

[Executive Order 113](#), signed by Governor Roy Cooper at December's DRIVE Summit, established the Developing a Representative and Inclusive Vision for Education (DRIVE) Task Force to develop a plan to increase the diversity of North Carolina's educator workforce. The task force is comprised of [34 members](#) representing stakeholder groups from along the educator pipeline.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

✉ **Dr. Anthony Graham**, Chair, DRIVE Task Force; Provost, Winston-Salem State University

Supporting and Retaining Racially, Ethnically, and Linguistically Diverse Educators

The fourth meeting of the DRIVE Task Force sought to better understand issues related to supporting and retaining racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse educators. By engaging in frank conversations around the challenges faced by in-service educators of color and learning from successful strategies and partnerships that are finding success in this space, task force members gained a more clear understanding of how North Carolina can work to make the teaching profession inclusive and sustainable for educators of color.

DEVELOPING SUPPORT NETWORKS FOR EDUCATORS OF COLOR

Best Practices from Durham Public Schools

RESOURCE EXPERT

✉ **Sonia Márquez**, Co-Founder, DPS Latinx

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **DPS Latinx Mission** | Founded in November 2018 by Sonia Marquez and Dr. Jose Cardoza, DPS Latinx is a grassroots effort dedicated to providing support to Durham Public Schools staff who identify as Latinx by creating a safe space where members can meet, network, and grow together as professionals.
- **Developing a Community of Support** | Affinity groups like DPS Latinx can overcome challenges associated with feelings of isolation and lack of support by providing opportunities for educators of color to engage in mentorship and professional development, and offer a safe space to share experiences and celebrate diversity.
- **Building on a District Commitment to Diversity** | Durham Public Schools' commitment to equity can be seen in their strategic plan. [Goal three](#) of the strategic plan is explicitly dedicated to increasing educator diversity and calls for increasing the percentage of DPS educators and staff who identify as Hispanic/Latino from three to 10 percent by 2023. This district-level investment created the ecosystem that allowed for the organic development of DPS Latinx.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- For districts establishing an affinity group, embed professional and leadership development that counts toward continuing education units (CEUs) and secure funding that can be dedicated to reducing barriers to participation, including providing childcare at meetings.
- Establish a district-level commitment to increasing educator diversity and codify those efforts into a strategic plan. At the state level, identify successful models and seek to scale these efforts across the state to provide a network for teachers that may not work in a district that has the capacity or diverse teacher population to sustain a local affinity group.
- Investigate the process for a postsecondary institution in North Carolina to become a Hispanic Serving Institution.
- To address the invisible tax, consider implementing policies that fairly compensate teachers of color for additional roles that they fill in addition to their full-time teaching role. This could include offering a district-subsidized translation credential, either through the district or through a local postsecondary institution, that can position bilingual educators to earn a pay differential for interpreting during and/or after work hours.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- The [DPS Latinx](#) homepage provides additional information about the mission and goals of the program.
- Durham Public Schools' [Strategic Plan](#) establishes a district-level commitment to diversity, including specific goals to increase the diversity of its educator workforce.

BARRIERS TO TEACHER RETENTION

Voices from the Field

RESOURCE EXPERTS

- ✉ **Sean Parrish**, Brevard High School, Transylvania County Schools
- ✉ **Jia Lin**, Charlotte Lab School
- ✉ **Brittany Hammonds**, Fairmont High School, Public Schools of Robeson County
- ✉ **Alirio Estevez**, Siler City Elementary School, Chatham County Schools

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Isolation in Predominantly White Contexts** | For educators of color who serve in schools in which they are the only non-white staff, feelings of isolation and exclusion can make the profession unsustainable. These feelings can be exacerbated in areas of the state in which the local community similarly lacks cultural diversity.
- **Balancing Cultural Values** | Despite the advanced qualifications and amount of work the teaching profession requires, it lacks the pay and prestige of other white-collar professions. As such, pursuing a career in the field of education can present a conflict with cultural norms among some communities. Educators of color most often struggle with culturally rooted challenges to being a teacher, including negative perceptions toward the profession, balancing the workload with traditional familial roles, or pressure to find a higher paying job to serve as the breadwinner for extended family.
- **Contending with the Invisible Tax** | The “invisible tax,” additional responsibilities placed on educators of color like translating or serving in a disciplinary role without compensation continues to be a significant challenge for educators of color. This phenomenon perpetuates the dynamic that educators of color must bear the burden of other staff’s lack of cultural competencies and must work harder than their white peers in order to be perceived as an equal within a school building.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Effective administrators who elevate teacher voices and can provide hands on coaching and mentorship are a critical element in retaining a diverse educator workforce. Providing training and support for current school leaders, as well as creating new and expanding existing pipelines of equity-minded administrators (especially school leaders of color) will be crucial.
- Increasing teacher pay, including reinstating master’s pay, may be a potential lever in retaining educators of color.
- Establishing affinity groups, both in higher education and at the district or state level, can build communities of support for educators of color and aid them in overcoming the isolation described in predominantly white schools or communities.
- Actively set goals to increase educator diversity at the district level and seek out potential educators of color by building relationships with Historically Minority Serving institutions, as well as community and faith-based organizations, to broaden the pool of diverse educators. Once these teachers enter a district, create an inclusive workplace environment and develop systems to lift their voices and prioritize their development.

