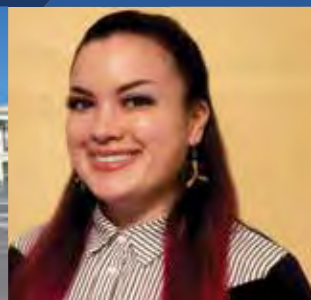


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**Dear Friends and Colleagues,**

At Teach Plus, we have an unwavering commitment to educational opportunity and equity for America's students. And we believe that great teachers, as a trusted and effective voice in shaping the policies and practices that most impact our students, schools, and nation's future, are a catalyst to fulfilling that commitment now and in years to come.

We should all be proud that this year, 2022, in a time of divisiveness and amidst many challenges in the teaching profession and education system as a whole, our best educators embraced opportunities to lead with thoughtfulness and courage. From Massachusetts to Texas, from Mississippi to Michigan, and across our eight other regions, Teach Plus teacher leaders were storytellers, innovators, advocates, and leaders. They sought out what their school communities needed, valuing the evidence around proven and promising practices and delivering major policy and practice changes at local, state, and federal level and results for their students and families.

In California, Teach Plus teacher leaders in the California Emergent Bilingual Change Agent Network, who see firsthand the social, cultural, and linguistic assets that students for whom English is not their home language bring to their classrooms, removed barriers for these students to succeed academically. In New Mexico, Teach Plus teacher leaders spotlighted the innovative practices and bright spots that schools and districts in the state have implemented, such as the use of co-teaching models and content specialists in elementary grades, to improve outcomes for students and encouraged others to follow suit.

In Pennsylvania, Teach Plus and Teach Plus teacher leaders advanced teacher diversity in their state and successfully advocated for the passage of legislation, informed by Teach Plus recommendations, with specific provisions aimed at diversifying the educator workforce. These include research-based strategies focused on increasing the number of excellent teachers in front of students, like youth pathways into teaching, a new teacher recruitment grant, and a new Chief Talent Officer role at the Pennsylvania Department of Education responsible for educator workforce initiatives. In Texas, Teach Plus, in partnership with Harmony Public Schools, a system of 61 charter public schools serving over 41,000 students, developed systems that elevate Harmony's teacher voice and utilize distributed leadership. And across all our states, Teach Plus teacher leaders shaped the education narrative, built understanding, and informed decision-making through op-eds and interviews with the media in a range of publications from Arkansas Democrat-Gazette to the Associated Press, in policy briefs and meetings with legislators, and through collective action in coalitions.

These are just a few of the many examples of our work and achievements you will read about in our 2022 Annual Report. Across our network and programs, the depth and breadth of our teachers' understanding and collective action shines through. They continue to be one of the most credible voices on the needs and aspirations of their students and communities. They continue to be one of the most important forces in advocating for strategies, policies, and levers that bring about systems change. The stories and voices in these pages are a clear testament to the power of teacher leadership and a reflection of our vision for the future.

As we continue to elevate teacher voices, deepen our impact, and work to build better education systems across this country, we are grateful for the support of so many who help us foster and grow the teacher leadership movement in the name of educational equity and the students we serve.

Sincerely

# OUR MISSION AND STUDENT OPPORTUNITY MANDATE

The mission of Teach Plus is to empower excellent, experienced, and diverse teachers to take leadership over key policy and practice issues that advance equity, opportunity, and student success.

In pursuing our mission, Teach Plus is guided by our Student Opportunity Mandate: All students should have the opportunity to achieve their potential in an education system defined by its commitment to equity, its responsiveness to individual needs, and its ability to prepare students for postsecondary success.

## GREAT TEACHERS. DEEP KNOWLEDGE. EMPOWERED TO LEAD.

We believe that when we provide excellent teachers with opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge and to lead—everywhere from the classroom to the Capitol—that is a lever that can make an enormous difference for students.

**WE RECRUIT AND SELECT** excellent teachers committed to equity and opportunity for students and to advancing policy and practice solutions that help bring about systems change.

**WE DEVELOP AND COACH** teacher leaders to shape education policy in their districts and states and to shape professional learning in their schools to improve outcomes for students.

**WE CONNECT AND EMPOWER** teacher leaders as change agents, from shaping professional learning in their schools to advocating with policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels.



*“As a Teach Plus Policy Fellow, I grew my leadership skills and learned about educational policy and advocacy as a teacher. Through the workshops and conversations at Teach Plus, I have been able to center advocacy beyond a ‘complaining’ activity, into a ‘building bridges’ activity that leads to change. Working with Teach Plus has transformed my life and reinvigorated my spirit and energy.”*

—Teach Plus Senior Policy Fellow Hjamil A. Martínez-Vázquez, PhD, Fort Worth, Texas



# Teach Plus Teacher Leaders

428

Leading instructional change in their schools and districts

399

Leading policy and systems change in their district and state

805

Participating in instructional practice programs led by Teach Plus teacher leaders

3,400

Active participants in the Teach Plus Network

## Our influence in the field



33

policy papers and reports

154

op-eds by Teach Plus teacher leaders

380

stories in the media

14,500

subscribers to our blog, *What's the Plus*, and Teach Plus newsblast

60,425

social media followers

## Our Programs

Through our Policy Fellowship and instructional leadership programs, we develop and support excellent teachers in their leadership and empower them to take action to improve equity, opportunity, and outcomes for students.

