

# TEACHERS LIKE US

STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING EDUCATOR DIVERSITY  
IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BY LYNN OLSON  
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**Future***Ed*

Independent Analysis, Innovative Ideas

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Lynn Olson is a FutureEd senior fellow.

### ***About FutureEd***

FutureEd is an independent, solution-oriented think tank at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy, committed to bringing fresh energy to the causes of excellence, equity, and efficiency in K-12 and higher education. Follow us on Twitter at @FutureEdGU

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# TEACHERS LIKE US

## STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING EDUCATOR DIVERSITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## FOREWORD

Mounting research on the importance of a diverse teaching force combined with the recent surge in support for racial justice has spurred a wide-ranging commitment to increasing teacher diversity. A new national survey of K-12 teachers conducted for FutureEd by the RAND Corporation found that 81 percent of the nation's teachers think it is "important or extremely important" for students of color to be taught by teachers of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and 79 percent think it is "important or extremely important" to have colleagues of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Yet while students of color comprise more than 50 percent of public-school enrollment nationally, a share expected to grow steadily in the years ahead, nearly 80 percent of teachers are White. And only 58 percent of the teachers in the FutureEd survey think their school district is "committed or very committed" to teacher racial and ethnic diversity. In many states, the lack of teacher diversity means that many students attend schools and districts that do not employ a single teacher of color.

To help education policymakers and practitioners make the national aspiration for a more diverse teaching force a reality, FutureEd examines in depth in this report the barriers to teacher diversity and the most promising steps that school districts, states, the federal government, and teacher-preparation programs can take to bring more teachers of color into classrooms and encourage them to stay.

FutureEd Senior Fellow Lynn Olson researched and wrote the report, bringing to bear her deep knowledge of the teaching profession and her years of experience writing about a critical component of the nation's education enterprise.

FutureEd Policy Analyst Bella DiMarco conducted a 50-state scan of state legislative activity on teacher diversity that informs the report and appears in the Appendix. And Molly Breen, Merry Alderman and Jackie Arthur made valuable editorial and design contributions.

We're grateful to Tequilla Brownie, the chief executive of TNTP and a FutureEd senior fellow, for her thought-partnership on the project, and we're grateful to the RAND Corporation for helping us gauge teachers' perspectives on racial and ethnic diversity in their profession.

The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Joyce Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York have been invaluable partners, making possible this project and FutureEd's wider work in support of the diverse, high-quality teachers the nation's students deserve.

**Thomas Toch**  
**Director, FutureEd**

**As a little girl growing up in El Salvador, Aracely Valdes loved school and dreamed of becoming a teacher herself. Yet when she enrolled in the Fort Worth, Texas public schools at age 15, a new immigrant who spoke no English, the path to fulfilling her dream was far from clear. Valdes became a mother in her senior year of high school, but in her early twenties enrolled in Tarrant County College, a Fort Worth community college, to earn an associate degree. Valdes knew she needed a bachelor's degree to become a teacher but worried she could not afford the tuition.**

Then, in her last year at Tarrant County College, Valdes saw a flyer for a one-year program called Tech Teach Across Texas that would allow her to earn a teaching degree while being paid to serve as a trainee in the classroom.

Texas schools were struggling before Texas Tech University launched the program in 2014: as the state's population grew the demand for new teachers swelled to over 30,000 each year. Many of those new teachers came through alternative certification programs rather than education schools, nearly half of them trained entirely online and with as few as 15 hours of in-person student teaching before becoming the teacher of record.<sup>1</sup> The vast majority of these new teachers ended up in high-need schools attended mostly by Black and Latino students from low-income families.<sup>2</sup> A survey of principals by the Texas Education Agency found widespread dissatisfaction with late hire, alternatively certified teachers.<sup>3</sup>

In response, Texas Tech University created its 12-month program allowing community college graduates like Valdes to earn both a bachelor's

degree and a teaching certificate by combining online courses with a year-long paid classroom residency working under an experienced mentor.

Today, a year after completing the program with honors, Valdes has realized her childhood dream and works as a dual-language third grade math and science teacher at T.A. Sims Elementary School in Fort Worth. As a bilingual teacher of color, she is a much sought-after hire in Fort Worth and beyond.

A host of studies have found that when students of color have teachers of color their attendance improves, disciplinary infractions decline, and academic achievement and college enrollment rise, while a diverse teaching force strengthens a sense of self-efficacy and improves racial attitudes among all students.<sup>4,5</sup>

Yet while students of color comprise more than 50 percent of public-school enrollment nationally, a share expected to grow steadily in the years ahead, nearly 80 percent of teachers are White.<sup>6</sup> In many states, this lack of teacher diversity means that most students attend schools and districts that do not employ a single teacher of color.<sup>7</sup> Why should

this be? The causes include a lack of role models, the high cost of a college education, the diminished earning prospects for teachers compared to other professions, and the challenging and often inhospitable environments in which many teachers of color work. A national survey of K-12 teachers conducted for FutureEd by the RAND Corporation in fall 2022 found that 81 percent think it is “important or extremely important” for students of color to be taught by teachers of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and 79 percent think it is “important or extremely important” to have colleagues of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Yet only 58 percent think their school district is “committed or very committed” to teacher racial and ethnic diversity.<sup>8</sup>

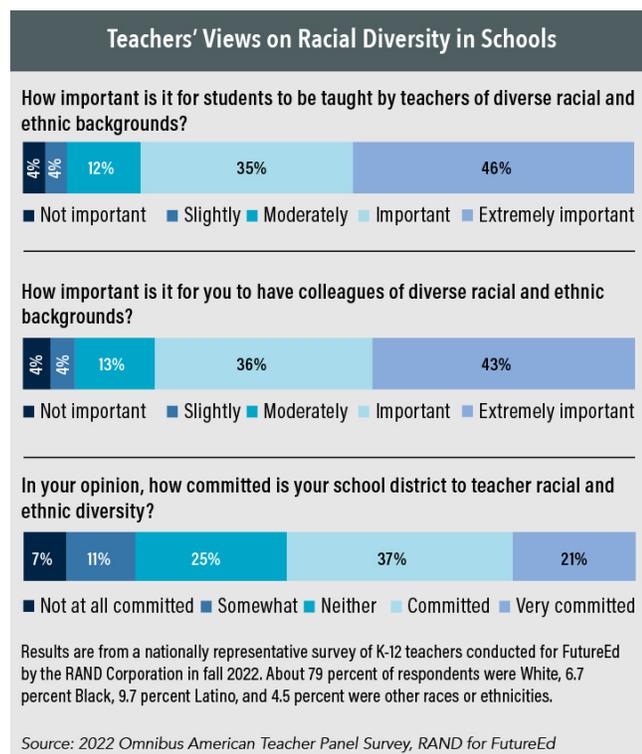
Mounting research on the importance of a diverse teaching force combined with the recent surge in support for racial justice has spurred a wide-ranging commitment to increasing teacher diversity along with a host of promising recruitment and retention strategies to achieve that aim.<sup>9</sup> This report examines in depth the barriers to a more diverse

teaching force and the most promising steps that school districts, states, the federal government, and teacher-preparation programs can take to bring more teachers of color into classrooms and encourage them to stay.

## Why Diversity Matters

Striking evidence has emerged over the past decade in support of a more racially and ethnically diverse teaching profession:

- Black students who had at least one Black teacher by third grade were nine percentage points more likely to graduate from high school and six percentage points more likely to enroll in college than their peers who were not assigned a Black teacher, according to research by American University economist Seth Gershenson and colleagues.<sup>10</sup>
- In North Carolina, Black students were less likely to experience exclusionary discipline when they had Black teachers than when they had White teachers, even within the same school, according to American University and University of California, Davis researchers Constance A. Lindsay and Cassandra M.D. Hart. This was true for suspensions, expulsions, and office referrals for “willful defiance.”<sup>11</sup>
- Studies by Gershenson and colleagues of schools in North Carolina and Tennessee found that matching Black and Latino students with same-race teachers increased long-term outcomes, including high school graduation, college aspirations, and college enrollment rates.<sup>12</sup> The impact, representing 10 percent increases, was roughly equivalent to a significant reduction in class size.<sup>13</sup> Research in Texas schools by Scott Delhommer at the University of Texas-Austin yielded similar findings.<sup>14</sup>
- A 2022 summary of evidence by researchers affiliated with the Brookings Institution found



that increased exposure to same-race teachers also is associated with improved course grades, attendance, grit and self-management, and the likelihood of being selected for gifted-and-talented programs.<sup>15</sup>

Researchers trace these results to several qualities that Black, Latino, and other teachers of color bring to classrooms: caring relationships with students and families, high expectations, and instruction relevant to students' cultural backgrounds and lived experience.

In a 2021 study of 71 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers that included classroom observations and teacher and student surveys, David Blazar at the University of Maryland found that teachers of color (mostly Black in the study, but also Hispanic and Asian) are more likely to believe that student intelligence is malleable rather than fixed; spend more time developing relationships with students and their families; spend more time preparing lessons and differentiating activities based on individual student needs; and address student misbehavior in productive ways that do not create a negative classroom climate.<sup>16</sup>

Blazar's research, based on randomly assigning teachers to classrooms, complements earlier qualitative studies that suggest teachers of color are better able to develop trusting, meaningful relationships with students of color, more likely to hold higher expectations in a nurturing way, and more likely to provide culturally relevant teaching.<sup>17</sup> Blazar's study found the effects of teachers of color extend not just to students of color but also to their White peers, whose sense of self-efficacy improves when taught by teachers of color.

Together, the research is so compelling, argues Seth Gershenson, the American University economist and co-author of the 2021 book *Teacher Diversity and Student Success: Why Racial Representation Matters in the Classroom*, that instead of treating teacher diversity and teacher quality as separate or even competing goals, policymakers and education administrators should consider a teacher's race as

one measure of teacher quality, alongside more traditional measures such as years of experience and demonstrated performance. In other words, Gershenson and others argue, the nation can't have a high-quality teaching force without also having a diverse teaching force.

## The Legacy of Segregation

Ironically, the biggest legal milestone in the history of school desegregation in the United States contributed to the current racial and ethnic imbalance in the nation's teacher workforce.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* required the legal integration of the nation's public schools. But it also forced tens of thousands of Black teachers out of their jobs through dismissals, demotions, harassment, forced resignations, and reduced pay as districts consolidated what had been separate Black and White school systems. In part, districts were responding to the objections of White parents that their children would be taught by Black teachers.<sup>18</sup> All told, an estimated 38,000 Black educators lost their jobs in the decade after *Brown*, or nearly half of Black teachers nationally.<sup>19</sup> The teaching force has never recovered.

