Driving Diversity: How Teacher Prep Can Accelerate Progress

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A high-quality teacher workforce is well-prepared, effective, and racially diverse.
- Given that the vast majority of new teachers in the United States earn licensure through teacher preparation programs, the diversity of prep program completers drives the diversity of new teachers. Therefore, teacher preparation programs bear the foundational responsibility for advancing teacher diversity.
- Nationally the cohort of teacher preparation completers is more diverse than the returning teacher workforce. Yet, the racial diversity of the teacher workforce is growing at a slower pace than the racial diversity of college-educated adults.
- More than 4 in 10 teacher prep programs fail to graduate candidates that are as diverse as their state's existing teacher workforce, actively making the workforce less diverse.
- Each state's teacher production exists in a unique context. View your state's data and visit the Teacher Diversity Dashboard to see how individual prep programs in your state are contributing to the diversity of the teacher workforce.
- **Education leaders at every level have a key role to play.**
  - **State policymakers** should make sure the requirements for entering the teaching profession are the right ones (e.g., rigorous expectations for content knowledge) and are free from unnecessary barriers that prevent talented individuals from becoming teachers.
  - **Teacher preparation programs** need to focus on recruiting diverse cohorts and supporting all candidates, including candidates from historically disadvantaged groups, to meet high state standards and earn their teaching credentials.

Teacher diversity fuels student success. Teachers of color raise student achievement, improve graduation rates, and strengthen social-emotional outcomes.

Teacher prep programs drive teacher diversity, yet 4 in 10 are actively making the teacher workforce less diverse.

Education leaders can change the trend by recruiting diverse cohorts and supporting all candidates into the classroom.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers remain the most important in-school factor for student success.[1] This is why researchers, policymakers, advocates, and school districts are focused on hiring and retaining the highest quality teacher workforce possible—a goal that must include diversifying the teacher workforce. Teachers of color bring benefits to all of their students, including better test scores, lower absence rates, and positive impacts on students' social-emotional competence, particularly as it relates to self-efficacy.[2] Students of all races have positive perceptions of teachers of color, which research has shown can lead to higher motivation and achievement and which may suggest that teachers of color are uniquely able to build rapport with students of different races from their own.[3]

The benefits of a diverse teacher workforce are particularly consequential for students of color. Students of color who have teachers of color perform better on reading and math tests[4] and take and pass advanced courses at higher rates.[5] For example, Black students who have just one Black teacher in kindergarten through grade five achieve higher reading and math scores.[6]

Teachers of color may also positively impact students of color on a range of non-academic factors as well, including better attendance,[7] social-emotional outcomes such as increased sense of belonging,[8] and behavioral outcomes such as lower rates of discipline.[9] Taken together, these academic and nonacademic benefits translate to students of color attaining life milestones as a result of their experiences with teachers of color, including higher rates of high school graduation, college enrollment, and college completion.[10] For example, Black students who have just one Black teacher in grades K–3 are 13% more likely to graduate from high school and 19% more likely to go to college.[11]

In addition to the numerous and well-documented benefits teachers of color have on students, there is new evidence suggesting that they also confer benefits to their white colleagues. White teachers who have just one same-grade Black colleague are more effective at teaching Black students.[12] This may be because teachers of color model how to nurture a positive and caring classroom environment while also holding students of color to high academic standards.[13] Given the undeniable body of research spanning decades, one thing is abundantly clear: The highest quality teacher workforce is one that's well prepared, effective, and racially diverse.

In this report, we use federal data to examine the diversity of the teacher pipeline by focusing on racial demographics in teacher preparation programs.[14] Given that the majority of new teachers come through these programs, teacher prep plays a key role in diversifying the teacher workforce. By providing specific data on the programs in each state, we aim to help policymakers and advocates identify where promising strategies may exist and where additional resources are needed.

Political and legal headwinds—plus weak incentives—slow progress on teacher diversity

Despite the clear imperative to create a more diverse teacher workforce, teacher racial diversity is growing at a slower pace than the racial diversity of college-educated adults. This trend indicates that, increasingly, Black and brown adults who earn college degrees are either choosing other professions or electing to leave the classroom after becoming teachers. Making matters worse, the uphill battle to diversify the teacher workforce has only grown steeper after federal rollbacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and the ripple effects in the actions of some state legislatures. The Supreme Court's decision striking down affirmative action in higher education also contributes to uncertainty for policymakers and teacher preparation leaders who want to advance teacher diversity without running afoul of state or federal law.

In addition to government dispositions about efforts to diversify the teacher workforce, there is another important factor to mitigate: The value proposition of a career in teaching may not be appealing enough to bring in more people of color. As more people of color pursue college and consider career options, teaching cannot be left to slide down the list of viable professions. Higher rates of attrition among teachers of color are similarly challenging and frequently attributed to systemic issues like difficult working conditions, racial discrimination, and racial isolation.[15] Efforts to lower the cost of entry into the teaching profession, increase teacher salaries, and improve teachers' quality of life are necessary to make the case to start and persist in a career in the classroom.

While the challenges are significant, diversifying the teacher workforce remains both essential and within reach. Moving the needle requires investment in policy and programs

that create opportunity and remove barriers for people of color to consider teaching. And it's critical to start at the beginning: teacher preparation. Since teacher preparation programs, both traditional and alternative, are the entry point for most new educators, they are uniquely positioned to drive diversity in the profession through intentional recruitment and support from enrollment to obtaining a teacher credential.

