ExpandEDSchools

INCLUSIVE EDUCATOR PATHWAYS

Educator Training in New York City: A Landscape Analysis

Prepared by

David J. Fischer

In collaboration with

Ashley Johnson, Monia Salam, and Saskia Traill

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The quality of a student's educational experience depends in large part upon the presence of highly skilled and relatable teachers. With a total K-12 enrollment of over 912,000, New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) maintains a teaching workforce of approximately 77,000. Although student enrollment might fluctuate from year to year, retirements and attrition mean there is always a need for new teachers, all of whom must have a bachelor's degree and certification from the New York State Education Department (NYSED). There are dozens of programs across the city designed to help those interested in teaching to build the skills and earn the credentials necessary to begin a career in the classroom. Almost without exception, however, these programs do not connect or align to form a meaningful pipeline.

One way in which the system falls short is its collective failure to produce a teaching workforce that closely resembles the student body in terms of demographics. Research strongly suggests that students' learning outcomes improve significantly when learning from teachers of the same race. The most recent data available, however, suggest that about 55 percent of NYCPS teachers are white, while more than 80 percent of students are Latine, Black, or Asian. The disparity is even more pronounced with respect to disabilities: while more than one in five NYCPS students have been diagnosed with a disability, the national rate for teachers is estimated at 4.6 percent.

Increasing the urgency to fix the educator pipeline is a New York State law passed in 2022 that sets maximum class sizes for kindergarten through 12th grade. Analysts project the law will require NYCPS to hire nearly 18,000 additional teachers to reach compliance by 2028. College preparation programs, which offer the most common and direct path to becoming a teacher, might not provide enough supply: combined enrollment at CUNY and SUNY in teacher training programs has declined by about half since the 2010-11 school year.

Some alternative certification programs serve professionals with bachelor's degrees who are interested in changing careers by giving them training and classroom experience. Others support paraprofessionals, Out-of-School Time workers and others in support roles, helping them complete their bachelor's degree and work toward NYSED certification. An additional group of programs engages students in middle and high school interested in teaching as part of their general early career exploration, potentially expanding access for older adolescents into youth-serving careers.

Executive Summary Cont.

Unfortunately, there is little or no shared and reliable data about the availability or quality of these programs. Whether a high school senior trying to choose between college programs, a paraprofessional looking for help toward earning a bachelor's and becoming a special education instructor, or a marketing executive interested in teaching biology, potential teachers are making choices with very limited information and guidance. Nor is there any public reporting or overall governance of the city's diverse portfolio of teacher training programs.

As an intermediary dedicated to ensuring that all young people in New York City have access to enriching learning opportunities that affirm their identities, teach them valuable skills, and spark new possibilities in and out of the school day, ExpandED has explored the landscape and developed recommendations for strengthening the teacher pipeline. To ensure that New York City has an ample supply of highly skilled educators, and that all who are interested in teaching and ready to put in the hard work are supported to do so, ExpandED recommends four steps:

1. **Set a citywide vision and goals for teacher training and create accountability for program and system performance.**
2. **Build strong data systems and put in place new norms of collaboration and information-sharing.**
3. **Make an explicit commitment to raising the share of teachers with disabilities within the educator workforce.**
4. **Provide access to culturally relevant advising and mentoring for prospective teachers at every level of interest.**




Introduction

New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) is the country's largest public education system, serving more than 912,000 students from kindergarten through 12th grade during the 2023-24 school year.[1] The number of classroom teachers employed to guide their education typically sits around 77,000.[2] In recent years, both student enrollment and the teacher workforce have declined slightly. Within the overall numbers, however, are multiple concerning trends that call into question whether New York City will have enough teachers, and the right mix of teachers, to deliver high quality education for every student over the years to come.

As an intermediary dedicated to ensuring that all young people in New York City have access to enriching learning opportunities that affirm their identities, teach them valuable skills, and spark new possibilities in and out of the school day, ExpandED has explored the landscape and developed recommendations for strengthening the teacher pipeline. In this brief, ExpandED reviews the ecosystem of teacher preparation programs in New York City, assessing its areas of potential as well as barriers and obstacles. The assessment begins with a review of current teacher workforce demographics, and the importance of a diverse educator talent pool. It also notes projections of how many teachers will be needed over the coming years given potential retirement and attrition along with a new state law requiring smaller class sizes. It then examines the process of becoming a licensed teacher in New York State, before taking a look at characteristics of the programs now in place to engage current high school students, college students, mid-career adults, and others with an interest in pursuing a teaching career. The brief continues with an analysis of challenges within and between these programs. It concludes with a series of recommendations for policymakers to expand and connect this system.

A standard approach for analyses of this kind is to focus on the programs that exist to address the core challenge: who is eligible, what they offer, the outcomes they produce. To an extent, this brief follows that template, offering high-level information about program types and citing a handful of examples. It also incorporates the perspectives of program administrators and participants. Beyond a program-level analysis, however, the brief spotlights the systemic aspects not currently in place. This choice is grounded in the judgment that the challenges facing New York City's teacher preparation landscape sit less within specific programs, than between them.

To inform this analysis, ExpandED spoke with NYCPS administrators, school-level staff, CUNY officials, nonprofit leaders, students, adults looking to enter the profession, and other stakeholders. We hope their insights serve both to highlight key points, and to remind readers that the issues detailed in the brief are not mere abstractions, but rather real dynamics that play out each day in classrooms, workplaces and homes across the city.

NYC's Teacher Workforce: Its Composition and Importance

According to EdTrust New York, as of 2021-22 New York City's public schools served a student body that was more than 80 percent non-white with a teaching workforce that was 55 percent white.[3] To be sure, this imbalance was considerably less pronounced in the city than statewide, and the issue has seen progress in recent years thanks in large part to sustained attention on the part of NYC policymakers. Yet, the numbers remain short of the goal of a pool of teachers that broadly reflects the diversity of the city and state.

Table 1: Student and Teacher Demographics, NYC and NYS

Race/ethnic group	Students	Teachers	4-yr teacher retention
New York City			
Asian	19%	8%	79%
Black	21%	17%	72%
Latine	42%	14%	75%
White	16%	55%	77%
New York State			
Asian	10%	3%	78%
Black	16%	9%	70%
Latine	29%	8%	75%
White	41%	77%	79%

In addition to the racial breakdown, NYCPS reports that 21.6 percent of students had disabilities as of the 2023-24 school year.[4] While data is not available for the share of New York City teachers who have a disability, researchers estimate that the national rate is 4.6 percent.[5]

Research is clear that students of color benefit when they learn from teachers of color. One analysis found that for Black male students in grades 3-5, having a Black teacher significantly reduced the likelihood of leaving high school before graduation, with the strongest effects among the poorest students. Similarly, persistently poor students of both sexes who had at least one Black teacher in grades 3-5 reported significantly higher intent to pursue a four-year college degree after graduating high school.[6]

The higher prevalence of non-white teachers also has a self-sustaining effect. Recent research has found that NYCPS teachers are more likely to stay in schools that have a principal and higher share of fellow teachers who share their race/ethnicity. Black teachers are 2 percentage points less likely to leave schools with a Black principal, translating to a reduction in the teacher turnover rate of roughly 14 points.[7]

Given the effect on student performance referenced above, this is a consequential discovery.

Teacher retention is a systemic challenge that has grown much more acute in the last few years, spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic and its chaotic aftermath in schools. NYC schools in 2022 saw their highest attrition rates in years, with the overall teacher workforce shrinking by 2,000. Among the most commonly cited reasons for teachers leaving the job were work-related anxiety and stress, and the excessive demands of the job.[8] Pay is a factor as well: according to the National Education Association, average teacher pay in 2022-23 adjusted for inflation declined by more than $3,600 compared to a decade earlier.[9]

As Table 1 shows, teacher retention rates vary by race, with Black teachers in New York City (and statewide) statistically more likely to leave the profession within four years of starting their teaching careers. A 2022 survey by the teacher-led organization Educators for Excellence found that while 87 percent of teachers nationwide reported that they expected to spend their entire careers as teachers, the rate for Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Island and Native American teachers asked the same question was only 52 percent.[10]

Two additional factors add to the coming strain on New York City's teacher workforce. One is the number of teachers who will be eligible to retire within the next five years. Statewide, this is approximately 35 percent of the total teacher workforce; this large share of teachers nearing retirement age is a big reason why analysts project that school districts statewide will need to hire 180,000 new teachers by the early 2030s.[11] The share of older teachers in New York City is somewhat lower. Still, high teacher turnover—for any reason—carries a cost both to the student learning experience and to school and district budgets: some sources indicate that districts spend $20,000-40,000 to replace every teacher that leaves.[12]

The second driver is a New York state law signed by Governor Kathy Hochul in 2022 that sets maximum class sizes for kindergarten through 12th grade: no more than 20 students for classes in grades K-3, a limit of 23 students per class in grades 4-8, and a ceiling of 25 students for high school classes. Implementation of the law is phasing in over a five-year period that began in September 2023. New York City's Independent Budget Office (IBO) projects that NYCPS could need to hire nearly 18,000 additional teachers to fully comply with the mandate, with about two-thirds of those for middle and high school classes. As Table 2 shows, more than a third of the projected need will be for special education teachers. IBO estimated that the total cost of hiring all these new teachers could range from $1.6-$1.9 billion per year.[13]

There's a considerable amount of stigma around the teaching profession in this country. It's not considered to be a high prestige endeavor.

