

Black Educators in L.A. Unified:

The Distribution of Black Teachers, Black Administrators, and Black Students in the District from 2016-2022

Independent Analysis Unit
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Dedicated to increasing Black student achievement, Board resolution 014-21/22 “Black Student Excellence through Educator Diversity, Preparation and Retention” committed the District to supporting and retaining Black educators. **In response to the resolution and to inform the development of a District strategic plan on educator diversity, this report presents data on the distribution of Black educators and Black students.** These data and analysis show that though a dramatic increase of Black educators likely would depend on demographic changes to the regional population, there are areas where the District can focus to effect change. This report also highlights metrics to monitor to ensure the District sustains its Black educator labor force.

Notably, we found **Black educators are the only racial/ethnic group with greater representation among administrators than among teachers.** One in ten teachers are Black, but two in ten administrators are Black. Because principals serve all students in their school, sustaining the Black administrator pool ensures that students continue to be exposed to Black educators. Increases to the Black teacher pool would have to be large to increase exposure of Black students to Black educators.

We also found the **share of Black teachers (9%) was proportional to the share of Black students (8%)** overall and by Local District. **However, the District lost nearly 100 Black**

teachers a year since 2016. This decrease, though relatively small (2 percentage points), may affect the size of the Black administrator pool in the long-term, especially if the trend continues. The white teacher population also declined during this time. We found the **Black and white teacher populations had proportionally fewer young teachers compared to the Asian and Latino teacher populations,** which have been stable or increased during the same time.

Though only one in ten teachers are Black, **over 90% of Black students attended a school with a Black educator,** and among them, most attended schools with a Black teacher *and* a Black principal. **Still, over 2,000 Black students, most in elementary school, attended a school without a Black educator.**

Finally, we found exposure to Black educators was largely a function of the total number of Black educators in the District. Sometimes the whole masks tendencies in the parts. In this case, though, districtwide, 9% of teachers were Black in 2022, and while some schools had no Black teachers, on average in any given school, 11% of teachers were Black.

A dramatic increase in the number of Black teachers, necessary to meaningfully affect Black students’ access to Black teachers, would require a commensurate increase in the number of African Americans in the educator labor supply. However, research shows

teachers are likely to work in communities where they grew up,¹ and, as it stands, the supply of Black teachers in Los Angeles roughly reflects the share of African Americans in the regional population. Still, the data presented in this report suggest areas the District could target, including:

- the overall number and distribution of Black elementary school teachers
- professional support (e.g., professional communities) for Black educators working in schools with few Black teachers
- the number of early career and younger Black teachers entering the District
- Black administrator retention/sustaining the current size of the Black administrator pool

In the sections below, we present data on the following topics:

1. The racial/ethnic composition of educators in the District, county, and state
2. The racial/ethnic composition of educators over time
3. Where Black educators work and where Black students go to school

ABOUT THE DATA

The primary data source for this report was the District’s Human Resources database, SAP. Data on all certificated staff were pulled each year from 2016-2022.² The sample includes all certificated active employees and excludes those on leave of absence (detached service), substitutes, and returned retirees. Employees were categorized into three groups based on their jobs, teachers (all levels, i.e., including adult and early childhood), school administrators, and District administrators, each with two types. These categories, some broader than those used in pub-

licly available staff demographic tables,³ represent different levels of seniority. For a detailed list of positions, see the Appendix.

Group	Position Types
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers (all levels) • Teacher leaders (instructional coaches, teacher advisers)
School administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant principals • Principals
District administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School support administrators • District leaders (e.g., superintendents, directors)

Staff racial/ethnic information are self-reported and collected in SAP. All staff identifying as Hispanic or Latino were categorized as Latino, so, all other races represent non-Hispanic/Latino of that race (i.e., Black signifies non-Hispanic Black). Non-Hispanic/Latino staff who identified as more than one races were identified as two or more races. To focus on the representation of Black educators, staff who identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Filipino, Pacific Islander, two or more races and unknown races—less than 5% of educators each year—were grouped as “All other races” throughout this report.

To compare staff demographics between the District and all other districts in Los Angeles County and California, state level data from 2016-2018 (the most recent year of data) was obtained from the California Department of Education’s (CDE) DataQuest.⁴ The CDE staff demographic data provides full-time-equivalent (FTE) percentages for teachers and administrators. Direct comparisons between District and CDE data are limited because data used for L.A. Unified analysis does not use FTEs and the categories for administrators may not match those reported in the CDE data.

