New York Equity Coalition

SCHOOL LEADER DIVERSITY IN NEW YORK STATE

September 2023

Principals and school leaders significantly impact student academic achievement, among the many other ways they are responsible for and care for students and the learning environment. Principals set the tone for high expectations in classroom instruction, school climate, and teacher hiring and retention. Principal-led decisions have a lasting impact, often leading to more sustainable change for school communities. Recent research on the role suggests that students' overall academic achievement is improved when schools are led by effective principals.

Yet, in New York, school-level leadership does not always represent the racial and ethnic diversity of the student population in NYS public schools, expanding the need to further interrogate our understandings of educator diversity in the state.

The Importance of School Leader Diversity

School leaders of color benefit students from all backgrounds and are an important factor in the pursuit of students' success. When students of color see themselves reflected in school leaders, there can be positive influences on students' future aspirations and identity development.

Further, same-race principals have positive impacts on academic outcomes for students of color. In a study focused on Black students and same-race principals in Missouri and Tennessee, evidence suggested that while being assigned to a Black teacher increases math achievement for Black students, a Black principal in their school can have positive impacts on Black students' math achievement beyond the impact of their teacher. Students with same-race school leaders also have improved attendance, fewer disciplinary referrals, increased placement in gifted programs and **improved academic outcomes**.

School leaders also influence teacher diversity. School leaders of color tend to hire and retain more teachers of color. A diverse teaching workforce has positive impacts on the academic performance of students of color and creates conditions for greater cultural consciousness for all students.

Impacts for Teachers

Black school leaders are more likely to hire Black teacher candidates than their White colleagues, and the same is true in studies **of Latinx principals and Latinx teachers**. Because principals identify and encourage teachers with strong leadership skills to enter the

principal pipeline, principals of color are more likely to **encourage teachers** of the same race to pursue leadership opportunities. Through hiring and retention practices, schools with principals of color are more likely to have more diverse teachers, and teachers are significantly less likely to leave their schools when the principal is of the same race or ethnicity.

The Untapped Potential of Assistant Principals

The number of assistant principals in public schools across the country increased over the last 25 years, and knowledge about the role and its potential has expanded. The role of assistant principals varies from school to school. Many perform a mix of instructional leadership, administrative management, student discipline and other leadership tasks. However, the most effective assistant principals support improved academic outcomes and foster culturally responsive environments. Along with the increasing number of assistant principals is an increase in the number of principals with experience as an assistant principal, bolstering the role as a steppingstone toward principalship. **Principals with previous assistant principal experience** in a school or district are often more prepared and effective at implementing strategies and policies when they transition to principalship, as they are often more familiar with the local context and the relationships built as assistant principal can be critical to reaching their goals.

By the Numbers: School Leader Diversity in NYS
In New York State...

55%
of all students are in a school without any school leaders of color.

38%
of students of color are in a school without any school leaders of color.

59%
of schools do not have any school leaders of color.

15%
of schools where students of color represent 96%+ of students do not have any school leaders of color.

If there is at least **1 school leader of color** in a school, they are more likely to be an assistant principal than principal.

The Education Trust–NY conducted an analysis of the educator workforce in New York from school years 2018-2019 to 2021-2022, using data about principals, assistant principals, and teachers.

Key Findings:

1. More than half of students in New York State public schools attend a school without any school leaders of color.

2. Schools that serve higher percentages of students of color are far more likely to have at least one school leader of color.

3. Schools with a principal of color have greater teacher diversity than schools with a White principal.

4. Very few teachers transition into leadership roles and most teachers who make the transition to principal or assistant principal are White.

