

TEACHFORAMERICA

Teach For America – Texas

Program Update,

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Note: This report offers an update to and makes multiple references to the initial report filed with the Texas Education Agency in November 2016¹.

¹ <http://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539611216>

1. Executive Summary

Vision, The Problem as we See It, Theory of Systemic Change, Mission & Approach

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, 6,400 corps members are teaching in 53 urban and rural regions across the country while more than 49,000 alumni work across sectors to ensure that all children have access to an excellent education.

OUR VISION:

One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

THE PROBLEM AS WE SEE IT:

Potential is equally distributed across lines of race and class, but opportunity is not. Today in America, the circumstances of children's births predict the opportunities they have in life. Children growing up in historically marginalized and disenfranchised communities lack access to a broad spectrum of resources and opportunities, and attend schools that are not equipped to meet their unmet needs. This disproportionately impacts children of color, who are more than two times more likely to be born into poverty, who bear an additional burden of low expectations and other biases stemming from institutional racism, and who now constitute nearly half of all children in American public schools. Our public education system, which has remained largely unchanged for 100 years, is not designed to give students agency to overcome the barriers they face to lead and shape the dynamic, global world into which they will graduate.

A THEORY OF SYSTEMIC CHANGE:

Solving this problem will take many interventions from many directions over a prolonged period of time: no single solution is sufficient to bring about an equitable and excellent education for all children. Our mission and approach draws on three lessons from enduring systems-change efforts throughout history. First, change requires sustained leadership inside and outside of the system challenging conventional wisdom and the status quo by demonstrating what's possible. Second, change requires a broad and diverse coalition of people united around common purpose and shared values, working together to translate insights from proof points of possibility into policy and practice. Third, the effort must be shaped by those most directly impacted by the injustice, and led by those with personal proximity to the problem and its complexity.

OUR MISSION:

Teach For America finds, develops, and supports a diverse network of leaders who expand opportunity for children from classrooms, schools, and every sector and field that shapes the broader systems in which schools operate.

OUR APPROACH:

1. **We find promising leaders:** The questions underlying educational inequity demand the imagination and sustained focus of our nation's most promising leaders. We recruit outstanding and diverse leaders early in their careers, who have demonstrated evidence of the values and leadership necessary to expand opportunity and access for all children inside and outside of the classroom. We ask leaders to make a lifelong commitment that begins with two years' teaching in a public school, partnering with children and families most acutely impacted by educational inequity.
2. **We develop and cultivate the leadership skills and mindsets necessary for systems change through classroom teaching:** We develop leaders who go beyond traditional expectations to advance the academic and personal growth of their students and help to strengthen their schools. In doing so, they expand their perspectives, knowledge, and skill as educators, advocates, and systems change leaders. Great teaching is necessary to ensure children realize their potential and have the full agency they need and deserve in life. Teaching is also a profound act of leadership, and foundational for courageous individual and collective leadership in the long fight for educational equity and excellence. In partnership with schools, families, local universities, other organizations, and businesses in the community, we provide initial training, ongoing professional development, and access to an unparalleled resource and support network.
3. **We support the individual and collective leadership, relationships, and learning of those in our network throughout their lifetime:** Throughout their lives, as their careers take shape, we help alumni connect with each other and with high-impact opportunities to continue to grow and learn in pursuit of collective impact. Informed and inspired by their students, many alumni choose to teach in high-need schools and communities beyond their two-year commitments. Others lead from many sectors that shape the context and conditions in which schools operate: they are school and district leaders; policy makers; founders of advocacy organizations; social entrepreneurs; and business, philanthropic, and civic leaders working to make change.

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 approaching 700 alumni of our organization. In total, the Teach For America network in Texas is approaching 4,500 members, with over 2,100 classroom teachers impacting nearly 140,000 high needs students, and another 750 K-12 employees (counselors, campus leaders and district administrators) leading and supporting schools.

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.²” Currently, the state’s highest need populations 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 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.

Timeline of Activities

Figure 1 highlights the timeline of activities described in this report:

Figure 1: Timeline of Activities

Activity	Timeframe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yearly survey of TFA alumni in Texas, with attention to current role/employer to establish baseline of public school employee scale among TFA alumni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yearly (minimum) stakeholder meetings with superintendents, heads of human resources/human capital in all partner districts (establishing expectations for partnership) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer/Fall 2016 • Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to school meetings with principals at partner campuses (setting shared expectations, with focus on key retention strategies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing stakeholder meetings with principals at partner campuses (progress updates regarding individual teachers on campus) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing, as necessary

² Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 60x30 Strategic Plan <http://www.theccb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/6584.PDF?CFID=26748433&CFTOKEN=34632987>, (p.i)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination with alternative certification providers to streamline program services between alternative certification and TFA where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer/Fall 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open door policy for TFA sponsored professional development events for partner district personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing, depending on regional PD schedules
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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"> ○ Transformational Teaching ○ Culturally Responsive Teaching ○ National Board Certification ○ Leadership Fellowship (i.e. pursuing school leadership opportunities) ○ Career Coaching (i.e. supports to make a career of teaching) ○ Excellent School Visits ○ Aspiring Leaders Program (in partnership with The Teaching Trust) ○ Partnerships with master’s in education programs for accelerated study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring/Summer/Fall 2016 • Ongoing into Spring 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesigned staff roles and responsibilities in various ways to focus on supporting teacher retention, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer 2016 redesign, for 2016-2017 school year • Summer 2017 redesign, for 2017-2018 school year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulating our overall cost model for preparing new teachers, including funding sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring/Summer 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating comparisons between TFA retention rates and retention rates for other new teachers in low-income communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring/Summer 2017

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 2: Efforts to Improve Retention in Public Education

Figure 2: Summary of Activities



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing Meetings with Superintendents/Human Resource Directors in Partner Districts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing meetings with Campus Principals/Administrators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination with Alternative Certification Providers/Educator Preparation Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Door Policy for Teach For America Professional Development
Region-Specific Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dallas – Fort Worth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alumni Teacher Engagement Campaign ○ Partnership with Teaching Trust ○ Variety of Professional Development Initiatives ○ Southern Methodist University Partnership ○ Texas Wesleyan University Partnership ○ Influencing Alumni Talent Initiative ○ Alumni Appreciation Initiative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houston <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partnership Meetings ○ Alumni Teaching Professional Development & Job Fair ○ Alumni School Leaders and Emerging School Leaders Learnings ○ Leadership Opportunities, Awards & Service Acknowledgements ○ Partnership with Leadership for Educational Equity & Other Advocacy Based Organizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rio Grande Valley <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transformational Teaching Cohort ○ Aspiring School Leaders Fellowship ○ Targeted Activities for Second Year Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • San Antonio <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partnership Meetings ○ Fellowships ○ Leadership Awards & Funding Resources ○ Competency & Values Development ○ Educator Appreciation Month ○ Director, of Alumni Impact (FTE)

2. Efforts to Improve Retention in Public Education

Regional & Comparative Data

In 2016, we contracted with two different firms to analyze and compare teacher and educator retention among Teach For America teachers and other teachers in the same school districts.

First, a partnership with the Center for Research, Evaluation and Advancement of Teacher Education based at the University of Houston provided 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 3: 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 ³	85%	56%
2010-2011 all new teachers in TFA partner districts ⁴	81%	61%

Second, we commissioned an evaluation by American Institutes of Research⁵ which 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. 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);
6. Are remaining teachers in Texas public schools at increasing rates (p. 13);

The AIR study is limited in that it:

1. Was unable to locate any Teach For America alumni from the 2010 – 2013 cohorts who have remained employed in Texas public schools in a non-teaching position (instructional coach, counselor, assistant principal, principal, central office roles, etc.) – which could be as high as 290 educators⁶.
2. Does not include any Teach For America teacher who began teaching in Texas from 1991 - 2009, or after 2013 - upwards of 650 educators, over 400 of which are teachers⁷.
3. Does not include any Texas teacher or K-12 employee who began teaching in another state and moved to Texas - upwards of 400 educators⁸

³ Source: Regional Tracking Tool

⁴ Source: Center for Research, Evaluation and Advancement of Teacher Education, Houston University, Report to Teach For America, July 21, 2016.

⁵ http://tiny.cc/air_tfatx

⁶ Source: Teach For America alumni database

⁷ Source: Teach For America alumni database

⁸ Source: Teach For America alumni database

4. 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.

