

Assessment of Diversity in America's Teaching Force

A Call to Action

Presented By

National Collaborative
on Diversity
in the Teaching Force

Washington, D.C.

October 2004



Acknowledgments

Contributors to this report include the Education Commission of the States' (ECS) Teaching Quality Policy Center. Special thanks go to Twanna LaTrice Hill, ECS policy analyst, and Susie Bachler, researcher, with the assistance of Michael Allen, program director, and Charles Coble, executive director. In addition, Geneva Gay, Jeannine E. Dingus, and Carolyn W. Jackson, of the University of Washington, prepared a report, *The Presence and Performance of Teachers of Color in the Profession*, which provided much-needed data on this important subject.

Additional contributors to the writing and editing of this report include Catherine Smith and Dawn Kum-Walks; we appreciate their expertise and input.

Several organizations have participated as “primary partners” of the Collaborative. They are the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (Mary E. Dilworth, Alicia Ardila-Rey), the American Council on Education (William Harvey), the Association of Teacher Educators (Armando Laguardia), the Community Teachers Institute (Rushern Baker, Jacob Mann, Maureen Evans), the National Education Association (Segun Eubanks, Donald Washington, Tom Blanford, Nessa Chappelle), and Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (Mildred Hudson).

The members of the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force deeply appreciate all those who contributed in ways both large and small to the research, writing, publication, and dissemination of the report.

Introduction

In late 2001, Congress passed the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The goal of this legislation is to improve the academic performance of all students, while simultaneously closing achievement gaps that persist between students from different ethnic groups and economic backgrounds. The law includes a number of elements considered essential for reaching this goal, including ensuring that all teachers are “highly qualified.” Yet, despite this focus on teacher quality, little attention has been paid to the issues of cultural competence and diversity in the teacher workforce — critical factors in improving the performance of students of color.

To examine the relationships among educational opportunity, educational achievement, educator diversity, and teacher quality, more than 20 of the nation’s leading education and advocacy organizations came together in November 2001 for a three-day conference entitled “Losing Ground: A National Summit on Diversity in the Teaching Force.” (For a list of the 2001, summit participating organizations, see Appendix A.)

Focusing specifically on the roles ethnicity and cultural competence play in student achievement, participants reviewed research on the impact of culturally responsive pedagogy on children. They also studied demographic data on the growing diversity of America’s schoolchildren and the static composition of the

teaching force. After this review, participants voiced widespread concern about these demographic disparities and their negative impact on the quality of education for all children. In addition, participants noted that although teacher quality has been accepted and internalized as a mantra for school reform, the imperative for diversity is often marginalized rather than accepted as central to the quality equation in teaching.

Although teacher quality has been accepted and internalized as a mantra for school reform, the imperative for diversity is often marginalized rather than accepted as central to the quality equation in teaching.

(Source: “Losing Ground” Summit Proceedings, February 15, 2002)

As a result, the participating organizations agreed on the need to create the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (the Collaborative). The Collaborative’s primary mission is to infuse the issues of teacher diversity and cultural competence into the education policy debate, at both state and national levels, with the same vigor and frequency as the issue of teacher quality.

Since the 2001 Summit, partner organizations have worked to achieve that mission. While the organizations vary in size, years of existence, number of staff, geographical location, and budget, they are committed to the following goals:

- coalescing and increasing the research base on culturally responsive teaching;
- identifying and eliminating obstacles to expanding the pool of prospective teachers of color and to increasing the cultural competence of all teachers;
- insisting that resources needed for successful teaching be equitable, no matter what school the teachers work in; and
- demanding that significantly greater resources be targeted to the recruitment, preparation, and support of a teaching cadre that is fully qualified, ethnically diverse, and culturally competent.

However, as controversies continue to swirl around NCLB and achievement gaps continue to widen in too many communities, the Collaborative is more concerned than ever that the issues of diversity and cultural competence in the teaching force have not received the attention they deserve from policymakers.