Finally, student demographic and school enrollment data were downloaded from the District’s ad-hoc reporting tool, Focus.⁵ Staff and

students were linked to schools via the school’s location code to control for various programmatic and school organizational models.⁶ This approximation may mask some important differences between different school types. For simplicity, we refer to these locations as “schools.”

THE DISTRIBUTION OF BLACK EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS IN L.A. UNIFIED

In L.A. Unified, one in five administrators and one in ten teachers are Black—higher ratios than the rest of the county and the state.

In L.A. Unified, administrators are twice as likely as teachers to be Black.

The pool of District and school administrators—taken together—has nearly twice as many Black employees, percentage-wise, as the teacher pool. In 2022, about one in five district and school administrators were Black

(Figure 1); in comparison, less than one in ten teachers were Black.

This pattern of occupying a higher share of administrator positions than teacher positions was unique to Black employees. Latino, white, and Asian employees had roughly equal representation across all positions, or their representation among teachers exceeded their representation among administrators (i.e., school administrators and district administrators combined). For example, in 2022, a District leader was just as likely to be white (23%) or Black (23%), but a teacher was three times more likely to be white (31%) than Black (9%).

Larger shares of teachers and administrators were Black in L.A. Unified than in L.A. County or California.

In 2018, the most recent year of state-level data, the share of Black administrators was double the share of Black teachers in the District, County, and the state (Figure 2). Compared to all other districts in L.A. County and California, though, L.A. Unified had larger shares of Black and Latino teachers. One in

Figure 1. District Educators by Position and Race/Ethnicity, 2022

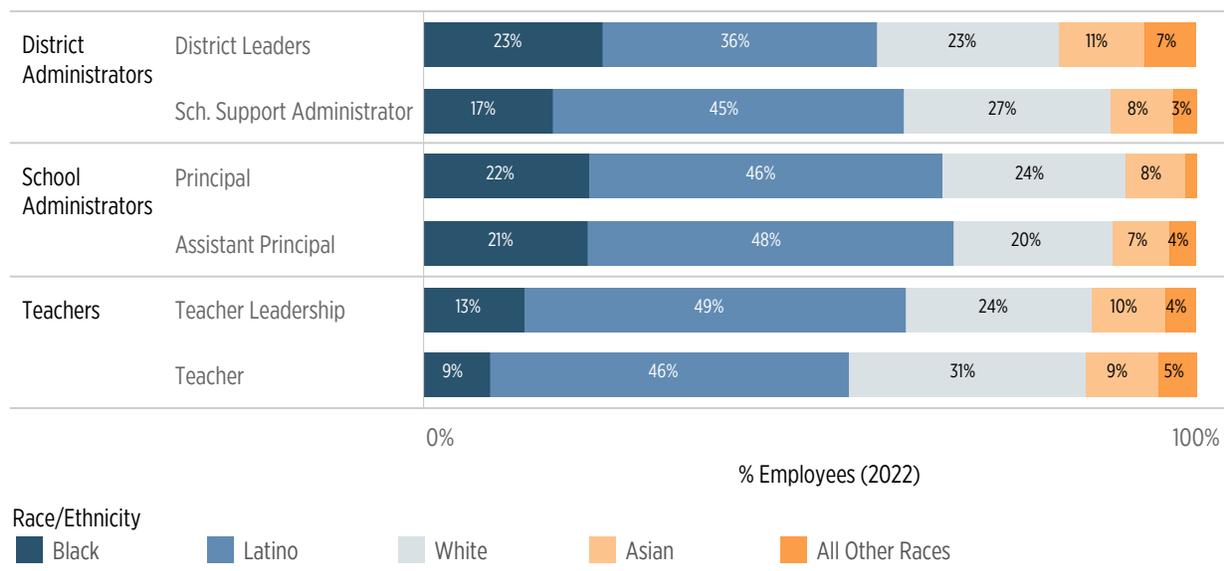
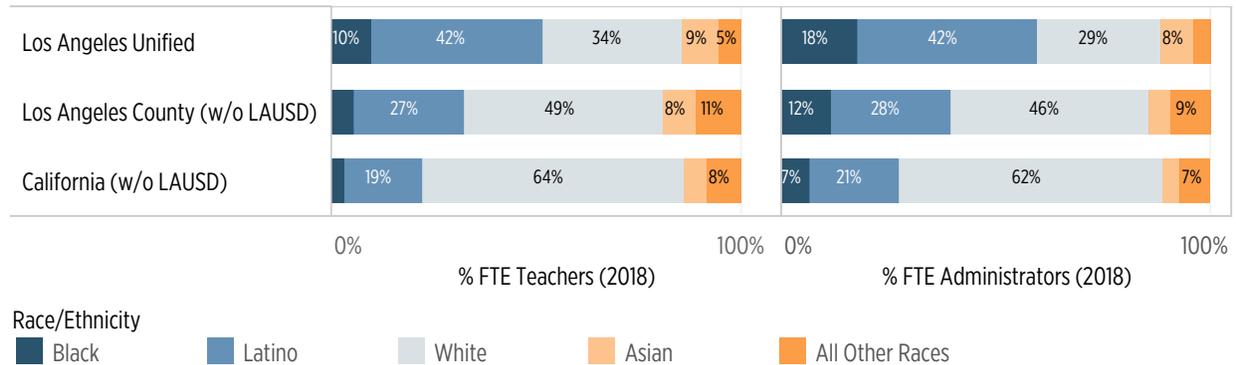


