

# **Task Force on Growing a Diverse K-12 Teacher Base in Iowa Final Report**

**December 15, 2021**

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# Task Force on Growing a Diverse K-12 Teacher base in Iowa

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## Executive Summary

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The task force was identified in House File 868, in the 2021 Legislative Session. HF 868 identified by title members of the task force. The Director of the Department of Education, with input from iJAG, identified persons to fill the roles. All but one of the members identified accepted the appointment.

Currently in Iowa there is a critical shortage of teachers. The shortage is even more pronounced for teachers with identities underrepresented in the teaching force. In the 2019-2020 academic year, 24.7% of Iowa students in public P-12 schools were people of color. During the same year, 2.7% of teachers were people of color and 11.3% of teacher preparation candidates were people of color. This presents a great need to recruit and retain teachers of color.

The task force examined a number of potential barriers to people choosing to become teachers, with emphasis on persons with identities underrepresented in the teaching force. Recommendations are described in the Recommendations for Action section of this report. Recommendations are made for each of the stakeholder groups identified in HF 868: the Office of the Governor, the Iowa Legislature, and the Iowa State Board of Education.

Recommendations:

Studies to examine why people with identities underrepresented in the teaching force do not enter or stay in teaching.

Conduct a pilot to examine proposed pathways.

Partnerships between P-12 schools, colleges/universities, community colleges, US Department of Labor, Department of Education, Iowa Workforce Development, and iJAG.

Seek funding to support pathways to teaching and assess actual costs as part of the pilot.

## Glossary of terms

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**BoEE:** Board of Educational Examiners

**Competency Based Education:** A system of education in which learners advance through content or earn credit based on demonstration of proficiency on competencies. Some students may advance through more content or earn more credit than in a traditional school year while others might take more than a traditional school year to advance through the same content or to earn credit. Credit may also be earned for out-of-school experiences and/or accomplishments. Students at all grade levels are afforded opportunities for more explicit or intensive instruction or enrichment within the content. (IDoE)

**Department:** Department of Education

**EPP:** Educator Preparation Program, a unit within a four year college or university authorized by the State Board of Education to prepare candidates for educator licensure

**IHE:** Institution of Higher Education

**iJAG:** Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates

**PD:** Professional Development

**Registered Apprenticeship:** A program using US Department of Labor protocols that provides learning through coursework and on the job training leading to a certificate. Components are described in the Proposed Pathway section below.

**USDOL/OA:** US Department of Labor/Office of Apprenticeship

# Charge from HF 868

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## **HF 868, Sec. 22. TASK FORCE ON GROWING A DIVERSE PREK-12 TEACHER BASE IN IOWA**

1. The director of the department of education, in consultation with Iowa jobs for America's graduates, shall convene a task force on growing a diverse prekindergarten through grade twelve teacher base in Iowa.
2. The director of the department of education or the director's designee shall serve as the chairperson of the task force. The department of education shall provide staffing services for the task force.
3. The task force shall, at a minimum, consist of the following members:
  - a. Representatives from public and private institutions of higher education engaged in practitioner preparation.
  - b. Representatives from state agencies engaged in practitioner preparation and licensure.
  - c. Representatives from area education agencies and school districts, including but not limited to teachers, administrators, and counselors, particularly those involved in competency-based education.
  - d. Representatives from apprenticeship programs and workforce development organizations.
  - e. Representatives from organizations that provide direct student support leading to graduation and career pathways or that provide remedial academic and career support outside the traditional classroom or school day.
  - f. Representatives from community-based organizations that have demonstrated expertise and effectiveness in the field of workforce development.
  - g. Persons representing current teachers, administrators, and school board members.
4. The task force shall do all of the following:
  - a. Develop a framework that expands opportunities for a more diverse teacher workforce and establishes a unique teacher career pathway for participants to achieve a bachelor's degree and teacher licensure while engaged meaningfully in the education system.
  - b. Demonstrate how the proposed pathway maintains a high-quality standard of learning and teacher preparation for all participants.
  - c. Recommend methods to attract, engage, and retain a high number of participants to make up a diverse teacher workforce that reflects the growing diverse population of students across Iowa, both rural and urban.
  - d. Recommend a pilot or experimental opportunity for a finite group of participants during the 2022-2023 school year that may be developed within an organization such as Iowa jobs for America's graduates.
5. The task force shall submit a report regarding its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislative or administrative rule changes, to the governor, the general assembly, and the state board of education by December 15, 2021.

# Meetings

The Task force held nine meetings. All meetings were held virtually.

Meeting	
1. August 17	<p>Director Lebo and Senator Cournoyer welcomed the members and initiated the task force. Each member of the task forces introduced her/himself and talked about expertise. The task force examined and discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Task force requirements in HF 868</li> <li>● Current code and rules regarding teacher preparation and licensure</li> <li>● Data on teacher shortages</li> <li>● Data on student, teacher, and teacher candidate demographics</li> <li>● Iowa’s alternative licensure pathway.</li> </ul> <p>Task force members asked the chairperson for additional data.</p>
2. August 24	<p>The task force examined and discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Additional data on shortages, teacher test passing rates and demographics</li> <li>● Apprenticeship pathways</li> <li>● Micro credentials</li> <li>● Current practices in teacher preparation</li> <li>● Incentives for recruitment of teachers from underserved populations</li> <li>● Funding incentives, salaries</li> <li>● Teacher retention</li> <li>● Competency based education.</li> </ul> <p>The task force brainstormed 34 ideas for increasing the diversity of the teaching force.</p>
3. September 7	<p>The task force reviewed a number of articles submitted by various members. The task force broke into small groups (selected by members) to examine ideas from meeting #2 and identified required components to make the idea work and needs to be addressed.</p> <p>Each group shared with the larger group in discussion.</p>
4. September 21	<p>Ideas from meeting #3 were grouped into 10 concepts. Task force members voted to keep or delete specific concepts. The task force was then divided into randomly assigned groups of four to discuss the voting on concepts. The large group then discussed information from small groups.</p>
5. October 5	<p>Task force members reviewed articles submitted or requested by members. The task force then reviewed a pathway for a Registered Apprenticeship from an article provided by iJAG.</p> <p>The task force then reviewed an outline of a potential pathway proposal. The task force then broke into small randomly assigned groups to develop a group pathway proposal.</p>
6. October 26	<p>The Department provided a written potential pathway as a synthesis of all ideas provided in meeting #5. The task force reviewed the pathway as a large group, then broke into small randomly assigned groups to edit the pathway proposal. The large group discussed findings from the small group.</p>
7. November 9	<p>The Department provided a draft report several days before the meeting for review. During this meeting the task force discussed and edited the proposed report.</p>
8. November 19	<p>The task force finalized the report, coming to a consensus on information included and the language of the report.</p>

9. December 14	The task force reviews the final report and the task force process. Public comment is invited.
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## Recommendations for Action by Key Stakeholder Groups

### Recommendations

1. The legislature should require and fund a comprehensive study to:
  - Examine why Iowa teachers, particularly people with identities underrepresented in the teaching force, leave teaching. These studies would provide further understanding of current barriers for diverse candidates in Iowa to stay in the teaching profession. The studies should engage with the pathway pilot(s) as well.
  - Examine why potential teacher candidates (high school and college/university students), particularly people with identities underrepresented in the teaching force, do not choose teaching as a profession. These studies would provide further understanding of current barriers for diverse teachers in Iowa to enter the teaching profession. The studies should engage with the pathway pilot(s) as well.
2. The legislature should examine options for the educator preparation programs to determine that candidates have demonstrated competency and teacher program completion without the required use of a national standardized test.
3. The legislature should require and fund the Department of Education to conduct a pilot study of the pathway recommended in the recommended pathway section below. Funding is needed for the pilot to assist with costs associated with the pilot which could include staff, evaluation, on-going assessment, and reporting.
4. The Department of Education should develop and support partnerships between P-12 schools and Institutions of Higher Education to promote teaching as an option in P-12 schools.
5. Reduce financial barriers for candidates to complete a program to become teachers. The Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Labor and Iowa College Student Aid Commission, and other entities, can develop a sustainability plan to support teacher candidates from various backgrounds in various entry points in the proposed pathway to complete college/university coursework after completion of the Registered Apprenticeship reducing student loan debt.

