

AUGUST 2025



Dudley Flood Center for  
Educational Equity and  
Opportunity

# DRIVE COALITION

Developing a Representative and Inclusive Vision for Education in North Carolina

**YEAR ONE IMPACT REPORT**



# OVERVIEW

THE DRIVE COALITION



Dudley Flood Center  
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## WHAT IS THE DRIVE COALITION

The DRIVE Coalition—Developing a Representative and Inclusive Vision for Education—is North Carolina’s push to diversify its educator workforce. Originating from Governor Cooper’s 2019 task force, it now operates through the Dudley Flood Center, turning statewide recommendations into local action. The site emphasizes the gap: while students of color make up 57% of the public school population, teachers of color lag far behind. Regional committees are the Coalition’s heart, driving policy and community engagement to close this divide and ensure all students see themselves reflected in those who teach them.

**57%**

% of NC’s public school students are students of color.

Yet the teacher workforce remains disproportionately white, with students of color far outpacing teachers of color across the state.

**18%**

% of teachers are Black

Black students consistently make up 24-26% of the student population, but Black teachers represent only 18%, even after a decade of slow growth.

**11%**

% of teachers are from other racial backgrounds

Students who identify as Latine, Asian, Indigenous, or multiracial make up ~ 33% of the student population - triple the percentage of teachers from these groups.

## WHY DOES IT MATTER

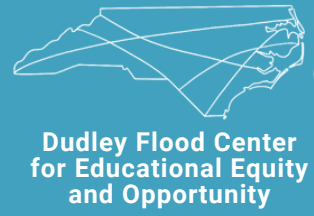
Representation matters because it shapes how students see themselves, their potential, and their place in society. When students of color have teachers who share or understand their cultural backgrounds, academically, social-emotional, and long-term impact grows—students are more likely to pursue higher education and even become educators themselves.

North Carolina’s DRIVE Coalition highlights how this isn’t just about fairness—it’s about building an education system that reflects and empowers all students. It’s about making sure classrooms aren’t just places of learning but also places of identity and possibility.



# YEAR ONE IMPACT

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## OUR VISION IN ACTION

In its inaugural year, the DRIVE Coalition laid the foundation for a more representative, inclusive, and equitable educator workforce in North Carolina. Launched by the Dudley Flood Center in alignment with Governor Cooper's DRIVE Task Force recommendations, the coalition convened regional leaders, shaped state-level policy conversations, and created tools to inform and advance equity in recruitment and retention efforts.



## BUILDING COLLECTIVE MOMENTUM

The coalition's public launch took place during a **statewide convening in October 2024**, featuring over **125 stakeholders** from across the education ecosystem. The event **spotlighted their DRIVE Forsyth work** as a regional exemplar in teacher diversity and pipeline innovation.

This convening marked the official formation of the **East, Central, and West Regional Committees**, introduced the coalition's strategic priorities, and set the tone for the year ahead.



# ADVANCING EQUITY THROUGH RESEARCH AND POLICY

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## KEY STEPS IN POLICY AND DATA

Early in the year, the coalition published a major **issue brief analyzing over 10 years of teacher diversity data** in North Carolina. The report offered a clear-eyed view of trends in hiring, licensure, and representation, identifying key opportunities for targeted investment and reform.

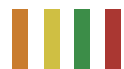
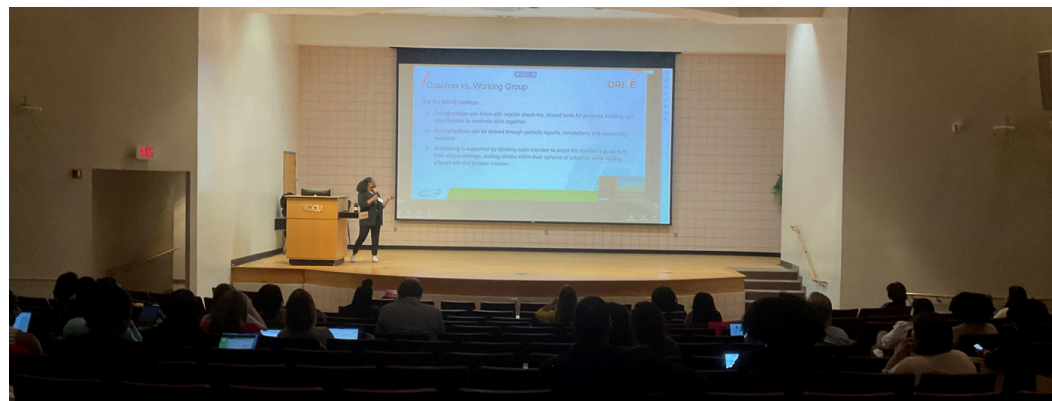
Building on this work, the team began developing a **statewide Educator Diversity Dashboard** to provide transparent, actionable data on recruitment, retention, and educator demographics. The dashboard, currently in development, will serve as a living resource for policymakers, district leaders, and community partners.

Throughout the year, DRIVE monitored and responded to critical legislation—including SB 227, HB 910 (the DRIVE Bill), and HB 531—providing early feedback to legislators and leveraging its research to advance equity-focused policymaking.



“We must continue to commit to educating souls... and to using standards and resources from the state to teach culturally sustaining content.”

— Natalia Mejia  
2025 DRIVE Summit Participant



# GROWING A STATEWIDE MOVEMENT

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The coalition **welcomed 78 new members** in its first year, with Regional Committees in the East, Central, and West regions serving as hubs for strategy, innovation, and advocacy.

**Regional Co-Leaders played a key role in convening and guiding the work:**

- **East Region:** Dr. Shawnda Cherry and Dr. Rachelle Savitz
- **Central Region:** Guy Hill and TaVshea Smith

**Together, they led 12 regional committee meetings statewide:**

- **East Region:** 5 meetings
- **Central Region:** 5 meetings
- **West Region:** 2 meetings

**These meetings focused on:**

- Highlighting local exemplars in teacher recruitment and preparation
- Developing collaborative cross-sector projects
- Monitoring and strategizing around legislation tied to educator diversity

Region	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
East	6	12	57	14	64
Central	9	61	60	62	12
West	—	—	—	8	4

## DRIVE Meet Your Regional Leaders



Shawnda Cherry, East Co-Chair



Rachelle Savitz, East Co-Chair



Guy Hill, Central Co-Chair



TaVshea Smith, Central Co-Chair



# SPOTLIGHTS IN LEGACY AND LEADERSHIP: THE 2025 DRIVE SUMMIT

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Held in February 2025 at the historic Palmer Memorial Institute, the **Annual DRIVE Summit** celebrated the legacy of Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown and centered the ongoing work of educators and advocates across the state.

Over **145 attendees** participated in a full day of dialogue, learning, and inspiration. The keynote address was delivered by **Dr. Cherrel Miller Dyce**, who offered a powerful reflection on the legacy of Charlotte Hawkins Brown and the lessons her life and work leave us with for this moment. Feedback from the summit was overwhelmingly positive.



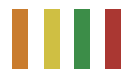
of respondents agreed that the summit deepened their understanding of the historical role of Black educators



Most respondents rated the Opening, Keynote, and Closing sessions a 4 or 5 out of 5

“This was a transformational event. I walked away inspired and motivated to continue to promote and advocate for this important work.”  
— Darron Daniels, Jr., Educator

“I am committed to the principle of Sankofa—going back to fetch what is necessary from our collective history to move forward.”  
— Dontavius Williams, Profound Gentlemen



# BUILDING MOMENTUM THROUGH COMMUNICATION

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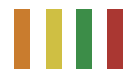
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To support transparency, consistency, and connection, the coalition revamped its communications infrastructure:

- The **DRIVE website** was updated to reflect the coalition’s new structure, regional committees, and tools.
- A **DRIVE Communications Toolkit** was created to unify messaging across partners
- Standardized **invitation letters** and recruitment materials were developed to support regional cohesion and outreach

## Social media outreach remained active throughout the year:

Date	Platform	Purpose	Engagement	Impression
Aug 2024	Facebook	DRIVE Coalition launch post	50	350
Jan 2025	Instagram	Weather update and RSVP reminder	10	90
Apr 2025	Instagram	Regional committee recruitment	12	198
Apr 2025	Facebook	Regional committee recruitment	7	81



# LOOKING AHEAD TO YEAR TWO

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As we transition into Year 2, our focus is clear: deepen alignment, build regional capacity, and connect our data to real change.

We will continue to:

- Strengthen communications through consistent updates and shared storytelling
- Support regional committees with tools, training, and coordination
- Design convenings to build collective capacity and action
- Translate research into influence, ensuring our work informs state policy and investment

The DRIVE Coalition is not just a project—it's a movement. Together, we're creating a future where every student sees themselves reflected in the classroom and every teacher is supported to thrive.

## SPOTLIGHT

The DRIVE Year 1 Report highlights your significant role in promoting educational equity and workforce diversity in North Carolina. Your participation in the 2025 Annual DRIVE Summit, held at the Palmer Memorial Institute, honored Black educators and motivated over 145 attendees towards actions like policy advocacy and curriculum reform. Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive, showcasing your leadership and the Coalition's impact on understanding historical context and fostering structural change. Additionally, your support for infrastructure improvements, such as website revamping and social media recruitment, enhanced the DRIVE Coalition's outreach and cohesion. As Year 2 approaches, your contributions have established a strong foundation for regional alignment and policy influence, aiming for a diverse representation in classrooms across North Carolina.

