



TENNESSEE EDUCATORS *of* COLOR ALLIANCE

2025 IMPACT REPORT



Reflecting Participant Survey Data from School Year 2023-2024

About TECA

We believe that in order to ensure strong accountability systems that promote equitable outcomes and excellence in education, more educators of color need a shared, elevated voice and stronger presence. Accomplishing this requires engaging and convening educators of color with opportunities to fellowship, developing layers of mentorship between preservice educators of color and in-service educators of color, and exposing educators of color to various leadership opportunities.

Mission

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

Vision

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

Core Values: Committed. Supportive. Inclusive.

We are committed to building a welcoming, unapologetic community where everyone has a role in ensuring educators of color are represented and positioned to influence change.

Acknowledging we are not a monolithic group, we must create safe spaces for educators of color to learn, grow, collaborate, and celebrate based on their own unique needs.

We must keep the big picture of systemic inequity at the forefront because all students deserve educators of color who are prepared to teach them from day one.

Programming

Cohort-Based Leadership Development Programs



Professional development for pre-service educators enrolled in an educator preparation program:

- Résumé prep
- Interview skills
- Mentorship & networking
- Leadership & professional development



Education policy bootcamp for community advocates:

- Local and state policy
- Civic leadership engagement training
- Advocacy tools, templates, and best practices
- TECA Day On The Hill



TENNESSEE EDUCATORS
of COLOR FELLOWSHIP

Professional development for in-service educators with 3+ years of experience:

- Mentorship & networking
- Tennessee-specific education landscape content
- Racial identity development
- Culminating equity project



TENNESSEE EDUCATORS
of COLOR FELLOWSHIP
CHARTER COHORT

Professional development for in-service educators with 3+ years of experience within charter schools:

- Mentorship & networking
- Tennessee-specific education landscape content
- Racial identity development
- Culminating equity project



Professional development to position charter school educators for career advancement into leadership:

- Emphasis on 4 core leadership skills
- Two summative projects
- Mentor/coach pairing

Membership

Community-Based Membership Opportunities

CONNECTED

Networking events and communal healing circles for educators of color.

TECA ON mighty networks

Online platform for authentic and relevant community building, professional development, prizes and giveaways, and more.

TECA AMBASSADORS

Leaders within each region who promote TECA awareness and membership, host events, and build community at the local level.



The Team



Dr. Shawn Boyd
Interim
Executive Director



Tereva Parham
Communications
Director



Kanitha Pope
Operations Manager



Michelle Thomas
Special Programs
Manager



Dr. Courtney Mauldin
Programs Manager



**Dr. Michalyn
Easter-Thomas**
Programs Manager



Core Burton
Programs Manager

Board of Directors



Dr. Janine Al-Aseer
University of Tennessee
Knoxville



Diana Anosike
Rocky Mountain Prep



Christiane Buggs
PENCIL



Matt Cheek
Nashville Teacher
Residency (Board Chair)



Sylvia Flowers
Alma Advisory Group



Dr. Diarese George
Nashville Public Education
Foundation
(TECA Founder)



Dr. Kevin Haggard
Amazon Corporate
(Board Secretary)



Lemuel Holifield
Valor Collegiate
Academies



Cardell Orrin
Stand For Children



Derrick Williams
The Forge School
(Board Treasurer)



Grant Williamson
Bradley Arant Boult
Cummings, LLP

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

IMPACT

This Impact Report is based on programming during the 2023-2024 academic year. Overall, it highlights how the three cohort-based programs of the time collectively strengthened educator leadership across Tennessee and equipped 52 educators to influence change in their schools and communities.

We appreciate TECA Founder Dr. Diarese George for his assistance in accessing the data; Special Projects Manager Michelle Thomas for her research and analysis of the data; and Communications Director Tereva Parham for translating the data into design.

REACH

Geographical Reach:

- 71% of people served in Middle Tennessee
- 29% of people served in West Tennessee

Programming expanded into West Tennessee for the first time.

OUTCOMES

Although each program had its unique goals, across the fellowships, there was an increase in the following areas:

- Advocacy
- Sense of Belonging
- Retention

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

Advocacy: Increased awareness and knowledge about processes and procedures within classrooms, schools, and districts.

Sense of Belonging: Huge emphasis on mentorship and Network Building - within TECA and the community.

Retention: Support networks and professional development opportunities enhanced participant interest in returning to the profession for the foreseeable future.

Data Methodology:

Feedback forms and participant exit tickets were analyzed to gather qualitative and quantitative data. Some metrics did not have matching pre-post questions or a well-defined scale. Additionally, there was no set group of questions to infer organizational goals across all three fellowships.

The Ascension Project

Highlights

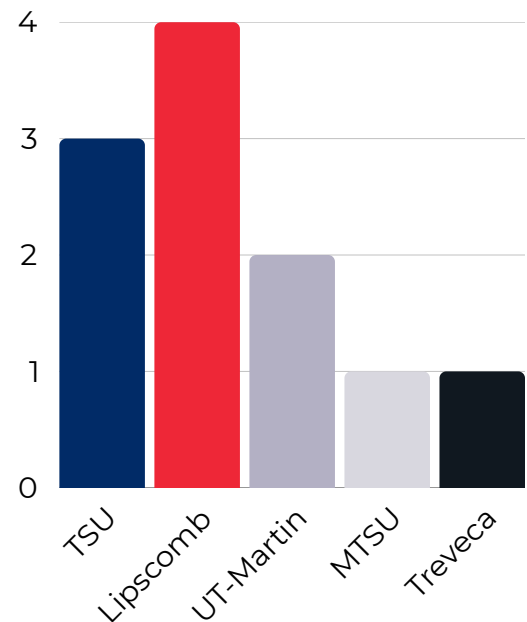
The Ascension Project had 11 participants, representing 5 higher education universities across Middle Tennessee during the 2023-2024 school year.

Ascenders expressed their awareness of metrics before and after their completion of the program.

Foundational knowledge of education policy and advocacy. Before the program, 4 participants were 'Not At All Aware,' 3 were 'Somewhat Aware,' and 4 were 'Very Aware.' **All participants who completed the program moved to the "Very Aware" level.** This indicated the program successfully met its objectives of increasing awareness and knowledge in Educational Policy and Advocacy.

Impact of racial identity on education experience and future students. Before the program, 6 participants were 'Somewhat Aware,' and 5 were 'Very Aware' of the impact of racial identity on education experiences. After completing the program, the number of participants who identified as "Very Aware" increased from 6 to 11. 45.45% of Ascenders improved their awareness, moving from "Somewhat aware" to "Very Aware." **The number of participants who identified as "Very aware" increased by 83.33% after the program's completion.** This demonstrates that the program was successful in increasing awareness of the impact of racial identity on educational experience.

University Representation

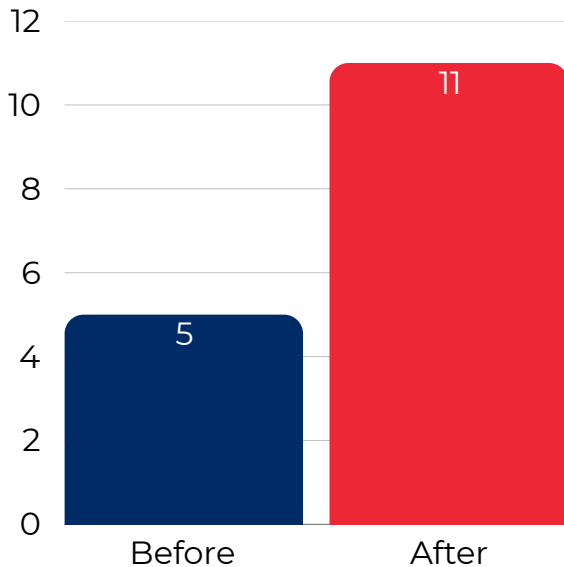


Awareness of Impact of Own Racial Identity on Students' Education

83%
increase

The Ascension Project

Leveraging Social & Professional Networks



“

"I feel much more aware and knowledgeable of the topics due to our panels, sessions, guest speakers, projects, and readings."

- Program Participant

”

Leveraging social and professional networks for career development. The initial data indicated that 18% of participants were “Not Aware” of the topic, while 36% felt “Somewhat Aware,” and 46% were “Already Very Aware.” This suggests a moderate level of existing awareness, with opportunities for growth. **After the intervention, every participant (100%) reported being “Very Aware.”**

Session content. Participants highlighted the relevance of the program content to their professional growth. Sessions were found to be meaningful, addressing both academic and non-academic topics and helping participants develop new skills and mindsets as educators of color. One Ascender shared, “I feel much more aware and knowledgeable of the topics due to our panels, sessions, guest speakers, projects, and readings.”

This feedback demonstrates that the program is effective in shaping participants’ career trajectories and building their professional knowledge base.

Mentorship: Relationship & Connections. When reflecting on the relationships and connections made while engaging in the program, an Ascender provided, **“The biggest takeaway I learned from mentorship is even if your mentor cannot get you to where you are trying to be, they may know someone else that can get you there, and they will support you and lead you along the way regardless.”**



The Ascension Project

Praise for the Program

"My biggest takeaway was acknowledging and showing off the power of being a teacher of color. My identity will be a main part of how I will teach and how my students will see me as their teacher."

"I have enjoyed myself tremendously and am grateful for all the connections I have made. This has been one of the most productive fellowships I have been a part of, and I really feel it has made a positive impact on my teaching career."

"I appreciate this program so much, and I will hold everything I've learned and experienced from this program! Already, I have seen the impacts it has made on my teaching as well as my life, and I hope that all teachers of color get to experience something like this!"

"The selection of presenters and team leaders was excellent! The memos, check-ins, and reminders were all well-timed and very appreciated. Overall, the entire program was absolutely amazing."

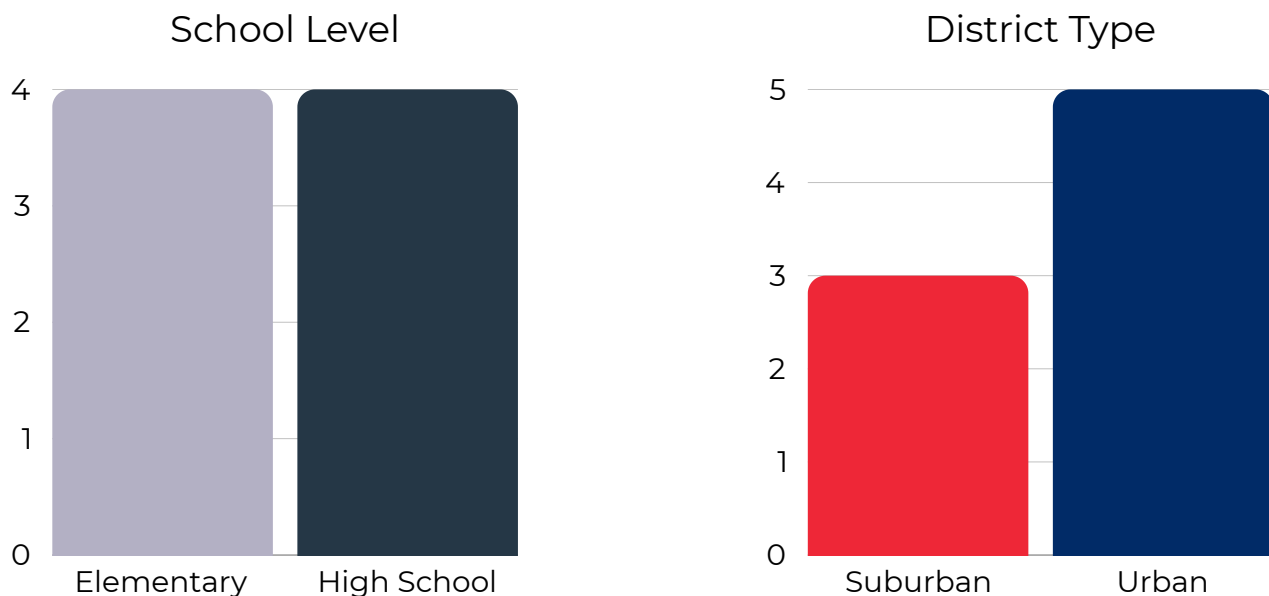


TECA Fellowship

Highlights

The 2023-2024 TECA Fellowship began with 9 participants, and halfway through the course, one participant left the program due to personal reasons. These highlights reflect the responses of the 8 participants who completed the program.

An equal number of participants worked at elementary schools and high schools, with 5 teaching in urban schools, and 3 teaching in suburban schools. This distribution aligned with the focus of the TECA Fellowship grant, which prioritized educators serving the Nashville area, a predominantly urban region.



