



PROGRAM EVALUATION DIVISION

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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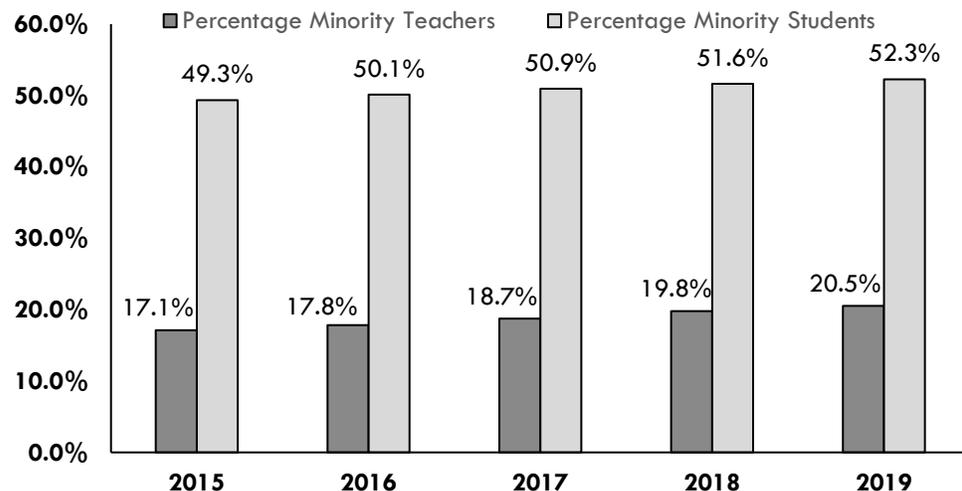
Lack of a Dedicated State-Level Effort Challenges North Carolina's Capacity to Increase Teacher Diversity

Highlights

IN BRIEF: The Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee's 2019–20 Work Plan directed the Program Evaluation Division to examine the effectiveness of North Carolina's current efforts to increase diversity in the teacher workforce. The directive required the Program Evaluation Division to explore whether other states are engaging in effective efforts and to report on any promising practices applicable to North Carolina. Although there is no dedicated state-level effort to promote the recruitment and retention of teachers of color, many local education agencies (LEAs), charter schools, and educator preparation programs (EPPs) within the state have developed and implemented initiatives to promote diversity in their teacher workforce.

BACKGROUND: Research shows that students of color experience many benefits from having a teacher of the same race. Both the recruitment and retention of teachers of color affect the diversity of the teacher workforce. People of color become teachers at lower rates than their white peers, as the pool of potential teachers of color narrows dramatically for black and Hispanic/Latino student candidates relative to white students at various points along the teacher pipeline. Teachers of color also leave the profession at higher rates due to a variety of factors.

The diversity of North Carolina's teachers does not reflect the diversity of its students



Source: Program Evaluation Division based on data from the Department of Public Instruction.

Despite achieving slight improvements in the diversity of its teacher workforce during the last few years, a sizable gap remains between the share of teachers of color in North Carolina and the share of students of color. A gap exists in every LEA in the state and in every other state in the country.

North Carolina lacks a dedicated effort to produce, recruit, and retain teachers of color.

Lack of a dedicated state-level effort leads to wide variation in district-by-district diversity. Local supplements and geographical factors often play a role in determining if students will be taught by a teacher of color. Disparities in resources result in some LEAs and charter schools being able to fund efforts to increase the proportion of teachers of color in their classrooms, whereas other LEAs and charter schools are less capable of doing so.

Educator preparation programs also face barriers to recruiting students of color. Many EPPs recruit from within their institution of higher education. EPPs are required to report on the number of candidates and graduates of color each year, yet they are not currently held accountable for their performance on these metrics.

Absent a statewide approach, LEAs, charter schools, and EPPs have implemented efforts to promote a diverse teacher workforce, but the effectiveness of these efforts is difficult to determine.

Many LEAs, charter schools, and EPPs only recently implemented their teacher diversity initiatives, and thus it may take several years to yield results. Further, these efforts include a wide variety of goals and metrics, making comparisons across programs difficult.

Efforts undertaken in other states demonstrate that options exist for North Carolina to more comprehensively increase the recruitment and retention of teachers of color.

Common efforts employed in other states include financial incentives, government directives, mentorship programs, and data monitoring policies. Although many of these efforts would require new funding, North Carolina could better leverage existing programs to improve teacher diversity without requiring the expenditure of additional state funds.

Recommendation. The General Assembly should mandate the inclusion of at least one Historically Black College or University or minority-serving institution in the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program.

Recommendation. The General Assembly should require the State Board of Education with the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission and the Department of Public Instruction to develop a plan for an alternative to licensure exams for teacher candidates to demonstrate competency.