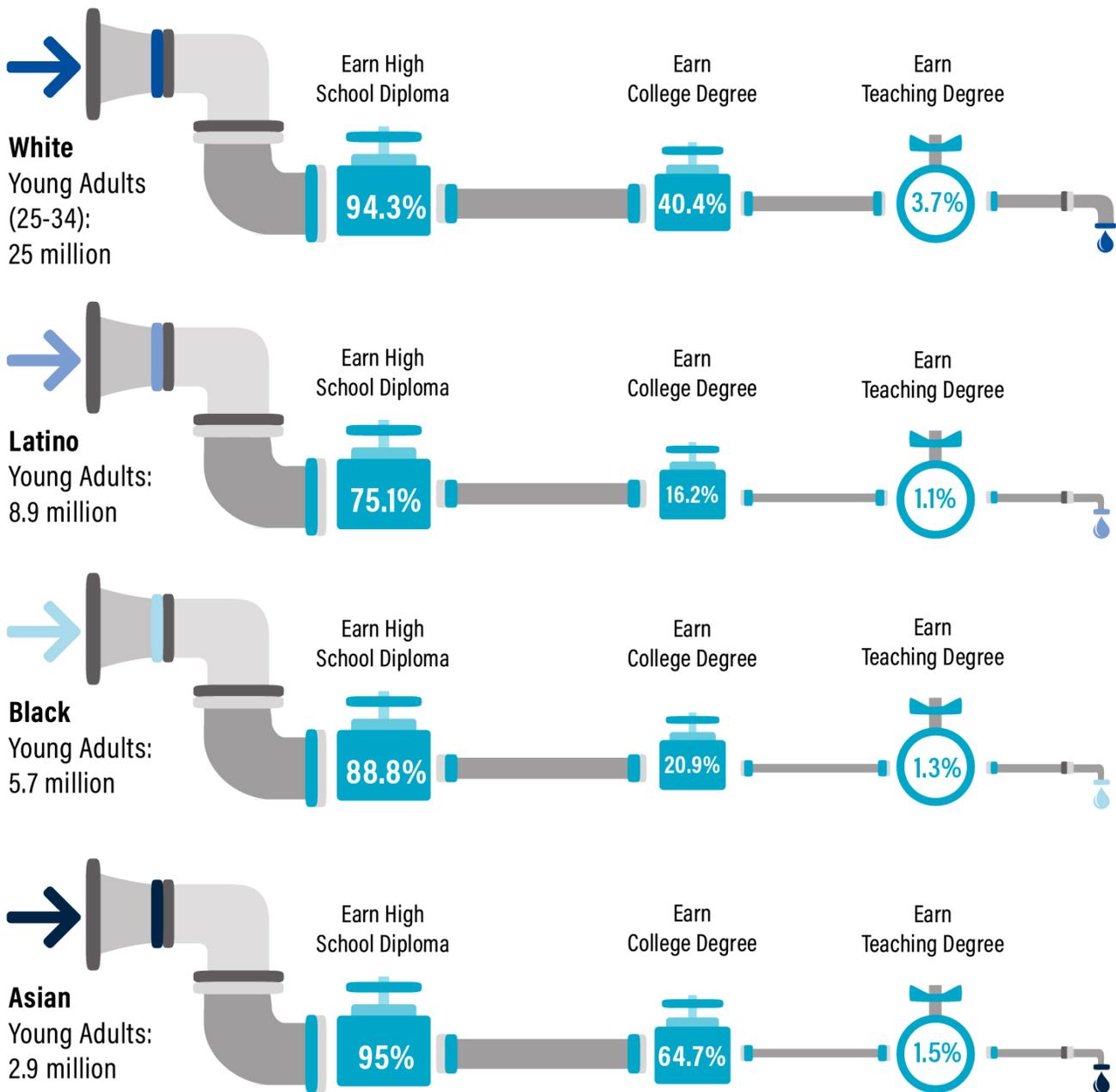
The pool of Black teachers continued to shrink in the decades after the civil rights movement. Prior to 1964, teaching was one of the few professions open to Black college graduates. The Civil Rights Act enabled Black professionals and other professionals of color to move up the economic ladder through fields that had once been largely closed to them, including business, engineering, and health.

Over the past 30 years, Latino teachers have mainly driven the increase in the racial and ethnic diversity of the teacher workforce. While they now constitute the second-largest ethnic group in the profession, the increases are not enough to close the representation gap between Latino students

and teachers.<sup>20</sup> Latino and Asian students are even less likely than Black and Native American students to see someone who looks like them in front of the classroom. While Asian students make up a relatively small percentage of enrollment nationally, Latino students comprised 28 percent of public-school enrollment in fall 2020 (and are the fastest-

growing student population).<sup>21</sup> Yet just 9 percent of public-school teachers are Latino.<sup>22</sup> Forecasts suggest that the representation gap between Latino students and teachers will grow by 20 percent over the next 40 years as the Latino student population continues to expand.<sup>23</sup>

## Percentage of Young Adults Who Become Teachers, By Race and Ethnicity



Source: Urban Institute

## A Porous Pipeline

Myriad factors reduce the representation of teachers of color in public schools, starting with education—who graduates high school, who enrolls in and completes college, who enters and graduates from an educator-preparation program—and extending to the profession—who gets hired, who is placed in what work setting, and how long they remain.

Many students of color receive lower-quality schooling than White students, contributing to diminished achievement and lower high-school-graduation, college-going, and higher-education-completion rates.<sup>24</sup> Among young adults with a college degree, fully two-thirds identify as White.<sup>25</sup>

The high cost of attending college and the financial penalties for becoming a teacher compared to work in technology and other more-lucrative fields compound the problem.

Studies have found that Black and Latino teachers are more likely to fund their undergraduate and graduate education through federal student loans than their White counterparts.<sup>26</sup> They owe more on these loans on average and encounter more difficulties in repaying them—diminishing the attractiveness of a relatively low-paying profession like teaching.<sup>27</sup> “It’s a huge barrier to entry,” says Elisa Villanueva Beard, the CEO of Teach for America, a nonprofit that places recent college graduates, 53 percent of whom are teachers of color, in high-poverty schools for two years through a competitive process. “What’s painful is you have a generation that really wants to serve, they want to make a contribution.”

Colleges of education, where most teachers are trained, are overwhelmingly White. A study by the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education found that, in 2022, only 28 percent of those earning undergraduate degrees and certificates from colleges of education were people of color, while Black and Latino students make

up 46 percent of the public-school population.<sup>28</sup> Students of color who do enroll in teacher-training programs are less likely to complete them than other students.<sup>29</sup>

TNTP, a national organization that supports districts’ human-capital strategies, computed a “teacher prep diversity gap” by comparing the race and ethnicity of student teachers in colleges of education to those of public-school students in each state. It found a gap of at least 10 percentage points in 43 states.<sup>30</sup> “Unless we fix this bleed, we’re never going to get out of the problem of the lack of teacher diversity in our schools,” says Tequilla Brownie, the organization’s CEO.

Teacher-training faculties are also overwhelmingly White. Less than 10 percent of tenured or tenure-track instructors and 13 percent of adjunct instructors in educator-preparation programs are persons of color, according to Rita Kohli, an associate professor of teaching and teacher education at University of California, Riverside, and author of *Teachers of Color: Resisting Racism and Reclaiming Education*.<sup>31</sup>

Kohli’s in-depth interviews with 30 teachers of color found they often felt “invisible, silenced, and isolated” within colleges of education, where the curriculum, pedagogy, and visions for the profession did not align with their own experiences or perspectives.<sup>32</sup>

Teachers of color who attend Minority Serving Institutions, such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, are more likely to graduate with a bachelor’s degree from a school or department of education compared to teachers of color who attend predominantly White institutions.<sup>33</sup> MSIs make up just 13 percent of teacher-preparation programs in the United States but prepare a disproportionate share of the nation’s teachers of color, including the majority of the nation’s Black teachers.<sup>34</sup> Yet they have traditionally lacked the resources of other teacher-training institutions.<sup>35</sup>

## The Challenge of Licensure Exams

The Black and Latino students who make it through teacher training fail licensure exams at much higher rates than other teaching candidates—further diminishing the pool of teachers of color. These exams, which are required to teach in many states, measure basic skills in math, reading, and writing that all students should have mastered in secondary school. The exams also gauge elementary teachers' grasp of English, math, science, and social studies content and secondary teachers' advanced knowledge of the subjects they plan to teach. Potential explanations for the higher failure rates include the lower quality education experienced by many prospective teachers of color during elementary and secondary school as well as possible bias in the exams themselves.

A recent study by the National Council on Teacher Quality examined passing rates on the content licensure tests for elementary school teachers across 44 states, from September 2015 to August 2018. It found that about 16,000 test takers of color, or roughly 30 percent of aspiring teachers of color, didn't pass their licensure test or subtest, even after multiple attempts.<sup>36</sup> NCTQ calculated that adding those candidates to the profession would increase the total number of public-school elementary teachers of color across the United States by roughly 6 percent.

The cost of paying to take teacher-licensure exams multiple times (each test can cost a candidate \$100 or more), combined with the time required to prepare for the exams, can provide a further disincentive to teach.

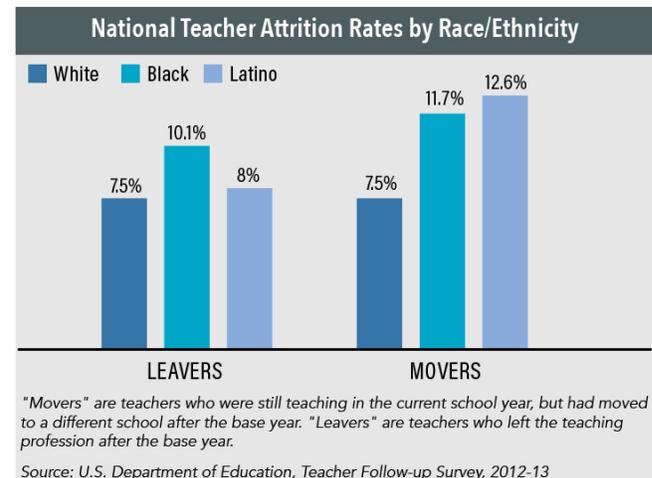
A third type of licensing test, performance assessments, more closely reflect classroom practice by requiring teacher candidates to submit such things as lesson plans and video of their teaching. Teacher performance assessments have smaller racial gaps in pass rates than traditional multiple-choice and writing tests (though gaps still exist).<sup>37</sup>

Alternative route programs, which allow individuals with a degree in another field to attain a teaching credential while teaching, attract a more diverse candidate pool—in part because of the reduced time and cost to complete such programs versus going back to complete another college degree. But their quality varies widely, and graduates fail licensure tests at even higher rates than graduates of traditional teacher-preparation programs.<sup>38</sup>

## Barriers on the Job

Teachers of color also face challenges during the hiring process and on the job.<sup>39</sup>

Studies of district and school hiring practices by researchers at Harvard and Brown University's Annenberg Institute have found significant discrimination against Black and Latino applicants, particularly in predominantly White schools. Black principals, researchers have found, are more likely to hire Black teachers than are White principals.<sup>40</sup>



Teachers of color also are more likely to be placed in under-resourced schools with high concentrations of low-income students and students of color. These schools often have a harder time attracting and retaining teachers, in general, leading to a disproportionate share of novice educators and

more challenging working environments, which increase the risk of teacher burnout and attrition.<sup>41,42</sup>

By their own report, many teachers of color face inhospitable work environments. Focus groups conducted by The Education Trust and Teach Plus in 2019 with 88 Black and Latino teachers across five states found that teachers of color experienced an “antagonistic work culture.” They often felt silenced or overlooked, undervalued and underpaid for the additional work they took on (often as disciplinarians or interpreters), and deprived of the agency or autonomy to tailor their teaching to their student population. At times they were considered too aggressive, particularly when they advocated for students who looked like them or when they incorporated students’ culture and language into their classrooms. And they reported being frequently overlooked for leadership and advancement opportunities.<sup>43</sup>

“We know that attrition rates are impacted by the microaggressions that people experience, not only from their colleagues and supervisors but also from their union reps,” says Sharif El-Mekki, founder and CEO of the Center for Black Educator Development, a nonprofit that works to increase the number of Black teachers entering and staying in the profession. “They’re reliving and may be triggered by the trauma they experienced as students in some of those same schools and districts. They’re remembering racial hostility that they experienced as a child or a student. And they’re trying to protect kids who look like them from some of the same policies and mindsets.”

