

TECA

TENNESSEE EDUCATORS *of* COLOR ALLIANCE



2023

ANNUAL REPORT

“The lack of diversity in Tennessee’s educator workforce is a detriment to all students, particularly students of color, who benefit academically and psychologically from having same-race teachers. With a state government that is committed to making the pathway to becoming a teacher free of cost, it is imperative that we attract and retain top talent from diverse backgrounds. The Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance (TECA) envisions a future where the diversity of Tennessee educators reflects the diversity of students across the state. Our mission is to provide high-quality programming and networking opportunities to support and retain educators of color across the state of Tennessee.

Below are some of the reasons why retaining teachers of color is so important based on data from the Tennessee Department of Education Teacher Retention Report :

The financial cost of replacing a teacher has been estimated to be as high as \$20,000 for urban districts, putting extra strain on districts with limited resources that must absorb the cost of teacher attrition. We know that educators of color have the highest turnover rate of all demographics.

Data suggest that leadership opportunities help to retain educators once they hit the five-year mark. We know that educators of color are not equitably represented in school leadership.

Highly-effective black teachers are retained at lower rates than their white counterparts. We know how important it is for educators of color to remain engaged in this work.

Our organization, TECA, has experienced significant growth this year thanks to our partners, funders, and educators in our network. We have doubled our team, scaled our existing programming across the state, and launched new partnerships and a new program called the Advocacy Academy. It’s important for educators of color to be advocates in the communities they serve, resisting harmful policies and legislation that make it hard to teach and serve all students well. We believe that the people closest to the problem should be at the forefront of developing solutions, and we’re committed to listening and learning from those who have lived experience and institutional knowledge.

In the following pages, you will find an overview of our programming and impact over the last year. Your support allows us to continue to serve educators of color across the state so that they may grow and thrive in this profession. We are grateful to continue to do this heart work.

With gratitude and appreciation, 
DR. DIARESE GEORGE
 FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SUPPORTERS

- NewSchools Venture Fund
- Maddox Fund
- Education Trust in Tennessee
- Knox Ed Fund
- Hamilton Co Schools
- Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
- Scarlett Family Foundation
- The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee
- Walton Family Foundation

PARTNERS

- Education Trust in Tennessee
- Hamilton County Schools
- Man Up Teacher Residency
- Trevecca Nazarene University School of Education
- Tennessee State University School of Education
- Middle Tennessee State University School of Education & Center for Fairness, Justice, and Equity
- Lipscomb University Pionero Scholars Program
- Austin Peay State University School of Education
- Nashville Teacher Residency
- University of Tennessee Martin (Call Me MiSTER Program)
- University of Tennessee Knoxville - School of Education

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

The Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance is filling a gap in the education space across the state of Tennessee by building an interconnected network of educators of color that feel supported, heard, and valued. TECA takes a forward-thinking and solutions-oriented approach that is rooted in practice and advocacy. Our organization addresses challenges of retention by providing professional development and celebrating diversity in the teacher workforce. We are in the business of teachers.

MISSION

To provide high-quality programming and networking opportunities to support and retain educators of color across the state of Tennessee.

VISION

We envision a future where the diversity of Tennessee educators reflects the diversity of students across the state.

2023 REVENUE & EXPENSES



DR. DIARESE GEORGE
 FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



RENÉ DILLARD
 DIRECTOR OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



CHRISTIANE BUGGS
 DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS



JULIO SALAZAR
 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING AND PARTNERSHIPS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| Derrick Williams
Metro-Nashville Public School | Lemuel Holifield
Nashville Teacher Residency | Jason Terrell
Walton Family Foundation |
| Sylvia Flowers
Independent Consultant | Tameka H. Marshall
Metro-Nashville Public Schools | Cardell Orrin
Stand for Children |
| Diana Anosike
RePublic Schools | Dr. Mona Ivey-Soto
Belmont University | Dr. James Thompson
Austin Peay State University |
| Dr. Kevin Haggard
Amazon | Dr. Janine Al-Aseer
UT Knoxville | |

SEPTEMBER 2016

TECA was founded and launched as an advocacy project for the SCORE Fellowship by Dr. Diarese George.

DECEMBER 2017

Approved as 501c3 by the IRS.

OCTOBER 2018

Released a policy report, *Sharing our Stories*, focusing on the challenges and successes of educators of color.

APRIL 2020

Dr. Diarese George became TECA's first full-time paid employee as the founding executive director.

JULY 2020

Launched our flagship Fellowship program as a pilot in Middle Tennessee.

FEBRUARY 2021

Statewide Educator Diversity Policy unanimously adopted by the State Board of Education, requiring recruitment and retention goals to be set for educators of color.

JULY 2021

Hired René Dillard as our second full-time employee (Director of Leadership Development) and expanded our Fellowship model across the state.

MAY 2022

Awarded a multi-year grant from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative totaling \$500,000 to expand our work and build capacity.

MARCH 2023

Held the first Day on the Hill for educators in our network at the Tennessee State Capitol.

JULY 2022

Hired two new employees (Director of Strategic Partnerships and Associate Director of Programming and Partnerships) to build our capacity.

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021

2022

2023

FEBRUARY 2018

First annual educators of color leadership conference, DiversifiED, at Tennessee State University.

OCTOBER 2019

Received first large grant award from NewSchools Venture Fund.

AUGUST 2020

Partnered with EdTrust in Tennessee to establish the Educator Diversity Advocacy Council to train a select group of educators of color on the specifics of the proposed Educator Diversity Policy. Onboarded participants to how to host a meeting with their governor-appointed State Board of Education member.

SEPTEMBER 2020

Collaborated with the Tennessee Department of Education and others to draft language for the Statewide Educator Diversity Policy.

MARCH 2021

Awarded a multi-year grant from NewSchools Venture Funds to expand our programming and capacity

FEBRUARY 2022

Launched the Ascension Project, a program to support teacher candidates of color in colleges and universities with community-building, coaching, and career-readiness skills.

AUGUST 2021

Established district partnerships with two of the largest districts in the state to support compliance with the new Educator Diversity Policy.

JANUARY 2023

Launched the Advocacy Academy, an education policy boot camp for community advocates.

SEPTEMBER 2022

Released policy report focused on highlighting the challenges that teacher candidates of color experience at traditional educator preparation programs.



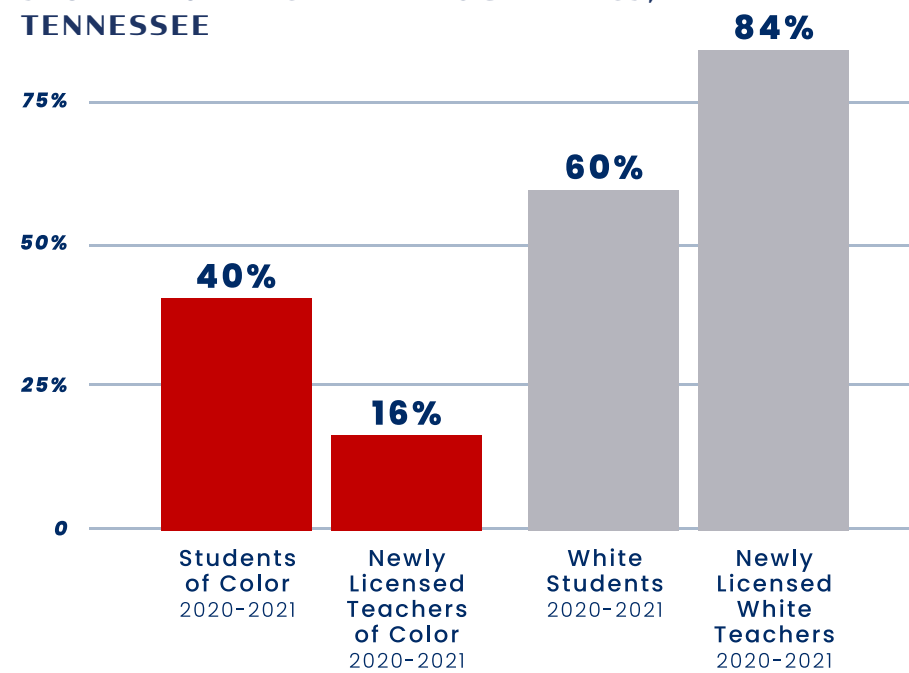
TENNESSEE EDUCATORS of COLOR ALLIANCE

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

Most recent data on the state of Tennessee reports that forty percent of our over one million students identify as people of color, compared to only sixteen percent of teachers (image below). Empirically, the research clearly outlines the value of a diverse teacher population, particularly when not just students of color, but all students, have teachers of color in their classrooms. TECA was launched to address the absence of teachers of color by recruiting prospective teachers through our Ascension Project, supporting, developing, and connecting in-service educators through our Fellowships, and empowering educators through the Advocacy Academy.

Our members benefit from TECA programs that connect them with fellow educators of color through a professional network, offer mentorship with community leaders and other fellowship graduates, and a variety of other professional development opportunities directly tied to equity practices, all while offering direct support and a safe space for these educators to bring their authentic selves and concerns. TECA exists to create a more equitable and representative educator workforce in the state of Tennessee, to support the existing educators of color in our schools, and train highly skilled teacher advocates and instructional professionals.

STUDENT & TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS, TENNESSEE



**The Tennessee Alliance for Equity in Education, a statewide coalition of more than 75 organizations committed to educational justice, including the Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance and The Education Trust in Tennessee, produced REPRESENTED: Increasing Teacher Diversity in Tennessee's Education Preparation Providers, a report that outlines why TECA exists in this space and the data behind educator of color discrepancies in Tennessee.*

WHY DO EDUCATORS OF COLOR SEEK MIGHTY NETWORKS?

- Collaboration, networking, community.
- I want to be able to support all students and to help them succeed.
- I hope to gain more inspiration from other colleagues of color in the education profession.
- My hope is to learn additional best practices as well as share the experiences and knowledge I have to close the achievement gap for students of color across Tennessee.

DiversifiED

The DiversifiED: Educators of Color Leadership Conference emerged due to a lack of convenings that celebrated and centered the importance of a diverse educator workforce in Tennessee. Our inaugural DiversifiED was attended by over 200 public school educators, pre-service educators, and education advocates. DiversifiED programming includes panel discussions, breakout sessions, keynote addresses, networking opportunities, and community building. In the past, featured guests have included James Ford, Roberto Rodriguez, David Johns, and Brittany Packnett-Cunningham. We look forward to our next DiversifiED in 2024.



We launched our Membership platform on Mighty Networks in Winter 2022. Since then, we've added over 500 education professionals from across the state to the network. Here, members can view unique Professional Development videos like Creating Culturally Inclusive Nature Curriculum, Financial Freedom for Educators of Color, and Serving Latinx Families. Members can also join content or geographic-specific cohorts — finding community in shared location, grade-span or subject. All of this is done on a user-friendly interface where members can comment, like, and share opportunities. Members can even chat directly with #TeamTECA.

CONNECTED

TECA Connected brings TECA to you. As we brainstormed ways to reestablish old relationships and build new ones, TECA Connected emerged as a way to build community and provide a safe, healing space for educators of color. These facilitated workshops go beyond the individualism of self care and support the collective journey towards reflection, self-advocacy, and growth.

We're grateful to Kia Jarmon of MEPR Agency and Give Back, Give Black for serving as our inaugural facilitator-in-residence for this program.

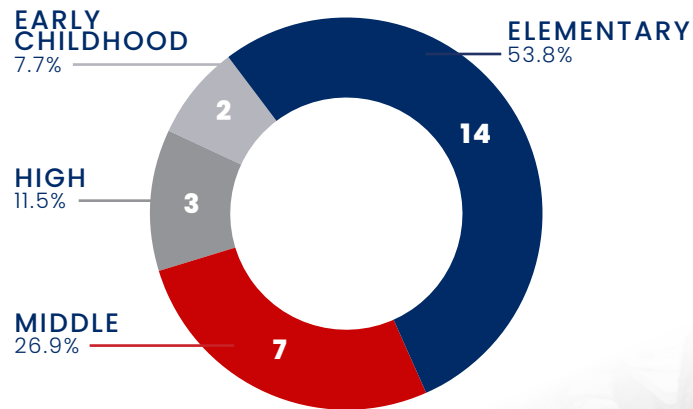




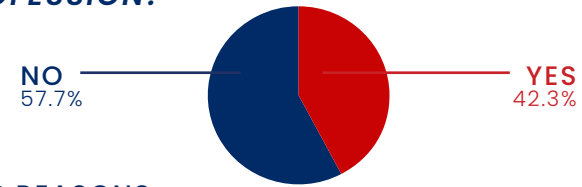
Since the Fall of 2020 The Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance Fellowship has invested in and supported over 60 educators of color across the state through our year-long Fellowship program. This includes classroom teachers, school administrators, counselors, and interventionists who join us for continual learning, networking opportunities, growth experiences, and community building with other teachers of color. We started small with a virtual cohort of 12 Fellows from across the state who committed to growing with us during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those Fellows worked on projects, met with panels of leaders across the state, and forged long-lasting relationships in a virtual environment.

At the end of year three, we have maintained our statewide Fellowship and created a unique cohort for Knox County. We are thankful for the policymakers, education leaders, content specialists, and facilitators who make this experience possible.

GRADE SPANS REPRESENTED 2022-2023 COHORT DATA



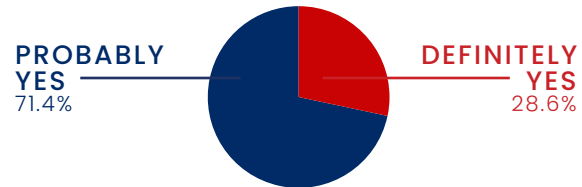
BEFORE THE FELLOWSHIP, WERE YOU CONSIDERING LEAVING THE TEACHING PROFESSION?



TOP REASONS

- Mental Health
- Better Wages
- Better Hours
- Pursuing Alternative Field of Passion

DO YOU FEEL YOUR EXPERIENCE IN THE FELLOWSHIP HAS IMPACTED YOUR DECISION TO REMAIN TEACHING?



92% OF THE 2022-2023 FELLOWSHIP COHORT WOULD RECOMMEND THE PROGRAM TO A FRIEND OR COLLEAGUE.

ALUMNI DATA

We also survey our Alumni annually. Out of twenty-seven respondents, 16 report they are either unlikely or neither likely to leave the profession within the next 5 years.

REASONS OTHERS REPORT CONSIDERING LEAVING THE PROFESSION:

- TO PURSUE AN ALTERNATIVE FIELD
- MENTAL HEALTH
- BETTER WAGES
- BETTER HOURS

50% of Alumni surveyed received some sort of promotion after completing the Fellowship, including but not limited to:

- OBTAINED ADMINISTRATIVE LICENSURE
- PROMOTED TO ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
- ASKED TO CONSULT WITH DISTRICT LEADERSHIP
- PROMOTED TO DEAN OF INSTRUCTION
- SELECTED FOR A REVIEW COMMITTEE

WHAT ARE ALUMNI SAYING?

