



EDUCATOR QUALITY AND DIVERSITY ADVISORY

AUGUST 2021 UPDATE



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In March 2015, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Joy Hofmeister commissioned the Teacher Shortage Task Force to address state recruitment and retention issues. Effective September 2020, the task force is renamed the Educator Quality & Diversity Advisory. The name change has not altered the work of this stakeholder group; rather, it has made the work more focused on quality of Oklahoma’s workforce and much-needed attention given to diversity in the talent pool.

INTRODUCTION

This annual report details recent work as well as future efforts addressing the continuing educator recruitment and retention challenges in the state. Also provided in this document are related legislation and COVID-19 pandemic recovery initiatives.

PROBLEM

As the state endures the COVID-19 pandemic, teacher shortages in Oklahoma remain a challenge. At the time of this publication, district superintendents are scrambling to hire teachers for the 2021-22 school year. Pandemic-related teacher departures have exacerbated the shortages particularly in Special Education, Science and Mathematics areas.

EDUCATOR QUALITY & DIVERSITY ADVISORY WORK UPDATES

Advisory members met three times this year: November 2020, February 2021 and June 2021. The meetings focused on recruitment and retention of qualified and diverse educators in Oklahoma’s talent pool with specific focus on best use of federal Title II, Part A funds. As the COVID-19 pandemic swept the state and federal emergency relief dollars became available, this advisory also addressed best use of these funds: ESSER I-CARES Act, ESSER II-CRRSA Act, ESSER III-ARP.

Meeting Agendas

	Presentations	Discussion
November 16, 2020	Title II, Part A federal funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State and local district level Title II, Part A best use of funds
	Transforming educator learning <i>(Resource: Restarting and Reinventing School: Learning in the Time of COVID and Beyond, Learning Policy Institute)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New set of teacher skills, commitment to equitable education and reinventing education systems

Educator Quality and Diversity Advisory

	Presentations	Discussion
February 23, 2021	Educator Supply and Demand report preview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Educator-student equity gaps
	Equitable access to teachers <i>(Resources: Diverse Teachers Matter brief, National School Boards Association; Eroding Opportunity: COVID-19's Toll on Student Access to Well-Prepared and Diverse Teachers, Learning Policy Institute; Program & Diversity Admission report, National Council on Teacher Quality)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Importance of recruiting and retaining educators ▶ Pandemic impact on teacher shortages ▶ Increased turnover, stress and health concerns ▶ Benefits of a diverse and qualified teacher workforce (teacher prep program admissions and licensing)
June 3, 2021	Finalize Title II, Part A best use recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Low income and minority students having greater access to effective educators
	Diversifying the talent pool – student teaching redesign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Athletes’ barrier to complete student teaching
	Ready Together recovery initiatives Ready Together Oklahoma Oklahoma State Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Counselor Corps ▶ Paid Student Teaching ▶ Teacher Induction

Recommendations from the advisory:

- ▶ Partner with universities to encourage college students to seek the teaching profession – “grow your own” model
- ▶ Teach Oklahoma program in every high school and Lead Oklahoma program in middle schools
- ▶ Engage historically overlooked youth
- ▶ Showcase private partnerships – OKCPS pipeline for bi-lingual and black teachers as paraprofessionals (tuition, fees, books)
- ▶ Grant pursuits with school districts and educator preparation providers as partners
- ▶ Build classroom climates where teachers are equipped with trauma-informed best practices and racial justice training
- ▶ Find ways to communicate best practices (in use of Title II, Part A funds) to all school districts, including the purchase of certification exam vouchers
- ▶ Showcase universities that have created redesigned student teaching schedules for athletes.

JOB MATCHING TOOL

In December 2019, the OSDE launched a new online tool intended to match teachers with Oklahoma job openings. Using the Oklahoma Educator Credentialing System (OECS), school administrators post job openings at [OKTEACHERMATCH.com](https://www.okteachermatch.com) and access a pool of certified teachers actively seeking employment. To be eligible to use the innovative feature, teachers must have a valid Oklahoma teaching credential. The job portal displays estimated salaries for each job opening, the job-seeking teacher's degree level and years of experience. As of July 2021, the total number of job postings is 223 and the total number of teacher displays is 2,865.

