

# The TEEACH Scholars: Committed to Making a Difference

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has!”*  
*–Margaret Mead*

Faculty in the Department of Special Education and Multiple Abilities are pleased to present the inaugural cohort of Project TEEACH Scholars. These very capable, caring, and committed individuals are ready to make a difference in special and general education classrooms across West Alabama. Project TEEACH provides full tuition scholarships and other support to elementary education teachers who are interested in becoming advocates, change agents, and highly qualified special educators.

**Patricia Burroughs**  
**Hale County School District**



Strong leadership is a hallmark of effective schools. Patricia is described by administrators and colleagues as a natural leader. A graduate of The University of Alabama, she earned her Bachelor’s degree from the Multiple Abilities Program (MAP) in 2004. She is currently teaching fifth grade general education at Greensboro West Elementary School. Patricia’s commitment to achieving excellence in her profession is endless; she wants to be an advocate for students with disabilities by earning a doctorate and becoming a special education administrator. Patricia stated Project TEEACH was a perfect fit because the program allows her to continue her love for teaching and meet her personal and professional goals. Patricia is very proud of her twin sons --both of whom are freshman honors’ students at The University of Alabama.

**Michael Jones**  
**Shelby County School District**



Students with disabilities need caring mentors and positive male role models. Michael is committed to doing just that! He is a former college basketball player and is currently a youth minister as well as a full-time teacher in the Shelby County School District. Michael constantly looks for ways to improve his teaching and stated Project TEEACH is an opportunity for him to earn his special education teaching certification while he continues to invest in the lives of his students. Michael is committed to leaving no child behind academically, emotionally, or socially. He is a dedicated family man with a supportive wife and four active children. He earned a Bachelor’s degree in Exercise Science from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1998.



**Kimberly Coates**  
**Tuscaloosa City School District**

Teaching for 19 years, Kimberly has acquired extensive wisdom and experience as a general education classroom teacher. She is currently a second grade teacher at Oakdale Primary School where she participates continuously in professional development and school improvement guided by The Modern Red SchoolHouse Institute. Kim has two adult children and thoroughly enjoys spending time with her four grandchildren. She is committed to life long learning and has always been interested in earning a master's degree in a specialized field. She stated Project TEEACH offers her opportunities to do this and, in turn, help her students with disabilities become higher achieving. Kimberly earned a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from The University of Alabama.



**Theresa Carden**  
**Tuscaloosa City School District**

Theresa knows effective teachers make a difference. Her unwavering commitment to being an effective teacher is evidenced in her list of achievements. She earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from The University of Alabama; and, she is also a Nationally Board Certified Teacher. Theresa is currently teaching 1<sup>st</sup> grade at University Place Elementary. One of her professional goals is to help reduce the overrepresentation of students who are minorities in special education. To do this, she stated she is on a mission to "wipe out the vicious, unrelenting animal called poverty" because she believes it interferes with school achievement. Theresa thinks her involvement in Project TEEACH will help her better meet students' differing needs and help her achieve her mission.



**Rene Bailey**  
**Tuscaloosa City School District**

Rene's unbridled passion for teaching students with learning and behavioral challenges is obvious and desperately needed in today's schools. Rene is currently teaching at Northington Elementary School where over the past six years she has gained a reputation as a fair, friendly, and incredibly hard working general education teacher. Rene's colleagues count on her for guidance and support. She is married with a four year old daughter and loves to scrapbook in her free time. Renee is a graduate from The University of Alabama. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education in 2000. She stated that the Project TEEACH is an exciting opportunity and she has always wanted to study under Dr. Rock.

**Kristine Sizemore**  
**Tuscaloosa City School District**



Kristine believes all children need support, encouragement, and nurturing to succeed. The most-up-to-date educational research supports her position. Earning her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education in 2004, Kristine is an alumna of The University of Alabama. She is currently a Kindergarten teacher at Northington Elementary School. Kristine is also the beaming mother of two young children and enjoys every minute she has with them. Kristine stated that she believes "every child has something special to offer the world". Always desiring to become a special education teacher, she thinks Project TEEACH provides her with the training in scientifically-based instruction and positive behavior support strategies she needs to learn to help all children succeed.

**Malinda Lee Parson**  
**Fayette County School District**



Family involvement is vital to successful schooling. In her fourth grade general education classroom at Hubbertville School, Malinda strives to actively and positively involve all parents in their children's education. Malinda is married and has three children of her own. So while she works hard to involve parents, she understands the many demands they face. Malinda earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Elementary Education from Mississippi University for Women in 1995. Embracing the challenge posed by her students who are difficult to teach and difficult to reach, Malinda wants to learn a variety of strategies to more effectively differentiate instruction. She stated that Project TEEACH would provide her with those research-based strategies and much more!

**Allison Reed**  
**Tarrant City School District**



Allison wants to change children's lives and she does so every day in her Kindergarten classroom at Tarrant Elementary School. With Master's and Bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood and Elementary Education already under her belt, her intuitive passion to make a difference is guided by sound professional knowledge. Allison's dedication to improving her teaching is profound, yet she is always looking for ways to positively motivate those around her. She stated that Project TEEACH gives her the opportunity to fulfill her life's calling to become a special educator. Allison's advocacy efforts are evidenced not only in her classroom, but also in her church and community service endeavors in which she leads children's ministries and serves as a summer camp counselor for individuals with disabilities. In her spare time Allison loves to read and spend time with family and friends.