The **TEACH PLUS POLICY FELLOWSHIP** is a highly selective, rigorous program for excellent teachers who want to deepen their knowledge, expand their influence, and lead in shaping education policy. Teach Plus Policy Fellows work to improve laws and policies at the district, state, and federal levels.

The **TEACH PLUS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS** grow excellent teachers' skills to use and analyze data, make evidence-based decisions about teaching and learning, and shape professional development for their peers. Teach Plus teacher leaders create change needed in schools to advance equity and improve outcomes for students.

**Teach Plus elevates teacher voice and shapes the public narrative around teacher-led solutions through research and communications work by sharing and celebrating stories of Teach Plus teacher leaders, and publishing reports, policy briefs, and op-eds in the commentary pages of regional and national media.**

## Our Equity Focus Areas

*Teach Plus teacher leaders lead in the following Equity Focus Areas across our policy and instructional leadership programs.*

Equitable funding—High-quality early childhood education—Recruitment and retention of a diverse teaching force—Rigorous curricula, high standards, and meaningful accountability—Teacher preparation, development, and leadership—Whole child, student-centered learning.

# Ensuring Students Have Access to Effective, Well-Prepared Teachers

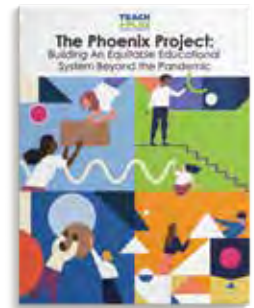


*“As the new school year dawns, we should get creative to ensure students have quality teachers in their lives because our youth are worthy of top-notch educators who inspire them to walk bravely and well-equipped into bright futures.”*

Teach Plus Policy Fellowship alumna and Senior Writing Fellow Kelly Pearce, Rio Rancho, New Mexico, in *Los Alamos Daily Post*

*“Imagine a system that attracts, supports, retains, and grows excellent, resilient educators who reflect the diversity and brilliance of their student bodies, and who have differentiated opportunities to lead and learn throughout their careers.”*

Teach Plus Phoenix Project: Building an Equitable Educational System Beyond the Pandemic (2021)



Our nation's students deserve to have excellent, well-prepared educators in their classrooms. A strong educator pipeline begins with high-quality preparation pathways so that new teachers are ready for the complex work of teaching, adapting, and responding to the diverse needs of all students. Across our regions, Teach Plus and Teach Plus teacher leaders are working to ensure that new educators entering the classroom are **ready to become teachers of record**.



Teach Plus Arkansas Policy Fellows at their kick-off event.

**IN ARKANSAS,** Teach Plus Executive Director and 2019 Arkansas Teacher of the Year Stacey McAdoo served as a **member of a state task force** that authored a new Educator Preparation Program State Review Tool, informed by Teach Plus teacher leaders, which will be used to evaluate all preparation programs in the state to ensure that teaching candidates are day-one ready.

**IN CALIFORNIA,** Teach Plus teacher leaders successfully advocated for **\$500 million in grants** to establish the Golden State Pathways Program, which includes new grow-your-own programs to recruit and train educators from within local communities to bring racial and cultural diversity and skills such as bilingualism into schools. Teach Plus California teacher leaders are also advocating for the recommendations of their 2022 brief, **“Realizing the Potential of California Standards for the Teaching Profession to Transform Teaching & Learning: Recommendations from Teach Plus California Policy Fellows,”** including the focus on culturally responsive pedagogy and affirming student voices and identities.





“Our work is more than just the hours spent with young people in the classroom. It’s the preparation that goes into teaching multiple lessons in a day, reflections on our teaching after a long day at work, the relationships we build with young people to support their humanity and learning and the connection with other colleagues and families to support students. To do this difficult work well, we have to continue to hone our craft.”

Teach Plus Policy Fellowship alum Corey Winchester, Evanston, Illinois, in *EdSurge*

## Focusing on the science of teaching reading

**IN CALIFORNIA,** Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law legislation aligned with the recommendations Teach Plus teacher leaders outlined in their policy brief, “Preparing All Educators to Teach Every Student to Read: Recommendations from Teach Plus California Policy Fellows.” The legislation updates **how reading and literacy are taught within teacher preparation programs, while maintaining California’s high standards and ensuring assessments are rooted in the science of foundational reading skills.** It also aims to hold preparation programs accountable by requiring the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to ensure that its standards of program quality and effectiveness for the preparation of candidates include all of the relevant requirements for literacy instruction.

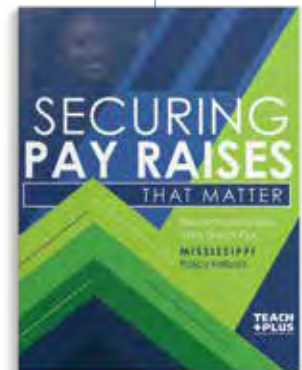


## Making teaching affordable

**IN ILLINOIS,** Teach Plus teacher leaders’ advocacy has contributed to **an increase of \$2.3 million in the 2023 state budget for the Minority Teachers of Illinois (MTI) Scholarship** to attract more teaching candidates of color to high-need schools. The increased funding will make possible a larger number of scholarships with increased annual award amounts that are focused on qualified bilingual minority applicants.



