



TRENDS IN THE STATE OF TEACHING IN THE UNITED STATES AND MINNESOTA

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As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates existing racial inequities, the spotlight shines on Minnesota's gaps in income, health care, housing, and college completion rates. Most notably, COVID-19 is significantly impacting K-12 education. Forced to evacuate school buildings and shift to teaching and learning online, this is a necessary time to reflect on and reevaluate K-12 education. In 2018, researchers examined the state of teaching in the United States.ⁱ Covering approximately three decades of teaching, Ingersoll and May highlight seven notable trends in the United States teaching workforce, examined below in turn.

The Current State of Teaching — US

Larger/Ballooning

Over the past three decades, the number of teachers in the public education system has increased at a faster rate than the number of students. He attributes this to the number of education reforms aimed at creating smaller class sizes, increasing STEM education opportunities, and needing to fill specialized teaching positions (ESL, ELL, Special Education, etc.).

Greying

The concern that many teachers are near or at retirement age, in turn, creating a teacher shortage. Ingersoll found that the field of teaching is subsequently becoming younger and that teacher shortages are impacted by the lack of retention of younger workforce, not simply by the retirement of baby boomers.

Greening

Beginning teachers and those who have shifted careers to teaching are building a less experienced workforce. The average of time a teacher has been in the classroom has dropped from fifteen years to one-to-three years since the late 1980's.

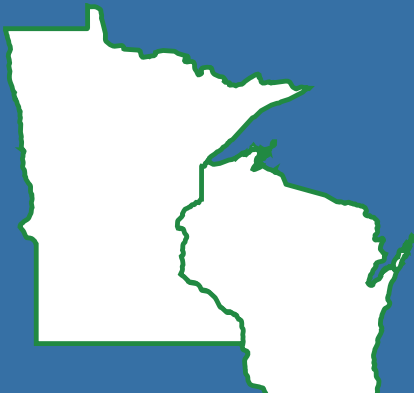
More Female

Ingersoll also notes that the field is increasingly more female. Though much of the teaching workforce has historically been white female teachers, the field contains less males than ever. The change occurred at the high school level where most men were most concentrated. In many cases, most male students will complete K-12 education without having any male teachers.

More Diverse

Though the overall increase in teachers of color is notable in his findings—as Ingersoll identifies a 150 percent increase from the late 80's to 2016—there is still a visible gap in the racial demographics of teacher and student populations. 51 percent of public-school students are students of color, yet only 19 percent of teachers are teachers of color.

i. Ingersoll, R., Merrill, E., Stuckey, D., & Collins, G. (2018). *Seven Trends: The Transformation of the Teaching Force*, updated October 2018. Research Report (#RR 2018-2). Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.



Ingersoll further notes that teachers of color are the most likely to leave the profession due to working conditions, lack of autonomy, and discretion of what occurs in their classrooms.

Consistent in Academic Ability

Ingersoll finds that just under one-tenth of new teachers have degrees from universities from the top two categories of higher education—most competitive and highly competitive—while about 25 percent come from the bottom two categories—less competitive and not competitive. However, teacher credentials and teacher effectiveness is well documented to have no relationship.ⁱⁱ

Less Stable

Ingersoll identifies the unstable nature of teaching as an ongoing problem in public education. The turnover rate has increased overall, but this statistic is exacerbated when considering teachers of color. Approximately, 44 percent of teachers leave the profession within five years and 50 percent of turnover occurs in 25 percent of public schools that enroll a high-poverty, high minority student demographic.

The Current State of Teaching — MN

In 2018, the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensure Standards Board (PELSB) commissioned Wilder Research to report on the state of teachers in Minnesota with an emphasis on supply and demand.ⁱⁱⁱ To provide a comparison, this section will draw parallels in the themes identified by Ingersoll et al. (2018) and the 2019 Biennial Minnesota Teachers Supply and Demand report to demonstrate where MN stands.