**Kim Victoria Mitchell**  
**Fairfield School District**

Recently awarded Fairfield City School District's Teacher of the Year award, Kim is a welcome addition to the elite inaugural cohort of TEEACH Scholars. She is currently a first grade teacher at C.J. Elementary School where her principal, Mr. Walter Curry, stated "she has a talent with children like none I have ever seen". Obviously, Kim is a capable, committed, and caring teacher, but there is more. She is also the parent of an amazing child with special needs. Closing the achievement gap is a goal that is near and dear to her heart, and she wants to know more about special education law, advocacy, and effective teaching strategies. She thinks Project TEEACH will provide her with the knowledge, skill, and ability she desires. In her free time, Kim loves to write poetry. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Stillman College in 1998.



**Marjorie Littleton**  
**Chilton County School District**

Marjorie is dedicated to preventing school failure for all children. As the mother of four teenage children, one of whom has a disability, and past professional experience as a social worker, Marjorie has gained valuable life and professional wisdom in what it takes to promote success. Marjorie earned a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from the University of Montevallo in 1996; however, she is currently teaching fifth and sixth grade students at Isabella High School. Marjorie stated that Project TEEACH will give her the opportunity to learn the research-based special education methods she needs to meet the needs of her students. She also stated that The University of Alabama has a standard of excellence with which she wished to be associated. In her spare time, she enjoys singing and musical theatre.



**Marsha Leigh Wheat**  
**Pickens County School District**

Marsha is described by her administrators and colleagues as "a leader who does whatever it takes to meet students' needs". She earned a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from The University of Alabama in 1991, and has always dreamed of going on to graduate school to learn how to better serve the children with whom she works. She is married with two children of her own and loves the Atlanta Braves and Alabama Gymnastics. One of her children has a disability, so her dedication to special education is fueled by both her personal and professional interests. She stated that Project TEEACH will better inform and strengthen her resolve to become a more effective teacher and advocate for students with disabilities.

**Kimberly Clark**  
**Pickens County School District**



Kimberly is committed to collaborative problem-solving. In her current role as a K-6 Reading Coach at Carrollton Elementary School, she is viewed by her colleagues as a mentor, instructional model, and facilitator of best educational practices. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Mississippi University for Women. Through the extensive training Kimberly has received as a reading coach, she has learned the value and observed the effectiveness of research-based methods. She is married with two children. Now that her sons are older, she thinks the time is right for her to pursue a master's degree. She stated that Project TEEACH has given her a wonderful opportunity to work towards this advanced degree in a field that she loves—special education.

**Abby Brown**  
**Tuscaloosa County School District**



Abby's dedication to meeting her students' differing needs is second to none. She is a hard working fourth grade general education teacher at Holt Elementary School who always devotes extra time, after school and on the weekends, to her teaching. She establishes high expectations for herself as well as her students, and wishes to ensure success for all. In 2002, she earned her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from The University of Alabama. Recently engaged, Abby and her fiancé are planning a fall 2007 wedding; she enjoys spending her spare time planning the festivities with friends and family. She stated that Project TEEACH provides her with an opportunity to grow personally and improve professionally.

**Wesley Chapman**  
**Tuscaloosa County School System**



Wesley's ability to see possibility is endless. A new 3<sup>rd</sup> grade general education teacher at Cottondale Elementary School, his love for teaching is contagious. He takes his professional responsibility to meet the needs of all his students to heart, and is always looking for ways to provide individualized instruction. In 2005, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from The University of Alabama. He is also a newlywed who enjoys spending as much free time as possible with his wife, Rachael. When asked why he wanted to be selected for Project TEEACH, he stated "I have a student with Down syndrome in my classroom, and the baby steps of progress we have made have been incredible. With new knowledge, skill, and ability, I can only imagine what else we can accomplish".



**Ava Smith**  
**Tuscaloosa County School System**

Described as a charismatic individual who is a real “team player”, Ava is a dedicated and motivated third grade general education teacher at Brookwood Elementary School. She earned a Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from The University of Alabama in 2006. Ava values tradition, pride, and excellence and is an avid TIDE football and basketball fan. She also likes to scrapbook in her free time and is a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.. Above all, Ava wants to learn how to better differentiate instruction and help her students become more effective and efficient learners. She stated that Project TEEACH will help her to do this.



**Nora Ray**  
**Tuscaloosa City School District**

Nora comes from a family of educators. Her mother, father, and brother are teachers and Nora is currently a general education Kindergarten teacher at Northington Elementary School. She earned a Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from The University of Alabama in 2006. One of Nora’s mentors described her as a caring, creative, and responsible teacher. Nora believes it is every teacher’s job to find a way to positively impact children. She grew up in Kansas and loves to spend her free time rooting for Kansas basketball. Nora stated that Project TEEACH will help her become more than just a successful special education teacher --it will help her touch people’s hearts.



**Kelly Washington**  
**Tarrant City School District**

Passionate about helping her students learn, Kelly uses innovative techniques to emphasize ability rather than inability. She is currently a fourth grade general education teacher at Tarrant Elementary School where her colleagues describe her as a teacher who is “hard working and dedicated to achieving good things”. Kelly earned a Bachelor’s degree in Elementary and early Childhood Education from Miles College in 2004. Because Kelly is also the mother of two boys –both of whom have disabilities—she also has a personal investment in becoming a special educator. She stated that Project TEEACH has given her the opportunity to be a positive role model to her young sons and to fulfill her goal of becoming an advocate for students with special needs.

