

Contact: Mika Rao

646.530.0249

[mika.rao@teachforamerica.org](mailto:mika.rao@teachforamerica.org)

## TEACH FOR AMERICA ALUMNI, ALLISON ASHLEY NAMED TEXAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

*Educator Recognized For Commitment to Dual-language Learners*

**Austin, Texas, October 18, 2016**— Teach For America alumni Allison (Ali) Ashley has been named Texas Teacher of the Year. The announcement was made on Friday at a luncheon hosted by the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) honoring teachers from across the state that had been named Teacher of the Year in their school and district. Ashley is a third grade dual-language teacher in Austin.

After graduating from Boston College, Ashley’s work in education began as a 2004 Teach For America corps member in the Rio Grande Valley where she taught at Sharpe Elementary School. From that role, she continued to work in the field teaching bilingual education in Austin. Ashley moved to Cambridge to pursue a master’s degree in education from Harvard University but returned to Texas for a role at Austin ISD. Ashley currently teaches at South Austin’s Becker Elementary School, working with dual-language learners.

“I’m so thankful for the opportunities our dual-language program are providing for our students,” shared Ashley upon accepting the award. “We are building up confidence in their linguistic skills, but also learning about working across a number of lines - socioeconomic, linguistic and cultural – and just seeing this program helping them build a pride in self-identity and also embracing the beautiful diversity we have in our communities.”

Ashley remains active in the Teach For America network as a former corps member and alumni. “My time working as a teacher in the Rio Grande Valley through Teach For America helped illuminate the issues students grapple with as dual-language learners,” she shared. “I consider those years in the Valley to be pivotal in my decision to commit to this field.” Ashley continues to engage with the organization as a faculty advisor at the Teach For America Houston Summer Institute, where new corps members receive training.

Texas Teacher of the Year is the highest honor the State of Texas can bestow upon a teacher. According to the TASA website, “Every fall, 40 Regional Teachers of the Year are selected — one elementary and one secondary teacher from each of the 20 Education Service Center regions in Texas. Six finalists are then chosen from among the 40 semifinalists. Following an interview process, the Texas Elementary Teacher of the Year and Texas Secondary Teacher of the Year are chosen.” One of these teachers will be selected to represent Texas at the 2017 National Teacher of the Year program.

### **About Teach For America**

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, 8,600 corps members are teaching in 53 urban and rural regions across the country while more than 42,000 alumni work across sectors to ensure that all children have access to an excellent education. Teach For America is a proud member of the AmeriCorps national service network. For more information, visit [www.teachforamerica.org](http://www.teachforamerica.org) and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

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