

# Meet the AAE 2019 Advocacy Fellows



**D**uring the last year, the AAE Foundation has been building new member programming around educator advocacy. Our goals are to encourage and train you, our nation's educators, to influence policy through advocacy and education. This is how you will advance our profession and transform the lives of more students for the better. We believe now is the perfect time to consider getting involved in educational advocacy.

We are pleased to announce our first cohort for AAE's Advocacy Ambassador Fellowship. These educators from across the country are dedicating time throughout the 2018-2019 school year to advocate for policies and issues that directly impact their students, communities, classrooms, and themselves. The fellows receive monthly one-on-one coaching calls, participate in trainings with their cohort, conduct various advocacy projects including published op-eds, meetings with legislators, testifying before committees, and more. Also, fellows will foster and build the skills and knowledge for advocating and organizing, increased familiarity with policy and bill tracking, and growing their network and sphere of influence.

Like you, these fellows share a commitment to AAE's mission and vision. They are harnessing the motivation to advocate for policies that provide more equitable outcomes and opportunities for educators and students. In the first month, we have already had two op-eds published and a testimony on a bill hearing at a state capitol. We cannot wait to see what else this year has in store! Congratulations and welcome! (If you would like to learn more about AAE's advocacy project, contact [mckenzie@aaeteachers.org](mailto:mckenzie@aaeteachers.org))



**Bridget Allison** Colorado

Bridget Allison currently serves as the first through fourth grade math interventionist at AXL Academy in Aurora, Colorado. The majority of her career has been in teaching math. Teaching math is her passion. Her other roles include curriculum support as well as in administration. "I love being involved in a career that

allows me to give back to my community through helping students," said Bridget. "I loved school as a child and consider myself to be a life-long learner." Bridget notes, "I am proud to say that I am well versed in using data to analyze and plan for differentiated learning. I also love and have experience in assisting teachers with differentiated math instruction and small group planning."

In her spare time, she enjoys aerobics classes, symphony concerts, and hiking.



**T. Cedric Anfield** Georgia

T. Cedric Anfield is originally from Stockton, California. He moved to Daytona Beach, Florida, to attend Bethune-Cookman University where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology with a minor in Biology. Upon graduation, he moved to Atlanta, Georgia, and worked with the Department of Behavioral Health serving as a community support specialist. He began his teaching career as a pre-K teacher in Fulton County as well as gaining infant and toddler experience. His first position with Rise Grammar Charter School was as a kindergarten instructor. Cedric now heads the Physical Education Department at The Rise Schools.



**Lydia Dillon** Arkansas

Lydia Dillon is a passionate second-grade teacher at David O. Dodd Elementary School in Little Rock, Arkansas, where she has taught for the last four years. She graduated from The University of Central Arkansas with a Bachelor of Science in Education degree in Early Childhood Education in 2014. Lydia is certified in Cognitively Guided Instruction and is trained in Kagan Cooperative Learning. In her free time she enjoys volunteering as the second grade girls' leader at her church. Lydia currently resides in Little Rock, Arkansas.



**Amy Goldberg** New Jersey

Ms. Amy Goldberg is an enthusiastic teacher with the iLearn Charter Schools. She is currently teaching special education mathematics, directing the school’s musical, and is a member of her school’s child study team at the Passaic Arts and Sciences Charter Middle School in Passaic, New Jersey. Ms. Goldberg is a graduate of Rowan University where she earned teaching certificates in elementary education and TOSD, as well as earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Studies for Math and Language Arts.

Amy began her teaching career in Taiwan teaching first grade for two years at a private bilingual school. She also has teaching experience at public schools, as well as a year of experience at a private dyslexia school. Amy loves playing music and doing crafts. She is currently working toward her personal trainer certificate and recently married Eric, a flight instructor she met while in Taiwan. Amy hopes she can share her cultural awareness with all of her students and encourage them to reach for all of their dreams.



**Maria Hill** California

Maria Hill of Redding, California, is a life-long learner, a developer of young minds, and an education advocate. She is an elementary school teacher and the sole proprietor of Hayfork Hills Consulting, which reviews publicly funded grant applications. Along the way, she connects with people working in public service, and those receiving services who have real stories of courage to share and valuable lessons to teach.

With a humorous outlook and a love of people, Maria builds bridges to compromise, knowing that an inclusive and diverse team with unique talents and skills is necessary to create positive change for families, communities, the nation, and the world.



**Roseangela Mendoza** New Jersey

Roseangela Mendoza has been with The Ethical Community Charter School (TECCS) since 2011. Ms. Mendoza graduated from New Jersey City University in 2006 with a Bachelor of Arts in History degree. Upon graduation, she began her career in traditional public schools teaching various grade levels. During this time, she volunteered with several North Jersey organizations including the Salvadoran Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Salvadoran Consulate of New Jersey and Delaware. Her role as the director of public relations and her dedication to the Salvadoran community were recognized by several local newspapers and led to Ms. Mendoza being named “Salvadoran of the Year” in 2011.

Since her arrival at TECCS, she has been a teaching assistant and head teacher. In 2013, Ms. Mendoza became the community outreach & service learning coordinator and anti-bullying specialist. From 2014-2016, Ms. Mendoza received a mayoral appointment to the Ridgefield Anti-bullying Committee. In 2016, Ms. Mendoza joined the Middle School team as the middle school social studies teacher as well as working with the school’s marketing team.

When not working or volunteering, Ms. Mendoza enjoys spending time with her family.



