



March 4, 2022
Academic and Student Affairs

The Minnesota Urban Teacher Program in the School of Urban Education at Metropolitan State University: Report to the Legislature

MINNESOTA STATE

Metropolitan
State University



School of Urban Education

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

March 2022

OVERVIEW

The School of Urban Education (UED) at Metropolitan State University is charged with the mandate of preparing racially and ethnically diverse teachers equipped with critical skills to teach in diverse classrooms in urban settings. The UED was founded in 2001 following a state legislation in 2000 that authorized Metropolitan State University to offer a new teacher education program to “meet the needs of Minneapolis, St. Paul and inner-ring suburbs”. The legislation mandated Metro State to enroll at least 50 percent teacher candidates of color with hopes of building a diverse and stable teacher workforce.¹ Today, the UED is accredited by the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) and offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs leading to teacher education licensure in a number of fields.² The mission of UED is to increase the number and percentage of teachers of color or American Indian teachers (TOCAIT) in the Twin Cities metro area, thus providing K-12 students with more equitable access to diverse teachers.

The UED has been committed to prepare and retain highly qualified racially and ethnically diverse teachers for academically and linguistically diverse PreK-12 classrooms in the metro area. Certainly, the number and percentage of TOCAIT enrolled in the UED have been on the increase over the years. Today, majority (52%) of the students enrolled in UED are people of color or American Indian; surpassing the expected enrollment goal of 50 percent teacher candidates of color set by the Legislature in 2000. This milestone has been achieved without continued earmarked program funding from the Legislature, without a dedicated program recruiter, and without implementing admission quotas. Admittedly, UED works in collaboration with community colleges throughout the Twin Cities metro area and several school districts to recruit, prepare, and mentor teachers of color. Of the 31 teacher preparation programs in the state, the Metro State teacher preparation program, though much younger, has grown to become the 13th largest overall teacher preparation program in the state (Table 1). Clearly, UED prepares a significantly higher number and percentage of TOCAIT compared to the top 15 largest teacher preparation programs in the state.

¹ According to the Supply and Demand of Teachers in Minnesota 2021 Biennial Report published by PELSB, there were 6,090 (5.64%) teachers of color and indigenous teachers in the state during the 2019-2020 school year. Data from the Minnesota Department of Education show that in 2020-21, there were 317,173 students of color representing 36 percent of the student population. Of the 40,420 teachers in the Twin Cities Metro Area, 4,886 (12.1%) are teachers of color or Indigenous teachers while 236,325 (48.0%) students in metro area schools are of color or American Indian.

² Current UED majors include: (i) Early Childhood Education, (ii) Elementary Education, with Pre-Primary Endorsement, (iii) Secondary Education - Life/General Sciences, Mathematics, English/Communication Arts & Literature, Social Studies, (iv) English as a Second Language, and (v) Special Education.

Table 1: Top 15 Largest MN Teacher Prep Institutions and Their Enrollment of TOCAIT Candidates³ (2020 Title II Reporting Year, AY18-19)

Program	Total	White	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Pacific Islander	Multi-Racial	Unknown	Total TOCAIT Enrolment	%TOCAIT Enrolment
St. Cloud State	1234	1027	2	38	52	53	0	51	11	207	17%
MN State-Mankato	1132	972	2	27	29	63	0	31	8	160	14%
Winona State	740	681	9	8	7	13	0	13	9	59	8%
U of M - Twin Cities	711	577	1	49	16	36	0	21	11	134	19%
U of M - Duluth	647	599	1	6	13	12	2	8	6	48	7%
Bemidji State	602	568	7	6	7	2	1	8	3	34	6%
MN State-Moorhead	596	561	2	4	4	7	0	11	7	35	6%
Bethel University	492	437	4	17	5	9	3	8	9	55	11%
Luther College	480	441	1	12	11	13	0	2	0	39	8%
Southwest State	416	394	3	6	6	6	1	0	0	22	5%
Hamline University	394	274	0	34	21	17	6	20	22	120	30%
Augsburg College	390	237	2	18	49	16	0	20	48	153	39%
Metropolitan State	389	171	2	49	107	34	0	25	1	218	56%
U of St. Thomas	382	262	1	17	30	10	0	18	44	120	31%
Concordia-St. Paul	287	219	1	25	17	8	0	12	5	68	24%
Sub-Total Top 15	8,892	7,420	38	316	374	299	13	248	184	1,472	17%
Total State	10,576	8,876	39	372	403	357	13	269	227	1,700	16%

³ Data compiled above from publicly reported data in the 2020 Federal Title II Report, in AY2018-19. For this reporting year, there were 1,700 teachers of color and American Indian teacher candidates enrolled across 30 Minnesota teacher preparation programs -- they represented just 16 percent of 10,576 total enrolled candidates in the state yet K-12 students of color and American Indian students represented 38 percent of all students. During FY21, the top 15 teacher preparation programs listed above enrolled 1,700 TOCAIT candidates, about 87 percent of all TOCAIT candidates in the state.

Despite this progress, financial constraints ensure that many teachers of color or American Indian teacher candidates take longer to or simply do not successfully complete their program.⁴ Admittedly, increasing the number of teachers of color requires intentional preparation and hiring, providing ongoing support, and addressing college affordability. To this end, UED prioritizes seeking funding to alleviate the financial constraints that TOCAIT candidates often experience during and prior to student teaching. During FY21, Metropolitan State University was awarded a total of \$288,000 from the Collaborative Urban and Greater MN Educators of Color (CUGMEC) grant program to support efforts to recruit, retain, and induct teacher candidates who are of color or who are American Indian. Money from the grant was used to award tuition scholarships to 180 TOCAIT candidates to cover course credits. In addition to tuition scholarships, a total of 13 TOCAIT candidates who did not receive the state teacher candidate grant or other scholarships were awarded tuition scholarships for all student teaching credits during FY21. Of the 78 teacher candidates who graduated in FY21, 40 were TOCAIT candidates, and all of them graduated after successfully registering for their student teaching. In addition, some of the grant money was used to provide intensive teacher preparation support programs including tutoring support, exam fee vouchers, and other supports to ensure teachers of color successfully complete preparation programs.

