



Dudley Flood Center for
Educational Equity and
Opportunity



Equity Education Issue Brief

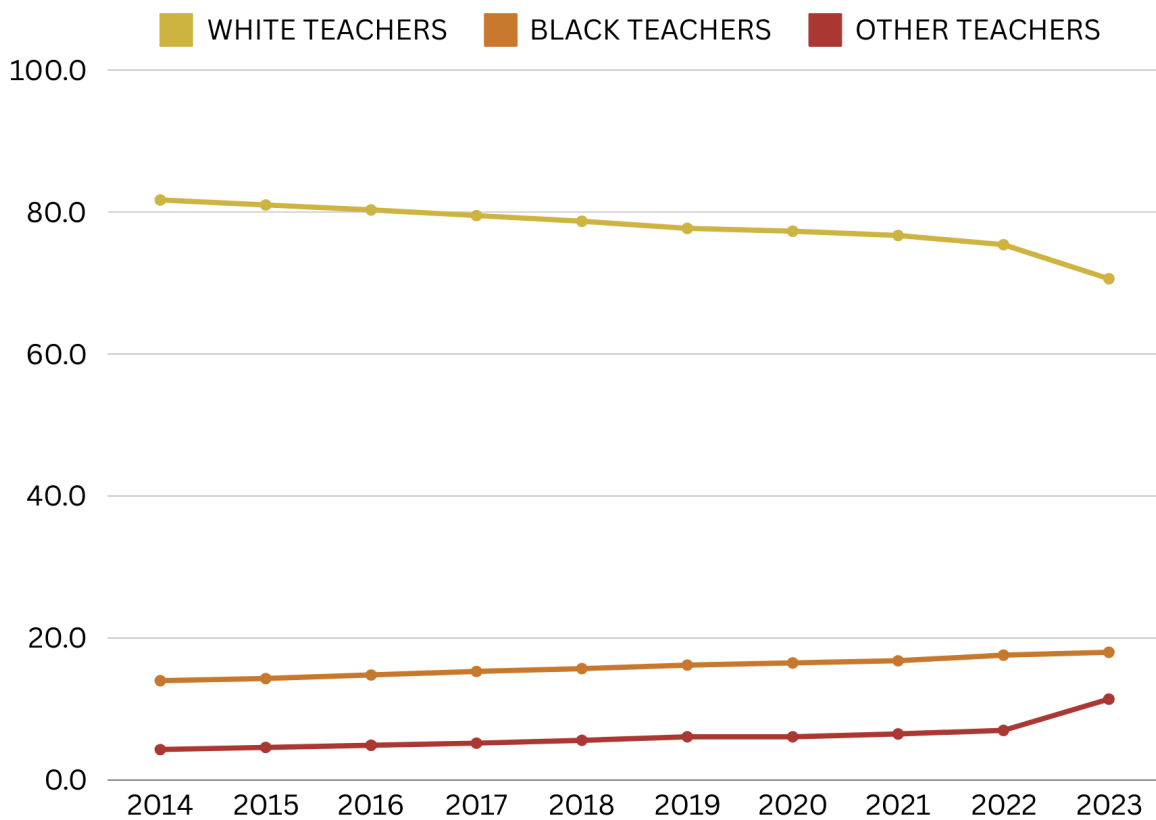
Teacher Diversity in NC

Dudley Flood Center | Public School Forum of North Carolina

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Overview

Over the past decade, North Carolina's student population has become increasingly diverse, yet its teacher workforce has not kept pace with this demographic shift. In the 2023-2024 school year, 57.2% of North Carolina's public school students identified as students of color, while only 29.4% of the state's educators were nonwhite. This persistent gap highlights the ongoing challenge of ensuring that students of color have access to a teacher workforce that reflects their backgrounds and lived experiences.



Teacher Demographics by Race

A 10-year analysis of teacher demographics in North Carolina reveals both progress and persistent disparities in racial representation. While the percentage of Black, Hispanic, and other teachers has increased over time, the pace of change remains slow compared to the rapid demographic shifts among students.

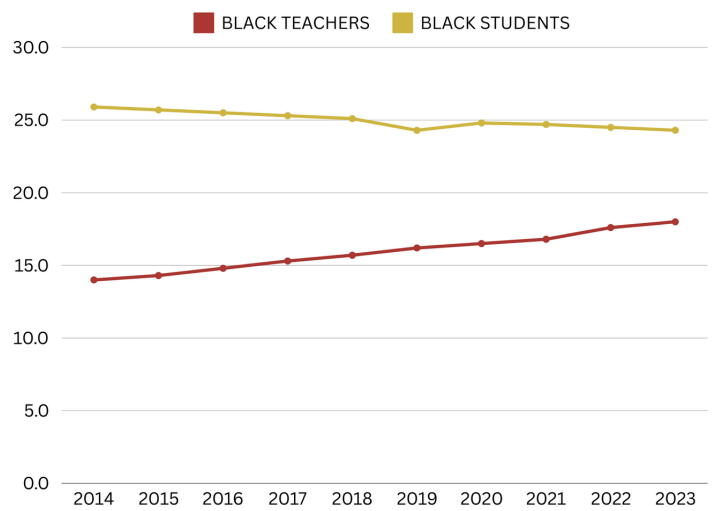


Analysis of Teacher-Student Diversity Gaps in North Carolina

Although some progress has been made, the gap between the racial composition of teachers and students in North Carolina has remained persistent, despite some progress in diversifying the educator workforce.

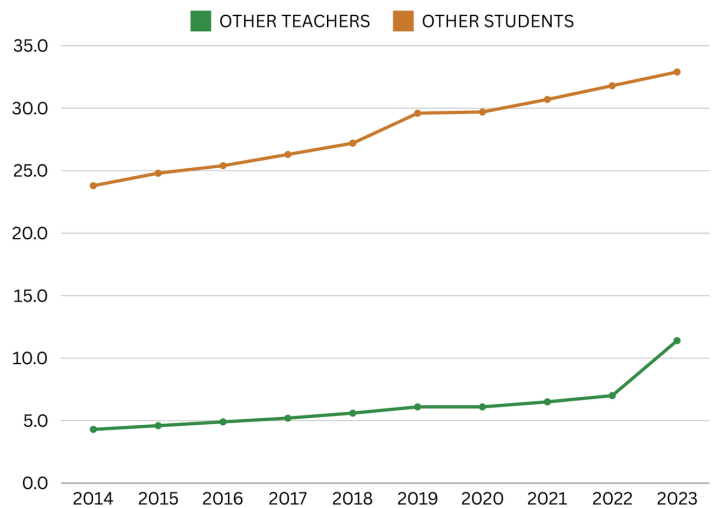
For Black teachers and students, the percentage of Black teachers has slowly increased from 14% in 2014-2015 to 18% in 2023-2024. However, Black students have consistently made up about 24-26% of the student population over the same period. This results in a gap of approximately 6-8 percentage points, indicating that Black students are significantly underrepresented among their teachers.

Black Teacher and Student Representation Over Time¹

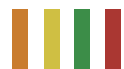


For teachers of other racial backgrounds, representation has grown from 4.3% in 2014-2015 to 11.4% in 2023-2024. However, this increase still lags far behind the proportion of students from other racial backgrounds, which has risen from 23.8% to 32.9%. The gap here is even larger, exceeding 20 percentage points, highlighting an even greater disparity in representation.

Other Race Teacher and Student Representation Over Time²



North Carolina DPI classifies educators into three racial categories: White, Black, and Other, collapsing multiple racial and ethnic identities into the "Other" category. This lack of disaggregation can mask important differences and unintentionally contribute to the erasure of diverse identities in data reporting.



Current Initiatives

DRIVE Task Force: Established by Governor Roy Cooper through Executive Order 113, the Developing a Representative and Inclusive Vision for Education (DRIVE) Task Force focuses on improving equity and inclusion in education. The task force developed a strategic plan to diversify North Carolina’s teacher workforce. At the close of 2023, the DRIVE Task Force designated the Dudley Flood Center for Educational Equity and Opportunity as the governing body of the task force’s work moving forward. They now manage the DRIVE Coalition to actualize the recommendations.

Teacher Assistants Reimbursement Pilot Program (TAs to Teachers): The TAs to Teachers program supports teacher assistants in earning their teaching credentials, helping to increase the diversity of North Carolina’s educator workforce. This program is administered through the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

Future Teachers of North Carolina: Future Teachers of NC encourages high school students, particularly students of color, to explore teaching as a career path by providing early exposure to the profession.

Teach NC: Teach NC is a statewide initiative designed to attract, prepare, and support future educators in North Carolina. Teach NC provides prospective teachers with information on educator preparation programs, financial aid opportunities, and pathways to the classroom, with a focus on increasing the diversity of the teacher workforce.

Spotlight: Community Schools as Recruitment and Retention Hubs

Community schools are powerful models for strengthening teacher pipelines by embedding educators within local communities and offering holistic support. In Durham Public Schools, teacher **turnover rates ranged from 20% to 32%** between 2014 and 2019. Following the implementation of the community schools model, **those rates dropped significantly—to 11% in 2020-21 and just 5% in 2021-22**—highlighting the impact of community schools in creating conditions that help educators stay and thrive.³



Forthcoming Policy & Legislative Considerations

BILL NAME	CURRENT STATUS	OVERVIEW	TEACHER DIVERSITY IMPACT
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SB 227 -
Removing DEI
Requirements

Passed in Senate
(3/11, vote 28-18);
Referred to House
Committee on Rules,
Calendar, and
Operations (3/13)

Seeks to eliminate
DEI requirements
in public
institutions,
including teacher
preparation
programs.

Removing DEI requirements could
weaken efforts to attract and
retain a diverse educator
workforce, reducing classroom
representation and support for
underrepresented educators.

SB 204 -
Removing
Standardized
Testing for
Teacher
Licensure

Referred to Senate
Committee on Rules
and Operations (3/3)

Proposes
eliminating
standardized
testing as a
requirement for
teacher licensure.

Eliminating standardized testing
could open pathways for a more
racially and linguistically diverse
pool of teachers, as tests like
Praxis disproportionately impact
candidates of color.

HB 192 -
Increasing
Teacher Pay

Referred to Committee
on Appropriations; if
favorable, moves to
House Rules, Calendar,
and Operations
(2/26/25)

Proposes
increasing teacher
salaries to
improve
recruitment and
retention.

Higher salaries can improve
teacher retention and recruitment,
particularly for educators of color
who face financial barriers, helping
to create a more stable and
representative workforce.



Ways to Get Involved



Join the DRIVE Coalition

Get involved in statewide efforts to increase educator diversity by participating in a regional committee or attending convenings.



Call Your Legislators

Advocate for policies that fund equitable recruitment, support educators of color, and require public reporting on teacher diversity.



Partner with Local Schools and Community Organizations

Collaborate on initiatives that uplift culturally affirming practices and create inclusive school environments where diverse educators can thrive.



Stay Updated on Local Data

Monitor teacher demographic data in your district to hold systems accountable and better understand where gaps in representation exist.

Sources:

- 1: NC DPI Statistical Profile Public Personnel Summary and Pupils in Membership
- 2: NC DPI Statistical Profile Public Personnel Summary and Pupils in Membership
- 3: Bull City Community Schools Partnership Impact Statement, 2018-2022

