



EDUCATORS FOR EXCELLENCE NEW YORK

FEBRUARY 2019

Ready *for* Day One and Beyond

To create meaningful recommendations, our team engaged over 1,000 city educators through focus groups and more than 700 through surveys, examined case studies and research from across the country, and consulted with over a dozen experts and stakeholders. We believe these solutions will have a significant and immediate impact in ensuring every teacher is prepared for the classroom on day one and beyond.

Thank you to all our colleagues, New York City public school teachers, who shared their experiences and opinions on how best to prepare and develop excellent educators. The challenges and successes we encounter every day shaped our recommendations.

The 2018/19 New York Teacher Policy Team on Teacher Preparedness and Professional Development

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OUR CHALLENGE

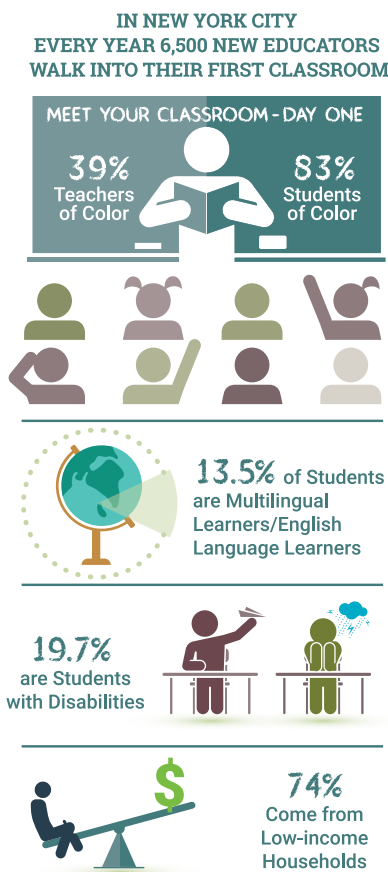
Ready for Day One and Beyond

Every year, the New York City Department of Education hires approximately 6,500 new educators and tens of thousands of students begin each school-year with a first-year educator leading the classroom.¹

We know from experience that new educators face challenges. Eighty-three percent of city students are students of color compared to 39 percent of teachers.² The city's student population is one of the most diverse in the country: 13.5 percent are multilingual learners/English Language Learners, 19.7 percent are students with disabilities, and 74 percent come from low-income households.³ From day one, new educators are expected to meet the needs of these students, but inadequate preparation and poorly designed field experiences fail to equip educators with the skills or know-how to manage this diversity. It is no wonder that so many of us struggle.

Unfortunately, on-the-job professional development does not address new educators' skill deficits. While we are inundated with development opportunities, too often they do not apply to our unique needs and are out of reach due to structural barriers.

What if our teacher prep program recruited more future teachers of color and prepared us for our diverse student body? What if each of us had access to professional development aligned to our needs? In the end, public education will be stronger when our educators are prepared on day one and have the ongoing support they need to support all of our students.



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase Educator Workforce Diversity

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) should substantially invest in the diversification of New York's teaching workforce.

Grow Teacher Residencies

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) should make recruiting and hiring candidates who participate in yearlong teacher residencies a significant source of educator talent.

Require Preparation Program Transparency

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) should publicize teacher preparation program outcome data annually.

Improve Professional Development Quality and Alignment

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) and New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) should ensure that professional development is high-quality and aligned with students' needs, teacher professional growth plans, and schoolwide Comprehensive Education Plans.

Increase Accessibility and Equitable Funding for Professional Development

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) should ensure that all educators have access to the professional development opportunities and the new leadership positions outlined in the 2018 United Federation of Teachers contract.

READY FOR DAY ONE AND BEYOND



83%

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WE AS EDUCATORS RECOMMEND

Increase Educator Workforce Diversity

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) should substantially invest in the diversification of New York's teaching workforce.

The diversity gap between New York City's teaching workforce and its student population is deeply concerning to us as educators — while 83 percent of the student population are students of color, less than half that number are teachers of color.⁴ Studies show that children of color and students from low-income households who have at least one teacher of color are significantly less likely to drop out of school and more likely to attend a four year college.⁵ The academic benefits that teachers of color provide all students are clear. As such, we must prioritize the recruitment and preparation of an impactful teacher workforce that more closely mirrors our student population. Teacher diversity matters.


ACTION PLAN

- The New York State Legislature should expand the Teacher Opportunity Corps (TOC), which recruits and supports historically underrepresented and low-income teaching candidates, so that at least 10 percent of incoming New York teachers each year are TOC participants.
- The NYCDOE should commit to recruiting and employing graduates of preparation programs that have shown success in matriculating greater numbers of educators from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, the district and schools should set diversity goals for prospective teacher hiring pools before advancing candidates to later hiring stages.
- NYSED and the NYCDOE should publish yearly reports on educator workforce diversity, initial placement, and mobility within and between school districts over the course of a teacher's career.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE

Creating a diverse teacher workforce requires leveraging and expanding successful programs like the TOC, which recruits and trains educators of color. Additionally, the NYCDOE could use its power as the state's largest employer of educators to build relationships with preparation programs that are exceptional recruiters and trainers of candidates of color. The districts and schools should also assess current hiring practices and implement changes to address biases. For example, a school could only move forward with its hiring process when 50 percent of its applicants identify as a person of color, thus increasing the likelihood that talented candidates of color are considered. Many organizations already do this, and it works.⁶

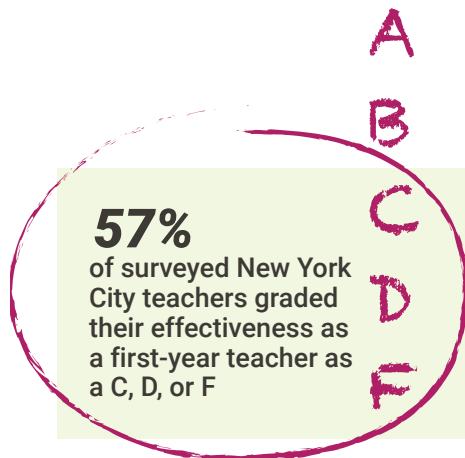
In addition, reports on workforce diversity would inform stakeholders about the efficacy of these strategies. In 2018, the state budget included funding for a report on teacher diversity, and we need to ensure this report is completed and made public. Tennessee, for example, produces a statewide report on teacher diversity trends and makes recommendations on hiring practices that districts can implement to increase workforce diversity.⁷ Reports at both the state and city levels provide broad trends and localized, in-depth details, as identified by the Education Trust-New York's teacher workforce 2018 diversity report, *See Our Truth*.⁸



“New York must demonstrate that teacher diversity matters and that all students benefit when they have a diverse set of leaders at the front of the classroom.”

—Arthur Everett, 12th-Grade Teacher at the High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology

READY FOR DAY ONE AND BEYOND



Educators for Excellence-New York. (2018). Survey of New York City Teachers.



70%
of surveyed teachers reported a desire that their preparation program would have included a deeper focus on supporting students with disabilities and multilingual students/English Language Learners.

Educators for Excellence-New York. (2018). Survey of New York City Teachers.



57%
of surveyed educators wanted a higher quality field experience in a community that more closely matched the schools they planned to teach in upon graduation.

Educators for Excellence-New York. (2018). Survey of New York City Teachers.



WE AS EDUCATORS RECOMMEND

Grow Teacher Residencies

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) should make recruiting and hiring candidates who participate in yearlong teacher residencies a significant source of educator talent.

Teacher attrition is high for new teachers, and initial teacher performance is predictive of how teachers will fare later on in their careers.⁹ Only 29 percent of city educators reported being “very well” prepared to provide rigorous academic instruction upon graduation.¹⁰ Proactive support for first-year educators will have beneficial effects for them and their students. More than 25 percent of teachers in city high schools with the highest proportion of students from low-income households and/or students of color have less than three years of experience, compared to just 15 percent of teachers in schools with high proportions of white and/or affluent students.¹¹ The data is clear: Our least experienced colleagues are teaching the students who need the most support.

Residency programs work to solve this problem by providing educators with continued coursework coupled with at least one school-year’s worth of classroom experience, overseen by a master teacher, in the type of schools they are most likely to work in after graduation. Furthermore, residencies have long-term impact for students and schools — the National Center for Teacher Residencies estimates that 86 percent of residency graduates are still teaching in their placements in high-need schools after three years.¹²

ACTION PLAN

- The NYCDOE should recruit and hire from yearlong teacher residencies by setting an ambitious goal for the proportion of incoming teachers in high-need schools who are residency graduates.
- The NYCDOE should place New York City teacher residency participants in schools serving high rates of students with disabilities, multilingual learners/English Language Learners, and students from low-income households.
- New York City residency programs should provide residents a living wage.
- NYSED should design a teacher certification pathway that acknowledges the extended training and service gained from residency participation.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE

Current student teaching experience provides limited opportunities for classroom leadership with diverse student populations: students with disabilities, multilingual learners/English Language Learners, and students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Placing residents in schools that reflect this diversity benefits students by providing the support of an additional classroom educator. In addition, the residents are guided by a master teacher.

But aspiring teachers cannot take advantage of programs they cannot afford. Residency programs must provide a living wage to allow all future teachers, particularly those from low-income households, to live in the community where they work.

NYCDOE currently partners with promising programs that can be expanded, like the Urban Teacher Residency and Bank Street College of Education’s Prepared to Teach. Residents in these programs teach a limited number of classes a week under the supervision of a master teacher, while also completing relevant coursework and receiving ongoing support. Significantly, both programs provide residents with a living wage and offer districts models that are financially sustainable.

We must also acknowledge residents’ skills and experience gained through extended preparation by providing them with alternative means for certification — a process that has been identified as a barrier to new teachers entering the profession.¹³

For more information on these recommendations and updates from the New York City public school teachers behind them, go to e4e.org/oneandbeyond

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WE AS EDUCATORS RECOMMEND

Require Preparation Program Transparency

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) should publicize teacher preparation program outcome data annually.

Prospective New York State educators should have relevant and reliable information about the state's teacher preparation programs, considering that these future educators represent 10 percent of all higher education students in the country.¹⁴ Unfortunately, the state does little to help prospective teachers select a program that is right for them. Like any educational institution, not all schools are the right fit for all students or have the expertise to train future teachers for the classrooms in our hard-to-staff schools. Furthermore, with this data, policymakers would be able to craft and update policies that improve teacher preparation.


ACTION PLAN

- NYSED should track and publicize preparation program data that includes, but is not limited to: demographic data of students, certification exam pass rates, employment rates (by certification area), graduate retention rates once in the classroom, and the type of schools (e.g. high-need, well-resourced, racially diverse) where graduates are employed.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE

Twenty-seven states already make educator preparation program data public.¹⁵ New Jersey, for example, has a comprehensive website where future educators and policymakers can view program and certification-level data. Educators can see the demographics of enrolled students and graduates, whether or not graduates go on to teach in high-need schools, the hire rate for graduates, and their retention rates once teaching. Providing this information empowers future educators to make informed decisions and gives the public insight into the efficacy of these programs.

This data will provide policymakers and other stakeholders with crucial information on how programs train new educators. Combined with our recommendation that the NYSED and the NYCDOE publish yearly reports on educator workforce diversity, we will have a better view of how educators enter the profession and move throughout their careers.



“Which preparation program we attend may be one of the most consequential decisions we make as educators. We have the right to understand how well they serve and prepare teachers for the realities of New York classrooms.”

—Rachel Fishkis, 10th-Grade Teacher
at Bronx Leadership Academy II

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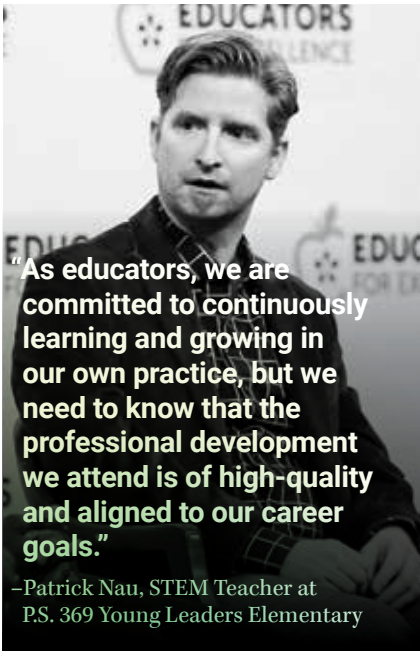
WE AS EDUCATORS RECOMMEND

Improve Professional Development Quality and Alignment

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) and New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) should ensure that professional development is high-quality and aligned with students' needs, teacher professional growth plans, and schoolwide Comprehensive Education Plans.

Our students should have instructional leaders who are continuously growing and developing as professionals, but unfortunately there are a number of barriers to quality professional development that meets our individual needs. Requiring teachers to complete 100 Continuing Teacher and Leaders Education (CTLE) credit hours of professional development every five years is often seen as just another box to check. There are countless providers across the city hosting professional development, but the quality varies widely by facilitator and program. And the NYCDOE website meant to help us identify those opportunities lacks the functionality needed to be truly useful.

With additional data and deeper alignment between our professional growth plans and the professional development opportunities, we can ensure our city's educators are continuously learning to meet the needs of our diverse student body.



"As educators, we are committed to continuously learning and growing in our own practice, but we need to know that the professional development we attend is of high-quality and aligned to our career goals."

—Patrick Nau, STEM Teacher at P.S. 369 Young Leaders Elementary

ACTION PLAN

- The NYCDOE should collect program quality data about professional development, including programming provided by schools, the district, the United Federation of Teachers, and other third-party providers.
- The NYCDOE should redesign the "I Teach NYC" website to make it more teacher-friendly and to be the hub for the professional development program data.
- NYSED should ensure CTLE professional development credit hour requirements align with professional growth plans.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE

The NYCDOE has made progress identifying what professional development should look like in our schools. However, the NYCDOE does not collect data on the quality of the programs we invest our time and money in every year. Educators should be able to assess the quality of the offerings using an easy-to-understand rubric based on commonly understood descriptors of professional development, like those proposed by the Learning Policy Institute in "Effective Teacher Professional Development."¹⁶ With this data, educators and the NYCDOE will be able to engage in a data-driven process to improve and strengthen the quality of professional development offered in the city.

To ensure teachers have easy access to this information, the NYCDOE should redesign the "I Teach NYC" website so it is more teacher-friendly, searchable, and has filters that allow us to browse professional development trainings by provider, district, content area, and peer feedback data collected from surveys. As an example, District 75 has a website that provides educators with a comprehensive, searchable database of development opportunities that they can sign up for.¹⁷

In addition, the state requirement for 100 hours of CTLE credit hours should be meaningful. We are educators. We take learning seriously. NYSED should stipulate that a portion of the hours spent in CTLE professional development align with professional and school-wide growth plans and strengthening curricular infrastructure. The hours spent fulfilling CTLE requirements should focus on supporting students with disabilities, multilingual learners/English Language Learners, restorative discipline and social-emotional learning, and instructional practices relevant to diverse student populations.

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Increase Accessibility and Equitable Funding for Professional Development

The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) should ensure that all educators have access to the professional development opportunities and the new leadership positions outlined in the 2018 United Federation of Teachers contract.

Oftentimes, we are forced to choose professional development based on cost, sometimes costing upward of \$300, rather than what our classroom needs. And when we can afford opportunities, we must request coverage from substitute teachers. In our experience, substitute teachers often do not report to high-need, hard-to-staff schools because of the perceived difficulty. Without substitutes to cover our absences, we are under pressure not to attend out-of-school opportunities, making it more difficult to access critical professional development.

In addition to growing our practice, we need to grow our careers through leadership opportunities such as those outlined in the 2018 UFT teacher contract. Positions like the Teacher Development Coordinator would benefit the advancement of staff skills and provide additional leadership to veteran teachers. Unfortunately, these opportunities are funded through school budgets that administrators are often unable to afford, effectively shutting qualified teachers out of these positions.

ACTION PLAN

- The NYCDOE should create a fund to help teachers access professional development opportunities linked to their professional growth plans and schoolwide growth plans.
- The NYCDOE should establish financial incentives to secure substitute teachers for hard-to-staff schools and districts.
- The NYCDOE should subsidize funding for teacher leadership positions in high-need schools.

WHAT THIS COULD LOOK LIKE

The NYCDOE should make “Teacher’s Choice Funds,” which currently provides a small stipend to educators for classroom supplies, available for educators to use the money for professional development opportunities aligned with their growth plans. By expanding the purpose of these funds, the city can demonstrate that it values quality teachers and provide equitable access to high-quality professional development for educators who cannot currently afford it.

We know that financial incentives reduce teacher attrition at hard-to-staff schools.¹⁸ Similar incentives for substitute teachers to attend hard-to-staff schools would encourage substitutes to report to those assignments and allow teachers to pursue the professional development they need. Other districts, like Tennessee’s Knox County Schools district, address these concerns through pay differentials for substitutes in high-need schools.¹⁹

Additionally, the 2018 UFT teacher contract provides opportunities for teacher leadership to educators who have shown expertise in providing professional development and support for their colleagues. As partners in teacher professional development, the NYCDOE should establish a fund that subsidizes these positions at the school-level in order to alleviate the burden on school budgets and provide these opportunities to more qualified educators.



“We are hungry to take on leadership positions and grow as professional educators. Let’s remove the barriers preventing us from leading in our schools and our profession.”

—Leona Fowler, Instructional Support Teacher at District 75, P233Q

Endnotes

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Becoming an educator and growing as a professional is challenging, but should not be a struggle. We have the opportunity to create a comprehensive system that prepares teachers – before and after they enter the classroom – to educate our city’s diverse student body. By rethinking teacher preparation and professional development, and improving workforce diversity, we will ensure that the nation’s largest public school system is more equitable and excellent for all.

As educators in New York City public schools, we crave high-quality, aligned, and accessible professional development. These recommendations contain reasonable fixes to coordinate and grow the professional learning available to all, and work to end the struggle we face in our professional growth.







For far too long, education policy has been created without a critical voice at the table – the voice of classroom teachers.

Educators for Excellence (E4E), a teacher-led organization, is changing this dynamic by placing the voices of teachers at the forefront of the conversations that shape our classrooms and careers. E4E has a quickly growing national network of educators united by our Declaration of Teachers' Principles and Beliefs.

E4E members can learn about education policy and research, network with like-minded peers and policymakers, and take action and advocate for teacher-created policies that lift student achievement and the teaching profession.

Learn more at e4e.org.

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 E4E.org