In March, **MISSISSIPPI** Gov. Tate Reeves signed into law a **historic pay raise**, increasing the state’s average teacher pay by about \$5,100 per year, or more than 10 percent. For Teach Plus and Teach Plus teacher leaders across Mississippi, this win was a culmination of a two-year advocacy campaign that encompassed meetings with legislators; the #RaiseMSTeacherPay social media campaign to highlight stories of teachers taking on second and third jobs to make ends meet; and a policy brief, “Securing Pay Raises that Matter: Recommendation from Teach Plus Mississippi Policy Fellows,” with recommendations based on feedback of more than 1,900 Mississippi teachers’ about pay, op-eds, and interviews with the media.



“Teachers deserve to focus on the one job that they have dedicated their lives to, without financial woes and worries. With the passing of this legislation, we are far more likely to attract and retain teachers in our classrooms.”

Teach Plus Senior Policy Fellow Crystal Jackson, Vicksburg, Mississippi

“This raise will help teachers stay the course, because that’s what we really want.”

Teach Plus Senior Policy Fellow Athena Lindsey, Anguilla, Mississippi, in *Mississippi Today*







Teach Plus Pennsylvania teacher leaders at the Capitol in Harrisburg.

## Recruiting and Supporting Teachers in the Profession

### Advancing teacher diversity

Research demonstrates that teachers of color make a difference for all students, especially students of color. Yet the diversity of our teaching force does not reflect the growing diversity of our nation's students. Across the nation, Teach Plus is working with schools and districts to build affirming school environments that attract teachers of color, engaging diverse teacher leaders to mentor and support their colleagues so they are better prepared and remain in the profession, and advocating for state-level legislation to diversify the educator workforce.



**IN PENNSYLVANIA,** Teach Plus and Teach Plus teacher leaders successfully advocated for the **passage of legislation**, informed by Teach Plus recommendations, that includes several provisions aimed at diversifying the educator workforce, including youth pathways into teaching, a new teacher recruitment grant, a new Chief Talent Officer role at the Pennsylvania Department of Education responsible for educator workforce initiatives, and improved data transparency. Teach Plus teachers leaders led the advocacy for this bill and mobilized other groups to support it. In the implementation phase, Teach Plus has helped develop the program of study for high school students and served on a committee appointed by the Secretary of Education to advance the department's educator workforce strategy, also informed by Teach Plus recommendations.

In September 2022, Teach Plus held the **#PANEedsTeachers summit** in Harrisburg, bringing together 150 policymakers, educators, and advocates to address teacher shortages across Pennsylvania. Teach Plus teacher leaders are now working with policymakers, including legislative leaders and the governor's office, to enact recommendations from the follow-up report in next year's budget and school code.

**IN TENNESSEE,** Teach Plus and the Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance (TECA) launched the **Ascension Project**, a leadership development and high-quality mentorship program for junior, senior, and graduate students of color who are candidates at education prep programs in middle Tennessee. The program engages veteran teachers of color in meaningful leadership roles and supports aspiring teachers of color in their transition to the profession and through their first year as educators. The Ascension Project has successfully graduated its first cohort of educators and the mentors are now working with the second group of teacher mentees.



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

Dr. Diarese George, TECA executive director

**IN TEXAS,** the Ready to Lead Fellowship works to diversify Texas teacher pipelines by encouraging talented and passionate young people in middle school, high school, and college to enter the profession through high-quality educator preparation programs. Fellows create locally responsive affinity groups focused on addressing campus, district, or citywide problems of practice. For example, Ready to Lead affinity groups have engaged Black male educators through a monthly reading series and other events in Dallas ISD; raised awareness of high-quality educator preparation programs for Hispanic high school students in Laredo; and organized students, parents, and officials to increase retention of teachers of color in Katy ISD.



*“I established [the] Real Talk 2 Percent [affinity group] to increase the excitement about Black male educators joining the profession while providing personal and professional support for the holistic development of Black men. We believe in providing a safe and shared space for Black male educators to show up as their authentic selves, honor equity of voice, and support one another beyond our scheduled events and meetings.”*

Teach Plus Ready to Lead Fellow Rickey Townsend, Dallas, Texas



*“I targeted Hispanic high school students to transition them into STEM teaching careers because one of the gaps seen in Laredo, Texas, is the low graduation rates for minority students.”*

Teach Plus Ready to Lead Fellow Maria Martinez, Laredo, Texas



## Building the profession through coalitions



Teach Plus is taking a lead role in the **One Million Teachers of Color campaign**, aimed at adding one million teachers of color and 30,000 leaders of color to the education workforce over the next decade. Launched in February 2022 by TNTP and the Hunt Institute, the campaign is working to amplify the unique strengths, skills, and lived experience that teachers and leaders of color bring in support of all students.

## Building the profession at the federal level

Teach Plus and Teach Plus teacher leaders are continuing their advocacy to help advance **the Teachers LEAD Act**. This legislation, the brainchild of Teach Plus teacher leader Kristen Beland, would create the first federal framework for teacher leadership through a grant program that would allow local education agencies, educational service agencies, and Bureau of Indian Education-funded schools to create teacher leadership programs tailored to their local needs. In Congressional meetings held in the summer, the teachers highlighted the role that teacher leadership can play in retaining excellent teachers alleviating the teacher shortage challenges that our schools and nation currently face.

Teach Plus is advocating for investment in teacher pipelines through programs like the **Augustus Hawkins Centers for Excellence** that funds teacher preparation at minority-serving institutions (MSIs), and working to create data systems that will help identify best practices in building an educator workforce that students deserve.



*Teach Plus teacher leaders and staff at the U.S. Capitol.*

# Unlocking Resources for Students

## Closing funding gaps

Teachers know how vital it is for students who need the most resources to actually receive them. Across our regions, Teach Plus teacher leaders shone a spotlight on what underfunding looks like and advocated before lawmakers to build equitable budgets and increase funding to meet the needs of students of color, students living in poverty, students with disabilities, and English learners.

**IN MICHIGAN,** Teach Plus, in partnership with The Education Trust-Midwest, mobilized to **remove language from the state budget that has historically been used to cut funding** from low-income students first during a budget shortfall. The teachers published op-eds, executed a social media campaign, and called on their legislators to guarantee the much-needed per-pupil funding. In February, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer struck the loophole from her 2022-23 budget proposal, taking the next step toward educational equity.



Teach Plus Michigan teacher leaders at the Capitol in Lansing.



**“It is imperative that legislators keep our state’s low-income and at-risk students at the forefront of their discussions and invest the surplus dollars in the students who need it the most. Michigan has ranked in the bottom five states for equitable school funding and continues to underfund our schools and students that need the most support. With this year’s budget, legislators should prioritize fully funding the promised 11.5 percent supplemental funding for at-risk students, a first step toward creating a more equitable funding system for our schools.”**

Teach Plus teacher leader Frances Lazette, Ann Arbor, Michigan, in *Bridge Michigan*

For the past two years, **Teach Plus PENNSYLVANIA** kept a laser-like focus on closing **adequacy and equity gaps in the state's school funding system**. From taking a lead role in a funding coalition, to holding meetings with over 70 legislators, to sharing their stories through op-eds, Teach Plus teacher leaders took every opportunity to advocate for resources for their students, particularly in the most underfunded districts.

The teachers highlighted the real-life consequences of inadequate and inequitable funding on students and teachers in their report, *"Funding Our Future: Teach Plus Pennsylvania Teacher Leaders on Fixing an Inadequate and Inequitable School Funding System,"* including the devastating effects of underfunding on student and teacher mental health and on school infrastructure and facilities.



In June, the Pennsylvania General Assembly approved the 2022-23 budget package which includes a **historic, bipartisan increase of over \$1 billion** in education funding, the largest ever investment in education in state history. The budget addresses all of the critical priorities Teach Plus teacher leaders brought to policymakers, including targeted measures to **address teacher shortages, diversify the educator workforce, and improve reading instruction**. The 2022-2023 budget also includes a \$100 million increase in special education funding, \$70 million in new pre-K funding, and \$225 million for the Level Up equity supplement, which accelerates resources to the 100 most underfunded school districts. In one of his final public appearances in his role, outgoing Secretary of Education Eric Hagarty told Teach Plus teacher leaders, *"The Level Up program would not exist without Teach Plus ... None of these wins would have happened without your advocacy."*



*“At a time when the impact of COVID-19 on children's and young people's mental health is profound, this funding will help my school increase access to mental health professionals and trauma-informed care. This funding will not only improve teaching and learning; it may actually save lives.”*

Teach Plus Policy Fellow Laura Sosik, Scranton, Pennsylvania



*“Level Up is sorely needed in districts like mine, which is underfunded by over \$5,000 per student per year.”*

Teach Plus Policy Fellow Luke Strawser, Mount Union, Pennsylvania



Teach Plus Pennsylvania teacher leader Xiomara Robinson (right) was honored by "Abbott Elementary" creator and star Quinton Brunson (left) on "Good Morning America" for going above and beyond to make her students feel seen and affirmed.



# Giving Teachers Agency to Lead and Affect Their Environment in Service of Students

When teachers lead, students thrive. Across a landscape of challenges in 2022, Teach Plus teacher leaders used their unique position at the crossroads of classroom and community to steer our education system toward better understanding and meeting students' needs and hopes.

## Ensuring students are on track for high school through teacher leadership and continuous improvement

In its second year, the **Network for School Improvement (NSI)** partnership with 15 middle schools in the Chicago Public Schools district continued to center teacher leadership as a key lever to ensure more Black, Latino, and low-income students were on track for success in high school and beyond. Steered by teacher leaders, 91 percent of educators across NSI agreed that their work has been successful at improving intended student outcomes, building their capacity to implement continuous improvement processes, and creating an equitable learning environment for students.

Over the past year, NSI schools focused on developing engaged and supportive relationships with their students. School teams set goals, built skills, and acquired tools to understand student needs and perspectives, and then make improvements. Highlights from across the network include schools that had **100 percent of students improve targeted quarter grades by one or more letter grade (after getting the opportunity to provide more voice in their assessment and learning activities)**, and schools recording an 83 percent drop in student referrals.



NSI meeting of Chicago Public Schools district's administrators



## Deepening teacher leadership across schools and networks

Across the country, the **Teach Plus Social Emotional Learning Change Agent (SELCA)** network empowered teachers to lead change at scale. The program supported 36 teachers—and created conditions for teacher leadership to thrive—across **COLORADO**, **MISSISSIPPI**, **NEVADA**, **NEW MEXICO**, **NEW YORK**, and **RHODE ISLAND**. Over the course of the year, 82 percent of participating schools met their project goals in improving student and/or teacher SEL practices and 88 percent of teacher leaders met their professional growth goals. Several SEL Change Agents shared their project learnings and experiences with their state legislators, working to create the necessary policies to further their classroom and schoolwide practices.



Above: The students of Change Agent Robin Stevens in Hobbes, New Mexico, show their bracelets that symbolize their power to learn and implement self-management and responsible decision-making strategies.

