



## MAURICE TELESFORD

Michigan teacher answered a calling to prepare students for careers in math, science, and engineering

As an undergraduate engineering student at the University of Michigan (U-M), Maurice Telesford struggled with a question that went on to define his career: why graduation rates in the engineering program were so low for students of color. "It seemed like a lot of it stemmed from poor high school preparation," he says. "I felt called to teach high school math or science in an inner-city school, to better prepare students for careers in engineering."

That insight led Telesford to intern at a local high school and take a graduate course in education, while at U-M. As he looked to continue his studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, a financial aid officer mentioned the KSTF Teaching Fellowship. Excited about the opportunity to develop science-specific pedagogy as he focused on the challenges associated with education in urban and high-poverty schools, Telesford successfully applied for and was awarded the Fellowship in 2007.

Many first-year teachers get very little support as they enter the field. "You get the keys to your classroom, a textbook, and are told to 'go,'" says Telesford. When he began teaching physics and chemistry at Ferndale High School, the experience was different. "Backed by the support of the KSTF network in the early years of my career, I didn't feel nearly as intimidated."

Lisa Williams, principal at Ferndale High School, calls Telesford "a great mentor and role model," adding that he "has complemented his academic achievements with educational research, theory, and experience." That experience, Telesford says, came from the intensive focus on science pedagogy during his time as a KSTF Teaching Fellow.

**Maurice Telesford**  
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- Member, Ferndale High School North Central Association certification committee
- Teacher, Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program and University of Michigan Center for Engineering Diversity and Outreach
- President, building representative, positive intervention and crisis chair, and negotiating team member, Ferndale Education Association
- Siemens STEM Institute Fellow
- Team leader, Ferndale High School science department data team

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## TEACHER PROFILE

"In the first and second year of the Fellowship, KSTF exposed me to things we are just now starting to do as a district," he says. Just as important, KSTF's leadership training in the final year of the Fellowship helped Telesford envision the instructional leader he has become. "They had us draw pictures of how we saw ourselves," he recalls. "I drew a picture of myself standing at a podium and speaking to people. What KSTF did was reinforce the value of teachers as leaders and say that there are many different ways you can lead as a teacher."

As a fifth-year teacher, Telesford led his department's data team, which looked at student work and planned instruction, a role made possible, he says, by the Fellowship's emphasis on inquiry and reflection. "With his leadership, students have made huge gains in their assessments," added Williams. He has also been active in his local teachers' union, serving as a building rep and on its negotiation team. He will serve as president of the union from 2014–2016.

In addition to his duties at Ferndale High, Telesford has returned as a teacher to the Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program, a STEM-focused enrichment program that he enjoyed as a student. He also teaches at an intensive science and engineering camp for high school students at U-M's Center for Engineering Diversity and Outreach. "Kids should be exposed to different careers," Telesford says. "Engineering isn't one that students see on television, so they don't know what it is, that it's broader than building a plane, train, or building. In the field of education, it's my goal to identify a continuous pathway to expose students to engineering, before they go on to the college level."

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