Build for Equity

NNSTOY

TEACHERS**LEADING**

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Contents

Executive Summary

The National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NNSTOY) conducted a months-long study on how to diversify the teacher workforce. This study, sponsored by ETS (Educational Testing Service), analyzed the practices of current and former educators and school personnel who have overseen hiring educators. A complementary literature review examined the effectiveness of current efforts in place across the country to diversify the teacher workforce. Research shows this has a positive impact on all students. Below are some highlights from the study and report:

Domains

Each domain reflects common themes encountered through the literature review and stakeholder interviews.

1. **The Student Experience:** Students of color are more likely to have a negative classroom experience, which in turn makes them less likely to return to the classroom as teachers. Increasing the racial diversity of educators can flip this pattern into a virtuous cycle.

2. **The Access:** Licensure requirements and standardized assessments can act as barriers to the profession for people of color. We must act to remove roadblocks and facilitate access for prospective teachers.

3. **The Affirmation:** Teachers of color often lack demonstrated support and professional development opportunities needed to affirm their place within a diverse educator community. Ensuring teachers of color are empowered to show up fully and honestly is key to diversifying the teacher pipeline.

4. **The Team:** *S*chools must be willing to transform their culture and hiring processes to successfully recruit and retain a diverse educator workforce.

5. **The Community:** Teachers of color benefit from a sense of belonging and a supportive community.

6. **The Gatekeepers:** Teachers of color are more likely to assume leadership roles within a school when they are supported by school leaders of color.

7. **The Respect:** Attracting more teachers of color to the profession will require a systemic change in the way the teaching profession is respected and valued.

8. **The Resources:** Tangible financial benefits must be in place to encourage more students of color to consider the teaching profession.

9. **The Redesign:** The American education system must be willing to change the structures in place that are deterring educators of color from entering the profession or exiting prematurely.

Acknowledgements

How to Use This Report

As a nation, we must change the trajectory of our education system, particularly as it relates to diversifying the pipeline of educators. That change will not happen in isolation of the other systemic issues that prevent educators from preparing students for success.

This report is intended to be used by every person who plays a direct role in the education system itself: teachers; paraprofessionals; building administrators; district administrators (including human resources personnel); and local, state, and national policymakers.

This report consists of nine domains which were defined based on months of intensive research, focus groups, and interviews. Each domain within this report includes the following:

Defining the Domain: We begin with an explanation of the concepts, arguments, and evidence within each domain.

Personal Stories: Educators from across the nation participated in focus groups and interviews during which their insights were linked to the domains. We include several personal stories to illustrate the practical reality of each domain. Readers should use these personal stories to help facilitate group conversations and reflections to connect back to their own setting and experience.

Reflective Questions to Consider: Each domain's reflective questions prompt the reader to consider how their own practices feed into the conditions and stories brought up within each domain, and whether they are doing their part to not just identify solutions, but to put those solutions in place.

Action Steps: Each domain includes action steps that can be implemented immediately by the reader. Some steps are intended to be completed individually while others are strengthened by partnering with others. More than anything, this report should be read with a view toward action.

Concluding Statement: Each domain's concluding statement summarizes the respective domain under the premise that diversifying the teacher pipeline is necessary, actionable, and urgent. The statements also suggest that the current composition of the teacher workforce is by design. Therefore, if a new workforce is to be built, the evidence will be in the design, or redesign, of the system as it presently stands.

When you access this guide, consider the most immediate needs of your district and go to the section you think could best address those needs. Conversely, you could think about the strongest systemic conditions for diversifying the teacher workforce in your district and access the stories and recommendations in that section to apply. Regardless of your approach we do not recommend trying to apply each recommendation simultaneously. Take time to read the whole document, preferably with your team, and then go back to the domains that best support your next steps.

While this guide will focus on diversifying the educator workforce pipeline as it relates to racial and ethnic identity, our society is in urgent need of diversifying the pipeline even further to include educators who have diverse religious backgrounds, abilities, gender identities, sexual orientations, socioeconomic backgrounds, and all other identity markers. The reader is encouraged to reflect on all these elements as they engage with this work. This guide is intended for reflection and charting actionable paths forward. It is the action we take, individually and collectively, that will transform education.

About the Authors

Josh Parker

Josh Parker's mission in education and life is to "help people and solve problems." Now entering his 16th year in education, he strives to continue in service of this mission. He has served students and teachers within the Baltimore/Washington D.C. corridor as an ELA Instructional Coach, Language Arts Department Chair, Secondary Language Arts teacher, professor, and compliance specialist. He has also served teachers, administrators, and educational leaders throughout the country as the Senior Director of Programs and Engagement at Unbound Ed. Mr. Parker, a Teaching Channel Laureate and *Education Week* writer, was also a Lowell Milken Unsung Hero (2017), N.E.A. Global Fellow (2013) and Maryland Teacher of the year (2012). He is now a senior consultant at Education First and lives with his wife of over a decade, Tiffany and their two children, Laila and Joshua in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Dr. Jemelleh Coes

In 2013, Dr. Jemelleh Coes was nominated to represent Bulloch County as Teacher of the Year. She went on to become Georgia's 2014 Teacher of the Year.

Jemelleh earned her Ph.D. in Educational Theory and Practice with certificates in Education Law and Policy, Disability Studies, and Qualitative Research from the University of Georgia and undergraduate degrees from Georgia Southern University. She serves as a board member for the National Network of State Teachers of the Year and advisory councilperson for the National Education Association Foundation and Georgia Partnership of Excellence in Education.

Jemelleh is the Director of Teacher Leadership at Mount Holyoke College where she leads the program, develops curriculum, and provides professional development opportunities for teacher leaders. She is also a professor at the University of Georgia where she teaches future educators along

with future professionals dedicated to disability advocacy. She believes that equity is the thread that runs through everything!

Jemelleh says, "In the sweater of life, if you remove the equity thread, you can guarantee indecent exposure."

Dr. Brenda Tufte

Dr. Brenda Tufte is a professor and Chair of Graduate Education at the University of Mary in Bismarck, ND. Prior to moving into higher education, Brenda taught English for 23 years in rural and urban public school districts in Minnesota and North Dakota. Her experience teaching students from diverse backgrounds has led to writing and presenting on learner-centered teaching, literacy, and differentiated instruction. She has authored 11 articles on education including "*Educating Students in Poverty: A Systemic Approach to Building a Culture of Success*," *Where the Boys Are(n't): Alarming Trends in Male College Outcomes*," and *College and Career Readiness in the Global World*." Her book, "*High-Impact Educators: How Graduates Describe Their Best Teachers*" was published in 2021 by Rowman and Littlefield. Brenda is the 2012 North Dakota Teacher of the Year and a 2017 recipient of the Crystal Apple Award for Excellence in Higher Education Teaching.
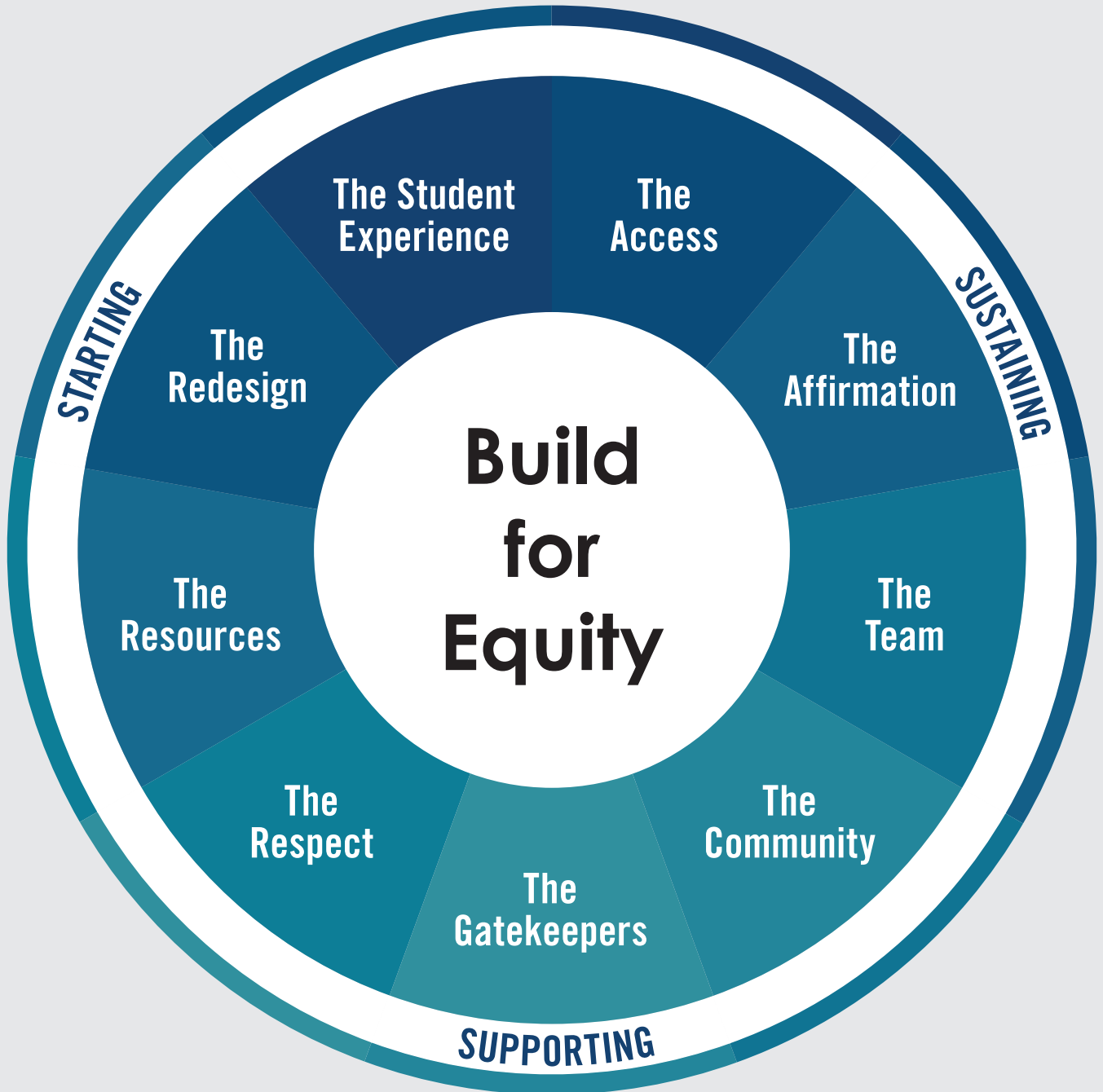
Justin Minkel