## Proposed Pathway to Diversify the Teaching Force.

### Statements

- This pathway centers on a Registered Apprenticeship using US Department of Labor/Office of Apprenticeship (USDOL/OA) standards.



- The pathway content and standards will be developed in a partnership that includes the Department of Education USDOL/OA, iJAG, P-12 school/district, an approved Educator Preparation Program, and a community college.
- The pathway is designed to bring people with identities underrepresented in the teaching force into the teaching profession with minimal cost, allowing people who could not afford to pay for a traditional pathway to enter the teaching force.
- This pathway relies on at least 4000 hours of experiential learning, some of which can be used in lieu of student teaching, negating the need for a teacher candidate to stop working in order to student teach.
- The Registered Apprenticeship, including the plan for teacher program completion in this pathway will, in the opinion of the task force, help diversify the teaching force based on:
  - Cost is lower than a traditional pathway, removing the cost barrier some students face.
  - May appeal to students who would not otherwise consider entering teaching through a traditional college based pathway.
  - Documentation of success for diverse learners through Registered Apprenticeship.
  - Students are able to work throughout the process in schools, allowing them to earn a living while preparing to be a teacher, as well as the opportunity for districts to grow their own teachers.
  - The significant number of hours of clinical experiences in the pathway may negate the need to stop working while completing clinical experiences, including student teaching.

### Registered Apprenticeship Definition

A Registered Apprenticeship includes five components:

- **Paid Job** - Apprentices are paid employees who produce high-quality work while they learn skills that enhance their employers' needs.
- **On-the-Job Learning** - Develops skilled workers through structured learning in a work setting.
- **Classroom Learning** - Improves job-related skills through education in a classroom setting (virtual or in-person).
- **Mentorship** - Provides apprentices with the support of a skilled worker to assist and enhance critical hands-on learning.
- **Credentials** - Offers a portable, nationally-recognized credential to be issued at the completion of the program.

### Pathway to Teacher Licensure

This pathway consists of two components, a Registered Apprenticeship and completion of a teacher preparation program while working in P-12 schools as a paraeducator and/or substitute teacher.

#### 1. Registered Apprenticeship.

In high school, students aged 16 may start a Registered Apprenticeship under the USDOL/OA standards of apprenticeship. Students less than 16 years old may start a pre-apprenticeship. The Registered Apprenticeship program will follow the USDOL/OA Work Process and Related Training Schedule. The Registered Apprenticeship for Paraeducator will serve as the first segment of this pathway.

The Registered Apprenticeship Includes:

Before apprenticeship begins:

- The Department will solicit and identify P-12 volunteer school districts with students interested in the teaching profession to volunteer to partner in this pathway.
- The EPPs will work with the USDOL/OA to identify on-the-job learning and coursework competencies for the expanded Paraeducator Registered Apprenticeship Work Process Schedule.
- Professional Development for counselors/specialists to provide information to students on opportunities within the Registered Apprenticeship.

Beginning in 11<sup>th</sup> Grade:

- The student apprentice will serve as a classroom aide in the school district.
- The Work Process Schedule will include on-the-job learning aligned with clinical requirements for teacher licensure.
- The Work Process Schedule will identify coursework competencies that lead to a paraeducator certificate and are aligned with requirements for teacher licensure.
- A recommended minimum of 4000 hours of on-the-job learning will be included in the Registered Apprenticeship.
- The paid job component of the Registered Apprenticeship will be paid by the school/district.
- The paid job during the students final two years of high school will take place as a teacher's aide within the apprentice's district.
- The classroom learning component of the Registered Apprenticeship will take place as dual credit coursework in the apprentice's high school, with college credit awarded by a community college and/or a four year Institution of Higher Education (IHE).

After high school graduation:

- The paid job as a paraeducator will be offered to participants making appropriate progress in the partner district. Progress is determined through evaluation of meeting competencies by appropriate evaluators.
- The classroom learning after high school graduation will take place through a community college and/or a four year IHE.
- The classroom learning and on-the-job learning during high school will allow the apprentice to be awarded a paraeducator certificate upon graduation (and achieving the age of 18).
- At the conclusion of the Registered Apprenticeship, the participant will achieve an associate's degree (or equivalent) and be eligible for a substitute authorization (once achieving the required age.)
- Additionally, prospective participants for the Paraeducator Apprenticeship could come through existing Paraeducators in the district or surrounding districts, or other

programs that could help to increase the diversity of applicants such as iJAG, Trio Programs, etc..

## 2. Completion of teacher preparation program.

This is the pathway that can work in the current environment, however, the pilot will identify and explore alternatives using collaboration among agencies. The goal is to have a fully licensed teacher at the end of the pathway. The graduate of the Registered Apprenticeship will obtain a paraeducator certificate and, if meeting requirements, a substitute authorization.

- After completion of the Registered Apprenticeship, the candidate will continue to work in the school district as a paraeducator and/or a substitute teacher using a substitute authorization.
- The candidate will complete coursework with an approved EPP. Coursework will be offered in a time and manner that allows the candidate to continue working.
- The EPP will monitor paraeducator or substitute teacher work to ensure candidates meet the clinical learning/performance requirements for licensure. The EPP may also monitor clinical experiences within the Registered Apprenticeship.
- The EPP will evaluate clinical experiences and award credit for student teaching as a component of the classroom experiences the candidate has completed throughout the pathway.
- The candidate will complete required program completion testing with support from the EPP and school/district that employs the candidate.
- The EPP will award the candidate a degree and recommend them for an initial license.

### **Recommended additions to the pathway**

These recommendations do not require legislative action and are made to inform interested stakeholders.

#### Elementary and Middle School Awareness/Exploration

P-12 school staff, with assistance from partners involved in this pathway, will provide elementary students with opportunities to become aware of teaching as a profession.

##### *K-5/6 Career Awareness*

- Learn about what jobs are available as well as begin development of soft skills
- Mentoring for skills useful in teaching (communication, empathy, collaboration)
- Job shadowing
- Become a teacher club – teachers sharing experiences
- Focus on students from populations underrepresented in the teaching force.

##### *Middle School Exploratory in Education Careers*

- Pre-apprenticeship in grades 7-8 as a teacher assistant receiving skills for communication and other skills that are useful in any field
- Consider using teacher leaders to provide PD for teachers on how to utilize student helpers in their classrooms

- Mentoring by teachers for skills useful in teaching (communication, empathy, collaboration)
- Develop/continue a teaching club for students interested in teaching, including teachers sharing their experiences
- Involve school counselors in mentoring and developing a five year plan in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Recommendation for a Pilot in the 2022-2023 academic year**

The Department of Education with the Department of Labor will oversee a pilot of the pathway, with the possibility of multiple entry points that may include high school students and paraeducators. The pilot will last two years, allowing students to achieve high school graduation, a paraeducator certificate, and completing approximately half of the Registered Apprenticeship, and allow current paraeducators to work toward teacher licensure.

#### **Pilot requirements**

- The Departments will use an application process to identify 2-3 P-12 school districts with a high number of students and/or paraeducators with identities underrepresented in the teaching force to voluntarily serve as partners in the pilots.
- The Legislature will provide funding to conduct the pilot.
- The Department will identify 2-3 EPPs to partner with the P-12 district.
- The Department will work with the selected EPPs and the USDOL/OA to identify On-the-Job learning competencies and coursework competencies for inclusion in the Paraeducator Work Process Schedule.
- The P-12 district will identify up to 10 high school students willing to participate who will enter their junior year in 2022.
- The P-12 district will serve as employer for the duration of the pilot and of the Registered Apprenticeship.