

CASE

**COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATORS
OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

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**DIVERSIFICATION OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION
LEADERSHIP WORKFORCE
TASK FORCE (DSEL-TF) REPORT**

CASE, The Council of Administrators of Special Education
a Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

<https://www.casecec.org/>

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DIVERSIFICATION OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP WORKFORCE TASK FORCE (DSEL-TF) REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Across the nation, policymakers seek to diversify the educator workforce to ensure students engage with educators who share their identities. In light of this need, CASE issued a call for applications to create a valuable resource to support the field in diversifying the special education leadership workforce. The call resulted in the identification of the Diversification of the Special Education Leadership Workforce Task Force (DSEL-TF). Eighty percent of the Task Force were people of the global majority and included representation from the LGBTQ+ and the disability communities along with many other intersectional identities. The DSEL-TF was charged with thoroughly examining the challenges associated with addressing this complex topic in a sustainable manner. To achieve this aim, the taskforce was divided into three sub-committees focused on one section of the report. What follows is a report detailing the work, findings, and recommendations of the Task Force.

This report is divided into three sections. The first section, CASE and CASE Subdivision/Unit Membership, is critically important in considering representation in special education leadership. Next, The PreK-12 School District section is dedicated to findings and recommendations related to school districts' efforts to create diversity of thought and identity in the special education leadership workforce. Lastly, the Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) section focuses on the changes needed to support the pipeline of leaders into the field.

While the diversity of CASE is reliant, in part, upon the international special education leadership, as of September 2021 the 14-member Executive Committee is 100 percent White. Other areas of representation do exist. However, the lack of racial diversity is a stark indicator of the depth of this problem. This report recommends a strong focus on the current leadership development practices and networking system of CASE and CASE subdivisions/units. Data collection, topics for professional development, considering the use of affinity space, and bylaw considerations are included in the recommendations. In addition, the dedication of CASE to racial diversity and social justice is essential.

The section of the report dedicated to PreK-12 school districts noted, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), by 2024 White students are projected to represent only 46 percent of the public school population. Hispanic students are projected to represent 29 percent, Black students 15 percent, and Asian/Pacific Islander students 6 percent. Based upon these data and additional research, the report challenges PreK-12 districts to act and impact the diverse representation of teachers in the classrooms and leaders in administrative roles across the nation through the following actions: a) confront systemic roadblocks to diversity of the special education workforce b) develop a strategic plan to address issues of diversity, and c) include all diverse communities as part of the district's professional learning program.

The final area of the report focuses on IHE that prepare professional educators. Educator and student diversity are changing at a rapid pace. Some of the challenges faced by diverse candidates interested in teacher and administrator preparation programs include financial hurdles, certain admissions requirements biased in favor of mainstream candidates, and lack of mentorship. Historically, higher education programs for teachers have only been able to attract 7 percent Black or Hispanic students as compared to the diversity in other programs on the same college campuses (eSchool News, 2021). Recommendations include a review of admission criteria, recruitment of diverse faculty with shared experiences, increased leadership development grants in the field of special education, and implementation of mentorship programs for diverse students enrolled in special education leadership programs.

CASE is committed to advocating for and supporting the building of a workforce fully representative of the students and families we serve. Diversifying the candidates for leadership in special education is a critical component of meeting CASE's commitment. Diversity is inclusive of race, ethnicity, intellectual perspectives, language, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. CASE, driven by research and best practices, will deeply engage in the challenging conversations necessary to create substantive changes required to diversify the CASE organization/board, committees, and membership.

THE REPORT

In June 2020, CASE issued a statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion in response to the murder of George Floyd and other incidents of significant racial injustice. The statement reads in part:

CASE will engage in a planning process to ensure our policies and positions are inclusive. We will also focus on strategies to increase representation of people of color in leadership roles in special education across the country. We will consider actions and mindsets that center equity, inclusion, respect, collaboration, deep listening, and unity in a way that brings us all together toward better outcomes (Appendix B).

As a result of this statement, CASE convened the Diversification of the Special Education Leadership Task Force. DSEL-TF was charged with: “a) *diversification of CASE as an organization, b) leading diversification of the special education leadership workforce, and c) developing future structures to sustain this body of work within the CASE organization.*” The specific goal of the DSEL-TF Membership Subcommittee was for CASE and its subdivisions “*to increase and sustain diverse leadership and CASE representation within state units, committees, boards, and membership.*” The work of this committee aligns with the CASE mission statement: CASE provides leadership to advance the field of special education through professional learning, policy, and advocacy.