A key part of the solution: Teacher prep

The diversity of a state's teacher workforce is largely dependent on the diversity of its in-state preparation programs. While some program completers may cross state lines after graduating, most new teachers get their first jobs close to where they completed preparation and student taught.[16] Further, teacher prep programs are designed to meet their state's licensure requirements, which means teachers seeking to move elsewhere may face additional hurdles in earning a teaching license.[17] Taken together, this means that if a state's teacher prep programs are not producing enough teachers of color to close representation gaps, there is little hope its teacher workforce will mirror the diversity of its population.

The findings below examine how well teacher preparation programs are supporting diverse cohorts of aspiring teachers to reach the classroom. The recommendations that follow are strategies and examples for state policymakers and teacher preparation program leaders to improve the status quo.

# NATIONAL AND STATE-LEVEL FINDINGS

Teacher preparation is contributing to teacher diversity—but growth is slow and the devil is in the state's details

The racial diversity of the teacher workforce is growing at a slower pace than the racial diversity of college-educated adults. Despite incremental growth in teacher diversity over the past decade, teachers are no longer a more diverse population than working-age adults with college degrees.

In any school year, the teacher workforce is made up of both *newly hired* and *returning* teachers (those remaining in the workforce from the previous year). Because the vast majority of newly hired teachers attain their initial licensure through a teacher preparation program (exceptions include those hired under emergency provisions), it is informative to look at the diversity of program completers in comparison to newly hired and returning teachers to assess the likelihood that tomorrow's teachers will be more diverse than today's.

Nationally, over the five school years ending in 2022–23, the percentage of both *program completers* and *new hires* from historically disadvantaged groups exceeded that of *returning teachers* by more than 5 percentage points.[18] In other words, new entrants to teaching were more diverse than the preexisting workforce. Notably, the diversity of *program completers* appears to anchor the diversity of *new hires*. This highlights the foundational responsibility that preparation programs bear for advancing teacher diversity. (Note: Federal higher education data did not include demographic information for teacher preparation program completers before 2018–19.[19])

Figure 1.

Assessing the diversity of the teacher pipeline in the United States

Returning teachers	20.6%
New teachers	25.7%
Program completers	26.2%

Percentage of persons from historically disadvantaged groups
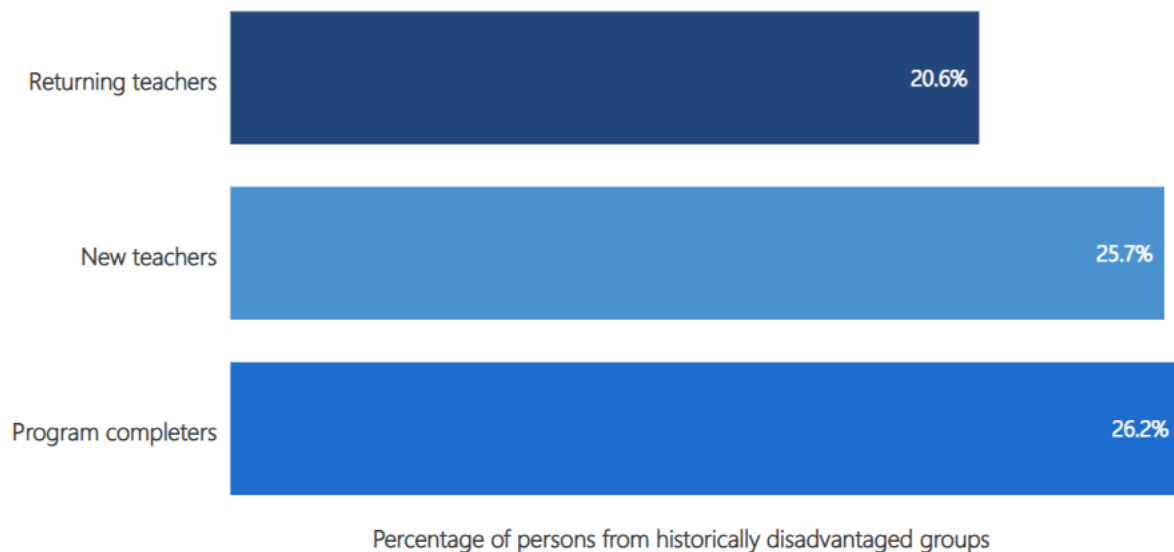
Percentages are based on an average spanning the 2018-19 to 2022-23 academic years.

[Examine the diversity of the teacher pipeline in your state here.](#)

While the greater share of teachers from historically disadvantaged groups among new hires (compared to returning teachers) is cause for optimism, over the five years in which the *average annual* cohort of new teachers was 5.1 percentage points more diverse than returning teachers, the overall teacher workforce only experienced a 1.7 percentage point total increase of teachers from historically disadvantaged groups.[20] This is primarily due to teachers of color leaving the workforce at higher rates. Annual turnover is greater for teachers of color (19%) than white teachers (15%),[21] and turnover is greater for new teachers (30%) than their veteran peers (17–20% for teachers with more than seven years of experience).[22] Taken together, these facts suggest that teacher preparation programs need to continue to expand the share of completers from historically disadvantaged

groups to [reverse the trend](#) of the teacher workforce falling behind the diversity of working-age adults with degrees.

While the national picture illustrates the collective role teacher preparation programs play in diversifying the teacher workforce, the health of the teacher pipeline does not look the same across the country. For example, just 26 states mirror the national pattern in that the percentage of program completers from historically disadvantaged groups exceeds that of new teachers, and new teachers are more diverse than the existing teacher workforce.[23] While the long-term impact on state teacher diversity remains to be seen, the diversity of program completers in those 26 states may expand diversity among newly hired teachers in the immediate term.

