

# **TEACHFORAMERICA**

## Teach For America – Texas Program Overview & Evolution, as required by Texas Legislature, 84th Regular Session HB1, Article III, Rider 50

Contact: Robert Carreon, [robert.carreon@teachforamerica.org](mailto:robert.carreon@teachforamerica.org)

## Table of Contents

1. <a href="#"><u>Executive Summary</u></a>	page 3
Vision, Mission & Our Theory of Change	
Clarification of Information included in Legislative Budget Board, Strategic Fiscal Review, 84th Legislative Session	
Timeline of Activities	
Summary of Activities	
Conclusions	
2. <a href="#"><u>Teacher &amp; Education Professional Retention</u></a>	page 11
Articulation of Program Model	
Teach For America & Comparative Data	
3. <a href="#"><u>Efforts to Improve Retention: Past &amp; Present</u></a>	page 17
Past Efforts to Improve Retention & Challenges	
Current Efforts to Improve Retention	
Region-Specific Activities	
Lessons Learned	
4. <a href="#"><u>Teach For America's Finances</u></a>	page 33
Overview of Financial Model	
Program Expenses	
Non-Program Expenses	
5. <a href="#"><u>Conclusion</u></a>	page 38
Lessons Applicable to Other Teacher Preparation Organizations	
6. <a href="#"><u>Appendices</u></a>	page 40
A: America Institutes for Research External Evaluation: Retention (2016)	
B: Center for Research, Evaluation and Advancement of Teacher Education Report to Teach For America (2016)	
C: List of School Employers of Teach For America Alumni (2015-2016)	
D: Sources of Funds (2015-2016) & Expenditures (2015-2016)	
E: Charity Navigator Record & Research about Teach For America	

## 1. Executive Summary

### *Vision, Mission & Our Theory of Change*

Teach For America works in partnership with communities to expand educational opportunity for children facing the challenges of poverty. Founded in 1990, Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding college graduates and professionals to make an initial two-year commitment to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to end educational inequity. Today, 8,600 corps members are teaching in 52 urban and rural regions across the country while more than 42,000 alumni work across sectors to ensure that all children have access to an excellent education.

**Our mission is to enlist, develop, and mobilize as many as possible of our nation's most promising future leaders to grow and strengthen the movement for educational equity and excellence.**

Our first regions in Texas, Houston and the Rio Grande Valley, were founded in 1991; in 2009 we launched in Dallas and expanded into Fort Worth in 2010. Additionally, in 2010 we also launched in San Antonio. Austin, while not a formal Teach For America region, has a network of over 500 alumni of our organization. In total, the Teach For America network in Texas is approaching 4,000 members, with over 2,100 classroom teachers impacting nearly 140,000 high needs students, and another 700 K-12 employees (counselors, campus leaders and district administrators) leading and supporting schools.

**What all children deserve:** Like educators, parents, and students across the system, we believe that every child deserves an excellent education—one that empowers and supports her to fulfill her potential and realize her greatest dreams. An excellent education ensures that a child has the opportunity to succeed in college and in life, though the decision to attend college is ultimately a personal choice. Education fulfills these promises when students gain strong academic skills and knowledge, grow personally, develop social, political and cultural consciousness, and gain access to opportunities in ways that are aligned with their own strengths, interests, and values.

**The challenge we're collectively working to address:** Today, despite the hard work of countless talented teachers, committed families, and brilliant children, our education system as a whole is not set up to ensure that low-income students and students of color are able to transcend the systemic challenges of poverty and racism.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has recently completed its long term strategic plan, which notes: "By 2030, Texas will need approximately 60 percent of its 25- to 34- year-old workforce to hold a postsecondary credential. . . However, the state's 25-34 year olds are increasingly Hispanic, and the inclusion of underrepresented student populations, such as Hispanics and African Americans, in higher education will be critical to this plan's success."<sup>1</sup> Currently, the state's highest need populations

---

<sup>1</sup> Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 60x30 Strategic Plan  
<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/6584.PDF?CFID=26748433&CFTOKEN=34632987>, (p.i)

are the furthest away from this goal, and lag behind the state average of 20% degree/certificate completion:

- White: 29%
- African American: 13%
- Hispanic: 13%
- Economically Disadvantaged: 10%

If the state is to reach these ambitious and deeply meaningful goals, we need as much top human capital working in education as possible.

**Our view of what it will take to address this challenge:** In the face of this reality, we believe two critical things are needed:

**First**, children need exceptional teachers, high-quality schools, and a broader set of supports that give them access to the educational opportunities they deserve today.

**Second**, education systems need massive, lasting change so that equitable educational opportunities are consistently offered to every student. This will require change in our education systems, efforts to address poverty and racism, new approaches to how social services are provided, and shifts in our nation’s policies and priorities

Changing this reality depends on the collective action of many people—those directly facing these injustices, those who have overcome challenges and are now poised to make an impact, those who are committed to uplifting high-risk communities, and those with power and privilege. It takes both existing leaders within education and new leaders. It takes action from people in every community and in every field fighting together for educational equity and working to attack poverty and racism from all angles. It also depends on extraordinary acts of individual leadership—to break down barriers, develop new solutions, and inspire collective action. In short, it takes a movement.

**Our unique role:** There are many important efforts happening to address the injustices facing America’s children growing up in poverty, and we strive to be a key partner among many. Teach For America aims to contribute additional leaders to the growing movement to end educational inequity. Our commitment starts with developing teacher leaders who offer their students the opportunity to attain an excellent education and continues through the work our alumni pursue across education and related fields. We drive change through leadership, ultimately with and for the sake of our students, both inside and outside the classroom. We believe that this is a unique and important role to play and our efforts, alongside many others, will enable us to reach our vision of educational excellence and equity in our lifetime.

### *Clarification of Information included in Legislative Budget Board, Strategic Fiscal Review, 84<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session*

As part of the 84<sup>th</sup> Legislature’s Strategic Fiscal Review, the Legislative Budget Board produced a review of Teach For America in Texas.

The Legislative Budget Board’s independent analysis of budget recommendations came to a conclusion similar to that of existing research on the effectiveness of Teach For America corps members. In classrooms across our four regions in Texas, Teach For America corps members provide an impact on Texas students that is as good as or better than non-Teach For America teachers<sup>2</sup>. These findings are even more impressive given that Teach For America places corps members in higher needs and underserved schools in Texas.

**Effectiveness:** The LBB focused on research which tells an incomplete story about Teach For America’s impact in Texas.

**Figure 1: Teach For America’s Impact in Texas**

Strategic Fiscal Review	Additional Evidence
<p>The SFR cites a review of evidence published in 2010, incorrectly noting that relatively few TFA teachers earn their certification. In fact, nearly 90% of our teachers complete two years of teaching, earning their certification.</p>	<p>The LBB report specifically excludes an analysis from Edvance Research, Inc., who published an independent study in 2013<sup>3</sup>, finding that Teach For America teachers have a positive impact on student learning in Texas. Using TAKS end of year exam data, the study reviewed student learning gains in elementary and middle school math and reading. The results suggest that the students of Teach For America teachers made learning increases in <b>every grade/subject combination analyzed.</b></p>
<p>Another study the LBB cites is from 2010, again noting that certified teachers produce stronger results.</p>	<p>An evaluation of Classroom Effectiveness Indices (CEI) in Dallas ISD showed that in math and science, every cohort of TFA teachers (2009 – 2015) had, in its second year, <b>an average CEI above 50 (50 is the district average for ALL teachers), and most cohorts held this distinction in their first year.</b> The CEI findings are especially noteworthy because the analysis does not account for the fact that corps members tend to work in Dallas ISD’s hardest to staff and highest needs schools.</p>

**Longevity:** One thing the LBB report does not take into account is the impact of our alumni who continue to make an impact in the classroom or are serving in administrative positions.

**Figure 2: Alumni Teaching Scale in Texas**

Strategic Fiscal Review	Additional Evidence
<p>The LBB reports that over 60% of TFA teachers remain in the classroom as teachers beyond their</p>	<p>In 2015-2016, over 3,000 alumni of Teach For America continue to call Texas home; of these,</p>

<sup>2</sup> Edvance Research, 2013. <http://edvanceresearch.com/evaluation-of-teach-for-america-in-texas-schools/>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

two year minimum commitment, citing a national 2011 study.	<b>62% continue their efforts in the field of education, with 1,200 as classroom teachers, and another 700 in key leadership positions:</b> school system leaders, principals, campus administrators and counselors and district officers.
--	--

### *Timeline of Activities*

Upon the close of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature, our teams in Texas began developing work plans to meet the expectations of our appropriation. Figure 3 highlights the timeline of activities described in this report:

**Figure 3: Timeline of Activities**

Activity	Timeframe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yearly survey of TFA alumni in Texas, with attention to current role/employer to establish baseline of public school employee scale among TFA alumni</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August 2015</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yearly (minimum) stakeholder meetings with superintendents, heads of human resources/human capital in all partner districts (establishing expectations for partnership)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summer/Fall 2015</li> <li>Ongoing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Back to school meetings with principals at partner campuses (setting shared expectations, with focus on key retention strategies)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fall 2015</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing stakeholder meetings with principals at partner campuses (progress updates regarding individual teachers on campus)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing, as necessary</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordination with alternative certification providers to streamline program services between alternative certification and TFA where appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summer/Fall 2015</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open door policy for TFA sponsored professional development events for partner district personnel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing, depending on regional PD schedules</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched teacher support cohorts, fellowships and programs in each TFA region in Texas (not all cohorts available in all regions):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transformational Teaching</li> <li>Culturally Responsive Teaching</li> <li>National Board Certification</li> <li>Leadership Fellowship (i.e. pursuing school leadership opportunities)</li> <li>Career Coaching (i.e. supports to make a career of teaching)</li> <li>Excellent School Visits</li> <li>Aspiring Leaders Program (in partnership with The Teaching Trust)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spring/Summer/Fall 2015</li> <li>Ongoing into Spring 2016</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Partnerships with master’s in education programs for accelerated study</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Redesigned staff roles and responsibilities in various ways to focus on supporting teacher retention, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Extending TFA professional development coaching and support that typically ends at the end of year 2 of teaching to year 3 + teachers who opt in (San Antonio, RGV, Dallas and Houston)</li> <li>○ Dedicated staff time to researching questions about factors impacting decisions to leave teaching, or leave the field of education (San Antonio)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Summer 2015 redesign, for 2015-2016 school year</li> <li>● Summer 2016 redesign, for 2016-2017 school year</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Finalizing contract with external evaluator who will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review of TFA approaches to retention in education</li> <li>○ Analyses of trends among TFA teachers who move to non-teaching positions, or move schools in Texas</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● (Contract) April 2016, (Evaluation) September, 2016</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Articulating our overall cost model for preparing new teachers, including funding sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spring/Summer 2016</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Developing comparisons between TFA retention rates and retention rates for other new teachers in low-income communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spring/Summer 2016</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Articulating any barriers to improving retention of TFA alumni</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spring/Summer 2016</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Synthesizing learnings from our efforts that could be applicable to all teacher preparation programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Summer 2016</li> </ul>

*Summary of Activities*

The activities we pursued to meet the expectations of our appropriation can generally be divided into those that are common across our four Texas regions, and those that were pursued specifically in a single Texas region. The specific initiatives that each regional operation pursued are described in further detail below, in the “Region-Specific Activities” portion of Section 3: Efforts to Improve Retention: Past & Present.

**Figure 4: Summary of Activities**

Common Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ongoing Meetings with Superintendents/Human Resource Directors in Partner Districts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ongoing meetings with Campus Principals/Administrators</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coordination with Alternative Certification Providers/Educator Preparation Programs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Open Door Policy for Teach For America Professional</li> </ul>

Development
Region-Specific Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dallas – Fort Worth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Alumni Teacher Engagement Campaign</li> <li>○ Partnership with Teaching Trust</li> <li>○ Director, Alumni Teacher Support (FTE)</li> <li>○ Variety of Professional Development Initiatives</li> <li>○ Alumni Appreciation Initiative</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Houston <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Partnership Meetings</li> <li>○ Alumni Teaching Professional Development &amp; Job Fair</li> <li>○ Alumni Aspiring School Leaders Fellowship</li> <li>○ Leadership Opportunities, Awards &amp; Service Acknowledgements</li> <li>○ Partnership with Leadership for Educational Equity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rio Grande Valley <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Transformational Teaching Cohort</li> <li>○ Aspiring School Leaders Fellowship</li> <li>○ Targeted Activities for Second Year Teachers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• San Antonio <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Partnership Meetings</li> <li>○ Fellowships</li> <li>○ Leadership Awards &amp; Funding Resources</li> <li>○ Competency &amp; Values Development</li> <li>○ Educator Appreciation Month</li> <li>○ Director, of Alumni Impact (FTE)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Conclusions

As we have worked to develop our approach to supporting and encouraging our teachers to remain in the classroom and to remain educators in Texas, we have found some key, overarching lessons that will inform our work moving forward.

1. We have expended significant energy and resources towards this initiative in the past 18 months, from dedication of staff time, to the creation of new positions, to the funding of specific professional development and fellowship programs.
2. We observed a variety of programs and initiatives in each of our four Teach For America regions, and given this variety, we were able to learn lessons across our state organization as a product of this regional variation, while still keeping key elements of our recruitment, selection, training and support consistent across the State of Texas.
3. Preliminary evidence from the 2014 Teach For America cohort, who finished their second year of teaching in May 2016, indicates that at least 56% will remain a teacher or K-12 employee in Texas in 2016 – 2017.

- a. In other words, while the State of Texas supported 20% of the total costs of recruiting, training and supporting the 550 Teach For America teachers in our 2014 cohort over the past two years, the 310 individuals who will remain educators in Texas, 306 of whom will remain classroom teachers, will no longer represent an ongoing cost to the State of Texas.
4. The most recent comparative data for three year retention rates of alternatively certified teachers in Texas is for the 2012 cohort. As of May 2016, 74% of all alternatively certified teachers who began teaching in 2012-2013 were retained into year 3<sup>4</sup>.
5. When we compare our retention rates in our 2014 cohort to the retention rates of teachers in the districts that Teach For America partners with, we see closer levels of retention. Data from the Center for Research, Evaluation and Advancement of Teacher Education at the University of Houston indicates that in Teach For America partner districts, 61% of teachers new to the districts in 2010-2011 were retained into a third year<sup>5</sup>.
6. An analysis of teacher retention by American Institutes of Research<sup>6</sup> found that Teach For America teachers:
  - a. Are increasingly diverse (p. 6);
  - b. Serve in harder to fill positions than their peers (p. 4);
  - c. Remain teachers in their initial district at higher rates than their peers (p. 7);
  - d. Remain teachers through two years at higher rates than their peers (p. 7);
  - e. Remain teachers in Texas public schools at increasing rates (p. 13);
  - f. When they move districts, they move to districts with higher rates of economically disadvantaged students, higher rates of non-white students and higher rates of English language learners than their peers (p. 18);
  - g. Were considerably more likely to move into educational administration roles over time (p. 20).
7. This project and plan contributes to a growing body of research proves our teachers have a positive impact on student achievement.
  - a. In 2016, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)<sup>7</sup> published a review of the research on Teach For America, identifying seven rigorous studies of TFA corps members that were previously conducted and met their bar of research standards. Collectively, the studies looked at more than 65,000 students in grades pre-K-12 in a variety of states across the country, and at various stages of Teach For America's scale-up. The review concluded that Teach For America first and second year teachers have positive effects on student outcomes, especially in mathematics and science.
  - b. The most recent Texas specific impact evaluation (Edvance 2012)<sup>8</sup> shows positive effects on student achievement for students in a TFA classroom (with the effect of up to 1.3 months of additional instruction in elementary reading & up to 6 months additional

<sup>4</sup> Teacher Retention 2011-2015, Texas Education Agency: <http://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539608299>.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Center for Research, Evaluation and Advancement of Teacher Education, Houston University, Report to Teach For America, July 21, 2016. See Appendix B.

<sup>6</sup> <http://tinyurl.com/jk9hz35>

<sup>7</sup> <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/EvidenceSnapshot/663>

<sup>8</sup> <http://tinyurl.com/h4nuxls>

instruction in middle school math. This study found that students of TFA corps members had larger gains in middle school math than students of non-TFA novices in schools without any TFA corps members. A similar finding held for TFA alumni relative to non-TFA veterans for math and reading in middle school. On the whole, the evidence suggests TFA teachers provide a net boost to student achievement in Texas.

- c. Dallas ISD published a study of the impact of TFA teachers in the district from 2009-2010 through 2014-2015<sup>9</sup>. The review found:
  - i. Since 2009 TFA corps members are on average more effective in Math, Science, and Language Arts than other early career teachers (Figure X);
  - ii. On average TFA corps members earn a higher Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI) rating by their second year of teaching than comparison, non-TFA second year teachers. (Figure XII, XIII); and,
  - iii. TEI ratings for TFA alumni teachers are on average stronger than other Dallas ISD teachers with more than two years of teaching experience.
- d. Additionally, research shows:
  - i. those who have gone through the Teach For America program are more likely to work in education compared to those who applied and were close to being admitted but did not complete the Teach For America program. Additionally, Teach For America alumni were also found to be more racially tolerant and more optimistic about life prospects of low-income children (Dobie & Fryer, 2011)<sup>10</sup>.
  - ii. 81% of Texas principals that hire Teach For America teachers report “I am satisfied with the Teach For America teachers at my school.”<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.dallasisd.org/cms/lib/TX01001475/Centricity/domain/98/evaluation/14-15/finalrpts/EA15-536-2%20Teach%20For%20America.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.degruyter.com/view/i/bejeap.2015.15.issue-3/bejeap-2014-0187/bejeap-2014-0187.xml>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1116.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1116.html)

## 2. Teacher & Education Professional Retention

### *Articulation of Program Model*

Teach For America's program model has been built over twenty-five years, with much of our early work and innovation occurring in Texas schools and communities. Our Houston and Rio Grande Valley regions have been in operation since 1991 – the second year of Teach For America's existence – and for many years in the 1990s all of the new Teach For America teachers completed their summer training requirements in Houston.

Our program model is based on key activities, which are rooted in our overall mission: **enlist, develop, and mobilize as many as possible of our nation's most promising future leaders to grow and strengthen the movement for educational equity and excellence.**

There are three main phases to our program operation:

1. We recruit diverse recent college graduates and professionals with demonstrated leadership ability to teach for a minimum of two years in low-income public schools.
2. We provide intensive training and support so they can have an immediate positive impact on students and deepen their own understanding of what it takes to dramatically increase student achievement.
3. We foster their leadership as alumni who work in education and other professional sectors.

Our efforts to **recruit and select talented committed leaders** takes into account educational inequity is a massive problem, and we need to dramatically increase the number of people working to solve it. Each year, thousands of diverse individuals apply to Teach For America.

Our approach to selecting corps members is based on our commitment to student success. Over the past 25 years, we have continuously studied our teachers to identify the characteristics of those who are most successful in the classroom. Based on this research, we look for the following characteristics in applicants:

- A deep belief in the potential of all kids and a commitment to do whatever it takes to expand opportunities for students, often informed by experience in low-income communities and an understanding of the systemic challenges of poverty and racism
- Demonstrated leadership ability across a variety of settings
- Strong achievement in academic, professional, extracurricular, and/or volunteer settings
- Perseverance in the face of challenges, ability to adapt to changing environments, and a strong desire to do whatever it takes to improve and develop
- Long-term commitment to reaching goals in various settings
- Excellent critical thinking skills, including the ability to accurately link cause and effect and to generate relevant solutions to problems
- Excellent organizational ability, including planning well and managing responsibilities effectively

- Excellent interpersonal skills to motivate others
- Respect for individuals' diverse experiences and the ability to work effectively with people from a variety of backgrounds

We believe corps members from all backgrounds have the ability to impact their students. At the same time, we place special focus on attracting corps members who can serve as powerful role models because they share the racial or socioeconomic background of the students they will teach, 80 percent of whom are African American or Latino. Additionally, due to the national shortage of qualified math and science teachers, we concentrate on recruiting individuals with a background in and knowledge of these subjects. In Texas, 63% of our 2015 cohort self-identified as a person of color, and 47% were Pell Grant recipients<sup>12</sup>.

Focusing more specifically on our **training and support operations**, we recognize that to end educational inequity, our teachers must provide high-quality instruction and enable students' access to expanded opportunities. We dedicate ourselves to creating and continuously improving tools and resources to help our corps members become successful teachers and community leaders.

We build our **training and support program** on a framework called Teaching As Leadership, which consists of six principles and corresponding actions:

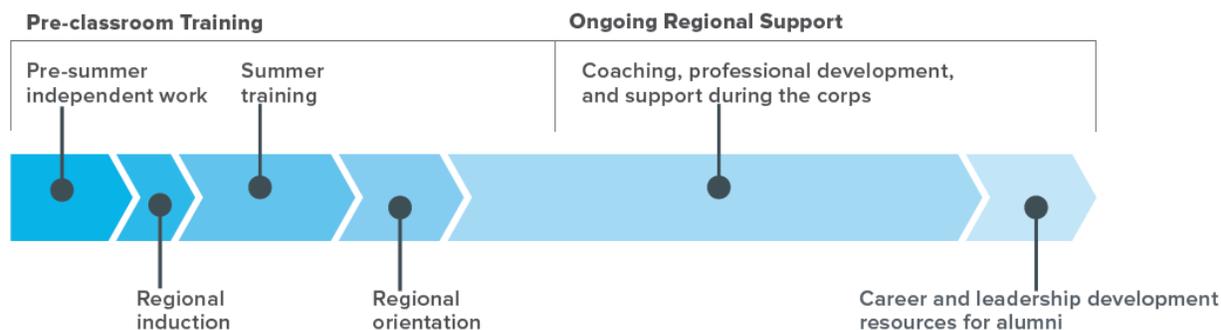
1. Set big goals for student achievement: Successful teachers give students high expectations so they are motivated to overcome obstacles on the path to success.
2. Invest students and families in these goals: Successful teachers break the cycle of low expectations faced by many students in low income communities by showing them that through hard work, they can and will achieve.
3. Plan purposefully to achieve students' goals: Successful teachers plan backward from their goals in order to efficiently reach them.
4. Execute effectively and adjust when needed: Successful teachers consistently monitor student progress and adjust course in light of changing realities.
5. Improve to accelerate student learning: Successful teachers are their own toughest critics and search constantly for ways to improve their skills.
6. Work continuously to overcome challenges: Successful teachers refuse to allow inevitable challenges to become roadblocks and work hard to overcome them so that their students can succeed.

Our **training and support program** is spread over the course of at least three years, where pre-summer independent work through regional orientation all occur before the first day of school of the first year of teaching.

---

<sup>12</sup> Source: Teach For America Admissions Data

**Figure 5: Training and Support Model**



Our **pre-classroom training** model includes:

1. **Independent work:** Accepted applicants complete 40–45 hours of training on their own, including self-reflection exercises and studying resources to build their understanding of the causes of educational inequity and the leadership required to solve it.
2. **Regional induction:** Corps members come together in their placement regions to get to know their new home and meet with community leaders, students, and parents.
3. **Summer training institute:** Teachers spend five weeks at a rigorous, resident teacher-preparation program to further develop the skills and mindsets that will enable them to teach successfully. They learn how to lead a classroom, partner with communities, set big goals, take feedback, design lesson plans, and more. They put their lessons into practice teaching summer school.
4. **Regional orientation:** Teachers return to their placement regions, where they focus on year and unit planning for their particular grades, subjects, schools, and districts. They also spend this time building relationships with one another and the community.

All corps members receive **year-round professional development** that builds upon their pre-classroom training. Specific structures vary by placement region, but generally include:

1. Observations and one-on-one coaching from an instructional and leadership coach
2. Access to resources and advice, including supports from our national organization
3. Content- or grade-specific learning teams led by experienced teachers
4. Certification and/or master’s degree programs that offer additional skill-building and support

Beyond the initial two years of a corps members experience with Teach For America, we continue to **foster the leadership of our alumni**. Filling high-need classrooms with passionate, high-achieving individuals who will do whatever it takes to help their students succeed is a critical element of our approach—but it’s not enough. We need people in every sector who are passionate about solving educational inequity. In the classroom, our teachers witness the injustices their students face and their ability to overcome them. They grow determined to make a difference and join our alumni leadership force—more than 37,000 strong—committed to creating change.

The individuals in our network support each other, personally and professionally, in their ongoing endeavors to expand educational opportunity. We help strengthen this community by providing forums for emotional, social, and intellectual engagement.

We also provide targeted career and leadership support through initiatives in social entrepreneurship and teacher, school, school system, and school board leadership (which is supported by Leadership for Educational Equity<sup>13</sup>, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering Teach For America corps members and alumni to grow as leaders in their communities and help build the movement for educational equity.)

### *Teach For America & Comparative Data*

Following the completion of our grant agreement with the Texas Education Agency in 2015, we began the process of contracting with an external firm to conduct an evaluation of the employment patterns of Teach For America teachers in Texas through the years 2010 – 2014 (as these years represented a five year period that fell within the historical period of our receipt of state funds via legislative appropriation). We developed an agreement with American Institutes of Research, and the questions guiding the research are included in Appendix A.

At the same time, we also entered into an agreement with the Center for Research, Evaluation and Advancement of Teacher Education based at the University of Houston to provide information regarding teacher retention rates in the school districts that Teach For America partners with in Texas. CREATE has reviewed teacher retention rates for all teachers new to each district Teach For America partners with in Texas for the years 2010 – 2015.

**Figure 6: Comparative Retention Data in School District Partners of Teach For America**

Cohort	2 Year Retention Rate	3 Year Retention Rate
2014 cohort Teach For America teachers in Texas <sup>14</sup>	85%	56%
2010-2011 new teachers in TFA partner districts <sup>15</sup>	81%	61%

Additionally, we have captured information for our 2014 cohort in Texas, with a specific focus on those who plan to remain teaching or employed by a K-12 public school in Texas in the 2016-2017 school year, as well as analyzed our alumni database for all alumni living in Texas, looking for those who remain classroom teachers and those who remain employed in K-12 public education.

**Figure 7: Teach For America 2014 Cohort Retention**

<sup>13</sup> <https://educationalequity.org/who-we-are>

<sup>14</sup> Source: Regional Tracking Tool

<sup>15</sup> Source: Center for Research, Evaluation and Advancement of Teacher Education, Houston University, Report to Teach For America, July 21, 2016. See Appendix B.

Measure	Result
2014 cohort Teach For America teachers in Texas who finished their two year teaching commitment (i.e. 2 year retention rate) <sup>16</sup>	466 teachers completed their two year commitment (85% of 550 who started teaching in 2014)
2014 cohort Teach For America teachers in Texas who will remain in K-12 education in Texas in 2016-2017 (i.e. 3 year retention rate) <sup>17</sup>	310 of these teachers will continue in K-12 education in Texas, of which 306 will be classroom teachers (56% of 550 who started teaching in 2014)

**Figure 7: Teach For America Alumni in Education**

Measure	Result
Number of Teach For America alumni who were classroom teachers in Texas in 2015-2016 <sup>18</sup>	~1,200 (ranging in experience from 3 years to 25 years)
Number of Teach For America alumni who were K-12 employees in Texas in 2015-2016 (excluding classroom teachers) <sup>19</sup>	~710 (including instructional coaches, counselors, deans/assistant principals, principals, district staff and superintendents)

A list of the distribution of these alumni across school employers in Texas can be found in Appendix C.

The evaluation by American Institutes of Research<sup>20</sup> found that Teach For America teachers:

1. Are increasingly diverse (p. 6);
2. Serve in harder to fill positions than their peers (p. 4);
3. Remain teachers in their initial district at higher rates than their peers (p. 7);
4. Remain teachers through two years at higher rates than their peers (p. 7);
5. Are remaining teachers in Texas public schools at increasing rates (p. 13);
6. When they move districts, they move to districts with higher rates of economically disadvantaged students, higher rates of non-white students and higher rates of English language learners than their peers (p. 18);
7. Were considerably more likely to move into educational administration roles over time (p. 20).

The AIR study is limited in that it:

1. Does not include any Teach For America teacher who began teaching in Texas from 1991 - 2009, or after 2013 - upwards of 675 educators, nearly 245 of which are teachers<sup>21</sup>. For example, Allison Ashley was recently named 2017 Texas Elementary Teacher of the Year; she started her

<sup>16</sup> Source: Regional tracking tool

<sup>17</sup> Source: Regional tracking tool

<sup>18</sup> Source: Teach For America alumni database

<sup>19</sup> Source: Teach For America alumni database

<sup>20</sup> <http://tinyurl.com/jk9hz35>

<sup>21</sup> Source: Teach For America alumni database

career teaching in the Rio Grande Valley in 2004 and has taught the last eight years in Austin ISD and is not considered in the AIR evaluation<sup>22</sup>.

2. Does not include any Texas teacher or K-12 employee who began teaching in another state and moved to Texas - upwards of 350 educators<sup>23</sup>
3. Does not consider the factors that influence TFA and non-TFA teachers decisions to leave their initial district or teaching, which is a challenge for the sector overall.

Further, the study does not account for the variety of innovations that Teach For America regions in Texas have developed in the past two years to encourage and support alumni to remain in the classroom and remain public school employees in other capacities, described in detail in the next section. These innovations include:

- Fellowships and professional development for 3+ year experienced teachers, including cohorts of teachers pursuing certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards;
- Partnerships with graduate schools like SMU, Johns Hopkins and Rice University, and with non-profits like The Teaching Trust;
- Partnerships with school districts across the state, to expand our professional development offerings to other teachers.

The impact of these innovations is even higher three year retention among our 2014 cohort.

Among Teach For America teachers who began teaching in Texas in 2014, 56% are still employed in Texas schools in 2016-2017<sup>24</sup>. This compares favorably to the 55% of non-TFA teachers from the 2013 cohort that began teaching a third year in their initial district (p. 25)<sup>25</sup>.

---

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.mystatesman.com/news/news/local/austin-teacher-allison-ashley-named-texas-teacher-/nsrB6/>

<sup>23</sup> Source: Teach For America alumni database

<sup>24</sup> Source: Teach For America internal tracker

<sup>25</sup> <http://tinyurl.com/jk9hz35>

### 3. Efforts to Improve Retention: Past & Present

#### *Past Efforts to Improve Retention & Challenges*

Over the past five years, we have undertaken a small group of strategies at the national and regional levels to support and encourage retention in the teaching profession and in K-12 education broadly.

1. The “Teach Beyond 2” campaign: First, we have developed regional focused “Teach Beyond 2” campaigns. These campaigns have been informed by our national organization, and regions have developed and implemented these in an effort to build a culture and a mindset among our members that there is value and opportunity in choosing to stay in the classroom beyond two years. Some key lessons we have learned in developing and implementing these campaigns include:
  - a. Setting goals for the number of teachers who remain in the classroom into a third year;
  - b. Engaging current alumni teachers as ambassadors
  - c. Leverage one on one relationships with first and second year corps members to understand motivations and barriers to teaching beyond two years
  - d. Invest in leadership development opportunities for alumni teachers
  - e. Celebrate alumni teachers
  - f. Engage district and school partners in these campaigns
  
2. Alumni Excellence in Teaching Award: Second, beginning in 2011-2012 we developed a national Alumni Excellence in Teaching Award in an effort to recognize, celebrate and learn from those individuals who have remained in the classroom and who have had an outsized impact on their students, school and community. Each region of Teach For America can nominate an alumni teacher for this award. There is an application process that includes student, family, teacher, and administrator interviews, video-taping of teaching in action, evaluation of student work and letters of recommendation. Recipients are honored for their efforts and serve as exemplars for current corps members, fellow alumni, and the broader community of educators and earn a prize of \$5,000. Recipients also begin a yearlong ambassadorship focused on deepening instructional expertise, team leadership, and amplifying their voice through policy and civic engagement.

In Texas, we have had 8 winners out of the total 45 awards since 2012:

- a. 2016 Award Winners
  - Parisa Behzadi (Houston 2012 corps)
- b. 2015 Award Winners
  - Matthew O’Connor (Houston 2009 corps)
  - James Sheridan (Houston 2000 corps)
  - Lauren Wimbley (Houston 2007 corps)
- c. 2014 Award Winners
  - Craig Brandenburg (Houston 2001 corps)
  - Crischelle Navalta (Rio Grande Valley 2005 corps)

d. 2013 Award Winners

- Jennifer Corroy-Paras (Rio Grande Valley 2004 corps)
- Rob Garza (Rio Grande Valley 2002 corps)

3. Supporting Alumni Teachers Professional Learning Community: Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, we developed a professional learning community for regional staff focused specifically on supporting alumni teachers. Participants in the PLC had the opportunity to work with and learn from other practitioners in other parts of the country on efforts to provide ongoing support and resources to alumni teachers. Participants also had the opportunity to develop a project or initiative and receive support and feedback on the design and execution of that project from others in the field. Many of the ideas and initiatives from this PLC have informed the work described below that is currently occurring in our Texas regions.
4. Engagement with school/district partners: Historically, our regional staff has conducted partnership meetings with school and district partners on a regular and ongoing basis. The topics of these meetings have ranged from negotiating the terms of the agreement (i.e. number of new teachers to be considered for hire, length of the agreement), to priority areas of focus (individual schools or feeder patterns within a district, or specific content backgrounds of teachers), to curriculum requirements and other training expectations.
5. Engagement with individual teachers: Additionally, we have always provided consistent and ongoing support to our individual teachers through the first two years of their teaching experience with Teach For America. The focus of this coaching and support has most significantly focused on professional development in service of meeting the needs of students, though we have also increasingly focused in recent years on career planning and support in decision making on next steps following the completion of the two year teaching commitment.

### *Current Efforts to Improve Retention*

In the 2015-2016 school year, there are a variety of activities happening across our organization in Texas that are aimed at increasing the retention of members of Teach For America in the teaching profession, and in the field of K-12 public education. Some of these activities are happening across our four placement sites (Dallas – Fort Worth, Houston, Rio Grande Valley, San Antonio) and some of these activities occur in one or more of our regional placement sites.

#### Common Activities

1. Ongoing Meetings with Superintendents/Human Resource Directors in Partner Districts: In each of our regional placement sites, we conduct ongoing meetings with the lead teams of our partner districts. These meetings typically happen at minimum on a yearly basis to establish and or confirm the baseline expectations for our partnership, as well as cover key areas of focus in a given academic year. These conversations include consideration of the retention of Teach For America members through the end of their first two years, beyond year two and transitions to

positions of leadership or administration at the campus or district level. These engagements set the tone for the nature of engagement at the campus level through the school year.

2. Ongoing meetings with Campus Principals/Administrators: In each of our regional placement sites we strive to conduct conversations with campus principals or a designated administrator at the start of the school year. Similar to engagement at the district level, this is an opportunity to establish or confirm baseline expectations for our support of Teach For America members on a given campus, including a division of responsibilities between campus staff and Teach For America staff. These campus-level meetings are intended to be the first in a series of ongoing conversations between Teach For America support staff (usually the Manager, Teacher Leadership Development) and the campus administration that is informed by the ongoing progress and performance of Teach For America members on that campus. These conversations are the basis for aligning across our organizations on the topic of the factors that could be influencing a member of Teach For America to complete their two year commitment, remain for a third year and beyond or depart the teaching position or the campus for some reason – and in these instances, strategizing where possible to ensure retention.
3. Coordination with Alternative Certification Providers/Educator Preparation Programs: Given that a majority of the members of Teach For America are not certified educators when they apply to our program, they must pursue alternative certification and secure their probationary teacher certification through their participation in an alternative certification program (ACP). Given the requirements of each partner ACP in Texas, each regional office of Teach For America works with the relevant partner ACP in their area to coordinate activities required and delivered by the ACP and activities required and delivered by Teach For America. The intent of this coordination is to prevent, as much as possible, duplication of requirements in order to streamline the professional development expectations of these new teachers. Because the most members of Teach For America successfully complete their alternative certification program requirements in their first year of teaching, and receive their standard certificate before their second year of teaching, this coordination most significantly impacts our first year teaching cohorts.
4. Open Door Policy for Teach For America Professional Development: Increasingly, we are working to share the professional development opportunities that are required and delivered by Teach For America as optional activities for other teachers in a region or partner district. We believe this is one way in which we can strengthen the networks between members of Teach For America and other teachers on a campus or in a district and is rooted in a belief that the strength of those networks can have a real impact on the retention of our members on a campus or in a district. In practice, we have noted that the attendance from non-Teach For America teachers at these opportunities is somewhat limited. Our primary theory for this is that it's due to the fact we do not offer stipends or Continuing Professional Education credits to participants, and that could be affecting the attendance of non-Teach For America teachers.

### *Region-Specific Activities*

Regions have developed and implemented a variety of activities to promote retention in teaching and education among current corps members and alumni.

### **Dallas – Fort Worth**

1. Alumni Teacher Engagement Campaign:
  - a. Central to our teacher retention efforts in DFW are quarterly email updates about upcoming professional development opportunities, networking opportunities and general information on resources for teachers.
  - b. Additionally, our full time staff in DFW conduct joint campus visits where there are clusters of 3 or more alumni teachers; these visits include classroom observations to provide support and coaching for teachers, and providing words and gifts of support to alumni teachers.
  - c. Lastly, the engagement campaign in DFW includes cold calling and texting alumni teachers to set up coffee or phone chats or invite to socials, all in the vein of strengthening the connection between alumni teachers and Teach For America staff and the connection with other alumni teachers.
2. Partnership with Teaching Trust:
  - a. Our DFW team has developed a robust partnership with The Teaching Trust that is open to both teachers and those looking to step into the school leadership pipeline.
  - b. TFA-DFW has dedicated 50% of a full time staff member to focus on the partnership's teacher leadership Fellowship (EdFellows)
  - c. The fellowship is open to teachers with at least two years of experience, and while it is not exclusive to Teach For America participants, roughly 50% of the fellows are alums. Further, The Teaching Trust expanded the size of the cohort knowing that TFA alums were a strong pool of likely applicants.
  - d. This partnership also includes a five year principal fellows, known as the Aspiring Leaders Program, and many applicants to this fellowship are classroom teachers at the time of their application.
3. Director, Alumni Teacher Support:
  - a. TFA-DFW has designed a full time position to support alumni teachers; this staff member acts as an instructional and leadership coach for any alumni teacher who would like to extend the support they received during their first two years in Teach For America. Further, this staff member supports people moving to DFW finding teaching roles by connecting them with schools and school districts looking to hire Teach For America alumni teachers.
  - b. The director, additionally, leads the Instructional Excellence Fellowship and Culturally Responsive Teaching Fellowship described below.
  - c. Lastly, our director, alumni teacher support focuses time and resources in conducting one - one meetings with alumni teachers and developing and executing small group professional development for alumni teachers at All Corps Conferences.
4. Professional Development Initiatives:

- a. Instructional Excellence Fellowship
  - i. This yearlong fellowship is for teachers in Dallas ISD who want to boost their skills in the classroom by collaborating, learning of best practices, and receiving observations/coaching. Specifically, the fellowship provides support for the Distinguished Teacher Review in order to maximize the Dallas ISD Teacher Effectiveness Index.
- b. Culturally Responsive Teaching Fellowship
  - i. This fellowship is open to second year corps members and alumni teachers in Dallas who want to learn the theory and practice of culturally responsive teaching. The fellowship was co-developed with the Director of Leadership and Diversity and focused on sharing exemplar teachers as well as videos and artifacts from participants.
- c. Teaching Trust's Ed Fellows Program
  - i. This yearlong professional development series for TFA alumni and non-TFA educators in DFW met once a month for four hours from August through May and also included a week long Summer Intensive in July. The planning and facilitation was split equally between TFA and The Teaching Trust staff; similarly, the grading of written and video assignments was split between the two organizations. The main focus of this series was instruction and peer leadership.
- d. Teach for America's 25th Anniversary Summit & Teaching Trust Lead to Impact Summit
  - i. TFA DFW held its inaugural Alumni Summit in FY15, and its second Alumni Summit in 2016. Additionally the Teaching Trust hosted a Lead to Impact Summit in 2016; both summits garnered significant participation from alumni teachers looking for a single day or weekend conference to connect and build skills. In combination, the two summits offered tracks of sessions or one-off sessions on a variety of topics and areas for skill-building.
- e. Rock Corps
  - i. This innovative program is a five year opportunity provided by a Teach For America alumni – Dr. William Ashley Griffith – who works at the University of Texas at Arlington. Each year, two TFA alumni STEM teachers received \$5,000 to be research assistants at UTA for the summer as well as a \$4,000 grant for school supplies and an expense-paid trip to present research at an academic conference. The program started in the summer of 2015 and will continue through 2020.
- f. Social Entrepreneur and Innovation Fellowship
  - i. Led by the Director of Tarrant County Partnerships with support from the national TFA team, this fellowship included alumni teachers and alumni in other roles with an interest in incubating and developing a new social venture. The fellowship met quarterly to learn elements of Social Innovation or Start Ups and develop an idea for an organization to pitch as a solution to some need in the community.

5. Southern Methodist University Partnership:

- a. Through SMU, there are multiple teaching growth opportunities for Teach For America teachers.
  - b. The Master's in Education program includes discounted tuition for TFA members.
  - c. Additionally, if a teacher pursuing a master's at SMU has been certified through SMU, they will receive a benefit of 18 credit hours towards their degree.
  - d. If a teacher pursuing a master's at SMU has not been certified through SMU, but they are a member of Teach For America, they will receive 6 credit hours towards their degree.
6. Alumni Appreciation Initiative:
- a. Our DFW staff wrote handwritten notes quarterly to all alumni working on K-12 campuses to express gratitude and offer encouragement for their continued work in education.
7. Looking Ahead:
- a. Alumni Engagement
    - i. The DFW region plans to continue visiting campuses where there are clusters of alumni teachers and consider expanding to other campuses. This strategy is an effective way to meet a large segment of alumni teachers and to see them in their element (and it has only been met by positive reactions).
    - ii. The DFW region will connect with alumni who have participated previously in professional development opportunities as they tend to be more responsive and willing to volunteer or engage in other ways.
  - b. Alumni Appreciation
    - i. The DFW region will continue to send the cards and find a way to handwrite or personalize them in some way. These pop up on classroom walls and Facebook pictures all the time as alumni value the appreciation.
  - c. Professional Development Opportunities
    - i. As the DFW team plans for the next year of programming, they have identified some key lessons for future efforts.
      - 1. Begin recruitment for all Fellowships 3-4 months earlier,
      - 2. Large conferences are one of the most in-demand kinds of support from alumni teachers and have garnered the highest participation rates the past,
      - 3. Either planning another TFA DFW Alumni Summit or leveraging conferences led by partner organizations such as Teaching Trust or The Momentous Institute and providing session support or other TFA contributions,
      - 4. Ensure that all TFA events can count for CPE (Continuing Professional Education) to create a more tangible value add for teachers.
      - 5. Consider stipends or other benefits as well.
      - 6. Consider working more extensively with the TFA –DFW Director of Secondary Partnerships to offer whole school development so that

alumni teachers can receive TFA support and coaching as a part of their typical work stream.

## Houston

### 1. Partnership Meetings:

- a. In Houston, the regional team is working to strengthen our collaboration with our local district partners in the hopes of improving teacher performance and retention. To that end, during the 2015-2016 school year, the regional heads of program conducted monthly meetings with central office teams. During these meetings our staff discussed trends in teacher performance and retention, promoted promising practices across the districts, and problem-solved in places where there was room for improvement.

### 2. Alumni Teaching Professional Development & Job Fair:

- a. The Houston region has pursued a variety of activities designed to extend the professional development offerings and opportunities for alumni teachers (i.e. those in their third year of teaching and beyond).
- b. These strategies and activities have grown out of Houston's local "Teach Beyond 2" campaigns, initially developed in 2012 to support and encourage the 2010 teaching cohort to remain in the classroom into the 2012-2013 school year and beyond. During this time, Houston has seen an increase in the percent of teachers remaining in the classroom for at least three years, from 43% of the 2010 cohort to 62% of the 2013 cohort.
- c. In March, 2016, Teach For America hosted an event focused on professional development for alumni teachers, with the trainings and activities offered by districts with an interest in connecting with and considering Teach For America alumni participants for future employment opportunities.
- d. This opportunity grew out of the recognition that there was a supply of Teach For America teachers who were in the process of considering new schools or districts for employment, and there was a demand from district partners in hiring Teach For America alumni for teaching positions.
- e. This one day event brought together our major district partners in Houston, as well as other organizations in the field, like Relay Graduate School of Education and 60 alumni teachers for a day of professional development and networking.

### 3. Alumni Aspiring School Leaders Fellowship:

- a. Through an investment from the Kern Family Foundation, the Houston region conducted an aspiring school leaders fellowship in 2015. This fellowship focused on individuals in traditional school districts with an interest in school leadership opportunities.
- b. This cohort had a total of 14 participants, most of whom were classroom teachers and the remainder were instructional specialists or coaches with an interest in greater school leadership opportunities.

### 4. Leadership Opportunities, Awards, & Service Acknowledgements

- a. We deeply believe in the power of our alumni to influence the teaching of our current corps members while also expanding their leadership capacity. Given these we recruit alumni teachers and school leaders to develop and facilitate professional development for incoming corps members during institute and for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year corps members during the school year. This development consists of both content and values-based development.
  - b. In partnership with the Kinder Foundation, every year Teach For America – Houston honors alumni for excellence in and commitment to teaching in the greater Houston area. Each award winner is celebrated at an awards dinner, receives a \$20,000 cash award, and joins a group of former winners in the Kinder Hall of Fame.
  - c. Each year we celebrate the impact of our teachers during national Teacher Appreciation Week via a social media campaign that highlights the work of teachers in our community.
  - d. In our office we honor every alumnus who stays in the classroom with a plaque that displays their name, a picture, their corps year, and current role in our partner districts.
5. Partnerships with Leadership for Educational Equity: Teach For America - Houston has developed a formal partnership with Leadership for Educational Equity (LEE), an organization that focuses on advocacy in education. As a result of this partnership we have:
- a. Engaged 1,030 members in the Houston area along, with a strong focus on engaging diverse membership - nearly 50% of engaged members identify as a person of color.
  - b. We have worked to develop six senior Policy and Advocacy leaders who are working to build their own organizations focused on specific needs in their educational communities.
    - i. One advocacy leader started a well reputed organization called [ProUnitas](#) in his second year in the corps; he serves an underserved, predominately African American neighborhood, Kashmere Gardens, and has received attention from community leaders.
  - c. In Houston, we have one sitting elected school board member – Erica Lee on the Harris County Board of Education.
  - d. ONE Houston was launched in the spring of 2015 and began a landscape and root cause analysis regarding underachievement in the Houston community. These diverse leaders have developed a focus on disrupting the school to prison pipeline and schools as community hubs.
    - i. ONE Houston helped secure one of the country’s first bans on Pre-K - 2 suspensions and expulsions passed at Houston ISD.
    - ii. Additionally, ONE Houston conducted a community forum with 11 of 13 HISD school board candidates leading up to 2015 election and has developed strong relationships with several school board leaders including former board chair, Rhonda Skillern Jones
6. Looking Ahead: In an effort to more fully maximize the impact of our alumni in Houston, we are taking the following steps in the 2016 – 2017 school year:

- a. Restructure the regional team to create a sub-team, Alumni Leadership and Engagement, whose sole focus is getting to know our alumni, connecting them with other alumni and community partners in their sector, inspiring them to expand their leadership in the greater Houston area, and supporting them as they pursue their next leadership opportunity.
- b. Within this structure we will move to a portfolio approach which will ensure that every alumnus in the greater Houston area has a relationship with a member of our team. This team member will be responsible for stewarding the alumni experience and helping them maximize their impact as alumni. These portfolios include:
  - i. City and system leaders (across all sectors)
  - ii. School system leaders
  - iii. District and school leaders
  - iv. Teachers and other school-based staff
  - v. Alumni working in organizations that impact education
  - vi. Alumni working in organizations not connected directly to education
- c. Codify paths to leadership and available professional development supports for alumni interested in school leadership, non-profit leadership, advocacy and policy, elected leadership, and community organizing in order to be able to match alumni interests with specific opportunities.
- d. Launch / re-launch alumni specific communities (i.e. The Collective – a support network for alumni who identify as a person of color, professional learning communities for teachers, sector-based professional groups, etc).

## **Rio Grande Valley**

### **1. Transformational Teaching Cohort:**

- a. In the 2015-2016 school year, the Rio Grande Valley team launched a Transformational Teaching Cohort open to a group of our second-year corps members. This group was co-lead by our regional executive director, Dr. Paula Garcia and our director of alumni affairs, Militza Martinez.
- b. In total, eight second year teachers participated in a yearlong fellowship type model, where they each had the opportunity to develop a yearlong plan of professional development that sought to access the experience and networks of the cohort leaders, Dr. Garcia and Ms. Martinez.
- c. Additionally, the cohort received access, support and resources from two alumni teachers in the Rio Grande Valley who have been past recipients of Teach For America's national Alumni Excellence in Teaching Awards (described above in the *Past Efforts* section).
- d. Of the eight total participants:
  - i. Three are staying in the RGV as classroom teachers,
  - ii. Four have plans to remain classroom teachers in a region outside of the RGV,
  - iii. One is attending law school.

- e. Key Takeaways from this initiative include understanding the value of:
    - i. Building more of a social/interpersonal feeling among cohort participants, by creating more opportunities for engagement in informal settings outside of the formal cohort meetings,
    - ii. Providing even more opportunities to work with and learn from our Alumni Excellence in Teaching Award winners,
    - iii. Continuing with the big picture design of developing a yearlong scope and sequence focused on developmental topics associated with long term teaching commitments
    - iv. Considering evolving this group to focus more on participants with 3 – 5 years’ teaching experience.
2. Aspiring School Leaders Fellowship:
- a. Through an investment from the Kern Family Foundation, the Rio Grande Valley conducted an Aspiring School Leaders Fellowship in 2015, which will be continued into 2016. This fellowship focused on individuals in traditional school districts with an interest in school leadership opportunities.
  - b. The Rio Grande Valley team contracted with local leadership development leader, Dr. Barbara Baggerly-Hinojosa, CEO of the Leadership Empowerment Group, LLC., on the design and scope and sequence of this fellowship, which met nine times in the Winter/Spring of 2015. The topics of consideration were:
    - i. Goal Setting
    - ii. Conflict Management
    - iii. Organizational Principles
    - iv. Business Etiquette in the Workplace
  - c. There were a total of four participants in the initial fellowship, and all remain engaged in public school leadership: two are classroom teachers in Texas, one is an assistant principal in Texas and one is an elected member of a traditional ISD board of education in Texas.
  - d. In 2016, this fellowship will continue and will evolve. Participants will attend Deloitte University’s *Courageous Principal’s Program*. This next iteration of the fellowship will be available for 8-10 participants and focused on teachers who have some leadership responsibilities on their campus already.
3. Targeted Activities for Second Year Teachers:
- a. For the second year in a row, the region conducted a “career bootcamp” assessment that focuses on the skills and motivations our people have and the roles that they should pursue. This year, we held this bootcamp in November during one of our Professional Saturday engagements. A majority of our second year cohort of teachers participated in this engagement or a make up session that was held in follow up.
  - b. Additionally, the Director of Alumni Affairs meets with each of our second year corps members either individually or in small groups to discuss their career trajectory and options for future years. During these meetings, our staff is attempting to make connections with people and resources that can be useful and influential in keeping our

rising alumni in the field of education. Additionally, these conversations are informative in that they provide us feedback on our programming structures, experiences of people in different schools and districts and overall sentiment regarding teaching and school employment for the long term – all of which we use to inform our programs in the coming year.

- c. We regularly contract with alumni teachers as leaders of a variety of professional development structures that are a requirement of our program for first and second year teachers. This year, alumni teachers led the following groups:
    - i. Content Seminars:
      - 1. Math
      - 2. Science
      - 3. English Language Arts & Reading
      - 4. Social Studies
      - 5. Elementary
    - ii. Spring Courses (a semester long investigations into specific topics):
      - 1. Differentiating Learning for Diverse Learners in MS and HS Math
      - 2. From Low Readers to High Achievers
      - 3. What does it mean to accommodate and differentiate for struggling learners?
    - iii. Student Leadership Fellowship
      - 1. A semester long engagement for students, with teacher guidance, to grow and develop their own leadership capacity, with a capstone community change project at the end of the fellowship.
4. Looking ahead:
- a. In addition to the continued implementation of our Transformational Teaching Cohort, Aspiring School Leaders Fellowship and Ongoing Professional Development Opportunities for teachers, the Rio Grande Valley team is also planning the following activities for 2016.
  - b. Alumni Board: This group will seek to organize our regional alumni base, a majority of whom remain classroom teachers, and the chair of the alumni board would sit on the Regional Advisory Board of Teach For America – Rio Grande Valley. This is intended to provide greater opportunity for our regional organization to respond to and remain accountable to our alumni in the region and given classroom teaching is the most common profession of our alumni in the RGV, we see this as a strategy to support and respond to our alumni teachers. In the coming year, our RGV region will have a priority on connecting alumni to each other via a teacher – teacher support network.
  - c. Veteran : New Teacher Mentorship: Since the majority of our alumni in the RGV are classroom teachers, the region is working to develop an initiative to pair veteran alumni teachers with new teachers in a mentoring and support capacity, in addition to the ongoing and regular support and development that all of our new teachers receive.
  - d. Evolving Staff Roles: We will be creating a new role in 2016-2017, the Director of Program Continuum. This role will work to ensure that we build a cohesive and

differentiated set of programming activities for teachers, whether they are in their first year in the classroom, or have been teaching for much longer. This represents and evolution from our prior year's roles, when we had a division between the work of supporting first and second year teachers and work supporting teachers with 3+ years of experience. As individuals are evaluating whether to continue their teaching into a third year, our intent is that this role will help ensure that there is a stronger continuum of support for teachers following the end of their second year of teaching.

## San Antonio

### 1. Partnership Meetings:

- a. In San Antonio, the regional team is working to go even deeper in partnership conversations with their local district partners. In the 2015-2016 school year, the regional head of program conducted monthly meetings with central office teams, with a key focus on developing and updating school by school projections of the retention status of all Teach For America teachers. These monthly meetings are informed by the ongoing engagement happening at the campus level, where the responsible Teach For America staff and campus assigned partner discuss the status of each Teach For America teacher on that individual campus.

### 2. Fellowships:

- a. The San Antonio regional team is running two fellowship opportunities for teachers to grow and develop their professional skills.
- b. Culturally Responsive Teaching Fellowship
  - i. Over the past two years, we have invested over \$30,000 to run a fellowship focused on providing ongoing learning for a set of our teachers on culturally responsive teaching practices. The distribution of participants are:
    1. 10 SAISD alum
    2. 10 SAISD current corps members
    3. 10 charter school alumni
    4. 4 Non-TFA affiliated educators
  - ii. These teachers are at the forefront of our movement for educational excellence - leading professional development for other educators, interjecting new ideas on campus about curricular and pedagogical theory, and becoming the proof points of what's possible in urban education. They meet monthly for intensive development.
  - iii. This fellowship is run through a contract with nationally recognized expert in the field of responsive pedagogy, Curtis Acosta, PhD. Dr. Acosta rose to national prominence via the film *Precious Knowledge*, which featured his efforts to keep his Chicano Studies class open in Tucson, Arizona.
- c. National Board Certification Fellowship
  - i. This fellowship invests over \$8,000 to pay for the cohort leader and mentors and the certification fees for the eligible alumni.

- ii. We currently have 4 candidates and are beginning to engage 4 pre-candidates:
      1. One 2010 alumni teaching in SAISD
      2. One non-alumni KIPP teacher (his fees are paid by KIPP)
      3. One alum KIPP teacher
      4. One alum teaching ESL to refugee students in NISD
    - iii. The NBC cohort meets monthly at the TFA office to get feedback on their written work pre-submission and engage in peer support to develop stronger teacher materials. Additionally, the 4 pre-candidates will be eligible to join the cohort in the summer and begin progressing toward their National Board Certification. The eight participants are expected to apply for National Board Certification in June 2017.
  - d. National Academy of Advanced Teacher Education
    - i. This program has invested over \$90,000 in support of eight participants (two members of the 2012 cohort and six members of the 2013 cohort).
    - ii. Participants spent 10 days in residence at Yale’s campus in summer of 2015 and 3 days in Wilmington, DE in January. They engaged in deep reflections on their instructional practice as well as their role as campus influencers through a case study method and discussions with peers. Participants in the program were overwhelmingly positive and can name concrete changes they’ve made to their instruction and ways in which they’ve led on their campuses.
    - iii. A second cohort has joined the first at Yale in the summer of 2016. The original participants are finishing out their NAATE fellowship and a new group of nine alumni participants are beginning their NAATE fellowship in summer of 2016.
  - e. Partnership with Leadership for Educational Equity
    - i. Leadership for Educational Equity focuses on the development of skills and leadership in the realm of policy and advocacy, organizing and politics for members.
    - ii. We have found that some of our most driven, passionate and visionary teachers stop teaching after two years because, with an understanding the challenges their students and teachers face, they wish to make an impact a policy level. The Collective Action work that Leadership for Educational Equity (LEE) is doing with San Antonio corps members and alumni educators is aimed at inspiring our teachers to use their leadership in the classroom as a vehicle through which they can have a voice in the world of policy.
    - iii. This partnership has been in place for one year, with over seventy participants:
      1. 12 SAISD alumni
      2. 16 SAISD current CMs
      3. 20 charter school alumni / CMs
      4. 30 + Non-TFA affiliated educators
- 3. Leadership Awards & Funding Resources:
  - a. San Antonio has also budgeted funds for the support of individual leadership development pursuits and campus and/or community projects. These are intended to

incentivize teachers remaining in the classroom via the opportunity continue their growth and professional development in a way that is motivating and inspiring to them, and to support their efforts to create positive change in their classroom and community.

- b. As of June 2016, we have supported a total of 14 projects at a cost of \$30,000.
  - c. Some examples of these awards include:
    - i. A group of students, fifty total so far, went on an overnight camping trip to Enchanted Rock and another group attended Phantom of the Opera at the Majestic Theater. Students earned incentives based on good grades and attendance.
    - ii. Three teachers, impacting over 200 students, attended training in the Mindfulness Schools Curriculum. Each day the teachers lead their students in mindfulness training. Students have commented on their ability to avoid antisocial or impulsive behavior because of the training.
    - iii. An alumna and a corps member collaborated to organize a school-wide literacy fair. Over 200 families attended the literacy night at Whittier Middle School. There were free books, literacy-themed games, open mic poetry by professional and student poets, and a spaghetti dinner provided to all attendees. All of the games were developed and run by students.
4. Competency & Values Development:
- a. San Antonio provides a variety of competency-based and values-based professional development opportunities for members who continue their commitment as classroom teachers.
  - b. Excellent school visits:
    - i. We have developed an application for corps members and alumni who are interested in observing culturally responsive teaching to apply to join this trip. We are looking for alumni and second year teachers who plan on teaching in SAISD next year to join us.
    - ii. We had close to 30 total participants in these excellent school visits.
    - iii. Most significantly, a group of seven corps members who had all committed to teaching a 3<sup>rd</sup> year in their schools travelled to Albuquerque, New Mexico in Spring 2016 to observe and learn from two excellent schools focused on culturally responsive teaching. Teachers met with school administrators, teachers, and students, and observed classroom instruction and school events over two days. Upon return to San Antonio the participants agreed that it was the best professional development experience they have had in their careers so far and that the visit impacted their vision for their classroom and their teacher leadership on their campuses for the upcoming year.
  - c. One on One coaching for alumni teaching
    - i. Our newly created Director, Alumni Impact is working to meet with all of our current teachers in their second year of their teaching commitment. This position is described further in full below.

- ii. In 2016 the director met with 95% of the second year corps members resulting in an increase in the percentage of teachers who chose to remain teaching in Texas from 44% in the previous cohort to 49% in this cohort.
  - d. Engaging CMs as facilitators to grow their professional capacity
    - i. The region engages current and recent teachers as facilitators for the variety of professional development offerings we provide. So far, there have been twenty-eight unique alumni presenters at TFA or SAISD professional development.
    - ii. This is an intentional culture strategy to increase the presence and profile of alumni who have chosen to remain in the classroom as teachers.
- 5. Educator Appreciation Month
  - a. The intent of our Educator Appreciation Month is to strengthen the ties between our corps members and their colleagues at their campus. We believe that the strength of these relationships can have a direct, positive impact on teacher retention.
  - b. In April, 2016, the region hosted a Celebration of Colleagues; each corps member has the opportunity to nominate a colleague who has had a significant and positive impact in their development as a teacher. A total of 42 educators were nominated and recognized at this event.
- 6. Director of Alumni Impact:
  - a. In 2015-2016, San Antonio has also created a new position on their regional team focused on alumni impact, with a specific focus on alumni teachers. The individual in this position is concurrently pursuing graduate study at the University of Texas – San Antonio (UTSA) Graduate School of Education, with a focus on Curriculum and Instruction.
  - b. As part of her master’s thesis, she is proposing to study the factors that influence early career teachers’ decisions to stay in the classroom or leave in the first few years of teaching. The research protocol is currently in the approval process with the Institutional Review Board at UTSA and with San Antonio ISD and Region 20 as potential collaborators to provide a participant pool for the research.
- 7. Looking Ahead:
  - a. Each of the strategies funded by our alumni team will be rooted in our new regional vision statement, “We develop leaders at all levels of the system who are **impactful, united, and committed** to transforming education in the inner city of San Antonio.”
  - b. The director, alumni impact will support teachers who have participated in various initiatives funded by the alumni team through follow-up sessions and one on one coaching to transfer the skills they are learning through these experiences into concrete leadership opportunities as teacher-leaders at their campuses and through Teach For America so that the impact can be tied back directly to the concrete strategies implemented by the alumni team.
  - c. Strategic outreach will be made to alumni teachers who have not yet participated in any of the alumni-sponsored programming to strengthen their ties to other educators both

within and outside of Teach For America so that they can be recognized and valued for their continued impact through teaching.

- d. For the 2016 – 2017 we already have groups of teachers who are actively participating in the following programs below centered on teacher retention. These alumni will also be actively involved in mentoring current corps members and influencing them to continue teaching beyond the two-year commitment.
  - i. National Board Certification: seven TFA alumni actively working toward certification
  - ii. NAATE: nine TFA alumni involved in the NAATE fellowship for 2016 – 2017
  - iii. Leadership & Development Grants: eight grants have been awarded for the upcoming year.
- e. An area of opportunity is focusing recruitment efforts into Teach For America on local talent. We recognized an area of opportunity in this by looking at the number of teachers from our most recent group of alumni who are choosing to teach elsewhere. Of those, 8 additional teachers are going to continue teaching in their home states. We plan to continue to collaborate with the Texas recruitment team to ensure that an ever increasing number of corps members who enter our corps have ties to San Antonio or to Texas.

### *Lessons Learned*

In summary, we have developed some key lessons learned across all of our regions as we developed our efforts in 2015-2016 to support, encourage and ultimately improve the retention of our teachers in the field of education beyond their initial two year commitment.

1. We have multiple examples of the creation or evolution of staff positions that are responsible for the support and engagement with alumni who remain in the field of education;
2. We are continuing to streamline the support and development we offer teachers and educators outside of the classroom beyond two years of experience;
3. We are working to improve information sharing across our internal teams to better develop relationships with our corps members and alumni across their experience;
4. We have learned that there is real value in being explicit and clear that teacher and educator retention beyond two years is something that matters to us, and is something we value and support;
5. We have seen the power of teacher – teacher relationships, and many programs and structures are seeking to encourage those relationships;
6. We have learned that we must start our engagement efforts to encourage participation in fellowships and professional development initiatives earlier in a corps member or alumni's career;
7. We have seen that the strength of relationships between our teachers and their campus community impact decisions, for future work, so will continue to encourage and foster systems to this end.

## 4. Teach For America's Finances

### *Overview of Financial Model*

Teach For America is a national, non-profit organization comprised of a growing, diverse community of corps members, staff and alumni around 50,000 strong working to end educational inequity. Our organization has over 50 regional offices across the country, led by an executive director and advisory boards that are charged with fueling local movements. These regional offices are not independent 501(c)(3) organizations; rather, we operate as one 501(c)(3), led by Chief Executive Officer Elisa Villanueva Beard, who works directly with the National Board of Directors to set our overall strategy and direction and govern the organization. Teach For America uses centralized finance, human assets, technology, and national administration functions maintained at our headquarters in New York to efficiently and effectively deliver on our program. In addition, Teach For America is in the midst of a multi-year process of reorganizing to provide regions with greater autonomy allowing them the capacity and flexibility to maximize their local impact.

Currently, regions manage our budgets locally by: (a) setting a revenue goal, (b) determining staffing structure, (c) identifying national support needed and (d) setting a desired corps size for the following year.

In FY16, which occurred from June 1, 2015 through May 31, 2016, Texas regions supported over 4,000 corps members and alumni leaders working to end educational inequity in our community that will impact over 140,000 students. To fuel this work, we garner support from local champions and we incur program expenses to recruit, select and train incoming corps members, support and provide professional development to our current corps members, and deepen our broad impact by cultivating the leadership of our alumni.

### *Revenue*

At the start of FY16, Texas regions set fundraising goals for \$23.2MM regionally, with a planned \$1.8MM coming from our national organization to support our program and its efforts. Regional income is comprised of locally-raised revenue designated for the use of each region and nationally-raised revenue, which is internally allocated to support regional efforts. National revenue includes federal funding and private funding from both individuals and institutions. The examples of national revenue include (a) Shared National Fundraising, (b) the Breakthrough Fund, (c) the Strategic Investment Fund and (d) other National subsidies.

- Shared National Fundraising is shared among all regions proportionate to their corps size and alumni base.
- The Breakthrough Fund is an application based competitive process that regions apply for to spark high-impact programmatic breakthroughs with the potential to advance our most important strategic priorities and spread to other regions in the future.
- The Strategic Investment Fund is a pool of money allocated to regions through an application process during strategic planning to increase equity across regions and ensure we are remaining

committed to all communities. This funding can be allocated to provide support for regions that have a limited philanthropic landscape as a bridge to a robust public funding solution or those experiencing an acute fundraising need, such as a leadership transition accounting for why they do not have a path to covering their budget, as a one-time infusion to get on a more sustainable path.

- Other National subsidies are those funds sourced by the National Development team on behalf of regions, such as the Rural Investment Fund, to provide support to rural regions.

## *Program Expenses*

### *Recruitment, Selection and Placement*

In FY16, our Texas regions recruited, selected and supported the hiring of over 400 new corps members in our 2015 cohort. To identify, attract, select and place the most extraordinary and diverse corps, we employ a high touch strategy on over 500 campuses and compete with the most powerful corporate recruitment operations in the country. Though it's an area of significant investment, our recruitment costs are significantly lower than other organizations seeking the same level of talent. For instance, the Peace Corps spends about 59% more per person than we do, even after excluding all of the direct expenses they provide to participants, and accounting for costs that aren't directly comparable to ours.

TFA's costs are comprised of the following:

- Salary and program costs for the Recruitment and Admissions teams
  - Dollar figures for this programmatic expense are calculated by each region's total assigned incoming corps members
- Transitional assistance, a need-based financial aid program which supports corps members as they transition to the region

A list of our FY16 expenditures can be found in Appendix D.

Over the past two years our recruitment landscape has changed dramatically. An improving economy and polarized education climate are making the decision to teach more challenging for the people we're recruiting. When the economy deteriorated in 2008 our applications spiked and at the same time we saw surging demand for corps members. Since the economy started to recover, recruiting has become much harder. Many students whose young adulthood has been shaped by the downturn and its effect on their families and friends tells us that they are focused on finding a career-oriented, financially rewarding position as soon as possible. Additionally, interest in the field of education has dropped and we've seen large decreases in job satisfaction among American teachers over the last few years. This is coupled with a vitriolic public conversation around education and a generally low sense of urgency around educational inequity, which is making it more challenging to convince folks to join this work. This is not limited to just Teach For America, as other teacher preparation programs around the country are seeing significantly larger drops in enrollment numbers.

In FY17 we are pursuing a variety of strategies in response to the challenges we are facing in the recruitment landscape:

- We are updating our key arguments for the importance of dedicating one's life to educational equity, with specific focus on college applicants.
- We will launch a competitive summer internship program for rising seniors. We have hired a national Managing Director of Underclassmen Engagement and planning is underway.
- We will develop a full suite of early engagement opportunities aligned to prospect insights.
- We will increase our capacity and focus on the top 80 schools by reducing the recruiter-to-campus ratio to 1:1.5 for these campuses.
- We will significantly strengthen recruitment team execution by hiring four Vice Presidents of Campus Recruitment to manage field operations, by strengthening core training and support for prospect outreach (getting prospects to the table) and prospect cultivation (inspiring prospects in the meeting), and by updating performance management reporting.
- We will overhaul the admissions and assignment process to keep more prospects in our process at every stage. The admissions process will be significantly shorter (an average of 35 days vs. 56 days from application submission to decision notification) and the assignment process will be personalized. These changes will roll out in August 2016 with the first application window of next season.
- We will design and pilot new approaches to leveraging current corps members and alumni in recruitment campaigns.

#### *Pre-Service Training and Preparation*

During the summer of FY16, we trained over 400 new corps members, who completed their first year of teaching in 2015-2016.

The majority of the costs for pre-service training and preparation are associated with the intensive five to seven week summer training institute, which in the summer of 2015 will train almost 4,000 incoming corps members at national and local institute sites across the country. Additionally, to welcome corps members into each region and deepen their region-specific context and understanding most regions host a five-day induction and a one to two week orientation.

These costs include the following:

- Full-time and summer staff positions
- Temporary housing for corps members and trainers
- Meals for corps members and trainers
- Rental of facility space
- Training materials
- Expenses for the induction and local orientation of incoming corps members prior to and following institute
- Travel for corps members and trainers to Institute and other training opportunities

This year, Texas’s corps members attended a nationally run institute in Houston (for Houston, Rio Grande Valley and San Antonio members) and a regionally run institute in Dallas (for Dallas – Fort Worth members).

### *Teacher Development and Support*

In FY16, we supported over 900 first- and second-year teachers in over 300 schools towards becoming excellent teachers and helping students achieve exceptional academic and social outcomes.

Teacher development and support expenses are primarily for the ongoing support provided to corps members throughout their first two years in the classroom. In addition, this category includes a share of the costs incurred by our national program team to create and refine instructional materials and regional staff members utilizing best in class techniques that we have refined over the last 25 years.

The following are some of the best-in-class tools provided:

- Specialized instruction for first and second year corps members
- Video role models
- Online customized e-learning experiences

### *Alumni Support*

In FY16, we supported over 3,000 alumni leaders across Texas.

Alumni expenses include the regional and national expenses associated with the ongoing support of Teach For America alumni as they continue working towards change in high-impact roles at every level of education across the country.

Additionally, this category includes a per corps member share of the costs incurred by our national alumni team to:

- Organize regional and national summits
- Produce a quarterly magazine
- Maintain a career website
- Run ongoing initiatives to foster and accelerate alumni interested in pursuing leadership roles in education, including the “Teach Beyond 2” initiative to support our alumni who choose to stay in the classroom

### *Non-Program Expenses*

Teach For America has earned a perfect four-star rating every year from Charity Navigator since 2001 in their evaluation of our financial health and transparency. Less than 1 percent of all nonprofits nationwide have received this many consecutive four-star ratings, putting us in the 99th percentile among all nonprofits. More information on this rating can be found in Appendix E.

### *Management and General*

Teach For America houses finance, human assets, technology and national administration specialized services centrally in order to lower costs and increase efficiency throughout the organization. In our

Texas regions, management and general expenses comprise 8 percent of payroll and other small costs incurred locally to support our programs.

### *Fundraising*

In FY16, our unaudited results indicate that our regions fundraised over \$25.47MM to improve educational equity in Texas. A breakdown of our funding by stream in FY16 is included in Appendix D.

This category represents the costs to fundraise and support our program needs directly in Texas. Other costs include the infrastructure that supports our local fundraising efforts and any customized national support that our region has selected. Our regional fundraising cost per dollar raised is \$.11.

## 5. Conclusion

### *Lessons applicable to other teacher preparation organizations*

We think that the lessons we developed could be particularly applicable to other teacher preparation programs, with a few additional considerations.

1. We have multiple examples of the creation or evolution of staff positions that are responsible for the support and engagement with alumni who remain in the field of education;
  - a. Similarly, other traditional and alternative certification programs could benefit from tasking teacher retention to one or more members of their staff.
2. We are continuing to streamline the support and development we offer teachers and educators outside of the classroom beyond two years of experience;
  - a. Similarly, other traditional and alternative certification programs could extend the support and engagements of individuals who have completed their program into the future.
3. We are working to improve information sharing across our internal teams to better develop relationships with our corps members and alumni across their experience;
  - a. Similarly, we believe that accurate, real time information sharing within other programs could be beneficial to the participants of those other programs as well.
4. We have learned that there is real value in being explicit and clear that teacher and educator retention beyond two years is something that matters to us, and is something we value and support;
  - a. Similarly, a clear and consistent call for long term teacher tenure can come from other teacher preparation programs.
5. We have seen the power of teacher – teacher relationships, and many programs and structures are seeking to encourage those relationships;
  - a. Similarly, we would encourage other teacher preparation programs to also set priorities around supporting teachers to build relationships across teacher preparation programs, as well as at their campus and in their district.
6. We have learned that we must start our engagement efforts to encourage participation in fellowships and professional development initiatives earlier in a corps member or alumni's career;
  - a. We would hope that early and continued conversations about the professional development offerings available to teachers throughout their career could similarly benefit teacher retention in other teacher preparation programs.
7. We have seen that the strength of relationships between our teachers and their campus community impact decisions, for future work, so will continue to encourage and foster systems to this end.
  - a. Again, we think that other programs could apply this lesson in an effort to strengthen the network of supports around new teachers.

Further, we should note that Teach For America is not an expert into the specific programs and initiatives that exist within any of the other teacher preparation programs in the state of Texas, and it could be the case that many of our learnings have already been applied in these other teacher preparation programs.

## 6. Appendices

### A. American Institutes for Research External Evaluation: Retention (2016)<sup>26</sup>

We have entered into an agreement with the American Institutes of Research to conduct an evaluation on the employment patterns of Teach For America teachers in Texas who taught between 2010 – 2014.

The research questions are:

1. How many TFA teachers began teaching as corps members in public schools (traditional or charter) in Texas between 2010–11 and 2013–14?
  - a. What are the demographic characteristics of TFA teachers assigned to teach in Texas?
  - b. In which districts are TFA teachers employed?
  - c. In what type of districts are TFA teachers employed?
  - d. What grade levels do TFA teachers teach (elementary, middle, secondary)?
  - e. How many non-TFA teachers began their first teaching jobs in the same districts in the same year?
2. What proportion of TFA teachers who began their teaching commitments in public school districts in Texas between 2010–11 and 2013–14 completed their two-year teaching assignments?
  - a. Does this differ by grade level taught (elementary, middle, secondary)?
  - b. Does this differ by district of placement?
  - c. How does this compare with the two-year retention rate of non-TFA teachers who began their first teaching jobs in the same districts during the same year?
  - d. What proportion of TFA teachers remained employed in public school districts in Texas each year?
  - e. What proportion of TFA teachers remained employed in teaching positions in the same public school district in which they were assigned from the time of their initial placement to the present?
  - f. Does this differ by grade level taught (elementary, middle, secondary)?
  - g. Does this differ by district of placement?
  - h. How does this compare with non-TFA teachers who began their first teaching jobs in the same districts during the same year?
  - i. What proportion of TFA teachers were employed in teaching positions in a different public school district in Texas each year from the time of their initial placement to the present?
    - i. Into what types of school districts do TFA teachers move?
    - ii. How does this compare with non-TFA teachers who began their first teaching jobs in the same districts during the same year?

---

<sup>26</sup> <http://tinyurl.com/jk9hz35>

3. What proportion of TFA teachers were employed in nonteaching positions in public school districts in Texas each year?
  - a. In what educational capacity are they employed (e.g., principal, administration, support staff)?

*B. Center for Research, Evaluation and Advancement of Teacher Education, Report to Teach For America (2016)*

	2010-2011	2011-2012		2012-2013		2013-2014		2014-2015	
	Year 1	Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
School District <sup>27</sup>	Initial Cohort <sup>28</sup>	N	% Retained						
37681	18	15	83.33%	11	61.11%	7	38.89%	4	22.22%
95507	200	155	77.50%	128	64.00%	101	50.50%	93	46.50%
30526	76	53	69.74%	30	39.47%	23	30.26%	20	26.32%
78454	42	31	73.81%	22	52.38%	18	42.86%	17	40.48%
78977	106	91	85.85%	73	68.87%	63	59.43%	51	48.11%
74329	82	71	86.59%	63	76.83%	55	67.07%	49	59.76%
38957	516	444	86.05%	371	71.90%	303	58.72%	258	50.00%
95830	1076	825	76.67%	602	55.95%	451	41.91%	358	33.27%
72720	60	48	80.00%	40	66.67%	39	65.00%	28	46.67%
34354	6	6	100.00%	1	16.67%	1	16.67%	0	0.00%
92702	98	69	70.41%	51	52.04%	33	33.67%	27	27.55%
73660	18	13	72.22%	8	44.44%	7	38.89%	6	33.33%
77428	34	32	94.12%	22	64.71%	19	55.88%	18	52.94%
53506	25	10	40.00%	10	40.00%	5	20.00%	2	8.00%
36023	770	671	87.14%	496	64.42%	364	47.27%	299	38.83%
76366	171	115	67.25%	77	45.03%	44	25.73%	39	22.81%
71764	30	24	80.00%	16	53.33%	12	40.00%	11	36.67%
79435	159	134	84.28%	116	72.96%	102	64.15%	96	60.38%
98142	17	17	100.00%	4	23.53%	3	17.65%	2	11.76%
55172	454	391	86.12%	300	66.08%	251	55.29%	203	44.71%
90019	125	59	47.20%	43	34.40%	27	21.60%	16	12.80%
54787	8	7	87.50%	5	62.50%	3	37.50%	3	37.50%
70019	190	163	85.79%	133	70.00%	119	62.63%	106	55.79%
75067	72	50	69.44%	41	56.94%	33	45.83%	30	41.67%
<b>TOTAL RETENTION ALL</b>	<b>4353</b>	<b>3494</b>	<b>80.27%</b>	<b>2663</b>	<b>61.18%</b>	<b>2083</b>	<b>48.20%</b>	<b>1736</b>	<b>39.89%</b>

<sup>27</sup> Districts are de-identified.

<sup>28</sup> The 2010-2011 Teacher Cohort (initial cohort) are teachers, both new and experienced, who began teaching in the district in 2010-2011. The retention of this cohort is followed for five years.

Teach For America Partner Districts (2015-2016)

TFA Region	Partner District
Dallas – Fort Worth	Dallas ISD
	Fort Worth ISD
	KIPP
	Life Schools
	Uplift
Houston	Houston ISD
	KIPP
	Promise Community Schools <sup>29</sup>
	Spring Branch ISD
	Yes! PREP
Rio Grande Valley	Brooks County CISD
	Edcouch-Elsa ISD
	Harlingen CISD
	IDEA Public Schools
	La Joya ISD
	McAllen ISD
	Mercedes ISD
	Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD
	Raymondville ISD
	Roma ISD
	San Benito CISD
San Antonio	Edgewood ISD
	IDEA Public Schools <sup>30</sup>
	KIPP San Antonio
	San Antonio ISD

*C. School Employers of Teach For America Alumni in Texas (2015-2016)<sup>31</sup>*

District/Charter/School	Alumni Employees
KIPP	255
HOUSTON IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	235

<sup>29</sup> The only school found in 2010-2011 was Ripley House although there have been more added since that time.

<sup>30</sup> IDEA San Antonio and IDEA Rio Grande Valley cannot be separated as San Antonio IDEA does not have data in 2010-2011 given this predates IDEA's operation in San Antonio.

<sup>31</sup> Source: Teach For America Alumni Database, 2015-2016

DALLAS IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	191
YES PREP PUBLIC SCHOOLS	188
UPLIFT EDUCATION	140
IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	104
SAN ANTONIO IND SCHOOL DIST	71
AUSTIN IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	41
SPRING BRANCH IND SCH DISTRICT	31
FT WORTH IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	21
AUSTIN ACHIEVE PUBLIC SCHOOL	20
MCALLEN IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	17
ALIEF IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	14
HARLINGEN CONS IND SCHOOL DIST	11
FT BEND IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	9
KATY IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	9
NORTHSIDE IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	9
ALDINE IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	7
DEL VALLE IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	7
PHARR-SAN JUAN-ALAMO IND SD	6
ROMA IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	6
CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS IND SCH DIST	5
DONNA IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	5
ARLINGTON IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	4
GOOSE CREEK CONS IND SCH DIST	4
KINKAID SCHOOL	4
LA JOYA IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	4
LEWISVILLE IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	4
MERCEDES IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	4
NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER INC	4
RIO GRANDE CITY IND SCH DIST	4
ROUND ROCK IND SCHOOL DIST	4
SOUTH SAN ANTONIO IND SCH DIST	4
BROWNSVILLE IND SCHOOL DIST	3
DIOCESE GALVESTON-HOUSTON OFF	3
EDGEWOOD IND SCHOOL DISTRICT (S.A.)	3
GALENA PARK IND SCHOOL DIST	3
HUMBLE IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	3
IRVING IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	3
KELLER IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	3
KILLEEN IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	3
LEANDER IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	3
NORTH EAST IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	3
PFLUGERVILLE IND SCH DISTRICT	3
RESPONSIVE EDUCATION SOLUTIONS	3
RICHARDSON IND SCHOOL DISTRICT	3
RIPLEY HOUSE CHARTER SCHOOL	3
SAN BENITO CONS IND SCH DIST	3

Other <sup>32</sup>	413
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>1900</b>

*D. Sources of Funds (2015-2016) & Expenditures (2015-2016)*<sup>33</sup>

Our FY2016 Fiscal Year ended on May 31, 2016. Data on sources of funds and expenditures are up to date as of July 20, 2016, and represent preliminary actuals which may shift as we complete our audit process.

Source of Funds	HOU	RGV	DFW	SAT	Total
Foundation	\$3,130,100	\$442,500	\$2,386,505	\$938,500	\$6,897,605
Corporate	\$917,946	\$210,700	\$961,500	\$1,126,085	\$3,216,231
Individual	\$1,009,470	\$32,633	\$1,299,705	\$998,033	\$3,339,841
State <sup>34</sup>	\$1,876,213	\$1,138,797	\$3,026,589	\$1,014,485	\$7,056,084
School Partnerships	\$762,000	\$516,500	\$1,068,250	\$435,000	\$2,781,750
Event	\$12,400	\$75	\$2,250	\$1,040	\$15,765
Regional Total	\$7,708,129	\$2,341,205	\$8,744,799	\$4,513,143	\$23,307,276
National Investment	\$326,065	\$836,184	\$790,038	\$211,258	\$2,163,545
<b>Regional + National Total</b>	<b>\$8,034,194</b>	<b>\$3,177,389</b>	<b>\$9,534,837</b>	<b>\$4,724,401</b>	<b>\$25,470,821</b>

**Dallas-Fort Worth**

	<u>Adjusted Budget (11+1)</u>	<u>Final (12+0) Forecast</u>	Variance fav/(unfav)
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Foundation	2,500,000	2,386,505	(113,495)
Corporate	1,000,000	961,500	(38,500)
Individual	1,800,000	1,299,705	(500,295)
State	2,000,000	3,026,589	1,026,589

<sup>32</sup> A mix of 140 other school employers of Teach For America alumni, with 2 or less total alumni employed.

<sup>33</sup> Source: Teach For America FY16 unaudited financials.

<sup>34</sup> Note: State funds include both appropriations via the legislature and funding from the OneStar Foundation, the Texas AmeriCorps Commission.

School Partnership	1,000,000	1,068,250	68,250
Event	-	2,250	2,250
Federal	-	275,172	275,172
National Contributions & Other Income	505,782	514,866	9,084
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>8,805,782</b>	<b>9,534,837</b>	<b>729,055</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Recruitment, Selection and Placement	1,434,569	1,469,078	(34,509)
Pre-Service Training and Preparation	2,608,364	1,325,205	1,283,159
Teacher Development and Support	3,889,429	4,261,204	(371,776)
Alumni Support	891,994	897,337	(5,343)
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>8,824,356</b>	<b>7,952,825</b>	<b>871,532</b>
			-
Management and Administrative	640,734	678,783	(38,049)
Fundraising	902,692	737,458	165,234
<b>Total Support Expenses</b>	<b>1,543,427</b>	<b>1,416,241</b>	<b>127,186</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>10,367,783</b>	<b>9,369,066</b>	<b>998,717</b>

## Houston

	<u>Adjusted Budget (11+1)</u>	<u>Final (12+0) Forecast</u>	Variance fav/(unfav)
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Foundation	2,853,800	3,130,100	276,300
Corporate	877,400	917,946	40,546
Individual	2,102,317	1,009,470	(1,092,847)
State	877,604	1,876,213	998,609
School Partnership	796,750	762,000	(34,750)
Event	-	12,400	12,400

Federal National Contributions & Other Income	-	-	-
	307,344	326,065	18,722
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>7,815,215</b>	<b>8,034,194</b>	<b>218,980</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Recruitment, Selection and Placement	947,365	939,583	7,782
Pre-Service Training and Preparation	1,029,203	1,014,388	14,815
Teacher Development and Support	3,296,346	3,377,929	(81,582)
Alumni Support	874,023	912,049	(38,026)
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>6,146,937</b>	<b>6,243,948</b>	<b>(97,011)</b>
			-
Management and Administrative	512,822	615,058	(102,236)
Fundraising	1,134,638	750,328	384,310
<b>Total Support Expenses</b>	<b>1,647,460</b>	<b>1,365,386</b>	<b>282,073</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>7,794,397</b>	<b>7,609,334</b>	<b>185,062</b>

### Rio Grande Valley

	<u>Adjusted Budget (11+1)</u>	<u>Final (12+0) Forecast</u>	Variance fav/(unfav)
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Foundation	330,000	442,500	112,500
Corporate	240,000	210,700	(29,300)
Individual	44,000	32,633	(11,367)
State	1,000,000	1,138,797	138,797
School Partnership	516,500	516,500	-
Event	-	75	75
Federal National Contributions & Other Income	-	-	-
	823,633	836,184	12,551

<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>2,954,133</b>	<b>3,177,389</b>	<b>223,256</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Recruitment, Selection and Placement	339,419	360,771	(21,352)
Pre-Service Training and Preparation	468,824	472,208	(3,384)
Teacher Development and Support	1,348,827	1,189,388	159,440
Alumni Support	194,534	202,732	(8,199)
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>2,351,604</b>	<b>2,225,098</b>	<b>126,506</b>
Management and Administrative	193,126	169,874	23,253
Fundraising	272,081	202,117	69,964
<b>Total Support Expenses</b>	<b>465,207</b>	<b>371,991</b>	<b>93,217</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,816,812</b>	<b>2,597,089</b>	<b>219,723</b>

### San Antonio

	<u>Adjusted Budget (11+1)</u>	<u>Final (12+0) Forecast</u>	Variance fav/(unfav)
<b>REVENUE</b>			
Foundation	1,087,000	938,500	(148,500)
Corporate	1,150,000	1,126,085	(23,915)
Individual	900,000	998,033	98,033
State	528,000	1,014,485	486,485
School Partnership	435,000	435,000	-
Event	-	1,040	1,040
Federal	-	-	-
National Contributions & Other Income	196,320	211,258	14,938
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>4,296,320</b>	<b>4,724,401</b>	<b>428,081</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			

Recruitment, Selection and Placement	445,987	537,330	(91,344)
Pre-Service Training and Preparation	619,034	696,287	(77,253)
Teacher Development and Support	2,077,345	1,996,462	80,883
Alumni Support	417,811	478,741	(60,930)
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>3,560,177</b>	<b>3,708,821</b>	<b>(148,644)</b>
			-
Management and Administrative	243,563	280,935	(37,372)
Fundraising	469,730	378,888	90,842
<b>Total Support Expenses</b>	<b>713,293</b>	<b>659,822</b>	<b>53,471</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>4,273,470</b>	<b>4,368,643</b>	<b>(95,173)</b>

#### *E. Charity Navigator Record & Research about Teach For America*

Research shows that teachers are the single biggest school-based factor in a child’s academic success so that’s where we invest – in teachers who lead their students to outstanding outcome and become lifelong educational champions. A growing body of rigorous independent research shows that Teach For America corps members and alumni are as effective in promoting student academic achievement as other comparably experienced teachers in the same schools, and sometimes more effective among certain age groups and subjects. A review of research about Teach For America is available at: <https://www.teachforamerica.org/research>.

We’ve earned 12 consecutive top ratings from [Charity Navigator](#).