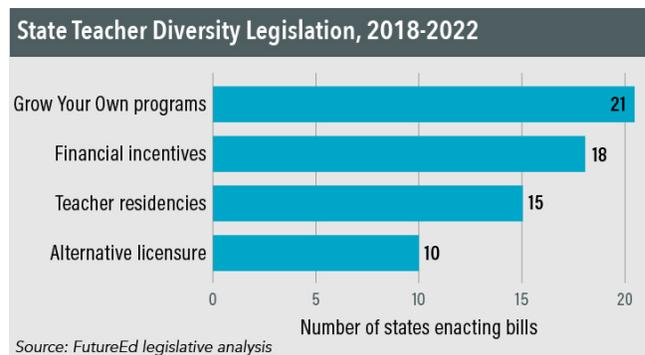
For all these reasons, teachers of color leave the profession at higher rates than other teachers. Annual attrition is 10 percent among Black teachers nationally and 8 percent among Latino teachers, compared to 7.5 percent for White teachers.<sup>44</sup> And attrition begets attrition: more turnover leads to fewer senior teachers of color, resulting in Black and Latino teachers often being the first fired under

“Last In, First Out” labor agreements. A 2010 study by NCTQ found that 75 out of 100 large school districts determined layoffs primarily based on teacher seniority.<sup>45</sup>

As a result, students of color see fewer teachers who look like them, making it less likely that they identify teaching as a potential career—and beginning again a troubling cycle that results in too few teachers of color in the nation’s schools.<sup>46</sup>

## Strategies for Diversifying the Teaching Force

If the challenges to diversifying the nation’s teaching force are many, so are the solutions. In recent years, a number of states, school districts, and nonprofit organizations have introduced a wide range of strategies that have helped bring more teachers of color into classrooms.



## Transparency and Targets

Smart policy to diversify the teaching force starts with clear, publicly available data about the scope of the diversity problem and clear goals and benchmarks for states, districts, schools, and teacher-preparation programs. And while the shortage of teachers of color is a national problem, the teacher labor market is local, with many candidates wanting to work close to where they grew up and attended college. Solutions must reflect state and local contexts.

Some states have begun sharing annual school-level information about the diversity of the educator workforce and the retention rates of educators of color, as well as information about the racial makeup of candidates attending and completing in-state teacher-preparation programs.<sup>47</sup>

The Massachusetts Department of Education, for example, posts school- and district-level data on the racial demographics of the educator workforce on its website.<sup>48</sup> School-level information is important because teachers of color may be unevenly distributed across schools within a district, resulting in some students having no access to teachers of color.

To encourage educators to act, in 2022 the Massachusetts legislature passed a law requiring the department to set measurable educator diversity goals for the state.<sup>49</sup> Illinois similarly posts state and district-level data about the diversity of the educator workforce and has an Annual Program Reporting System to collect data from state teacher-preparation programs, including the racial makeup of candidates entering and completing such programs.<sup>50</sup>

Tennessee is a leader in setting measurable targets for increasing the number of teachers of color. Since the start of the 2021-22 school year, a state board policy has required Tennessee districts to set goals and strategies for getting more teachers of color in front of their students, submit their plans to the state department of education, and report annually on how they're doing.<sup>51</sup> The state's Educator Preparation Report Card gives each program an overall score and several sub-scores, including one based, in part, on the percentage of program graduates who are people of color.<sup>52</sup>

The Tennessee State Department of Education in 2018 reported that 37 percent of Tennessee's students but only 13 percent of its teachers are people of color.<sup>53</sup> The state has received a four-year, \$1.7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to study its teacher pipeline, identify

the leaks, and determine what might be driving teachers of color away, in partnership with the Tennessee Education Research Alliance at Vanderbilt University.<sup>54</sup>

Importantly, Title II of the federal Higher Education Act requires all states to report on the racial and ethnic diversity of teacher-preparation enrollees, but not on the diversity of program completers, which is a better indicator of the actual supply of candidates of color. Adding that information to the Title II reporting requirements would be a simple fix and an important improvement.

### ***Starting Early***

Back in 2014, when Sharif El-Mekki was talking to other Black male educators across the country about their careers, he realized, "Not a single one of us had been engaged by an adult to consider teaching until after we'd graduated college." In contrast, he said, when he asked his White female colleagues when someone first talked to them about teaching, "the average response was third grade." That led El-Mekki to launch the Center for Black Educator Development in 2019 to recruit, train, hire, and retain quality educators who reflect the cultural backgrounds and interests of the students they serve.

The center's recruitment efforts begin in high school. It partners with districts to create high school teacher academies that offer a three-year curriculum centered on the Black experience. In Philadelphia, juniors and seniors can take college courses and graduate with an associate's degree in education along with a diploma. The center's Freedom School Literacy Academy, which operates during the summer and after school, trains high school and college students to teach literacy to first through third grade students while being coached and mentored by Black educators. A program of year-round seminars, book clubs, and focus groups engages Black students in understanding and solving the educator-diversity problem.

The center is currently working in Camden, N.J., Detroit, and Philadelphia, but hopes to partner with 10 to 15 cities over the next two decades. Its virtual Freedom School Literacy Academy last year included 99 teacher-apprentices in 16 states, who were paid a salary in part through teenage jobs programs operated by their home cities.

Crucially, El-Mekki’s program encourages young people to consider teaching when they are first thinking about careers and deciding whether to pursue a college degree.

Other options include Future Teacher Clubs, starting as early as middle school; high school teaching academies that give students classroom experiences and coursework that let them try on teaching as a career; dual-enrollment programs that enable students to enroll in postsecondary education

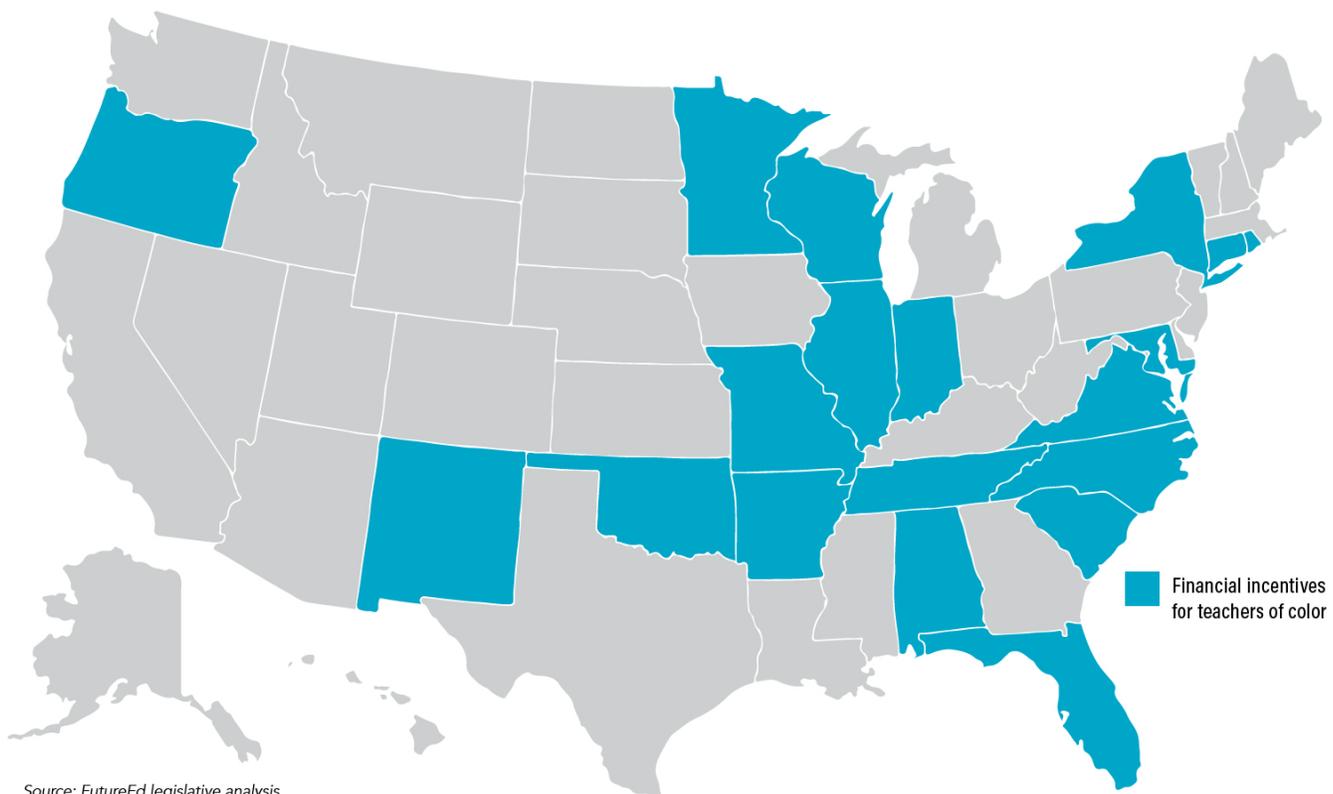
courses while still in high school; and Pathways in Technology high schools that offer historically underserved students both high school and postsecondary coursework leading to a high school diploma, an associate’s degree, and a teaching certificate within six years.

In 2007, the Washington State legislature created Recruiting Washington Teachers (RWT) to help districts grow a teaching force that more closely resembles their student population by offering high school teacher academies. Districts receive two-year grants to design strategies that fit their local circumstances. But all of them use a RWT curriculum that helps students explore cultural identity and educational equity within the context of teaching.

Students gain hands-on teaching experience through tutoring, internships, and other

## State Legislative Financial Incentives for Teacher Diversity, 2018-2022

The map represents the number of states with at least one financial incentive program targeting teachers of color that has been established, amended, or funded through state legislation in the past 5 years.



Source: FutureEd legislative analysis

opportunities. Districts provide help with college access, including articulation agreements with local higher education partners to transfer course credits. The majority of programs also support students to take the test needed to become a paraeducator and partner with district human-resource offices to guarantee interviews for program graduates. In 2017, lawmakers built on the program by creating the Bilingual Educators Initiative (BEI) to recruit, prepare, and mentor bilingual high school students to become future bilingual teachers and counselors.

The projects have been effective. While teachers of color make up just over 13 percent of Washington State’s teacher workforce (compared to 49 percent of the student population), 79 percent of RWT participants and 63 percent of BEI participants identify as students of color.<sup>55</sup> For both programs, Latino enrollment is nearly double Latino representation in the state’s student population, and 18 percent of RWT students identify as Black, four times Black enrollment statewide. Of seniors in the program, 93 percent applied to college, 100 percent of those who applied were accepted, and 99 percent graduated on time. Two-thirds of students surveyed said the program strengthened their plans to attend college, and 90 percent said it helped them do well in school.

### ***Scholarships and Loan Forgiveness Programs***

One of the big barriers to recruiting more candidates of color and first-generation college students into teaching is the high cost of college and traditional educator-preparation programs.