**Luke Henke** Kansas

Luke Henke is enjoying his ninth year teaching mathematics in southeast Kansas. Passionate about developing youth into leaders who can navigate change, Luke focuses on developing growth mindset, persistence, and integrity in his students. In his effort to be a role model for continued growth, he hopes to obtain his doctorate in educational leadership by 2020. As a project-based learning and standards-based grading trailblazer for his school, Luke helps students focus on what matters, and engages them through new, innovative ways to reach a generation often labeled unreachable. He coaches cross country, scholars’ bowl, and the math team, which all provide avenues to develop students beyond the classroom. When he isn’t challenging his students or himself academically, he enjoys kayaking, construction, and computer gaming. What he enjoys most of all is spending time with his wife and little boy.





**Angela Sheffield**  Arkansas

Angela Sheffield was born in Mountain Home, Arkansas, and has lived throughout the United States, so she knows what it is like to move from school to school. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Education degree from Oklahoma Christian University in Oklahoma City with certifications in special education and history. Throughout her career she added certifications in PK-fourth grade general education and fourth- through eighth-grade English, social studies, math, and science. She has been an educator for twenty-six years, teaching in Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, and Indiana. Sheffield earned her Master of Science in Education degree in reading at the University of Central Arkansas and achieved National Board Certification in the area of Middle Level Generalist. She will graduate with her Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis in May. In 2017, Sheffield moved to Lafayette, Indiana, where she teaches seventh-grade language arts. She serves on various committees focused on increasing student success. She loves reading and traveling, but most of all, spending time with her husband, Matthew, and children, Emily (who attends Vanderbilt Law School) and Elijah (completing his degree in advertising this May from Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas). Those three are her cheerleading section in everything that makes life an adventure.

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**Nabin Timilsina**  Florida

Nabin Timilsina is a certified professional science educator based in Miami, Florida. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Louisiana at Monroe, he was a science teacher at one of the most challenging inner-city schools in North Miami. His passion for teaching, leadership, making a difference in the lives of children, and giving back to the community propelled him to take this opportunity. His consistent hard work, determination, and love for his students established him as a highly proficient educator within his first year of teaching.

Mr. Timilsina has established a successful track record as a highly effective science educator by working at a wide range of schools. A Harvard trained aspiring school leader, Mr. Timilsina is currently pursuing a joint program Master of Arts Doctorate in Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction/NASA Endeavor STEM Leadership Certificate, a collaboration of U.S. Satellite Laboratory, Teachers College, Columbia University, and Adams State University.



**John Unger**  Arkansas

John Unger was born and raised in Arkansas. He attended the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville and earned a Bachelor of Arts in History degree in 2003. Unger accepted a men's basketball coaching position at Louisiana State University in Shreveport. While working at LSUS, Unger earned his Master of Science in Education degree. Unger spent seven years in Northwest Louisiana, three years at LSUS, and four years as an instructor in the Behavioral Science Department and men's basketball coach at Bossier Parish Community College.

In 2010, Unger began his public school teaching career in Decatur, Arkansas. During his time with the Decatur School District he has served as teacher, coach, dean of students, acting principal, athletic director, and alternative learning director. Unger has been a leader in school innovation in rural, diverse districts across Arkansas, and has presented at several conferences on school redesign. Unger serves on the Harding University-Northwest Arkansas Advisory Board for Education, is a member of the Arkansas Educators Association, and serves on the Northwest Arkansas Educational Cooperative Teacher Committee.

Unger is married and has two children. He currently resides in Siloam Springs, Arkansas.

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**Amanda Whittington**  Georgia

Amanda Whittington is an educator, instructional technologist, and passionate writer, with experience in early childhood, elementary, and secondary education. A 2012 Honors Graduate of Elizabeth City State University, in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, Amanda has served on many committees, participated in many service projects, and taught grades six through twelve. While she has taught in North Carolina and Southern Georgia, she is currently a seventh-grade teacher at Leadership Preparatory Academy in Dekalb County, Georgia. Ms. Whittington also serves as an instructional technology liaison for the school. From an early age, her goal has been to improve the lives of others through the written word and the implementation of technology. Ms. Whitt, as most call her, believes that fostering innovation, combined with love and creativity, is the true recipe for success. ■

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## Spotlight on AAE Advocacy Fellow: **LynDel Randash**

**W**e are excited that our inaugural cohort of AAE Fellows is diving right in, doing the challenging, and sometimes scary, work needed to advocate for teachers and students. At the first opportunity to testify before a state senate education committee, our Fellow, LynDel Randash, of Colorado didn't hesitate. Here are some of her thoughts about her experience.

“ To prepare for my testimony before the Colorado Senate Committee on Education, I wrote down my thoughts, and then organized them and typed them. I was adding to the testimony right up until just before I testified. I also researched the Colorado teacher shortage and salaries as well as the bill itself and studies that supported the Senate bill. I have been a teacher for more than twenty years, and it was exciting and a bit scary to testify! I am comfortable teaching and interacting with large groups of students; however, in front of adults, it's a different ball game!

It was very disappointing when the bill did not pass through the committee. I would definitely testify again if it were a bill that I supported. It is important to me because everyone has a voice and by testifying, my voice was heard. I would encourage other educators to support legislation pertaining to education by testifying or becoming involved with the legislative process. Together we can make a difference in Colorado and across the nation!

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**LynDel Randash**

Colorado

Ms. LynDel Randash began her career in education with the Bilingual Education Department on the Ft. Peck Indian Reservation in Poplar, Montana, as a computer lab instructor. She transitioned to teaching positions at the fifth-grade and sixth-grade levels. After several years there, she moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado, where she taught in Harrison School District 2. During this time, she earned a Master in Education degree with a focus in Technology and Curriculum. This opened the door for a position as a technology curriculum specialist. When this position was eliminated she returned to the classroom. Her current position is as a K-5 computer/reading teacher at Roosevelt Charter Academy in Colorado Springs. ■