Figure 2. Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Teachers and Administrators in the District, County and State by Race/Ethnicity (2018)



ten teachers and nearly one in five (18%) administrators were Black in L.A. Unified, more than double the ratios statewide and 1.5 times the ratio in all other districts in the county. Moreover, three out of five Black teachers in California work in Los Angeles County, and within the County, over half work in L.A. Unified.⁷

Insight 1: Black educators become administrators at a higher rate than their peers. This is positive finding from an equity lens and is consistent countywide and statewide. Although there are fewer school leaders and District leaders than teachers, because a school leader serves all students in a school, there are more students in the District with a Black principal than a Black teacher.

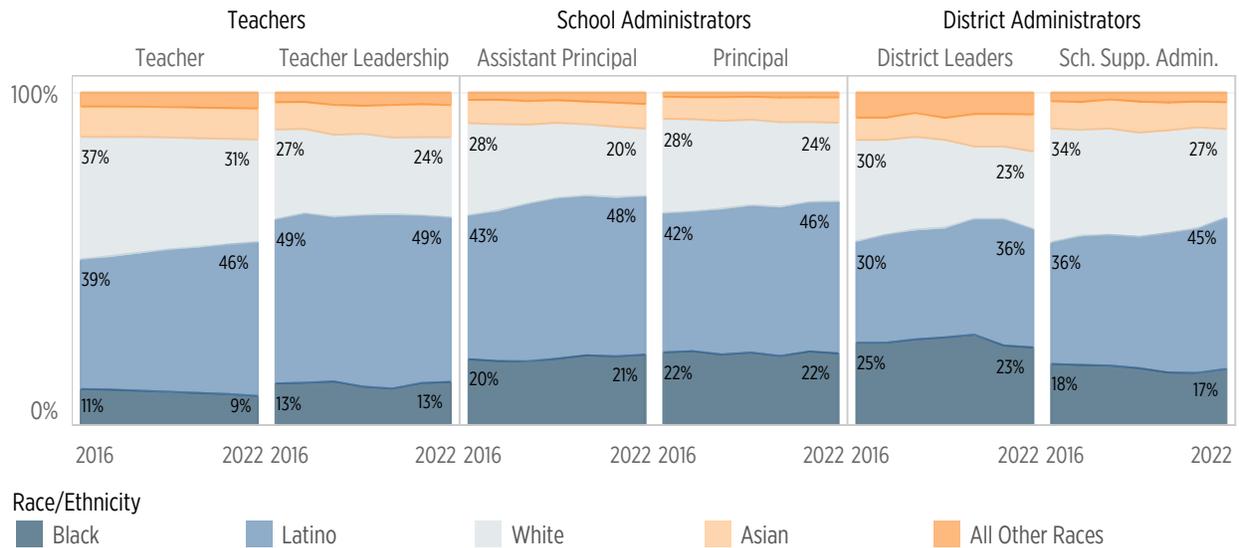
Insight 2: The data also suggest L.A. Unified may be a more attractive employer or has more successfully recruited Black educators than other districts in the county. It may also be the case that **the share of Black educators in the District simply reflects the Black population in the District’s boundaries.**⁸ If the share of Black educators were to drop below the share of the Black population in the District’s boundaries, this could be a matter of concern.