STATE EFFORTS TO SUPPORT AND RETAIN EDUCATORS OF COLOR

Best Practices from Massachusetts

RESOURCE EXPERT

✉ **Dr. Ventura Rodríguez**, Senior Associate Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Grounding the Work in a Theory of Action** | The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) established an Educator Diversification Theory of Action, a living document that guides its efforts to diversify the state's educator workforce. In addition, the Massachusetts State Board of Education established a subcommittee dedicated to issues related to educator diversity that oversees and supports DESE's efforts in this space.

DESE Educator Diversification Theory of Action

We believe people of color are not choosing to become teachers because:

1. They believe that there are better financial rewards/opportunities in other professions.
2. There are financial barriers to enter the profession.
3. They are not having/did not have a positive experience as K-12 students and therefore do not view the profession favorably.

IF DESE works with school districts and partners to:

Provide tangible financial support and incentives to recruit and retain teachers of color;

Proactively advertise the benefits of becoming educators (including the financial incentives) to prospective teachers of color;

Improve the experience students and teachers of color are having in our state's K-12 schools;

THEN the state will be able to recruit and retain larger numbers of teachers of color.

AS A RESULT, all students, particularly students of color, will have a more positive experience and perform at higher levels academically.

- **The InSPIRED Fellowship** | Recognizing the interplay of the recruitment and retention of diverse educators, the [InSPIRED Fellowship](#) leverages the community connections of in-service educators of color to identify and recruit diverse teacher candidates and hosts regional groups to connect career educators of color.
- **The Teacher Diversification Pilot Program** | Recognizing the existence of district efforts to recruit and retain diverse educators, DESE sought to provide financial investments to strengthen such programs. This includes tuition assistance for enrollment and completion of educator preparation programs and financial incentives for in-service educators. These incentives include funding for loan repayment reimbursement, relocation allowances, signing bonuses, and grow your own programs.
- **Superintendent Diversity** | Acknowledging the need for diverse district leaders, DESE developed the Influence 100 program to increase inclusivity and cultural responsiveness among school districts by recruiting and cultivating a diverse cadre of education leaders poised to become superintendents within five years. This fellowship includes professional learning opportunities tailored to developing and implementing policies that are culturally responsive and seek to diversify the educator workforce.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure efforts to increase educator diversity are grounded in a long-term, data-driven strategy that addresses inherent and unconscious biases within talent development systems and is more inclusive and culturally sustaining across all state human resource practices.
- In addition to building a pipeline of diverse school leaders, invest in state-level programs to increase the pool of superintendents and other senior district administrators of color.
- When drawing on state and federal funds to incentivize a career in education for educators of color, be conscious of federal requirements that disallow limiting access to these funds based on demographic characteristics.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is home to a number of [initiatives dedicated to increasing the diversity of its educator workforce](#).
- In addition to his role with DESE, Dr. Rodriguez also served as co-chair of the New England Secondary Schools Consortium Task Force on Diversifying the Educator Workforce, which released a [report](#) in the spring of 2020 that includes a number of recommendations to increase educator diversity.

COORDINATING EFFORTS

Alignment with the State Board of Education's Strategic Plan

RESOURCE EXPERT

- ✉ **Dr. Deanna Townsend-Smith**, Director of Operations and Policy, North Carolina State Board of Education; Member, DRIVE Task Force

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Embedding Equity** | The State Board of Education's [Strategic Plan](#), approved in August 2019, included significant work on addressing issues of equity, including developing an equity definition:

The State Board is committed to delivering equitable opportunity to every student in North Carolina. Therefore, "Educational Equity" is the belief and practice of ensuring that every student is treated in a fair and just manner, providing the necessary allocation of resources for the success of every student, and eliminating discriminatory barriers to full participation and opportunities for every student.

- **Educator Diversity within the Strategic Plan** | Throughout the plan, elements that address the barriers and opportunities around increasing educator diversity are present, including an explicit objective to increase the number of educators of color in schools across North Carolina, with an expanded focus on leadership. Many of the strategies identified by the State Board align closely with the recommendations proposed by the Recruitment and Preparation subcommittees, including investing in Historically Black Colleges and Universities and revising educator licensing exams.
- **Rooting the work in Data** | The State Board is working to develop a dashboard to monitor its progress on these issues that will be updated on a quarterly basis.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to identify areas in which the Task Force Recommendations align with both the State Board's Strategic Plan and the Leandro Action Plan to ensure synergy across these efforts.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Approved Equity Resolution, Whole Child Resolution & Action Framework](#)