identified as working professionals, rather than as a student. This included 543 professionals from North Carolina. 921 Military Veterans of the United States Armed

Forces submitted applications to Teach For America last year, including forty-eight Military Veterans of the United States Armed Forces from North Carolina who submitted applications to Teach For America last year. TFA accepted twenty-two Military Veterans of the United States Armed Forces to teach as first-year teacher candidates serving across the United States as part of Teach For America this past year. Finally, TFA's new Ignite Fellowship is poised to further grow, diversify, and strengthen the national pool of exceptional applicants TFA leverages to place teacher leaders in North Carolina and across the United States, with 43% of eligible Ignite Fellows (high-impact tutors) applying to become full-time teachers this past year.

Teach For America has a rich history of recruiting the nation's top talent to teach in the schools that need them most. That includes over 1000 graduates of our country's Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) and 4000 Ivy League graduates. We have invested capacity and energy into a multi-year plan towards mobilizing our most positive influencers to advocate on behalf of Teach For America. We have found that by working with influencers on college campuses, we are able to steward relationships that endure year over year, provide reciprocity, and ultimately shape a more positive ecosystem to attract top prospects to our mission and organization. Results of our Fall 2019 Brand Health survey showed that campus word-of-mouth is the primary driver of brand awareness at most-selective campuses,

accounting for roughly 60% of introductions to Teach For America. A few years ago, we created new roles that were charged with designing, executing, and continually improving a set of influencer-led experiences to steward and convert mission-aligned candidates throughout their journey. This role was also in charge of developing and executing a set of rigorous experiments to generate learning outcomes for quality lead generation. These roles were able to deliver a series of innovative and high-quality experiences to maximize the recruitment of mission-aligned leaders.

Teach For America North Carolina continues to increase its targeted recruitment efforts of candidates who majored in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). These graduates, alongside the traditionally trained educators we recruit and place, are uniquely-educated to teach STEM subjects. Additionally, we utilize targeted recruitment efforts to attract early-career and mid-career level professionals from industries related to STEM. Collectively, those who studied and/or are working in areas related to STEM education are well-positioned to serve as teachers in K-12 STEM subjects. That is why we are hyper-focused on recruiting them to serve as part of Teach For America North Carolina. In fact, since 2002, we've recruited 500+ graduates of STEM programs to teach in North Carolina. These educators deliver quality instruction in science, math, and other STEM-related subjects. With 61.4% of our TFA teacher candidates

teaching at least one STEM subject, our organization has continued to deliver on its commitment to leveraging our State Funding to recruit STEM educators to teach in North Carolina's public schools.

There are several different strategies the Teach For America Recruitment Team employs to enlist STEM majors and minors from underrepresented backgrounds to join Teach For America, but one strategy that has gained traction in recent years is our intentional pursuit of establishing meaningful partnerships with student-led campus organizations. This has been particularly successful with organizations that include higher volumes of students coming from historically underrepresented groups. A few examples of this type of partnership are the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), and Minority Association of Premedical Students (MAPS). At times, Teach For America will partner with other mission-aligned organizations, such as the Peace Corps and City Year, to host a joint event and draw a larger crowd. We also host STEM-based events and webinars featuring Teach For America alumni who are working in tech, medicine, engineering, etc. to make explicit connections between education and these career paths. Finally, we illustrate through our marketing that gaps in STEM education are greater for the students we serve (compared to non-STEM subjects) to more explicitly state the need for STEM educators, in an attempt to attract

more folks with backgrounds in STEM to rise to the occasion and meet this challenge.

Since STEM students often solidify post-grad plans (whether that be graduate school or highly-selective job opportunities, particularly for engineering students) on an earlier timeline than some of their non-STEM peers, we work to engage them as early as their freshman year through these events. We begin actively recruiting them early in their junior year to effectively compete with graduate school and other highly-selective work opportunities as well. While strategic partnerships may look different campus to campus, they are designed to be ongoing – with continued communication, engagement, and programming year over year between the campus recruiter and student leaders (and faculty, if relevant.) While specific programming may only take place 1-2 times a semester, partnerships often take the form of student leaders promoting application deadlines, internship opportunities, etc. for all students – keeping Teach For America top of mind for students over the course of the entire year (and a student’s undergraduate career.)

Partnerships are typically assessed on a campaign (or campus) level. We track: all touchpoints between the recruiter and program/event participants; the degree of ‘success’ this program/event achieves (i.e. % of program attendees who started an application/submitted an application/received an offer to join TFA/ultimately joined TFA (or participated in other TFA programs, if an underclassman.) Ultimately,

this data determines effectiveness of strategy and informs future engagements for this campaign (or those similar.)

We've learned the importance of helping our recruiters better understand our program offerings, so that they can be pitched to a partner in a way that best serves the needs of our partners. For example: Proposing that we 'push in' to a meeting already scheduled by the partner (i.e. such as visiting a chapter meeting to talk about TFA) is much more effective in regards to attendance than trying to schedule an 'outside' event with the partner (i.e. an additional time commitment for participants who are part of this organization.) We've gained a better understanding of when STEM prospects make decisions about post-grad paths, and thus, when we need to begin engaging with them. Our approach ensures that by the time senior year rolls around, committing to teach for two years sounds less 'out of the blue' and more aligned with a path to achieving their long-term personal and professional goals. This ultimately strengthens our organization and delivers positive results for North Carolina's public-school students.

Due to a disparity in access to excellent STEM educators, programs, and opportunities, Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, women, and individuals from low-income backgrounds are [under-represented in STEM and computer science fields](#). Research shows that high-quality teachers in STEM classrooms are critical to closing the STEM opportunity gap, yet school districts across the country, especially

those in low-income communities, find it difficult to fill open STEM teaching positions each year. Teach For America is one of the largest and most diverse providers of STEM teachers in the country. Knowing that today's students are the innovators and pioneers of the future, Teach For America has invested in the recruitment and training of diverse STEM educators and has partnered with organizations like [Cognizant U.S. Foundation](#), [Texas Instruments](#), [Kode With Klossy](#), [100Kin10](#), and [3M](#) to ensure that all students have access to meaningful STEM and computer science learning opportunities. In addition, [our alumni are building innovative models inside and outside of the K-12 system](#) to create new pathways for students from all backgrounds to pursue STEM and computer science careers. With exposure to diverse STEM educators and equitable access to learning opportunities, we can inspire the next generation of STEM innovators and pioneers and ensure that a diverse set of leaders are empowered to solve the challenges of tomorrow.

Teach For America North Carolina won't rest until every child attains an excellent education. This means we must ensure every child has the opportunity to learn from knowledgeable STEM educators, which we will continue to strategically recruit to fulfill our mission. Our State Funding helps us deliver on this promise, and for that we are incredibly grateful.

Teach For America North Carolina continues to increase its targeted recruitment efforts of candidates who identify as mid-career level and lateral entry industry professionals. These individuals bring professional experiences to the classroom that expose our students to a world of possibilities. Moreover, in addition to teaching theories outlined in state and federal standards, these mid-career level professionals provide students with real-world examples of how what they learn in school connects with the jobs they seek after graduation.

Leadership. Integrity. Commitment. These are just a few of the skills that our Military Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces develop during their years of service to our country. They're also the skills that our greatest teachers exemplify in the classroom every day. Teach For America North Carolina continues to increase its targeted recruitment efforts of candidates who identify as veterans of the United States Armed Forces because our veterans are heroes. Teach For America's "Military Veterans Initiative" focuses on supporting our veterans, members of the guard and reserve, and military spouses as they put their leadership power and skills to work in our nation's highest-need classrooms through Teach For America. TFA's "Military Veterans Initiative" was formed in 2012 to support veterans and military spouses who want to serve their country yet again by putting their leadership skills to work in the classrooms that need them most. Through partnerships with key veterans support organizations, we train military

professionals as teachers in high-need schools, assist them in finding teaching positions, and support them throughout their careers as leaders in the movement for educational equity. The “Military Veterans Initiative” helps to connect our military veterans and military spouse TFA teachers and alumni with professional development opportunities that will help their unique leadership skills. We work to transition these TFA teachers and alumni into career paths that will place them in lead roles that directly affect educational inequity. One of the ways we support the professional and personal growth of our military veterans and military spouse TFA teachers and alumni is through our “Military Veterans Initiative Council”. The council is composed of veterans and military spouses, TFA teachers, and alumni who act as consultants to the Managing Director of the initiative. These council members work to ensure there is substantial support in place for veterans and military spouse TFA teachers and alumni, as well as access to leadership mobility pathways that will sustain military involvement in the fight to end educational inequality. “The Mission Continues,” “Leadership for Educational Equity,” and Columbia University’s “Center for Veteran Transition and Integration” are just some of the partners who work with TFA’s “Military Veterans Initiative” to support the professional development of our military veterans and military spouse TFA teachers and alumni as they continue to lead in the movement for educational equity.

“I retired after 30 years of [military] service to my country, but this commitment is far from over...I want my students to recognize that a life dedicated to caring about and helping others is a life worth choosing.”

**Sequoia Aldridge**

Retired Chief Warrant Officer-5, U.S. Marine Corps  
Eastern North Carolina Corps Member 2015

**We salute the following Teach For America North Carolina alumni for their extraordinary service to our great nation as members of the U.S. Armed Forces and for their continued service as teachers in North Carolina.**

| <b>Full Name</b>   | <b>Corps Year</b> | <b>Region</b>          | <b>Military Branch</b> |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Gerard Falls       | 2013              | Eastern North Carolina | Army                   |
| William Flanagan   | 2013              | Eastern North Carolina | Navy                   |
| Christa Venery     | 2014              | Eastern North Carolina | Army                   |
| Elliott Kim        | 2014              | Charlotte              | Army                   |
| Antonio Smith Jr   | 2014              | Charlotte              | Air Force              |
| Charles Brickhouse | 2014              | Eastern North Carolina | Army                   |
| Teresa Everette    | 2014              | Eastern North Carolina | Army                   |
| Brian Headley      | 2014              | Eastern North Carolina | Navy                   |
| Stacy Mebane       | 2015              | Eastern North Carolina | Army                   |
| Anthony Notte II   | 2015              | Charlotte              | Army                   |
| Sequoia Aldridge   | 2015              | Eastern North Carolina | Marine                 |

|                     |      |                          |             |
|---------------------|------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Matthew Westbrook   | 2015 | Piedmont Triad           | Army        |
| Adam Tyler          | 2016 | Eastern North Carolina   | Marine      |
| Patrick Bartholomew | 2016 | Charlotte                | Army        |
| Richard Warren      | 2016 | Eastern North Carolina   | Navy        |
| Justin Van Wegen    | 2016 | Eastern North Carolina   | Army        |
| Stephen Olson       | 2016 | Charlotte                | Army        |
| Christopher Fessey  | 2017 | Eastern North Carolina   | Army        |
| Jennifer Battaglia  | 2017 | Eastern North Carolina   | Air Force   |
| Jessica Eason       | 2018 | Charlotte-Piedmont Triad | Air Force   |
| Kristen LeCroy      | 2018 | Eastern North Carolina   | Coast Guard |
| Jodie Riley         | 2018 | Eastern North Carolina   | Air Force   |
| Kedeisha Dougherty  | 2018 | Eastern North Carolina   | Army        |
| Zachary King        | 2019 | Charlotte-Piedmont Triad | Army        |
| Michelle Stalworth  | 2019 | Charlotte-Piedmont Triad | Navy        |
| Laureia Colquitt    | 2019 | Charlotte-Piedmont Triad | Army        |
| Derik Powell        | 2019 | Charlotte-Piedmont Triad | Marine      |
| Teresa Bovia        | 2019 | Eastern North Carolina   | Army        |
| Zachary Hannigan    | 2020 | Charlotte-Piedmont Triad | Marine      |
| Cameron Pedigo      | 2021 | Eastern North Carolina   | Navy        |

|                 |      |                          |        |
|-----------------|------|--------------------------|--------|
| Britney Basit   | 2021 | Charlotte-Piedmont Triad | Army   |
| Eric Hairston   | 2022 | Charlotte-Piedmont Triad | Marine |
| Pamela Stanek   | 2022 | Charlotte-Piedmont Triad | Army   |
| Jodyann Dempsey | 2022 | Charlotte-Piedmont Triad | Army   |



Army



Marine Corps



Navy



Air Force



Space Force



Coast Guard



National Guard

UNC Pembroke [profiled](#) its career fair and highlighted Teach For America as a participating organization.

<https://www.uncp.edu/news/uncp-part-time-job-volunteer-fair-attract-s-260-students-35-organizations-0>

# Meet Our Leaders



Teach For America North Carolina is a network of diverse and exceptional leaders who are ready to support, challenge, and lead alongside each other as we aim to collectively expand opportunities for students in North Carolina. Every child deserves an excellent education and a life filled with the biggest and brightest possibilities. TFA NC's greatest contribution to ensuring that reality is leadership. TFA NC is sourcing, matching, and developing the talent required to ensure every child in North Carolina can attain an excellent education. Every day, TFA NC teachers enter classrooms and alumni continue their work in countless public and private organizations to impact communities across the Old North State.

We continue to work to ensure that all students across our state have a teacher who is a powerful advocate on their behalf. Access to a

teacher leader who believes in the limitless potential of our children and communities. A teacher leader who is nurturing the next generation of exceptional individuals through high standards and great teaching. We also are developing alumni who are shaping childrens' futures through every industry and field. TFA NC will continue to source, match, and develop talent to ensure every child can attain an excellent education.

We are a diverse network ready to support, challenge, and lead alongside each other as we aim to collectively expand opportunities for students in North Carolina. Every child deserves an excellent education and a life filled with the biggest and brightest possibilities. Teach For America's greatest contribution to ensuring that reality is leadership: sourcing, matching, and developing talent.

Since 1990, Teach For America has brought over 4,000 corps members to pursue positive change in North Carolina, impacting more than 250,000 students. This school year, more than 800 exceptional leaders, including corps members, alumni teachers, and high-impact tutors, will be working with 82,000 students across North Carolina. In addition, we have 100 alumni serving in school and school systems leadership roles impacting the educational outcomes of 48,000+ students from across North Carolina.

Our teachers reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. Nationally, about 57% of our Teach For America teachers identify as

people of color, compared to the national average of 21%. More than half of TFA teachers come from a low-income background. When teachers share the background of their students, there is a measurable, positive impact on student achievement. We know that teachers of color not only have a better cultural understanding of students of color that aids in classroom management, but they also hold them to higher expectations, often leading to better academic marks and increased chances of graduating. Moreover, research shows that learning from a teacher of color benefits all students. Diversifying the teaching profession is one key way to help decrease suspensions, increase student learning, and reach better academic & economic results for all students. Dr. Monique Perry-Graves, TFA NC Executive Director, agreed to join North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper's bipartisan Task Force to Develop a Representative and Inclusive Vision for Education (DRIVE) to help improve equity and inclusion in education. Governor Cooper [announced](#) Dr. Perry-Graves' appointment on May 18, 2022.

Teach For America North Carolina remains committed to focusing on the quality of the individual leaders serving in classrooms, schools, and every sector and field as part of our network. For example, nine out of 10 principals who employ Teach For America corps members agree that they have a positive impact on students, according [to a report published by Westat](#) on September 26, 2023. The report is the culmination of Teach For America's biennial National Principal Survey, in

which independent research firm Westat administered a survey to more than 1,100 principals who employed Teach For America teachers, known as corps members, during the 2022–2023 school year. The survey had a 74% response rate, with more than 800 principals sharing their feedback. Results from prior years of the National Principal Survey have consistently shown that principals have favorable perceptions of corps members and alumni. The 2023 survey findings are largely consistent with prior years and provide continued evidence that principals have very positive views of corps members and alumni. In addition to agreeing that Teach For America corps members are effective in the classroom, principals also agreed that corps members are positive contributors to their school communities. Principals are also highly satisfied with the Teach For America alumni teachers working in their schools. “Our principal survey regularly provides Teach For America with important feedback on our educators and their contributions to our partner schools,” said Teach For America CEO Elisa Villanueva Beard. “We are grateful for the time and insight from these school leaders and use it to continuously improve our training and support model to maximize our impact with and for students.” The key findings from the survey include:

- Principal satisfaction with corps members is high. 87% of principals indicated that they were satisfied with corps members at their schools. 9 out of 10 principals agreed that corps members

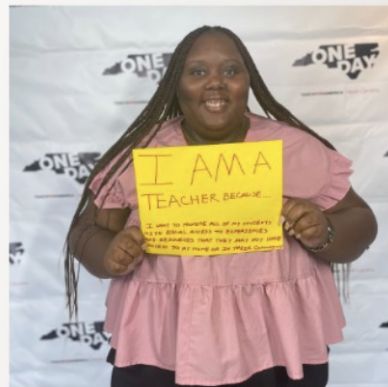
have a positive impact on students' academic growth; students' personal growth; and students' development of positive social identities.

- Principals view corps members as positive contributors to their school community. 90% agreed that corps members maintain a positive learning environment in their classrooms. 93% agreed that they contribute to a positive, collaborative professional culture at their school.
- Principals see value in hiring corps members. 91% of principals would hire another corps member in the future to fill a vacancy. 91% would also recommend hiring a TFA corps member to a fellow school leader.
- Principal satisfaction with TFA alumni also remains high. 97% of principals were satisfied with the Teach For America alumni in their schools. Additionally, 9 out of 10 principals reported that alumni had positive impacts on students in each of the areas they were asked to address, which included academic growth, personal growth, development of positive social identities, recognition of injustice in the world, and ability to seek out relationships and resources needed to overcome barriers in pursuit of personal goals.



our **brightest** minds. our **boldest** dreamers. our **brilliant** innovators.

# MEET OUR LEADERS



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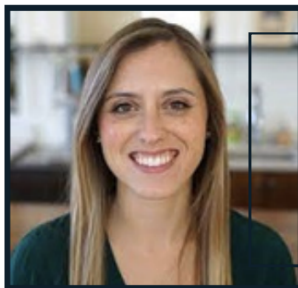
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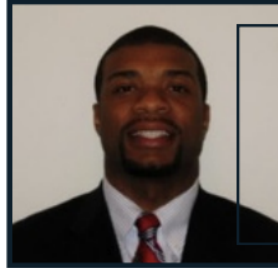
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**Lauren Wooden**

*Community Volunteer*

## Teachers of the Year

TFA NC is proud to share that 15 TFA teachers were recognized as Teachers of the Year in the 2022–2023 school year, including Charlotte–Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) District Teacher of the Year Ana Cunningham (CPT '12). That is in addition to the 22 TFA teacher leaders who were named Teacher of the Year in 2021 and the 18 TFA teacher leaders who were award winners in 2022. These TFA teacher leaders included CeCe Sizoo–Roberson, who previously was a finalist for North Carolina Teacher of the Year, and LaKeia Colquitt, who previously was named Rookie Teacher of the Year for Guilford County Schools. The 2021 North Carolina Principal of the Year is also a TFA alum; prior to serving as principal at Broughton High School in Raleigh, Dr. Elena Ashburn got her start in teaching as a 2007 TFA teacher in Eastern North Carolina. Dr. Ashburn now serves as Central Area Superintendent of Wake County Schools. Teach For America focuses on filling vacancies with the nation’s best leaders. Anything less would be unacceptable for the students and communities we serve. As a result of the North Carolina General Assembly’s investment in our organization, we continue to deliver on this promise.



2022-2023 TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

# Our Leaders Are Award Winning! Meet Our Teachers Of The Year

We are proud to announce our Teach For America North Carolina corps members and alumni teachers who were recognized for their excellence in education for the 2022-2023 school year. They, along with the tens of thousands of educators across our state, are an inspiration to us all as we illuminate the path to One Day.

## The Honorees

**Tyler Adams (CPT '20)**

*Teacher of the Year*  
Movement Middle School

**Ana Cunningham (CPT '12)**

*District Teacher of the Year*  
Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools

**Jasmine Dozier (CPT '13)**

*Teacher of the Year*  
iMeck Academy at Cochrane

**Michelle Stalworth (CPT '19)**

*Teacher of the Year*  
Walter G Byers

**Kylie Bray (CPT '22)**

*Rookie Teacher of the Year*  
Allen Jay Elementary

**Glen Almon (CPT '22)**

*Rookie Teacher of the Year*  
Oakview Elementary

**Reneka Andrews (D.C. '95)**

*District Teacher of the Year*  
Warren County Schools

**Catie Burnette (ENC '10)**

*Principal of Magnet School of the Year*  
Washington GT Magnet Elementary

**Rachel Brackney (ENC '15)**

*Teacher of the Year*  
SouthWest Edgecombe  
High School  
*District Teacher of the Year*  
Edgecombe County Public Schools

**Angela Rivas (CPT '12)**

*Teacher of the Year*  
North Forsyth High School

**Jared A. Gatewood (CPT '15)**

*Assistant Principal of the Year*  
Forest Hills High School

**Dea Skendri (CPT '22)**

*Rookie Teacher of the Year*  
Eastern Guilford High School

**Kaili Matiaco (CPT '22)**

*Rookie Teacher of the Year*  
Western Middle School

**Brittany Mary Lopez (ENC '14)**

*Assistant Principal of the Year*  
Edenton Chowan Schools

**Erin Nicole Barksdale Coles (ATL '07)**

*East Learning Community*  
*Principal of the Year*  
Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools





**HAYLEY GEARHEART (ENC '17)**  
*District Teacher of the Year*  
 Edgecombe County Public Schools



**CECE SIZOO-ROBERSON (CPT '12)**  
*District Teacher of the Year*  
 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools  
*Finalist North Carolina Teacher of the Year*



**LA'KEIA COLQUITT (CPT '19)**  
*District Rookie Teacher of the Year*  
 Guilford County Schools



**MARCIA MOYD-WILLIAMS (CPT '17)**  
*Finalist, District Teacher of the Year*  
 Guilford County Schools



**NEHA MURALY (CPT '20)**  
*Finalist, District Rookie Teacher of the Year*  
 Guilford County Schools



**PARIS HARRELL SPEIGHT (CPT '16)**  
*Finalist, District Teacher of the Year*  
 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

**ASHLEI GENTRY (CPT '17)**  
 Teacher of the Year  
 Tuckaseegee Elementary

**KAITLYN BROWN (CPT '20)**  
 Rookie Teacher of the Year  
 Eastern Middle School

**MAZELLA SLOAN (ENC '16)**  
 Teacher of the Year  
 Kinston High School

**ASHLEY FRYE (ENC '19)**  
 Beginning Teacher of the Year  
 Phillips Middle School

**KATELYN BURRELL (CPT '17)**  
 Teacher of the Year  
 Nations Ford Elementary

**MOLLY NAYLOR (CPT '12)**  
 Teacher of the Year  
 McClintock Middle

**BRIGID MCCLUSKY (ENC '20)**  
 Teacher of the Year  
 Warren County Middle School

**KATIE KELLER ALAR (CPT '17)**  
 Teacher of the Year  
 Devonshire Elementary

**SADIYA STRONG (CPT '20)**  
 Rookie Teacher of the Year  
 Gillespie Park Elementary

**GEORGIA HAYNES-COX (CPT '17)**  
 Teacher of the Year  
 Westerly Hills Academy

**KENYA RAYNOR (ENC '16)**  
 Teacher of the Year  
 Phillips Middle School

**SARAH SCOTT (ENC '20)**  
 Beginning Teacher of the Year  
 Southwest High School

**JALAN GUNNING (CPT '20)**  
 Beginning Teacher of the Year  
 Movement Charter (Freedom Drive)

**LIZ MOORE (ENC '20)**  
 Rookie Teacher of the Year  
 Vance County High School

**SHAWNA FIELDS (CPT '13)**  
 Teacher of the Year  
 West Mecklenburg High

**MATT WESTBROOK (CPT '15)**  
 Teacher of the Year  
 Mendenhall Middle School

## 2021-2022 TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

# Meet these Award-Winning Teachers from the TFA Network in North Carolina

Eighteen Teach For America corps members and alumni teachers were recognized for their excellence in teaching for the 2021-2022 school year; they, along with the tens of thousands of educators across our state, are a huge inspiration.



## The Honorees

**APRILLE MORRIS-BUTLER (CPT '19)**  
Charlotte Parent Magazine's Teacher of the Year  
Julius L. Chambers High School

**DAEJA GODETTE (ENC '21)**  
Beginning Teacher of the Year  
W.A. Pattillo Middle School

**ELLA BESS MARSHALL (ENC '07)**  
Keith Burnam, Jr. Award  
Henderson Collegiate

**GENA MORTON (CPT '16)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Northeast Middle School

**GOLD GLADNEY (CPT '18)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Wilson STEM Academy

**JANET JOLLY (ARKANSAS '12)**  
Keith Burnam, Jr. Award  
Henderson Collegiate

**KADE'JHA ELLIOT (CPT '17)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Bruns Academy

**KATIE SONDEIM (CPT '17)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Allenbrook Elementary School

**KIAUNA FERGUSON (CPT '19)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Paw Creek Elementary School

**MATT KILLIAN (CPT '18)**  
Leah Louise B. Tannenbaum Award  
Penn-Griffin School of the Arts

**MEGHAN COLLINS (CPT '18)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Quail Hollow Middle School

**MEGHAN SHELDON (CPT '21)**  
Rookie Teacher of the Year  
Vandalia Elementary

**MIKAELA ARGO MILLER (CPT '21)**  
Rookie Teacher of the Year  
Jackson Middle School

**PETER LEONARD (ENC '20)**  
Excellence in Education Award  
Henderson Collegiate (High School)

**PRESTON HUGHES (ENC '21)**  
Beginning Teacher of the Year  
Henderson Collegiate (High School)

**ROBERT B. OECHSLIN, JR. (CPT '17)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Burton Magnet Elementary

**RUBÍ J. PARRA (CPT '17)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Marie G. Davis IB Middle School

**TAYLOR LAWSON (CPT '21)**  
Rookie Teacher of the Year  
Eastern Guilford Middle School



The High Point Enterprise [highlighted](#) TFA corps members Kylie Bray of Allen Jay Elementary and Glen Almon of Oakview Elementary, who both were named rookie teachers of the year.

