



*Fighting for Our Communities, Fighting for Our Schools*

# **THE DISAPPEARANCE OF BLACK AND LATINO TEACHERS IN NEW YORK CITY**

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*Toward an agenda for action*

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## **Executive Summary**

While it is generally acknowledged that more Black and Latina/o teachers are needed in New York City, the fact that the DOE is hiring fewer and fewer of these teachers is less well known. After reviewing the data and testimony from teachers working in public schools, we believe the gains that were previously made in attracting more Black and Latina/o teachers to teaching are being erased, especially during the last decade. For instance, while the hiring of Black teachers rose from 16% to 27% during the decade of the 1990s, by 2012 this number had declined to just under 11%, far below Black hires in 1990. Other alarming data include the following:

### **1. ALTHOUGH NEARLY 70% OF NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE BLACK AND LATINA/O, ONLY 34% OF TEACHERS ARE BLACK AND LATINA/O.**

There is a dramatic mismatch between the percent of Black, Latina/o and Asian teachers in New York City schools and the percent of Black, Latina/o and Asian students.

### **2. NEW HIRES OF BLACK AND LATINA/O TEACHERS ARE DECLINING DRAMATICALLY.**

While the New York City Independent Budget Office has released data that suggests that the number of Black and Latina/o teachers in the system has not changed dramatically in the last decade, their hiring has declined. In 2011, only 14.3% of students were white, but 67.6% of new hires were white, and 58.6% of teachers in the system were white. The decentralization of the DOE, leaves principals to hire teachers. Less oversight of the teacher hiring process weakens accountability for compliance with equal opportunity goals. Charter school organizations do not provide data on hiring broken down by race/ethnicity and, since 2002, the number of charter schools has increased from 17 to at least 183.

### **3. GROWING RACIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY MAKES IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR LOW INCOME BLACK AND LATINA/O STUDENTS TO BECOME TEACHERS IN NEW YORK CITY.**

A key obstacle in hiring teachers of color is the small numbers of students emerging from the pre-k-12 school system who are college ready. Even though graduation rates have risen somewhat, large numbers of graduates are languishing in developmental courses in community colleges.

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## ***The importance of recruiting and retaining more Black and Latino teachers...***

It is important to hire and retain more Black and Latino teachers not because they are technically better or worse than other teachers, but because they bring important advantages that enhance the learning of low-income students of color. This is particularly the case when Black and Latino teachers are from communities like those in which low-income students live.

1. There is considerable research that shows that, in general, Black and Latina/o teachers, particularly those who grew up in poor or working class neighborhoods, tend to be more culturally responsive in their teaching and are more likely to act positively on higher expectations for their students than white teachers do
2. Black and Latino teachers can provide students with bonding and bridging forms of social capital
3. It is important for Black and Latino students to see people who look like them in professional positions, as this can increase their expectations about their life prospects and signal at least the possibility of equal opportunity in the society.
4. African-Americans and Latinos should have equal access to teaching jobs and the well-paid administrative jobs they may lead to.

## ***Recommendations***

These recommendations are guided by our core belief that the percentage of Black and Latino teachers should be about the same as the percentage of Black and Latino/a students. With this commitment, we recommend that:

1. New York City Department of Education (DOE) implement specific policies and practices to improve the recruitment and retention of Black and Latino/a teachers
2. Students, parents, teachers, and community partners collaboratively build power at school sites and across the city to increase the number of Black and Latino/a teachers
3. Various school stakeholders initiate and sustain conversations with each other about what type of schooling Black and Latina/o students are entitled to
4. New York State legislature ensure that there are empowered and meaningful mechanisms for community public oversight and transparency at the DOE

# THE DISAPPEARANCE OF BLACK AND LATINO TEACHERS IN NEW YORK CITY

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## Who Are The Teachers In New York City?

