

# Moving from Problems to Solutions: Why Black Teachers Leave and what We Can Do to Make Them Stay

Presentation for ResearchED

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# Over the next 40 minutes

Background & Purpose

Method & Results

Discussions/Implications  
and Impact

Future Research

Strong teachers  
affect more  
than test scores.

Teachers significantly impact  
how likely students are to...

- Be absent
- Get suspended
- Progress to the next grade
- Take the SAT
- Graduate high school
- Go to college
- Earn higher incomes as adults

# “Added-Value” for Students of Color When Taught by a Teacher of Color

Better math and reading outcomes

Better non-academic outcomes  
(attendance; consider college)

More positive perceptions of teachers  
of color

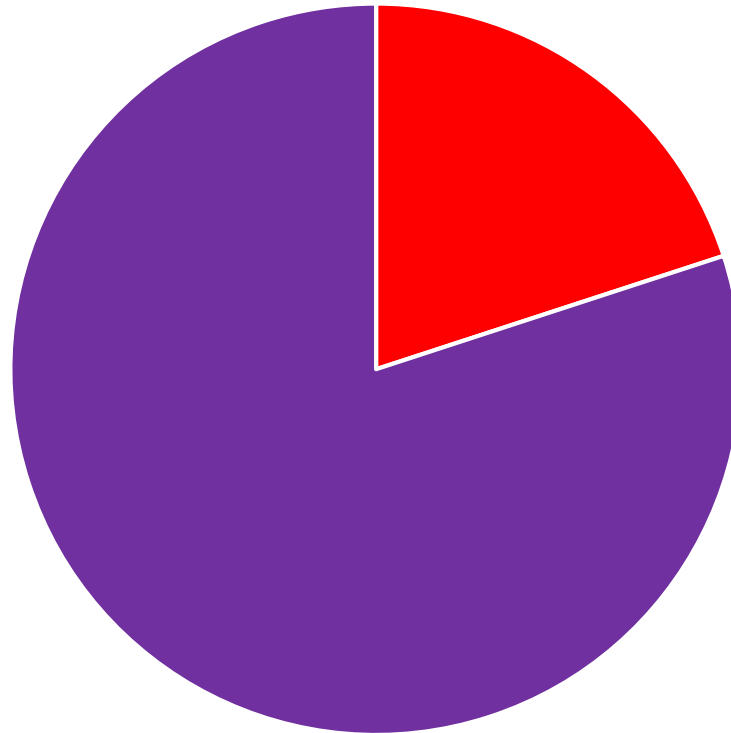
## The Bottom Line

“When students of color see themselves reflected in their instructors’ identities and in the curriculum, studies show that the positive impact on student achievement is far reaching, not only for students of color, but for all students.”



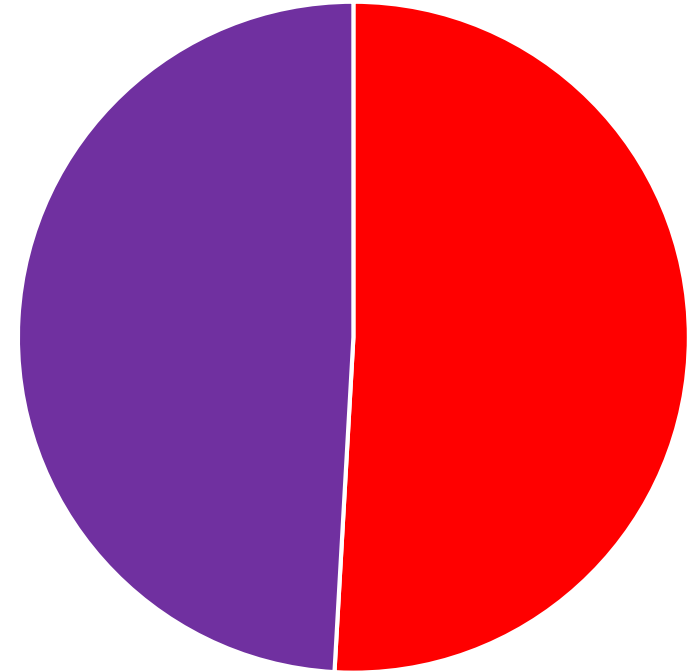
The racial demographics of teachers & students show a clear lack of teacher diversity