--Nonprofit leader

Table 2: Potential Teacher Need to Comply with NYS Class Size Law

	General Education	Special Education
Early Childhood and Elementary School Teachers	3,900 additional teachers	1,900 additional teachers
Middle, Secondary and High School Teachers	7,500 additional teachers	4,400 additional teachers

Source: NYC Independent Budget Office

Becoming a Teacher in New York State

All aspiring teachers in New York State must meet two requirements: complete a bachelor's degree, and obtain the necessary subsequent initial certification. (To remain in the field, teachers must complete a master's degree within five years and earn a "professional certificate.") The process of earning state certification includes multiple steps and varies somewhat across the 41 distinct classroom teaching certificate titles that NYSED awards.[14]

For example, the most straightforward way to earn an initial certificate to teach English in grades 7-12 is the Approved Teacher Preparation Program. It requires aspiring teachers to:[15]

- Complete a program offered by a New York State institute of higher education (IHE) and pre-approved by NYSED
- Secure an institutional recommendation from the IHE
- Pass the New York State Teacher Certification Exam – Educating All Students Test, designed to measure "professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills necessary to teach all students effectively in New York State public schools"[16]
- Pass the Content Specialty Test – English Language Arts, designed to assess subject-specific knowledge and skills
- Take a workshop related to the Dignity for All Students Act and pass a fingerprint-supported criminal history background check.

This is one of ten distinct ways listed on the NYSED website to become an English teacher for grades 7-12. Other non-traditional paths include earning initial certification with a bachelor's degree and education coursework, and transitional certification, with a bachelor's degree and completion of a teacher prep program (such as NYC Teaching Fellows). Another route is Individual Evaluation, which requires proof of having taken and completed an extensive set of college courses as well as a relevant student teaching experience in addition to the exams and workshop/background check; and multiple options for teachers trained in other states or changing disciplines.[17]

The Program Menu: Many Options, Few Pathways

Broadly speaking, two types of programs directly prepare individuals for teaching positions. Traditional educator preparation programs typically serve aspiring teachers about to begin their working careers. Alternative preparation programs, including residency/apprenticeship initiatives, usually enroll career-changers, whether professionals who are looking to move into education, or individuals already working in the field in support roles such as paraprofessional. An emerging set of programs further upstream engages high school students through broad-based career exploration, and in theory can serve as a pipeline into traditional teacher preparation programs. All three are briefly discussed below.

We organizationally spent a lot of time grappling with how we figure out the best way to design programs that set people up for the highest likelihood of success. Not just getting licensed, but becoming successful and effective teachers who stay for a long time.
--Nonprofit leader

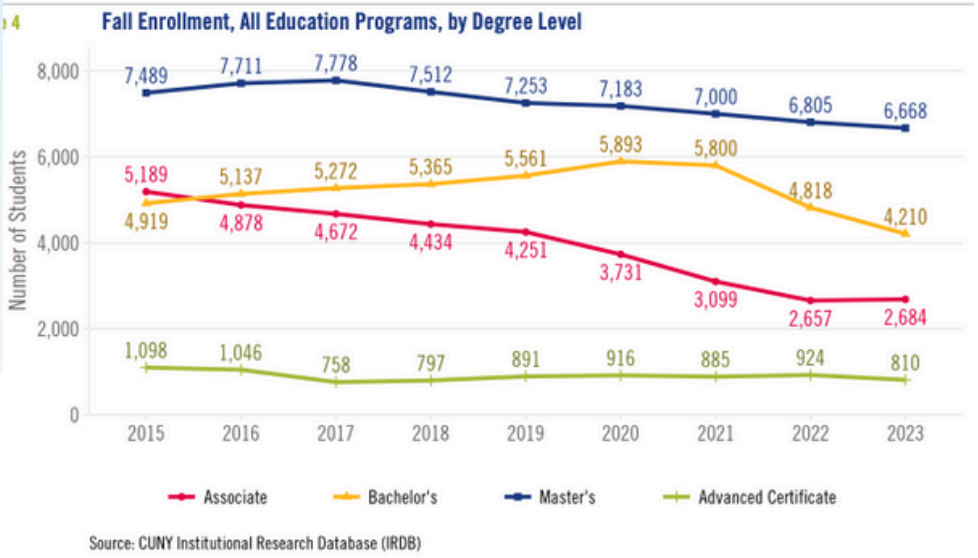
In traditional educator prep programs, college students take foundational courses to acquire knowledge and develop skills related to pedagogy. College education majors in bachelor's degree programs additionally choose an area of focus related to the subject they intend to teach. For example, at Hunter College School of Education in the CUNY system, students in the Undergraduate Teacher Education Pathway (UTEP) within the Adolescent Education (Grades 7-12) track choose among ten subject options, from Biology to Social Studies. UTEP programs support students through the process of earning NYSED certification, and include extensive experiences supporting established teachers and leading instruction in NYCPS classrooms.[18]

