

Meet the Pathways Class of 2022 -23

The Future of Teaching is Here!

ExpandedED Schools's **Pathways Fellowship** seeks to **diversify New York City's teaching workforce** by helping aspiring BIPOC teachers prepare for success in the classroom. College juniors, seniors and recent graduates are eligible for the program, which combines mentorship, professional development workshops, and a 10-month paid afterschool practicum.

This year's program consists of 11 fellows pursuing general education. **Below members of the Pathways Class of 2022-23 describe why they believe it is important to increase the number of BIPOC teachers in NYC and their goals as future teachers.**

Katelyn Torres



she/her

College Status 2022: Class of 2022, Lehman College
Post Fellowship: Intends to apply for graduate school in 2024 in Mental Health Counseling

What inspires you to be an educator?

What inspires me to become an educator is the ability to make a difference in others' lives and help students develop skills that will be useful in their future. I want to be the educator that I wish I had when I was younger, that will push students to be the best person they can be.

Reshmanie Boodhoo



she/her

College Status 2022: Senior, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Post Fellowship: With the guidance of her mentor, Reshmanie has decided to apply for graduate school in 2024 for Counseling

What inspires you to be an educator?

What inspired me the most were my amazing teachers growing up. From each of my classes, I could walk out with something new that I can take with me in life. This is something I hope to continue as an educator. I still remember the encouraging words of my ELA teachers, the wisdom of my 8th-grade math teacher, and the art teacher that kept building my confidence. I want to bring that into the education system and be that teacher.

Pallavi Komma



they/them

College Status 2022: Senior, New York University

Post Fellowship: Hired as the Nonprofit Coordinator at Educational Alliance, where they completed their practicum

Why is it important for people of color to enter teaching?

It is important for a person of color to teach as this field is predominantly made of white women. This misrepresentation within the classroom creates unhealthy power dynamics that are rooted in white supremacy. Having someone who the students see as a reflection of their upbringing helps them embrace their cultural backgrounds. This aids in creating a dynamic of advocacy, where students have an equal stake in nurturing the classroom environment with a teacher who is able to see them as empowered through their experiences.

Alejandra Mercedes Diaz



she/her

College Status 2022: Senior, Lehman College

Post Fellowship: Working as an Education Specialist at New York Edge P.S./I.S. 384K, where she completed her practicum and customized existing NY EDGE curricula to be bilingual as well as culturally responsive specifically for Spanish speakers

What inspires you to be an educator?

The small improvements I see myself making in the lives of the next generation are what motivates me to become a teacher. When I was a young child and moved to this country, I felt very lost and unsure of where to begin. When I started school, I met my teachers and was happy to be in a bilingual setting where, despite the fact that my classes were taught in English, I had the support of the teachers who worked there and helped the community feel like a family. When a child like me comes to this country for the first time, I want to be that support for them. Not only do I enjoy learning new things, but I believe that you do as well when you are surrounded by students. At such a young age, they are inquisitive and question everything they see. They are also capable of learning just as well as I am. Because it makes me happy, I would describe teaching or becoming an educator as my spark.

Marquis Rolle



he/him

College Status 2022: Junior, Nyack College

Post Fellowship: Intends to pursue becoming a music teacher

What inspires you to be an educator?

What inspires me to be an educator is the excitement kids have when they are engaged, especially involving music. Music is such a great way to let students express themselves. Growing up I was not very social, however my elementary school teacher really inspired me when I got older to become a music teacher, because he was able to reach kids from different backgrounds and different personalities and made a free space for them to express themselves through singing or playing an instrument. I am inspired to be an educator that is able to reach any child, no matter their background, and create a space for them to learn, grow, have fun, and be themselves.

Kristina Rodriguez



she/her

College Status 2022: Class of 2019, Dickison College

Post Fellowship: Joining program partner, Teach for America, New York 2024 and co-wrote NY EDGE Pop-Up Garden K-2 STEM Curriculum

What inspires you to be an educator?