Justin Minkel has taught 1st through 4th grade students in high-poverty public schools for the past 21 years. He began his teaching career at P.S. 192 in West Harlem, New York City, completed a Masters in Elementary Education at the University of California at Berkeley, and now teaches in northwest Arkansas at a school where 85% of students are English Learners. Justin is the 2007 Arkansas Teacher of the Year, a 2006 Milken Educator, and a National Board Certified Teacher.

Justin has written over 120 columns for publications including *Education Week Teacher* and Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's *Educational Leadership*, and he is the author of the children's book *Clubhouse Clash*. He is currently completing a low-residency MFA in Creative Writing for Children and Young Adults through Hamline University.

Leigh Ann Erickson

Leigh Ann Erickson, educator, activist, and author of *What is White Privilege*, has taught in New York City, Chicago, rural Ohio, and Mt. Vernon, Iowa. She was a finalist for the 2019 Iowa Teacher of the Year and aims to eradicate racism through justice-driven teaching, with a focus on educating white students and adults. Leigh Ann is the founder of Undone Consulting and The Undone Movement, a nationwide movement of racial reconciling. Grateful to play a small role in centuries long resistance work, she owes much to her family, friends, and mentors.

Build for Equity

The Student Experience

The Access

The Affirmation

The Team

The Community

The Gatekeepers

The Respect

The Resources

The Redesign

STARTING

SUSTAINING

SUPPORTING

Domain 1: The Student Experience

Students of color are more likely to have a negative classroom experience which makes them less likely to return to the classroom as teachers. Increasing the racial diversity of educators can flip this cycle.

"It goes all the way back to K-12. Are we making school a safe and inviting atmosphere for kids so that they can see themselves doing that for their future students? How do we start to fix that all the way to preschool, kindergarten, up throughout the grade levels?" - Jennifer Walker, Curriculum Supervisor, Ohio

Defining the Domain

A breach divides students of color from their teachers. Half of students in U.S. public schools are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), compared to only 18% of their teachers (9% Latinx, 7% Black, 2% Asian-American).[1] This breach has profound and lasting consequences for students of color. Black teachers see Black students' academic potential more favorably than white teachers do. Students of color tend to experience harsher discipline from white teachers than consequences meted out to white students for the same infractions.[2] BIPOC students often receive the message, both explicitly and implicitly, that school is not a place where they can be themselves. As Illinois Principal Marcus Belin said during a focus group, "When we create school environments where students are traumatized, they typically don't go back. If kids are already pegged as academic challenges grades K-3, and discipline challenges grades 4-12, they are going to be like, 'I hated school. I am not going back to be a teacher.'"

The literature clearly shows that the academic and emotional impact of the demographic disconnect between students and teachers in American schools endures beyond students' time in classrooms. Negative experiences as students make former students of color less likely to pursue teaching as a career. The lack of belonging often experienced by BIPOC students is echoed by the lack of belonging many teachers of color feel in their workplace. Many of the same factors that damage the experience of students of color make potential teachers of color less likely to be hired, less likely to be treated with respect once they enter the classroom, and more likely to leave the teaching profession.

The evidence for the positive impact of BIPOC teachers on BIPOC students is overwhelming. Black students who have had at least one Black teacher are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college. Black students are also less likely to receive disproportionately harsh discipline from Black teachers.[3] Students and families who speak a language other than English at home

can communicate more directly with educators who speak their language. As Arkansas instructional facilitator Perla Andrade said, "I'm fluent in Spanish, and we cater to a large population of English language learners. That instantly creates a connection. I'm able to communicate with them, and that almost instantly creates this relationship of trust."

In a 2016 study, students of all races reported that Black teachers were more likely than white teachers to hold students to high academic standards, help them organize content and explain their ideas clearly, and provide feedback.[4] Asian-American students had an even stronger preference for Black teachers than Black students did. Diverse staffs also benefit students of all racial backgrounds by introducing them to ideas and experiences outside their own. Focus group participant Perla Andrade pointed out, "Our kids don't necessarily recognize diversity. That could be because of the lack of diversity around them. Most of their time is spent in school. Where they're going to gain these kinds of experiences, it's going to be from school."

Teacher candidates of all racial backgrounds need coursework focused on racial diversity and student teaching placements in schools with high numbers of BIPOC students. They need to be familiar with contemporary literature for young people by diverse authors. They also need to be able to teach students who speak English as a second or third language.[5] Ten percent of our nation's students are English learners, yet only

41% of teachers took any coursework on teaching English learners before entering the classroom.[6] The cognitive benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy are well documented[7], yet there is a relative scarcity of bilingual programs nationwide, with some state legislatures prohibiting them through "English only" mandates.

The scarcity of BIPOC teachers in American classrooms propagates a harsh cycle. Students of color tend to experience a host of negative factors, which makes them less likely to seek to return to the classroom as teachers, which in turn replicates the scarcity of BIPOC teachers for the next generation of students. However, districts and states that increase the racial diversity of their teachers and administrators can flip this self-perpetuating cycle into a virtuous cycle.

Personal Stories

"Teachers of color or marginalized populations are the teachers that kind of get it because they have walked in that space. The way we have always been told we are supposed to interact with students and the way the classroom is supposed to look, all of those things may not be true when we are dealing with students that are diverse. When we bring diversity in it makes us rethink what this is supposed to look like when you are connecting with a student, human-to-human." - Linda Rost, Teacher, Montana

"Every student can benefit from a Native teacher. Native students can benefit from having a mirror, but also all students can benefit from having a Native teacher, a Black teacher, [or] a teacher from Iran. The ability to see the spectrum of our

human race can only benefit [them]. It cannot harm." - Dr. Carmelita Lamb, Associate Dean, North Dakota

"I grew up in the country in an all-white school system and really didn't learn about diversity until I began teaching. One day I was teaching a senior class and we were having this great discussion, and I shared a story, and a student said, "Mrs. Walker, you grew up in the movies." It hit me like a ton of bricks. No matter how hard I worked, there was still this screen between us. They knew that I didn't live their experience. They need to see themselves. My students liked me, they loved me, they learned from me. But they need to see themselves reflected." - Jennifer Walker, 2010 State Teacher of the Year, Ohio

Reflective Questions to Consider

1. How can increasing the racial diversity of your staff positively impact your students' learning, growth, and school experience?

2. How do your teaching practices, dispositions, and curriculum reflect and affirm the identity and experiences of students of color?