According to data from the New York City Independent Budget Office (NYCIBO), the hiring of Black and Latina/o teachers rose during the decade of the 1990s, but has declined precipitously since then. The hiring of Black teachers rose from 16% in 1990 to 27.2% in 2000, but plummeted to 10.9% for the 2011-2012 school year (far fewer than the 1990 figure). Hiring of Latina/o teachers rose from 11.9% in 1990 to 16.3% in 2000, but declined to 12.3% in 2008, moving back up to 14.4% in the 2011-2012 school year. In 1990, 59.5% of teacher hires were white, and in 2000, 53% of teacher hires were white. This number had risen to 67.6% by the 2011-2012 school year. Asian teacher hires have more or less steadily risen from 3.2% in 1990 to a high of 7.9% in 2009 (See Table 1).

**Table 1. (Does not include Asian and Native American teacher hires)**

Teachers' race	percent hires 1990-1991	percent hires 2000-2001	percent hires 2011-2012
Black	16%	27.2%	10.9%
Latina/o	11.9%	16.3%	14.4%
White	59.5%	53%	67.6%

The decline in the number of Black and Latina/o teacher hires is troublesome, but when the percentage of hires is compared with the children who attend New York City public schools these data are even more troublesome. Data from the 2011 NYCIBO annual report show that only 14.3% of students are white (as of 2012, 67.6% of teacher hires were white), 39.3% of students are Latina/o (but as of 2012, 14.4% of teacher hires were Latina/o), and 29.9% of students are Black (as of 2012, 10.9% of teacher hires were Black).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Current teacher demographics do not correspond with student demographics or the broader population demographics of New York City. From 1990-2010, the white population in New York City declined from 52% to 44%. During the same period, the Black population across New York City declined from 28% to

**Table 2**

NYC students' race	percent of students in NYC DOE (2011 IBO annual report)	percent teacher hires (for 2011-12 school year)
Black	29.9%	10.9%
Latina/o	39.3%	14.4%
White	14.3%	67.6%
Asian	14.9%	6.7%

While Teachers Unite obtained hiring data from the NYCIBO, this data has not been included in their published reports. A recent report released by the NYCIBO, does, however, provide data on current teachers in the system broken down by several demographic categories, including race. The data for teachers of color in the system are slightly better than teacher hires, suggesting that there may be less turnover among teachers of color. (See Table 3)

Nationally, there is some evidence that teachers of color are being heavily recruited, but tend to have higher turnover, in part because they are more likely to teach in hard-to-staff, high-poverty schools (Ingersol & Smith, 2004). In New York City, teachers of color also are more likely to teach in these schools, but they appear to be staying longer (NYCIBO, 2014). This suggests that if more effort had been put into hiring teachers of color under the Bloomberg administration, their numbers would likely be much higher today.

**Table 3**

NYC students' race	Percent of students in NYC DOE (2011 IBO Annual Report)	Percent Teacher hires (For 2011-2012 school year)	Percent teachers in system (For 2011-2012 school year)
Black	29.9%	10.9%	19.6%
Latina/o	39.3%	14.4%	14.4%
White	14.3%	67.6%	58.6%
Asian	14.9%	6.7%	5.9%

We think the declining hires of teachers of color and the disparity between the demographics of the teaching force and the student population warrants critical inquiry into the declining numbers of Black and Latina/o educators from public schools in New York City.

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25% and Latina/o population rose from 24% to 28%. As the table above shows, white educators are overrepresented and black and Latina/o educators are underrepresented in the teaching force even compared to the general population.

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## Why Do We Need More Black and Latina/o Teachers?