At the same time, CEC created the Leadership Development Committee (LDC), an initiative focused on examining and addressing the association’s overall need for greater diversity and representation within its membership. The goal of the LDC is to give specific recommendations to the CEC Board of Directors on process, relationship building, rubrics, applications, and questions to enhance and effectuate visible diversity among their legacy leaders, members, and state units (Dr. Sheila Bailey, interview, July 21, 2021).

Other national organizations such as the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD), National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) have also shown their commitment to the effort to create, develop, and sustain diversity within their respective memberships through promotion of priority issues, discussion of trending topics, and development of resources. For example, NCLD has created an issue brief entitled “Strengthening and Diversifying the Education Profession.” NAESP has developed a report, [Principal’s Guide to Building Culturally Responsive Schools](#), and NASSP has identified ‘building culture’ as a category for growth. In addition, the Learning Policy Institute has a plethora of resources (reports, briefs, press releases, webinars, and fact sheets) which highlight diversity membership by showcasing the subtopic of ‘Equitable Resources and Access.’

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) has also been influential in leading the efforts to ensure diversity of membership and leadership. ASHA has taken a proactive effort with various pipeline programs serving as a channel for diversity from preservice to seasoned professionals who then serve the association. ASHA has committed to diversity and inclusion for the association, membership, and national office (ASHA, 2021).

The initiatives of CEC, CASE, and other national organizations are paving the way to build more diverse, equitable and inclusive representation within their own memberships and professional fields. The following sub sections, context, findings, and recommendations support the work and deeply felt thoughts of the CASE DSEL-TF Membership Subcommittee.

CASE AND CASE SUBDIVISION/UNIT MEMBERSHIP

CONTEXT

Currently no research exists in the literature related to increasing diverse representation on boards specifically representing special education leadership. However, the literature related to diversification of 501(c)(3) nonprofit executive boards and their memberships is applicable and should be considered as it relates to CASE and its subdivisions. Specific research is needed to address this topic within the field of special education leadership.

In an analysis of diversification of board composition, Fredette & Bernstein (2019) found three primary areas of focus make the most substantial difference in diversification: a) fiduciary investment, b) stakeholder engagement, and c) responsiveness of the organization. In examining the relationship between boards and the performance of their organizations, Erica Harris (2014) recognized the lack of research in this area and considered the topic in her own work. Ultimately, relationships among board members as well as the diversity of the board play an important role in the work of nonprofit boards. Specifically, boards that were ethnically and racially diverse were more successful in problem solving and crisis management. The research also indicates a relationship between a critical mass of diverse identities in the membership related to achieving diversity in the boardroom.

In addition to the literature supporting the clear value of diverse boards and organizational memberships, the research also suggests diversity within boards and membership is only valuable in the context of the inclusive policies and practices of the organization (Buse et al., 2016). In other words, understanding the value of diversifying the CASE board as well as the membership is critical; however, consideration also must be given to revisiting policies and practices of inclusion related to the ongoing engagement between the membership and the board. This literature also supports the need to diversify the cadre of special education leaders across the country and to examine CASE as an organization through the lens of diversification.

FINDINGS

- The research demonstrates board diversification is predicated on the policies and practices of the organization. Therefore, a comprehensive review of the organization's bylaws and policies is a critical step to addressing diversification of the special education leadership workforce. This review should include both formal bylaws and policies as well as informal leadership practices.
- Relationships play a key role in CASE among board members and the membership as a whole. These connections must also be considered in decisions about how CASE will address diversification of the organization's membership and board structure.
- Research in the field shows the PreK-12 educational workforce is not diverse. This is true for teachers as well as leaders. "The elementary and secondary educator workforce is overwhelmingly homogenous (82% White in public schools)" (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The diversity of CASE is in part reliant on the diversity of special education leadership nationally. The current research and data sets do not contain

information related to the diversity of administrators of special education, suggesting the need to develop this research and data to advance the end goal of diversification.

- A rudimentary examination of CASE membership demographics reveals approximately 80 women and 20 men out of every 100 members. CASE has not collected data in a way that provides representation for non-binary people, nor has the organization collected data on racial identification. This 80/20 finding indicates a lack of representation of male directors of special education, particularly interesting given that the opposite is evident among general education principals, superintendents, and other administrators. “Although the pool of leadership candidates is weighted heavily in favor of women, where over half of all administrative degrees are earned by females there remains an absence of women administrators at the top school leadership positions” (Weir, 2017).
- A review of the racial demographics of the current CASE Executive Committee reveals, as of June 2022, the 14-member body is 100 percent White, with 8 women and 6 men. When a call was issued to the CASE membership to join a task force on Diversifying the Special Education Leadership Workforce, many Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) applied. The committee is led by a woman of color, and 80 percent of the task force membership is also BIPOC. This notable difference between the Executive Committee and task force demographics indicates a need to revisit the process for selecting members of the Executive Committee to encourage diverse representation within the organization's leadership.
- Another aspect of diversity to consider is diversity in gender identity and sexual orientation. “Unfortunately, no data exist on the percent of educators or administrators who identify as LGBTQ+. However, there exists a small, but growing body of literature on LGBTQ+ issues in education leadership” (NEA, 2019).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1: BYLAWS AND DOCUMENTS

Review and revise, as appropriate, sections pertaining to elections and committee selection processes that will promote diversity on the CASE and CASE subdivision/unit boards and committees.

2: COMMITTEES & ELECTIONS

Review and revise, as appropriate, processes by which chairs are selected for committees and slates are submitted for elections that promote board and committee diversity.

3: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Create a program for aspiring special education leaders designed to engage, mentor, and support racially, ethnically, linguistically, and otherwise diverse individuals. Explore partnerships with university leadership programs, historically Black colleges and universities, or other minority-serving institutions.

4: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Identify conference strands on issues related to equity and diversity including sessions specific to increasing equity and diversity in the special education workforce.

5: DATA COLLECTION

Review membership registration process with parent organization CEC to provide further data on the diversity of membership, state unit boards of directors, and both standing and ad hoc committees.

6: EQUITY & INCLUSION POSITION STATEMENTS & RESOURCES

Ensure that CASE subdivisions/units have resources and position statements available to their members related to equity and diversity.

PREK-12 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

CONTEXT

As the field of special education evolves, PreK-12 school districts must reimagine professional learning and reskill school leaders who influence special education, including special education directors and teachers, general education leaders, central office staff, and talent managers. These professionals must become socially just, inclusive leaders who create safe, supportive schools and promote educational equality across the multiple dimensions of diversity in special education. To serve the diverse populations of students with disabilities, school districts must act to transform each of their schools through a shared vision of inclusive leadership for social justice. School leaders and staff must gain an understanding of how students' multiple dimensions of diversity intersect, how such varied factors impact student learning, and how improving learning and outcomes for youth with disabilities is a social justice issue.

Diversifying special education should be an integral part of the overall transformation of the larger education program - general, gifted, and special education. Three actions can make special education more diverse at the K-12 level: 1) addressing biases in eligibility for special education, which have resulted in over- and under-identification of diverse student groups and in underlying teacher and administrator attitudes and practices, 2) providing ongoing diversity training for educators to ensure equal access to special education for all students, and 3) instituting systemic processes to ensure such training is being implemented.

CASE is committed to supporting the building of a workforce fully representative of the students and families we serve. Diversifying the candidates for special education leadership and teaching and the equitable treatment of diverse students with disabilities are critical components to meeting this commitment. CASE understands diversity must encompass race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender, sexuality, ability, socioeconomic status, and religious identity.

To develop actionable recommendations and best practices related to diversifying and training the candidates for leadership in special education across all these dimensions, the task force relied on the following findings based on current literature.