Recognizing the dearth of meaningful research on the number and impact of teachers of color, as well as on state efforts to recruit and retain teachers of color, the Collaborative commissioned three significant reports (These reports are available online at the primary partners web sites):

- *The Presence and Performance of Teachers of Color in the Profession* (Gay, et. al., 2003)
- *Recruiting Teachers of Color: A 50-State Survey of State Policies*; (Education Commission of the States, 2003)

- *Recruiting Teachers of Color: A Program Overview* (Education Commission of the States, 2003)

These reports, along with the expertise and vision of the members of the Collaborative, form the foundation of this assessment, which is organized into the following sections.

- I. The Current State of Diversity and Cultural Competence in the Classroom briefly addresses the representation of teachers of color in the teaching force and their impact on student achievement.
- II. The Future of Diversity in Public School Classrooms looks at efforts taken by states to recruit a diverse teaching force, trends in test scores for teacher candidates of color, and the implications of NCLB.
- III. Conclusion and Implications for Research and Policymakers summarizes the beliefs of the Collaborative and provides a list of recommendations for increasing the percentages of teachers of color in the workforce.
- IV. The appendices include a list of 2001 Summit participants and a list of the Collaborative's primary partners.

Taken together, these findings present an important first step toward creating a truly qualified, diverse teacher workforce that meets the needs and potential of all public school students. Additional research is needed, but time is passing quickly, and action is vital. We cannot continue to wait as more children of color fail to reach their potential and as fewer teachers of color join and remain in the education community.

I. The Current State of Diversity and Cultural Competence in the Classroom

The challenges of ensuring teacher excellence and diversity are not new. However, only recently have these issues begun to garner the public attention needed to bring about actual change in the composition of the teacher workforce.

Representation of Teachers of Color in the Workforce

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2003), the number of minority teachers (teachers of color) nationwide is not representative of the number of minority students (students of color). For example,

- in 2001–02, data shows that 60% of public school students were White, 17% Black, 17% Hispanic, 4% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% American Indian/Alaska Native.
- in contrast, 2001 data shows that 90% of public school teachers were White, 6% Black, and fewer than 5% of other races.
- some 40% of schools had no teachers of color on staff.

Digging beneath the surface of the data (NCES, 2003), further trends emerge.

- The percentage of teachers of color does not even approximate the percentage of students of color in any state with a sizable population of diverse residents except Hawaii. The District of Columbia also is an exception.

- Across the states, the larger the percentage of students of color is, the greater the disparity with the percentage of teachers of color. Ironically, these are the areas with the greatest need for teachers of color.
- Teachers of color come closest to having proportional representation in large urban school districts.
- Most teachers of color are employed in schools that have 30 percent or more students of color. For American Indians/Alaska Natives, these schools are located in rural areas and small towns, rather than urban centers.
- Teachers of color tend to teach in schools that have large numbers of students from their own ethnic groups.
- Teachers of color are found in states and regions of the United States with large percentages of their own ethnic groups. Thus, the highest percentages of African-American teachers are found in the Southeast, Latinos in the West and in the Northeast, American Indians/Alaska Natives in the central and western regions, and Asian Americans in the West. Attendance at colleges and schools of education follow similar patterns.
- Teachers of color largely are geographically isolated from each other and from their White colleagues, in terms of both where they enroll in teacher education programs and where they are employed.
- Within ethnic groups, teachers of color are about equally represented in elementary and secondary schools.

Furthermore, statistical projections show that while the percentage of students of color in public schools is expected to increase, the percentage of teachers of color is not expected to rise—unless action is taken on the state and national levels.

I. The Current State of Diversity and Cultural Competence in the Classroom (continued)

The Impact of Teachers of Color on Student Achievement

Policymakers, teacher educators, members of ethnic communities, and school leaders agree that the education profession needs more teachers of color. More teachers of color would

- increase the number of role models for students of color;
- provide opportunities for all students to learn about ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity;
- be able to enrich diverse students' learning because of shared racial, ethnic, and cultural identities; and
- serve as cultural brokers, able not only to help students navigate their school environment and culture, but also to increase the involvement of other teachers and their students' parents.