Both the federal and state governments have tried to address this issue through service scholarships, grants, and loan forgiveness programs that cover or reimburse a portion of tuition costs in exchange for committing to teach in high-need schools or subjects, typically for three to five years. A 2023 FutureEd analysis found that 18 states enacted

legislation concerning financial incentives for teachers of color between 2018 and 2022. Six of these states specify that the funds are for loan forgiveness or mortgage assistance, while the vast majority—including Florida, Illinois, and Minnesota—provide scholarships or financial assistance programs to help offset the high costs associated with becoming a teacher.

Some states, such as Arkansas and Connecticut, offer multiple opportunities. Connecticut, for example, funds a minority educator loan reimbursement program, a minority teacher scholarship program, and a teacher mortgage assistance program, which recently expanded to target graduates from HBCUs and Hispanic-serving institutions. A handful of states also provide grants to universities or school districts to recruit teachers of color, which can then be used to provide financial assistance directly to teachers.

But problems persist. Since 1986, for example, the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program has provided scholarships for students to pursue an education degree at an approved North Carolina university in exchange for teaching in the state for four years. A state task force on increasing educator diversity (known as DRIVE, for Developing a Representative and Inclusive Vision for Education), created by Governor Roy Cooper in 2019, found that over the 30-year life of the program, only 17 percent of recipients were students of color and most of the host institutions were predominantly White.<sup>56</sup>

The task force recommended setting benchmarks for recruiting and selecting diverse candidates and increasing the number of HCBUs and MSIs that offer the program. North Carolina’s most recent state budget expanded the Teaching Fellows program to include three MSIs. The budget also expanded a state program that provides reduced tuition for students at public colleges and universities to include four MSIs, all of which have teacher preparation programs.

Ultimately, broader policy change at the scale of President Joe Biden’s proposal to forgive federal student loans may be needed. Villanueva Beard of Teach for America says that her organization has found that loan burdens form “one of the biggest barriers to having a sustainable job in the teaching profession.”

**Minority Serving Institutions**

Minority Serving Institutions, including HCBUs, produce a disproportionate share of teachers of color, yet are historically underfunded and face a unique set of challenges, including serving many low-income and first-generation college students.

“I always say when higher education gets a cold, MSIs get pneumonia,” observes Cassandra Herring,

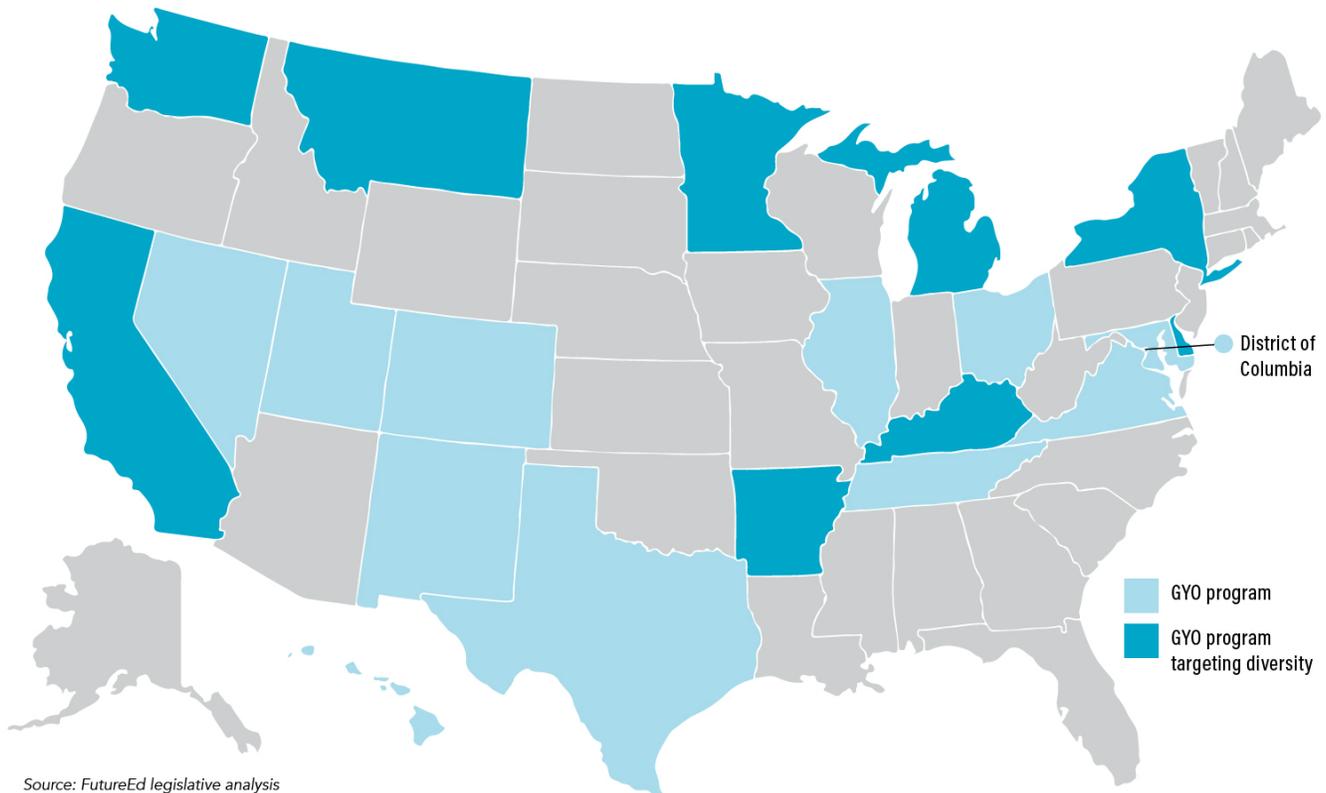
president and CEO of Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity, an organization which helps MSIs share best practices and grow their effectiveness. MSIs, she says, have a strong “duty of care for [teacher] candidates on campus...an orientation around student success. They tend to be more explicit around issues of diversity and equity.”

As former dean of the school of education at Hampton University, Herring prepared teacher candidates to navigate contexts where they might be the only person of color on staff and care for themselves in environments that might not be welcoming. “We called it intentionally straight talk,” she says.

Branch Alliance operates a professional learning center that helps university education faculty

**State Grow Your Own Legislative Initiatives, 2018-2022**

The map represents the number of states with at least one program designed to bring paraprofessionals and other local community members into teaching — known as Grow Your Own programs — that has been established, amended, or funded through state legislation in the past 5 years. While such programs typically promote teacher diversity, some states explicitly mention that as a goal.



Source: FutureEd legislative analysis

grow their skills and another center that provides intensive, three-year coaching to MSIs to redesign their programs in line with an evidence-based, equity-centered framework for quality educator preparation. The alliance works with these institutions to track the progress of teaching candidates to see where they face barriers within the institution, disaggregate data to enhance program support for candidates of color, and embed diversity, equity, and inclusion into every course.

According to a recent report from the Hunt Institute in North Carolina, many land-grant HBCUs have received lower levels of federal and state funding than other land-grant colleges since their inception. This has resulted in HBCUs missing out on \$12.8 billion in funding across the country over the past few decades, Hunt estimates.<sup>57</sup>

While recent years have brought increased grants and donations to HBCUs, many of these institutions continue to struggle for funding parity. In North Carolina, for example, notes Anthony Graham, the chairman of the DRIVE task force and the provost of Winston-Salem State University, public institutions within the University of North Carolina system are grouped into tiers, with those in the higher tiers receiving more state funding. That leaves HBCUs—most of which fall into tiers 3 and 4—at a disadvantage when it comes to recruiting and retaining faculty because they pay less.

Smaller institutions, many of them HBCUs, also receive less money for student recruitment, since those allocations are tied to enrollment. Many have facilities and technology that have not been updated in decades. “It places us in a tough situation,” Graham says.

In August, the U.S. Department of Education announced a new \$8 million grant competition to support high-quality teacher preparation programs at historically minority-serving institutions through the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence.<sup>58</sup> The grants will focus on key aspects of a high-quality

teacher preparation pipeline, including providing extensive clinical experience for future educators. The grants, authorized under Part B of the Higher Education Act of 1965, mark the first time Congress has appropriated money for the program since its creation in 2008.

### **Grow Your Own Programs**

Facing strong competition for the limited supply of teachers of color graduating from MSIs and other teacher-preparation institutions, many states and districts committed to increasing teacher diversity are creating Grow Your Own programs to develop a pipeline of local talent. Such programs recruit prospective teachers of color from the local community, including high school students, paraprofessionals, after school staff, and other community members. They typically provide some financial, programmatic, and curriculum support for candidates as they prepare to teach in exchange for working in the community after they earn their teaching license.

“Not only do paraprofessionals or teachers’ aides know the students and teachers well, and the geography of the school, but they’ve literally been watching the teacher teach for a long time,” says Seth Gershenson of American University. “They’re already signaling that they’re interested.” About 20 percent of paraprofessionals throughout the U.S. public school system speak a language other than English at home and 21 percent identify as people of color.<sup>59</sup>

The FutureEd analysis found that at least 21 states—including California, Colorado, Delaware and Kentucky— have passed laws in the last five years explicitly allowing, creating, or funding Grow Your Own programs, with about half of those states specifying that the purpose of the program is to increase diversity. California’s Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing program, for example, offers school staff such as paraprofessionals up to \$4,000 per year for up to

five years to earn a bachelor’s degree and teaching credential. Since receiving funding in 2016, the program has supported more than 2,000 classified staff to become teachers, nearly half of whom are Latino.<sup>60</sup>

A substantial challenge for policymakers is resolving the tension that often exists between ensuring that students of color have access to well-prepared, high-quality teachers and recruiting paraprofessionals from local communities who have frequently experienced the same educational shortcomings as the students they serve.

