

TO DIVERSIFY THE TEACHER WORKFORCE, DISTRICTS SHOULD THINK OUTSIDE THEIR CURRENT PIPELINES.

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CENTRAL QUESTION

Diversifying the teacher workforce is an urgent need. How are Maryland school districts planning to do it?

There is substantial policy interest in diversifying the U.S. teacher workforce.¹ Scholarship likens the pathway to becoming a teacher to a “leaky pipeline,” calling attention to (1) multiple points along the teacher pipeline in which prospective teachers of color are not sufficiently supported, including preparation, recruitment, hiring, induction, retention² and even the educational experiences of students of color;³ (2) multiple solutions to address those leaks, including financial assistance and efforts to address implicit bias in hiring practices;⁴ and (3) multiple prospective teacher pools to draw from (e.g., high school students, career changers).⁵ Scholars also speak to the need to learn from the experiences of teachers of color and to examine racialized practices in schools and districts.⁶

As part of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, all 24 Maryland school districts developed 2023 Blueprint implementation plans. In this brief, we describe school districts’ diversification plans and share research-based recommendations for district and state policymakers.

KEY FINDINGS

Aligned with state guidance, most district plans targeted the early stages of the teacher pipeline: preparation, recruitment and hiring.

The template that the Maryland State Department of Education created for crafting Blueprint implementation plans included questions specifically highlighting recruitment, hiring and Grow Your Own (GYO) approaches—homegrown pathways into teaching that are tailored to community members (e.g., students, local career

changers).⁷ District plans reflected those questions: most strategies that districts reported targeted preparation, recruitment and hiring (Figure 1).

Districts most often addressed teacher preparation through GYO programs to support new pathways into teaching for racially/ethnically diverse candidates. Districts also commonly planned to recruit more frequently (e.g., hosting and/or participating in recruitment events) and more broadly (e.g., expanding to neighboring states and/or abroad). Several districts described aggressive advertising campaigns with the support of external consulting groups. Districts’ focus on hiring practices included some potentially promising strategies, including professional learning on implicit bias for hiring managers (10 districts) and intentionally including racially diverse educators on recruitment teams (6 districts). However, detail on the nature of these efforts was limited.

Induction and retention plans were less common and less developed, and attention to K-12 student experiences was minimal.

Five districts included plans pertaining to induction and mentoring for new teachers of color, and eight districts attended to strategies for increasing retention. Regarding retention, districts most often focused on information gathering via surveys of new and/or departing teachers of color. Three districts included retention strategies in their plans that aimed to shift school environmental conditions for educators of color via professional learning or affinity groups for racially minoritized teachers, which scholars have found to be powerful for educators of color.⁸ All district plans pertaining to induction and/or retention were in the early stages of development.

About this Brief. The University of Maryland College of Education’s **Maryland Equity Project (MEP)** seeks to improve public education through research that supports an informed public policy debate about the quality and distribution of educational opportunities in Maryland and nationally. This brief is one in a series on **The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future**—a significant statewide investment to transform Maryland’s public schools in service of educational equity. The purpose of this brief series is to support districts in their efforts to plan and implement Blueprint initiatives through information-sharing and research-based recommendations.

DIVERSIFYING THE TEACHER WORKFORCE

Finally, one district (Calvert County) connected their plans to students' educational experiences, noting in their plan the need to ensure culturally responsive educational practices.

High school students and career changers may comprise a relatively untapped pool of prospective teachers for many districts.

Most districts focused their plans on teacher candidates and current teachers (Figure 2). Slightly less common was

targeting other professional staff. For instance, Caroline, Frederick, St. Mary's, and Somerset Counties all planned to offer tuition reimbursement for support staff to pursue full certification.

District plans targeted high school students and career changers much less frequently than other pools. When they did, districts often focused on dual enrollment programs for high school students, such as through the Teacher Academy of Maryland, and pathways for career changers to pursue full certification while teaching.

Figure 1. Points Along the Teacher Pipeline

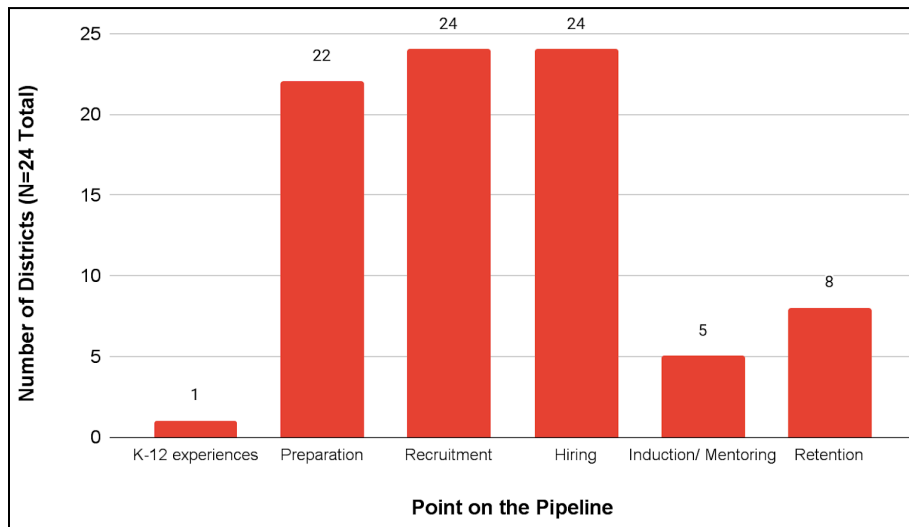
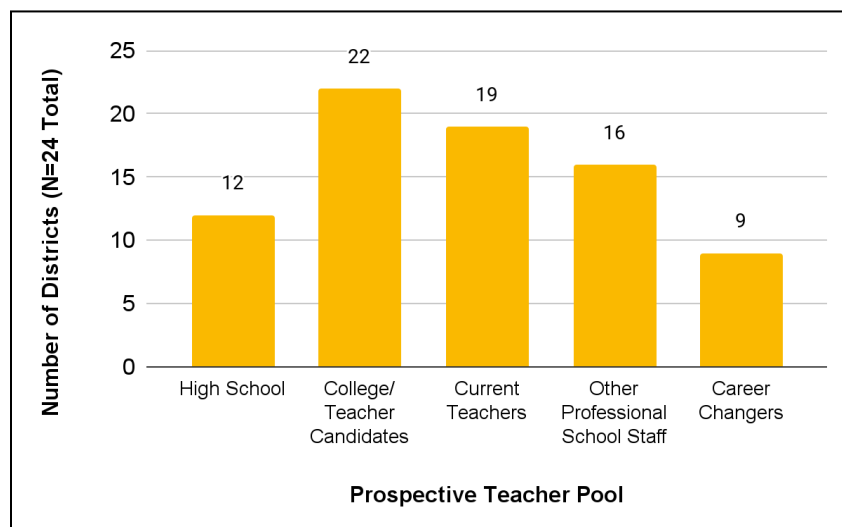