- **Black and Latina/o Students Benefit from Meaningful Connections with Black and Latina/o Teachers**

### *Teaching is About Relationships*

Education research shows that Black and Latina/o teachers are not necessarily better or worse in any technical sense than other teachers. In fact, there are many outstanding white teachers teaching Black and Latina/o students using culturally responsive pedagogies. Yet, research findings indicate that Black and Latina/o teachers provide higher levels of mentorship than white teachers. Sleeter and Thao (2007) capture this controversial issue well,

Race does not determine teacher quality. However race, ethnicity, and language shape the nature of the experiences teachers bring to the classroom, as well as insights they bring to the teaching profession at large. Currently, largely because of the demographic gap, students of color are much more likely than White students to be taught by teachers who question their academic ability, are uncomfortable around them and their families, and do not know how to teach them well (p. 4).

This claim can seem controversial, since everyone can think of a white teacher who is particularly effective with students of color or a Black or Latina/o teacher who lacks respect for the children of color they teach. However, there is considerable research that shows that, in general, Black and Latina/o teachers, particularly those who grew up in poor or working class neighborhoods, tend to be more culturally responsive in their teaching and have higher expectations for their students than white teachers do (Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

So while technical expertise and knowledge of subject matter are vitally important, the ability to connect with one's students is crucial for getting low-income students to achieve at high levels. Because teaching is essentially relational, all of the expertise and knowledge in the world is not worth much if a strong connection is not made with students. This is one reason why—as we will discuss below—using a single test that purports to measure technical knowledge or subject matter to “weed out” teachers is a flawed strategy. Rather than basing teacher employment on a test, better public education policies would support teachers who make strong connections with their students and demonstrate an understanding of the culture and history of the school community.

### *The Skill of Crossing Borders*

Strong relationships among educators and the community in which a school is based are crucial to student success. Low-income students need bridging and bonding social capital to be economically and socially successful outside their communities (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Black and Latina/o teachers with links to the community have often developed dual identities and move comfortably within and outside their communities. They are therefore often in a better position to create the kind of bonding that provides students a sense of belonging, as well as providing access to professional opportunities beyond their communities. And perhaps more importantly, they are able to help students learn to acquire skills for interacting with diverse groups while also providing them with a healthy respect for their own culture. A

criticism of too many (largely white) teachers in paternalistic, “boot camp” charter schools is their attempt to provide middle class culture while, either intentionally or unwittingly, denigrating students’ own culture (McDermott, & Nygreen, 2013).

### *Role Models*

Not only do Black and Latina/o teachers tend to be more culturally responsive in their teaching, while modeling a type of flexibility between cultures, they represent a model for Black and Latina/o Students, who see people who look like them in professional positions. For low-income students of color who live in areas of concentrated poverty, one of the only places they come into contact with professionals is in their schools. It is hard to imagine themselves as professionals, if most of the professionals they see at school are white.

- **Teaching Jobs Increase the Economic Stability of New Yorkers and These Jobs Should Be Accessible to Black and Latina/o Communities**

In an age of degraded jobs with low wages, teaching in New York City continues to be one of the few jobs that provides a stable income and benefits since public non-charter school teachers in New York City are unionized. Lack of equitable access to employment as teachers also means that fewer Black and Latina/o teachers will move into positions of leadership such as principals and administrative positions, making their underrepresentation in these well-paid jobs more likely. Increasing the number of Black and Latina/o teachers in New York City will increase the economic stability of our neighborhoods and communities.

## *The Big Picture:*

### **Why is it important to stop and reverse the disappearance of Black and Latina/o educators?**

Many studies that focus on the declining numbers of Black and Latina/o teachers use the metaphor of a “leaky pipeline.” That is, researchers see the pipeline metaphor as a way to expose those points along the pipeline (beginning in K-12 schools) where Black and Latina/o teachers are leaving or not represented (Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009). This approach has some advantages in that it can help to draw attention to where we might fix the pipeline so more Black and Latina/o teachers enter and stay in teaching jobs (Clewel & Villegas, 1999). However, the “leaky pipeline” metaphor ultimately fails to capture the periodic increase and decrease in the number of Black and Latina/o teachers hired to teach in public schools. It also fails to provide an understanding of how corporations are influencing elected policy makers to apply ideas from the business sector to public sectors, such as education. Generally described as neoliberal policies, these shifts make it unlikely that school districts will prioritize increasing the numbers of Black and Latina/o teachers any time soon.