Including Early Childhood and other tracks, Hunter offers 15 bachelor's programs for students majoring in education. Across CUNY as a system, nine senior colleges offer nearly a hundred bachelor's level education programs, in addition to dozens of associate degree or certificate programs mostly available at community colleges. (These programs can qualify workers for classroom support roles and/or build credits for transfer into a bachelor's program at a CUNY senior college or other institution that grants bachelor's degrees.) CUNY also offers 70 master's degree education programs, a vital option for New York teachers who must earn that credential within five years to remain in the profession.[19]

One challenge is that there are so many opportunities, so the issue for students is navigating them to find the best match for their interests.
--NYCPS High School principal

Across all its degree programs, CUNY enrolled slightly under 15,000 education students in 2023, about 73 percent of whom were in bachelor's or master's programs.[20] The State University of New York (SUNY) offers bachelor's programs in education at 12 of its campuses, and hundreds of programs at levels ranging from certificate to master's degree.[21] In all, SUNY enrolled slightly over 20,000 education students in fall 2024, more than 85 percent of whom were in bachelor's or master's programs.[22]

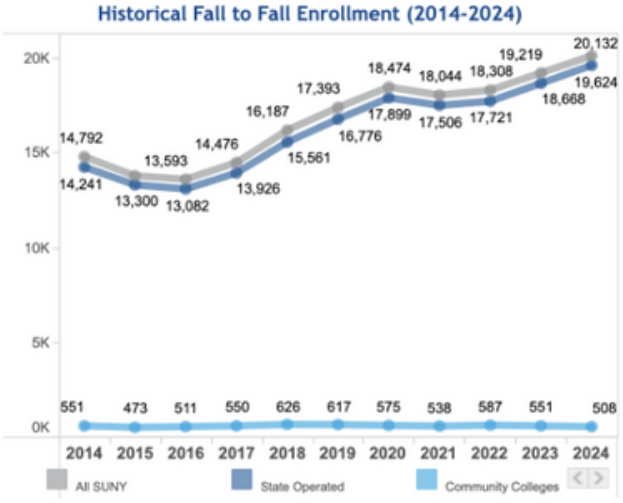
Chart 1: CUNY education program enrollment, 2015-23

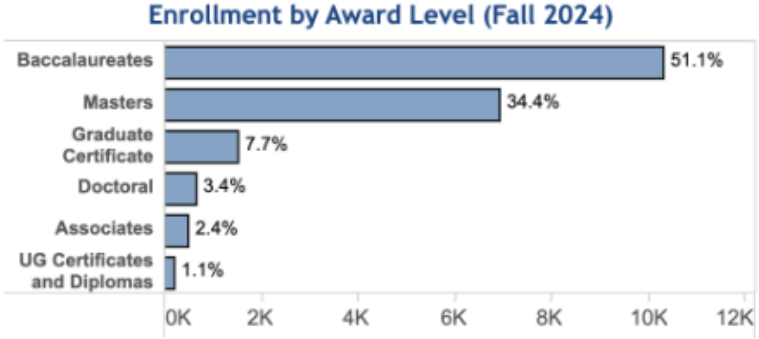


Source: CUNY Institutional Research Database (IRDB)

Of concern is that the number of students in traditional educator preparation programs has plunged over the past decade and a half. A 2019 NYSED report on educator diversity found that enrollment had fallen by nearly half, from 70,128 to 37,080, between the 2010-11 and 2016-17 academic years.[23] As Charts 1 and 2 suggest, CUNY and SUNY numbers over the years since suggest that overall statewide enrollment in teacher prep programs has remained at roughly that same level.

Chart 2: SUNY education program enrollment, 2014-24





ExpandEDSchools

The decrease in the number of college students enrolled in, and completing, traditional educator prep programs and beginning classroom careers has raised the stakes for the success of alternative preparation programs. Among these are high-profile initiatives targeted at professional career changers such as Teach for America and the NYC Teaching Collaborative, which enroll bachelor's degree holders who have been working in other fields and feature a grounding in pedagogical skills along with a healthy portion of classroom experience. These programs partner with institutions of higher education—including many CUNY and SUNY schools—which offer master's programs.

