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**Glancing Back and Looking Forward:
The Role of Education Policy in Creating Pathways to the Workforce
for Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers**

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Abstract: The *Handbook of Research on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers* charts the landscape of the educator diversity research base by focusing on 11 domains of inquiry. Policy, one of the domains of inquiry in the *Handbook*, is instrumental for advancing educator diversity. This paper is anchored in the lessons from the policy domain, and extends this scholarship by briefly synthesizing the historical origins of educator diversity policies, and examining present-day manifestations of these efforts in the sociopolitical context of state and federal level policy trends. The manuscript concludes with a set of policy recommendations.

Keywords: Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers; federal and state teacher education policy; educator diversity policy; educator diversity

Mirando hacia atrás y hacia adelante: El papel de la política educativa en la creación de caminos hacia la fuerza laboral para los Maestros de Color y Maestros Indígenas

Resumen: El *Manual de Investigación sobre Maestros de Color y Maestros Indígenas* traza el panorama de la base de investigación centrándose en once dominios de investigación. Las políticas, uno de los ámbitos de investigación del *Manual*, son fundamentales para promover la diversidad de los educadores. Este artículo se basa en las lecciones de este conjunto de trabajos y amplía este conocimiento sintetizando brevemente los orígenes históricos de las políticas de diversidad de los educadores y examinando las manifestaciones actuales de estos esfuerzos en el contexto sociopolítico de las tendencias políticas a nivel estatal y federal. El manuscrito concluye con un conjunto de recomendaciones de políticas.

Palabras-clave: Maestros de Color y Maestros Indígenas; política federal y estatal de formación docente; política de diversidad de educadores; diversidad de educadores

Olhando para trás e olhando para frente: O papel da política educacional na criação de caminhos para a força de trabalho para Professores Cor e Professores Indígenas

Resumo: O *Manual de Pesquisa sobre Professores de Cor e Professores Indígenas* traça o panorama da base de pesquisa concentrando-se em onze domínios de investigação. A política, um dos domínios de investigação do *Manual*, é fundamental para promover a diversidade dos educadores. Este artigo está ancorado nas lições deste corpo de trabalho e amplia este conhecimento sintetizando brevemente as origens históricas das políticas de diversidade de educadores e examinando as manifestações atuais desses esforços no contexto sociopolítico das tendências políticas estaduais e federais. O manuscrito conclui com um conjunto de recomendações políticas.

Palavras-chave: Professores de Cor e Professores Indígenas; política federal e estadual de formação de professores; política de diversidade de educadores; diversidade de educadores

**Glancing Back and Looking Forward:
The Role of Education Policy in Creating Pathways to the Workforce for
Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers**

Part I: Policy Overview—Past and Present

Policies that support educator diversity in school systems play a vital role in shaping the learning experiences of teachers and students in our nation's schools. The policy section of the *Handbook of Research on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers* (hereafter, the *Handbook*; Gist & Bristol, 2022) provides research on historical and contemporary challenges for advancing educator diversity in the United States. Key research themes from the policy domain include the need for intentionally crafted recruitment strategies and program designs for subgroups of Teachers of Color and

Indigenous Teachers (TOCIT) (e.g., Latina women) (Amos, 2022); the use of various incentives (e.g., financial, educational, professional) for increasing the recruitment and retention of TOCIT (Dilworth, 2022; Hansen & Quintero, 2022); and the contradictory nature of preparation programs and school systems that may have high numbers of TOCIT, but simultaneously disenfranchise marginalized and minoritized communities (Kim et al., 2022; Pawlewicz et al., 2022). Collectively, scholarship from the *Handbook* policy domain identified key policy considerations for researchers, policymakers, and educational leaders.

Many contemporary efforts to increase educator diversity have been inspired by empirical work demonstrating that Students of Color and Indigenous Students who are exposed to same-race/ethnicity teachers have higher academic achievement and high school graduation rates, more positive behavioral outcomes, and a lower likelihood of becoming mis-identified for special education services (Gershenson et al., 2017; Hart & Lindsay, 2024; Redding, 2019). In the context of these outcomes, the recruitment of Paraeducators of Color and Indigenous Paraeducators (PCIP) into full-time teaching positions has become an understudied, yet promising, policy strategy for increasing educator diversity (Gist et al., 2022). Paraeducators of Color and Indigenous Paraeducators are uniquely qualified for Grow Your Own (GYO) programs as they share students' racial and linguistic backgrounds, come from within the community, and have experience supporting student learning (Bisht et al., 2021; Edwards & Kraft, 2024).

