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MASSACHUSETTS STATE TEACHER OF THE YEAR RECEIVES HONOR FROM TEACH FOR AMERICA FOR IMPACT INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

*Teach For America Alum Takeru Nagayoshi (Massachusetts Corps '14) Awarded 2019 Sue Lehmann
Excellence in Teacher Leadership Award*

NEW YORK, October 21, 2019—Teach For America awarded alum and Massachusetts state teacher of the year Takeru Nagayoshi (Massachusetts Corps '14) the 2019 Sue Lehmann Excellence in Teacher Leadership Award for his impact inside and outside the classroom.

Nagayoshi teaches English at New Bedford High School in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he has served since being placed there as a Teach For America corps member in 2014. He teaches English Language Arts, AP Literature, and AP Seminar.

Teach For America recognized Nagayoshi for his leadership inside and outside of the classroom in pursuit of educational equity. Last year alone, 84 percent of his students passed the rigorous AP English exam, surpassing the state and global averages, and the majority of his students did so as freshman even as most AP exams are designed for upperclassmen. The year before, due in part to his efforts, the College Board awarded 18 Advanced Placement Capstone Certificates to New Bedford High School students, representing 38 percent of all certificates issued in Massachusetts that year.

Each year, Teach For America's Sue Lehmann Excellence in Teacher Leadership Award celebrates outstanding Teach For America corps members and alumni who are achieving excellent outcomes in the classroom and pursuing systems change to expand opportunities for all children. Nagayoshi was one of [four finalists](#) nominated for this year's award, and his win was announced on Thursday night at a ceremony in Houston.

In addition to leading his students to strong academic gains, Nagayoshi is also working to develop a local teacher-leader pipeline through the Southern New England Alumni Leadership Initiative, an education fellowship he created that collaborates with Teach For America–Massachusetts, Teach For America–Rhode Island, and Leadership for Educational Equity to empower educators to impact policy change in their schools and communities without leaving the classroom. He was also recently selected by the state to be part of the second cohort of INSPIRED fellows, a program that seeks to increase the diversity of the state's educators by meeting with high school and college students and encouraging them to teach. When not teaching or coaching, Nagayoshi lends his voice to conversations on education-related policy issues through his participation on panels and committees and op-ed writing. As a queer educator of color in an urban public school, he is committed to leveraging his unique perspectives to fight for and lead systems-wide solutions for education equity.

“We are proud to honor Takeru as an educator fiercely committed to educational equity,” said Teach For America CEO Elisa Villanueva Beard. “He impacts hundreds of students' lives every year as an educator with unwavering belief in their potential, while his work with SNEALI has also laid a foundation for long-term, systemic change in southern New England. His excellence in teaching and embodiment of individual and collective leadership represents the best of Teach For America's network.”

In May, Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Jeffrey Riley [announced](#) Nagayoshi as the 2020 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year at an assembly in New Bedford High School. He is currently one of two Teach For America alumni who have been named a 2020 State Teacher of the Year and are candidates for National Teacher of the Year; the other is DC 2020 State Teacher of the Year Justin Lopez-Cardoze (Jacksonville Corps '11).

“Teachers must imagine their role as beyond academics,” Nagayoshi wrote in his award application. “I describe my relationship through a sports metaphor: I’m their coach off the field, their team player on the field, their cheerleader on the sidelines, and their number one fan in the bleachers.”

The Sue Lehmann Excellence in Teacher Leadership award was created to honor longtime Teach For America board member and lifetime director Sue Lehmann, who for more than 25 years has advocated for change in the educational ecosystem in New York City and across the country and has helped build a network of nearly 60,000 leaders who are committed to educational equity and excellence. More information about the Sue Lehmann Excellence in Teacher Leadership Award and 2019 finalists can be found [here](#).

About Teach For America

Teach For America works in partnership with urban and rural communities in more than 50 regions across the country to expand educational opportunity for children. Founded in 1990, Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding leaders 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 Teach For America is a force of over 60,000 alumni and corps members committed to profound systemic change. From classrooms to districts to state houses across America, they’re reimagining education to realize the day when every child has an equal opportunity to learn, to grow, to influence, and to lead. For more information, visit www.teachforamerica.org and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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