The relationships between the diversity of program completers, new teachers, and returning teachers in the remaining states (and the District of Columbia) vary. In some cases, they do not appear supportive of diversifying the teacher workforce in the near term. Understanding the local context is important when arriving at implications about the health of the state teacher pipeline. Each state's teacher labor market is unique and the extent to which school districts rely on hiring in-state program completers varies. Many factors affect the source of new teachers, such as state licensure requirements, proximity to out-of-state teacher prep programs, and in-state prep programs' ability to attract out-of-state candidates (and whether those candidates return to their home states to teach).

TEACHER PREP PROGRAM FINDINGS

More than 3 in 10 teacher preparation programs do not even have the *potential* to make the teacher workforce more diverse

Individuals from historically disadvantaged groups cannot join the teaching ranks without first being certified to teach. It is therefore important to examine how many teacher preparation programs contribute positively to teacher diversity. When looking at the individual programs preparing teachers, nearly one-third fail to *enroll* candidates that are as diverse as the existing state teacher workforce. In other words, more than 3 in 10 programs have no chance of increasing the proportion of teachers from historically disadvantaged groups in their state and therefore, are actively making the teacher workforce less diverse.

Figure 2.

More than 3 in 10 teacher prep programs fail to enroll a cohort of candidates that are as diverse as their existing state teacher workforce
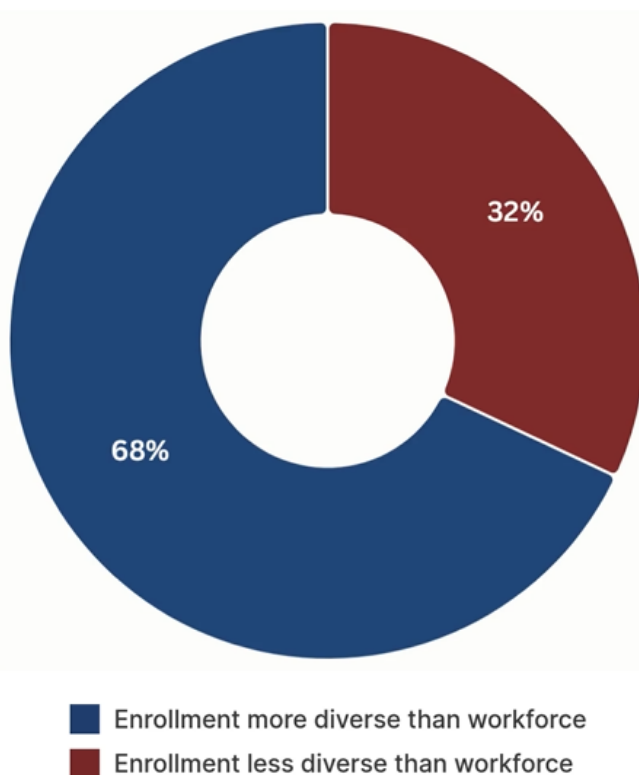
32%

68%

■ Enrollment more diverse than workforce
■ Enrollment less diverse than workforce
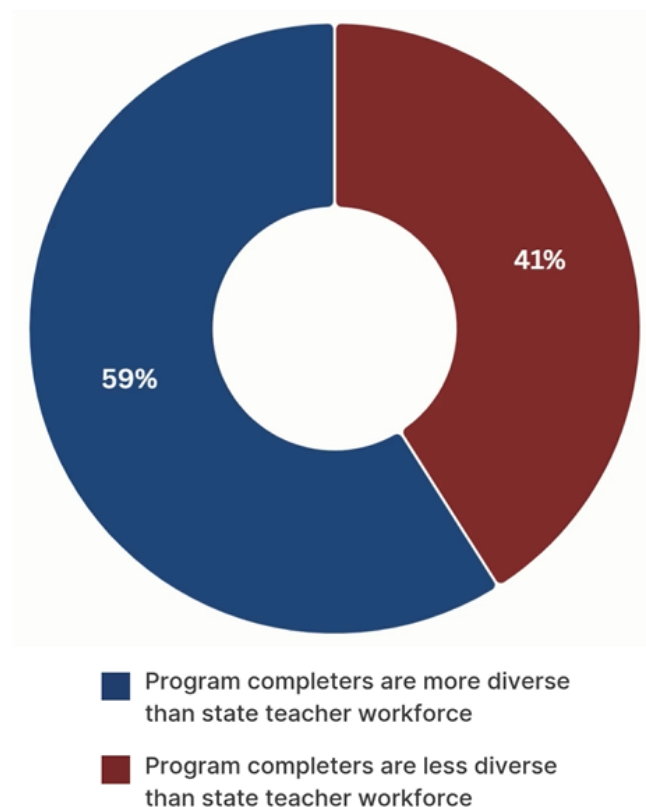
(N= 1,526 teacher producing institutions)
Excludes 173 institutions with fewer than five program completers annually

More than 4 in 10 teacher preparation programs are making the teacher workforce less diverse

While it's informative to look at program enrollment to get a sense of *potential* contributions to workforce diversity, what is ultimately most important is looking at *actual* contributions to diversity through program completers. Unfortunately, more than 4 in 10 programs produce cohorts of program completers that are less diverse than their state teacher workforce. This means that many states that are successfully diversifying their workforce are doing so based on the contributions of a small majority of programs.

Figure 3.

