



# Championing a Stronger, More Diverse Educator Workforce

## A Congressional Call to Action

Our nation's education system is at an inflection point. With unprecedented drops in student achievement and sizable staffing challenges in districts across the country, we must invest in evidence-based strategies to meet the needs of our students—including cultivating an educator workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of our nation. That's why we launched the One Million Teachers of Color campaign: to capitalize on this unique opportunity by working together to add one million teachers of color and thirty-thousand leaders of color over the next decade. By enacting policies and fueling practices that increase the number of teachers and leaders of color serving in our schools, we can transform our education system so that students emerge from school more prepared than ever to succeed in college, a fulfilling career, or whatever their next steps in life may be. Congress has a crucial role to play in accelerating efforts to strengthen and diversify our nation's educator workforce—and, in so doing, making social and economic mobility and prosperity a reality for all Americans. This federal policy brief contains critical research and actionable recommendations to help you advance our shared goals for students and schools across the country.

**Children of all racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds benefit when they have access to diverse teachers and school leaders. Yet just one in five educators are people of color today, compared to more than half of American schoolchildren.**

### ABOUT US | The One Million Teachers of Color Campaign

The One Million Teachers of Color (1MToC) campaign is a national call to action with the bold goal of rallying the nation to add one million teachers of color and thirty-thousand leaders of color to the education workforce over the next decade. The campaign is led by a Steering Committee, which includes leading experts with the Center for Black Educator Development, The Education Trust, The Hunt Institute, Latinos for Education, Men of Color in Educational Leadership, New Leaders, Teach Plus, and TNTP. Learn more at <https://1mtoc.org> and contact us at [info@1MToC.org](mailto:info@1MToC.org).



## AN UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY | Fueling Learning Acceleration and Belonging with a Stronger and More Diverse Educator Workforce

The COVID-19 pandemic upended traditional teaching structures and, as a result, our students experienced significant “unfinished learning,” equivalent to at least five months in math and four months in reading.<sup>1</sup> Further, the pandemic exposed and exacerbated pervasive inequities in our schools. Those already at a disadvantage before the pandemic hit—children of color, students with disabilities, English learners, young people from low-income families and rural communities—had *even less* access to essential support during pandemic-era schooling and they are now *even further* behind.<sup>2</sup> To address resource, opportunity, and achievement inequities that increased significantly during the pandemic and to create a stronger educator workforce for decades to come, Congress should champion local, state, and national efforts to diversify our educator workforce.



Stronger engagement at school. Greater presence in gifted programming. Better academic performance. Higher high school graduation rates. Higher college enrollment and completion rates.

**Across a range of critical measures, all students, especially children of color, thrive when they have access to teachers and leaders of color.**

Why? Young people thrive—in school and in life—when they have access to safe, supportive, inclusive learning environments paired with rigorous and engaging academic content. Research shows that educators of color are adept at cultivating developmentally appropriate and culturally affirming learning environments for students, especially students of color, at least in part due to their steadfast belief that all children, truly, are capable of achieving at the highest levels.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, research shows that children of all races, ethnicities, and cultures benefit from greater access to teachers and leaders of color.<sup>4</sup> The positive effects of a stronger and more diverse educator workforce are especially pronounced for students of color.<sup>5</sup> For example, a longitudinal study found that Black teachers in elementary schools increase the likelihood of Black students attending college and decrease the likelihood of dropping out of high school, particularly among Black males.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Latino students have higher attendance rates and are more likely to take advanced courses if they attend a school led by a Latino principal.<sup>7</sup> And, overall, Black, Latino, and Asian American students who have teachers of the same race/ethnicity experience a lower likelihood of suspension.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dorn, E., Hancock, B., Sarakatsannis, J. and Viruleg, E. (2021). “COVID-19 and education: The lingering effects of unfinished learning.” McKinsey and Company. Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/education/our-insights/covid-19-and-education-the-lingering-effects-of-unfinished-learning>.