"Since learning through this fellowship, I am so much more aware of educational changes and movements within the stay and how I fit into those changes. I feel more confident among conversations that I can partake in."

"TECA helped me to feel empowered and advocate for a better future in education. TECA also provided a safe space to express thoughts and feelings."

"This fellowship has allowed me to see myself as more than an educator. I now understand that decisions made about education come from state, local, and national government agents, and I want to participate there."





The TECA Ascension Project was born out of an identified -need to increase recruiting efforts and support for educators of color in Tennessee and to supplement Education Preparation Program curriculums. Ascenders participate in a school-year cohort formed from various partner universities across Tennessee and

WHAT ARE ALUMNI SAYING?

This program was amazing. The mentors were top-tier. They were so patient and very informative to us and I always appreciate it when someone takes time out of their life to help me.

It was an amazing experience that broadened my perspective and viewpoints on a lot of things happening in the education field, specifically for people of color.

Twenty-five Ascension Alumni from the Spring and Fall of 2022 reported overwhelmingly positive experiences in pacing, curriculum, and overall experience in the Ascension Project. Alumni data covering three cohorts of the Ascension Project also showed an overall increase in personal growth across the three program priorities: Career preparation skills, pedagogical professional development, and equity work.



engage in monthly informative sessions that cover career preparation skills, pedagogical professional development, and equity work toward self-healing and holistic classroom education. The Ascenders are also paired with in-service educator mentors throughout the leadership development program. TECA Staff, university education faculty members, and other expert guest speakers and panelists facilitate the program. Ascension Graduates remain part of the program and report that the program radically changed their education experience.

TWENTY-FIVE ALUMNI WERE SURVEYED ON THEIR SATISFACTION WITH PROGRAM COMPONENTS:



SPRING 2023 PARTICIPANTS WERE ASKED HOW COMFORTABLE THEY WERE WITH A LIST OF METRICS BEFORE AND AFTER THE ASCENSION PROJECT:

EXTREMELY COMFORTABLE WITH UNDERSTANDING HOW YOUR RACIAL IDENTITY IMPACTS YOUR EDUCATION EXPERIENCE AND YOUR STUDENTS



EXTREMELY COMFORTABLE WITH RESUME WRITING AND INTERVIEWING



SOMEWHAT AND EXTREMELY COMFORTABLE WITH LEVERAGING PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT



The TECA Advocacy Academy introduces education policy and advocacy best practices to TECA members interested in advocating for their students and school community. Designed by policy writers, thought partners, and advocates, this non-partisan opportunity connects education-focused community members with the experiences needed to influence policy locally and across Tennessee.

In its first year, twenty-three participants received an overview of local, city, and state education policy in



96% OF PARTICIPANTS RATED THIS EXPERIENCE 5/5 AND RELEVANT TO THEIR FUTURE ADVOCACY EFFORTS.

SOME OF THEIR KEY TAKEAWAYS WERE:

- ★ How to approach policymakers and state representatives.
- ★ Power in connecting with organizations who have a vested interest in the work that you are doing.
- ★ Advocacy can look like many different things; it's just everyday people who decided to be a part of the change in a tangible way.

I got the wonderful opportunity to be apart of the Advocacy Academy and I loved it. I got to go with TECA to the Day on the Hill and speak to state Senator Dawn White about preschool funding.

a collaborative and rigorous environment over five weeks. Each participant identified a policy to advocate for or against, then reached out to policymakers and elected officials (individually and in groups) to set meetings to discuss those policies. These newly trained advocates heard from & spoke with panelists that included education foundation leaders, state legislators, locally elected policymakers, and statewide organizers.

The culminating event for this program was our inaugural Day on the Hill, where Advocacy Academy participants and other TECA members engaged with policymakers and legislators about the current state of education and legislation on the docket for that session.



TENNESSEE EDUCATORS *of* COLOR ALLIANCE



CONTACT US

WWW.TNECA.ORG
INFO@TNECA.ORG