Although their contributions are sometimes identified as having more of an impact on the social and relational areas than on academic performance, increasing the percentage of teachers of color in the workforce is connected directly to closing the achievement gap of students.

Policymakers, teacher educators, members of ethnic communities, and school leaders agree that the education profession needs more teachers of color.

Most of the data currently available on connections between teachers of color and student performance are generated from small-scale qualitative research involving single or multiple case studies. These data focus on a number of significant, though under-recognized, school achievement markers, including attendance records, disciplinary referrals, dropout rates, overall satisfaction with school, self-concepts, cultural competence, and students' sense of the relevance of school.

While additional data about the positive impact of teachers of color on student achievement need to be gathered, the limited number of studies indicate that

- Students of color tend to have higher academic, personal, and social performance when taught by teachers from their own ethnic groups. (However, this finding does not suggest that culturally competent teachers could not achieve similar gains with students of color from different ethnic groups.)
- Teachers from different ethnic groups have demonstrated that when students of color are taught with culturally responsive techniques and with content-specific approaches usually reserved for the gifted and talented, their academic performance improves significantly.
- Teachers of color have higher performance expectations for students of color from their own ethnic group.

II. The Future of Diversity in Public School Classrooms

Efforts by States to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color

States across the country are recognizing the urgent need to recruit and retain teachers of color and are implementing a variety of programs and policies that complement traditional teacher recruitment methods. Some of these approaches include the following:

- Alternative programs, in which teacher candidates are appointed as the teacher-of-record in a classroom after initial training of six months or less. These alternatively trained teachers tend to complete their preparation program while employed as teachers.
- Early outreach/precollegiate programs, which are designed to expose middle and high school students to teaching as a profession.
- Community college outreach programs, which steer teacher candidates toward completion of an associate's and then a bachelor's degree.

Community colleges have proven to be a highly effective resource for preparing new teachers—approximately 20% of the current teacher workforce began their education in community colleges.

- Paraeducator (often referred to as paraprofessionals or teachers' aides) outreach programs, which target and recruit paraeducators to become fully licensed teachers. In some states, these programs are called "career ladder" approaches.
- Scholarships, grants, and fellowships, which provide financial incentives and are among the most popular strategies to recruit teachers.
- Loans and loan forgiveness programs, which are offered by several states to help prospective teachers defray the cost of their education.

Testing among Teacher Candidates of Color

Most states and schools of education require some form of standardized testing for entry into teacher education programs. As an exit criterion, a large number of states also require standardized testing of teacher candidates to assess their knowledge in subject matter areas that must be passed in order to become a licensed teacher. The majority of states use the Praxis series created by the Educational Testing Service – Praxis I is a basic skills test used for entry into teacher education programs and Praxis II is designed to assess the knowledge

States across the country are recognizing the urgent need to recruit and retain teachers of color and are implementing a variety of programs and policies that complement traditional teacher recruitment methods.

II. The Future of Diversity in Public School Classrooms (continued)

of beginning teachers in a specific subject or content area. It is important to understand that passing scores alone do not guarantee teachers will be highly effective, nor does failing the tests automatically mean teachers will be ineffective. However, the tests do assess what a beginning teacher should know.