Building on lessons from the *Handbook*, this paper extends this scholarship by briefly synthesizing the historical origins of educator diversity policies, examining the present-day manifestations of these efforts in state and federal level policy trends (e.g., expansion of GYO models), and concludes with a set of policy recommendations.

A Brief Historical Note on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers

In 2008, Mary Dilworth and Anthony Brown posed the following question: What is the inherent value of Teachers of Color to the teaching force, to society, and, most importantly, to students? Looking at the history of Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers (TOCIT), you will find similar concerns about students from different backgrounds and the value that a TOCIT might have in a student's life. These historical concerns about Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers have as much pertinence today as they did two centuries ago. The first critical historical concern has been racial exclusion. By racial exclusion, we are referring to policies and practices that directly impacted the education of Communities of Color. Historically, TOCIT emerged as an educational reform strategy in the context of enslavement, Jim Crow, English-only policies, settler colonialism, and anti-Chinese sentiment. The discourse for TOCIT surfaced within spaces that were corrective to the concerns of oppression and inequity in education systems.

The second critical historical concern is the issue of racial recognition. We define racial recognition as the acknowledgment and placement of people from the same ethnic or racial group with the intention of engendering connections that are meaningful and valuable. Some of the earliest conversations about TOCIT noted the importance of their culture, race, and background matching the students they serve. However, it was common for writers and advocates for more TOCIT to note the importance of understanding and sympathy as vital qualities of TOCIT. This idea of racial recognition has remained stable as it relates to Native, Latino, and Asian American teachers (Dilworth & Brown 2008). Scholars of Mexican American education have noted that Latinx teachers' Spanish-speaking and understanding of culture played a valuable role in shaping children's education in the Southwest.

The issues of racial exclusion and racial representation mostly stayed the same in the late 20th century. The unique historical context for TOCIT was within the context of the Civil Rights Movement. While Civil Rights Movement policies would ultimately inform a similar

conceptualization to having a diverse teaching force in diverse communities, the sociohistorical context of the Civil Rights Movement would uniquely impact African Americans. The most noted impact by scholars was the dramatic decrease in the Black teaching force (Fenwick, 2022; Fultz, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Anderson, 2021). By the late 1980s and early 1990s, despite the dramatic decrease in Black teachers, scholars such as Michele Foster (1997), Gloria Ladson-Billings (2015), and Jackie Jordan Irvine (1989) began researching Black teachers' significance in the classroom, helping to advance new theories about the importance of culture and care as relevant to student success.

Indeed, while the historical trajectory of racial exclusion has changed over time from *de jure* to *de facto* forms of exclusion, the material outcomes of segregation, social reproduction, and under-resourced schools have helped to hold in place durable outcomes of class formation for Communities of Color through most of the 20th century and up to the present. In the context of classroom teachers, racial exclusion has been documented for decades, noting how the primarily white teaching force lacked the needed cultural and political awareness to meet the equity concerns of Students of Color and Indigenous Students. This catalyzed discussions and empirical research documenting the significance of TOCIT to illustrate the importance of culture, mentorship, and care when deployed by teachers of their students' backgrounds. Philip and Brown (2020) stated:

...this body of research shows that Teachers of Color are essential as cultural translators (Irvine, 2003), are more likely to be aware of racial trauma experienced by students, and work in schools that disproportionately enroll low-income students of color (Ingersoll & May 2011; Kohli, 2009). These teachers offer the following benefits for racially matched students: increased test scores (Dee, 2004) more positive disciplinary outcomes (Lindsay & Hart, 2017), higher expectations (Fox, 2015) and, authentic forms of care (De Royston et al, 2017). (p. 7)

Thus, the inherent value of Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers was a real value, not simply rooted in presumptions about what would occur in classrooms when Students of Color and Indigenous Students get to interact with teachers from their cultural and racial backgrounds; but rather, reflected real change in the dynamic of schooling and educational outcomes (Philip & Brown, 2020). The calls for Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers throughout the 1990s and 2000s emphasized their sociocultural importance. The field of education moved to understanding how culture and context matter in the life of schooling. Scholars began to research and theorize the necessity of TOCIT as cultural agents for Students of Color and Indigenous Students. Terms such as cultural relevance, cultural responsiveness, and cultural synchronization evolved from studies related to the pedagogy of Black teachers. The calls for TOCIT, in large part, have remained premised on ideas of exclusion and inequity, and the significance of culture, as a needed aspect of educational reform for Communities of Color and Indigenous Communities.