[https://www.hpenews.com/news/local-teachers-earn-state-recognition/article\\_c4bf0bd5-e568-5b64-b366-abeef5e46009.html](https://www.hpenews.com/news/local-teachers-earn-state-recognition/article_c4bf0bd5-e568-5b64-b366-abeef5e46009.html)

## Local teachers earn state recognition

By ENTERPRISE STAFF Sep 15, 2023 Updated Oct 22, 2023

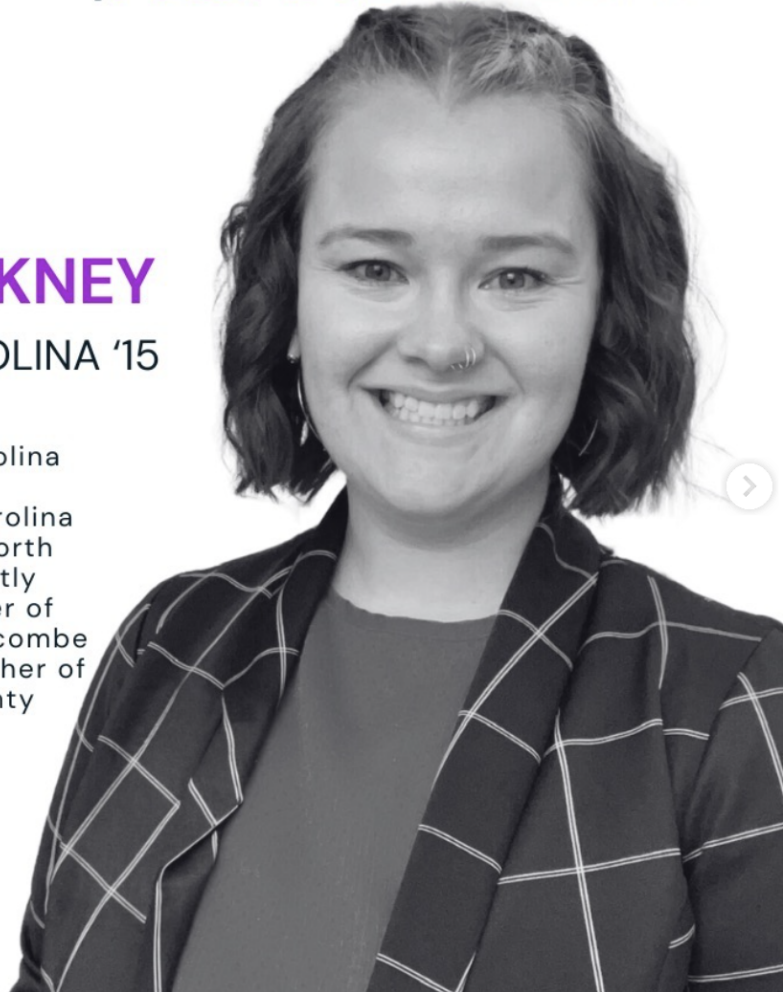
HIGH POINT — Two teachers in High Point schools who are part of Teach For America North Carolina are among 15 teachers to win awards from the organization this year.

Kylie Bray of Allen Jay Elementary and Glen Almon of Oakview Elementary both were named rookie teachers of the year.

## RACHEL BRACKNEY

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA '15

Teach For America North Carolina Alumna Rachel Brackney was recently named the North Carolina Teacher of the Year for the North Central Region. Rachel currently holds the title of both Teacher of the Year for SouthWest Edgecombe High School and District Teacher of the Year for Edgecombe County Public Schools.





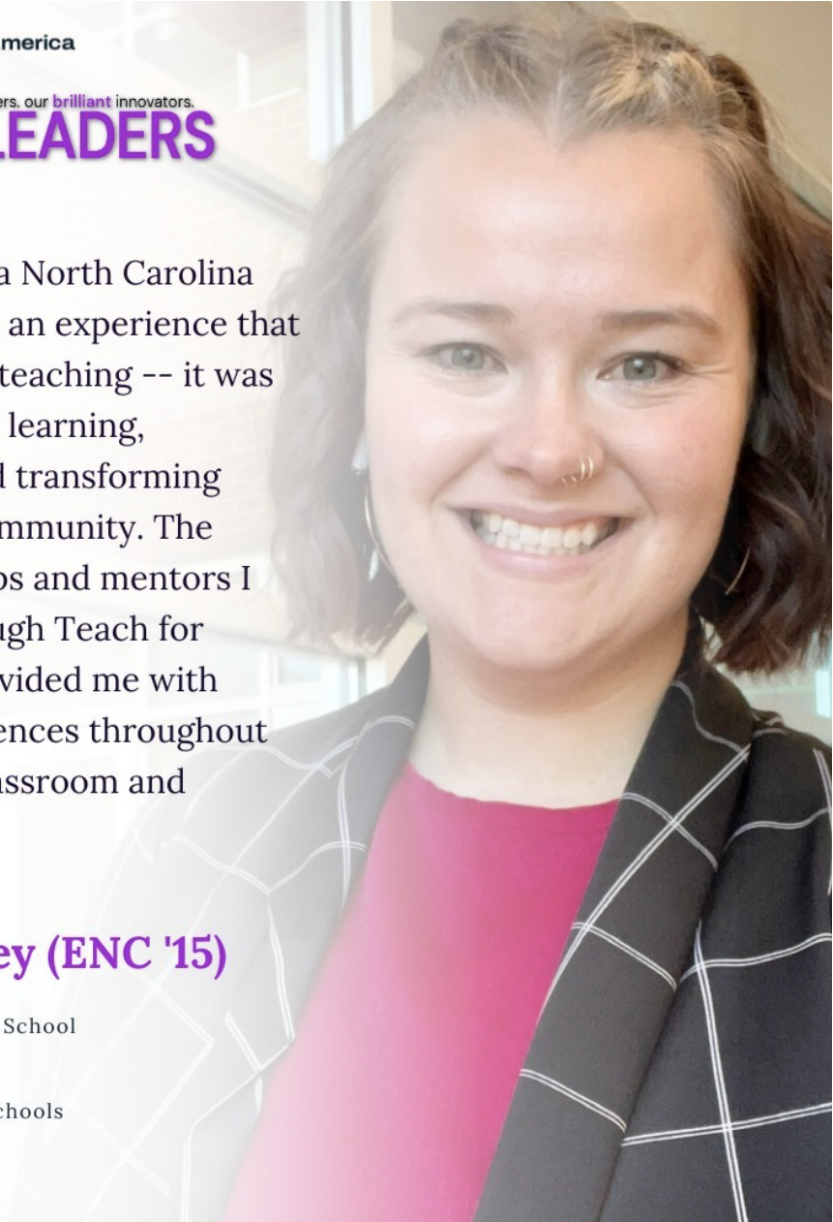
our **brightest** minds. our **boldest** dreamers. our **brilliant** innovators.  
**MEET OUR LEADERS**

“ Teach for America North Carolina provided me with an experience that wasn't just about teaching -- it was about continuous learning, collaboration, and transforming education as a community. The lifelong friendships and mentors I have gained through Teach for America have provided me with invaluable experiences throughout my time in the classroom and beyond.

**Rachel Brackney (ENC '15)**

*Teacher of the Year*  
SouthWest Edgemombe High School

*District Teacher of the Year*  
Edgemombe County Public Schools





## RENEE ELIDIEU

CHARLOTTE- PIEDMONT TRIAD '23

First year corps member Renee Elidieu was named Beginning Teacher of the Month at Quail Hollow Middle School.



## DR. KELLY ANNE MUDD

PRINCIPAL  
MARTIN MILLENNIUM ACADEMY  
EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA BOARD MEMBER

Congratulations to our Eastern North Carolina Board Member and Principal of Martin Millennium Academy, Dr. Kelly Anne Mudd for being named the 2023-2024 ECPS Principal of the Year.





Teach for America North Carolina provided me with an experience that wasn't just about teaching -- it was about continuous learning, collaboration, and transforming education as a community. The lifelong friendships and mentors I have gained through Teach for America have provided me with invaluable experiences throughout my time in the classroom and beyond.

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**Rachel Brackney (ENC '15)**

*Teacher of the Year*  
SouthWest Edgecombe High School

*District Teacher of the Year*  
Edgecombe County Public Schools





When I began my teaching career, the goal was that "one day, all kids", but it was very difficult to see what kind of impact a teacher like me could have and the impact that longevity in education has as well. Twelve years later, I can say that although "one day, all kids" is still the goal, I am inspired and driven by "one more day, one more kid". In turn, that has become hundreds of kids a year that step foot in my classroom and are hopefully inspired to connect with the world around them in a different way. I have seen the life-changing impact every teacher can have on a student, and I have been privileged to witness how education can change lives, families, and entire generations. I still have that sense of urgency that I did when I began teaching, but now I walk in knowing that, "one more day, one more kid", so that "one day, all kids".

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**Angela Rivas (CPT '12)**

Teacher of the Year

North Forsyth High School



## School Leaders

Teach For America North Carolina is committed to growing the pipeline of diverse and exceptional talent inside of our schools. That includes matching talented educators with opportunities to grow their leadership and further serve North Carolina as school and district leaders. We know that administrators are critical when it comes to recruiting, retaining, and developing the talent we need to ensure every student can attain an excellent education.

For example, Teach For America Alum Dr. Lauren Lampron [has been named](#) the new director of the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from West Chester University and earned teaching credentials through Teach For America's partnership with East Carolina University. She has a Master of School Administration and Doctor of Education degrees from NC State University. *EdNC* [previously profiled](#) Lampron for her exceptional work as Principal of SouthWest Edgecombe High School. Teach For America alumni are serving as leaders in all types of roles all across the state. For example, earlier this year, TFA Alum Courtlyn Reeves was [named](#) "Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources" by Cabarrus County Schools' Superintendent Dr. John Kopicki. Dr. Johanna Parker is now Assistant Superintendent in Cabarrus County, but got her start as a 2012 Teach For America Eastern North Carolina corps member.

NC State University's Educational Leadership Academy ([NELA](#)) seeks to increase student achievement by preparing and retaining principals in high-poverty, hard-to-staff, and historically low-performing schools. NELA creates a comprehensive leadership development and succession plan for NC high-need school districts. Each component is anchored in research-based best practices in leadership preparation and is designed to meet the specific contextualized needs of schools in North Carolina. 90% of schools with a NELA graduate serving as principal met or exceeded growth for the 2018 – 2019 school year vs. only 75% of principals across all schools in the state reaching the same level of performance. Teach For America aims to source and match alumni to high-impact job opportunities. We are proud of the many Teach For America alumni who have completed this program. We know that their leadership as school and district leaders will accelerate student learning, expand opportunity, and move North Carolina forward. Folks can read more about TFA alumni who have completed NELA below.

<https://nela.ced.ncsu.edu/nela-innovative-leaders-academy/nela-cohort-i/>



**Erin Swanson**  
**Sponsoring District: Warren**  
**Current District: Edgecombe**

Erin graduated magna cum laude from Wake Forest University. Erin was an English I teacher through Teach for America and was a member of the Teacher for America Eastern North Carolina staff for six years as Executive Director, Senior Program Director, and Program Director. Erin completed an administrative internship at AB Combs Elementary School. After graduating from the NELA program, Erin was an Assistant Principal at Northwest Halifax High School during the 2012-2013 school year. She was Principal at Stocks Elementary School from 2013-2014. She opened Martin Millennium Academy in 2014 and was Principal until 2016 then served as Director of Innovation for Edgecombe County Public Schools. Erin is currently Assistant Superintendent for Innovation and Strategic Planning at Edgecombe County Public Schools.



**Dr. Erica Shoulders-Royster**  
**Sponsoring District: Warren**  
**Current District: DPI**

Dr. Shoulders-Royster graduated from Stillman College where she majored in English Communications. She was a Teach for America Eastern North Carolina corps member and later served on staff. She earned a Master of School Administration degree from UNC-Chapel Hill and NELA at North Carolina State University. She recently served as a board member for The Boys and Girls Club and Henderson Collegiate. Dr. Shoulders-Royster was an Assistant Principal at Franklinton High School from 2012-2016 and then served as Principal at Franklin Early College High School. She was awarded Franklin County Principal of the Year for the 2019/2020 school year. Currently, Dr. Shoulders-Royster is the CCRG Program Administrator within the Office of Innovation at NC Department of Public Instruction. When not working, she is busy raising her five children with her beloved husband Mark.



**Krista Fasoli**  
**Sponsoring District: Nash**

Krista received a dual major in Elementary Education and Social Science from Keene State College in Keene, New Hampshire. She was a Teach for America participant and taught third grade at O.R. Pope Elementary School. She was selected as the Pope Elementary School Teacher of the Year for 2011-2012. Krista completed an administrative internship at Parker Middle School. She was an Assistant Principal at Williford Elementary School from 2013 to 2015 and was selected as the Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools Assistant Principal of the Year for 2014-2015.



**Lauren Hinnant**  
**Sponsoring District: Northampton**  
**Current District: Roanoke Rapids**

Lauren earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science with a minor in Communications from Wake Forest University. She was a 2009 Teach for America corps member, and earned her teaching licensure from East Carolina University. She worked as a Corps Member Advisor for Teach for America's Summer Institute in the Mississippi Delta in 2011, and as a School Director in the summer of 2013. She taught 7th and 8th grade English Language Arts at Northampton County High School. Lauren completed her administrative internship at Belmont Elementary School in Roanoke Rapids. Lauren served at Manning Elementary School- first as an Assistant Principal from 2013 to 2017, then as Principal until 2022. She was awarded Roanoke Rapids Principal of the Year in 2020. Lauren is currently serving as Executive Director of Instructional Services for the Roanoke Rapids Graded School District.



**Dr. Timothy Mudd**  
**Sponsoring District: Nash**  
**Current District: Nash**

Timothy earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science from Clemson University and a Master of Science in Athletic Administration from Western Kentucky University. He also earned an EdD in Educational Leadership from East Carolina University. He participated in Teach for America and worked in Eastern North Carolina. He completed an administrative internship at Rocky Mount High School and was as an Assistant Principal at Southern Nash High School from 2013 to 2016. Timothy is currently serving as Principal at Red Oak Middle School .



**Dr. Hugh Scott**  
**Sponsoring District: Nash**  
**Current District: Nash**

Hugh earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Health from The Johns Hopkins University and an EdD in Educational Leadership from East Carolina University. He participated in the Teach Baltimore summer program under AmeriCorps, where he taught first and third grade. Hugh joined Teach for America and was placed in Eastern North Carolina. He has served as the Secondary Math and Science Instructional Facilitator for the Nash-Rocky Mount School District and as a Professional Development Facilitator. Hugh completed an administrative internship at Southern Nash High School, where he became an Assistant Principal. Hugh serves on the Community Development Committee for the United Way Tar River Region, where he completed his NELA Community Internship. He was the Principal of Tar River Academy during the 2016-2017 school year. Currently, Hugh is serving as Principal of Southern Nash High School where he was awarded the 2019/2020 Nash-Rocky Mount Principal of the Year.



**Dr. Kelly Anne Mudd**  
**Sponsoring District: Nash**  
**Current District: Edgecombe**

Kelly Anne earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism from the University of Maryland in College Park, MD and an EdD in Educational Leadership from East Carolina University. She joined Teach for America and worked in eastern North Carolina. She worked as an Exceptional Children's educator in Rocky Mount and in Henderson, NC. She has also been a Comprehensive Exceptional Children's Accountability Systems (CECAS) trainer as well. She was selected as the Eaton-Johnson Middle School Teacher of the Year for the 2010-2011 school year. Kelly Anne completed an administrative internship at Southern Nash Middle School and was an Assistant Principal at Nash Central Middle School from 2013 to 2015. Kelly Anne was Principal of Spring Hope Elementary School from 2015 to 2018. She is currently serving as Principal of Martin Millennium Academy.

<https://nela.ced.ncsu.edu/nela-innovative-leaders-academy/nela-cohort-iii/>



**Lauren Lampron, Ed.D.**  
**Sponsoring District: Edgecombe**

After graduating from West Chester University with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Lauren joined the Eastern North Carolina Corps of Teach for America. She earned her teaching credentials through the alternative licensure program at East Carolina University. She then earned a Master of School Administration degree at NC State University as a Northeast Leadership Academy Fellow. Her educational background includes teaching 7th and 8th grade English and Social Studies, obtaining high school experience through a year-long Principal internship, and being a middle school and high school administrator. She is a Standards Institute Leadership Facilitator through UnboundEd, serves as a principal panelist on the #PrincipalProject, is a member of the ENC Teach for America Network Steering Committee, and is a Principal Advisory Board Member for Schools That Lead. Sharing her passion for education reform with her husband; the couple resides in Edgecombe County, NC, where they are both administrators. Lauren served as the principal of SouthWest Edgecombe High School in Pinetops, NC, where she was named Principal of the Year for 2019-2020. Currently, Dr. Lampron is the Director of the NC Principals Fellows Program.



**Katie Row**  
**Sponsoring District: Bertie**

Katie earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She joined the Eastern North Carolina Corps of Teach for America in 2010. Katie completed an administrative internship at Windsor Elementary School. After graduating from NELA, she was an Instructional Coach at Stocks Elementary School. She was an Assistant Principal at SouthWest Edgecombe High School during the 2015-2016 school year. Katie was Principal of Coker-Wimberly Elementary School from 2016 until 2018.



**Donnell Cannon**

**Sponsoring District: Weldon**

**Current District: Other**

Donnell earned his Bachelor of Arts in History at Norfolk State University and was awarded the 2011-2012 Bettie F. Williams Tri-Campus, City of Virginia Beach Volunteer of the Year Award. Donnell co-founded the "Won Day" mentorship program, in Norfolk, Va. This program aims to instill principles such as integrity, responsibility, respect, courage in children so that they can achieve their dreams and one day become strong, responsible, and productive citizens. He joined Teach for America in 2012 and taught middle school social studies in Weldon, North Carolina. Donnell was involved in The Children Defense Fund and served as the director of the CDF Freedom School in Rocky Mount, NC from 2013-2015. He completed his Principal Residency at Southeast Halifax High School. Donnell served as the Principal of North Edgecombe High School from 2016-2021, and was the co-founder of the North-Phillips School of Innovation. Donnell then served as Executive Director of District Transition and Redesign in the Edgecombe County Central Office. Currently, Donnell is the Executive Director of Maureen Joy Charter School in Durham, while also pursuing an EdD in Educational Leadership at NC State University.



**Caroline Linker**

**Sponsoring District: Halifax**

**Current District: Chatham**

Caroline graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations and minors in Business Administration and Spanish from North Carolina State University. She joined Teach for America as a corps member in 2012, where she earned her teaching licensure through East Carolina University. As a corps member, Caroline served as a Transition Team Leader for incoming corps members and served as a Summer Fellow in 2014. Caroline taught Algebra I and Geometry at Northwest Halifax High School in Littleton, N.C, where she was also head volleyball coach. She also served as a member of the School Improvement Team, the PBIS Intervention Team, and was the AVID Site Team Leader. Caroline was at Scotland Neck Primary for her Principal Residency. Caroline was an Assistant Principal at Bunn High School during the 2016 to 2017 school year, then Principal of Youngsville Elementary School from 2017-2019. Caroline was previously Principal at W.G. Pearson Elementary School and now serves as Principal at Silk Hope School in Chatham County of July 2022.



**Jenny O'Meara**  
**Sponsoring District: Warren**

Jenny earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in French and International Relations at the State University of New York at Geneseo. After graduating, she served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Burkina Faso, West Africa, where she taught middle school math and English to French speaking youth. She moved back to the United States to join Teach for America as an Eastern North Carolina Corps Member. In 2012, she served as a Corps Member Advisor at TFA's Houston Summer Institute. She was selected as a Sue Lehmann Award for Excellence in Teaching Nominee for the Eastern North Carolina Teach For America Corps in 2013. Jenny taught math at Warren County High School, where she served as the Math Department Chair as well as a Co-Chair of the School Leadership Team. She completed the NELA Principal Residency at Northern Vance High School. Jenny was an Assistant Principal at North Edgecombe High School during the 2016-2017 school year, then served as Principal of Phillips Middle School from 2017-2021. In July of 2021, she began writing Banner Advisory Curriculum for North Edgecombe High School and Phillips Middle School, and started with Transcend Education to coach three rural schools across the country. Jenny is now working full-time with Transcend Education as a Partner in School Design Services and Co-Leading the Rural School Design Community.



**Ashley Johnson**  
**Supported by Henderson Collegiate**

Ashley earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Media Arts and Design with a double minor in Spanish and Humanitarian Affairs from James Madison University. She joined the Eastern North Carolina region of Teach for America and was placed at Henderson Collegiate. She taught fifth grade writing and reading there. She was also a Curriculum Specialist at the Teach for America Delta Institute where she coached a group of incoming first-year TFA teachers. Ashley served as the 5th grade reading teacher and grade level chair at Henderson Collegiate, where she also completed the Principal Residency. Ashley is currently the Principal of Henderson College Elementary School.



**Dr. Johanna Parker**  
**Sponsoring District: Weldon City Schools**  
**Current District: Cabarrus**

Johanna attended the University of North Florida and earned an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education and also received an EdD in Educational Leadership from East Carolina University. She was a 2012 Teach for America corps member and still serves as an Alumni Community Engagement Ambassador for Teach for America Roanoke Valley. She is K-6 ESOL certified. She was a Freedom Schools servant leader intern in the summer of 2014 for the Rocky Mount Children's Defense Fund. She taught 5th grade science at Weldon Middle School during her first year in the NELA program. She was also a Science Department Chair, School Improvement Team Chair and 5th Grade Team Leader. She completed her Principal Residency at Weldon Elementary School in fall 2016 and Dawson at Scotland Neck Primary in spring 2017. After graduation from NELA, she was an Assistant Principal at Martin Millennium Academy during the 2017 to 2018 school year. Johanna served as the Director of Innovation at Dare County Schools until being named Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education in Cabarrus County Schools in August 2022.



**Lemondre Watson**  
**Sponsoring District: Vance**  
**Current District: Chatham**

Lemondre earned an undergraduate degree in Sociology from the College of William and Mary. He participated in Teach for America. Before joining NELA's Cohort V, Lemondre taught 7th Grade Social Studies at Henderson Middle School. He completed his Principal Residency at AB Combs Elementary School in fall 2016 then became an Assistant Principal at Northern Vance High School. For the 2017-2018 school year he served as an Assistant Principal at Eaton Johnson Middle School. Then from 2018-2020 Lemondre served as Assistant Principal at Vance County Middle School where was awarded Vance County Schools Assistant Principal of the year for 2018/2019. He then served as Assistant Principal at Carroll Magnet Middle School until May 2022. Lemondre is currently serving as Principal of Pittsboro Elementary School in Chatham County.



**Megan Bain**  
**Sponsoring District: Nash**  
**Current District: Nash**

Megan earned degrees in International Studies and Arabic from The Ohio State University. She was recognized as South Edgecombe Middle School Teacher of the Year in 2013. She participated in Teach for America and completed Math Design Collaborative training. Megan taught eighth grade math and Math 1 at Nash Central Middle School in Nashville. She completed the NELA Principal Residency at Englewood Elementary School. Megan is currently serving as Assistant Principal at Southern Nash High School.



**Matt Hickson**  
**Sponsoring District: Durham**  
**Current District: Out of State**

Matt Hickson earned a BS in Business Administration from the Kenan Flagler School of Business at UNC Chapel Hill. He was the Durham Public Schools Beginning Teacher of the Year and is the founder and director of Bull City Schools United. He started his path to working toward education equity as a teenager volunteering to register voters on the west side of Charlotte, North Carolina. After years of witnessing the deep social and economic inequities of our state and nation as an activist, he went to work as a teacher and advocate with Student U Durham before becoming an 8th grade science teacher at Neal Middle School in East Durham. He completed the DPLA Principal Residency at Hillside High School. Matt served as Assistant Principal at Neal Middle School from 2018-2020. Following, he served as the Director of Online Learning for Durham Public Schools until May of 2021 when Matt became the first principal of Ignite! Online Academy (Durham Public Schools). Matt is currently serving as Director of Partner Transformation for the Modern Classrooms Project in Boston, MA.



**Leandra Clay**  
**Sponsoring District: Duplin**

Leandra Clay graduated with Honors from Hampton University where she received a Bachelors of Science in Criminal Justice. While attending Hampton, she was a member of Golden Key International Honor Society, treasurer of Phi Alpha Delta Honor Society, and vice president of Alpha Phi Sigma Honor Society. During her undergraduate years, Leandra spent time interning at Hampton Regional Roads Jail and the Hampton Sheriff's Department. In 2014, Leandra joined Teach For America in Eastern North Carolina where she served as the region's social studies liaison. Leandra has taught 6th & 7th grade social studies at Warsaw Middle School. Leandra was the PBIS chair, the social studies department chair, and culinary arts instructor. It is Leandra's lifelong goal to provide a superior education in order to deter incarceration among our youth. She completed her Principal Residency at Kenansville Elementary School. Leandra served as Assistant Principal at Wallace Elementary School, a K-8 school from 2018 to 2019. She then worked as the Director for Teacher Leadership Development with Teach For America until January 2022. Leandra is currently serving as Managing Director of Network Strategy for Teach For America.



**Hunter Dansby**  
**Sponsoring District: Duplin**

Hunter Dansby earned an undergraduate degree in Finance and Business with Honors from Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. He taught in Duplin County at James Kenan High School, served as the Mathematics Department Chair and School Improvement Team representative, and is a Teach For America Corps Member. He taught Math 1 and was the creator and instructor of the school's first formal ACT prep program for juniors. He was James Kenan High School's Beginning Teacher of the Year for the 2015-2016 school year and was also the Junior Varsity Boys Basketball Head Coach. He was a Principal Resident at Warsaw Elementary School during the 2017-2018 school year. He remained at Warsaw Elementary during the 2018-2019 school year and was Assistant Principal. Hunter then served as Principal of Uplift Heights Middle School in Dallas, TX. Currently, he works as a Leadership Coach for Big Rock Education Services supporting principals across Texas.



**Erica Fox Dale**

**Sponsoring District: Wake**

**Current District: Harnett**

Erica graduated with honors from Miami University of Ohio and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology and Environmental Principles and Practices. She was a 2013 Teach For America corps member in Eastern North Carolina and served her commitment at Northwest Halifax High School as a special education science teacher. She taught at Garner Magnet High School in Wake County as a special education reading teacher. Erica was also a member of the School Improvement Team and the Instructional Leadership Team. She completed her principal residency at River Bend Middle School during the 2019-2020 school year. Erica started the 2020 school year as a 7th and 8th grade ELA Special Education Teacher at A.C Reynolds Middle School in Asheville, NC. Erica started her position as Assistant Principal at East Henderson High School in February 2021, then became Assistant Principal of South Harnett Elementary School in August 2021.



**Cally Hudson**

**Sponsoring District: Wake**

**Current District: Wake**

Cally graduated from Wake Forest University as a double major in Psychology and Health and Exercise Science. She is a certified Science, Math and Special Education Teacher. She was a 2013 Metro-Atlanta Teach for America Corps member teaching at Maynard Jackson High School in Atlanta. She has taught 9th grade biology at Knightdale High School of Collaborative Design for the past three school years. Cally served as a leader of the Capturing Kids Hearts Process Champion team at her school, leading professional developments during the summer for staff members. Cally completed her principal residency at Douglas Elementary School during the 2019-2020 school year. She is currently serving as Assistant Principal at Lead Mine Road Elementary.

