

Diversifying the Field

Barriers to Recruiting and Retaining
Teachers of Color and How to
Overcome Them

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Serving 11 states and D.C., the IDRA EAC-*South* is one of four federally-funded centers that provide technical assistance and training build capacity to confront educational problems occasioned by race, national origin, sex and gender, and religion.

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Introduction

Recruiting and retaining a diverse teacher workforce that includes teachers of color is crucial. However, faced with a national teacher shortage, schools across the country are struggling to hire a workforce of qualified educators that reflects the racial diversity of their communities (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). While current conditions in many states have contributed to widespread shortages of teachers of all types, teachers of color encounter unique barriers to entering the profession and to continuing to teach for the long haul. Fortunately, a variety of programs, policies, and practices hold promise in helping to bolster the pipeline of teachers of color recruited and retained in teaching. This paper examines the current state of teachers of color in the workforce, the factors that affect the recruitment, hiring, and retention of teachers of color, and opportunities for growing a stable workforce of teachers of color.

The first section of this paper, *The Current State of Teachers of Color in the United States*, includes a description of the proportion and growth and teachers of color in the workforce based on several national data sources and an analysis of the most recent nationally representative datasets from the U.S. Department of Education Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2011-12 and the SASS Teacher Follow-up Survey 2013-14. This section also summarizes recent literature regarding the value to students of a racially diverse teacher workforce, followed by a discussion of the significant role teacher retention plays in shortages of teachers of color.

The second section of this paper, *Barriers to Recruiting & Retaining Teachers of Color*, summarizes the most recent literature on factors affecting the recruitment, hiring and retention of teachers of color. Included within this discussion is enrollment in and completion of high-quality teacher preparation, school closure and turnaround policies, and teacher working conditions.

Finally, the last section of this paper, *Promising Practices*, examines the evidence for promising practices aimed at overcoming the common barriers to recruiting, hiring, and retaining teachers of color identified in section two. These practices include funding high-retention pathways into teaching, such as teacher residencies, Grow Your Own programs, and college mentoring and support programs; creating pro-active hiring and induction strategies; and improving school teaching conditions through improved school leadership.

Current State of Teachers of Color in the United States

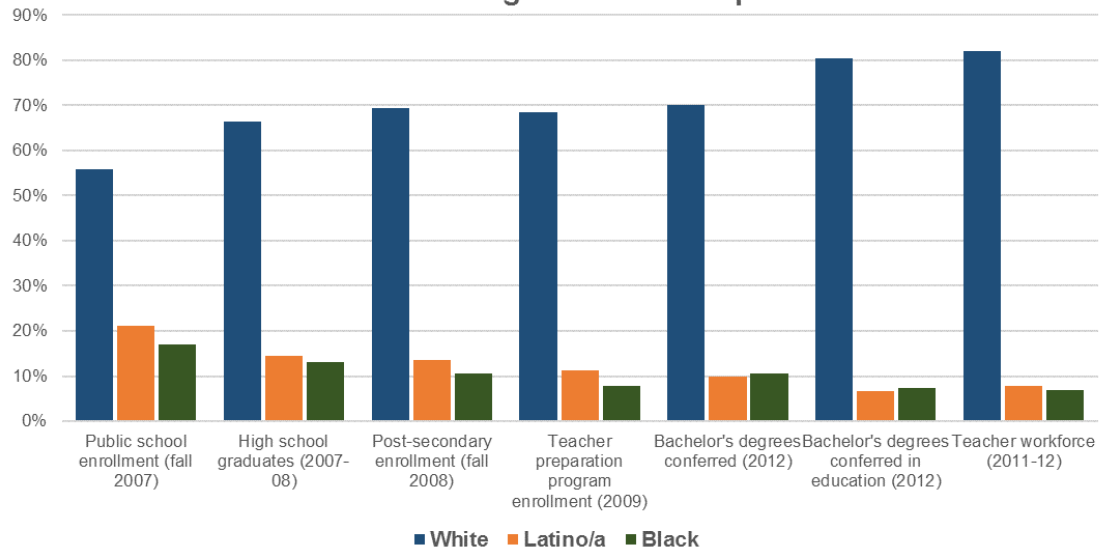
We analyzed the most recent nationally representative datasets from the U.S. Department of Education Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2011-12 and the SASS Teacher Follow-up Survey 2013-14 to understand the current state of teachers of color in the United States. Teachers of color comprise an increasing share of the U.S. teacher workforce, but that share (18 percent in 2011-12) is disproportionately low compared to the proportion of students of color in public schools (49 percent) and people of color in the nation (37 percent). It is also too low to meet the demand from school districts and families (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles 2014; Ingersoll & May, 2011).

The gap between the percentage of Latina/o teachers and students is larger than for any other racial or ethnic group. More than 21 percent of students are Latina/o, while Latina/o teachers represent fewer than 8 percent of teachers. This, despite the fact that the percentages of Latina/o teachers and students are growing faster than those of any other racial or ethnic group. And while the population of teachers of color is growing overall, Black and Native American teachers are a declining share of the teaching force.

Furthermore, the pool of potential Black and Latina/o teaching candidates dwindles as individuals move along the teacher pipeline, from high school graduation to college enrollment, teacher preparation, and employment in the teacher workforce (see Exhibit 1). By examining national data for a similar group over time, from the kindergarten-12 years to entry into teaching, we find that the percentage of Black and Latina/o teachers is disproportionately low.

In 2007, Black and Latina/o students made up over 38 percent of k-12 students, less than 28 percent of high school graduates, and about 24 percent of high school graduates who went on to enroll in a two or four-year college the next fall. Black and Latina/o candidates made up just 19 percent of teacher preparation candidates, including baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate candidates, in the fall of 2008. Four years later, in 2012, Black and Latina/o candidates comprised about 20 percent of bachelor's degree-earners in 2012, but only 14 percent of education bachelor's degrees.

Exhibit 1: The Pool of Potential Black and Latina/o Teachers Dwindles Along the Teacher Pipeline



Sources for Public school enrollment; High school graduates; Post-secondary enrollment: NCES. (2009). Percentage distribution of enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity and state or jurisdiction: Fall 1997 and Fall 2007. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_041.asp

Sources for Teacher preparation program enrollment: U.S. Department of Education. (2017). 2016 Title II Reports, National Teacher Preparation Data. <https://title2.ed.gov/Public/DataTools/Tables.aspx>

Sources for Bachelor's degrees conferred; Bachelor's degrees conferred in education: NCES. (2014). Bachelor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity and field of study: 2011-12 and 2012-13. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_322.30.asp

Sources for Teacher workforce: Learning Policy Institute analysis of Schools and Staffing Survey 2011-12.

Why Increase Teacher Diversity?