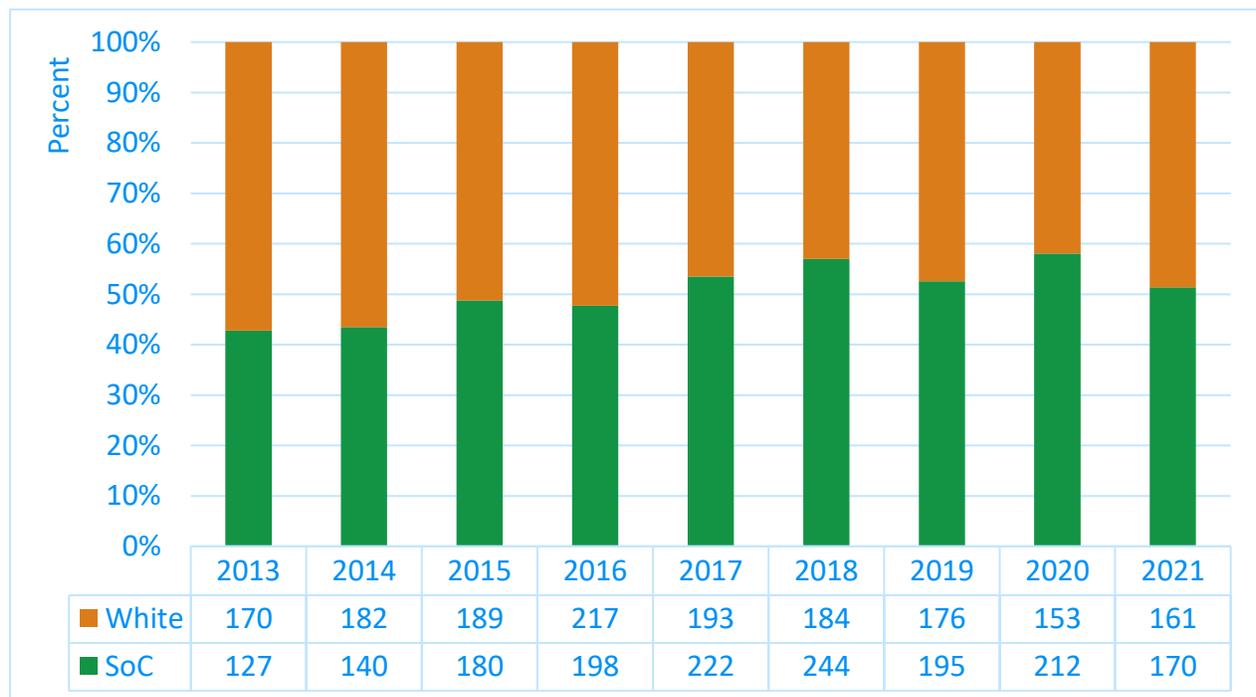
In fall 2021, several partnering school districts included Metro State Urban Teacher Program in their grant applications for Grow Your Own state grants and two of 11 districts receiving grants had Metro State included. In late 2021, the University and UED were excited to get the news of receiving a \$1 million donation from a benefactor to be used over four years to support the recruitment, retention and success of teachers of color in UED. A veteran faculty member was also hired to serve as the next dean of UED starting in January 2022. The unit will now have stability and be able to continue building upon its strengths and successes in making improvements and growth for the future rather than experiencing another challenging transition with leadership. Importantly, legislative support will be key in recruiting and retaining more TOCAIT candidates. Dedicated program funding will support educator preparation programs, among other provisions to address early outreach and preparation. Financial support, community support, and mentorships will be critical in drawing in more educators of color too and in turn, inspire more prospective students to enter the field.

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

⁴ Internal UED data reveal that students of color and American Indian students take longer to complete their programs, assume more debt, and are less likely to engage in unpaid labor by resigning from their paid employment in order to complete the mandatory 12–15-week unpaid full-time student teaching period. Student teaching tuition and fees costs range from \$2,164 (undergraduate) to \$3,522 (graduate), not including required exam and edTPA expenses.

Enrollment: Over the years, the number and percentage of students of color enrolled in the program has been on the increase. As shown in Figure 1, much of this growth has largely been experienced among teacher candidates of color or American Indian. The number of students of color increased from 127 in 2013 to 212 in 2020. During academic year 2020-21, we had 170 students of color or American Indian candidates taking the required coursework ranging from content and methods classes to student teaching (a 34% increase since 2012-13) and they represent about 52 percent of all teacher candidates enrolled in the program. Using CUGMEC grant monies, UED has been able to provide direct support in form of tuition scholarships covering at least 6 credits each to all fully admitted and enrolled UED teacher candidates of color or American Indian teacher candidates prior to student teaching. In addition to the tuition scholarship, a total of 18 TOCAIT candidates who did not receive the FY21 Office of Higher Education (OHE) student teaching grant were awarded tuition scholarships using CUGMEC funds to cover the cost of all student teaching credits. In part because of the CUGMEC grant, the number of TOCAIT candidates slightly increased from 195 in 2019 to 212 in 2020, but declined to 170 in 2021 possibly because of Covid-19. Despite the overall increased enrollments over the years, the UED is currently facing declining enrolment, more so in the mathematics and science licensure programs.

