

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 13, 2024

The Honorable Miguel Cardona
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona:

The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) is a valuable tool to measure whether students have equal access to educational opportunities, including a high-quality, diverse educator workforce. Yet, there is no permanent national mechanism to collect teacher and principal data at the school district-level. We urge the Department of Education (Department) to collect data on teacher and principal demographics and teacher certification similar to our *Strengthening Educator Workforce Data Act* (S.3736 / H.R.7250) in the 2025-26 CRDC and 2027-28 surveys.

Students of color with at least one same-race teacher often have improved academic performance, attendance, graduation rates, and aspirations to attend college. Schools nationwide are working to ensure that the educator workforce reflects the diversity of our nation's students. At least 30 states and the District of Columbia publish race/ethnicity demographics of their teacher workforces, and 36 states have funded or established initiatives to support educator retention. We commend the Department's efforts to work with states, tribes, local educational agencies, and educator preparation programs, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and other Minority Serving Institutions, to eliminate educator shortages in schools and strengthen and diversify the education profession.

However, current solutions to address both educator workforce shortages and diversity gaps use incomplete data that is not easily accessible. The Department, through the CRDC, is well-positioned to collect this data in a comprehensive manner and make it accessible to stakeholders. Without a national dataset, stakeholders cannot identify which schools need the most help. Further, it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of federal investments in recruitment and retention programs such as the Teacher Quality Partnership and the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence without this data.

We appreciate the Department's previous inclusion of the number of full-time equivalent teachers, years of teacher experience, and areas of certification in hard-to-staff subject areas in the CRDC. As the Department develops the 2025-26 CRDC survey, we urge you to consider the collection of the following data from public schools, disaggregated by race/ethnicity and sex:

- The number of full-time principals employed and the median years of experience across the full-time principals employed, disaggregated by years of experience;
- The number of full-time preschool and K-12 teachers employed, disaggregated by years of experience; and

- The number of full-time teachers who hold State certificates, licenses, or endorsements in mathematics, science, English as a second language, and special education—all hard-to-staff subject areas.

With standardized, accessible data on the educator workforce, policymakers and stakeholders will be able to better understand and evaluate teacher recruitment and retention efforts and better serve students. Accurate and accessible data also will help district and state leaders set local goals and implement data-informed policies to address nationwide teacher shortages.

We look forward to working with the Department to ensure our nation's students have a diverse set of educators. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress