

**The Urban Teacher Program**  
in the  
**School of Urban Education**



**A Progress Report to the  
Chairs of the Higher Education Finance Divisions  
of the Minnesota State Legislature**

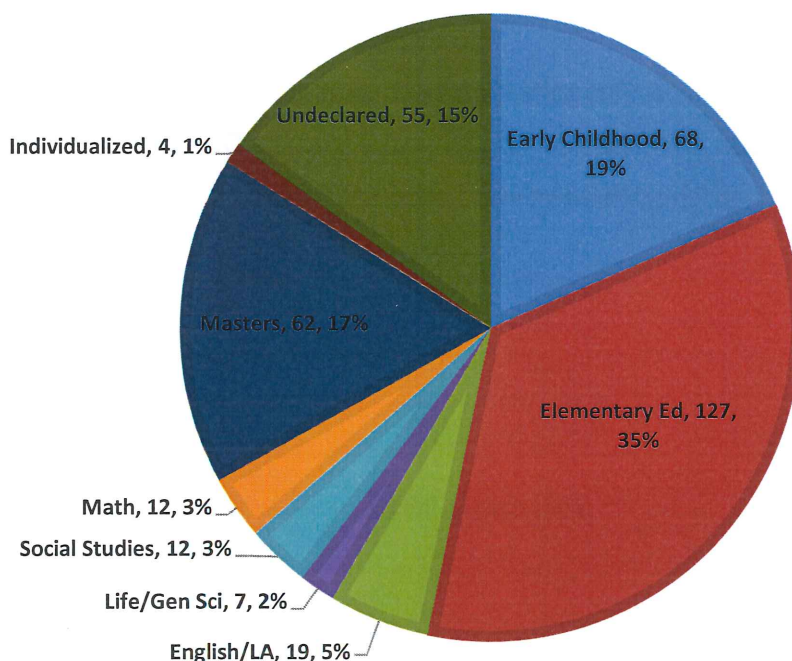
**February 2018**

## OVERVIEW

The Urban Teacher Program (UTP), housed in the School of Urban Education (UED) at Metropolitan State since 2012, is completing its 17<sup>th</sup> year of preparing diverse teacher candidates to meet the needs of the Twin Cities metro area since being created by the Legislature in 2000 with a one-time appropriation. The UED is the most racially, ethnically diverse school/college of education in Minnesota (students, staff or faculty) with more candidates and completers who are of color or American Indian than any other program, and a majority of staff and faculty who are of color. With the exception of the M.S. in Urban Education/Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Schooling track, which is designed for professional development purposes, UED offers the following majors that qualify program completers to become licensed educators in the state of Minnesota (Figure 1).

- B.S. Urban Early Childhood Education (Birth-Grade 3 licensure)
- B.S. Urban Elementary Education (Kindergarten-Grade 6 licensure)
- Urban Secondary Education (Undergraduate B.S. pathways for Grades 5-12 licensure in one of the following subject areas; Communication Arts & Literature, Life Science/General Science, Mathematics, or Social Studies)
- M.S. Urban Education
  - Secondary Education Teacher Preparation track for 5-12 licensure in one of 3 core disciplines
  - Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Schooling track for professional development