Though shares of most categories of Black educators have remained stable, the number of Black teachers has decreased by 100 per year since 2016.

The share of Black certificated employees remained stable between 2016 and 2022, though the share of Black teachers decreased 2 percentage points (Figure 3). This decrease amounted to a decline of 100 Black teachers per year, or 700 Black teachers since 2016.⁹ (While the share of District leaders also decreased by 2 percentage points, this equated to a decline in 5 Black employees; there are fewer than 100 District leaders each year). Over the same period, the share of white teachers decreased by 6 percentage points, which equated to a reduction of ~300 teachers per year.

Black and white teachers were the only racial groups declining in overall numbers. We also found Black and white teachers were older, on average, than their Latino and Asian peers. Half of all Latino and Asian teachers were under the age of 45, whereas only 28% of Black teachers and 35% of white teachers were under the age of 45.

Figure 3. District Educators by Position and Race/Ethnicity, 2016-2022



	Black	White	Latino	Asian
Change in K-12 teacher demographics since 2018^a	▼ 2 percentage points ▼ -500 teachers (-100/year)	▼ 4 percentage points ▼ -1,400 teachers (-300/year)	▲ 4 percentage points ▲ -400 teachers (-80/year)	no change ▼ -100 teachers (20/year)
Current % K-12 teachers^a	8.3%	30.6%	46.1%	9.6%
Current % students^b	7.5%	10.5%	73.4%	3.9%

^a Certificated Demographics Tables, Los Angeles Unified Personnel Research & Analysis. <https://ca01000043.schoolwires.net/Page/1453>

^b Los Angeles Unified Fingertip Facts 2021-2022. <https://achieve.lausd.net/Page/362>

Insight 3: The future talent pool for school and District leadership positions comes from teachers. The number of Black administrators has remained constant over the period of this analysis, but a **shrinking population of Black teachers may affect the number of Black administrators in the years and decades to come.**

Insight 4: Further, because there are fewer young Black teachers compared to the Latino and Asian groups of teachers—which have stable or increasing teacher populations—**younger Black teachers may not be replacing Black teacher retirees. If this trend were to continue, the decline in the share of Black teachers may accelerate.** The same could be true for white teachers, which suggests some of the decline may reflect demographic shifts in the local population.

