

## Question

Generally, information was sought about “best practices” information on minority teacher recruitment. Specifically, you were interested in state strategies to modify teacher assessment requirements in order to expand the supply of minority teachers and address teacher shortages.

## Our Response:

### Minority Teacher Recruitment

Recent research has identified a number of strategies for improving minority teacher recruitment, including approaches that leverage reporting, financial investments, and preparation pathways. You can find a list of recommended research at the end of this document.

#### ➤ Reporting & Data

- Require teacher preparation programs to publicly report information on teacher candidate outcomes disaggregated by race;
- Require schools and districts to publicly report on the race and ethnicity of teachers;
- Offer forums for teachers of color to gather and reflect on their own pathway into teaching and generate new ideas for recruiting future colleagues.

#### ➤ Investments

- Invest in and support high-quality teacher education programs at historically black colleges and universities and public colleges and universities serving large numbers of minority students;
- Provide generous scholarship support to future teachers of color that are tied to the effectiveness of the training program and the performance of the teacher candidates;
- Improve compensation packages to attract the brightest, most resilient people of color into the teaching profession with the aim of ensuring that teachers of color are paid comparable to other jobs with similar knowledge, skills, and responsibilities.

#### ➤ Preparation Pathways

- Support “grow your own” teacher preparation programs and career ladders for educational aides and paraprofessionals seeking to become teachers;
- Ensure that alternative certification programs are affordable to a wide range of nontraditional candidates by limiting university courses and learning experiences to those that are essential to beginning teachers;
- Develop a comprehensive system of incentives and supports for recruiting and supporting prospective teacher candidates of color from high school through college
  - Recruitment efforts should start at least as early as high school, as students who aspire to teach while in high school become teachers at a higher rate than students who did not express teaching aspirations;
- Encourage school- or community-based teacher preparation pathways.

Given the potential for [positive effects](#) of minority teachers on minority students and [research](#) demonstrating that minority teachers are more likely to move schools or exit the profession, minority teacher retention is also crucial. Please let us know if you would like additional information on minority teacher retention.

## Teacher Testing Requirements

Requirements for entry into teacher preparation programs and for teacher certification following the completion of such programs vary by state, grade and subject area. Fifty-state information on teacher certification assessment requirements can be accessed [here](#) and [here](#). Nearly all states have policies that require teacher candidates to take multiple assessments before entering the profession. The most widely used exams in the certification process are the [Praxis Series](#) assessments (administered by the Educational Testing Service and used in over 40 states) and the [National Evaluation Series](#) (administered by Pearson).

As you are aware, the lower performance of minorities on licensure tests may screen them out of the pool of potential teachers. A [national analysis](#) of more than 300,000 Praxis test-takers who completed the paper-based test between November 2005 and November 2009 found a 41.4% pass rate gap between African-American and Caucasian test-takers in math and a 40.8% pass rate gap between African-American and Caucasian test-takers in reading.

### ➤ Cut Scores

There is no national cut score for licensure exams, resulting in [variation](#) amongst states. While higher cut scores pose barriers to minority teacher candidates, [one study](#) found that raising cut scores in one state would eliminate more effective teachers than ineffective teachers and would not improve teacher quality.

### ➤ Effects on Student Achievement

Although [research](#) has documented some correlation between licensure tests scores and teacher quality, there is [evidence](#) that this correlation differs by teacher race and that black students benefit from being matched with a black teacher regardless of how that well or poorly the teacher performed on licensure tests.

### ➤ State Task Force Reports

#### *Colorado*

In December 2014, Colorado's [minority teacher representation study](#) recommended:

- The state department of education study whether there are differences in teacher test pass rates by race/ethnicity, and whether the tests, or aspects of the tests, are barriers for minority teacher candidates.
- If evidence of barriers is found, then the department should review the tests for cultural bias, validity, and reliability as indicators of teacher preparation and success.
- If the tests are deemed valid, reliable predictors of educator effectiveness, and if there are still disparities in pass rates between racial/ethnic groups, then the focus should shift to helping minority candidates understand and effectively prepare for the tests.
  - This preparation could take the form of classes, coaching, tutoring, or other study strategies.

Additionally, the study noted that:

- Support for students that struggle with certification exams might include non-traditional certification criteria such as performance evaluations and individual portfolios.
- Oregon and Connecticut are examples of best practices in policies and initiatives related to minority teacher recruitment and retention (p. 57-61). However, the research indicates that because Connecticut has not seen much return on test preparation efforts, focus has shifted away from the strategy.

## Oregon

In July 2015, the Oregon Educator Equity Advisory Group released an “[Educator Equity Report](#)” that proposed to limit barriers associated with teacher tests by adopting the following strategies:

- Collaborating with deans and directors of educator prep programs when considering national accreditation to ensure that institutions are not required to increase GPA requirements or test scores for program applicants,
- Providing future candidates with free access to test preparation materials and workshops,
- Continuing to monitor potential biases in the EdTPA, a newly required performance assessment (see a summary of New York’s dilemma relating to the use of a performance assessment for teachers [here](#)).

In addition, in June 2015, the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission voted to eliminate the rule requiring the passage of a Basic Skills Test for teacher licensure (see p. 38).

## Recommended Research

- [The State of Teacher Diversity in American Education](#) (2015) - see policy recommendations on p.108
- [The Challenge of Recruiting and Hiring Teachers of Color: Lessons from Six High Performing, High-Poverty, Urban Schools](#) (2015) – see implications for policy on p.40 et seq
- [Closing Gaps: Diversifying Minnesota’s Teacher Workforce](#) (2015) – see recommendations for improving recruitment beginning on p.11
- [America’s Leaky Pipeline for Teachers of Color: Getting More Teachers of Color into the Classroom](#) (2014) – see recommendations for federal, state, and local governments beginning on p.18
- [Keeping Up with the Kids: Increasing Minority Teacher Representation in Colorado](#) (2014) – see p.48 for best practices
- [The Student Has Become the Teacher: Tracking the Racial Diversity and Academic Composition of the Teacher Supply Pipeline](#) (2013)
- [Increasing Teacher Diversity: Strategies to Improve the Teacher Workforce](#) (2011) – see recommendations for state and districts beginning on p.28
- [Teacher Diversity Matters: A State-by-State Analysis of Teachers of Color](#) (2011)
- [Recruitment, Retention and the Minority Teacher Shortage](#) (2011)