

Recommendations

Finding 3 of this report described several efforts undertaken by other states to increase the diversity of their teacher workforces. Finding 4 described ways North Carolina could leverage its existing programs. Implementation of the two recommendations discussed below should not require the expenditure of any additional state funds.

Recommendation 1. The General Assembly should mandate the inclusion of at least one Historically Black College or University (HBCU) or minority-serving institution (MSI) in the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program.

As discussed in Finding 4, Session Law 2020-56 increased the number of institutions that may participate in the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program from five to eight. In addition, the legislation directs the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Commission to select institutions that represent “a diverse selection of both postsecondary constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina and private postsecondary institutions operating in the State.”

To increase the diversity of the teacher workforce, the General Assembly should mandate the inclusion of at least one Historically Black College or University (HBCU) or minority-serving institution (MSI) in the program. The General Assembly should direct the Commission to select an HBCU or MSI to participate in the Teaching Fellows program by October 1, 2021.

Recommendation 2. The General Assembly should require the State Board of Education (SBE), in consultation with the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission (PEPSC) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), to develop a plan for an alternative to licensure exams for teacher candidates to demonstrate competency.

As discussed in Finding 4, teachers of color experience, on average, lower passing rates on standardized licensure exams compared to their white peers. However, researchers have found a weak relationship between performance on these exams and effectiveness in the classroom.

To increase the diversity of the teacher workforce, the General Assembly should require the SBE, with consultation from PEPSC and DPI, to develop a plan for an alternative to licensure exams for teacher candidates to demonstrate competency. Alternative qualifications considered by the plan might include, but are not limited to,

- receiving a recommendation from the district superintendent or
- receiving an evaluation rating of proficient or above for each year of initial licensure.

In developing the plan, the SBE should

- identify the potential effect of an alternative qualification on the diversity and effectiveness of the teacher workforce,
- identify any benefits and challenges in implementing the plan, and

- identify costs to implement the plan if it were adopted.

SBE should submit the plan and any corresponding legislative changes necessary to implement the plan to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by October 1, 2021.

Appendices

Appendix A: Percentage of Minority Teachers by State, 2007–08 to 2017–18

Appendix B: Detailed Comparison of Student and Teacher Demographics in North Carolina in 2015 and 2019

Appendix C: Cost of Exams for Selected Licensure Areas

Agency Response

A draft of this report was submitted to the Department of Public Instruction for review. Its response is provided following the appendices and is followed by a response from PED.

Program Evaluation Division Contact and Acknowledgments

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