3. How is your school or district collecting data on the number of BIPOC teachers, staff, and administrators? What is the current representation of people of color in every role: custodial, secretarial, teachers, principals, Human Resources, superintendents?

4. What is your school or district's plan for increasing the racial diversity of your staff?

Action Steps

1. **Encourage students of color to consider a career in teaching.**

   Consider implementing practices to keep in touch with former students and alumni who express interest in teaching. Mississippi principal Charlette Artis-Harris has a process to keep in touch with graduates of her elementary school who she thinks would make great teachers. As they near high school graduation, she encourages them to pursue a degree in teaching and return to teach at their former elementary school.

2. **Build partnerships with organizations to close the demographic gap between students and teachers.**

   Consider partnerships such as Ohio's Diversifying the Education Profession grants program that partners with Historically Black Colleges and Universities [HBCUs] or other partnerships with minority-serving institutions.

3. **Implement support for BIPOC teachers into the structure of the school week.**

   Strong mentoring programs, affinity groups, and opportunities for professional autonomy and leadership are critical for retaining teachers of color.

4. **Engage BIPOC students in regular conversations about their classroom experience, then act on what they share.**

   Find out what the school day feels like to students in your school or district: their sense of belonging, their relationships with their teachers, the ways they experience discipline, their engagement with the curriculum. Providing students of color with a nurturing and rigorous education is a worthy goal in and of itself, but it can also motivate and prepare future teachers of color. Students who experience deep learning and a sense of belonging from school, taught by teachers in whom they see themselves, are more likely to return to the classroom one day as educators. These future educators will create the same conditions of love and excellence they experienced in school for the next generation of students.

Closing Statement

Increasing the number of teachers of color and creating the conditions to help them thrive can fundamentally improve the experience of students of color in our PreK-12 educational system. While this goal is sufficient in and of itself, it also has the benefit of creating a virtuous cycle in place of the current damaging cycle, as students of color who thrive in school are more likely to consider teaching as a career once they graduate.

There is no substitute for the potential positive impact of teachers of color. As New York teacher Briana Yarborough said, "These kids are me. They are people of color. They are me."

Domain 2: The Access

Licensure requirements and standardized assessments can act as barriers to the profession for people of color. We must remove roadblocks and facilitate access for prospective teachers.

"[In the education program], I was typically the only Black male student in my class. It provided a challenge but also helped bring some clarity to understand there is an issue. There is a teacher shortage and lack of diversity within the profession." - Marcus Belin, Principal, Illinois

Defining the Domain

Data clearly show that the diversity of our nation is not mirrored in the candidates entering teacher preparation programs. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, K-12 students in America's public schools will continue to become more diverse over the next decade.[8] If action is not taken to attract teachers of color into teacher preparation programs and provide adequate support for successful completion and licensure, we can expect an increase in the disproportion of representation between students of color and their teachers.

The U.S. Department of Education reports that diversity continues to decrease at each successive "leak" across the teacher pipeline. According to the U.S. Department of Education, "In 2013, 25 percent of individuals enrolled in teacher preparation programs based in an institution of higher education were individuals of color. In comparison, 37 percent of all individuals (regardless of major) in those same institutions were individuals of color."[9] Even on diverse college campuses, teacher preparation programs often lack racial and gender diversity.

Licensure tests contribute to this disparity. In the case of Praxis I licensure assessments, Educational Testing Service (ETS) notes that "first-time pass rates are indeed a reflection of the African American-white test-taker score gap."[10] White test takers are more likely to pass the reading and math portions of the test than their Black peers. The math exam showed the biggest gap: 78.2% of white test takers passed compared to 36.8% of Black test takers.[11] There is little evidence showing that standardized multiple-choice tests are effective at predicting teaching proficiency; ETS notes that "... teacher education programs that reduce quality teachers to test scores...are, in fact, reducing the number of candidates of color in the pipeline."[12] The barriers of single-measure gatekeepers, coupled with the high cost of standardized assessments and college tuition, have been the impetus to rethinking a one-size-fits-all approach to teacher licensure. Recent research shows the validity of teaching portfolios as an alternative measure of teaching quality for

licensure and found that the best portfolio scores were effective in distinguishing between teachers who were more and less successful in enhancing their students' achievement.[13] In addition, the best portfolios are more robust predictors of teachers' contributions to gains in student achievement and they add information that is not measured on Praxis tests.

Creating alternate pathways into the profession while keeping standards high has been a challenge to operationalize. During critical teaching shortages policymakers often turn to quick, short-term solutions like lowering professional standards. While this might fill some positions, the benefits are short-lived. Lowering professional standards hurts students and diminishes respect for the profession, compounding the conditions that caused the original shortages. Teachers who are not adequately trained are less effective and less likely to provide the example that inspires their students to consider teaching as a career. From a public perspective, lowering standards reduces the profession, making it less attractive to highly skilled candidates. ETS notes that students of color comprise a much larger share of the alternative access population than they represent among bachelor's degree recipients in the field of education, which can undermine diversification efforts.[14] Alternative access candidates complete less coursework and internship hours. Comprehensive preparation matters, and teachers who enter the classroom without it leave the profession at higher rates.

Rather than lowering standards for teacher preparation, successful initiatives focus on investing more in comprehensive preparation models. Paid resident teacher internships, *Grow Your Own*, Special Education Personnel Preparation, and *Para to Teacher* are examples of programs that ensure there are enough teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to help students—including those with disabilities—succeed. Other programs show promising results, such as the *Hawkins Centers of Excellence* and *Project-Impact*, designed to increase the quality and number of new teachers of color and especially male teachers of color, as well as programs such as *2+2 Partnerships* with community colleges and tribal colleges.

Early initiatives for high school students considering teaching as a career, such as *Educators Rising* and *Dual Credit*, have expanded and formed unique variations. Universities have also collaborated with districts to deliver on-site *Teacher Leadership Academies* designed to strengthen teachers' practice and address important challenges in the workplace. Out of these collaborative partnerships, teaching candidates are afforded more expansive opportunities to team-teach and co-plan with experienced and skilled mentors who are well-trained in culturally responsive teaching.[15] These environments allow teacher candidates to hone their skills in the classroom and receive feedback and modeling. Opportunities to see culturally responsive teaching in action and to develop a comprehensive background in content knowledge, pedagogy, learning theories, and classroom management prepare teachers to know their students and respond respectfully to their diverse learning needs and experiences.

Personal Stories

"[Schools] are sometimes 50% understaffed. We talk a lot about pathways to licensure. We work with community colleges on programs. Some of the barriers Indigenous teachers face are access to higher education and whether or not they are going to pursue it. There are a lot of barriers to students of color finishing STEM degrees. Access is part location. They may not even have access to the internet or a car to drive to school. Have conversations with talented students about being a teacher." – Linda Rost, Teacher, Montana

"In Boston [we are] surrounded by lots of colleges and universities with very strong teacher prep programs that are working to diversify their pools. They work with schools nearby starting with grade 12 about what makes you choose teaching, what makes you choose a master's in education, what helps you succeed and stay with a program. The state tests have traditional pass rates that are very detrimental to people of color." – Pam Casna, Principal, Massachusetts

Reflective Questions to Consider

1. What obstacles are preventing teachers of color from entering teacher prep programs? How can you collaborate to provide additional support and mentorship?

2. What bias is present in standardized tests and other forms of assessment and curriculum? How could you mitigate bias and utilize more authentic models?

3. What funding sources and programs are available to support education students and teachers of color to underwrite the high cost of college?

4. How can you create cultural immersion opportunities and extended internships to help preservice teachers develop their understanding and teaching practice?

Action Steps

1. **Expand early access to internship opportunities.**

   Benefits of extended internships include authentic application of learning, access to modeling by experienced teachers, and increased mentorship. Consider partnering with districts and agencies to provide paid residencies for teaching candidates. Create more opportunities for preservice teachers to increase their interaction in diverse communities through internship placements in diverse settings.

2. **Utilize authentic performance-based assessments.**

   Reduce standardized testing requirements to enter the field of teaching and use performance-based assessments to demonstrate proficiency. Be mindful of performance gaps and mitigate implicit bias within assessments and curriculum. For example, educators who teach in schools of education can utilize multiple assessments throughout a unit of study rather than relying on just one. They can build assessments and curricula that accommodate a variety of learning preferences and interests. In addition,

schools of education can address the threat of stereotype bias by dispelling stereotype myths and fostering an inclusive environment in which students' identities are valued.