As teaching becomes increasingly oriented to narrow outcomes demanded by competition and current testing regimes, these ‘reform’ strategies fail to deeply understand and attend to the

relationship between poverty, inequality, and schooling (Darling-Hammond, 2004; Payne, 2008). Increasing the number of Black and Latina/o teachers will help address the dangerous shift in global education policy toward the imposition of market-based policies, de-professionalization of teaching and high stakes testing.

Partly as a result of these policy changes that prioritize business goals rather than community-developed goals for schools, teachers are leaving the profession in large numbers. In fact, the notion of teaching as a long-term profession is being eroded as we see increasing levels of teaching turnover. Ingersol and Smith (2004) found that nationally 50% of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching. Darling-Hammond (2012) describes the current degradation of the work of teaching:

American teachers deal with a lot: low pay, growing class sizes and escalating teacher-bashing from politicians and pundits. Federal testing and accountability mandates under No Child Left Behind and, more recently, Race to the Top, have added layers of bureaucracy while eliminating much of the creativity and authentic learning that makes teaching enjoyable. Tack on the recession's massive teacher layoffs and other school cuts, plus the challenges of trying to compensate for increasing child poverty, homelessness, and food insecurity, and you get a trifecta of disincentives to become, or remain, a teacher (para.1).

## How Did We Get Here?

### **The Historical Roots of the Disappearance of Black and Latina/o Teachers and the Struggle for Our Schools**

The history of schools in New York City shows that American Indian, Black and Latina/o communities have successfully challenged exclusionary policies and won important changes to transform what education means. Since the seventeenth century, American Indian people have fought British colonial education projects and later twentieth century U.S. government policies that forcibly removed indigenous children from their families to be placed in boarding schools (Smith, 2005; Szasz, 2007). American Indian communities and native educators have also challenged U.S. educational practices through everyday resistance and formal political challenges (Lomawaima & McCarthy, 2006). Likewise, the nineteenth century black freedom struggle regularly challenged slave laws barring education and literacy among people enslaved in the South and the North. During reconstruction, black freedmen taught alongside white abolitionists in black schools (Butchart, 2010). Across the 1920s to the 1970s, African American, West Indian, and Puerto Rican students and parents in New York City won changes to curricula and admissions policies to make schools more accessible to Black and Latina/o students (Fairclough, 2009; Kelly, 2010; Nieto, 2010). The combination of the long history of American Indian, Black, and Latina/o movements demonstrate an ongoing struggle for education as a site of self-determination and a recognition of the full humanity of all people.

As a result of the discriminatory practices built into evaluating potential teachers since the 1920s, the number of black and Latina/o teachers remained low relative to student population



of New York City public schools. Christina Collins notes that even by 1975 the New York City teaching force included 13% non-white teachers compared to the 64% non-white student population, the lowest ratio of teachers of color to students of color among U.S. urban school districts (Collins, 2011, p. 4). Even as college and education officials celebrated 'merit' as the basis for teacher selection, the emphasis on evaluating students' language and social behavior linked the definition of teacher quality and merit to prejudiced assumptions about race and gender.

Black and Latina/o communities in New York City regularly mobilized to challenge the wide array of policies limiting the number of black and Latina/o educators. Throughout the 1930s to the 1940s, the multiracial Teachers Union repeatedly challenged education officials to replace the use of standardized testing to certify teachers with more holistic evaluations that would recognize teacher of color's academic preparation and experience working with diverse student populations (Taylor, 2013). During the 1950s and early 1960s, Puerto Rican women teachers in collaboration with families successfully fought for bilingual education and called for an increase in Spanish-speaking teachers who could support the growing Puerto Rican student population in New York (Korrol, 1996). Later in the 1960s and 1970s, parent activists collaborated with Black and Latina/o teachers to challenge the de facto segregation of public schools across the boroughs and, as a result, expand the number of teaching opportunities for black and Latina/o teachers (Purnell, 2013). Like national and state-wide movements focused on education access and equity, the ongoing struggle to increase the number of black and Latina/o educators in New York City identified public education as a site for bringing about racial and economic justice.

