



## GEAC Recruitment and Retention of Educators of Color Subcommittee Recommendations

### Rationale:

The statewide teacher shortage has exacerbated an already pressing issue: the marked lack of diversity in the field of education. We know that when students of color see themselves reflected in their educators, they are much more likely to flourish in school. But right now, the white teacher to white student ratio in Michigan is around 1:12, the black teacher to black student ratio is 1:60. The emerging body of research on diversity in education and its immense impact in the classroom is a reason why Governor Whitmer has made this a priority for the GEAC, creating the Subcommittee on Recruitment and Retention of Teachers of Color (heretofore “Subcommittee”) to develop recommendations to address the issue.

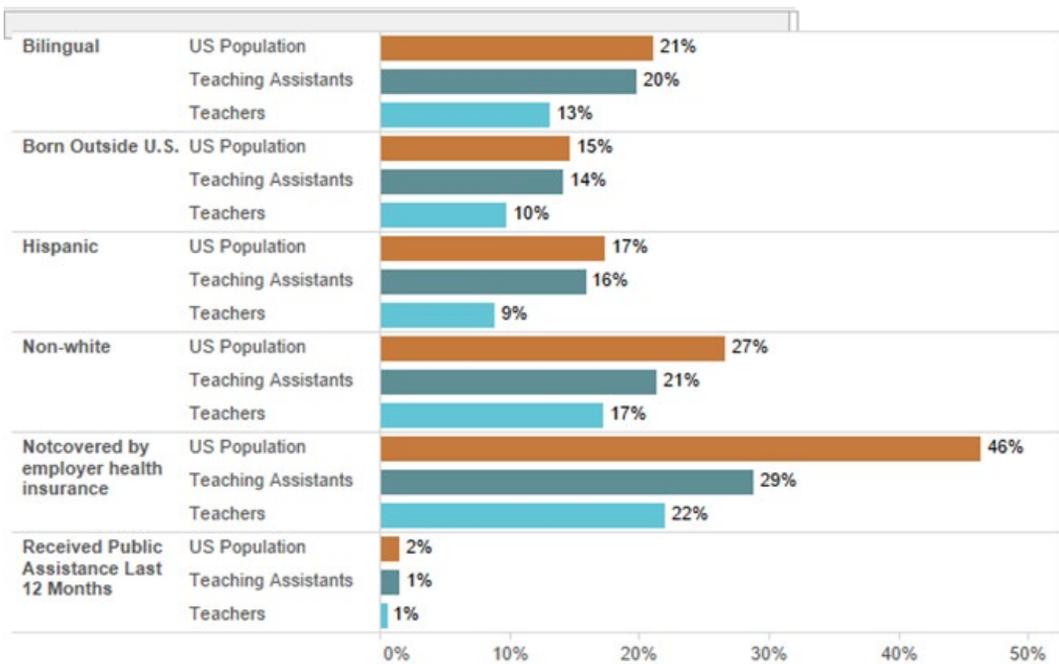
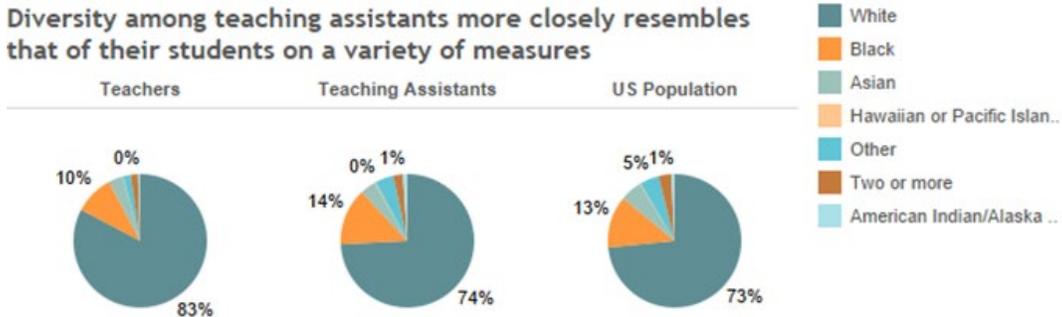
The Subcommittee has divided the recommendations into two categories: Recruitment and Retention. Though it is important to note that there is some obvious overlap between the two, so the solutions may overlap, as well. Finally, the Subcommittee would like to note that the best solution for any educator shortage is offering educators a competitive salary, opportunities for growth, support, and training and stability (S.O.S.). We hope with the support of the Governor, the Michigan Department of Education, the Michigan Legislature, and the State and local school boards, we can see the face of education in Michigan diversify.

