

CCSSO DLRT Teacher Pipeline Series:
What does Teacher Diversity and Culturally Responsive Practice have to do with ...
COMPENSATION?

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 Compensation.

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

- According to the U.S. Department of Education, “[teacher compensation](#)” refers to the entire package of financial benefits earned by full time educators, including annual salary, bonuses, incentive pay, merit-based pay, vacation and sick days, benefits, and pensions.⁸ Often times, “teacher compensation” and “teacher pay” are used [interchangeably](#), although teacher pay often refers to [annual salary](#).^{9,10}
- In most places, teachers’ salaries are staggeringly low. [Nationally](#), the average starting salary is \$38,617, and the average teacher salary is \$59,660, although this varies by state and district.¹¹ After adjusting for inflation, average teacher pay has actually remained [mostly stagnant](#) over the last 40

years.¹² From 2010 to 2016, the average teacher salary adjusted for the cost of living [decreased](#) in 39 states.¹³

- A recent [survey](#) of 2,400 students revealed that low teacher pay is a deterrent for young people who are otherwise interested entering the profession; 40 percent of respondents said they would want to make at least \$50,000 per year as a new teacher.¹⁴ In a recent nationally representative survey of current educators from [Educators for Excellence](#), “Three out of four teachers responded that a higher salary would be the most motivating factor for them to continue being a classroom teacher for their entire career and that disputes over salary and benefits would be the most likely reason they would participate in a strike.”¹⁵
- The spring of 2018 saw a wave of teacher walkouts across the country, from West Virginia and Kentucky to Oklahoma and Arizona. During these [walkouts](#), teachers advocated for an increase in school funding, higher teacher [salaries](#), better pension plans, and more pay for support staff.^{16,17}

What does teacher diversity have to do with teacher compensation?

- Teachers earn [60 percent](#) of the average salaries of similarly educated professionals—which is the lowest among all OECD countries.¹⁸ Importantly, other [nonwage](#) benefits—like pensions, vacation days, and summer break—do not make up for the difference.¹⁹
- Teachers in high poverty schools make less than their peers in lower poverty schools, which disproportionately impacts teachers of color, and black teachers, especially. On average, black teachers earn [\\$2,700 less](#) per year than white teachers.²⁰
- Black college students also have much higher student [loan debt](#) on average than their white peers, which can be compounded by low teacher pay for teachers of color.²¹ Students of color are also [more likely](#) than their white peers to report that student loan debt limited their educational options; it stands to reason that higher debt load may also impact their career decisions.²²
- Low teacher pay (and even the perception that the profession is low paying) may deter high-achieving college students of color from choosing education as a career path.

How can policymakers and school leaders leverage compensation to diversify the teaching force?

- School leaders should consider employing models like [Opportunity Culture](#) that allow teachers to make more money for taking on additional leadership responsibilities but that are cost-neutral over time. District leaders in [higher-paying districts](#) should leverage their competitive and strategic compensation structures to attract college graduates of color to the profession.²³
- Policymakers at the state level should work to restore education funding to pre-recession levels and ensure that teachers are earning, at a minimum, a [livable wage](#).²⁴ To attract young people into the profession—especially young people of color—all states should consider raising the average starting salary to [\\$50,000](#).²⁵ State policymakers and other stakeholders should also consider more [strategic](#) teacher compensation policies.²⁶
- Because teachers in high poverty schools make less than their peers in low poverty schools, and teachers of color disproportionately teach in higher poverty schools, state and district policymakers should pay teachers more to teach in hard-to-staff schools and districts, which tend to serve larger

populations of students from low-income families. In fact, in the same [survey](#) created by Educators for Excellence, teachers ranked “financial incentives for serving in hard-to-staff schools” as the most popular strategy for attracting new teachers to the profession.²⁷ Doing so would have the added benefit of potentially attracting and retaining more teachers of color in those schools, since high achieving college graduates of color have many more lucrative career options from which to choose.

- State departments of education should collect and publicize real teacher compensation data at the school and district level to allow for greater transparency. As real teacher salary data becomes available, state policymakers, departments of education, and nonprofit organizations should analyze these data to advocate for and work towards more equitable pay structures.
- A recent [paper](#) from the Center for American Progress proposed providing teachers in high poverty schools with as much as a \$10,000 annual raise through the federal tax code.²⁸ Federal policymakers should also consider levers such as these to raise the salaries for educators teaching students with the greatest academic, economic, and social-emotional needs.

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

- Policymakers, school leaders, and parents are asking more from teachers than ever before, but the policies and systems designed to support teachers have not kept pace. If the [3.8 million](#) teachers currently in our nation’s classrooms are asked to fulfill ongoing professional learning in the area of Culturally Responsive Practice, they should be paid commensurately for any out-of-school time needed to learn how to implement best practices in their classrooms.²⁹

How can policymakers and school leaders leverage teacher compensation to increase teacher proficiency in Culturally Responsive Practice?