Policy Research on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers

More recently, with the shifting sociopolitical climate in the United States, some policymakers have advocated for doing away with programs designed to increase and ensure diversity, which makes understanding the policy landscape on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers vitally important. The current policy literature on diversifying the teaching force falls into three categories. The first category is the literature that lays out best practices for teacher diversity. The second category is the historical literature that remind us of how past policy decisions directly impact present-day educational circumstances. For example, education historians have noted how school desegregation devastated the Black teacher workforce, greatly influencing the low percentage of Black teachers in K–12 schools. The third category of literature is critical policy analysis, where

scholars detail the explicit and implicit ways teaching diversity policies impact education. This scholarship complicates what policies mean in a broader sociocultural context, or notes the limitations of implementing an existing policy effort. This section draws on the third category of literature, reporting best practices and situating the literature within a wider sociopolitical context of culture and politics.

All levels of government have a role in developing and enacting policies to increase the ethnoracial diversity of the teacher workforce. Federal policymakers and leaders can integrate competitive priorities and goals within existing grant programs or even create new programs to support the teacher diversity pipeline and use the bully pulpit to promote the issue (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). States can make changes to teacher certification and licensure policies, promote the development of innovative teacher pathways, offer scholarship programs, and invest in making community college free. School districts can provide training to school leaders on how to better recruit and retain TOCIT, create leadership opportunities, promote career advancement, and attend to working conditions in schools.

Given the variety of actions that can be taken, policies that support the development and implementation of recruitment frames and preparation approaches to increase access into the teaching profession for TOCIT are key; in particular, GYO teacher programs recruit and prepare community members to teach in their local schools (Gist et al, 2019). Recruiting future educators from the community that already work in schools can ensure that teachers working within high-needs schools bring cultural credibility that bolsters a commitment to serve. Irizarry (2011) noted:

Many Teachers of Color have valuable insight into the cultures of their students. Based on their experiences, this particular group of teachers is often well-versed in the socio-cultural realities faced by many students in these communities, and they can use this information to inform their practice. (p. 88)

GYO has three essential elements. The first is recruiting existing educators and community members who are familiar with the school's student population. These individuals, often paraeducators, possess deep sociocultural connections to students, schools, and community. The second is that GYOs can identify educators who have done good work in schools but have yet to receive advanced degrees and credentialing due to a variety of systemic barriers. Finally, third, with the proper support through recruitment, preparation, and induction, GYO teachers may be more likely remain steadfast in staying in the profession.

Since GYO is a recruitment frame that can be paired with a variety of teacher preparation approaches and pathways, considerable investments and initiatives have been made at the state and local levels in recent years (Garcia, 2024a). Scholars have noted that with comprehensive institutional support and explicit commitment to equity and culture, GYO teacher programs can offer a promising space to diversify the teaching profession. In the case study spotlight (see Figure 1) we provide a descriptive overview of paraeducators in a state context with significant investments in GYO initiatives (Texas Education Agency, 2023).

Figure 1*Case Study Spotlight: The Paraeducator of Color and Indigenous Paraeducator Workforce***Overview**

Research indicates that ethnoracial diversity in the teacher workforce matters. Paraeducators are current district employees who are more ethnoracially diverse compared to teachers, more connected to the communities they serve, and strong as candidates to become full-time teachers. Yet, the structure of traditional teacher education programs is not supportive of this group, who are often not able to attend school full-time and may not have financial resources to pay for college.

Context

To build the rationale for systems of preparation, recruitment, and hiring for paraeducators, educational leaders and policymakers need a better understanding of the demographic and educational characteristics of Paraeducators. To illustrate this, using data from the Texas Education Research Center (ERC), we provide a descriptive overview of the Paraeducators of Color and Indigenous Paraeducators (PCIP) employed across three Greater Houston School Districts between the 2007 and 2022 school years. *See more about this study in Gist and Edwards (Manuscript submitted for publication).*

What were the characteristics of Paraeducators?

