

Teacher diversity diminishes at each point.

Postsecondary Enrollment

All states require a bachelor's degree as the first step toward teacher certification. Yet even at this early point the demographics have shifted: the racial composition of college graduates is already less diverse than it is among public high school graduates. In 2012, for example, 62 percent of all bachelor's degree students were white, whereas only 57 percent of those graduating from high school were white.



Enrollment in Education Programs

In 2012, 73 percent of students majoring in education at colleges and universities were white. The study acknowledges that this is not the only path for potential teachers. Teacher preparation programs—which may or may not be provided in association with an established college or university—deliver state-approved curricula that give enrollees an initial teaching credential. Even in teacher preparation programs associated with a college or university, the study found that enrollees were less diverse than the larger student body.



Postsecondary Completion

The "Racial Diversity" study notes that bachelor's degree completion is lower for black and Hispanic students than it is for white students. For students beginning college in 2008-2009, 42 percent of black students and 49 percent of Hispanic students had completed a bachelor's degree after six years, compared with 73 percent of white students. Graduates have become more diverse over time, but it is happening very slowly. In 2000, 77 percent were white, 11 percent were black, 8 percent were Hispanic, and 3 percent were other. By 2012, 73 percent were white, 12 percent were black, and 11 percent were Hispanic.



Entering the Workforce

Among those beginning postsecondary study in 2007-2008, 82 percent of bachelor's degree recipients certified to teach K-12 by 2012 were white, 4 percent were black, and 9 percent were Hispanic. Citing a 2011 study, "Racial Diversity" suggests that the low numbers of black and Hispanic certifications may reflect licensure exam performance; teachers of color, on average, score lower on licensure tests and pass at lower rates than white colleagues. Nonetheless, the authors note, "the racial composition of new teachers entering the teaching profession is more diverse than the racial composition of all teachers," hinting that, once teachers of color embark upon a teaching career, retention becomes the greatest challenge.



Teacher Retention

Teacher retention data follows a familiar pattern: there are more white teachers in the same position from one school year to the next than teachers of color. There are many reasons why this is the case, with "Through Our Eyes" data suggesting teacher burnout, lack of administrative support and understanding, unrealistic expectations (from administrators, colleagues, even students), and more. In addition, "Racial Diversity" notes that most black and Hispanic teachers work in urban schools, which tend to be high-stress, high-turnover environments.

