*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

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| Jeffrey C. Riley  *Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

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| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner |
| **Date:** | December 7, 2021 |
| **Subject:** | Educator Diversification Update |

This memorandum updates the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) on current initiatives led by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department/DESE) to diversify the educator workforce in the Commonwealth. Department staff are continuing to work on this initiative with the Board’s Educator Diversification Committee (Amanda Fernandez, Committee Chair, and members Darlene Lombos, Paymon Rouhanifard, and Mary Anne Stewart) and provided the committee with an update in November 2021.

**Background and Context**

In September 2019 and January 2021, the Department updated the Board on current initiatives led by Department staff to diversify the Commonwealth’s K-12 educator workforce. The January 2021 update included an overview of the [Guidebook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csi/diverse-workforce/guidebook.html) on Promising Recruitment, Selection, and Retention Strategies for a Diverse Massachusetts Teacher Workforce, produced by TNTP in partnership with the Department.

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, forty percent of students are of color, while approximately ten percent 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 fourteen percent 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.

As such, the Department identified educator diversification and educator retention as one priority strategy to address educational inequity. Since 2019, the Department has provided financial support and incentives through state grants to support local school district efforts to strengthen diverse educator recruitment and retention programs. Updates of selected educator diversification initiatives are detailed below.

**Teacher Diversification Pilot Program Grant**

In FY19, the Department developed the Teacher Diversification Pilot Program Grant to provide financial support and assistance to schools and districts seeking to enhance and strengthen diverse teacher recruitment and retention programs. Since FY19, the Department has awarded approximately $6 million in grant funds to support the development of high school education pathways; provide tuition assistance to support enrollment into approved educator preparation programs; provide Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) preparation support; and pay for associated costs of MTEL examination fees. Districts may also use the grant funds to provide financial incentives such as loan payment reimbursement, relocation assistance, and signing bonuses to support local school district recruitment efforts. In FY22, the Department plans to award an additional $3 million to schools and districts.

**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 goals of the fellowship are to increase the diversity of the teaching workforce in Massachusetts, and to increase the retention rates of current educators committed to a diverse workforce by creating a network of like-minded, committed educators that can persist beyond the fellowship period. There are currently 20 InSPIRED Fellows working in schools and districts across the state.

**Influence 100**

Influence 100 is a pilot program designed to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of superintendents in Massachusetts. The program aims to create more culturally responsive districts and leaders across the state and promote better outcomes for students. Influence 100 includes a two-year fellowship program for educators who desire to move into the superintendent role within the next five years. To date, Influence 100 has supported 63 aspiring superintendents from 26 school districts statewide.

**Teacher Diversification Professional Learning Community**

The Teacher Diversification Professional Learning Community is a year-long, high-quality professional development series for school and district teams to review systems and practices to support the development of a more culturally responsive educator workforce. The Teacher Diversification Professional Learning Community provides support to approximately 100 school districts, charter schools, career/vocational technical education schools, approved special education schools, and collaboratives, and 400 school and district personnel.

Deputy Commissioner Regina Robinson and Shay Edmond, Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Initiatives, will be present at the December 2021 Board meeting to discuss our current educator diversification initiatives and answer questions.