



BLACK EDUCATORS' ALLIANCE OF MASSACHUSETTS, INC.

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Response and Recommendations for Information Provided to the City Council Committee on Education

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Teacher Diversity

Despite BPS commitments and federal mandates, teacher diversity has declined over the last four years, since the 2011–2012 school year. According to BPS reports, the number of Black teachers fell from 1,011 (22.4%) in October 2011 to 944 (20.5%) in March 2015. The number of Latino teachers increased slightly from 454 in October 2011 to 457 in March 2015, but their percentages actually decreased from 10.1% to 9.5% over the same period.

The trend in teacher diversity in BPS is alarming and requires immediate, intensive actions. In the sections below are BEAM's recommendations for actions.

Teacher Diversity General Recommendations

- Charge the new School Committee Achievement Gap Task Force with the responsibility for reviewing, advising, and reporting on district strategies to improve teacher diversity
- Strengthen the leadership of the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendents, and Network Superintendents in achieving teacher diversity across schools
- Strengthen internal monitoring by the Office of Equity of teacher diversity strategies, plans, programs, and initiatives

Recruitment

The recruitment of Black and Latino teachers for the 2015–2016 school year has fallen far short of the projections in the Strategic Recruitment Plan for School Year 2015–2016. According to the Strategic Recruitment Plan, the recruitment goals were to build a pool of teacher candidates that would allow for hiring 30 % Black teachers and 20% Latino teachers. Moreover, the plan stated: “We hope to have at least 3,000 candidates in district pools by March (2015)”. The 3,000

candidates for 2015 contrasted with 1,300 candidates in district pools in March 2014. According to BPS reports, the actual number of candidates in district pools as of March 18, 2015 is 1,330, leaving BPS 1,670 short of its goal. Included in the district pools were 213 (16 %) Black teachers and 87 Latino teachers (6.5%).

Recruitment Recommendations:

- Provide analysis of why recruitment efforts did not yield the projected number of applicants for the district pools by March 2015
- Describe efforts to intensify recruitment to make up for shortfall
- Add a third professional recruiter. In past years, when BPS was in full compliance with federal mandates, BPS had 3 professional, full-time recruiters. The 15 part-time Recruitment Fellows do not provide the capacity to do the recruitment and screening needed to grow and diversify the teacher applicant pool
- Conduct outreach and priority screening for licensed BPS paraprofessionals and substitute teachers of color who want to become provisional teachers
- Conduct outreach and priority screening for paraprofessionals and substitute teachers of color who have passed at least one MTEL and who want to become provisional teachers
- Conduct outreach and priority screening for all licensed and “Pending” external applicants of color not in the district pools
- Provide an analysis of teacher applicants by ethnic group showing their status as licensed, pending license, and no license
- Track interviews and offers of employment for applicants of color

Pipeline Development

Along with recruitment, pipeline development programs grow the pool of licensed, well-prepared, diverse candidates for BPS teaching positions. BPS offers MTEL prep and vouchers to support its paraprofessionals and substitute teachers who are seeking licensure. BPS also offers the Accelerated Community to Teacher (ACTT) program to develop cohorts of promising internal and external candidates for teaching position.

Internally, BPS has a pool of paraprofessionals with bachelors degrees and substitute teachers of color who have begun to pass MTEs. Externally, BPS also has applicants of color who have passed MTEs but who are not yet licensed.

These internal and external educators have demonstrated their interest in becoming teachers and are prime candidates for targeted outreach, support, and cultivation for teaching positions.

Pipeline Development Recommendations:

- Identify and conduct outreach to paraprofessionals with bachelors degrees, substitute teachers, and external applicants of color who have begun to pass MTELS
- Screen and offer support to internal and external aspiring teachers of color. The support should include MTEL prep, mentoring, career development, similar to that provided to ACTT members
- Continue and expand the Accelerated Community to Teacher Program. The ACTT Program should have the capacity to generate at least 50 licensed, well-prepared teachers each year
- Hire a full-time Licensure Director to expand MTEL prep and licensure support services for paraprofessionals, substitute teachers and provisional teachers on waivers, as well as high potential external applicants

Hiring/Rehiring Provisional Teachers

Rehiring provisional teachers of color who are rated proficient or exemplary is critical to improving teacher diversity. According to BPS reports, in 2014–2015 there are 268 Black and 122 Latino provisional teachers. 153 (57%) Black provisional teachers received reasonable assurance or permanent appointments for 2015–2016. 87 (71%) Latino provisional teachers received reasonable assurance or permanent appointments for 2015–2016. Every effort should be made to retain provisional teachers of color who have formative ratings of proficient or exemplary.