<sup>2</sup> Office of Civil Rights. (2021). Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America’s Students. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/20210608-impacts-of-covid19.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Blazar, D. (2021). Teachers of Color, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Student Outcomes: Experimental Evidence from the Random Assignment of Teachers to Classes. Retrieved from <https://www.edworkingpapers.com/sites/default/files/ai21-501.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Blazar, D. (2021).

<sup>5</sup> Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color. Learning Policy Institute. Retrieved from [https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Diversifying\\_Teaching\\_Profession\\_REPORT\\_0.pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Diversifying_Teaching_Profession_REPORT_0.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Gershenson, S., Hart, C., Hyman, J., Lindsay, C., and Papageorge, N. (2018) *The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers*. National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from: <https://www.nber.org/papers/w252545>.

<sup>7</sup> Grissom, J., Rodriguez, L., and Kern, E. (2017). *Teacher and Principal Diversity and the Representation of Students of Color in Gifted Programs: Evidence from National Data*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1086/690274>.

<sup>8</sup> Shirrell, M., Bristol, T., and Britton, T. (2021). The Effects of Student-Teacher Ethnoracial Matching on Exclusionary Discipline for Asian American, Black, and Latinx Students: Evidence From New York City. Retrieved from <https://edworkingpapers.com/sites/default/files/ai21-475.pdf>.

## CONTEXT | Talent Issues Are Significant and Surmountable

School systems across the country are facing difficult staffing challenges. They need help as they work to strengthen, stabilize, and sustain their workforces and accelerate student learning in the years ahead:

- **There is a sizable representation gap.** Despite research showing the profound benefits of a more diverse educator workforce for both students and schools, just one in five educators is a person of color. This statistic has remained stubbornly persistent over the past 20 years,<sup>9</sup> even as demographic shifts have transformed the student population such that, today, more than half of American schoolchildren are young people of color.<sup>10</sup> In 97% of school districts, the percentage of students of color exceeds the percentage of teachers of color, and 25% of public schools do not have a single teacher of color on staff.<sup>11</sup>
- **Educators are burnt out, and the toll may be especially severe for educators of color.** Morale took a hit during the pandemic; as a result, more than half of teachers plan to quit due to workplace stressors<sup>12</sup> and nearly 40 percent of principals plan to leave the profession in the next three years.<sup>13</sup> These findings reflect the experiences of educators across district, public charter, and private schools, and in urban, suburban, and rural settings. Educators of color tend to leave the profession at a higher rate than their peers<sup>14</sup> and the acute stressors of pandemic-era schooling may accelerate this trend,<sup>15</sup> further widening the representation gap in the years ahead.
- **Education leaders want to build and maintain a diverse educator workforce, but they need help.** In a 2022 survey of district and charter network leaders, 8 out of 10 expressed a strong personal commitment to diversifying their school leadership corps. Yet in that same survey, more than 60% of respondents said their system *simply does not know how to build a diverse pipeline*.<sup>16</sup>

To address urgent student needs and stabilize our educator workforce, we must tackle head-on the systemic issues that discourage people of color from pursuing and establishing sustainable careers in education. These issues are *real* and they are *surmountable*.



**This is not just an education issue—it is a national economic issue. Addressing barriers to growing and diversifying the educator workforce is essential if we are to make social and economic mobility and prosperity a reality for all Americans.**

<sup>9</sup> For teacher-specific data, please see <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020103/index.asp>. For principal-specific data, please see [https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ntos/tables/ntos1718\\_19110501\\_a1s.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ntos/tables/ntos1718_19110501_a1s.asp).

