

**CCSSO DLRT Teacher Pipeline Series:**  
**What does Teacher Diversity and Culturally Responsive Practice have to do with ...**  
**RECRUITMENT?**

## Introduction

In 2018, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) engaged nine states<sup>1</sup> in their Diverse and Learner-Ready Teachers (DLRT) Initiative. CCSSO also engaged a range of national organizations as collaborators to support the work of the DLRT states. One subset of national collaborators, the Communications and Advocacy Work Group<sup>2</sup>, identified the need for developing a common language for policymakers around diverse teaching and learning. The group worked to address this need by developing two resources. First, they collaboratively assembled the following definitions for two key terms – teacher diversity and culturally responsive practice:

- Diversity can be defined as the sum of the ways that people are both alike and different. The dimensions of diversity include race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion, mental and physical ability, class, and immigration status. **Teacher Diversity** refers to the representation of dimensions of diversity in the collective makeup or pool of individuals within the K-12 public school teacher workforce. The work of the CCSSO DLRT Initiative focuses specifically on increasing the **racial** diversity of the teacher workforce.<sup>3,4</sup>
- **Culturally Responsive Practice** in the classroom refers to both: 1) the use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for all students; and, 2) the embodiment of attitudes and dispositions that empower students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The work of the CCSSO DLRT Initiative focuses specifically on increasing the culturally responsive practice **aptitude** of the teacher workforce.<sup>5,6,7</sup>

Next, based on these definitions, group members developed a series of short papers that would address how these two terms relate to nine key aspects of the teacher pipeline: Accountability, Compensation, Data Systems, Induction and Mentoring, Preparation, Recruitment, Retention, Student Demographics, and Well-Rounded Education. These papers form a series that seeks to provide both language and rationale to state policymakers as they work to incorporate teacher diversity and culturally responsive practice in policy initiatives across the spectrum of teacher pipeline issues. The current paper specifically addresses the intersection of diversity with Recruitment.

## What is recruitment? What is its role in the larger Teacher Pipeline?

- Recruitment with a focus on diversity is the act of getting diverse, multi-talented individuals into the classroom as teachers.
- Because teacher quality shapes a student's experience and has a direct impact on student learning, success in teacher recruitment is essential to overall student success and achievement.

## What does Teacher Diversity have to do with recruitment?

- Increasing minority representation between students and teachers is associated with greater student achievement, including stronger effects among low-performing black students.<sup>8</sup> Black, Latino, Native, and immigrant teachers are especially equipped to help children who look like them gain the knowledge they need and deserve.
- Since only 20 percent of public school teachers are people of color, compared with over 50 percent of public school students,<sup>9</sup> increasing teacher diversity via recruitment is an area of national concern.
- Many schools and districts also struggle to find teachers of color<sup>10</sup> who reflect the entirety of their student bodies; addressing diversity in education through teacher recruitment may be the most important education priority in the coming years.
- Talent recruitment has recently become more intense for top college graduates; technology firms and corporations have intensified their recruitment efforts. Education as a field must step up and consider recruitment policies and practices that build a teacher workforce comprised of diverse, effective educators.

## What are some policies and practices that could leverage recruitment to diversify the teaching force?

- **Targeted outreach and support programs:** Direct engagement in and with minority communities is vital to the diversification of the teaching workforce.
  - Traditional and alternative teacher preparation programs should devote time, money, and personnel to increasing minority enrollment and completion rates.
  - All K-12 schools and school districts should devote substantial resources to diversity in teacher recruitment. Without such targeted efforts, teacher recruitment and hiring will revert to default patterns, and the lack of minority representation among teachers will continue. Some promising examples of diversity-focused outreach:
    - [The Fellowship: Black Male Educators for Social Justice](#) is a “professional membership and activist organization dedicated to advancing the recruitment, development and retention of Black male educators in schools throughout Greater Philadelphia.”
    - The [Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity](#) (BranchED) is a hub for teacher preparation programs at minority serving institutions (MSIs) to connect, share resources, and receive support.
- **Alternative routes:** A recent report finds that non-traditional providers recruit more minority teacher candidates (as a proportion of teacher candidates) than traditional providers, 35-41 percent compared to only 26 percent. However, this report caveats that “without discounting the impressive success of these efforts, nontraditional providers constitute a small fraction of the new teacher pool, about 15 percent of all new teachers. Though alternative certification appears to be the most diverse source of teacher candidates into the workforce, it is unclear if the recruiting successes among this small segment could be scaled up enough to significantly narrow national diversity gaps.”<sup>11</sup>

- **Financial incentives.** Using money and benefits as incentives can also play an important role in recruiting candidates of color. The strongest predictors of a more diverse teacher workforce are:
  - Offering relocation assistance
  - Loan forgiveness
  - Bonuses for excellence in teaching<sup>12</sup>
- **“Grow your own”:** Seeking out graduates of local schools to return as teachers can increase teacher workforce diversity, since many teachers of color return to their own community to teach.<sup>13</sup> Some examples:
  - Boston's [High School-to-Teacher program](#) creates a pool of diverse "homegrown teachers," where educator-mentors advise students through high school with a focus on developing their leadership skills, guiding them toward higher education, and encouraging them, eventually, to return to Boston schools to teach.
  - A similar program in Denver called [Pathways2Teaching](#) is a concurrent enrollment program designed for 11th & 12th grade students to explore teaching as potential career choice while examining critical issues related to educational justice and earning college credit.
  - [Teach Tomorrow in Oakland](#), a partnership program in California, has recruited local residents—83 percent of whom are candidates of color—to complete alternative teacher-certification programs and commit to at least five years of teaching in that city's public schools.
- **Identify and correct bias in hiring.** School-district hiring practices must be free of racial discrimination and bias, an “overlooked and particularly troubling obstacle to boosting the number of black educators,” per a [2018 article in The Atlantic](#). Schools who serve more white students are less likely than schools with more diverse student populations to hire teachers of color. Leaders in those schools will need to pay special attention to policies that lead to diversity and inclusion in their teacher workforce.<sup>14</sup>
- **Recruitment policies alone will not lead to the needed increase in teacher diversity.** Research suggests that improving overall college enrollment and completion rates for people of color, increasing interest in teaching careers, and a focus on teacher retention are also key.<sup>15</sup>

### **What does Culturally Responsive Practice and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (collectively, CRP) have to do with recruitment?**

- K-12 schools need to be able to recruit and retain the teachers best for their students. As the public school population diversifies, especially in contrast to the current teacher workforce, a grounding in CRP should be a focus of recruitment strategies.

### **What are some policies and practices that could help make CRP an integral part of recruitment?**

- CRP “considers how students' home culture relates to their educational experiences in classrooms, maintaining that teachers need to be nonjudgmental and inclusive of the cultural backgrounds of all their students in order to be effective educators.”<sup>16</sup>

- Successful teacher recruitment efforts should seek individuals with the capacity to develop equity mindsets, and with the knowledge and skills to view their work through the lenses of the diverse communities with whom they will work. Schools and districts should actively seek educators from all races, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds, and who share several CRP-aligned characteristics:
  - an ability to be non-judgmental and inclusive of the cultural backgrounds of their students in order to be effective facilitators of learning in the classroom;
  - a record of leadership, achievement, and long-term commitment to reaching goals;
  - a deep belief in the potential of all kids;
  - perseverance in challenging situations;
  - excellent organization and critical thinking skills;
  - strong interpersonal skills;
  - the ability to work with individuals from a variety of backgrounds;
  - a strong understanding of how they want to contribute personally to educational excellence and equity, frequently informed by experience in low-income communities.
- Recruiters should recognize that great teachers don't always leverage the same strengths; they should avoid a narrow focus on quality across a single dimension, such as ACT score or GPA. Job postings and interviews should prioritize teacher candidates' facility with CRP.
- Pre-service training must place a focus on building a teacher talent pool that is versed in culturally responsive practice. Licensure and other policies should ensure that teacher candidates leave their preparation program with at least a foundation in CRP.

