

Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

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2014 Policy Issue: Building a Diverse Teaching Force

Brief Description of Issue: The success of efforts to close the student achievement gap may depend in part on our ability to attract, prepare, license, and retain a more diverse teaching force in communities across the country. Several studies highlight the impact on student learning of a teacher cadre that is reflective of the student body. Unfortunately, the number of teachers of color lags behind the increasingly diverse student population across the nation. In 2012, 96% of Minnesota teachers were white, compared with a student population in which 73.7% of P-20 students were white.

Key Points:

- **According to the Center for American Progress (2011), the student body in the nation's public schools will no longer reflect a clear racial or ethnic majority within about a decade.** By contrast, teachers of color represent only about 17 percent of the total U.S. teaching cadre.
- **Research studies have identified the importance to students to have teachers of their own race/ethnicity to serve as role models.** Findings indicate that students of color achieve higher levels of performance on various measures of academic outcomes when taught by teachers of color (CAP, 2011; Dee, 2004; Villegas & Lucas, 2004).
- **Research also points to benefits to students of color when taught by teachers who share their social and cultural background** and who, as a result, may have more connections with their students; have greater respect for students' cultural, community, and familial knowledge; and use culturally relevant pedagogy that focuses on high student expectations (Milner & Howard, 2004; Milner, 2006).

Recommendations:

- **Provide financial support and incentives (e.g., loan forgiveness, grants, and scholarships) to enable a more diverse group of individuals to complete teacher preparation programs leading to licensure, including student teaching.** Such assistance can help attract, prepare, license, and retain adult learners who cannot stop working to pursue teaching credentials, particularly during student teaching and other clinical experiences. One model is the Teaching Fellows Program developed by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.
- **Provide financial support and incentives to teacher preparation programs to enable them to attract, prepare, license, and retain teacher candidates of color.** Selective funding of some programs is a start and additional support is needed.
- **Provide alternative pathways by which paraeducators can prepare and become licensed as teachers.** This could be an effective way to transition individuals from underrepresented groups with a commitment to education into the teaching profession.
- **Mandate that assessments required for licensure are bias-free.** The Board of Teaching should monitor assessment results on the basis of race and ethnicity to assess the extent to which the tests are bias-free.
- **Provide outreach and mentoring to middle/high school students as a means to recruit a diverse group of high-quality candidates to teacher preparation programs,** perhaps through a partnership among the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Board of Teaching, and the Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

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Sources:

- *Excellent Teachers for Each and Every Child: A Guide for State Policy*, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and Partners, December 2013.
- *Teacher Diversity Matters: A State-by-State Analysis of Teachers of Color*, Center for American Progress, 2011.
- *Teachers, Race, and Student Achievement in a Randomized Experiment*, Dee, in *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 2004.
- *Black Teachers, Black Students, Black Communities, and Brown: Perspectives and Insights from Experts*, Milner and Howard, in *The Journal of Negro Education*, 2004
- *The Promise of Black Teachers' Success with Black Students*, Milner, in *Educational Foundations*, 2006
- *Diversifying the Teacher Workforce: A Retrospective and Prospective Analysis*, Villegas and Lucas, in *Developing the Teacher Workforce*, 2004.

Creating a More Diverse Teaching Force: Minnesota Rules and Statutes

The Education Commission of the States published a report in 2003 that identified programs in all fifty states designed to recruit more teachers of color for the nation's classrooms. The ECS report specifically noted four state policies then in place for the purpose of recruitment and preparation. Of those, only two are still in existence. Specifically, the report highlighted the following:

- MN Rule 8700.7600 Subp 5,D, which specifies in part that teacher preparation programs must actively recruit and have in place plans, policies, and practices for admission and retention of a diverse candidate population;
- MS 122A.64, the Minnesota Teacher of Color Program which, until its repeal in 2012, provided financial incentives to recruit and prepare teachers from diverse backgrounds at St. Cloud State University and Winona State University;
- MS 122A.65, Minority Teacher Incentives, which, until its repeal in 2012, offered financial incentives to school districts to encourage and support the hiring of individuals from diverse backgrounds to serve as teachers in the district; and
- MS 122A.63, which continues to provide financial assistance to enable more American Indians to prepare as teachers in the state.

At least two other policy actions were taken in recent years to achieve this same diversity goal:

- **Providing on-going funding to support CUE (the Collaborative Urban Educator program)** through which three private colleges in the Twin Cities are working to meet the needs of urban schools and diverse student populations, and
- **Funding the creation of the Urban Teacher Program at Metropolitan State University** that, in partnership with Minneapolis Community and Technical College and Inver Hills Community College, is working to prepare a more diverse teaching force for urban schools in Minnesota. The percentage of students of color in UTP is currently 30-40% and its faculty and staff are exceptionally diverse. Its work is bolstered by admissions counselors who serve as Cultural Coordinators in Student Affairs, and a faculty-created Empowerment Network Development System coaches and assists African American students navigate the university process.

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