

A green-tinted photograph of a classroom where several students are seated at desks and have their hands raised, indicating an active learning environment. The image serves as the background for the top half of the page.

Delaware's Pathway to Teach

Findings and
Recommendations

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY

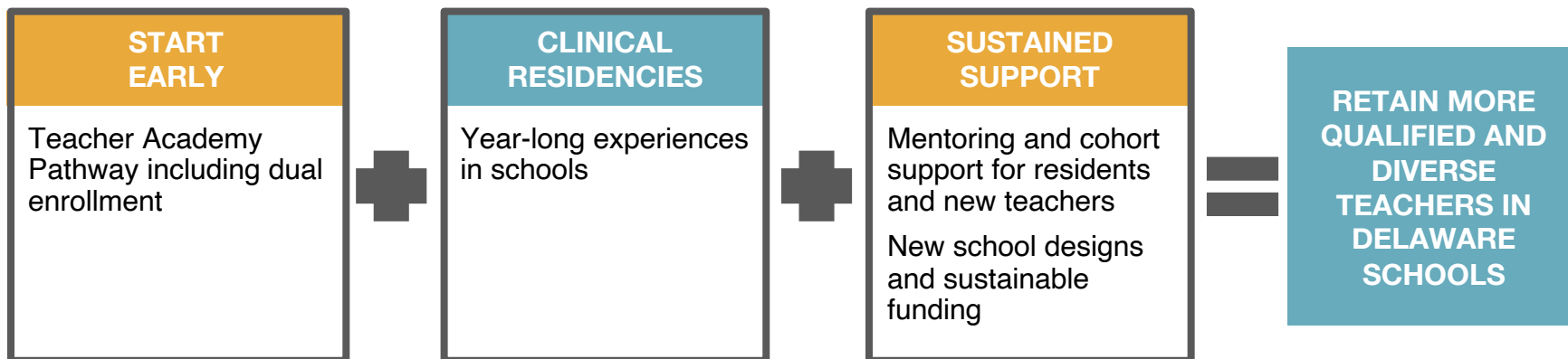
Teacher Preparation
Collaboration

Project Overview

This research project charts the pathway to becoming a teacher in Delaware – beginning in middle school through hiring – and recommends how to improve it.

It's part of a larger collaboration among Delaware state, districts, teacher preparation programs, and funders. The project aims to catalyze action in 2020-22 to achieve and sustain the following goals:

- Dramatically increase the teachers of color in the pipeline and their retention in the profession
- Catalyze statewide change in Delaware that can inform national conversation



Research was conducted between January and May 2020 and included interviews and focus groups, document and data review, and national benchmarking. Findings and recommendations from Delaware teachers, school counselors, teacher candidates, high school students and their families, district and state staff, and institutions of higher education.



Dr. Kerri Kerr, President and Founder of Sage Education Advisors, served as the lead researcher for the project.

Partners

DELAWARE SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERS



DELAWARE EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS



SUPPORTING PARTNERS



Why Focus on the Pathway to Becoming a Teacher?

Despite some progress, Delaware struggles to hire and retain high-quality teachers—especially teachers of color. By improving the steps along the way to becoming a teacher, we improve recruitment and hiring—and complement with retention-focused efforts.

KEY CHALLENGES:

Opportunities to “start young” (middle school and high school) are varied and can be expensive

Few targeted strategies and programming to attract students of color

Confusion about opportunities + little marketing to raise student awareness and inspiration in teaching careers

Burgeoning Teacher Academy Pathway: only 40% of students report they plan to obtain a teaching certificate + opportunities to strengthen programming and accelerate achievement

Current State of Hiring Teachers in Delaware

Challenges Likely Exacerbated By Covid-19 Context

Hardest to Staff Areas ("shortages")

High school math, foreign language, special education, middle school and high school science, and substitutes

Easiest to Staff Areas (but recently more challenging)

Elementary, physical education, early childhood, English/language arts, and social science

New teachers tend to seek employment near where they grew up or went to college

79% of teachers who grew up in Delaware also rated Delaware as their first-choice teaching destination

56% of teachers who attended college in Delaware also rated staying in Delaware as their top choice

