



CLOSING GAPS

*DIVERSIFYING MINNESOTA'S
TEACHER WORKFORCE*

February 2015



"Do work that matters."

Vale la pena."

GLORIA E. ANZALDÚA



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#TeacherDiversityMatters

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opportunities
empowerment
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Educators & Excellence
Minnesota

LETTER TO MINNESOTA'S STUDENTS OF COLOR

To Minnesota's Students of Color,

You don't need a politician or an academic to tell you what makes a great teacher. If you think back to an amazing teacher you've had, she could most likely be described as someone who pushed you to do more than you thought you were capable of, and all the while made the challenges of learning fun. More than anything, we hope you have had the chance to feel the impact of a dedicated and talented teacher who both increased your skill levels, and your confidence and interest in learning.

We also hope you have the opportunity to learn from teachers who are not only great, but also share critical elements of your identity, such as race. There is something indescribable about the impact a teacher of your own race can have on you. There are also quantifiable academic and social benefits, which have shown us that diversity is a central tenet of a high-quality teaching force.

It will likely not surprise you that your chances of having a teacher of color in Minnesota are slim. From schools in Minneapolis to Worthington to Saint Cloud, your classmates increasingly represent the entire spectrum of diversity. Yet, your teacher population remains 96 percent white.

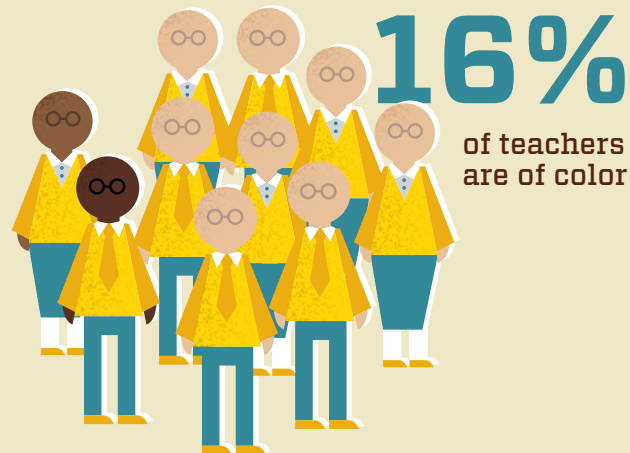
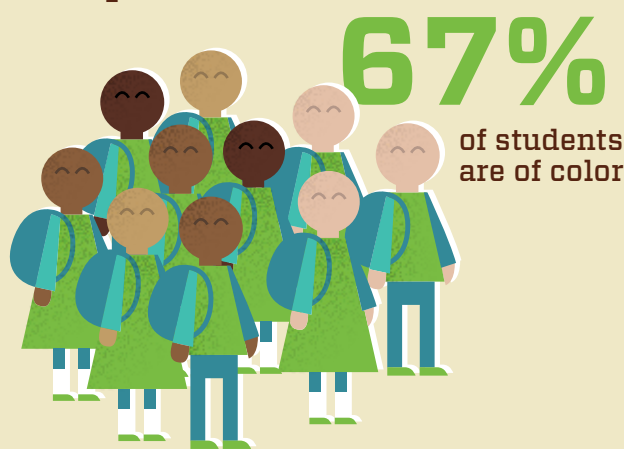
We, a diverse team of educators, know that if something is important to you, it should be important to us. That's why we have to do more than just hope; we must act. We are committed to advocating for solutions that will help to diversify Minnesota's teacher workforce. We've taken up this issue, studied, debated, and discussed the policies that impact teacher diversity for months. All the while, we've kept in the front of our minds why we chose this topic—because teachers of color can have a strong and positive impact on not just you, but all students. We believe all students deserve the opportunity to learn from teachers of diverse backgrounds and to see what an asset diversity is within our society.

We ask you to stand with us in urging policymakers to act both with hope and urgency so that you and all students have the opportunity to learn from educators who represent the same wonderful diversity that you bring to our classrooms.

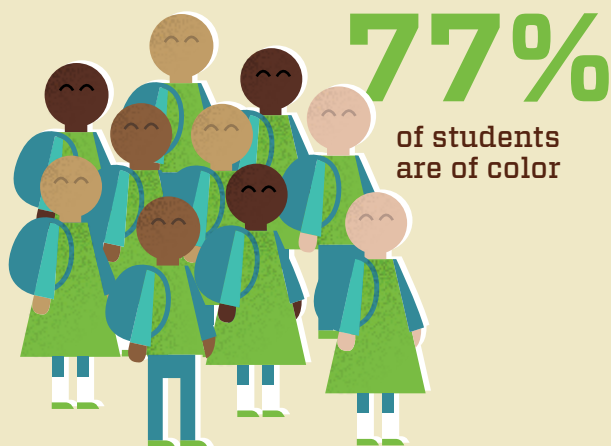
The Educators 4 Excellence-Minnesota 2015 Teacher Policy Team on Teacher Diversity

Fig. 1 The Current State of Teacher Diversity in Minnesota

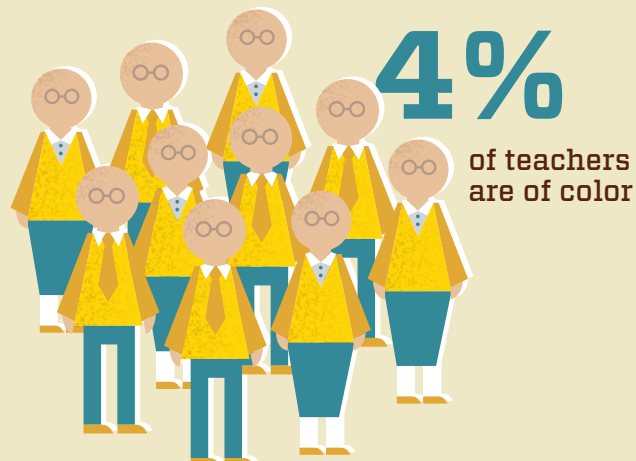
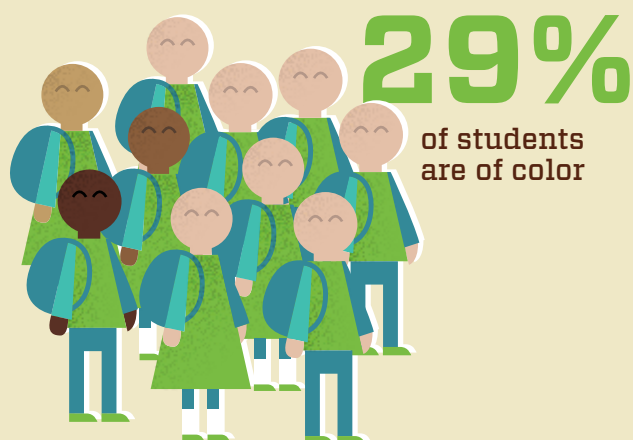
Minneapolis



St. Paul



Statewide



TEACHER DIVERSITY MATTERS

THE ISSUE

As of 2014, students of color constituted a majority of the nation's K-12 population (50.3 percent). Yet the teaching workforce remains largely white (about 82 percent).¹ Locally the disparity between the racial makeup of students and teachers is even greater (see graphic). Sixty-seven percent of Minneapolis students are people of color, yet only 16 percent of teachers identify as people of color.² St. Paul has 77 percent students of color, compared to 17 percent teachers of color.³ This gap affects communities beyond the metro area as well. For example, Worthington, Minnesota, has a student population made up of 65 percent students of color, and few teachers of color. Austin, Rochester, and other areas beyond the metro have similar gaps.

From our experiences as educators, we realize that addressing the gap between teacher and student demographics is critical to addressing the opportunity gaps that exist between students of color and American Indian students and their white, often more affluent, peers. We have felt firsthand how students and teachers alike benefit when there is diversity among the teaching staff. We have had colleagues open our eyes to cultural norms we did not ourselves grow up with or understand, which in turn improved our ability to engage more students and ultimately drive student achievement. Many more experiences like this have made us realize how student

learning is impacted by the extent to which students and teachers feel connected.

Studies confirm our experiences, finding unique academic, behavioral, and social benefits for students of color when there is a diverse teaching staff. For example, teachers of color positively impact academic outcomes for students of color in areas of attendance, standardized test scores, advanced-level course enrollment, and college enrollment rates.⁴ In addition to the academic benefits, students of color experience social and emotional benefits as well. When teachers of color are paired with students of color, discipline referrals and referrals to special education decrease.⁵ Further, teachers of color can serve as meaningful role models in students' academic and personal development. Studies have documented how teachers of color can boost the self-worth of students of color and help them strive for social success.

It is important to recognize that one of the most critical factors for student success is a teacher who sets high expectations and believes in the potential of every student. This mind-set is not limited to one race or another, meaning that white teachers can and do serve students of color well. We recognize that simply recruiting more people of color into teaching is not enough. We also recognize the importance of all teachers developing key mind-sets and skills required to drive achievement among

"Ultimately, all children in America, no matter who they are or where they are from, deserve a quality education so they can have autonomy over their destinies. Having a more diverse teaching force is one component of making this happen."

James Kindle, New-to-country Accelerated Bilingual Academic Development (NABAD) program third- to fifth-grade teacher at Anne Sullivan Communication Center

“I didn’t have a teacher who looked like me until fifth grade. Having a Latino teacher drastically changed how I felt about learning, and how I felt about myself. For the first time, I felt smart. It influenced my decision to become a teacher and is a reason I continue to teach.”

Grecia Zermeno-Castro, Second-grade teacher at Bancroft Elementary IB World School

students from diverse backgrounds. Cultural competency is a skill all teachers can learn and utilize to help them navigate diverse classrooms, but there are additional social, academic, and emotional benefits for students of color when they are taught by teachers who look like them.

Finally, we believe all students, including white students, are disserved by the lack of diversity in our teacher workforce. When a majority of teachers are white and the support staff is often a majority of color, we reinforce hierarchical stereotypes that are damaging to all of our students. This discourages our students of color from imagining themselves as teaching professionals. Additionally, students served by a more diverse teaching force are better prepared for the increasingly globalized society they will experience in the workforce.

As a group of educators, we find the state of teacher diversity in Minnesota unacceptable. Not only is teacher diversity one of the most important policy issues to us personally, but it is critical to improving educational outcomes for all of our students. We were motivated to dedicate our time, meet, and write this paper to offer solutions for how teacher diversity in Minnesota could be improved.

THE DEFINITIONS

During our meetings, we deliberated our collective definition of diversity. First, we wish to acknowledge the importance of increasing teacher diversity in every sense of the word, defining diversity to include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, and more. We seek a teaching force as diverse as our learners—and representative of our communities.

In addition to emphasizing the importance of diversity in the broad sense, we call special attention to racial diversity in this paper. We frequently and intentionally use the terms “teachers of color” or “people of color” here to describe individuals of all racial groups who are not white, including American Indians. We use this term to also acknowledge the relationship among nonwhite racial groups, who share commonality in experiences with racism—while acknowledging that individual people of color experience racism differently.

It is important for us to specifically call out race because when diversity is discussed in the broadest way, we notice that people sometimes shy away from talking about race directly. For example, income often gets used interchangeably with race when talking about opportunity gaps. Poverty significantly impacts education and rightly deserves a prominent place in our conversations. However, when we only discuss poverty and ignore race, we miss a set of issues that is present regardless of class. Because of America’s history and current racial context, educators must acknowledge that we have students entering our classrooms who are experiencing the effects of systemic racism, which can be different than the effects of poverty.

OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recruitment



Recommendations for recruiting, training, and licensing a more diverse teacher workforce

- 1 Traditional teacher preparation programs and districts should recruit high school students of color into the teaching profession and support them through college graduation.
- 2 The state should require teacher preparation programs to publicly report information on teacher candidate outcomes disaggregated by race.
- 3 The state legislature should fund the expansion of school- or community-based teacher preparation pathways.
- 4 The Board of Teaching should create clear and streamlined pathways for teachers licensed in other states to enter Minnesota classrooms.

Induction



Recommendations for ensuring new teachers stay, develop, and thrive in their early years

- 1 Districts should facilitate district-wide learning cohorts for teachers.
- 2 Districts should provide high-quality mentorship programs for all new teachers.

Retention



Recommendations for ensuring teachers of color thrive as leaders in our classrooms and schools

- 1 Districts should deliberately cultivate culturally inclusive environments for teachers and students.
- 2 Districts should create new compensation and career ladder opportunities.
- 3 The state should require school districts to use performance before seniority in layoff decisions.

Districts should publicly release a racial impact analysis before layoffs occur.

RECRUITMENT: THE CURRENT PROBLEM

The first step to diversifying the teacher workforce is to ensure that the pipeline of candidates into the teaching profession is diverse. Only 50 percent of students of color graduate from Minnesota high schools, limiting the number of potential teachers of color. Only half of those who graduate high school go on to attend college.⁸ Many students of color face additional challenges during college, and half of those who enter college do not attain a degree within six years, narrowing the pool of potential teacher candidates of color even further.⁹

Additionally, many high school and college students of color do not see teaching as a desirable profession for a number of reasons including:¹⁰

1. The lack of prestige associated with the profession;
2. Low starting salaries with few opportunities for significant increases until late in the career track;
3. Negative experiences in the K-12 school system;
4. The dearth of role models of color in teaching positions; and
5. Cost barriers of teacher preparation coursework and multiple months of unpaid student teaching.