- Forty-five percent of all PCIP identified as Black and 42% identified as Latinx, compared to 37% and 26% of teachers, respectively.
- Compared to teachers, more PCIP identified as female (88% and 75%, respectively).
- PCIPs earned on average just over \$20,000 annually, less than half the average salary of teachers.
- In terms of years of experience in schools, PCIP had similar average experience compared to employed teachers.
- Nearly 20% of PCIP had bachelor's degrees, and 8% held associate's degrees.
- Most PCIPs were uncertified (83%). Among the 17% of PCIP with a certification, most attended an alternative preparation program (55%), with less than one-third attending a university-based preparation program (31%).
- Four percent of PCIP were promoted to full-time teaching positions across all years.

Policy Considerations

There is evidence that GYO programs, such as Paraeducator-to-Teacher pathways, provide a needed opportunity for local school and community members to become full-time teachers and that these prospective educators are more likely to be ethnoracially diverse (Gist et al., 2022). We assert that Students of Color and Indigenous Students stand to benefit from the adoption of more supportive policies regarding pathways for PCIP to earn the credentials required to become full-time teachers. This is because PCIP represent a critical and essential group of educators who often hold deep ties to their school community (Gist, 2022); can increase positive student outcomes associated with student-teacher ethnoracial matching (Hart & Lindsay, 2024; Redding, 2019); and are well positioned to identify the needs of students of color correctly (Weathers, 2023). As such, the following policy considerations are noted:

- We recommend that district leaders develop recruitment systems to identify PCIPs interested in becoming teachers and support their pathway into the profession.
- We recommend data-informed recruiting to eliminate barriers to the profession for PCIP (Gist et al., 2022). This would require coordination at the district level, including communication between district human capital managers and school leaders tasked with interviewing/hiring.
- Traditional programs can be unwelcoming to prospective TOCIT and other historically marginalized groups (Souto-Manning & Emdin, 2023). Leaders of traditional prep programs should critically examine program policies and curriculum and consider how the organization of their programs could be more inclusive of PCIP interested in becoming full-time teachers (e.g., evening courses, online course offerings, ethnoracially representative faculty).

Federal Policies and Initiatives

Federal education laws, such as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Higher Education Act (HEA), include multiple provisions related to teacher recruitment, preparation, and development. For example, ESSA Title III includes the National Professional Development program, which is a competitive grant to support the recruitment, preparation, and professional learning of teachers of English learners (ELs). The most recent application has a focus on GYO programs for bilingual educators, which will help increase the linguistic diversity of the teacher workforce and ensure that more EL students have access to bilingual instruction (Federal Register, 2024). The Higher Education Act provides MSIs with discretionary and mandatory appropriations, equaling \$1.29 billion in fiscal year 2023 (Congressional Research Service, 2023). In addition, the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence Program, first funded in 2022, helps increase and retain racially and linguistically diverse teachers. The competitive grant program supports efforts at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) to reform existing teacher preparation programs, offer high-quality clinical training under the guidance of a mentor teacher, and implement wraparound supports to help candidates complete the program and earn certification (Federal Register, 2022). MSIs prepare a large share of Teachers of Color, with 38% of Black teachers, 51% of Latinx teachers, and 35% of Asian American teachers earning a degree in education from an MSI (Gasman et al., 2017). A research review by Ginsberg et al. (2017) emphasized several key attributes of MSIs, including holistic recruitment approaches, comprehensive support structures to promote candidate persistence, strategic partnerships with local school districts to facilitate robust clinical training, integration of culturally responsive practices and asset-orientations towards students, among others.

HEA also supports the development of teacher residency programs that integrate GYO. The 2022 Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant competition, which provides grants to teacher preparation programs (TPPs) to work in partnership with high-needs local education agencies and school districts to address teacher workforce needs, included competitive preferences related to increasing educator diversity and offered an invitational priority for GYO (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). TQP funds can be used to support the development of new teacher residency programs or the redesign of existing teacher residency programs. Teaching residencies emerge from the medical residency model and typically possess features such as a partnership between a high-needs school district(s), an institution of higher education, and other stakeholders; a rigorous, full-year classroom apprenticeship alongside a well-trained mentor teacher that integrates coursework and theory in a school-based environment; and placement and hiring assistance coupled with the residents' commitment to teach in the district for 3 to 5 years (Torrez & Krebs, 2019). In terms of impact on student learning, the findings have been very promising. For example, of 39 teacher preparation programs in Tennessee in 2015, the Memphis Teacher Residency has the highest percentage of graduates meeting and exceeding student growth averages on the state's value-added assessment system, according to state data. The Memphis Teacher Residency finished 2018 as one of the state's top performers on Tennessee's Educator Preparation Report Card, earning nearly 95% of the evaluation's possible points (Torrez & Krebs, 2019, p. xxii).

