

How can Maryland districts diversify their teacher workforces?

Kayla Bill, Deborah Euzebio, Ditra Backup, & David Blazar // Maryland Equity Project

In Maryland, recruiting a diverse teacher workforce is both a key priority and a challenging policy goal.

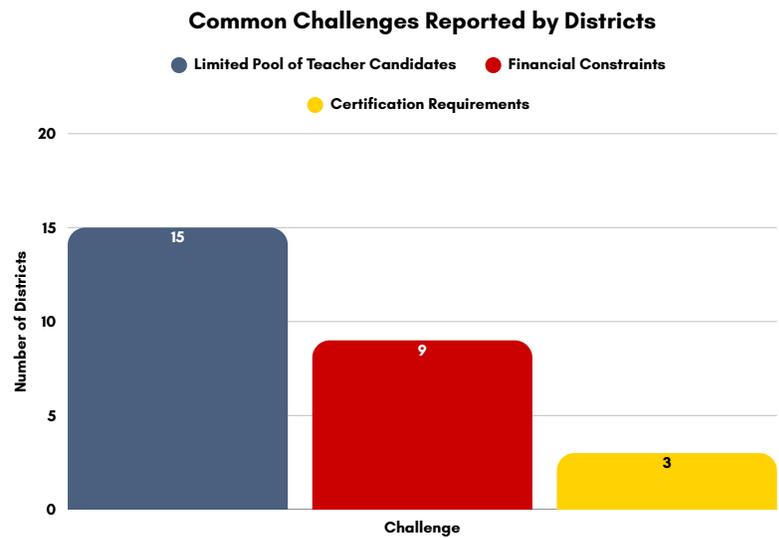
Recruiting a diverse teacher workforce is a key priority of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the state's comprehensive education reform. Ample research suggests that, while this policy goal is critically important, it is also highly challenging.^[1] For example, studies have identified many factors that drive a limited prospective teacher pool, including disparities in high school graduation, college-going, and college graduation;^[2] declining interest in teaching;^[3] and bias in certification exams and hiring processes.^[4]

This brief explores how Maryland's 24 school districts are endeavoring to **recruit** a more diverse teacher workforce. Our findings are based on an analysis of districts' 2024 Blueprint implementation plans, which they submitted to the board that oversees Blueprint implementation.^[5] Our analysis, guided by a framework grounded in academic literature, sought to identify common challenges with and strategies for recruiting a diverse teacher workforce. Our comprehensive findings are described in [this slide deck](#). In this brief, we provide an overview of findings and highlight examples of recruitment strategies that we have identified as particularly promising, given their alignment with academic literature and districts' stated challenges.

Critical Challenges, Ample Strategies

Most districts are encountering challenges with recruiting a diverse teacher workforce, including small candidate pools and limited diversity, as well as financial constraints and onerous certification requirements that make it difficult for prospective candidates to enter the career. At the same time, districts are implementing a range of strategies to diversify their workforces. We identified six categories of strategies districts described employing. The most common strategy was grow-your-own programs, through which districts aimed to recruit diverse

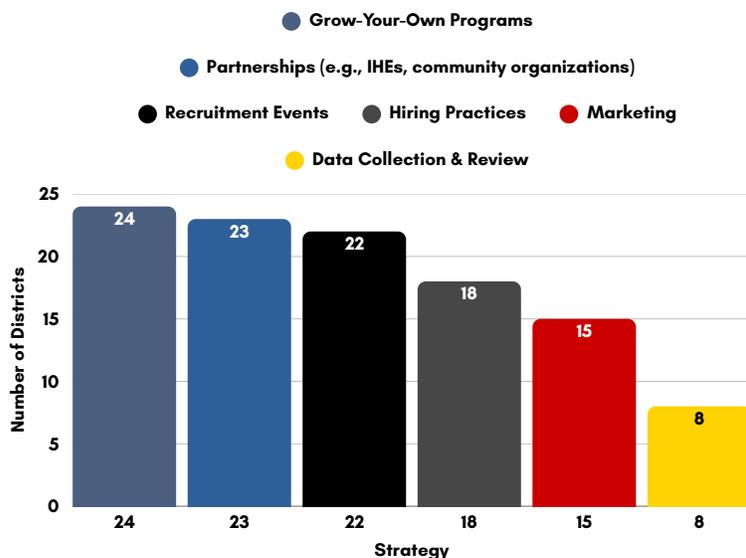
candidates from their own support staff, high school students, or local community members. Others included partnerships with institutions of higher education (IHEs) and community organizations, which are often central to grow-your-own programs, as well as recruitment events such as job fairs and information sessions. These strategies targeted various pools of prospective teacher candidates—most commonly, high schoolers, paraeducators, undergraduate students, and conditionally certified teachers.



