



Tabletop Session Summary

July 22, 2021

A Coalition for Teacher Diversity

Presenters: Sandra Saucedo-Falagan, [South Washington County Schools \(MN\)](#); Paul Spies, [Metropolitan State University \(MN\)](#)

This tabletop discussion provided new approaches to encourage and support diverse candidates along the education pathway.

Session Highlights

- » In Minnesota, 38 percent of students are students of color while only 7 percent of teachers are teachers of color. This gap led to the formation of the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota. The coalition is comprised of volunteers. They host conferences, affinity dinners, and policy forums using grant funding. They have also been involved in drafting legislation and advocating for policy changes.
- » A five-point platform was developed to diversify the educator workforce. It includes climate and curriculum transformation, financial provisions for teacher education, elimination of discriminatory teacher testing requirements, additional supports for teacher induction and retention and for pathways to teaching for diverse youth.
- » Challenges for this work have included the COVID-19 pandemic, dependence on grant funding, incrementalism, a divided legislature, the current political climate, and burnout.

Shared Resources

- » [A Natural Fit: Supporting After-School Staff of Color in Teacher Pipelines](#)
- » [HallPassBreak](#)
- » [HF 217/HF 1041 - Increase Teachers of Color Act](#)
- » [The Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota](#)

Questions and Answers on A Coalition for Teacher Diversity

How might summer and afterschool programming support experiences with culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum?

Since summer school is an opportunity for students to catch up (especially students who have been underserved all year), it is important for the curriculum to be authentic, culturally relevant, and reflective of students. It can be beneficial for students to have teachers of color who can teach and share about their own culture.



Is there a difference in the staffing of "summer school" versus "summer learning" provided by community-based organizations?

It is difficult to staff for summer when there are already staffing challenges during the year, especially after COVID-19. Students of color participating in summer school may continue to be underserved. There are not many teachers of color in summer school.

To what extent are colleges of education and teacher preparation programs diverse? Do these programs serve as a source of teacher candidates for summer school?

Many of the programs in Minnesota don't necessarily provide a curriculum that prepares teachers for a diverse setting. Regarding summer school staffing in Minnesota, you must be licensed to teach summer school. Some licensed teachers for summer school, however, are paraprofessionals.

Beyond legislative differences, has The Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota experienced any resistance from parents, community leaders or members, or organizations? If so, how did you handle that?

There are critics who show opposition to articles about the coalition's work and legislative achievements. They don't think it's important to incorporate culture into the curriculum and believe focusing on equity may be divisive. However, there has not been any up-front or direct resistance.

The coalition has really focused on being transparent about the goal to make sure all kids have opportunities to see teachers who reflect their racial and cultural backgrounds but also to experience teachers who are different from themselves.

What is the role of the coalition in supporting strategies for building a diverse pipeline?

To create pathways, legislative support and funding are needed. The coalition has worked with universities to create some of those pathways. One of the coalition's goals is also to support districts in furthering this work.

What are some ways to leverage the diverse staff in teacher pathway programs or afterschool programs particularly in community-based organizations?

All of the following programs are ways The Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota approaches leveraging diverse staff.

- Grow Your Own Efforts
- Teacher Mentorship and Retention
- American Indian Teacher Preparation Programs (between various colleges and universities, school districts, and reservations)
- Minnesota's Hiring Bonus Program (a new program proposed this year for attracting teachers from other states)
- Collaborative Urban and Greater Minnesota Educators of Color Grant Program
- Higher Education Teacher Preparation Institutions
- Teacher Recruitment Marketing Campaign

