



# Rigorous Curricula, High Standards, and Meaningful Accountability

## Preparing All Students for College, Career, and Citizenship.

Teach Plus Teacher Leaders are focused on ensuring that state and local systems' policies help hold schools accountable for the readiness of all students for college, career, and citizenship. Often the mechanisms states or local systems could use to ensure students have equal access, such as tools for accountability, evaluation, and assessment, lack the input of those closest to the classroom. Teach Plus Teacher Leaders led from the bottom up, transforming their schools to better understand the connection between equity and their students' readiness to meet rigorous college and career-ready standards.

### PHILADELPHIA

Teach Plus Teacher Leaders working across five elementary schools in Philadelphia have elevated equity to the core of a teacher-led movement to improve early literacy. The results have been transformative: For the third year in a row, Teach Plus partner schools are outpacing the school district on academic learning and growth across multiple early literacy measures, including the third-grade state reading assessment. Bayard Taylor Elementary School and Alexander McClure Elementary School were recognized by the School District of Philadelphia among the most improved schools in the city. Students at Bayard Taylor Elementary grew in their mastery of English Language Arts for the fourth year in a row, gaining a remarkable 35 points on the School Progress Report over the course of Teach Plus' partnership with the school. Students at McClure Elementary made a 27 point gain on that same measure, as the school advanced two tiers in the district accountability system.

While facilitating a process of improving teaching and reading in language arts, Teach Plus supported its Teacher Leaders across Philadelphia in the development of their understanding and leadership across issues of race and equity. This foundation allowed for deeper exploration of implicit bias, research and stories about inequity, creating space to reflect on the access their students had to the standards and a high bar for learning. Now, Teach Plus Teacher Leaders use equity as a lens when engaging in school goal setting, navigating team dynamics, and analyzing data. Equity has also become a core part of schools' rationale for improving standards-based instruction and ensuring that all students have access to a rigorous curriculum.

*"I used to not talk about race because I didn't know what I was talking about. But now I'm over being defensive. I had this aha moment that I need to talk to other people about race. I have grown so much in how I think over the last few months."*

—Philadelphia Teacher Leader.

## COLORADO

Teach Plus Teacher Leaders came together from across the state to take a close look at Colorado's teacher evaluation system. After researching best practices in evaluation across the nation, Teach Plus Teacher Leaders proposed and implemented a series of micro-pilots to determine how best to support and improve teachers' knowledge and skills. The micro-pilots included teachers creating peer coaching opportunities in their school; structuring evaluations based on teachers' past ratings; creating actionable feedback loops in schools; and creating collaborative learning teams, among other topics.

By translating data from these micro-pilots into policy recommendations, Teach Plus Teacher Leaders improved the state teacher evaluation system and gained support of policymakers to ensure that future efforts encompass their recommendations. Teach Plus built a strong, empowered coalition of educators with interest and expertise in evaluation to inform the effort ahead.

*". . . the opportunity to pursue micro-pilots really opened my eyes to possibilities within the implementation of the current policy and how to change the upcoming policy so that the focus is on growing all teachers to become highly effective."*

—CO Teacher Leader.

## TEACHER LEADERS, WORKING ACROSS NETWORK, IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES

The Teach Plus Network for School Improvement (NSI) works across ten Chicago and Los Angeles middle schools to increase the share of African-American, Latino, and low-income students ready for high school success in mathematics, as a defining point in preparing students to stay on track for high school graduation and college success. With instructional leadership and coaching from Teach Plus, 10 network schools and teams have developed a shared vision for student success: Ninety-seven percent of NSI participants have reported a shared accountability for their network aims using continuous improvement tools supported by Teach Plus in collaboration with the Rennie Center. During the 2018-19 school year, network schools saw significant gains in academic achievement in math among Black, Latino, and low-income students.

Teach Plus has made equity a strong focus of this network approach, from the selection of individual schools and teacher leaders to the evidence collected on teacher and student learning. Teach Plus Teacher Leader teams across the network developed their leadership skills to focus on equity, exploring their own identity and biases and integrating equity leadership into their strategy for instructional change and improvement in mathematics. Teacher-led teams developed continuous improvement cycles to advance classroom strategies that promoted student learning, supported access to high standards, and accelerated progress on grade-level content.