

Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

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Ongoing MACTE Discussions about the Importance of Teacher Diversity within PreK-12 Classrooms

We know that our teacher education programs across the state continue to be called out for their lack of students of color. There is no denying that we must do better. Because of this fundamental understanding and with the recognition that there are no quick fixes, MACTE is moving forward with conversations and actions that we believe will (eventually) lead do more diverse classrooms across the state.

As evidence of these ongoing discussions, please note the words of our current president in a recent letter to education preparation representatives within MACTE:

Diversity, in every definition of the word, is very important to MEC, and we want it to be a continued focus moving forward. Keeping in mind the length of what we are reporting ..., we chose not to include all 5 specific questions on diversity but rather “Differentiate instruction for a variety of learning needs.” While we are not recommending to report out on all 5 questions, MEC strongly recommends that each individual institution include specific information because we recognize the importance of naming what “diversity” means and the areas where instruction must be differentiated to meet those diverse needs.

Students from various socioeconomic backgrounds
Students with IEPs and 504 Plans
Students with mental health needs
Students who are gifted and talented
Students who are English-language learners

MACTE also recognizes the importance of alternative preparation programs that are more likely to attract teachers of color to the workforce. And we continue to be supportive of the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota.

At the upcoming Fall Collaboration, scheduled for October 27, two-thirds of all submissions had a diversity focus.

Finally, we believe that we are justified in this intense focus given the plethora of research that indicates the positive outcomes for students when they have teachers of color.

For example, Hua-Yu Sebastian Cherng, a sociologist at New York University has published a paper with colleague Peter Halpin in *Educational Researcher* with the following conclusion. It seems that students of all races — white, black, Latino, and Asian — have more positive perceptions of their black and Latino teachers than they do of their white teachers. Better perceptions lead to better student outcomes.

In another recent study, researchers found that when students have teachers of the same race, they not only were more likely to graduate but also reported feeling more cared for and interested in their schoolwork.

And finally, if a low-income black student has just one black teacher in elementary school, that student is significantly more likely to graduate high school and consider attending college, a study from John Hopkins University has found.