3. **Inspire youth to pursue teaching.**

   Teachers often cite having great teachers when they were in school as the reason they chose the field of education. Inspire young people to recognize their strengths and to consider a degree in teaching. Effective and caring teachers convey a belief in their students that is internalized and transformational. Plant the seeds early and give students experience helping others learn. Start an *Educators Rising* group for high school students who are considering teaching and offer dual credit opportunities that can be applied to a postsecondary teacher preparation program.

4. **Partner with Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), Tribal and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).**

   Seek institutions deeply invested in serving students of color as sources of knowledge and support about strengthening outcomes for diverse students in higher education and teacher prep programs. Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), Tribal colleges and HBCUs can help educators in all higher education institutions be more reflective and responsive to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds. In addition, forming articulation agreements with two-year community colleges and Tribal colleges can get more teachers of color into

teacher preparation programs. These agreements also forge partnerships that have the potential to attract grant funding for programs that support students of color.

5. **Emphasize training for all preservice teachers on how to differentiate instruction and effectively educate students of all backgrounds**.

   Beyond theoretical learning of differentiated instruction and culturally responsive teaching, preservice teachers need to receive rich, timely feedback working in a classroom with an experienced mentor who is skilled in culturally-responsive pedagogy.

Closing Statement

We need to ensure that all students have access to equitable opportunities and a chance to learn from diverse teachers who are able to transcend stereotypes, form common values, and forge influential relationships. It is unacceptable that a mere 25% of candidates in teacher preparation programs are students of color (12% lower than other bachelor's degrees), while the majority of students in K-12 schools are students of color. To change this imbalance, teacher preparation programs can begin by identifying effective initiatives to recruit diverse candidates, then fund and support them through degree completion and licensure. By partnering with school districts, education professors can enhance preparation of candidates through extended residencies and internships as well as graduate-level teacher leadership academies which present opportunities for authentic collaboration to strengthen outcomes.

Domain 3: The Affirmation

Education systems often fail to give teachers of color support and professional development opportunities that would affirm their place within a diverse educator community. Ensuring teachers of color are empowered to show up fully and honestly is key to diversifying the teacher pipeline.

"When teachers are trusted to be the professionals that they are, when they have the autonomy to be and do as they see fit, and when the culture is one that is welcoming and inviting, those are the things that that work and that make people want to come into the building." - Leron McAdoo, High School Teacher, Arkansas

Defining the Domain

Teachers perform best when they are free to be themselves. Education is a space of honesty and vulnerability where teachers authentically build transformative relationships with students and other staff. Showing up as one's full self includes one's culture and lived experience rooted in race and ethnicity. When those lived experiences are not affirmed—or worse, invalidated—by school administration and staff, teachers experience isolation and a lack of belonging. Ensuring teachers of color are empowered to show up fully and honestly is key to diversifying the teacher pipeline.

Today, 79% of the teaching population is white.[16] In certain states, that number is much higher. In Iowa, for example, 94% of teachers are white.[17] As a result, white culture and white racialized identity are embedded into schools. According to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, white racialized identity is defined as "the way that white people, their customs, culture, and beliefs operate as the standard by which all other groups are compared...whiteness and the normalization of white racial identity throughout America's history have created a culture where nonwhite persons are seen as inferior or abnormal."[18]

This reality creates a leak in the teacher pipeline: lack of racial and cultural affirmation. A lack of affirmation of teachers of color can include: an unwillingness to provide leadership opportunities, an expectation to handle behavior incidents with all or most students of color in the building, lack of support for trainings and professional development specifically for educators of color, micro- and macro-aggressions from other teachers and administrators, an unwillingness to discuss culturally-responsive teaching and curriculum through school-wide professional development, and a persistent lack of diverse representation in staff and curriculum.

In our current system, many teachers of color do not feel empowered or supported to show up fully, which is one explanation for higher turnover rates among teachers of color. Deficit biases held by white

counterparts in education make it difficult to see differences as strengths. These biases must be addressed in order to affirm teachers of color.

Current bills in several states seek to prevent the teaching of truth, and, if passed, will further invalidate the lived experiences and histories of BIPOC educators. Additionally, this type of legislation will prevent teachers from teaching topics related to race, sexual orientation, religion, and other topics coined as "divisive," topics that we know are essential to dismantling problematic structures. Ensuring that accurate histories can be told affirms the experiences of diverse educators. Bills like these will be an additional deterrent for prospective educators.

Affirmation leads to increased joy in the workplace and stronger relationships among colleagues. Additionally, this joy often transfers to students. With affirmation, teachers are more likely to stay in their jobs. Higher rates of turnover for teachers of color negatively impact all students, but particularly students of color. Black students who have at least one Black teacher by 3rd grade are 13% more likely to attend college.[19] Learning from a diverse teaching staff improves learning and builds empathy for all students.

Personal Stories

"You kind of want to leave. I'm not going to lie to you. I've said so many times that I don't know if I fit in here. I know I don't when I'm told that I'm aggressive because I'm vocalizing that certain things are wrong or certain things should be done. It's lonely. It's very lonely. And yes, you have to navigate the culture. But sometimes

navigation is being you." - Briana Yarborough, 4th grade teacher, New York

"What is our capacity to support a diverse educator? What are the ways in which we are going to welcome that young Black teacher into our community in the building? The environment in which teachers are teaching has a huge impact on their perception of whether they are making any kind of difference, or whether there is value in what they can offer to children. It is very difficult to survive that if they do not have support." - Dr. Carmelita Lamb, Associate Dean of Higher Education at the University of Mary, North Dakota

"I had always felt like they—'they' being the system, the Arkansas Department of Education, the Little Rock School District— didn't care about me, as a human. But when they pushed forward during Covid with [in person learning], it solidified that they did not care about me, and I could not continue in that system and so that's why I'm trying to change policy now. We may not be able to make them care about us, but we can make them put practices in place that will protect us." - Stacey McAdoo, 2019 State Teacher of Year, Arkansas

Reflective Questions to Consider

1. How are you affirming the experiences of teachers of color in your space by listening?

2. What spaces are available for teachers of color to work collaboratively for change?

3. How could you offer professional development opportunities specifically designed for teachers of color?

4. In what ways are you specifically acknowledging and uplifting the value of teachers of color?

5. In what ways are you providing space to address the issues people of color face either in whole staff conversations, or professional development?

Action Steps

1. **Introduce policies designed to affirm teachers of color.**

   Policies could include implementing training programs to identify and address personal biases; establishing a protocol for responding to issues that are unique to the people of color in schools; and formalizing policies for addressing micro- and macro-aggressions.

2. **Promote racial and cultural affinity groups.**

   Ensure there is dedicated space for teachers of color to convene to discuss their experiences in the school. If there is only one teacher of color in the building, seek out professional development experiences that can expand that teacher's network of educators of color.

3. **Build building and community support.**

   Whole staff conversations and professional development focused on racial equity and culturally responsive teaching support teachers of color. Invite members of the community to participate in these conversations to encourage community support, particularly in predominantly white communities.

4. **Adamantly oppose laws and policies that prevent educators of color from telling their stories and histories.**

   At the time of this paper, a growing number of states are introducing policies that will prevent teachers from teaching topics related to race, sexual orientation, religion, and other topics coined as "divisive," topics that we know are essential to dismantling problematic structures. Ensuring that accurate histories can be told affirms the experiences of diverse educators.

Closing Statement

While teachers are reminded to affirm and uplift the differences their students hold, our education system too often fails to do the same for its teachers. By actively affirming teachers of color, we are investing in our nation's education. Affirmation can break cycles of oppressive biases that harm students and educators of color, thereby helping to diversify the teacher pipeline and improve outcomes for all students.

Domain 4: The Team

Affinity groups can create a sense of community to combat isolation and provide needed support.

"When students of color choose the teaching profession, continued feelings of isolation can lead to early attrition. Avoid diversity for diversity's sake. Once we hire the teachers, understand why we hired them and support them." - Dr. Marcus Belin, Principal, Illinois

Defining the Domain

There is often an important sense of community amongst educators in any school building. However, educators of color may not always feel a sense of belonging. Schools that lack diversity among their educators would benefit most from hiring teachers of color; however, even in schools with a diverse workforce, educators of color are still likely to feel culturally isolated.