Limited data are available on the testing results of teachers of color, partly because the national pool of teachers—both in the classroom and in the pipeline—contains far fewer teachers of color than teachers who are not of color. However, the data does reveal specific trends:

- In most instances, fewer than 50 percent of African Americans pass teacher tests. This pattern prevails across time, location, and types of tests.
- Overall, more teacher candidates of color pass Praxis II subject matter content tests than Praxis I basic skills tests. The pass rates on Praxis II are greater for secondary than for elementary teachers.
- All teacher candidates of color (African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans, and American Indians/Alaska Natives) who passed both Praxis I and II scored much higher on the SAT than their ethnic group peers who did not pass. They also scored higher on the SAT than those in the general population who took Praxis I and II.
- There are positive correlations between SAT and ACT scores, grade point averages, and performance on teacher tests for all ethnic groups.
- Teacher candidates of color who took the SAT tend to perform better on the Praxis I certification

tests than those who took the ACT college entrance examination. The reverse is true for Praxis II for all ethnic groups, except African Americans.

Clearly, much more research is needed on the impact of practices that may facilitate or obstruct the entry of teachers of color into the profession. Additional research is needed to find out why these disparities exist and what the best solutions are to closing this gap. *The Collaborative is firmly committed to identifying and decreasing the obstacles that currently impede efforts to expand the pool of prospective teachers of color.*

The Implications of No Child Left Behind Legislation

Since the No Child Left Behind legislation was passed in 2001, several substantive changes have been made, and additional revisions no doubt will take place in the coming years. Members of this Collaborative support the legislation's goals of improving student performance and closing achievement gaps. They particularly are interested in the timely, adequate provision of resources necessary for improving student achievement.

However, one of the resources necessary for improving the performance of students of color is a teacher workforce that is culturally competent and diverse. Even though the legislation calls for "highly qualified" teachers and leaves the actual implementation and assessment to each state, the logistics of this complex legislation continue to create significant barriers to recruiting teachers of color. The Collaborative is concerned about the long-term implications of this legislation if future revisions do not remove these barriers and clearly spell out cultural competence and diversity as critical elements of a highly qualified teacher workforce.

III. Conclusion and Implications for Research and Policymakers

The Collaborative believes that:

- Diversity and cultural competence are key factors in improving the quality of America's teaching force.
- The issues of teacher diversity and cultural competence must be infused into state and national education policy agendas.
- Teachers of color and culturally competent teachers must be actively recruited and supported.
- Barriers for candidates of color across the teacher development continuum must be identified and reduced.
- Institutional resources to meet the growing need for teachers of color must be increased.
- Toxic institutional and program practices—including institutional and individual racism—in schools and colleges must be eliminated.
- Highly qualified teachers must be equitably distributed to ensure that students in high-poverty and high-minority schools receive their fair share of the best and experienced teachers.

To do this, *significantly greater resources need to be targeted to the recruitment, preparation, and support of a teaching cadre that is fully qualified, ethnically diverse, and culturally competent.* Although the members of the Collaborative recognize that there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution, the following recommendations are a major step toward addressing this problem.

Federal, state, and local governments should

- enact more legislation to increase and support the number of teachers of color both in the pipeline and in the classroom.
- provide additional, meaningful resources and financial support to programs that result in the successful recruitment and training of teachers of color.
- create policies to strengthen professional development programs for public school teachers in high-poverty, high-minority areas, with particular emphasis on cultural competency and mentoring.
- examine trends in teacher performance within different content areas.
- ensure that future teachers are trained with a solid, substantive curriculum, particularly in the social foundations of education. (Without understanding the historical, social, and political underpinnings of how disenfranchised groups have been systematically excluded from receiving a fair and equitable education, there will continue to be a shallow approach to understanding diversity issues.)
- encourage higher education institutions to use responsible recruitment strategies to increase the number of faculty of color in colleges and universities, particularly in colleges of education.
- provide a supportive environment at institutions of higher learning for culturally and linguistically diverse students and faculty.

... greater resources need to be targeted to the recruitment, preparation, and support of a teaching cadre that is fully qualified, ethnically diverse, and culturally competent.

- conduct research on how different ethnic groups are performing on different teacher tests as well as on who is not taking the tests and why they are not. In other words, are some prospective teachers of color leaving the field before testing because they are afraid of failing? Are some not even considering the profession because of the negative press around rates of failure by candidates of color?
- conduct research on successful efforts to increase the rate of test passage by teacher candidates of color and work with higher education institutions to develop, implement, and evaluate appropriate resources to help more teacher candidates of color pass tests.
- promote strategies for increased retention of both diverse students and diverse teachers.