Of the various struggles for education access, the struggle for community control of New York City public schools in the 1960s continues to have the most lasting influence on current teacher employment rates and practices. During the 1960s, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) and educational policy makers argued that centralized teacher certification and hiring practices would provide equitable employment opportunities. In contrast, community control advocates called for local decentralized hiring practices to address racial disparities in teacher and principal employment and student access to culturally-specific curricula. The eventual success of supporters of centralized hiring further entrenched the use of oral and written exams and other policies. Researchers have identified this push for merit-based definitions of teacher quality and preparation as contributing to a low certification and promotion rate for black and Latina/o educators (Collins, 2011; Perrillo, 2012; De Jesús and Pérez, 2009). Since the expansion of certification and promotion policies in the late 1960s, the unique lack of diversity among teachers and principals in New York City public schools has continued.

## **How Teacher Preparation Programs Influence the Disappearance of Black and Latina/o Educators**

Alternative certification routes that offer temporary teaching licenses and stipends for master degrees, which may be earned while teaching, have historically been an avenue for Black and Latina/o and working class people generally to enter the profession. Recently, these alternative certification routes (particularly Teach for America) have turned to recruiting from private elite schools whose predominantly White graduates are assumed to be superior candidates. Although Teaching Fellows and Teach for America have increased their percentage of teachers

of color, these are too often from elite schools and backgrounds, and few remain in the classroom longterm. Unfortunately, traditional teacher education programs are not doing any better at producing Black and Latino teachers (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Mercado 2011). Additionally, the traditional certification route through teacher colleges has been restricted through the imposition of higher GPA requirements rather than other measures of preparation for the classroom. If a prospective teacher completes the certification process or enrolls in an alternative certification route, the principal conducts hiring with no oversight from an equal employment opportunity representative and no accountability structure that involves prospective teachers potential colleagues. As a result, principals are under no pressure to consider diversity as a goal in and of itself.

Both undergraduate and traditional graduate level teacher education programs are problematic in several ways that affect both potential and current Black and Latina/o educators and the populations they would be or are serving. Notwithstanding the barriers that already exist for black and Latina/o students entering college, those that do attend college can find what researchers Irizarry and Donaldson (2012) call an “anti-‘urban’ (often used as code to reference Latina/o and Black, economically disadvantaged communities) sentiment” that permeates and shapes students’ experiences as they pursue a teaching career (Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012, p. 179). As a result of idealizing white suburban and rural school districts, researchers have found that education programs ineptly prepare all “teachers to effectively teach all students” (Hayes and Juarez, 2012). Blanchett (2006, as cited in Hayes and Juarez, 2012) further explains that “most teachers continue to enter public school classrooms unprepared “to effectively teach African American and other students of color” (p. 27); teachers often begin teaching with little to no knowledge of themselves as racial beings or of social groups outside of their own and are unprepared to identify, implement, or access culturally responsive teaching and learning strategies (Bell, L.A, 2002; Cochran-Smith, Davis & Fries, 2004; Cross, 2005; Juarez, Smith, & Hayes, 2008). In other words, teacher preparation programs not only fail to support Black and Latina/o students but also their white counterparts who will more than likely have Black and/or Latina/o students during their time in the profession.

As a result of these tendencies in education programs, Black and Latina/o students pursuing teaching careers experience “frequent instances of racial discrimination and cultural insensitivity within their preservice teacher education program... [which] prompted them to contemplate leaving the program and abandoning their pursuit of the teaching profession” (Irizarry and Donaldson, 2012, p.180). Changing teacher preparation programs will be a crucial step in increasing the number of Black and Latina/o teachers in New York City.