More than 4 in 10 teacher prep programs fail to produce cohorts that are as diverse as their state teacher workforce

41%

59%

■ Program completers are more diverse than state teacher workforce

■ Program completers are less diverse than state teacher workforce

N= 1,526 teacher producing institutions)
Excludes 173 institutions with fewer than five program completers annually

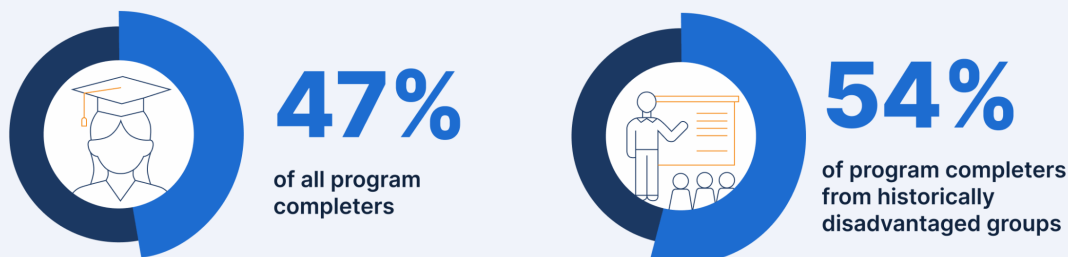## Diversity declines as program size shrinks and other significant findings

Across the country, larger programs (based on the number of annual completers) not only produce a disproportionate number of new teachers, but their graduates also tend to be more diverse. In fact, the largest 10% of programs (170 programs in total) produce 47% of all completers and 54% of completers from historically disadvantaged groups. To attempt to understand why diversity declines with cohort size, we looked at the differences between public, private, and alternative programs not based at a college or university (often referred to as "non-IHE-based alternative programs"). We found the following:

- **Public programs are generally large producers.** The average public university produces 145 new teachers each year, nearly three times the 50 teachers produced on average by private institutions.[24] The average non-IHE-based alternative program produces 70 teachers.

- **Private programs may be smaller producers on average, but collectively they are not meaningfully less diverse than public programs.** When comparing public and private institutions, there is less than a one percentage point difference in the average proportion of program completers from historically disadvantaged groups and the percentage of programs producing teachers more diverse than their state teacher workforce.

- **Private program diversity is more sensitive to production size than public program diversity is.** In terms of the percentage of annual completers from historically disadvantaged groups, all sizes of public institutions make roughly equal contributions to diversity. In contrast, as the size of private institutions declines, so does the diversity of program completers. In combination with the previous point, this means the collective diversity of private programs is buoyed by the largest private producers.

- **Non-IHE-based alternative programs make greater contributions to teacher diversity than both public and private programs, particularly among small producers.** Overall, alternative programs produce a greater percentage of teachers from historically disadvantaged groups, but differences relative to public and private institutions don't appear until program sizes shrink. In other words, smaller alternative programs are generally more diverse than smaller public and private programs, but larger programs across all three categories generally produce similarly diverse cohorts.

Figure 4.

AMONG 1,700 TEACHER PREP PROGRAMS NATIONALLY,

The largest 10% of programs are responsible for:

47%
of all program completers

54%
of program completers from historically disadvantaged groups

Across the country, larger programs (based on the number of annual completers) not only produce a disproportionate number of new teachers, their graduates tend to be more diverse.

Call to policymakers: *All* teacher preparation programs should be held to high standards

Over the five school years ending in 2022–23, at least 10% of program completers in 19 states and the District of Columbia attended non-IHE-based alternative programs. In nine of those states (Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, and West Virginia) the percentage of alternative program completers from historically disadvantaged groups was higher than that of public and private programs.

Teachers who complete alternative programs tend to be more likely to leave the profession than their traditionally prepared peers, often because they feel unprepared.[25] And some alternative models yield worse student outcomes.[26] All states should hold alternative programs to the same high standards as their traditional programs. This is particularly important in states where alternative programs are outsized producers of teachers from historically disadvantaged groups.

NCTQ's brief *What's the Alternative?* provides recommendations for state policymakers to set and maintain a high bar for alternative certification programs.

Each state's teacher production exists in a unique context. The three examples below illustrate how teacher preparation programs in a state contribute to its teacher diversity. These examples detail the source of new teachers by program type and how each program type contributes to statewide teacher diversity.