Advocates for increased teacher diversity frequently indicate a need for peer support and mentorship.[20] Providing encouragement and due support for educators of color is particularly important when they are in settings that lack diversity, where they are more likely to report feeling culturally isolated or siloed. Teachers of color often experience extra pressure to connect with and support students of color while combating microaggressions and other workplace hostilities.[21] Many teachers have asked for spaces that provide opportunities for connections and support. While all teachers can benefit from these support structures, advocates from underrepresented racial groups identify a need for particular spaces dedicated to helping them find resources, support,

belonging and professional development. These spaces of support may take the form of affinity groups and strong mentorship programs. Micia Mosely, founder of the Black Teacher Project, describes racial affinity groups as "spaces of support, learning, and healthy career development that are culturally responsive to a specific racialized group who experiences the consequences of institutional racism in particular ways."[22]

The structure and content of an affinity group may differ according to the needs of the participating teachers. Mosley found success in increasing teacher retention and support through inquiry groups, book studies, and rejuvenation spaces. Inquiry groups provide a space for teachers to discuss workplace dilemmas and receive feedback from other teachers.[23] Teachers of color nurture genuine friendships and mentorship by participating in monthly book studies that focus on the interplay between identity, race, and culture. Mosley also reported on the success of rejuvenation spaces, which allow teachers to explore, strengthen, and share their own artistic talents. Teachers participating in the Black Teacher Project affinity groups reported gaining insights that facilitated their

healing and access to tools they could take back into the classroom. When these relationships are fostered, they become transformational for teachers.

Without intentional planning and a unified commitment to attract and support teachers of color, schools without a variety of backgrounds and cultures among their faculty will likely have difficulty shifting their demographics. At all stages of the hiring process, feelings of isolation can impact teacher diversity. Reaching out to diverse educators about openings and demonstrating a welcoming environment can encourage new teachers to consider applying to districts where people who share their background are underrepresented. Moreover, school communities that hire and retain diverse teachers tend to be the same schools that pair teachers with skilled mentors. This mentorship process occurs early on to provide valuable professional support and cultivate increased communication, collaboration, and community. Fostering a relationship between mentors and mentees can be a vital connection, especially during the first and second years of teaching.

All schools could benefit from diversifying their faculty. *Education Week* reported that students from all cultural backgrounds describe feeling cared for and intellectually challenged by teachers of color.[24] In addition, when taught by teachers of color, students of color have improved academic performance, higher graduation rates, and are more likely to attend college. These outcomes are significant. Despite feelings of isolation, teachers of color recognize the vital role they play in creating connections that positively impact student learning. Every educator has the opportunity to take the lead in welcoming teachers of color to their districts and helping them to connect and thrive.

Personal Stories

"Going to conferences and being able to meet other educators that have an identity that you identify with is important and can lead to a lot of professional development, growth, understanding, comfort, laughter, and joy. Someone that you can breathe with. That moment can save someone's day." - Lily Ngaruiya, Academic Affairs and Equity Coordinator, New York

"Often a barrier is going to an interview at a school and seeing...no one that looks like you as a Black man or woman, and have it be all white people on the panel, and just feeling like I don't necessarily want to work here because I don't feel like I'll have an affinity group or have a peer group... [or be able to] have the kind of equity conversations that I want to have." - Pam Casna, Principal, Massachusetts

Reflective Questions to Consider

1. What spaces and opportunities do teachers of color have to connect and support each other?

2. Who at your school/district carries the unspoken expectations of culturally connecting with students? How often do you rely on these teachers to explain, support, or represent the group they identify with in cases of cultural disconnect? How do they feel about this added responsibility?

3. What resources (time, money, physical space) can you set aside to create mentorship and/or affinity group opportunities?

4. How do you foster a culture of shared responsibility in supporting and welcoming teachers of color in our educational community?

Action Steps

1. **Recognize key staff members capable of providing leadership to an affinity group or mentorship initiative.**

   Assessing which staff members are carrying the expectations of representation is the first step to being mindful of the potential burden of those expectations and recognition of support those educators might need as a result.

2. **Invite and equip key leaders to begin the mentorship and/or affinity group initiative**.

   When cycles of initiatives start and stall repeatedly, teachers feel frustrated and undervalued. Sustaining strong mentorship and affinity groups requires adequate training of teacher leaders, resources, monitoring, and responsive support.

3. **Identify resources needed to support these staff members.**

   a. How many mentors or affinity group leaders will you need?

   b. What space will they use to meet?

   c. How frequently will they meet?

   d. What compensation is available for key leaders?

   e. Is childcare available for meetings outside of the school day?

Closing Statement

Districts aiming to improve outcomes for all students will bolster their efforts by consistently recruiting and supporting teachers of color. It is essential for school leaders to focus on building a culture that welcomes and supports individuals from diverse backgrounds. Many schools have increased retention and job satisfaction for teachers of color through initiatives such as mentorship programs or affinity groups. However, progress in these efforts requires an increase in momentum. The success of programs that help teachers of color feel connected depends on the genuine commitment of the school community and the allocation of necessary resources to nourish and sustain these programs. A community that values personal connection and authentic learning about other cultures gives voice to teachers of color and creates space for all to benefit from their gifts.

Domain 5: The Community

The reciprocal support between a community and its school plays a critical role in hiring and retaining teachers of color. When a school is a place of community partnership, students will have a more positive experience and may consider returning as future educators.

"What if we go to the community and ask them to send their best and brightest to become teachers?"- Dr. Shanna Peeples, 2015 National Teacher of the Year, Texas

Defining the Domain

Connecting with the community is a common goal for many schools, but the challenge for some is determining how to achieve a connection that honors the fabric of the community.

For many schools, community partnership is the end goal of community connection, and a sense of belonging is key to an authentic partnership. The New America Foundation defines belonging as "the extent to which people feel appreciated, validated, accepted, and treated fairly within an environment…Like neglecting the need for food or water, neglecting belonging is hazardous to our health."[25] Because belonging is so critical to the health of a school and its community, it is important for schools to consider the impact of belonging when working to diversify the teacher pipeline. When discussing the positive and negative roles communities play in diversifying the teacher pipeline, we must create a sense of belonging that lifts up and does not distort, deflect, or deny the dignity of the community or the teachers.

Community connection and partnership are key elements to a successful educational environment. In fact, of the eight culturally responsive teaching competencies identified in a recent New America Foundation report, five are tied directly to family and community connection.[26] Despite the importance of this connection, educational experiences are often confined to the buildings in which they exist, without consideration of the surrounding local and global community. Because of this, white culture has defined the U.S. education system and has become the narrow lens through which students are viewed. This view of the student experience includes outcomes, expectations, and interactions with the community. Some educators have a deficit mindset for communities of color, which makes them unable to see the value of the community and causes them to dehumanize students, families, and communities of color.

This connection between a school and its community is critical to diversifying the teacher pipeline, particularly in communities of color. Schools that struggle to hire and retain educators of color often lack representation from and an understanding of diverse communities. If the teaching staff doesn't reflect the

racial, ethnic, socio-economic, or cultural experiences of the community, students from that community are unable to see themselves as educators and are likely not encouraged to go into the profession. Additionally, potential educators of color may not see that school and its lack of diversity as a desirable workplace.

To cultivate belonging, schools must invest in building community relationships and working with community leaders. School doors should be open to the community, and educators and administrators should look for ways that students can learn from the community. This could include hosting guest lecturers, planning field trips, and coordinating events that unite students and their community. Programs focused on recruiting and retaining teachers of color within communities of color must celebrate community culture, language, race, and ethnicity.

It is also important to consider the role that some white homogeneous communities play in impacting the teacher pipeline. Today, 40% of schools in the U.S. do not have a single teacher of color on staff[27], and community response to diversification attempts within the building or the curriculum contributes to that statistic. Cultural affirmation of teachers of color in white communities is critical to retaining teachers of color and is often inhibited by tensions over academic and administrative policies. Recently, high turnover rates have been reported as a result of tensions around Critical Race Theory and Covid-19 protocols. According to a recent report by the RAND Corporation on teacher retention in public schools, "Black teachers were more than twice as likely as other teachers in the winter of 2021 to say they planned to leave their jobs at the end of the 2020-21 school year."[28] In New Hampshire, a parent organization will give a $500 "reward" for anyone who "catches" a teacher teaching Critical Race Theory in their classes.[29] Administrators must work hard to help the community understand the value of diversifying the teaching staff to reflect a diverse world.

Administrators must also be ready to support educators of color when there are racial tensions or contentious issues within the community. Leaders need training for how to respond to and prevent negative community interactions stemming from biases, and BIPOC educators need strong professional community and camaraderie.