The Positive Impacts on Students

While all teachers require more intentional, culturally-based preparation to reach a growing diverse student population (Higgins, Shaffer, & Schlanger, 2017), increasing diversity in the teaching profession also can have positive impacts on student educational experiences and outcomes. This is especially true for students of color – who demonstrate greater academic achievement and social-emotional development in classes with teachers of color – but having teachers of color benefits White students as well.

Many teachers of color report feeling called to teach in low-income communities of color, positions that are often difficult to fill (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Thus, three in four teachers of color work in the quarter of schools serving the most students of color nationally, so their retention decisions have significant impacts on students of color (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Current State of Teachers of Color in the United States

Some studies have found that teachers of color boost the academic performance of students of color. One re-analysis of test score data from the Tennessee STAR class-size study found that Black elementary students with Black teachers had reading and math test scores 3 to 6 percentile points higher than students without Black teachers and that gains in test scores accumulated with each year students were in a class with a race-matched teacher (Dee, 2004).

Studies of North Carolina student standardized test performance also have found positive, though smaller, effects of racial matching on student test scores (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007; Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010; and Egalite, Kisida, & Winters, 2015). Scholars have found similar patterns in higher education. Fairlie, Hoffman, & Oreopoulos (2014) found that underrepresented community college students of color (Black, Latina/o, Native American, and Pacific Islander students) fared better when taught by underrepresented faculty of color. They were more likely to pass a class and earn a B or higher than underrepresented students of color in classes taught by White faculty.

In addition to academic benefits, students of color can experience social-emotional benefits to having teachers of color. Using longitudinal data on North Carolina k-5 students and teachers between 2006 and 2010, Holt & Gershenson (2015) found that students with teachers of another race had more unexcused absences and an increased likelihood of being chronically absent than students with race-matched teachers. In particular, boys of color in classes with White teachers were even more likely to be chronically absent, to have ever been suspended, and to experience more suspensions than did other students.

Using the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) database of survey and academic data for more than 80,000 grade 4 to 8 students in six urban districts across the country, Egalite & Kisida (2017) evaluated student test scores and a range of student attitudes toward their teachers. Students with racially-matched teachers were more likely to report favorably on four of seven indicators: feeling cared for by their teacher, feeling happy in class, the clarity of their teacher's teaching style and methods, and classroom management. Black teachers received especially favorable ratings from Black students. Black male teachers received higher ratings from Black male students than from White male students on five of seven indicators. Black female teachers were rated much higher by Black female students than by any other group of students on five of seven indicators as well. Other research has found that overall ratings of teachers on this survey can predict student learning gains for those who responded to the survey, as well as other students in the class (Raudenbush & Jean, 2015).

Scholars suggest that there might be a variety of reasons for the positive educational experiences that students of color often have when taught by teachers of color: teachers of color

have a role-model effect, whereby students of color identify with seeing people of color in professional roles (Auerback, 2007; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Boser, 2011; Evans, 1992; Clewell & Villegas, 1998; Quiocho & Rios, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2004). They also can undermine *stereotype threat* (the phenomenon of underperforming because of feeling stereotyped as an underperformer) (Steele, 1997; Dee, 2004), and they typically have higher expectations for students of color than do White teachers (Fox, 2015; Ouazad, 2014; Gershenson, Holt, & Papageorge, 2016; Baron, Tom, & Cooper, 1985; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007; Downey & Ainsworth-Darnell, 2002). Teachers of color often have multicultural awareness and function as cultural translators and as advocates for students of color (Warikoo, 2004; King, 1993; Irvine, 1990; Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010; Villegas & Irvine 2010), and they tend to provide superior quantity and quality of instructional support to students of color than White teachers (Casteel, 1998; Taylor, 1979).

Studies also suggest that all students, including White students, benefit from having teachers of color because they bring distinctive knowledge, experiences, and role modeling to the student body as a whole (Cherng & Halpin, 2016; Irvine, 1988). Also, using the MET database, Cherng & Halpin (2016) analyzed grade 6 to 9 student perceptions of Black, Latina/o and White teachers along seven outcome measures that included feeling cared for and academically challenged, among others. In several models controlling for student, teacher, and school conditions, these researchers consistently found students expressed more favorable perceptions of Black and Latina/o teachers than of White teachers. Latina/o teachers were almost always rated higher than White teachers across all seven measures. Students rated Black teachers higher on three of seven measures, and Black students reported especially favorable attitudes toward Black teachers across all outcome measures. Asian American students also rated Black teachers higher on most of the outcome measures. In demonstrating the positive perceptions students have of teachers of color, these studies suggest that all students can benefit from a more diverse teacher workforce.

Most of the literature explores the impact teachers of color have in directly affecting students, but there is some evidence to suggest that increasing teacher diversity also may benefit teachers of color already in the field. In several qualitative studies, teachers of color expressed feelings of isolation, frustration and fatigue when they were one of few teachers of color in their schools, experiencing pressure to represent their students to colleagues (Simon & Johnson, 2015; Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Osler, 2016). This finding suggests that increasing the diversity of the teaching force may also benefit students indirectly if it helps to improve teacher satisfaction and decrease teacher turnover, a key contributor to teacher shortages and school instability (Ingersoll, 2001; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013; Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016).

The Important Role of Retention

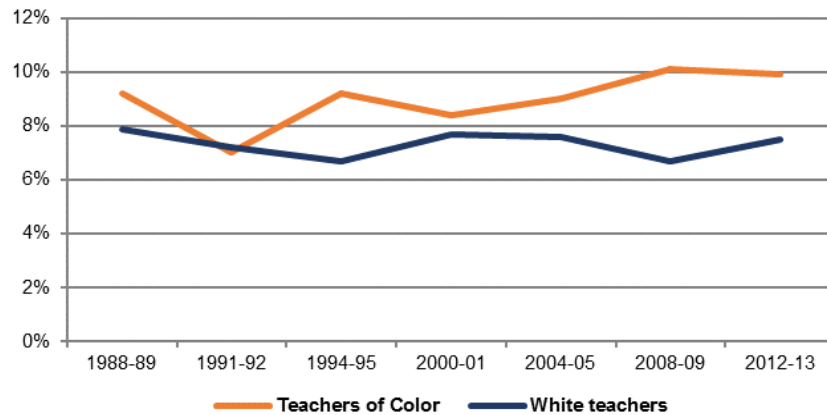
When districts and states experience shortages, some attempt to boost the teacher supply by increasing teacher recruitment and even lowering the bar to enter the field (Ingersoll, 2001). While effective recruitment is important, research shows that teacher retention is crucial in reducing shortages of all teachers, including teachers of color. High turnover rates have offset successful recruitment of teachers of color in recent years and continue to contribute to shortages of teachers of color (Ingersoll & May, 2011; 2016). In addition to negatively impacting student achievement, high teacher turnover rates exacerbate teacher shortages because inexperienced and underprepared teachers – those with some of the highest turnover rates – are often hired in place of those who are fully prepared, resulting in a “revolving door” of teachers (Ingersoll, 2001). A key step to increasing the proportion of teachers of color in the workforce is addressing the factors that contribute to their decisions to move schools or leave teaching.

