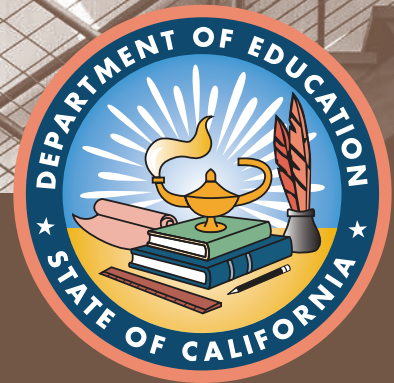


HOW TO INCREASE THE DIVERSITY OF California's Educator Workforce

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Executive Summary

Over the past year, the California Department Education (CDE) took two critical steps to recruit, support, and retain teachers of color. First, in 2020, to address the state’s teacher–student ethnoracial mismatch, Assemblymember Mike Gipson and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond co-sponsored Assembly Bill (AB) 520. One goal of AB 520 was to provide additional state resources aimed at recruiting, supporting, and retaining teachers of color. The intent of AB 520 was to establish the California Diversifying Teacher Grant Program, which would have included awarding one-time competitive grants, totaling \$15 million, to school districts, county offices of education, and/or charter schools that develop and implement new (or expand existing) research-based programs that address local efforts to advance the teacher workforce while emphasizing the retention of male teachers of color.¹ These efforts included strategies for recruiting and retaining teachers of color, specifically by establishing or advancing support programs, and providing outreach and communication approaches.

The second step taken by the CDE and State Superintendent Tony Thurmond to recruit, support, and retain teachers of color was to establish the CDE Educator Diversity Advisory Group. The purpose and charge of the CDE Educator Diversity Advisory Group is to provide recommendations to State Superintendent Tony Thurmond on how the CDE can recruit, support, and retain teachers of color across California. Members of the Educator Diversity Advisory Group responded to State Superintendent Thurmond’s charge by developing a bottom-up approach to policymaking. Specifically, members of the advisory group held four virtual convenings with practitioners across California. The purpose of these virtual convenings was to document how practitioners were supporting and retaining an ethnoracially diverse educator workforce, the barriers they have faced in deepening the educator diversity workforce, and their recommendations to the CDE on policy levers aimed at bolstering teacher diversity efforts.

Below are the five primary recommendations made by the CDE Educator Diversity Advisory Group.

1. Create communities of practice for county offices of education and for local school districts to build their capacity to recruit, support, and retain teachers of color
2. Maintain sustainable funding, measure outcomes for teacher diversity, and identify focal support factors at the state, county, and district levels

3. Provide guidance and accountability for local education agencies (LEAs) so grant funds support the development of foundational equity-based processes/practices
4. Promote deeper partnerships and collaboration among LEAs, institutes of higher education (IHEs), and community-based organizations (CBOs) to build institutional pathways for candidates of color
5. Develop a public awareness campaign for recruiting teachers of color; continue to co-sponsor educator diversity statewide legislation



Contents

- Executive Summary.....1
- Introduction.....4
 - Assembly Bill (AB) 520.....5
 - Formation of the California Department of Education (CDE)
Educator Diversity Advisory Group..... 5
- People-First Policymaking.....8
 - Themes.....8
 - Barriers.....10
- Recommendations to the CDE.....13
 - Create Communities of Practice..... 13
 - Maintain Sustainable Base Funding Sources and Practices.....14
 - Provide Guidance and Accountability for LEAs.....15
 - Promote Deeper Partnerships and Collaboration.....16
 - Disseminate Information.....17
- Conclusion.....18
- Endnotes.....19

Introduction

Although the California teacher workforce is becoming increasingly more ethnoracially diverse, there is a demographic mismatch between teachers of color and the student body in public schools.² According to the most recent California Department of Education (CDE) data, approximately 22 percent of public school students were Non-Hispanic White, while approximately 61 percent of public school teachers were Non-Hispanic White. In addition, while Latinx students made up more than half of the public school population (approximately 55 percent), only approximately 21 percent of California public school teachers were Latinx.

