



STRATEGY BRIEF:

Recruiting & Hiring Educators of Color

Local education agency (LEA) and school leaders can use this brief to learn more about:

- Effective practices they can use to improve rates of recruiting and hiring educators of color;
- Examples from other schools that have implemented strategies to address this challenge; and
- Resources to support this work in your LEA.

To learn more about educator recruitment and hiring generally, see the [Recruitment & Hiring Guide](#).

Context

Research suggests that educator diversity can play an important part in closing achievement gaps among students, and in improving school climate. While increased teacher diversity can positively affect students of all races,¹ studies indicate particular benefits for students of color—such as higher attendance rates, graduation rates², and likelihood of being labeled as gifted.³ In Pennsylvania, about six percent of teachers are people of color, compared with 35 percent of the state’s public school students.⁴

1 A.M. Villegas, A.M. and J.J. Irvine. (2010). Diversifying the Teaching Force: An Examination of Major Arguments. *Urban Review*, 42: 175-192.

2 A.M. Villegas and J.J. Irvine, 2010; S.B. Holt and S. Gershenson. (2015). The Impact of Teacher Demographic Representation on Student Attendance and Suspensions. IZA Discussion Paper No. 9554.

3 J. Grissom and C. Redding, “Discretion and Disproportionality: Explaining the Underrepresentation of High-Achieving Students of Color in Gifted Programs,” *American Educational Research Association (AERA) Open*, January 2016, https://news.vanderbilt.edu/files/Grissom_AERAOpen_GiftedStudents1.pdf.

4 Boser, Ulrich. (2014). *Teacher Diversity Revisited*. The Center for American Progress, Washington, D.C.

Effective LEA policies and practices

Annually and publicly report on multiple indicators of teacher diversity

LEAs can collect and publicize data on teacher diversity at the school and LEA level, analyze the degree to which the educator workforce reflects the demographics of the student population, and use this to help identify ways to strategically recruit and retain a more representative workforce—such as the strategies below.⁵

Resource: *Insights on Diversifying the Educator Workforce* – A free, user-friendly, Excel-based tool developed by the Center for Great Teachers and Leaders that districts can use to analyze their own data to understand the underlying causes of their diversity gaps. The tool helps identify and visualize diversity gaps across the entire career continuum, from high-school graduates entering preparation programs to experienced classroom teachers. The tool supports users in examining educator workforce diversity gaps by guiding users through the development of charts and maps.

Reflection Questions:

- *What, if any, hiring data does your school/LEA currently collect?*
- *Do these data tell you what you need to know about the diversity of your educator workforce?*
- *What data do you have regarding educator diversity at the school/LEA level?*
- *What does the data reveal in terms of educator diversity as compared to the demographics of your student population?*
- *What is your baseline data to help monitor progress toward a more diverse educator workforce?*

⁵ Council of Chief State School Officers, (2019) A Vision and Guidance for Diverse and Learner-Ready Teacher Workforce, available at https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/Vision%20and%20Guidance%20for%20a%20Diverse%20and%20Learner-Ready%20Teacher%20Workforce_FINAL010919.pdf

Convene key stakeholders to analyze data and address diversity gaps.

LEAs can work with local stakeholders, including education preparation programs, teachers' unions or associations, and school boards, to identify shortages in teachers of color and develop strategies that they can implement to diversify the teacher workforce.⁶

Resource: *Creating a District Plan to Increase the Racial, Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity of Your Educator Workforce* – This guidebook supports LEAs in planning to select and hire teachers of color. The guidebook includes templates and tools for creating a district plan to increase the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the educator workforce.

Reflection Questions:

- *Who participates in your hiring and selection process?*
- *What, if any, protocols are currently used?*
- *Have you mapped your hiring process and identified when and why teachers of color exit your hiring process?*

Focus recruitment efforts on candidate competencies and on candidates who want to work in hard-to-staff schools.

A review of programs that successfully recruited teachers of color found that these programs focused on finding candidates with a core set of competencies including “strong academic skills, an ability to engage students, a desire to improve student performance at challenging schools, a willingness to work with school communities, and a commitment to working in a school for a set period of time.”⁷ Additionally, these

⁶ Council of Chief State School Officers, (2019) A Vision and Guidance for Diverse and Learner-Ready Teacher Workforce, available at https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/Vision%20and%20Guidance%20for%20a%20Diverse%20and%20Learner-Ready%20Teacher%20Workforce_FINAL010919.pdf

⁷ Bireda, S. & Chait, R. (2011) Increasing Teacher Diversity: Strategies to Improve the Teacher Workforce, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2011/11/09/10636/increasing-teacher-diversity/>

programs targeted candidates who exhibited a desire to work in hard-to-staff schools and an understanding of the challenges of doing so.^{8,9}

Establish quality, supportive pathways into the teaching profession.

