

KEY POINTS: Minority Teacher Retention and Testing in Teacher Evaluation

- Positive minority recruitment in Connecticut districts when SBAC not used for teacher evaluation – Districts like Bloomfield, that recruit a better share of minority teachers and also show achievement gains, do not use SBAC scores in their evaluation. Even Achievement First, which has a higher proportion of minority staff, suspended SBAC for their teacher evaluations (note: AF also has rates of uncertified teachers that exceed limits established in law).
- Diversity among teachers is important in every community: Improving the retention of minority teachers recruited into teaching is crucial to creating a teaching force that represents the diversity of the students they teach and to bring diversity to areas that do not have significant numbers of minority students.
- Too few teachers of color: In 2014-15, just over 41% of students in the U.S. were Black or Hispanic, but only 14% of teachers were of color.
- Too few teachers of color in communities of color: Research indicates minority students benefit socially from having positive role models who are from their minority group. Some studies also suggest there may be academic benefits as well.
- Greater recruitment challenges in urban schools: There is also strong evidence that schools serving children at risk are particularly challenged to attract and retain a diverse faculty of teachers. (NEA Report)
- Retention in urban schools is already a challenge: Schools serving predominantly minority students lose effective teachers to other schools at higher rates. 50% of teachers in low performing schools are 50% more likely to leave. (NEA Report)
- Urban teachers deterred by greater job risks: Teachers who are employed in high need schools and communities are more challenged than others to meet student performance requirements and therefore are more vulnerable to transfer and dismissal when student achievement goals are not met. Since teachers of color are generally clustered in such schools their tenure and retention may be less secure than others. (NEA Report)
- High-stakes = High risk: Research indicates that high stakes testing may make it more difficult for poorer schools to recruit and hold on to quality teachers. (Jackson, 2008)
- Urban teachers more vulnerable to factors beyond their control: Teachers in schools serving disadvantaged students (where minority teachers are concentrated) are more likely to be adversely impacted by accountability indicators beyond a teacher's control.
- Testing pressure increases teacher turnover: Researchers in one study noted that “teachers who said that they personally would consider transferring schools were generally from high-poverty schools; their main reasons were that they might want to work in schools where there was less pressure to raise test scores and where there were better-prepared students.” (Jackson, 2008)
- High-stakes linked to difficulty recruiting teachers: Research on high-poverty schools reported a link between accountability policies and increased difficulty in recruiting teachers. Respondents in both high- and low-poverty schools felt that accountability policies had

increased teacher turnover in their schools. Reasons given for recruitment difficulties included candidates' concern about pressure to raise test scores. (Jackson, 2008)

- High-stakes testing means less learning: “Teachers in testing grades indicated that they stopped introducing new material between 2 and 4 weeks prior to the administration of the end-of-grade tests. Teachers indicated that the testing process, including preparation, administration, and recovery, took away from instructional time that could have been used to expand lessons and provide remediation.” (Jackson, 2008)
- High-stakes testing means less individualized attention for urban students: The emphasis on testing in accountability and the use of mastery test scores in teacher evaluation results in more standardization, especially in high need schools. (Achinstein, Ogawa, & Spiegelman, 2004)
- High-stakes testing means less job satisfaction: High stakes contributes to the loss of teacher autonomy and lack of teacher input in decision-making, factors driving minority teachers out of the profession. It simply does not make sense to hold teachers accountable for a test score when nearly 90% of what influences that score is beyond a teacher's ability to control.
- Recruiting and retaining teachers requires equity: Improving the retention of minority teachers recruited into the teaching profession can only be done by addressing deterrents. Teachers most frequently cite excessive workloads and high-stakes testing, disruptive student behavior, poor leadership and administration within schools, and views of teaching as a temporary profession. (Education Northwest, 2014)
- Recruiting and retaining teachers requires fairness: A teacher in a high-poverty area can't control if a child comes to school regularly, eats a good breakfast, gets enough sleep, has a computer at home, or reads regularly for pleasure, all of which influence a student's performance on a test. It does not make sense to hold someone accountable for things they can't control. Doing so only increases a teacher's feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness, the very factors that drive so many talented minority teachers out of the profession.

Sources:

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