There is a strong evidence base that recruiting, supporting, and retaining an ethnoracially diverse teacher workforce has a positive impact on student engagement, learning, exclusionary discipline, and other outcomes for not only students of color, but all students.³ Research indicates:

- Latinx students are more likely to say they expect to graduate from college when taught by a Latinx teacher, as compared to being taught by a teacher of a different ethnoracial identity.⁴
- Being taught by at least one Black teacher reduced the probability of Black male elementary students dropping out in later years by 39 percent and increased Black students' intentions to pursue a four-year university degree by 29 percent.⁵
- In multiple studies, Black students assigned to a Black teacher scored consistently higher in reading and math than their peers in other classrooms.^{6, 7, 8, 9}
- Asian American and Latinx students were less likely to receive an out of school suspension in years that they had a teacher of the same ethnoracial identity.¹⁰
- Black students taught by only Black teachers are less likely to receive exclusionary discipline than if they encountered only non-Black teachers.¹¹
- Students of color experienced less unexcused absences, likelihoods of chronic absenteeism, and suspensions when taught by teachers of color.^{12, 13}
- All students, regardless of race, have reported feeling both academically challenged and cared for by their teachers of color.^{14, 15}

Working-class communities of color face some of the nation's largest teacher shortages.¹⁶ Nationally, three in four teachers of color work in a quarter of schools serving majority students of color. Given the aforementioned research on the added value of teachers of color for their students of color, ensuring teachers of color are supported and retained in schools plays a crucial role in the outcomes for students of color in CA public schools.

Assembly Bill (AB) 520

Recently, the CDE took two critical steps to recruit, support, and retain teachers of color. First, in 2020, to address the state's teacher-student ethnoracial mismatch, Assemblymember Mike Gipson and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond co-sponsored Assembly Bill (AB) 520. One goal of AB 520 was to provide additional state resources aimed at recruiting, supporting, and retaining teachers of color. The intent of AB 520 was to establish the California Diversifying Teacher Grant Program, which would have included awarding one-time competitive grants totaling \$15 million to school districts, county offices of education, and/or charter schools that develop and implement new (or expand existing) research-based programs that address local efforts to advance the teacher workforce while emphasizing the retention of male teachers of color.¹⁷ These efforts included strategies for recruiting and retaining teachers of color, specifically by establishing or advancing support programs, and providing outreach and communication approaches. AB 520 was approved by the Assembly and Senate Education Committees and informed the current Educator Effectiveness Fund Block.

Formation of the California Department of Education (CDE) Educator Diversity Advisory Group

The second step taken by the CDE and the State Superintendent to recruit, support, and retain teachers of color was to establish the CDE Educator Diversity Advisory Group. The purpose and charge of the CDE Educator Diversity Advisory Group is to provide recommendations to the State Superintendent on how the CDE can recruit, support, and retain teachers of color across the Golden State. State Superintendent Thurmond selected Dr. Travis J. Bristol, an associate professor in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley, to chair the advisory group. Dr. Bristol invited a diverse group of California education researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to join the advisory group (see complete list below).

CDE Teacher Diversity Advisory Group Members

- **Anthony Arinwine**
Teacher, San Francisco Unified Public Schools
- **Ernest Black**
Systemwide Director, CalStateTEACH
- **Travis J. Bristol**
Associate Professor, University of California, Berkeley
Chair, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Board of Directors
- **Desiree Carver-Thomas**
Researcher and Policy Analyst, Learning Policy Institute
- **Rebecca Cheung**
Executive Director of Leadership Programs, University of California, Berkeley
- **Kristen Cruz Allen**
Education Administrator, California Department of Education
- **Jeffrey Garrett**
Sr. Vice President of Leadership Development at Partnerships, Los Angeles Public Schools
- **Shelly Gupton**
Director, California Teachers Association
- **Daniel Helena**
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- **Soo Hyun Han-Harris**
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- **Terri Jackson**
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- **Sarah Lillis**
Executive Director, Teach Plus California

- **Patricia Lopez**
Assistant Professor, California State University, Fresno
- **Hana Ma**
Program Officer, Sobrato Philanthropies
- **Laura McGowan-Robinson**
Chief Executive Officer, Diversity in Leadership Institute
- **Cara Mendoza**
Grants Consultant, Commission on Teacher Credentialing
- **Barbara Murchison**
Former Director, Educator Excellence and Equity Division, California Department of Education; retired
- **Mary Nicely**
Chief Deputy, California Department of Education
- **Abby Ridley-Kerr**
Senior Research and Data Analyst, Education Trust-West
- **Bryan Sapp**
Legislative Representative, California Department of Education
- **Nedim Yel**
Senior Research Statistician, Data Analysis and Statistical Solutions LLC

People-First Policymaking

To respond to State Superintendent Thurmond’s charge, members of the Educator Diversity Advisory Group developed a bottom-up approach to policymaking. Specifically, members of the advisory group held four virtual convenings with education practitioners across California. The purpose of these virtual convenings was to document how practitioners were supporting and retaining an ethnoracially diverse educator workforce, the barriers they have faced in deepening the educator diversity workforce, and their recommendations to the CDE on policy levers aimed at bolstering teacher diversity efforts.

