



Raising Diversity

in the Educator Pipeline

ETS[®]
**Professional
Educator**
PROGRAMS

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As our nation has grown more diverse, the demographics of the teacher workforce have not kept pace with the changes in student demographics. Recent statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics indicate nearly 50% of the student population is racially diverse, while only 20% of teachers are. While actual percentages differ from state to state, and district to district, this fact remains — the nation suffers from a significant demographic gap between the teacher workforce and the PK–12 student body and it must be addressed.

Why is teacher diversity important? According to a report by the U.S. Department of Education, *The State of Racial Diversity*, diversity among teachers significantly benefits students. The report states that:

“Improving teacher diversity can help all students. Teachers of color are positive role models for all students in breaking down negative stereotypes and preparing students to live and work in a multiracial society. A more diverse teacher workforce can also supplement training in the culturally sensitive teaching practices most effective with today’s student populations.”

Many states have adopted programs — such as early identification of prospective teacher candidates’ initiatives for middle and high schools, alternate route preparation programs, scholarships, financial incentives and professional support systems. ETS directly supports these types of initiatives and others to increase diversity in the educator pipeline.

Developing Unbiased Teacher Licensure Tests

Our work to ensure tests reflect a diverse teacher workforce begins with our test development process. ETS is the developer of the *Praxis*® tests for teacher licensure. A widely adopted national program, the *Praxis* tests are administered to pre-service teachers at various stages in their licensing process. ETS works with Education Preparation Programs (EPPs) and the state agencies which oversee the preparation and licensure of new teachers to ensure that our tests provide an equal opportunity for every test taker to demonstrate readiness to teach — regardless of race and background.

We also work closely with stakeholders to include the voices of teacher candidates of color and minority-serving EPPs in every stage of the development process in order to verify that our tests are free of cultural bias. ETS conducts statistical analysis on our assessments — using processes like Differential Item Functioning — to ensure that they do not include test items that disadvantage any population.

State Initiatives

Alabama: ETS collaborated with the National Education Association of Alabama (NEA-AL) to host a weeklong bootcamp for teacher candidates of color to have an in-depth understanding of the *Praxis*® Core Academic Skills for Educators assessment (or *Praxis*® Core), a program entry test. Our assessment development staff worked with NEA-AL teachers to assist with knowledge of the standards, overarching content, connections to curriculum, content representations in test items, pass rate data, test-preparation materials and skills, and specific content areas of improvement.

Connecticut: The state’s district leaders and EPPs have identified ways to bolster diversity in their teacher pipeline. ETS assists by engaging with policymakers, EPPs, community members and alternate route programs. We disseminate research and information to the CT Minority Recruitment Task Force, provide guidance on test development and test resources, help EPPs with test review sessions and support an alternate certification program that focuses on candidates of color by assisting with test-preparation resources.

ETS initiated a joint effort with the Hartford Public Schools to support a “grow your own program” for paraprofessionals to earn additional credit in the areas of teaching practice and pedagogy. We have also worked with the Greater New England Association of Black School Educators to bolster their equity efforts by sponsoring conferences focused on diversifying the teacher pipeline and culturally responsive teaching in the classroom.

Indiana: In 2018, ETS collaborated with the Indiana Commission on Higher Education to sponsor a “Diversity in the Teacher Workforce” symposium. The event brought together ETS researchers, Indiana policymakers and education community members to explore research-based approaches that promote diversity and equity in education.

Kentucky: ETS is working with the Louisville Teacher Residency Program (LTR) — a partnership between the Jefferson County School District, Simmons College and the University of Louisville. The program produces a diverse cohort of quality teachers by creating a recruitment pipeline of recent graduates and current upper-level students at Simmons College, as well as others in the community who are interested in learning how to serve well in schools that are persistently hard to staff. Through engagement with LTR program leadership, ETS consults with faculty, peer counselors and mentors on the implications of test results for curriculum revisions, test preparation, technical support for candidates and assistance with data analysis.