<https://nela.ced.ncsu.edu/johnston/jpla-fellows/>



**Dr. Melissa Altemose**  
**Sponsoring District: Edgecombe**  
**Current District: Edgecombe**

Melissa earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Cell and Developmental Biology at the University of Rochester and received her Master's in Curriculum and Instruction, K-12 Science Education at George Mason University. Teach for America brought her to North Carolina in 2011. She taught at Weldon Middle School for two years. She then spent four years in Washington, D.C. teaching at Achievement Prep Academy in Southeast D.C. and Jefferson Academy Middle School in Southwest D.C., where she served as Grade Level Lead. While in D.C. she was named a Capital Commitment Fellow by DCPS for being an effective, experienced teacher committed to closing the achievement gap. She served as DCPS Travel Ambassador leading study abroad trips for 8th grade students and was a mentor teacher with TechBridge Girls, George Washington University and the University of D.C. Recently, Melissa won a Foundation for Blended and Online Learning Innovative Educator Grant and was named a National Finalist in the NSTA's Shell Lab Redesign Challenge. She taught 8th grade science at W.A. Pattillo Middle School in Tarboro, NC and served as a Project Manager for ENC STEM, a program that provides high quality STEM learning opportunities and leadership training to high school students in eastern North Carolina before starting her principal residency. Melissa completed her principal residency at Henderson Collegiate during the 2019-2020 school year, then served as assistant principal at Coker-Wimberly Elementary School for the 2020-2021 school year. Melissa was serving as Assistant Principal at Tarboro High School in Edgecombe County, then was Assistant Principal at GW Bulluck Elementary School before becoming Principal in 2022. Melissa earned an EdD in Educational Leadership from NC State University in August 2023.

<https://nela.ced.ncsu.edu/ncsucohort/ncsu-cohort-fellows/>



**Melanie Forte Johnson**  
**Sponsoring District: Vance**  
**Current District: Other**

Melanie Forte Johnson earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from The College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, where she ran Track and Field. She joined Teach for America Eastern North Carolina as a 2013 Corp member, and taught 6th and 7th grade English at her placement school, Henderson Collegiate. She participated in the RELAY Graduate School of Education Principal's Fellowship Program in the 2016-2017 school year. She has served as the Reading Department Chair, Instructional Coach, and 4th Grade Level Chair at Henderson Collegiate. She most recently taught 7th grade language arts. Melanie completed her principal residency at Henderson Collegiate Middle School. She will remain at Henderson Collegiate Middle School serving as Principal.

<https://nela.ced.ncsu.edu/ncsla-fellows/>



### **Derek Cobb**

Derek Cobb earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Georgia. During his undergraduate years, Derek began his professional career working as an academic interventionist. He came to North Carolina when he joined the Teach For America corps in 2016. Over the past three years, Derek has taught 5th grade at Lakeforest Elementary in Pitt County and Parkwood Elementary in Durham County. He has also served as grade chair, SIT and leadership team member, PBIS chair, and behavior interventionist. He served as a 5th grade teacher at Parkwood Elementary School in Durham County until June 2020. Derek completed his principal residency at Ligon Magnet Middle School during the 2020-2021 school year. He is currently serving as Assistant Principal at Factory Shoals Elementary School in Lithia Springs, GA.



### **Brittney Mary Lopez** **Edgecombe County**

Brittney Mary Lopez earned an undergraduate degree in Child and Adolescent Studies with a medal in Community Engagement from California State University Fullerton. In 2015 she began teaching third grade at Nashville Elementary where she was awarded Beginning Teacher of the Year. She taught fourth and fifth grades as an Extended Impact Teacher at Coker-Wimberly Elementary. She was recognized as a Teacher with Value-Added score in the top 25 percent statewide for three consecutive years before transitioning to her current role as Multi-Classroom Leader. In this role she is serving teachers and stakeholders in third, fourth and fifth grade. She is a Teach for America Alumna and acting support staff member. She started her Principal Residency at W.A. Pattillo Middle School, and then served at Tarboro High School. Brittney is currently the Assistant Principal at Chowan Middle School in Edenton-Chowan Public Schools as of June 2022. Brittney Mary Lopez can be reached at [bmbrouwe@ncsu.edu](mailto:bmbrouwe@ncsu.edu).



## **Sardavia Williams Johnston County**

Sardavia Williams earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – Social Entrepreneurship from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro where she graduated Magna Cum Laude. While attending UNCG, she was a member of Beta Gamma Sigma Honor Society, performing in the top 10% of her junior class. During her undergraduate years, Sardavia spent time advising, tutoring, and mentoring middle school students with Empowering Youth through Education Program, as well as her peers as a Student Success Assistant with the University's special support TRIO program. In 2012, Sardavia joined Teach for America in Eastern NC where she served as a 6th-8th grade math teacher, and in her second year she served as a Math 1 teacher. In this second year, she led in her district with 98% proficiency on the EOC. Sardavia has also taught math intervention, and served as a Dean of Culture, Dean of Students and Math Curriculum, and Manager of Teacher Leadership Development within a public school, charter school, and as a TFA staff member. She completed her Principal Residency at Thanksgiving Elementary School during the 2021-2022 school year. Sardavia can be reached at [swilli35@ncsu.edu](mailto:swilli35@ncsu.edu).

<https://nela.ced.ncsu.edu/past-cohorts-2021-2023/nela-cohort-2023/>



## **Hayley Gearheart**

Hayley Gearheart graduated cum laude from Butler University in 2017 and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Classical Studies. She was a 2017 Teach for America Corps Member in Eastern NC and taught English I, English II, English III, and ACT Prep at Weldon STEM High School Career Academies. During her time at Weldon, she served as the senior class advisor, School Improvement Team Chair, English Department Chair, assistant softball coach, and Instructional Lead Teacher (ILT) for the district. Additionally, Hayley served as a Servant Leader Intern for the Children's Defense Fund Freedom School program at the Peacemakers of Rocky Mount site. In the fall of 2020, Hayley transitioned to serving as the English Department Chair and English II teacher at North Edgecombe High School. She continued to serve on the School Improvement Team, School Design Team, and the North-Philips School of Innovation (NPSI) Team. Hayley was named Edgecombe County Public School's Teacher of the Year for the 2021-2022 school year. Hayley has worked, designing curriculum and serving as the lead English Design for Change facilitator at North Edgecombe High School in Edgecombe County. She completed her Principal Residency at Patillo Middle School during the 2022-2023 school year. Currently, she serves as Assistant Principal of Operations at Maureen Joy Charter School in Durham. Hayley can be reached at [hgearhe@ncsu.edu](mailto:hgearhe@ncsu.edu).



### **Ryan Thorne**

Ryan Thorne graduated from Duke University in 2016 in the top third of her class with a Bachelor of Arts in Art History with minors in English and Italian Studies. She then worked in various museums and cultural institutions, focusing on public and university education. In 2018, Ryan joined Teach for America – Eastern North Carolina where she served as humanities educator for grades 6th through 8th, HillRAP tutor, and School Improvement Team member at Phillips Middle School. Concurrently, she enrolled in a Masters of Science in Education in Secondary Education through Johns Hopkins University, a degree she completed in 2020. For the 2020-2021 academic year, Ryan joined the Exceptional Children's team at South Edgemcombe Middle School as a reading resource teacher. She currently serves as the school's chair of the EC department and as a member of the Equity in Action Team. Previously, she served on the School Improvement Team. She has participated in projects through the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Buck Institute for Education, and Rural Opportunity Institute. Ryan completed her Principal Residency at G.W. Carver Elementary for the 2022-23 school year. Currently, she serves as Assistant Principal at GW Carver Elementary School in Edgemcombe County. Ryan can be reached at [rethorne@ncsu.edu](mailto:rethorne@ncsu.edu).

<https://nela.ced.ncsu.edu/current-cohorts/nela-cohort-2025/>



### **Rachel Brackney** **Sponsoring District: Edgemcombe**

Rachel Brackney earned an undergraduate degree in Psychology from the University of Missouri. She was a 2015 Teach for America corps member and served her first three years in Bertie County. Rachel continued her teaching career in Edgemcombe County where she currently serves as a Math 1 teacher at SouthWest Edgemcombe High School. Throughout the years, she has served as the head of the science department, School Improvement Team representative, mentor teacher, athletic director, and softball coach. Rachel can be contacted at [rbrackn@ncsu.edu](mailto:rbrackn@ncsu.edu).

<https://nela.ced.ncsu.edu/current-cohorts/tuffy-cohort-2025/>



**Marissa Saxon**  
**Sponsoring District: Durham**

Marissa Saxon earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, Language & Literature from the University of South Carolina-Upstate in Spartanburg, SC. In 2018, Marissa joined Teach for America in Eastern North Carolina. She began her teaching career as a 3rd grade teacher at Northeast Elementary School in Lenoir County. Marissa then taught 5th grade in Durham County Schools at Parkwood Elementary School. She has previously served on the PBIS Committee at Parkwood. Currently, Marissa is a 2nd grade teacher and math team leader at Parkwood Elementary. Marissa can be reached at [mlsaxon@ncsu.edu](mailto:mlsaxon@ncsu.edu).

<https://nela.ced.ncsu.edu/current-cohorts/wake-cohort-2025/>



**Kamilla Wright**  
**Sponsoring District: Wake**

Kamilla Wright earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Multidisciplinary Studies from NC State University. She began her teaching career as a 2001 Teach For America alumna teaching math and science in Eastern North Carolina at Bunn Middle School in Bunn, North Carolina. Kamilla has been teaching math at West Cary Middle School in Wake County since 2004. She has served as the math representative on the School Improvement Team and member of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support team. She currently serves as a member of the Leadership Team, Equity Leadership Team, and grade level team lead. She was elected as her school's Teacher of the Year for the 2015-2016 school year and was nominated for the 2022-2023 school year. Kamilla is committed to exposing her students to as much as she can educationally, in addition to learning math, and creating safe spaces for students to learn. She also supports beginning teachers with best practices for classroom and instructional management strategies. Kamilla can be reached at [kdwright4@ncsu.edu](mailto:kdwright4@ncsu.edu).

## Cordelia Breiner

Washington County Schools



Cordelia Breiner is a proud rural educator who has been serving Eastern North Carolina in various capacities since 2016. A multiracial woman, Cordelia was born in Tonga and raised in Wyoming, MI before attending Michigan State University. She graduated from Michigan State University with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and found her way to North Carolina by way of Teach for America-Eastern North Carolina (TFA-ENC). Cordelia taught 6th grade math for four years in Lenoir County before transitioning to Washington County Schools (WCS) in the Fall of 2020 to serve as the Middle School Instructional Coach, District Instructional Technology Facilitator, and most recently the WCS District Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) Coordinator.

Through her teaching experiences, Cordelia discovered that she has a real knack for facilitating adult learning opportunities for schools, organizations, and companies. Since 2018, she has presented over 500 hours of professional development at local, regional, state, and national level conferences. Her session attendees have included teachers, principals, superintendents, consultants, directors, and professors like Dr. Jill Biden (First Lady), Michael Bonner (Ron Clark Academy), Liz Kleinrock (Teaching with Tolerance Award Winner). Presentation topics have included educational technology innovations and integration, content-specific sessions, student engagement, trauma and resilience and taking care of the whole educator.

Cordelia has been recognized for a variety of grants that serve all stakeholders. She received \$6,000 in May 2022 from the Simple Gifts Fund to support the arts program in Washington County, \$224,660 for the 21st CCLC Competitive Summer Mini-Grant Program awarded in Summer 2021, and a \$497 grant for a trauma-informed classroom library from the Lenoir County Education Foundation. She has been spotlighted by the NC New Teacher Support Program, Teacher of the Month and Profound Lady of the Month.

Cordelia is gearing up to redesign the educational field as a future school administrator through East Carolina University's PIRATE Leadership Academy. While she may be the feature for different awards, she continues to thank her village for their support. She believes her success reflects the community that pours into her. Outside of work, Cordelia loves diamond painting, cheap and exciting travels, and reading young adult books.

Teach For America North Carolina is proud of all of our alumni serving in school- and district-level leadership roles.

## Cardinal Gibbons High School

Lesley Coe  
Chief Technology Officer at Cardinal Gibbons High School

## Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools

### Mark Bailey



Coordinator of Recruitment and Employee Engagement  
Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools

## Charlotte Area

### CHARLOTTE

| Alumni Name                 | School                                     | District            | Corps Year |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------|------------|
| Tyler Adams                 | Assistant Principal: Movement              | Movement Foundation | 2020       |
| Erin Nicole Barksdale Coles | Principal: Highland Renaissance Academy    | CMS                 | 2007       |
| Paul Barnhardt              | Principal: Charlotte Lab School            | CMS                 | 2001       |
| Anna Blessington            | Assistant Superintendent of Middle Schools | Cabarrus Co         | 1998       |
| Lauren Bloom                | Principal: Whitewater Academy              | CMS                 | 2000       |
| Malcolm Brooks              | Principal: KIPP Change Academy             | KIPP Charlotte      | 2003       |
| Kiera Busching              | Dean/Director: McClintock Middle School    | CMS                 | 2013       |

|                   |  |                          |      |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------|------|
| Amanda Cahn       | Executive Director, PK-12 Learning and Teaching Services | CMS                      | 2006 |
| Loren Campbell    | Data Use for School Improvement, Specialist              | CMS                      | 2009 |
| Jeffrey Cook      | Principal: Governor's Village STEM Academy               | CMS                      | 1995 |
| Kimberli Darling  | Assistant Principal: Ridge Road Middle                   | CMS                      | 2012 |
| Courtney Derrick  | Principal: Montclair Elementary School                   | CMS                      | 2007 |
| Brianna Eaddy     | Asst Principal: KIPP Change Academy                      | KIPP Charlotte           | 2018 |
| Kenneth Gorham    | Principal: Movement Charter School                       | Movement Foundation      | 2019 |
| Colleen Grosse    | Asst Principal: Martin Luther King Jr Middle School      | CMS                      | 2013 |
| James Jerrell     | Principal: McClintock Middle School                      | CMS                      | 2008 |
| Tyler Jones       | Asst Principal: KIPP Academy Charlotte                   | KIPP Charlotte           | 2018 |
| Tobi Lee          | Asst Principal: KIPP Change Academy                      | KIPP Charlotte           | 2012 |
| Robert Leichner   | Secondary Math Specialist                                | CMS                      | 2004 |
| Kadean Maddix     | Asst Principal: Ascend Public Charter Schools            | Other                    | 2014 |
| Lauren McCrory    | Principal: First Presbyterian Church Weekday School      | Other                    | 2008 |
| Traci Jo Morgan   | Asst Principal: Iredell Charter Academy                  | Iredell Charter Academy  | 2012 |
| Rachael Neill     | Principal: Quail Hollow Middle School                    | CMS                      | 2005 |
| Nemal Patel       | Principal: Roberta Road Middle School                    | CMS                      | 2011 |
| Kevin Poirier     | Asst Principal: West Charlotte High School               | CMS                      | 2012 |
| Cora Polsgrove    | Asst Principal: Devonshire Elementary                    | CMS                      | 2008 |
| Courtlyn Reeves   | Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources              | Cabarrus Co              | 2011 |
| Sarah Reeves      | Chief Academic Officer                                   | Cabarrus Co              | 2009 |
| Ramon Richardson  | Asst Principal: KIPP Charlotte Academy MS                | KIPP Charlotte           | 2000 |
| Talla Rittenhouse | Executive Director, Strategy Management                  | CMS                      | 2003 |
| Meg Scott         | Principal: Charlotte Lab School                          | Charlotte Lab School     | 2005 |
| Katie Sunseri     | Director of Advanced Studies                             | CMS                      | 2008 |
| Sardavia Williams | Dean/ Director: KIPP Change Academy                      | KIPP Charlotte           | 2012 |
| Renee Wilson      | Dean/Director: Kindezi Academy                           | Neighbor Charter Network | 2012 |
| Kimberli Darling  | Assistant Principal: Ridge Road MS                       | CMS                      | 2013 |

The [Concord \(NC\) Independent Tribune](#) (6/9) reported Cabarrus County Schools' Superintendent Dr. John Kopicki announced several personnel appointments, "which were approved by the Board of Education on June 5." Among the new appointees is Courtlyn Reeves, who has been named "Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, replacing Dr. Michael Williams, who is transitioning to Chief Human Resources Officer for the district on July 1." Reeves started his career "as a Teach for America member at Vance High School (CMS) where he taught math."

# Chatham County Public Schools

## Caroline Linker

Principal at Siler City



Caroline Linker, Principal

[clinker@chatham.k12.nc.us](mailto:clinker@chatham.k12.nc.us)

Hi Eagles!

My name is Caroline Linker, and I am the proud principal of Silk Hope School. The Silk Hope School community is unlike any other, and I am so grateful for your continuous support of our students and teachers. I am dedicated to doing what's best for students and doing all that I can to support our students' academic and social/emotional growth. Our staff genuinely cares about our students and works hard every day to ensure they get the best learning experience. We may be small, but our Eagle pride is mighty! I hope to see you soon!

Fast facts about Ms. Linker:

- I am an avid WOLFPACK fan! I am currently working on finishing my doctorate at NCSU, which will be my third degree from there. I'm red and white for life!
- I am a dog mama to Lila. She gives me so much joy! If you're lucky, you may see her on campus during the summer or on workdays.
- I'm happiest when there's music playing!

**Lemondre Watson**  
Principal at Pittsboro Elementary



**Lemondrè Watson, Principal**

## Durham Charter High School

<https://www.durhamcharter.org/>

### Alex Quigley



### Executive Director, Durham Charter High Schools

Alex Quigley is the Executive Director of Durham Charter School, a turnaround K-9 school serving over 600 students. Alex has over 20 years of experience creating and leading high-performing organizations, leading the successful transformation of three different charter schools in two states. In the most recent three consecutive years as a principal, schools Alex led were ranked in the top ten of all charter schools in the state each year in terms of academic growth.

In addition to his work as a school leader, Alex has been a member of the North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board for the last eight years, serving as Vice-Chair for the first two years and Chair for six years. Prior to his time as a school leader, Alex was the Executive Director of Teach For America – Eastern North Carolina. During his time with TFA in NC, he led the organization through a period of rapid growth, securing the first ever state appropriation for the organization, and established a customized program to train and license TFA teachers at East Carolina University, where he served as an adjunct faculty member.

Alex holds a B.A. in Government from Colby College, an M.Ed. in Curriculum and an EdS in School Leadership from the University of Mississippi. Alex graduated with honors from the Relay School of Education National Principals Academy Fellowship and from Cohort 8 of the Leverage Leadership Institute, where he earned Platinum Distinction. Alex began his career as a 2nd grade teacher in the rural Mississippi Delta. Alex lives in Durham with his wife of 20 years, Ashley, and four children.

## **Durham County Public Schools**

<https://www.dpsnc.net/>

### **Claude Cody**



Assistant Principal at George L. Carrington Middle School

## **Edgecombe County Public Schools**

<https://www.ecps.us/>

### **Erin Swanson**

Associate Superintendent for Innovation & Strategic Planning  
Edgecombe County Public Schools

### **Dr. Kelly Anne Shelton Mudd**

Principal at Martin Millennium Academy  
Edgecombe County Public Schools

### **Melissa Altemose**

Principal at G.W. Bulluck Elementary School  
Edgecombe County Public Schools

### **Ryan (Bennert) Thorne**

Assistant Principal at G. W. Carver Elementary School  
Edgecombe County Public Schools

## Franklin County Public Schools

<https://www.fcschools.net/>

### Dr. Lela Nichols



Chief of Academics

## Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington (GLOW)

<https://sites.google.com/lowacademy.net/lowacademystaff/home?authuser=0>

### Alexia (Lexi) Shank



Associate Director of College Access  
College Bound Program Coordinator  
GLOW Academy

# Henderson Collegiate Public Charter School (Vance County)

<https://hendersoncollegiate.org/>

**Eric Sanchez**  
Co-Founder

**Carice Sanchez**  
Co-Founder



## Our Founders

### Eric Sanchez

Eric Sanchez earned his B.A. in Philosophy and Economics from Binghamton University in 2002. He then joined [Teach for America](#) in Eastern North Carolina, where he taught at Eaton Johnson Middle School in Vance County. After a few years, Eric transitioned to [Gaston College Preparatory](#), part of the [Knowledge Is Power Program](#), where he taught and assumed the responsibility of Grade Level Chair. A few years later, in 2010, he co-founded Henderson Collegiate with his wife, Carice Sanchez, as the School Leader over its first 4th grade class of 100 students. Eric led the school as it expanded a grade level each year through July 2015, when he assumed the role of Executive Director over 600 students in multiple schools. In this position, he supports the Principals and Directors of Operations and facilitates the charter school's expansion on a growth trajectory that will reach capacity with over 1,200 students in grades K-12 in the year 2020. Under Eric's leadership, Henderson Collegiate has Exceeded Expected Growth each year since opening, earned Title I Reward School status for High Student Growth for three consecutive years, and achieved the highest school performance grade in the state of North Carolina, A<sup>+</sup>, an honor earned by only 2.8% of all NC public schools. Eric recently completed the [National Principals Academy Fellowship](#) through the [Relay Graduate School of Education](#), where he now serves as an advisor for principals around the country. He is a member of the Henderson Rotary Club and a house-appointed, voting member of the Charter School Advisory Board, which makes policy recommendations and provides performance evaluations to the North Carolina State Board of Education.

### Carice Sanchez

Carice Sanchez earned her B.A. in Education from The Ohio State University in 2002 and joined [Teach for America](#) in Eastern North Carolina. She was hired to teach at Pinkston Street Elementary School, where she taught and achieved great success with her students over the next six years. She earned her M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction from North Carolina State University and is a nationally board certified educator. In 2008, Carice transitioned to KIPP's [Gaston College Preparatory](#) in Gaston, NC, where she taught for the next two years as she learned the school's unique instructional model and approach to targeted literacy instruction. In 2010, she co-founded Henderson Collegiate with her husband, Eric Sanchez, as the school's 4th grade Reading teacher. After teaching Reading for the school's first two years, Carice became the school's Director of Instruction in 2012. She continues to serve in this role today, coaching teachers and guiding the development of the literacy curriculum across grade levels. Carice works with the academic Department Heads to create aligned and rigorous curricula, assessments, lesson plans and classroom materials. Under Carice's leadership as Director of Instruction, the school's composite score for EOG's has grown from 50% to 85% over the past two years. Henderson Collegiate has Exceeded Expected Growth each year since opening, earned Title I Reward School status for High Student Progress for three consecutive years, and achieved the highest school performance grade in the state of North Carolina, A<sup>+</sup>, an honor earned by only 2.8% of all NC public schools. For 2015, the school was additionally honored as North Carolina's National Distinguished Title I School for High Student Progress.

Henderson Collegiate | Charter School Henderson NC 252-598-1038

Show Less

## Our Story

Having just graduated from college, Mr. Eric Sanchez and Mrs. Carice Sanchez came to Henderson, North Carolina in the summer of 2002. Through the nationally renowned [Teach For America](#) program, they began their teaching careers in Vance County; Mr. Sanchez at Eaton-Johnson Middle School, Mrs. Sanchez at nearby Pinkston Street Elementary. As they each proved their effectiveness in the classroom, they also fell in love with the local community.

Despite the academic growth and desire to learn they were seeing in their respective classrooms, Mr. and Mrs. Sanchez saw the potential to make an even greater impact. They only had to look fifty miles east to [Gaston College Preparatory](#), a public charter school and part of the [Knowledge Is Power Program \(KIPP\) network](#), to see what was possible. Both Mr. and Mrs. Sanchez went on to teach there, again achieving remarkable results in their classrooms, learning what it would take to lead a school of their own, and planning to one day open one using the KIPP model.

Meanwhile, neither educator lost their commitment to the students of Vance County who remained hungry for an excellent education. Mr. Sanchez led the "Henderson to KIPP" initiative, arranging enrollment and transportation for more than thirty Vance County students to attend Gaston College Prep.

It was on New Year's Day of 2009 when Mr. and Mrs. Sanchez decided they were ready to lead their own school in Vance County, submitting an application a month later to the North Carolina State Board of Education. Out of twenty-four applicants that year, only three would be granted charters to open their schools. Short-listed to a group of six, Mr. and Mrs. Sanchez were joined by potential board members, students, and parents in Raleigh, where they were interviewed by the Leadership for Innovation Committee. Based on the recommendations of that committee, the State Board of Education convened in August 2009 for a final vote. Henderson Collegiate, as it was named, won the second highest number of votes and was the first choice of four of the Board's nine members.

Exactly one year later, after months of planning and preparation, Henderson Collegiate opened its doors in August 2010 to its first class of fourth-graders, affectionately known as "the Pride of 2019."

## Kate Liddle



Director of Talent Acquisition at Henderson Collegiate

## Celeste Olsen



Dean of Curriculum & Instruction at Henderson Collegiate

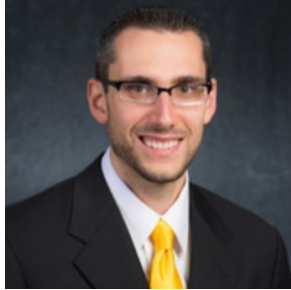
**Victoria Robertson**

Henderson Collegiate Central Office Team

**Barb Roeder**

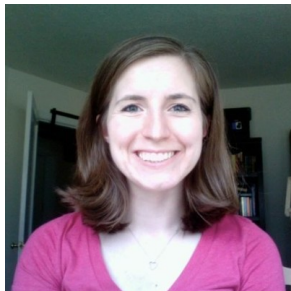
School Finance Coordinator at Henderson Collegiate

**Frank Terranova**



Principal Manager at Henderson Collegiate

**Caitlin Terranova**



Chief of Staff at Henderson Collegiate

## **Taro Shigenobu**

Principal, Henderson Collegiate High School



**Principal:** Taro Shigenobu

Taro Shigenobu joined Henderson Collegiate in 2013. During his time at Henderson Collegiate, Taro has held numerous positions, such as 8th Grade Science teacher, Grade Level Chair, and Instructional Coach. He then stepped into the role of High School Principal in the fall of 2019. Taro earned his B.A. in Economics and East Asian Studies from Brown University and joined Teach for America in 2013, and is currently working to earn his masters degree from Johns Hopkins University.