Research shows that strong community partnerships benefit students of all ages, races, and ethnicities. In schools that have strong community partnerships, students earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, and are motivated in academics and extracurriculars.[30]

Personal Stories

"We had a very strong program in a very migrant and immigrant community where we worked with students who, in the high school level, were able to tutor younger students that came in. We set it up so that they were able to emotionally be there to support them too; to say: 'I came here and I didn't speak the language at all either. I was separated from my family and school is going to be okay.' And what we realized is that in supporting them emotionally, they were also supporting them academically. We then created that as an opportunity to provide credit and dual enrollment courses at a high school so they could enter into an associate's degree or a community college

with multiple classes under their belts that they could then transfer to our university program. And then we partner them with some of our refugee and community charitable organizations to cover the rest of their schooling. So, it not only provided them an opportunity to stay connected to keep their main language, which was a really big request of our community. They were able to utilize their language with younger kiddos." - Kristie Jackson, 2012 State Teacher of the Year, Arizona

"[Teachers of color] have been getting that form letter from parents about critical race theory and monitoring what texts or assignments teachers are assigning. If you look at a school district and see they're trying to rewrite history or they're trying to bury history, you're not welcome there. Sometimes they're saying it explicitly and sometimes they're saying it very implicitly, but it's still very loud and clear." - Jennifer Walker, 2010 State Teacher of the Year, Ohio

Reflective Questions to Consider

1. In what ways do school administrators and teachers lift up the community in which they work?

   a. Do you use positive language to discuss the community?

   b. Are school events accessible for all members of the community?

   c. Does your curriculum provide windows into the community and mirrors for the community?

   d. Does your communication respect all languages and cultures in the community?

2. How do educators and community members feel a sense of mutual respect and belonging?

   a. What can you do to increase partnerships between the school and community?

   b. How do community members play roles within the school? (i.e., mentors, tutors, guest speakers, etc.)

3. What is being said about the school and the teachers in the community? What concerns might the community have about the school?

Action Steps

1. **Increase partnerships between the school and the community.**

   When community members are playing important roles in the education process, the community is uplifted. Mentorship or tutoring programs, guest lecture series, and other community building events will be incredible assets to students and teachers in the school. These kinds of partnerships will support retention for teachers of color by making school a place where the identities and experiences of people of color are valued and affirmed.

2. **Understand and address the narrative the community has about the school.**

   Listen to the narratives and address concerns. This is part of the critical support needed to ensure BIPOC educators are supported enough to continue teaching in the community.

3. **Partner with local colleges and universities.**

   To shore up the pipeline, set up programs that funnel students interested in education into local schools. Additionally, bring teacher candidates into schools for student teaching experiences and visits to encourage them to consider applying for open positions.

Closing Statement

To diversify the teacher pipeline, it's essential to create an education community that is rooted in belonging, invites people into the teaching profession, and supports and empowers them throughout their career. This cannot be accomplished without a deep understanding of the impact a school and a community have on one another.

Domain 6: The Gatekeepers

School leaders charged with hiring and staffing decisions directly impact the diversity of the educators within their schools. Because of this great responsibility, those in leadership positions must be effective leaders, who are held to high standards of diversity and equity and supported by state and professional organizations. Teachers of color are more likely to assume leadership roles within a school when they are supported by school leaders of color.

"Think about principals and executives in the school because every single level matters. Think about who is in the cafeteria and who is cleaning. Is the only other Black person the person picking up trash?" - Lily Ngaruiya, Academic Affairs and Equity Coordinator, New York

"Do not just see diversity as a box to check but as a value to champion." - Representative Megan Godfrey, Arkansas State Legislature

Defining the Domain

When evaluating efforts to diversify the teaching population, it is important to consider who is doing the hiring. According to a study by the School Superintendents Association, less than 10% of school superintendents in the U.S. are BIPOC.[31] Around 20% of U.S. principals are BIPOC, and the percentage of BIPOC principals has only risen 7% since 1987 (compared to the number of female principals, which has doubled in the last 20 years). Additionally, according to a Texas study by the American Educational Research Institute, Black principal candidates were 18% less likely to be promoted to principal than equally qualified white candidates.[32] The continued shortage of BIPOC administrators stems from the racist handling of school integration after Brown v. Board of Education. During the decades of integration (1964-1987), 90% of Black principals were fired, often for minor infractions like not holding a monthly fire drill.[33]

Schools are more likely to hire and retain BIPOC teachers when there are BIPOC administrators. According to a study by the Brookings Institution, "School leaders of color have their own unique influence on hiring and staffing decisions, often resulting in greater attraction and retention among teachers of color. Leaders of color have been shown to tap teachers of color to nudge them toward school leadership."[34] Additionally, when BIPOC students see people who look like them in leadership roles, they are more likely to aspire to those same roles. Ensuring there are more BIPOC leaders in administrative and hiring positions is an important way to diversify the teacher workforce.

Administrators and Human Resources staff should create and actively monitor plans to diversify the teacher pipeline. It is essential to collect and examine hiring and retention data. Today, traditional data like test scores and attendance tend to drive policies and programs, leaving diversity and equity programs out of the primary factors driving change. To remedy this, state Departments of Education should hold schools accountable for instituting diverse hiring practices and should provide the necessary support to do so. With that in mind, state departments of education and other state policy-making entities including school boards, congress, and senates should endeavor to hire, elect, and appoint people of color to positions that will have a long-term impact on law and policy in education.

Only hiring within comfort zones or familiarity is another hindrance to diversifying the teaching population. Hiring decisions are often made because of a connection someone has to the district or based on a perception of a person "fitting into" the school culture. These are biased hiring practices that often stem from a lack of awareness or understanding and a lack of diversity within the hiring process. Additionally, there is often a disconnect in goals and priorities between Human Resources, talent acquisition, and school leaders which further exacerbates this problem.

Redesigning school structures must be guided by data on both "what" and "who." Demographic data on the representation of BIPOC educators in leadership roles needs to be collected.

Personal Stories

"What is measured is what is deemed important. Numerous studies show the significant benefit for students, especially students of color, when they are taught by teachers of color. At all levels--district, state, and federal--we should be tracking and disaggregating recruitment and retention data. We should be considering how to use these data as a flashlight to help understand how to better support teachers of color." - Kelly Kovacic Duran, Principal at Education First

"In the actual process of creating strategies in HR and the budget, the minutiae really slows down progress. That is the impact of exclusion. Long-embedded things are hard to fix in an instant. There is a burden of bureaucracy. A lot of systems are sneaky... white supremacy has snuck in." - Lily Ngaruiya, Academic Affairs and Equity Coordinator, New York

Reflective Questions to Consider

1. How are your goals helping (or hurting) efforts to build a diverse teacher workforce?

2. Are you seeking out and hiring BIPOC teaching candidates?

3. Is your school a welcoming place for BIPOC educators? How do you know?

4. Does the leadership in your school/ district reflect the diversity of the teaching workforce you hope to attain?

5. Who makes up your hiring committee and how do those individuals support district/school goals for diversifying your staff?

Action Steps

1. **Ensure the hiring board is diverse**.

   Include community members or stakeholders of color who support and understand education, the school, and the community. Bringing diverse voices into this space mitigates personal biases and speaks to the strengths of cultural differences, which will help diversify the education workforce.

2. **Set clear goals for diversity and have accountability for those goals.**

   Diversifying the pipeline is not something that simply "happens." Diversity goals in hiring must be explicitly stated, and systems must be in place to hold hiring teams accountable to those goals.

3. **Provide anti-bias anti-racist (ABAR) training for hiring teams.**

   Provide training that allows hiring teams to uncover and understand personal biases and how those biases might impact their practices.

4. **Seek out programs that support BIPOC teachers and teacher leaders.**

   Invite educators and program leaders into your school. Consider how the environment in your school uplifts BIPOC voices.

Closing Statement

If we want more people of color to become teachers, then we should *hire* more BIPOC teachers. This direct and impactful action is often hindered by personal bias, school hiring culture, and an unwillingness or inability to measure effectiveness and address inadequacies of hiring practices. Addressing shortcomings in these areas will improve hiring practices and diversify the teacher pipeline.

Domain 7: The Respect

System-wide disrespect for teachers hits BIPOC educators the hardest. To improve professional autonomy and respect, support systems for BIPOC teachers need to be robust.

"The same things that are driving our teachers out of schools are driving our students out of schools." - Kristie Jackson, 2012 State Teacher of the Year, Arizona

Defining the Domain

Teachers of color are disproportionately impacted by the factors that dissuade many people from considering teaching and drive early exits from the profession. These factors include high stress, low pay, and lack of autonomy. Those closest to the day-to-day work tend to have the least decision-making power over the policies that shape their classrooms.

