MEET BREAKTHROUGH PHILLY'S SUMMER 2025 TEACHING FELLOWS!

A dual-mission program, Breakthrough is committed to providing free academic enrichment for middle and high school students to help reach their educational aspirations AND provide pre-professional training for college students to pursue teaching careers. Known fondly as Breakthrough Teaching Fellows (TFs), they are the pillars of Breakthrough's program! About 45 TFs train at Breakthrough every year.

Introducing the Summer 2025 Teaching Fellows. Here are some reflections on their teacher training experiences at Breakthrough!
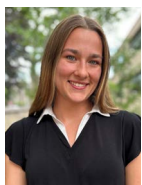

Mallory Applegate

Student, Kansas State University

Teaching Fellow: Math, 8th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Card Games

I'm pursuing a secondary math education degree and Breakthrough was the perfect summer job that would prepare me for it. I've learned a lot about lesson planning and adapting on the fly. I've also learned about managing a classroom.
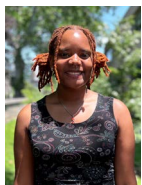

Annora Bradley

Student, Temple University

Teaching Fellow: Science, 8th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Music From Scratch

I joined Breakthrough Philly to put my current wealth of knowledge and experience to the test, and find out how I can improve as a teacher. All of the Teaching Fellows are incredible to work with, and I enjoy laughing and having fun with my students.

Renia Butts

Student, North Carolina A&T

Teaching Fellow: Math, 8th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Read to a T(ea)

I returned to Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia because I wanted to get more experience teaching. I enjoyed my experience last year, and wanted to return and get more practice teaching math.

Chloe Coleman

Student, Temple University

Teaching Fellow: Math, 7th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Soccer

At Breakthrough, I've learned the insides and outs of 7th grade behavior, that all children need different supports in different areas, and that I am pretty good at teaching content even though I was nervous about teaching math. I enjoyed the professional development sessions, making new friends, and watching students' confidence in math.

Aisha Doucoure

Student, Howard University

Teaching Fellow: Science, 6th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Music Study

Getting to know my students has been the best part of my summer. There have been good days and bad days, but through it all I wouldn't trade my students for the world and I appreciate them the most. I learn as much from them as they learn from me.

Diamond Jackson

Student, Tuskegee University

Teaching Fellow: History, 6th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Travel and Culture

I joined Breakthrough because I love the mission and also the focus on teaching future teachers. I love getting a chance to teach and build a connection with students.

Christina Ly

Student, University of Pennsylvania

Teaching Fellow: Science, 7th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Arts, Crafts, and Storytelling

I joined Breakthrough's Teaching Fellow program because I wanted to challenge the educational inequities I experienced firsthand as a student in Philadelphia's underfunded schools and support students during this crucial developmental moment in their lives. I was driven to create a learning environment over the summer that is enlightening, insightful, yet joyful for students because I want them to succeed. I wanted to provide middle school students with the culturally responsive and supportive educational experience I never had but desperately needed during my own formative years.

Danae Martin

Student, Pennsylvania State University

Teaching Fellow: History, 7th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: The Art of Step

I joined Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia because I'm committed to uplifting students who are constantly overlooked and underestimated. I refuse to sit on the sidelines while inequities persist, and this program gave me a space to take action while stepping fully into my purpose as an educator.

Charles Andrew Miranda

Student, University of Pennsylvania

Teaching Fellow: Math, 7th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Introduction to the Korean Language

I joined Breakthrough because its mission aligned with my personal background and mission in teaching. Growing up low-income in a well-resourced environment taught me about educational inequality and drove me to pursue secondary education. Specifically in math, I have a strong passion in teaching students math aimed towards reaching calculus or college-level math.

Noelle O'Brien

Student, Virginia Tech

Teaching Fellow: Science, 6th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Culture Through Dance

I've enjoyed so many aspects of the summer, from the insights from the deans and my one-on-ones with the instructional coaches, to my conversations with my other Teaching Fellows about their experiences. My favorite part is seeing the kids' excitement, seeing them jump to learn not just inside the classroom but also outside, one on one with me and even as a group.

Hope Polhill

Student, New York University

Teaching Fellow: Literature, 6th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Fundamentals of Theater

This summer I was looking for a position that would provide me the opportunity to work in the classroom and gain valuable teaching experience. My experience working with students has been limited to the early elementary grades. Breakthrough's program caught my attention because they granted aspiring educators with the chance to lead their own classroom while specifically working with students from underrepresented communities.