## **Melanie Johnson**

Principal, Henderson Collegiate Middle School



**Principal:** Melanie Johnson

Melanie Johnson joined Henderson Collegiate in 2013 as a Teach For America corps member. In the last six years, Melanie has served as a Grade Level Chair, Instructional Coach, Reading Department Chair, and currently serves as our Middle School Principal. Melanie is pursuing a master's degree in the NELA cohort (NSCU) at North Carolina State University.

# Ashley Johnson

Principal, Henderson Collegiate Elementary School

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## Principal: Ashley Johnson

Ashley joined Henderson Collegiate in 2011 as a Teach For America corps member teaching 5th grade English/Language Arts. In 2013, she transitioned into leadership as the 4th and 5th Grade Level Chair and then in 2014 became an Instructional Coach. This school year she is serving as the Founding Principal at Henderson Collegiate Elementary School. In addition, Ashley has served as a Curriculum Specialist at Teach For America’s Mississippi Summer Training Institute. She earned her B.A. from James Madison University in Media Arts and Design with Minors in Humanitarian

Affairs and Spanish and earned a Masters of School Administration from N.C. State University.

## Results

### 2023 Academic Achievement Results

- Earned a composite score of 82% (B)
- Ranked #10 in Growth for 2023 out of 2500+ traditional and charter schools in NC
- Met all State and Federal targets (AMOs)
- Ranked #1 in Growth for 2023 out of all charter schools in NC
- [Learn more about NCDPI state test results](#)



# Congratulations HC!

*Out of 2,500+ NC public schools  
for 2022-2023, Henderson  
Collegiate ranked:*

## 10th for Academic Growth

*Top 0.4% in NC!*

Outperformed state  
in every subject area  
and grade level!



[HendersonCollegiate.org](https://HendersonCollegiate.org)

*School Performance Score = 82% (B)  
Source: NCDPI 2022-23 School Performance Grades*

## Insight Colearning Center (Durham County)

<https://www.insightcolearning.org/>

### **Susan Haws**



Founder and Executive Director at Insight Colearning Center

## Johnson County Public Schools

<https://www.johnston.k12.nc.us/>

### **Dorlisa Johnson-Cowart**

Executive Director of Middle Education and Advanced Learning

## **KIPP (Statewide)**

<https://kippsc.org/>

### **Dr. Eboné Barnes**



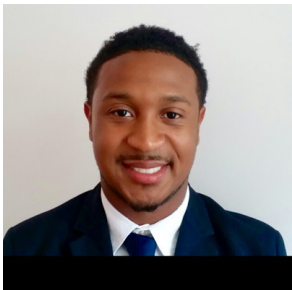
Dean of Culture & Instruction at KIPP Pride High School

### **Emily Cook Dwight**



Head of Schools with KIPP North Carolina

### **Marcus Griffin**



Assistant Principal at KIPP Gaston PRIDE High

### **Quinton Vance**

Senior Relationship Manager

## Maureen Joy Public Charter School (Durham, NC)

<https://www.joycharter.org/>

### **Donnell Cannon**



Executive Director  
Maureen Joy Charter School (Durham, NC)

### **Jeremy Wall**



Principal  
Maureen Joy Charter School (Durham, NC)

### **Hayley Gearheart**

Assistant Principal of Operations  
Maureen Joy Charter School (Durham, NC)

# Nash County Public Schools

## Megan Bain



6-12 Math Content Specialist, Nash County Public Schools

## Timothy Mudd

Principal, JW Parker Middle School



**Timothy Mudd, Principal**

This is my 18th year in Nash County Public Schools. I have had the pleasure of working with different teachers, students, and families from all over Nash and Edgecombe counties. I believe every school can get a little bit better, and by putting students first, setting high expectations, and working together, that is exactly what we are going to do. I believe the most important people on our campus are our students. We must constantly strive to develop a student-centered environment where all decisions are based on the best interest of our students and not what is most convenient for adults. It is my goal to create an open, accepting, flexible, and transparent environment that encourages students and staff to be open to feedback, ready to try new things, and willing to fail. I don't believe in quitting or giving up! If students and staff work hard, don't make excuses, and are held

accountable, they can achieve anything they set their minds to. In order to successfully reach a goal, you can't be interested in your goal; you have to be committed to it. This means working together, respecting our differences, and giving 100% even if we don't get any of the credit. I can't wait to meet and get to know each of the Pirate community individually.

<https://jwparkerms.ncpschools.net/o/jwpms/page/administration>

## Hugh Scott

Principal, Southern Nash High School

**Mr. Hugh Scott - Principal**

[hdsconfig@ncpschools.net](mailto:hdsconfig@ncpschools.net)



Dr. Scott has over 17 years of experience in education, with one year as Principal at Tar River Academy and four years as Assistant Principal of Southern Nash High School. Dr. Scott is in his 7th year as principal at SNHS. He earned his Master's in School Administration from North Carolina State University. Dr. Scott completed his Doctorate in Educational Leadership from East Carolina University and the Project I4 program. While in Nash County Public Schools, he served as a teacher, curriculum coach, and professional development coordinator for the district before moving into an administrative role. Dr. Scott was recognized as the Nash County Public Schools Principal of the Year in the 2020-21 school year and currently serves again as the Principal of the Year of the District.

"I am grateful to serve as principal of Southern Nash High and lead a staff of great and growing educators. I strive to take our school to the next level to continue a long tradition of excellence. All of our students have the potential to be GREAT, and it takes everyone involved in the child's life to help make them successful! Our students must embrace their experiences, respond appropriately to challenges, and learn their academic content and valuable character traits to be competitive in this growing global society! I look forward to working with our students and pushing them in their realization of their full potential!"

<https://southernashhs.ncpschools.net/o/snhs/page/administration>

## Oxford Preparatory School (Granville County)

<https://www.oxfordprep.org/Home>

### MaryAnn Crews



Lower School Director

## Piedmont Triad Area Schools

| PIEDMONT TRIAD    |   |            |            |
|-------------------|---|------------|------------|
| Alumni Name       | School  | District   | Corps Year |
| Stephen Bell      | American Indian Education Coordinator               | GCS        | 2013       |
| Nasaa Enkbold     | Data Strategist, Office of Data Analytics & Support | GCS        | 2015       |
| Whitney Gilbert   | Asst Principal: Mendenhall Middle School            | GCS        | 2014       |
| Sharrone Honor    | Positive Support & Student Transition Teacher Lead  | GCS        | 2016       |
| Olivia Joliff     | Director MTSS                                       | GCS        | 2013       |
| Stuart Johnston   | Asst Principal: NorthEast Guilford High School      | GCS        | 2003       |
| Rebecca Kaye      | Senior Advisor to the Superintendent                | GCS        | 2000       |
| Ebenezer Lancerio | Principal: Central Wilkes Middle School             | Wilkes CO  | 2014       |
| Marshall Matson   | Chief of Schools                                    | GCS        | 1991       |
| Johnathan Moore   | Principal: Southern Elem                            | GCS        | 2016       |
| Shane O'Neal      | Principal: Thomas Jefferson Middle School           | WSFC       | 1991       |
| Shawn Stover      | Superintendent                                      | Rockingham | 1990       |

This year, we were excited to learn about many TFA alums who became first-time principals, including TFA alum Johnathan Moore, who [was named](#) principal at Southern Elementary in Guilford County.

## **Pitt County Public Schools**

<https://www.pitt.k12.nc.us/>

### **Sarah Pierce**

6-8, 9-12 Program Specialist  
Pitt County Public Schools

## **Roanoke Rapids Graded School District**

<https://www.rrgsd.org/>

### **Lauren Hinnat**



Executive Director of Instructional Services

## Sampson County Public Schools

<https://www.sampson.k12.nc.us/>

### Amy Tart



### Assistant Principal of Union Elementary School

#### SCS BOARD ANNOUNCES NEW ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Valerie Newton

AUG 16, 2023

At their August 15 work session, the SCS Board of Education approved the recommendation from SCS Superintendent Dr. Jamie King for a new assistant principal.

Amy Tart will become the new assistant principal of Union Elementary School. She moves into this role with nearly 10 years of experience in education. Tart began her teaching career in 2014 as a Teach for America corps member at Union Intermediate School. Since then she has taught at Hayesville Elementary School in Clay County, NC, Sunset Avenue Elementary in Clinton, NC, and most recently as an intern administrator at L.C. Kerr and Butler Avenue Elementary schools in Clinton, NC.

"We look forward to the teaching and leadership experience Mrs. Tart will bring back to Sampson County Schools. It's a full-circle moment in her career", said Dr. King.

Tart was the 2018-2019 Sampson County Teacher of the Year and has participated as a co-host of the online interview series program, Tar Heel Teachers at Home since 2018.

Tart is currently enrolled in the Master of school administration program at Campbell University. She graduated as a teaching fellow from Mars Hill University with a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education.

## The Capitol Encore Academy (Cumberland County)

<https://www.capitolencoreacademy.org/>

### **Gerald Falls**

Superintendent of The Capitol Encore Academy



**Gerard Falls**

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*Superintendent*

*Title IX Coordinator*

[gfalls@capitolencoreacademy.org](mailto:gfalls@capitolencoreacademy.org)

## The Exploris School

<https://exploris.org/>

### Ethan Burton



Director of Elementary Grades at The Exploris School

## Trinity Academy (Wake County)

<https://trinityacademy.com/>

### Matthew Breazeale



Assistant Head of School

## Wake County Public Schools

<https://www.wcpss.net/>

### Elena Ashburn

Central Area Superintendent at Wake County Public School System



Dr. Elena Ashburn | [Contact Dr. Ashburn](#)

Dr. Elena Ashburn began her career in education as a Teach For America Corps Member, teaching English at Southern Durham High School. She served as an assistant principal at Fuquay-Varina High School prior to becoming principal at East Garner Magnet Middle School and later Needham B. Broughton Magnet High School. Dr. Ashburn earned a doctorate in Educational Leadership from UNC Chapel-Hill in 2018. In 2021, Dr. Ashburn was named the North Carolina Wells Fargo Principal of the Year. She was named Central Area Superintendent in 2022.

## Ari Cohen

### Principal at Leesville Road Elementary



Phone: 919-870-4200

Email: [acohen@wcpss.net](mailto:acohen@wcpss.net)

**Degrees and Certifications:**

MSA, UNC Chapel Hill

## Ari Cohen

email address: [acohen](mailto:acohen)

It is hard to believe that I am entering into my ELEVENTH year as the Principal here at Leesville Rd. Elementary School. It has been a terrific honor to serve as the leader for this community throughout the past decade and while the past two and a half years have been the most challenging of my professional life, I can honestly say that I have still looked forward to coming to work each day. Mrs. Bailey and I say that the worst and most difficult days at LES are still better than the best days anywhere else.

To share a bit about my path that led me to Leesville Rd. Elementary School, I joined Teach for America as a 1995 Corps Member. TFA sent me out to Compton, California, where I taught first grade for five years at Thomas Jefferson ES. Once my first class of students completed their 5th grade year, I moved back home to NYC, where I taught first grade for another two years at PS 189 in Washington Heights.

During my second year, I determined that I wanted a broader impact on school operations, which led me to the NC Principal Fellows and the Masters in School Administration Program and UNC-CH.

Following my internship at Forest View Elementary in Durham, I became the Assistant Principal at Southwest ES. After one and a half years as AP and five and a half years as Principal, my family and I moved to Paris, France, where I spent two years leading the Pre-K through 8th Grade Program at Marymount International School.

As my family and I made our plans to return to North Carolina, I was fortunate to land here in the Leesville community. **The PRIDE Starts Here Leesville!**

## **Kristen McCollum**

Assistant Principal at Millbrook Magnet Elementary



### **Ms. Kristen McCollum**

Ms. McCollum is excited to be a part of the Millbrook Environmental Connections Elementary School community, which he joined in January of 2022.

Ms. McCollum grew up in Huntersville, NC and attended Winston-Salem State University where she studied Elementary Education. After graduating, she moved to New Orleans, Louisiana to join the Teach For America Corps. In New Orleans she taught a variety of subjects in 4th - 6th grades at schools in the Mid-city and 7th ward communities. During that time, she coached girls' basketball, started a club "Strong Like a Girl," and taught a flag dance group. In 2016, she moved to Raleigh to attend NC State to earn a Master's of School Administration. Most recently Ms. McCollum served as the proud 6<sup>th</sup> grade Assistant Principal at West Cary Middle School for three and a half years. She currently is earning her Doctorate of Educational Leadership at NC State.

Phone: 919.850.8700 Ext 26245

Email: [kmccollum@wcpss.net](mailto:kmccollum@wcpss.net)

In her free time, Ms. McCollum enjoys spending time with her sister, parents, and hosts of extended family and friends. She enjoys watching documentaries, listening to live music, traveling, and hiking.

## **Stephanie Costa**

Principal at Burton Pond Elementary



### **Mrs. Stephanie Costa**

Mrs. Costa is honored to lead Barton Pond Elementary School as it's founding principal. Prior to transitioning to Barton Pond, Mrs. Costa served as the principal of Brassfield Elementary School. She holds BA, MAT, & Ed.S. degrees from UNC Chapel Hill, as well as NC licensure in Regular Education, Special Education, Gifted Education, School Administration, and School Superintendency. Mrs. Costa is excited to collaborate with Barton Pond's staff, students, and families to grow Barton Pond into the very best school in the Wake County Public School System.

## Catie Burnette

Principal at Washington Gifted and Talented Magnet Elementary School



### Mrs. Catie Burnette, Principal

My name is Catie Burnette and I am honored to be the Principal at Washington Gifted and Talented Magnet Elementary School. Upon graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a North Carolina Teaching Fellow, I taught first grade in rural Eastern North Carolina as part of the Teach for America corps. After getting married, I moved to Raleigh and continued my career in both first and second grade at Bugg Creative Arts and Science Magnet Elementary School. During my time at Bugg, I worked with beginning teachers, coached Girls on the Run, and worked as an A+ Fellow with the A+ Schools Program of NC. I was also selected as Teacher of the Year by my colleagues and was a semi-finalist for Wake County Schools during the 2015-16 school year.

Throughout my educational career, I have worked alongside many leaders who have shaped my values and beliefs. They helped me to also grow as a leader in and out of the classroom and encouraged me to further my education. I completed my Master's in School Administration at North Carolina State University and then became Assistant Principal at Hilburn Academy, WCPSS's only PreK-8th grade public school. In 2019, I was honored to be named Wake County Public Schools Assistant Principal of the Year. My husband, George, is a trust and estate strategist with Vanilla, a financial technology company. We live with our dog, Lola, in downtown Raleigh and enjoy trying new restaurants, spending time with friends, and going to Atlantic Beach with our family.

**Alumni:** University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University (HOUSE DIVIDED)

<https://www.wcpss.net/Page/51269>

**Cally Hudson**  
Assistant Principal at Lead Mine Elementary



## Washington County Schools

<https://www.wcsnc.org/>

### **Cordelia Breiner**



Past: District Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) Coordinator

Present: Assistant principal at Washington County High School

## TFA School Leaders are Serving in Every Corner of NC



Jared Gatewood, Principal, East Union Middle School

Ebenezer Lancerio, Principal, Central Wilkes Middle School

Dr. Eboné Barnes, Dean of Students, KIPP Pride High School

Johnathan Moore, Principal, Southern Guilford Elementary

## Partner Testimony

We included below some testimony from a few of our partners about the exceptional leaders Teach For America brings to North Carolina, with a list of TFA teachers of the year from the past three school years outlined after that.

***“I appreciate the exceptional support Teach For America has provided and look forward to our continued partnership.”*** –said Kendra Davis, Principal at Mariam Boyd Elementary School in Warrenton, NC

***“Teach For America is vital in helping to fill vacancies. I wish we could quadruple the number of TFA teachers in our schools in Charlotte.”*** –said Jeffrey Cook, TFA Alum Principal, Wilson STEM Academy, Charlotte, NC

*“Teach For America North Carolina is a source for students to receive instruction from highly motivated and successful individuals that may become career teachers. TFA provides Charlotte–Mecklenburg Schools with outstanding individuals who fill vacancies in hard-to-fill content areas and in schools with students that come from a lower*

*socioeconomic status. TFA has recruited teachers to fill STEM vacancies and mid-career individuals through national partnerships and networks. Individuals with training in particular areas, but do not have educator training, can still transition to a classroom teacher because they have strong content knowledge and Teach For America opens the door for them. Their pedagogy is strong because of TFA support and experience in the classroom. Teach For America impacts our community in a positive way. Students' educational experiences are enhanced when they receive instruction from someone who looks like them and from someone who has strong content knowledge, which TFA makes possible."* –said Robert Ellyson, Executive Director, Talent Acquisition, Charlotte–Mecklenburg Schools

## Alumni Profiles

### Ana Cunningham (CPT '12)

Charlotte–Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) District Teacher of the Year

*“Teach For America North Carolina altered my life’s trajectory. My initial pursuit of law turned to a permanent home in education as I met my students who deserved the highest levels of access, most rigorous standards of education, and ample opportunities to lift their voices to enact change. The lessons that spark curiosity, the classroom discussions that build perspective, and the writing that reveals students’ grit and tenacity all solidify my passion to advocate audaciously for students to ensure that their personal circumstance need never dictate their future outcomes. Our students have ambitions and aspirations to impart incredible impact on our world and it has been my greatest privilege to witness their tremendous transformation for the past twelve years—the absolute greatest honor I hold in my life.”*



our **brightest** minds. our **boldest** dreamers. our **brilliant** innovators.

## MEET OUR LEADERS

“The lessons that spark curiosity, the classroom discussions that build perspective, and the writing that reveals students' grit and tenacity all solidify my passion to advocate audaciously for students to ensure that their personal circumstance need never dictate their future outcomes. Our students have ambitions and aspirations to impart incredible impact on our world and it has been my greatest privilege to witness their tremendous transformation for the past twelve years of teaching.

### Ana Cunningham (CPT '12)

*District Teacher of the Year*  
Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools



## Ashley Lopez-Davila

["Guilford County Schools' Counselor of the Year talks mental health resources for students"](#)

Courtney Wallen | Spectrum News 1 | 9.27.22

*Ashley Lopez-Davila, a school counselor at Alderman Elementary School, is Guilford County Schools' Counselor of the Year*

***Ashley Lopez-Davila is the school counselor at Alderman Elementary School in Greensboro. She started her career with a two-year stint in Teach For America.***

*She loved teaching so much, she signed up for another year. After moving from Texas to North Carolina, Lopez-Davila switched to counseling. She credits her work in teaching to her ability to support students, their families and teachers in the classroom.*

*"I understand how it is in the classroom and best support students in the classroom and also support the teachers too," she said.*

*Lopez-Davila helped her students deal with the challenges and stress of remote learning when the pandemic forced schools to close. She noticed a change in some students as they returned to in-class learning.*

*Lopez-Davila began approaching social-emotional learning with her students, teaching them to talk through how they feel, control their*

*actions and emotions, and recognizing how to build relationships. She encourages teachers to focus on it in the classroom, and leads lessons in class herself. Lopez-Davila also works with students in small groups or independently.*

*“It’s very important that they learn at an early age how to handle different emotions and how to be able to calm themselves down. When something gets hard in life, they’ll have those skills, and we’ll have to continue building on those,” she said.*

*According to a [Gallup poll](#) in the 2020 academic year, three in 10 parents reported their child experiencing emotional or mental health challenges.*

*Guilford County Schools Superintendent Whitney Oakley says there’s a focus on mental health resources for students and staff this year.*

*“We’ve worked really hard to make sure that every student has a trusted adult in the building. That’s one of the main things we can do for mental health support,” Oakley said.*

*The work Lopez-Davila has done with her students earned her Guilford County Schools’ Counselor of the Year recognition. She’s passionate about helping her students every day. Lopez-Davila hopes to continue helping students, their families and the Alderman community feel safe and supported.*

## Dr. Elena Ashburn



Pictured L to R: Meredith Archie, NCDHHS Secretary Kody Kinsley, WCPSS Central Area Superintendent Dr. Elena Ashburn, Alexander Family YMCA Executive Director Matt Lilley

### **Meredith Archie Talks Workforce: Challenges Impacting North Carolina**

The Alexander Family YMCA hosted a Community Connections breakfast where NC Chamber Foundation President Meredith Archie served as a panelist alongside NCDHHS Sec. Kody Kinsley and WCPSS Central Area Superintendent Dr. Ashburn, moderated by Branch Director Matt Lilley. Archie discussed significant challenges facing our community and state, focusing on workforce and labor constraints, but is encouraged by the partnerships and collaboration across the private and public sectors to address this long-term issue.

## Catie Burnette

TFA Alum Catie Burnette is principal at Washington Magnet Elementary, which was recently named the top elementary school in the nation by Magnet Schools of America. Catie and the Washington Elementary team [received a visit](#) from Governor Cooper on May 23.

[“Governor visits Raleigh elementary school to launch ‘Protect Public Schools’ tour”](#)

Rupen Fofaria | *EdNC* | 5/23/2023 | Featuring Alum Catie Burnette

## Donnell Cannon

["A new fleet of electric school buses hit the road in Durham"](#)

Alli Lindenberg | *EdNC* | 10/11/2023 | **Featuring TFA Alum Donnell Cannon**

## Hannah Cocca

Zachery Eanes of *Axios Raleigh* recently [profiled](#) the furniture company Nugget, including quotes from Nugget co-founder and TFA Alum Hannah Cocca.

## Nichad Davis

James Scott Farrin attorney and TFA Alum Nichad Davis was chosen for 2023 national black lawyers "top 40 under 40" list. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).



/ALUMNISPOTLIGHT



**NICHAD DAVIS**

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA '13

Teach For America North Carolina Alumnus Nichad Davis was recently selected for the 2023 National Black Lawyers "Top 40 Under 40 List".

## Duke University Features

TFA alums Stephen Ezekoye, Zack Kaplan, and Dylan Moore discussed their experiences in Teach For America and how TFA launched their future studies and careers at a Duke University [event](#). Ezekoye (ENC 2018) is currently pursuing a MBA from Duke, Moore (Memphis 2017) is part of Duke's MPP program, and Kaplan (ENC 2015) earned a JD from Duke Law School.

[Poets And Quants](#) (8/21, Schmitt) profiled TFA alum and Duke University MBA student Janyiah Olawale for its 2023 MBA To Watch series.

## Kenneth Gorham

["26-year-old used 3 soft skills to become the youngest principal in his school's history: 'This never happens'"](#)

Ashton Jackson | CNBC | 10/24/23 | Featuring TFA Alum Kenneth Gorham



**Kenneth Gorham, principal of Movement Freedom Middle School in Charlotte, North Carolina.** Kenneth Gorham

# Gerard Falls

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## Gerard Falls

[Home](#) / [Teachers/Staff](#) / Gerard Falls

**Title/Name:** Mr. Gerard Falls

**Position:** 5-8 Dean of Students

**Email:** [gerard.falls@capitolencoreacademy.org](mailto:gerard.falls@capitolencoreacademy.org)

**Education:**

Bachelor of Arts in Global Studies, Methodist University

Middle Grades Education Licensure, East Carolina University

**Biography:**

Originally from Maine, Mr. Falls served in the 82nd Airborne Division from 2004-2008. After completing his enlistment, he attended Methodist University in Fayetteville, where he graduated in December 2012 with a BA in Global Studies. In 2013, he was admitted into the Teach for America Eastern North Carolina Corps. He served in TFA for two years, teaching middle school and coaching high school swimming in Clinton, while completing his education licensure at East Carolina University. After completing his service, he joined The Capitol Encore Academy for the 2015-2016 school year.

Mr. Falls was the 2014 recipient of an educator's grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, an inductee into the Fayetteville Observer's "40 Under 40" class of 2017, and a 2017-2018 North Carolina Museum of Art Fellow. He was selected as the 2017-2018 runner-up for North Carolina Charter School Teacher of the Year, and he currently serves as secretary on the board of directors of Sweet Tea Shakespeare. Mr. Falls is married to his wife, Michele, and they live in Fayetteville, where they are active in promoting the arts, education, and a more inclusive community.



## LaToya Faustin

### [“She Built This City Launches Job-Training Home-Repair Program”](#)

Ryan Pitkin | *Queen City Nerve* | 10/23/23 | **Featuring TFA Alum LaToya Faustin**

LaToya Faustin joined on with [local workforce development organization She Built This City](#) in 2019, and just months later in 2020, when founder Demi Knight Clark stepped down from her leadership position, Faustin found herself at the helm of the nonprofit in the midst of a pandemic.

The prospect may have been overwhelming for some, but Faustin has stepped up to launch a slate of innovative programming at She Built This City, which provides “industry disruptive programming” in skilled trades for youth, women and marginalized communities.

The pandemic helped emphasize the importance of her work.

“It was definitely scary,” she told Queen City Nerve. “But as I was sitting in my home quarantined with my child, looking out my window seeing the roads still being built, it was one of those things like, I think there’s something here that is worthy of my time and attention.”

In June 2020, Faustin launched She Built This City’s mobile programming for youth to help get them out and moving at a time when most of their days were spent in front of screens. By December, they had served 500 kids.

Since then, Faustin has continued to innovate, this year launching a home-repair program in Pottstown, Huntersville’s oldest historically Black neighborhood, to help train women in construction trades while simultaneously curbing the risk of displacement for Pottstown residents who want to age in place.

We caught up with Faustin in the lead-up to a celebratory mural unveiling that marked the end of the home-repair pilot to discuss her goals for She Built This City.

## Queen City Nerve: What were you up to before joining the team at She Built This City?

**LaToya Faustin:** My background is in education. I was a teacher by trade and training through Teach for America, then took various avenues through nonprofit, upward-mobility work. I came to Charlotte for an organization called Citizen Schools. It's an education-based nonprofit that was extending the learning day. My first placement school was Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School. So I was there as a campus director and then also at Quail Hollow Middle School.

From there I began to do more community development work. I left education and started focusing more on the economic mobility plight of Charlotte. I worked with a community development corporation on affordable housing efforts, and that's where I crossed paths with She Built This City. And understanding that — and this is my personal opinion around affordable housing — it is a noble and worthy effort and Charlotte continues to focus on it as it should; however, I believe there's only so much land available and opportunities to build these affordable units. Through workforce development, you can create economic mobility and empower communities with the tools they need to make a living wage so they can live wherever they want to.

Read more [here](#).