TEACHER EXTERNSHIP UPDATE

In its fifth year partnering with STEM-related businesses, the program continued to offer teachers an experience to learn about potential career paths for their students. Externships run year round with most participation occurring in the summer. Thick Descriptions, AAON and OneNet provided in-person or virtual learning opportunities for Oklahoma teachers.

RELATED 2021 LEGISLATION

School Year 2021-22 mandates:

- › **HB 1593:** Revision of frequency of professional development for digital teaching and learning standards, student mental health needs, workplace safety and alcohol/drug abuse.
- › **HB 1796:** Teacher certification exception with an advanced degree in the content area.
- › **HB 2329:** Teacher certification exception for deaf teachers who are fluent in ASL and exclusive settings requiring use of ASL.
- › **HB 2748:** Alternative certification for qualifying early childhood or elementary education candidates who declare their intention to earn standard certification within three years.
- › **HB 2752:** Establishes a STEM micro-credential program.
- › **HB 3398 (2020):** Employee background checks by July 1, 2022.
- › **SB 21:** Requires school boards to provide district-wide suicide awareness training.
- › **SB 121:** Requires school boards to adopt a policy allowing employees who are lactating to take paid break.
- › **SB 1038:** Student teachers eligible to receive compensation from the beginning of any teaching internship.

School Year 2022-23 mandates:

- › **HB 1568 (2021):** Maria's Law – all schools providing health education to include mental health.
- › **HB 2030 (2021):** U.S. Naturalization test required for high school graduation.
- › **HB 2749 (2021):** School districts receiving more than \$2,500 in RSA funding to spend a minimum of 10% on professional development in the science of reading.

School Year 2023-25 mandates:

- › **HB 2293 (2021):** Establishes a federal or grant matching rate for OTRS members who provide summer school programming services.
- › **SB 89 (2021):** Develops micro-credential and professional development programs for teachers responsible for teaching health education.
- › **SB 252 (2021):** Requires Computer Science course in HS; offered in MS and Elementary.
- › **SB 267 (2021):** Allows retired OTRS members to return to the classroom with no earnings limitation.

For more details refer to [Red Banner 2021 Legislation Book](#).

OTHER RELATED INITIATIVES

Recovery Efforts

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on students, educators and schools positioning the OSDE to respond with strategies and initiatives to address disrupted teaching and learning. Below are a few initiatives related to teachers' roles.

Paid Student Teaching

The OSDE will invest \$12.75 million dollars of relief funds over three years to compensate individual qualified candidates up to \$3,250. Through a partnership with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) and the OSDE, payments will be provided to each student teacher approved by Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs). For the first payment, the OSDE will transfer applicable funds to the OSRHE, which will distribute \$1,625 to the student teacher. The second \$1,625 payment will be distributed to the public school district that hires the student teacher, and the district will then pay the student teacher directly.

Counselor Corps

In partnership with Oklahoma school districts, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) will invest in a School Counselor Corps of approximately 300 new counselors and school-based mental health professionals to help address students' academic and social-emotional needs. This effort will begin in summer 2021 and continue through summer 2024.

Science of Reading

The OSDE is offering a comprehensive, no-cost professional development opportunity to 10,000 kindergarten through third-grade educators over the next three years. Oklahoma Science of Reading Academies will be implemented in four cohorts with each cohort engaging in professional learning for two years and cover eight modules on essential literacy instruction topics, including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, writing and assessment.

First Year Teacher Induction

To support 800 new teachers, the OSDE will invest nearly \$2.5 million over three years to provide mentoring and coaching to include a virtual element.

Leadership Development programs

The OSDE will invest \$1.7 million over three years to build a leadership pipeline providing support to administrators through the enhancement of their knowledge and skills.

For more information about these initiatives and other recovery efforts, please see [Ready Together Oklahoma | Oklahoma State Department of Education](#)

USDE APPROVED SHORTAGE AREAS

The following 18 areas are approved by the U.S. Department of Education enabling Oklahoma to receive federal funding to enhance the educator talent pool.

Academic Achievement PK-8	English Language Arts 9-12
Academic Achievement 9-12	Fine Arts PK-8
Advanced Placement 9-12	Health/PE PK-8
Business Education 9-12	Math PK-8
Career Technology	Science
Counselor	Social Studies PK-8
Early Childhood	Special Education
English as a Second Language PK-8	Technology & Computer Science PK-8
English Language Arts PK-8	World Languages PK-8

TEACH OKLAHOMA

Sponsored by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, Teach Oklahoma continues to serve as a strong recruitment program for future teachers. Twenty schools hosted the program in 2020-21, and over 217 students were served. Thirty-two percent of all Teach Oklahoma students surveyed are interested in teaching. This past year, 43% of the graduating seniors indicated that they plan to become teachers.

SPECIAL EDUCATION RECRUITMENT

School year 2020-21 was the fourth year of Project 616, a subject area certification reimbursement program allowing districts to reimburse teachers who take certification exams. Twenty-one districts took advantage of the program, and 54 people were reimbursed for certification exams they took and passed.

TEACHERS OF WORLD LANGUAGES

Oklahoma has slightly more than 2,200 world languages teachers who teach 18 languages including American Sign Language, Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Greek, Japanese, Latin, Russian, Spanish and Turkish as well as more than eight Native American Languages, including Cherokee, Choctaw, Comanche, Kiowa, Mvskoke (Creek), Osage, Pawnee and Potawatomi.

Total Number of Students Enrolled in World Languages:

- › 77,272 of 694,113 total students in Oklahoma = 11.15%,
- › A drop from nearly 20% enrolled in 2008
- › While unchanged since 2017, access for students constantly changes, often eliminating diversity of language programs, limiting the ability to develop enough proficiency due to few elementary programs and/or advanced course offerings.

Native American Languages

Currently at least eight Native American Languages are taught in Oklahoma public schools: Cherokee, Choctaw, Comanche, Kiowa, Mvskoke (Creek), Osage, Pawnee and Potawatomi. Native American Languages are offered at nearly 70 sites across the state by 54 teachers.

Guest Teacher Programs

Tulsa Public Schools has utilized a Memorandum of Understanding between Spain and the Oklahoma State Department of Education to hire 11 new teachers and retain 18 teachers through the Spanish Guest Teacher program. This program allows a guest teacher to be hired with a J1 visa renewed yearly for two years and a final visa renewal of three years for a total of five years. In addition, the Guest Teacher program has facilitated their hiring of 10 additional teachers (one from France through a

Memorandum of Understanding between the Academie d'Amiens and the OSDE, and nine from Spain). Six have pursued opportunities to remain in the programs in which they served as guest teachers, while four are spouses of guest teachers. One additional teacher is a former international student completing the optional practical training year (OPT) in Tulsa under an F1 visa. These teachers serve over 2,000 students. Oklahoma City Public Schools has one Spanish Guest Teacher in the third year of the program.

Data Reported by University Programs with World Language Education Majors

	Oklahoma State University	University of Oklahoma	Northeastern State University	University of Central Oklahoma
Graduates in 2020- 2021	2	7	0	4
Expected graduates in 2021- 2022	2	4	1	3
Candidates in Spanish	5	7	2	8
Candidates in French	1	3	0	2
Candidates in German	0	1	0	1
Candidates in a Native American Language	0	0	0	N/A
Other languages	N/A	Chinese 2 Latin 2 Arabic 1	N/A	N/A
Total number of World Language Education Majors	8	11	2	15

The chart above includes data reported to the Oklahoma State Department of Education’s Office of World Languages by universities with an active world language education program. Each column provides a snapshot of an aspect of world languages teacher preparation in Oklahoma and helps provide context to the future outlook. Candidates are identified as students who have been accepted into a program in a college of education at their university and are on the pathway to becoming a certified teacher.

TROOPS TO TEACHERS

Recruitment efforts through this grant-funded program are categorized by leads, registrants and hires.

LEADS (May 2020-May 2021)	REGISTRANTS (May 2020-May 2021)	TEACHING IN DISTRICTS (May 2020-May 2021)
555	126	349



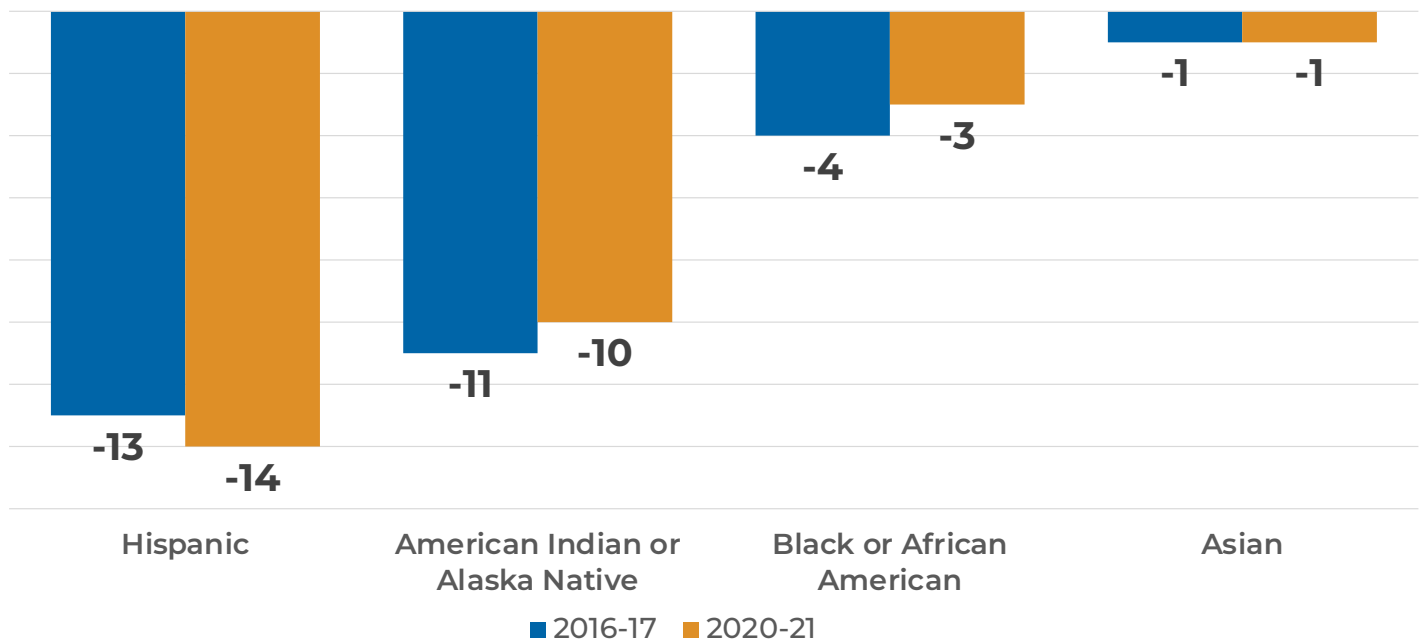
GRANTS

Priorities in each of these grants address teacher training and professional learning intended to increase teacher retention.

- ▶ Troops to Teachers – \$1,245,170 (in year 3 of 5 years)
- ▶ Project GET FIT! - \$1,825,000 (in year 3 of 5 years)
- ▶ Native Youth Community Partnership - \$3,992,364 (in year 3 of 4 years)
- ▶ Project AWARE - \$8,616,110 (in year 3 of 5 years)
- ▶ School Climate Transformation - \$3,729,615 (in year 3 of 5 years)
- ▶ Oklahoma Prevention and Mental Health Project - \$148,661 (in year 3 of 3 years)
- ▶ Oklahoma Violence Threat Assessment Project - \$249,684 (in year 3 of 3 years)
- ▶ Oklahoma School Emergency Management - \$3,740,874 (in year 3 of 5 years)
- ▶ STOP School Violence - \$250,000 (in year 2 of 3 years)
- ▶ ARTech Well-Rounded project - \$5,801,691 (in year 2 of 5 years)
- ▶ Project AWARE East - \$8,981,170 (in year 2 of 5 years)

PRELIMINARY DATA FROM THE EDUCATOR SUPPLY & DEMAND REPORT
(to be published later this year)

Student-to-teacher racial/ethnic gaps in Oklahoma public schools
2016-17 & 2020-21



Note: Enrollment headcount includes prekindergarten, kindergarten and grades 1 thru 12. Racial categories exclude individuals of Hispanic ethnicity. People of Hispanic ethnicity are classified as such regardless of race. Calculations include educators who have a base salary, and have complete records across systems. Racial gaps are averages across schools. The *Pacific Islander* category is omitted from the graph because of gaps close to zero. 2020-21 personnel data as of 01/10/2020.

