

# Teach Waterloo: Building Tomorrow's Teachers Today

A University of Northern Iowa and Waterloo School District partnership to increase the number of minority teachers to support student success



Shakari Baker-Bruce, Teach Waterloo Fellow

## Addressing the Gaps

K-12 schools nationwide are more racially diverse than ever before. For the first time, non-white students now account for the majority of public school students.

Yet despite changing student demographics, racial representation among teachers is lagging behind, and research suggests this may limit students' achievement and potential. Studies have shown that having a teacher of color in a classroom can increase the likelihood that students of color complete high school and aspire to attend college.

## Teach Waterloo Program

In 2018, the Waterloo School District and the University of Northern Iowa formed the Teach Waterloo partnership to diversify the teacher workforce in support of student success. The Teach Waterloo participants, known as program "fellows," are drawn from current paraeducators and behavioral intervention specialists whom the district recommends to enroll in the program. Three fellows graduated in 2020, and eight are currently enrolled in Teach Waterloo.

### Program Details

- Provides minority fellows a path to earn elementary education teaching licensure
- Graduates have a three-year agreement for employment with Waterloo Schools
- Fellows are provided wrap-around supports, including advising and success coaching, textbooks and scholarships
- Waterloo Schools provides a liaison for fellows and the flexibility to attend class while remaining employed

## Diversifying the Teacher Workforce

In Iowa, there is a gap in representation across the teacher workforce. Among the state's largest school districts — where the majority of students are non-white — the Waterloo School District has the largest percent of minority teachers with just 6%. Approximately 55% of the Waterloo public school students identify as racial or ethnic minorities.

### United States

**79%** of public school teachers are white and non-Hispanic

### Iowa

**92%** of public school teachers are white and non-Hispanic

### Waterloo

**94%** of public school teachers are white and non-Hispanic

Source: National Education Statistics and Waterloo School District Data

*Teach Waterloo is a step toward systemic change in K-12 education, providing tomorrow's students role models and educators to unlock their potential and achieve their academic goals.*



*I hope to be a teacher who inspires my students to become great at whatever they choose to do — to become resilient and to prosper and grow a love for their chosen field and install a passion for not just learning, but to bring the learning to higher levels and peaks, and to simply succeed at what they set out to do.*

**Benjamin Smith**  
2020 Teach Waterloo Graduate

## One Teacher Creates a Ripple

Many of us were lucky enough to have a teacher that challenged us and unlocked our potential to do more than we thought possible. Your support of a Teach Waterloo fellow will provide that experience to not one, but many students over the course of a teaching career, making a lasting difference in our schools and in our community.

### 1 Teach Waterloo Fellow

can make a difference for

### 500 Students

*1 Teach Waterloo Fellow X 25 elementary students year  
X 20 years of service = 500 students*

Teach Waterloo is based on a previous program at Wartburg College funded by the R.J. McElroy Trust that demonstrated this ripple of impact. From 1994–1999, the program produced 31 teachers/administrators of color who each went on to serve an average of 21 years in the Waterloo School District.

## Support Teach Waterloo

Generous investment from the R.J. McElroy Trust launched the Teach Waterloo program and supported the first group of Teach Waterloo fellows. UNI is now seeking additional investments to continue the program's impact.

The program's primary expense is the cost of tuition and fees — an average of \$25,000 for each Teach Waterloo fellow. Recognizing Teach Waterloo fellows may have greater financial need than the typical college student, we endeavor to bridge the gap between available financial aid and scholarship assistance to erase financial barriers to their participation.

We invite the Waterloo and UNI communities to support this impactful program by helping to fund the next round of Teach Waterloo fellows and future educators. Consider making an investment today in Teach Waterloo:

### Fundraising Goal

**\$300,000** — Scholarship support for the next 12 Teach Waterloo fellows (average of \$25,000 in scholarship support per fellow)

## Waterloo Community School District



**Kingsley Botchway II**  
Chief Officer of Human Resources & Equity  
Waterloo Community School District



*The collaboration between the District, McElroy Trust, and UNI has made this an amazing success. While the impact on our students is the reason why this work is so important, the impact that we are having on the individuals in the program and their families is immeasurable.*

### Contact

For questions or to give, contact Hillery Oberle, assistant vice president for strategy, communications and campaigns, or Kim Hanna, director of development for the College of Education.

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