## Lauren Lampron

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### Meet a principal who offers love first in this come as you are school



Mebane Rash  
February 21, 2023

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REPUBLISH THIS STORY

Feature K-12 The Editor's Notes Edgecombe

<https://www.ednc.org/meet-a-principal-who-offers-love-first-in-this-come-as-you-are-school/>



Principal Lauren Lampron, SouthWest Edgecombe High School. Mebane Rash/EducationNC

*There used to be a dress code at [SouthWest Edgecombe High School \(SWEHS\)](#).*

*As students entered school each day, it was more about worry than welcome. Worry about drugs and weapons — and the dress code.*

*Now, students come as they are and are greeted with love first.*

*Meet Lauren Lampron, the principal who changed all of that and more.*

*The students nicknamed her L Money — because she is cool, admitting with a laugh that she asked them for the nickname. She even has a personalized handshake.*

*This is a high school where each of the 807 students is seen and known as the person they are and can be.*

*So it makes sense that the principal is too.*

*The day we visited SWEHS, someone spray painted the N-word on the football field. Lampron moved into high gear to have it removed before students could see it.*

*The next day, she held a circle with the football team, administrators, the school resource officer, and coaches. They talked about what it felt like to have their safe space violated, what it meant from their individual vantage points, and how to move forward.*

*Lampron said, "The players spoke beautiful words of encouragement and purpose. They did a 'breakdown,' putting their hands in and breaking down on 'family' on the count of three."*

*"We are going to anchor in talking about our hurts and making it safe to share our truth with mercy," she said.*

*And for another day, the school she works so hard to make feel welcome to all continued to feel welcome to all.*

*When Lampron started at SWEHS, she looked at suspension data and noticed how many suspensions were attributed to violations of the dress code — a dress code, she noted, that was informed by white, middle-class values.*

*She conducted an equity audit of herself as she greeted students in the morning.*

*She tallied who she said good morning to and who she greeted with a correction. “The kids who looked like me got all of me. But I heard myself saying over and over to the kids who didn’t look like me, ‘my expectation is that you take your hoodie off in this building.’”*

*She realized the dress code created opposition from the very beginning of each day. “It felt to them like we don’t understand them, we don’t see them, we don’t value them,” she said.*

*Lampron wanted to build a school community that welcomed the whole child.*

*She showed the data to her teachers and then she conducted an equity audit of how teachers greeted their students as they entered the classroom.*

*It was clear why her Black and Brown students didn’t feel welcome.*

*The students asked Lampron, “Why do you care if I wear a hoodie? Are you scared of me when I wear one?”*

*“Why are hats OK and hoods aren’t?” Lampron asked herself.*

*She made a deal with the staff. No dress codes for students or staff. If teachers can teach wearing whatever they want, then students can learn wearing whatever they want, she reasoned.*

*Lampron believes educators have to honor and meet students where they are to have a shot at guiding them where they are going. Her number one goal for herself is to get kids in the door of the school.*

*To have the conversations about building resumes, how to show up at interviews, and the importance of soft skills, she said you have to first have a relationship with the student, and that only happens if they are in school.*

*“These students,” she said, “are anchored in a high school body with high school social media and high school norms. They want to look fresh. And I just need to see their eyes.”*

*Now she tells the students, “My charge is to keep you safe here — physically, emotionally, and mentally.”*

*That gets them in door to learn.*

*SWEHS had a [school performance grade](#) of C in 2022, its highest grade since 2015, and it met expected growth.*

*Lampron was an English teacher. She will tell you she doesn’t do math.*

*But she understands what kids need to succeed. So consider this a lesson in math.*

*Lampron will also tell you that new principals are told not to change anything for the first six months they are on the job. “Walk around. Get to know the people,” she remembers people saying to her.*

*She couldn't do that given all of the barriers she saw for her students to an equitable education.*

*So hers is also a lesson in leadership and life.*

*Lampron didn't like what she saw when she looked at which students in her school were taking and passing Math 1.*

*Why is Math 1 such a big deal? "Once they get through Math 1, they know how to do the work," she said. More importantly, four units of college preparatory mathematics are required for college admission, so access to Math 1 is access to college.*

*Lampron dug deeper, and she realized there was a problem with the master schedule. With the best of intentions, Foundations of Math was being offered to ninth-graders in first semester to ready them for Math 1.*

*The problem was that if they failed, there wasn't a math class for them to take second semester. So during the first semester of 10th grade, they would repeat Foundations of Math. Redux in 11th grade.*

*You see the problem.*

*These students were in a loop that foreclosed college as an option because of how math was scheduled.*

*Lampron then diagnosed gaps in student knowledge. For example, Math 1 requires mastery of quadratic equations, and to get there, students have to understand operations of integers.*

*Lampron moved to close that gap. High school teachers, she said, don't think they have time to teach operations of integers. "I dare not," she said, "because we agree that to get to a quadratic function, they need to know how to do this."*

*She then partnered with eighth grade teachers for the first time. Her team looked at each incoming freshman's EVAAS scores. But knowing "kids are more than numbers," they asked eighth grade teachers whether each student should be in Foundations, retake Math 1, be in Honors, or be placed in Math 2.*

*They hand-scheduled every incoming ninth-grader.*

*Now, even if a ninth-grader fails Foundations, the student still takes Math 1 in second semester of ninth grade. If they pass Math 1, they are also given credit for Foundations of Math.*

*Lampron then took a look at what was happening with students with an exceptional children (EC) designation.*

*Meet Charles Griffith, who Lampron said is among the best math teachers in the district. She moved him from teaching math to 96*

*students to serving EC students in classes of 12. She calls it a game changer.*

*“Those 12 kids are the ones who need him the most,” said Lampron.*

*A student in his class tells me Griffith knows how to work magic with them, and in fact, last semester, Griffith had a 100% pass rate for all of his students.*

*Another student tells me he had a lot of bad grades before being in class with Griffith. “Now I am doing great,” he reports. What’s the difference, I ask. “He will actually walk you through a lot of stuff. I can understand him. He takes it slower, but you learn faster,” the student said.*

*In the first semester of ninth grade, Foundations of Math is offered to these students as an inclusion class. “Griffith is in it with them,” Lampron said.*

*Then, in the second semester, these students take science in the first block, a learning strategies course in the second block (important for two reasons: It’s the period before math and also the same semester they will take the EOC), Math 1 in third block, and an elective in fourth block.*

*The planning period for math teachers is fourth block so every student has a second chance to get their math in day-to-day.*

*Older grades of students never have math in first block so that if they are late once they start driving they never miss math just because they are tardy.*

*When Lampron got to SWEHS, the schedule had been static for five years. Every year she has been there, the schedule has changed.*

*“Kids are completely different. Their needs are completely different. We need to design with the children in mind,” she said.*

*Her team also hand-schedules all students with a 504 or IEP, and all students identified as ESL, LEP, or EC.*

*“Handing out schedules to me is a labor of love,” she said. “I intimately know you and love you as a ninth-grader, and I’ve never seen you before. But I know your academic testing history. I know your projections. I know the level of support you need.”*

*All of this required getting the buy-in of the math teachers who do the teaching and the counselors who do the scheduling.*

*And parents.*

*“Parents,” Lampron said, “have so often been left out of the conversation.”*

*Now they know their student’s schedule has been designed with their child in mind, so they trust the process.*

*In educator speak, Lampron aligned the coherence maps (which show connections between math standards) with the course sequence and master schedule, and provided supports for EC students and the opportunity for tutorials.*

*This is what adaptive change looks like, said Lampron. In 2022, SWEHS met expected growth in both Math 1 and Math 3.*

*Meet THE Keyshawn Powell, as he is introduced to us by school leaders.*

*A senior, Powell has a 3.9 GPA and is #8 in his class. He is in the National Honor Society and Beta Club, and he is an Academic All-American. President of the Student Government Association, he just signed to Louisburg College, where he will play football and major in business.*

*There have been four signing days at SWEHS in the last two weeks — students accepting offers to go to a college to play sports with a scholarship.*

*“Because we are about the work,” Lampron said.*

*During POWER — a time during the school day when students Plan, Organize, Work, Eat, Relax — we watched the varsity football coach audit transcripts with student athletes.*

*Students are taught the value of taking weighted courses.*



*They are taught the difference between an 88 and a 90, a 3.0 or a 4.0, and how to discern where they can make up extra points as needed.*

*They look for mistakes in their transcripts and learn how to get them fixed.*

*The grade point averages of student athletes are posted in the hallways.*

*One student shared that since auditing his transcript he had moved up from a 1.8 GPA to a 2.4. Last spring, he had a 4.0. Math had been a pain point, but now he is taking Math 3 Honors.*

*“How many head varsity football coaches know the GPA of their individual players?” asked Lampron.*

*During that same block of POWER, the baseball team was outside in batting practice because practice was expected to be cancelled that afternoon due to rain.*

*Student athletes, dressed up in their uniforms, visit elementary and middle schools and are presented and seen as community leaders.*

*Transcend is a national organization that supports schools and communities “to create and spread extraordinary, equitable learning environments.”*

*Here is what that work looks like at SWEHS.*

*The first step is putting together a design team of educators to work with the consultants from Transcend.*

*Community engagement happens next, including interviews, focus groups, and surveys. For example, at SWEHS, surveys revealed that while 63% of students believe their learning is customized for them, only 39% of students believe the learning is relevant.*

*Insights from the community engagement are then analyzed and developed, identifying both tensions and where leaps are needed.*

*Inspiration is drawn from other schools who have tackled similar challenges.*

*Design sprints are conducted to begin to envision a draft model for school transformation. With feedback from the community on the draft,*

*details are developed before the model is piloted. The pilot informs sustainable school transformation over the long-haul.*

*At SWEHS, the model includes promoting rigorous and relevant learning for the whole child and supporting social consciousness and action while building connections and community.*

*Signature experiences for students include advisory pods, the development of individualized purpose pathways, place-based learning, and social action projects.*

*These opportunities are aligned with the district's [graduate aims](#), which include:*

- 1. Graduates will know their purpose and passion, and be living this out;*
- 2. Graduates will possess global awareness and agency;*
- 3. Graduates will be making positive contributions to their community;*
- 4. Graduates will create or seize opportunities to return to — or stay — in Edgecombe County; and*
- 5. Graduates will be resilient in the face of challenges.*

*On learning and leadership*

*Keyshawn Powell lobbied Lampron to bring students back to school during COVID-19. He wanted school to be better and more enjoyable.*

*“Let’s learn,” he said to her.*

*SWEHS was one of the first schools back because of his leadership. And hers.*

*"She's the type of principal I want to be under," he said.*

*The day we visited SWEHS, we met with this student panel.*

*Ricky Smith, all the way on the right on the panel, is a freshman. In his early conversations with Lampron, they talked about the transition into high school, meeting new people, growing into the person you want to be, and preparing for college.*

*Smith went home and reflected on the conversation. He said he took it to heart.*

*He thought, "I'm gonna go out there and work."*

*Lampron moved him into all Honors classes.*

*They kept talking, and Lampron helped Smith see the difference between being good, great, and the greatest of all time (GOAT).*

*Smith said he realized the GOAT is where he really wants to be in life, pushing physically and mentally.*

*"I've been doing great," he said.*



*Lampron is teaching her students how to play the game of life, how to navigate in the real world.*

*“They need the opportunity,” she said, “to get angry, calm down, be self-resilient, be self-reliant, and most importantly ask for help.”*

*Her number one skill for graduates is to know how you find the helpers. To be successful in life, she believes, they will need to be able to find the helpers at college, in a job, and in their relationships.*

*As Lampron and I were talking, her phone is lighting up with texts. All of her students — all 807 — have her cell phone number. They are letting her know why they are late or why they won’t be in school because it is her expectation that they will let her know.*

*“This is how you do the work,” she said.*

*To do what she believes is in the best interests of her kids, Lampron at different points in time has had to be willing to take on parents and teachers and counselors and central office.*

*She had to broker a truce with leaders in the community, including leaders of gangs.*

*The SRO told me she has been able to get buy-in because people can see L Money loves her kids.*

*She is brave above all for her students. And that is not in the job description of principal.*

**“Dr. Lampron is the real deal. She embodies the transformational leadership needed to lead a school today, balanced with a level of curiosity, empathy, dedication, and work that kids deserve.**

**She is truly all in for students, and I am not surprised at the broad impact, inspiration and impact she brings to her role.”**

– Dr. Monique Perry-Graves, Executive Director, Teach for America  
North Carolina

## Lauren Lampron to lead North Carolina Principal Fellows Program



Mebane Rash  
September 19, 2023



REPUBLISH THIS STORY

Feature Press Release The Editor's Notes

<https://www.ednc.org/lauren-lampron-to-lead-north-carolina-principal-fellows-program/>

*Dr. Lauren Lampron has been named the new director of the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program, according to a [press release](#).*

*She was selected by the [North Carolina Principal Fellows Program Commission](#).*

*Many of you know Lampron as the principal of SouthWest Edgecombe High School and before that as the assistant principal of W.A. Pattillo Middle School in Tarboro for six years.*

*She is a Teach for America alum whose leadership is making a difference for students and our state. She taught seventh and eighth grade English language arts and social studies at CB Martin Middle School in Tarboro. She also taught fourth grade English language arts and mathematics in Oxford, Mississippi.*

*Lampron also lectures at NC State University. She holds a Bachelor of Science in psychology from West Chester University and earned teaching credentials through Teach for America's partnership with East Carolina University. She has a Master of School Administration and Doctor of Education degrees from NC State University.*

*The North Carolina Principal Fellows Program was established to prepare future school leaders and elevate educators in the state's public schools. The program has produced more than 2,000 school leaders since its inception in 1993.*

*Principal Fellows fulfill their loan obligation through service as a school administrator in North Carolina's public schools. Grant funds cover the cost of participants' tuition, fees and books, as well as salary supplements and health benefits during a full-time, comprehensive administrative internship. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction provides full-time administrative interns with a salary stipend for up to 10 months while Fellows are on an educational leave of absence to complete the internship.*

*Lampron will lead the state-supported, forgivable loan program and oversee principal preparation initiatives. She will also serve as the chair of the NC Principal Fellows Program Commission.*

*"I am truly honored to accept the role of director for the Principal Fellows Program," Lampron said. "I am excited to continue the*

*development of a program that focuses on nurturing future educational leaders, and I am eager to lead it into a future filled with innovation, growth, and a deep commitment to shaping the next generation of school principals.”*

<https://www.northcarolina.edu/news/new-director-announced-for-north-carolina-principal-fellows-program/>

**September 14, 2023**

*Lauren Lampron to lead principal preparation initiatives*

RALEIGH, N.C. – Dr. Lauren Lampron has been named the new director of the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program.

She was selected by the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program Commission.

Lampron will lead the state-supported, forgivable loan program and oversee principal preparation initiatives. She will also serve as the chair of the NC Principal Fellows Program Commission.

“I am truly honored to accept the role of director for the Principal Fellows Program,” Lampron said. “I am excited to continue the development of a program that focuses on nurturing future educational leaders, and I am eager to lead it into a future filled with innovation, growth, and a deep commitment to shaping the next generation of school principals.”



Lampron has extensive experience as a teacher and administrator as well as a lecturer at NC State University. She is the principal of SouthWest Edgecombe High School and previously served as the assistant principal of W.A. Pattillo Middle School in Tarboro for six years. She taught seventh and eighth grade English language arts and social studies at CB Martin Middle School in Tarboro. She also taught fourth grade English language arts and mathematics in Oxford, Mississippi.

Lampron holds a Bachelor of Science in psychology from West Chester University and earned teaching credentials through Teach for America’s partnership with East Carolina University. She has a Master of School Administration and Doctor of Education degrees from NC State University.

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More information on the program is available at <https://ncfp.northcarolina.edu/>



## **DR. LAUREN LAMPRON**

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA '11

Dr. Lauren Lampron, TFA NC Alumna and Principal of SouthWest Edgecombe High School, has been named the new Director of the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program.



## Antonio McBroom

### TFA Alumnus Named 2024 Leadership Award Winner For Equity, Inclusion. (SPCLTY)

The [Specialty Food Association](#) (12/20, Tanner) profiles Antonio McBroom, who's making a "lasting impact on the rights of the disenfranchised in the Southeast, as the owner of 20 Ben & Jerry's franchises in North Carolina, Washington, DC, Georgia, Florida, Texas, Tennessee, and other southern states." From the beginning of his career, "he was combining doing good with business, working at Teach for America at South Durham High School during the day, followed by scooping ice cream in the late afternoon and evening." McBroom has been named a 2024 Leadership Award winner for Equity & Inclusion.

<https://www.specialtyfood.com/news/article/2024-leadership-award-winner-inner-equity-inclusion-antonio-mcbroom-primo-partners/>

## Kayla Romero Morais

["Our Turn's Kayla Romero Morais: Helping students change the education system"](#)

Gabriela Ramirez | *Education NC* | 9/29/2023 |

Featuring TFA Alum Kayla Romero Morais

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Kayla Romero Morais, now the Chief Growth Officer of the national organization [Our Turn](#), grew up a long way from here in the unincorporated community of Beulah, Colorado.

When she graduated from high school, Morais moved from Beulah to Boulder, entering the University of Colorado at Boulder as part of the [Presidents Leadership Class](#), which “shapes extraordinary individuals to step boldly into the world, ready to challenge the status quo and make a lasting, positive impact on society.”

Morais describes her move from rural America to a large state university as culture shock.

“I obviously knew there was a world outside Beulah,” she said. “But Boulder is a school that brings in so many people from out of state, especially wealthier families, so there was culture shock happening on multiple levels.”

## Her journey into teaching

As a political science major, Morais didn’t learn to teach while she was an undergraduate, but she wanted to teach so she applied for [Teach for America](#).

She was accepted. Placed in a school in Charlotte, North Carolina, she prepared for the cross-country move.

Read more [here](#).

## Dr. Monique Perry-Graves

The Charlotte Business Journal [named](#) Dr. Perry-Graves to their Power 100 program, which focused on the Charlotte region's leaders in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Jamie Boll from WBTV recently [spoke with](#) Dr. Perry-Graves and TFA alum Kenneth Gorham, the principal of the Movement Freedom Middle School, about TFA's work to source, match, and support talent.

**Teach For America**  
North Carolina

# /STAFFSPOTLIGHT

## CHARLOTTE BUSINESS JOURNAL

### DR. MONIQUE PERRY-GRAVES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
TEACH FOR AMERICA NORTH CAROLINA

Teach For America North Carolina's Executive Director, Dr. Perry-Graves was recently named on the Charlotte Business Journal's 2023 Power 100 List.

**POWER 100**

PRESENTING SPONSORS: Atrium Health, BANK OF AMERICA, CHARLOTTE, SUPPORTING SPONSOR: FOOD LION

CELEBRATION SPONSOR: FORVUS, PHOTOGRAPHY + COCKTAIL SPONSOR: [Logos], EVENT PARTNERS: [Logos]

DR. MONIQUE PERRY-GRAVES

## Eric and Carice Sanchez

In 2022, Henderson Collegiate, a public charter school in Vance County founded by Teach For America alums Eric and Carice Sanchez, achieved the number one spot in all North Carolina schools for academic growth according to metrics established by NCDPI & the NC State Board of Education. In the 2021–2022 school year, 33 Teach For America teachers worked at Henderson Collegiate. You can read more about this achievement [here](#), with an excerpt of the article posted below.



Henderson Collegiate staff pose at TFA's annual One Day Breakfast (May 2022)

According to metrics established by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the North Carolina State

Board of Education, schools exceed growth expectations when they score a 2 or above on the academic growth index. Henderson Collegiate scored 18.77 on the index per NCDPI's 2021-22 school report card—the highest score of all 2,700+ public and charter schools across North Carolina.

Henderson Collegiate serves approximately 1,300 students, 95% of whom identify as BIPOC and 86% of whom come from low-income households.

“Last year’s results go a long way to doing something that we have cared about since we started Henderson Collegiate: helping people change their paradigms about what’s possible in public education,” said Eric Sanchez, CEO and Co-Founder of Henderson Collegiate. “We’re a little school in rural North Carolina that has shown that our kids can compete with the most affluent communities in our state. These achievements show that your zip code does not have to determine your destiny.”

Sanchez, who also serves on the North Carolina Charter Schools Advisory Board, began his career in education as a member of the 2002 Teach For America Eastern North Carolina corps where he taught at Eaton Johnson Middle School in Vance County.

“Teach For America gave me one of the greatest gifts: my why,” said Sanchez. “And that why—that fire that lights in me to this day—is the

result of joining this extraordinary cohort and national movement, which is also the reason why we created Henderson Collegiate.”

Sanchez founded Henderson Collegiate in 2010 with his wife and fellow Teach For America alum Carice Sanchez, who currently serves as the school’s Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

“Eric and Carice and the Henderson Collegiate community are expanding opportunities for students in a way that is truly inspiring,” said Dr. Monique Perry–Graves, Teach For America North Carolina’s Executive Director. “Accomplishing this level of growth in the face of all the disruptions accompanying the COVID–19 pandemic is remarkable. They have set a new bar for excellence, showing our state what is possible for students when a school community puts equity at the heart of their approach. It is also evident that the TFA North Carolina alumni network continues to be a game–changing force in their leadership and impact on kids.”

As Teach For America recognizes the accomplishments of the Henderson Collegiate community, the school has also recently recognized the contributions of some specific members of the Teach For America network. In the 2021–2022 school year, 33 Teach For America corps members and alums worked at Henderson Collegiate. Of those, corps member Peter Leonard was honored with the 2021–2022 Excellence in Education Award, and alums Ella Bess Marshall and Janet

Jolly were both recipients of the school's 2022 Keith Burnam, Jr. Award for their "extraordinary contributions extend[ing] past their job description to impact adults and children in multiple schools."

When Sanchez first heard the news of their number one ranking, he immediately thought of his staff. "It was a tough year, and our staff endured a lot," he said. "But all their efforts turned into something special. Their love of kids, their commitment to children, and their commitment to the mission gives me a real sense of pride."

Kate Liddle, Teach For America alum and Director of Talent Acquisition at Henderson Collegiate, also said these extraordinary academic results stem from a true team effort. "These outcomes are definitely a testament to the hard work of our students and teachers," shared Liddle, who is leading hiring efforts for these open roles at the school.

"We are looking for people who put intention into action and give our kids an experience that is different from anywhere around the country," said Sanchez.

Sanchez has high hopes for the future of Henderson Collegiate, and last year's growth results have only deepened his resolve for the school moving forward. "We are just scratching the surface of what our children are capable of, and as a result, what they are going to achieve," he said. "I know that the best is ahead of us."



Alums Andrew Lakis (DC '04) and Eric Sanchez (ENC '02)

[TFA NC Alumni-Led School Ranked First in the State for Student Growth](#)

EdNC | Featuring: Eric Sanchez (ENC '02), Carice Sanchez (ENC '02), Kate Liddle (DC '10), Dr. Monique Perry-Graves

[Henderson Collegiate rises to challenges posed by COVID](#)

*The Daily Dispatch* | Featuring: Eric Sanchez (ENC '02)

[HC tops state report-card growth metrics; new letter grades out for schools](#) | *The Daily Dispatch* | Featuring: Eric Sanchez (ENC '02)

Also, the NC Chamber of Commerce listed this terrific news in their September 22, 2022 "Business Matters" weekly email briefing. A screenshot of this update is included below.



## Teach for America NC Alumni-Led School Ranked First in the State for Student Growth

Congratulations to Henderson Collegiate, a public charter school in Vance County founded by Teach for America, which achieved the number one spot among all North Carolina schools for academic growth. Teach for America is an NC Chamber Cornerstone member.

[Learn more >](#)

## Amy Strecker

*Yahoo Finance* [profiled](https://finance.yahoo.com/news/she-making-difference-communities-duke-203000237.html?guccounter=2) TFA alum Amy Strecker's career and work as President of the Duke Energy Foundation.

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/she-making-difference-communities-duke-203000237.html?guccounter=2>



[“She’s Making a Difference in the Communities Duke Serves”](#)

Jessica Wells | *Yahoo News* | 6/27/2023 | Alum Amy Strecker

[“Three lessons in philanthropy for our clean energy future”](#)

Amy Strecker, TFA Alum | Duke Energy | 2.10.23

## Tiara Mahoney Paulino

[5.23.2023 WCNC Article](#)



*CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Vivian Page and Tiara Mahoney Paulino sat down at a dining table and perused a restaurant menu, scoping out all the options for lunch.*

*"Oh, que rico," Page said, pointing to one item, signaling her appetite for the dish and how tasty it sounded to her.*

*The two continued to discuss in Spanish when restaurant manager Jesús León approached the table and asked if they were ready to order.*

*"¿Listos?" he asked.*

*It felt like a scene from a trip abroad, but the interchange was happening in East Charlotte, and the encounter was all part of a Spanish-language immersion tour, organized by Paulino.*

*"We decided to bring abroad to our clients here," Paulino, a Spanish language instructor and CEO of [Dual Vida Language Academy](#), said. "Give them a taste of Latino culture right here in Charlotte."*

*Paulino said she first started teaching Spanish as a tutor, moved into a classroom setting, but then eventually, decided to branch out into a more interactive, real-life setting for learning.*

*"We know that the best way for folks to learn a new language or get better at the language and also be able to engage with that particular culture more fluidly is through immersion," Paulino said.*

*The tour stops at several businesses in a Spanish-speaking corridor of East Charlotte: [Compare Foods](#), [Morazán Restaurant](#), and [Manolo's Bakery](#). Paulino said the experience isn't just about learning the language, it's also about connecting more profoundly with the Latino culture.*

*Page said she studied Spanish all through school, even taking that learning abroad, and treasured being able to brush up on her skills at home, with a program where she could take her husband and kids along.*

*"You are having conversations with different people," Page said. "You're talking. You're also, you know, being directed with different things. So, for example, sitting down and eating."*

*The ability to conduct such a tour also speaks to the boom of Latino and Hispanic culture in the Charlotte area.*

*According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data, Charlotte is 15% Hispanic or Latino, and the number of Latinos in Mecklenburg County has grown 52% over the past 10 years.*

*León said he was among those who came to the Queen City during that timeframe, arriving in 2016. Speaking in Spanish, he shared how he felt there weren't many Latinos living in Charlotte at the time, then after 2017, he said he started to notice what he calls an "explosion" of Latinos, bringing more culture and businesses to the area.*

*Paulino said the local immersion tour isn't just a way to appreciate another culture blossoming in one's city, it might also be the most realistic place for some clients to learn.*

*"Not everybody has the level of comfort, the level of safety or the understanding of how to travel abroad and feel good doing it, or they might even might not even have the resources to be able to make it happen," Paulino said.*

*"One thing that I try to tell people is we're going to be your clientele. We're your local business owners. We're your students. We're your supervisors. So, we're here--why not learn how to engage with us in a really meaningful, culturally sustaining, and linguistically sustaining way?"*

*Paulino said a tour costs about \$150, with children under two attending for free.*

[“Charlotte's booming Latino culture offers Spanish learners opportunities for immersion”](#)

Vanessa Ruffes | WCNC | 5/23/23 |

Featuring Alum Tiara Mahoney Paulino

## **Tony Alleyne**

TFA Alum Tony Alleyne is [leading a program](#) to support first-generation college students and other students lacking resources in Charlotte.




