



— FALL 2022 COHORT —

Welcome Book

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TECA
TENNESSEE EDUCATORS of COLOR ALLIANCE

TEACH
+PLUS



Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance Launches Ascension Project in Partnership with Teach Plus

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (March 22, 2022) –The Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance (TECA) and Teach Plus today announced the launch of the Ascension Project, a new leadership development and high-quality mentorship program for junior, senior, and graduate students of color who are candidates at education prep programs in middle Tennessee. The program, composed of mentors who are all current classroom teachers of color and their mentees, will focus on racial identity development, education policy, advocacy strategies, resume development, and networking for career advancement.

“Our future teachers of color are not being prepared for the challenges that exist when they enter the profession. Racial isolation, being a disciplinarian, a school-wide translator, or accessing leadership opportunities, are challenges that teachers of color continually face,” said Dr. Diarese George, executive director for the Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance. “It’s important that we prepare and provide support for candidates of color training to become teachers prior to them transitioning into the profession so that they may be better prepared and can be retained longer.”

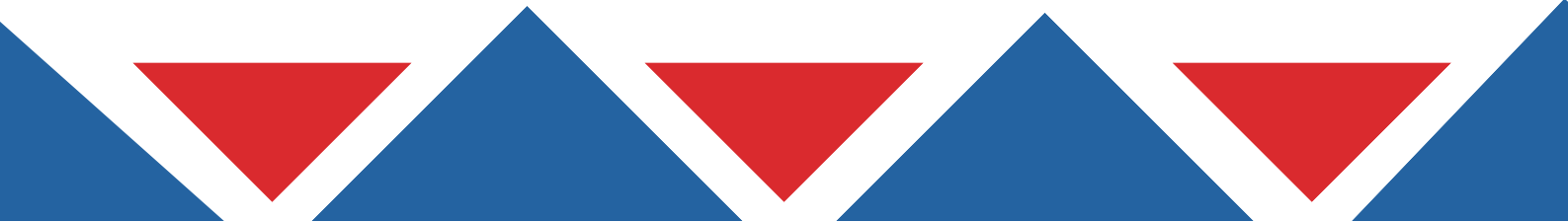
“We’re excited to embark on this work in partnership with TECA,” said Dr. Michael Savoy, Teach Plus Vice President of Programs. “Teach Plus is focused on ways to attract and retain talented teachers of color in the classroom. With the dearth of teachers of color in the profession, it is more important than ever to build the skills of incoming teachers of color to be leaders in their school community and advocates for themselves and their students of color. It is very important to support them as they learn and grow as professionals.”

Sixty percent of early-career educators of color leave the profession during the first three years. Lack of access to leadership opportunities is one of the leading causes for high attrition among educators of color in Tennessee. The Ascension Project underscores the urgent need to prepare candidates of color for the realities and challenges of being a teacher of color so that they may be retained longer in the profession, and ascend to higher heights in their careers. As part of the program, Teach Plus will develop the leadership, mentorship, and collaboration skills of teacher mentors and TECA will support the leadership development of the candidates of color.

Alexa Cathey, a senior at Austin Peay State University shared, “One of my motivations for applying to the Ascension Project was to connect and network with other educators who are people of color. Being connected to other teachers of color would help me not to feel alone in the world of education. Within this community, I anticipate that we can share our challenges, successes, and stories with each other. I want to be a part of a community of educators where we can laugh together, cry together, and learn together.”

All of the candidates, known as Ascenders, were selected from different preparation programs at universities in middle Tennessee, and ten of Ascenders are first-generation college students.

Similarly, the mentor teachers, known as Tennessee Ready to Lead Fellows, were selected through a rigorous process. Each Fellow is a demonstrably effective classroom teacher, has demonstrated leadership in and out of the classroom, and identifies as a teacher of color. “The first few years within the classroom can be extremely rough because of a general lack of support. This is especially true for educators of color as the profession does not represent or resemble us,” said Taylor Kirk. “This often leads to feelings of isolation and ultimately can cause a departure from the profession. I was interested in this program because I have a heart for mentoring new educators of color to gain their ground in the profession.”





TENNESSEE **EDUCATORS** *of* **COLOR** ALLIANCE

About Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance

Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance (TECA) seeks to develop, connect, and support educators of color with decision-making power who shape, create, and influence policy. TECA works to amplify the voice, presence, and support for educators of color while remaining student-centered and solutions-oriented. More information is available at www.tneca.org.



About TeachPlus

The mission of Teach Plus is to empower excellent, experienced, and diverse teachers to take leadership over key policy and practice issues that affect their students' success. Since 2009, Teach Plus has developed thousands of teacher leaders across the country to exercise their leadership in shaping education policy and improving teaching and learning, to create an education system driven by access and excellence for all. Teachplus.org

MEET THE LEADERSHIP TEAM!