An estimated 90 percent of teacher demand nationally is driven by teachers who leave the profession. Two-thirds of that demand is caused by teachers who have left for reasons other than retirement (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Teacher shortages generally result from voluntary, pre-retirement attrition (that is, teachers leaving the profession).

Teachers of color move schools or leave the profession at a higher annual rate than do White teachers (19 percent versus 15 percent). While teachers of color and White teachers leave the workforce at similar rates over time, moving rates (switching from one school to another) over time are much higher for teachers of color (see Exhibits 2 and 3). Although the overall teacher mover rate has remained fairly steady at 8 percent, that is not so for teachers of color. They have experienced a mover rate ranging between 6 percent to 10 percent since 1988, resulting in a widening gap between moving rates of teachers of color and White teachers. Teacher mover rates may not decrease the total supply of teachers in the workforce, but they have serious impacts on students who are most affected. When a teacher leaves a school, it impacts the school and students as if that teacher had left the profession altogether. Higher mover rates among teachers of color disproportionately impact students of color and students in poverty whom teachers of color most often serve (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

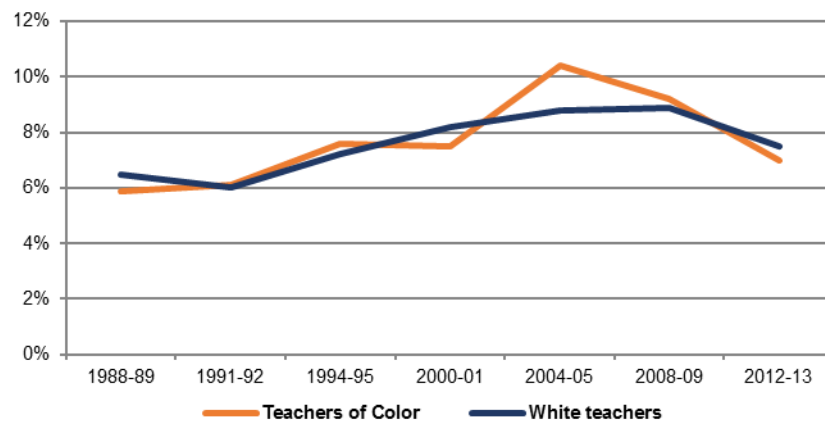
Current State of Teachers of Color in the United States

Exhibit 3: Mover Rate, 1988-89 to 2012-13



Source: NCES School and Staffing Survey, 2011-12; Teacher Follow-up Survey, 2012-13.

Exhibit 2: Leaver Rate, 1988-89 to 2012-13



Source: NCES School and Staffing Survey, 2011-12; Teacher Follow-up Survey, 2012-13.

Teachers of color are more likely to enter teaching through alternative pathways, increasing the likelihood that they will leave. A quarter of all teachers of color entered teaching through an alternative certification pathway in 2013. That is double the share for White teachers. While the quality of alternative certification programs varies, research has shown that teachers with the least comprehensive teacher preparation are two to three times more likely to leave their teaching position or teaching altogether than the most prepared candidates, exacerbating shortages of teachers of color and contributing to school instability often in the neediest schools (Ingersoll & May, 2011).

Current State of Teachers of Color in the United States

Recent evidence shows that alternatively certified teachers are 25 percent more likely to turnover than their traditionally certified counterparts, even after controlling for several student, teacher and school characteristics (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). It is important to note that, while the figures above generalize alternative certification programs, they can differ considerably in terms of the comprehensiveness of preparation and rigor they provide. Teacher residencies, for example, offer extensive preservice preparation on par with high-quality traditional teacher preparation programs (Guha, Hylar, & Darling-Hammond, 2016).

As another example, the Intercultural Development Research Association's Transition to Teaching programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education used an asset-based approach with professional learning community supports to recruit, prepare and train new teachers in math, science, bilingual/ESL and special education fields. In the combined programs, 745 highly-qualified teachers were certified to teach in high-need schools. IDRA's most recent program, Teachers for Today and Tomorrow (T³), was carried out in partnership with universities and 20 Texas schools. Of the 124 teachers achieving alternative certification, 71 percent were teachers of color. Of those who became teachers of record, 83.1 percent remained as teachers at least three years. (IDRA, 2016)

Teachers of color are more likely to teach in schools serving large numbers of students of color, where turnover rates are higher for all teachers. While there is a statistically significant difference in the overall turnover rates between teachers of color and White teachers, this does not hold true across school types. When teachers of color and White teachers work in schools with the same proportion of students of color, their turnover rates are statistically indistinguishable (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). However, as noted earlier, because teachers of color tend to work in schools with higher concentrations of students of color, they are more likely to teach in schools with higher turnover rates.

Teachers of color were more likely, compared to the average teacher, to report on the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) that certain factors were *very important* or *extremely important* in their decision to leave teaching: concerns about compensation tied to student performance, administrative support, lack of classroom autonomy and school influence, poor working conditions, and the desire to pursue another career or improve their opportunities in education.

Barriers to Recruiting & Retaining Teachers of Color

The Impact of Student Debt on Teacher Preparation Enrollment and Completion

Increasing the pool of teachers of color begins with increasing the number of college students enrolling in and completing teacher preparation programs (although it certainly could be said that improving k-12 educational quality and boosting high school graduation rates for students of color is also necessary). Currently, college students of color are less likely to enroll in teacher preparation programs than are White college students, despite an increase in overall college enrollment over the past two decades for students of color (NCES, 2015 Table 306.10).

The increasing debt burden of college may play a role in declining interest in pursuing education. The average student loan balance increased nearly 60 percent between 2005 and 2012 to about \$25,000 (Federal Reserve Bank of New York, 2013). College students' potential debt burdens influence their decisions about what profession to enter, with the result that they are less likely to pursue education or take other low-paying jobs after graduation when they expect to incur more debt (Rothstein & Rouse, 2011). This is especially true for students of color. According to Baum & O'Malley, (2003), even expecting the same debt burden and post-graduation salary, undergraduate and graduate Black, Latina/o and Asian American students were more likely than White students to report that loans limited their choice of educational institution, and Latina/o students were most likely to report feeling limited by loans. Black students were more likely to report that they wished they had borrowed less to fund their post-secondary education, that they changed their career plans because of their loans, or that their loan payments were burdensome.

