

## **Opportunities to Support a Well-Prepared and Diverse Educator Workforce in the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and FY19 Appropriations Process**

[A growing body of research](#) demonstrates that teachers of color provide benefits to all students, especially to students of color and students from low-income families. Unfortunately, African American and Native American teachers are a declining share of the teaching force and although the number of Latinx teachers is increasing, it is still far below the national Latinx population. The lack of teachers of color is a part of a nationwide teacher shortage that has left [over 100,000 classrooms](#) staffed by educators who are not fully certified. Urban and rural schools with high populations of students living in poverty and students of color typically experience the largest impact of teacher shortages, which includes lack of access to a diverse and well-prepared educator workforce. The reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) and the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 appropriations process present policy opportunities to address teacher shortages and increase educator diversity.

**Specifically, policymakers have an opportunity within HEA reauthorization to:**

- 1. Increase the scholarship amounts under the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) grant program for eligible undergraduate and graduate students preparing for a career in teaching and amend several of the administrative provisions to make it a more effective vehicle for recruiting and retaining teachers.** While the Federal government is limited in what it can do to raise teacher salaries at the state and local levels, it can offset low salaries by eliminating or significantly reducing the burden of student debt on the front end. HEA can better support candidates of color, who often incur greater levels of student loan debt, and encourage their retention by significantly subsidizing the cost of teacher preparation. Moreover, research shows loan forgiveness programs are most effective when they are bureaucratically manageable for participating teachers, districts, and higher education institutions.
- 2. Reauthorize and improve the effectiveness of the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant program by prioritizing programs that build educator capacity to create inclusive, student-centered, and supportive learning environments that develop the higher order skills students need in today's economy and programs that include opportunities for high-quality teacher residencies—an approach that has been successful in recruiting talented candidates into high-need fields and locations.** As states and districts move to increase student access to a college preparatory curriculum, they need an educator workforce with the requisite skills to implement and sustain these programs and opportunities and to create culturally responsive and equitable learning environments for all students. Further, this preparation can be supported by high-quality residency programs. Research shows that well-designed residencies improve the preparation and retention of a diverse educator workforce, playing a critical role in improving student outcomes.

## **Opportunities to enhance teacher education within the FY2019 Appropriations Process: Title II, Part A, Teacher Quality Partnership Grants, and Title III, Programs Supporting Teacher Education at Minority-Serving Institutions**

The following programs authorized in HEA would benefit from additional investments to address teacher shortages and increase educator diversity. For example, Congress could invest \$300 million of the approximately \$4 billion agreed to within the two-year budget deal for student-centered programs that aid college completion and affordability to increase access to high-quality teacher preparation programs as follows:

- 1. Partnership Grants for the Establishment of Teacher Residency Programs.** Section 202(a) awards 1-year stipends to recent college graduates and mid-career professionals (who are not teaching) to obtain graduate-level teacher training in exchange for agreements to serve 3 years in a high-need school. This program was funded at \$43.1 million in FY2018. Increasing the funding level to \$150 million in FY2019 would significantly increase the number of teachers who participate in high quality teacher residency programs, improving teacher effectiveness and retention rates and positively impacting student achievement.
- 2. The Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) Competitive Grant Program.** Under Section 318(d)(2)(C), this program provides grants eligible PBIs to support activities including “establishing or enhancing a program of teacher education designed to qualify students to teach in a public elementary school or secondary school in the state that shall include, as part of such program, preparation for teacher certification or licensure.” Additionally, funds can support MSI programs that prepare teachers and improve the educational outcomes of African American males. This program was funded at approximately \$11 million in discretionary funding in FY2018. Increasing the funding level to \$50 million in FY2019 would provide increased access to high-quality teacher preparation programs that support teachers of color.
- 3. Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Programs (MSEIP).** Under Section 352, MSEIP grants are competitively awarded to minority serving institutes of higher education and funds are used for faculty development programs, strengthening an institution’s science and engineering programs, and conducting research in science education. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) educator preparation programs could also be directly supported with these funds (in addition, report language could clarify that this is an allowable use of funds). This program was funded at \$11 million in FY2018. While this was a slight increase, increasing the funding level to \$50 million in FY2019 would provide increased access to high-quality teacher preparation programs that support teachers of color and address shortages in STEM-related fields.