FINDINGS

- There is an ongoing and significant lack of diversity in teaching and leadership roles (Coursen et al., 1989). While 82 percent of the overall teaching force including special educators are White, 65 percent of students are youth of color (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). In more diverse communities, teacher and administrator recruitment and retention practices are becoming important in increasing the percentages of a diverse staff of educators. (See, e.g., recent legislation to increase teachers of color in Colorado and Minnesota, 2020.) Schools' subsequent staff training and follow-up interactions, among both underrepresented and majority special education teachers and leaders, can better ensure diverse role models are in place for youth with disabilities (CEC-DDEL, "Critical Conversation" and "New Educator Jumpstart Series," 2021).
- Data indicates the need for racial diversity in education among students, teachers, and leaders. Special training on how to interact with diverse students, teachers, and administrators is a critical component in ensuring a more equitable education system.
 - Racial Diversity of Students
 - The public school student population is projected to become increasingly more diverse in the next few years, with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) predicting White students will represent only 46 percent of public school students in 2024.
 - In 2024, Hispanic students are projected to represent 29 percent of total public school enrollment and Asian/Pacific Islander students 6 percent of total enrollment, while Black students are projected to be 15 percent of all public school students.
 - Racial Diversity of Teachers
 - In the 2011-12 school year, 82 percent of public school teachers were White, 7 percent Black, and 8 percent Hispanic, while 51 percent of all elementary and secondary public school students were White, 16 percent were Black, and 24 percent were Hispanic.
 - In the 2011-12 school year, the racial demographics of elementary school teachers were similar to those of secondary school teachers, with overall K-12 educators less likely to be Black or Hispanic.
 - Racial Diversity of Principals and Special Education Leaders
 - For the most part, principals are also a racially homogenous group. In the 2011-12 school year, 80 percent of public school principals were White while 10 percent were Black and 7 percent Hispanic.
 - In the 2003-04 school year, 82 percent of public school principals were White while 11 percent were Black and 5 percent Hispanic.

- Diversity decreases at multiple points across the teacher pipeline as teachers progress through postsecondary education, teacher preparation programs, and employment correlating with the lack of diverse special education leaders. A large majority of education majors and more specifically students enrolled in teacher preparation programs are White. Completion rates for students who major in education are higher for White students than for Black and Hispanic students. Teacher retention rates also are higher among White teachers than Black and Hispanic teachers.
- Special education administrators must support the long-term goal of Increasing diverse teachers and leaders through supportive attitudes, rules, and activities. Specifically, as CEC and other professional organizations recently urged, special education administrators must work toward more positive perspectives (CEC-DDEL, "Critical Conversation," 2021).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1: ROADBLOCKS AND PLANS

To address lack of diversity amongst teachers and administrators, the field should tackle perceptions, rules, and activities that are barriers to diversity. The field must address lack of diversity in the education workforce. Special educators should also examine underlying perspectives, rules, and activities to focus on ways which better achieve equity for youth, teachers, and administrators.

2: GOALS AND ACTION STEPS

Schools and school districts should consider their data specific to the diversity of teachers and leaders in their school districts. They should set goals and create actions that recruit, hire, and retain diverse educators. Progress toward diversity goals and action steps should be monitored.

3: SYSTEMIC STRUCTURES IN SCHOOLS

Schools must combat social biases against underrepresented persons among teachers and administrators through positive programming that welcomes and affirms these individuals (Gay, 2002b). Among staff, that affirmation should be felt in recruitment and retention practices.

4: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM

Provide ongoing professional learning opportunities that promote increased awareness of the principles of diversity and inclusion. Increasing the numbers of diverse teachers and administrators in special education should be the focus of professional learning and growth. Ongoing diversity training is strongly supported by a) the longstanding professional commitments of CASE, b) existing literature, c) research findings, and d) literature-supported recommendations.

5: STRATEGIC PLAN

Consider the following actions for school districts to undertake over a three- to five-year period to enact and implement programs supporting greater diversity among special education teachers and leaders:

- Establish a shared vision of “inclusive leadership for social justice” to create an empathetic and positive culture of learning.
- Implement a district-wide equity strategic plan.
- Conduct ongoing diversity training that includes but is not limited to activities such as book clubs, discussions on identifying bias, multicultural awareness discussions, and monthly staff meetings with a focus on addressing inequities.
- Hold community meetings on new district policies to receive feedback from all community members and ensure diverse stakeholder groups are included.
- Conduct equity audits to assist in monitoring the district's progress toward diversity goals.
- Provide ongoing training in leadership programs with an emphasis on social justice.
- Ensure resources and leadership time are dedicated to moving equity and inclusion forward in the district.

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

CONTEXT

Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) provide the foundation for the creation of a diverse workforce of teachers and administrators entering the field of education. Diversity encompasses race, ethnicity, intellectual perspectives, language, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. It follows, a diverse workforce brings a broader range of viewpoints to the schoolhouse and provides strong role models for diverse students. As a result, increased student achievement, higher graduation rates, increased rates of postsecondary enrollment, and further advancing the heterogeneity in higher education programs (eSchool News, 2021).

IHE play several key roles in preparing special education leaders. IHE provide programs of study leading to state licensure as special education administrators, professors, researchers, and program developers in special education. These programs of study require graduate work beyond the master's degree. Approximately 50 percent of states grant licensure in special education administration (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003; Boscardin, et al., 2010) through programs that require post-master's study.

Teacher and administrator preparation programs in their traditional forms impose multiple obstacles for certain diverse candidates. Barriers include financial hurdles (application, examination, tuition, and other fees), admissions requirements heavily biased in favor of mainstream candidates, and teaching methodologies that do account for candidates' unique strengths and lived experiences stemming from their diverse backgrounds. These inherent difficulties are exacerbated by the challenges special education professionals experience such as a greater chance of litigation and salaries that are not competitive. Historically, higher education programs for teachers have only been able to attract 7 percent of Black or Hispanic students as compared to the diversity in other programs on the same college campuses (eSchool News, 2021); a fact amplified in advanced programs, such as special education leadership and administration. A 2016 report from the US Department of Education states:

The teaching force has recently become somewhat more diverse. However, student diversity is growing at an even faster pace. As noted in a recent study from the U.S.

Department of Education, unless current trends change, moving forward the disparity between the racial makeup of students and teachers may increase further, fueling the need for substantially more progress in increasing teacher diversity. (U.S. Department of Education, 2016)

Efforts to attract a more diverse workforce in special education leadership and administration needs to be concentrated in the following broad areas: graduate recruitment, gaining admission, program completion, and culturally responsive curricula and teaching methodologies. Graduate recruitment involves both aggressive recruitment of diverse students to the field and hiring professors from diverse backgrounds who can support student success. Gaining admission and program completion, begins with scrutiny of admissions criteria to determine the fairness and recognition of the contributions of diverse students. Completing a program requires extensive financial support, especially when programs aim to attract first-generation graduate students and students who may come from low-paying employment such as teaching. In addition, providing mentoring for students during their program and continuing after graduation helps establish them in the field. Direct and explicit instruction in the teaching of culturally responsiveness ensures candidates are well prepared to tailor their strategies to the increasingly diverse student population in public schools.

Though there is ample data on recruitment and retention of teachers, studies delving into similar themes for special education administrators are sparse. Much of the available information stems from studies involving teacher retention in general. The American Council on Education released a report in 2020 examining issues related to race and ethnicity in higher education. The report states that in the last twenty years, the number of undergraduate students identifying as a race other than White has increased from 30 percent to 45 percent (Taylor, et al., 2020). Despite this increase, institutions of higher education have not been able to keep pace with providing their students with experiences and opportunities that are representative of their culture and ethnicity.

This report also garnered findings in four key areas, and many of those findings may be relevant for special education professionals. Research revealed that PreK-12 and postsecondary institutions disproportionately fail Black students. When these students face barriers to high school graduation, the concomitant result is fewer diverse students matriculating into higher education and entering the teacher pipeline. Many students from diverse backgrounds, for whom postsecondary education was a viable option, chose to attend for-profit institutions which resulted in greater debt burdens than students enrolled in other sectors. The study also found that borrowing patterns and experience with debt consolidation varied widely by ethnicity. In general, Native American and Black students had greater difficulties repaying their college loans, which negatively influenced their upward mobility through generations. Furthermore,

All positions and seniority levels, faculty, staff, and administrators remain less diverse than the student body. What's more, the most diverse positions tend to be those outside of the classroom and leadership, meaning diverse students are more likely to see people from similar backgrounds in clerical, technical, and service staff positions. (Taylor, et al, 2020)

Many of the trends reported in this recent study validate the key issues in higher education identified by DSEL-TF. Disproportionality in high school graduation outcomes creates obstacles for diverse students in terms of entry and access to higher education programs. Even when enrolled

in college programs, students from underrepresented backgrounds face obstacles in the form of higher debt, lack of support from various faculty and staff, and the invisible message that people of color are more likely to acquire clerical and technical positions than professorial ones.

