



Tabletop Session Summary

June 10, 2021

Increasing Workforce Diversity to Boost Learning Recovery Efforts

Presenters: Seth Gershenson, [American University, School of Public Affairs](#); Erin Lomax, [National Comprehensive Center](#)

This tabletop discussion focused on the importance of a diverse educator workforce in programming to support student achievement.

Session Highlights

- » The American Rescue Plan has state set-asides for summer learning and enrichment, afterschool programs, and extended day or year schedules. These programs are intended to mitigate the impact of lost instructional time due to the pandemic, especially for students disproportionately impacted by it.
- » Research on each of the programs designated for state set-asides has shown positive effects for students on some outcomes. When compared to other learning recovery strategies, however, high-impact tutoring specifically stands out in terms of effectiveness in both reading and math for K-12 students.
- » In addition to learning recovery strategies, access to effective teachers (including teachers who are representative of the student population) can help close achievement gaps. The current workforce, however, is about 80% White, while the student population is less than 50% White.
- » There are several strategies that can be employed to address this disparity. Learning recovery provides an immediate opportunity to transform the teacher pipeline. Through hiring for learning recovery programs, individuals more representative of the student population can be introduced to the teaching profession or current aides and paraprofessionals can be supported in their growth in the field.
- » Districts can also take steps to ensure that their hiring processes promote diversity. They can, for example, hire across districts for summer to intentionally have a more representative presence in their programs.

Shared Resources

- » [Teacher Diversity and Student Success: Why Racial Representation Matters in the Classroom](#)
- » [Learning Recovery and a Diverse Workforce: A Win-Win for Students Hardest Hit by COVID-19](#)



Questions and Answers on Increasing Workforce Diversity to Boost Learning Recovery Efforts

Do the references to "teacher" in this tabletop discussion include youth workers, community educators and/or afterschool staff who do not have a teaching credential but are often representative of the communities summer learning and enrichment programs serve?

Yes. The word "teacher" is being used very broadly and does include staff who may bring more representation to summer, afterschool, and tutoring programs.

How can we encourage educators to incorporate a more diverse curriculum in their programming?

One approach to addressing this issue is getting buy-in from principals and school leaders who are making these decisions. Getting teachers to empathize with students of diverse backgrounds can also help and is a big part of changing mindsets. There isn't time, however, to change teacher mindsets for this summer. Hopefully, events like this tabletop discussion, briefs, and books have convinced some principals to buy into this idea.

Can high school students be effective tutors for younger students and in so doing get exposure to teaching as a possible profession?

Yes. Research is showing that well-trained tutors who get ongoing support and who are consistent in the student-tutor relationship can be effective at building trust and increasing academic outcomes. For example, there was a national tutoring program that had a cost-effective design using high school students to tutor younger kids and college students to tutor high school students. The program was regarded as effective not only in terms of academic outcomes but also cost.

Using high school students to tutor can also be leveraged as a gateway into education as a career. High school students who may not have considered a teaching career can be exposed to the profession through this type of opportunity.