### Where can I go to learn more?

- [Getting and Keeping Good Teachers](#), Education Week
- [A Root Cause of the Teacher-Diversity Problem](#), Melissa Anderson, The Atlantic
- [How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students](#), The Century Foundation

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<sup>1</sup> The nine states initially engaged in CCSSO's DLRT initiative were: Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, and New York.

<sup>2</sup> The national organizations represented in the Communications and Advocacy Work Group were: American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE), Center for American Progress (CAP), Data Quality Campaign (DQC), Education Commission of the States (ECS), Education Testing Service (ETS), Education Trust, National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), National Center for Teacher Quality (NCTQ), New America, and Teach for America (TFA).

<sup>3</sup> Council of Chief State School Officers. (2018). Preparing “Learner-Ready” Teachers: Guidance from NTEP States for Ensuring a Culturally Responsive Workforce. Washington, D.C.: Council of Chief State School Officers. From <http://www.ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/Preparing%20Learner-Ready%20Teachers.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> National Education Association. (2008). Diversity Toolkit Introduction. From <http://www.nea.org/tools/diversity-toolkit-introduction.html>

<sup>5</sup> Council of Chief State School Officers. (2018). Preparing “Learner-Ready” Teachers: Guidance from NTEP States for Ensuring a Culturally Responsive Workforce. Washington, D.C.: Council of Chief State School Officers. From <http://www.ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/Preparing%20Learner-Ready%20Teachers.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Geneva Gay. (2010). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Teachers College Press.

<sup>7</sup> Gloria Ladson-Billings. (1994). *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*. Jossey-Bass.

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<sup>8</sup> [High hopes and harsh realities: The real challenges to building a diverse workforce](#), Hannah Putman, Michael Hansen, Kate Walsh, Diana Quintero, Brown Center on Education Policy, The Brookings Institution, August 2016

<sup>9</sup> [Can Minority-Serving Colleges Help Create a More-Diverse Teaching Force?](#) Madeline Will, Education Week, September 19, 2017

<sup>10</sup> [Teacher Recruitment and Retention: It's Complicated](#), Debra Viadero, Education Week, January 23, 2018

<sup>11</sup> [High hopes and harsh realities: The real challenges to building a diverse workforce](#), Hannah Putman, Michael Hansen, Kate Walsh, Diana Quintero, Brown Center on Education Policy, The Brookings Institution, August 2016

<sup>12</sup> [Can money attract more minorities into the teaching profession?](#) Michael Hansen, Diana Quintero, and Li Feng, Brown Center on Education Policy, The Brookings Institution, March 20, 2018. Note: the authors “caution that this analysis cannot identify causal relationships between district policies and teacher diversity (causality could flow in either direction, or from a factor common to both). Rather, this exercise is intended to identify which policies are correlated with workforce diversity, as they may offer a good starting place for further exploration on this issue.”

<sup>13</sup> [Teacher Diversity Gap Poses a Steep Climb](#), Madeline Will, Education Week, August 30, 2016

<sup>14</sup> See [Teachers in the US are even more segregated than students](#), Michael Hansen and Diana Quintero, Brown Center on Education Policy, The Brookings Institution, August 15, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> See [We cannot simply hire our way to a more diverse workforce](#), Michael Hansen and Diana Quintero, Brown Center on Education Policy, The Brookings Institution, August 18, 2016

<sup>16</sup> [Toward a Conceptual Framework of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: An Overview of the Conceptual and Theoretical Literature](#), Brown-Jeffy, S., & Cooper, J. E. .Teacher Education Quarterly, 38, 1, 65-84. (March 07, 2012)