What inspires me to be an educator is the amazing educators I was lucky enough to have growing up who led with care, empathy, and wisdom. I had quite a few great teachers who saw something in me, who both encouraged and challenged me in ways that led me to be someone that I could be proud of today. I would love to be that mentor or role model for this generation of bright youth. It is so important to have diverse educators, because representation matters. While I was grateful for the educators I had, and found value in their influences in my life, something I felt was lacking was seeing myself in these leaders of the community I grew up in which was mainly people of color. As someone who is now an educator in the afterschool sector, I see what a great impact having people you can look up to and learn from who come from similar backgrounds as you. When youth can see themselves in positions of leadership, that inspires them because it feels more attainable and accessible for them and motivates them to chase their dreams. .

Bijoya Biswas



she/her

College Status 2022: Senior, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Post Fellowship: Working at the DOE as a Legal Education Specialist and beginning her graduate degree in Education Policy at NYU

Why is it important for people of color to enter teaching?

It is important for people of color to enter teaching because this is a country of immigrants and we have children who speak another language. In order to make students feel safe and comfortable, they need to see a teacher that is like them. When I first came to this country and I met a teacher that was from my country or looked like me, I felt so comfortable and happy to learn from them. It's important to feel that level of comfort and happiness being in a classroom.

Matthew Parra



he/him

College Status 2022: Senior, St. Joseph's University

Post Fellowship: Pursuing his graduate degree at St. Joseph's School of Education and looking to work as a Special Education teacher with the DOE

What inspires you to be an educator?

What inspired me to be an educator is the need to have representation in the classroom. I hope to be a person that my students look up and relate to. I think it is also important to understand that when teaching in a diverse place such as New York City you have to celebrate the differences that students have.

Elizabeth Perez



she/her

College Status 2022: Junior, Brooklyn College

Post Fellowship: Joining program partner, Uncommon Schools' Summer Teacher Fellowship

What inspires you to be an educator?

My inspiration comes from my high school principal and teachers. My principal established a strong philosophy that yearned for the students and staff to treat each other like family to ensure that the students were motivated to learn. The school was very successful in their philosophy and it ultimately felt like we were all one big family. Most teachers strived to give the students a second chance to succeed. To be an educator, I wish to bring that philosophy onto my own work.



Jennifer Fernandez



she/her

College Status 2022: Class of 2022, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Post Fellowship: With the guidance of her mentor, she has decided to to pursue her Master's in Social Work in 2024 to become a youth advocate due to her love of out-of-school time/youth development practice

What inspires you to be an educator?

It's extremely important for people of color to enter teaching or the education system because many of our youth live in impoverished communities lacking good educational programs/educators. There has been discrimination and segregation within the educational system which caused the under-subsidization of schools within minority communities serving students of color. Such district schools tend to not prepare and educate due to a lack of resources and representation. Sometimes educators and one's environment can have a huge impact on a students overall behavior and life choices. That's why it's extremely important for our youth to see educators that look like them, educators they can relate to and educators that can empathize with, understand, and accommodate many of their needs.

Monae Ollivierre



she/her

College Status 2022: Class of 2022, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Post Fellowship: Working at a private school and beginning law school in Fall 2023

Why is it important for people of color to enter teaching?

Students of color do better academically and are more likely to graduate and go to college if some of their teachers look like them. Research shows that black teachers tend to have higher expectations for black students. Research also suggests that white students show improved problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity when they have teachers of color. Finally, since I have a learning disability, I will bring a more profound empathy and positivity to my teaching as a special education educator.



Interested in learning more? Visit our [website](#) or reach out to a member of our team.



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ExpandED Schools leverages afterschool as a vehicle for addressing the educational inequities that prevent far too many students from reaching their full potential.

ExpandED's advocacy, research, and program development efforts enable community-based organizations to provide quality K-12 afterschool enrichment and academic programs; support a career-oriented summer jobs program for high schoolers; and promote afterschool as a training ground for aspiring teachers of color.