**Subcommittee Members:** Mr. Jeff Whittle, Ms. Angela Pérez, Mr. Benedict Pineda, Dr. Ramont Roberts, Mr. Marcus Walton, Ms. Cara Lougheed, Ms. Zeinab Chami

## Recommendations for Recruitment of Educators of Color:

1. **Develop and Fund “Teacher Cadet®” Programs.** It is particularly vital that educators of color stand in front of classrooms where they reflect the student populations. Recruiting students to become teachers within their communities and districts will likely bring a passion and enthusiasm into classrooms many disadvantaged students learn. We recommend that districts, with the support of their local school boards, create “teacher cadet” or “grow your own” programs. Michigan, through the office of Career and Technical Education at MDE could lead the way by focusing on and expanding its Education General programs throughout the state.
  - A. Currently, there are 50 programs that fall under Education General through the office of CTE at MDE running out of either comprehensive high schools, or through career centers. There are 7 additional that are running as a part of an Early Middle College.
    - CTE office is also working with ELL consultants to provide programming in Spanish, as well as setting up programs in rural areas in the upper peninsula
  - B. Some districts house the courses in the high school building, while others such as Dearborn and Saginaw run such programs in partnership with their early college programs, so teacher cadet classes are housed in community colleges. ISDs also run courses on their campuses.
    - Specific emphasis must be placed on recruiting students of color in larger urban/diverse districts.
    - Publicize & promote Education General courses to all local districts, concentrating on urban districts
    - Opportunity to accelerate certification or permit
  - C. Western Michigan, Ferris State, Oakland, Saginaw Valley State, and Central Michigan Universities all have state-wide CTE articulation agreements.
  - D. Grand Rapids runs a similar program, but not through CTE.
  - E. Public-private partnerships can bolster these programs in high-need areas. In Detroit, the Skillman Foundation and the Detroit Children’s Fund have created Teach 313, a project aimed at recruiting teachers into Detroit Public Schools. While this project is not aimed directly at recruiting educators of color, endeavors like this can be leveraged to do so.
  - F. MDE and Governor’s office work with larger urban/rural/suburban districts to provide alternate pathways for teachers of color to become permanent teachers.
    1. Specialized permit from MDE
      - A. Certain criteria to qualify (Race/Ethnicity, Credit Hours/B.A. Degree, Years of Exp., Recommendations from School District Personnel, P.D. Hours, 5 Year commitment to Profession)
    - G. Certain criteria for school districts to meet for employment (mentor, training for three years, minimum salary offered, MOU with Union, Successful Evaluations, Growth on Local Assessments, Pass MTTC, State Reimbursement for Signing Bonus over Three Year Period)
2. **Create a Paraprofessional Career Ladder.** Paraprofessionals are silent heroes of the education profession. They work with some of the highest need students in our schools, and they possess an

understanding of education born of years in the field. Several states--Texas, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York and California--already have paraprofessional-to-teacher career ladder legislation. Studies show that paraprofessionals more closely reflect their student populations in terms of [diversity](#):



Currently, there is a bill in draft form to address this need. Some suggestions for the bill:

- A. Create two “levels” of grants available to paraprofessionals who are becoming teachers, the second level of which will be available to those specializing in content areas deemed “high need” at the district, county, or State levels.
- B. Required work experience for paraprofessionals seeking a grant from the State should be: full-time paraprofessional for two years or part-time paraprofessional after four years.

- C. Allow paraprofessionals seeking grants choice in the type of educational institutions they attend, college or university.
  - D. The median appropriations amount other states appear to devote to this type of initiative is approximately \$2-2.5 million.
- 3. Promote #proudMIEducator and #PMEChat at Colleges of Education.** The Michigan Department of Education’s campaign is running strong, so we hope that creating a push at the university level will create a sense of pride and unity in our up-and-coming teachers. The MDE can reach out to organizations on the campus level that represent minority students in order to place special focus on recruiting those students. Initiatives could include commercial advertisements created by students and educators to compliment TE curriculums.
- 4. Develop Partnerships with Private Entities to Provide Scholarships for Prospective Teachers of Color.** Student debt for minorities is often a daunting prospect, so partnering with private organizations to provide scholarships for educators of color may draw more minorities into the profession.