Recommendations for Hiring/Rehiring Provisional Teachers:

- Continue to offer Letters of Commitment to non-renewed provisional teachers of color who were rated proficient/exemplary and who are licensed. Without an immediate commitment from BPS, these provisional teachers are more likely to seek employment in other districts
- Offer intensive MTEL prep and licensure support for non-renewed provisional teachers of color who have not yet earned licensure and who were rated proficient/exemplary

- Offer targeted professional development to non-renewed provisional teachers of color who were rated needs improvement.
- Provide an analysis of the 2014–2015 formative evaluation ratings of provisional teachers by ethnic group

Excessed Teachers

BPS needs to maximize the hiring of excessed teachers of color in order to improve teacher diversity. According to BPS reports, 594 permanent teachers have been excessed from their schools for the 2015–2016 school year, including 163 (27.4%) Black teachers and 55 (9.3%) Latino teachers. Black teachers are overrepresented in teachers who have been excessed, while Latino teachers are not overrepresented.

The percentages of Black and Latino teachers excessed in the spring 2015 are higher than their percentages in the spring of 2014, when 24.2% of the excessed teachers were Black and 8.5% were Latino. Of the teachers excessed in 2014, Black teachers were more likely to exit BPS and less likely to be hired by other schools. Excessed Latino teachers, however, were less likely to exit BPS and more likely to be hired by other schools than other excessed teachers.

Excessed Teacher Recommendations

- Conduct exit interviews of excessed teachers who exited and who were rated as proficient/exemplary
- Closely track applications, interviews, hiring offers for excessed teachers
- Assess the effectiveness of services provided to excessed teachers who are rated as proficient and who are not hired by other schools

Staffing

Schools at the same grade level are staffed with widely different representations of teachers of color. BPS has rated the teacher diversity of each school using the minimum percentages that were mandated by federal desegregation orders, which no longer reflect BPS student diversity. The School Committee has committed BPS to teacher diversity reflecting the diversity of the students served by the schools. BPS is not in compliance with the outstanding federal mandate for the minimum representation of Black teachers. The widest gap in teacher diversity is between Latino teachers and students.

Staffing Recommendations

- Target support for schools with chronically low representation of teachers of color
- Identify strategies used by schools that are successful in maintaining teacher diversity
- Set a goal for the representation of Latino teachers, separate from the mandated minimum for “Other Minority” in the federal desegregation order
- Continue the review and approval of teacher offers of hire by the Office of Equity
- Ensure that exam schools comply with their specific teacher desegregation mandates in the federal court order
- Hold Principals, Headmasters, Network Superintendents accountable for teacher diversity in their performance evaluations
- Clarify the definition of “teacher” in the federal court orders

Performance Evaluation

Performance evaluation ratings impact teacher hiring, excessing, and retention. BPS reports on summative teacher performance ratings for the past two school years show that Black teachers have been disproportionately rated as “Needs Improvement” and “Unsatisfactory”. BPS has committed to anti-bias training and to professional development for evaluators to remedy the apparent bias in performance ratings.

Performance Evaluation Recommendations

- Provide an analysis of 2014–2015 formative teacher ratings by ethnic group.
- Provide report on the progress of anti-bias training for evaluators.
- Hire external expert who is knowledgeable of performance evaluation and teacher diversity to review the teacher evaluation process.

Teacher Retention

The disproportionate attrition rates of teachers of color contribute substantially to the lack of progress in improving teacher diversity in BPS. According to BPS reports between Oct. 1, 2013 and Oct. 1 2014, BPS lost 96 Black teachers and 40 Latino teachers, not including teachers who took leaves of absence. In the 2014–2015 school year BPS hired 98 new Black teachers, down from 109 new Black teachers in 2013–2014. In contrast, 62 new Latino teachers were hired in 2014–2015, up from 46 the previous school year.

Reviewing the types of attrition between Oct. 1, 2013 and Oct. 1 2014, Black teachers are overrepresented in retirements and the expiration of provisional contracts. Latino teachers are overrepresented in resignations. Most Black and Latino teachers who exited have performance ratings of proficient or exemplary, if they have performance ratings.

Teacher Retention Recommendations

- Conduct exit interviews of teachers who voluntarily exit BPS to assess reasons for their departures
- Identify schools that have patterns of disproportionate exits and transfers of teachers of color
- Identify and publicly recognize schools that have exemplary multicultural climates
- Review peer support programs to assess participation rates by ethnic group and outcomes for teachers
- Provide targeted professional development and support for new teachers rated as needs improvement