## **Teacher Licensing Exams and Teacher Evaluation Policies Adversely Impact Teacher Hiring Rates**

There is a long tradition of studies that assert that most standardized testing is culturally and racially biased (Lemann, 2000). Most recently, the SAT and teachers licensing exams have become increasingly scrutinized for racial bias. A federal appeals court has recently upheld a lower-court ruling that “a teacher-certification test used by New York state was not properly validated and that the New York City school system could be held liable under federal civil-rights law for the test's racially disparate impact on black and Latino test-takers.” (Walsh, 2014)

There is also some evidence that current teacher evaluation policies are falling more heavily on teachers of color. A Boston Teachers Union analysis of the impact of the new performance evaluation system has revealed that Black teachers are more than three times as likely as white teachers to be placed on either a Directed Growth Plan or an Improvement Plan, both of which convey negative ratings that could lead ultimately to an intention to dismiss. Hispanic teachers are one and one-half times as likely as white teachers to be similarly situated. (Boston Teachers Union website, April 24, 2013)

## **The Erosion of Teacher Seniority Rights Contributes to the Disappearance of Black and Latina/o Teachers**

One of the sources of upward mobility for African-Americans and Latinos was working their way up public bureaucracies, including educational bureaucracies. The dismantling of these bureaucracies in urban districts and the attack on seniority has had a disproportionately detrimental effect on these groups.

Two major education policy changes in New York City have also impacted the number of Black and Latina/o teachers in the classroom. First, concessions in the United Federation of Teachers union contract for New York City teachers regarding the teacher seniority structure created a growing pool of teachers assigned to the Absent Teacher Reserve (ATR) and to Reassignment Centers (the “rubber rooms”). *Absent Teacher Reserve* refers to teachers that have lost their daily teaching positions but are reassigned to substitute for absent teachers at a school or number of schools within NYC. Second, long-time effective teachers lost their jobs due to the Bloomberg administration’s efforts to close schools in Black and Latina/o communities and push in charter schools not required to publicly disclose their financial records or re-hire former teachers from schools closed by Bloomberg’s administration.

## **Decreasing Federal and State Funding for Public K-12 and Higher Education Decreases the Pool of Potential Black and Latina/o Educators**

Federal and state funding for public K-12 schools and public universities has a direct impact on the number of Black and Latina/o students in New York City pursuing a career in teaching. As a result of decades of funding decreases for public education, New York City public K-12 schools do not have the resources to provide students with adequate academic and social support in preparing for college. In 2013, the City University of New York (CUNY) reported that 77.6% of high schools graduates from New York City public schools would need to take remedial courses in at least one of the three subjects in order to enroll in college-level courses.<sup>2</sup> In other words, 77.6% of high school graduates seeking a college degree at CUNY would need to re-take basic skills courses in reading, writing and/or math before enrolling in

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/forum/2014/03/31/cuny-start-for-pre-community-college-level-students-helping-nyc-high-school-graduates-in-math-writing-and-reading/>

college-level credit bearing courses. Compared to earlier decades when 48-56% of students enrolling in CUNY needed to take remedial courses, the increase in the number of New York City public high school graduates who need to spend more time re-taking basic skills courses has led to lower graduation rates from associates degree and bachelor degree programs.<sup>3</sup> As a result, there is a decrease in the pool of students who may be interested in pursuing education coursework or a teaching career.

Overall the number of Black and Latina/o students who enroll in the CUNY senior colleges has decreased and, as a result, the size of the most immediate pool of potential Black and Latina/o educators from NYC communities has decreased. Increases in K-12 funding to support academic skill development and increases in public higher education budgets would greatly increase the number of Black and Latina/o students who do not need to take remedial courses as they pursue college degrees.