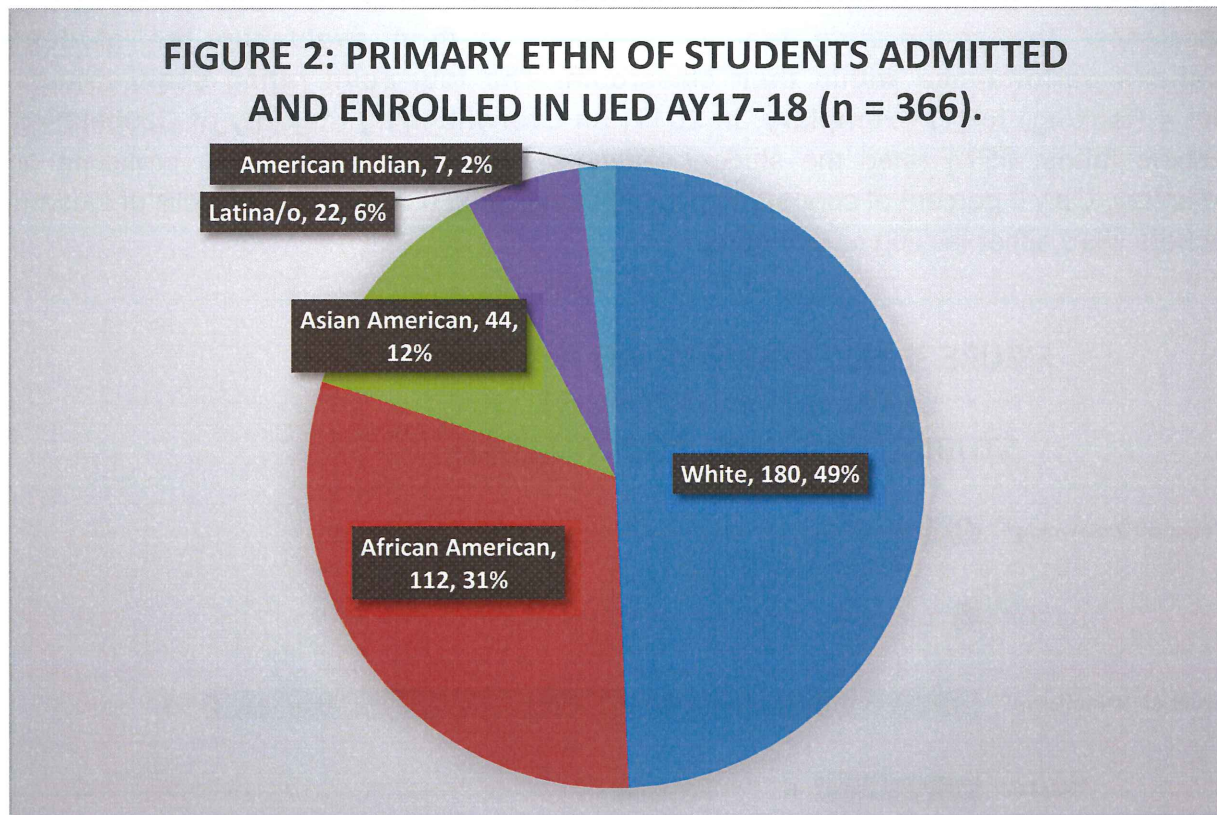
**FIGURE 1: MAJORS OF STUDENTS ADMITTED AND ENROLLED IN UED AY17-18 (N = 366).**



**CONTINUED OUTCOMES RELATED TO THE 2000 LEGISLATURE’S TARGET OF THE PROGRAM ENROLLING AT LEAST 50% STUDENTS OF COLOR.**

When the Legislature created the Urban Teacher Program in 2000, there was a severe shortage of teachers of color. Unfortunately, this shortage still exists. According to the 2017 Minnesota Teacher Supply and Demand Report published by the Minnesota Department of Education, of 32,246 teachers in the Twin Cities Metro Area, only 2,197 (6.8%) are of color or American Indian while 58.9% of 475,092 students in metro area schools are of color or American Indian<sup>1</sup>.

Metropolitan State University continues to be the institution of choice for many diverse teacher candidates in the Twin Cities when compared to overall enrollments in teacher preparation at private and public colleges and universities in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Those programs have enrollments that remain predominantly white with the exception of a few specialized programs that receive extra funding. Feedback from candidates and school partners is largely positive, which explains the growth of the program and increased demand for our graduates (see pp 7-8 for sample comments from cooperating school teachers).