Student-to-teacher racial and ethnic gaps by school poverty level
2016-17 & 2020-21 (Percentage Points)

	Hispanic		American Indian/ Alaska Native		Asian		Black/African American		Pacific Islander	
	2016-17	2020-21	2016-17	2020-21	2016-17	2020-21	2016-17	2020-21	2016-17	2020-21
High poverty	-14.5	-20.9	-15.3	-11.5	-0.2	-0.2	-4.3	-3.6	-0.2	-0.3
Mid-high poverty	-12.8	-11.8	-11.3	-10.7	-0.7	-0.6	-4.1	-2.9	-0.1	0.0
Mid-low poverty	-12.8	-10.5	-7.1	-6.8	-1.9	-1.6	-3.6	-2.4	-0.2	-0.1
Low poverty	-6.1	-8.1	-4.8	-2.5	-2.8	-4.1	-4.4	-2.9	-0.1	-0.1

Note: Enrollment headcount includes prekindergarten, kindergarten and grades 1 thru 12. Racial categories exclude individuals of Hispanic ethnicity. People of Hispanic ethnicity are classified as such regardless of race. Calculations include educators who have a base salary, and have complete records across systems. Racial gaps are averages across schools. 2020-21 personnel data as of 01/10/2021.

Student-to-teacher racial and ethnic gaps by school locale 2016-17 & 2020-21 (Percentage Points)

	Hispanic		American Indian/ Alaska Native		Asian		Black/African American		Pacific Islander	
	2016-17	2020-21	2016-17	2020-21	2016-17	2020-21	2016-17	2020-21	2016-17	2020-21
City	-28.8	-32.3	-0.6	-0.5	-1.8	-1.4	-11.9	-7.6	-0.2	-0.4
Suburb	-11.2	-13.4	-4.8	-2.9	-1.7	-2.1	-6.7	-5.4	-0.1	0.0
Town	-13.1	-14.2	-13.5	-11.5	-0.7	-0.7	-2.8	-2.1	-0.6	-0.7
Rural	-7.9	-8.5	-15.2	-13.2	-0.5	-0.5	-1.6	-1.3	0.0	0.1

Note: Enrollment headcount includes prekindergarten, kindergarten and grades 1 thru 12. Racial categories exclude individuals of Hispanic ethnicity. People of Hispanic ethnicity are classified as such regardless of race. Calculations include educators who have a base salary, and have complete records across systems. Racial gaps are averages across schools. 2020-21 personnel data as of 01/10/2021.

Student-to-counselor racial and ethnic gaps 2016-17 & 2020-21 (Percentage Points)

	Hispanic	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	Black/African American	Pacific Islander	Total Minority
2020-21	-17.5	-6.9	-1.8	-2.1	-0.3	-37.0
2016-17	-16.0	-8.9	-1.5	-4.5	-0.3	-37.4

Note: Enrollment headcount includes prekindergarten, kindergarten and grades 1 thru 12. Racial categories exclude individuals of Hispanic ethnicity. People of Hispanic ethnicity are classified as such regardless of race. Calculations include educators who have a base salary, and have complete records across systems. 2020-21 personnel data as of 01/10/2021.

Student-to-principal racial and ethnic gaps 2016-17 & 2020-21 (Percentage Points)

	Hispanic	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	Black/African American	Pacific Islander	Total Minority
2020-21	-16.2	-6.2	-1.5	-4.1	-0.2	-37.6
2016-17	-14.9	-8.2	-1.5	-5.3	-0.2	-36.8

Note: Enrollment headcount includes prekindergarten, kindergarten and grades 1 thru 12. Racial categories exclude individuals of Hispanic ethnicity. People of Hispanic ethnicity are classified as such regardless of race. Calculations include educators who have a base salary, and have complete records across systems. 2020-21 personnel data as of 01/10/2021.

OSDE-PROVIDED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

EngageOK in the Cloud 2021

EngageOK in the Cloud was the State Department of Education's annual summer conference held virtually June 21, 22, 23. Over 4,000 educators attended the 30 live-streamed sessions. Teachers and school staff attended sessions on Mental Health, Multi-Tiered System of Supports, Research-Based Literacy Instruction, ICAP Implementation and many more. Sessions were recorded and are available at <http://engage.ok.gov/in-the-cloud/>.

Tele EDGE

In partnership with OSU/Center for Health Sciences Project ECHO, the OSDE Tele Edge video education sessions centered around supporting educators as they prepared for safe re-opening of schools whether in-person, blended or virtually. These professional learning opportunities included OSDE staff and school district officials addressing current challenges and topics such as instructional disruption, RSA screening, supporting English learners, child nutrition and social emotional learning.



More information on education ECHO video lines can be found at <https://medicine.okstate.edu/echo/tele-edge.html>.



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