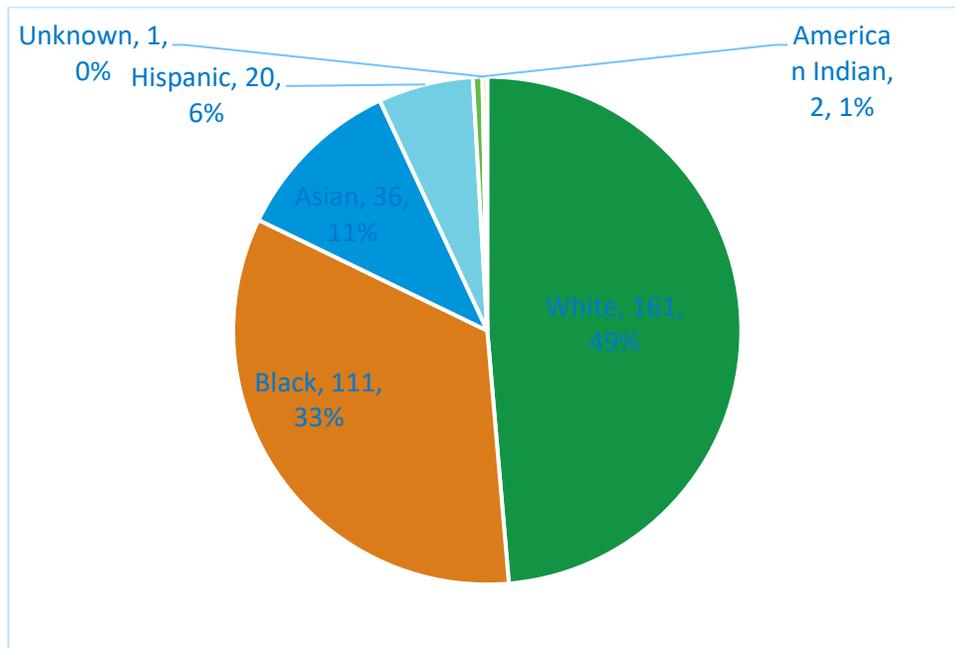
Figure 1: UED Student Enrollment Trends Comparing SoC and Whites, FY14-21



Clearly, UED has maintained a healthy enrollment of students of color or American Indian students over the last decade. Figure 2 shows the number and percentage of

students of color admitted and enrolled in UED in FY21. With minimal scholarship support, UED has attracted historically underrepresented groups including Latinos, Black/African Americans, American Indians, and Asians. Today, a majority (52%) of the students enrolled in the UED are people of color or American Indian. However, a near-term issue is with uncertainty in enrollment outcomes following the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic compounded existing struggles and added new hurdles for aspiring educators culminating in a declined enrollment.

Figure 2: Primary Ethnicity of Students Enrolled in UED AY 2020-2021 (n=331)

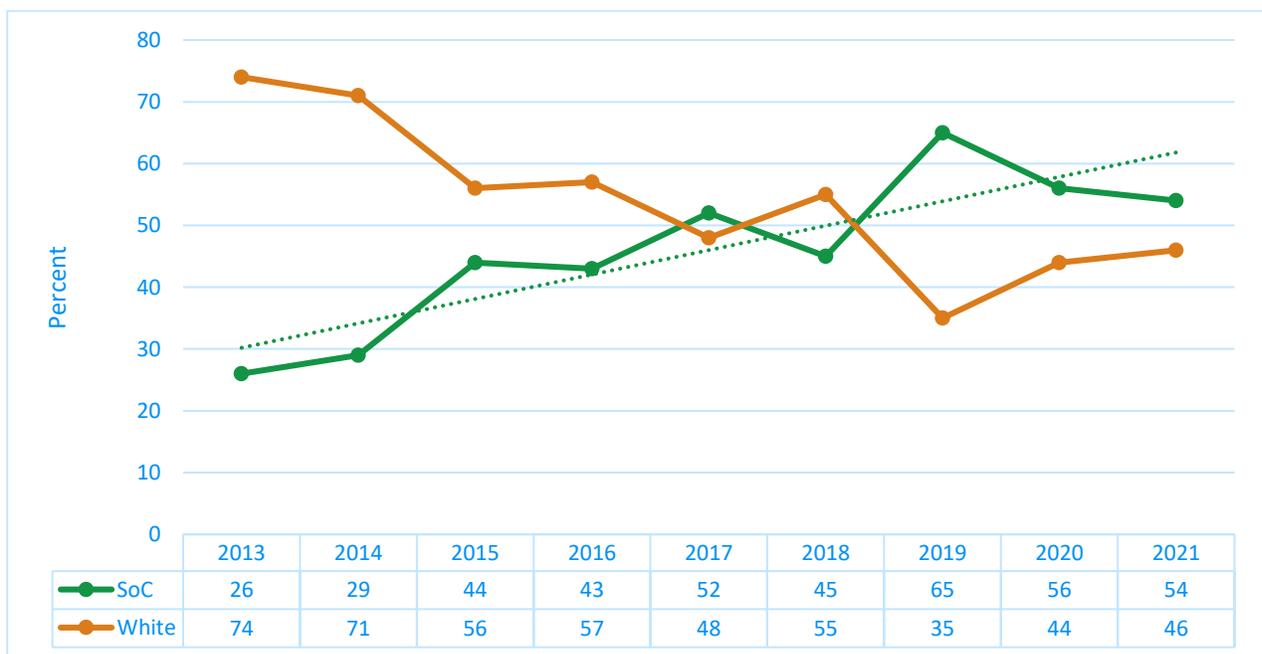


Nonetheless, the UED has implemented a number of support practices to retain diverse candidates including, (i) *Early intrusive advising*: professional academic advisors, preview days & admission orientation; (ii) *Continuous intrusive advising*: faculty advisors, academic standing automated reports and early alert system, and required Progress Checks 1 & 2; (iii) *Culturally responsive curriculum*: start with pre-professional coursework before admission, including policy that student complete an Ethnic Studies course for admission; (iv) *Academic support*: Write to Teach initiative, test preparation for MN NES Essential Academic Skills exams, new SET initiative (“Success Engagement Team”); (v) *Financial support*: CUGMEC, university and foundation scholarships, OHE grant; and (vi) *Data Analysis*: Always looking at data from admission to completion with a racial/ethnic lens to ensure we are reaching our goals and closing opportunity gaps.

Student Teaching: Prospective teacher candidates in Minnesota must complete a degree at an approved teacher preparation school, gain field experiences and complete student

teaching under a teacher licensed in the field the candidate is seeking licensure. All UED licensure programs incorporate a wide range of ongoing field experiences for teacher candidates to hone skills and knowledge required in the SEPs. Increasingly, the number of TOCAIT candidates who complete student teaching has been on the increasing trend (Figure 3) because of financial support provided. However, the sudden decline in the number of candidates who completed their student teaching was occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic.⁵ Students were affected by limited access to technology and Wi-Fi networks as college pivoted to remote learning because of COVID-19. Of the 53 teacher candidates who successfully completed student teaching requirement for licensure during the academic year, 29 (54%) were students of color or American Indian. Thus, we have closed the achievement gap of program completion that troubled UED for years as disparate percentages of TOCAIT candidates could not afford to student teach at the end of their academic studies. Most remarkably, of the 29 TOCAIT candidates who successfully completed their program in 2020-2021, a total of 18 who did not receive the OHE student teaching grant were awarded tuition scholarships through the CUGMEC grant for all their student teaching credits.

Figure 3: UED Program Completers by Race as a Percent (%) (FY14–21)

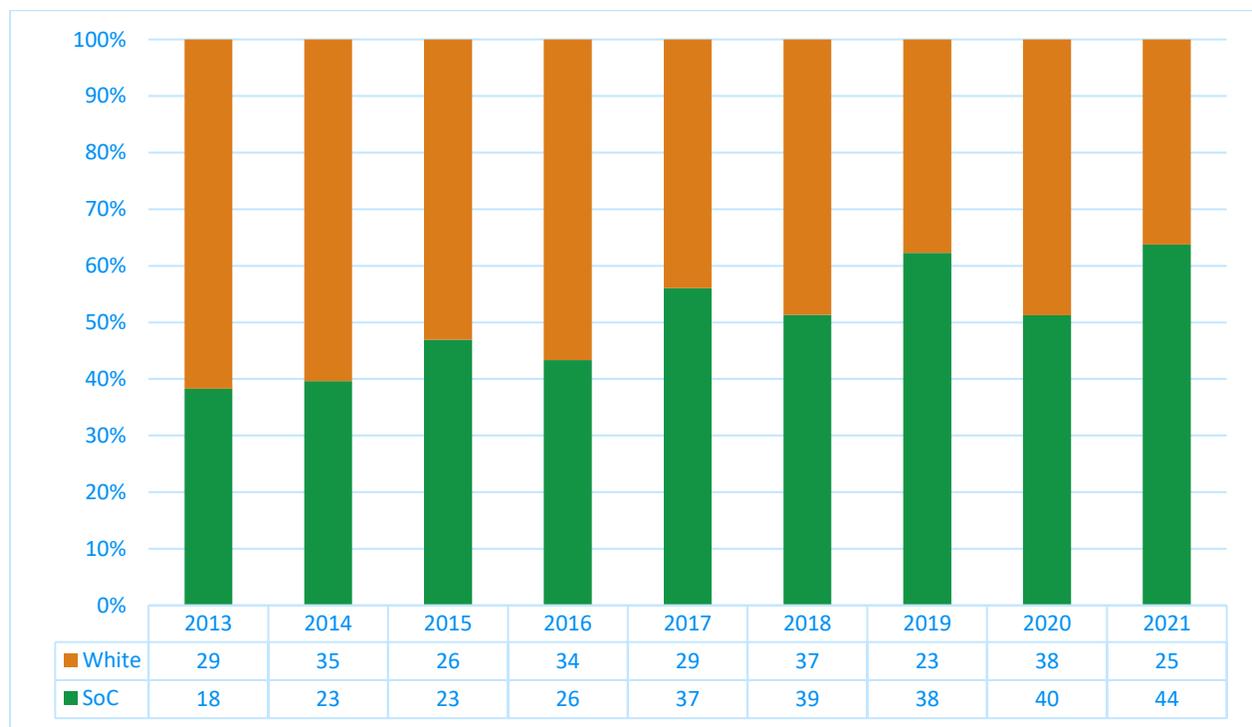


Graduated: In order to graduate, UED teacher candidates in early childhood, elementary and special education must complete required coursework, practicum

⁵ The closure of the K-12 learning institutions to contain the spread of COVID-19 greatly interrupted student teaching; teacher candidates were not able to fulfil their in-person practicum requirements as student-teachers in schools or complete their edTPA portfolios.

experiences and student teaching while earning a minimum GPA in content and professional education coursework. Secondary candidates may either complete licensure requirements at the undergraduate level with their content major or at the graduate level after earning a bachelor's degree in their content area designed for teaching. The number of TOCAIT candidates who have graduated from UED has been growing steadily over the years (Figure 4). Notably, the number of teacher candidates of color who graduated from the program has marginally increased for the past three years. Of the 69 teacher candidates who graduated with a degree in urban teaching in FY21, 44 were TOCAIT candidates, and all of them graduated after successfully registering for their student teaching.

Figure 4: Numbers of UED Graduates by Race, FY13-21)