<sup>10</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. (2021). "Racial/Ethnic Enrollment in Public Schools." The Condition of Education. Retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe\\_cge.pdf](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_cge.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Based on a recent analysis from TNTIP that leverages data from National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data for 3 states (ME, NH, VT), and state-level data requests covering 48 states (41 of which reflect data as recent as 2021-22 or 2022-23)

<sup>12</sup> National Education Association. (2022). Poll Results: Stress And Burnout Pose Threat Of Educator Shortages. Retrieved from

<https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/NEA%20Member%20COVID-19%20Survey%20Summary.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> National Association of Secondary Principals. (2020). NASSP Survey Signals a Looming Mass Exodus of Principals From Schools. Retrieved from <https://www.nassp.org/news/nassp-survey-signals-a-looming-mass-exodus-of-principals-from-schools/>.

<sup>14</sup> McCorkell, L. and Hinkley, S. (2019). Retaining Teachers of Color to Improve Student Outcomes. Institute for Research on Labor and Employment. Retrieved from <https://irle.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Travis-Bristol-Policy-Brief-Teacher-Representation-1.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Jotkoff, E. (2022). "NEA Survey: Massive staff shortages in schools leading to educator burnout; alarming number of educators indicating they plan to leave the profession." National Education Association. Retrieved from <https://www.nea.org/about-nea/media-center/press-releases/nea-survey-massive-staff-shortages-schools-leading-educator>.

<sup>16</sup> Gilbert, N., Gran, J., Lewis, A., and Teodorescu, D. (2022). *The Shoulder Tap: Educators of Color on the Leadership Representation Gap – and What We Can Do About It*. Retrieved from <https://newleaders.org/resources>.

# EVIDENCE-BACKED SOLUTIONS | A Three-Point Plan to Strengthen and Diversify Our Educator Workforce

Policy priorities backed by the 1MToC Campaign can help address these challenges by filling gaps along the talent pipeline, and by capitalizing on the commitment of so many education leaders and stakeholders to take bold action to strengthen and diversify our educator workforce. Of note, these recommendations are grounded in research and deeply informed by the perspectives of teachers and school leaders of color<sup>17</sup> and the students, schools, and communities we collectively serve.

## ACTION PLAN

- 1) Build and Expand More Diverse Educator Talent Pipelines
- 2) Invest in Financial Supports and Incentives to Recruit and Retain Educators of Color
- 3) Make Data on Teacher and School Leader Diversity More Transparent and Actionable



Additional detail and specific opportunities for Congressional leaders to advance local, state, and national efforts in these three areas are outlined below.

## 1 | Build and Expand More Diverse Educator Talent Pipelines



**Increase funding for programs that can spur and fuel local and state educator diversity initiatives**, including the Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) program, the Teacher and School Leader (TSL) Incentive grant program, the School Leader Recruitment and Support Program (SLRSP), the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) program, and the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence program, among others.

**Encourage the U.S. Department of Education to continue giving priority to grant projects that seek to increase educator diversity**, including invitational, competitive, and absolute priorities deployed via a wide range of grant competitions, such as those highlighted above.

<sup>17</sup> Steiner, E.D., et al. (2022). *Prioritizing Strategies to Racially Diversify the K–12 Teacher Workforce: Findings from the State of the American Teacher and State of the American Principal Surveys*. RAND Corporation. Retrieved from [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA1108-6.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1108-6.html).





**Continue supporting the Department in their work to develop guidance on how states and districts/charter management organizations (CMOs) can advance educator diversity goals.** We appreciate the work of Congress in directing the Department to release guidance on state and local uses of federal funds to increase educator diversity. Forthcoming guidance should highlight funding sources that can support such efforts. In addition, guidance should highlight the responsibility of districts/CMOs to provide students with equitable access to effective teachers and school leaders, and make the connection between educator effectiveness and educator diversity explicit. Guidance should further outline resources districts/CMOs can use to audit their recruitment and hiring processes, and elevate promising local and state efforts to create more equitable approaches.