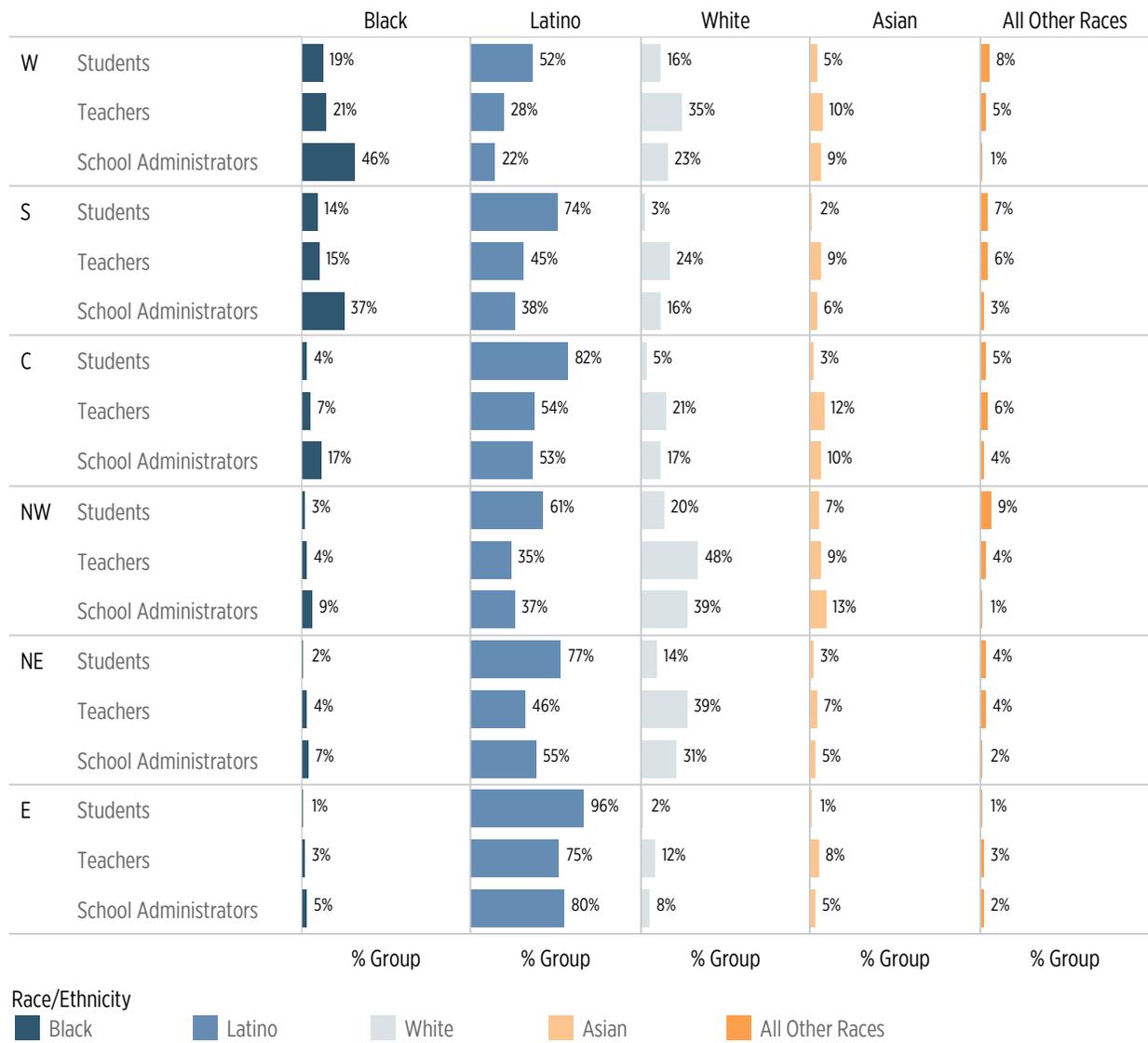
Most Black students attend schools with Black educators.

Eight in ten Black students, Black teachers and Black principals are in Local Districts South, West, and Central.

Across all Local Districts, West, South, and Central had the largest shares of Black students, teachers, and school administrators (principals and assistant principals) (Figure 4). These local districts were also where most Black students (84%), most Black teachers (83%), and most Black school administrators (80%) go to school or work.

As in the District overall, in each local district, the share of Black teachers was equal to or exceeded the share of Black students. Also

Figure 4. Students, Teachers, and School Administrators by Race/Ethnicity and Local District, 2022



Population	W	S	C	NW	Other
Black students	40%	35%	10%	8%	8%
Black teachers	34%	33%	16%	7%	10%
Black principals	35%	31%	14%	7%	13%