Research has demonstrated that teacher residency programs tend to enroll higher proportions of racially diverse candidates than traditional models of teacher preparation (Guha et al., 2016). In 2019, the National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) launched the Black Educators Initiative (BEI) to recruit, prepare, and retain 750 new Black educators through the national network of teacher residency members (National Center for Teacher Residencies, 2024). An external review on recruitment and retention of Black educators at eight teacher residencies by Madhani et al. (2022) found very promising findings. Also, the Black Educators Initiative (BEI) identified key policy

recommendations for Black Educators, which included the following: a) make teacher preparation financially accessible; b) prioritize recruitment strategies that focus on Black Educators; c) ensure that teacher preparation programs are culturally and linguistically sustaining; d) employ affinity groups; e) invest in and support mentors who can cultivate prospective Black Educators; and f) includes voices of Black Educators in the development of teacher education policies (Rowland et al., 2023).

Federal COVID relief funding has also been used to support teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention, including residency programs; GYO educator programs; induction programs; and more (The Education Trust, n.d.). A recent proposal by Senator Bernie Sanders, chairman of the Senate Health, Educator, Labor and Pensions (HELP) committee, would authorize and provide grant funding for GYO partnerships under HEA, among a range of actions to boost teacher pay and strengthen teacher preparation (Pay Teachers Act, 2023). While these federal investments and proposals are laudable, they are not sufficient to address the problem at scale.

These efforts are also embedded within a larger K–12 policy structure that, starting with No Child Left Behind (NCLB), placed more accountability pressure on school systems and educators. NCLB ushered in “highly qualified teacher” requirements that served to magnify disparities in access to qualified teachers across low-poverty and high-poverty schools (Birman et al., 2007). Achinstein and Ogawa (2012) documented the tension Teachers of Color felt in employing culturally responsive practices within the framework of standardized tests and standards that lacked cultural relevance to their students. Race to the Top, launched in 2009, pushed for greater teacher accountability, incentivizing states to develop “high-stakes” teacher evaluation systems that would link teacher effectiveness directly with their students’ performance on standardized assessments. Teachers deemed ineffective could face termination, while those rated as highly effective could receive a financial bonus. Kraft et al. (2019) found that “high-stakes” teacher evaluation policies were associated with a 16-18% reduction in the supply of novice teachers, a higher perceived cost of becoming a teacher, and a reduction in job satisfaction and autonomy. While the ESSA eliminated the HQT requirement and provided more autonomy to states to amend their accountability structures, teachers continue to face external policy pressures that impact their practice, working conditions, and retention in the profession.

State and Local Initiatives

A 2024 review of GYO policies and programs found that 35 states plus the District of Columbia funded some type of GYO pathway (Garcia, 2024a). These funds most often come from state-level appropriations and supplemental federal funds; most prominently COVID-19 pandemic aid. Pathways range from scholarships to competitive grants designed to incentivize partnerships between teacher preparation programs (TPPs) and school districts to address local challenges in the teacher pipeline. In some states, these programs are intentionally designed to recruit, prepare, and retain racially and linguistically diverse teachers and/or to serve schools with high proportions of students of color. For example, Minnesota’s GYO grant specifies that 80% of the funds for tuition scholarships must go to supporting community members of color or who are American Indian (Minnesota Department of Education, n.d.).

Washington State offers GYO programs for high school students and adults. Recruiting Washington Teachers (RWT) is a high school teacher academy with a culturally responsive curriculum that offers students the opportunity to explore the education system and have leadership opportunities. RWT aims to attract diverse students to the teaching profession and offers a program for multilingual students to provide exposure to working in bilingual education. In 2019, Students of Color made up 88% of all program participants (Geiger, 2019). States such as New York and Massachusetts have offered teacher diversity pilot grant programs that utilize a GYO approach.

Massachusetts's Teacher Diversification Pilot Program offers local school systems funds to develop high school education pathways; provide financial incentives such as loan forgiveness to strengthen teacher recruitment; or offer tuition assistance to Paraeducators, school district graduates, or provisionally licensed teachers to complete an approved TPP program (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.). Paraeducators are often recruited into GYO programs because they often share the same racial and linguistic demographics of students, come from the same community, and have experience supporting student learning (Bisht et al., 2021; Villegas & Clewell, 1998; Williams et al., 2016).

Both state and federal policies can specify data collection and evaluation requirements that can add to the growing literature base on GYO. The Texas Education Agency (TEA), which has awarded GYO grants to over 400 districts in the state since 2018, partnered with Regional Education Laboratory Southwest to study progress and early outcomes of these programs (Wan et al., 2022). The results were too preliminary to draw strong conclusions, but offered areas for further investigation. Similarly, state policies can also propose the creation of a task force charged with researching teacher diversity and identifying initiatives that can be undertaken (New York State Legislature, Senate Bill S3385A) or developing a strategic plan for increasing teacher diversity (New Mexico, House Memorial 18).

At the local level, school districts across the country have also implemented career ladder programs (Garcia, 2024a), residency programs (Papay et al., 2012), and Registered Apprenticeship programs in teaching (Will, 2023) that draw on local talent. Educator Registered Apprenticeship (ERA) has gained traction among policymakers as a strategy for helping teacher candidates receive paid on-the-job training and mentorship often paired with tuition-free coursework. ERA aligns with elements of both GYO and teacher residency, including addressing financial barriers to earning a degree and providing robust clinical training (Garcia, 2024b). Since January 2022, 35 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have registered a program (Garcia, 2023). Less attention has been paid to the role of ERA in helping to diversify the teacher workforce; however, expanding career pathways for underrepresented populations is a central goal of the U.S. Department of Labor's (2023) investments in Registered Apprenticeship expansion. Taken as a whole, these approaches reflect strategic programmatic policy approaches for advancing educator diversity.

Conclusion

It is promising that a plethora of federal, state, and local policies dedicated to educator diversity are significantly expanding to provide access for Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers. At the same time, the long-term impact of restrictive diversity, equity, and inclusion bans across several states in the nation remains to be seen. Ongoing policy research that deepens the evidence base on the importance of ethnoracial educator diversity will be vital to address policies that create barriers and limit educational opportunity for Students of Color and Indigenous Students. Given this context, the following questions, noted in the *Handbook's* policy section (pp. 1074–1075), still remain relevant and represent areas of policy research that deserve significant exploration in the future:

- In what ways can critical, racial justice, and decolonial theoretical frameworks be applied to develop, analyze, and evaluate district, state, and national ethnoracial teacher diversity policies?
- How can nondominant methodologies and metrics be used to interpret the effectiveness of ethnoracial teacher diversity policies in ways that honor the lived experiences of TOCIT?

- What are the relationships between teacher development and/or education reform policies (e.g., online alternative certification programs, certification exams, microcredential programs, loan forgiveness, incentive pay, affinity hiring and placement groups), the contexts in which TOCIT live and work (e.g., hiring rates, retention rates, student loan debt, income increases, school working conditions), and the outcomes TOCIT produce (e.g., students' academic and non-academic performance, evaluation scores, promotion and/or advancement)?
- How do the political commitments, organizing processes, and/or knowledge products advanced by education reform funders impact performance outcomes related to the recruitment, preparation, retention, and professional advancement of TOCIT?
- To what extent can education reform funders and governmental stakeholders be effectively engaged to develop and support research-based district, state, and national ethnoraical teacher diversity policies that are informed and iteratively refined by the knowledge systems and experiences of TOCIT?

Part II: Policy Brief

As outlined in Part 1, policies supporting Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers (TOCIT) have a grounding in history. TOCIT have experienced exclusion within a policy framework built on systematic discrimination that continues into contemporary preparation and workforce contexts (Philip & Brown, 2021; Kohli, 2018; Souto-Manning & Emdin, 2023). From this context emerged educational advocates and community members who argued for classroom contexts where Students of Color and Indigenous Students could learn from teachers and leaders who understood and were responsive to their racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic background. Increasing opportunities for Students of Color and Indigenous Students to see themselves, and their future, in their classroom was, and continues to be, an important feature of efforts to advance educator diversity.

Given this historical background, various policies supporting a vision of increased educator diversity persist. In the sections above, we described many of these policies as they pertain to supporting a new supply of teachers. One example, GYO programs, was defined as “partnerships between educator preparation programs, school districts, and community organizations that recruit and prepare local community members to enter the teaching profession and teach in their communities” (Garcia, 2024a, p. 11). While research related to the efficacy of these programs is relatively scarce, we highlight distinct policy impacts that are important to the development of future policy and practice efforts. We review these impacts while also noting areas for growth within practice and implementation, where we suggest the continued development of supportive policies.

Teachers prepared through GYO programs may have higher workforce retention rates, compared to teachers from traditional educator preparation programs (Abramovitz & D’Amico, 2011), and lead to improved student achievement outcomes, particularly at the elementary level (Fortner et al., 2015). GYO programs also have success recruiting a more ethnoraically diverse workforce (Valenzuela, 2017). While many teachers hired through GYO programs have prior district work experience, this pathway has the potential to meaningfully reduce efforts linked to district hiring, training, onboarding, and thus lower overall human resource costs. Building on this momentum, we highlight the critical need for more research in this area.

While researchers have made progress sorting through the variations in GYO programs (e.g., paraprofessional to teaching pathways, residency programs), there is a need for more consensus

related to standard practices linked with success in supporting Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers. As enrollments grow within alternative preparation pathways—including many online and for-profit programs (Castro & Edwards, 2021)—how can GYO programs increase enrollments by structuring more flexibility while also maintaining a high level of quality?

Teacher residency programs—which is a preparation model used by some GYOs—captures each of these benefits while also addressing the affordability concern that many prospective teachers cite as a key barrier towards pursuing a pathway into full-time teaching. As described in our policy research and policy landscape sections, residency programs often provide preservice teachers with a living stipend or salary as they continue to complete their preparation requirements contingent on commitment to a full-year classroom apprenticeship under an experienced teacher-mentor. While there is substantial variation in the implementation of residency models across state and district contexts (Chu & Wang, 2022), the extant policy impact literature related to this model is promising. For example, like workforce outcomes for GYO programs in general, teacher residencies have a successful record of preparing higher rates of TOCIT, compared to other preparation program models.

There is also literature indicating that teacher residencies are more successful than other programs in preparing teachers who use culturally responsive approaches to instruction and are committed to equity and social justice efforts—specifically in urban schooling contexts (Chu & Wang, 2022; Reagan et al., 2016; Williamson et al., 2016). Further, there is evidence that policies creating and sustaining teacher residencies will lead to higher levels of teacher retention. Researchers investigating both 3- and 5-year retention outcomes among teachers prepared through residencies have found that this group was more likely to remain in the classroom during these career points, compared to other novice teachers (Papay et al., 2012; Roegman et al., 2017).

The impacts emerging from educator diversity policies are promising. Beginning with a historical grounding, in this article we explored how implementation and practice are unfolding at the federal, state, and local levels. Given the early success of efforts to support new pathways into the profession for TOCIT (e.g., GYO, teacher residencies, and paraprofessional-to-teacher pathways), we provide four recommendations below that educational leaders at the federal, state, and local levels should consider, understanding that, ultimately, policy efforts that eliminate barriers for marginalized and minoritized groups are an important strategy for advancing enduring and transformative educational outcomes for all students in our nation's schools.

1. Increase access and affordability for Students of Color and Indigenous Students interested in becoming K–12 teachers. Policies to support this goal could include Grow Your Own paid apprenticeship models beginning in high school (see, for example, Lyda, 2022), paid student teaching (e.g., Michigan Future Educators Stipend), free community college, and community college baccalaureate programs (Thai & Love, 2024).
2. Promote and facilitate collaboration with community colleges, which historically offer more flexibility and are more welcoming for working students, student parents, first-generation students, and Students of Color and Indigenous students (Ma & Baum, 2016).
3. Increase teacher compensation and pay to improve the perception of teaching as a profession, and to recognize the higher levels of job complexity, and resulting burnout, that teachers face in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Expand critical policy research that examines the relationship between efforts to advance or restrict educator diversity in schools, and student engagement and learning outcomes, teacher recruitment and retention, and school culture and working conditions.

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