

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 16, 2021; 12:01AM EST

CONTACT
Nicole Gerber
National Council on Teacher Quality
ngerber@nctq.org
202-393-0020 ext. 712

NEW DATA DEMONSTRATE THAT TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS CAN BE BOTH SELECTIVE AND DIVERSE

NCTQ Report Finds 198 Educator Preparation Programs that Both Maintain Sufficient Admissions Standards and Enroll Diverse Cohorts of Aspiring Teachers

Washington, D.C. — Today the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released new data and analysis examining both the academic admissions requirements and diversity in enrollments in over 1,200 of the nation's elementary teacher preparation programs. The [Teacher Prep Review: Program Diversity and Admissions \(2021\)](#) surfaces 198 programs that are driving greater teacher diversity in their communities while also maintaining adequate admission standards—strong evidence that academic selectivity and diversity are not mutually exclusive.

These 198 programs earning high marks for both diversity and selectivity in a field of 1,256 elementary programs are notable for the fact that they constitute almost half of the 420 programs earning high marks for diversity—indicating just how achievable it is for diverse programs to impose reasonably strong admissions standards.

“The idea that you have to lower standards to diversify teaching is an erroneous calculation,” shared **Sharif El-Mekki, CEO of The Center for Black Educator Development** in response to the new NCTQ *Teacher Prep Review*. “It is my hope that institutions of higher education, school districts, as well as state and federal agencies will use this report to act with accountability and urgency by really diving in and interrogating what they are doing to improve teacher preparation programs and teacher diversity, and aligning all efforts to ensure accelerated student outcomes.”

A diverse teacher workforce benefits all students, particularly students of color. Research has found that having same-race teachers increases student achievement, improves the likelihood of graduating high school and attending college, and can lead to lifelong benefits for students of color. At the same time, teachers who were themselves strong students are more likely to be effective teachers. Greater selectivity in admissions to preparation programs provides students with access to the highest quality teachers, helps to raise the status of the teaching profession, and supports the push for higher teacher salaries.

Programs that prepare teachers have long struggled to attract Black and Hispanic candidates, with only 7% of programs reporting enrollments that match the diversity of the rest of the student body on the campuses where they reside. If the programs in this study were to reflect the diversity of their institution, NCTQ estimates that approximately 80,000 more persons of color could enter the teacher pipeline each year.

A number of efforts by teacher education's accrediting bodies to raise admission standards in order to mirror the practices of high-performing education systems elsewhere in the world have not been successful. As a [2007 study from McKinsey & Company](#) found, these high-performing education systems limit enrollment to aspiring teachers in the top third of their class, as opposed to the U.S. where calls to restrict admission to the top *half* have been frequently rebuffed.

“Selectivity and diversity are not mutually exclusive standards,” said **Bayliss Fiddiman, Associate Director for K-12 Education at the Center for American Progress**. “There are educator preparation programs that are very selective in their admissions and also enroll diverse teacher candidates. All students deserve access to high-quality educators and benefit from a teaching workforce that reflects the diversity of our nation's students.”

A [2017 report from the Center for American Progress](#) found states that increased admissions standards to teacher preparation programs saw increased diversity of undergraduate education majors, and the new NCTQ data make it abundantly clear: **teacher preparation programs can both excel in selective admissions and in contributing to teacher diversity.**

"We know that both teacher diversity and maintaining high academic standards for entry into teacher preparation are critical," said **Kate Walsh, NCTQ President**. "Rather than lower admissions standards in a misplaced belief that it will lead to more diverse enrollment, teacher prep programs have to be intentional and strategic in their efforts to recruit and support aspiring teachers of color, and we are excited to highlight programs that are doing just that."

[Learn more from eight Programs Leading the Way on their approaches to recruiting and supporting teacher candidates of color.](#)

Findings on Program Diversity

NCTQ analyzed the diversity of each elementary teacher preparation program by comparing the diversity of the teacher candidates enrolled in the program to two factors: the diversity of the state teacher workforce and the local community where the program is located.

One-fifth of programs (261) earn an A on the Program Diversity standard because their enrollment exceeds the diversity of the state teacher workforce and matches or exceeds the diversity of their local community. At the other end of the spectrum, the 25% of programs (317) that earn a D or F grade enroll teacher candidates that are less diverse than the existing state teacher workforce and local population. ***(See the full NCTQ Program Diversity standard methodology [here](#).)***

The NCTQ data provide encouraging news, finding that two thirds of programs report a more diverse enrollment than the current teacher workforce in their states. However, state teacher workforces are generally far whiter than the population in their surrounding communities, and only 22% of programs match the diversity found in the community where program graduates are most likely going to teach.

[Use this interactive tool to see how the diversity of each teacher preparation program compares to the diversity of their state teacher workforce and local population.](#)

Findings on Program Admissions

Sixty years of research and evidence from nations whose students academically outperform students in the United States have proven that teachers with stronger academic aptitude are more likely to be effective, as measured by student learning gains and observations of teacher performance. Because no single indicator of academic aptitude is failsafe, the methodology employed by NCTQ to determine if programs set adequate admissions standards gives programs multiple paths to meet the bar, including applicants' SAT/ACT performance, audition requirements, minimum GPA for each applicant, or average GPA for each cohort of new teacher candidates. ***(See the full NCTQ Admissions standard methodology [here](#).)***

NCTQ findings illustrate that admissions standards remain low, improving little since 2013 when NCTQ first rated programs on the selectivity of their admissions. Currently, 70% of all elementary programs set a minimum GPA for admission of 2.75 or lower, in spite of the fact that the average college GPA is 3.0.

Read the report, see recommendations for teacher preparation programs, and explore the full data here:
www.nctq.org/publications/Teacher-Prep-Review:-Program-Diversity-and-Admissions-2021

[Watch video statements from experts and advocates in the field on the importance of these findings.](#)

###

To schedule an interview with NCTQ President Kate Walsh, contact Nicole Gerber via email at ngerber@nctq.org or via phone at (202) 393-0020 ext. 712.

About the National Council on Teacher Quality: NCTQ is a nonpartisan research and policy group, committed to modernizing the teaching profession and based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. We recognize that it is not teachers who bear responsibility for their profession's many challenges, but the institutions with the greatest authority and influence over teachers. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, www.nctq.org.