Research in improving the diversity of the professional educator workforce suggests school districts and universities should embark on projects to develop pipelines for school personnel to enter or advance in the professions (Gist, et al., 2018; Brown, 2018). For other positions, like special education administrators, collaborative efforts across school districts or regions could provide a critical mass of candidates to pursue either licensure or professional learning. Often called 'grow your own' programs, these projects join the efforts of universities and school districts to recruit prospective professional educators, prepare them in accordance with the standards of the profession, assess their competence and growth, and employ them as appropriate based on the needs of the district. A major advantage of 'grow your own' programs is that candidates are likely to stay with the district because they already have roots in the community and commitments to the district. Usually 'grow your own' projects are supported through external funding pursued by universities. An example is the PPEERS (Preparing Principals for Educational Excellence in Rural Schools) project at the University of North Carolina Greensboro (<https://soe.uncg.edu/ppeers/>), a state-funded project that prepares school principals in ten rural school districts in North Carolina.

To recruit and prepare a diverse pool of special education administrative candidates, a university might partner with a school district to develop a pool of well-prepared candidates. Through this partnership, districts could be charged with nominating quality candidates after intentional recruiting efforts with a special emphasis on diverse professional educators from historically underrepresented groups. The university could provide coursework in concert with the districts. Course content would meet state licensure requirements, if applicable, and address state and local needs.

FINDINGS

- There is a need for further research and quantifiable data in the area of professional preparation for and diversification of special education leadership in IHE.
- Research indicates diversity in teaching and leadership results in increases in participation for underrepresented students, academic achievement, graduation rates, and enrollment in higher education as well as positive long-term life outcomes (Ayscue et al., 2017; Baker et al., 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Diversity in leadership influences organizational culture and institutional climate in higher education, impacting recruitment, curriculum, academic support, and institutional vision.
- Barriers to pursuing graduate preparation in special education for diverse candidates mirror the barriers to graduate programs in other areas.
- As diversity in K-12 and undergraduate student enrollment increases, a more diverse workforce is needed. Higher education faculty should reflect the diversity of the communities being served (Enwefa et al., 2011; Munday et al., 2019).
- Historically, teacher education programs experience challenges attracting diverse candidates.
- Barriers to increasing diversity in teaching and leadership include candidate shortages and inequitable admissions requirements, (Enwefa et al., 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2021).

- Many undergraduate and graduate programs do not sufficiently utilize culturally responsive approaches to advanced teaching and learning.
- Institutional and policy responses are needed to diversify special education leadership. Efforts in the areas of attraction, preparation, and retention should continue to include: alternate routes to certification, funding options and loan forgiveness, leadership preparation grants, leadership development programs, state-funded projects, consideration of micro-credentials, residencies, mentorship, professional development and 'grow your own' programs (Munday et al., 2019; Tyler et al., 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2021; Wolfe & Freeman, 2013).
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), other minority-serving institutions, and alternative routes to teacher certification tend to enroll a more racially diverse population of teacher candidates. Two percent of individuals who are preparing to be teachers are enrolled at HBCU, but 16 percent of all Black teacher candidates attend HBCU. Alternative routes to teacher certification, at some HBCU and other universities, tend to enroll more racially diverse populations of candidates than traditional teacher preparation programs. Forty-two percent of teacher candidates recently enrolled in an alternative teacher preparation program not based in an IHE were individuals of color. Thirty-five percent of teacher candidates enrolled in an alternative teacher preparation program based in an institution of higher education were individuals of color. Fewer teacher candidates enrolled in a traditional teacher preparation program (26%) were persons of color.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1: INTENTIONAL EFFORTS FOR DIVERSITY

Review recruiting efforts for educational leadership programs as it relates to the promotion of diversity. Consider enrollment criteria and graduate curricula as institutions strive to prepare highly qualified special education leaders who understand the needs and expectations of students with disabilities. Review recruiting procedures for educational leadership programs to ensure intentional promotion of diversity. Employ enrollment criteria, graduate curricula, and instructional teaching methods that prepare special education leaders who understand the needs and expectations of students with disabilities and other traditionally underrepresented populations.

2: DIVERSE FACULTY

Hire more diverse faculty in educational leadership programs. To diversify the special education leadership field, diverse students in the leadership programs need diverse faculty who have their shared experiences. A diverse faculty which shares experiences and backgrounds with students enrolled in educational leadership programs could attract more candidates to the special education leadership field.