On **March 25, 2021**, the advisory group met with representatives from 10 county offices of education: Merced, Los Angeles, Shasta, Napa, San Diego, Fresno, San Bernardino, Lassen, Kern, and Marin. On **April 15, 2021**, the advisory group met with representatives from eight local education agencies (LEAs): Bakersfield City School District, San Diego Unified School District, Oakland Unified School District, Fresno Unified School District, San Francisco Unified School District, Alameda Unified School District, San Lorenzo Unified School District, and Chula Vista Elementary School District. Then, on **May 13, 2021**, the advisory group met with school administrators and leadership support organizations such as the Diversity in Leadership Institute, the Principal Leadership Institute at UC Berkeley, the Oakland Unified School District, and the Partnership for Los Angeles Schools. Finally, on **May 20, 2021**, the advisory group met with 20 teachers from across the state, some of whom were affiliated with organizations such as Trellis, the California Teacher Residency Lab, and the Black Teacher Project.

Themes

Here, we highlight the major themes from our discussion with county, district, administrator, and teacher leaders. We begin by highlighting the promising work taking place across counties, districts, and nonprofits focused on recruiting, supporting, and retaining teachers of color.

Growing Their Own Teaching Force

At both the county and district levels, leaders pointed to the impact that state investments have had on enabling the development of **“grow your own” teacher programs**. County leaders discussed their utilization of the classified employee

credentialing and local solution grants to develop “grow your own” programs. For example, one participant shared that their county was using grant funding to support classified staff as they move to become certified staff. Another expressed that their county shared a dual-enrollment program with a local community college.

District leaders shared how they were working on their own kind of “grow your own” programs, including pipelines for high school students, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, after-school teachers, and maestros. For example, one participant shared that they held a Future Teacher of Color Job Fair.

Participants then shared that it is equally important to establish cohorts consisting of candidates of color who are aspiring **leaders in education**. This is done by ensuring participation in administrator development programs such as principal pipeline curriculums (e.g., Aspiring Principals Program).

Building Partnerships and Learning Communities

Across the four virtual convenings, participants agreed that **building partnerships** is essential for diversifying the teacher workforce. County and district leaders discussed the partnerships they have developed with IHEs to diversify their teacher workforce by creating pathways using programs focused on targeting students of color.

For example, district leaders discussed how they developed an integrated Teachers of Color Pathway, a scholarship program in partnership with an IHE (including community colleges), to recruit future teachers of color. County leaders also talked about their partnerships, which connect career and technical education (CTE) programs with an education industry sector, and with local community colleges on dual enrollment programs for high school students.

In addition to partnering with IHEs, district and county leaders shared other partnerships for training and nurturing teachers of color to become self-efficacious. Both parties have collaborated with organizations such as the National Equity Project, Unity, various statewide organizations, and thought leaders such as Dr. Gholdy Muhammad.

It was clear after hearing from teachers of color that **affinity groups** are important for these teachers to connect and to learn together. Districts shared that they have various affinity groups for teachers, including teachers who identify as African American and Latinx.

Intentionally Prioritizing Teacher Diversity in Systems and Plans

Both county and district leaders noted how they changed their staffing and programming to focus on recruiting and retaining a diverse teacher workforce. For example, new positions were created in some districts to target diversity, such as diversity and inclusion officers. Additional strategies included combating bias in the hiring process, utilizing scholarships, more effectively tracking hiring and placement, and standardizing human resources practices.

As it relates to support and retention, district leaders discussed the importance of **ongoing and intentional implementation** of their recruitment strategies, specifically pointing out that the human resources office, school leaders, and the financial office must work together to provide the best placements for teachers in residency programs. Participants noted that examples of successful systems in place include:

- departmental diversity and equity leads that meet monthly,
- a “response manager” that serves as an immediate response to teachers’ needs and concerns,
- the implementation of a Special Teacher Development Team, and
- the development of research that looks at strategies for supporting and retaining teachers of color.

Importance of Targeted Funding and Sustaining Programs

County and district leaders noted the importance of federal and state funding for continuing to innovate and build infrastructure to recruit and retain teachers of color. For example, county participants explained that their offices are building their own credential programs and high-retention pathways. District participants also discussed how they are creating new positions focused on diversity, mentoring, and providing support to help teachers of color complete these programs.

Barriers

Beyond the promising practices occurring across counties and local districts, we also asked attendees to share what barriers they experienced around deepening their efforts to recruit, support, and retain teachers of color.

