



Children  
Now

# Black Student Success

Improving Educational Outcomes  
for Black Kids Through Increasing  
the Number of Black Teachers

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## Teacher Diversity is Linked to Student Outcomes: Increasing the Number of Black Teachers Positively Impacts Black Student Success

The COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented uncertainty both within teacher preparation programs and in schools. While it has exacerbated existing and long-standing inequities in California's educational system, the pandemic also presents an opportunity to innovate teacher education programs and rethink how they prepare and sustain candidates of color, particularly Black teachers.

Qualified, engaged teachers are critical for all students, but especially for students who face systemic barriers. Racism, poverty, immigration threats, and community violence hinder students' ability to achieve their full potential. Today, California is facing an acute teacher shortage, fueled in part by the pandemic, an overall workforce shortage, a dearth of applicants, as well as the unevenness of current teacher preparation programs. The result is inequities in instructional quality that disproportionately affect Black students.

Research indicates teacher qualifications are the most important school-related predictor of student achievement and that educators who share the same race as their students tend to set higher expectations for them than other teachers. Students of color with a same-race teacher also earn higher GPAs, spend more time on homework, and have higher expectations for themselves attending college. Furthermore, students of all races report forming stronger connections and learning better when they have teachers of color. However, we know that across California, the teacher workforce is not reflective of the state's diverse student population.

Over the past several years, California has made significant investments in programs to address the chronic teacher shortage and need for additional training of the current teaching workforce. However, these investments are largely short-term solutions aimed at addressing a long-term and systematic problem. Unfortunately, few of these investments are focused on expanding teacher preparation program capacity and do not address structural impediments erected through policy and regulation. Combined with the failure to treat teaching on par with other top professions, this dissuades prospective candidates from enrolling in teacher preparation programs.

As reported by [EdSource in April 2019](#), "enrollments in teacher preparation programs... just aren't high enough to put fully prepared teachers in classrooms to educate all 6 million of the state's public-school students."

California needs an estimated 24,000 new teachers each year according to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). During the 2016-17 school year, the CTC issued 16,518 new teacher credentials, which was still about 7,482 credentials short.<sup>1</sup> In concert with pandemic impacts, retirements, and other transitions, the gap between the number of new credentials issued and demand for teachers over the past two years has increased significantly, leaving schools, and more importantly, the students they serve without access to a well-prepared teacher.

To bridge the gap, school districts increasingly hire teachers without full preparation. These include "short-term staff" and "provisional internship" permit holders, who are not required to have any teacher training. The Learning Policy Institute estimates that teachers on "emergency style" permits are three times as likely to teach in California's high-minority schools and twice as likely to teach in high-poverty schools as in better resourced schools. School districts are also increasingly relying on intern credentialed teachers. While intern programs are a popular pathway (they allow for the teacher candidate to earn a salary while completing their preparation program), research shows teachers trained as interns tend to turn over faster, so the shortage problem persists.

The overall working environment teachers are in is also often not supportive and in some cases hostile. New teachers, especially Black teachers, report feelings of isolation once in the classroom, as well as lacking support and a sense of community due to the absence of other Black teachers in their school. Teachers of color are also often asked to take on additional roles including coach, mentor, role model, disciplinarian, and are responsible for communicating with families of students of color. While these may be roles a teacher embraces over the course of their career, having these responsibilities thrust upon a teacher early in their career, while they should be focused on mastering the art of teaching, puts undue burden on teachers of color.

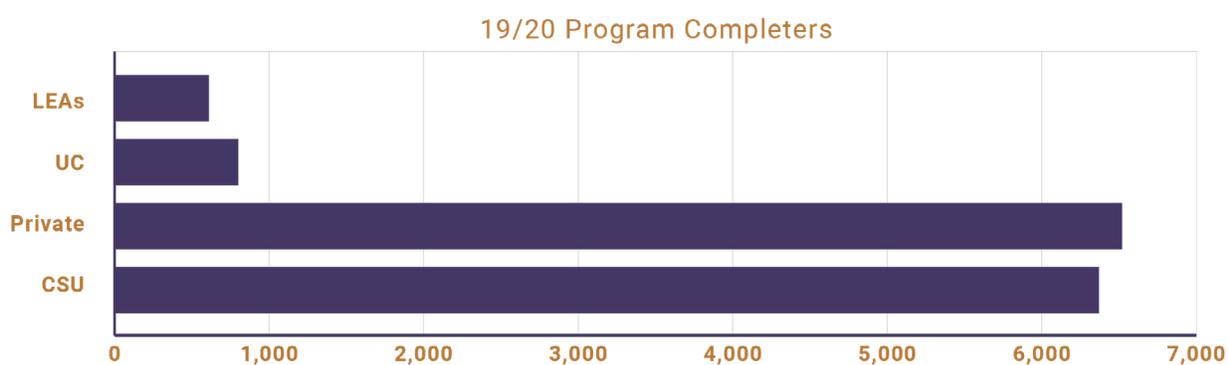
The lack of ongoing investments, inadequate preparation, low pay (particularly in the first five years of teaching), additional workloads, and challenging work environments results in a cycle year-after-year with school districts always needing more teachers. The churn-and-burn cycle has an incredibly negative effect on student learning and overall school climate.