Left: The student members of the "Titan Peer2Peer" program in Farmington, New Mexico, who lead SEL lessons for their peers with training and support from Change Agent Alexia Martinez.



“Working with Teach Plus has helped me to organize my thoughts on educator wellness and begin to think about change. First, I wrote a letter to the school committee and spoke during public comment. This led to an article in the *Boston Globe* covering this meeting and educator wellness. After the article was published, I received an outpouring of support from former students, community members, and local politicians. Within our school system, my partner and I were asked to lead a workshop on educator wellness. The data from a survey we administered helped to guide our professional development to fit our teachers' needs.”

**Teach Plus SEL Change Agent Lisa Garcia, North Kingstown, Rhode Island**



“Over time, the Community Building and Restorative Circles allowed my students and me to gain a deeper appreciation of our commonalities and differences and deepened our connections as a community of learners. Our team focused our Teach Plus Change Agent project around community building circle education for classroom teachers. In the spring of 2022, we were able to carry out a three-day circle training event. The event culminated with participants generating plans for bringing community circles to their schools.”

**Teach Plus SEL Change Agent Shannon Lane, Greece, New York**





Afghan refugee children at an "EL Parent Night," hosted by Emerging Bilingual Change Agent Joanne Capous at Coleman F. Brown Elementary School in Modesto, California.

**IN CALIFORNIA,** Teach Plus expanded the **California Emergent Bilingual Change Agent Network (EBCAN)** to 18 teacher leaders and communities within the Central Valley. The program began under the premise that no one knows better than teachers the potential in all our students, particularly those for whom English is not their home language. Teachers see firsthand the social, cultural, and linguistic assets these students bring to their classrooms, as well as the barriers that many of them face in succeeding academically. The first EBCAN cohort's projects ranged from **building a team to differentiate instruction for English learner students to addressing STEM curriculum's linguistic barriers**. To further close opportunity gaps for students, the Change Agents looked closely at California's EL Roadmap and its principles to understand the success, or lack thereof, of its implementation in schools across the state.



*“The goal of the Transformational Science Literacy Framework, which I am developing with colleagues as part of our Teach Plus Emergent Bilingual Change Agent Network project, will be to not only address the deficits that exist in science and engineering instruction to support EL students but to also build capacity and teacher leadership in teachers that will be participating in implementing the framework.”*

Teach Plus Emergent Bilingual Change Agent Fellow Jose Rivas, Lennox, California

The teachers shared their learnings in a memo, “Teach Plus California Emergent Bilingual Change Agent Network: Lessons Learned from Teacher-Led Implementation of the California English Learner Roadmap,” with recommendations for California's education leaders and first-person essays from three of the Change Agents about their students and projects. As momentum grew, the EBCAN network expanded its focus beyond schoolwide change to mobilizing teachers to address local policy barriers and build a grassroots effort of teacher-led professional development in their communities.



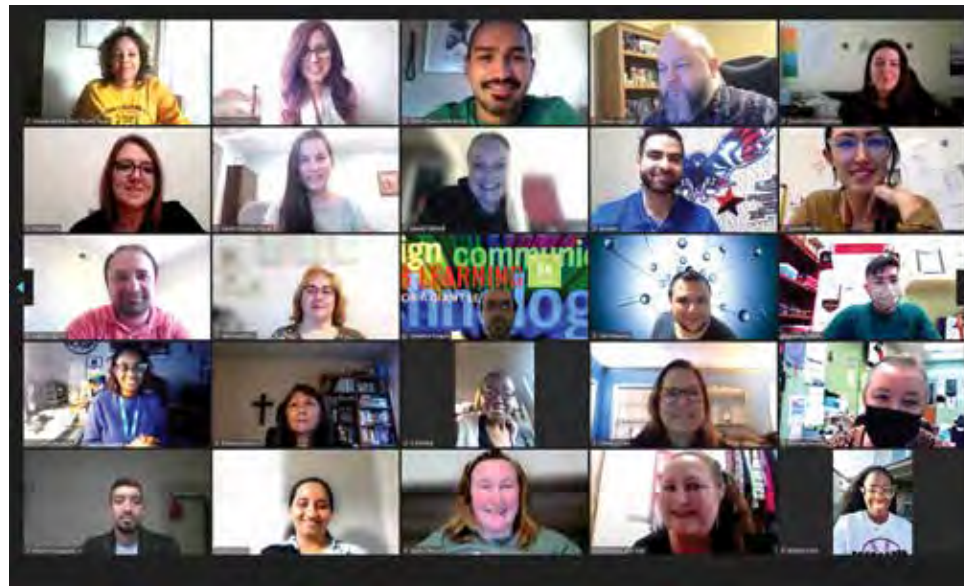
*“What traditionally has been assigned as a humanities teacher's role needs to apply to STEM and enrichment departments as well. All teachers, regardless of subject, need to be trained on how to modify or differentiate their instruction in collaboration with their colleagues. That is why my Teach Plus Change Agent project is focused on 100% of our organization's instructional team actively using individual language acquisition plans and having the documentation to account for student goals and next steps for all English Language Learners.”*

Teach Plus Emergent Bilingual Change Agent Fellow Carolina Rodriguez, San Jose, California



“Being a Harmony Teacher Advisory Senior Cabinet member is one of my most important roles within Harmony Public Schools. The cabinet has been instrumental in providing an organized platform that allows the time and opportunity to unpack concerns that greatly affect HPS as a whole.”

Harmony Teacher Advisory Senior Cabinet member Chanel Ashley-Jones, San Antonio, Texas



The Harmony Public Schools Teacher Advisory Cabinet.