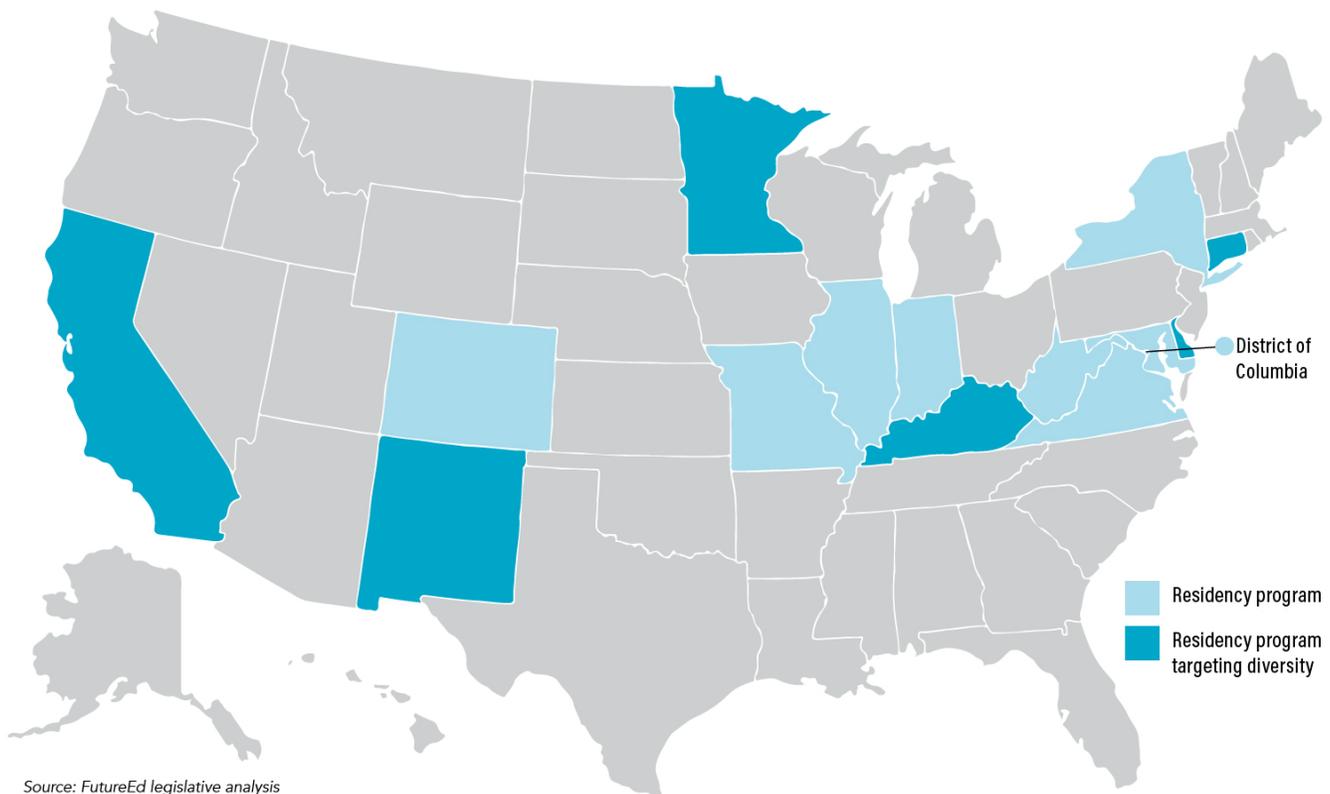
In response, many Grow Your Own programs provide academic supports to candidates so they can succeed in their studies and become effective

teachers, including offering developmental education courses to build up candidates’ college-level academic skills. For example, Project Nueva Generación, a community partnership between the Logan Square Neighborhood Association and the Bilingual Education Program at Chicago State University, offers developmental math, writing, and English as a Second Language classes for students who need to refine their skills. The program has become the model for the Grow Your Own teachers’ initiative in Illinois.<sup>61</sup>

TNTP created the Black Educator Excellence Cohort, which creates partnerships between districts and local teacher preparation programs to set shared goals around teacher diversity and hiring, establish

### State Teacher Residency Legislative Initiatives, 2018-2022

The map represents the number of states with at least one residency program for training teachers alongside mentors that has been established, amended, or funded through state legislation in the past 5 years. While such programs typically promote teacher diversity, some states explicitly mention that as a goal.



Source: FutureEd legislative analysis

Grow Your Own programs, and reform personnel policies that hurt teachers of color, such as using seniority as the primary or sole criteria to determine which teachers are laid off following budget cuts.

A 2020 evaluation of six urban districts that worked with TNTP to build in-house teacher-preparation programs found that teachers trained through these programs were more racially diverse, at least as effective, and remained on the job as long as other novice teachers.<sup>62</sup> Overall, the effort added 74 more teachers of color than might otherwise have been hired across the six districts. The programs reported that recruiting individuals already working in schools was critical to their success, as was partnering with community and nonprofit organizations to increase outreach to minority communities.

### **Teacher Residencies**

Aracely Valdes participated in Tech Teach Across Texas through a partnership with the Fort Worth Independent School District to grow its own teachers through an intensive clinical preparation model known as a teacher residency. Modeled after medical residences, such programs provide extensive on-the-job training linked to coursework in order to better prepare teachers to be classroom-ready on day one. Teacher residents typically receive a stipend or salary while completing a year-long internship in the classroom of a highly qualified mentor teacher, making the programs more accessible for candidates like Valdes who cannot afford to step out of the labor market entirely while preparing to teach.

Studies show that teacher residencies both attract and retain more teachers of color.<sup>63</sup> Nationally, about 49 percent of residents are people of color, more closely mirroring the student population.<sup>64</sup>

US PREP, a nonprofit based in Texas, works with 28 colleges of education nationally—about 75 percent of them MSIs—to pilot, scale, and sustain year-long residencies. “Right now, one of the many challenges

that teacher candidates struggle with is access,” says Sarah Beal, the executive director of US PREP. “They often choose lower quality routes that are fast, cheap, and easy because they can get a salary. Those routes attract a higher percentage of teachers of color, but the attrition of teachers of color is very high. So, it’s not really solving any system issues.”

In 2010, Texas Tech University, based in Lubbock, began partnering with schools in its region to increase the quality and diversity of the incoming teaching force by piloting and scaling a teacher residency model. In 2014, the university adapted the model to create Tech Teach Across Texas, designed to provide a pipeline of diverse, high-quality candidates for high-needs districts without access to a nearby university, for students like Valdes.

Through a collaborative governance agreement between Texas Tech, a local community college, and a school district, the program enables candidates with an associate’s degree to complete an intensive, one-year program that leads to a B.A., a teaching certificate, and immediate employment in the district where they complete their residency. Candidates take most of their education courses online (between 54 and 60 credits), while spending the year in the classroom co-planning and co-teaching under the guidance of a trained mentor teacher and a site coordinator from Texas Tech.

Site coordinators lead monthly governance meetings with each district’s principals and mentor teachers to ensure the program is going well and that teacher residents feel supported. They also use video capture and on-the-ground coaching to train future teachers, including four classroom walkthroughs and three formal observations per semester and a weekly teaching seminar that builds on what they’re seeing in practice.

“We are taking nontraditional students...and giving them the opportunity to do something great,” says Tamara Jenkins, the program coordinator for Tech Teach Across Texas.

## MAKING TEACHER RESIDENCIES SUSTAINABLE

**MANY PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS OF COLOR**—and first-generation college students, in particular—cannot manage tuition debt while taking a full year off from work to student teach and earn an education degree under residency programs. In Texas, 40 percent of undergraduates and 76 percent of graduate students work full time, and 20 percent, like Aracely Valdes, have dependents.<sup>66</sup> Finding ways to cover both the cost of tuition and stipends is a challenge for many residencies. Fort Worth Independent School District supplied Valdes' residency stipend, but she paid her own tuition by cobbling together scholarships.

To address this issue, the Texas Education Agency in 2020 launched its Innovative Staffing Initiative, using over \$100 million in state and federal COVID-recovery dollars. The goal is for participating districts to come up with a plan to pay for residency stipends on an ongoing basis by the time the federal funding runs out. The initiative has two parts: First, educator-preparation programs apply to be recognized as a vetted residency model by meeting rigorous criteria for quality, sustainability, and scale. (Twenty-nine educator-preparation programs met the criteria in 2022.)

Districts can then choose a partner from among the vetted residency programs and apply for an Innovative Staffing Initiative grant. Each district receives three years of funding, starting with the 2021-22 school year, to support \$20,000 stipends for up to 20 teacher residents. At the same time, districts and their teacher preparation partner team up with a technical assistance provider to design a strategic staffing model that will sustain the stipends beyond the grant period by reallocating existing district resources. In year one of the program, more than 185 Texas districts applied. Of those, 88 are now implementing teacher residencies and working with 11 of 20 regional service centers in the state on innovative staffing models.

All of the district grants target schools serving Black and Latino students and those impacted by poverty, and vetted residency

programs must increase the match between student and teacher-candidate demographics over time. Says Melissa Yoder, director of educator residencies and talent pipelines at the Texas Education Agency: “We know that there is a track record of success around teacher residents’ retention and placement in those high-needs content areas. With residencies, we believe we can reduce the novice teacher learning curve and also retain teachers over time.”

Of the 820 residents in year two of the program, 47 percent are Hispanic, 34 percent are White, and 7 percent are Black.<sup>67</sup>

### Other School Districts

School districts are exploring a variety of ways to pay for residency stipends. These include having residents substitute teach one day a week; work part-time as teacher's aides; or tutor students before, during, or after school, and then funneling those savings back into residency stipends.<sup>68</sup>

Some districts are using the money from existing teacher vacancies to explore teacher leadership models, under which residents provide release time for highly skilled teachers to support other teachers in the same grade or subject, with each teacher having a slightly increased student load. The salary from the existing teacher vacancy is then spread across multiple residency stipends.

Yet a stipend of \$20,000 is not a living wage, particularly for prospective teachers who must pay tuition and support their own families, and the choice to enter the program remains a difficult one. La Vega ISD had reallocated money from teacher vacancies to fund 20 teacher residents in the 2022-23 school year, but neither Texas Tech nor Tarleton State University, its other university partner, had enough undergraduates enroll in their residency programs to meet district demands—so La Vega ended up with only 11 residents.

In the 2021-22 school year, vetted teacher residency programs produced about 2,000 teacher candidates across Texas, only “a

Continued

## MAKING TEACHER RESIDENCIES SUSTAINABLE CONTINUED

small chunk” of the state’s 17,622 teacher candidates that year, according to Yoder of the Texas Education Agency—particularly given the 185 districts who applied for the Innovative Staffing Initiative. Districts have run into other challenges as well: Last year, not all of the residents who completed their training in Fort Worth ISD chose to remain in the district, which led to some soul-searching by the school system about what to do differently.

California’s \$350 million Teacher Residency Grant Program is one of the largest in the nation. It provides one-time grants for teacher residency programs that address shortage areas or recruit, develop, and retain a diverse teacher workforce. The state permits districts to integrate residents into their existing budgets by allowing residents to substitute one day a week, so that five residents make up a full-time substitute teacher salary and each resident receives 20 percent of that salary, on average, or about \$7,000 a year.<sup>69</sup> Districts also can tap into existing university and financial aid resources to support residents and negotiate with universities to reduce tuition costs.

“The residencies have been pulling in a tremendously more diverse group of people in California,” says Kai Mathews,

project director of the California Educator Diversity Project at the University of California Los Angeles. “But it’s sometimes a hard sell because school districts are used to getting student teachers for free.”

A report by the Learning Policy Institute, an education research and policy group based in California, argues that districts could sustainably fund residencies over time by reinvesting the money they save in reduced teacher turnover and onboarding costs for new teachers.<sup>70</sup> Teacher attrition accounts for 90 percent of the demand for new teachers in California.<sup>71</sup>

“While we’re seeing a nationwide decline in teacher-preparation enrollments, California is seeing the opposite,” says Desiree Carver-Thomas, a researcher and policy analyst at LPI. She goes on to note, “In the past three or four years, we’re starting to see an uptick in the number of people enrolling in teacher-preparation programs. And the data from the Teacher Residency programs and some of the Grow Your Own investments, and the Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing program, have high proportions of candidates of color. So, it’s clear that those investments are starting to make a difference in the pipeline in the state.”

Joanna Acevedo, a fourth grade literacy teacher in Fort Worth Independent School District, graduated from the program last year. “It is hard. It takes a toll on us,” she says of the long hours simultaneously teaching and taking coursework. “But all the feedback I got helps me now. I feel better prepared. I’m able to plan my lessons and do my presentations weekly and daily.”