What is the source of teachers and teacher diversity in Florida?
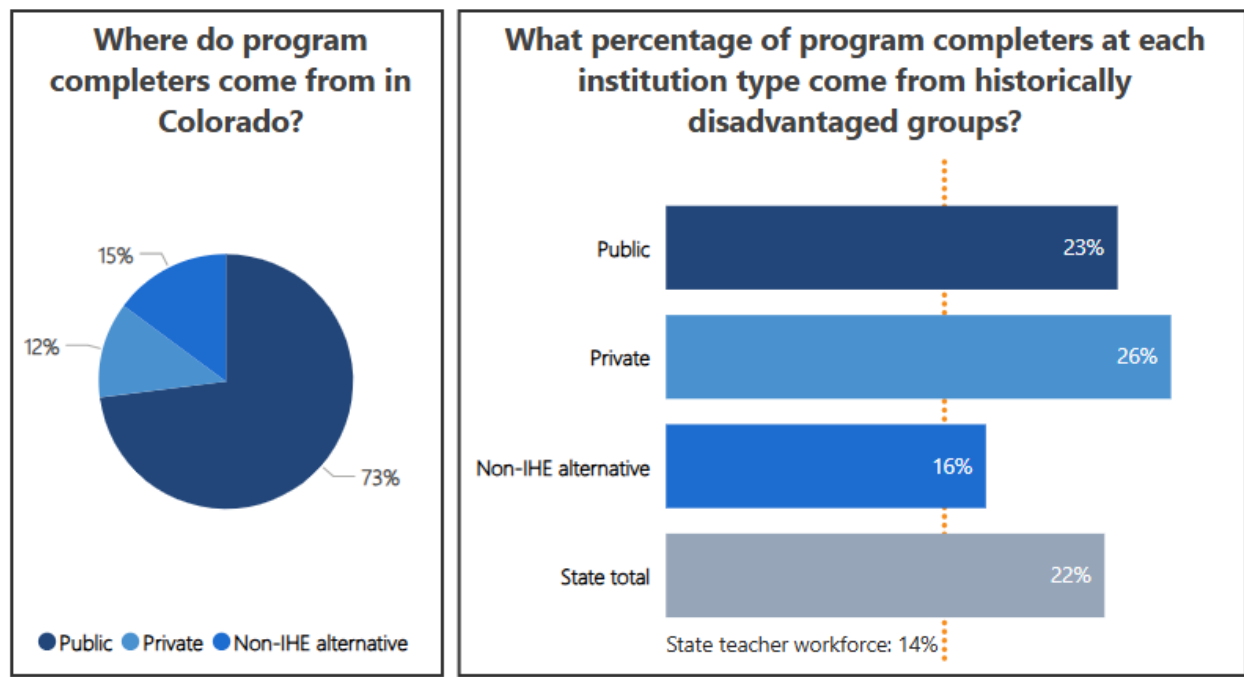
Figure 5a.
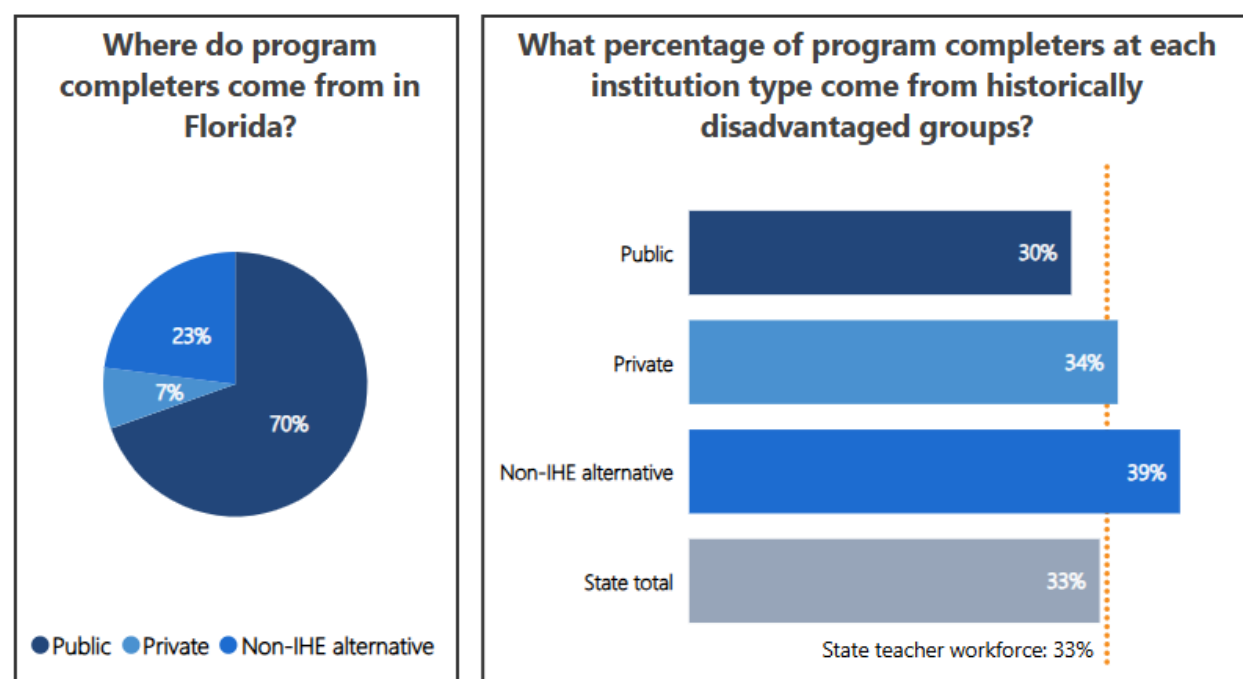
Percentages are based on an average spanning the 2018-19 to 2022-23 academic years.

Key takeaways:

- Public programs produced 7 in 10 new teachers.
- Public programs are less diverse than private and non-IHE-based alternative programs, dragging down the overall percentage of completers from historically disadvantaged groups to match that of the current teacher workforce.
- Non-IHE-based alternative programs produce the most diverse teacher cohorts in the state.

What is the source of teachers and teacher diversity in Colorado?

Figure 5b.

Where do program completers come from in Colorado?

- Public: 73%
- Private: 12%
- Non-IHE alternative: 15%

● Public ● Private ● Non-IHE alternative

What percentage of program completers at each institution type come from historically disadvantaged groups?