Recruitment

Primarily from local universities—the top being University of Delaware and Wilmington University

Limited pool, particularly for racially diverse candidates

17% of new teacher hires in 2019-20 entered teaching through an **alternative route to certification**

Delaware's Current Teacher Force Does Not Reflect the Diversity of the Student Body

CURRENT CHALLENGES

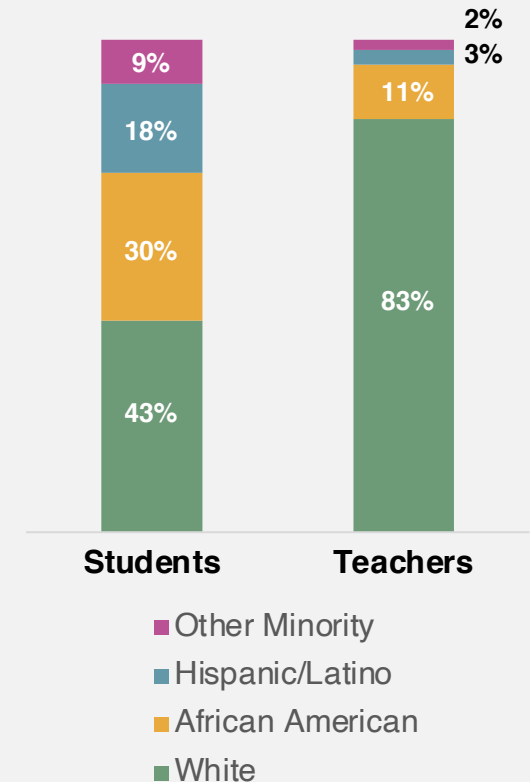
- **56% of Delaware's students identify as students of color compared to only 17% of teachers**
- **Retention rates for Teachers of Color (TOC) are lower than other teachers**
 - After 2 years of teaching, Delaware retains only 50% TOC in the same school and 70% in the state (about 10 percentage points lower than non-TOC)
- **67% of high school teacher academy students statewide are not sure or unwilling to teach in their current district**

SIGNS OF PROMISE

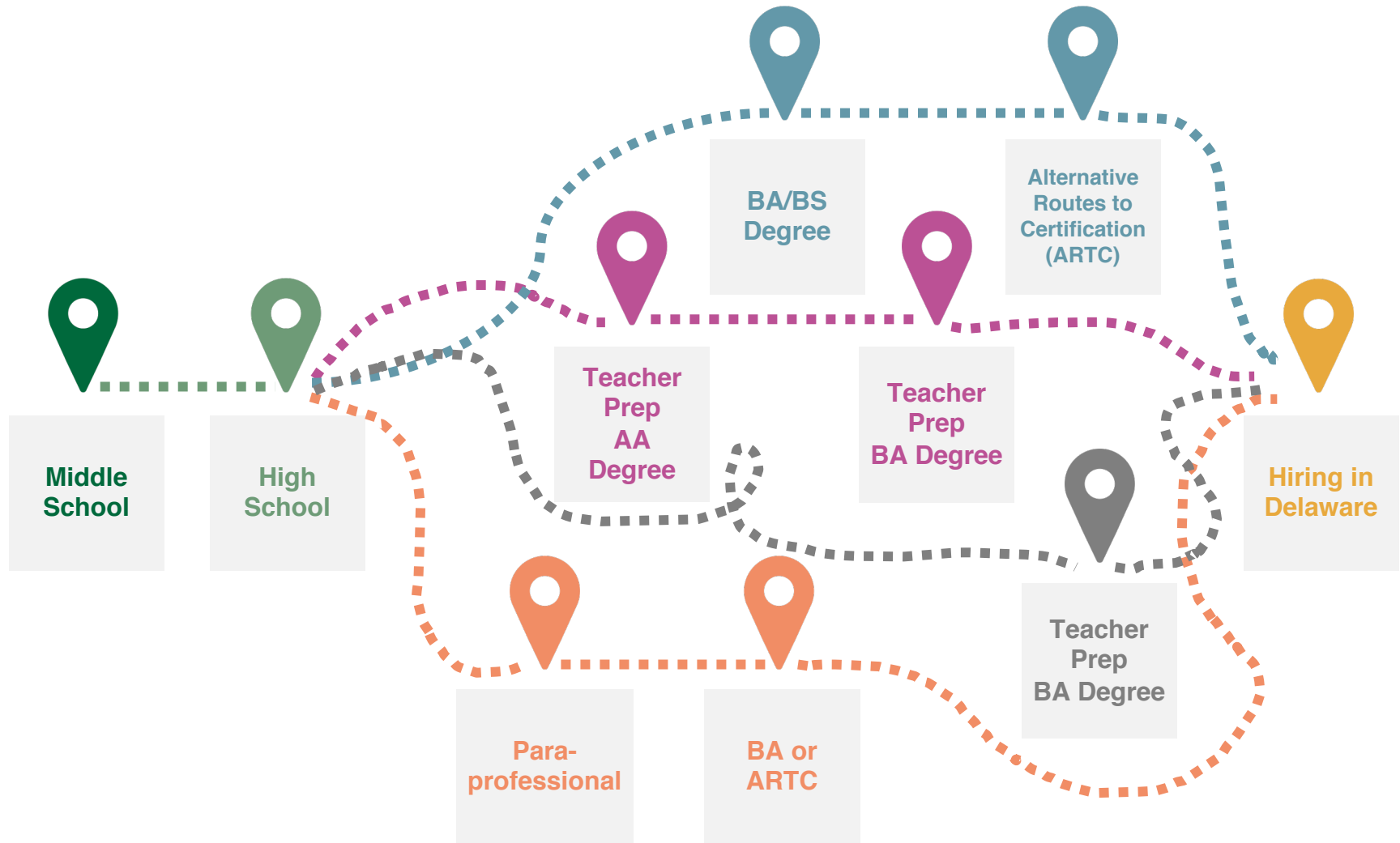
- **New teachers are more diverse**
 - 34% of first year teachers are TOC
 - 1,500 high school students enrolled in teacher academy courses; 50% of color
- 79% of teachers who grew up in Delaware rated **Delaware as their first choice teaching destination**
- High concentration of residencies yielding stronger new teachers and higher retention potential: state investing \$1 million and planning for 75 residents in 2 years

Percent of Teachers and Students by Race

2018-19



Pathways to Becoming a Teacher in Delaware



As of spring 2020, 19 high schools offer the Teacher Academy Pathway; 5 Universities offer AA, BA, MA and ARTC programming; there are 43 districts and charters that hire teachers in Delaware

Accomplishments and Work Underway

Delaware has improved its teacher pathway in recent years; the findings and recommendations that follow intend to build on and strengthen these efforts.

State investments

- \$1 million in FY20 for resident stipends and program development
- \$700,000 in FY20 for loan forgiveness for educators in hard-to-staff positions and schools
- State scholarships fund 6-8 semesters at public universities cost-free, plus other local, university, and national scholarships – available to all students and to educators

Improved recruitment efforts at state and district level, including JoinDelawareSchools website and a middle school career exposure and awareness programming

High school Teacher Academy with racially diverse enrollment and provide articulated credit acceptance across IHEs




Residency programs developed at Wilmington University; RELAY Graduate School of Education; University of Delaware; Delaware State University

Other financial supports include dual credit and dual enrollment, loan forgiveness, and hiring and retention bonuses



Findings and Recommendations

Findings & Recommendations: Overview

 Student Equity & Access	(1) Reduce barriers and increase opportunities for students to earn college credit while in high school
	(2) Increase efforts to engage, attract, and retain students of color
 System Improvements	(3) Provide early exposure to teaching as a career and inspire students to pursue teaching
	(4) Strengthen quality and relevance of Teacher Academy pathway and Educator Preparation Programs
	(5) Develop comprehensive Grow Your Own strategies
 Communication	(6) Improve data reporting and use
	(7) Improve and expand communication to all stakeholders about becoming a teacher in Delaware