3: LEADERSHIP PREPARATION GRANTS

Provide more leadership preparation grants intentionally marketed to attract special education leaders from diverse demographics. Currently, federal leadership preparation grants focus on "a variety of different personnel, such as teacher preparation and related service faculty, administrators, researchers, supervisors, and principals. Authorized activities include preparing

personnel at the graduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels, and providing interdisciplinary training for various types of leadership personnel" (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

4: MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Establish mentorship programs for diverse students in special education leadership programs. Mentorships can help colleges and universities recruit and retain more diverse special education leaders especially when mentors share similar experiences and backgrounds with mentees.

CONCLUSION

CASE is committed to addressing the diversification of the workforce dedicated to leadership in special education. As an organization committed to visionary leadership, inclusion, engagement, and integrity, CASE will move forward with the recommendations of this task to promote diversity within the organization. CASE pledges to review organizational practices to ensure intentional efforts to attract, retain and support diversity within the organization and across the workforce. Additionally, CASE will seek out opportunities to partner with other agencies and organizations in the support of diversity, equity, and inclusion across the field of special education.

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Appendix A

Recommendations of the DSEL-TF Report



Recommendations of the DSEL-TF Report

CASE AND CASE SUBDIVISIONS/UNIT MEMBERSHIP

1: BYLAWS AND DOCUMENTS

Review and revise, as appropriate, sections pertaining to elections and committee selection processes that will promote diversity on the CASE and CASE subdivision/unit boards and committees.

2: COMMITTEES & ELECTIONS

Review and revise, as appropriate, processes by which chairs are selected for committees and slates are submitted for elections that promote board and committee diversity.

3: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Create a program for aspiring special education leaders designed to engage, mentor, and support racially, ethnically, linguistically, and otherwise diverse individuals. Explore partnerships with university leadership programs, historically Black colleges and universities, or other minority-serving institutions.

4: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Identify conference strands on issues related to equity and diversity including sessions specific to increasing equity and diversity in the special education workforce.

5: DATA COLLECTION

Review membership registration process with parent organization CEC to provide further data on the diversity of membership, state unit boards of directors, and both standing and ad hoc committees.

6: EQUITY & INCLUSION POSITION STATEMENTS & RESOURCES

Ensure that CASE subdivisions/units have resources and position statements available to their members related to equity and diversity.



Recommendations of the DSEL-TF Report

PREK-12 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1: ROADBLOCKS AND PLANS

To address lack of diversity amongst teachers and administrators, the field should tackle perceptions, rules, and activities that are barriers to diversity. The field must address lack of diversity in the education workforce. Special educators should also examine underlying perspectives, rules, and activities to focus on ways which better achieve equity for youth, teachers, and administrators.

2: GOALS AND ACTION STEPS

Schools and school districts should consider their data specific to the diversity of teachers and leaders in their school districts. They should set goals and create actions that recruit, hire, and retain diverse educators. Progress toward diversity goals and action steps should be monitored.

3: SYSTEMIC STRUCTURES IN SCHOOLS

Combat social biases against underrepresented persons among teachers and administrators through positive programming that welcomes and affirms these individuals (Gay, 2002b). Among staff, that affirmation should be felt in recruitment and retention practices.

4: PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM

Provide ongoing professional learning opportunities that promote increased awareness of the principles of diversity and inclusion. Increasing the numbers of diverse teachers and administrators in special education should be the focus of professional learning and growth. Ongoing diversity training is strongly supported by a) the longstanding professional commitments of CASE, b) existing literature, c) research findings, and d) literature-supported recommendations.

5: STRATEGIC PLAN

Consider the following actions for school districts to undertake over a three- to five-year period to enact and implement programs supporting greater diversity among special education teachers and leaders:

- Establish a shared vision of "inclusive leadership for social justice" to create an empathetic and positive culture of learning.
- Implement a district-wide equity strategic plan.

- Conduct ongoing diversity training that includes but is not limited to activities such as book clubs, discussions on identifying bias, multicultural awareness discussions, and monthly staff meetings with a focus on addressing inequities.
- Hold community meetings on new district policies to receive feedback from all community members and ensure diverse stakeholder groups are included.
- Conduct equity audits to assist in monitoring the district's progress toward diversity goals.
- Provide ongoing training in leadership programs with an emphasis on social justice.
- Ensure resources and leadership time are dedicated to moving equity and inclusion forward in the district.



Recommendations of the DSEL-TF Report

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

RECOMMENDATION 1: INTENTIONAL EFFORTS FOR DIVERSITY

Review recruiting efforts for educational leadership programs as it relates to the promotion of diversity. Consider enrollment criteria and graduate curricula as institutions strive to prepare highly qualified special education leaders who understand the needs and expectations of students with disabilities. Review recruiting procedures for educational leadership programs to ensure intentional promotion of diversity. Employ enrollment criteria, graduate curricula, and instructional teaching methods that prepare special education leaders who understand the needs and expectations of students with disabilities and other traditionally underrepresented populations.

RECOMMENDATION 2: DIVERSE FACULTY

Hire more diverse faculty in educational leadership programs. To diversify the special education leadership field, diverse students in the leadership programs need diverse faculty who have their shared experiences. A diverse faculty which shares experiences and backgrounds with students enrolled in educational leadership programs could attract more candidates to the special education leadership field.

RECOMMENDATION 3: LEADERSHIP PREPARATION GRANTS

Provide more leadership preparation grants intentionally marketed to attract special education leaders from diverse demographics. Currently, federal leadership preparation grants focus on "a variety of different personnel, such as teacher preparation and related service faculty, administrators, researchers, supervisors, and principals. Authorized activities include preparing personnel at the graduate, postgraduate, and doctoral levels, and providing interdisciplinary training for various types of leadership personnel" (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

RECOMMENDATION 4: MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Establish mentorship programs for diverse students in special education leadership programs. Mentorships can help colleges and universities recruit and retain more diverse special education leaders especially when mentors share similar experiences and backgrounds with mentees.

Appendix B

CASE Statement on Equity and Social Justice

June 3, 2020



Dear Colleagues,

The Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) is dedicated to the enhancement of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of each individual in society and we reaffirm these commitments and beliefs as leaders in the field of special education today. We recognize, however, that beliefs and commitments are not enough and, as an organization, we believe the systemic conditions and underlying factors including institutional racism resulting in the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor and many other untold victims require immediate actions to redress the harms caused. Our country is in the midst of two national crises - the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial unrest. Both of these crises are disproportionately impacting communities and individuals of color across our country.

We can and must do more. CASE commits to working with its members across the country to strengthen our systems, engage in difficult conversations, and develop resources to bring about meaningful, positive change so the civil rights of everyone, and in particular, those who have been marginalized in society, are honored. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." CASE will engage in a planning process to ensure our policies and positions are inclusive. We will also focus on strategies to increase representation of people of color in leadership roles in special education across the country. We will consider actions and mindsets that center equity, inclusion, respect, collaboration, deep listening, and unity in a way that brings us all together toward better outcomes. Members or others with specific ideas about how to undertake this important work should contact Phyllis Wolfram at pwolfram@casecec.org or our President, Erin Maguire at emaguire@ewsd.org.

In partnership,

Erin Maguire, President

Dr. Mike Asip, Unit Development Chair
Dr. Pam Baker, Product Committee Chair
Dr. Mary Lynn Boscardin, Journal Editor
Dr. Julie Bost, Membership Committee Chair
Eric Hoppstock, Treasurer
Dr. Adam Leckie, Publications Chair
Myrna Mandlawitz, Legislative Consultant
Kindel Mason, President-Elect
Gary Myrah, Past-President
Heath Peine, Professional Development Chair
Dr. Kevin Rubenstein, Policy and Legislative Chair
Dr. Gina Scala, Research Chair
Greta Stanfield, Secretary
Carrie Turner, Technology & Communications Chair
Phyllis Wolfram, Executive Director

About CASE

CASE, [The Council of Administrators of Special Education](#), is the largest division of the [Council for Exceptional Children](#). With close to 4900 members, it is the professional organization of choice for special education administrators across the country. CASE's mission is to provide leadership and support to members by shaping policies and practices that impact the quality of education. *Disclaimer:* The views, opinions, and information expressed in this statement by CASE may not reflect the official policies or positions of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). *CONTACT:* Phyllis Wolfram at (417)-427-7720