Most recently, we have captured information for our 2015 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 2017-2018 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 4: Teach For America 2015 Cohort Retention

Measure	Result
2015 cohort Teach For America teachers in Texas who finished their two year teaching commitment (i.e. 2 year retention rate) ⁹	352 teachers completed their two year commitment (83% of 424 who started teaching in 2015)
2015 cohort Teach For America teachers in Texas who will remain in K-12 education in Texas in 2017-2018 (i.e. 3 year retention rate) ¹⁰	251 of these teachers will continue in K-12 education in Texas, of which 187 will remain at the same campus (59% of 424 who started teaching in 2015)

Figure 5: Teach For America Alumni in Education

Measure	Result
Number of Teach For America alumni who were classroom teachers in Texas in 2016-2017 ¹¹	~1,450 (ranging in experience from 3 years to 26 years)

⁹ Source: Regional tracking tool

¹⁰ Source: Regional tracking tool

¹¹ Source: Teach For America alumni database

Number of Teach For America alumni who were K-12 employees in Texas in 2016-2017 (excluding classroom teachers) ¹²	~750 (including instructional coaches, counselors, deans/assistant principals, principals, district staff and superintendents)
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In summary, we see a slightly higher level of retention into a third year among our 2015 cohort, at 59%¹³ compared to the retention into a third year among our 2014 cohort, which we reported on in the fall of 2016, at 56%¹⁴. Data from the AIR evaluation show the three year retention rate of our 2013 cohort at 55%¹⁵.

Lastly, we should note that Teach For America continues its recent history of increasing its teacher force diversity, which was noted by the final report from The American Institutes note above. Compared to the entire teacher workforce in Texas in 2015-2016 (the most recent year available), the Teach For America teachers in 2015-2016 were more diverse, and more closely mirrored the changing demographics of our state.

Figure 6: Teacher Workforce Diversity, 2015-2016

Demographic	Texas Teacher Workforce, 2015-2016 ¹⁶	Teach For America, 2015-2016 Texas Cohort ¹⁷	Texas Student Population, 2015-2016 ¹⁸
White	61%	36%	29%
Hispanic	26%	27%	52%
African American	10%	22%	13%
Non-White Other	3%	15%	7%

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. These activities **are in addition to the “Common Activities”** previously articulated in our prior report to the Texas Education Agency in November 2016¹⁹.

¹² Source: Teach For America alumni database

¹³ Source: Regional Tracking tool

¹⁴ <http://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539611216>, p. 15

¹⁵ http://tiny.cc/air_tfatx, p. 25

¹⁶ <https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/2016/state.pdf>, p. 18

¹⁷ Teach For America Application Data, 2014 & 2015

¹⁸ <https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/2016/state.pdf>, p. 15

¹⁹ <http://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539611216>, p.18-19

Dallas – Fort Worth

1. Alumni Teacher Engagement Campaign:
 - a. Central to our teacher retention efforts in DFW are monthly email updates about upcoming professional development opportunities, networking opportunities and general information on resources for teachers.
 - b. The engagement campaign in DFW includes cold calling and texting alumni teachers to:
 - i. set up coffee or phone chats
 - ii. invite to socials
 - iii. coaching on career acceleration
 - iv. influencing them to participate in professional development,
 - v. and, to strengthen 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. Ed Fellows 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.
 - c. This partnership also includes a five year principal fellowship, known as the Aspiring Leaders Program, and many applicants to this fellowship are classroom teachers at the time of their application.
3. Professional Development Initiatives:
 - a. **Professional Readiness Career Support**
 - i. Host monthly professionalism and networking trainings for all alumni in education (i.e. resume & cover letter workshops, interviewing skills, mock interviews etc.)
 - ii. Provide resume and cover letter support to alumni on an as needed basis
 - iii. Provide one-on-one career coaching for alumni
 - b. **Classroom Teacher Development**
 - i. Design a new, year-long or semester professional learning experience for alumni team leads, grade level chairs, CTLs, etc.
 - ii. Develop a partnership with the National Board Certification to sponsor and support alumni through the program.
 - c. **Mid-Level and School Leader Development**
 - i. Plan and execute a brand new, year-long professional learning experience for alumni school leaders and mid-level leaders
 - ii. Identify & coordinate executive coaching for school leaders and assistant principals
 - iii. Design and coordinate instructional rounds for alumni leaders
 - iv. Sponsor alumni to attend national TFA development opportunities such as:

1. Schools to Learn From
2. Deloitte Courageous Principal's Academy
3. The School Leaders of Color Conference
- d. **School Systems & Higher Education Development**
 - i. Plan, coordinate and execute professional development opportunities for junior, mid-level and senior alumni staff, respectively
- e. **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.
4. Southern Methodist University Partnership (for Dallas County based educators):
 - 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.
5. Texas Wesleyan University Partnership (for Fort Worth based educators):
 - a. Through TWU, 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 TWU has not been certified through TWU, but they are a member of Teach For America, they will receive 6 credit hours towards their degree.
6. Influence alumni talent
 - a. **Teacher Recruitment**
 - i. Recruit alumni nationally for teaching positions throughout DFW
 - b. **Principal Pipeline Recruitment**
 - i. Collaborate with established partners to increase number of alumni in school leadership pipelines (Teaching Trust, SMU, Texas Wesleyan)
 - ii. Recruit alumni locally and nationally to enter local school leadership pipelines by executing one-on-one prospecting meetings, medium sized events and application/coaching workshops
 - c. **Alumni School Leader Recruitment**
 - i. Execute a national recruitment weekend for aspiring and current alumni school

leaders from other regions known as, the “Destined for DFW” weekend, in service of our district partners

7. Alumni Appreciation Initiative:

- a. Our DFW staff provided s quarterly gifts to all alumni working on K-12 campuses to express gratitude and offer encouragement for their continued work in education.

8. 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. Leverage professional development being put on by our Corps Program Team to include and be relevant for alumni teachers
 - 4. Leverage conferences led by partner organizations such as Teaching Trust or The Momentous Institute
 - 5. Contract with experts to provide the professional development opportunities that teachers want most
 - 6. Ensure that all TFA events can count for CPE (Continuing Professional Education) to create a more tangible value add for teachers.
 - 7. Consider stipends or other benefits as well.

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 School Leader and Emerging School Leader Learnings:

- a. In an effort to exponentially grow our school leader's impact, we're convening our school leaders quarterly to engage in robust learnings. During these times we'll focus on areas they have self-identified as barriers holding them back from contributing at their maximum level of capacity: Effectively managing teachers who don't buy in the campus culture/vision; people management; creating systems to mind and maintain a culture of learning among teachers (resources and best practices); and navigating external politics that have implications on their work. Note: These quarterly convenings will also be available to emerging school leaders who currently sit in the assistant principal position, in an effort to increase their level of readiness to assume principal positions as they become available.
- b. In addition to the above quarterly convening, our alumni school leaders will have the opportunity to visit other schools to both learn from each other and engage in the problems of practice protocol to assist each other in solving the most pressing issue on the hosting school's campus.
- c. Houston will also convene our sitting school leaders and select emerging leaders for an annual school leader retreat where they can learn from each other, share plans for the upcoming year, identify opportunities for collaboration, and so they can have access to experts in components of school leadership.

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 1st and 2nd 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 and other Advocacy Based Organizations: 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, predominantly African American neighborhood, Kashmere Gardens, and has received attention from community leaders. In August 2017, Adeb Baqwari the founder of ProUnitas, was named to the Texas State Board of Education Long-Range Plan Steering Committee.
 - c. Houston has also become home to two new advocacy-based organizations: Houstonians for Great Public Schools (Houston GPS) and Leadership ISD, who focus on educating parents and the broader community on the roles they can play in improving the state of education in Houston. Teach For America Houston partners with these programs by funneling alumni with interest in these areas to these organizations, co-hosting community events and sitting on panels lending our voice to the conversation.
 - d. In Houston, we have three sitting elected school board members – Erica Lee on the Harris County Board of Education, along with Anne Sung and Holly Marie Flynn Vilaseca Ocampo who are both Houston ISD Trustees.
 - e. 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. Program Innovations: In an effort to more fully maximize the impact of our alumni in Houston, we took the following steps in the 2016 – 2017 school year:
- a. We restructured 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 moved to a portfolio approach that 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. We are focusing on codifying 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. We are also focusing on the 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. Beginning 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. 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.
 - e. In 2017-2018, this cohort will continue to be a part of our regional program offering, and will continue to receive support from Dr. Paula Garcia, the outgoing executive director of TFA-RGV, who has transitioned to a senior vice president role at Teach For America, overseeing the work of multiple TFA regions across the country.
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, and 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. In 2016, participants attended Deloitte University’s *Courageous Principal’s Program*.
 - d. In the spring of 2017, interest in this fellowship waned, and we experienced challenges in securing the desired number of participants. One of our theories of why this happened is the growing number of in-district school leadership opportunities and programs that are becoming available in our partner districts.
3. Targeted Activities for Second Year Teachers:
- a. In prior years, our Director of Alumni Affairs met with each of our second year corps members either individually or in small groups to discuss their career trajectory and options for future years. In 2017-2018, we transitioned this responsibility to a Director of Program Continuum role, who has a deeper focus on ensuring alignment and

continuity in our program offerings during the first two years of a teacher's commitment, and the support available to them following their initial two years.

