

Oregon Falling Short on Hiring Minority Teachers

Last summer, the Oregon Education Investment Board released the results of a survey on minority teachers, the 2014 Oregon Minority Teacher Act Status Report. The Legislature requested the report in 2013, to provide an update on the trends and latest data.

Back in 1991, the state had set a goal to “address the gap between the demographics of the state’s educator workforce and that of the K-12 students they serve.” Over the last two decades, that gap “continues to widen as was reflected in reports generated and provided to the Legislature in 2003, 2005, and 2011.”

Yet, Oregon Department of Education figures in 2013 show that while students of color in Oregon make up more than one-third of the K-12 population, only 8% of Oregon’s teacher workforce is non-white. The largest difference is between Latino students (22%) and Latino teachers (4%).

Among the report’s findings: “Given that the gap between student demographics and educator demographics in Oregon continues to widen at the same time that the student achievement gaps between student populations continues to increase, the intent of the Minority Teacher Act and Senate Bill 755 remain critical to Oregon’s education agenda.”

The Oregon Public Broadcasting website put a fine point on the reality of Oregon schools: “According to the report, while a third of Oregon’s students are people of color, about 92% of their teachers are white.” OPB’s Think Out Loud radio program did a nice piece on this topic for

readers who are interested in more discussion:

We are reprinting below the Executive Summary and Key Findings from the July 2014 report:

Read the entire 43-page report here: <http://tinyurl.com/nt6rn>



The 2014 Oregon Minority Teacher Act Status Report

In accordance with Senate Bill 755

Oregon Education Investment Board
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Salem, Oregon 97301
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Executive Summary Background

Since the passage of the Minority Teacher Act in 1991, Oregon has made sporadic efforts to address the gap between the demographics of the state’s educator workforce and that of the K-12 students they serve. These efforts have had a limited impact on a gap that continues to widen as was reflected in reports generated and provided to the Legislature in 2003, 2005, and 2011. Currently, the Oregon Department of Education reports that in 2013, Oregon’s students of color make up more than one-third of the K-12 population but only 8.3% of Oregon’s teacher workforce is non-white and the most notable

difference exists between Latino students (21.5%) and Latino teachers (3.6%).

Senate Bill 755

During the 2013 Legislative Session, Senate Bill 755 (Appendix A) amended the original Minority Teacher Act passed in 1991 with a revised goal for 2015 and

2014 Status Report

In accordance with the legislation, this 2014 report serves as a “status” update on progress toward achieving the 2015 goal. In addition, this report also describes ways in which the 2015 report can be enhanced to serve as the foundation for action and accountability. A statewide advisory group representative of the changing demographics in Oregon has been formed and is ready to provide a means of assessing, evaluating and advocating for continuous accountability and improvement or conditions and policies that impact educator equity.

While data available for the 2015 are still incomplete and there are still discrepancies between the data sources (ODE and TSPC), this report identifies issues surrounding the accessibility, accuracy, and interpretation of the data that can help inform potential changes during the 2015 legislative session. Although SB 755 amended the definition of minority to include educators whose first language is not English, these data are not currently collected or available for analysis. Steps are now been taken by ODE, the OUS, and TSPC to collect these new data for inclusion in the full report due July 1, 2015.

Key Findings in 2014

1. Although data for 2013-14 are not available yet, as of July 1, 2013, Oregon is on track to meet the 2015 goal of increasing the percentage of minority candidates graduated from Oregon’s public educator preparation programs by 10% as compared to July 2, 2012. The 2012-13 data show that the annual yield of minority candidates graduating from public educator preparation programs increased by sixteen and that minority graduates accounted for 14.3% of the total numbers who graduated.

2. As of 2014, Oregon is only two-three individuals short of being on track to meet the 2015 goal of increasing the percentage of minority administrators employed

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by school districts and education service districts by 10% as compared to July 2, 2012. The 2013-14 data reveal that the number of culturally and linguistically diverse administrators employed in Oregon public schools has increased by 18 since 2011-12 and is currently 10.8% of the employed administrator workforce.

3. As of 2014, Oregon is not on track to meet the 2015 goal of increasing the percentage of minority teachers employed by school districts and education services districts by 10% as compared to July 2, 2012. The 2013-14 data reveal that the number of culturally and linguistically diverse teachers employed in Oregon public schools only increased by ten to 2,401 (8.46%) percent of the employed teacher workforce. The reduction may be in part due to reductions in staff in recent years.

Given that the gap between student demographics and educator demographics in Oregon continues to widen at the same time that the student achievement gaps between student populations continues to increase, the intent of the Minority Teacher Act and Senate Bill 755 remain critical to Oregon's education agenda.

Key Findings from the Research Demographic Shifts

The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that by 2020, the U.S. people of color will increase by 32%, meaning that people of color will make up 39% of the total U.S. population. On a corresponding level, we have seen a 12% increase in students of color in Oregon public schools between 2003 and 2013. In 2011-12, 26% of Oregon's public high school graduates were students of color and 17% of Oregon's high school graduates were Hispanic. By 2015-16, 31% of Oregon's public high school graduates are projected to be students of color, with 23% of all Oregon high school graduates projected to be Hispanic. This shift is expected to continue to increase over the next 10 years, as the change in ethnic demographics is impacting western states at a much higher rate than other regions of the United States.