[Axios](#) (6/12, Mahoney) reports more than a dozen West Charlotte students are participating “in the Delaware College Scholars program’s Harrell Charlotte Expansion arm. DCS serves first-generation college students and students lacking resources as they navigate high school.” Following a “three-year pilot program at West Charlotte, it will now be called Queen City Scholars because program leaders plan to expand it to more schools next year.” Expansion to Charlotte was inspired by founder Tony Alleyne’s “connection to the city and state. He began his teaching career at Charlotte’s Martin Luther King, Junior Middle School with Teach For America.”

# Our Programming

Since 2013, Teach For America (TFA) North Carolina has developed, established, implemented, and perfected several new programs to increase the number of candidates who remain working in North Carolina public schools beyond their initial two-year TFA commitment. We achieved this by developing, implementing, and perfecting innovative strategies to work with both TFA participants and local school administrators and board of education members to extend the service commitment of TFA participants. These teacher retention and leadership development programs have included our Teach Beyond Two and Make it Home initiatives, including our Pop Miller Fellowship (PMF) and Reinvest in Student Excellence (RISE) Fellowship. Additionally, we have established, implemented, and perfected teacher retention and leadership development programs such as our partnerships and scholarships with Ama La Vida, the Aspen Institute, the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library (CML), Toyota Tsusho (Future Forward Mentoring Initiative), Truist, and Western Governors University (WGU) North Carolina.

## Ama La Vida Coaching

<https://alvcoaching.com/tfa-nc/>



**Turn your passion  
into career clarity.**

TFA-NC is giving you 6 **free** career coaching sessions to help you take the next step in creating a meaningful career.

[ENROLL HERE TO GET STARTED](#)

## Ready to take your career forward?

*How would it feel to be...*



Clear on your purpose and career path



Living your purpose authentically and aligned with values



Making a visible difference in educational equity

SIGN ME UP



"Ama La Vida 1:1 Coaching is a service that I would recommend to all TFA NC alumni as long as it is offered. It is even worth it if you can pay for it, yourself.

**For those of us trying to move our impact outside of the classroom, we often don't know where to look and/or who to turn to. Ama La Vida 1:1 coaching creates empowering spaces to find answers to these career pivots."**

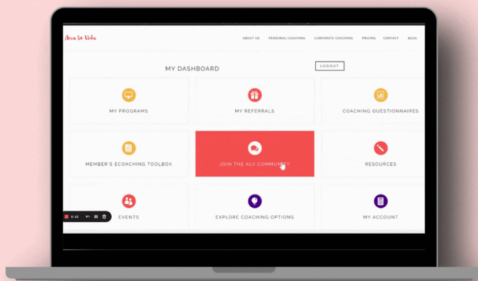
*- Katie S., TFA-NC program participant*

# Here's what you'll get...



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- ✓ ***Elevate Leaders.*** Learn to inspire others and create an even larger impact by honing your leadership skills in this accredited eCoaching program.
- ✓ ***eCoaching Toolbox.*** Get quick-fix solutions for everything from productivity to body language, and so much more.



### You're seeking clarity on your career path.

- ✓ Identify your passion, strengths and purpose.
- ✓ Explore your commitment to educational equity.
- ✓ Reflect on your experience with TFA NC and how that informs your future.
- ✓ Find the right career direction and get that job.



### You want to further your career in educational equity.

- ✓ Learn your skills and strengths.
- ✓ Explore your passion and purpose exploration.
- ✓ Define your lifestyle non-negotiables.
- ✓ Build your network to maximize your influence and communication.



### You're ready to re-ignite your commitment to educational equity.

- ✓ Deepen your self-awareness: passions, gifts, values and purpose.
- ✓ Redefine yourself as a leader and elevate your skills.
- ✓ Set your path for the next phase of your career.

Ama La Vida takes a holistic view of your career and leadership. It's not just about short-term goals that only serve you now. Our proven proprietary methods help you uncover the core of who you are, align with your vision for your future, and help you to stay accountable to your dreams.



We utilize proven coaching methodologies and have developed proprietary coaching curriculums in our eCoaching platform to support our members.

Our team of coaches not only go through an intensive vetting process, but when you register, you get custom matched to the right fit coach for you. But not only do you get access to your personal coach, when you become a member, you get access to our ENTIRE team of coaches.

Our clients are our heartbeat. It's one of our company commandments, and we mean it. We are here to support you every step of the way

[GET STARTED](#)

## Aspen Executive Seminar on Leadership, Values, and the Good Society

Another Teach Beyond Two program TFA NC employed to retain talented leaders in North Carolina was securing an alumni scholarship exclusively for TFA NC alums from the Aspen Institute. Below is a press release announcing this innovative strategy designed to further catalyze the leadership, learning, and impact of TFA alumni. Moreover, this Teach Beyond Two program will help retain talent inside the North Carolina classrooms and schools served by TFA alumni.

TFA NC Executive Director Dr. Monique Perry-Graves leveraged her personal connections and the generosity of a North Carolina-based donor of the Aspen Institute to establish a unique scholarship opportunity for TFA alums serving in the Old North State.

TFA NC's joint scholarship opportunity with the Aspen Institute is just one way the TFA NC staff is working to ensure North Carolina is the preeminent destination for TFA tutors, teachers, alumni, and staff. Moreover, the exclusive scholarship opportunity is one of TFA NC's countless "Teach Beyond Two" programs driving the retention of TFA teachers, TFA school and district leaders, and TFA alumni from every industry. Furthermore, this groundbreaking scholarship ensures more TFA leaders from all socioeconomic backgrounds, including those still in

public service careers such as K-12 classroom teaching, can obtain the professional development they need to grow as educators, leaders, and members of the North Carolina community.

Through this professional development, TFA alumni grow their leadership abilities and expand their broad and diverse personal networks, which they can collectively leverage to advance academic results for North Carolina's students. TFA NC understands that offering our alumni affordable and high-quality leadership development opportunities is a critical component of sustaining, retaining, and growing North Carolina's leaders, including the TFA alumni leading inside and outside of the classroom. TFA NC is proud of this scholarship opportunity.

TFA NC received encouraging feedback from TFA alumni participants in our pilot year (2022) and our first full year of implementation about this scholarship opportunity in 2023. We hope to continue to grow this offering alongside the Aspen Institute to ensure more TFA NC continue to learn, lead, and serve right here in the Old North State.

You can read more about this collaborative effort via the article and press release below.

[Perspective | A new level of leadership might take putting your head in the clouds](#)

Dr. Monique Perry-Graves | EdNC | May 9, 2023



*Teach For America North Carolina alumni Alyssa Sharpe and Juan Lascano checking into the Aspen Institute Executive Seminar. Photo Courtesy of TFA North Carolina*

*“My journey into education leadership was unconventional. [My experience and background](#) uniquely prepared me to lead in this space, however, because there are integral tenets of leadership and management that translate across industry. They are often the skills that make or break the connections that build momentum toward achieving a shared goal.”*

*“When I was leading discussions with the Aspen Institute about a potential partnership with Teach For America North Carolina, most of my team had never heard of Aspen’s [Executive Seminar](#) in the context of professional development for educators. Technically speaking, it isn’t.*

*“It is, however, highly regarded professional development for leaders, because it is an invitation for participants to examine their own leadership in the context of their core values. That is why this partnership was a strategic step forward for our (TFA) region.*

*What brought me to the K-12 sector was Teach For America’s vision for developing leadership skills that make an impact, whether you’re a teacher, a school or systems leader, a policymaker, or a nonprofit leader. What I brought to the table was a perspective outside of this*

sector and pathways for industry leaders to sit at new and different tables.

*“I first learned about the Aspen Institute ten years ago, when I applied for their Rising Presidents Fellowship at the urging of a peer from my doctoral program. I was one of the first leaders among South Carolina’s community college professionals to be selected for the [College Excellence Program](#) in 2018, and I now sit on their Alumni Advisory Council, seeing firsthand the myriad ways the institute works to expand leadership opportunities for students and professionals in our country. However, Mebane Rash, CEO of EducationNC, introduced me to this other arm of their executive-level development a year ago, further fueling my belief that TFA North Carolina’s broad and diverse alumni network should have access to the same caliber of leadership development.”*

*“Last summer, TFA North Carolina and the Aspen Institute [officially announced](#) a joint scholarship program for such a purpose. Since then, twelve TFA alumni have attended [the Executive Seminar on Leadership, Values, and the Good Society](#), where, along with reading, reflection, and sustained dialogue, participants also practiced care of their bodies,*

*enjoying nutritious meals and hikes through the natural beauty of the Aspen Meadows campus in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado.”*

*“The stunning destination was certainly a draw for the TFA NC alumni scholars, but they soon realized it was no vacation. Instead, they encountered a rigorous and immersive dialogue with the purpose of achieving meaningful leadership growth through the critical examination of personal core values.”*

*Juan Lascano of Profound Gentlemen attended the seminar in August and summarized the experience as “a check for my executive compass.”*

*“I had the opportunity to reflect on my leadership style and challenge myself. Where do my values fall? Where do my mindset and abilities and style come in as a leader?”*

*Alyssa Sharpe of Digi-Bridge attended alongside Lascano and echoed his sentiment. “As a CEO, I’m the person at the top. It’s hard to be challenged, because the stakes are so high. But at Aspen, everyone*

*there is an equal. We could have nonpartisan civil discourse and have real conversations without labels.”*

*Vichi Jagannathan, co-founder of the Rural Opportunity Institute, valued the environment of a small group forum intentionally composed of executives across agencies and associations — from military and government officials to corporate and nonprofit CEOs.*

*“Oftentimes, I am around a lot of other people who think like me or have had the same experiences as me, and that can sometimes feel like an echo chamber,” said Jagannathan, going on to explain the benefit of practicing dialogue across differences, including economic background and political ideology. “It made me really think. If we ultimately want to create this long-lasting systemic change for kids in eastern North Carolina, we have to understand and interact with folks in all these different positions.”*

*“All three agreed that the opportunity to exercise the muscle of making meaning and engaging in challenging conversations was a significant element of their experience, and that their organizations’ respective*

*missions would benefit from their ability to foster connections across vast and deeply-set differences.”*

*“You will definitely disagree with people in the room, and the question is, how do you navigate that to arrive at some sort of shared alignment?” said Jagannathan. “Is it possible to maintain dialogue even when there’s no way we can find common ground?”*

*“Another significant skill participants developed was reflection, which, when done errantly or only occasionally, only deepens the isolation leaders can feel in their roles. TFA NC alumna and staff member Leandra Clay spoke to the new depths of reflection she engaged in while attending the seminar in June.”*

*“We often stop at how we think or feel. We don’t think about reflection as a process leading to change,” said Clay. “I was pushed to reflect with others via dialogue, rather than in siloed silence.”*

*“Sharpe seconded the practice of reflection that she felt she could immediately implement upon completing the seminar. “I’m making decisions all the time as a leader. When I’m not allowing time to reflect,*

*I'm thinking about what's next, where are our numbers, what went well or didn't. It's rarely based on values'."*

*"Reflection as a sustaining, community-building experience can deepen connections within coalitions. Within the environment of the seminar, reflection can also expand attendees' networks, relieving the pressure of demanding leadership responsibilities through dialogue and shared experiences."*

*"Inviting TFA NC alumni to partake in our new Aspen Institute scholarship is just one part of our commitment to thinking expansively about the future of education. In addition to continuing to offer the opportunity to attend the executive seminar due to the generosity of private donors that underwrite attendance exclusively for TFA NC alumni, our organization is also offering skill-based leadership development through the [Center for Creative Leadership](#) for alumni at any point in their career journeys."*

*"We believe that, in addition to supporting the daily efforts of our teachers, we must empower leaders in this industry with access to diverse networks and values-based development. In doing so, we hope*

*to not only challenge their thinking but also sustain their efforts to expand opportunities for all students.”*

*“We know that we are on the right track after hearing Jagannathan’s reflection. ‘In order to really push the bounds of the work we’re doing and get to brand new solutions that might serve our kids and families differently,’ she shared, ‘we will benefit from hearing a broad range of perspectives’.”*

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[Teach For America North Carolina and the Aspen Institute  
Announce New Alumni Scholarship](#)

JUNE 1, 2022

*Scholarship Increases Access to Professional Development for TFA NC Alumni*

*Washington, DC, June 1, 2022 – The Aspen Institute and Teach For America North Carolina (TFA NC) announced today a new scholarship opportunity for TFA NC’s more than 2,200 alumni to enroll in one of the*

*Aspen Institute's signature leadership development programs, the Aspen Executive Seminar on Leadership, Values, and the Good Society.*

*Starting this summer, alumni of Teach For America North Carolina can apply for an exclusive scholarship to attend The Aspen Executive Seminar. Held by the Aspen Institute since 1951, the Aspen Executive Seminar brings together individuals to engage in dialogue and critical examination of their core values in order develop the practices and mindsets to be more effective values-based leaders. Past participants of the seminar have included such prominent figures as the late Madeleine Albright and CEO of Netflix Reed Hastings, as well as TFA CEO Elisa Villanueva Beard and Former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan who attended as a part of their Aspen Institute leadership fellowships. The TFA alums who are selected will receive full funding provided by both organizations to participate in the seminar worth \$12,950.*

*One of the trademarks of the Aspen Executive Seminar is the intentional curation of leaders from different sectors in dialogue so that those working in corporate, government, and nonprofit arenas can learn from each other and forge networks that defy typical sector and industry boundaries.*

*“As a TFA alumni leader working in the nonprofit education space I rarely get access to professional development and growth opportunities like the Aspen Institute,” says Vichi Jagannathan (TFA ENC ‘11), Co-Founder of Rural Opportunity Institute and an early scholar selected to attend the seminar. “The opportunity to build connections with and learn from senior leaders in different fields was invaluable for me and will be for other alumni. It is critical to have the exposure and learning from this type of experience as we continue to remain focused on contributing to education and equity in North Carolina.”*

*The ultimate vision for this collaboration will be annual convenings in North Carolina in which the TFA alumni who have gone through the Executive Seminar will take part in further Aspen Institute–designed programming to both foster deep bonds of community and prompt meaningful action. The goal is to create broader conversation about the importance of collective leadership among the equity–centric educators that animate the TFA.*

*“Our alums make a lifetime commitment to students and their potential alongside our collective mission of making education equity a reality through system–change leadership,” said Dr. Monique Perry Graves, Executive Director of Teach For America North Carolina and Executive*

*Seminar alumna. “As an organization, our lifetime commitment is to foster that collective leadership and development in a variety of ways. Being able to catalyze alumni leadership by providing opportunities for North Carolina TFA alums to attend the Aspen Executive Seminar directly aligns with our mission, and the very active work we are doing in North Carolina as we advance towards doubling our impact in our communities by 2030. Supporting alumni to attend the seminar and then establishing Aspen as a partner in future statewide TFA NC alumni conferences is a significant step in our 30+ year history, but more importantly a tremendous benefit for our NC-based alumni and ultimately the communities we serve.”*

*Aspen Executive Seminars are held six times a year at the Aspen Institute’s Aspen Meadows Campus, with upcoming seminars in June, August, and October. Seminar groups are capped at 23 people with up to three spaces reserved for TFA NC alumni scholars.*

*“This collaboration is a welcome and timely investment in education in and for a free and responsible democracy. Ideas have consequences, and we all benefit—especially those laboring in the vineyards of education—from an opportunity to test our ideas and their consequences in the company of those who may see the world*

*differently,” Executive Director of Executive Leadership Seminars at the Aspen Institute Todd Breyfogle. “I hope this collaboration will be the first of many such opportunities for leaders in education to expand their perspectives, refine their pedagogy, and help create the laboratories of ideas and dialogue that support a more thoughtful public.”*


###

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/news/teach-for-america-north-carolina-alumni-scholarship/>

TFA Alum Greg Schermbeck [wrote a wonderful reflection](#) about his experience with the Aspen Institute Executive Leadership Seminars, made possible by a scholarship opportunity created by Teach For America North Carolina and The Aspen Institute.

<https://scherm.co/blog/90-aspen-institute-reflections/>





“If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands.”

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

#### **Letter from Birmingham Jail**

-

I first heard about the Aspen Institute opportunity through an email from the Teach For America North Carolina (TFA NC) office. A strategic partnership between the Aspen Institute and TFA NC was formed due to a generous donation from a funder. This partnership allows select TFA NC alums to have access to the Aspen Institute’s leadership seminars, resources, and community. I completed a quick application and received the good news a few weeks later. Aspen – here we come.

#### **Prep**

- The seminar focused on leadership, values, and the good society. As such, we were sent a wide-ranging list of readings to complete before arriving to fully engage in the discussions. The readings ranged from Plato to Bell Hooks and spanned over 400+ pages. Shout out to ChatGPT for some support.

#### **Programming**

- Most of our days began with a block of four-hour seminars. We reviewed the prescribed readings and explored their meanings and reflections on our current reality. Further, these discussions allowed me to learn more from each of my cohort members, their perspectives, and how these readings aligned with their leadership journeys.
- The readings and discussions provided a helpful decision-making framework for me as a leader at SchermCo and for everyday life. Many of the readings, aligning with the seminar’s scope, laid out the nuances of leadership decisions and actions that could be grouped under one of the following pillars: Liberty, Efficiency, Community, and Equality. We know leadership decisions are rarely binary, and often moments can be fluid with several variables to consider at any given time, yet; the scenarios and discussions were helpful exercises that I’ll carry with me in future situations.
- Once the daily seminars concluded, the afternoons were mostly spent exploring Aspen, hiking Maroon Bells (BEAUTIFUL), having dinner at a local nature reserve, and much more. I was grateful for these moments to further connect with my cohort members and take advantage of all Aspen offers.

#### **The Cohort**

- Our cohort comprised 19 leaders from across the country representing several industries: Healthcare, Business, Military, and Education. Each human brought a unique and diverse perspective to the seminar and discussions. Further, I appreciated their willingness to share reflections from their leadership journeys and push my thinking.

#### **Nature**

- I spend most of my time in city limits, but the nature and scenery in Aspen are unreal. I don’t have the proper words to describe the picturesque mountains, the fresh air, or the unbothered deer. Something about taking the time to be in nature allowed me to clear my head and contemplate on a deep level. I’m committing to creating more daily space to make this a habit.

### Takeaways

- The experience gave me tools to analyze my leadership decisions and the decisions we make as an organization.
  - Are we making this decision to benefit ourselves or the community?
  - Is this decision being made in the name of equality or efficiency?
  - Are we doing enough?
- The readings and the seminar experience will allow me to reflect on these questions and utilize the frameworks to make better decisions moving forward.
- One of the most impactful readings from this experience was Letter from Birmingham Jail by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. I've previously read the piece, but revisiting it during this moment brought on a different level of meaning. I'd encourage everyone to visit/review the piece as it illuminates several key points related to the fight for racial equity. For me, the section on White Moderates resonated the most. As a white man often working in the social impact and education spaces, I'm constantly working to ensure I'm going enough to work towards racial equity. As a business owner, leader, and human, I feel obligated to provide the systems, practices, and habits in place to operate an equitable organization and advocate for the equitable society we and our clients hope to achieve. This reading served as a helpful reminder to avoid the perils of the White Moderate. As Dr. King states in this piece, racial equity isn't just good for the Black community; it's good for all communities.

I'm grateful to the Teach For America North Carolina team (extra thanks to the generous donor that made this partnership possible), the Aspen Institute, and my cohort for the experience.

I'm also grateful to the entire SchermCo team for stepping up and supporting our clients and partners while I was away.

I'm returning more clear, more calm, and hopefully a better leader.

More to do. More to come®

### Action Steps

- Send me any thoughts or questions. I'd love to know your reaction to the post and answer any questions you have about my experience in Aspen.
- Read your emails and stay connected to your community/networks. You don't want to miss these opportunities.





As a part of our partnership to support alumni leadership development and retention, TFA NC and The Aspen Institute hosted an Executive Seminar in Asheville in July 2023. Dr. Kalissa Hendrickson of the Aspen Institute and Dr. Perry-Graves of TFA NC co-moderated the seminar. Due to the generosity of a NC-based private family foundation donor and Aspen, TFA NC gathered 20+ alumni leaders from Eastern North Carolina, the Triangle, Greensboro, and Charlotte serving in district, school, and non-profit roles for the seminar.





## Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) & Teach For America North Carolina

Another Teach Beyond Two program TFA NC employed to retain talented leaders in North Carolina was forging a formal partnership with the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL). Below is a press release announcing this innovative strategy designed to further catalyze the leadership, learning, and impact of TFA alumni. Moreover, this Teach Beyond Two program will help retain talent inside the North Carolina classrooms and schools served by TFA alumni.

### [Teach For America & CCL Announce Statewide Partnership](#)

November 15, 2021

*Teach For America (TFA) North Carolina and the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL)<sup>®</sup> have announced a new statewide partnership providing exclusive access and leadership development programming for over 2,200 diverse Teach For America alumni throughout North Carolina. The recipients of the leadership development include K-12 teachers, school and district leaders, nonprofit leaders, and other educational leaders.*

*Teach For America has a goal of doubling its impact in the communities it serves across North Carolina by 2030. The strategy to accomplish this goal includes not only attracting and placing first-year teacher*

*candidates in classrooms across the state, but also catalyzing over 2,000 alumni impacting the state's educational ecosystem. The partnership with CCL will provide access to transformational leadership development programming to promote the growth and retention of critical leaders in North Carolina's K-12 educational space.*

*TFA North Carolina's alumni network team will lead the engagement of alumni to access this partnership and benefits beginning as early as January 2022.*

*"During this unique and challenging time in K-12 education, we know this relationship will allow us to support the retention and further development of the dynamic, outcomes-driven, proximate, and equity-minded TFA alumni leaders that are impacting over 150,000 kids daily in rural and urban communities across the state. As we march towards our 2030 goal, building partnerships at a statewide level allows us to accelerate that progress in direct support of our alums through their career lifecycles," said Dr. Monique Perry-Graves, TFA North Carolina's Executive Director.*

*"We are excited to enter this partnership with the Center for Creative Leadership to provide access and leadership development to our alumni across the state taking full advantage of the access to CCL's campus headquarters in Greensboro, NC," she added.*

*The partnership includes:*

- *Discounted access for TFA alumni in North Carolina to world-class leadership tools and programs from CCL, including both virtual and face-to-face development opportunities.*
- *Cohort-based leadership programs tailored to the unique needs of TFA focused on alumni teachers, nonprofit leaders, and school and district leaders.*
- *TFA-sponsored cohorts of alumni for leadership development opportunities powered by CCL, including [resilience-building skills training](#) beginning in January 2022.*
- *The opportunity for TFA alumni to become certified to deliver powerful CCL content at their schools and organizations.*

*“In-depth studies in the field of K-12 education confirm that investments in high-quality, research-based leadership development for principals, teachers, staff, and students play an essential role in creating the transformational change needed in education today. That’s because leadership development focuses on the single most important part of any school system, public or private – its people.”*

*“CCL is thrilled to partner with Teach For America to provide greater access to leadership development for their diverse network of alumni across North Carolina – people who are working across the educational ecosystem to improve education outcomes for all students*

*in our home state,” commented [Lynn Fick-Cooper](#), Vice President of Societal Impact at CCL.*

<https://www.ccl.org/newsroom/news/teach-for-america-ccl-announce-statewide-partnership/>

###

## Future Forward

LIBERTY, NC. (November 28, 2023) – [Toyota Tsusho America](#), Inc. (“Toyota Tsusho”) announced today a total investment of \$100,000 to [Teach For America North Carolina](#) (“TFA NC”) to bring the Future Forward program – a career and college readiness initiative supporting marginalized high school students – to Randolph County. The company originally pledged \$25,000 to fund the program in Eastern Randolph High School (Ramseur, NC.), and increased its contribution today by an additional \$75,000 to expand the program to more high schools in the area.

“Today’s children are tomorrow’s future,” said Mike Lavender, Senior Vice President, Administration and Digital, Toyota Tsusho America. “As Toyota Tsusho grows our business in North Carolina, we are committed to supporting the needs of our local communities. That’s what today is all about. And, it’s why we’re honored to team up with Teach For America North Carolina to grow the Future Forward coaching program in this region, starting here in Randolph County.”



## A Model for Success

Since its inception in 2020, Toyota Tsusho has funded the Future Forward program in Kentucky, where it now operates in three schools. The company's support enables program coaches to work one-on-one with participating students, offering guidance and resources as they navigate school, postsecondary options, family, and community, while building a customized action plan for life after graduation.

Future Forward coaches are current college students, often first-generation, and local to the community and schools they serve. In

2022, the program logged more than 320 student coaching sessions and over 200 individual mentoring hours.

The program is resulting in higher grades and increases in college enrollments, and for many students, makes the difference between graduating from high school and dropping out. As many as 90% of program participants have identified a postsecondary pathway after completing Future Forward coaching, with roughly half of all participants planning on earning a two-year or four-year degree after high school.

“The opportunity to partner with Teach For America North Carolina and Toyota Tsusho will provide desperately needed support for career and college postsecondary success,” said Dr. Susan Chappell, Principal of Eastern Randolph High School, her alma mater. “I am a product of the Randolph County School System and have served the students and families of the Eastern Randolph Quadrant for the majority of my 28-year career.”

For Dr. Chappell, Future Forward is more than just a mentoring program. It’s a pathway to greater opportunities. “As the textile industry left the area, so did much of our opportunity for economic growth in this area of the district. I am excited for the job opportunities Toyota Tsusho will bring to our community and the mentorship that the Teach For America North Carolina Coaches will provide our students,” she said. “It is our

collective vision for all graduates of Eastern Randolph High School to leave with a pathway to postsecondary success.”

### Moving (Future) Forward



With the goal of ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to learn, thrive, and succeed in their postsecondary paths, Teach For America North Carolina is leading the way in training equity-driven individuals to become educators in urban and rural public schools throughout the United States.

“Teach For America North Carolina is excited to be partnering with Toyota Tsusho to bring the Future Forward program to Randolph

County,” said [Dr. Monique Perry-Graves](#) , Executive Director, Teach For America North Carolina. “Across the state, Teach For America North Carolina works as a diverse network ready to support, challenge, and lead alongside each other as we aim to collectively expand opportunities for students here in our state. Every child deserves access to an equitable and excellent education, and thanks to Toyota Tsusho’s sponsorship, we can directly impact the lives and futures of hundreds of children as they work to achieve postsecondary readiness and success through peer-to-peer-influence.”