- b. 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. As we did in 2015-2016, this arrangement continued into 2016-2017, with alumni leading the following professional development groups:
 - i. Content Seminars:
 - 1. Math
 - 2. Science
 - 3. English Language Arts & Reading
 - 4. Social Studies
 - 5. Elementary
 - ii. 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. Program Innovations:

- a. Alumni Board: This board launched with 7 members in the 2016-2017 year; their charge is to organize our regional alumni base, a majority of whom remain classroom teachers; 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.
- b. Evolving Staff Roles: We piloted a new role in 2016-2017, the Director of Program Continuum. This role will focused on building 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 an 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. In 2017-2018, we will evolve this role even further, with an increased focus on building a strong network of

alumni connections, with direct access to the programming and supports we offer to our beginning teachers.

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 2016-2017 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 a fellowship opportunity for teachers to grow and develop their professional skills.
- b. 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.
- c. National Academy of Advanced Teacher Education
 - i. This program has invested significantly in support of 21 educator participants over the course of the past 3 summers. The newest batch of CMs to go will be 7 (five members of the 2015 cohort and two members of the 2013 cohort).
 - ii. Participants spend 10 days in residence at Yale's campus over the summer 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 have made to their instruction and ways in which they have led on their campuses.
- d. 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 two years, with over 120 participants new in 2016-17:
 1. 70 + LEE Members
 2. Over 50 Community Members
 3. 30 of the 70 LEE members have engaged in multiple LEE events this year.

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 September 2017, we have supported 46 projects at a cost of \$100,000.
- c. Some examples of these awards include:
 - i. A teacher at an SAISD elementary school founded a Lego Robotics Club. They entered into Robotics competition and took team field trip to the DoSeum (local children's museum) to further study Robotics.
 - ii. Started the first student council at YWLA - took her council at a training at Trinity University, where they met with other student council officers from around Texas, engaged in training and came back to lead in the 2016-17 school year.
 - iii. One educator sought to increase participation at SAISD Foundations 5k to help promote student and families' health and wellness. With the money, she provided transportation and scholarships for over 30 students and family members provided training leading up to the 5K.

4. Competency & Values Development:

- a. San Antonio continues to provide a variety of competency-based and values-based professional development opportunities for members who continue their commitment as classroom teachers
- b. We continue to engage with acclaimed professors, educators and facilitators to lead one-off professional development for our alumni still in education (Dr. Bree Picowar, Dr. Ana Maria Villegas; and Curtis Acosta).
- c. Excellent school visits

- i. In addition to planning local & out of state excellent school visits for alumni educators, we are planning to expand this set of programming to alumni school and district leaders with their own sets of school visit experiences. In addition to the NACA Inspired Network, we are planning trips to Roses in Concrete in Oakland, CA.
 - ii. We had over 60 total participants in these excellent school visits.
 - iii. Most significantly, a group of twelve corps members who had all committed to teaching a 3rd year in their schools travelled to Albuquerque, New Mexico in Spring 2017 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.
 - d. One on One coaching for alumni teaching
 - i. Our Director, Alumni Impact meets with all of our current teachers in their second year of their teaching commitment to help them decide how to develop work continuing work within or outside of the classroom.
 - ii. In 2017 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.
 - e. 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 2017, 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 his or her development as a teacher. Forty-two educators were nominated and recognized at this event.
- 6. Director of Alumni Impact:
 - a. During the 2017-18 school year, the Director of Alumni Impact will broaden the focus from specific targeted intervention with alumni teachers, to include a focused initiative in the development and coaching of school and district leaders.
- 7. Program Innovations:

- a. Each of the strategies funded by our alumni team will be rooted in our 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. We will be seeking to expand these alumni supports beyond the classroom in 2018-19. In addition to supporting alumni educators, we will be designing robust programming and development opportunity for alumni principals, district and education non-profit leaders. Specifically, we will be launching a 2017-2018 Principal PLC cohort who will engage in Elena Aguilars’ “Art of Coaching Teams” seminar and lead monthly meetings throughout the School year.
- c. The Director, Alumni Impact will continue to support teachers who have participated in various initiatives funded by the alumni team through follow-up sessions and one on one coaching. Alumni will be able 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.
- d. 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. In 2017-2018, we will work more closely with district offices and campus administration to publicize available professional development as a way of driving even greater interest and participation.
- 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, eight 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.

2. Appendices

A. Financial Data (2016-2017)

Note: An overview of our financial model and key definitions are included in our prior report to the Texas Education Agency, November 2016²⁰.