**Promote Grow Your Own (GYO) programming and increase the supply of English Learner (EL) teachers via the Teacher Quality Partnerships (TQP) program.** Through the 2022 competition, the U.S. Department of Education clarified that TQP can be used to support GYO programs.<sup>18</sup> Congress should include report language in future appropriations bills that directs TQP funds toward effective GYO programming. Further, the report language should encourage TQP applications that support the development and strengthening of high-quality teacher preparation programs that enable graduates to meet licensure or certification requirements to teach ELs (in response to the growing population of multilingual learners across the country, with 31 states experiencing shortages of EL teachers.<sup>19</sup>)

**Strengthen the TQP program to better support diverse leadership.** Congress should amend TQP to ensure eligible entities may choose to focus exclusively on principal preparation or support (vs. exclusively teacher development with leadership as an optional program component, as under current law). Further, Congress should include a priority for high-quality principal preparation and support programs run by Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and other Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), as well as states, districts, CMOs, and nonprofits focused on recruiting and preparing teachers and/or school leaders of color.



**Promote high-quality preparation and strong retention of educators of color via the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence program,** which supports educator preparation programs at HBCUs, HSIs, and other MSIs. Using authority under HEA section 242(b)(3)(A) and (B), Congress should direct the Department to prioritize projects designed to retain educators of color through high-quality early-career/induction supports and/or mentoring for teachers and school leaders of color.

**Continue investing in Americorps, and elevate public service as a pathway into teaching.** Congress should continue providing robust funding for Americorps, which supports state and local initiatives to offer high-impact tutoring, after-school and summer programming, and other essential services for students. Encourage states, districts/CMOs, and teacher preparation programs to establish strategies to recruit future teachers of color from among Americorps members and alums who served in schools.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (2022). "Education Department Announces \$35 Million Competition to Improve Teacher Quality." Retrieved from <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/education-department-announces-35-million-competition-improve-teacher-quality>.

<sup>19</sup> Joint Letter Supporting Funding for Educator Diversity Programs in FY23 Appropriations: <https://edtrust.org/press-release/joint-letter-supporting-funding-for-educator-diversity-programs-in-fy23-appropriations/>.



## 2 | Invest in Financial Supports and Incentives to Recruit and Retain Educators of Color

**Continue offering incentives that help to remove financial barriers to entry into the profession.** Congress should continue to fund TEACH grants, Perkins loan cancellation, and other federal loan forgiveness programs, including the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. Congress should ensure the Department continues taking steps to improve access to federal loan forgiveness, by raising awareness about educators' eligibility for such programs and providing streamlined resources and support for educators to get their loans forgiven once they have satisfied service and other eligibility requirements.

**Provide school leaders with access to loan forgiveness programs and other incentives.** Congress should amend HEA to include principals, assistant principals, other school leaders, and teacher leaders in Title IV incentives currently designed for teachers, including TEACH grants, Perkins loan cancellation, and other federal loan forgiveness programs. Congress should continue funding—and offering the benefits of—other loan forgiveness programs for which school leaders are already eligible, including the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

## 3 | Make Data on Teacher and School Leader Diversity More Transparent and Actionable

**Update existing data collection activities to track critical school leader diversity measures,** especially via the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) and the Title II Use of Funds survey. The CRDC should ask for schools and districts/CMOs to report on teacher and school leader demographics, and the Title II survey should ask specifically about state and local investments in school leader diversity (in addition to teacher diversity).

**Direct the Department to encourage improved data collection and sharing in support of local and state educator diversity efforts.** For example, in the forthcoming guidance, specifically ask the Department to address how to use state and local report cards to track progress in increasing teacher and school leader diversity across jurisdictions. Such guidance should also include information for states on how to include data on teacher and school leader diversity in state and institutional report cards under HEA Title II. Overall, data should be easily accessible and usable for non-research audiences.



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We are eager to answer any questions you may have about our campaign and recommendations, and to assist you in your efforts to champion a stronger and more diverse educator workforce.

Our team can be reached at [info@1MToC.org](mailto:info@1MToC.org).