## ***Challenging the Disappearance: The Next Chapter in the Story of Black and Latina/o Educators***

While there has been some grassroots action to push back against the disappearance of Black and Latino/a educators, there is much more work to be done. Reviewing the current political climate of the neoliberal attack on public education underscores the need for a multi-stakeholder organizing initiative to defend public education and promote a democratic model of schools in New York City. This movement must work to ensure that Black and Latina/o educators from our city are hired and retained in large numbers.

### **Recommendations for School Stakeholders**

Since mayoral control of schools, the School Leadership Teams, which have elected parent, teacher and (in high schools) student representation, no longer have meaningful decision-making power in school-based hiring. This means that school stakeholders have no institutional power to influence teacher hiring. To address this we recommend that parents, students and educators organize at the school and community level to:

- **Make hiring Black and Latino/a educators a priority for your school.** Your participation in your P(T)A, UFT Chapter or Student Council is key in identifying other leaders who will work to bring the issue to the forefront in your school community. While the principal has sole discretion in teacher hiring (a change made during the Mayor Bloomberg administration), the more they feel they have to answer to an organized community committed to diversity, the more they will be persuaded to meet that community's requests.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/95F4D0E2-49F6-4DB1-ADDB-ADD7F5B03DA5/0/CityCouncilHearing11912CollegeReadinessFINAL.PDF>

- **Create hiring committees that include parents, teachers and students.** When a school's UFT chapter votes to support the School-Based Option of the UFT contract, the school establishes a personnel committee composed of the principal, teachers (who form the majority of the committee), the UFT chapter leader, and parents. The committee is charged with establishing criteria for filling teaching vacancies *based on instructional needs*; implementing a process (including interviews) for determining candidates' fit with the criteria; and selecting faculty to fill vacancies. Each year, a UFT chapter of a school decides whether or not to renew its School-Based Option.
- **Advocate for meaningful school governance laws that outline parent, teacher and student participation in the hiring process.** Contact your representatives in the New York State legislature to discuss the creation of such a bill, and strategize with parent leaders throughout the school system to support the passage of such a law. The Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council (see Appendix) is a good place to access P(T)A presidents from throughout the city and discuss the need for meaningful leadership and decision-making in hiring and diversity.
- **Advocate for Teaching As a Career.** High school and college students have a unique role in the struggle for justice and equality in New York City public schools. Support students choosing education as a major or double-majoring in education and a specialized discipline like Math or History. Work with other Black and Latina/o students and faculty allies to advocate for more scholarships and financial aid for students of color, immigrant students, and students with disabilities who are pursuing education degrees at college. Host study sessions and college student events for students of color, immigrant students, and students with disabilities considering education as a career. Meet with the teachers union, the United Federation of Teachers, and the CUNY faculty union, the Professional Staff Congress, to advocate for more programs and policies for supporting future teachers of color (See [www.growyourownteachers.org](http://www.growyourownteachers.org)). By broadening access to college for historically underrepresented students and building a network of future teachers, students can better prepare for their own career and supporting a broader shift toward education equity and access in New York City public schools.

### **Additional Community Recommendations**

Black New Yorkers for Educational Excellence has advocated redirecting funds from the DOE's recruitment budget and other areas of its budget to launch a community-based recruitment and education campaign that would include:

1. Free tuition through graduate school for all those Black & Latina/o parents, college-bound High School grads and other adults who want to earn an education degree and commit to teaching at least five years within the NYC school system. CUNY, SUNY and private schools will be the participating colleges and universities.

2. The DOE will pay for 50% of the fulltime in good standing education major's rent or mortgage and 30% of their rent or mortgage for the first 3 years of their full-time teaching status.
3. The DOE have at least 10 fulltime Community Teacher Recruiters in each Borough spending the next four years actively recruiting and enrolling potential educators from the Black and Latina/o communities.
4. Over the next 10 years, annually bring at least 100 retired Black & Latina/o educators out of retirement thru various financial incentive programs and enhanced new retirement policies including comprehensive FREE family medical (including full dentistry) coverage.
5. Institutionalize a Black & Latina/o Recruitment & Retention Commission and Program to help seek and keep the Black & Latina/o educators.