An evaluation of both the Texas Tech and Tech Teach Across Texas (TTAT) programs by faculty members Jacob Kirksey and Jessica Gottlieb found that graduates of TTAT were much more likely to be Latino than other new teachers and to serve student bodies that included more Latino, English-language

learners, and disadvantaged students than the overall school population in Texas.

Moreover, the students of these teachers showed better growth in reading on the state test, known as STAAR, than the students of other novice teachers. In math, historically marginalized students of teachers from both programs showed particularly strong results. These students include English learners, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, and students with disabilities. Nearly nine in 10 of the teachers from both programs remained in the classroom three years after graduating.<sup>65</sup>

In contrast, the researchers found the academic progress of students whose novice teachers graduated from one of Texas’s fully online, alternative-route programs with minimal student-teaching requirements actually declined—by an amount roughly equivalent to experiencing a full year of substitute teaching.

### **Apprenticeship Programs**

The U.S. Department of Labor represents a new source of funding for both Grow Your Own and residency programs. For the past 85 years, the department has run Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs for skilled trades such as electricians, plumbers, and information-technology specialists but not for teachers. Registered apprenticeship programs come with federal funding that can pay for candidates’ on-the-job training and wages, as well as support services such as child care and transportation. Such programs also can access money from state departments of labor and regional workforce development boards. Industry-Recognized Apprenticeships must ensure that apprentices are paid at least the applicable federal, state, or local minimum wage and participate in structured work experiences under the guidance of a mentor, with related instruction.

In 2021, Tennessee won approval from the U.S. Department of Labor to recognize K-12 teaching as an occupation eligible for registered apprenticeships.<sup>72</sup>

The state’s application grew out of its existing Grow Your Own Program, launched two years earlier and modeled after a partnership between the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System and Austin Peay State University.<sup>73</sup> Under the Grow Your Own program, district-university partnerships had to meet certain non-negotiables: Teacher candidates had to be able to complete teacher training at no cost while earning a stipend. They had to graduate dual-endorsed in either special education or English as a Second Language (which accounted for more

than 20 percent of the teacher vacancies in the state). And they had to spend significant time learning to teach on the job, a minimum of two years for those seeking a bachelor’s degree and one year for those seeking a master’s degree. In addition, districts had to select candidates who were more diverse than their current teacher workforce. To date, the state has used \$6.5 million in federal COVID relief money to provide \$100,000 grants to 63 districts that are partnering with 14 educator-preparation programs. The grants enable districts to pay candidates just under \$10,000 a year while they are in training.

In January 2022, the partnership in Clarksville Montgomery County became the first registered apprenticeship program for teachers in the country. “For the first time, money that’s been used to train people to become plumbers, electricians, culinary artists, and IT specialists can now be used to train teachers,” says David Donaldson, who led the state application process to the federal government as the former chief of human capital for the Tennessee Department of Education. “It’s a true earn and learn model.”

Donaldson now runs the National Center for Grow Your Own and has launched the National Registered Apprenticeship in Teaching Network, with 11 participating states. To date, eight states have a registered apprenticeship program for teachers—Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, New Hampshire, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia—and several other states are pursuing such programs. “The way I describe registered apprenticeships is that they’re Grow Your Own or Teacher Residency phase 2,” he says. “If you’re interested in registered apprenticeships, you should identify high-quality programs that work already and use registered apprenticeship to sustain or expand them.”

States can combine registered apprenticeship funds with other sources of revenue, including federal Title II, Part A, funds for teachers’ professional learning, Title III funds for those seeking an English-as-a-

Second-Language endorsement, or Individuals with Disabilities in Education funds for those preparing to be special education teachers. In April 2022, U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona called for all 50 states to pursue registered apprenticeships for teaching.

### **Licensure**

To address shortages and bring more people into the teaching profession, including teachers of color, many states have made it easier to enter classrooms in the wake of the pandemic. The National Council on Teacher Quality reports that in the past two years a dozen states have lowered or eliminated requirements that prospective teachers pass statewide licensing exams. One such state was California, which last year began allowing teacher candidates to skip two different licensure exams—a basic-skills test and a subject-matter test—if they have taken approved college courses.<sup>74</sup> Pre-pandemic, roughly 40 percent of teacher candidates failed to pass one of the tests on the first attempt. The state has provided limited guidance to the state’s more than 260 teacher-preparation programs on what courses could take the place of the tests.

Such steps increase teacher diversity. When the pandemic stopped Massachusetts from administering the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure in 2020 because many testing centers shut down, the state temporarily created an emergency teacher license to keep teachers flowing into the system. By March 2021, the state had granted nearly 7,000 emergency licenses, about 25 percent to people of color, compared to an existing teacher workforce that is only 8 percent people of color.<sup>75</sup>

But the benefits are often short-lived. Texas tracked the results of emergency waivers it introduced in 2020 that allowed prospective teachers to complete a one-year internship without first passing a content pedagogy exam in the subject they planned to teach.

While more Black and Hispanic candidates entered the profession under the waivers, the increases did not last. Compared to White waiver interns, Hispanic waiver interns were 16 percentage points less likely to earn a standard certificate and Black waiver interns 33 percentage points less likely to earn a standard certificate after the year was over. The standard certificate requires that candidates pass both a content exam and a general pedagogy and professional responsibilities test. The study also found that principals rated the preparation of waiver interns lower than non-waiver interns who started teaching the same year.<sup>76</sup>

Students living in poverty, who could benefit the most from having the best possible teachers, often attend high-need schools that have difficulty attracting and retaining teachers, in part, because of more challenging working conditions and less competitive salaries than in more affluent schools. These schools end up with a disproportion number of new teachers or those who have not yet passed licensure tests. And students pay the price.

A study by researchers from the American Institutes for Research found that candidates’ scores on the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure predict on-the-job performance ratings for teachers, including teachers of color, and contribute to their students’ test score gains.<sup>77</sup> An earlier study, using data from Washington State, found that a teacher’s basic-skills test scores modestly predict their students’ achievement in middle and high school math and highly predict their achievement in high school biology. A teacher’s subject-specific test scores significantly predict their students’ performance in high school biology.<sup>78</sup>

“Evidence is clear that teachers need to know the content they will be expected to teach, and that students learn more when their teachers have passed licensure tests of their content knowledge,” argues a recent report on teacher licensure from the National Council on Teacher Quality.<sup>79</sup>

One way to resolve the tension between quantity and quality in teacher hiring is to have institutions of higher education help aspiring teachers pass the licensing exams, including instruction in subject knowledge they may have missed in high school. NCTQ's licensure report highlights nearly 90 institutions where aspiring teachers of color pass the licensure tests on their first attempt at a higher rate than the state average for all test takers. And there's little or no disparity in first-time pass rates between test takers of color and White test takers, suggesting that support strategies would make a difference. Says Heather Peske, NCTQ's president: "Teacher prep programs need to be savvy about using diagnostic assessments to determine where their aspiring teachers have content gaps, and about how to shore those up."

Virginia has appropriated \$100,000 over two years for provisionally licensed teachers of color to get assistance passing Praxis, a commonly used teacher licensure exam, and the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment.<sup>80</sup> Grants to school divisions, teacher preparation programs, or nonprofits will subsidize test fees and the cost of tutoring for provisionally licensed teachers seeking full licensure in the state.<sup>81</sup>

The Massachusetts state board of education three years ago launched a pilot that lets candidates substitute another approved standardized test for the state's general knowledge exam for aspiring teachers. It also permits candidates who have come very close to the passing score on subject-specific tests to submit an essay to demonstrate content knowledge.<sup>82</sup>

And Massachusetts lawmakers are mulling legislation that would allow alternatives to passing state licensure tests, such as submitting a portfolio that includes student feedback, competency-based projects or obtaining a master's degree.<sup>83</sup>

TNTP supports such alternatives. "We aren't saying that states should eliminate their current

licensure requirements," says Andy Smith, the organization's director of policy and advocacy. "But we do think a best practice for student learning and equity is for states to offer parallel pathways that are performance-based, that allow teachers to demonstrate their readiness to serve in front of students."

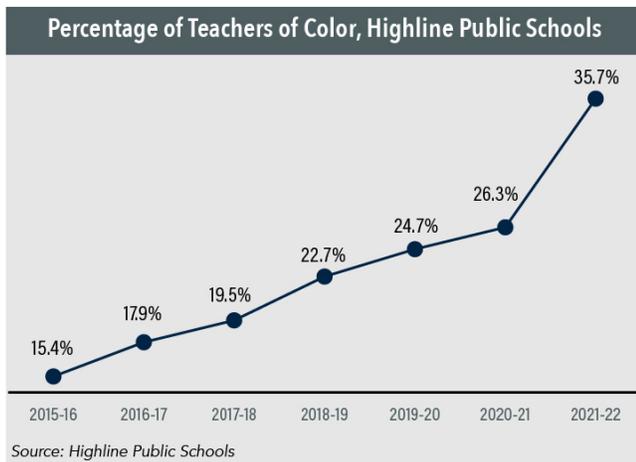
Another compromise, suggests Seth Gershenson of American University, is to slightly lower the passing threshold. "The evidence shows very clearly that lowering the threshold is not going to decrease the quality of the teaching force and, if anything, might increase it a little bit by increasing diversity," he says. Missouri's state board of education voted in June 2022 to grant teaching certificates to test-takers who missed the qualifying score by a few questions.

### ***Recruitment, Hiring, and Placement***

As a Black student who succeeded in school, Gilbert Parsons has always "just really wanted Black and Brown children to see not only themselves in me as a role model but also to see themselves and their capacity for success."

In 2009, after switching careers to earn his master's degree in teaching, Parsons was hired by Highline Public Schools south of Seattle to teach middle school math. He eventually became a dean of students, an assistant principal, and then a principal at Sylvester Middle School. Today, Parsons is one of four instructional leadership executives for the district, working to support other principals to advance equity and excellence in schools.

The Highline district enrolls some 18,700 students, more than half of whom are Black or Latino. Like most districts, its teachers have long been predominantly White, but through a strategic recruitment, hiring, and placement process Highline increased its new hires of color from 12 percent in 2014-15 to 35.7 percent in 2022-23. Now, people of color make up 26 percent of the district's teacher workforce.



Highline’s diversity initiative began under former Superintendent Susan Enfield, who promoted Steve Grubb to become the district’s chief talent officer with the goal of creating a high-quality, diverse workforce. With the support of a \$250,000 grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grubb streamlined the department’s recruitment and hiring processes to save money, and then invested the resources to systematically diversify Highline’s teaching force. “We’re very intentional about going after mission-driven candidates and those who have backgrounds similar to our students in Highline,” says Grubb.

Grubb moved up the annual recruiting schedule to help build a pool of candidates of color as early as January. He used \$300,000 in savings to hire “HR partners” to work with principals on staff planning to better anticipate each school’s future needs. Superintendent Enfield reduced the case loads of principal supervisors to half that of a typical school district. She also required principals to address staffing as part of their school improvement plans and during annual meetings about their budget plans.

To provide more stable employment for new teachers, many of whom are teachers of color, the district and the local teacher union agreed that teachers in their first two years on the job would not be moved out of their buildings as more senior teachers looked for new positions. In addition, the

district has created eight teacher affinity groups dedicated to racial equity and pays teachers to participate in them.

