

CCSSO DLRT Teacher Pipeline Series:

What does Teacher Diversity and Culturally Responsive Practice have to do with ... ACCOUNTABILITY?

Introduction

In 2018, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) engaged nine states¹ in their Diverse and Learner-Ready Teachers (DLRT) Initiative. CCSSO also engaged a range of national organizations as collaborators to support the work of the DLRT states. One subset of national collaborators, the Communications and Advocacy Work Group², identified the need for developing a common language for policymakers around diverse teaching and learning. The group worked to address this need by developing two resources. First, they collaboratively assembled the following definitions for two key terms – teacher diversity and culturally responsive practice:

- Diversity can be defined as the sum of the ways that people are both alike and different. The dimensions of diversity include race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion, mental and physical ability, class, and immigration status. **Teacher Diversity** refers to the representation of dimensions of diversity in the collective makeup or pool of individuals within the K-12 public school teacher workforce. The work of the CCSSO DLRT Initiative focuses specifically on increasing the **racial** diversity of the teacher workforce.^{3,4}
- **Culturally Responsive Practice** in the classroom refers to both: 1) the use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for all students; and, 2) the embodiment of attitudes and dispositions that empower students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The work of the CCSSO DLRT Initiative focuses specifically on increasing the culturally responsive practice **aptitude** of the teacher workforce.^{5,6,7}

Next, based on these definitions, group members developed a series of short papers that would address how these two terms relate to nine key aspects of the teacher pipeline: Accountability, Compensation, Data Systems, Induction and Mentoring, Preparation, Recruitment, Retention, Student Demographics, and Well-Rounded Education. These papers form a series that seeks to provide both language and rationale to state policymakers as they work to incorporate teacher diversity and culturally responsive practice in policy initiatives across the spectrum of teacher pipeline issues. The current paper specifically addresses the intersection of diversity with Accountability.

What is accountability? What is its role in the larger teacher pipeline?

- Accountability is a mechanism through which we can hold educator preparation programs (EPPs) and districts responsible for recruiting, developing, and retaining educators that meet the hiring needs of the teacher workforce.
- Holding EPPs and districts accountable to producing and retaining high-quality teachers, signals not only a sincere commitment on the part of the state to strengthen the teacher workforce, but also helps institutions prioritize this work among the myriad of responsibilities they have.

- Data about teachers’ demographics, where they get jobs after graduation, and what’s working to retain those who are high-quality can help leaders better understand gaps in the current teacher workforce and inform collaboration between EPPs and districts to help meet those needs.
- The right data can help to add clarity around subject-specific variations in teacher shortages.

What does teacher diversity have to do with accountability?

- [Research](#) shows that all students learn better when they have access to high-quality teachers from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.⁸
- A diverse teacher workforce should reflect the identities of the students they teach, including but not limited to: race, language, ability, socio-economic status, and geography.
- Accountability can help to shape district priorities around both diversifying the teacher pipeline as well as ensuring this diversity is similarly reflected in hiring and placement decisions across school leadership roles.

How can policymakers and school leaders leverage accountability to diversify the teacher workforce?

- While it is vital that EPPs and districts are held responsible for recruiting and producing teachers that meet the hiring needs of schools, simply holding districts and EPPs accountable is not sufficient to drive action.
- For accountability to work, states must collect and share data that EPPs and districts most need to reflect on and improve their practice. For example, states might consider sharing: teacher certification status, compensation, retention, and vacancies by subject, etc.
- EPP and district leaders are best positioned to take strategic action to diversify and strengthen their teacher workforce when they have the full picture of who their teachers are and how they are progressing through the teacher pipeline.

What does Culturally Responsive Practice (CRP) have to do with accountability?

- Holding EPPs and districts accountable to building and retaining a teacher workforce that reflects the identities of the students they teach is foundational to creating a culture where Culturally Responsive Practice can flourish.

How can policymakers and school leaders leverage accountability to increase teacher proficiency in CRP?

- Meaningful accountability must be coupled with state action to share data between EPPs and districts about the ethno-racial background of teachers and school leaders, where they are placed, and what is working to develop and retain them.

- Including measures of CRP into educator certification and licensure can help to encourage the inclusion of culturally responsive pedagogy and practice into the curriculum of EPPs and ongoing professional development of school districts.
- States can also hold EPPs and districts accountable through transparency by reporting out on how these entities are recruiting, placing, and retaining teachers of color within the educator workforce.

Where can I go to learn more?

- [Using Data to Ensure That Teachers Are Learner Ready on Day One](#), Data Quality Campaign
- [What school districts can do to tackle teacher shortages](#), National Council on Teacher Quality

¹ The nine states initially engaged in CCSSO’s DLRT initiative were: Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, and New York.

² The national organizations represented in the Communications and Advocacy Work Group were: American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE), Center for American Progress (CAP), Data Quality Campaign (DQC), Education Commission of the States (ECS), Education Testing Service (ETS), Education Trust, National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), National Center for Teacher Quality (NCTQ), New America, and Teach for America (TFA).

³ Council of Chief State School Officers. (2018). Preparing “Learner-Ready” Teachers: Guidance from NTEP States for Ensuring a Culturally Responsive Workforce. Washington, D.C.: Council of Chief State School Officers. From <http://www.ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/Preparing%20Learner-Ready%20Teachers.pdf>

⁴ National Education Association. (2008). Diversity Toolkit Introduction. From <http://www.nea.org/tools/diversity-toolkit-introduction.html>

⁵ Council of Chief State School Officers. (2018). Preparing “Learner-Ready” Teachers: Guidance from NTEP States for Ensuring a Culturally Responsive Workforce. Washington, D.C.: Council of Chief State School Officers. From <http://www.ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-02/Preparing%20Learner-Ready%20Teachers.pdf>

⁶ Geneva Gay. (2010). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Teachers College Press.

⁷ Gloria Ladson-Billings. (1994). *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*. Jossey-Bass.

⁸ Cherng, H.S. & Halpin, P. F. (2010) The Importance of Minority Teachers: Student Perceptions of Minority Versus White Teachers. *Educational Researcher*, 40(7), 407-420.