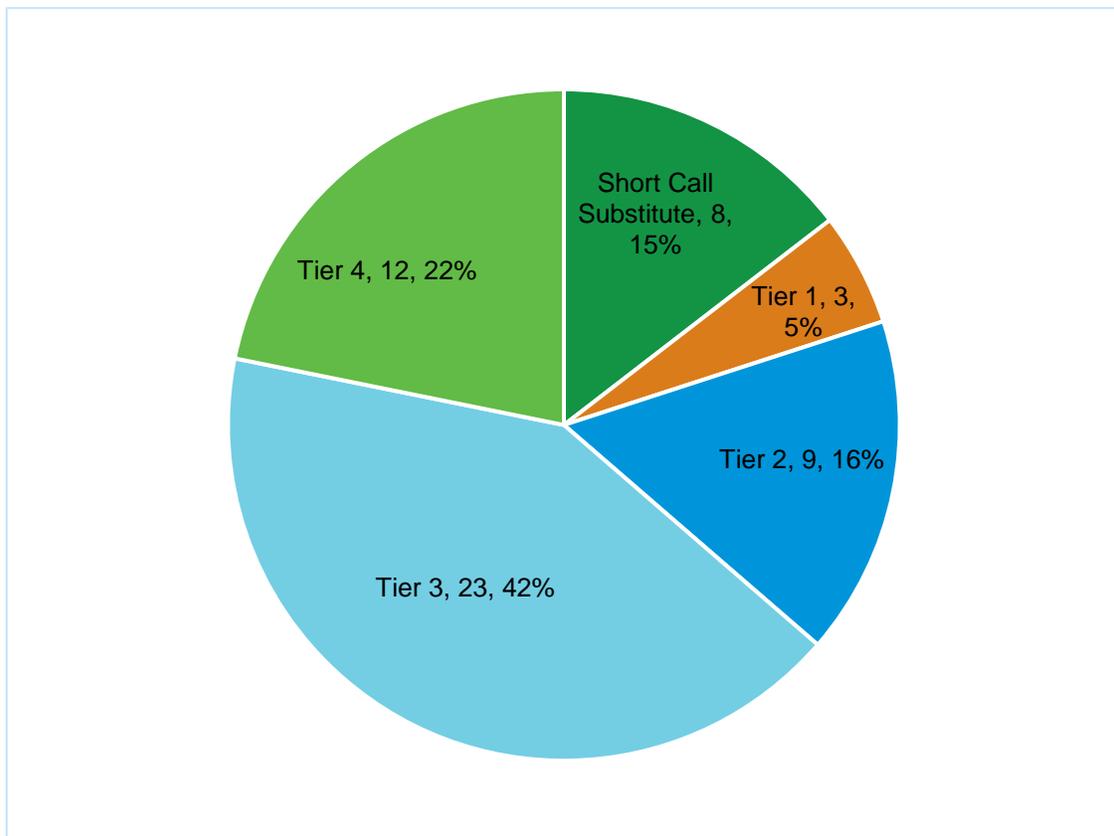


Licensed: Teacher candidates obtain their teacher licensure after successfully completing student teaching, submitting an edTPA portfolio for scoring and passing the Minnesota Teacher Licensing Examinations (MTLE). The UED offers support to students to ensure they pass their licensure exams.⁶ During academic year 2020-2021, a number of teacher

⁶ Starting Spring 2018, Metropolitan State University partnered with Augsburg University to offer an intensive mathematics tutoring session to help students prepare and pass the National Evaluation Series (NES) math subtest, which is needed to receive a Tier 4 teaching license in Minnesota. The foci of the free 8-week intensive NES mathematics test prep sessions was: (i) to enhance participants' knowledge of the mathematics concepts that are covered in the NES mathematics subtest, (ii) exam taking skills and strategies, and (iii) to acclimate the participants to the NES mathematics subtest itself. Since then, we have not focused on the skills exams because those are no longer required for initial teaching licensure. Instead, during Fall 2020, UED built a website and offered six tutoring sessions to support the elementary education majors to take

candidates were not able to take their MTLE Content and Pedagogy exams as test centers were closed following the spread of Covid-19. Because of logistical challenges posed by Covid-19, PELSB issued a discretionary variance⁷ on licensure application requirements for teacher candidates completing student teaching in the 2020-21 school year. These variance changes in licensure application requirements resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of teacher candidates who applied and obtained their Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 teacher licensure in FY21 (Figure 5). Overall, the number of teacher candidates of color who obtained their licensure more than tripled, increasing from fourteen (14) in FY16 to more than fifty-one (51) in FY21, accounting for more than a 300 percent increase.

Figure 5: Number and Percent of Newly Licensed Teachers, FY21 by License Scope.