An Event Fit for Giving Tuesday



Intentionally held on Giving Tuesday – a globally recognized day of giving – attendees at the Liberty, NC, event included state and local community leaders. Among the speakers were North Carolina State Senator Amy S. Galey; [Dayson Pasi3n, M.Ed.](#), Teacher Advisor, Office of North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper; [Dr. Monique Perry-Graves](#), Executive Director, Teach For America North Carolina; Mike Lavender, Senior Vice President, [Toyota Tsusho America](#); Dr. Susan Chappell, Principal of Eastern Randolph High School; Dr. Stephen Gainey, Superintendent, [Randolph County Schools](#).

"The Randolph County School System is very excited to partner with Toyota Tsusho and Teach For America North Carolina to implement the Future Forward program at Eastern Randolph High School," said Dr. Stephen Gainey, Superintendent, Randolph County School System.

"Without a doubt, this program will help our students through its support of the school system's goal of preparing them for the future. I am extremely excited about the different focal points of concentration associated with this program such as future education options, future employment options, and financial planning."

## Toyota Tsusho in North Carolina



Toyota Tsusho's presence in the Liberty, North Carolina area is quickly growing.

In collaboration with Toyota Motor Corporation, Toyota Tsusho America's parent company, Toyota Tsusho Corporation, is a 10% shareholder in the Toyota Battery Manufacturing North Carolina plant. The facility will produce batteries for hybrid electric vehicles (HEV) and battery electric vehicles (BEV) and is set to begin production in 2025.

"Bringing Future Forward to Randolph County isn't just an investment in our students," Lavender said. "It's an investment in our community's future – today."

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/toyota-tsusho-invests-100000-teach-america-north-carolina-future-huknc%3FtrackingId=a1EVepxwvzx%252BiOUh%252FQUIBQ%253D%253D/?trackingId=a1EVepxwvzx%2BiOUh%2FQUIBQ%3D%3D>

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### **Continuing Coverage: Toyota Tsusho America Invests \$100K In TFA North Carolina. (EDNC)**

In continuing coverage, [EdNC](#) (11/30, Lindenberg) reports that on Giving Tuesday, Toyota Tsusho America, Inc. “formally announced a \$100,000 investment in Teach For America (TFA) North Carolina. The initiative, named Future Forward, is an evidence-based coaching program and will initially focus on supporting students in Randolph County before expanding to other areas in North Carolina.” Dr. Monique Perry-Graves, executive director of TFA North Carolina said, “The objective is to ensure that students aren’t left behind due to not having access to resources and the support necessary to reach the potential we know that each and every child has.”

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### **TFA North Carolina Investment For Future Forward Program Mentioned Among New Education Opportunities In The State. (CNTRSQR)**

*The Center Square* (11/29, Skinner) reports, “North Carolina’s status as the best state for business is translating into more opportunities for students, a trend aided by an intentional focus on working directly with employers,” as the executive director of the North Carolina Business Committee for Education “told *The Center Square* the organization that turns 40 this year has launched ‘substantially more initiatives’ in recent years to help students connect with companies for exciting careers.” This comes as multiple educational investments in the state “will provide opportunities less common elsewhere. Toyota Tsusho America, a shareholder in Toyota’s planned \$14 billion battery plant in Liberty, announced Tuesday it will send \$100,000 to Teach for America NC to bring its Future Forward program to Eastern Randolph High School and others in the region.”


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The [Winston-Salem \(NC\) Journal](#) (11/28, Craver) reports, “Toyota Tsusho America, a 10% shareholder in the planned \$14 billion Toyota Battery Manufacturing N.C. plant in Liberty, said Tuesday it will provide \$100,000 to Teach For America N.C.” The funding will be spent on “bringing the Future Forward program – a career and college readiness initiative supporting marginalized high school students – to Randolph County. The company originally pledged \$25,000 to fund the program in Eastern Randolph High School, but added \$75,000 to expand the program to more high schools in the area.”

[WFMY-TV](#) Greensboro, NC (11/28, Lake, Glenn) reports Randolph County “will be the first location for this program in North Carolina. The program tries to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to learn, thrive, and succeed in their post, secondary paths.” Executive Director of TFA North Carolina, Dr. Monique Perry-Graves “said this investment will help expand the work in Randolph County.”

The [Asheboro \(NC\) Courier-Tribune](#) (11/28, Lucas) also reported on this exciting announcement.

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What you need to know if you only have a few minutes but don't want to miss anything in the world of education news, policy, and politics. Curated from NC and national sources by editor-in-chief Mebane Rash. 

Dr. Monique Perry-Graves is the executive director of Teach For America North Carolina. She serves on EdNC's Board of Directors, and you can see the impact of her leadership not just in our work but in both of our articles today. Dr. Perry-Graves serves on the DRIVE Task Force, and TFA NC is piloting an initiative called Future Forward, an evidence-based coaching program that will kick off in Randolph County with an investment from Toyota Tsusho America, Inc. Last year, the Aspen Institute [announced](#) a scholarship opportunity for TFA NC's more than 2,200 alumni to enroll in one of the Aspen Institute's signature leadership development programs, the Aspen Executive Seminar on Leadership, Values, and the Good Society. She is on my list of leaders to watch in 2024 and beyond.

EdDaily by EdNC

Friday, December 1, 2023 9:13 AM

# Toyota Tsusho announces investment in Teach For America North Carolina



Alli Lindenberg  
November 30, 2023



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News Teach For America K-12 Randolph

<https://www.ednc.org/11-30-23-toyota-tsusho-announces-investment-in-teach-for-america-north-carolina/>

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## Toyota unit provides \$100,000 to Teach for America NC

Richard Craver Nov 28, 2023 0

[https://journalnow.com/news/local/business/toyota-unit-provides-100-000-to-teach-for-america-nc/article\\_869f7f74-8e1c-11ee-a8b3-336851a2e4b3.html](https://journalnow.com/news/local/business/toyota-unit-provides-100-000-to-teach-for-america-nc/article_869f7f74-8e1c-11ee-a8b3-336851a2e4b3.html)

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PREV

## Toyota expands plan for career-readiness program

By GUY LUCAS PAXTON MEDIA GROUP Nov 28, 2023 Updated Nov 29, 2023

[https://www.courier-tribune.com/news/local/toyota-expands-plan-for-career-readiness-program/article\\_f666510d-018a-53ad-b4c1-bd0dfecad1b3.html](https://www.courier-tribune.com/news/local/toyota-expands-plan-for-career-readiness-program/article_f666510d-018a-53ad-b4c1-bd0dfecad1b3.html)



EDUCATION

# Toyota Tsusho announces \$100,000 investment in Teach For America North Carolina

Randolph County will be the first location in North Carolina for this program.



<https://www.wfmynews2.com/article/news/education/toyota-tsusho-investment-teach-for-america-north-carolina-randolph-county-schools/83-4585a27f-ba70-4bc7-bd7c-6118a81408e4>

# THE BUSINESS JOURNALS

## TRIAD BUSINESS JOURNAL



NOV 28, 2023, 2:51 PM EST

### Another benefit of Toyota: post-grad mentoring for at-risk students

<https://www.bizjournals.com/triad/news/2023/11/28/toyota-tsusho-teach-for-america-randolph-county-nc.html>



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ENTERPRISE TOP STORY

### Opportunities for students grow alongside North Carolina's business boom

By Victor Skinner | The Center Square contributor Nov 29, 2023

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[https://www.thecentersquare.com/north\\_carolina/article\\_75cf0920-8eea-11ee-a8f7-1f374171467b.html](https://www.thecentersquare.com/north_carolina/article_75cf0920-8eea-11ee-a8f7-1f374171467b.html)





## Ignite Fellowship (High-Impact Tutoring)

### *High-Impact Tutoring Program Addresses Learning Loss & Recruits Exceptional Educators*

The Ignite Fellowship is a ground-breaking tutoring initiative that provides personalized small group learning experiences for students while also building a diverse teacher leadership force in North Carolina sourced from a national talent pool. TFA NC launched Ignite in the Old North State during the 2022–2023 school year. The program is operating in Bertie County Public Schools and Edgecombe County Public Schools. We hope to grow the program in future years. Ignite Tutors are tackling learning loss today, while TFA is building a more diverse and exceptional applicant pool of potential corps members for future years.

[Teach For America Launches High-Impact Tutoring Program to Accelerate Student Learning in Eastern North Carolina](#)

11.17.22 | TFA blog

*NORTH CAROLINA—Teach For America North Carolina announced today their launch of the Ignite Fellowship, a high-impact tutoring initiative in partnership with Bertie County Public Schools, Edgecombe County Public Schools, and Henderson Collegiate that provides customized small group learning opportunities for students designed to accelerate learning and foster belonging.*

*Sourced from a national talent pool of exceptional and diverse leaders, the Ignite Fellows are part of a historic expansion of Teach For America's services in North Carolina. Teach For America will continue to drive change through their network of 2,000+ leaders who are living and working across North Carolina, and the Ignite Tutors will offer personalized learning experiences for students while also receiving coaching and support from veteran teachers.*

*The program, built in part to address pandemic-fueled learning gaps, shifts how and with whom learning is happening by virtually connecting students to exceptional and diverse leaders from across the country who bring a dual focus on academic acceleration and social emotional learning. Students need to feel connected with educators to grow academically, and Ignite fellows focus on building relationships and fostering belonging by respecting students' multiple identities, affirming their capacity to succeed, and recognizing their agency and contributions.*

*The Ignite program model leverages best practices for high-impact tutoring, including alignment with school academic curriculum, low fellow-to-student ratios, and sessions at least three times weekly during the school day. Fellows receive ongoing training from Teach For America and their schools, and Teach For America will measure the academic and personal growth of students through surveys and school-based assessments.*

*“This fall, Ignite doubled its impact by growing to meet demand from school partners across 10 new states; we are thrilled to include North Carolina in that group,” said Katie Tennessen Hooten, the Senior Vice President of the Ignite Fellowship. “Thanks to existing deep relationships and a shared vision for impact, we were able to bring the Ignite program to North Carolina this fall under the visionary leadership of Dr. Monique Perry-Graves and school leaders in Bertie County Public Schools, Edgecombe County Public Schools and Henderson Collegiate.”*

*Teach For America is committed to diversifying the educator workforce and removing barriers to the teaching profession, as [research shows](#) that students benefit from having teachers who share their racial and cultural backgrounds. The Ignite Fellowship is bringing a diverse group of exceptional, equity-minded leaders into classrooms virtually to expand access to individualized learning for students in Eastern North Carolina.*

*In its pilot year, the Ignite Fellowship brought 728 tutors to dozens of public schools across the country in the 2021-2022 school year, 61% of whom identified as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color. Nearly 100% of the inaugural cohort of Fellows said they gained new insights about the state of education and their role in working towards educational equity.*

*“We are eager to build capacity in classrooms in an innovative and responsive way to help students make up for lost learning, and this first service expansion for Teach For America in North Carolina aligns with that,” said Dr. Monique Perry-Graves, executive director of Teach For America North Carolina. “Our hope is that Ignite will provide students with the support they need in order to thrive, while also attracting a diverse cohort of strong leaders to North Carolina who are committed to educational equity.”*

*The Ignite Fellowship is one of several key initiatives Teach For America has launched to drive progress towards its 2030 goal, in which they aim to double the number of students reaching key educational milestones, indicating that they are on a path to economic mobility and co-creating a future filled with possibility.*

*“What differentiates Teach For America in some ways is our ability to leverage our national talent pool to attract leaders to the state in service of educational equity—Ignite is not any different,” said Dr. Perry-Graves. “We need as many leaders as possible in this work to holistically meet the needs of our students right now, particularly in North Carolina.”*

Here are testimonials from our district partners about Ignite:

- *“Edgecombe County Public Schools has had a long standing partnership with Teach for America North Carolina to support our*

impact and strategy over many years,” said Dr. Valerie Bridges, Superintendent of Edgecombe County Public Schools and the [2022 North Carolina Superintendent of the Year](#). “We also have a focus on being one of the innovative districts in the state, so the opportunity to bring Teach For America North Carolina’s newest program to our county is a win-win for kids and our district as a whole.”

- “As our students are still recovering from learning loss due to the pandemic, we are excited about this opportunity to partner with Teach For America to assist Bertie County Schools with our efforts to provide our middle school students rich opportunities to ensure they will experience positive academic outcomes,” said Dr. Otis L. Smallwood, Superintendent Bertie County Public Schools.
- “Success makes you hungry for success—it gives you more encouragement and more inspiration to say that what we’re doing is right, and that we can do more,” said Eric Sanchez, CEO and Co-Founder of Henderson Collegiate, and a Teach For America alum. “Last year’s achievement coupled with the different realities of this year makes me really excited for what we are going to achieve with our 1,300 students.”

This is the National Impact of Teach For America’s Ignite Fellowship:

# OUR IMPACT AT SCALE



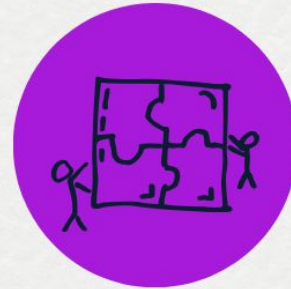
**80**

School Partners



**1,019**

Fall 2023 Ignite Fellow  
Placements



**27**

Communities served



Ignite Fellows are a diverse network of leaders who bring their unique experiences and perspective to partnering with students. In our last cohort, 57% identified as BIPOC and 39% identified as coming from a low-income background.

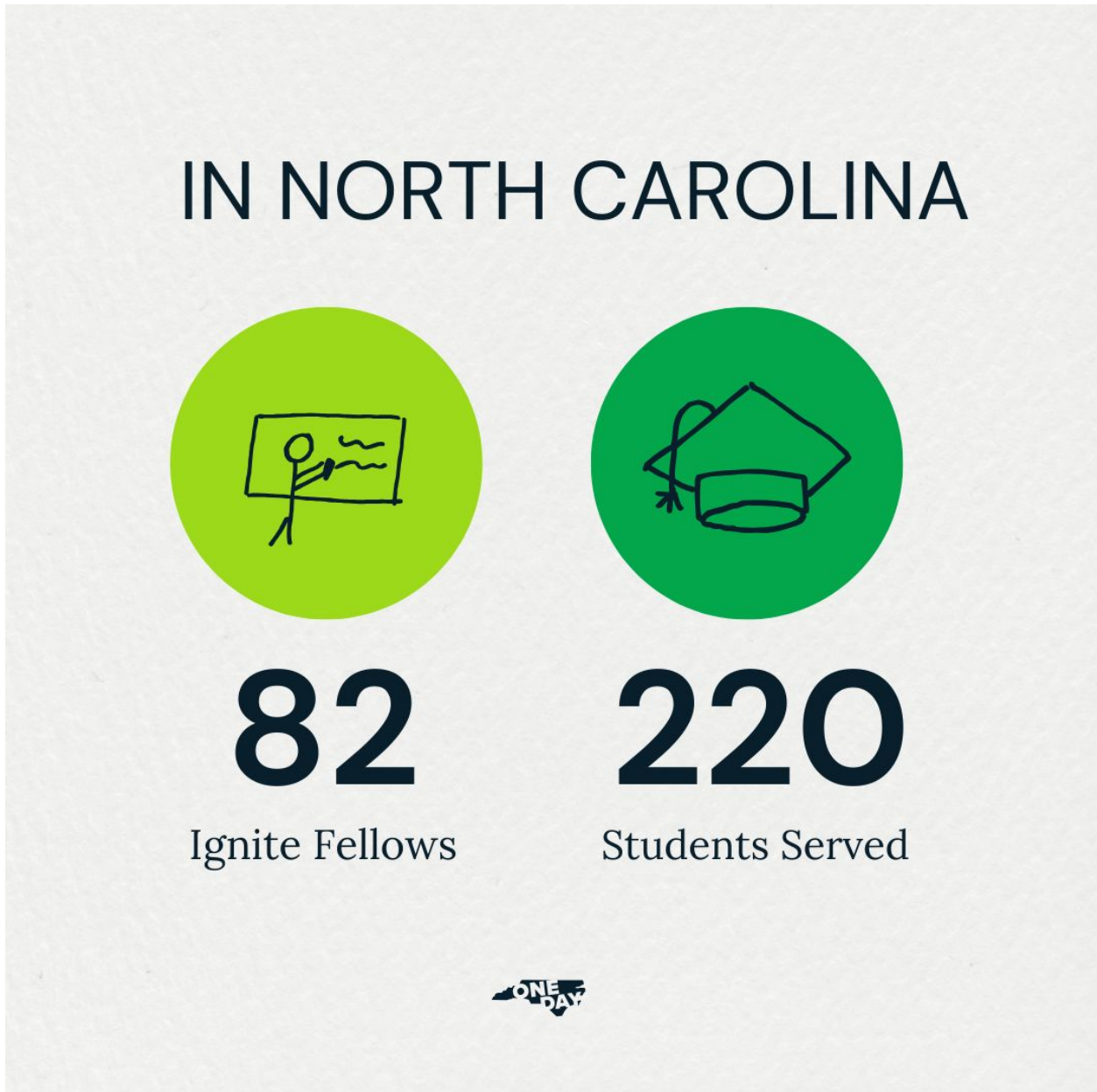


**2,600**

Students Impacted By Teach For America's Ignite Fellowship this fall semester.



And this is the impact of Ignite in North Carolina:



Fellows come from all academic majors and are supported by veteran teachers and TFA. You'll receive dedicated training on how to be an effective tutor from Teach For America, as well as support tailored to

your specific tutoring placement from your school-based veteran educator.

All kids deserve individualized learning to meet their unique needs. Ignite Fellows provide personalized learning that helps students increase their achievement and fosters greater belonging in the classroom. Research shows that tutoring is one of the most effective ways to improve educational achievement. This past school year, nearly 1,500 Ignite Fellows partnered with 2,700 students across 23 communities.

Below are testimonials from Ignite Fellows (tutors), their mentor teachers, and the students they serve:

"Our partnership with Teach For America's IGNITE program is allowing **50% of our 4th grade Math scholars to have access to intentional and individualized tutoring without having to overcome any external barriers.** IGNITE removes the need for special transportation and eliminates any additional burden of families having to rearrange after-school child care so that their child can attend tutoring. IGNITE provides the quality and much needed specific tutoring during the school day. Our scholars who are able to access IGNITE are excited to connect with and learn from their tutor. Often on Mondays we hear, "I can't wait to go to IGNITE" and we are constantly getting requests from scholars in other grade levels to join IGNITE too. IGNITE has also challenged us to think differently about what tutoring can look like and to consider more innovative ways to leverage technology and human capital outside of our building. IGNITE has energized us to see beyond, around, over and under some of the barriers that traditionally would have been an immediate non-starter."

**Dr. Kelly Anne Mudd**  
Principal, Martin Millenium Academy



“

It really made me start believing that I could be taught in my own way and still be smart.

**Student**

“

I enjoyed that my Ignite Fellow takes her time in trying to get us to understand. I got a good grade in math because of it.

**Student**

“

Ignite to me is about my students being exposed to college students and seeing themselves in their shoes.

**Teacher**

“

I really appreciated the quality of people selected to be Fellows. I was very impressed by their background, passion, and dedication.

**Teacher**

“

I'm most proud of being able to help a teacher accommodate some of her students and alleviating some of their pressure.

**Ignite Fellow**

“

I felt like I was really helping my student and making an impact on her education and her understanding, which was really meaningful to me. I just loved the experience.

**Ignite Fellow**

“

It was a rewarding experience to see that in real time I can make a difference with my students. It's really exciting to see when they understand something and they get excited.

Ignite Fellow

“

I valued the opportunity to connect with students through my teaching experience. I learned how to adjust teaching, what works and what doesn't, and how I can get them excited to learn.

Ignite Fellow

“

I love that Ignite gives students a chance to create safe and trusting relationships. The small group size ensures that children are given individualized attention and the fellow is able to recognize and cater to students' specific needs and interests.

Ignite Fellow

“

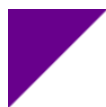
I valued getting to meet with the same students every session and getting to be involved in their classroom goals and agendas. It feels like the Ignite fellows become a part of the students' classroom experience.

Ignite Fellow

“

As a future teacher, this program enabled me to develop teaching skills, understand the education landscape, and get excited about being in the classroom.

**Ignite Fellow**



**MEET YOUR IGNITE COMMUNITY**

**Contributed By: Jeremy Tarbuton, Patillo Middle-NC**

Hello TFA Ignite Fellows & Ms. Flowers,

My name is Jeremy (he/him/his), I'm originally from GA, but I call NC home now and am currently based in the Appalachian mountains (Boone, NC).

I actually finished my studies a while back. I completed a BBA in Marketing from the University of Georgia and an M. Ed. in Teaching from the University of Houston. I am a '09 TFA Houston alum and this is my 4th TFA Ignite Fellowship (I previously tutored 5th/7th-grade math during spring/fall 2022 and 7th-grade math during spring 2023).

I love to travel, learn languages, and immerse myself in other cultures. I speak Spanish and Portuguese and have mainly lived outside the U.S. in Central/South American countries since 2016, having visited 30 countries to date. In February 2024, I will be heading to Vitória, Brazil as an English Language Fellow (a U.S. Department of State program administered by Georgetown University) to teach for 10 months at the Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo. I'm looking forward to working with my student(s) from Patillo Middle School before my departure. Looking forward to meeting everyone soon!



I chose to become an Ignite Fellow so I could take my tutoring experience and make an impact in public school systems who might need the extra support. I also wanted to make direct personal relationships with the students I was working with, so the high-dosage, small group model worked really well!

## Kareena Stowers

2023 Ignite Fellow  
Cornell University



The Ignite Fellowship prepares me for my future professional and personal goals as I hope to join Teach For America and later become a professional mental health counselor for children. With this experience, I am able to work with students in small groups or one-on-one to be a resource to help support the future generation of leaders. This is a step in my journey that allows me to learn and grow alongside professionals and TFA veterans and staff.

## Carter Murr

2023 Ignite Fellow  
University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill



I plan on becoming a teacher since I am a double major in Education Studies and Spanish. The Ignite Fellowship definitely helps prepare me for teaching since I work with my own students three days a week to go over reading comprehension. This familiarizes me with different high-impact tutoring strategies that help students learn.

## Roman Varty

2023 Ignite Fellow  
University of Wisconsin-Madison



I have always loved tutoring kids younger than me as I was growing up. Ignite gives me the opportunity to continue this passion but for students that come from lower income communities. Because of Ignite, I am allowed to continue tutoring and can also give back to the community.

## Madonna Samaan

2023 Ignite Fellow  
Temple University



One of the most important things I learned during my onboarding training was to make sure to create a connection with my student(s). While this may seem like a small piece of advice, I think that it will be monumental as I work in my future profession to form trusting relationships and create comfortable spaces that will be beneficial for both my clients and me.



## Francesca Albanese

2023 Ignite Fellow  
The University of Rhode Island



## Pop Miller Fellowship, a Teach Beyond Two Initiative

TFA North Carolina is currently reimagining how the Pop Miller Fellowship can aid our efforts in retaining, supporting, and developing TFA alumni teachers. The Pop Miller Fellowship is one of our long-time “Teach Beyond Two” initiatives. More TFA teachers were retained as classroom teachers because of the Pop Miller Fellowship. More students attained an excellent education as a result of the Pop Miller Fellowship too. We will reimagine this historical pillar of our Teach Beyond Two programming so that has an even more promising future. Some of the information about the design and impact of the Pop Miller Fellowship to date is included below.