## Teachers leading to accelerate student achievement

**IN TEXAS,** Teach Plus continued its partnership with **Harmony Public Schools**, a system of 61 charter public schools serving over 41,000 students, working alongside its executive leadership team to develop systems that elevate teacher voice and support principals to take advantage of and utilize distributed leadership. Across the district and state, exceptional teacher leaders, trained by Teach Plus, led in their buildings and alongside district leaders via the **Harmony Teacher Advisory Cabinet**. The cabinet focused on incorporating teacher voice into planning across the Harmony schools and guided the district on a range of issues of importance to Harmony Public School teachers, students, and parents including teacher leadership and development, social-emotional learning, and lesson planning and preparation.

## Giving teachers the microphone

Teachers with deep knowledge of local policy understand how important nuance is in building understanding and informing good decision-making, often creating opportunities out of challenges. In **INDIANA,** in response to legislation (HB1134) that would have increased teacher workloads, limited the scope and rigor of instruction, hindered social-emotional support for students, and resulted in increased teacher attrition, Teach Plus teacher leaders first designed effective messages to reach their peers, policymakers, and the public. Then, the teachers used these messages to mobilize a large network of supporters and to design an advocacy strategy they knew would be effective—including meeting with over 30 legislators, communicating through formal and informal networks and outlets, and bringing teacher voices to collective action in coalitions. Their efforts, alongside partners across the state, resulted in the ultimate failure of the legislation.



“If passed, HB 1134 will push teachers to the point of burnout and exacerbate the teacher shortage in Indiana. Our students are struggling, academically and socially, after nearly two years of pandemic learning, and we teachers are poised to help. The proposed legislation will only harm us and our students by placing unnecessary and detrimental restrictions on our work.”

Teach Plus Indiana Police Fellowship alumna Sarah Tekolste, Indianapolis, Indiana, in the *Indianapolis Business Journal*

Across our networks, our teachers continued to seek out bigger platforms to spread their perspectives and solutions. **IN MASSACHUSETTS,** Teach Plus teacher leaders advised Boston's new Mayor Michelle Wu, and informed new Gov. Maura Healey's administration, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Early Education and Care on issues ranging from teacher preparation and diversity to early childhood education.

**IN NEW MEXICO,** Teach Plus and Teach Plus teacher leaders spotlighted a range of innovative practices and approaches happening in schools across the state that are helping to improve educational outcomes for students. By focusing on creative models of teaching and learning and encouraging districts to follow suit, the teachers hope to build a more equitable system for all of New Mexico's students.



**IN NEVADA,** Deanne Moyle-Hicks, a Nevada Teach Plus Senior Policy Fellow and 4th grade teacher from Natchez Elementary School, located on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation, was named 2022 Nevada Teacher of the Year. In her leadership, Deanne advocated for an empowering education of all students—recognizing and respecting the diverse cultures and backgrounds of students. Teach Plus Nevada teacher leaders used their agency and platform to bring students, families, and educators together to engage in community discussions about what they most need and want from Nevada's educational institutions. During a community panel series focused on Indigenous voices, representatives of Native American communities shared what is most important for their educational experiences. Among teacher leaders' recommendations for policymakers: Design an accessible, living curriculum and hold brave spaces and create opportunities to connect tribes and bands with local school communities.



**“Elevating our collective voices to make positive change in the lives of Indigenous people honors their humanity and offers an opportunity to understand and address the widening achievement gap for Nevada’s Native American children.”**

**Teach Plus Nevada teacher leaders**





# Teach Plus Teacher Leaders: Voices for Impact

In 2022, Teach Plus teacher leaders published over **150 op-eds in the regional and national media**, raising their voices and advocating for what's important to them, their students, and their communities. Below are excerpts from a few of their powerful op-eds.



## Equitable funding

**“In an equitable school system, public schools are funded and given resources based on the needs of their students, not on the property wealth of their communities. In order to improve achievement and close opportunity gaps for our students, I suggest that our new governor eliminate the usage of this matrix and adopt a model that increases funding and addresses the needs of schools that serve our most vulnerable populations.”**

Teach Plus Policy Fellowship alumna Iesha Green, Little Rock, Arkansas, in *Arkansas Advocate*



## Teaching standards that improve instructional practice

**“[T]eaching standards push us not to take baby steps but leap into action when it comes to equity and instructional practices that better support our students in today’s classrooms. School leaders and teacher mentors also use the teaching standards as a guideline for coaching new and veteran teachers to refine and develop their practice.”**

Teach Plus Policy Fellow Josh Salas, Los Angeles, California in *EdSource*



## High-quality early childhood education

**“When I think about the important work early childhood professionals do, I think about rhyming activities, name writing, math games and the many other strategies we use to kickstart young children’s learning. The fact is that our work is extraordinary. We build children up to be confident, capable and compassionate people who will have the tools they need to experience physical, academic, social and emotional success.”**



Teach Plus Policy Fellow Donna Reid-Kilgore, Swoyersville, Pennsylvania, in *Times Leader*



### Whole child, student-centered learning

“I have found again and again that my students are energized by the opportunity to discuss topics that matter to them. They pay more attention to the news, come in asking relevant questions, and use the information to make their arguments stronger. I am amazed at the 14-year-olds’ ability to understand complex issues, discuss them with people they might disagree with, and find common ground to have the conversation. This challenging year, perhaps more than ever, educators must be able to facilitate conversations about difficult issues and empower our students to participate in, and lead, these conversations in their daily lives.”