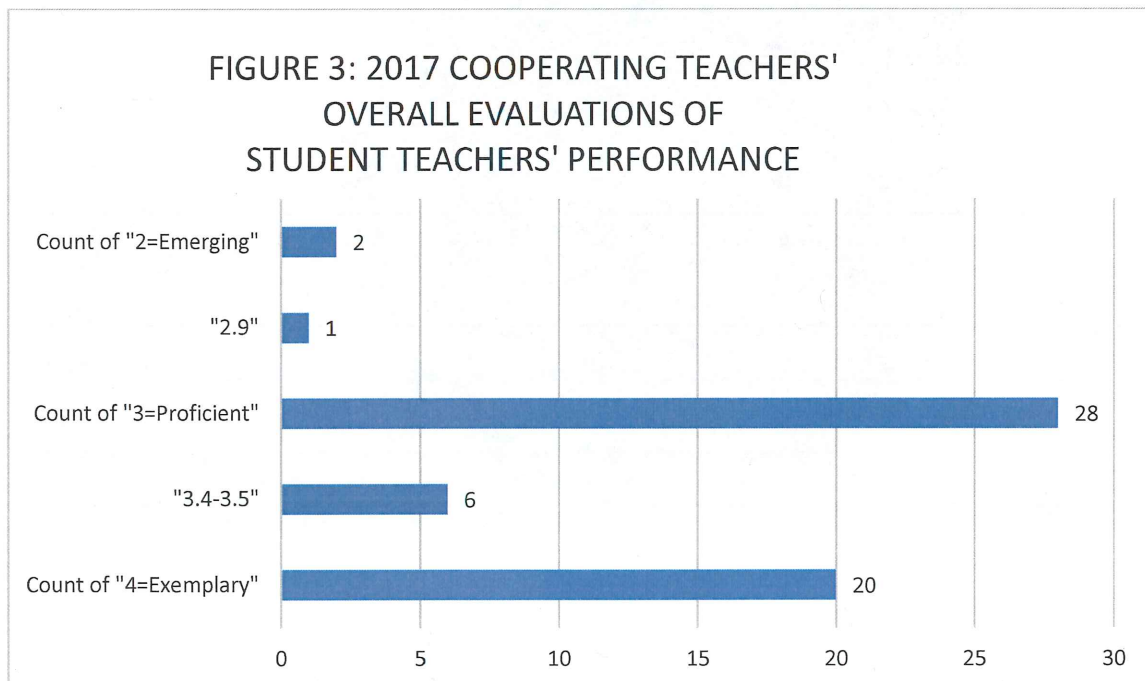


<sup>1</sup> Statewide, only 4.2% of the teaching force statewide are persons of color or American Indian, including 7.7% of newly licensed teachers.

Metropolitan State University is proud to report that (51%) of all Urban Education majors taking courses in the Urban Teacher Program during the 2017-18 academic year are students of color and American Indian students (see Figure 2). We have achieved this percentage without a designated program recruiter, enrollment quotas or being able to offer full scholarships; we have achieved this percentage through hard work, modeling our mission and legislative mandate, and word of mouth among our teacher candidates as well as K-12 and community college partners. We are also proud that we have increased the number of program completers by 57% across our various teacher licensure programs over the last two years. Moreover, we continue to close gaps in program completion percentages among students of color and American Indian teachers versus program completion percentages of white candidates.

