What Gets Measured Gets Improved:
Teach Plus Recommendations for Improved Data Reporting on Teacher Diversity in Pennsylvania

The Importance of Teacher Diversity

All students benefit from learning from diverse educators, but the benefits for students of color can be truly life-changing. Students of color have higher test scores, are more likely to graduate from high school, and perform better in college when they are taught by teachers of color in grades K-12. Teachers of color also have a positive effect on attendance, drop-out rates, suspension and expulsion rates, and college aspirations for students of color.[1]

The Problem

In Pennsylvania, teachers of color comprise 6% of the workforce, while students of color comprise 36% of the student population. 50% of Pennsylvania's public schools and 37% of all school districts have no teachers of color at all. Since 2013-14, the teacher workforce has become only marginally more diverse, while the student body has diversified more quickly, leaving thousands of students of color with no access to teachers who look like them.[2]

One barrier to improving teacher diversity in Pennsylvania is a lack of actionable data on the diversity of the teacher workforce; there is no regular public reporting of teacher race in Pennsylvania, and the data cited above has only been obtained through public records requests. Without transparent reporting on demographic data in the teacher pipeline, we cannot fully understand the scope and causes of the Commonwealth's teacher diversity problem, identify bright spots to learn from, or build public and political understanding and will to address the problem.

In recent reports, both Research For Action[3] and Education Trust[4] have identified Pennsylvania's lack of diversity reporting as an impediment to being able to adequately address the shortage of teachers of color:
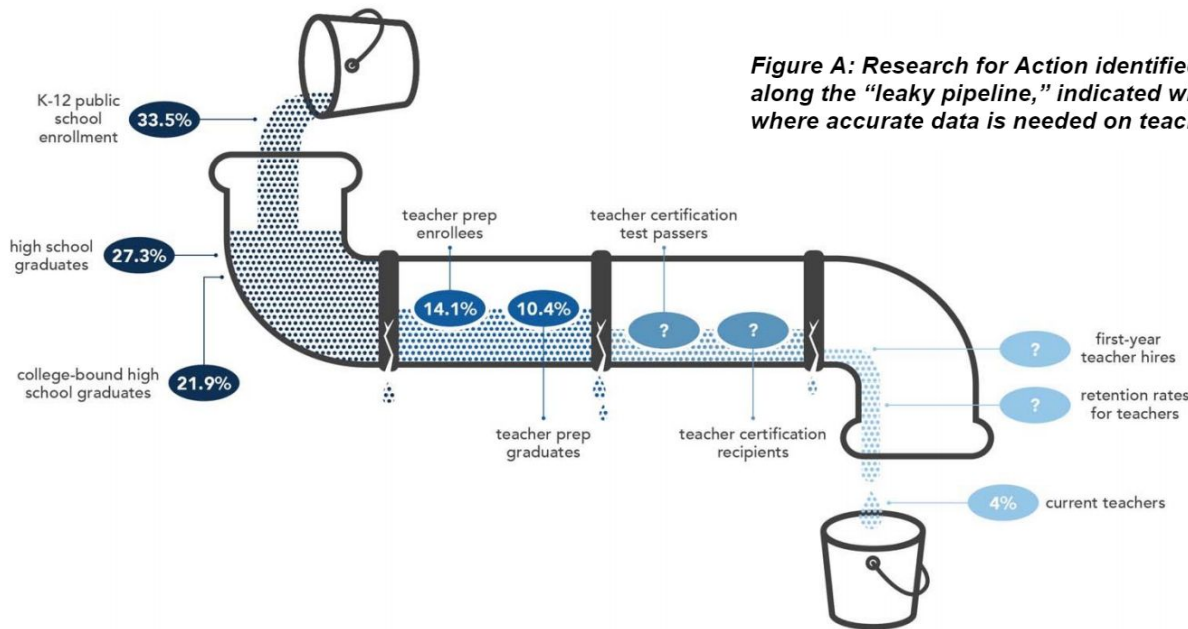

Figure A: Research for Action identified multiple points along the "leaky pipeline," indicated with question marks, where accurate data is needed on teacher diversity.

Figure B: Education Trust rated Pennsylvania "Does Not Meet" for "Visible & Actionable Data" based on the below categories.

Does Not Meet	Partially Meets	Does Not Meet	Does Not Meet
Share annual school-level information about the racial demographics of the educator workforce.	Share the racial makeup of candidates attending in-state teacher preparation programs annually.	Share the racial makeup of candidates completing in-state teacher preparation programs annually.	Share annual school-level information about the retention rates of educators of color.

[1] Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color.
[2] Shaw-Amoah, A., Lapp, D. & Kim, D. (2020). Teacher Diversity in Pennsylvania from 2013-14 to 2019-20.
[3] Stohr, A. & Lapp, D. (2018). Patching the Leaky Pipeline: Recruiting and Retaining Teachers of Color in Pennsylvania.
[4] Education Trust (2020). Is Your State Prioritizing Teacher Diversity & Equity?

The Solution

To prioritize and address teacher diversity in Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) should annually report detailed demographic data for teacher candidates and teachers in the Commonwealth. This data will allow policymakers to better pinpoint where in the educator pipeline teachers of color are being lost, and will also create incentives for teacher preparation programs, schools and districts, and policymakers to make investments and take action to improve recruitment and retention of teachers of color in their jurisdictions.

Recommended Data Points

Phase 1 (by end of 2021): The first phase involves publishing data PDE already collects but does not make public. We recommend that PDE report on the following data points annually:

- **Racial demographics of all enrolled candidates and program completers by program in all in-state teacher preparation programs annually.** The U.S. Department of Education collects and publishes this data, and PDE links to the Title II report on its website, but PDE should compile and report on this data itself for every in-state teacher preparation program. For an example, see Tennessee's Educator Preparation report card or North Carolina's EPP dashboard.
- **Racial demographics of teachers at the school, district, and state level.** PDE already collects this data and could easily make it public. For an example, see Massachusetts' race/ethnicity staffing dashboard.

Phase 2 (by end of 2022): This phase may require PDE to collect new data from teacher candidates, schools and districts, and teacher preparation programs. PDE should incorporate these data requests into its processes by the end of 2021 so that data can be made publicly available by the end of 2021:

- **Teacher certification test takers and passers by race.** This data will allow for identification of any racial disparities in test passing rates, which may inform changes to the certification testing requirements to eliminate racial bias.
- **Teaching certifications granted by race each year.** PDE does not currently collect demographic data through TIMS for applicants for teaching certifications. PDE should begin asking applicants to self-report race/ethnicity in order to identify trends in certification application and approval rates by race.
- **New teacher applicants and hires by race at the school, district, and state level.** This will allow for identification of trends in where teacher applicants of color are applying as well as evidence of bias in hiring.
- **Retention rates of teachers of color at the school, district, and state level.** Publish data on retention or turnover disaggregated by race. For an example, see Delaware's educator mobility dashboard.

Recommended Format

In the short term, assuming the absence of immediate resources for creation of data dashboards or report cards, this data can be made available for download in spreadsheet form from the PDE website, similar to how PSSA data is published. For another example, see Tennessee's Data Downloads page.

In the long term, school and district demographic data should be compiled into a dashboard, like this one from Massachusetts, that allows for easy visualization, comparison, and analysis. Another option is incorporating this data into the existing PA Future Ready Index, which already includes achievement data and student demographic data for every school in Pennsylvania.

For teacher candidate demographic data, in the long term, PDE should consider creating a dashboard that makes this information easily accessible by teacher preparation program. Even better, PDE should consider this information in its ratings and approval of teacher preparation programs, possibly as part of the Chapter 49 revision process. For an example of a state report card system for teacher preparation programs that incorporates candidate diversity into its ratings, see Delaware's Educator Preparation Program Reports.