Virginia: ETS worked with the Virginia Secretary of Education, the Governor’s Task Force on Diversifying the Teacher Pipeline and the Virginia Association of Colleges for Teacher Education to strengthen diversity in the state’s teacher pipeline. Our staff provided research findings, as well as led presentations on successful strategies for increasing teacher diversity. More recently, ETS worked with the Office of Equity and Community Engagement within the Virginia Department of Education to offer strategic thought leadership around the state’s K–12 equity goals. Specifically, ETS engaged the department and leading EPPs to offer guidance on best practices for diversifying the teacher pipeline. We are currently helping to lead discussions on developing standards and professional development tools to ensure all teachers have a background in culturally responsive pedagogy and practice.

Research Initiatives

ETS researchers have investigated and documented what EPPs are doing to meet the challenge of the diversity gap. In 2016, we conducted a survey of EPPs across the country to understand how programs attract, admit, support and graduate teaching candidates from underrepresented groups. As a follow-up, ETS conducted interviews and site visits with EPP faculty and administrators who completed its diversity survey — identifying strategies that support candidate success and explaining the challenges experienced by these programs. We also published several reports in 2019 discussing findings and providing guidance to the education community.

Study on Increasing Teacher Diversity: ETS and the National Education Association have co-published the report, *Toward Increasing Teacher Diversity: Targeting Support and Intervention for Teacher Licensure Candidates*. It focuses on the performance gap in demographic subgroups of teacher candidates on *The Praxis Series*® assessments. This report also offers insight into strategies and interventions that can better support minority candidates in meeting full licensure requirements.

Other Projects

Building the Black Male Educators’ Pipeline Through Effective Recruitment: Black males represent 6% of the adult U.S. population, but represent less than 2% of the three million currently working as K–12 teachers. Many factors account for the underrepresentation of Black male teachers, and we are committed to seeking solutions that can help diversify our nation’s teaching force. ETS’s Policy Evaluation & Research Center is working with the *Praxis* program, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the National Urban League, the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh and the Western Pennsylvania Consortium of Educators to conduct a series of convenings focusing on three factors: recruiting; developing and retaining; and identifying and growing opportunities to build the pipelines of Black male educators.

American Federation of Teachers (AFT): ETS facilitated a two-hour discussion on the importance of teacher diversity in the classroom. This national meeting was convened by AFT, but included other national education stakeholder groups such as the National Education Association, the NAACP and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. This discussion focused on the history and importance of teacher licensure and certification tests, overall pass rate data on *Praxis* exams, best practices for addressing the needs of teacher candidates of color and ways that test preparation can help support potential candidates. Because of the importance of this conversation, ETS staff from the Assessment Development and Research & Development divisions as well as *Praxis* program management attended.

Strengthening Instruction in Tennessee Elementary Schools: Focus on Mathematics (SITES-M): Between 2008–2015, ETS supported and improved teacher quality in hard-to-serve areas by joining Tennessee State University and launching the SITES-M project. This math instruction program was developed at the request of the Tennessee Black Caucus of State Legislators. SITES-M supported five universities, four of which are Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), to create a Summer Math Institute and Saturday Math workshops. These initiatives provided innovative mathematics-centered learning communities for K–8 teachers serving in low-income urban schools.

Algebra Project, the Southern Initiative of the Algebra Project and the Young People’s Project: Since 2011, ETS has collaborated with these three organizations that are dedicated to strengthening the teaching and learning of mathematics for students in the bottom quartile of socioeconomic status and in math achievement. We have developed assessments designed for their curricula and collaborate with them on research.

Young Scholars Program: ETS and the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) formed a collaboration to create the Young Scholars Program that’s designed to attract minority undergraduate students who are interested in research, assessment, statistics and education. In their first and second year, students participate in a seminar series where they engage in learning activities with UTSA faculty and receive mentoring sessions by ETS staff.

HBCU–ETS Steering Committee: Founded in 1983, this committee comprises seven HBCU presidents who meet regularly to provide guidance to ETS — bringing to light the issues that directly affect their student and teacher populations. Recently, the committee has focused on investigating the role of noncognitive assessments in student retention.

To learn more about the *Praxis* program,
visit ets.org/pep or contact us at praxis@ets.org