Alternative programs offer more hands-on teaching experience for participants than do traditional programs. This can have a meaningful positive impact on students. For instance, researchers have found that participants in teaching residency programs are less likely to misidentify students of color, those from low-income families, and English Language Learners as needing special education services, and are better prepared to deliver in-class solutions to learning barriers.[24]

One such program, NYC Teaching Fellows, engages participants in an intensive seven-week summer training program, during which Fellows prepare for teaching jobs through classroom experience, daily coaching, and skill-building activities. They then must earn an alternative certification, known as a Transitional B Certificate, as they begin teaching in high-need schools the following September. While teaching, they work toward earning a master's degree, typically completing a program in two to three years.

Another set of alternative preparation programs looks to advance workers already in education roles toward gaining certification as full classroom teachers. Tens of thousands of workers are facilitating enrichment activities in after-school or other Out of School Time (OST) settings across the five boroughs. Wages in the sector are exceptionally low, with one 2023 report putting the statewide average for OST workers in New York at $17.30 per hour.[25] Pay is only slightly better for the approximately 24,000 paraprofessionals working in New York City,[26] who earn an average of about $18 per hour.[27]

The logic of programs to support paraprofessionals and OST and other school support workers toward teaching certification is straightforward. Candidates already are familiar with the dynamics of the classroom and the unique strains and satisfactions of school life, somewhat reducing the risk of early attrition. Many have hands-on experience as paraprofessionals, leaders or staff of after-school programs, or in other support roles. They also represent a far more diverse talent pool: districts and programs that successfully support their credentialing subsequently position themselves to reap the related benefits to learning referenced above.

One such initiative is the Career Training Program (CTP), available to paraprofessionals who are members of the United Federation of Teachers. CTP supports participants toward earning a bachelor's degree at an approved partner college or university, a list that includes 19 CUNY colleges, two SUNY campuses, and four private colleges.[28] The program covers tuition costs and provides paid release time for study.

A second program, Leap to Teacher (LTT), is available through CUNY's School of Labor and Urban Studies and serves all school and daycare workers.[29] LTT partners with eight CUNY colleges that offer teacher prep programs, offering advising and workshops to support learners toward college enrollment and successful persistence and completion, prep for NYSED teacher certification exams, and much more. Compared to CTP, LTT both casts a wider net in terms of eligibility and targets a broader set of outcomes: LTT students might be trying to become paraprofessionals, complete an undergraduate or graduate degree, or simply build skills.

Important and promising as they are, these programs face distinct challenges as a scalable talent pipeline into the teaching workforce. First among them is simply the need for aspiring teachers to complete bachelor's degrees. Many candidates are among the hundreds of thousands of prime-age workers in New York City who have begun college but stopped out short of a degree. In many cases, they face obstacles to re-enrolling that might include unpaid fees, transcripts they cannot access (often, as a result of the unpaid fees), and credits that will not count toward the requirements of an education major. Additionally, school support staff usually must balance their participation in these programs with their need to continue working. In many cases, they must also handle a full set of family responsibilities and the many additional challenges that face low-income working people.

The teacher pipeline [extends over] a long time horizon. Saying to 13- or 14-year olds, "when you graduate college, when you become certified, when you do your teaching apprenticeship, then if there's a job then we can POTENTIALLY employ you here"—it's just a long time, with lots of places to potentially fall through the cracks.

--NYCPS administrator

Finally, NYCPS and partnering nonprofit organizations (including ExpandED) support programs that engage high-school students with general career exploration, including some that focus on education as a career pathway. FutureReady NYC, the signature in-school career readiness initiative of Mayor Eric Adams and his administration, launched in 2022 and operates in 135 schools citywide as of the 2024-25 school year. 24 high schools offer the FutureReady education track.

As in all FutureReady programs, the education track includes a career-connected instructional sequence. The four education courses begin with an introduction to teaching and culminate in a "teaching practicum," an internship in which students "apply their acquired knowledge and skills in a real-world setting."[30] The program also includes an opportunity to earn college credit with a partnering CUNY campus, as well as individualized advising and financial literacy.

I have three little sisters. I used to, like, play school with them, and ended up teaching them, and then I was able to get an internship where I actually got to teach [kids in] K through fourth, and that's when I absolutely fell in love and decided to pursue early childhood education.
--High school student

As young people gain exposure to a wider range of options, gather more information, and have more experiences, their career plans naturally evolve. With that in mind, it would not be reasonable or realistic to expect students in 9th or 10th grade to have fully informed plans and clear intention to pursue a career in teaching, or any other line of work. Previously, however, there were few if any structures or supports in place to support young people whose initial curiosity might have evolved into strong interest. The true power of FutureReady lies in its potential to put those structures and supports in place—the most urgent need within the larger ecosystem, as discussed below.