Student loan debt is much greater for Black students than for White students, and both the amount of debt and the gap between Black and White borrowers grows substantially over time (Scott-Clayton & Li, 2016). With an average debt of \$36,000, Latina/o graduates borrowed more than Black and White graduates for a bachelor's degree from a private, non-profit college in 2012 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Scholars argue that the rising trend in student tuition and loans – with students graduating from baccalaureate programs with upwards of \$20,000 in debt – dissuades students of color from enrolling in teacher preparation programs (Osler, 2016; Gasman, Samayoa, & Ginsberg, 2017).

Obstacles to Completing College

Unfortunately, completion rates are low among those students of color who enroll in college generally and education programs specifically. U.S. Department of Education data show that Black, Latina/o, Pacific Islander and Native American/Alaska Native college students are less likely than students overall to graduate within six years. Nationally, 40 percent of full-time students who began any bachelor's programs in 2008 at four-year colleges graduated within four years, and 60 percent graduated within six years. However, fewer than 25 percent of Black or Native American/Alaska Native students graduated within four years, and just 41 percent graduated within six years. For Latina/o students, 54 percent graduated within six years, and 50 percent of Pacific Islander students graduated within six years (NCES, 2016 Table 326.10). In addition, among students of color who completed their degrees, those studying to become teachers may switch their field of study. With mass teacher layoffs during the Great Recession, for example, college graduates might have switched majors or pursued employment outside of teaching.

Students of color attempting to complete bachelor's degrees face several challenges. Scholars have cited increased financial burdens as a key contributor to reduced college completion among students generally, claiming that this leads students to work more and take fewer classes (Santos & Haycock, 2016). In addition, students of color may be discouraged from completing their degrees due to being underprepared for college-level coursework caused by a lack of exposure in high school (Hargrove, Godin, & Dodd, 2008; Mattern, Marini, & Shaw, 2013), family responsibilities, transportation difficulties, dissatisfaction with little faculty diversity (Osler, 2016), and the difficulty of being in an environment that does not reflect or respect their culture or experience (Steward, Lim, & Kim, 2015). A study of Native American college student completion issues suggests colleges consider embedding Native cultures, family support, quality interactions with faculty, mentoring and student engagement in academic life (Al-Asfour & Abraham, 2016).

Some schools are successfully helping diverse teaching candidates to complete college and pursue education degrees. According to a survey of teacher preparation programs administered by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), in 2009-10 Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) produced more diverse candidates than Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2013). Additionally, teachers of color who attended MSIs were more likely to graduate with a bachelor's degree from a school or department of education compared to teachers of color who attended PWIs (Gasman, Samayoa, & Ginsberg, 2017). It is possible that the structure of education programs and the supports provided at MSIs make teaching seem more attractive to college students of color.

Insufficient Teacher Preparation

High-quality teacher preparation is key to teacher retention. Teachers who enter the field with little preparation are two to three times more likely to leave their schools than those who had comprehensive preparation (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2012). However, as mentioned earlier, teachers of color are twice as likely to enter the profession through an alternative certification pathway as are White teachers (one in four teachers of color had entered teaching through an alternative certification pathway), a trend that has increased over the past several years.

State data reported in compliance with Title II of the *Higher Education Act* show that enrollments in both traditional and alternative certification programs have been declining over the last decade, but candidates of color were 44 percent more likely to enroll in an alternative certification program in 2014-15 than in 2008-09. In 2014-15, more than one in five candidates of color enrolled in an alternative certification program compared to about one in 10 White candidates (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

As noted earlier, while variation exists in the quality of preservice preparation of alternatively certification programs, on average, these teachers complete less coursework and student teaching, if any, and teachers entering through alternative pathways are more likely to leave their schools or leave the profession than teachers certified through traditional pathways.

For Black teachers, alternative certification has become increasingly common. Black teachers have about the same average age and teaching experience as other teachers, but Black teachers in their first year in 2012 were three-and-a-half times more likely to have no student teaching experience than all other first-year teachers (28.2 percent versus 7.9 percent), a discrepancy driven by disproportionate entry through alternative certification routes. Nearly half of newly hired Black teachers were certified through an alternative pathway, compared to just 22 percent of all other first-year teachers.

Teacher Licensure Exams

Among the many requirements teacher candidates must fulfill (including earning a bachelor's degree, student teaching and completing teacher training), most states require that teacher candidates demonstrate subject-matter competence by passing standardized exams, the most common of which is the Praxis Series of teacher license exams. About two-thirds of states include satisfactory performance on the Praxis as a requirement for a teaching credential (LPI analysis of Praxis website). Several other states require a passing score on their own state-specific standardized exams, including the Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) and the Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators (GACE). The Praxis I exam is meant to assess

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high school level mathematics, reading and writing skills and can be used for entry into a teacher preparation program or for state teacher licensure (Tyler, 2011). Praxis II exams measure subject-specific content knowledge, general pedagogy, and content-specific pedagogy and are used to meet state licensure requirements (Tyler, 2011).

Black and Latina/o candidates disproportionately fail these exams (National Research Council, 2001; Nettles, Scanton, Steinber, & Tyler 2011; Cole, 1986). Historically, the disparities in failure rates have been vast. A previous Texas teacher exam failed over 18 percent of Black teachers and administrators and just 1 percent of White test-takers (National Council of Teachers of English, 1987). A Georgia teacher certification exam resulted in failure rates four times as high for Black test-takers, with just 40 percent passing. An examination of 1998-99 Praxis scores in states across the country found that Latina/o, Black and Asian American test-takers had lower average scores and lower pass rates than White test-takers (National Research Council, 2001). That analysis found a gap in pass rates as high as 38 percentage points.

Critically, Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act* of 1964 forbids racial discrimination in hiring, as well as hiring and evaluation practices that disproportionately exclude racial minority and other groups, unless the policies are directly job-related. Teacher licensure exams often result in far fewer teachers of color earning certifications, and there is limited evidence that a teacher candidates' performance on these exams is associated with their students' achievement. Studies of the National Teacher Examination (precursor to Praxis) conducted in the 1970s and 1980s found either negative relationships between teacher performance and student test data or mixed outcomes (National Research Council, 2001).

A study of North Carolina teacher value-added contributions to student learning gains using longitudinal data from 1995 to 2004 revealed a positive but minor relationship between licensure exam scores and student achievement (Goldhaber, 2007). The results of the study suggest that the benefit of minor increases in student test scores when teachers pass such an exam may be outweighed by the potential loss of talent the exams create. Several states, including Alabama, California, New York, South Carolina and Texas, have faced legal challenges due to racial disparities in outcomes on tests that have not been found to be substantially reliable or valid in assessing minimum competency for teaching.