Daniel Calderon, an instructional leader in the district, was initially recruited by Enfield to become the principal of Cascade Middle School, a dual-language school. Over five years, Calderon changed the makeup of the teaching staff from 90 percent White to almost 50 percent teachers of color. His success required several ingredients, he says, including talking with his staff “about things that made people uncomfortable, like disproportionate rates of exclusion and identifying adult practices that very clearly were not responsive to our students— direct conversations about race and privilege and power.” The school’s addition of a sixth grade during Calderon’s second year offered an “opportunity to hire a more representative staff,” he says.

Calderon set goals for both the recruitment and retention of teachers of color and invested his own labor in the task. “There was a lot of time and intentionality around that process,” he says.

Gilbert Parsons points out he “got a lot of resistance at every level in the building” as he worked to diversify the staff at Sylvester Middle School. He replaced the school’s existing disciplinary policy with restorative justice practices; reduced the number of deans in the building and redirected those resources to support instructional coaches; and emphasized the importance of school culture to foster a sense of belonging among students.

Parsons also worked with Highline human resources staff to develop hiring profiles that would better identify candidates interested in teaching marginalized students, such as prior experience working with diverse populations, strong articulation of an equity-driven pedagogy, and nontraditional pathways into teaching—qualities that tended to draw more candidates from marginalized communities. In addition, he worked with human resources to add questions to the interview process

that would help elicit candidates' beliefs about teaching disenfranchised students and trained the interview team about implicit bias in hiring. By the time Parsons left, every department in the school of 48 teachers employed at least one Black teacher and the entire administrative team was staffed by people of color.

The Highline school board reinforced the work of Parsons, Calderon, and other principals in the district. It prioritized staffing diversity as a cornerstone of the district's equity strategy and set an explicit goal of achieving a workforce representative of the district's student population. In line with these aims, the board also required annual progress reports on educator diversity. "Our system is committed to disrupt institutional biases and inequitable practices in how we recruit, select, grow, and retain impactful staff," board policy states. This includes expecting hiring teams to reflect the diversity of Highline's schools and community and for those teams to engage in training on implicit bias in the hiring process.

"The best thing that Highline did was to codify its vision for social justice and racial equity," says Parsons, "because that gives our leaders and our teachers the power and authority to then go out and engage in the kinds of actions that would achieve it." The district also has a Grow Your Own program with Western Washington University to help paraprofessionals become certified, which yields about 15 bilingual, dual-language teachers every two years.

Other big-city school systems have made similar efforts to hire and retain a more diverse teaching force.

In the 2019-20 school year, for example, male teachers of color made up 14 percent of the workforce in the District of Columbia Public Schools, three-and-a-half times the national average.<sup>84</sup> The total number of Latino teachers, while small, has tripled over the last decade.<sup>85</sup> In addition to

partnering with local universities to recruit and prepare a more diverse candidate pool, including through teacher residency programs, the district works with principals of hard-to-staff schools to recruit quality candidates by giving them early access to job hiring fairs, assigning them dedicated recruitment and hiring support, and steering promising matches their way.

The district also provides extensive anti-bias training to teachers who interview job candidates and provides additional support to candidates of color during the application process, such as access to preparation courses for those who have yet to pass teacher licensing exams. The school system also hosts events at MSIs and provides its recruitment materials in both English and Spanish.

As part of its Teach Chicago initiative, the Chicago Public Schools launched the Opportunity Schools program in the 2016-17 school year with a subset of the city's hardest-to-staff schools. The program provides these schools with dedicated recruitment and marketing support from a small team of central office employees. It pays "teacher ambassadors" at the schools an annual stipend of \$2,500 to make themselves available by phone or in person to talk to potential candidates. It provides principals with retention strategies, including how to have "stay conversations" with teachers on a regular basis. And it pays for trained instructional coaches and in-school mentor teachers at a subset of the schools to work with novices.

Between the 2016-17 and 2020-21 school years, the retention rate for first-year teachers at these schools increased from 52 percent to 78 percent.<sup>86</sup> Retention rates for first-year Black teachers increased from 52 percent to 80 percent and for first-year Latino teachers from 44 percent to 84 percent.

Teacher vacancy rates declined from 7.5 percent to 3.8 percent. Of the more than 500 teachers placed in Opportunity Schools over the past three years, more than half are teachers of color and more than two-

thirds teach in hard-to-staff subjects, such as special education. CPS plans to expand the program from the current 78 schools to 100 schools by 2024.<sup>87</sup>

Teach for America, which placed 3,000 graduates from selective college campuses in high-needs schools this year, also has produced impressive diversity gains. For the last eight years, around 50 percent of TFA recruits have been people of color and over a third have been first-generation college graduates.

TFA has built partnerships with HBCUs and Hispanic-serving institutions, hired alumni from those institutions as recruiters, and focused more on recruiting college graduates who grew up in the communities they want to serve. The organization has recently made it simpler for applicants to determine where they'll teach and has sought in particular to help new corps members return to or stay to teach in their hometowns. TFA also is investing more in financial grants for corps members—worth approximately \$14 million in 2021—to address the financial constraints that CEO Villanueva Beard says prevent many candidates of color from entering teaching. These grants include \$5,000 individual grants to cover required state exam fees, transition costs, and living expenses during training and before candidates receive their first paycheck. “It’s a long game,” says Beard. “We invest a lot of money in recruitment; it’s one of our biggest budget items.”

### **Retention**

It’s not enough to hire more teachers of color if they don’t stay in the profession, and attrition is significantly higher among Black teachers than White teachers and slightly higher for Latino teachers.<sup>88</sup>

When asked why they left, teachers of color overwhelmingly point to “school factors” as the primary reason.<sup>89</sup> Teachers of color are more likely

to teach in high-needs, hard-to-staff schools with challenging working environments and higher attrition rates for all teachers. But as the 2019 report from the Education Trust and Teach Plus found, teachers of color also often feel overlooked and undervalued within their schools.<sup>90</sup>

Shortly after Parsons began teaching in Highline, he says, his principal began sending students with behavior problems to his classroom—a pattern not atypical for Black male educators. Next, the principal asked him to become the dean of students, responsible for discipline schoolwide. “There was just this assumption that I should be a disciplinarian and that I could not be an instructional leader for staff,” he says. “I had to lean more heavily into learning and studying instruction and instructional leadership to prove myself ... at a level that most others around me did not have to prove themselves.” Many teachers of color say Parsons’ experience is common, leading to fewer leadership opportunities and lesser compensation.

In 2022, a national survey of teachers by Educators for Excellence included a parallel survey of teachers of color. It found that while 86 percent of the national sample said they were likely to spend their entire career as a classroom teacher, only 52 percent of teachers who were Black, Indigenous, and people of color reported the same.<sup>91</sup>

As an alternative, participants in The Education Trust/Teach Plus focus groups suggested that schools create informal and formal mentoring opportunities for teachers of color, as well as pathways to leadership and culturally affirming work environments. District leaders need to make retaining teachers of color a priority by compensating them for extra work; prioritizing the hiring and placement of teachers of color to build cohorts and reduce isolation; and creating curriculum, learning, and work environments that are inclusive and respectful of all racial and ethnic groups, these teachers said.

Similarly, 40 percent of teachers of color responding to the Educators for Excellence survey cite a need for more opportunities to improve their craft and more leadership opportunities while teaching—a higher percentage than those mentioning higher salaries—while 73 percent listed housing support as one of the top three financial levers for recruiting and retaining teachers, compared to only 35 percent of the national sample.<sup>92</sup>

Principals also affect retention. Researchers have found that retention rates among teachers of color are higher in schools headed by principals of color.<sup>93</sup> One study, using teacher survey data from Tennessee, found that having a same-race principal improves teachers' perceptions of their school

and their job satisfaction.<sup>94</sup> As part of its teacher-diversity work, the Highline district has made a concerted effort to hire more administrators who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Today, people of color make up 71 percent of the district's administrative staff, compared to 19 percent in 2015. Highline hopes to hire more school leaders of color by seeking state approval to train and certify its own principals. "Our principals are huge gatekeepers," says Calderon, "because they're the ones developing leader pathways within our system and, in a lot of ways, gatekeeping the conversations around advancement and whom they're choosing to elevate or not."

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIVERSIFYING THE TEACHING FORCE

**Increasing the percentage of teachers of color** in the nation's schools and keeping them in the profession requires action on multiple fronts simultaneously, sustained investments, and, importantly, the commitment of every educator and education leader. "Oftentimes in this work, the institutions of color and the people of color are burdened with solving the problem that they didn't create," notes Anthony Graham, the Winston-Salem State provost and chair of North Carolina's DRIVE task force. "By doing so, the issue is relegated to institutions of color and people of color, and others are removed from the equation: 'That's their problem. I'll let them work on that.' As opposed to saying this is our problem collectively."<sup>95</sup> Diversifying the teaching force is a shared problem, making it important that federal, state, and local officials and leaders of teacher education programs act intentionally and with urgency.

**Summary of Recommendations.** The following recommendations provide starting places for action:

- **Create Actionable Data, Goals, and Targets.** Make data about educator diversity more visible and actionable. Set and prioritize measurable goals around recruiting, training, and

hiring candidates of color and provide transparent data at the state, district, and school levels, as well as for individual teacher preparation programs. Title II of the federal Higher Education Act, for example, should require that all states report on the racial and ethnic diversity of teacher-preparation program completers, not just enrollees. In addition to quantitative data, collect and analyze qualitative factors such as educators' sense of belonging and well-being that impact the experiences of teachers of color and future teachers of color through such mechanisms as focus groups, exit surveys, and teacher improvement plans.

- **Start Early.** Increase early outreach to students of color by creating and scaling programs that let students explore a teaching career beginning in middle and high school, including early college high schools, teacher academies, P-Tech programs, and dual-enrollment and Grow Your Own programs. Undergraduate teacher education programs should consider partnering with high schools and campus summer programs to yield a diverse pipeline of candidates of color.

Continued

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIVERSIFYING THE TEACHING FORCE CONTINUED

- **Target Scholarship and Loan Forgiveness Programs.**

Cover or reimburse the cost of attending teacher preparation programs through federal and state service scholarships, grants, and loan forgiveness programs that specifically target candidates of color. At the federal level, create a federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teacher Corps whose members would teach for three years in a high-poverty Title I school in a school district with an effective teacher evaluation system. In return, members would receive a salary supplement, student loan forgiveness, and a national teaching credential. Set targets for the percentage of corps members of color.

- **Deepen Support for Minority Serving Institutions.**

At the federal level, continue funding for the Hawkins Centers of Excellence. At the state level, use one-time allocations and performance-based funding models to bolster funding for institutions that serve students of color. Review existing policies and practices to ensure that they do not unintentionally or intentionally favor predominantly White institutions over MSIs.

- **Expand Pathways into Teaching that Support High-Quality, Diverse Candidates.**

Invest in Grow Your Own programs at the federal, state, and local levels, including 2+2 partnerships between local school districts, community colleges, and four-year institutions that provide clear pathways for candidates of color. Scale teacher residencies and registered teacher apprenticeships as particularly promising avenues for candidates of color to receive extensive clinical preparation and earn a salary while they learn to teach. Provide federal and state incentives for systems to make such models sustainable over time. Within traditional schools of education, hire more faculty of color, embed culturally responsive pedagogy into all candidate training, and create cultures in which students of color feel included and valued.

