Our college has a history of producing the highest number of certified teachers in bilingual education, special education, and STEM-related fields in the state of Texas. We have consistently been ranked among the top five educator-producing programs in Texas.

Aggie educators are working in 756 school districts in all 20 regions of the state in 211 counties. That's more than 10,000 former students working in the state of Texas. And that doesn't include those who work in private and parochial schools that aren't counted in state data. While the number of students going into teaching is on a sharp decline nationally, we have stayed strong. Over the past five years we have had more than 1,800 students enrolled annually who are passionate about educating the next generation.

The average 5-year retention rate of teachers nationwide hovers at about 50%, yet as of the last reporting period (2013-14), Aggie Educators were staying put 78% of the time! Much of this can be credited to the quality preparations they are given as well as the time they spend in partner classrooms outside of the TAMU environment. Today's pre-service teachers complete approximately 750 hours in various field based settings before becoming certified teachers.

We must not rest on these accomplishments, however, because the diversity and needs of our state and nation demand that we do more. We must continue our tradition of being a catalyst for change. We must lead the way to improvement in the delivery of education in our lowest performing schools. We must create a path to academic achievement for those who face the most challenging economic, social and emotional hurdles of our time.

To help us transform the lives of our graduates and of the students they teach, contact...

Jody Ford ’99
Senior Director of Development
Office: (979) 847-8655
Cell: (979) 218-7368
jford@txamfoundation.com

Haley Jennings ’95
Assistant Director of Development
Office: (979) 847-9455
Cell: (316) 734-3491
hjennings@txamfoundation.com

“Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher.”
~Japanese proverb
For almost 50 years, the College of Education and Human Development has provided innovative instruction which helps prepare future leaders, support solutions to social issues, and contribute to the knowledge base of our professional field. What started as a school for teachers in 1969, has become a school for leaders across many disciplines. We are dedicated to transforming and enriching lives with integrity, passion, and hard work. We seek challenges and break boundaries because our children, our communities, and our future depend on us.

We address education's most urgent challenges and remain at the forefront of the fight to improve educational achievement. For those entering the teaching profession, cutting-edge training is critical now more than ever. Rigorous curriculum demands, ever-changing technological innovations, diverse populations, and today's societal challenges require well-prepared, passionate educators who are determined to stay current. From K-12 schools with higher rates of dropping out of high school or not seeking a higher education to anticipated academic challenges from a very early age to ensure that they do not become disillusioned with the educational system.

We also know that K-12 schools with higher rates of low income students typically have lower rates of overall academic achievement. We believe they deserve the best and brightest minds to help them be successful; passionate, energetic teachers who have walked a mile in their shoes and know the social, emotional, and economic challenges they struggle to overcome on their way to an education.

IMPACT

Our first challenge is to encourage academically gifted students from low-income families/schools to seek teacher certification at Texas A&M University. Emphasis would be placed on those seeking degrees in the high needs fields of math/science, bilingual and special education. Our goal is to find a way to place young, enthusiastic teachers who clearly understand the value of hard work and educational success in lower-income schools. The greater challenge is to find a way to keep them in those high needs classrooms.

Grappling with the socio-economic challenges of teaching in schools that serve a large percentage of low income students combined with the traditional low pay scales for teachers may influence job choice. Graduates may be more apt to accept positions in economically challenged schools if they are not burdened with the debt from student loans. We need to ensure that those who understand economic challenges can impart their passion with those who need it the most and not have their job choice influenced solely by the financial need to repay a student loan.

For the past three years, 40% of the Aggies graduating with a master's degree who choose to enter the teaching profession have borrowed an average of $22,384 to get their degree. While first generation students comprised only 27% of our total teaching graduates from the 2014-2015 academic year, they comprised 60% of those who borrowed money to finish school. The issue of student debt will not soon change. Texas A&M University's financial aid office estimates that the cost of attendance for undergraduate students at A&M will increase next year.

Average base pay for teachers statewide was $51,892 for the 2015-2016 school year according to the Texas Education Agency. Average salaries for teachers with little experience will be even lower. (Data from 2012-2013 showed the average salary of a starting teacher was $35,636 and for those with 10 years of experience it was $43,714).

INNOVATE

We propose the creation of the Dean's Education Scholars program to provide financial, educational, and psychological support to academically gifted scholars with the ability and desire to inspire students from low income backgrounds to achieve educational success. In addition to monetary support, a Dean's Education Scholar would:

1) Participate in a living/learning community in a campus residence hall which would provide:
   i) Mentors to assist them in adjusting to college life and academic rigor
   ii) Leadership development
   iii) Small group activities
   iv) A cohort of core courses taken together to aid in learning and community building
   v) Nationally renowned speakers
d) Immediate access to academics and community

2) Experience global study opportunities during junior or senior year

3) Serve as mentors to incoming freshmen

INFLUENCE

“There is an old saying that the course of civilization is a race between catastrophe and education. In a democracy such as ours, we must make sure that education wins the race.”

- John F. Kennedy

The global economy of the 21st Century is more critical than ever that we win the race with education. Recent reports have documented that new jobs being created require more than a high school degree. Therefore, children from low-income families who typically have a higher rate of dropping out of high school or not seeking a higher education must be encouraged and equipped to meet today's academic challenges from a very early age to ensure that they do not become disillusioned with the educational system.

“I have a dream that one day on every yardstick of a nation, the yardstick of opportunity will be the same for every child.”

- Martin Luther King Jr.

We propose the creation of a program at Texas A&M University to provide the tools to assist academically gifted scholars with the ability and desire to inspire students from low income backgrounds to achieve educational success. The program would involve the following initiatives:

- Provide scholarships
- Establish and operate a mentor program
- Conduct an intensive summer camp program
- Host a leadership conference every year

“Sow a good seed to get a good harvest.”

- John F. Kennedy

If for ten years, plant a tree. If for a hundred years, teach the people. When you sow a seed once, you will reap a single harvest. When you plant a seed, you will reap a hundred harvests.”

- Kuan Chung

“If you plan for a year, plant a seed. If for ten years, plant a tree. If for a hundred years, teach the people.”

- Kuan Chung