- Public: 23%
- Private: 26%
- Non-IHE alternative: 16%
- State total: 22%
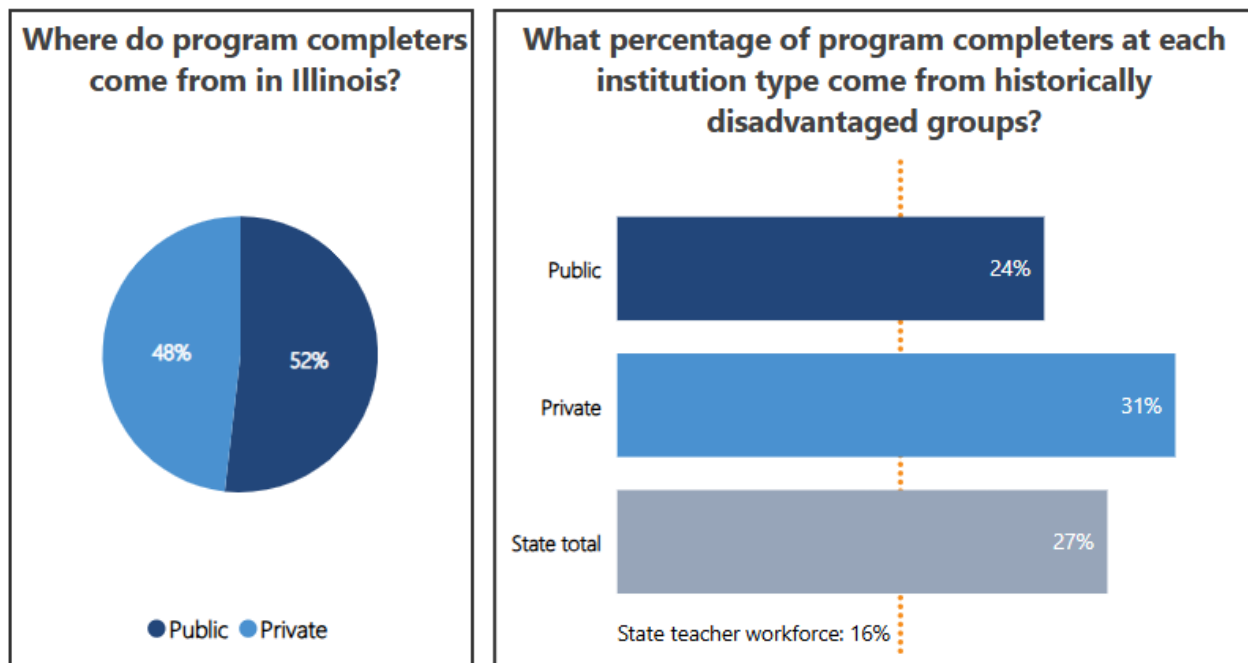
State teacher workforce: 14%

Percentages are based on an average spanning the 2018-19 to 2022-23 academic years.

Key takeaways:

- Nearly three-quarters of program completers in Colorado come from public programs.
- Public and private programs produce teachers that are considerably more diverse than the existing state teacher workforce.
- Non-IHE alternative programs produce the least diverse cohorts of teachers in the state but still make a positive contribution to diversifying the workforce.

What is the source of teachers and teacher diversity in Illinois?

Figure 5c.

Where do program completers come from in Illinois?

48% Private
52% Public

● Public ● Private

What percentage of program completers at each institution type come from historically disadvantaged groups?

Public: 24%
Private: 31%
State total: 27%
State teacher workforce: 16%

Percentages are based on an average spanning the 2018-19 to 2022-23 academic years.

Key takeaways:

- Teacher production in Illinois is almost evenly split between public and private programs.
- Both public and private programs produce teachers that are considerably more diverse than the existing state teacher workforce.
- Private programs make a greater contribution to diversifying the teacher workforce.
- Illinois does not have any non-IHE based alternative programs.

[Find the source of teachers and teacher diversity in your state](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS

A diverse teacher workforce is good for all students, especially students from historically disadvantaged groups. The analysis above provides new insights into the teacher pipeline to support policymakers in identifying the highest leverage opportunities to accelerate teacher diversity.

In general, state policymakers should hold a high bar for entering the teaching profession while removing meaningless barriers that prevent the entry of talented individuals. This is likely to be particularly important for people from historically disadvantaged groups, who may be more likely to face financial and other constraints to entry.

Teacher preparation programs need to focus on recruiting diverse cohorts and supporting all candidates, including candidates from historically disadvantaged groups, to meet high state standards and earn their teaching credentials.

The recommendations that follow are organized by three points along the teacher pipeline: recruitment into teacher prep, supporting teacher candidates to earn their license, and hiring and early induction.

Strengthen recruitment into prep programs

1. **Raise teacher salaries.** People who choose a career in teaching are assessed a pay penalty that they continue to pay throughout their careers. As of 2023, teachers earned 26.6% less than comparable college graduates, representing the largest gap to date.[27] It is naive and unfair to expect people of color to accept a lifelong pay penalty in the name of improving teacher diversity. In fact, the number one approach teachers of color themselves recommend for recruiting more people of color into teaching is increasing teacher salaries.[28]

   Since hiring needs vary across districts, schools, and subject areas,[29] differentiated pay approaches for hard-to-staff subjects and schools can support teacher diversity goals by prioritizing additional pay for the most frequently vacant positions.

2. **Develop or support programs that introduce middle and high schools students to teaching.** Early exposure to the realities of a career in teaching can help young people determine if teaching is a good match for their career goals. For example, Educators Rising, a national organization with state affiliates, provides standards, curricular materials, and student leadership opportunities for high schools to provide students with coursework and clinical experiences that introduce them to teaching.

The Teacher Academy of Maryland, a program that has spread to nearly all school districts in the state, introduces high school students to teaching and can result in college credits and scholarships. One study of the program found that participating students were 47% more likely to become teachers.[30] While white female students were the biggest beneficiaries of the program, Black female students also reaped benefits, providing some evidence that programs focused on high school students can support teacher diversity goals, particularly with targeted expansion into diverse high schools.