Missing, Inaction: How lack of system infrastructure breaks the pipeline

We could get folks to the table: funders, grantees, partners... They always would agree about the importance of about the importance of creating a cohesive environment for educator development. But we never established platforms or events or real knowledge-sharing… there wasn't much action on innovation.
--Former alternative prep program administrator

This report uses the term "ecosystem"--a dynamic, interdependent set of entities that might thrive or struggle depending on a variety of factors–to describe the landscape of programs to help train teachers in New York City, in large part because to use "system" would be misleading. A system implies connection and intention, with multiple inputs operating in a coordinated manner toward the same goal. Although teacher training programs generally have the same core objective—to prepare aspiring teachers to become certified and effective educators—there is little if any evident connection, intention, or coordination between programs.

Where we fall short is that we don't have coordinated data… it's not like we're all moving towards the same metrics or collecting the same information.
--Mayor's Office administrator

Missing systemic elements include a coherent data infrastructure, shared performance metrics, transitional support, clear governance, and public accountability. If there is a master inventory of programs that would enable policymakers, including planners within the NYCPS Office of Teacher Recruitment and Quality, to know how many potential teachers are in traditional and alternative programs, it is not publicly available. NYSED urges local education areas to pursue "Grow Your Own" (GYO) initiatives of local teacher talent development, beginning with self-assessment as to needs and priorities. There is no publicly available documentation in New York City that suggests the city has articulated a clear plan or goal, or is pursuing a coordinated strategy to achieve that goal.

The absence of data severely limits the extent to which administrators, policymakers, and others can even understand how well programs are performing. From a systemic perspective, this is bad enough, sharply raising the degree of difficulty in making funding and staffing decisions or exercising quality control. Adding to the challenge is that even within subsystems such as NYCPS or CUNY, each participating school—a high school offering the FutureReady education track, or a CUNY college with a teacher prep program—has substantial discretion in how they choose to structure their programs.

As much as we would like to be able to offer programming that's consistent across all schools, how it gets implemented, or how a school decides to prioritize certain things… will impact what opportunities students have access to.
--NYCPS administrator

From the perspective of an individual aspiring teacher, the stakes are even higher. For instance, a paraprofessional entering the Career Training Program might be trying to decide which CUNY college they should enroll in to make progress toward earning their bachelor's degree. But without information regarding past participants' persistence, completion, and subsequent success both in getting certified as a teacher and performing in the classroom, their decision will not be as well informed as it should be.

Adding to the challenge is the seeming reality that nobody is minding the store. While the state has made relatively significant investments in bolstering New York's teaching workforce, and the City supports initiatives such as the NYC Teaching Fellows and NYC MenTeach, these investments continue to come at the program level. The absence of any meaningful overarching governance enables a perverse dynamic in which programs compete rather than coordinate—for funding, for participants, for access—and their success can be zero-sum rather than additive.

In a dynamic that prioritizes programs over systems, it becomes impossible to align resources toward a larger goal. Funders, both public and private, tend to push for higher enrollment and lower costs per participant, and information—including data—becomes something to hoard rather than something to share. In the absence of easily available guidance, program participants themselves might enroll with an imperfect understanding of what they have signed on to do. For example, one former manager of a program to support after-school workers toward becoming teachers shared that a number of participants thought this program itself would position them to go directly into the classroom, rather than support them through earning a bachelor's and completing the NYSED certification process.

Building a System from the Bottom Up

One encouraging recent development in this space is coming out of NYCPS itself, as an extension of the FutureReady NYC education track. Administrators across several NYCPS offices are working with ExpandED and other community-based organization partners to create paid internships and other work experiences in after-school programs for participating students. Along with early college credit opportunities, including two courses at Hunter College (Introduction to Urban Education, Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Teaching), these students are engaging in an informal pre-apprenticeship—all while earning money, gaining experience, and amassing college credit.

The FutureReady track has even larger ambitions, however. NYCPS administrators are working to significantly expand a small summer internship program launched last year to serve up to 200 high school juniors and seniors. These students would work in summer programs while preparing for the NYSED teaching assistant exam. Once certified, they could continue to work as substitute paraprofessionals—including while enrolled in CUNY traditional teacher prep programs. They could potentially amass additional credit through CUNY's Credit for Prior Learning policy.

To be sure, this prospective pipeline—FutureReady NYC courses through 11th grade, then the Hunter classes and paid work with a CBO partner, then getting certified as a teaching assistant and working as a substitute paraprofessional—is in a very early stage. (One administrator described it as "not even 25 percent of the way there.") Potential pitfalls range from liability issues related to workers under age 18, to CUNY capacity, to internal NYCPS politics. But this is the sort of intentional and inclusive concept that could help New York City evolve its portfolio of teacher preparation programs into a functional and effective system worthy of the name.

Recommendations

As noted above, the lack of program level data and related information adds to the challenge of assessing performance on a micro (program) or macro (system) level. The main priority for New York City policymakers, then, should simply be to build toward a system that can better support aspiring teachers. Such a system should offer value for high-school students just starting to think about their careers, college students in traditional teacher preparation programs, longtime classroom support staff looking to move up the career ladder, and mid-career professionals looking for a change. It should be characterized by equity, transparency, and accountability, with a laser focus on the final outcome of putting a highly qualified diverse teacher workforce in place and keeping them there for the long term.

ExpandED offers these four recommendations to policymakers, private funders, and other stakeholders looking to build an inclusive and effective pipeline of educator talent in and for New York City.

Recommendation 1: Set a citywide vision and goals for teacher training and create accountability for program and system performance.

The Mayor and Chancellor should convene a citywide Commission on Teaching Careers, composed of leaders from NYCPS, the United Federation of Teachers, CUNY, the nonprofit community, academic research institutions, and the private sector. This Commission, to be staffed by NYCPS with support from the Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development (NYC Talent), can make recommendations on recruiting prospective teachers, meeting diversity goals, ensuring access for New Yorkers with disabilities and English Language Learners, providing transitional support, and bolstering teacher retention. It should produce a report with analysis of challenges in the current pipeline, detailed recommendations to address those challenges, and clear goals to ensure both that the city has enough educators to meet its projected needs, and that teaching careers are accessible to all qualified and committed candidates.

The Commission's findings should serve as the blueprint and action plan to build a true system. Its report should include an actionable recommendation around system governance that provides an unambiguous answer to the question of who is responsible for achieving the goals of the plan. Whichever entity that is—whether the Office of Teacher Recruitment and Quality within NYCPS, NYC Talent, a new nonprofit or public/private entity, or something else—should launch with a clear mandate and the support necessary to do its work.

Recommendation 2: Build strong data systems and put in place new norms of collaboration and information-sharing.

Starting on the day a high school student connects with a program to explore their interest in teaching, information should be in place for all relevant entities to support that student in exploring and, if their interest sustains over time, building skills related to a teaching career. Such a database would benefit participants by providing staff of programs, advisors and mentors, and others a deeper understanding of their teaching journey to that point, including a better sense of how to effectively support them. It also would be a valuable resource for system planners, who would be able to say how many potential teachers were in the pipeline at any time as well as the demographics of that rising talent pool, what subjects they are preparing to teach, and other vital data points.

As always with data sharing, officials must responsibly address concerns of privacy. Fortunately, NYCPS has extensive experience in handling students' sensitive personal data. Further, the agency has data-sharing agreements with CUNY, the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, and many contracted nonprofits that should provide a foundation to safely and expeditiously resolve these concerns.

Recommendation 3: Make an explicit commitment to raising the share of teachers with disabilities within the educator workforce.

Just as research has shown that Black student performance benefits when Black teachers are present in the classroom, it logically follows that students with disabilities (SWD)—who account for more than one in every five NYCPS students—would see academic gains by learning from teachers who have disabilities. But while New York City and state have made admirable commitments and progress toward putting in place a teacher workforce that reflects students' racial and ethnic mix, no corresponding effort has gone toward boosting the share of teachers who have disabilities. It's not even clear what share of current NYC teachers have a disability.

As part of the larger effort toward putting a functional and meaningful pipeline in place, NYCPS should emphasize recruiting and providing ongoing support for SWD who have interest in teaching careers. Of the 24 schools that offer the FutureReady NYC education track, one—The Bronx School for Continuous Learners (BSCL)—is part of District 75, the entity within NYCPS that offers programming customized to support SWD. As part of efforts to evaluate FutureReady and the education track in particular, NYCPS and its partners should closely assess how well the program is performing at BSCL, both in terms of initial student interest and their persistence and transitions to college teacher prep programs over time.

Recommendation 4: Provide access to culturally relevant advising and mentoring for prospective teachers at every level of interest.

Participants across multiple programs engaged for this brief indicated a strong interest in more information and guidance related to teaching careers. Part of the mandate for whatever entity assumes responsibility for building and maintaining a teacher pipeline should be to create and refresh information resources. As part of this work, it could help match current or retired teachers with students, either in a one-on-one context or through an online question-and-answer functionality similar to that offered by CareerVillage.org for a wide range of career paths, to share insights and advice.

As noted above, teacher retention improves when educators work with peers and leaders who share their backgrounds. Researchers also have found that new teachers who do not receive mentoring and related support are more than twice as likely to leave the profession as those who do.[33] By the same logic, potential teachers might be more likely to persist in, succeed in, and complete educator training programs with guidance and support from established teachers whose circumstances and path into the profession reflect their own. Those more senior teachers should be recognized and possibly rewarded for sharing their knowledge and perspective in service to the field and rising colleagues.

About this report

This report was written by David Jason Fischer of Altior Policy Solutions, with additional research by Ashley Johnson, and edited by Monia Salam and Saskia Traill. ExpandED Schools thanks the Wallace Foundation for their support of this work and for building stronger youth development systems in New York City and around the country.

EXPANDED SCHOOLS is dedicated to ensuring that all young people in New York City have access to enriching programs that affirm their identities, teach them valuable skills, and spark new possibilities in and out of the school day. In order to achieve this mission, ExpandED provides K–12 programs with curricula and support; trains educators; and advances the sector through policy and research.

Endnotes

1NYC Public Schools, "DOE Data at a Glance," accessed February 7, 2025.
2 NYC Public Schools, "Class Size Working Group Meeting #4," July 12, 2023.
3 EdTrust New York, "Is the Diversity of New York's Students Reflected in the Teaching Workforce?"
4 NYC Public Schools, "DOE Data at a Glance," accessed February 7, 2025.
5 Disabled Teachers Network, "Teachers With Disabilities: Their Challenges and Their Needs," 2018.
6 Seth Gershenson, Cassandra M.D. Hart, Constance A. Lindsay, and Nicholas W. Papageorge, "The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers," IZA Institute of Labor Economics, March 2017.
7 NYU Steinhardt, "NYC Teachers More Likely to Stay at Schools with Principals, Peers of the Same Ethnicity," January 8, 2025.
8 New York State School Boards Association, "Turning the Tables on the Teacher Shortage," July 19-20, 2024.
9 Eliana Perozo, "NYC teachers get raises. Physical and occupational therapists still wait." Chalkbeat NY, July 12, 2023.
10 Madina Touré, "New survey reveals stark racial divide in teacher retention rates in New York City," Politico, April 29, 2022.
11 Mayme Hostetter, "Hostetter: NYS Will Need 180,000 Teachers in the Next Decade, Especially Educators of Color. 3 Ways to Draw More Candidates to This Great Profession," The74, May 10, 2022.
12 NYSSBA, "Turning the Tables on the Teacher Shortage."
13 New York City Independent Budget Office, "How Would The New Limits To Class Sizes Affect New York City Schools?" July 2023.
14 New York State Education Department, "Chart of Classroom Teaching Titles," accessed February 5, 2025.
15 NYSED, Office of Teaching Initiatives, "Search Certification Requirements," accessed February 5, 2025.
16 NYC Teaching Fellows Support Center, "What is the Education All Students (EAS) test?" accessed February 10, 2025.
17 NYSED OTI, "Search Certification Requirements."
18 Hunter School of Education, "Adolescent Education," accessed February 6, 2025.
19 CUNY, "Education Grid 2024," accessed February 7, 2025.
20 CUNY Office of Applied Research, Evaluation and Data Analytics, "Teacher Education at CUNY: Enrollment, Graduation, and Diversity Trends," January 2024.
21 SUNY, "Educating Our Future," accessed February 7, 2025.
22 SUNY, Enrollment, accessed February 10, 2025.
23 New York State Education Department, "Educator Diversity Report," December 2019.
24 Katherine Herman, "What We Know Now: Urban Teacher Residency Models, Teacher Shortages, and Equity," Issues in Teacher Education, Spring 2023.
25 The Century Foundation, "Child Care Funding Cliff at One Year: Rising Prices, Shrinking Options, and Families Squeezed," September 24, 2024.
26 Alex Zimmerman and Michael Elsen-Rooney, "NYC special education staffing shortage leaves students in limbo, teachers union charges," Chalkbeat NY, November 20, 2024.
27 ZipRecruiter, "Full Time Paraprofessional Salary in New York City, NY." Accessed February 21, 2025.
28 Career Training Program, "Approved Colleges and Universities." Accessed February 10, 2025.
29 CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies, "LEAP to Teacher." Accessed February 10, 2025.
30 FutureReady NYC, "FRNYC School Playbook: Education." Accessed February 21, 2025.
31 Unfortunately, the Office of Teacher Recruitment and Quality did not respond to interview requests related to this brief.
32 NYSED, Grow Your Own Initiatives. Accessed February 11, 2025.
33 Learning Policy Institute, "Why Do Teachers Leave?" from Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.