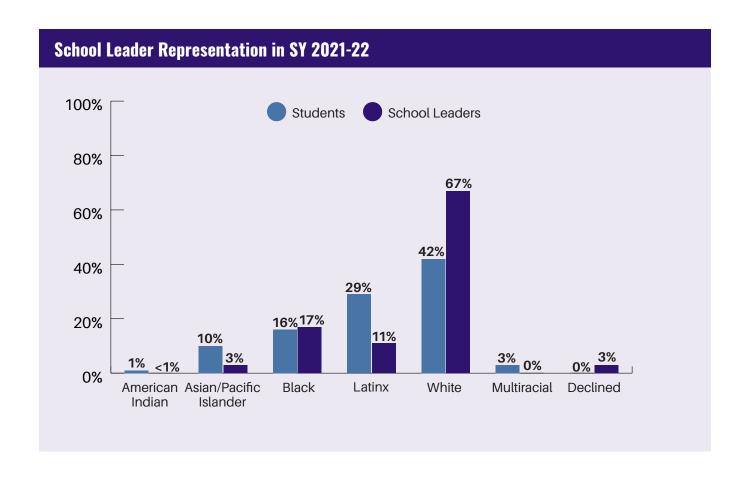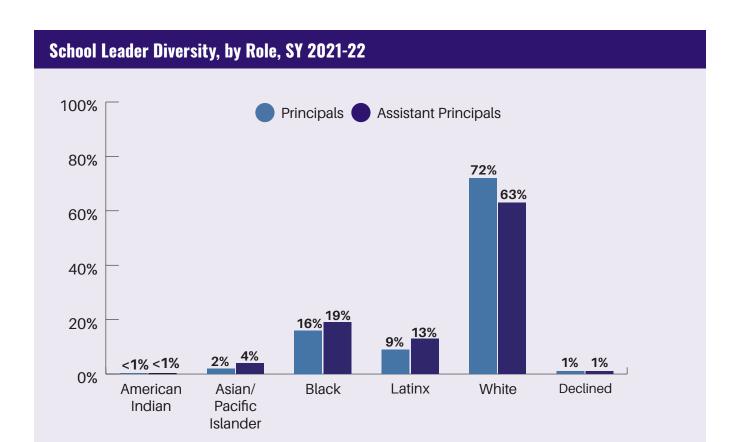Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUimages

In this report, students, teachers, and school leaders of color refer to non-White students, teachers and school leaders. Students of color identify as American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Latinx or Hispanic, or Multiracial, while teachers and school leaders of color identify as American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Latinx or Hispanic. School leaders in the data refer specifically to assistant principals and principals, and not other roles that may vary across schools. Educators of color in this report include teachers, assistant principals, and principals of color.

A Look At The Data

FINDING 1: More than half of students in NYS public schools attend a school without any school leaders of color.

- School leaders in New York do not represent the racial diversity of the student population in NYS public schools. While students of color represent 59% of students in the state, only 31% of school leaders are school leaders of color.

- School leaders of color are more likely to be assistant principals than principals (36% v. 27%), while White school leaders are more likely to be principals than assistant principals (72% v. 63%).

- Students of color are more likely to attend schools without a same-race school leader, with the proportion of Asian and American Indian students attending a school without a same-race teacher is highest at 83% and 96%, respectively.

- Access to school leaders of color varies across districts, with students in rural high needs districts being the most likely to attend a school without a school leader of color, and students in charter schools, NYC schools and the Big 4 being most likely.

School Leader Representation in SY 2021-22

Legend: ● Students ● School Leaders

Category	Students	School Leaders
American Indian	1%	<1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	10%	3%
Black	16%	17%
Latinx	29%	11%
White	42%	67%
Multiracial	3%	0%
Declined	0%	3%

School Leader Diversity, by Role, SY 2021-22

Legend: ● Principals ● Assistant Principals

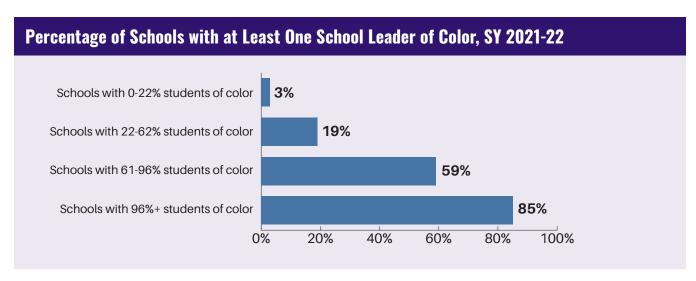| Category	Principals	Assistant Principals
American Indian	<1%	<1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	4%
Black	16%	19%
Latinx	9%	13%
White	72%	63%
Declined	1%	1%

Statewide	School leaders of color	Black school leaders	Latinx school leaders	Asian school leaders	American Indian school leaders	White school leaders
Schools without any...	59%	74%	82%	95%	99%	17%
Students of color in schools without any...	38%	61%	69%	90%	99%	19%
Black students in schools without any...	29%	44%	73%	92%	99%	27%
Latinx students in schools without any...	36%	63%	62%	91%	99%	19%
Asian students in schools without any...	49%	77%	75%	83%	100%	8%
American Indian students in schools without any...	41%	64%	75%	90%	96%	21%
White students in schools without any...	81%	90%	91%	97%	100%	3%

Need/Resource Capacity Category (NRC)	Schools without any...					
	School leaders of color	Black school leaders	Latinx school leaders	Asian school leaders	American Indian school leaders	White school leaders
NYC	29%	57%	67%	89%	99%	31%
Buffalo, Rochester, Yonkers, Syracuse	28%	39%	79%	98%	97%	16%
Urban-Suburban High Needs	54%	67%	80%	98%	100%	23%
Rural High Needs	94%	97%	98%	99%	99%	3%
Average Needs	86%	92%	94%	99%	100%	5%
Low Needs	85%	94%	93%	96%	100%	5%
Charters	24%	44%	68%	91%	99%	32%

Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUimages

FINDING 2: Schools that serve higher percentages of students of color are far more likely to have at least one school leader of color.

- Schools with the highest concentrations of students of color, where 96% or more of the student body are students of color, are more likely to have at least one school leader of color.

- Across the board, if there is at least 1 school leader of color in a school, they are more likely to be an assistant principal than principal.

- In schools that serve 61-96% students of color, 41% of schools do not have any school leaders of color.
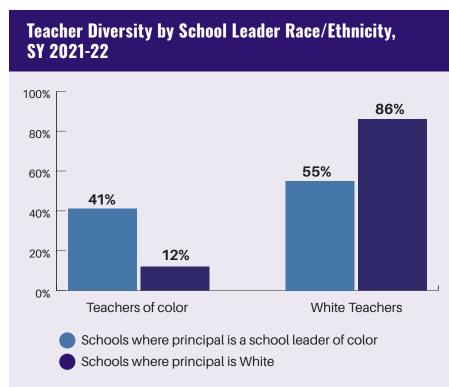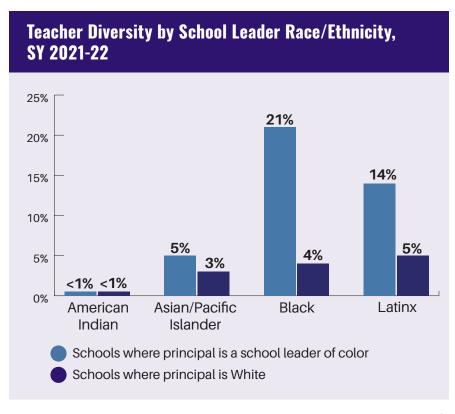
Percentage of Schools with at Least One School Leader of Color, SY 2021-22

School category	Percentage
Schools with 0-22% students of color	3%
Schools with 22-62% students of color	19%
Schools with 61-96% students of color	59%
Schools with 96%+ students of color	85%

Percentage of Schools with at Least One School Leader of Color, by Role SY 2021-22

School category	At least one principal of color	At least one assistant principal of color
Schools with 0-22% students of color	2%	5%
Schools with 22-62% students of color	9%	19%
Schools with 61-96% students of color	37%	52%
Schools with 96%+ students of color	67%	77%

● Schools with at least one principal of color   ● Schools with at least one assistant principal of color

- In schools with one principal who is a principal of color, teachers of color make up 41% of the teacher workforce, as compared to schools with one principal who is White, where teachers of color only represent 12% of teachers.

- Schools with a principal of color have higher shares of Asian, Black and Latinx teachers than schools with a White principal.
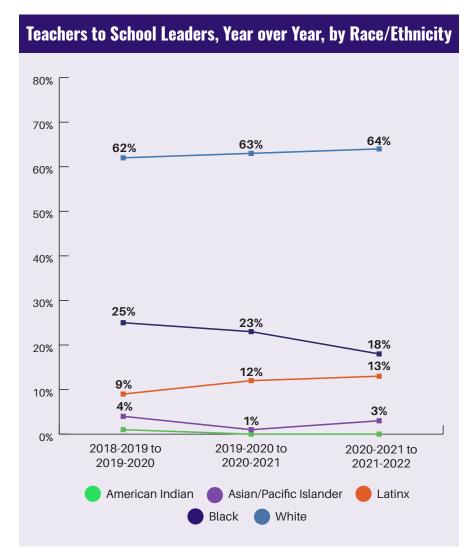

Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUimages

Teacher Diversity by School Leader Race/Ethnicity, SY 2021-22

Teachers of color — 41% / 12%
White Teachers — 55% / 86%

● Schools where principal is a school leader of color
● Schools where principal is White

Teacher Diversity by School Leader Race/Ethnicity, SY 2021-22

American Indian — <1% / <1%
Asian/Pacific Islander — 5% / 3%
Black — 21% / 4%
Latinx — 14% / 5%

● Schools where principal is a school leader of color
● Schools where principal is White

- Of this small sample of teachers-to-school leaders, patterns of underrepresentation of teachers of color continue. In the SY 2018-19 to 2019-20 cohort of teachers-to-principals, 25% were Black teachers, 9% were Latinx teachers, 4% were Asian teachers while 62% were White teachers. Similarly for teachers-to-assistant principals in the same time frame, 19% were Black teachers, 11% were Latinx teachers, 4% were Asian teachers while 63% were White teachers.

- By the SY 2020-21 to SY 2021-22-time frame, there is a decrease in percentage of Black teachers-to-principals, down to 18% from the 2018-19 to 2019-20 high of 25%.

Teachers to School Leaders, Year over Year, by Race/Ethnicity

	2018-2019 to 2019-2020	2019-2020 to 2020-2021	2020-2021 to 2021-2022
White	62%	63%	64%
Black	25%	23%	18%
Latinx	9%	12%	13%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%	1%	3%
American Indian		1%	

Legend: ● American Indian ● Asian/Pacific Islander ● Latinx ● Black ● White
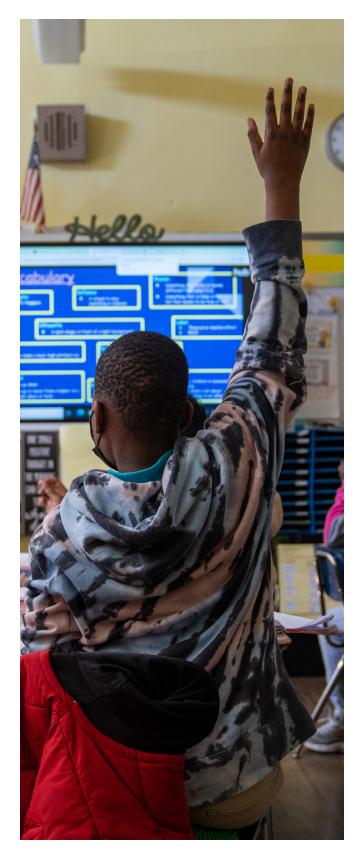
Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUimages

A Call To Action

New York has an opportunity to improve diversity of the school leader workforce. Recently, the state has taken significant action to increase diversity within the teacher workforce. Efforts to improve teacher diversity are underway in districts across the state. Particular attention should also be paid to the diversity of school leadership — a critical lever toward improved student outcomes and well-being. Now, state and district leaders can begin to design initiatives that support diversifying school leaders.

Key Recommendations:

- **NYSED and the Board of Regents** explicitly name workforce diversity as a critical element in diversity, equity and inclusion efforts enacted by local districts. State leadership can continue to support districts by:

  - Providing technical assistance and guidance that supports districts to create racial equity plans with intentional and specific goals for improving diversity of the educator workforce.

  - For example, **districts in North Carolina and Kentucky** created racial equity plans based on existing data, updated the plans to include efforts to recruit more school leaders of color, and sought and set aside funding to implement these plans in earnest.

- Assistant principals, and teachers, are already more likely to be educators of color than principals. Principals of color are more likely to hire teachers of color, improving teacher diversity. The state can help districts improve their school leader diversity by:

- Supporting districts to utilize or create a pipeline for assistant principals of color to become principals, and for teachers of color to become assistant principals and principals.

- Creating more pathways to school leadership through apprenticeship programs and teacher-leader opportunities connected to institutions of higher education and other schools of leadership.

• New York does not yet transparently share data about the demographics of teacher or leader candidates completing in-state educator preparation programs. The state can help districts to improve recruitment and hiring of educators of color by:

- Providing the racial/ethnic makeup of enrolled students and candidates completing in-state teacher preparation programs publicly so that the districts can partner with higher education institutions to identify high-quality candidates of color.

- Districts should work to interrogate current recruitment and hiring practices for elements that would drive better diversity and equity.

• Districts should invest in opportunities for teachers of color to grow and develop their skills and qualifications for future leadership roles by:

- Providing teachers with professional learning opportunities that develop leadership competencies and spark greater interest for teachers of color to remain in the field.

- Using cohort models and continuing education opportunities that encourage teachers of color to consider future leadership opportunities in their schools and districts is a way to support retention.

• Assistant principalship can be seen as a steppingstone to becoming a principal. The state can support districts and schools to strengthen the pathway from assistant principal to principal by:

- Studying the assistant principal role in schools, and its diverse tasks and responsibilities, as there is a lack of coherence or guidance on role expectations, preparation, evaluation and impacts on students.

- Supporting districts and schools to create more intentionality and clarity for role expectations which can help pivot assistant principals to focus on academic needs, and lead to supportive evaluation to improve effectiveness and support the transition to principalship.

Data Note:

Findings about educator diversity and representation are from a public data records request from NSYED. The data is an anonymized database extraction of full-time and part-time K-12 teachers, principals, and assistant principals from the 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22 school years. It does not include substitute teachers, paraprofessionals, after-school educators, or other administrative roles. The data may include a small fraction of the state's prekindergarten teachers.

For the findings about how school leaders reflected student diversity in the 2021-22 school year, we used K-12 student demographic data in the public school enrollment data found **here**, which includes public and charter schools. Need/Resource Capacity Categories (NRCs) are designated by the state and used to categorize districts by their ability to meet the needs of their students with local resources. More information on NRCs and how they are designated is available **here**.

For findings about school leaders by specific roles, we excluded <1% of school leaders who were classified as both an assistant principal and principal in the 2021-22 school year data.

For findings about principals and teacher diversity, we were able to match 4,487 schools with principal and teacher data, then excluded 639 schools with multiple principals or principals

who declined to report their race. These findings only include schools with one principal whose race was reported to compare teacher diversity in schools with an individual principal of color or an individual White principal.

Throughout the report, percentages between 0% and 1% are reported as <1%. Any percentage that appears as 0% reflects exactly 0 students, school leaders or teachers in that category.

We strive to report on disaggregated racial data whenever possible. Publicly available student enrollment data contains one aggregated category called "Asian," while the educator data contains two categories: "Asian" and "Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander." We aggregated the two educator categories into "Asian" to match the student data. Additionally, the educator data includes a category called "declined to state" which is not present in the student data, and the student data includes a category called "multiracial" which is not present in the educator data. "Nonwhite" and "of color" are defined as all racial/ethnic categories other than White. For students, "nonwhite" and "students of color" includes American Indian/ Native Alaskan, Asian, Black, Latinx, and Multiracial. For educators, "nonwhite" and "teachers of color" or "school leaders of color" includes American Indian/ Native Alaskan, Asian, Black, Latinx, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander.

New York Equity Coalition