### Recommendations for Retention of Educators of Color:

- 1. Fund Development of New Teacher Support Programs.** Increasingly, new teachers feel isolated and alone in their struggles as they embark upon. That is why the Subcommittee hopes that State will focus on these programs, which have yielded positive results in other states.
  - Implement support programs (ideally at the district level) like [NC’s NTSP \(New Teacher Support Program\)](#), which offers 3 core services:
    - 1) Instructional Institute (begin the year with a “kickstart” conference for new teachers).
    - 2) Professional Development (create a survey to determine the needs of new teachers).
    - 3) Instructional Coaching (create instructional coaching positions to offer individual support for new teachers).
  - Less expensive option: Implement programs like [NEST \(New Educators Support Group\)](#) and [NTN \(New Teacher Network\)](#)--both out of Ingham County. [NTIP \(New Teacher Induction Program\)](#) through Oakland ISD .
  - Send Subcommittee to a National Teacher Retention/Recruitment Conference... like [New Teacher Center Symposium - Accelerate: Collective Impact for Equity in Education](#) in Atlanta, Feb 9-11.
  - Added responsibilities and expectations for teachers needs to be formally and consistently supported by additional resources.
  - Ensure protected time with mentors.
- 2. Create Networks for Current Educators of Color.** Research conducted by EPIC in Michigan tells us that teachers of color in predominantly white communities feel isolated, which increases the likelihood of leaving the profession. Initiating networks at the district, ISD, or even state level will help alleviate this.

3. **MDE Partnership with MEA & AFT.** Teacher unions carry a strong legacy, so they are natural conduits for a culture shift in our profession. We believe this will be particularly impactful in districts with large populations of minority teachers in our state, for they can feel isolated from the larger profession. Partnership could include promotion of MDE's **#proudMeducator/#PME** campaign and support of MEA's [MiNE](#) (Michigan New Educators) program. An example of **#proudMeducator**'s work can be found [here](#).
4. **Expand and Simplify Student Debt Forgiveness.** Currently, the process for educators to seek student debt forgiveness is onerous. Streamlining the process and expanding the teachers who qualify (with a particular focus on educators of color who teach in high need communities) would likely increase teacher retention.
5. **Reduce the Role of Standardized Testing in Education and Evaluations.** One truth we all know as educators on the ground: increased focus on standardized testing has had a deleterious effect on educators and students. We also know that students of color and those who live in poverty are at distinct disadvantages when it comes to these measures. We would like to encourage the Michigan State Legislature to work with MDE to reexamine the role of standardized testing in our teacher evaluations. The evidence is compelling:
  - A [survey](#) of 1,500 educators conducted by the NEA shows that 72% of teachers feel pressure from their administrators to improve standardized test scores, with almost half (45%) considered leaving the profession due to the negative impact testing has had on the profession. So reducing the role of standardized testing in teacher evaluations from 40% to 25% or, even better, eradicating it completely would go a long way in retaining our teachers.
  - Beyond placing pressure on teachers and students alike and putting minority and poor students at a distinct disadvantage, emphasis on testing largely prevents teachers, who often enter the profession for moral reasons, from fulfilling what they see as an imperative because, according to findings from Penn State University, it [narrows the scope](#) of what educators can teach.
  - Ultimately, standardized testing is expensive, burdensome, and unreliable. The tests used were not designed for evaluation of teachers, and, as research from Stanford University tells us, their use has been widely [debunked](#).
6. **Offer Pathways to Leadership for Current Educators of Color: Teacher- Peer Collaboration.** The definition of leadership in education is expanding. No longer are leaders only in school and district administration (though it is important for these positions to reflect the populations they serve).

A. In recent years, Detroit Public Schools has created a master teacher position for “exceptional practitioners.” Master teachers spend half the day in their classrooms and half the day supporting colleagues in deeply authentic ways. In DPS, master teachers:

- Spend half the day in their classrooms and half the day supporting colleagues in deeply authentic ways (not as substitute teachers).
- Serve as mentors to their colleagues, taking on a teacher leadership role that could foster a healthier culture in schools and districts.
- Provide a range of support for their peers in ELA in math.
- Receive a \$5,000 stipend for their efforts.

We recommend that the MDE encourages large districts with teacher retention issues to adopt master teacher positions like Detroit. These districts are often large and urban in demographics (high ED and/or ELL populations). While some districts may need funding support, others may be willing to adopt this practice sans stipend for the time being.

B. Encourage Michigan administrator organizations to partner with educators of color professional groups at the district and ISD levels. MASA (Michigan Association of Superintendents and Administrators), MASSP (Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals) and MEMSPA (Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association) members can provide mentorship while also growing the numbers of their own members of color.