Since 2014, states in every region across the country have begun to incorporate performance assessments like Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers and edTPA into their licensure processes, either as standard requirements or as optional substitutions for traditional tests. These newer assessments typically require teaching candidates to develop portfolios of work that include unit plans, videos of their instruction, evaluation of student work, and written

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reflections that connect their teaching practice to theory. They are designed to more authentically evaluate candidates' readiness for teaching, and indeed initial research finds that teacher candidates' scores on the performance assessment predict their students' academic gains.

Research on beginning teacher performance assessments, such as the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT), Connecticut's Beginning Teacher Educator Support and Training Program (BEST), and edTPA, suggests that, like the National Board assessment, teacher candidates' scores on the performance assessment predict their students' gains on standardized tests (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Wilson, Hallam, Pecheone, & Moss, 2014; edTPA, 2015). These assessments also function as learning tools and have been found to develop teachers' skills and increase their effectiveness as they learn to demonstrate the ability to plan and implement curriculum, address a range of student needs, instruct effectively, and assess student learning to improve instruction (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Furthermore, initial data, while mixed, suggest that performance assessments may reduce barriers to entry into the profession for teachers of color. A study of PACT in California found no disparities in passing rates between candidates of color and White candidates (Darling-Hammond, 2010). A study by edTPA found that while the average score for Black teachers was somewhat lower than for White teachers, the gaps were smaller than those found in more traditional teacher licensure exams (edTPA, 2015). A later study of the edTPA in Washington found no disparities in pass rates between Black and White candidates, but higher failure rates for Latina/o candidates (Goldhaber, Cowan, & Theobald, 2017).

The cost of teacher licensure exams, which ranges from \$100 to \$300 each, can be particularly burdensome to low-income students. Some teacher candidates may have to pay to take several different subject-matter exams to earn their certification. These costs are amplified for teachers who may not pass their exams initially and must pay to retake them (Kolman, Gellert, & McLurkin, 2017).

Challenging Teaching Conditions

Once teachers of color enter the classroom, the teaching conditions they encounter can discourage them from staying at the same school or even staying in the profession. This is important because schools with high proportions of students of color are more likely to have difficult teaching conditions, and three in four teachers of color work in the quartile of schools that serve the most students of color.

Scholars have noted that schools with the greatest student of color populations often contend with a range of challenges, including accountability pressures and a lack of resources and

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support (Simon & Johnson, 2015; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). Teachers citing a lack of administrative support, in particular, were more than twice as likely to leave their school or teaching entirely (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). For teachers of color, specifically, an analysis of 2011-13 nationally representative teacher survey data found that turnover was strongly associated with a lack of classroom autonomy and school influence (Ingersoll & May, 2016).

Effective school leaders can influence several teaching conditions in a school and can help create environments in which teachers of color want to continue to teach. Unfortunately, many school leadership training programs do not prepare principals to be effective in all the roles they must play. A 2005 study of school administrator training programs found that these programs were among the weakest U.S. education school programs (Levine, 2005; see also Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neill, 2005). Clinical training requirements, for example, varied considerably between programs with some requiring as few as 45 hours at a school site and others requiring as many as 300. Many prospective principals have reported that their coursework failed to prepare them for the realities of leading a school (The Wallace Foundation, 2016).

Studies also suggest that teachers of color experience unique adverse teaching conditions, regardless of the quality of the schools in which they teach. In a qualitative study of Black teachers across the United States, teachers reported facing racial discrimination and stereotyping in their schools. Many respondents said their colleagues lacked respect for their expertise as educators, and they were often pigeonholed as disciplinarians (Griffin & Tackie, 2016). Teachers also reported that they felt obligated to take on additional responsibilities to support their Black students who might not otherwise receive the support they needed. While most Black educators described feeling called to the profession to improve schooling experiences for students of color, the added workload outside of teaching could contribute to increased turnover.

School Closures

Even for teachers of color committed to continuing to teach in their schools, district and state policies can increase their turnover rates. In 2012, in an era of school closings and layoffs in many cities, the rate of involuntary turnover was much higher for Black teachers than for all other teachers, constituting nearly a third of all turnover.

Disproportionately high rates of involuntary turnover among Black teachers was the result of Black teachers involuntarily leaving the profession and moving schools. Twelve percent of Black teachers who left the profession did so involuntarily, compared to 10 percent of teachers overall (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). While about 30 percent of all movers left

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their schools involuntarily, over 50 percent of Black teachers moved involuntarily (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Teacher layoffs during the recession and school closings in urban districts were largely due both to declining enrollments and sanctions for schools with low test scores under the No Child Left Behind Act (Executive Office of the President, 2012). Decreases in the numbers of Black teachers have been proportionally much greater than decreases in the size of the overall teaching force in these cities (see Table 1).

In New Orleans, more than 7,000 teachers – most of whom were Black– were fired en masse after Hurricane Katrina. They were replaced by predominantly young, White teachers brought in to teach in the charter schools that replaced the district schools (Holley-Walker, 2007; Ciolino, Kirylo, Mirón, & Frazier, 2015). Consequently, the number of Black teachers there declined by more than 62 percent. In other major cities, the decline in the number of Black teachers ranges from 15 percent to 39 percent (Bond, Quintero, Casey, & Di Carlo, 2015).

A report on One Newark, a school restructuring plan led by the New Jersey Department of Education to improve Newark Public Schools, found that schools targeted for closure, turnaround, or replacement by charter schools in 2012-13 – processes often involving massive staffing changes – served higher shares of Black children and were disproportionately staffed by Black and Latina/o teachers. They were not, however, necessarily the worst performing schools (Weber, Baker, & Oluwole, 2014). Based on their analysis, Black teachers were twice as likely to have to reapply for a teaching position as were White teachers in similar school settings. Latina/o and Native American teachers also were more likely to have their employment disrupted. The teachers employed in charter schools in the district were far more likely to be White than Black, Latina/o or Native American and were more likely to have fewer than five years of experience.

Promising Practices

Research illustrates the importance of supporting a pipeline of teachers of color at every stage of the teaching career, from preservice to veteran teaching status. Increasing the number of teachers of color in the workforce requires both intentional preparation and hiring and providing them with ongoing support to overcome the barriers to recruitment and retention described above. Fortunately, programs and initiatives across the country provide evidence that an intentional and sustained approach to recruiting and retaining teachers of color can be successful. This section describes policy strategies aimed at overcoming barriers to recruiting and retaining teachers of color and examples of how they have been implemented.

1. Fund high-retention pathways into teaching

Given the evidence that teacher turnover is a primary driver of shortages of teachers of color, it is critical that policies are tailored not only to recruit new teachers but also to retain them for the long haul. Research shows that improving teacher retention begins with high-quality teacher preparation; however, in many cases, teachers of color are more likely to begin teaching without having completed comprehensive preparation. This is not surprising given the cost of traditional teacher preparation programs and the debt burden faced by college students of color. By underwriting the cost of completing a high-quality teacher preparation program, state and local policymakers can both encourage more students of color to pursue a teaching career and to do so through a high-quality program. Among the high-retention pathways into teaching are increasing access to traditional preparation through service scholarship and loan forgiveness programs and other measures, teacher residencies, and Grow Your Own programs.

Increase Access to Traditional Preparation: Admissions, Service Scholarships, and Loan Forgiveness

Enrollments in alternative certification programs have increased for teachers of color, but a majority of new teachers are still educated through traditional preparation programs at colleges and universities. Changes to admissions policies and student financial support can help mitigate the need for candidates of color to enter teaching through alternative certification pathways by increasing access to high-quality teacher preparation institutions. Increased access to high-quality preparation can improve the chances teachers of color have at feeling successful in the classroom and continuing to teach long-term.

Several states require candidates to take the Praxis I, SAT or ACT, or some other standardized exam to be admitted to a preparation program. These tests disproportionately present barriers to admission for teachers of color. The **San Francisco Teacher Residency** program (SFTR) practices **conditional admission**. That is, it admits candidates based on a holistic admissions policy that evaluates applicant dispositions, values and experiences, as well as their academic achievement. It also helps them meet requirements for admissions and licensure. The program extends conditional offers to promising applicants who have not yet passed California licensure exams and provides them with extensive support, including test preparation tutoring, mentoring, and subsidizing exam fees, and even helps gathering documents and writing admissions essays (Osler, 2016).

By using **high-touch recruitment methods** (actively prioritizing and following-up with prospective applicants of color, building relationships, and offering support), preparation programs can bring more candidates who might otherwise be discouraged from applying into the profession. In 2016-17, SFTR extended conditional admissions to several candidates of color and White candidates. With the support of SFTR, 80 percent of the candidates of color passed the necessary exams and gained admission to the program. Under typical admissions policies, none of those candidates would have been accepted into a teacher preparation program without having met admissions requirements. This conditional admissions policy allows SFTR to maintain high standards for new teachers while helping candidates of color overcome barriers to entering the profession (Osler, 2016).

Teacher preparation programs also can increase recruitment efforts by partnering with community colleges to create degree articulation agreements. **Stone Child College** (SCC) is a tribal community college of the Chippewa Cree Tribe in Montana. The college offers associate's degrees in early childhood education and elementary education. These degrees simultaneously prepare candidates for employment as paraprofessionals and for transfer to a four-year education program. Through an articulation agreement with Montana State University-Northern (MSU-Northern), all education courses required by SCC are accepted at MSU-Northern (Stone Child College, n.d.).

States can increase enrollments of candidates of color by implementing support and monitoring policies for teacher preparation programs. In Tennessee, for example, the State Board of Education revised the state's Teacher Preparation Report Card in 2016. The report card evaluates teacher preparation programs on a range of measures that includes candidate diversity metrics, such as enrollee and completer demographics. The report cards also measure the retention rates of teacher preparation program completers (State Collaborative on Reforming

Education, 2016). Teacher preparation programs may be more likely to actively recruit and support candidates of color because their accreditation depends on it.

In addition, states can adjust licensure requirements to allow teaching candidates to demonstrate their competency through rigorous but more authentic, performance assessments that do not generate the racial disparity in pass rates of traditional exams. In Tennessee, candidates can submit edTPA scores for licensure in lieu of taking the Praxis exam, and by 2019 edTPA will be required of all teaching candidates (State Collaborative on Reforming Education, 2016). The same is true in states across the country.

States can support candidates of color by underwriting the cost of teacher preparation. **Service scholarship and loan forgiveness programs** cover or reimburse a portion of tuition costs in exchange for a commitment to teach in high-need schools or subject areas, typically for three to five years. These programs tend to be more effective when they underwrite a significant portion of educational costs (Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, & Darling-Hammond, 2016). One of the most lauded service scholarship programs was the now-defunct **North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program**, a highly-selective scholarship program that provided fellows \$6,500 annually for four years to attend an approved North Carolina university in exchange for a commitment to teach in the state for four years. From 1986 to 2015, the program recruited nearly 11,000 candidates into teaching (Podolsky & Kini, 2016), and fellows were far more likely to continue teaching in North Carolina public schools than teachers credentialed through other programs (Henry, Bastian, & Smith, 2012). The program made a concerted effort to recruit at least 20 percent students of color in each cohort, in alignment with the proportion of teachers of color in the state (Public School Forum of North Carolina, 2016).

Several states currently offer service scholarship or loan forgiveness programs aimed at increasing the number of teachers of color, including Florida's Fund for Minority Teachers, the Missouri Minority Teaching Scholarship, the Tennessee Minority Teaching Fellows Program, and the Kentucky Minority Educator Recruitment and Retention Loan Forgiveness Program. These programs offer candidates \$3,000 to \$5,000 per year for two to four years in exchange for a commitment to teach, often for the number of years they received funding.

Teacher Residencies

Teacher residencies – modeled on medical residencies – are another promising high-retention approach to preparing teachers of color. Teacher residencies are partnerships between districts and universities that subsidize and improve teachers' training to teach in high-needs schools and in high-demand subject areas (Guha, Hylar, & Darling-Hammond, 2016). There are at least 50 residency programs currently operating around the country. Participants spend a year working

as apprentices with highly effective mentor teachers while completing related coursework at partnering universities. During this time, residents receive financial support, often in the form of a stipend and tuition assistance. They commit to teaching an additional three to four years in their district, with ongoing mentoring support.

This model improves upon typical alternative certification programs in a few ways. Teacher residents gain extensive classroom experience by learning from an accomplished veteran teacher in a high-needs school before becoming solely responsible for their own class. This increases their chances of success as classroom teachers and gives the residency program an opportunity to assess resident performance before entrusting them with students of their own. The service commitment has the dual effect of filtering out candidates not willing to make a serious commitment to teach and ensuring that they continue to teach in high-needs schools as their effectiveness increases (Wiswall, 2013; Kini & Podolsky, 2016). It also enables the partnering school district to closely shape the type of coursework and other preparation the residents receive, so that residents fully understand the local district context. The residency model helps new teachers build strong relationships by clustering cohorts in university classes and school sites and by providing ongoing mentoring and support once residents become teachers. Thus, residents can collaborate with and support one another through the challenges of being novice teachers (Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2016).

Research on teacher residency programs shows that they are effective both in bringing more teachers of color into the profession and in preparing them to stay long-term. Nationally, about 49 percent of residents are people of color. That is the same as the proportion of public school students of color and far more than the 18 percent of teachers who are people of color nationally (Boston Teacher Residency, 2016). Principals find graduates of residency programs to be well prepared, and in many cases to be better prepared than typical new teachers. In addition, a review of residency program evaluations shows that residents tend to have higher retention rates over time than non-resident teachers (Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2016; see also National Center for Teacher Residencies, 2016; Solomon 2009; Sloan & Blazevski, 2015).