In this section, we present policy solutions that could help alleviate these barriers and create a more diverse pool of potential teachers. These solutions are critical to taking advantage of the increasingly diverse student population to recruit a more diverse pool of teachers.

RECRUITMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECRUITING, TRAINING, AND LICENSING A MORE DIVERSE TEACHER WORKFORCE

- 1 Traditional teacher preparation programs and districts should develop a comprehensive system of incentives and supports for recruiting and supporting prospective teacher candidates of color from high school through college.

RATIONALE: Traditionally, colleges and universities (and especially schools of education) passively wait for students to apply for their programs and accept the candidates who meet their criteria. Instead, colleges and teacher preparation programs could actively target students of color in high school, who would potentially make great educators.

In addition, colleges need to combat high dropout rates by employing strategic and proactive supports for students of color that have proven successful in other institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs).

We also must make teacher preparation programs affordable for all students. Recruitment efforts should be tied with incentives to make teaching possible for students from diverse backgrounds, including from low-income households. Financial incentives could start in high school, and persist through college and beyond.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Teacher preparation programs should partner with high schools to identify promising students of color and provide opportunities to explore teaching careers, while obtaining credits through dual credit programs or Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO).

The programs should:

- Work with students from 10th grade through graduation.
- Emphasize teaching skills, coursework, and pedagogy.
- Help students complete college and financial aid applications.
- Provide exposure to a college campus, atmosphere, and coursework.

The state should work with teacher preparation institutions to offer scholarships, full tuition, or loan forgiveness modeled after the federal TEACH grants to program participants who commit to teaching in high-needs schools for a set number of years.

Once students graduate from high school and enroll in college, institutions should use proactive strategies to support teacher candidates of color who are prominent in HBCUs and TCUs. These practices could include “intrusive advising,” professors developing deep and meaningful mentorships with students, using cohort models like the Posse Foundation model, and more.¹¹

CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS: A formal partnership program between high schools and teacher preparation programs, while ideal, does not need to be set up to start early recruitment and teacher development. For example, Como Park High’s Future Educators is a club for high school students interested in exploring teaching as a career. It is part of a broader push by St. Paul Federation of Teachers (the local union) to cultivate talented teachers—especially teachers of color—from within the school district to return to teach.¹²

The state should require teacher preparation programs to publicly report information on teacher candidate outcomes disaggregated by race.

RATIONALE: The U.S. Department of Education recently announced draft regulations requiring states to ensure that teacher preparation programs report on outcomes from their programs by 2017. Reporting requirements include data such as how many candidates from the program obtain licensure, how many obtain employment, and how well prepared they are to drive student learning, among other things. The Department announced that it would task state departments of education with the establishment of the specifics of the accountability process.¹³

This is an opportunity to provide much-needed transparency and accountability for colleges of education, which are widely perceived as failing to adequately prepare future generations of teachers.¹⁴ This added transparency would ensure potential teacher candidates (and the public) could access information on the percentage of a program's candidates who stay enrolled, graduate on time, achieve licensure, and become employed.

Anecdotally, we have seen many students of color drop out of these programs, but more concrete data is needed to understand the magnitude of the problem. Disaggregating the information by race would give the state the opportunity to review how successful each teacher preparation program is at preparing all teacher candidates.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: The Minnesota Department of Education, with the support of the state legislature, should require teacher preparation programs to report graduation, licensure, employment, and new teacher effectiveness data, disaggregated by race. These reports should be accessible to the public via online reporting, similar to data on the success and quality of law schools and medical schools.

Requiring public reporting of outcomes disaggregated by race would accomplish the following:

- Empower candidates of color to select an institution based on its record of success in preparing prospective teachers to attain licensure and secure employment.
- Aid the state in recognizing and replicating practices of teacher preparation programs that excel in preparing teachers from diverse backgrounds.
- Allow the state to intervene or administer consequences (such as withdrawal of funding or accreditation) to programs that are not successful in preparing teacher candidates.

CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS: When the teacher candidate sample size at an institution is small, disaggregating by race could violate privacy. In this situation, the institution should still report disaggregated information to the Board of Teaching, but it should not be made public.



“Teacher diversity matters, and the answer is right in front of us. We need to look to our communities—we need to recruit those people. Often there are parents who have had prior teaching-like experiences in some capacity. We need to think outside of the box and create a space where we are proactive about finding talented people of color at the entry level, and do a lot to support them to become qualified.”

Sarah Clyne, Former Executive Director at Joyce Preschool

3 The state legislature should fund the expansion of school- or community-based teacher preparation pathways.

RATIONALE: Alternative certification programs are more diverse, on average, than traditional teacher preparation programs. Nationally, about 30 percent of teacher candidates in alternative certification programs are people of color, compared with traditional teacher prep programs that average 12 percent.¹⁵ Alternative programs are a promising way to increase teacher diversity, but alternative certification only accounts for a relatively small pool of teacher candidates (about 20 percent nationally).¹⁶

Minnesota currently lacks the variety of pathways into the profession that other states have. In conversations with leaders of prospective grow-your-own programs—those that support educational assistants in becoming licensed teachers—and other alternative teacher preparation programs, we learned that the major barriers to expansion are: 1) funding and 2) lack of will to take new approaches to teacher preparation.

Adopting a multipronged approach to recruiting talent into the teaching profession is critical. Many students at age 18, just embarking on their college trajectories, do not yet know if they want to be a teacher and thus do not enter traditional teacher preparation programs. Alternative pathways enable students to have flexibility to choose teaching as a career later in college or after graduating. In addition, alternative pathways create opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds who are mid-career professionals, veterans, and education support staff already excelling in our schools to more easily become licensed teachers.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE: Minnesota needs to spur innovation in the field of teacher preparation. The state legislature should incentivize new school- and community-based teacher preparation programs through a dedicated funding mechanism.

Current funding streams, such as the Collaborative Urban Educator funding,¹⁷ should be expanded and then opened up for a request for proposal (RFP) process. The RFP should be geared toward new or existing programs that meet the following criteria:

- Recruit high-quality candidates from diverse backgrounds. For example, candidates could be college students, recent graduates, mid-career professionals, or current education support professionals with high GPAs/GRE scores, or candidates with other impressive professional track records.
- Provide meaningful clinical training and support in attaining licensure and ongoing support during placement through the first year of teaching and beyond.
- Specifically outline strategies for supporting teachers of color.
- For existing programs, have a track record of success in selecting, training, and supporting teachers so their student achievement data and teacher evaluation scores are equal to or better than new teachers prepared through traditional programs.

CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS: Programs with strong startup plans should be eligible for state funding and should receive continued (and potentially increased) funding if the program excels. Excellence should be determined by measuring diversity, placement, preparedness and support evidenced by student

achievement, graduate feedback, and teacher evaluation data from its new teachers. It is critical to hold alternative certification programs accountable for the same high standards as traditional teacher preparation in the areas of placement and teacher preparedness, along with diversity metrics. (See recommendation 2 on pg. 12.)

4 The Board of Teaching should create clear and streamlined pathways for teachers licensed in other states to enter Minnesota classrooms.

RATIONALE: Prior to 2011, Minnesota was one of only nine states that did not have a system outlined for teachers licensed in other states to transfer into Minnesota.¹⁸ To address this, a law was passed instructing the Board of Teaching (Board) to outline a process by August 2011 to grant licensure to out-of-state teachers who had “substantially equivalent” teaching preparation and experience. After three years and controversy about inconsistent licensing decisions, the Board created guidance for out-of-state teachers that places point values on academic credentials and other qualifications.¹⁹

The process is still labor intensive, for both the Board staff and the applicant, and there are still inconsistencies in what coursework out-of-state candidates must complete. For example, a math teacher with more than 10 years of classroom teaching in Pennsylvania, New York, and Texas was told she needed to spend thousands of dollars on additional teacher preparation coursework in order to be licensed in Minnesota.²⁰

While the point system is a step in the right direction, more can be done. The Board has an opportunity to create clear and transparent guidelines for out-of-state teachers to earn licensure. We believe in welcoming teachers from diverse backgrounds who can and want to serve

our students, particularly our students of color. We want schools that have trouble filling hard-to-staff positions to have more freedom to recruit excellent teachers from across the country, including from regions with larger populations of teachers of color.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE: The Board of Teaching should create clear, transparent guidance and requirements for attaining licensure for out-of-state teachers. This process should limit barriers for teachers who:

- have taught out-of-state for three years and meet testing requirements and coursework (both of which are clearly and transparently posted online);
- can demonstrate a proven track record of high quality instruction (through evaluations or value added measures). Teachers who demonstrate this success would not need to take additional tests or coursework; and
- are Nationally Board Certified. A number of studies find that students taught by Nationally Board Certified teachers made greater gains on achievement tests than students taught by teachers who are not board-certified.²¹

CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS: When discussing this topic, we felt it was important to remember licensure does not mean employment or retention. We err on the side of recruiting the widest pool possible and allowing principals and their hiring teams the flexibility to determine who is the best fit for a teaching position. Granting Minnesota licensure to teachers who have demonstrated success in other states gives districts and principals more choices, but doesn’t guarantee employment.

“Knowing that a lack of teacher diversity is not a new problem, we need to better understand why teachers of color are not going into the profession, and also why they are leaving the classroom. We need to make systemic changes, and we all must be part of the solution.”

Mary Frances Clardy, Literacy coach at Barack and Michelle Obama Elementary



INDUCTION: THE CURRENT PROBLEM

While recruitment efforts are critical in diversifying our teacher workforce, these efforts are rendered moot if we do not improve our teacher induction process. More than 30 percent of new teachers leave during their first three years, over 50 percent leave within five years, and new teachers of color leave the profession at even higher rates than their white colleagues.²² In some years, more teachers of color leave the profession than enter it.²³ Turnover of new teachers is not only costly (with replacement costs approximated at \$15,000-\$20,000 per teacher), but it also destabilizes school environments.²⁴

The most frequently cited reasons that new teachers leave the profession are a lack of support, the wrong types of support, or not feeling effective.²⁵

Aside from challenges and frustrations shared by all new teachers, there are additional unique factors for teachers of color. New teachers of color face additional burdens such as feelings of isolation and challenges associated with working in hard-to-staff schools, which is where teachers of color are more likely to be employed. We often hear from young teachers of color who have left the profession that a frustrating part of their jobs was dealing with cultural incompetence or low expectations for students from white colleagues. We have heard many examples of teachers of color being asked to handle situations with students of color because of their race—from behavior to communicating with parents and beyond. These situations, which begin immediately upon hire for some teachers of color, are difficult to bear for more than a few years.

INDUCTION

INDUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENSURING NEW TEACHERS STAY, DEVELOP, AND THRIVE IN THEIR EARLY YEARS

- 1** Districts should facilitate district-wide learning cohorts for teachers in their first three years.

RATIONALE: Research suggests that the degree to which new teachers felt they were teaching students well was an important driver of their persistence and, as a result, retention, especially in the first years of teaching.²⁶ In addition to efficacy, feelings of isolation were strongly associated with the retention rates among new teachers of color specifically.²⁷ It is no wonder that high-quality teacher induction programs improve satisfaction and retention of new teachers.²⁸

The research described above strongly resonated with our policy team. A uniting experience for us all was the “sink or swim” environment during our first years of teaching. As we struggled in the front of our classrooms, we had students looking back at us who deserved a great teacher, which magnified our feelings of failure. Experiencing

some challenges early in a career is a part of growth in any profession, but feeling unsupported when the stakes are so high was, at times, overwhelming.

Creating new, district-wide teacher cohorts—or groups of teachers who share commonalities—is one way to bring new teachers together to learn developmentally appropriate teaching skills and build support networks. In these cohorts, new teachers could share struggles, so they did not feel alone, and collectively brainstorm about potential solutions under the guidance of a cohort leader.

While these cohorts benefit all new teachers, we believe they provide a platform to uniquely support teachers of color. New teachers of color who are the only teachers of color at their school could have the opportunity to interact with other new teachers of color from other schools. There could be optional cohort meetings specifically for new teachers of color to discuss their unique challenges and develop solutions.

“Being able to talk with other teachers and reflect on working with students from diverse backgrounds has improved my teaching ability. I take the information from trainings, apply it in my classroom, and hear how colleagues are implementing the ideas. There are variations based on student need, and it has been critical to see and reflect on the positive differences.”

Ayan Mohamed,

New-to-country Accelerated Bilingual Academic Development (NABAD)
program teacher at Anne Sullivan Communication Center

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Districts should facilitate learning cohorts, made up of 15 to 20 new teachers, grouped together by content area or grade level. The cohort model would start with at least three weeks of induction programming before school begins in the summer. Common understanding of mission, mind-sets, and vision are integral to building and maintaining the culture among strong teaching teams. Induction could begin with new teachers developing key mind-sets for success within the school/district. A newly established cohort for teachers of color could begin meeting during this time.

After the initial induction period ends, cohort groups would continue to meet for monthly content-specific professional development days focused on skill building and would include ongoing racial equity training.

Groups would be led by cohort leaders, who should be selected based on their demonstrated ability to teach students from diverse backgrounds. Districts should be intentional and strategic about selecting and developing cohort leaders of color, as well as white teachers with key mind-sets of cultural inclusivity and high expectations for all students. Cohort leaders should also be in the classroom part time, making the cohort leadership role a hybrid position. *(See our career ladder and hybrid position recommendation on pg. 22.)*

2 Districts should provide high-quality mentorship programs for all new teachers.

RATIONALE: Cohort models can help teachers to develop new skills alongside other educators, but new teachers also need “in the field” support and guidance to implement the skills learned in their cohorts. For that reason, high-quality mentors are necessary to help new teachers feel successful and supported.

Studies show mentorship programs can be successful in decreasing new teacher attrition.²⁹ When mentors are prescreened, given adequate time, and compensated

to support new teachers, they can help spark early and lasting improvements in a new teacher’s effectiveness. Not only does a teacher’s increased skill level improve student achievement, but it also improves the teacher’s sense of efficacy, which is connected to retention.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: It is critical for all new teachers to have a highly qualified coach who spends his or her time with a new teacher supporting research-based, developmentally appropriate skills.

Mentor roles could be structured in a variety of ways—including as a full-time role, as a hybrid teacher leadership position, or as an additional opportunity along with full-time teaching. In our view, the best option would be for teacher leaders to serve as mentors to early-career teachers through hybrid leadership positions. These mentors would have a caseload of 10 to 15 teachers and would continue to teach part time, serving in hybrid teaching roles.

(See recommendations for a hybrid role on pg. 25.)

Ideally, these mentors would be selected by the mentee from a pool of teacher mentor candidates all bringing:

- content knowledge,
- demonstrated success in working with students of diverse backgrounds,
- culturally competent mind-sets, and
- ability to teach/lead adults.

It is critical that mentors align their support with the skills and content being taught in the cohort groups. Additionally, mentors should provide strategies for culturally responsive teaching. *(See pg. 21.)*

Mentoring should be required for first-year teachers and optional for second- and third-year teachers.

“My mentor was an important part of my first-year teaching experience, and helped me grow my skill set and my confidence. During my second year of teaching, I no longer had my mentor but felt I needed her. I still wanted and needed feedback on my performance to continue to grow.”

Paula Cole, Third-grade teacher at Emerson Elementary



RETENTION: THE CURRENT PROBLEM

As our student population continues to become more diverse, attrition rates for teachers of color continue to grow.³⁰ Currently, teachers of color are 24 percent more likely to leave teaching than their white counterparts.³¹ There have been increases both in the number of teachers of color who leave to teach at other schools and in those who leave the profession.³²

Across all sectors, including education, there is a strong connection between an organization's environment and its ability to retain people of color.³³ For example, a reason frequently mentioned by teachers of color for moving from one school to another was the lack of equity in a school's policies or practices and an unwillingness to discuss the impact of race on school culture.³⁴ Some teachers of color felt that their schools did not recognize their cultural resources as assets. As a result, they felt alienated from their schools' goals, particularly concerning issues of diversity, antiracism, and social justice.³⁵ Research also shows that a lack of classroom autonomy and decision-making power are the most commonly cited reasons teachers of color leave the teaching profession.³⁶

These reasons for leaving the profession resonated with us. As teachers of color, members of our team have felt isolated in buildings where there was little diversity. At times, the lack of cultural competency exhibited by some colleagues and administrators has been emotionally exhausting and has caused us to switch schools. We also know colleagues of color who have left the profession because of the inability to influence or improve their school climate, specifically for students of color.

We must address the reasons teachers of color decide to leave teaching, and we must also protect newer teachers of color from being forced to leave their positions as a result of layoffs, with no regard for the quality of their performance. We have seen in our careers how the ebb and flow of student population has regularly caused districts to lay off teaching staff based on seniority, which often disproportionately impacts teachers of color who are more likely to have recently joined the profession.³⁷ As a result, some of us (including teachers of color) have been laid off in urban districts like Minneapolis and ended up teaching in suburban districts with lower populations of students of color. Some of our colleagues, on the other hand, chose to leave the profession altogether when they were laid off.

RETENTION

RETENTION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENSURING TEACHERS OF COLOR THRIVE AS LEADERS IN OUR CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS

- 1** Districts and school leaders should deliberately cultivate culturally inclusive environments for teachers and students.

RATIONALE: While the causes of teacher turnover are many and varied, culturally inclusive environments are absolutely essential to retaining teachers of color. For those of us who work in schools with a strong racial justice focus, we experience an environment of trust, coupled with ongoing trainings that equip people with necessary tools to have difficult conversations about race and equity. In many other schools, that trust is absent.

Culturally inclusive schools can and should be systematically fostered, rather than created by chance thanks to exceptional individual leaders. It can be done through deliberate implementation of best practices common across sectors in work environments striving to be diverse.

In addition to cultural inclusivity for adults, culturally competent teaching practices should be threaded into the fabric of daily routines, instruction, operations, and policy.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: To be more culturally inclusive, there are best practices districts can use that are currently being implemented in some districts here in Minnesota, and across the nation. The best practices suggested below reflect important starting places.

DISTRICTS AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP SHOULD:

- Define and measure cultural competence.
- Select a framework, and invest in training.
- Actively monitor staff perceptions of culture and environment.
- Provide ongoing training on culturally responsive teaching techniques.

(For more details, see the appendix, page 28.)

CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS: There is no easy policy solution to creating a culturally inclusive work environment. That is why the importance of strong leadership at the district and school level cannot be overstated. The success of this recommendation depends on leaders' and teachers' continued commitment to implementation.

"There are piecemeal ways we have addressed the disparity between teachers and students of color in Minnesota, but we desperately need something more overarching. We haven't had any real measurable success. Until we look both at recruiting teachers of color, and supporting them by creating welcoming and inclusive environments, little will change."

Mitchell Cooper,

Former teacher, currently Human Relations Manager at Intermediate School District 287

Fig. 2 **Model Career Advancement Ladder**



2 Districts should make teaching an attractive, long-term profession by creating new compensation and career ladder opportunities.

RATIONALE: Ultimately, teachers, like any other professionals, thrive from working to master their craft, having autonomy in making decisions, and increasing their impact. So it's no surprise that decision-making power and classroom autonomy are strongly connected to retaining teachers of color.³⁸

Career ladders can provide structured leadership opportunities that give teachers more autonomy in their work and influence on school decision-making. Career ladders should include a variety of leadership roles so that they engage highly effective teachers from diverse backgrounds, increasing opportunities for more autonomy.

As we know, lack of leadership and autonomy is a significant root cause of poor retention among all

teachers, not just teachers of color. However, this has the potential to uniquely improve retention among teachers of color because they frequently cite lack of advancement opportunities as a reason for leaving; more so than their white counterparts.³⁹

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE: Districts should create meaningful leadership opportunities, including hybrid roles that enable talented teachers to increase their responsibilities and leverage their talents to expand their impact beyond their classroom.

Districts and schools should set goals around and invest in developing their teacher leaders of color. Some leadership roles in which teachers of color could provide unique benefits to new teachers of color or school environment include: 1) mentors; 2) new-teacher cohort leaders; 3) equity coaches;⁴⁰ and 4) school climate leaders.

"I love working in a place where equity and diversity aren't just catch phrases, they're part of our daily work."

Ben Mackenzie, High school English, FAIR School

However, these roles should not be thrust upon the shoulders of teachers of color simply because of their race or ethnicity. Instead, school administration should develop and support teacher leaders of color who express an interest and skill in roles in which they could make a strong impact.

In order for the additional responsibilities of a career ladder to be attractive to accomplished teachers of color, the accompanying compensation would need to convey the value and importance of the roles. In addition, compensation could help keep teachers from leaving the profession for higher-paying jobs in other fields.

Furthermore, we know that too often we are losing teachers of color so early in their careers that leadership roles would not be applicable. In addition to early coaching and development for those roles, districts could also consider changing pay structures so that pay increases can come earlier in a teacher's career if he or she demonstrate effectiveness. For example, instead of having to wait seven years to earn \$60,000 annually, teachers would earn \$60,000 by their third year.

CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS: Districts that have Q Comp can use funds from that program to implement hybrid roles and compensate teacher leaders without requiring additional funding streams.

3 The state should amend the layoff statute to require school districts to use performance before seniority in layoff decisions.

Districts should publicly release a racial impact analysis before layoffs occur to demonstrate how teacher demographics would be impacted by layoffs.

RATIONALE: Layoff policies based solely on seniority, commonly referred to as "last-in and first-out" or "LIFO" offset successful recruitment efforts that get teachers of color into the profession. Minnesota's current system is also quality-blind. It ignores the fact that teacher effectiveness is the single most important in-school factor impacting student achievement. One study used simulations to compare layoff policies based on effectiveness, with those based on seniority. The study found that the difference in the effectiveness of remaining teachers in each simulation was significant and, as a result, so was the corresponding student achievement. Another finding was that future student achievement would be impacted as well.⁴¹

Furthermore, quality-blind layoffs disproportionately affect our students of color. Schools with concentrations of low-income students and students of color often have teachers with less experience, meaning layoffs are concentrated in these schools. One study found that students of color were significantly more likely to have been in a classroom of a teacher who received a layoff notice under LIFO layoff

EXAMPLE: WEST METRO EDUCATION PROGRAM—FAIR SCHOOLS

District policy requires that every employee with direct student contact attend diversity training. Administrators, counselors, teachers, and aides all participate and return ready to work with our diverse students. But that training isn't just a box to check and forget about. The training provides the methods to support equity through instruction, discussion, and relationships with students. In the schools, each staff member commits to using lessons from the training and relies on coworkers to ensure that what is learned becomes practice. Administrators use it to frame evaluations, and colleagues use it to guide conversations about challenges in the classroom.

policies. The performance-based layoff simulation resulted in fewer layoff notices and was much more equitably distributed across student subgroups.⁴² Research also highlights the negative impacts on student achievement as a result of teacher turnover. For example, when teachers leave schools, student achievement declines—both for those taught by the departed teachers and by students whose teachers stayed put.⁴³

In the past, a common concern with altering LIFO has been around the difficulty in measuring teacher effectiveness, especially given most districts' fledgling evaluation systems. We saw this argument play out in 2012, when a bill that would have altered LIFO by requiring performance to be a factor passed through the Minnesota state house and senate but was vetoed by Governor Dayton. Since 2012, a new law has been passed requiring all Minnesota districts to create teacher evaluation and development plans. School year 2014-15 marks the first year all districts will implement multi-measured evaluation systems to assess and support teacher performance. We believe it is irresponsible and inequitable to ignore useful information gathered from multi-measure evaluation systems if there is potential to ensure that students have the best teachers possible.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE: Within the next three years, districts should be required to use performance as the predominant factor in layoff decisions, along with other factors such as seniority.

We believe that amending the current layoff policy is a step in the right direction preventing teachers of color from being disproportionately impacted during budget cuts.

We would also recommend going further by having all districts conduct racial impact analyses prior to layoffs to determine if they will disproportionately impact teachers of color. When there is an impact on teachers

of color, districts should analyze the root causes and take appropriate action to address them.

The state should modify the law governing teacher layoffs to require districts to use performance before seniority in layoff decisions. Districts should work with collective bargaining units to design plans that incorporate multiple factors in their layoff decisions, including seniority, attendance, and leadership outside of the classroom among others. Plans should be included in all local contracts beginning in 2017.

In cases when districts and local bargaining units cannot come to an agreement, the state should impose a default model that is developed by a state task force representing diverse communities. (See example plan in figure 3.)

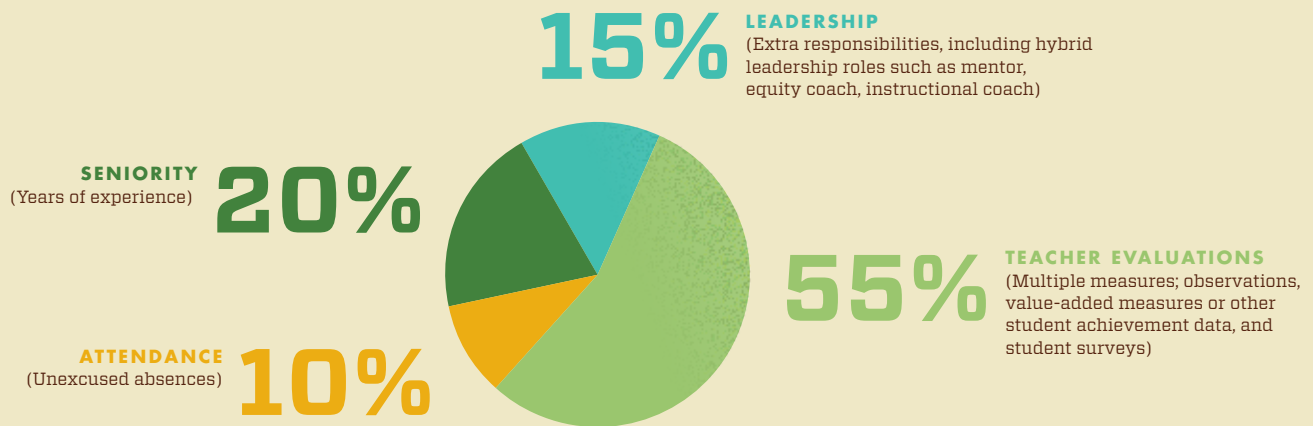
CAVEATS AND CONSIDERATIONS: There is not one perfect measure, so multiple measures of performance and experience should be included in a clear and transparent plan. Additionally, because the teacher evaluation law requires three-year performance review cycles, modifications to the layoff policy should not start before 2017.

Finally, explicit language should be included to prohibit districts from using salary as a factor in layoffs. Transparent layoff plans based on multiple measures that are reliable and objective would protect against the influence of salary in staffing decisions.

CURRENT MINNESOTA LAYOFF LAW

Currently, Minnesota requires districts to lay off teachers in the “inverse order in which they were hired,” unless a different plan is negotiated.⁴³ While some districts have contracts that include small categorical exceptions to strictly seniority-based layoffs, such as protecting bilingual teachers or native language instructors, seniority is the sole factor determining layoffs across Minnesota.⁴⁴

Fig. 3 **Sample Multi-Measure Layoff Policy**



METHODOLOGY

IDENTIFYING E4E'S POLICY FOCUS

E4E conducted focus groups with diverse groups of teachers who work in public district and public charter schools. We polled hundreds of E4E members across Minnesota to identify the most important policy issues affecting teachers' classrooms and careers. Teacher diversity was the most important issue to many of our members. An Equity Action Team of teachers was formed in February 2014, which aimed to launch an advocacy campaign to create meaningful change. After meeting for several months, the team formally launched a Teacher Policy Team to commit to researching and developing policy recommendations.

REVIEWING RESEARCH

We met over the course of two and a half months to review research on recruitment, induction, and retention of teachers of color. We looked at current problems, root causes, barriers, and potential solutions. As we explored solutions, we looked to programs and ideas from across the nation, as well as promising policies and practices right here in Minnesota. We coupled this research with our experiences as educators to craft our recommendations to districts and the state.

CONDUCTING LOCAL RESEARCH

We conducted interviews with teacher colleagues, district leaders, and other education stakeholders to gather critical information about current policies and practices. After developing initial ideas for recommendations, Teacher Policy Team members held focus groups, surveyed colleagues, and hosted a large-group listening session to gather feedback and finalize our recommendations. In total, we gathered feedback from over 200 educators.

CONCLUSION

In the last decade, research has proven that teacher quality is the most important in-school factor impacting student achievement. For that reason, we have seen a series of new policies aimed at improving and monitoring teacher quality. All too often, teacher diversity is seen as an afterthought or an additional challenge to improving teacher quality rather than the asset it is. We know that relationships drive learning, and we have seen firsthand the positive impact that culturally competent teachers, and particularly teachers of color, can have on our students' success.

From our research and our personal experiences, we know the current problem can be fixed through policy change and racial justice-focused leadership. We urge our policymakers at the state and district level to adopt the recommendations outlined here and to seize the opportunity to increase the diversity of our teacher workforce.

Our students deserve leaders who embody the passion, dedication, and skills that we seek to instill in them through our educational system.

APPENDIX:

DEFINE AND MEASURE CULTURAL COMPETENCE:

Districts and school leaders should collaborate with staff to create a working definition of cultural inclusivity for the district. For example, districts could create a rubric with descriptions of what cultural inclusivity looks like for a school and its staff members. Districts could then evaluate individual schools and also have staff evaluate their own schools using a common rubric. This would allow districts to highlight schools that are excelling and to turnkey best practices.

SELECT A FRAMEWORK AND INVEST IN TRAINING:

Districts should provide their staff with tools to have difficult conversations about race. To do this, the district

should invest in a framework, shared across school sites.

School leadership should provide ongoing training on the curriculum and how to infuse those conversations in our work as educators. For example, many districts use Courageous Conversations curriculum paired with ongoing equity trainings. Once the staff has received training, race and equity conversations should be embedded within the day-to-day school operations of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), observations, staff meetings, and more.

ACTIVELY MONITOR STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF CULTURE

AND ENVIRONMENT: Leaders should monitor staff perceptions of culture with frequent staff surveys and a

NOTES

¹ National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_203.50.asp

² Summary Statistics. Racial/Ethnic Breakdown 1985–2014. Minneapolis Public Schools. Retrieved from: <http://studentaccounting.mpls.k12.mn.us/uploads/historyfall1985-2014final.pdf>

³ St. Paul Public Schools Demographics. Retrieved from: <http://www.spps.org/AboutUs.html>

⁴ Ana Maria Villegas & Jacqueline Jordan Irvine. (2010). Diversifying the Teaching Force: An Examination of Major Arguments. Retrieved from: http://www.montclair.edu/profilepages/media/439/user/Villegas_%26_Irvine--2010.pdf

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. Citing Cole, '86; Waters '89; King '93.

⁸ Office of Higher Education, Minnesota State Legislative Report. Retrieved from: <http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/fc/753/pg.cfm>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Anthony Graham and Kimberly D. Erwin (2011). I Don't Think Black Men Teach Because How They Get Treated as Students: High-Achieving African American Boys' Perceptions of Teaching as a Career Option. *The Journal of Negro Education* 80 (3) (2011): 398.

¹¹ Dr. Bridges, Lessons from HBCU for the K-12 Education Sector. For more resources see Dr. Bridges, "Imparting Wisdom: HBCU

Lessons for the K-12 Education Sector" and The Center for School Changes conference page Learning and Teaching with Fire: Lessons from HBCUs and Tribal Colleges.

¹² Mila Koumpilova (2014). Future Educators Have an Edge. Pioneer Press. Retrieved from: http://www.twincities.com/education/ci_25878297/future-educators-have-edge

¹³ U.S. Dept. of Education (2014). Announcement on proposed regulations, Retrieved from: <http://www.ed.gov/teacherprep>

¹⁴ NCQT (2014). 2014 Teacher Prep Review. Retrieved from: http://www.nctq.org/dmsView/Teacher_Prep_Review_2014_Report

¹⁵ National Council on Teaching Quality (2014). Quality of Teacher Preparation Routes Report, citing 2011 survey from the National Center for Education Information.

¹⁶ C. Emily Feistritzer (2011). Profile of Teachers in U.S. 2011. Education Week. Retrieved from: <http://www.edweek.org/media/pot2011final-blog.pdf>

¹⁷ Each budget year, the state legislature grants funding to several universities, including St. Thomas, Concordia, and Hamline, to use for a variety of initiatives aimed at increasing teacher diversity.

¹⁸ Beth Hawkins (2014). Good news (sort of) for transfer teachers in licensing limbo. Retrieved from: <http://www.minnpost.com/learning-curve/2014/04/good-news-sort-minnesota-transfer-teachers-licensing-limbo>.

¹⁹ Those who score 45 or more points and meet basic requirements such as a college degree and passage of the state licensure tests will be granted licenses.

²⁰ Examples collected by MinnCAN, information, Retrieved from: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1PXRJa6qOSmvX8bCd71J2rsjFr25OVJcZrp1fYm3_iA/viewform

²¹ National Research Council (2008). Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs (2008), Retrieved from: <http://www8.nationalacademies.org/onpinews/newsitem.aspx?RecordID=12224>

²² Richard Ingersoll & Henry May (2011). Recruitment Retention and the Minority Teacher Shortage.

²³ New Teacher Center. Retrieved from: <http://www8.nationalacademies.org/onpinews/newsitem.aspx?RecordID=12224>

²⁴ National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007). The High Cost of Teacher Turnover. Retrieved from: <http://nctaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/NCTAF-Cost-of-Teacher-Turnover-2007-policy-brief.pdf>

²⁵ Ingersoll (2012). Beginning teacher induction. Retrieved from: <http://www.schoolturnaroundsupport.org/sites/default/files/resources/Beginning%20Teacher%20Induction.Ingersoll.2012.pdf>

²⁶ Susan Moore Johnson, Jull Harrison Berg, & Morgaen L. Donaldson (2005). Who Stays in Teaching and Why: A review of the Literature on Teacher Retention. Cambridge, MA: The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers,

commitment to transparently analyzing results. Survey questions should gauge how culturally inclusive teachers feel the school is and how much trust they have in the school leadership. Survey results should be analyzed and discussed in staff meetings, followed by action to address problem areas that exist.

PROVIDE ONGOING TRAINING ON CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING TECHNIQUES: Culturally

Responsive Teaching is defined as “a student-centered approach to teaching in which the students’ unique cultural strengths are identified and nurtured to promote student achievement and a sense of well-being about the student’s cultural place in the world.”⁴⁵ For example, The National

Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems highlights that culturally responsive teaching goes well beyond “food, folklore, and fun,” where information is taught for one day and not threaded throughout instruction. Rather, teachers should challenge traditional and dominant-culture views, and present diverse perspectives within all content.⁴⁶ Given the number of resources on the topic, districts should select one training curriculum so teachers can continue to develop and implement best practices using a shared framework.

Harvard Graduate School of Education. Retrieved from http://assets.aarp.org/www.aarp.org/_articles/NRTA/Harvard_report.pdf.

²⁷ Betty Achinstein, Rodney T. Ogawa, Lisa Johnson, & Casia Freitas (2009). Supporting New Teachers of Color and Cultural Diversity. The New Teacher Project. Retrieved from: http://www.newteachercenter.org/sites/default/files/ntc/main/resources/BRF_SupportingNewTeachersofColorandCulturalDiversity.pdf

²⁸ Susan Moore Johnson, Jull Harrison Berg, & Morgaen L. Donaldson (2005). Who Stays in Teaching and Why: A review of the Literature on Teacher Retention.

²⁹ Ingersoll (2005). Beginning teaching induction. Retrieved from: <http://www.schoolturnaroundsupport.org/sites/default/files/resources/Beginning%20Teacher%20Induction.Ingersoll.2012.pdf>

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Richard Ingersoll & Henry May (2011). Recruitment, Retention and the Minority Teacher Shortage. University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved from: http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1232&context=gse_pubs

³² Ibid.

³³ Taylor Cox and Ruby L. Beale (1997). Developing Competency to Manage Diversity, San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

³⁴ Richard Ingersoll & Henry May (2011). Recruitment, Retention and the Minority Teacher Shortage. University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved from: <http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent>

http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1232&context=gse_pubs

³⁵ Betty Achinstein and others, “Retaining Teachers of Color: A Pressing Problem and a Potential Strategy for ‘Hard-to-Staff’ Schools,” Review of Educational Research, citing Feuerverger, 1997; Foster, 1994.

³⁶ Richard Ingersoll (2013). The Greening of the Teaching Force and Six Other Trends. University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved from: <http://scholar.gse.upenn.edu/?q=rmi/files/trendsarticle.pdf>

³⁷ National Council on Teacher Quality (2010). Teacher Layoffs: Rethinking “Last-Hired, First-Fired” Policies.

³⁸ Betty Achinstein and others, “Retaining Teachers of Color: A Pressing Problem and a Potential Strategy for ‘Hard-to-Staff’ Schools,” Review of Educational Research.

³⁹ Richard Ingersoll & Henry May (2011). Recruitment, Retention and the Minority Teacher Shortage. University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved from: http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1232&context=gse_pubs

⁴⁰ An equity coach refers to a teacher leader that helps administrators and teachers examine how race impacts policies and practices, with the ultimate goal of making changes that address the racial achievement gap. These roles currently exist in some Minnesota school districts, such as St. Louis Park.

⁴¹ Donald Boyd et al. (2011). Teacher Layoffs: An Empirical Illustration of Seniority Versus Measures of Effectiveness. Retrieved from: <http://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Teacher%20Layoffs.pdf>

⁴² Dan Goldhaber, Managing the Teacher Workforce, EducationNext. Retrieved from: <http://educationnext.org/managing-the-teacher-workforce/>

⁴³ Stephen Sawchuk, Teacher Turnover Affects All Students’ Achievement, Study Indicates, Education Week. Retrieved from: http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/teacherbeat/2012/03/when_teachers_leave_schools_ov.html

⁴⁴ Minn. Stat. 122A.41

⁴⁵ Mathew Lynch, Ed. D. (2012). Culturally Responsive Training: Exploring Your Students’ Cultural Backgrounds. Retrieved from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/matthew-lynch-edd/culturally-responsive-tra_b_1176982.html

⁴⁶ Becoming Culturally Responsive Educators: Rethinking Teacher Education Pedagogy (2006). The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems. Retrieved from: http://www.nccrest.org/Briefs/Teacher_Ed_Brief.pdf

THE EDUCATORS 4 EXCELLENCE—MINNESOTA 2015 TEACHER POLICY TEAM ON TEACHER DIVERSITY

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