Larger/Ballooning

The state of Minnesota has approximately 70,000 actively licensed teachers who are not in classrooms teaching. That's roughly half of all licensed teachers in the state. Commonly framed as a teacher shortage, the correct lens is that there are unfilled positions throughout Minnesota. According to the Wilder report, Minnesota has unfilled teaching position due to lack of qualification of applicants in the following areas:

- Agricultural education
- American Sign Language
- Blind or visually impaired
- Deaf or hard of hearing
- Driver education
- Family education/early childhood
- Hmong, Ojibwe, and German languages
- Parent and family education

Greyer/Greener

Though the 2019 Biennial Minnesota Teachers Supply and Demand report does not speak specifically to age/experience as does the Seven Trends: The Transformation of Teaching report, it does speak to the attrition rate in

Minnesota. It shows that approximately 21 percent of the 7,000 teachers who did not return to teach during the 2016–17 year retired—the second highest reason for not returning following personal reasons. This might indicate that the teacher workforce in Minnesota is not as inexperienced as the national workforce data indicates. However, stating that roughly a fourth of teachers not returning retired does not allow us to conclude which demographic left for personal reasons. This is something the report may want to address in the next iteration.

More Diverse

In examining race/ethnicity, the 2019 Biennial Minnesota Teachers Supply and Demand report indicates that, like the overall state of teaching in the U.S., Minnesota has a difficult time recruiting and retaining teachers of color. Approximately 95.6 percent of teachers identified as white, 1.4 percent as Asian, 1.4 as Black, and 0.4 percent as American Indian. Corroborating data offered in the same report indicates that nearly 77 percent of districts have zero or relatively few (<6%) teachers of color.

While much research speaks to the recruitment of teachers of color, little exists presenting the empirical argument for increasing their supply. Researchers Dr. Ana Villegas of Montclair State University and Dr. Jacqueline Irvine of Emory University examined the literature discussing teacher diversity published in peer reviewed articles, books, and reports. They offer three major arguments as to why Minnesota, as well as the rest of the U.S., needs to address the lack of teachers of color in the teacher workforce with urgency.

- **Teachers of color serve as role models for all students.**

For students of color, having someone that looks like them and is from their socioeconomic/environmental background boosts self-worth as a student. Teachers of color also provide benefits for white students as the interaction assists in dispelling myths about people of color, particularly for those who do not often interact with people of color. It demonstrates how teachers of color are successful and contributing members of society.^{iv}

- **Teachers of color have the potential to improve the academic outcomes and school experiences of students of color.**

Empirical evidence in research indicates that teachers of color improve learning outcomes for students of color as they can connect via shared lived experience and cultural background their academic performance. Further research suggests that teachers of color have a more favorable view of students of color, forming caring and trusting relationships. In turn, they are able to advocate for and negotiate for student opportunity and advancement. Teachers of

ii. See, for example: Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006; Harris & Sass, 2011; Leigh, 2010.

iii. Wilder Research. (2019). *2019 Biennial Minnesota Teacher Supply and Demand*. Retrieved from https://mn.gov/pelsb/assets/2019_Supply_and_Demand_Report_tcm1113-370206.pdf

iv. Irvine, J. J. (1988) as cited in Villegas, A. M., & Irvine, J. J. (2010). Diversifying the Teaching Force: An Examination of Major Arguments. *Urban Review*, 42(3), 175–192.

color tend to have higher expectations of students of color, leading to higher academic achievement.^v Additionally, teachers of color are found to employ culturally relevant teaching connecting cultural backgrounds to the curriculum, subsequently engaging those who might not be engaged or are culturally excluded, and confronting racism through curriculum.^v

- **The Workforce Rationale**

Research reveals that white teachers tend to leave schools that predominantly enroll students of color not because of their poverty status, but because of race. In turn, teachers of color select these “hard-to-staff” schools because they have a personal

connection. As white teachers leave the workforce and difficult to staff school serving minoritized students, scholarship suggests that teachers of color are more committed to teaching students of color and are more persistent in staying.^v

Research has identified pipeline programs as the highest-impact recruitment strategy, followed by more competitive salary and hiring incentives. The most impactful retention efforts were professional development opportunities and mentorship programs. These recommendations as well as others can be reviewed in the research briefs on Recruiting and Retaining Teachers of Color.

v. Villegas, A. M., & Irvine, J. J. (2010). Diversifying the Teaching Force: An Examination of Major Arguments. *Urban Review*, 42(3), 180-182