- **Increase the Percentage of Candidates of Color Who Pass Licensing Exams.**

Provide financial and human resources to help prepare and otherwise support aspiring teachers of color for the state licensing exams. Maintain high standards for how teachers are prepared and licensed while exploring meaningful alternative options for prospective teachers to show what they know and can do that better predict classroom performance. Consider interstate licensure reciprocity agreements with states that have higher levels of teacher diversity.

- **Prioritize Hiring, Recruiting, and Placing Teachers of Color.**

Shift human resource practices to focus on recruiting, hiring, and placing candidates of color. Direct additional resources to high-needs schools and districts that struggle to provide a strong, diverse teaching force for students of color and those from low-income families. Use district- and school-level data to ensure more students have access to at least one teacher of color during their K-12 education.

- **Retain Teachers of Color.**

Provide leadership opportunities and clear career pathways for teachers of color and pay them for the extra work they assume. Connect teachers of color with their peers nationally and locally through paid, cohort-based mentorship and professional learning opportunities. Prepare, hire, and support more school leaders of color and support all school leaders and teachers to create inclusive, culturally affirming learning environments for students and staff. Use surveys and exit interviews to look for responses that may signal inhospitable working environments for educators of color. Use COVID recovery funds to provide seed money for innovative teacher preparation programs, as Tennessee and Texas have done; induction and mentoring programs that support educators of color; and professional development that supports all educators to create inclusive, culturally affirming learning environments for students of color.

## APPENDIX

### State Legislative Teacher Diversity Initiatives, 2018-2022

	GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAMS	FINANCIAL INCENTIVES	TEACHER RESIDENCIES	ALTERNATIVE LICENSURE
Number of states	21	18	15	10
Alabama		Alabama Recruit & Retain Minority Teacher Pilot  <i>Related bills: H.B.187 (2020), S.B.189 (2021), H.B.135 (2022)</i>		
Alaska				
Arizona				
Arkansas	<i>Related bills: S.B.524 (2021)</i>	Arkansas Geographic Critical Needs Minority Teacher Scholarship Program; State Teacher Education Program (loan assistance)  <i>Related bills: S.B.93 (2019), S.B.139 (2021), S.B.58 (2022), H.B.1600 (2019)</i>		Alternative educator preparation programs  <i>Related bills: S.B.358 (2019)</i>
California	<i>Related bills: A.B.130 (2021)</i>		Teacher Residency Grant Program  <i>Related bills: A.B.130 (2021)</i>	
Colorado	Grow Your Own Educator Program  <i>Related bills: H.B.18-1309 (2018), H.B.18-1332 (2018)</i>		Teacher Residency Expansion Program  <i>Related bills: H.B.18-1189 (2018)</i>	Expands content areas for non-certified instructors; Teacher recruitment education and preparation program (TREP program)  <i>Related bills: S.B.21-185 (2021)</i>

**APPENDIX** CONTINUED**State Legislative Teacher Diversity Initiatives, 2018-2022**

	GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAMS	FINANCIAL INCENTIVES	TEACHER RESIDENCIES	ALTERNATIVE LICENSURE
Connecticut		Mortgage assistance; Minority Educator Loan Reimbursement Grant Program; Minority Teacher Scholarship <i>Related bills: S.B.1022 (2019), H.B.7424 (2019), H.B.5506 (2022)</i>	Minority candidate certification, retention or residency year program <i>S.B.1202 (2021)</i>	<i>Related bills: S.B.455 (2018)</i>
Delaware	Grow Your Own Educator Program <i>Related bills: H.B.430 (2022)</i>		Year-long teacher residency program <i>Related bills: H.B.178 (2022)</i>	
DC	Grow Your Own Teacher Preparation Support Program <i>Related bills: B.24-0373 (2021)</i>		<i>Related bills: B24-0373 (2021)</i>	
Florida		Minority Teacher Education Scholarship Program <i>Related bills: H.B.5001 (2022)</i>		
Georgia				
Hawaii	Grow Our Own Teachers Initiative <i>Related bills: H.B.1070 (2019)</i>			
Idaho				
Illinois	Grow Your Own Teacher Education Act; Educators Rising Curriculum <i>Related bills: H.B.0035 (2019), H.B.0900 (2022)</i>	Minority Teachers of Illinois scholarship program <i>Related bills: H.B.2170 (2021)</i>	Alternative Educator Licensure Program, which requires a first year of residency <i>Related bills: S.B.1569 (2020)</i>	Alternative Educator Licensure Program <i>Related bills: S.B.1569 (2020)</i>

**APPENDIX** CONTINUED**State Legislative Teacher Diversity Initiatives, 2018-2022**

	<b>GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAMS</b>	<b>FINANCIAL INCENTIVES</b>	<b>TEACHER RESIDENCIES</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE LICENSURE</b>
Indiana		Minority Teacher Scholarship Fund <i>Related bills: H.B.1001 (2021)</i>	Teacher Residency Grant Pilot Program; Indiana Education Residency Pilot <i>Related bills: H.B.1009 (2019), H.B.1008 (2019)</i>	
Iowa				
Kansas				
Kentucky	Local school district training programs; West Louisville Historically Black Colleges and Universities Pilot Project <i>Related bills: H.B.277 (2022), S.B.270 (2021)</i>		<i>Related bills: H.B.277 (2022)</i>	Expedited certification program; credentialing system that provides alternative routes to certification <i>Related bills: H.B.277 (2022), S.B.270 (2021)</i>
Louisiana				
Maine				
Maryland	Teaching Fellows for Maryland Scholarship <i>Related bills: H.B.1415 (2018), S.B.0190 (2020), H.B.1300 (2021), H.B.0588 (2021), S.B.0290 (2022)</i>	Teacher Quality and Diversity Grant Program <i>Related bills: H.B.1300 (2021), S.B.0290 (2022)</i>	Teacher Collaborative Grant Program-21st-century practicum for teacher candidates <i>Related bills: S.B.1030 (2019), H.B.1300 (2021)</i>	
Michigan	<i>Related bills: S.B.848 (2018)</i>			Eliminate the basic skills exam <i>Related bills: S.B.0889 (2018)</i>

**APPENDIX** CONTINUED**State Legislative Teacher Diversity Initiatives, 2018-2022**

	<b>GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAMS</b>	<b>FINANCIAL INCENTIVES</b>	<b>TEACHER RESIDENCIES</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE LICENSURE</b>
Minnesota	Grants for Grow Your Own programs <i>Related bills: H.F.1 (2019), H.F.2 (2021)</i>	Minnesota Aspiring Teachers of Color Scholarship Program; Come Teach in MN hiring bonus for teachers of color; Collaborative urban and greater Minnesota educators of color grants <i>Related bills: H.F.7 (2021), H.F.2 (2021)</i>	Teacher residency pilot program <i>Related bills: H.F.1 (2019)</i>	Alternative Teacher Preparation Grant Program <i>Related bills: H.F.2 (2021)</i>
Mississippi				
Missouri			Teacher residency program <i>Related bills: H.B.3002 (2022)</i>	
Montana				
Nebraska				
Nevada	<i>Related bills: S.B.352 (2021), S.B.458 (2021)</i>			
New Hampshire				
New Jersey				Male teachers of color alternate route <i>Related bills: S.703 (2019)</i>
New Mexico	Grow Your Own Teachers Act <i>Related bills: H.B.20 (2019), H.B. 22 (2021)</i>	Teacher loan repayment program; scholarship program <i>Related bills: H.B. 275 (2019)</i>	Teacher residency programs <i>Related bills: H.B.92 (2020), H.B.13 (2022)</i>	
New York	Teacher diversity pipeline pilot <i>Related bills: S.07504 (2018), S.8003D (2022)</i>	Teacher Opportunity Corps <i>Related bills: S.8003D (2022)</i>	Teacher residency program <i>Related bills: S.8003D (2022)</i>	

**APPENDIX** CONTINUED**State Legislative Teacher Diversity Initiatives, 2018-2022**

	GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAMS	FINANCIAL INCENTIVES	TEACHER RESIDENCIES	ALTERNATIVE LICENSURE
North Carolina		NC Teaching Fellows; NC Promise Tuition Plan  <i>Related bills: S.B.105 (2021)</i>		
North Dakota				
Ohio	Grant program for uses including “grow your own” recruitment strategies  <i>Related bills: H.B.110 (2021)</i>			
Oklahoma		Oklahoma Future Teacher Scholarship and Employment Incentive Program  <i>Related bills: H.B.3564 (2022)</i>		
Oregon		Scholarships to culturally and linguistically diverse teacher candidates  <i>Related bills: H.B.4031 (2022)</i>		
Pennsylvania				
Rhode Island		Rhode Island School for Progressive Education to support access to higher education opportunities for teachers of color  <i>Related bills: H.B.7123 (2022)</i>		
South Carolina				

**APPENDIX** CONTINUED**State Legislative Teacher Diversity Initiatives, 2018-2022**

	<b>GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAMS</b>	<b>FINANCIAL INCENTIVES</b>	<b>TEACHER RESIDENCIES</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVE LICENSURE</b>
South Dakota		<i>Related bills: H.B.7123 (2022)</i>		
Tennessee	Appropriations, local teacher development (Grow Your Own) <i>Related bills: H.B.2821 (2020), S.B.1790 (2020)</i>	Minority Teaching Fellows <i>Related bills: S.B.2097 (2020)</i>		
Texas	<i>Related bills: H.B.1 (2019)</i>			
Utah	Grow Your Own Teacher and School Counselor Pipeline Program <i>Related bills: H.B. 381 (2021), S.B.251 (2022)</i>			
Vermont				
Virginia	<i>Related bills: H.B. 381 (2021), S.B.251 (2022)</i>	Virginia Teaching Scholarship Loan Program <i>Related bills: H.B.1729 (2019), S.1406 (2019)</i>	Teacher Residency Program; Teacher Residency Partnership Grants <i>Related bills: H.B.29 (2020), H.B.1800 (2021), H.B.30 (2022)</i>	"Alternative evaluation standards" to demonstrate proficiency <i>Related bills: H.B.2037 (2019), S.B.1397 (2019)</i>
Washington	Recruiting Washington teachers program; Bilingual educator initiative; alternative routes <i>Related bills: H.B. 1109 (2019), S.B. 6168 (2020), S.B.5092 (2021), S.B.5693 (2022)</i>			

**APPENDIX** CONTINUED

**State Legislative Teacher Diversity Initiatives, 2018-2022**

	GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAMS	FINANCIAL INCENTIVES	TEACHER RESIDENCIES	ALTERNATIVE LICENSURE
West Virginia			Clinical teacher of record program <i>Related bills: H.B.2029 (2021)</i>	
Wisconsin		Minority Teacher Loan Program <i>Related bills: A.B.51 (2019), A.B.68 (2021)</i>		
Wyoming				

SOURCE: FutureEd analysis

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- <sup>2</sup> Presentation by Melissa Yoder, director of educator residencies and talent pipelines, and Camille Davenport, educator residency and talent pipeline specialist, Texas Education Agency, US PREP Learning Tour, Nov. 2-3, 2022, Fort Worth, Texas. Novice or intern teachers serve over 70 percent of disadvantaged students in the Lone Star State, Yoder and Davenport reported.
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## ENDNOTES CONTINUED

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- <sup>95</sup> As a result, the North Carolina DRIVE task force recommends revising the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards so that prospective educators, as well as current teachers and administrators, receive training in anti-racist, anti-bias, and culturally responsive pedagogy.

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