Black teachers who speak out against polices they disagree with are often labeled as "angry" or "difficult." According to New York teacher Briana Yarborough, "Those conversations are really hard to have. I've been told I'm aggressive or a know-it-all when I speak up." Black teachers also report feeling less secure in their jobs if they anger administrators. This is a problem made especially acute by the lack of BIPOC administrators in positions of power. Briana Yarborough said, "I know if I leave, I won't be able to make an impact, but it's really hard when there are a large number of people uncomfortable with diversity, equity, and inclusion. It's lonely."

The combination of low pay, high stress, lack of autonomy and decision-making power have created a profession-wide crisis that Tim Slekar of the Edgewood

College School of Education calls a "teacher exodus," not a shortage.[35] "When we have a shortage, say of nurses, pay goes up, conditions get better and enrollment in nursing programs skyrockets," said Slekar. "So, if we have a teacher shortage, pay would go up. It's not. Conditions would get better. They're not. And enrollment in teacher education would go up. It's declining." This exodus has increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly for those teachers who believe their district has not protected their health throughout the ongoing pandemic. 2019 Arkansas Teacher of the Year, Stacey McAdoo, said, "I left because the system had broken my heart for the final time. Especially the way they responded to Covid-19—I felt that they didn't care about me as a human."

The teacher exodus impacts all demographic groups to some degree, but attrition rates are disproportionate given the impact of these factors on teachers of color. Teachers of color are 24% more likely to exit the profession than white teachers[36], widening the diversity gap. In order to recruit more teachers of color, proven solutions like greater autonomy in instructional decisions, decision-making power in policies that impact the classroom, higher pay, and opportunities

for professional growth and advancement need to be accessible and robust.

Personal Stories

"Those that are in power are the ones making the decisions and those decisions are to bring in people like themselves. Teachers need to be trusted and have the autonomy to do as they see fit. The culture has to be welcoming." - Stacey McAdoo, 2019 Arkansas Teacher of the Year

"I always have to defend why I chose this profession. Culturally, we need to address some of our issues about how we value the teaching profession." - Yung Romano, Teacher, Florida

Reflective Questions to Consider

1. How is your district's respect for teachers and their work expressed through policies, salary, working conditions, professional autonomy, and decision-making power?

2. How many people of color work in your school or district, and how are those roles distributed among custodial, teaching, and administrative positions? Is there a scarcity of people of color in key roles? If so, why?

3. What are the attrition rates for teachers leaving your school or district, and are they different for people of color than white staff? Why are teachers choosing to leave?

4. In what ways has your system or school ensured that the same type and quality of leadership opportunities are accessible to qualified BIPOC staff as for qualified white staff members? Do staff of color have access to leadership opportunities equal to those of white staff?

5. Do staff of color feel comfortable questioning or expressing disagreement about school and district policies? How much power and input do they have to influence these policies?

Action Steps

1. **Ensure that BIPOC teachers have professional autonomy and decision-making power.**

   Teachers need to be at the table when the policies governing their classrooms are made. BIPOC teachers need to be included in that representation, including school and district leadership teams and positions in district and state administration where they can provide input and help make policy decisions. Collect data on how many BIPOC educators are represented on committees and task forces with decision-making power. If racial representation is inequitable, set quantifiable goals for increasing the diversity of those decision-making bodies.

2. **Invest in teachers.**

   Respect is encoded in compensation. Taking concrete steps to increase salaries, create paid student teaching opportunities, free teacher certification exams, and forgive student loan debt can create an incentive for BIPOC teachers to enter teaching and choose to remain in the profession.

3. **Create formal teacher leadership roles and ensure equitable representation in those roles.**

   Roles that enable teachers to make an impact beyond their own classroom— i.e., mentoring new or student teachers, working to help design district curricula, serving on district or state task forces and committees that shape policy— need to be compensated through stipends or differentiated pay at a level commensurate with the degree of skill, experience, and time involved in the role. They also need to be equally accessible to BIPOC educators, measurable by the number of educators of color serving in those roles.

Closing Statement

We cannot close the diversity gap without closing the gaps in respect, autonomy, and institutional power that fracture our profession. We need to shift decision-making power to teachers both within the classroom and beyond its walls. Teachers should have a greater degree of professional autonomy in their classrooms. They should also have a seat at the table when policy decisions are made. Like most resources in our current system, autonomy and decision-making power are inequitably distributed along racial lines. Teachers of color need to have a central role in this shift toward respect due to the profession that makes all other professions possible.

Domain 8: The Resources

If we want to support students of color, we must invest in teachers of color. Increasing teacher diversity will require intentionality, commitment, and the allocation of resources to close the gap between current teacher salaries and the professional expertise required of teachers.

"Until we give resources to support schools in urban communities that let them know that schools are great places, and you can be successful, and you can come back because you had a teacher that inspired you to be a teacher, you are not going back to a place where you have been traumatized." - Dr. Marcus Belin, Principal, Illinois

Defining the Domain

The teaching profession requires a great deal of training and skill. Teaching is both an art and a science. It requires not only content knowledge of subjects taught, but a deep understanding of child development. Teachers have a profound impact on their students' academic learning, social-emotional development, and the trajectory of their future. Wages should reflect the value of the skills, training, and experience required of teachers as well as the significance of the work they do.

The impact of teacher compensation (or lack thereof) is well-researched and commonly contributes to teacher shortages. Low compensation serves as a barrier to the profession, especially for people of color. According to the Economic Policy Institute, despite recent improvements, a pervasive 19.2% wage penalty continues to exist for teachers in 2020. In other words, on average, teachers are paid 19.2% less than other college-educated workers after accounting for other factors such as "education,

experience, and state of residence."[37] While all teachers are subject to low wages relative to the value of their skills, there remains a significant wage gap for teachers of color. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports that Black teachers make an average of $2,700 less per year than white teachers; teachers in high-poverty schools make $4,000 a year more than teachers in areas with low poverty.[38]

Education costs are another major barrier impacting teacher diversity. Students of color often take on higher student loan debt, which can influence their decision to choose professions with higher wages than teaching. Policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels can forgive student loan debt and raise teacher wages to help bring more teachers of color into the profession and encourage them to stay. Some districts and policy makers are collaborating to find creative ways to respond to the wage gap and other financial obstacles by using various forms of compensation to help more teachers of color enter the teaching workforce and improve teacher retention. For example, many districts

report success from allocating funds for teachers who agree to return to an area of need. This may take the form of loan forgiveness, grants, teacher residencies, and stipends for assuming additional leadership responsibilities.[39] Leveraged appropriately, financial resources may improve pathways into the field of teaching, strengthen teachers' practice, and diversify leadership roles within the profession.

District and school policymakers must recognize the training and skills necessary for teachers to be effective in all learning environments, and in turn be prepared to set aside resources to support that training.

Teachers entering the profession can also benefit from working collaboratively with mentors to translate their recent learning and real-world skills into meaningful classroom experiences. The transference of these skills is often acquired during practice. Like other professions that prioritize onboarding processes and professional development plans by leveraging mentorship opportunities, school and district leaders can implement similar plans for their teachers.[40] Seasoned teachers may also help new teachers create a diverse curriculum by participating in joint curriculum audits. This approach nurtures community building and purpose among all teachers, while providing teachers of color particular opportunities to lead and be heard.

The impact of teachers of color on students of color is profound and lasting. A 2017 study by Johns Hopkins University found that "having at least one Black teacher in third through fifth grades reduced a Black student's probability of dropping out of school by 29 percent. For very low-income Black boys, the results are even greater—their chance of dropping out fell 39 percent."[41] In addition, the study showed that the benefits for students continued into high school. Students of color who had at least one teacher of color were 29 percent more likely to report a desire to attend college.[42] Positive outcomes for all students taught by teachers of color are well documented. All teachers can benefit by collaborating with teachers of color to learn strategies for connecting with students, making curriculum culturally relevant, and understanding what support they need to perform at the highest level in their classrooms.

Personal Stories

"The coaching programs have had a really big impact—having more coaches and less caseloads for those coaches. We have gotten really strong feedback on having an instructional coach who meets with you at least once a week, observes your class, knows your students, and knows sort of where you are in your own educational career and knows what your goals are." - Pam Casna, Principal, Massachusetts

"As I am trying to navigate being one of the only [teachers of color], I would love it if my superintendent or anyone in the district would say 'Hey, I don't understand the challenges you face but I'm willing to talk this through with you and figure out how we can support.' Just being able to say, 'Hey I need this. Can I go to this conference? Can I get connected to this particular environment? Can we develop this network? Can we start one where teachers of color in the county can get together?'" - Dr. Marcus Belin, Principal, Illinois

Reflective Questions to Consider

1. What financial resources and support would a student graduating from your school/school system need to acquire the appropriate degree, training, and licensure credentials before returning to the classroom as a teacher?