[Perspective | Honoring excellence in teaching with legacy Leroy ‘Pop’ Miller Fellowship](#) | November 30, 2022 | *EducationNC*

*In honor of this season of gratitude and fellowship, I encourage all of us in this industry to count the many blessings we have around us, including the many career educators who continue to support students, families, and communities. With that, it feels fitting to mention the hard work and dedication of all Teach For America North Carolina alumni who continue to serve our classrooms, schools, and districts; and especially those who have undertaken critical development on their trajectory toward long-term education leadership through the Leroy “Pop” Miller (LPM) Fellowship.*

*This fellowship was established to honor one of the most dedicated educators – and most reluctant trailblazers – in North Carolina history. Leroy Miller, affectionately known as “Pop,” was a World War II veteran who returned to North Carolina in 1945 to become an industrial arts teacher in Charlotte–Mecklenburg Schools (CMS). After teaching for nearly two decades, Pop was finally convinced to take a role in school leadership in 1963. A decade later, as integration was beginning to rock the foundations of CMS, “district leaders wanted a principal who could oversee the change at all–white East Mecklenburg High.”*

*As his obituary so succinctly describes it, “They turned to Leroy ‘Pop’ Miller, who had earned a reputation for tough love and high standards, first at the all–Black West Charlotte High, then as he helped desegregate Carmel Junior High.”*

*Yet, even as one of the first Black principals in the state, and possibly the entire Southeast, Pop did not want to be remembered for his race alone. “I’ve always wanted to be a good person,” Pop said towards the end of his life. “When I go out and cut my grass, I want my yard to look better than any yard in this neighborhood ... I’d say to the kids I wanted them to be the best in the state of North Carolina, and I wanted to be the best principal in the state.”*

*To a broader community Pop may be remembered for his groundbreaking historical leadership, but to the peers, students, and community members he served alongside, he is first and foremost remembered for his commitment to excellence. Pop set a standard of leadership that is as relatable as it is remarkable, as he was forced to address high teacher turnover and students sneaking off campus, as well as the cultural taboo of driving a car with a white female passenger.*

*Pop's commitment to authentic leadership and his natural propensity toward coalition-building left an incredible impression on the education landscape in our state. His son Skip remarks that his dad's willingness to lend a hand, as well as his fortitude when speaking up for himself and those he felt responsible for, paved the way for the leadership opportunities that continue to shape Charlotte and the state more broadly even to this day. Pop was also careful to encourage the capable educators around him to step up and make even more of an impact in their school community. As one of Pop's contemporaries put it, "He could just pull together a group of leaders and folks would basically say, 'Yes sir!' and go do it." Another calls Pop "an educator's educator."*

*These simple but hard-won affirmations are the mark of a true teacher-leader and were the inspiration for the fellowship that we at Teach For America established in Pop's honor. Since its start in 2014,*

*the LPM Fellowship has matriculated dozens of Teach For America alumni based in CMS who, with the help of a network of support, have gone on to become teacher-leaders in their own right.*

### *Knitting a network together*

*As in any industry, excellence in teaching is cultivated through time, development, and the mentoring of more tenured peers and managers. Yet teacher attrition has been increasing in schools across the country since the pandemic, deepening a challenge low-income schools and communities have always experienced. To top it all off, development opportunities that will compensate for the loss of peer mentoring are difficult to find.*

*When Nina Franklin began teaching in 2012, teacher turnover was a noticeable issue. However, Nina found her footing among deeply-rooted teachers in her school and continued to seek out further development, eventually selected as one of the first LPM Fellows in CMS.*

*“As an LPM Fellow, I was happy to stay teaching at my [Teach For America] placement school, as I felt connected to my school community and students,” says Nina. “While I continued to hone my craft as a teacher in the classroom, the coaching and learning experiences through LPM gave me the opportunity to explore other areas of influence.”*

*Following the fellowship, Nina pursued a graduate degree in school counseling, and she returned to CMS to put her certification to use. Now, she has over worked nearly 10 cumulative years in CMS, where, she says, “Each and every day I use my experiences and perspective from my time in the classroom to influence my direct work with students, collaboration with teachers, and partnership with families.”*

*Like Nina, Kimberli Darling was also among one of the first LPM cohorts and was inspired to remain at her placement school in CMS for nearly ten years. In that time, she has been recognized twice as Teacher of the Year and has held varied roles and responsibilities — from classroom teacher, to leading a grade level team, then a subject area team, and overseeing special events like the eighth grade student graduation.*

*Kimberli’s interest in knowing the “behind-the-scenes” operations and administration led her to the LPM Fellowship, which has since set her on a trajectory towards school leadership. Some of the most important skills she developed, however, were the “soft” skills of networking while remaining grounded in authentic leadership.*

*“In the spirit of Leroy ‘Pop’ Miller, I’ve learned that it’s essential to build a community,” says Kimberli. “It’s not just about my class. It’s our entire space.”*

*Her time as a fellow, as well as her passion for inspiring teachers and students to bring their whole selves to the classroom, has transformed her into the kind of teacher others can look up to. She has been instrumental in new teacher orientation, as well as orientation for the entire teaching body, and takes time to mentor teachers whenever possible.*

### Expanding beyond CMS

*This year, Teach For America North Carolina announced the expansion of the LPM Fellowship to include educators in Piedmont Triad and Eastern North Carolina counties, marking a new chapter of long-term teacher development across the state. I can only imagine what Pop would have to say about one of his eponymous fellows teaching at an all-virtual academy.*

*When asked why she wanted to join the LPM Fellowship, Butner teacher Christeanna Friend says that she “wanted the opportunity to network with other teachers across North Carolina, to see what is working well in their classrooms” as well as share her promising practices more broadly. “I wanted to make sure that I knew of opportunities that would benefit my students that I might not otherwise know about,” she continues.*

*Christeanna and the entire 2022 cohort of LPM Fellows are making strides toward achieving excellence for themselves, their*

*students, and their broader community. And now, by knitting together a group of teachers beyond Charlotte, Pop Miller's legacy will make even more of an impact in developing a wealth of educator knowledge and experience.*

*Sometimes, the test of an educator lies in navigating unprecedented challenges, relying on the knowledge, instinct, and compassion to move forward rather than well-tread practices. For Pop Miller, the unprecedented challenge was school integration. For our LPM Fellows — the majority of whom have already experienced teaching during a pandemic — “unprecedented” is now a part of everyday life. However, Teach For America is committed to equipping educators with the skills necessary to not only survive the unprecedented but develop strong, equity-minded solutions.*

*I couldn't put it any better than Kimberli, who remains an inspiring example of our fellows' efforts in education: “I'm not sure I would've been able to do half of those things if it weren't for Teach For America. It was a kind of preparation to answer questions you weren't sure you were going to be asked.”*

*This is a 15-month fellowship opportunity for Teach For America alumni teachers. We offer this fellowship because we want to build leaders who are people-centered, system-focused, and hopeful. Fellows have already proven themselves to be leaders in the classroom and we hope*

*to expand their impact. We will deepen their connections across the network and create learning lab opportunities for them through the LPM Fellowship. This will ensure everyone in our network feels seen, known, heard, pushed, and celebrated at every step of their journey. These fellows exemplify leadership that is dynamic, outcomes-driven, proximate, and equity-centric. During the first summer of the fellowship, fellows attend development and planning sessions to grow their capacity (self-identified) and renew their contribution to the common good. Throughout the school year, fellows mentor first-year TFA teacher candidates based on assets and expertise. Fellows focus on changing systems during the second summer of the fellowship, as they take part in an internship with a community change agent that is working towards the mission. More than 70 Teach For America alumni have completed the Leroy “Pop” Miller Fellowship since its inception. 68% of them are still either teaching or working full-time in a school-based administrator role in North Carolina public schools. Pop Miller Fellows come from Charlotte, Eastern North Carolina, and the Piedmont Triad. TFA North Carolina accepts new TFA alumni teachers to this distinguished fellowship each year. It is just one of the tools we are using to ensure more of our teachers continue to serve in North Carolina’s public schools beyond their initial 2-year commitment.*

## **Reinvest in Student Excellence (RISE) Fellowship, a Teach Beyond Two Initiative**

**15% of Teach For America applicants planned to work in education before joining TFA. Then, 66% of TFA alumni remain in the education profession, and 85% of TFA alumni continue serving in low-income communities, after they finish their corps commitment.** Through our blossoming “Teach Beyond Two” programs, more of the teacher leaders we place in North Carolina communities continue to teach in North Carolina’s public schools beyond their initial two-year commitment with Teach For America. For FY21, 91% of TFA teacher candidates remained in their placement region, further symbolizing the success of our “Teach Beyond Two” initiatives, programs that are a direct result of the North Carolina General Assembly’s strong investment into Teach For America North Carolina.

Teach For America teachers remain committed to leading in North Carolina’s classrooms. Teachers entering the profession in North Carolina through Teach For America are staying at the same, or even higher, rates compared to other beginning teachers across the state. According to the most recent State of the Teaching Profession Report from NCDPI, attrition rates were 12.71% for beginning teachers and 11.8% for all lateral entry teachers. Based on our internal data, the attrition rate

was 13% for TFA teachers from year one to year two (so comparable). 70% of TFA teachers stayed in the classroom at least a third year, which is beyond their two-year corps commitment and ahead of the national TFA rate of 66%. The attrition rate for Teach For America in the report is stated to be 25.3%. The report states that data collection processes to identify and track Teach For America teachers is inconsistent, and once a teacher converts their license, they are no longer considered a TFA teacher – both of which can "skew attrition rates higher." Retention and attrition is monitored consistently and regularly across Teach For America. Each year, in the first few months of the school year, the organization collects information on all first-year TFA teacher candidates from across the country. The following year, each TFA teacher candidate is referred to and if they are still in the classroom, they are considered an active TFA teacher. If not, they are removed from internal systems. We hope to partner with NCDPI to ensure that, in the future, their report better reflects TFA's model and includes data that more accurately communicates the true attrition rate of TFA teachers. Moreover, although TFA's true attrition rate was 13%, which is very comparable to the 12.71% for all beginning teachers and 11.8% for all lateral entry teachers, we acknowledge 13% is still too high. We will never rest until every classroom has a strong teacher leader ensuring every student has the opportunity to attain an excellent education. We will continue to strive towards perfection when it comes to sourcing, matching, and developing talent. That includes bringing more diverse

and exceptional leaders to North Carolina. That includes retaining a higher percentage of TFA teachers, ensuring we strive towards 100% of TFA teachers completing their corps commitment, and developing the leadership of TFA alumni in unprecedented ways.

TFA NC's **Reinvest in Student Excellence (RISE) Fellowship** is a commitment between Teach For America, participating fellows, and school leaders to work together to push toward expanded outcomes for the students that we serve in North Carolina. It is the combination of coaching, professional development, data-driven instruction, and shared commitment that we believe will improve the following outcomes:

- retention of teachers in communities that need it most
- student proficiency
- growth in measures that predict quality of teacher directed support and development

RISE Fellows are matched with a Teach For America North Carolina Director of Leadership Development who focuses on coaching TFA teachers. Fellows work with coaches to establish a vision and direction for their classroom, monitor student progress, learn more about best practices, further develop their knowledge of content and pedagogy, and adjust as necessary to meet student needs in order to increase student learning and growth.

Our RISE Fellows have access to our partnership with The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) and engage in leadership development offered through their course catalog. In addition, Fellows receive opportunities for additional development throughout the year as a part of TFA's RISE Fellowship program. RISE Fellows receive additional financial compensation for staying in the classroom and for going above and beyond for the students and communities they serve.

RISE Fellows come together for collaboration, networking, and professional development in the fall and spring. They engage in other professional development opportunities offered to TFA teachers, including programs for teacher candidates and TFA alumni. RISE Fellows meet with their coaches at least once per month, but often are connecting with their coach via text or email multiple times per week. TFA teachers use data to drive their instruction and improve student results. TFA teachers who serve as RISE Fellows are required to leverage the following alongside their TFA coach:

- Beginning of program diagnostic and feedback from leadership coach
- Quarterly RISE Fellow classroom data review
- Mid-Year Program Evaluation in January
- End of Program Evaluation in June

Here are testimonials from RISE Fellows about why they joined the teacher retention, leadership development, and student-centered RISE Fellowship:



“I came to this group because I still believe in the essential mission of TFA. I wanted the support to be able to make a bigger impact in my classroom. I want the skills and network to open my kids up to a world of new possibilities.”

*Krystal Dehaney, CPT 2019, Pilot RISE Cohort*



“The idea that I can continue to make a difference in the lives of scholars in the capacity of a teacher in NC. This opportunity was happening when I was in the crossroads of what my next steps would be.”

*Tammy Gottschalk-Hempstead, ENC 2020*

The following graphics outline the TFA alumni teachers who served as RISE Fellows the 2022–2023 school year.

# RISE Beyond Two, Reinvest in Student Excellence

## PILOT COHORT

### PIEDMONT TRIAD COMMUNITY



**NATALIE PENNER**  
George C Simkins Jr  
ES  
Gulford County Schools



**WILLIAM CORNETT**  
Northeast Gulford HS  
Gulford County Schools



**NICOLLETTE JONES-  
FLOWERS**  
Gulford eLearning  
University Prep  
Gulford County Schools



**MATTHEW KILLIAN**  
Penn-Griffin School for  
the Arts  
Gulford County Schools



**GREGSHA' LEE**  
James B Dudley HS  
Gulford County Schools



**TANESHIA MOORE**  
Melvin C Swann MS  
Gulford County Schools



**MAGGIE O'DANIEL**  
Rankin ES  
Gulford County Schools



**DELIA PARKS**  
Southeast Gulford MS  
Gulford County Schools

# RISE Beyond Two, Reinvest in Student Excellence

## PILOT COHORT

### EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA + TRIANGLE



**TAMMY SUE  
GOTTSCHALK-  
HEMPSTEAD**  
West Edgecombe MS  
Edgecombe County  
Schools



**PETER LEONARD**  
Henderson Collegiate  
HS  
Henderson Collegiate



**SERENA MOSBY**  
KIPP Halifax Primary  
KIPP NC



**JACOB NELSON**  
North Edgecombe HS  
Edgecombe County  
Schools



**FREDI NIELSEN**  
KIPP Durham ES  
KIPP NC



**RAYSHAWN SMITH**  
KIPP Halifax Primary  
KIPP NC



**EMILY ADCOCK**  
School  
Gulford County Schools

CHARLOTTE AREA

**RISE Beyond Two,  
Reinvest in  
Student  
Excellence**

**PILOT COHORT**



**TYLER ADAMS**  
Newell ES  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
Schools



**VITA BORJAS**  
West Charlotte HS  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
Schools



**KRYSTAL CARTUS**  
Wilson STEM Academy  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
Schools



**KADESHA ESTRICH**  
Governor's Village  
STEM Academy  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
Schools



**NICHELE GOODWIN**  
Druid Hills Academy  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
Schools



**JOHNNA HAUCK**  
Devonshire ES  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
Schools



**CYNTHIA KELLETT**  
Martin Luther King Jr.  
MS  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
Schools



**EMILY MANUEL**  
Newell ES  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
Schools



**CAMEO NICHOLS**  
Walter G. Byers  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
Schools



**NICOLE PAPPAS**  
Ranson IB MS  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
Schools



**TY'ASIHA RANN**  
Martin Luther King Jr.  
MS  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg  
Schools



**BREANNA TILLISON-  
SMITH**  
KIPP Change Academy  
KIPP NC

TFA alumni teachers serving as RISE Fellows impacted 1500+ students in the inaugural year of the Fellowship. TFA NC looks forward to expanding this Fellowship, thanks in large part due to the steadfast support we have received from the NCGA, to ensure more teachers stay in the classroom and more students are meeting key milestones that indicate they are on the path to academic and economic success.

In 2023–2024, 26 RISE Fellows are serving 2,775 students from 10 school districts and charter school networks. They are teaching eight different subjects, including Exceptional Children (EC) and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID).



# Reinvesting in Student Excellence and Addressing the Teacher Shortage in North Carolina

The Teach For America NC RISE Fellowship is a commitment between Teach For America, participating fellows and the school leaders where they serve to work together toward expanded outcomes for students and teachers in the communities we serve in North Carolina.

We aim to support schools and school systems to develop and retain high quality teachers and leaders by focusing on professional development, data-driven instruction and shared commitment to drive measurable outcomes.



**26** RISE FELLOWS

This is the total number of participants in North Carolina for the 2023-2024 Year.

**10** DISTRICT PARTNERS

The total number of districts served by our RISE Fellows.

**8** SUBJECT AREAS COVERED

Our RISE Fellows teach over eight different subject areas including AVID and EC.



We remain committed to the following measures of success:



retention of teachers in communities that need it most



student proficiency and growth in measures that predict access



quality of teacher directed support and development

# RISE Fellows By Community

## Fellows in Piedmont Triad

**Bec Brady**  
*Grade 9 - 12 English/Creative Writing/Journalism Teacher at T. Wingate Andrews High School*

**Matthew Killian**  
*Grade 9 - 12 English Teacher at Penn Griffin School of the Arts*

**Sybil Robinson**  
*Grade 8 Science Teacher at Eastern Guilford Middle School*

**Cassidy Stafford**  
*Grade 9-12 Math Teacher at High Point Central High School*

**Shade White**  
*Grade 9-12 Biology/IB Biology Teacher at High Point Central High School*



## Fellows in Triangle

**Christal Garry**

*Kindergarten Teacher at Reedy Creek Elementary School*

**Robert Oechslin**

*Grade K - 5 Math & Reaching AIG Teacher at Burton Magnet Elementary School*

## Fellows in Charlotte Area

**Amiya Ballenger**

*Grade 6 - 8 EC/General Education English Teacher at Whitewater Middle School*

**Doc Dillard**

*Business Essentials, Entrepreneurship and Career Management Teacher at the Performance Learning Center*

**Vita Borjas**

*Grade 9 - 12 AP US History, Economics and Personal Finance Teacher at West Charlotte High School*

**Jabreia Dirton**

*Grade 3-5 STEM Teacher at Movement Charter School*

**Aprille Morris-Butler**

*Grade 9-12 Biology/Physical Science at Mountain Island Charter School*

**Kaylan Purisima**

*EC: OCS (Literacy 9), English I/II at Garinger High School*

**Jennifer Ruth**

*Grade 2 Teacher at Eastover Elementary School*

**Ty'Asiha Rann**

*Grade 7 Math Teacher at Martin Luther King Jr Middle School*

**Liana Zalutsky**

*First Grade Teacher at Eastover Elementary School*

## Fellows in Eastern North Carolina

**Dajarae Bacote-Ingram**

*Grade 6 English Teacher at KIPP Halifax College Prep*

**Dr. Ebone' Barnes**

*Dean of Culture and Instruction at KIPP Pride High School*

**Monique Brown**

*Grade 3 - 5 Special Education Resource Teacher at Coker-Wimberly Elementary School*

**Rachel Candaso**

*Grade 6 - 8 Program Site Coordinator, Wellcome Middle School*

**Peter Leonard**

*Grade 9-12 World History Teacher at Henderson Collegiate High School*

**Merri Lindsay**

*Grade 3-5 Math/ELA/Science/Social Studies Teacher at Lakeforest Elementary School*

**Serena Mosby**

*Grade Pre-K - 2 Reading & Math Teacher at KIPP Halifax Primary School*

**Timothy O'Shea**

*Grade 6-8 Multi-Class Leader of Innovation & Digital Literacy Coach, West Edgecombe Middle School*

**Rayshawn Smith**

*Grade 3-5 Math/ELA Teacher at KIPP Halifax College Prep*

## Western Governors University (WGU) NC

### Western Governors University (WGU) NC & TFA NC Sign Partnership Agreement

*Another Teach Beyond Two program TFA NC employed to retain talented leaders in North Carolina was signing a partnership agreement with the WGU North Carolina. Below is a press release announcing this innovative strategy designed to further catalyze the leadership, learning, and impact of TFA alumni. Moreover, this Teach Beyond Two program will help retain talent inside the North Carolina classrooms and schools served by TFA alumni.*

### [WGU North Carolina and Teach For America North Carolina Sign Partnership Agreement](#)

TFA-NC members eligible for \$2,500 scholarships and other opportunities

April 28, 2022

*Durham, N.C. – WGU North Carolina, an affiliate of online nonprofit Western Governors University (WGU), has signed a partnership agreement with Teach For America, Inc., North Carolina (TFA-NC). To provide TFA-NC members and employees with multiple paths to higher education and professional development, WGU will provide*

*scholarships valued at \$2,500 to those seeking to further their education through online coursework at WGU.*

*WGU will award up to five Teach For America North Carolina Scholarships per year, provided as a tuition credit of \$625 per six-month term, renewable for up to four terms. As part of the agreement, WGU North Carolina will also assist in the development and execution of initial and ongoing enrollment campaigns, and provide information about Teach For America to qualified students in WGU's Teachers College.*

*WGU is accredited through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). WGU's Teachers College is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP). Tuition is around \$4,000 per six-month term for most WGU undergraduate degree programs, and students can accelerate at their own pace with consent from their assigned mentor.*

*Since 1990, Teach For America has found, developed, and supported a diverse network of leaders who expand opportunity for children across North Carolina. Its network continues to work in classrooms, schools, and every sector and field that shape the broader systems in which schools operate. Teach For America has 2,000+ alumni members in North Carolina, representing a diverse network of*

*changemakers – career educators, ed-tech entrepreneurs, district leaders, socially conscious CEOs, and many more – who are working to expand opportunity.*

*“It is our mission to find, develop, and support equity-oriented leaders so they can transform education and expand opportunity with children,” said Dr. Monique Perry Graves, Executive Director of Teach for America North Carolina. “Partnerships like this are critical toward achieving that aim. We are grateful for WGU’s contributions to higher education in North Carolina.”*

*“We recognize the excellent work that Teach for America North Carolina has done to recruit and develop exceptional educators working in high-need areas of our state,” said WGU North Carolina Chancellor Ben Coulter, Ed.D. “It is our hope that the partnership and scholarships will further develop talented teachers committed to inspiring bright students in their communities.”*

*Celebrating its fifth anniversary as a state affiliate this year, WGU North Carolina currently has more than 3,800 students enrolled across the state. More than 1,100 graduates of WGU’s Teachers College live in North Carolina.*

**###**

# Financial Report

Last year, Teach For America (TFA) North Carolina leveraged our \$6 million allocation from the North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) in innovative ways. We continue to make publicly available all documents related to the execution of our program and the expenditures of State funds. This section of our annual report provides an overview of our program costs and private sources of revenue. Furthermore, this section of our annual report includes a regional breakdown of the costs related to our mission of finding, developing, and supporting a diverse and exceptional network of leaders who expand opportunity for children from classrooms, schools, and every sector and field that shapes the broader systems in which schools operate.

We continue to utilize our funding to build off of the successes of the NC Teacher Corps and place promising teacher leaders in hard-to-fill vacancies. We believe the more public and private funding we have, the more teachers we can place in classrooms. That is important because the more diverse, exceptional leaders we recruit from across the country to teach in North Carolina, the more North Carolina students TFA NC teachers can help learn to read by third grade through the Science of Reading, reach other key academic milestones such as graduating from high school and obtaining an advanced

credential, and put on a path to economic mobility to discover a future filled with possibility.

We reallocated existing resources and reorganized our organization's structure to pivot back to a statewide fundraising team and strategy over the past three years. Our team continues to steward our long-term partners in Charlotte, the Piedmont Triad, and Eastern North Carolina, while also maximizing funding opportunities and resources across the state that we have not yet pursued. This is an exciting opportunity to better leverage our State Funding to increase the private revenue we generate, which will ultimately help us serve more of North Carolina's students.

## **Program Costs & Regional Breakdown**

In compliance with S.L 2013–360, Section 8.21.(b).8.b, and S.L 2013–360, Section 8.21.(b).8.a, below you will find details on our program costs from the last fiscal year. This includes costs associated with recruitment, candidate selection, corps member (first- and second-year teacher) placement, the preparation and effective execution of the preservice training of teacher leaders, operational and administrative costs, development and fundraising expenses, alumni support, management costs, and investments made in marketing and research.

This is the regional breakdown of how we invested our State Funding last fiscal year:

| Category  | Eastern North Carolina | Charlotte Piedmont Triad |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Funds expended by region of the state   | \$3,007,619            | \$7,491,042              |
| Recruitment, Candidate Selection, and Placement                               | \$597,028              | \$1,631,980              |
| East Carolina University: Education preparation program and licensure partner |                        | \$15,200                 |
| Preservice training and preparation costs                                     | \$277,267              | \$1,301,878              |
| Professional development and support (corps members)                          | \$1,170,625            | \$1,625,798              |
| Alumni Support  | \$591,825              | \$1,836,973              |
| Management & Fundraising  | \$370,874              | \$1,079,213              |

We leverage our public and private funding for the costs associated with the selection, placement, and retention of our first-year TFA teacher candidates. Expenses associated with selection include

various recruitment costs. These costs include finding potential TFA teachers, pushing them to apply to TFA, deciding who to admit to TFA, yielding admitted folks to confirm their acceptance to TFA, and placing them with one of our charter school or district partners. Therefore, the funding we receive from the State helps ensure more candidates apply for, and interview with, Teach For America. It also helps ensure more leaders ultimately enter the classroom to serve the students who need us most.

For recruitment, we have recruiters across the country who work with universities and other organizations – HBCUs and Veterans Affairs, as examples – who work to identify strong candidates from their assigned institutions and communities and encourage them to apply to Teach For America. Here in North Carolina, we have a recruitment director specifically assigned to North Carolina A&T University and North Carolina Central University, as these two HBCUs have historically yielded a high number of strong candidates for Teach For America. We also have recruitment managers who support candidates that apply from all other HBCUs, and other colleges and universities, from throughout North Carolina. We recently reallocated resources to create a position on the TFA NC statewide team specifically focused on recruiting folks from North Carolina to teach in North Carolina as part of Teach For America. This unprecedented move is firmly aligned with the legislative language that established TFA’s state funding in 2013. We are

one of the few TFA regions in the country allowed to supplement the TFA national team's recruitment efforts with a local recruiter specifically focused on the strategic priorities of our statewide team. We believe this recruitment pilot will lead to more North Carolinians joining Teach For America, as well as more applications from folks with backgrounds in STEM, lateral-entry and mid-career professionals, and Military Veterans of the United States Armed Forces. Our commitment to bringing more talented folks from all walks of life into this movement is unwavering.

In addition to recruitment efforts, part of our funding is used to support the interview and admissions work that takes place to ensure only the strongest leaders with the greatest potential to teach and lead are selected. This process helps ensure we hire teachers who can effectively connect with students, partner with parents, and remain committed to North Carolina's public schools for not only the two years they initially sign up for, but for years to come. All candidates are reviewed and interviewed by Teach For America staff members. Following interviews, our admissions team works to ensure that candidates meet all eligibility requirements needed for acceptance to Teach For America. Once completed, the admissions team identifies what regions candidates are best suited for, which takes into account both candidate preference, as well as the specific needs of Charlotte, Eastern North Carolina, and the Piedmont Triad.

The second part of this larger spending category is placement. Placement for Teach For America North Carolina includes all the work that takes place from the time we confirm an accepted applicant in North Carolina, to their first day in school teaching students. Throughout this period of time, our North Carolina Onboarding Team supports the matriculation, onboarding, and preparation of first-year TFA teacher candidates. They assist with relevant paperwork and human functions such as securing housing. Specifically, testing and licensure are two key aspects of getting an incoming TFA teacher candidate in front of students in North Carolina. The majority of our districts in North Carolina require teachers to be on a residency license, meaning they have to pass certification exams, as well as be affiliated with an education preparation program. Teach For America partners with East Carolina University's preparation program. Our Onboarding Team guides first-year TFA teacher candidates through the testing process, as all North Carolina teachers have to pass a certification exam. Teach For America North Carolina covers the cost of our first-year teacher candidates' certification exams, such as the Praxis and Pearson exams, so we can lower the cost of entry to teach in the state. This is another way we leverage public and private dollars to diversify North Carolina's teaching force and deliver strong academic results for North Carolina's public school students. In addition to expenses related to testing, licensure for our first-year teacher candidates is another cost associated with placement. Teach For America North Carolina covers

the initial cost of this education preparation program at ECU. This investment provides our first-year teacher candidates with a path to teaching licensure. These investments ultimately ensure our first-year teacher candidates are effective educators, ready to make a difference in students' lives from the first day of school, but also committed to the continuous learning necessary to ensure every student in North Carolina receives a quality education. We are proud to partner with an esteemed state university from right here in North Carolina to ensure our teacher candidates are licensed and effective.

# Revenue Generated by Private Fundraising

In compliance with S.L. 2013-360, Section 8.21.(b).8.c, we outlined below the funds that we received through our private fundraising efforts. Additionally, we categorized our sources of private funding by the various regions of our great state.

| Funds received through private fundraising, specifically by sources in each region of the state |                        |                          |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------|
|   | Eastern North Carolina | Charlotte-Piedmont Triad |
| <b>Foundations</b>  | 787,000                | 752,000                  |
| <b>Corporations</b>   | 12,550                 | 257,000                  |
| <b>Individuals</b>  | 40,864                 | 626,650                  |
| <b>Events</b>   | 21,000                 | 167,000                  |

This report will be submitted to the North Carolina General Assembly's Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the offices of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairs of the Senate Appropriations / Base Budget Committee and the House Appropriations Committee, the Senate Appropriations Committee on Education / Higher Education, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, and the Fiscal Research Division on or before January 1, 2024 as required by the North Carolina State Legislature, per S.L. 2019-165, Section 3.6(b); S.L. 2013-360, Section 8.21.(b); and S.L. 2013-360, Section 8.21.(e).

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