Other groups emphasize that more attention needs to be paid to creating career pathways for Black and Latina/o students that start earlier in their academic careers and tap non-traditional students. They also argue that teacher preparation should be more community-based and build on the “funds of knowledge” that students bring from their communities, including bilingualism (Mercado, 2011).

## About This Project

Teachers Unite is an independent membership organization of public school educators in New York City collaborating with youth and parents to transform the city's and the nation's public schools. We resist institutions that segregate and criminalize Black and Latina/o youth, such as the school-to-prison pipeline, by organizing educators to work as allies in local and national campaigns for social and economic justice. By conducting collaborative research on pressing educational issues, we provide resources to promote grassroots leadership in public education.

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**Appendix A:****Resolution promoting diversity in the New York City teaching force**

January 19, 2011

WHEREAS, it has been a long standing policy of the UFT to support the existence of a diverse teaching force, both in the interest of equity and because education research has consistently proven that African-American and Latina/o students who have had teachers of color as positive role models achieve greater educational progress; and

WHEREAS, a study of the UFT Committee on Civil and Human Rights found that in relation to the numbers of African-American and Latina/o students in New York City public schools, African-American and Latina/o educators are dramatically underrepresented;

WHEREAS, the Committee found that while the hiring of new African-American and Latina/o educators had steadily increased into the early 2000s, there has been a troubling reversal of this trend under the tenure of Chancellor Joel Klein with the effect of exacerbating, rather than abating, the dramatic underrepresentation of African-American and Latina/o educators; be it therefore

RESOLVED, that the UFT demand that the New York City Department of Education rededicate itself to a policy of actively recruiting and hiring teachers of diverse backgrounds in order to reverse the downward trend of the last eight years in the percentages of African-American and Latina/o classroom teachers and to diminish the considerable gap between the numbers of African-American and Latina/o students and the numbers of teachers of color; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the UFT use all its resources to compel the Department of Education to take affirmative action to increase the numbers of teachers of color in its contracts with third party entities engaged in teacher recruitment on its behalf; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the UFT use all of its resources to compel the Department of Education and the third party entities engaged in teacher recruitment on its behalf to target recruitment at public universities such as the State University of New York and the City University of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the UFT lobby the Federal, State and City governments to develop and expand scholarships and other incentives to encourage and support college students in entering the educational profession; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in conjunction with the NYC Department of Education, the UFT encourage the development and expansion of future teacher programs in the NYC public high schools, and highlight education as a viable career path by encouraging its development through the use of financial supports; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the UFT use all of its resources to compel the Department of Education to expand its support for existing programs which produce large numbers of experienced and qualified African-American and Latina/o teachers – the career ladder program for para-professionals and the Success Via Apprenticeship program for aspiring Career-Technical teachers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the UFT continue to combat the negative depiction of teaching and the teaching profession which can only result in turning away prospective teachers from our profession, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the UFT through its own efforts and in conjunction with the Department of Education persuade the Teach for America program to expand its pool of potential teachers to include more teachers of diverse backgrounds and advocate that both Teach for America and

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the NYC Teaching Fellows actively recruit more African-American and Latina/o teachers.

<http://welcometocup.org/Projects/MakingPolicyPublic/SchoolsAreUs> [FREE download available of “Schools Are Us” Teachers Unite’s fold-out poster that lays out the different levels of decision makers who govern NYC’s schools. Parents and students can use the poster to find out where they can participate in decisions about schools]

Your Schools, Your Voice: The Impact of Mayoral Control on Community Participation in Schools [http://cdp-ny.org/report/your\\_schools\\_your\\_voice.pdf](http://cdp-ny.org/report/your_schools_your_voice.pdf)