

# Delaware Educator Snapshot

A Glimpse into How Delaware is Building a Stronger,  
More Diverse Educator Workforce

Spring, 2025

**Rodel**

A GREAT EDUCATION  
CHANGES EVERYTHING



## Why Diversity Matters

A more diverse educator workforce leads to better student outcomes, like higher academic achievement, access to advanced coursework, and strong social-emotional support for all students.

## The Problem

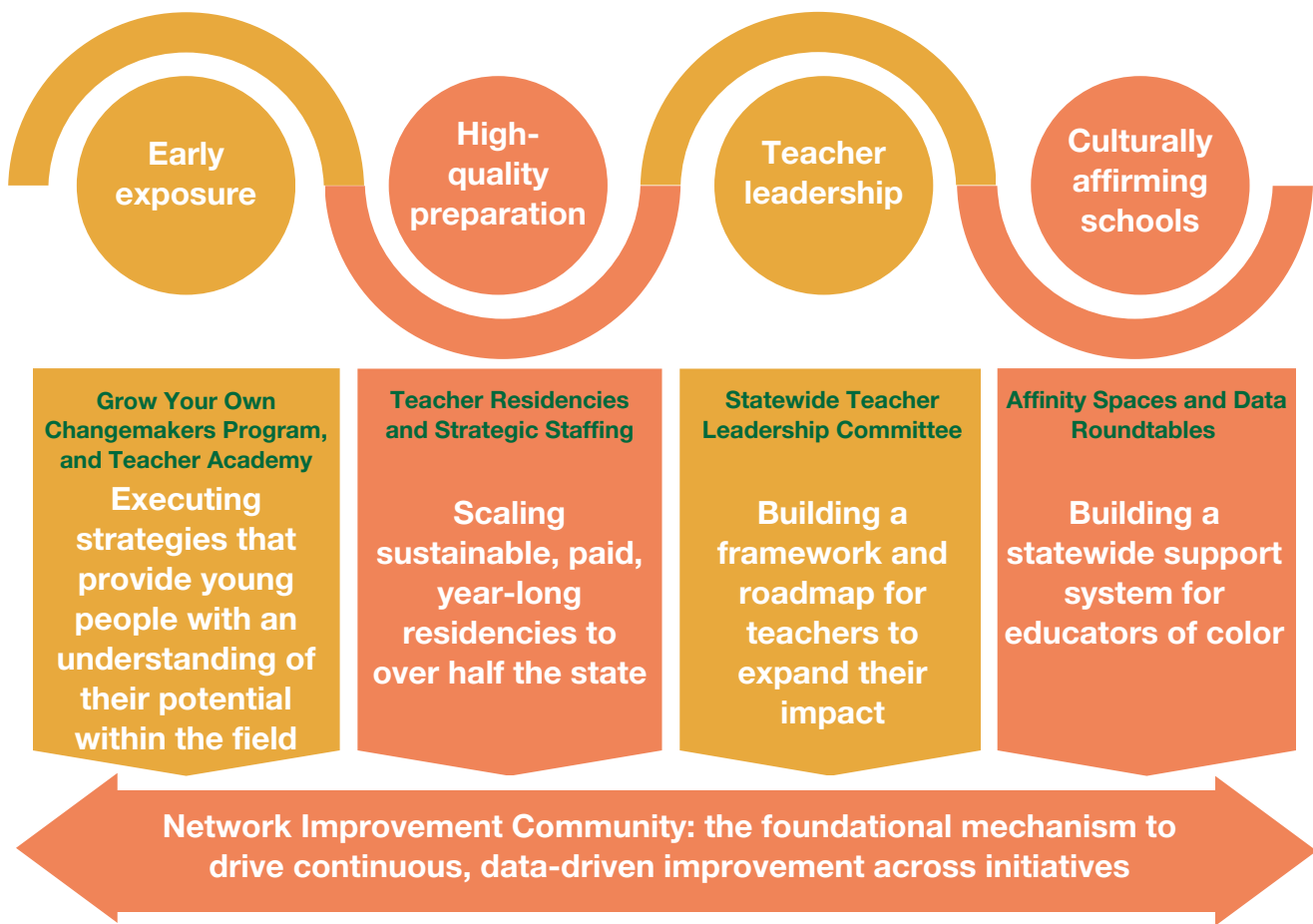
Delaware is facing a pressing challenge in teacher recruitment and retention. Many schools are understaffed, and nearly half of all new teachers leave the profession within their first five years. This issue is particularly acute among teachers of color. While over 50 percent of Delaware's student population identifies as students of color, only 20 percent of the teaching workforce reflects that diversity. Moreover, approximately 70 percent of teachers of color exit the profession within their first five years, often citing challenging working conditions, inadequate leadership support, and limited opportunities for career advancement as primary factors influencing their decision to leave the classroom.

## How We Work

Rodel is working to address this challenge through a comprehensive, four-pronged theory of action aimed at building a strong educator workforce that mirrors the diversity of Delaware's student population. Research shows that a more diverse teaching workforce benefits all students and strengthens the profession by bringing varied perspectives, enhancing cultural competency, and fostering more inclusive learning environments. In partnership with districts and educator preparation programs, Rodel supports strategies to advance educator diversity at every stage of the pipeline—from early exposure to the profession to the creation of culturally affirming school environments where all educators are supported and can thrive.

## Building the Pathway to a Diverse Educator Workforce

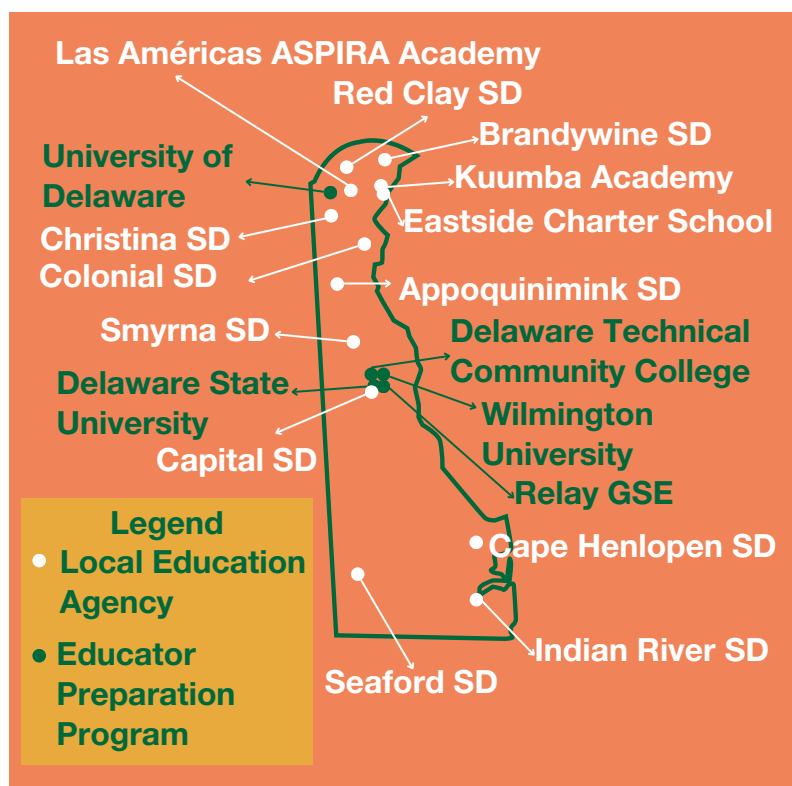
For each strategy in our theory of action, we have implemented targeted initiatives designed to recruit and retain educators of color, ensuring meaningful impact at every stage of the educator pipeline.



## Where We Are Working

Rodel is working to diversify Delaware's educator workforce by supporting and convening Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) across the state. We believe that by expanding early exposure to the teaching profession, developing a statewide network of high-quality teacher residency programs, scaling opportunities for teacher leadership, and building a community committed to advancing cultural competency, Delaware can cultivate a teaching workforce that reflects the diversity of its students.

Ultimately, a more diverse and well-supported educator workforce will not only strengthen the profession—it will transform student experiences and improve outcomes for all learners.



## Early Exposure Matters

Research shows that the earlier young people are exposed to the teaching profession and the impact teaching has on their communities, the higher likelihood they will pursue it as a profession. Unfortunately, many students—especially students of color—do not consider teaching until well after their postsecondary education is complete. Rodel is working with partners across the state to create opportunities for students of color to see themselves in the profession while earning college credits. The goal is to grow the number of high school and college students interested in pursuing education as a career. The Changemakers Program and the Teacher Academy are two different programs that expose students earlier.

## Grow Your Own Changemakers Program

The Changemakers Program, sponsored by Rodel in collaboration with Delaware State University (DSU), offers high school students the unique opportunity to engage in college-level coursework. This innovative program is designed to deepen their understanding of the education system, school operations, and the daily realities faced by teachers. Through a thoughtfully crafted curriculum, students develop critical thinking skills and explore how educators are making a meaningful impact on the world. By partnering with DSU, the program aims to equip future educators with the tools to reimagine and enhance the

educational landscape, grounded in the core principles of DSU's Teacher Education Program conceptual framework: diversity, interpersonal communication, reflection, effective teaching, content knowledge, and technology.

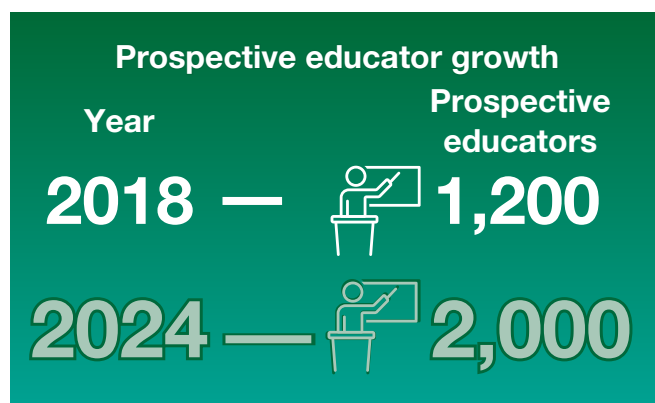


**“[The Changemakers] course has taught me independence, individuality, and leadership. I look forward to pursuing teaching in the long run.”**

**~10th grade student, Sussex Technical High School**

## Teacher Academy

The high school Teacher Academy pathway is a state-approved career and technical education program that provides an early opportunity for young people to explore and engage in opportunities to begin their path into the education profession. Students in this pathway learn how educators make an impact in their community while earning college credit and gaining hands-on experience in the PK-12 education system.



## High-Quality Preparation



High-quality preparation is key to retaining teachers in the classroom. Traditional certification pathways often include just six weeks of student teaching, leaving many new educators underprepared. In contrast, year-long teacher residencies offer immersive, hands-on experience that leads to stronger classroom readiness, greater teacher diversity, and higher retention. However, these residencies are often unpaid, creating barriers for many aspiring teachers.

To address this, the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) and Rodel are co-leading a statewide effort to make teacher residencies more accessible and sustainable. Together, they have partnered with nine school districts to develop paid, year-long residency programs that align with a strategic staffing model. This approach reallocates existing school resources to fund residents while addressing the schools' most pressing instructional needs. As a result, approximately 75 percent of residents are now participating in paid residencies—strengthening Delaware's teacher pipeline and helping ensure every student has access to a well-prepared educator.

**"I'm proof that it works. And the teachers that you've been able to keep from these residencies, they're better prepared. They feel more supported and your students are going to benefit from it in the end."**

**~Tameka Wingo, teacher, New Castle Elementary School**

**There has been 150% Growth in teacher residencies across Delaware**

**2018 —  40 teacher residents**  
**2024 —  100 teacher residents**  
**Of these**  
**75+ teacher residents**

**Were paid yearlong teacher residency positions across 9 districts**

## Teacher Leadership

Teachers are often asked to take on more roles in their schools on top of their teaching responsibilities, and many times, without additional compensation. We also know this is particularly true for teachers of color, who are often asked to take on additional responsibilities, serve on committees, or be default leaders without additional pay, compensation, or recognition. With support from the DDOE, Rodel has worked with a dedicated group of 18 teachers to develop a set of recommendations to drive future state investments and policies to support teacher leadership statewide.

**"Leading with cultural responsiveness is the responsibility of all leadership roles in schools, not just those typically thought of at the top."**

**– Rodel Teacher Network Working Group**





### Culturally Affirming Schools

As Delaware confronts a growing teacher shortage, prioritizing retention strategies that uplift and empower educators—especially educators of color—is essential. Creating strong, culturally affirming school environments where all students, teachers, and communities feel valued is key to addressing this challenge. At Rodel, we are building on national best practices by:

- Partnering with districts statewide to establish affinity spaces that foster belonging and support for educators with shared identities.
- Training educators within each district as affinity space facilitators, providing leadership opportunities and co-creating solutions to common challenges.
- Convening LEA and EPP partners twice a year for data roundtables, where we analyze recruitment and retention trends and develop equity-centered action plans to cultivate welcoming and affirming school communities.

By investing in these strategies, we aim to create environments where educators and students alike feel empowered to thrive.

Growth in educators trained to facilitate affinity spaces

2022-23 — 17

2023-24 — 31

2024-25 — 67

“A lot of times as a teacher, I feel like I’m on my island. I often think I’m the only one that has to juggle the mental health of my students, my mental health, and serious social issues because of the gaps of service in the community. Teaching is a job of service, so I’m constantly trying to figure out, how do I teach the whole child? And if I’m doing that in a silo, it’s extremely draining. This is why affinity groups are so necessary because educators come together in a specific time, space, and format to be heard and supported to create equitable policies.”

~Alena Warner-Chisolm, Stanton Middle School educator and  
Red Clay affinity group leader

Visit <https://rodelde.org/report/educator-support-and-development> for more Educator Support and Development Reports

Follow us on socials | Facebook: @Rodel | Instagram: @rodel.delaware | X: @RodelDE