

Another way to examine the issue of changes in minority teachers is by looking at new hires. Analysis of CDE Human Resources data shows the proportion of new teachers (i.e. no experience) who are minority teachers has increased from 9% in 2000 to 11% in 2005. And it appears the proportion of minority teachers prepared in Colorado remained steady at 56% across those years. In other words, districts appear to be improving in their ability to recruit minority teachers and data suggests that a little more than half of those minority teachers are prepared in Colorado (through both traditional and alternative programs).

Taken together it appears that increasing the number of minorities in teacher preparation is an important element in increasing the minority teacher workforce, as are efforts earlier in the pipeline that encourage minority high school students to consider teaching as a career.

## Conclusions about Teacher Attrition and Diversity

The central issue for schools and districts for improving their students' learning is improving the quality of their teachers. This means districts must attract and retain the best teachers possible. In this section, the ability to retain teachers overall and minority teachers in specific was addressed. What is clear from the above data is that not all districts or schools face the same challenges or successes in attracting or retaining teachers.

### Attrition

Since the challenges vary by district, the state's response to those challenges should also be different. Those districts and schools with the largest challenges should receive additional support, with a focus on low performing schools. Because of the correlation between attrition and low performing schools, it is clear some of this support should be in the form of mentoring and induction support for new teachers and in particular those in low performing schools in particular. Pay incentives, such as the market incentive in Denver's ProComp<sup>24</sup> plan also offer an innovative way to support teachers working in hard-to-staff schools.

However, there are also districts with higher than average attrition. The state can play a valuable role in supporting these districts. We recommend that a teacher retention task force be established at the Colorado Department of Education to examine and coordinate its role as a leader in addressing teacher recruitment and retention issues. The Colorado Department of Education should consider teacher retention a priority issue when determining formula and competitive grant criteria (e.g., NCLB Title IIA, special education State Improvement Grant) to focus on the schools and districts facing the greatest challenges in retaining quality teachers.

District policymakers should use attrition data to examine the teacher workforce to learn about current and potential future challenges. These challenges could include not only an aging workforce, but also a salary system that does not align with the district's goals or labor market.

If the overall district or schools within the district are experiencing high attrition rates, policymakers should:

- Examine its new teacher placements to ensure that new teachers are not being concentrated in low achieving schools,
- Examine the effectiveness of its new teacher mentoring and induction program,
- Work with teacher preparation institutions to ensure teachers are prepared to work with the increasingly wide range of students,
- Determine if additional induction and mentoring resources can be strengthened in high attrition schools.

<sup>24</sup>[www.denverprocomp.org](http://www.denverprocomp.org)

## Diversity

The good news is the diversity of Colorado's teacher workforce is slowly growing. The challenge is that the diversity of the student body is growing faster. As with attrition, districts face different challenges in terms of attracting a diverse teacher workforce.

The key goal is increasing the number of minority teachers being prepared in both traditional and alternative programs. Here the state has two roles. First, our colleges and universities should be encouraged to produce as many minority teachers as is possible. To this end the state should work with districts and higher education institutions to increase the number of minorities going into teaching through a comprehensive and systematic recruitment strategy. This could include increased use of *Teacher Cadet*<sup>25</sup> type programs to recruit interested minority high school students, increased attention to recruitment on higher education campuses, and/or the creation of statewide recruitment/incentives to direct well-qualified adults (e.g. career changers) into traditional and alternative preparation programs.

Second, as with teacher attrition, the state should focus support toward those districts facing the largest growth in minority students. These districts should be given extra support in recruiting, mentoring, and retaining minority teachers.

In districts, policymakers and practitioners need to examine if they are being successful at recruiting (and retaining) minority teachers. If they are not being successful, a deeper examination is in order. Those districts with the largest challenges should work together to pool their efforts to better recruit and support minority teachers and partner with higher education institutions to prepare more minority teachers.



<sup>25</sup><http://www.coloradoteachercadet.com> Teacher Cadet is designed to attract talented young people who possess exemplary interpersonal, academic and leadership skills to consider teaching as a career. In Colorado there are trained Teacher Cadet sites in 35 schools within 21 school districts. In 2007-08, some 300 students are enrolled in the program. Teacher Cadet is an honors level high school course developed and licensed by the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA).