

**ACTION 3.6**

*Develop a state plan to recruit and retain birth-through-third-grade educators and school leaders of color, using a variety of strategies, including financial incentives, recruitment legislation, recruitment centers, pre-college programs, and alternative certification programs targeting substitute teachers and mid-career paraprofessionals.*

# RECRUIT and RETAIN EDUCATORS and SCHOOL LEADERS of COLOR

Recruiting and retaining educators and school leaders of color has been shown to improve academic achievement and reduce suspension and expulsion, especially for students of color. When schools have educators and administrators that bring with them lived cultural experiences that align with the cultural diversity of the students they serve, those schools are more likely to provide culturally responsive teaching and a diverse learning environment that is inclusive for a broader range of student backgrounds.

## WHAT WE KNOW

The impact of having diverse faculty and staff benefits not only students of color, but students of all backgrounds. Research illustrates how educators of color are linked to positive academic, social-emotional, and behavioral outcomes; their use of culturally responsive pedagogical practices is a driving factor in these results. Culturally responsive teaching includes viewing student capacity as not static, prioritizing building relationships with students' families, and specializing instruction to fit individual student needs. A study by The Learning Policy Institute reports that all students, including white students, report feeling academically challenged and cared for by their teachers of color.

These benefits of having educators and school leaders of color are only available for a limited fraction of students because many barriers to recruiting and retaining educators of color still remain. These include the disproportionate burden of student loan debt, narrowly targeted teacher preparation programs, and a lack of professional support networks for educators of color.

**79.5% OF NORTH CAROLINA'S K-12 TEACHER WORKFORCE IS WHITE**, which is not representative of NC's student diversity in which 47.7% of students are white.\*\*\*

### Dive Into the Data

The most recent breakdown of educator racial and ethnic diversity across the state is based on the 2017-2018 academic year, and shows that 15% of teachers were Black, 4% were Latinx, 1.5% were American Indian/Alaska Native, and less than 1% were teachers identified as Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Explore other indicators on the [Pathways Data Dashboard](#).

## WHAT WE NEED

Statewide investment in programs aimed at recruiting and retaining a diverse educator workforce is crucial to minimizing the **variation in expectations for hiring qualifications and standards** across geographic areas and across early learning program types within and across states.

## HOW TO SUPPORT

North Carolina's DRIVE taskforce, established in 2019 to develop an inclusive educator workforce, has come back with a **clear set of recommendations for recruiting and retaining educators of color**. Some of these recommendations include:

- Offer affordable postsecondary access through scholarships, loan forgiveness, and tuition reimbursement programs to encourage a more diverse candidate pool for teachers.
- Expand and develop entry points into the educator pipeline that are based on models with proven success in recruiting racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse educators.
- Provide sustainable investments in educator preparation programs at North Carolina's Historically Minority Serving Institutions to elevate and build capacity for increasing their impact as leaders in equity-minded educator preparation.
- Invest in state- and district-level initiatives that increase sustainability of the education profession by strengthening support networks for educators of color and providing professional development to enhance practice and foster inclusive school environments.
- Develop and sustain pathways for advancement, tailored to the needs of educators of color.
- Release an annual statewide Educator Diversity Report that tracks North Carolina's progress in developing and sustaining a representative educator workforce.

This taskforce has also drafted a **clear set of action steps** that, if implemented, will lead to an increasingly diverse educator workforce in the state of North Carolina. These recommendations and action steps can be adapted to the needs of the early care and learning workforce. For example, as policymakers make decisions about the qualifications required for prekindergarten teachers, it is important that they consider how increasing education requirements may reduce workforce diversity.

Research shows that **states that add one additional year of required education and training are less likely to have Latinx pre-kindergarten educators**. This tells us that there are structural barriers like financial support for postsecondary education and training that may make it more difficult for aspiring Latinx educators to enter—and stay—in the early learning workforce.

## INITIATIVES WORKING IN THIS AREA



**Profound Ladies** leads in diversifying the teaching force by recruiting and retaining women who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color, also known as BIPOC). Teachers are supported as early as their sophomore year in college, through their critical years in education, and prior to the five year attrition mark. They center elements in their core programming to create Trauma Informed Spaces for Black, Indigenous Educators of Color and use the Transformational Coaching Approach with their educators.



**NC State University's Educational Leadership Academy** (NELA) seeks to increase student achievement by

preparing and retaining principals in high-poverty, hard-to-staff, and historically low-performing schools. NELA creates a comprehensive leadership development and succession plan for high-need NC school districts. Each component is anchored in research-based best practices in leadership preparation and is designed to meet the specific contextualized needs of schools across the state.



**The Educators of Color Network** is a school-university partnership initiative created to help build a more diverse teacher workforce in North Carolina. University of North Carolina at Wilmington's Watson College of Education launched the EOC Network in 2022. The group is comprised of current and retired P-12 teachers and school leaders, university faculty, and students who work collaboratively to envision and facilitate activities to recruit students of color into the teaching profession, retain current educators of color, and engage school partners in advocacy efforts to establish a broader, more diverse network of professionals.

**Visit the Pathways Action Map to learn more about these and other initiatives leading efforts in this area.**