

Teacher Development

SEF Position

Ensure students of color and other historically underserved students are taught by well-prepared and licensed teachers by advancing evidence-based policies that support high-quality teacher preparation, recruitment, development, and retention activities.



Background

Research suggests that, among school-related factors, teachers matter most. Additionally, according to the U.S. Department of Education, students of color are expected to make up 56% of the student population in 2024. Meanwhile, the teacher educator workforce remains between 82-84% White, with little evidence of a major demographic change within the profession.¹ Greater efforts are needed to recruit teachers of color and also to invest in *all* teachers to ensure that educators are able to remain in the profession. Overall, public schools perform much better when states invest in career educators and support them with strong preparation induction, ongoing professional development, and leadership roles in classrooms and schools. A study from the Center for American Progress has found that the recruitment and human capital systems of the nation's school districts have not kept pace with the modern best practices that are to be found in other industries and the private sector.² A more robust investment in recruiting and training a highly prepared and diverse teaching workforce will yield benefits for students and also help to reduce teacher turnover.



Benefits of Teacher Development and Diverse Teacher Workforce

- A teacher is estimated to have two to three times the impact of any other school factor on student reading and math test scores.³
- Research indicates that teachers of color boost the academic performance of students of color, as well as their White peers, including higher reading and math assessment results, improved graduation rates, and a rise in college aspirations.
- Recent research shows that Black students who encounter at least one Black teacher are more likely to graduate high school and consider attending college.⁴
- Greater diversity of teachers mitigates feelings of isolation, frustration, and fatigue that can contribute to individual teachers of color leaving the profession when they feel they are alone.⁵



SEF Recommendations

- Support teacher candidates of color by underwriting the cost of teacher preparation through service scholarship and loan forgiveness programs.
- Fund teacher and leader preparation programs that emphasize culturally relevant and responsive practices to ensure teachers understand students' cultural and/or economic contexts.
- Invest in expanding high-quality educator preparation programs, including those at Minority Serving Institutions.



Endnotes:

1. The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2016. <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/racial-diversity/state-racial-diversity-workforce.pdf>.
2. To Attract Great Teachers, School Districts Must Improve Their Human Capital Systems. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress, 2016. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2016/12/22/295574/to-attract-great-teachers-school-districts-must-improve-their-human-capital-systems/>.
3. Teachers Matter: Understanding Teachers' Impact on Student Achievement. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2012. https://www.rand.org/pubs/corporate_pubs/CP693z1-2012-09.html.
4. The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2018. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w25254.pdf>.
5. Diversifying the Teacher Workforce: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color. Washington, DC: Learning Policy Institute, 2018. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/diversifying-teaching-profession-report>.