- increase the amount and quality of research on all issues related to the presence, preparation, and performance of teachers of color and to culturally responsive teaching.
- include and maintain more detailed variables on race and ethnicity for all groups in research, policies, and practices about teacher education and student achievement.

The Collaborative urges all those involved in education and education policy to consider carefully the current research, to recognize the value and validity of diversity, and to join us in calling for a qualified and diverse teaching force for America's public schools.

Appendix A: Participants in the 2001 National Summit for Diversity in the Teaching Force

The organizations listed below were involved in the National Summit for Diversity in the Teaching Force held in Washington, D.C., in November 2001.

Alliance for Equity in Higher Education/Institute for Higher Education Policy
 American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education*
 American Association of School Personnel Administrators
 American Council on Education*
 American Indian Higher Education Consortium
 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
 Association of Science-Technology Centers
 The Association of Teacher Educators*
 Carnegie Corporation of New York
 Community Teachers Institute, Inc.*
 Council for the Great City Schools
 Council for Opportunity in Education
 DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund
 Educational Testing Service
 Florida Senate Member (Kendrick Meek)
 Ford Foundation
 Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
 Hispanic Scholarship Fund Institute

Institute for Educational Leadership
 League of Latin American Citizens
 Metropolitan Life Foundation
 Michigan Urban Teacher Program
 Eastern Michigan University
 Wayne County Community College
 Wayne State University
 Minnesota Teachers of Color Program
 National Alliance of Black School Educators
 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
 National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
 National Association for Multicultural Education
 National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education
 National Education Association*
 National Urban League
 New York State Teacher Opportunity Corps Program
 Ohio Senate Member (C.J. Prentiss)
 Pew Charitable Trusts
 Phillip Morris Companies, Inc.
 Project TEAM
 Florida State University
 Recruiting New Teachers, Inc.*
 Rockefeller Brothers Fund

*Denotes primary partner organizations. Please see Appendix B for a description of the mission of each primary partner.

Appendix B: Primary Partners

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)

www.aacte.org

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) provides leadership for the continuing transformation of professional preparation programs to ensure competent and caring educators for all America's children and youth. It is the principal professional association for college and university leaders with responsibility for educator preparation. It is the major voice, nationally and internationally, for American schools, colleges, and departments of education and is a locus for discussion and decisionmaking on professional issues of institutional, state, national, and international significance.

David G. Imig, President & CEO

American Council on Education (ACE)

www.acenet.edu

The American Council on Education (ACE), the major coordinating body for all the nation's higher education institutions, seeks to provide leadership and a unifying voice on key higher education issues and to influence public policy through advocacy, research, and program initiatives.

Its members include approximately 1,800 accredited, degree-granting colleges and universities and higher education-related associations, organizations, and corporations. Founded in 1918, ACE fosters greater

collaboration and new partnerships within and outside the higher education community to help colleges and universities anticipate and address the challenges of the 21st century and contribute to a stronger nation and a better world.

Three key strategic priorities drive ACE's activities:

(1) Representation: Serve as principal advocate for all of higher education, influencing the federal agenda, state policy, and public opinion; (2) Leadership Development: Enhance the diversity and capacity of American higher education leaders; and (3) Service: Support colleges, universities, and other higher education and adult learner organizations in their efforts to serve students and society. ACE's areas of focus include:

- Access, Success, Equity, and Diversity. Programs to foster greater diversity among higher education leaders, faculty, and students, and to support postsecondary educational opportunities and favorable outcomes for all.
- Institutional Effectiveness. Programs to enhance the capacity of colleges and universities in their efforts to serve students and society.
- Lifelong Learning. Programs to ensure the validity of nontraditional learning and promote adult access to and success in postsecondary education and the workforce.
- Internationalization. Programs to help colleges and universities prepare students to work and live in a globally interdependent world.