In Tennessee, data on the **Memphis Teacher Residency** (MTR) indicate that about a third of residents identify as people of color, which is greater than the 22 percent students of color in Shelby County schools (Tennessee Department of Education, 2016). MTR residents are far more likely to continue teaching in the district; 91 percent of residents from the 2010 to 2013 cohorts completed their three-year teaching commitment. Historically, fewer than 60 percent of new non-resident teachers have stayed in the district for more than three years (Memphis Teacher Residency, 2016). Other residency programs in the South can be found in Richmond, Virginia; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Jacksonville, Florida; Dallas; Washington, D.C.; Nashville,

Tennessee; and New Orleans (Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2016).

Grow Your Own Programs

Grow Your Own programs recruit teacher candidates from non-traditional populations that are more likely to reflect local diversity and more likely to stay in their communities. Teacher candidates include high school students, paraprofessionals, after-school program staff and other community members (Reininger, 2012; Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Clewell & Villegas, 2001). The South Carolina Teacher Cadet program, which offers a year-long course for college credit to 2,700 high school students each year, has more than 60,000 graduates over 30 years. One in five cadets goes on to earn a teacher certification at a cost of just \$100 per student (Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, & Darling-Hammond, 2016). In 2016-17, more than a third of the students who completed the cadet program were students of color (Teacher Cadets, 2016). By comparison, fewer than 20 percent of the state's traditional teacher preparation enrollees in 2014-15 were students of color (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Another such program, **Pathways2Teaching** based in Colorado, is working to increase teacher diversity by offering programs to high school students in low-performing schools that emphasize the role of teachers in advancing social justice. High school participants, mostly students of color, engage in weekly field experiences building elementary students' literacy skills. They earn college credit for the course and receive support through the college search and application process. As of 2013, 100 percent of the first P2T cohort were taking college courses, and 18 percent had declared an education major, exceeding national averages (Tandon, Bianco, & Zion, 2014). The program recently expanded to Metro Nashville Public Schools and will begin offering courses at five schools in the fall of 2017 as part of the district's commitment to increasing teacher diversity (Beuten, 2017).

Teacher pipeline programs tailored to bilingual teachers may also increase teacher diversity. The Foundation for Oklahoma City Public Schools launched the Bilingual Teacher Pipeline Project (BTTP) in 2016 with the mission of providing funding for tuition and teacher certification costs for bilingual paraprofessionals in the district as they work to become certified teachers (Mélou, 2017). In return, program participants agree to teach in the district for at least three years after they have been certified. As of 2017, the BTTP has 34 bilingual paraprofessionals enrolled in college. Other states, including California, Connecticut, Washington and South Dakota, have passed legislation or initiated programs with similar goals of increasing the ranks of bilingual teachers.

Ongoing Mentoring and Support for Candidates of Color

Colleges can offer support to students of color throughout the college and teacher preparation experience to improve the likelihood that they will complete the training and certification process. **Call Me MISTER**, founded at Clemson University in 2000 and active in several other colleges throughout the South, works to increase the pool of Black male teachers through a comprehensive system of supports that includes loan forgiveness, mentorship, academic and peer support, preparation for state licensure exams, and assistance with job placement. Participants commit to teaching in a local school for each year they receive financial support. The program maintains contact with graduates and graduates are expected to become mentors to new program participants. Of the approximately 150 participants who have graduated since 2004, 100 percent remain in education, and 95 percent are teaching in South Carolina schools, far exceeding national retention rates (Cary, 2016). Other initiatives, such as the Sherman STEM Teacher Scholars Program at University of Maryland Baltimore County and Montclair State University Teacher Education Advocacy Center, also are working to provide support to teacher preparation candidates, including academic coaching, mentoring and advising, and peer support.

Some districts are exploring ways of advancing cultural competency for all teachers and staff, which can improve student experiences as well as working conditions for teachers of color. Jefferson County Public Schools, for example, offers the **Equity and Inclusion Institute** where teachers learn about the need for culturally relevant pedagogy, connecting with parents, building relationships, classroom management, as well as the skills to implement these practices (Vanderhaar, 2014). An evaluation of the institute in 2013-14 found that of the more than 300 educators who attended, 91 percent changed the way they viewed some of their students (Vanderhaar, 2014). Programs like these may reduce feelings of isolation, frustration and fatigue teachers of color express at having to advocate for students of color on their own.

2. Create pro-active hiring and induction strategies

Once a prospective teacher is trained and certified, district and school hiring practices can influence their decisions to enter the teaching force and whether to stay in their schools. A review of teacher recruitment and retention strategies identified several hiring conditions associated with effectively recruiting and retaining teachers, including timing of hiring, information in the hiring process, and licensure and pension portability (Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, & Darling-Hammond, 2016). These factors affect the recruitment and retention of all teachers, but some may be particularly pertinent for schools looking to hire and retain teachers of color.

A report detailing the Boston Public Schools (BPS) Human Capital Initiative (HCI), a hiring policy change initiated in 2014, showed that initiating hiring timelines earlier in the year resulted in more

racially diverse teacher hires. Essentially, HCI allowed BPS to post open teaching positions to both internal and external candidates simultaneously rather than posting and interviewing internal candidates based on seniority first, as was previously done. The authors posited that in-demand diverse candidates were more likely to be available for hire earlier in the year, which their data confirmed. Black and Latina/o teachers comprised nearly 40 percent of teachers hired before August and only 27 percent of hires made in August (Boston Municipal Research Bureau, 2016). Given the pressure of student loan debt on students of color mentioned earlier, securing a teaching position before graduation or soon thereafter may help ensure that they enter the teaching workforce, rather than having to choose a nonteaching position.

Districts can partner with local teacher preparation programs to coordinate student teaching placements and vet candidates for hire before they graduate. In the **Long Beach Unified School District**, this strategy enables student teachers to learn district teaching expectations while the district can identify strong candidates for teaching positions (Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, & Darling-Hammond, 2016). This is a strategy that can be pursued specifically with Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) or Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs).

Through a qualitative analysis of six schools serving majority Black and Latina/o low-income students, Simon & Johnson (2015) found that schools had to commit time, resources and effort to successfully increase their numbers of teachers of color. Successful schools pro-actively partnered with “human capital pipeline organizations”; formed informal relationships with “connectors” who could help them communicate with communities of color; included their current teachers of color in the hiring process in meaningful and collaborative ways; prioritized applicants of color in the hiring process; and developed teaching pipelines to increase the pool of available teachers of color.