Figure 2. Prospective Teacher Pools Targeted



RESEARCH METHODS

This brief synthesizes findings from a qualitative analysis of all 24 Maryland school districts' 2023 Blueprint implementation plans. We analyzed two sections of Blueprint plans: (1) 2.1.5: Monitor the quality and diversity of State teacher candidates and existing teacher workforce and (2) the diverse teacher candidates sub-section of 2.2.6: Develop and implement pathways for paraprofessionals to become certified teachers. We coded the points along the teacher pipeline that the district focused on, the types of strategies they prioritized and the prospective teacher pool(s) they targeted.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

GYO programs offer promise and require criticality and intentionality.

GYO programs offer great promise,⁹ and the state of Maryland is on its way to having a GYO in almost every district. At the same time, while GYO programs have proliferated, their purposes and formats have varied widely.¹⁰ As districts embark on implementation of these programs, they should consider recommendations from the literature: committing to pedagogies that draw on the knowledge, assets, and skills of prospective educators of color; ensuring robust teacher learning supports; and developing sustainable funding models to maintain them.¹¹

All stages of the pipeline warrant attention.

Induction and mentoring support and factors relating to teacher retention are critical for supporting teachers of color.¹² State policy should reinforce the importance of these stages of the teacher pipeline by encouraging districts to attend to them in their plans. Furthermore, given scholarship that suggests students' own educational experiences influence their interest in teaching,¹³ the state and districts should also prioritize supporting current teachers to engage in culturally responsive pedagogies to ensure meaningful educational experiences for K-12 students.

Diversification requires adding to the pool.

Most districts' plans focused on efforts to compete for teacher candidates and teachers currently in the teacher pipeline. Most districts also identified the national and statewide teacher shortage as a primary challenge to this work. Fewer districts had plans to draw more individuals into the pipeline—for instance, by targeting high school students, community members or career changers. Doing so might not only increase the prospective teacher pool, but may also lead districts to identify the talent within their own communities.

Endnotes

- ¹ Swisher, A. (2023). State of the states 2023: Policies to increase teacher diversity. National Council on Teacher Quality.
- ² Farinde-Wu, A., Butler, B. R., & Allen-Handy, A. (2020). Conceptualizing a Black female teacher pipeline: From recruitment to retention to retirement. *Theory into Practice*, 59(4), 337-347.; Gist, C. D., Bianco, M., & Lynn, M. (2019). Examining grow your own programs across the teacher development continuum: Mining research on teachers of color and nontraditional educator pipelines. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 70(1), 13-25.
- ³ Goings, R. B., & Bianco, M. (2016). It's hard to be who you don't see: An exploration of Black male high school students' perspectives on becoming teachers. *The Urban Review*, 48, 628-646
- ⁴ D'Amico, D., Pawlewicz, R. J., Earley, P. M., & McGeehan, A. P. (2017). Where are all the Black teachers? Discrimination in the teacher labor market. *Harvard Educational Review*, 87(1), 26-49..
- ⁵ Gist et al., 2019
- ⁶ Carter Andrews, D. J., Castro, E., Cho, C. L., Petchauer, E., Richmond, G., & Floden, R. (2018). Changing the narrative on diversifying the teaching workforce: A look at historical and contemporary factors that inform recruitment and retention of teachers of color. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 70(1), 6-12.
- ⁷ Gist et al., 2019
- ⁸ Pour-Khorshid, F. (2018). Cultivating sacred spaces: A racial affinity group approach to support critical educators of color. *Teaching Education*, 29(4), 318-329.
- ⁹ Gist et al., 2019
- ¹⁰ Edwards, D.S. & Kraft, M. (2023). *The landscape of "grow your own" teacher initiatives in the United States*.
- ¹¹ Gist et al., 2019
- ¹² Gist, C. D., & Bristol, T. J. (Eds.). (2022). *Handbook of research on teachers of color and indigenous teachers*. American Educational Research Association.
- ¹³ Goings & Bianco, 2016