Districts can establish supportive pathways that identify local candidates who reflect the diversity of their community by establishing grow-your-own and early outreach programs that target paraprofessionals and current students. In grow-your-own programs, districts partner with local educator preparation programs to prepare paraprofessionals, other school staff, or community members to help candidates attain their teaching certification and teach in the district. Early outreach programs attempt to attract high school students into the teaching profession before they enter college. These programs can provide a direct pathway from high school into teaching. Some early outreach programs offer financial support through college if students commit to becoming a teacher in their district.¹⁰

EXAMPLE IN ACTION:



A New Ship Rising Program is a partnership between Shippensburg University and regional school districts to recruit, mentor, guide and support middle and high school black male students interested in education careers. Students engage in several phases of the program starting as early as middle school or high school when they are partnered with underrepresented male college student mentors; together they investigate practices in education by observing instruction in their own LEAs. High school seniors enroll in two college-level courses, one course in educational foundations and one in liberal arts, while participating in a college-level mentoring program. Once in college, students participate in a residency teaching experience with cooperating teachers, based on the medical residency model. Program graduates are employed by local LEAs and receive support through a highly engaged induction process that goes beyond the one year required in Pennsylvania.¹¹

8 Bireda, S. & Chait, R. (2011) *Increasing Teacher Diversity: Strategies to Improve the Teacher Workforce*, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2011/11/09/10636/increasing-teacher-diversity/>

9 Public Impact (2016) *School Turnaround Teachers: Selection Toolkit*, available at https://publicimpact.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Turnaround_Teacher_Selection_Toolkit.pdf. See “Suggested questions for critical competencies”, pages 12-13, and “Complete Competency Rating Levels”, Appendix A.

10 Bireda, S. & Chait, R. (2011) *Increasing Teacher Diversity: Strategies to Improve the Teacher Workforce*, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2011/11/09/10636/increasing-teacher-diversity/>

11 Presentation by Nicole Hill, Andrae Martin, B. Donta Truss and Travis Waters at SHEEO Summit, October 2019 – A New Ship Rising: Empowering Minority Male Engagement and Longevity in Teaching. <https://sheeo.org/event/summit-on-project-pipeline-repair-restoring-minority-male-participation-and-persistence-in-educator-preparation-programs>

EXAMPLE IN ACTION:



Journey into Education and Teaching is a program of the Massachusetts Foundation for Teaching and Learning in partnership with urban LEAs such as Boston, Brockton, Fall River, New Bedford, Springfield, and Worcester in Massachusetts. This is a grow-your-own program designed to provide paraprofessionals without a bachelor's degree with a pathway to become licensed teachers in their community high-need schools. Program participants have prior classroom experience; reflect the racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the students; and are committed to long-term teaching in their communities. Candidate qualifications include a minimum of two years of employment as a paraprofessional in a Massachusetts public school, a desire to complete a bachelor's degree, and permanent residence in Massachusetts for at least one year. The program provides guidance and support as participants secure financial assistance and apply for college admission and enroll in college courses. It also provides ongoing support and mentoring for participants through the multi-year path to become a teacher. During the period of 2007-2014, the program enjoyed a 65-70 percent participant retention rate, 68 percent of participants achieved a bachelor's degree¹², and 62 percent earned Master of Arts in Teaching degrees.¹³

Resource: *Grow Your Own Guide – Grow your own programs are one potential approach to creating a quality, supportive, low-cost pathway into the teaching profession. Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. provides a guide for developing paraeducator-to-teacher programs. The guide provides suggestions for establishing a supportive program that addresses specific challenges faced by paraprofessionals working towards teacher certification.*

Partner with programs that graduate large numbers of candidates of color.

Where available, programs such as TNTF are viable options with proven records for recruiting teachers of color.¹⁴ Historically black colleges and universities graduate the highest rates of teachers of color. Typically, TNTF Fellows have decided to make a career

¹² Compared to the national 30% college completion rate for part-time adult college students.

¹³ Journey into Education & Teaching (JET) <https://jetintoteaching.org/>

¹⁴ Putman, H., Hansen, M., Walsh, K., and Quintero, D. (2016) High Hopes and Harsh Realities: The Real Challenges to Building a Diverse Workforce, available at <https://www.brookings.edu/research/high-hopes-and-harsh-realities-the-real-challenges-to-building-a-diverse-teacher-workforce/>; Bireda, S. & Chait, R. (2011) Increasing Teacher Diversity: Strategies to Improve the Teacher Workforce, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2011/11/09/10636/increasing-teacher-diversity/>

change into teaching; thus the program enjoys an above-average retention rate. In New York City, TNTP has an 87 percent retention rate for teachers in their second year, and for black and Latino teachers the retention rates are higher with 92 percent retention rate in their second year.¹⁵ Some Pennsylvania education preparation programs are more successful than others at producing candidates of color. Data reported to the US Education Department show that Temple University, Lincoln University, Drexel University, Edinboro University, St. Joseph's University, Chestnut Hill College, and Carlow University graduated the highest numbers of teachers of color in 2015-16 (the most recent year for which data is available from the US Education Department).

Reflection Questions:

- *What recruitment strategies does your school/LEA currently have in place?*
- *Are there partnerships that can be established or reinforced with higher education institutions that produce the highest numbers of educators of color in your state?*

¹⁵ Bireda, S. & Chait, R. (2011) Increasing Teacher Diversity: Strategies to Improve the Teacher Workforce, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2011/11/09/10636/increasing-teacher-diversity/>



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DEVELOPED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:
Pennsylvania's System for LEA/School Improvement
Lancaster-Lebanon IU13
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visit <https://www.iu13.org/school-improvement>