Our FY2017 ended on May 31, 2017. Data on sources of funds and expenditures are up to date as of July 1, 2017, and represent preliminary actuals, which may shift as we complete our audit process.

Dallas-Fort Worth

	Adjusted Budget (11+1)	Final (12+0) Forecast	Variance fav/(unfav)
REVENUE			
Foundation	2,300,000	1,745,982	(554,018)
Corporate	1,200,000	1,292,547	92,547
Individual	2,050,000	2,037,185	(12,815)
State	2,500,000	2,750,863	250,863
School Partnership	1,200,000	1,191,500	(8,500)
Event	-	-	-
Federal	-	509,672	509,672
National Contributions & Other Income	236,931	267,799	30,869
Total Revenue	9,486,931	9,795,548	308,617
EXPENSES			
Recruitment, Selection and Placement	2,446,198	2,119,471	326,727
Pre-Service Training and Preparation	2,118,902	1,881,779	237,123
Teacher Development and Support	3,790,702	4,132,861	(342,159)
Alumni Support	827,184	587,025	240,159
Total Program Expenses	9,182,985	8,721,136	461,849
			-
Fundraising	791,722	670,948	120,774
Total Support Expenses	791,722	716,164	75,558
Total Expenses	9,974,707	9,437,300	537,407

²⁰ <http://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539611216>, p.33-37

Houston

	Adjusted Budget (11+1)	Final (12+0) Forecast	Variance fav/(unfav)
REVENUE			
Foundation	2,475,000	2,277,335	(197,665)
Corporate	960,000	495,266	(464,734)
Individual	1,180,000	1,370,834	190,834
State	1,830,000	1,872,605	42,605
School Partnership	655,000	687,750	32,750
Event	-	-	-
Federal	-	-	-
National Contributions & Other Income	151,350	195,919	44,569
Total Revenue	7,251,350	6,899,709	(351,641)
EXPENSES			
Recruitment, Selection and Placement	1,165,520	1,253,390	(87,870)
Pre-Service Training and Preparation	943,771	1,145,562	(201,791)
Teacher Development and Support	2,252,430	2,705,574	(453,145)
Alumni Support	1,023,169	974,669	48,500
Total Program Expenses	5,384,889	6,079,196	(694,306)
			-
Fundraising	1,017,387	728,835	288,553
Total Support Expenses	1,017,387	766,192	251,196
Total Expenses	6,402,277	6,845,387	(443,111)

Rio Grande Valley

	Adjusted Budget (11+1)	Final (12+0) Forecast	Variance fav/(unfav)
REVENUE			
Foundation	400,000	452,500	52,500
Corporate	240,000	212,340	(27,660)
Individual	45,000	104,779	59,779
State	769,000	771,941	2,941
School Partnership	347,500	356,500	9,000
Event	-	30	30
Federal	3,000	4,312	1,312
National Contributions & Other Income	327,143	331,747	4,603
Total Revenue	2,131,643	2,234,148	102,505
EXPENSES			
Recruitment, Selection and Placement	484,920	446,690	38,230
Pre-Service Training and Preparation	390,122	430,749	(40,628)
Teacher Development and Support	976,238	976,187	51
Alumni Support	146,819	93,695	53,125
Total Program Expenses	1,998,099	1,947,321	50,778
			-
Fundraising	205,484	147,679	57,805
Total Support Expenses	205,484	164,217	41,267
Total Expenses	2,203,583	2,111,538	92,045

San Antonio

	Adjusted Budget (11+1)	Final (12+0) Forecast	Variance fav/(unfav)
REVENUE			
Foundation	1,025,000	1,002,000	(23,000)
Corporate	650,000	575,775	(74,225)
Individual	1,075,000	927,168	(147,832)
State	877,000	865,331	(11,669)
School Partnership	330,000	417,700	87,700
Event	1,000	500	(500)
Federal	-	-	-
National Contributions & Other Income	201,213	309,609	108,396
Total Revenue	4,159,213	4,098,083	(61,130)
EXPENSES			
Recruitment, Selection and Placement	823,294	749,207	74,087
Pre-Service Training and Preparation	647,869	801,110	(153,241)
Teacher Development and Support	1,726,217	1,859,462	(133,246)
Alumni Support	611,355	566,134	45,221
Total Program Expenses	3,808,735	3,975,913	(167,178)
			-
Fundraising	350,478	268,793	81,684
Total Support Expenses	350,478	278,219	72,259
Total Expenses	4,159,213	4,254,132	(94,919)