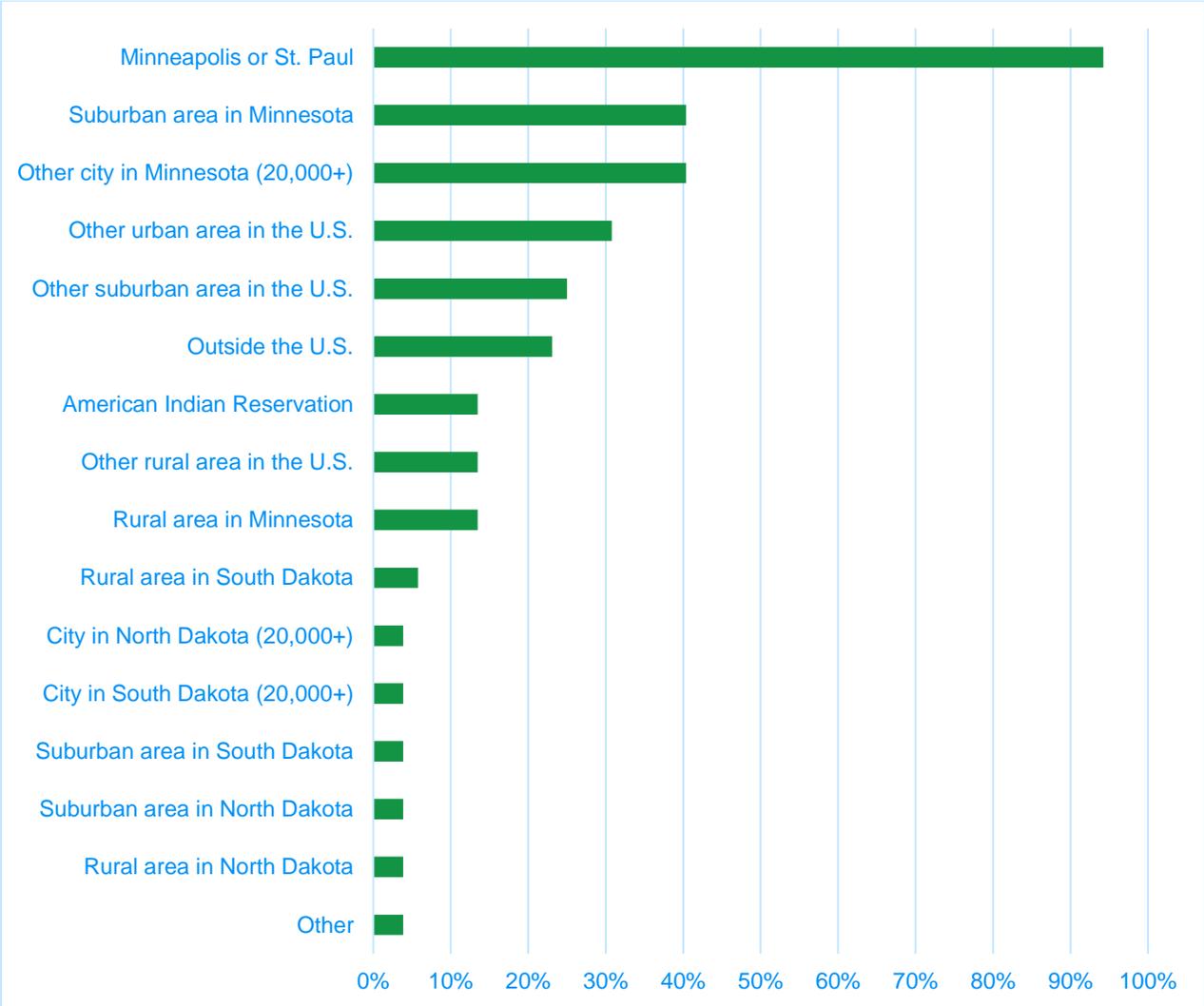


and pass the MTLE content tests. We have contracted and worked with Study.com to provide free practice tests to all candidates in all licensure areas.

⁷ Teacher candidates were not required to complete the edTPA, those who have not yet taken the required examinations could be licensed as a Tier 2 teachers if have a job offer with a Minnesota public or charter school, and those currently applying for a Tier 3 license must take and pass the appropriate MTLEs in content and pedagogy. In lieu of the edTPA, PELSB authorized teacher preparation providers to complete a teacher performance assessment for each student-teacher that includes components of planning, instruction, and assessment.

Newly Employed: Most of the UED teacher candidates who obtain their licensure before the start of the school year get employed within the Twin Cities metro area schools. Data from PELSB show that of the 96 teacher candidates who were awarded either an initial license or added another license during the 2020-2021 academic year, 36 were employed as teacher on record during the 2020-21 school year. *More than two thirds (72%) of those employed during the 2020-21 school year were teacher candidates of color or American Indian.* This notwithstanding, we know that most of our newly licensed teachers end up becoming employed in learning institutions within the Twin Cities metro area. According to exit survey results of the 2020-2021 teacher graduates, a great majority of the UED teacher candidates plan to seek employment within the Twin Cities metro area, followed by the suburban area in Minnesota and other cities in Minnesota (Figure 6).

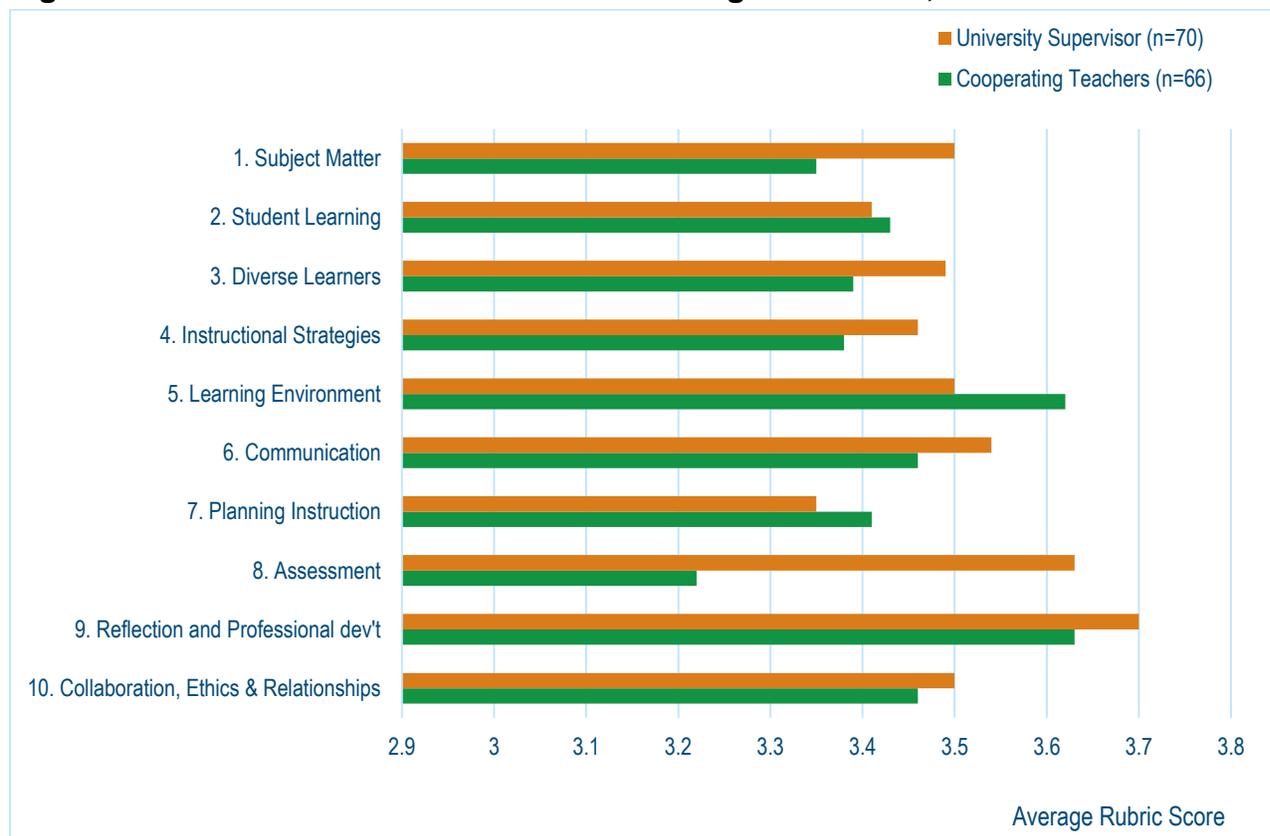
Figure 6: Where would you consider Teaching? (n=52)



