

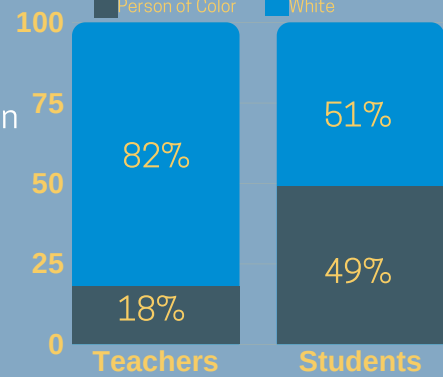
THE CASE FOR DESCRIPTIVE REPRESENTATION IN EDUCATION

ANU JOY

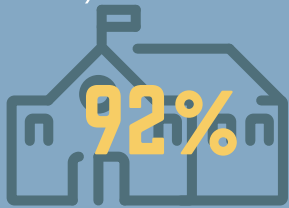
APRIL 19, 2020

DIVERSIFYING THE TEACHING WORKFORCE

Diversity in U.S. Schools in 2012
(King, McIntosh, & Bell-Ellwanger, 2016)



Diversifying the workforce is the process of increasing the racial/ethnic composition of teachers in schooling to reflect the ethnic makeup of the student population, known as descriptive representation (Goings, Walker, & Cotignola-Pickens, 2018). A lack of representation has been plaguing American schools since racial integration but was only widely studied starting in the 1980s. Researchers discovered the Teacher Diversity Gap: the difference in racial representation between non-white students and non-white teachers, which has been widening since the 1970s and, as of 2014, measures to **30 percentage points** in difference (Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012 and Bireda & Chait, 2011).

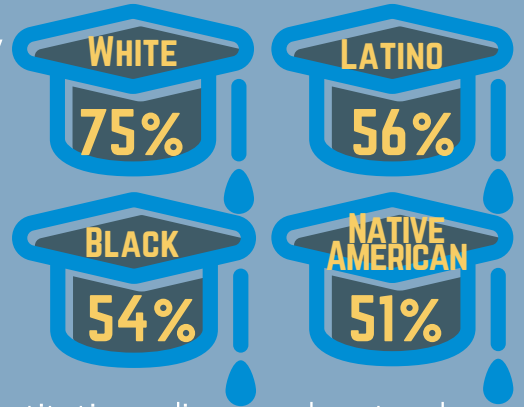


OF 39 LARGE SCHOOL DISTRICTS EXPRESSED THEIR NEED FOR GREATER DIVERSITY

This lack of racially representative teachers is most prominent in large urban schools, primarily due to the large proportion of minority students in urban schools (Clewel & Villegas, 1998).

There are a number of possible reasons for the low number of minority teachers including low systemic graduation rates among minority students, where a high school degree is required for the teaching profession (Bireda & Chait, 2011). Therefore, systematic patterns decrease the possibility of minority students in becoming teachers. Additionally, negative experiences with teachers in schooling, such as stereotyping, have been shown to deter minority students from the profession. The pool of minority teachers is therefore small to begin with (Bireda & Chait, 2011).

High School Graduation Rates



Beginning in the 1980s, many states and private companies started instituting policies, such as teacher cadet and financial incentives, as seen in North Carolina, but no uniform or overwhelmingly successful program has been implemented (Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012). Diversifying policies have not been instituted commonly because of myths such as that minority teachers are less effective than white teachers—which has been disproven and is instead dependent on race of a student (Douglas, Lewis, Douglas, Scott & Garrison-Wade, 2008).

WHY DO WE NEED DIVERSITY IN THE TEACHING WORKFORCE?

Diversity in teachers has been shown to greatly benefit students, especially students of color, for three main reasons (Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012; Clewell & Villegas, 1998; Goldhaber, Theobald, & Tien, 2015; Goings, Walker, & Cotignola-Pickens, 2018):

Teachers serve as role models

Teachers of color are seen to increase self worth for students of color, decrease isolation that students of color may feel, and eliminate the myth of inferiority, which have all been seen to increase long-term professional success in students of color. Among Black student-teacher pairs, students were less likely to be seen as disruptive, which has been seen to increase future student achievement (Goings, Walker, & Cotignola-Pickens, 2018). While some say this rationale has not been quantitatively proven, qualitative studies have proven this stated impact (Villegas & Irvine, 2010).



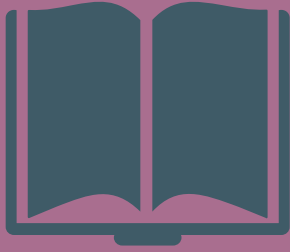
Decreases stress on the workforce

The presence of minority teachers in urban schools has been shown to both increase the number of educators in the most needed school districts and in turn lead to greater retention of minority teachers. Minority teachers have been seen to be more likely to remain at large urban schools once they have entered the workforce, as exemplified in a longitudinal study of a California school district



"where Latino teachers were more likely than White teachers to remain in low-performing, high-minority schools" (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). This is extremely important as urban schools are more likely than rural schools to lack racial representation (Clewell & Villegas, 1998).

Increase academic outcomes in students of color



Due to a multitude of factors, including high expectations of students of color, using "culturally relevant teaching," and tackling racism in teaching, teachers of color are shown to increase academic outcomes in students of color. This had led to better scores in reading and mathematics for elementary-aged students and decreased drop out rates among students of color, especially seen in Hispanic students (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Diversity in the workforce has also been seen to close racial achievement gaps among Black students (Goings, Walker, & Cotignola-Pickens, 2018).

A combination of these factors have been shown across case studies to promote both academic achievement and the possibility of a professional career through many avenues. Thus, diversity in education is important to achieve an equitable education.

POSSIBLE POLICY SOLUTIONS

- There are many levels of actors that can institute policies, including school districts, states, federal government, and private institutions. The policies below explore methods applicable to all levels.
- 5 main types of policies to improve diversity in the teaching workforce (Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012):
 - **Financial incentives for recruitment**
 - Relocation/housing packages and scholarships are offered to minority teachers and teachers in training, as used effectively in Tennessee in promoting the hiring of minority teachers, seen in the gradual increase in racial diversity over the past 5 years (Tennessee ESSA Leadership Learning Community, 2018).
 - **Creating government mandates**
 - These policies include both state and federal mandates which require certain agencies, such as school system central offices, to hire a particular amount of minorities in a defined time period. Today, 17 states currently employ mandates. Tennessee requires school districts to fulfill certain minority recruitment goals to match the racial makeup of students. While there could be an issue of constitutionality, government mandates are highly effective when combined with other strategies, as evidenced by the number of states engaging in this method (Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012).
 - **Promoting certain recruitment programs**
 - This method would include outreach to HBCUs and conducting job fairs, as already implemented by many school districts. Job fairs have been associated with streamlined recruitment, and while many argue that students of color may be excluded from fairs (Brosnan, 2001), this is not the case when job fairs are conducted at HBCUs and other minority specific institutions (Goings, Walker, & Cotignola-Pickens, 2018).
 - **Establishing recruitment centers**
 - While research does not show explicit outcomes of these, recruitment centers are often housed under school districts or within certain universities where interested candidates can explore the career opportunities. 6 states have adopted this method but effectiveness has not been reported (Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012).
 - **Alternate certification programs as a pathway to teaching**
 - Grow Your Own programs are the most prominent example of alternate certification pathway programs, where high school students are recruited with a contract to be an educator in a certain school district, serving as a pathway to teaching. While these programs have gained commentary of decreasing self-efficacy once in the program (Versland, 2013), there are many opportunities for agency if the programs are designed properly, seen with great success in North Carolina and Iowa (Goldhaber, Theobald, & Tien, 2015 and Bireda & Chait, 2011). Paraeducator programs, in which teacher assistants can gain easy access to teacher certification, have increased the number of bilingual minority teachers in Los Angeles (Genzuck & Baca, 1998).

RECOMMENDATION

Ideally, a federal policy to create uniform state policies should be implemented to promote greater descriptive representation in education across the nation. The federal policy should create broad policy requirements for states through a government mandate, including implementing alternate certification programs, based on the case studies shown, in high need districts and using a variety of heightened recruitment programs. A mixture of these policies will be expected to narrow the Teacher Diversity Gap, as states like Iowa and Tennessee have shown success in hiring a larger number of minority educators. States will still have leeway in deciding what type of recruitment programs to implement, but this bi-layer policy will ensure greater diversity in teaching. As these methods show, greatest effectiveness can ideally be achieved by combining government mandates, recruitment programs, and alternate certification programs in a federal guideline model for states.

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