Teacher race



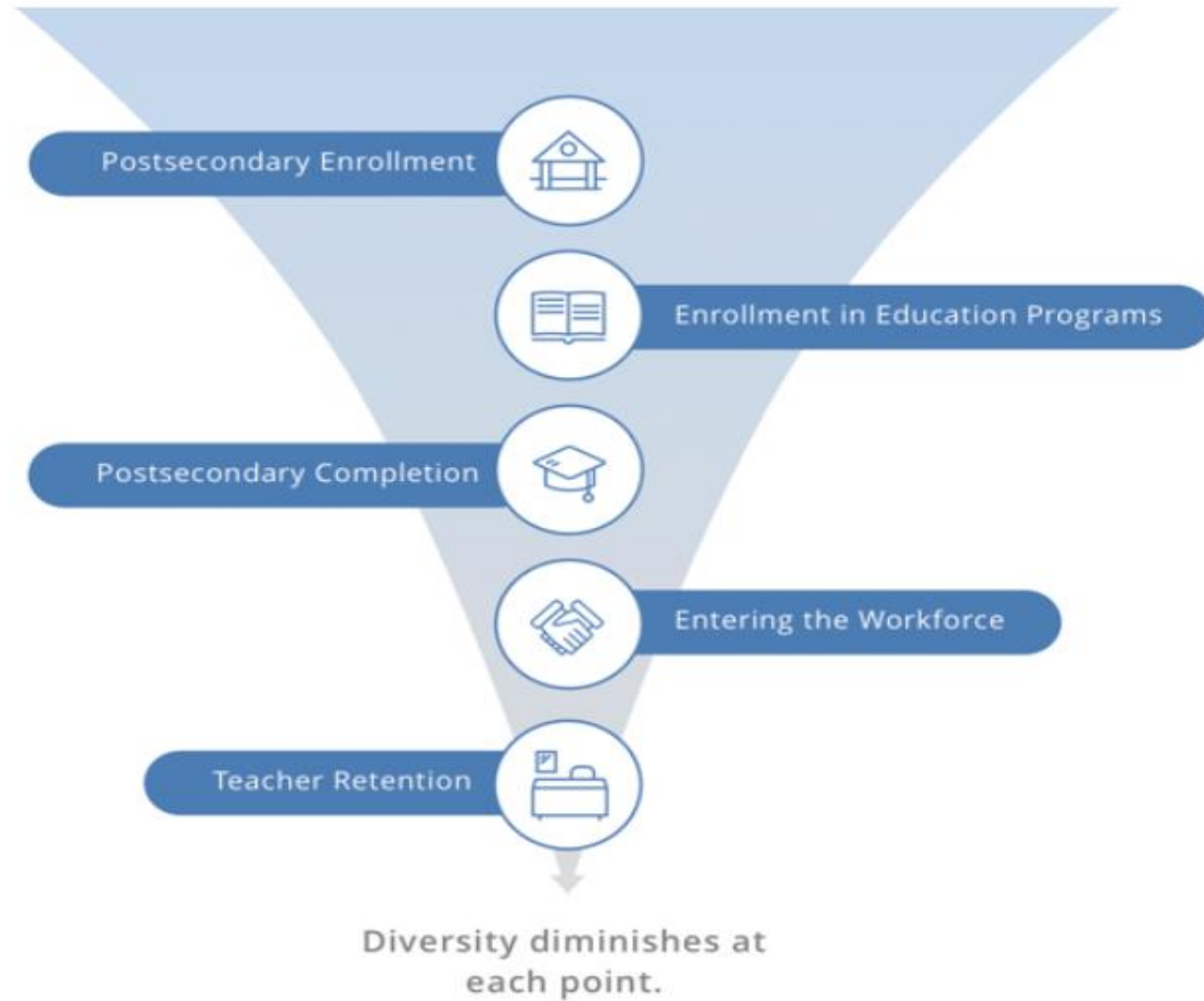
■ Teachers of Color   ■ White Teachers

Student race



■ Students of Color   ■ White Students

# Diversity Diminishes at Multiple Points Along the Teacher Pipeline





# Why Teacher Retention?

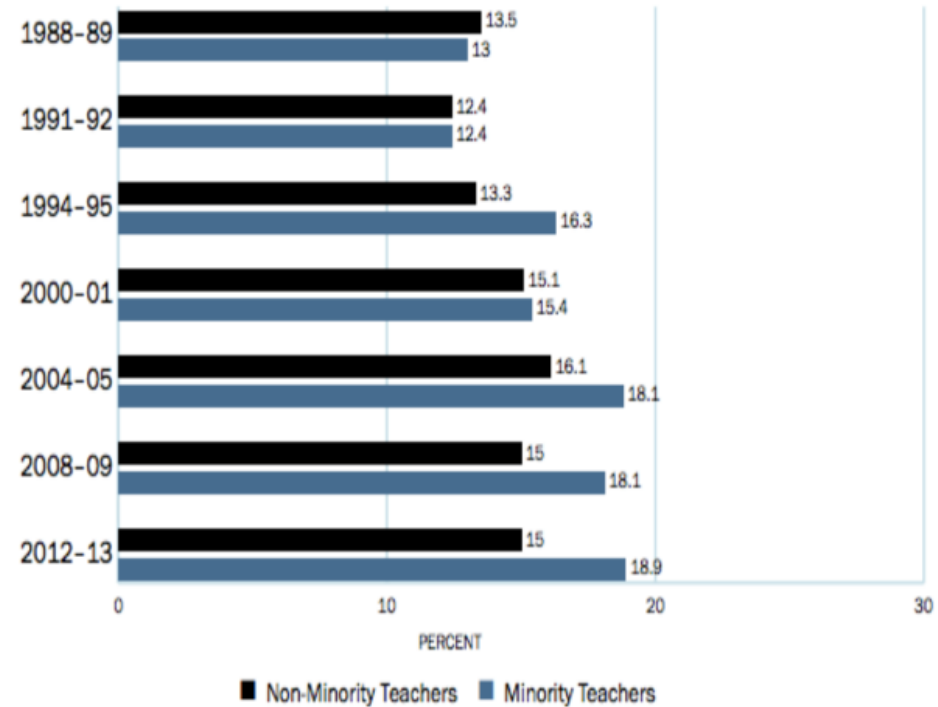




Research shows teachers of color have experienced higher rates of turnover than white teachers.

**Figure 2**

**Percent Annual Public School Teacher Turnover, by Race/Ethnicity of Teachers, by Year**



Nationally, how is the conversation around recruiting and retaining teachers of color moving?

6 states have teacher diversity goals in their ESSA plans (CT, MS, NE, OR, TN, PA)

11 states have committed to reaching student-teacher parity in their demographics by 2040.

A number of states have engaged in moving policy, working groups, and recommendations including, NY, MD, MN, IL, NM, DE TN, TX, CA, to name a few.

More to come...

## Purpose:

### From teachers of color's voices:

- Reasons for high turnover
- Strategies that schools, districts, and states can use to improve retention

### From schools and districts actively working to retain teachers of color:

- Tangible solutions to solve the retention issue
- School, district, and state policies to enact across the country

# What did we do?

## Focus Groups

- 88 teachers who identify as Black or Latino across five states.

## Case Studies

- Convenience sample
- Two district offices
- Three traditional public schools
- Two public charter schools
- District officials, principals, teachers, and other school leaders

Five challenges  
that teachers of  
color face:

Antagonistic  
Work Culture

Lack of Value  
and  
Recognition

Deprivation of  
Agency and  
Autonomy

Unfavorable  
Work  
Conditions

High Cost of  
Being a  
Teacher



# What can we do about it?

Promising Solutions

# Five Solutions that Schools and Districts Can Employ

Create culturally affirming school environments

Affirm teachers' humanity and racial identity

Support, empower, and invest in teachers

Build a schoolwide "family"

Adopt a district priority related to retaining teachers of color



“Positive racial identity has to be an important part of how we approach the work.”



“Principals must feel comfortable engaging all staff, regardless of race, in discussions about how racism, systemic oppression, and implicit bias can show up in district, school, and classroom practices and language choices.”

“School administrators can start to shift their cultures and keep teachers of color in the classrooms. Value teachers of color, support them, affirm them, and create a safe space for them. These actions are foundational to education and what we focus on for our students.”

- Keisha Rembert, an Illinois educator and Teach Plus Illinois Policy Fellowship alumna



Intentional, deliberate, and fully integrated **POLICIES** can disrupt the culture of turnover

# Move the Needle

Value teachers of color

Collect, disaggregate data, and understand the data

Invest in recruitment, preparation, and development

Ensure curricula and work environments are inclusive and respectful of all racial and ethnic groups

# From Research to Policy

6 states with  
Teacher Diversity  
in the ESSA Plans

11 state  
superintendents  
committed to  
building diverse  
teacher pipelines  
in their states

Diversity goals,  
legislation,  
funding, and  
recommendations  
to diversify the  
workforce.

Capacity building  
for teachers of  
color to become  
advocates



# Share Outs & Questions