

UNPRECEDENTED YEAR, UNDENIABLE IMPACT:

TEACH FOR AMERICA APPALACHIA'S REINVENTION: 2020-2021

Each day, our network of 400 alumni across Kentucky, West Virginia, Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia impact students and communities through their profound leadership. In these years of unpredictable challenges, TFAA has reimaged our model to drive impact for students and communities in the mountains of Central Appalachia.



Eastern Kentucky Spotlight: Filling Critical Needs with Top Talent

Despite the changing educational landscape, Eastern Kentucky continues to experience significant challenges in finding teachers to fill gaps in every grade level, let alone highly qualified teachers oriented to student success. Now in our 10th year, TFAA continues to be a premiere provider of talent to the highest-need schools in Eastern Kentucky. TFAA received 200% more requests for teachers than we could place for the 2020 school year.

Of our current program teachers, 44% are from Kentucky or the Appalachian region, and 12% identify as a person of color, compared to the state average of 4.8% teachers of color. Hayley Leach (left), 2020's Miss Kentucky in the United States pageant, is also a proud TFAA teacher to second grade students at Jones Fork Elementary School in Knott County. Kyle Yeh (right), distinguished graduate of the University of Chicago, left Los Angeles four years ago to teach in Eastern Kentucky and continues teaching Spanish at his placement school in Floyd County.

Creating Summer Learning Opportunities

As the realities of COVID related learning loss became undeniable in 2020, TFAA rapidly responded with a free, 10 day summer school program -TakeOff"- available to any student in grades 2-12 in Harlan County. Using best practices for safety recommended by the state and CDC, we successfully provided a true hybrid learning model, offering virtual options to students in the morning and small in-person classes in the afternoon. Providing everything from academic remediation to enrichment activities like art and drama, our program was highly regarded by local parents and expanded to include a 3rd week, beginning in June of this summer.

Teach For America Appalachia has been an incredible partner over the years and a key player in helping Eastern Kentucky's schools fill the teacher shortage gap. Their commitment to providing high-quality support for teachers and recruiting talented members is at their heart of their success. They (TFA teachers) have been able to positively impact our students, families, and communities by building life-changing relationships. Our communities are better because of their work."

- Harlan Independent School District Superintendent
C.D. Morton

"It (Takeoff) was fun. I loved art, reading, and science."
- Natalie, 2nd grade

"Thank you for bringing this program to Harlan; it was a wonderful opportunity and experience." - Takeoff parent

Preparing Teachers for Rigorous Instruction

In a matter of months, TFAA shifted our entire programmatic operating model to prepare our incoming cohort of teachers to teach and lead in virtual, hybrid, and in-person settings. As our teacher coaches were not permitted in schools, we doubled down on our virtual opportunities to increase the scope and frequency of our coaching. Despite vast changes to our programming, our teachers remain among the most satisfied and prepared out of all 51 TFA urban and rural communities .

100% of current TFAA teachers report:

100%

I feel part of a community driven to impact.
I can be myself at TFAA.
I feel valued by TFAA staff and my students.

As a best in class professional development provider, we opened our programmatic offerings to any teacher in Central Appalachia, including 1:1 coaching of new, traditionally trained teachers in our partner schools as well as intensive virtual small group professional development (PD) sessions with exceptionally strong results.

100% of PD participants report:

100%

I gained knowledge and skills to implement this PD into my job.
The scope and format of the PD were effective.
Overall, I am satisfied with this PD experience.

DOUBLING DOWN ON A LIMITLESS FUTURE FOR EVERY CENTRAL APPALACHIAN STUDENT

TFAA's work in 2021 and beyond

If 2020 revealed anything, it was the depths of the challenges our students already face in our educational ecosystem. Despite thousands of well-intending adults, virtual instruction left a staggering number of Central Appalachian students without access to educational services, social-emotional interactions, and relationships with caring school-based adults that so many rely on. While these years has widened the gap, we recognize that even pre-pandemic, students in Central Appalachia are statistically far from on-track to achieve postsecondary and career goals that put them on the path to a bright future. Imagine yourself on a bus of 40 students in Central Appalachia. Statistically speaking, of those 40 students, only 16 are likely to enroll in a postsecondary program, and only four will graduate in four years. Given the role that postsecondary certifications and degrees play in establishing student outcomes, we are partnering with communities to set and pursue a bold 10-year impact goal.

By partnering with communities to reach this goal, we are launching and expanding bold, strategic initiatives to meet Appalachian community needs. In addition to continuing the placement of our nation's brightest young leaders into classrooms in Central Appalachia, TFAA is leading on the following new initiatives:



By 2030, twice as many students in Central Appalachian communities where we work will achieve postsecondary readiness and success, indicating they are on a path to economic mobility and a future filled with possibility.



Based on our proven model for rapidly and effectively training new teachers, TFAA offers free, customizable professional development and 1:1 coaching to both current and prospective educators across Central Appalachia.



Through a partnership with the Southeast/South-Central Educational Cooperative, TFAA is supporting college coaches in 17 EKY high schools who work directly with students to set and achieve postsecondary goals. These near-peer coaches focus on high potential, low-income students, building their skill and self-efficacy through 1:1 coaching and development.



TAKEOFF

TFAA SUMMER SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

To address summer learning loss, TFAA expanded our Takeoff summer program, offering free academic and enrichment activities to any student in Harlan County, including in-person, hybrid, and virtual options.



A bold approach to teacher retention, this fellowship incentivizes our best TFA teachers to remain in the region after completing their initial two-year corps commitment. Fellows receive ongoing coaching, support other new teachers, and elevate the potential of Appalachian students and communities. We inaugurated 11 fellows into the program in 2021.



This innovative fellowship incentivizes TFA alumni from across the country to move to Appalachian communities to fill key roles in sectors impacting our ten year goal. Through a prestigious selection and onboarding process, these leaders migration to mountain communities shifts the narrative of what is possible in Central Appalachia.