2. What supports exist for teachers of color such as childcare options, flexible course schedules, or stipends to assist in completing licensure requirements, continuing education, and assuming leadership positions?

3. In what ways are new teachers given the time and space to refine their skills before taking on additional responsibilities?

4. How are new teachers given time and resources to work with mentors (particularly educators of color) with time set aside for reflection and feedback?

5. How do you compensate teachers assuming additional leadership responsibilities? Is this pay commensurate with the skill required and the importance of the additional work they take on?

Actions Steps

1. **Assess teacher compensation.**

   Assess teacher compensation in relation to professions with similar

educational requirements and regional expectations. Plan timelines for teacher salary increases that are in line with other industries.

2. **Procure and communicate financial support for teachers of color.**

   Seek out federal and state funding and work with community partners to create a funding stream for supporting the education and development of diverse teachers. Create a plan for communicating funding opportunities and requirements to prospective candidates.

3. **Increase collaboration and mentorship.**

   Foster collaboration within professional learning communities to diversify ideas and give teachers of color a voice. Pair each new teacher with a strong mentor who is well-trained in culturally responsive teaching. Dedicate time and space for teachers to receive feedback and discuss professional development plans with mentors. Consider that experienced teachers may also benefit from mentorship.

4. **Build a diverse leadership team.**

   Form a diverse leadership team that is committed to helping others and raising the profession and compensate them appropriately. Consider integrating a leadership track within professional development plans for teachers of color. Leaders and mentors can support identified areas of development and support teachers of color to consider positions of teacher leadership or administration.

Closing Statement

Successfully building and retaining a diverse teacher workforce will not happen by chance. Diversification efforts will demand broad commitment, resources, and openness to collaborating with districts that have been successful in diversifying their teaching faculty and delivering a culturally responsive curriculum. Schools that invest in teacher growth and an innovative, culturally responsive pedagogy receive many lasting benefits including a stronger school culture, improved academic outcomes for students of color, and deepened cultural competencies for all students and staff. If we want to support students of color, we must invest in teachers of color.

Domain 9: The Redesign

We must redesign our education system to support teacher leadership and better meet students' needs.

"If you have committed district administrators who are about changing the ways we typically have done things, then you start to see more movement." - Rebecca Mielwocki, 2012 National Teacher of the Year, California

Defining the Domain

The current education system in the United States was designed more than 100 years ago with the goal to produce workers.[43] With significant advancements in technology, intellectual curiosity, and humanity, antiquated systems of rote memorization and compliance for the sake of compliance have little room in today's society. We need to consider which structures we can create or redesign to move forward in education with a focus on equity. Three areas of opportunity for redesigning education are hybrid roles, school scheduling, and shared decision-making power.

Educators consistently report not having time to do the things they find most valuable for students and their future success. This is due to the overwhelming number of often invisible tasks embedded in the job, including ongoing personal parent contact, tracking individualized student goals, providing emotional support to students, and the cumbersome infrastructure related to test-driven notions of accountability.

Teachers' overburdened schedules not only leave them little opportunity to complete their official scope of duties; the excessive workload also precludes them from being able to participate in essential endeavors outside the classroom including advocacy for themselves and the teaching profession, action research, collaborative planning, and self-care. Effective school systems in other nations have taken intentional steps to ensure that a teacher's time is protected so they can collaborate with colleagues, build relationships with students and families, shape policy decisions at a school level and beyond, and contribute to the development of curriculum, pedagogy, and research. In the United States, educators spend 27 of the 45 hours in their work week directly teaching students, compared to 17 hours for educators in Singapore and 21 hours in Finland.[44] Hybrid roles remain rare in U.S. schools. These roles can provide a pragmatic structure for teachers to "lead without leaving," continuing to teach while contributing to mentoring initiatives, curriculum development, and the formulation of school and district policy as part of the leadership team working alongside administrators.[45]

Being dynamic in the structuring of school schedules can allow school times to vary based on the needs of students. It has been

reported that there is a great variation in the ways students learn, particularly related to the time of day in which they learn best. If schools can be designed in ways that align to the natural cadences of students' developmental needs, students will learn more deeply. To accommodate this redesign, educators could be given more flexibility in their schedules, affording them greater professional autonomy. This flexibility could make the teaching profession competitive with the other fields that potential educators choose instead of teaching.[46] These fields offer greater flexibility, increased autonomy, and higher pay for less demanding work. Factors related to time and flexibility become particularly important in relation to the recruitment and retention of potential high-quality educators of color. While these educators may greatly desire to directly support the learning of the next generation of leaders, their options are bountiful outside of education in careers that provide opportunities for greater professional growth, increased respect, and a better work-life balance.

Lack of professional autonomy, while common throughout many schools, is particularly prevalent for BIPOC teachers. There are significant changes that can be made to increase professional autonomy through opportunities for teacher leadership including hybrid roles in which a teacher leader spends half their time teaching in the classroom and the other half working to shape curriculum, professional development, and policy at a school, district, or state level.

Today's education system also tends to overemphasize the importance of standardized testing at the expense of cultivating abilities that matter most for success in work and life like critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. This tendency is particularly pronounced for schools and districts with high percentages of teachers and administrators of color. The damage done to students by restricting their access to the arts, higher-order thinking, and even the sciences in favor of a test-driven focus on basic literacy and numeracy is staggering. This problem is compounded by harsh systems that strip autonomy from teachers, districts, and entire communities in the name of test-based accountability. The punitive and sterile environments that result are not only bleak places to be a student; they create a disincentive for teachers and principals who might otherwise choose to serve there.

We must recruit more teacher candidates of color. But if those teachers enter a system in which they experience an overwhelming workload in rigid conditions that are

anathema to professional growth and a sustainable work-life balance, they will quit. Recruiting teachers of color to enter a system that will quickly drive them out is like sending water down a pipeline riddled with holes. Redesigning our system to be more equitable requires increased flexibility, more humane conditions, a higher degree of professional autonomy, thoughtfully designed avenues for teacher leadership, and greater respect.

Personal Stories

"When people ask me if I would return to the traditional classroom, I gently decline. It's not because of the students. It never is. It's not even because of the heavy burdens that are placed on teachers. I can handle that. However, what I can't handle is not being able to have freedom and flexibility. The schedules of most schools are uncomfortably restrictive, but it doesn't have to be that way. I've seen it done differently." - Jemelleh Coes, 2014 Teacher of the Year, Georgia

"I have all these ideas, but we don't have time to implement the actual things that we want to help kids with." - Pooja Moondra, Teacher, Texas

Reflective Questions to Consider

1. In what ways does your school or district offer flexibility when it comes to providing time for educators to take care of their well-being outside of school? What permanent structural elements are in place to protect that flexibility? What structures are temporary?

2. What partnerships (i.e., with HCBU's or Hispanic-serving institutions) do you already have to help you increase professional autonomy and leadership opportunities for BIPOC teachers? What new partnerships could be created to help you achieve that goal?

3. What opportunities for professional autonomy and teacher leadership, particularly through hybrid roles, exist in your school/district/state? Is access to those opportunities equitable for BIPOC teachers as proven by demographic data on who is currently serving in those roles—not just their stated intent?

4. What elements of bureaucracy can be removed from your school or system to help teachers access support and resources more readily?

Action Steps

1. **Consider ways to be dynamic in scheduling.**

   Review the needs of the district to see what is possible in terms of the time commitment from educators. Redesign the schedules of the district to include adequate time for teachers to collaborate with families, one another, and the school leadership team.

2. **Ensure equitable access to professional opportunities.**

   Make sure opportunities for teacher leadership and professional growth are equitably accessible to BIPOC educators, particularly related to hybrid roles. Consider the way these opportunities are designed, collect data on who is accessing them, and make changes to the design if your data reveal that changes are necessary.

3. **Ensure that practicing teachers are at the table when the policies governing their classrooms are made.**

   BIPOC teachers need to be represented on school and district leadership teams, as well as in positions with decision-making power in district and state administrations.

Closing Statement

Redesigning the education system toward greater racial representation and equity requires strengthening what's working and reshaping what isn't. The Covid-19 pandemic has given the education world the opportunity to rethink the possibilities. If we are to recruit and retain high quality educators of color, we must consider how we can redesign systems to be more meaningful for both students and educators. Being an educator was once a means to upward mobility and middle-class wealth for people of color. As our society becomes more inclusive, people of color have the option to choose different paths to middle class wealth and beyond. We must redesign the system so that people of color not only choose to teach but choose to stay.

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