EVALUATION OF STUDENT TEACHERS BY COOPERATING TEACHERS AND UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS

Minnesota teacher candidates are required to demonstrate mastery of teaching practice standards relating to knowledge, skills, and dispositions. These standards are embedded in teacher education coursework, practicum placement, and student teaching. At the conclusion of the student teaching experience, the cooperating teacher and university supervisor evaluate the student teacher's performance in the classroom using a four-point rating scale - (1) lacking, (2) emerging, (3) proficient and (4) exemplary. During the 2020-2021 academic year, both cooperating teachers and university supervisors rated the student teachers' teaching skills as proficient on average across the ten standards of effective practice (SEPs) (Figure 7). Overall, average rubric scores by university supervisors were higher compared to those of cooperating teachers in all the SEPs except two: Student Learning (standard 2) and Learning Environment (standard 5). On the other hand, the largest differences in average rubric scores between cooperating teachers and university supervisors were related to Subject Matter (standard 1) and Assessment (standard 8), and these are the areas for further continuous improvement.

Figure 7: Overall Evaluation of Student Teaching Candidates, 2020-2021.



FEEDBACK FROM PROGRAM GRADUATES

Given the Covid-19 challenge experienced by school personnel, UED did implement the Exit Survey but not the Transition to Teaching Survey (TTS) and Employer Surveys during academic year 2020-2021. Results from the exit survey of graduating candidates across all teaching majors indicate the quality of the program is rated highly. Figure 8 shows the rating of the basic performance skills that students gained from the program. A combined majority of the graduating students (more than 95%) “agree” or “tend to agree” that the program equipped them with adequate skills to:

- (a) create a learning environment in which differences such as race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, and language are respected,
- (b) develop and maintain a classroom environment that promotes student engagement,
- (c) help students develop critical thinking processes,
- (d) effectively teach students from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds and communities,
- (e) regularly adjust instructional plans to meet students' needs,
- (f) select instructional strategies to align with learning goals and standards,
- (g) use formative and summative assessments to inform instructional practice,
- (h) use effective communication skills and strategies to convey ideas and information to students,
- (i) provide students with meaningful feedback to guide next steps in learning,
- (j) Differentiate instruction for a variety of learning needs,
- (k) collaborate with parents and guardians to support student learning,
- (l) effectively teach the subject matter in my licensure area, and
- (m) help students develop skills to solve complex problems.

The high rating indicates that UED teacher candidates are taught by outstanding faculty and learn to practice teaching under the mentorship of highly qualified cooperating teachers in our partner schools across the metro area. Areas with large room for improvement include;

- (i) differentiating instruction for gifted and talented students,
 - (ii) designing long-range instructional plans that meet curricular goals, and
 - (iii) differentiating instruction for students with IEPs and 504 plans.
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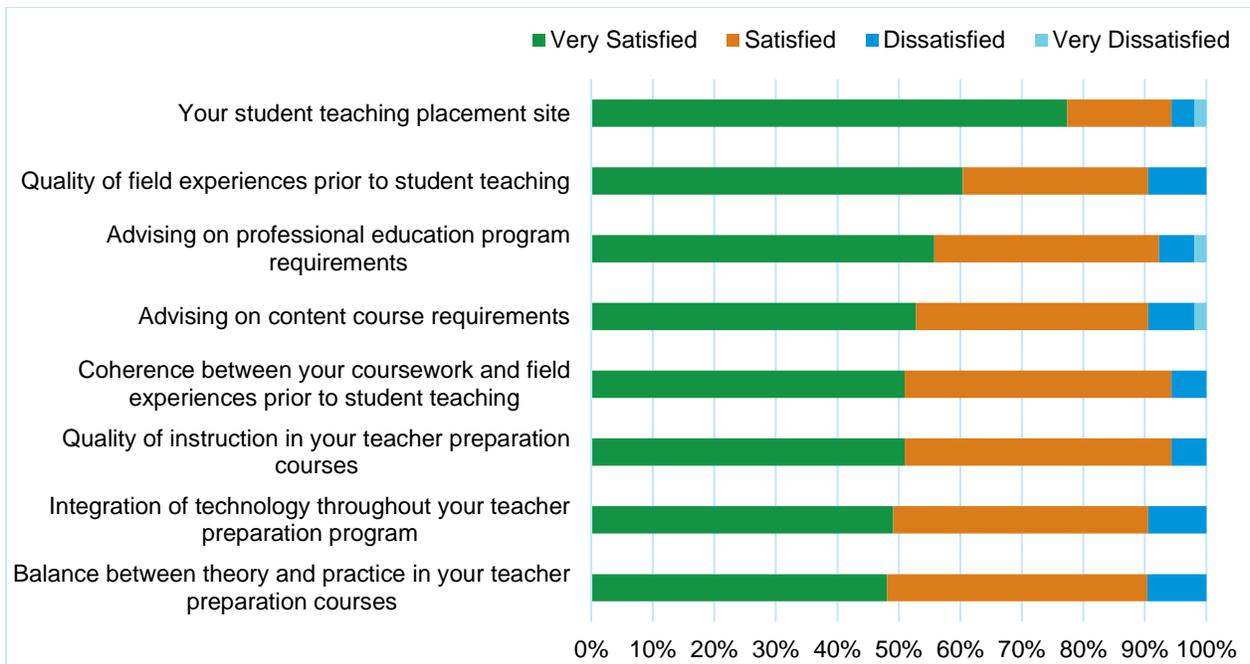
Figure 8: Evaluation of UED Program by Graduating Students (n=53)



STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN THE PROGRAM

The UED places a greater priority on the experience of students not only to ensure they graduate but to also have an engaged and active student base that becomes energized advocates of the program and alumni. Graduating students from the program are required to take the exit survey to assess the student's perceptions of the quality of the student learning and program effectiveness. Survey results are used for program planning. A total of 53 students who graduated from UED in 2020-21 completed the exit survey. Figure 9 shows respondent ratings on eight domains. Overall, a combined majority (90% or more) of the students reported that they were either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the quality of the program across the eight domains. More than 50 percent of the respondents indicated that they were "very satisfied" with the student teaching placement sites, quality of field practicums prior to student teaching, student advising, coherence between coursework and field practicums, and quality of instruction in EDU prefix courses. Broadly speaking, a high percentage of graduating students rating UED as effective in preparing students in each of these areas speaks to a well-designed curriculum, effective teaching practices, and quality of student services offered. The areas in which the graduating students most likely expect the UED to increase its emphasis are integration of technology into the program, balancing theory and practice in courses, quality of instruction as well as academic and professional advising.

Figure 9: How satisfied were you with the following aspects of your Teacher Preparation Program? (n=53)



On the other hand, the graduating students were asked if they would recommend their teacher preparation program to another prospective teacher. *An overwhelming majority (93%) of the respondents indicated that they would recommend the School of Urban Education to a friend or colleague interested in becoming a teacher.* The high expression of confidence in the program is a key pointer that UED effectively produces high-quality educators who enter the classroom well prepared to improve student learning and contribute toward narrowing achievement gaps for historically underserved students. Below are a sample of verbatim students' reasons for recommending UED to prospective teacher candidates:

- Because all the teachers were very helpful.
- All of my advisors were pleasant to work with. Also, this education program really aims to prepare teacher candidates on how to teach students of color.
- Great teachers that help you step by step.
- The urban education program focuses on creating an inclusive classroom for all students and families.
- Great experience with students who look like me.
- Student teaching is a wonderful experience. I have learned a lot. Metropolitan is a valuable school.

- I like the diverse approach to learning that Metro always tries to put in place. We are all working to improve, but at least they try.
- I would recommend the Metro State program because it is flexible, community based & affordable.
- Diverse and adaptable to a working schedule
- All of the staff and professors are amazing.
- It is a great program that focus in Urban learners.
- The cultural competency offered in this program was unlike any other.
- It is very affordable and diverse.
- Affordable program dedicated to improving urban education.
- Because teacher education program at Metro provide adequate teaching/learning strategies and resources.
- Overall, I had a good experience with professors and field experience the thing that makes it is the student body even though there is no cohort you learn from a wide range of prospective teachers and I also like that faculty are or have been teachers.
- The program is amazing, it relates to what is happening now in our world. I love that we learn from a multicultural perspective and that we learn how to actively be an anti-racist teacher.
- Metropolitan State University does an amazing job equipping teachers with the skills to be culturally responsive educators!
- This is a great program! I love that the program really supports students regardless of where they are coming from.
- Affordable, flexible, and focused on Urban students and learning.
- The cooperating teacher that I taught with was flexible and supportive.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Program Strengths

- The number and percentage of students of color or American Indian enrolled in the UED have been on the increase when compared to enrollments in teacher
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preparation programs at private and public colleges and universities within the state.

- Through concerted efforts, UED has been slowly closing the graduation and licensure gap between students of color or American Indian students and white students.
 - The diversity of the student body readily provides an environment that prepares teachers to work with ALL learners, not just those white, middle-class children for whom our schools were built.
 - The focus on urban education, and the consistency throughout the program.
 - The cost is more affordable than most institutions
 - The predominance of evening course scheduling is accommodating to working individuals, parents, etc.
 - Majority of faculty and support staff are people of color from a variety of racial and ethnic groups and with diverse backgrounds, but are also very knowledgeable, encouraging and informative and provide a hands-on aspect of the teaching program.
 - Early and ongoing field experiences including Student Teaching only in urban settings is another strength of the program. Practicum and Student teaching experiences provide teacher candidates with opportunities to learn about teaching and help reduce anxiety among those entering the profession in what are often challenging school environments. Cooperating teachers help teacher candidates to apply their theoretical knowledge into practice and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses before they start the teaching profession.
 - Because of its diverse student population, the program has attracted grant funding. Recently, UED was awarded the Collaborative Urban and Greater MN Educators of Color (CUGMEC) grant to support efforts to recruit, retain, and induct teacher candidates who are of color or who are American Indian. All TOCAIT students were awarded tuition scholarship to cover for enrolled credits. In addition to tuition scholarships, candidates who did not receive the state teacher candidate grant were awarded tuition scholarships for all student teaching credits. At the end of 2021, UED also received a generous \$1 million donation from a benefactor to support TOCAIT recruitment, retention and program completion. Furthermore, several school districts have written Metro State's School of Urban Education into their applications for Grow Your Own (GYO) state grants as the place for their BIPOC non-licensed staff to earn licensure.
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Way Forward

Metropolitan State University and the UED have made a concerted effort to attract, prepare and retain an increasing number and percentage of teachers of color and American Indian teacher candidates. Today, UED is under immense pressure to increase enrollment, manage costs, and maintain growth—all while enrollments in education courses and programs are plummeting throughout the state. Developing and implementing policies for sustained support systems for the UED will go a long way to increase the number and percentage of teachers of color and American Indian teacher candidates thus ensuring all students within the Twin Cities metro area have more equitable access to effective and racially and ethnically diverse teachers who reflect the diversity of students. In the end, state policy changes and increased investments that support teacher preparation programs and their respective teacher candidates who are of color and American Indian are needed to establish a more engaging context where all learning environments can better support student teachers and colleges of education on the pathway to developing a more collaborative schooling environment.



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