

OSU College of Education Educator Equity Plan 2024-2026

BACKGROUND

The Oregon Educator Equity Act (2015; HB 3375) requires that each public teacher education program in the state prepare a plan for the recruitment, admission, retention, and graduation of diverse educators. The goal is to increase the diversity of the teacher candidate pool.

The state defines diverse through the culturally or linguistically diverse characteristics of a person, including:

“Origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa but is not Hispanic; Hispanic culture or origin, regardless of race; origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands; origins in any of the original peoples of North American, including American Indians or Alaskan Natives; or a first language that is not English.”

For the purposes of this document, we utilize the terms racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse (abbreviated to the acronym RELD) to encompass the broad array of students encompassed under this umbrella.

In what is now the fifth Educator Equity Plan by Oregon State University’s College of Education related to the Oregon Educator Equity Act, College of Education faculty pledge to continue work toward the specific goal of furthering the recruitment and retention of RELD students to become future teachers by improving the learning environment. This goal incorporates the guidance of the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), including details of (a) specific measurable goals, (b) practices and strategies to impact progress, and (c) a clear timeline by which strategies will be implemented.

OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY’S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

The College of Education is committed to the five interrelated goals in the Oregon State’s [Plan for Inclusive Excellence](#): (a) integrating inclusive excellence into all aspects of the university, (b) improving recruitment of students and employees from underrepresented communities, (c) creating an inclusive climate to support the retention and success of all employees and students, (d) providing innovative and transformative learning experiences enabling all students and employees to advance inclusive excellence, and (e) communicating accomplishments, initiatives and innovations related to OSU’s inclusive excellence efforts. With the 2024-2026 goal of improving the learning environment for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color teacher candidates to improve retention, OSU’s Educator Equity Plan will provide a mutually reinforcing scaffolding for the goals set out in the *Plan for Inclusive Excellence* and OSU’s new Diversity Action Plan.

The College of Education offers six different pathways to initial teacher licensure through OSU’s two campuses in Corvallis and Bend, and throughout the nation via Ecampus. The college specializes in providing programs tailored to students’ needs and interests as well as their professional goals. Licensure programs range from one year to five years, are available in both part-time and full-time options, and at the bachelor’s and master’s degree levels. College of Education teacher candidates are equipped with knowledge, skills, and habits of mind that are

informed by cutting-edge research in teaching and learning informed anti-racist principles and social justice. These principles guide the college’s work.

In this fifth Educator Equity Plan, the College of Education has built upon the successes of previous years’ efforts as well as the generous funding from the state of Oregon. These funds have included \$83,000 received in 2020, \$150,000 in 2021-2022, and an additional \$250,000 in 2022-2024. These funds were leveraged with other state- and federally-funded initiatives including the Oregon Grow Your Own (GYO) program, the TEAMS grant, and the College’s own donor-funded programs to provide for (1) student support, (2) professional development for our faculty and cooperating teachers, and (3) advising support for Oregon’s future teachers.

2024-2026 GOAL AND AREA OF FOCUS

In the 2024-2026 biennium, the OSU College of Education remains committed to continuing the vital work laid out by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), the Educator Advancement Council (EAC), and the state of Oregon. Since this work began in 2015, there has been steady progress in increasing the number of RELD teacher educators (see Table 1), reflecting an increase of 6% of all licensed teachers produced in the past 10 academic years (AY).

Table 1: Total Licensed RELD Students by Academic Year (AY)

REGULATORY RACE	AY14	AY15	AY16	AY17	AY18	AY19	AY20	AY21	AY22	AY23	AY24	Grand Total
American Indian/Alaska Native	6	3	3	3	4	2	2	2	1		2	28
Asian	27	26	22	25	21	14	19	16	14	17	19	220
Black or African American	4	3	3	1	1	4	6	3	5	6	8	44
Hispanic	51	52	58	66	73	65	75	79	89	104	91	803
Multiple	37	29	43	54	58	59	42	43	42	28	29	464
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	-	2	4	4	2	2	1	-	-	1	1	17
Non-Resident Alien	5	7	7	4	4	5	5	1	2	2	1	43
Unknown	24	13	13	12	8	6	7	7	2	10	11	113
White	551	545	517	557	494	418	450	366	347	358	348	4951
Total RELD	125	115	133	153	159	146	145	143	151	156	150	1576
Percentage RELD	18%	17%	20%	21%	24%	25%	24%	28%	30%	30%	29%	24%
Grand Total	705	680	670	726	665	575	607	517	502	526	510	6683

OSU’s 2024-2026 goal builds upon previous work and progress toward preparing teachers who reflect Oregon’s K-12 classrooms in regard to racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. In this biennium, the College will place special focus on particular goal: improving the learning environment for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) teacher candidates to improve retention.

This goal emerged from previous Educator Equity Plan work and the commitment of OSU faculty and staff, who utilized several data sources to arrive at this focus. First, the 2022-2024 plan involved extensive engagement with other Oregon public universities. Many peer institutions to OSU have similar goals and approach them in different ways. While we were all able to see movement toward the goal of increasing the number of RELD teacher educators,

understanding what was “moving the needle” was difficult to pinpoint. At the same time, none of us had yet reached the statewide goal that is the impetus for this work. Without a clear focus, it has also been difficult for us to understand what specifically was *not* working.

Therefore, we will spend the next two years with a clear and specific focus on improving the learning environment for our BIPOC teacher candidates to improve retention.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The learning environment is a key part of BIPOC students’ experiences in higher education. Defined as the “‘climate,’ ‘ethos,’ ‘ambiance,’ and ‘atmosphere,’” the learning environment can be thought of as “the environment experienced or perceived by students and teachers”¹. In this way, the classroom or educational environment takes on its own personality, which may ultimately be perceived differently by individuals based upon their own backgrounds, identities, and experiences². A positive learning environment has been found to improve student outcomes, including academic achievement, retention, and graduation³. Conversely, “students...who feel unwelcome or alienated...are unlikely to remain. If they do remain, they are unlikely to be successful”⁴.

The learning environment is also the place where students and faculty connect to the curriculum. The curriculum functions to communicate “a college’s or program’s mission, or collective expression of what is important for students to learn”⁵. Whose voices, backgrounds, and notions are incorporated into the curriculum and, by extension, what ideas are upheld and honored, are important indicators to BIPOC students about their own sense of belonging and value⁶. Beyond the curriculum, “classroom experiences that encourage students to explore issues of race and to interact with diverse others are essential to positive educational outcomes related to race”⁷.

Taken together, the learning environment serves as an important location for the Educator Equity Plan work as it also brings together both the curriculum and co-curriculum. In teacher education programs, the learning environment incorporates the classroom as well as practica, internships, external assessments, and other sites of learning for the teacher candidate.

Finally, the learning environment provides an opportunity for modeling for these future teachers. In K-12 classrooms, the learning environment has been found to have equal significance in children’s learning⁸. When we are mindful of creating a positive learning environment for our BIPOC future teachers and modeling it as such in our classrooms, these concepts can be directly transferable to their own future classrooms and students.

EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT GOAL

Beyond the literature, the need for improving the learning environment for BIPOC teacher candidates as a means to improve retention has been evidenced in our own data collection.

¹ ([Ibrahim, 2008, p. 7](#))

² ([Hall & Sandler, 1982](#); [Hurtado et al., 1998](#))

³ ([Gurin et al., 2002](#); [Hurtado, 1996, 2001](#); [Gurin, 1999](#))

⁴ ([Green, 1989, p. 113](#))

⁵ ([Stark & Lattuca, 1997, p. 7](#))

⁶ ([Mayhew, Grunwald, & Dey, 2005](#))

⁷ ([Rankin & Reason, 2005, p. 45](#))

⁸ ([Wang et al., 2020](#))

In Spring 2022, a climate survey was distributed to all College of Education students. Of the 174 respondents, a total of 68 self-identified as BIPOC students (39%). As presented in Table 3, those respondents indicated the following in comparison to all respondents, where 1 was “extremely negative” and 5 was “extremely positive.”

The survey results suggest all students are very satisfied with their experiences; however, the general trend of BIPOC students’ perceptions of the College and their learning environment were less positive than those of non BIPOC students.

In addition, the College facilitated several focus groups of current students and recent alumni to discuss their experiences in the College as a BIPOC individual. What we heard from current and former students is that the learning environment significantly impacts their experiences - both for the better and worse - and that this learning environment is experienced far beyond the classroom. Specifically, our BIPOC Student Advisory Board - which was created as part of the previous Educator Equity Plan - shared at a June 15, 2023 meeting that the selection, training, and matching of cooperating teachers (CTs) with consideration of them as BIPOC teacher candidates was vital to their success. Alumni have shared similar responses about the need for CT and university supervisor training. Also sharing that, while they had overall very positive experiences with their teacher education preparation, they too wish they had been exposed to a deeper level of engagement around such topics. One respondent said, “I wish we had gone more in depth talking about DEI.”

In another focus group with current students conducted in the Winter of 2023, we learned that the requirements related to edTPA often cause stress and anxiety beyond the anxiety also voiced by non-BIPOC students. For example, many of our BIPOC students are also dual language students and, even when they are not, they are often those who work with emergent bilingual students. Some of these students wished to write the edTPA in Spanish, therefore, but were unable to receive direction for how or if they could do so, with particular fears related to how it would be scored. Moreover, when supervised or mentored by those in the schools related to the edTPA, a lack of understanding can exacerbate the anxiety. These sentiments have been echoed by our faculty and academic advisors who work with our BIPOC students, who witness our students experiencing significant stress and anxiety around this standardized testing requirement.

Table 3: 2022 & 2024 Survey Results by BIPOC Students in the College of Education at OSU

Question	2022			2024		
	White (n=102)	BIPOC (n=39)	BIPOC vs White Difference	White (n=68)	BIPOC (n=28)	BIPOC vs White Difference
How would you rate your overall experience in the College of Education?	4.35	4.21	-0.15	4.50	4.43	-0.07
The College of Education is a welcoming place for me.	4.63	4.41	-0.22	4.68	4.54	-0.14
Overall, I have had a positive experience interacting with faculty/instructors in the College of Education.	4.55	4.18	-0.37	4.61	4.75	0.14
Overall, I have had a positive experience interacting with staff in the College of Education.	4.60	4.00	-0.60	4.49	4.75	0.26

Overall, I have felt consistently ignored in my College of Education classes when I try to participate.	1.38	1.51	0.13	1.37	1.25	-0.12
My College of Education faculty/instructors recognize the importance of my ideas.	4.46	4.18	-0.28	4.50	4.54	0.04
In my College of Education courses I have been singled out to speak on behalf of a specific group.	1.84	2.03	0.18	2.30	1.89	-0.41
My College of Education instructors/faculty communicate welcomeness in my courses.	4.58	4.46	-0.12	4.68	4.86	0.18
I feel comfortable among other students in my College of Education courses.	4.54	4.56	0.02	4.68	4.25	-0.43
My College of Education advisor responds to my questions in a timely manner.	4.41	4.28	-0.13	4.54	4.71	0.17
My various identities have been well represented in my College of Education course content and/or discussions.	4.14	3.74	-0.39	4.39	3.89	-0.50
My College of Education courses have positively impacted my thinking/understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues.	4.62	4.44	-0.18	4.68	4.29	-0.39
The College of Education provides an environment for the free expression of ideas/opinions/beliefs.	4.49	4.33	-0.16	4.54	4.57	0.03
I feel comfortable approaching College of Education faculty/staff with a problem I have.	4.50	4.05	-0.45	4.26	4.64	0.38
College of Education faculty/staff express respect for underrepresented populations.	4.67	4.36	-0.31	4.62	4.50	-0.12

Yet another data point stems from our national and state accreditation report and visit in Fall 2022. As part of the 7-year accreditation approval process, we are tasked with improving our efforts related to this teacher performance assessment as well as our training and evaluation of cooperating teachers.

Taken together, these data point to the need for us to consider the learning environment both within and outside of the classroom in which our future teachers are being prepared, with an eye toward the needs of our BIPOC future teachers and their learning.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING: A GUIDING FRAMEWORK

Connecting our BIPOC students’ experiences and the learning environment will be accomplished through the framework of Culturally Responsive Teaching. Specifically, Ladson-Billings⁹ and Gay’s¹⁰ foundational scholarship forms the basis around which we will orient our Educator Equity Plan for the 2024-2026 biennium.