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<sup>1</sup> Darling-Hammond, L., Satcher, L., Carver-Thomas, D. Getting Down to Facts II, Teacher Shortages in California: Status, Sources, and Potential Solutions. August 2018. [https://gettingdowntofacts.com/sites/default/files/2018-09/GDTFII\\_Report\\_Darling-Hammond.pdf](https://gettingdowntofacts.com/sites/default/files/2018-09/GDTFII_Report_Darling-Hammond.pdf)

## California Teacher Preparation, Recruitment, and Retention: A Piecemeal “System”

The recruitment, preparation, hiring, and retention of teachers in California is a multi-faceted, multi-agency endeavor plagued by lack of leadership, coordination, and leaks in the proverbial “teacher pipeline.” Teacher preparation programs (TPP), which train and prepare students to become classroom teachers, are housed and run by institutes of higher education and local education agencies. The California State University (CSU) system prepares more teachers than any other system, however, private colleges and universities, when grouped together, prepare the largest number of California’s teachers. The University of California and local education agencies (LEAs) prepare a small percentage of teachers. TPPs are accredited and guided by the CTC. The CTC is a standalone, state-level agency whose charge includes the accreditation of preparation programs, the issuance of credentials, and the arbiter of charges of malpractice by teachers. TPPs are responsible for recruiting students into their preparation programs. With more than 250 TPPs in the state, there is no systematic approach to the recruitment of individuals into the teaching profession.



Data from Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Accessed August 12, 2022. <https://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/reports/data/state-trends>. Table 8.1, Institutions Tab

More than 1,000 California local education agencies are responsible for hiring teachers. LEAs with established TPP relationships receive increased access to new teachers, giving them an advantage in hiring over LEAs without relationships with TPPs. These are often rural or small school districts. The retention of teachers is largely the responsibility of a school site administrator, although district administration and policies are also an important factor. The California Department of Education (CDE) and the State Board of Education (SBE) are state-level institutions whose activities have influence over a teacher’s work environment, yet they do not oversee the recruitment, preparation, hiring, or retention of teachers.

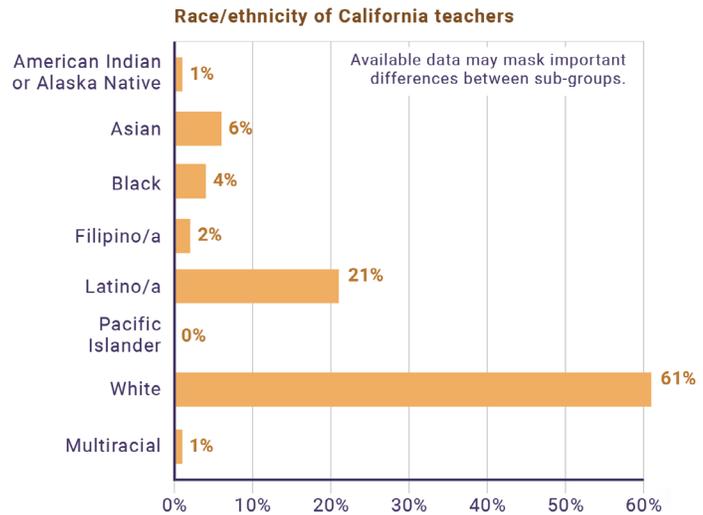
Currently, while there are several state-level incentive programs to increase participation in teacher preparation programs, none have been designed to address the specific barriers to teaching that people of color face. These incentive programs are funded with one-time budget augmentations. The absence of ongoing dollars represents a significant shortcoming of these efforts to recruit, prepare, and retain new teachers by not allowing for permanent, systemic infrastructures to be built and sustained. Additionally, none of these incentives are coordinated by a single agency. Over the past few years, the following incentive programs have received robust funding with the intention of addressing the state’s chronic teacher shortage.

- Teacher Residency Grant Program\* (\$625 million from 2018 – 2022)
- Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program (\$170 million from 2017 – 2022)
- Golden State Teacher Grant Program (\$600 million from 2019 – 2021)

\*The 2021 program gives priority selection points for grant applications that target diverse residency candidates.

Another example of teacher diversification efforts includes [California State University's six-campus project](#) aimed at increasing the teacher pipeline for male teachers of color throughout the CSU system.

While some local education agencies and teacher preparation programs specifically target the recruitment and retention of teachers of color, they are not systematic, which results in uneven access across the state.



Source: The 2022 California Children's Report Card

## Recommendations

To increase and improve the preparation of Black teachers, entering and remaining in the profession beyond the first five years, California should implement and invest in:

1. Registering Teacher Residency Programs as Teacher Occupation Apprenticeship Programs with the U.S. Department of Labor and prioritizing the enrollment of Black teachers in the programs. This would provide broader access to high-quality, district-driven, work-based learning pathways that offer aspiring teachers hands-on work experience while earning a wage that increases during the progression of the program, enabling them to earn a college degree and teaching credential. Federally recognized apprenticeship programs could eliminate one of the greatest barriers to becoming a teacher, which is the ever-increasing cost of attending college and completing a teacher preparation program.
2. Replicating and scaling statewide models of additional support for new Black teachers like the Black Teacher Project. The Black Teacher Project is a proven model that provides initial and sustained support for new Black teachers as they enter the profession, giving them a sense of belonging, peer-to-peer support, and mentorship, which increases the likelihood they will remain in the profession beyond the first five years.
3. Instituting a statewide Educator Bonus Program as a financial incentive to retain Black teachers. Funded by the state and free of state taxes, payments would be made directly to all new and recently (within the prior five years) hired teachers. The program would be administered at the state level (e.g., by the California Department of Labor) and structured to not violate local collective bargaining agreements. This program would address the chronically low pay for new teachers and provide incentive for those considering other higher compensated professions to become teachers.

## Conclusion

California's unprecedented budget surplus and record levels of federal funding tied to COVID-19 relief presents a unique opportunity to invest in new models for teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention. Well-prepared teachers who reflect the diversity of the students they serve are needed to ensure that all students, especially low-income students of color, have access to rigorous and engaging learning opportunities across the curriculum. To address the success of Black students, California must invest in programs to attract, support, and retain Black teachers.

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