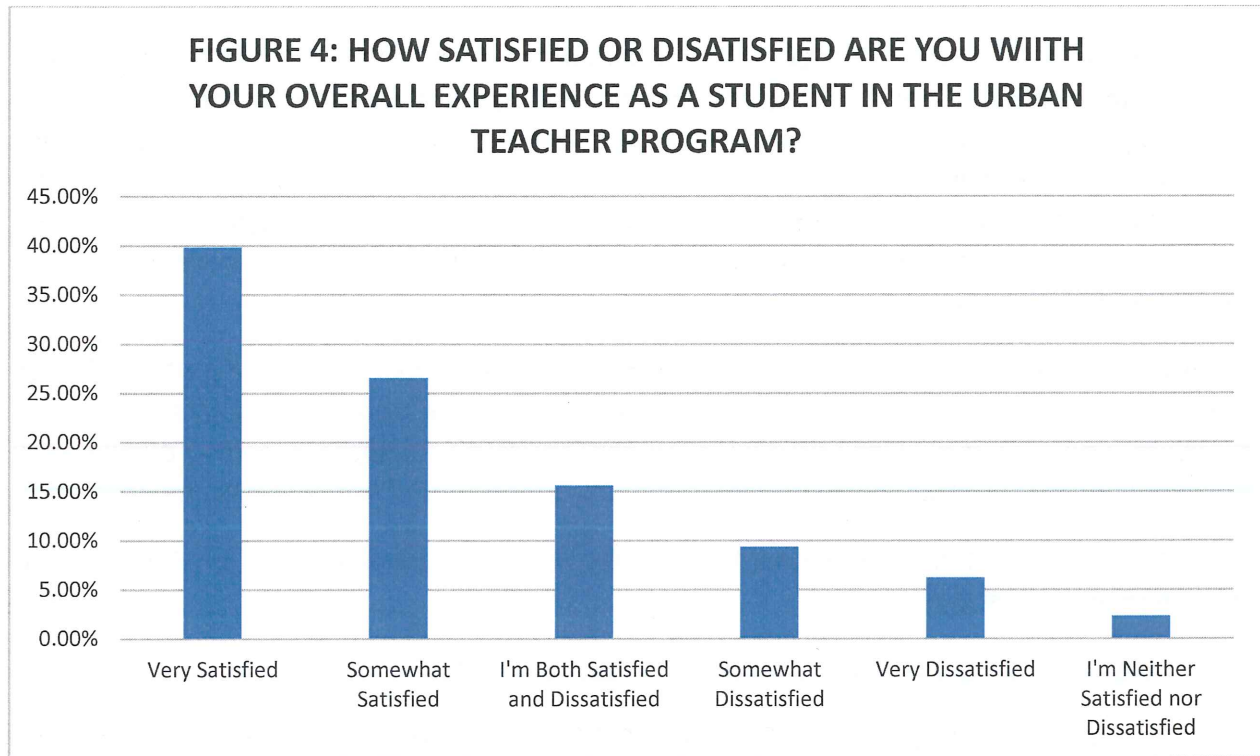
**EVALUATION OF STUDENT TEACHERS BY COOPERATING TEACHERS**

UED students are placed in several K-12 school across the metro area where they work with cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers are to mentor and guide the teacher candidate by assisting the teacher candidate in developing standards based lessons and observing and providing constructive feedback, and modeling effective teaching strategies and professional behavior. At the conclusion of the student teacher's experience, the cooperating teacher complete a form evaluating the student teacher's performance within their classroom. The four-point rating scale ranges from 4 (lacking) to (1) exemplary. In 2017, an overwhelming majority of Cooperating teachers (about 95%) rated the student teachers teaching skills as either proficient or exemplary. Only 5 percent of cooperating teachers indicated that the teacher skills of student teachers were either lacking or emerging.



## STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN THE PROGRAM

A survey of students about their educational experience at Metro showed that a vast majority would give an overall stamp of approval to the urban teacher program. As shown in the below figure, a combined majority (about 67%) of UED students surveyed in 2017 were either “very” or “somewhat satisfied” with their overall experience of the program. Very few report being completely dissatisfied. This clearly shows that UED places the interests and outcomes of students at the heart of what they do.



A Sample of student comments about their experience are listed below:

*“I have felt that a lot of the curriculum either directly addresses or allows room for conversations about social justice and real issues in our schools and this is important to me. I also feel that I've gained very real skills for curriculum development and content area knowledge. On the other hand- and I am not sure how much of the licensing process is in the hands of Metro State- I am frustrated by the barriers that exist for those who do not have strong financial support, especially in regards to the many hours that we are asked to spend in classrooms, most significantly during student teaching, without being paid and in fact requiring us to pay for the process. I find this unreasonable and a real obstacle that contributes to a lack of diversity in our schools.”*

*“Professors care and take responsibility for the students and engage with them as future teachers. Concretely helpful and welcoming.”*

*“I think the program challenges me as a student.”*

*“Good price, locations and schedule. Staff is qualified, professional.”*

*“The program was rigorous and relevant. At times it felt like we were “on our own,” but I think that only helped us to be better prepared to go into the real world. More support navigating the system would’ve have reduced some of the stress and frustration.”*

*“Teachers were knowledgeable. All the teachers I had were aware of and understanding of fact the many students were working fulltime- were respectful of our time by not giving busy work- gave homework that was needed and helpful.”*

*“I’ve learned a lot of important pieces of information about many of the harsh realities of urban education and I feel the program understands and does an excellent job stressing the importance of training quality teachers to teach in areas that need it the most. However, I am going to begin student teaching in the fall and do not feel I’ve had enough preparation for it. I don’t think more practicum hours are needed but perhaps more time spent in education classes developing effective teaching strategies and a little less on educational theories (although those are still important, too!)”*

*“I really enjoy and respect a lot of my teachers and colleagues. I think the content discuss and aim of the program is needed and addresses many of the issues for urban scholars and teachers. I do think that there could be more services to aid teachers in getting placements, in school hours (per class assignments), a preparedness for test like MTLE or the licensure.”*

*“The classrooms are always engaging and diverse. More options for DDL licensure and special ed would be great!”*

*“It’s a very welcoming environment and I really appreciate that”*

*“I appreciate the grouping of the classes. They really build on each other. There is a consistent message from every class and professor regarding diversity. I also appreciate the consistent classroom community building in every class.”*

*“Staff when available are helpful. Staff size needs to increase to meet the needs of the students.”*

*“I feel the program is great, and it is very inclusive. The part that I am dissatisfied is that the school is not listening to students when they do the survey. There are some professors who give a bad name to Metro State. Those teachers should not be teaching because they are not good teachers. It is a pure waste of money.”*

*“I love the mission for the Urban Teacher Program, however I felt that there were some instructors who challenged this vision. There were times when I have witnessed, and experienced first-hand, students being put down by the instructors in passive-aggressive or other indirect ways. Things kinds of things were very discouraging. However, there were a number of amazing instructors and advisors in the program that I am thankful for.”*

*“I love this program! I have been enrolled at other colleges but it just was never a good fit. This program is helping me become a well-rounded future educator.”*

## OTHER PROGRAM UPDATES AND DEVELOPMENTS

**PARTNERSHIPS:** During the 2017-2018 academic year, UED continues to work with various metro area community college partners including its original partners Minneapolis Community & Technical College and Inver Hills Community College as well as other Metro Alliance community colleges. This includes reviewing, updating, or creating articulation agreements or memorandums of agreement that articulate coursework at 2-year colleges for transfer into various teaching majors at Metropolitan State.