Marissa Prager

Student, University of Pennsylvania

Teaching Fellow: History, 6th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Money Talks

My favorite aspect of Breakthrough has been the students… 100%! They bring so much joy and life to the program, and they are the reason why I put in hours and hours into lesson planning. They make it all worth it. At Breakthrough, I have learned how to manage a classroom by myself and set clear expectations. I also learned how to effectively lesson plan, designing my lessons around my end goal, rather than the content.
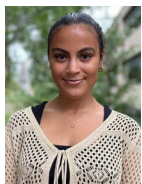
Eden Richman

Student, Wesleyan University

Teaching Fellow: History, 8th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Paper Mache

I joined Breakthrough to see if teaching could be for me. I was excited about all the pedagogical training, and I have learned about clear communication and setting boundaries. I have developed more confidence!
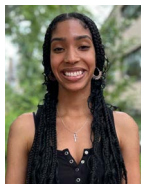
Eva Sliker

Student, Gardner-Webb University

Teaching Fellow: History, 5th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Intro to American Sign Language

My favorite part of Breakthrough is seeing the expressions on the kids' faces when something clicks for them. I love explaining things to kids and helping them with their issues in understanding (the content). I have loved getting to know them and my 5th graders all have HUGE dreams. I can't wait to see where they end up and how far they go.

Ma'at Smith

Student, Tufts University

Teaching Fellow: Literature, 6th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Basic Knitting

I joined because I wanted to give back to my Philadelphia community. As someone who comes from a neighborhood where schools are underserved and was lucky enough to attend private schools, I want to pay that forward.

Maya Walker

Student, Stanford University

Teaching Fellow: Math, 6th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Music Analysis

As a Teaching Fellow, I have learned that patience and trust are some of the most important things to have in the classroom. Math is not necessarily the most fun subject, but because the students trust me, they are much more willing to learn. I also have learned that within a classroom, all students work at different paces and it is up to me as a teacher to meet each of those students where they are.

Georgie Williams

Student, The University of Chicago

Teaching Fellow: History, 8th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Drama

As an aspiring teacher, I loved how Breakthrough of Greater Philadelphia offered an opportunity to work directly with students while also learning from experienced mentors and developing invaluable teaching skills. I joined the Teaching Fellow program because I'm inspired by Breakthrough's deep commitment to learning in all its forms—as students, as educators, and as people.

Kalea Albanese

Student, La Salle University

Teaching Fellow: Literature, 7th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Build Your Own Website

Miles Baldwin

Student, Lower Merion High School

Teaching Fellow: Junior Teaching Fellow: 7th & 8th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Ultimate Frisbee

Kayla Banks

Student, Howard University

Teaching Fellow: Literature, 8th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Film

*Watch Kayla teaching in the School District of
Philadelphia in her first year as a full-time teacher!*

Delia Ford

Student, University of Mississippi

Teaching Fellow: Science, 7th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Breakthrough News Team

Hanif Goins

Student, Morehouse College

Teaching Fellow: 5th-8th grade

Markeese King

Student, North Carolina A&T

Teaching Fellow: Math, 6th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Exploring Perspectives Through Art

Breeann Leggs

Student, Arcadia University

Teaching Fellow: Science, 5th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Speak On It: Intro to Spoken Word

Nacala McDaniels

Student, Clemson University

Teaching Fellow: Literature, 5th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Creative Writing

Lily Mehta

Student, Penn Charter

Junior Teaching Fellow: 5th & 6th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Learn Bollywood Dances!

La'Mon Perry

Student, Loyola University-Maryland

Teaching Fellow: History, 7th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Case Closed

Jamylah Sykes

Student, North Carolina A&T

Teaching Fellow: Literature, 8th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Chess Club

Nia Walcott

Student, Hampton University

Teaching Fellow: Math, 5th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: The Great Debaters

Xavier Woodhouse

Student, Morehouse College

Teaching Fellow: Literature, 7th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Big Jokers: Spades Crash Course

Joshua Zacharia

Student, Johns Hopkins University

Teaching Fellow: Science, 8th grade
Elective Taught/Designed: Public Speaking and Golf