Counties and Districts

When members of the advisory group asked participants to share barriers to recruiting and retaining teachers of color, county office of education and district representatives cited the financial resources demanded of pre-service teachers, such as unpaid student teaching, credentialing, and exam fees. Specifically, those from northern counties documented that it was more difficult to recruit teachers from rural counties than their urban and suburban counterparts.

While some counties reported working partnerships with community colleges (e.g., via dual enrollment programs), others shared that the community colleges in their area were not interested in forming a partnership to recruit and train teachers of color. Several counties noted that the CTE Educational Pathway program is underfunded and underutilized.

Leadership Programs

Leadership programs voiced concern about the sustainability of their programs given their scholarships are funded exclusively through philanthropy. Participants shared that novice school principals do not, on average, have access to high-quality induction. Access to funding for pursuing school leadership is often a barrier for teachers of color. Failure to provide sustainable sources of funding for leadership pipelines for aspiring leaders of color may further exacerbate the lack of diversity in school leadership. High-quality induction leadership programs that are culturally responsive and also focused on recruitment and retention of educators of color were highlighted as ways to fortify and build the pipeline. Specifically, teacher leaders and administrators highlighted programs that provide affinity spaces affirm and build on the shared experiences for educators of color.

Teachers

Current California public school educators were asked to share their experiences and understandings of the barriers teachers of color face in beginning and continuing their careers in public schools. Several educators shared that the financial strain that the degree and certification process places on aspiring teachers is a serious barrier to recruitment. Specifically, the time spent on unpaid student teaching and relatively low salary were mentioned.

Attendees suggested that the unpaid and invisible labor that teachers of color are expected to perform—labor such as translating and cultural brokering between students, families, and school—could and should be compensated. This compensation could ameliorate some of the financial burden high rates of burnout teachers of color face, ultimately improving retention.

Burnout and a lack of connection between white teachers and teachers of color were also shared as serious issues by teachers. Teachers of color are recruited but often feel “pushed out” by administrators and other teachers. The lack of mentors and opportunities to connect with experienced teachers for support were noted as barriers to retaining teachers of color.

Recommendations to the CDE

As we highlighted in this report, there are a wide range of practices that county, district, administrator, and teacher leaders continue to enact to recruit, support, and retain educators of color. However, for diversifying the workforce to be a priority statewide, there are concrete steps that the CDE must take to remove barriers that make it challenging for practitioners to diversify and sustain diversity efforts. To this end, based on our conversations with education practitioners and policymakers across the state, the Educator Diversity Advisory Group provides the following recommendations to the CDE.

Participant convenings revealed several thematic areas of support the CDE might provide:

- 1) **Create communities of practice** by documenting and disseminating information about what counties and districts are doing statewide to foster dialogue about the critical importance of educator diversity and increase the resources available to support the work
- 2) **Maintain sustainable base funding sources and practices** at the state level
- 3) **Provide guidance and accountability for LEAs** around the use of grant funds toward the development of foundational equity-based programs and practices
- 4) **Promote deeper partnerships and collaboration** among LEAs, IHEs and community-based organizations (CBOs) to build institutional pathways for candidates of color
- 5) **Develop a public awareness campaign** for recruiting teachers of color; continue to co-sponsor educator diversity statewide legislation

Create Communities of Practice

- Create communities of practice for county offices of education and for local school districts to build their capacity to recruit, support, and retain teachers of color.
- Officials in county offices of education and LEAs are well versed about what the research says about *how* to recruit, support, and retain teachers of color. What they are in urgent need of is how to implement that research into practice. A

community of practice that falls under the auspices of the CDE could serve as one vehicle to deepen the capacity of county and local district leaders to recruit, support, and retain teachers of color. We encourage the CDE to work with a support provider, ideally the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) to develop the content for the community of practice.

- To partially finance the community of practice, county and district leaders should use funding provided through AB 130.
- One outcome from the community of practice is that the CDE should become the hub for gathering information, documenting programs, and sharing resources via its website and to county offices of education and LEAs. Local and state education leaders can access and share these resources as part of an ongoing dialogue to support program rollout and shifts across the state in anti-racist recruitment and retention processes.
- Create affinity support spaces throughout various phases of teacher and leadership development, including mentorship and peer support spaces within credentialing programs and school districts.
- Support and advocate anti-racist recruitment and retention best practices at all levels of employment, and the development of a robust data system to understand and monitor the impact and efficacy of those practices.
- Support training educators in bias and racial trauma to help them understand and cope within themselves and in their students. In addition, train school leaders to better support educators and particularly educators of color, around these issues.
- Build upon previous efforts, such as the 2012 Educator Excellence Taskforce Report, that identify best practices for educator development by addressing the needs for an educator workforce that reflects the diversity of California's students.