The purpose of Culturally Responsive Teaching is to empower linguistically, racially, and ethnically diverse students by cultivating their cultural integrity, individual abilities, and academic success. Culturally responsive educators realize not only the importance of academic

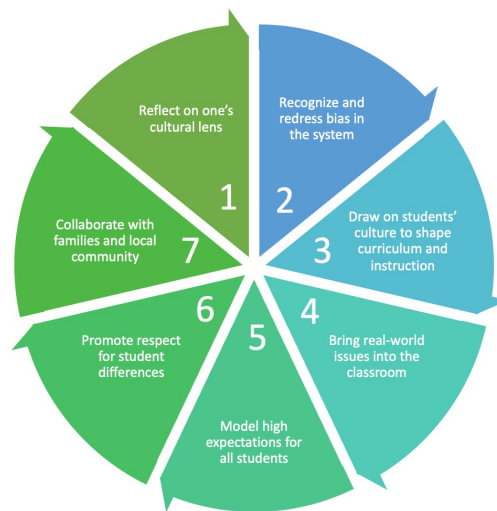
⁹ ([Ladson-Billings, 1995](#))

¹⁰ ([Gay, 2013](#))

achievement but also the maintenance of cultural identity and heritage¹¹. In this way, not only does learning become more engaging to students, but their personal experiences and frames of reference (what some have referred to as their “funds of knowledge”¹²) become embedded in the learning environment. In turn, students feel more valued, more capable of learning, and more engaged with the learning environment and materials¹³.

While many conceptualizations of Culturally Responsive Teaching exist, we will frame our efforts around the following model (see Figure 1), with a specific focus on seven core tenets, as described below:

Figure 1: *Culturally Responsive Teaching Model*



- 1) *Reflect on one's cultural lens* - Educators should reflect on their own life experiences and various identities to inform their own beliefs and practices. Everyone is susceptible to implicit biases that shape how we interact with others. By doing purposeful work to understand these biases and becoming critically self-aware, we can improve our ability to challenge stereotypes and prejudices when we encounter them.
- 2) *Recognize and redress bias in the system* - Educators should understand how systemic privileges and biases impact opportunities that people receive. Engaging in the literature and opportunities to learn about institutional and structural biases will inform practices and the ability to advocate for changing these structures.
- 3) *Draw on students' culture to share curriculum and instruction* - A foundation element of Culturally Responsive Teaching is that students' own cultural background is a resource to learning. Validating their lived experiences and identities through the curriculum, materials used, and classroom activities provides both mirrors that reflect their world and windows to understand others'.
- 4) *Bring real-world issues into the classroom* - By addressing the “so what?” part of instruction, educators can connect what is happening in students' lives into the classroom, making learning more salient and relevant. Creating bridges from this content to real-world problem-solving elevates this learning to an even higher level.

¹¹ ([Han et al., 2014](#))

¹² ([Moll et al., 1992](#))

¹³ ([Nieto, 2004](#))

- 5) *Model high expectations for all students* - All students are capable of success and this mindset is vital to student learning. Supporting all students in producing high-level work through both word and deed demonstrates a belief in all learners' success.
- 6) *Promote respect for students' differences* - Educators should understand how different backgrounds of students impact how they experience the learning environment. Helping students navigate their own experiences of bias and ways to address it can contribute to positive student outcomes.
- 7) *Collaborate with families and the local community* - Educators should assume that families and communities are interested in connecting with their classrooms and work to diminish the barriers that might stand in the way of this engagement. Learning about the communities of their students and working to collaborate with them is a way of giving back to these communities.

Over three decades of research about the impact of Culturally Responsive Teaching upon student achievement¹⁴ undergird our choice of framework. Namely, when incorporated into pedagogical practices, teachers' use of the tenets of Culturally Responsive Teaching have been found to improve social-emotional, academic, and behavioral outcomes of their students in both short-term and long-term outcomes¹⁵.

Moreover, many connections exist between Culturally Responsive Teaching and Oregon's own standards for educators as well as the guidelines from our national accrediting body, CAEP.

PLAN TO ADDRESS THE 2024-2026 GOAL

In the next two years, the OSU College of Education will utilize the framework of Culturally Responsive Teaching and draw from both existing and new data to address the stated goal of improving the learning environment for BIPOC students to improve their retention. The College will focus on four discrete and yet synergistic efforts as described below:

- 1) Culturally Responsive Teaching Professional Development
- 2) Curriculum Revision and Alignment
- 3) Cooperating Teacher and University Supervisor Training
- 4) Teacher Performance Assessment Overhaul

Culturally responsive teaching professional development - In order to fully embed the framework of Culturally Responsive Teaching into the curriculum and co-curriculum, thereby improving the learning environment for BIPOC students, the faculty and staff require professional development to assist them in learning it and utilizing it well themselves. We had begun some of this work through our last Educator Equity Plan, where we engaged 35 faculty and cooperating teachers from across the state in training related to supporting BIPOC teacher candidates in October 2022. Taking it from the general to the specific through Culturally Responsive Teaching-focused professional development will be a key part of the upcoming work. We will utilize funding from the grant to hire an external facilitator on this topic and provide stipends to our faculty and cooperating teachers who participate and utilize the data we have collected to inform the content and structure of that retreat.

Curriculum revision and alignment - In order to be truly effective and create structural change, Culturally Responsive Teaching must be embedded in all parts of the learning experience and not just discussed once in a particular class. Beginning with a College of Education-wide retreat

¹⁴ ([Muñiz, 2019](#))

¹⁵ ([Blazar, 2021](#))

in March 2024, we will engage throughout the upcoming years in a complete overhaul of our teacher education programs to ensure that our learning experiences - both inside and outside of the classroom - connect to expressed outcomes, including Culturally Responsive Teaching. We will use grant funding to provide stipends to faculty to engage in course development and course redesign with Culturally Responsive Teaching elements in mind.

Cooperating teacher and university supervisor training and evaluation - Our data point to the importance of quality cooperating/mentor teachers and university supervisors in our teacher candidates' learning experiences. We will utilize grant funds to further develop the training of our cooperating teachers and university supervisors, particularly around Culturally Responsive Teaching, with an associated goal of implementing a robust evaluation system related to it.

Teacher performance assessment overhaul - With a recognition that the edTPA, the state-mandated teacher performance assessment system, created tremendous stress for many of our teacher candidates – especially our BIPOC students. The edTPA also required a significant amount of class and staff time to support students through the submission process. Last year we first piloted our local assessment and we are now excited to continue the work to pilot our local assessment option, what we refer to as the OregonTPA (ORTPA). Utilizing the new curriculum that will embed Culturally Responsive Teaching tenets, we will also provide a new structure for teacher performance assessment through embedding key assessments throughout the curriculum. In this way, we will move toward an authentic assessment structure rather than a “high stakes standardized assessment,” which have been found to be barriers to underrepresented students in particular. We will use grant funding to provide training for faculty and scorers for this assessment overhaul that, too, will incorporate Culturally Responsive Teaching tenets that will be evident in the revised curricula for both elementary and secondary programs.

DATA TO INFORM PROPOSED EFFORTS

In order to ascertain our effectiveness in reaching the goal and evaluating our progress toward improving the learning environment for our BIPOC students, we will implement the following evaluative tools.

- 1) **BIPOC Student Advisory Panel** - Over the past several Educator Equity Plans, we have utilized a BIPOC Student Advisory Panel to provide us with an ongoing source of feedback from our current students. These 20 students from both campuses and all modalities will meet monthly with our faculty and administration to provide a real-time focus group discussion about ongoing efforts and changes. Grant funds will go toward providing these students with a stipend for their efforts and their input.
- 2) **BIPOC Cooperating Teacher Panel** - We have also gained experience in engaging with our local schools about their needs over the past several plans. In addition to regular monthly meetings that we hold with current and potential school partners, we will assemble a BIPOC Cooperating Teacher Panel to utilize as a focus group. In addition to providing great advice to our current students, we will use this opportunity to ask specific questions of them and their experiences in working with teacher candidates and in their own schools. These data will provide us further insights into what we need to incorporate into our curriculum and co-curriculum. Grant funding will provide these cooperating teachers with a stipend for their time and expertise.
- 3) **Student Climate Survey** - We will continue the efforts of the 2022 College of Education climate survey through a re-administration of the instrument in Spring 2024. Having both a benchmark and metrics for monitoring changes and progress over time will be helpful

in our efforts. We will utilize grant funds to provide students who participate in the survey with a \$5 gift card.

- 4) **Student Learning Experience Surveys** - Each term, OSU administers surveys to students about their experiences with specific courses. Each college is able to provide additional questions to delve more deeply into specific issues or topics. We will incorporate Culturally Responsive Teaching-specific questions into these regularly administered assessments. Beyond the general climate survey discussed above, this tool will provide course-specific feedback so we can better ascertain where changes are seen and experienced by students.

Utilizing these data, the Educator Equity Team, led by the department chair, will gather monthly to forward efforts and to benchmark progress toward the goal. This representative group will also connect with faculty and staff in their various roles to engage the larger educator preparation programs in updating them on the plan's progress and to involve them in continuing efforts.

RECOMMENDATION

We seek board approval for the 2024-2026 Educator Equity Plan. This approval is required by the state of Oregon and will be presented to the HECC at its June 2024 meeting.