Impact of Teachers of Color on Students of Color

There are compelling reasons for

diversifying the education workforce to better reflect the students being served. Educators of color serve as cultural brokers, not only helping students navigate their school environment and culture, but also increasing involvement of families and communities of color which in turn impacts student attendance, achievement, graduation rates and postsecondary aspirations. Villegas, Strom, and Lucas (2012) offer two key reasons supporting the urgency of intentional efforts to prepare, recruit, and retain the number of culturally and linguistically diverse teachers enrolled in teacher preparation programs leading to teaching and administrative positions:

1. Teachers of Color Serve as Role Models for All Students: Early proponents of diversifying the teaching force argue that white students as well as students of color benefit from seeing culturally and linguistically diverse educators; such daily interactions could potentially dispel myths of racial inferiority that white students might have internalized about people of color from socializations outside of school (Waters, 1989).

2. Teachers of Color are Uniquely Positioned to Teach Students of Color: Teachers who are culturally and linguistically diverse tend to bring to teaching an understanding of minority students' cultural, backgrounds and experiences (Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2000; Villegas et.al., 2012). And, although teachers of color vary significantly in their own backgrounds and experiences related to those of their diverse students, compared to their white counterparts, minority teachers are more likely to understand many aspects of the lives of minority students (Milner, 2006).

It is critical that we also understand the impact of a diversified workforce in closing the academic achievement gap between white and non-white students. While there are multiple efforts, policies, and programs centered on this important social crisis, several studies have found that diversifying the field of education has both an immediate and long-term impact of closing the academic achievement gap. For example, research (Dee, 2004; Eddy & Easton-Brooks, 2011) has shown

that when matched with a teacher of the same ethnicity, elementary-level students of color performed higher on academic achievement tests than those students of color who are not taught by a teacher of color. Easton-Brooks (2013), created the State Teacher Diversity Index based off of Boser's (2011) Teacher Diversity Gap Index and found that, as the gap in percentage of diversity of teachers to the percentage of diversity of students in the state increased, the state's achievement score gap between Spanish-speakers/white and African American/white students increased significantly. Given the gap between the percentage of diverse teachers to the percentage of diverse students, Oregon ranks 30th out of 50 states on the State Teacher Diversity Index.

A study by Clewell et al. (2005) showed an increase in the reading and mathematics scores of African American and Spanish-speaking elementary students at 4th and 6th grade when taught by a teacher of their same ethnicity. For those Spanish-speaking students who were taught by a Spanish-speaking teacher of the same ethnicity, their mathematics scores at 4th and 6th grade were higher than those Spanish-speaking students who were not taught by a teacher of their same ethnicity. In reading, those Spanish-speaking students taught by a Spanish-speaking teacher of the same ethnicity scored higher than Spanish-speaking students who were not taught by a teacher of their same ethnicity.

Two studies using longitudinal data showed that students of color who engaged with a diverse educator workforce had higher achievement test scores in reading (Easton-Brooks et al., 2010) and mathematics (Eddy & Easton-Brooks, 2011) than students who did not have at least one teacher of the same race between kindergarten and 5th grade. Easton-Brooks et al. found that African American students who had at least one African American teacher between kindergarten and 5th grade scored 1.50 points higher in reading than those students who did not have at least one African American teacher at the end of kindergarten. The reading scores of these students increased 1.75 points per year higher than

those students who did not have at least one African American teacher between kindergarten and 5th grade. Similarly, Eddy and Easton-Brooks (2011) found that students who were exposed to at least one African American teacher scored 1.44 points higher on the mathematics achievement test at the end of kindergarten and the growth in the mathematics scores of these students was at least 0.64 points higher than those students not exposed to an African American teacher between kindergarten and fifth grade.

Recruitment of Educators of Color into Education Careers

A challenge in increasing the number of teachers of color resides is the fact that less than 10% of college students of color elect education as their major. Most of these students go into fields such as business and social science (Dickson, 2010; Porter & Umbach, 2006). These students elect not to go into the field of education because of expanded opportunities for people of color who are college graduates, low teacher salaries, rigorous testing standards in schools and more demanding certification and licensing requirements, and social perception of the teaching profession (Easton-Brooks, et al., 2010; Lewis, 2006).

Lewis (2006) proposed strategies for recruiting African American teachers, which could be followed to recruit other groups of teachers of color. The proposed approach is as follows: (1) collaboration with communities, (2) faculty mentors, (3) refinement of entrance requirements, (4) college and school collaboration, (5) academic supports, and (6) collaborations with community colleges. While these recommendations were based on the recruitment of African American males, these strategies should also be used in the recruitment of all preservice

teachers of color. Boser (2011) recommendations include (1) increasing federal oversight of and increased accountability for teacher preparation programs, and (2) creating statewide initiatives to fund teacher preparation programs aimed at teachers of color. In addition, efforts should also be made by policymakers to increase salaries and/or incentives to entice qualified teachers of color to the field of education. *See the entire report at <http://tinyurl.com/lqpxj9z>*