DR. DIARESE GEORGE
TECA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dr. Diarese George is the founder and executive director of the Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance (TECA), an organization focused on developing, supporting, and connecting educators of color with decision-making power who shape, create, and influence policy. Recently, TECA was instrumental in advocating for the unanimous adoption of Tennessee's statewide Educator Diversity policy requiring districts establish recruitment and retention goals. Previously, he served as the Director of Recruitment for the Nashville Teacher Residency where his primary focus was recruiting more people of color to the education profession. Prior to that, he taught for five years as a high school teacher. Additionally, he has completed several education leadership fellowships focused on the intersection of policy and advocacy, and serves on several councils, boards, and committees statewide. Dr. George holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and a Master's degree in Corporate Communications from Austin Peay State University. He also received an MBA and a Doctorate in Education Leadership from Trevecca Nazarene University.



DR. MICHAEL SAVOY
TEACH PLUS, VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMS

As the Vice President of Programs, Dr. Michael Savoy (he/him/his) provides guidance for the design and implementation of programs that support the growth of teacher leaders to pursue the Teach Plus mission. As a member of Teach Plus' leadership team, Michael partners closely with state leaders to assess regional needs and continuously improve programming for maximum impact, and collaborates with other senior leaders to develop and implement strategies that advance teacher leadership as a catalyst for student success and for strengthening the teaching profession. In his 25 years of education experience, Dr. Savoy taught mathematics at the middle, high school and college level, designed the aerospace science curriculum for NASA, and worked with community organizations on school policy, advocacy, and parent involvement. Michael is the author of two book chapters on user design and change agency and has presented at numerous conferences including AERA, ISTE, and Learning Forward. Dr. Savoy earned his bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering at The University of Maryland, his master's degree in mathematics education at Salisbury University and his Ph. D. in Instructional Systems at The Pennsylvania State University. Michael lives in Maryland with his wife and two children.



WELCOME ASCENDERS!

Fall 2022



SHADAE ABDUS-SALAAM
TREVECCA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY



KEAERRA BRASSELL
AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY



CHASITY BRISTOW
AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY



JOYA BURRELL
TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



BENISE DUHART
TREVECCA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY



TRE'VEON HAYES
TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



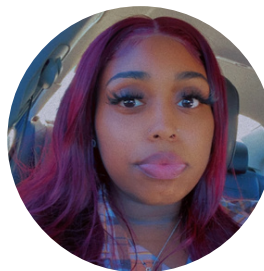
DOMINIQUE MILLER
AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY



VICTORIA MOORE
TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



TERRIANA PRICE
AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY



KASHYRA WILLIAMS
TENNESSEE UNIVERSITY

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MEET THE ASCENDERS!



SHADAE ABDUS-SALAAM

TREVECCA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY

I am from New Jersey and early childhood, esl education major and I love to be around kids. Being the oldest of six helped me gain this passion to teach and help kids grow. I have a two year old daughter who is in now is PreK classes. Seeing her growth in learning makes me so excited and seeing my students in my class learn new things makes me happy.



KEAERRA BRASSELL

AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Hello, my name is Keaerra Brassell and I am from Memphis, TN. I am currently a senior at Austin Peay State University majoring in education with a pre-K-3rd concentration. I am very kind and caring, and I also enjoy learning new things and meeting new people. My love for children is what has inspired me to go down the career path of teaching. Knowing that I can make a huge impact on their lives. I am super excited about my journey and I cannot wait to help shape the lives of the young children.

MEET THE ASCENDERS!



CHASITY BRISTOW
AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY

I am a 21-year-old woman that is blessed with a family that cares for and supports my aspirations and my goals for the future. I am a woman of mixed race, mixed with black and white. I am on my way to becoming an educator of color in the 21st century and I am hoping to make an impact on students of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds. I hope to provide diverse educational experiences for my students that allow my students to create and have different connections with all walks of life.



JOYA BURRELL
TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

I am Joya Burrell. Elementary Education major attending Tennessee State University from Nashville, TN. I would love to teach first grade but wherever I go I am excited for that as well!

MEET THE ASCENDERS!



BENISE DUHART
TREVECCA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY

Hello! My name is Benise Duhart. I am from Memphis, TN. I attend school at Trevecca Nazarene University. At Trevecca, I am an elementary education major. Also, at Trevecca, I am an SGA and a Walden, which is the name of our black student union, board member.



TRE'VEON HAYES
TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Tre'veon Hayes is a senior majoring in Elementary education. He is apart of collegiate 100, leadership TSU and he also serves as the 32nd Mister TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY!

MEET THE ASCENDERS!



DOMINIQUE MILLER
AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Hi ! My name is Dominique and I am from Memphis ,TN. I am a current junior at Austin Peay State University and a future Educator! Many others know me for my happy and bubbly personality, smiles are contagious so you will catch me smiling all the time. I love to travel and would love to travel to London or Hawaii. I was young when I knew I wanted to be a teacher, and also I have educators in my family. My uncle is a principal of a school and a couple of my aunts are teachers in Memphis. I love all things yellow & pink!!!



VICTORIA MOORE
TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

My name is Victoria Moore. I'm from Nashville,TN. I attend Tennessee State University majoring in Music Education. I love to sing but I also have stage fright(I know that sounds weird but it's true) One of my goals is to actually start singing at open mic nights again. It was very therapeutic for me, as well as shopping!. I love helping people and learning more on how I can assist to help my people reach the top. I love learning new ways to help engage everyone in a classroom setting and finding new activities to get kids' minds moving.I'm also a proud member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc.

MEET THE ASCENDERS!



TERRIANA PRICE

AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY

I'm currently taking courses at Austin Peay State University, relating to my future career interest as a teacher. Also, I've engaged in several events by influencing my peers in a couple of ways. To add, I went to the Alzheimer's Center for HOSA and served snacks and drinks while chatting with the elderly. Another activity is during our regular 30-minute intervention session, I got interested in tutoring my peers in math. Finally, I was selected to become the Spanish Club's Vice President and Photographer. I organized picnics as vice president and promoted collaboration.



KASHYRA WILLIAMS

TENNESSEE UNIVERSITY

My name is Kashyra Williams. I am 24 years old and from Chicago, IL. I attend Tennessee State University, my major is Early Childhood Education.



WELCOME READY TO LEAD FELLOWS!

2022



DR. CANDRA CLARIETTE
METRO-NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



AMISSA GREEN
ROBERTSON COUNTY



JAQUANDRIA HAYES
METRO-NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



JASMINE JACOBS
METRO-NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



TOYA KADEBA
RUTHERFORD COUNTY



TAYLOR KIRK
METRO-NASHVILLE



TAMEKA MARSHALL
METRO-NASHVILLE



TOVASHA MYREE
CLARKSVILLE-MONTGOMERY COUNTY



DAVEN OGLESBY
METRO-NASHVILLE



DARLENE PERRY
METRO-NASHVILLE



EVELIN SALGADO
METRO-NASHVILLE



LETICIA SKAE-JACKSON
WILLIAMSON COUNTY



DR. MEGAN SMART
METRO-NASHVILLE

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DR. CANDRA CLARIETTE
METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. Candra C. Clariette has served the students, teachers, and parents of the Metropolitan Nashville Public School system for the past 16 years as a teacher, literacy specialist, and instructional coach. Dr. Clariette currently serves as literacy coach at the historic Haynes Middle School. Candra is a native of Memphis, TN, and came to Nashville to further her education. She is a graduate of Tennessee State University and holds degrees in Speech Communication/Theatre and Education Administration. Dr. Clariette completed her doctoral research and received her degree in Leadership and Professional Practice from Trevecca Nazarene University.

As a 3rd generation educator, she has worked tirelessly to provide opportunities for students and families to embrace literacy. Dr. Clariette has also been recognized nationally by the professional education publication Education Week for leading literacy-based after-school programs throughout the Nashville community. In her spare time, Candra likes to read, garden, travel, and attend concerts.



AMISSA GREEN
ROBERTSON COUNTY

My name is Amissa Green and I am a native of Nashville. I am a proud graduate of Tennessee State University with a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education. I come from a family of teachers and proud to continue the tradition. I enjoy working with and encouraging children of all backgrounds to learn.

MEET THE READY TO LEAD FELLOWS!



JAUQUANDRIA HAYES

METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Greetings!!! My name is Jaquandria Hayes. I am married with four children. I've been teaching kindergarten at East End Prep in Nashville for the past three years. I currently have my Masters in Curriculum and Instruction. In the start of the summer I will be embarking on my journey of getting my Eds in Teaching and Learning.



JASMINE JACOBS

METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Hello! My name is Jasmine Jacobs. I have my bachelors in psychology and my masters in elementary education. Currently working on my principal certification. I've been in education for about 8 years. Majority of my experience is with math. I've taught 5th grade math for three years and 6th grade math for three years. I am currently working in curriculum as the Manager of STEM for KIPP Nashville elementary schools. I am learning so much and I am excited for this opportunity to help others navigate in a career path/ subjects that are not always accepting of BIPOC.

MEET THE READY TO LEAD FELLOWS!



TOYA KADEBA
RUTHERFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS

My name is Toya Kadeba. I'm originally from Memphis, TN. I'm a graduate of Austin Peay State University with my undergraduate and Masters degrees. I've studied abroad in Ireland while in graduate school. This is year 15 as a licensed teacher in Tennessee in two different counties, three different schools. I am a wife of almost ten years, and a mother of two beautiful daughters. We currently reside in Davidson County, however, I teach in Rutherford County.



TAYLOR KIRK
METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

My name is Taylor Kirk. I have been in education for 8 years. During this time, I have been a Humanities teacher for both middle and high schoolers. Much of my work within the classroom focuses on connections between content and Social Justice.

MEET THE READY TO LEAD FELLOWS!



TAMEKA MARSHALL

METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Tameka H. Marshall works as an English Language Development Instructional Coach for the Office of English Learners with Metro Nashville Public Schools. She is an experienced educator who spent 14 years in the classroom teaching elementary grades. She earned a Bachelor of Arts from Fisk University, summa sum laude, a Master of Art in Teaching, MAT from Belmont University, holds a license endorsement to teach dual language learners from Lipscomb University and is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She is a National Board Certified teacher in Literacy-Reading and Language Arts. Tameka regularly engages with community stakeholders on behalf of students. She believes in the power of collective efficacy, culture, and eliminating deficit mindsets regarding underserved students through strong accountability systems and effective leadership.



TOVASHA MYREE

CLARKSVILLE-MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOLS

Hello, my name is Tovasha Myree and I am currently the Student Support Coordinator at Byrns Darden Elementary School. I have been in education for a total of 11 years. I have taught all grade levels, as well as inclusion due to my background in working with children who have disabilities. I have a Bachelors Degree in Health Care Management from Austin Peay State University and a Masters in Elementary Education from Trevecca Nazarene University. I am looking forward to working with Minority Students in order to prepare them to be successful in Education.

MEET THE READY TO LEAD FELLOWS!



DAVEN OGLESBY

METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Daven Oglesby is a transplant to Nashville from Winston-Salem, NC. He found his niche within education as a substitute teacher in MNPS elementary schools in 2015. This led to a position as a paraprofessional in 2017. He then enrolled in Lipscomb University's inaugural EA Teaching Fellowship which led to his obtaining his M.Ed in Special Education in 2019. He was then accepted into Tennessee State University's Aspiring Assistant Principal Project in 2020 which he will complete in Spring 2022 to gain his M.Ed in Educational Leadership. He credits his success to his loving and supportive family.



DARLENE PERRY

METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Darlene Perry knows that building relationships with students increases confidence, trust, and learning. A native Nashvillian and in her 10th year teaching, she is a 5th grade EL Teacher at Cole Elementary School. Darlene was the 2018 Cole Elementary School Teacher of the Year. She received her Bachelor of Social Work degree from Tennessee State University and Master of Education degree from Grand Canyon University. Darlene aspires to advance her career in education by moving into an administration role. In her free time, she loves spending time with her family, reading, and talking to people.

MEET THE READY TO LEAD FELLOWS!



EVELIN SALGADO

METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

My name is Evelin Salgado and I'm completing my sixth year of teaching. I was born in Mexico, but grew up in Nashville. I love to hike and to spend time with my family. I am so excited to be a part of this program!



LETICIA SKAE-JACKSON

WILLIAMSON COUNTY SCHOOLS

Leticia Skae-Jackson has been an educator for 16 years. She is passionate about advocacy work in sociocultural curriculums, teacher retention, and education equity. Her passion stems from her own struggles experienced growing up as an immigrant in the United States learning English as a second language. Ironically, she is a successful ELA teacher with accolades such as Level 5 scores for multiple years, Blue Ribbon Teacher, Middle School Teacher of the Year at MLK Magnet School, and runner-up for middle school teacher of the year for a previous district, MNPS. Leticia has participated in many educational fellowships such as, SCORE, Hope Street Group and most recently TN Educators of Color Alliance. She has a M.Ed from Vanderbilt University, and she is currently finishing her PhD in Literacy Studies at MTSU. When she is not enthralled in educational matters, Leticia simply likes reading books, cooking and being a wife and mom.

MEET THE READY TO LEAD FELLOWS!



DR. MEGAN SMART

METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

My name is Dr. Meagan Smart. I have served as an educator within Metro Nashville Public Schools for nearly a decade. I attended Howard, Fisk, TSU, and Lipscomb University. I have served in many roles within the district. I currently serve as a coordinator with Magnet Schools of America and Community Achieves. I am grateful to have worked with so many terrific students and colleagues.