Furthermore, districts can offer comprehensive induction to support beginning teachers of color in their first years of teaching. Induction often includes being matched with a veteran mentor teacher and can also include seminars, classroom assistance, time to collaborate with other teachers, coaching and feedback from experienced teachers, and reduced workloads. Induction is especially effective when teachers participate in a comprehensive set of induction activities. First-year teachers who received induction support were found to be twice as likely to stay in teaching as those who did not receive early support (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). An analysis of the Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS) found that participants left teaching at significantly lower rates than did non-participating novice teachers in the state. The analysis also found improved retention rates among participants teaching in schools serving students of color and students from low-income families, where attrition rates tended to be quite high and where

teachers of color are most likely to teach (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The finding suggests that teachers of color could particularly benefit from participating in strong induction programs.

3. Improve school teaching conditions through improved school leadership

Teaching conditions, and administrative support particularly, play a key role in teachers' retention decisions. Recent evidence shows that administrative support is especially critical in improving retention of teachers of color. An analysis of national data from select years between 1999 and 2011 found that teachers of color in schools where 90 percent of the teaching staff or more were White were far more likely to switch schools than their White peers if they perceived a lack of administrative support. In contrast, their retention decisions were similar to White teachers when they felt strong administrative support in their schools (Bednar & Gicheva, 2017). Strong school leaders may be addressing some of the challenges teachers of color report experiencing as one of few teachers of color on staff.

Districts can provide training for school administrators so they can create work environments that encourage teachers to stay. Even if teachers are prepared for the challenges of teaching, undesirable working conditions can drive them to other schools or out of the profession entirely. School administrators are responsible for making hiring decisions, being instructional leaders, setting norms for students and staff, nurturing a positive and encouraging culture, keeping schoolwide systems running smoothly, and more (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). When they are not able to do those things well, the consequences are learning and work environments that make it difficult for teachers of color to stay. Poor school leadership more than doubles the likelihood that teachers will move or leave their classrooms and schools.

Some university-district partnerships have made progress in training effective school principals by actively recruiting talented future administrators, especially those who have demonstrated a commitment to working in hard-to-staff schools. A review of the nationally recognized educational leader cohort program at **Delta State University (DSU)** in the Mississippi Delta, for example, found that the program partnered with local school districts to recruit excellent teachers with strong school leadership potential and that half of their recruits each year were Black (LaPointe, Davis, & Cohen, 2007). Most of the teachers had been working in the Delta – a mostly rural region plagued by poverty and racial segregation – and they had undergone a demanding selection process to be nominated for the program by their district. With state, federal, district and university funding, DSU funds its full-time paid internships at school sites. This joint investment of funds allows well-qualified candidates to participate regardless of their financial

means. According to DSU, 85 percent of all graduates hold administrative positions in Delta schools and districts (Delta State University, 2016).

An analysis of the **McREL Balanced Leadership Development Program** (McREL BLDP), a program that focuses on principals developing 21 leadership responsibilities over 10 two-day cohort-based sessions, found that it resulted in a seven-point reduction in teacher turnover in schools that fully participated in the intervention (and a 23-point reduction in principal turnover) (Jacob, Goddard, Kim, Miller, & Goddard, 2015).

States can support improved principal preparation by establishing holistic principal preparation program accreditation and licensure standards and funding effective school leadership development programs. State principal preparation and licensure regulations play a significant role in shaping the content and format of principal preparation programs and can help ensure that these programs are held to a standard of excellence. These regulatory strategies could help improve retention rates for teachers of color by requiring that program participants have clinical experiences in schools with diverse students and staff and learn to create collaborative, supportive work environments for the teachers with whom they work. In the program accreditation process, states can require that programs survey graduates on how well-prepared they felt to handle each of the duties, including supporting a diverse staff. The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) permits states to set aside 3 percent of their Title II formula funds to strengthen the quality of school leaders, including by investing in principal recruitment, preparation, induction and development (Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, 2015).

Rethinking School Improvement

In lieu of school districts closing low performing schools, and in turn, increasing teacher turnover, especially for teachers of color, ESSA provides states and districts greater flexibility in implementing alternatives that bolster school communities. **High Schools that Work** (HSTW), established by the Southern Regional Education Board in 1987, is a school improvement initiative that helps schools to improve student achievement through intensive teacher and leader professional development and technical assistance in more than 1,200 sites nationally (High Schools That Work, n.d.). HSTW works with schools to increase academic rigor, student engagement, teacher collaboration, student support and use of data with the goal of improving student performance and preparation for post-secondary success. A mixed-methods study of the program found that teachers observed improved student behavior and attitudes and decreased dropout rates after the implementation of HSTW (Anderson, Goertz, & Goldwasser, 2006).

States and districts can consider other evidence-based investments in schools that improve

instructional quality and supports for students without displacing teachers of color who most often teach in struggling schools, including early childhood education, mentorship for beginning teachers and community schools, which focus on whole child development through community partnerships (NAACP Task Force on Quality Education, 2017). For increasing retention of high quality, certified teachers of English learners, they may want to consider school- or district-based learning networks where teachers can, for example, access coaching supports to assist with instructional techniques and classroom observations (Lavadenz & Colón-Muñiz, 2017).

Conclusion

Teachers of color face barriers to entry and to continuing in teaching from preservice to veteran teaching status. The debt burden of college discourages students of color from pursuing expensive teacher preparation programs, and those who are interested in teaching may instead enter through alternative certification programs. While some alternative certification programs might offer high-quality training, overall, teachers who enter through these programs are less likely to continue teaching in their schools, further exacerbating shortages of teachers of color and negatively impacting student learning. In addition to completing their preparation, teaching candidates of color must meet several state-mandated requirements that often include standardized tests. The most common of these tests disproportionately fail candidates of color, keeping them out of the profession or requiring many attempts that present a financial burden. Candidates of color who successfully enter the field encounter undesirable working conditions in the schools they most often serve and are more likely to be pushed out of their schools involuntarily due to school closure and turnaround policies.

Fortunately, there are a range of equitable approaches for overcoming those barriers. Financial investments that underwrite the cost of high-quality teacher preparation candidates of color – such as loan forgiveness programs, service scholarships, teacher residencies and Grow Your Own programs – can encourage candidates of color to enter teaching through high-retention pathways. Mentoring and support, both during their preparation and through their first years in the classroom, can help them complete their programs and begin teaching successfully. District-wide cultural competency training and more holistic standards of excellence for school leaders can help make schools positive working environments for teachers of color. Finally, state and district policies aimed at school improvement can focus on investing in schools where teachers of color teach, instead of policies that push them out of teaching. A common theme among the promising practices in recruitment and retention of teachers of color is that they require an intentional commitment to increasing teacher diversity, including commitments of funding, staff and time. Research shows that investments in a high-quality, diverse teaching workforce are repaid in reduced teacher turnover and improved learning and achievement for all students.

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