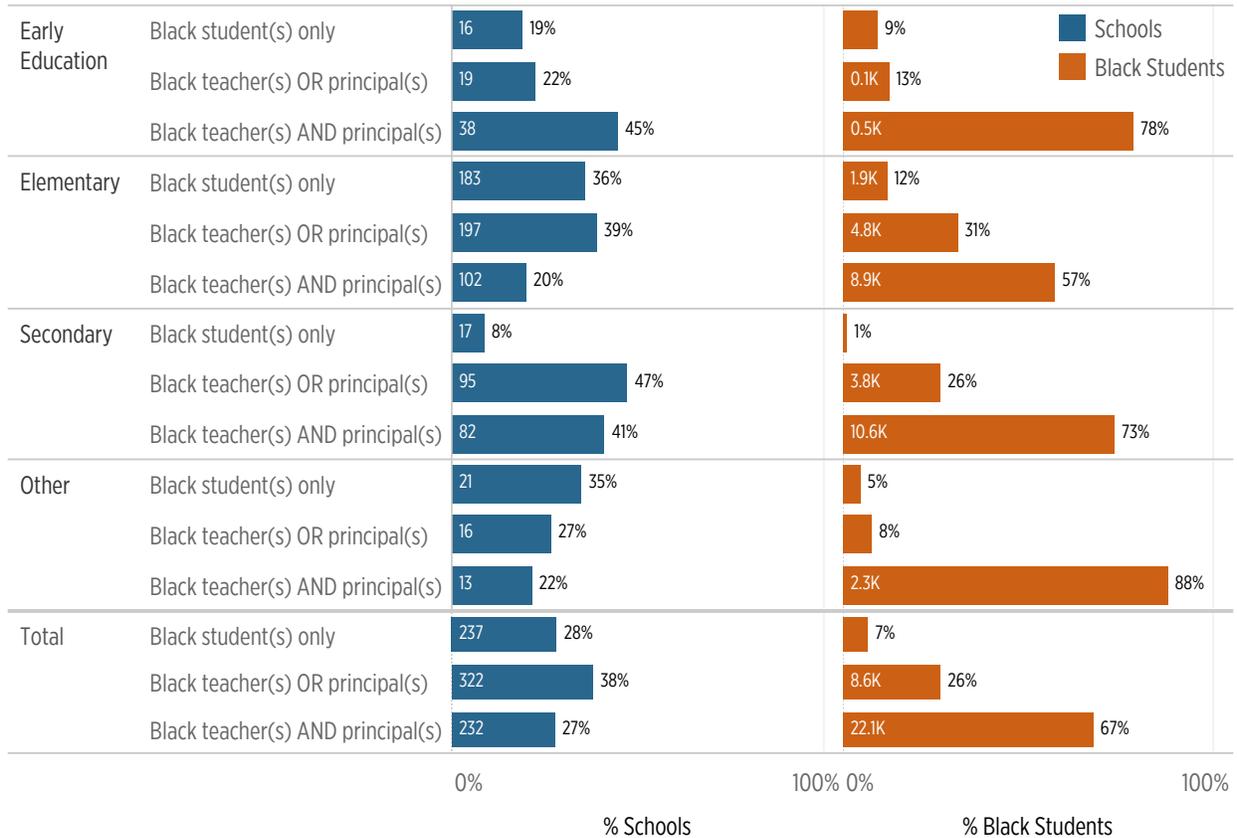
following the districtwide pattern, in each local district, the pool of District and school administrators—taken together—had two to three times as many Black employees, percentage-wise, as the teacher pool. For example, in 2022, nearly half of principals (46%)

were Black, more than double the ratio of Black students and teachers; one in five students and teachers in Local District West were Black.

Over 90% of Black students attend a school with a Black teacher, Black principal, or both – though this varies by school level.

In total, across school types, over nine in ten Black students attended a school with a Black educator, though these schools only comprise

Figure 5. Percent of Schools and Black Students by Black Student Exposure to Black Educators, 2022



Note: Here, principal includes principals and assistant principals. Early education includes Early Education Centers and State Preschools. Other includes Central Office, Community Day School, Continuation High School, Non-Public Schools, Opportunity Schools/units, and Special Education. Only schools with Black students are shown, so the total percent of schools does not add up to 100%. Not shown are schools with no Black student(s) or Black educator(s) (4% of all schools), schools with Black principal(s) only (1%), and schools with Black teacher(s) only (2%).

approximately two thirds of all schools (Figure 5). Most Black students (67%) attended a school with at least one Black teacher and at least one Black principal (or assistant principal). An additional 26% attend a school with at least one Black teacher (25%) or at least one Black principal (1%). As shown in Figure 5, shares of Black students attending a school with a Black teacher and a Black principal were highest in early education centers and secondary schools.

However, more than 2,000 Black students (7% of all Black students) were enrolled in schools that did not have a Black teacher or principal on staff. Most of these students (~1,900) were enrolled in one of 183 elementary schools.

Data drill-down: Investigating the 183 elementary schools where Black students were enrolled but had no Black educators on staff

- 15 of these schools served 30 or more Black students, including Lomita Elementary Magnet, which served close to 100 Black students.
- Of the 164 remaining elementary schools, half served 5 or fewer Black students, and the other half served between 5 and 30 Black students.