David Ward, President

Appendix B: Primary Partners

The Association of Teacher Educators (ATE)

www.ate1.org

The Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) was founded in 1920 and is an individual membership organization devoted solely to the improvement of teacher education both for school-based and post secondary teacher educators. ATE members represent over 700 colleges and universities, over 500 major school systems, and the majority of state departments of education. The ATE office is located in the Washington D.C. area where it represents its members interests before governmental agencies and education organizations. In addition, ATE has representatives on the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, the Holmes Partnership, and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education.

ATE's commitment and concern for teacher diversity has been expressed in its strategic goals of support for the recruitment of a diverse teaching force that reflects the diversity of our schools and society. The ATE general assembly passed resolutions that support the work of the ATE Task force on Diversity in the Teaching Force and its mission of helping to create a national initiative to reverse the lack of diversity in the U.S. teaching profession.

David A. Ritchey, Ph.D., CAE, Executive Director

Community Teachers Institute (CTI) www.communityteachers.org

Community Teachers Institute (CTI) supports the creation of partnerships among schools, institutions of higher education, and community-based organizations to "home-grow" teachers rooted in communities of color. These partnerships recruit, develop, and nurture culturally-connected teachers committed to the empowerment of students and the transformation of public education to foster social and economic justice. CTI also provides professional development and technical assistance to emerging and established educators.

Rushern L. Baker III, Executive Director

National Education Association (NEA) www.nea.org

The National Education Association (NEA) has a long, proud history as the nation's leading organization committed to advancing the cause of public education. With its headquarters in Washington, D.C., NEA has 2.7 million members who work at every level of education, from pre-school to university graduate programs. NEA has affiliates in every state, as well as in more than 14,000 local communities across the United States.

Founded in 1857 "to elevate the character and advance the interests of the profession of teaching and to promote the cause of popular education in the United States," the NEA has remained constant in its commitment to its original mission as evidenced by the current mission statement:

To fulfill the promise of a democratic society, the National Education Association shall promote the cause

Appendix B: Primary Partners

of quality public education and advance the profession of education; expand the rights and further the interest of educational employees; and advocate human, civil, and economic rights for all.

The NEA Teacher Quality department (TQ)

- Advocates quality teaching that ensures quality learning;
- Advances a definition and an understanding of a quality teacher that incorporates rigorous standards and offers comprehensive support systems to meet those standards;
- Develops policies, products, services, and information to support the professional growth of NEA members and to sustain a diverse workforce of quality teaching professionals.

Reg Weaver, President

Recruiting New Teachers (RNT)
www.rnt.org

Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. (RNT) is a national non-profit organization based in Belmont, Massachusetts. RNT's mission is to raise esteem for teaching, expand the pool of qualified teachers, and improve the nation's

teacher recruitment, development, and diversity policies and practices. RNT pursues its goal through innovative public service outreach, action-oriented research, and national conferences.

RNT was established in 1986, when a group of business leaders and educators recognized an impending national shortage of qualified teachers for the nation's schoolchildren. In response, RNT launched a major public service advertising campaign to explore interest in teaching, especially among people of color in urban areas, where the need was greatest. There was an overwhelming response to this campaign from people interested in teaching as a career. Since then, RNT has continued to promote public interest in teaching and identify programs that work to recruit, retain, and develop a qualified and diverse teacher workforce.

RNT's work includes:

- Serving as a national resource for research, data, trends, and programs
- Conducting original, action-oriented research
- Educating the public about teacher quality issues
- Informing prospective teachers about the profession
- Helping districts learn about promising recruitment and induction practices
- Advising community leaders, educators, and decision makers about policies and practices that make a difference
- Convening national meetings, symposium, and conferences

Mildred Hudson, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer



Great Public Schools for Every Child

1201 16th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036