



**TRAILBLAZER
COALITION**
PREPARING A MORE DIVERSE
TEACHING FORCE FOR NASHVILLE

2017 Report Release & Community Partnerships

On July 18, 2017, the Trailblazer Coalition hosted a community conversation event to celebrate the end of their first year of work in Middle Tennessee analyzing and organizing to tackle systemic barriers that obstruct local efforts to increase teacher diversity. The Trailblazer Coalition is a group of teacher educators from nine area teacher preparation programs who believe that it is incumbent to come together and work in innovative, collaborative ways to create long-term solutions.

The Trailblazer Coalition has identified four key systemic barriers and key questions that need to be asked in each arena:

- 1. Licensure & testing policies with a disproportionate impact on candidates of color**
 - What funding resources exist, need to be developed, or pooled for licensure exams?
 - How do we address/improve lower performance of candidates of color on licensure exams?
 - What changes can be made to the licensure process to reduce barriers?
- 2. Access to financial support and comprehensive financial systems**
 - What financial literacy tools do teachers need? How and when should they be delivered?
 - What can be done to increase access to scholarships and grant funding?
 - What are the financial needs or barriers for teachers choosing the profession?
- 3. Planning for long-term teacher retention and success**
 - How do we develop affinity groups for teachers of color?
 - What tracking of teacher diversity needs to occur and by whom?
 - What training for principals is needed and how should it be implemented?
- 4. Promoting teaching as a transformative practice**
 - What information do young people need to help them consider the teaching profession?
 - What information or resources are needed to help candidates understand the pathway to teaching and their options?

Community Partners Conversations: Key Solutions Proposed

- **To address barriers in licensure & testing:** ed prep programs should pool funds and resources to offer city-wide access to high quality prep, and address exams that are consistently prohibitive and encourage the State to develop alternative assessments.
- **To support teacher retention:** teacher diversity must be tracked at the ed prep and school, district, state levels on: hiring, retention, mobility, exit information, barriers to success. School districts must formally support and nurture affinity groups. Principal training and ongoing coaching needs to be evaluated to see how to increase emphasis on diversity & inclusion.
- **Comprehensive financial systems must be addressed to consider:** greater accessibility to loan forgiveness programs and other low-cost programs, and addressing ways new teachers are taught financial literacy, budgeting, and understanding their benefits.
- **Marketing and awareness is needed to encourage entry into the profession.** Our community needs a central place to get information about the profession such as a website and social media outreach as well as awareness campaigns that leverage church leaders and other leadership within communities of color. Everyone has a role to play in promotion! Teacher prep programs & school districts need to invest in long-term measures to celebrate and promote the profession.