The confluence of Black students and teachers reflects that fact that the geographic distribution of educators largely reflect the geographic distribution of Black families and employees in the District’s boundaries. Research

has shown that nationwide, teachers typically work in schools in close proximities to the communities in which they grew up.¹⁰

Though there were some schools with large shares of Black teachers, most schools had Black teacher representation at rates between 0 and 10%, a pattern also observed among Asian teachers, who have similar representation districtwide. In the schools where 93% of Black students are concentrated, Black teacher representation averaged 15%.

Data drill-down: Comparing Black and Asian teacher representation across District schools:

- Districtwide, about one in ten teachers were Black and one in ten teachers were Asian
- Only one third of all schools had larger ratios of Black and Asian teachers than the District average. There were 46 schools (5%) where more than half the teachers were Black. There were only 8 schools (<1% of all schools) where more than half the teachers were Asian.
- More than one third of schools had no Black teachers, while a quarter of schools had no Asian teachers.

Insight 5: The more teachers from each race/ethnic group there are at a school, the more likely it is that students at that school will learn from those teachers. Thus, the confluence of Black students and teachers increases the exposure of most Black students in the District to a Black educator. Conversely, although many Black students and educators are concentrated in certain areas, a non-trivial number of students and teachers are racially isolated. **Reducing this isolation at select schools with substantial Black students and low numbers of Black educators could be a pragmatic area for strategic focus.** However, increasing the number of Black teachers at any given school is challenging given that fact that only approximately 10% of teachers are Black.

CONCLUSION

Because the proportion of educators who are Black corresponds to the students who are Black in the District and reflects the Black population—and probably the labor supply—in the county, the options for dramatically increasing the Black share of educators in the District are limited. The analysis presented in this report, however, provides key insights into how the District can effect change on the margins.

1. Knowing that, of the 7% of Black students who attend schools without Black educators, most are in elementary schools, the District can focus on increasing the number of Black educators in elementary schools and monitoring their distribution (i.e., in elementary schools with the highest numbers of Black students).
2. Knowing that the relatively low number of Black teachers means that many are in schools by themselves, and that the number of Black teachers decreases every year, the District can focus on how to support and retain existing Black teachers.
3. Knowing that a relatively low proportion of Black teachers are on the younger side, and that the number of Black teachers decreases every year, the District can focus on recruiting and retaining early-career Black teachers.
4. Knowing that Black educators comprise more than 20% of the administrator pool, that the relatively large share of administrators who are Black can affect many students, the District can monitor this rate, monitor Black administrator retention, learn about existing programs that support Black teacher promotion to administrative positions, and continue to support and fund these programs.

NOTES

¹ Reininger, M. (2012). Hometown disadvantage? It depends on where you're from: Teachers' location preferences and the implications for staffing schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 34(2), 127-145.

² We used Census Day as the date of reference, which differs from District reports that use Norm Day.

³ The Human Resources Division of Personnel Research & Analysis publishes certificated staff demographics every year, available here: <https://ca01000043.schoolwires.net/Page/1453>

⁴ <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/staffdemo.asp>

⁵ All files were downloaded and processed by the Independent Analysis Unit.

⁶ Students were matched to school locations via their program location code for their enrollment. Educators

were matched to school locations via their cost center and linking their cost center to the school's location code for that cost center.

⁷ Author calculation using CDE data.

⁸ In L.A. County, 8.1% of the population is Black. In L.A. City, 8.3% of the population is Black. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates (https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B03002&g=0500000US06037_1600000US064400&tid=ACSDT1Y2019.B03002)

⁹ The number of Black K-12 teachers decreased by 500 since 2018, the most recent year of publicly available District tables on Certificated Employee Demographics. Source: <https://ca01000043.schoolwires.net/Page/1453>

¹⁰ Reininger. (2012). Hometown disadvantage?

APPENDIX

Below, we list the jobs associated with each position type used throughout this report. A detailed list with the positions as coded in SAP is available upon request.

- **Teachers:** All K-12 (including special education and resource specialists), early childhood, and adult teachers
- **Teacher Leaders:** Advisors and instructional coaches
- **Assistant Principals:** All assistant principals
- **Principals:** All principals
- **School Support Administrators:** All school support administrators
- **District Leaders:** Superintendent, local district superintendents, assistant/associate/instructional area/deputy superintendents, instructional area superintendents, executive directors, chiefs/deputy chiefs, coordinators, directors/deputy directors, assistant general counsel, senior directors/executive directors, senior advisers