3. **Create pathways for current high school students, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, and career changers to enter the teacher workforce.** Programs such as teacher apprenticeships, residencies, and grow-your-own programs can increase access to teaching. Intentionally marketing such programs to historically disadvantaged communities will yield a more diverse pool of applicants.

   Some programs are designed explicitly to increase teacher diversity. For example, the Center for Black Educator Development's Teaching Academy is a program designed for Black high school students interested in teaching. It offers dual enrollment opportunities, enabling students to graduate high school with an associate's degree in education. Other programs designed to increase access to the teaching profession for people from all backgrounds can contribute to teacher diversity when made visible to historically disadvantaged communities. TeachNC was born out of a partnership between the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, BEST NC and TEACH.org. It is designed to provide targeted support to aspiring teachers who might be coming to the profession in a variety of ways, from high school students to career changers.

4. **Survey high school seniors and college freshmen to gauge interest in the teaching profession and use the results to identify and recruit potential teachers.** Disaggregating survey results by race can provide insights into the overall appeal of teaching for members of different racial groups. Results can also help identify individuals who could be recruited into teacher preparation programs. For example, Texas includes a question on its centralized college application form (asking applicants whether they will pursue teacher certification) that can be used to track interest in teaching.[31]

Specific to potential educators of color, one study found that among students who expressed interest in teaching upon enrolling in college, students of color were significantly less likely to go on to enroll in a teacher preparation program than their white peers.[32] Early identification of students of color who are interested in teaching creates additional opportunities for recruitment into teacher preparation.

5. **Reduce financial hardships for prospective and early-career teachers.** Initiatives that reduce or eliminate teacher preparation tuition and provide stipends to cover common expenses such as housing, transportation, and licensure test fees increase access to teaching for those who cannot otherwise afford to take on the considerable career start-up costs.

   Call Me MiSTER (Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models) began at Clemson University and has since expanded to 29 institutions in South Carolina and 17 partner institutions. The current program aims to increase the pool of strong teachers from more diverse backgrounds across K–12, especially people from rural, economically disadvantaged, and underserved communities. Participants receive tuition and housing assistance, as well as stipends for books and PRAXIS test fees, in addition to the mentoring and academic support that are the program's hallmarks.

Support teacher candidates to earn their license

1. **Hold teacher preparation programs accountable for their rates of success converting enrollees to program completers.** Federal data does not connect enrollment and completer numbers by cohort, rendering it impossible to determine how well prep programs are doing when it comes to supporting candidates through all program requirements. States should report completion rates publicly, disaggregated by race. Doing so creates an incentive for individual programs to have strong admissions criteria and available resources for enrolled students to aid them across the finish line. For example, Texas's Educator Preparation Data Dashboards include a wealth of information for the public to evaluate teacher preparation programs, including enrollment and completer demographics. The Texas Education Agency also maintains the Insight to Impact (I2I) data dashboards, which provide feedback to individual teacher preparation programs about their candidates and programs.

Transparency related to completion rates is particularly important for keeping non-IHE-based alternative programs in check. Between the 2010–11 and 2022–23 school years, non-IHE-based programs experienced a 131% enrollment increase while at the same time seeing a 17% *decline* in program completers.[33] (Learn more about alternative program enrollment and completer trends in NCTQ's brief *What's the Alternative?*) These figures represent a huge number of "lost" teachers, including teachers from historically disadvantaged groups who are more likely to enroll in an alternative program than their peers.

2. **Improve clinical practice experiences.** Clinical practice with an effective cooperating teacher can make a first-year teacher as effective as one in their second or third year.[34] Clinical practice experiences must be welcoming and supportive for *all* aspiring teachers. Enhancements to clinical practice include:
   - Paying student teachers a stipend so they can afford to work in schools full-time without a separate paid position. Teachers tend to have a high level of student loan debt, and that debt is even greater for teachers of color.[35] There are a variety of student teacher compensation models to accommodate a range of contexts.
   - Incentivizing districts to recruit a diverse corps of cooperating teachers so that a large share of student teachers work with cooperating teachers who share their race, gender, or other important demographic characteristics. Since teachers of color already report taking on many additional but unpaid responsibilities, hosting student teachers should not be added to that unpaid burden.[36] Several places have developed approaches for compensating cooperating teachers.
   - Aligning student teacher placement sites with likely job openings. First-year teachers are more effective when they are hired into a position in a similar grade and school type as their student teaching placement.[37] Aligning placement sites with likely job openings sets new teachers up for success and helps districts identify candidates for open positions.
   - Surveying student teachers and disaggregating the results by race to determine whether different groups of student teachers have different experiences or needs.

3. **Bridge the divide between community colleges and four-year institutions.** Many aspiring teachers begin their postsecondary education at a community college. Community colleges also tend to enroll a higher share of Black and Hispanic students than four-year institutions.[38] One study of Washington state found that 4 in 10 traditional teacher prep program completers spent time in a community college on their road to teacher certification, bolstering the merits of facilitating a path from community colleges into teacher preparation.[39] Some community colleges are partnering with four-year institutions to form 2+2 programs, where candidates complete two years of study at a community college before completing the final two years of teacher training at a four-year institution.[40] These partnerships rely on aligned requirements and eliminate the risk of candidates taking redundant or irrelevant courses.