Maintain Sustainable Base Funding Sources and Practices

- Maintain sustainable funding and measure outcomes for teacher diversity and identifying focal support factors at the state, county, university, and district levels.

- Maintain ongoing preparation and professional development programs at the state, county, and local levels to support and maintain ongoing funding sources that foster educator diversity. For example, provide tuition assistance as well as high-quality and culturally responsive mentoring for principals to receive their credentials.
- Ensure that the massive investments that are currently underway are going toward support measures that mitigate barriers for educators of color and are ongoing, regardless of the changing of sociopolitical climates.
- Establish a state-led research and advisory board to study ongoing diversity efforts with the goal of producing an annual brief on accomplishments and areas of continuous improvement.
- Provide targeted seed funding to ensure that the created pathways to support teachers of color gain credentials are sustainable.
- Launch Career Pathways in high schools that serve students of color to encourage careers in teaching with dual credit courses in education and internship experiences in tutoring and classroom assistant roles.
- Create funding streams for subsidizing the preparation of education leaders, with a special focus on recruiting and supporting educators of color to become principals.

Provide Guidance and Accountability for LEAs

- Provide guidance and accountability for LEAs so grant funds support the development of foundational equity-based processes/practices.
- Building comprehensive leadership development programs for teachers and administrators that include stipends, professional learning with an equity lens, confronting anti-Blackness, and coaching. For example, the Principal Leadership Institute at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Diversity in Leadership Institute’s Aspiring Principal of Color Fellowship were named as powerful leadership development models that promote the building of networks and communities of practice to discuss strategies to deepen the capacity of principals to lead.

- Promote the use of and provide guidance to LEAs on using funding for the purpose of mitigating identified barriers for educators and administrators of color.
- Provide access to models of recruitment and retention programs for teachers of color in support for the development of “grow your own” programs, including mentorship, affinity group support, and reimbursement for testing fees and test preparation.
- Provide guidance to districts on incorporating educator diversity and equity through the iterative goal-setting and assessment LCAP process. Additional guidance should be provided to counties for reviewing and providing critical feedback and support to districts in that process.
- Sustain funding for counties and districts to support beginning teachers, including through affinity groups tailored to teachers of color.
- Intentionally collaborate with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to inform its administration of teacher pathway programs with information from the field in order for sustainable efforts to be incorporated by the CTC into grant guidelines.
- Partner with the CTC to expand its current one-year-out survey on teacher certification and employment to five years.
- Support LEAs and county offices of education in establishing a department, team, or task force that focuses on equity that annually disseminates its reporting.

Promote Deeper Partnerships and Collaboration

- Promote deeper partnerships and collaboration among LEAs, IHEs, and CBOs to build institutional pathways for candidates of color.
- Build strong partnerships with LEAs, IHEs, and other educational institutions to comprise a network of structural support for recruiting teacher of color candidates.
- Facilitate dialogue between CTC, LEAs, and IHEs to modernize teacher preparation programs programmatically and curricularly, increase efficacy of teacher support, and ensure teachers are prepared in a culturally responsive way.

- Promote expanding and strengthening partnerships among high schools, community colleges, and four-year universities to establish a teacher pathway for students of color, starting with Career Pathways for Teaching at the high school level.
- Forge partnerships across the System of Support and other CDE initiatives such as 21CSLA.

Disseminate Information

- Develop a public awareness campaign that highlights the positive impact teachers and leaders of color have on improving their students' outcomes.
- Co-sponsor statewide legislation that supports the recruitment and retention of teachers of color.
- Create a public campaign that highlights how Proposition 209 limits the state's ability to work with LEAs and institutions of higher education to develop recruitment and retention programs that target prospective educators of color and diversify the educator workforce.
- Continue to expand multiple pathways of demonstrating subject-matter competency toward teacher certification that addresses the systemic testing barriers to teacher licensure (e.g., expand the Subject-Matter Competency requirement to make individual courses count toward the requirement of degree area).

Conclusion

This report underscores the importance of recruiting, supporting, and retaining teachers of color in the state of California and across the country. Although current practices and policies are promising, the work is not over. Many teachers of color face barriers that perpetuate the disproportionately White teacher workforce in a majority student-of-color public school population. The state can and should implement the aforementioned efforts to create a more diverse teacher workforce that will better support students and the education system at large.

Endnotes

The following section includes endnote citations for noted information in the document.

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