- Policymakers and school leaders should consider providing additional compensation to educators with a Culturally Responsive Practice endorsement or with a specialized degree in Culturally Responsive Practice. School leaders should also leverage the expertise of these specialists and provide them with additional compensation to lead their peers in job-embedded training in Culturally Responsive Practice.

Where can I go to learn more?

- [Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color](#), Learning Policy Institute
- [Do More, Add More, Earn More](#), Center for American Progress
- [Fact Sheet: Yes, Increase the Salaries of All Teachers](#), Center for American Progress
- [Few High School Students Are Interested in Teaching. But Better Pay Could Help](#), Education Week
- [How to Give Teachers a \\$10,000 Raise](#), Center for American Progress
- [Low Teacher Salaries 101](#), Education Resource Strategies
- [New Federal Data Show a Student Loan Crisis for African American Borrowers](#), Center for American Progress

- [Rankings of the States 2017 and Estimates of School Statistics 2018](#), National Education Association
- [States, Strikes, and Teacher Salaries](#), National Council on Teacher Quality
- [Strategic Teacher Compensation Databurst](#), National Council on Teacher Quality
- [Teacher Compensation](#), U.S. Department of Education
- [Teacher Pay: 2017 State Averages & Rankings](#), BEST NC
- [Teacher Walkouts: A State By State Guide](#), National Public Radio
- [Voices from the Classroom: A Survey of America’s Educators](#), Educators for Excellence

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 U.S. Department of Education. (2018). *Teacher Compensation*. From U.S. Department of Education: <https://www.ed.gov/oii-news/teacher-compensation>.

⁹ Will, M., & Sawchuk, S. (2018, March 30). Teacher Pay: How Salaries, Pensions, and Benefits Work in Schools. *Education Week*.

¹⁰ Shapiro, S., Partelow, L., & Brown, C. (2018). *Fact Sheet: Yes, Increase the Salaries of All Teachers*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

¹¹ National Education Association. (2018). *Rankings of the States 2017 and Estimates of School Statistics 2018*. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association.

¹² Katz, N., Apfelbaum, K. W., Frank, S., & Miles, K. H. (2018). *Low Teacher Salaries 101*. Watertown, MA: Education Resource Strategies.

¹³ Benner, M., Roght, E., Johnson, S., & Bahn, K. (2018). *How to Give Teachers a \$10,000 Raise*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

¹⁴ Schwartz, S. (2018, August 7). Few High School Students Are Interested in Teaching. But Better Pay Could Help. *Education Week - Teacher*.

¹⁵ Educators for Excellence. (2018). *Voices from the Classroom: A Survey of America's Educators*. New York, NY: Educators for Excellence.

¹⁶ Turner, C., Lombardo, C., & Logan, E. B. (2018, April 25). Teacher Walkouts: A State by State Guide. *NPR Ed*.

¹⁷ Nittler, K., & Gerber, N. (2018). *States, Strikes, and Teacher Salaries*. Washington, D.C.: National Council on Teacher Quality.

¹⁸ Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development. (2018). *Education at a Glance 2018*. Paris, France: Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development.

¹⁹ Benner, M., Roght, E., Johnson, S., & Bahn, K. (2018). *How to Give Teachers a \$10,000 Raise*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

²⁰ Benner, M., Roght, E., Johnson, S., & Bahn, K. (2018). *How to Give Teachers a \$10,000 Raise*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

²¹ Miller, B. (2017). *New Federal Data Show a Student Loan Crisis for African American Borrowers*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

- ²² Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and retain Teachers of Color*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.
- ²³ Miles, K. H., Pennington, K., & Bloom, D. (2015). *Do More, Add More, Earn More: Teacher Salary Redesign Lessons from 10 First-Mover Districts*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.
- ²⁴ Shapiro, S., Partelow, L., & Brown, C. (2018). *Fact Sheet: Yes, Increase the Salaries of All Teachers*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.
- ²⁵ Partelow, L., Brown, C., Shapiro, S., & Johnson, S. (2018). *7 Great Education Policy Ideas for Progressives in 2018*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.
- ²⁶ Ross, E., & Worth, C. (2018). *Strategic Teacher Compensation Databurst*. Washington, D.C.: National Council on Teacher Quality.
- ²⁷ Educators for Excellence. (2018). *Voices from the Classroom: A Survey of America's Educators*. New York, NY: Educators for Excellence.
- ²⁸ Benner, M., Roght, E., Johnson, S., & Bahn, K. (2018). *How to Give Teachers a \$10,000 Raise*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.
- ²⁹ Loewus, L. (2017, August 17). Teaching Force Growing Faster Than Student Enrollment Once Again. *Education Week*.