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MEMORANDUM

**To:** Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Board of Higher Education

**From:** Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Carlos Santiago, Commissioner of Higher Education

**Date:** December 13, 2019

**Re:** Educator Workforce Diversity

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This memorandum is an update on current initiatives led by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Department of Higher Education (DHE) to diversify the educator workforce in the Commonwealth.

# Massachusetts Context

As a result of the Education Reform Act of 1993 and the commitment of educators across the Commonwealth, Massachusetts schools and districts continue to experience gains in student achievement and lead the nation in student achievement success measures. This achievement is evidenced by progress made towards narrowing proficiency gaps between student subgroups, increased graduation rates, and performance on national and international assessments.

However, while Massachusetts continues to achieve and experience successes in K-12 education, persistent disparities in opportunities and outcomes remain for students of color, English language learners, students from low-income backgrounds, and students with disabilities. For example, in 2017, the five-year graduation rate for all Massachusetts high school students was 90.1%, while the rate was only 69% for English language learners, 76.8% for students with disabilities, and 82% for low-income students. Additionally, while the five-year graduation rate for white and Asian students in 2017 was 93.9% and 95.4% respectively, the rate was 84.2% for African-American students and 77.4% for Hispanic students.

A growing body of educational research demonstrates the positive impacts of teachers of color on short- and long-term academic outcomes of students of color. Specifically, the research finds that having a single teacher of color can boost academic achievement, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment for students of color (Dee, 2004; Gershenson, 2018).

In Massachusetts, 40% of students are of color, while only 8% of teachers are of color. An analysis of educator preparation data indicates that in 2016-2017, of the approximately 15,400 candidates enrolled in a Massachusetts educator preparation program, only 14% identified as people of color. In addition, an analysis of educator retention data finds disparities in the rates of attrition between teachers of color and their peers. For example, statewide in 2016-2017, districts had a teacher attrition rate of 12.5%. However, the district attrition rate for Hispanic teachers was 17.4% and for African-American teachers was 23.5%. Factored with the already low numbers of Hispanic and African-American teachers statewide, the impact of these attrition rates is significant.

In light of these findings, recruiting and retaining a diverse and effective educator workforce is one of DESE’s priority strategies to address educational inequity. Below are descriptions of some current educator diversification initiatives led by DESE and DHE.

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Initiatives**

**Teacher Diversification Pilot Program Grant**

The Teacher Diversification Pilot Program is a three- year pilot program (beginning in FY19) that provides $2 million annually in competitive grants to support local school district efforts to strengthen and diversify existing teacher recruitment and retention programs. The grant provides funding that districts may use for financial assistance to paraprofessionals (such as classroom aides), district graduates, recent college graduates, and provisionally licensed teachers. Specifically, the grant will provide tuition assistance to support enrollment into, and the completion of, an approved educator preparation program; provide Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) preparation support; and/or pay for associated costs of MTEL examination fees. The grant will also support thoughtful, high-impact strategies to enhance districts’ existing “grow-your-own” educator initiatives. In FY20 (year 2 of the pilot) districts may also use the grant to provide financial incentives such as loan payment reimbursement, relocation assistance, and signing bonuses to support local school district recruitment efforts. The grant will continue to support thoughtful, high-impact strategies to enhance districts’ existing “grow-your-own” initiatives. Pilot districts will engage in shared learning experiences and will have access to talent diversification resources and materials curated through our contracted partner, [TNTP](https://tntp.org/). Districts participating in the second year of the pilot are: Amherst-Pelham, Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Chelsea, Clinton, Fitchburg, Holyoke, Lynn, Malden, Pittsfield, Randolph, Springfield Empowerment Zone, Somerville, Springfield, Wayland, Weymouth, Woburn, and Worcester.

**InSPIRED Fellowship**

The InSPIRED Fellowship was launched in January 2019 to provide an opportunity for current educators to recruit students and young adults from underrepresented communities at the high school, community college or undergraduate level into the teaching profession. The InSPIRED Fellowship is designed to select a diverse group of approximately 40 current educators, primarily teachers, to serve as Fellows. These Fellows work with high schools, community colleges and 4-year undergraduate programs in an effort to: 1) encourage individuals to consider education as a career and 2) show them a clear path into the teaching profession. In addition, the InSPIRED Fellowship is structured to include regional affinity groups designed to support the retention of past and current InSPIRED Fellows as well as other educators of color within the region. The second cohort of InSPIRED Fellows launched in October 2019.

**Influence 100**

Influence 100 is a new pilot program aimed at increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of superintendents in Massachusetts, creating more culturally responsive districts and leaders across the state, and promoting better outcomes for students. Influence 100 includes a fellowship program for qualified educators who desire to move into the superintendent role in the next five years, and support for school districts to become more culturally responsive and to engage in intentional strategy development and execution around diversifying their educator workforce. All fellows participate in explicit programming on navigating political challenges, understanding racial identity and racial identity development, learning best practices for senior-level leadership, and building contextual awareness around the history of race and education in Massachusetts. The goal is that, in the next ten years, the program will work with 100 districts across the Commonwealth to become more culturally responsive and to develop an intentional strategy around diversifying their educator workforce (teachers, principals, staff, senior district leaders) to better serve all students.

**Diversity Network**

Launched in October of 2019, the Diversity Network provides training opportunities for districts and educator preparation providers interested in more actively recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce. The network is designed as a two-year engagement. In its first year, sessions support district and school leaders, along with their educator preparation partners, in exploring best practices for recruiting diverse candidates. The following year will focus on effective strategies for retaining the diverse workforce that districts worked hard to recruit and hire. Over the course of the two years, our goal is to engage outside speakers, share national as well as local highlights, provide resources and tools to advance the work, and provide space for cross-district thought-partnership and collaboration. The development and implementation of the Diversity Networks is led by the Center for Instructional Support in partnership with [TNTP](https://tntp.org/).

**Department of Higher Education Initiatives**

**MassTeach**

MassTeach is a National Science Foundation Robert F. Noyce Scholarship program. The Department of Higher Education received this $1.5M award in July 2018 to specifically diversify the STEM teacher pipeline by building a two-to-four year pathway for STEM community college students to earn a bachelor’s degree in a STEM field and a secondary education license at a partnering state university. Currently, MassTeach partner institutions include Berkshire Community College, Holyoke Community College, Quinsigamond Community College, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, Westfield State University, and Worcester State University. In April 2020, MassTeach will host a statewide meeting to develop a statewide two-to-four-year pathway to encourage students from any of the fifteen community colleges to pursue a license to teach.

**STEM Starter Academy Pre-Teaching Internships**

STEM teaching is a STEM career. In an effort to encourage more community college STEM students to consider teaching as a career, an opportunity many community college students have not thought about and have not been encouraged to consider, the STEM Starter Academies at the three partner MassTeach sites are developing pre-teaching internships. The purpose of these internships is to expose students to teaching as a career, similar to internships in engineering, computer science, and biotechnology.

**Higher Education Innovation Fund (formerly known as the Performance Incentive Fund)**

The Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) is the DHE’s main lever to seed and support new innovations and proven practices in public higher education specifically aimed at advancing the Commonwealth’s overarching goal to significantly raise success outcomes among underrepresented student populations. With the DHE’s explicit priority on equity, campuses are invited to be innovative and creative in submitting proposals that support increased education and leadership opportunities to improve equitable access, experiences, and outcomes for members of their communities. In FY20, the DHE provided Worcester State University with $100,000 to lead an Equity and Engagement Consortium of faculty leaders and administrators to promote community-engaged scholarship and build greater diversity among state university faculty.

**Paraprofessional to Teacher Support**

The Department of Higher Education supports current paraprofessionals to become classroom teachers by providing scholarship funds for them to complete their bachelor’s degree. The DHE offers funding directly through the Office of Student Financial Assistance’s Paraprofessional Teacher Preparation Grant. It also manages the Commonwealth’s funding for the Journey into Education and Teaching program (JET). JET provides opportunity, access, affordability, and sustained mentoring to paraprofessional participants. JET program services entail recruitment, financial aid and college admissions advisement, professional and career development forums, and ongoing mentoring throughout this multi-year journey (on average three years) for paraprofessionals to become licensed teachers.

**Incentive Program for Aspiring Teachers Scholarships**

Students from the nine state universities and four undergraduate University of Massachusetts campuses with at least a 3.0 GPA are eligible to apply for a tuition waiver equal to the resident tuition rate at their university. Students are eligible to receive up to two years of funding during their third and fourth year of school. In return for the funding, students commit to teaching for two years in a Massachusetts public school.

**100Kin10**

As a 100Kin10 partner organization, the DHE is eligible to participate in its national project teams. In 2019, DHE staff led a national team to create a website for the STEM education community. The purpose of the website is to be a first stop to learning about research and promising practices that the field is implementing to recruit a diverse set of pre-baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate teachers, as well as retain students in educator preparation programs. In addition to providing descriptions of these strategies, the website connects those who are currently implementing these strategies with those who are interested in learning more.

**Inter-agency Collaborations**

**Commissioner’s College Visits**

Together with DESE staff members and InSPIRED fellows, Commissioner Riley visited five Massachusetts institutes of higher education between February and April 2019 to speak with students about the teaching profession and the need for a racially and ethnically diverse Massachusetts teacher workforce. Two of the visits, to Bridgewater State and Holyoke Community College, were done in partnership with Commissioner Santiago. This school year, Commissioner Riley and DHE Deputy Commissioner Patricia Marshall visited four institutions of higher learning. The universities we have visited as part of this initiative include: Bridgewater State University; University of Massachusetts Amherst, Boston, and Dartmouth; Framingham State University; and Holyoke Community College.

**Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)**

Massachusetts was one of ten states that participated in CCSSO’s Diverse and Learner Ready Teachers Initiative in 2018 and 2019. Staff from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Higher Education, as well as faculty from higher education and K-12 institutions, participated as a team during this time and created a statewide plan. The statewide plan identified key teacher diversity benchmarks that are to be met by 2028.

**New England Educator Diversification Task Force**

Members of DESE and DHE are participating in a regionaltask force this fall that is focused on exploring educator diversification efforts in New England. The task force is supported by the New England Secondary Schools Consortium (NESSC) and is made up of teams from Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, and Maine. The state teams are comprised of state education agency leads, district leaders, teachers, partners, and students. The task force is charged with exploring current state and regional strategies that have significantly increased the diversity of the educator workforce and determining strategies most likely to be successful in New England states. The task force will publish a document with proposed strategies for New England states in early 2020.

**100Kin10**

The Executive Office of Education applied to be a 100Kin10 partner organization in 2012 and identified two goals that the Governor’s STEM Advisory Council took on and completed by 2015. Like Massachusetts, many other partner organizations have already achieved their goals. 100Kin10 has asked partner organizations to reexamine its ambitious goals and identify new ones to accomplish by 2022. The Executive Office of Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Department of Higher Education have identified as the sole goal to diversify the STEM teacher pipeline. The agencies are in the process of finalizing Massachusetts’s new commitment and identifying benchmarks, which will be reviewed and approved by agency leaders in early 2020.

Pat Marshall, Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success (DHE), Allison Little, Assistant Commissioner for P-16 Alignment and Outreach (DHE), and Ventura Rodriguez, Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Initiatives (DESE) will be at the December 2019 joint Board meeting to discuss our current educator diversification initiatives and answer questions.