UED continues to work to build and strengthen partnerships with Minneapolis Public Schools, St. Paul Public Schools, and several diverse inner-ring suburban schools and districts. Specifically, UED signed partnership agreements with Osseo and Hopkins School Districts and we have started a new cohort with St Paul Public Schools. These partnerships have served to provide urban teacher candidates with invaluable urban classroom experience while also helping urban schools and teachers meet the needs of urban learners. They have also resulted in recruiting efforts of diverse paraprofessionals to enter the teaching profession. Increasingly, school districts are seeking partnerships with the School of Urban Education because of the diversity of our candidates and the preparation they all receive to meet the needs of diverse preK-12 learners.

**NEW HIGH-NEED PROGRAMS:** UED projects continued growth with the continued recruitment of students in Master of Science in Urban Education programs. The ESL and Special Education graduate programs were approved for licensure by PELSB in 2017.

**LEADERSHIP AND STAFFING:** Dr. René Antrop-González is in his third year as dean of UED and Dr. Rosa Fagundes was elected by the faculty to serve a second three year term as Department Chair. This stable leadership matters, because until 2015, UED had had seven positional leaders in nine years. As a result of more stable leadership, UED's mission/vision are more likely to be maintained. In 2017, a full-time coordinator of assessment was hired.

## LOOKING FORWARD

- **FINANCIAL INCENTIVES:** Financial incentives (e.g., scholarships or grants, student teaching stipends & loan forgiveness for teaching service) are needed to attract and support people of color into the teaching profession. Teacher candidates of color need financial assistance, so they do not just graduate with a bachelor's degree, but so they can also complete their licensure programs. UTP students continue to be challenged by the reality that they must forgo income and pay tuition during student teaching, which in effect is a 12-15 week unpaid full-time internship. In fact, a disproportionate number of teacher candidates of color graduate but not get licensed, because they cannot afford to quit working in order to complete the student teaching requirement. If students of color and low-income students in the Urban Teacher Program could receive support during their

student teaching semesters, we are confident that the program could achieve even greater success in recruiting, retaining, and graduating with licensure students of color, low-income, and first-generation college students who understand the experiences and needs of urban learners.

- **CHANGING LICENSURE EXAM REQUIREMENTS:** Recent legislative sessions have highlighted problems with the Minnesota Teacher Licensing Exams (MTLE). Further addressing the systematic inequities resulting from the MTLE and the new NES Essential Academic Skills exams that disproportionately keep successful program completers of color and American Indian program completers from gaining full teaching licensure would serve to increase the licensure rates for teacher candidates of color and American Indian teacher candidates. The UTP not only seeks to increase the number of teacher candidates of color who complete our programs, but needs legislative support so that all candidates of color and American Indian teacher candidates who successfully complete degrees and student teaching also earn licensure in order to become full-time, licensed urban teachers.
  
- **A STRONG AND COLLABORATIVE URBAN EDUCATOR PROGRAM:** The Minnesota State system and Metropolitan State University are proud of the considerable enrollment growth and graduation outcomes of the Urban Teacher Program. In 2017, UED was awarded \$90,000 (\$45,000 per fiscal year) from the Legislature's Collaborative Urban Educator (CUE) program. Metropolitan State has demonstrated a steady growth in student enrollment over the past decade consistent with the 2000 legislative mandate to increase the number of teachers of color and American Indian teachers in the Metro area. Simply put, we believe we have demonstrated that UED's inclusion in the CUE program would be a wise investment for the state and help narrow the wide opportunity and achievement gaps that continue to persist in Minnesota's urban core. This particular request, among other additional funding requests that would benefit all teacher preparation programs in the state, is being pursued through legislative channels due to UED's work with the *Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota* ([www.tocaimn.com](http://www.tocaimn.com)). This Coalition was founded in November 2015 and is comprised of several Twin Cities-based teacher education programs in partnership with the *Minnesota Education Equity Partnership* (MnEEP) with the goal of doubling the number of teachers of color and American Indian teachers in the state by 2020. The Coalition has a legislative team that has drafted E-12 and Higher Education bills designed to advocate for new and amended statutes and budgetary allocations that would address several major barriers to the profession, including the need for financial support and incentives for pre-service and in-service teachers who are of color or American Indian. These financial incentives include scholarships, stipends for student teaching, loan forgiveness programs, and hiring bonuses.