4. **Design teacher preparation program components flexibly to meet the needs of a diverse group of aspiring teachers.** Flexible course schedules, intentional onboarding into the program, ongoing mentorship, and tuition assistance are all features of teacher prep programs that can make earning a teacher credential more accessible.

   The teacher apprenticeship program at the University of Nevada – Las Vegas, as featured in NCTQ's clinical practice [case study](#), provides a good example of how intentional program design can reach a previously untapped pipeline of potential teachers, in this case paraprofessionals. The program is producing diverse cohorts of teachers (62% people of color) with a very high rate of completion (94%).

5. **Provide licensing test preparation and subsidize test fees.** State or teacher preparation program data management systems can help identify candidates who struggle to pass licensing tests and who would benefit most from supports such as test preparation courses, tutoring, and other mechanisms for demonstrating content knowledge. Massachusetts's [MTEL Flex program](#) is a good example. States are pursuing licensure test fee subsidies through a [variety of approaches](#) to eliminate cost-related barriers for initial and repeated testing, some of which are specifically designed to address differences in pass rates by different racial groups.

Improve hiring and early induction

1. **Start the hiring process early to broaden candidate pools.** Teachers of color themselves say that early hiring processes serve as an important non-pay-based strategy for recruiting.[41] A report from Boston shows early hiring was a key aspect of a human capital initiative that led to hiring more effective and diverse teachers. Teacher preparation programs should prioritize partnerships with school districts that have embraced early hiring so their candidates have the opportunity to consider applying for the widest range of open positions.

2. **Develop programs and strategies to recruit more school leaders of color.** School leaders of color contribute to teacher diversity in several ways.[42] For example, Black principals are more likely to hire Black teachers, and Black teachers are less likely to leave a school with a Black principal.[43] Teachers also report higher job satisfaction when supervised by a same-race principal.[44] California's Diverse Education Leader Pipeline Initiative grant program is an example of a state-run initiative to increase the number of school leaders of color.

3. **Strengthen human resources functions, including hiring.** Some evidence suggests that teachers of color are less likely than similarly qualified white candidates to receive a job offer.[45] States can consider establishing training opportunities for district human resources directors focused on advancing equitable hiring and responding to challenges teachers of color may face, such as racial discrimination and isolation.

4. **Ensure that all beginning teachers have access to a strong induction program and mentor.** The first years in the classroom are challenging for all educators. A strong induction program and ongoing access to an effective mentor can support new teachers to persist in their careers during this turbulent time. Mentor training and assignment systems as well as induction supports should reflect the needs of beginning teachers, including teachers of color. A Minnesota law provides for a grant program that can be used to provide additional stipends to mentors of color and establish affinity groups and induction programs for educators from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. The state also provides among its induction and mentoring materials for districts a report by *Kappan* with research-informed recommendations for developing mentoring practices for teachers of color.

5. **Improve school cultures so that teachers from historically disadvantaged groups feel welcomed and supported.** The final recommendation stretches the scope of this report beyond teacher preparation, but it must be included due to its importance for the long-term retention of teachers from historically disadvantaged groups. The future diversity of the teacher workforce depends not only on recruiting new teachers from diverse backgrounds but on preventing high rates of turnover.

   A report from Teach Plus and The Education Trust draws on the expertise and experience of teachers of color to provide recommendations for retaining them focused on improving school culture, including approaches for affirming teachers' racial identities and empowering teachers to be advocates for their students.

   One study focused on Black teacher retention found that support from school administrators was the central factor in teachers' intention to stay in the classroom. Black teachers shared that they are motivated by school administrators who are supportive, encouraging, have clear expectations, recognize a job well done, and are quick to back up their teachers when they need it.[46]

CONCLUSION

This brief establishes the central role of teacher preparation programs in shaping the diversity of the teacher workforce. While teachers of color provide proven academic and other benefits to all students, the profession still lags behind the racial diversity of college-educated adults. More than 4 in 10 preparation programs are graduating cohorts that are less diverse than their state's current teacher workforce, constraining progress. This problem, coupled with barriers such as financial burdens to obtaining certification, higher rates of new teacher and teacher of color attrition, and inequitable working conditions, continues to stymie headway.

Diversifying the teacher workforce is both urgent and achievable. With intentional recruitment, strong supports for candidates to complete their prep programs, and systemic measures like competitive pay, equitable hiring, and inclusive school cultures, states can build the high-quality, diverse teacher workforce students deserve.

ENDNOTES

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[2] Blazar, D. (2021). *Teachers of color, culturally responsive teaching, and student outcomes: Experimental evidence from the random assignment of teachers to classes* (EdWorkingPaper No. 21-501). Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University; Blazar, D. (2024). Why black teachers matter. *Educational Researcher*, *53*(8), 450–463.
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[19] Several years of additional program completer demographic data will make it possible to establish the relationship between teacher preparation program diversity and the state workforce trends presented in the Teacher Diversity Dashboard, which relies on five-year averages. In the interim, the chart below is intended as a snapshot of the current health of the teacher pipeline.

[20] In a 2016 report coauthored with the Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings, NCTQ used a teacher workforce model to project to the year 2060 the impact of an unspecified proactive approach to increasing Black and Hispanic representation in teacher preparation programs, testing what would happen if Black and Hispanic students pursued teaching at the same rate as white students or at a higher rate. The most optimistic model resulted in a reduction of the Black and Hispanic teacher-student diversity gaps by 5 and 12 points, respectively, while not entirely closing the gap even after simulating decades of higher enrollment. See Putman, H., Hansen, M., Walsh, K., & Quintero, D. (2016). *High hopes and harsh realities: The real challenges to building a diverse*

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