Fellows expressed their awareness of metrics before and after their completion of the program.

Confidence in advocating for change. Before starting the fellowship, only 3 participants (37.5%) felt confident advocating for change. The majority, 5 participants (62.5%), did not feel confident advocating for change. After completing the fellowship, all 8 participants (100%) felt confident advocating for change. **The data shows a remarkable improvement in participants' ability and confidence to advocate for change, with a 62.5% increase in confidence levels.**

TECA Fellowship

Use of data and research for advocacy. Before the Fellowship, 37.5% (3 out of 8 participants) were using data and research to guide their advocacy work. **After the fellowship, 87.5% (7 out of 8 participants) used data and research for advocacy work.**

Comfort in using data and research for advocacy. Before the Fellowship, the mean score on this metric was 2.75 out of 5. Afterward, the mean score increased to 4.125. The mean score increased by 1.375 points, which shows a substantial improvement in participants' confidence, skill, or understanding based on this question.

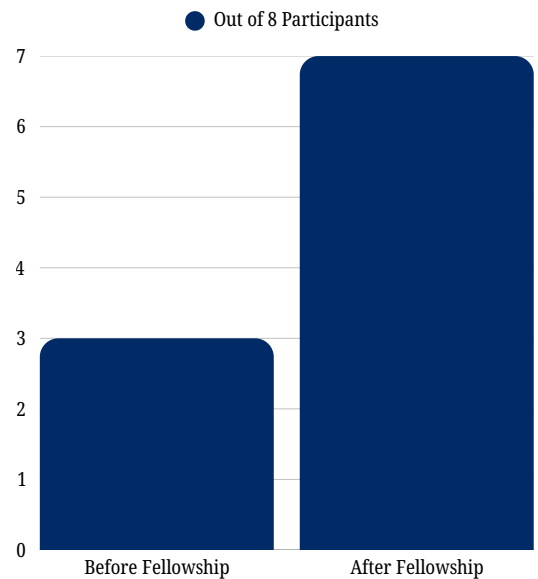
Leadership opportunities. As a result of being in the Fellowship, 3 fellows applied for leadership positions or pursued other opportunities within their schools or professional networks:

- Dean of Students
- Exceptional Education Coach
- "I am writing a proposal to present to my principal, addressing the many building needs that will help support students and teachers. If my school rejects my proposal, I will go to the Superintendent of Schools."

This indicates the program contributed to the increase in participant confidence, moving them to pursue to leadership positions.

**Comfort in using data and research increased:
from 2.75
to 4.125**

Use of Data and Research



TECA Fellowship

The equity project. The fellowship includes an equity project designed to impact their community and revitalize their own passion for teaching. This included identifying issues, using data, and driving to action-oriented goals.

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“This project really pushed me to be more involved in my school community outside of my job role. It also helped me create an engaging activity that I can keep doing for years to come with multiple grade levels.”

“This process was scary, yet necessary. The equity project has lit a fire in me that I thought fizzled out. It was the push that I needed to become a better version of myself.”

”

Mentorship. The participants of the TECA Fellow program were paired with The Ascension Project participants to develop TECA's first mentor-mentee program that ran in tandem with each other. Both programs ran during the academic year, allowing for overlapping sessions when needed.

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“I enjoyed being able to mentor, encourage, and share teacher nuggets with my mentee. I loved showing her the good parts of teaching and showing her the challenges of teaching in a positive way. I was able to advocate and share my class with her, as well as ask her questions and give her things to prepare for and think about. I know this is a lifelong mentor and mentee relationship.”

“The mentee and mentor experience was astounding! I hope to continue this experience throughout the next few years of teaching. Providing an opportunity to a mentee and to acclimate a student teacher to the most rewarding career ever established will always be a great takeaway for me.”

”

TECA Fellowship

Educator retention. TECA prioritizes educator retention through all of its programming. It is imperative to provide support for existing educators of color and retain them in the workforce. To identify the impact of the TECA Fellowship on educator retention, we asked, “Since completing the fellowship, how likely are you to return to the profession?”

A strong majority (62.5%), 5 out of 8 participants, rated their likelihood of returning as 5 (very likely), and 37.5% (3 out of 8) rated their likelihood as 4 (likely). No respondents indicated feeling unlikely or neutral about returning. This indicates that the program contributed towards keeping educators in the profession by providing them with the professional development and advocacy skills required to grow in their careers and impact their communities.



Overall satisfaction. When asked about the overall satisfaction with the fellowship program, the majority of participants (7 out of 8) rated their satisfaction as 5, indicating they were **"highly satisfied"** with the fellowship experience. Only one participant rated the experience as a 4, indicating moderate to high satisfaction. This average score is 4.875, very close to 5, further reinforcing that participants were largely satisfied with the fellowship.

Praise for the Program

“Exposure! This fellowship really helped connect me directly to the systems of education that I didn’t know existed. There are so many organizations and institutions making a lot of decisions and advocacy.

“I think the TECA Fellowship is necessary. It has to be pushed out to the district and the directors of schools.”

“The TECA Fellowship has caused me to listen more and try to implement the voices of students, parents, and young educators with a shared belief that equity can be achieved with self-confidence, praise, and acceptance from all stakeholders as we all aim for academic success.”

Advocacy Academy

Highlights

The Advocacy Academy held two cohorts during the 2023-2024 school year: Nashville during fall 2023 with 18 participants and Memphis in spring 2024 with 15 participants. This was the first year that the program was extended to Memphis.

Program relevance. Both cohorts rated the sessions as “Extremely Valuable.” The average score on program relevance and helpfulness to future educators of color in Nashville was 4.74, while in Memphis, it was 4.85. Participants indicated a high satisfaction with the program in helping them as future educators of color.

"I now have clarity and more understanding about the process of how policies are made and implemented. I know where to look when I need information specifically about educational policies."



Advocacy Academy

Highlights

Key takeaways. Participants shared their takeaways from different sessions. Recurring themes included excitement about collaboration on policy work, a deeper understanding of the policymaking process, and the role of constituent support to effectively pass policies.

- “Councilwoman Delishia Porterfield’s session was amazing! I had a renewed sense of faith in our government after hearing her share her story.”
- **“Hearing directly from someone with experience in policy advocacy brought the process to life.”**
- “Rep. Harold Love, Jr. is the first politician that I have met with who explained the processes in layman's terms and was transparent about his tenure and leadership style. I appreciated him providing a thorough explanation of how policies are shaped and voted upon.”
- “Not being from Shelby County, this academy has really encouraged me to move home and start this work in my hometown of Jackson, TN.”



Memphis and Shelby County participants really appreciated gaining local context on policy and advocacy work:

- "Understanding how things have worked in Memphis has opened my eyes to injustices not really understood before."
- "Shelby County's operations seem to be different than the majority of the state."
- "Gentrification and changing of district lines were better understood."

Inaugural E3 Awards



E3: Elevating Excellence in Education

On **Saturday, September 23, 2023**, educators, education advocates and supporters, and community members gathered for the inaugural TECA E3: Elevating Excellence in Education Awards Dinner. Held at the Loews Vanderbilt Hotel, the elegant evening of celebration was established to honor educators and increase financial support to advance, deepen, and strengthen TECA's impact. Attendees received a complimentary TECA swag bag, networked during the cocktail social, dined on a delicious catered meal, recognized educational leaders and leaders on the rise, and concluded the night on the dance floor.

2023



Honorees

Aspiring Educator of Excellence

Erica Diaz
Jeremiah Phillips

Early Career Educator of Excellence

Courtney D. Covington
Chandler Davenport

Educator of Excellence

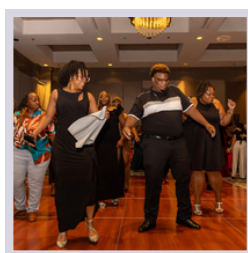
Verónica Calderón-Speed
Dr. Candra Clariette
Dr. Tanya Kennedy

Lifetime Achievement for Excellence

Dr. Melissa Collins

Community Partner of Excellence

The Education Trust





TENNESSEE EDUCATORS *of* COLOR ALLIANCE

We appreciate your support of the Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance.

Your engagement as members, community partners, and donors enables the sustainability and continuous fulfillment of our necessary mission. Our intentional programming provides high-quality learning and professional development, increases workforce retention, and cultivates valuable networks and community.

We invite you to invest in Tennessee's educators of color and the education system through one-time and recurring donations that directly advance and strengthen support for educators of color.



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