Teach Plus Policy Fellow Yvette Peña, San Antonio, Texas, in *San Antonio Report*



### Rigorous curricula, high standards, and meaningful accountability

“When teachers select texts that are far from their students’ experiences, we add multiple invisible hurdles to learning. Overly complex language stymies early academic growth while literary experiences that uniformly neglect my students’ perspectives condition them to perceive their point of view as inherently less valuable than those illustrated in the text. **When texts relate to my students’ lives, they are able to access literary analysis and research-based writing faster, in the process also learning that their lives and communities are legitimate sources of wisdom.**”

Teach Plus Policy Fellow David Tow, San Rafael, California, in *EdPost*



### Teacher preparation, development, and leadership

“The basketball coach who modeled strong leadership skills and grace under pressure. The math department chair who shared resource after resource. These and other incredible teachers, staff and community leaders helped me grow in my profession and feel rooted in the community. All teachers, especially new teachers, need a space where they can be mentored, learn, and grow. State policymakers need to prioritize mentorship programs by requiring, not just recommending, for each district to create and sustain effective mentorship programs for new teachers.”

Teach Plus Policy Fellow John Fredericks, Webb, Mississippi, in *The Sun-Sentinel*





# Retaining Teachers in a Profession Where They Can Grow for the Long-term



“Reimagining education is a work of head, hands, and heart. Reimagining education for all must be a shared responsibility if we are to progress in ways that are meaningful for our students, families, teachers, and education staff. There are no unicorn teachers or leaders that can save us from this crisis in education. It is time we look to new and innovative solutions that address pressing, persisting challenges in education.”

Teach Plus Senior Policy Fellow Laura Jeanne Penrod, Las Vegas, Nevada, in *The Nevada Independent*

“As a teacher leader of color, it is extremely important to me to be in a position to influence and mentor other staff members, and to train and develop teachers into leadership roles so we can both recruit educators of color and maintain a diverse pool. As part of my Teach Plus Change Agent project, my team and I became role models for other teachers of color to take on leadership positions.”

Teach Plus Policy Fellowship alum Raymond Xochitlpilli Falcón, Lubbock, Texas



## Prioritizing teacher effectiveness through growth and support

**IN COLORADO,** Teach Plus teacher leaders concluded a multi-year advocacy effort to transform teacher evaluation and help create supportive learning environments across the state. After three years of engaging their peers, district leaders, and policymakers, Colorado teachers saw Gov. Jared Polis sign legislation which directly reflects their recommendations for a teacher evaluation system that streamlines and differentiates the process for consistently highly effective educators; focuses on development and training, including training for evaluators; incorporates innovative methods of observation; and continues to incorporate student data in a meaningful way.

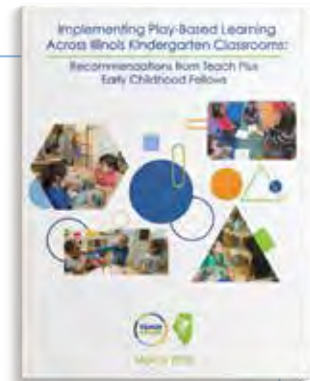
The teachers also successfully advocated for a supportive learning environment bill that requires better data collection on disciplinary incidents and indicators of school climate, updates restraint and seclusion policies, ends practices that have been shown to harm students, and promotes best practices and proper training for school security staff. Teach Plus Colorado Executive Director Mark Sass and Policy Fellowship alumna Veronica Bell now serve on the Colorado Department of Education Committee writing regulations to implement this legislation.



“Because of a focus on academic achievement, school climate has often been overlooked. However, it is an important indicator of student success and it should be treated as such. This is why I support a bill sponsored by Representatives Herod and Young (HB22-1376). If passed, this legislation would update Colorado’s policies, practices, and data frameworks to make data about students’ experiences at school more transparent and to ensure that every student learns in an environment that is positive, safe and inclusive.”

Teach Plus Colorado Policy Fellowship alumna Veronica Bell, Denver, Colorado, in *Boardhawk*

**IN ILLINOIS,** Teach Plus Early Childhood Education (ECE) teacher leaders continued to grow their presence across the state, demonstrating the professionalism, insights, and innovations within this deep, diverse ECE educator community. While there is consensus on the value of quality early learning opportunities, Teach Plus teacher leaders noticed a need in supporting communities in identifying and scaling effective practices. Teachers advocated to ensure that the state incorporated teacher voice in an initiative through the State of Illinois and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies to help create a statewide regional infrastructure with input from communities. They developed tools for policymakers and school leaders to identify and scale effective learning, including their brief, *“Implementing Play-Based Learning Across Illinois Kindergarten Classrooms: Recommendations from Teach Plus Early Childhood Fellows.”* Through this tool, Teach Plus teacher leaders highlighted the factors that allow for play-based learning in our youngest learners, and provided recommendations for policymakers to help improve its implementation across the state.



“Despite years of research demonstrating the long-term beneficial effects of play-based learning, this type of learning environment is not always available for all children. This is especially true in schools serving low-income children. It’s time we rethought our approach to play. In a recently published brief, Teach Plus Illinois Policy Fellows recommend bringing play based learning into all kindergarten classrooms in Illinois, structuring an hour of uninterrupted self-initiated play by the child and an hour of guided play directed by the educator.”

Teach Plus Illinois Early Childhood Educator Senior Policy Fellow Alli Bizon, Chicago, Illinois, in *What’s the Plus*

After years of advocacy for teacher micro-credentialing, teachers across **NEW MEXICO** are now able to **advance their licenses** from Level 1 to Level 2 after completing five micro-courses. Teach Plus teacher leaders in New Mexico partnered with the New Mexico Public Education Department to launch a pilot course and created the “Student Centered Learning” micro-course teachers across the state can use as part of their licensure process.

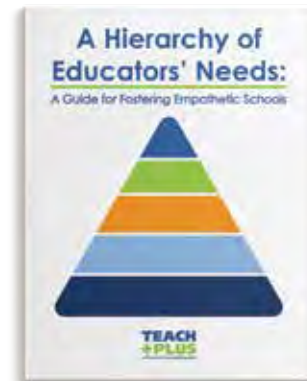
**IN TEXAS,** Teach Plus staff and teacher leaders are working to address statewide staffing concerns as part of the **Texas Education Agency’s Teacher Vacancy Task Force (TVTF)**. Teach Plus staff has worked alongside the agency to select the teacher participants and to facilitate bi-monthly meetings of the task force. Six Teach Plus teacher leaders—including Teach Plus Policy Fellowship alumnus and 2021 Texas Teacher of the Year Eric Hale—are serving on the TVTF, and it is chaired by Teach Plus Policy Fellowship alumnus Josue Tamarez Torres. The TVTF report to the governor and the Texas Legislature includes recommendations on key issues such as teacher compensation, mentoring for new teachers, high-quality instructional materials, teacher leadership, and other issues affecting the teaching profession.

## Reimagining the teaching role

For over a decade, outstanding teachers have been attracted to Teach Plus because of the opportunity to learn and lead without leaving the classroom. Teach Plus is proud to be a founding member of the **Coalition to Reimagine the Teaching Role**, along with Education Resource Strategies, Leading Educators, Public Impact, and the Next Education Workforce Initiative at Arizona State University. We believe that teaching should be a dynamic, rewarding, collaborative, sustainable, and diverse profession—one with educators who are set up to have the greatest positive impact on their students' learning and well-being—and that teachers can lead the way to that vision for the profession.

### Focusing on educator wellness

When educators are able to bring the best version of themselves to their classroom, students have opportunities for innovative, culturally responsive learning experiences. Educator wellness is directly correlated with an improved positive school climate, performance, and sense of safety for students. In **CALIFORNIA**, Teach Plus teacher leaders developed a framework, **A Hierarchy of Educators' Needs**, which defines key areas of need, establishes relevant framing, and puts forth solutions to apply to the local context. The teachers are using the hierarchy to guide discussions in their schools and districts around adult well-being.



*“If we want our schools to be a place where students, parents and staff feel a sense of belonging and trust, we need to recommit to building community and fully fund restorative practices with behavior intervention. We need to learn — or relearn — to be relationship-centered. We need to create spaces where we can all speak from the heart and be known to each other. We need to take the time to have difficult conversations, show students the impacts of their behavior and commit ourselves to their futures.”*

Teach Plus Policy Fellowship alumna and Senior Writing Fellow Louise Williamson, Chula Vista, California, in EdSource



Across 12 districts in **ARKANSAS**, **CALIFORNIA**, **ILLINOIS**, **MASSACHUSETTS**, **PENNSYLVANIA**, and **TEXAS**, Teach Plus's **Equity Leadership Institute** is bringing together teacher leaders, school administrators, and systems leaders to collectively work through a continuous improvement process to diversify their educator workforces. As part of this work, districts are examining demographic, organizational, and school culture and climate data to understand the root causes affecting recruitment and retention of teachers of color, learning about best practices for building diverse teacher pipelines and culturally affirming school environments, and developing plans to tackle the challenge of educator diversity within their regional contexts.



*“Growing up, I never saw myself represented in teaching at all; I only had two Black teachers in school. Working in a predominantly Black school, it’s important for our students to be represented in educational roles. I’m excited to participate in the Equity Leadership Institute to share my perspective as a teacher of color and find ways to bring students of color like mine into the teaching field.”*

Kindergarten teacher Lynetta Smith, Duquesne City School District, Pennsylvania

**IN ILLINOIS**, Teach Plus secured a \$2 million statewide investment from the Illinois State Board of Education and is working in partnership with the Sangamon-Menard Regional Office of Education 51 and the Golden Apple Foundation, to launch affinity groups for educators of color, an idea conceptualized by teacher leaders in 2019. In 2022, 45 teachers were leading 43 affinity groups, across 35 districts in the **Illinois Affinity Group (ILAG) Network** that support educators in navigating and improving their school environments and connect them to a larger network to build alliances and address systemic issues.



*“As a Black male elementary school teacher of 14 years, it has taken over a decade for me to find a space such as the Teach Plus affinity groups where I can not only be my authentic self, but receive confirmation that my story is shared, respected, and understood. No matter my role in education, I am passionate about empowering and supporting our educators and students of color as diversity of thought breeds innovation and collaboration for all students, educators, and our society as a whole.”*

Illinois Affinity Group facilitator Reggie Duncan, Mascoutah School District

*“Since accepting the position as Illinois affinity group facilitator, I have experienced a true sense of belonging for the work I am passionately advocating for as an educator in Illinois. I am dedicated to advocating, building, engaging, and lifting voices with my colleagues to implement authentic sustainable change.”*

Illinois Affinity Group facilitator Tiauna King, Naperville Community School District 203





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