Student Equity & Access



FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Access and affordability of credit-earning courses for high school students vary greatly (from none to dozens at some high schools)- Students of color, first-generation college students, and males need robust, targeted strategies and programming aligned to their interests- Clear goals and transparency about diversity needed at every stage of the teacher pipeline- Opportunity to market teacher as a social change agent and better communicate dual credit and transfer opportunities- Need to increase scholarships and other additional financial incentives	<p>(1) Reduce barriers and increase opportunities for students to earn college credit while in high school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Increase clarity on courses offered and transferability</i>• <i>Expand access to more coursework</i>• <i>Limit or eliminate fees, provide scholarships</i>
	<p>(2) Increase efforts to engage, attract, and retain students of color</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Start early: elementary and middle school, actively recruit, and engage through school career</i>• <i>Ensure school leaders reflect the diversity of the student population</i>• <i>Provide more creative incentives such as relocation assistance and loan forgiveness</i>• <i>Establish equity goals and track data</i>• <i>Offer culturally responsive curriculum</i>• <i>Mitigate racial bias in hiring</i>

System Improvements



FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>- Limited awareness, recruitment, and inspiration among high school students</p> <p>- Upcoming program review is a key opportunity to strengthen Teacher Academy Pathway to align with research, district needs and student interests</p> <p>- Opportunity to improve EPP programs with year-long residencies (YLR), more access, and better affordability</p> <p>- District desire to build Grow Your Own (GYO) strategies to recruit and support students from high school, EPPs, to hiring, targeting candidates of color and majors in hard-to-staff subjects (STEM, foreign language, special education)</p> <p>- Data reporting and use at all levels is not consistent and timely enough to track participation and effectiveness</p>	<p>(3) Provide early exposure to teaching as a career and inspire students to pursue teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide guidance and tools to middle schools to more deliberately expose students to teaching careers</i> • <i>Intentionally leverage teachers and counselors as mentors and recruiters in middle and high school</i> • <i>Ensure high school schedules enable participation</i> • <i>Expose students to job opportunities in high school</i> • <i>Recruit high –performing students and expose non-TA students to teaching</i>
	<p>(4) Strengthen quality & relevance of Teacher Academy pathway and Educator Preparation Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Update curriculum to align with research and address equity, new research, multiple content areas, and additional coursework</i> • <i>Amplify credential opportunities and implement resume and portfolio development</i> • <i>Strengthen TA teacher selection and preparation</i> • <i>Create accelerated pathways in college for TA students and to enable year long residencies</i>
	<p>(5) Develop comprehensive Grow Your Own strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Implement high school to hiring approach providing social, academic, and professional supports</i> • <i>Place alums in student teaching in their home district and guarantee an interview upon graduation</i> • <i>Increase recruitment supports mitigate hiring bias, including pay for travel and multiple interviews</i>
	<p>(6) Improve data reporting and use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Build regular data sharing channels among LEAs, IHEs and DOE to inform placement, hiring and retention</i> • <i>Use surveys, focus groups, and data analysis to target pipeline needs, test recruitment messaging, and understand motivations for selecting teaching</i>



FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Lack of accurate information and negative perceptions about teaching as a profession – across students, families, educators, counselors, and district officials. Improved communication needed about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- No/low cost opportunities available- Acceleration opportunities in high school- Advantages: stability, schedule, social justice, benefits- Leadership opportunities and a variety of positions available	<p>(7) Improve and expand communication to all stakeholders about becoming a teacher in Delaware</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Create compelling communications materials at the state and district level to describe:</i>• <i>Low cost and ways to maximize financial supports</i>• <i>Benefits of the profession—especially social justice and equity opportunities</i>• <i>How to navigate the pathway starting in high school</i>• <i>Supplement JoinDelawareSchools.org to strengthen messaging and train teachers, counselors, and district staff on the messages and strategies to reach prospective teachers</i>• <i>Engage more educators of color as ambassadors and recruiters</i>

A green-tinted photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, a student is seen from behind, sitting at a desk with an open book and a pen. Their right arm is raised, pointing their index finger upwards. To their left, another student's arm is also raised. In the background, other students are visible, some with their hands raised. The room has a window on the left and a clock on the wall.

Next Phase

Next Phase

In the years to come, project partners are committed to:

