

Recruiting and Retaining Teachers of Color— A Resource Brief

This brief is part of [a seven-part series](#) on challenges related to recruiting and retaining teachers from underrepresented backgrounds or with certain certifications. This series was developed as part of the R9CC Teacher Recruitment, Retention, and Recognition project with Illinois.

Addressing the Shortage of Teachers of Color

Attracting and retaining excellent educators is one of the most important drivers of a well-functioning education system—a system that must prepare diverse students with complex needs to participate in today’s knowledge-driven economy. However, a recent surge in the demand for teachers, alongside a diminishing supply and a steady rate of teachers leaving the profession, threatens students’ academic and economic welfare.¹ Teacher turnover adversely impacts student achievement, school finances, and school improvement efforts.² Specific, targeted supports can help recruit and retain teachers in your district.

Although the percentage of teachers of color in the workforce has grown significantly over the past 30 years, it still does not reflect the diversity of the national population or students. Teachers of color also have higher turnover rates than White teachers, highlighting the need for strategies to retain teachers of color as well as recruit more of them. All students, especially students of color, benefit from having teachers of color. These benefits range from increases in academic performance to improved social-emotional and nonacademic measures.³

This brief provides resources that highlight examples of strategies, programs, and initiatives that assist states, local education agencies, and school districts with addressing the shortage of teachers of color. This brief also includes additional resources related to recruiting, retaining, and supporting teachers.

Highlighted Resources

This section highlights examples of strategies, programs, and initiatives that help states, local education agencies, and school districts address the shortage of teachers of color.

Title	Summary
“It’s time for us to fix America’s shortage of Black teachers” (2021)	<p>This article explains how Colorado College and the Sachs Foundation partnered to formulate ways to address the shortage of Black teachers in Colorado. The Sachs Foundation launched a Teacher Development Program to identify Black undergraduate students who are open to a career in education and remove barriers that keep Black educators out of classrooms. The program provides summer fellowships, funding for internships, full tuition for graduate studies toward becoming a certified teacher. Once students are certified, the program provides a \$10,000 annual stipend to supplement teachers’ salaries for their first three years if they teach in Colorado schools, preferably a Title I school. Black teachers who take full advantage of the program can receive more than \$100,000 in funding from the Sachs Foundation.</p>
“Local Alabama program shows promise in putting more Black, male teachers in classrooms” (2021)	<p>This article describes how Alabama A&M University received part of a \$500,000 grant from the Alabama Commission on Higher Education in 2019 to launch the Males for Alabama Education (M.AL.E) scholarship program for minority men preparing to become teachers. The initiative strives to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensively recruit undergraduate and graduate male students who express an interest in teaching students within Alabama's public PK–12 schools. • Provide up to 2 years of tuition assistance for undergraduate juniors and seniors and up to 2 years of tuition assistance for graduate students. • Provide funding and test preparation supports to complete assessments needed to meet state certification requirements. • Provide mentorship and build collegiality through a student cohort system beyond certification completion. • Provide pre and post job-embedded professional and personal development opportunities for M.AL.E students. <p>For each year of student participation in the M.AL.E. initiative, participants will be required to provide 2 years of service within a public Alabama PK–12 school.</p>
New Mexico House Bill 275: An Act for Teacher Loan Repayment (2019)	<p>This act instituted by New Mexico changed the state’s teacher loan repayment program in an effort to prioritize applicants who teach in designated high-need positions, including teachers who are minorities. The bill also established a scholarship program for students enrolled in educator preparation programs, with priority given to students who are economically disadvantaged, English language learners, minority students and students with disabilities.</p>

Title	Summary
Colorado House Bill 18-1309: An Act Concerning Programs Addressing Educator Shortages (2018)	<p>This Colorado legislation established requirements for a grow-your-own program that targets students at the postsecondary level to recruit those who commit to working in the same school or district for 3 years after graduation in exchange for undergraduate tuition support. The state Department of Education must report on several aspects of the program, including demographic data, to determine whether the program is effectively recruiting students from underrepresented groups into the teaching profession.</p>
Connecticut Senate Bill No. 455: An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention (2018)	<p>Connecticut enacted this legislation requiring the Department of Education, in consultation with the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council, to establish partnerships to increase recruitment of teachers of color, monitor innovative methods to attract candidates of color, and support new and existing educator preparation programs that commit to enrolling greater numbers of candidates of color. The bill also required the Department of Education to develop or review and approve a new alternative route to certification programs for specific professionals. In addition, the bill required that any approved program must contain instruction in classroom management and cultural competency. This bill also addressed licensure exams by requiring the Department of Education to enter into memorandums of understanding with teacher licensure test vendors to provide some test takers with a free retake of the exam under certain circumstances.</p>
Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color (2018)	<p>This Learning Policy Institute report draws on nationally representative data as well as research on recruiting and retaining teachers of color to summarize the primary barriers to recruitment and retention of teachers of color along the teacher pipeline.</p>
A space to be whole: A landscape analysis of education-based racial affinity groups in the U.S. (2021)	<p>This resource presents a national landscape analysis of racial affinity groups focused on supporting educators of color. This report is intended to: document national and state organizations; highlight similarities and differences between groups; explore potential collaborations between affinity space approaches; and identify policy and activism implications of racial affinity work.</p>

Additional Resources

Teacher recruitment and retention is a challenge across teacher subgroups. These resources offer a more general overview of strategies to combat the teacher shortage.

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. (2020). *Strategies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in educator preparation*.

<https://aacte.org/resources/research-reports-and-briefs/strategies-that-promote-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-in-educator-preparation/>

Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/559.310>

Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes for Research:

<https://gtlcenter.org/>

Duncan, E. (2022). *Addressing teacher shortages in the short and long term: What states and districts can do*. Education Trust. <https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Addressing-Teacher-Shortages-in-the-Short-and-Long-Term-May-2022.pdf>

Gist, C. D., Bristol, T. J., Bustos Flores, B., Herrera, S., & Claeys, L. (2021). Effective mentoring practices for teachers of color and indigenous teachers. In *Building a More Ethnographically Diverse Teaching Force: A Kappan Special Report* (pp. 32–35).

https://pdkmembers.org/members_online/publications/archive/pdf/PDK_2021_SpecialIssue/PDK_SpecialIssue_2021_MentorshipBrief.pdf

Konoske-Graf, A., Partelow, L., & Benner, M. (2016). *To attract great teachers, school districts must improve their human capital systems*. Center for American Progress.

<https://americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/HumanCapitalSurvey-report.pdf>

Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *Solving the teacher shortage: How to attract and retain excellent educators*. Learning Policy Institute.

https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Solving_Teacher_Shortage_Attract_Retain_Educators_REPORT.pdf

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). (n.d.). Ideas that work: Attract, prepare, retain resource database.

<https://osepideasthatwork.org/federal-resources-stakeholders/topical-issues/attract-prepare-retain-resource-database>

Other Briefs

This section includes links to other briefs in the series.

[Bilingual Teachers](#)

[New Teachers](#)

[Rural Teachers](#)

[Special Education Teachers](#)

[STEM Teachers](#)

[Teachers in Low-income and Low-performing Schools](#)

Endnotes

¹ Sutchter, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). *A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S.* Learning Policy Institute.

² Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *Solving the teacher shortage: How to attract and retain excellent educators.* Learning Policy Institute.

³ Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color.* Learning Policy Institute.