Promising strategies aim to expand teacher candidate pools.

Of the many strategies in which districts described engaging, those that focused on **expanding** the teacher candidate pool—as opposed to merely pulling in more candidates from the existing pool—emerged as most promising. These strategies aligned with the challenges that districts named in their own local contexts, as well as those identified in the academic literature. The most promising strategies were those that districts described in sufficient detail, which offered important insights about how they were being (or would be) implemented. The following sections provide examples of some of the most promising strategies we identified through our analysis.

Common Strategies Employed by Districts



Early Pathways to Teaching in Kent County

Kent County Public Schools (KCPS) described a multifaceted, innovative approach to grow-your-own recruitment strategies aimed at generating an early interest in teaching among students. KCPS noted that the introductory course for the Teacher Academy of Maryland (TAM) program, a pathway to teaching for high schoolers, would be offered every year “to provide more students regular access.” Additionally, the district noted that it would “leverage its ... career counseling program to generate interest [in education careers] at the middle school level,” with the goal of increasing the number of students entering and completing the TAM program.

Connecting with the Local Community in Anne Arundel County

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) sought to expand and diversify their pool of prospective teacher candidates by building connections with the local community. As the district noted, “many [community] stakeholders are interested in working with students but may not have the means to independently pursue traditional pathways to licensure.” AACPS has sought to identify these prospective teachers by attending community events (e.g., the African Heritage Festival, the county fair) “to encourage county residents to consider careers in the school system.”

Overhauling Hiring Practices in Frederick County

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) focused their diversification strategies on hiring practices, after identifying how “certain selection practices ... may

contribute to a lack of diverse candidates.” The district described several efforts to improve their hiring practices, including providing hiring managers with assessment tools to ensure “that all candidates are evaluated using the same criteria” and that those criteria “do not disproportionately disadvantage certain groups of candidates.” Furthermore, FCPS provided training to administrators related to interview procedures and “equity and access” in the hiring process. The district has also sought to ensure that “interview panels are diverse and representative of different backgrounds.”

Overall, the aforementioned strategies offer promising examples of diversification efforts. Their focus on expanding teacher candidate pools aligns with both academic literature and districts’ own challenges, suggesting that they have relatively high potential to help districts diversify their teacher workforces.

Endnotes

- [1] Blazar, D. (2024). *Why Black Teachers Matter*. *Educational Researcher*, 53(8), 450-463.
- [2] Blazar, D., Anthenelli, M., Gao, W., Goings, R., & Gershenson, S. (2024). *Disparate pathways: Understanding racial disparities in teaching*. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, OnlineFirst*.
- [3] Bartanen, B., & Kwok, A. (2023). *From Interest to Entry: The Teacher Pipeline From College Application to Initial Employment*. *American Educational Research Journal*, 60(5), 941-985.
Kraft, M. A., & Lyon, M. A. (2024). *The Rise and Fall of the Teaching Profession: Prestige, Interest, Preparation, and Satisfaction Over the Last Half Century*. *American Educational Research Journal*, 61(6), 1192-1236.
- [4] Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D., Jin, Z., & Theobald, R. (2023). *Assessing Licensure Test Performance and Predictive Validity for Different Teacher Subgroups*. *American Educational Research Journal*, 60(6), 1095-1138.
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.
Goldhaber, D., Cowan, J., & Theobald, R. (2017). *Evaluating prospective teachers: Testing the predictive validity of the edTPA*. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 68(4), 377-393.
- [5] Accountability and Implementation Board. (n.d.). *About the Accountability and Implementation Board*. Maryland State Government.