

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

UTC Scholar

---

Honors Theses

Student Research, Creative Works, and  
Publications

---

8-2020

## Classroom to classroom: how many do you see? the lack of african american teachers in K-12 public schools and how to address this issue through diverse curriculum development in teacher education programs

Deonna Starks

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, [grd139@mocs.utc.edu](mailto:grd139@mocs.utc.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.utc.edu/honors-theses>



Part of the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Starks, Deonna, "Classroom to classroom: how many do you see? the lack of african american teachers in K-12 public schools and how to address this issue through diverse curriculum development in teacher education programs" (2020). *Honors Theses*.

This Theses is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research, Creative Works, and Publications at UTC Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of UTC Scholar. For more information, please contact [scholar@utc.edu](mailto:scholar@utc.edu).

Classroom to Classroom: How Many Do You See?  
*The Lack of African American Teachers in K-12 Public Schools and How to Address This Issue  
Through Diverse Curriculum Development in Teacher Education Programs*

Deonna Starks

Honors Thesis  
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga  
Political Science and Public Service

Examination Date: April 14, 2020

Tiffany Mitchell  
Professor of English  
Thesis Director

Dr. Shewanee Howard-Baptiste  
Professor of Health and Human Performance  
Thesis Examiner

## **Abstract**

This study provides a descriptive study of DEI courses and admissions requirements among 4-year public universities and colleges. Using data and formation collected from Georgia State University, University of Georgia, Kennesaw State University, Fort Valley State University, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, University of Memphis, and Middle Tennessee State University, this thesis will examine the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) courses offered at each individual university and propose a ClearPath and recommendations for further implementation of DEI curriculum and the retention and recruitment of preservice African American teachers. Previous research shows that the lack of African American teachers in K-12 public schools correlate with admissions criteria to TEPs, inequities and poor curriculum in TEPs, and the inequities within the profession. The literature also shows the importance of African American teachers to the public education system. With the information collected in this study, there are recommendations for TEPs such as community partnerships, foundational education and DEI courses, and workshops to assist with admissions.

**Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Literature Review</b>	<b>4</b>
The Lack of African American Teachers in K-12 Public Schools	4
Teacher Education Programs	5
The Importance of African American Teachers	7
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>Criteria for Admissions</i>	
Georgia	10
Tennessee	13
<i>Diverse Curriculum</i>	
Georgia	17
Tennessee	25
<b>Findings and Data Analysis</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>38</b>

**Dedication**

*This thesis is dedicated to my Mom and Dad for always believing in me.*

*My school-mom and dad, Dr. HB and Dr. Mo*

*My mentor, Sherese Williams*

*My amazing thesis director who has been nothing but supportive, Professor Mitchell*

*To all the Black Educators that do not feel seen or heard.*

*I hear you.*

## **Introduction**

There is a lack of African-American teachers within the United States teachers' K-12 workforce. Through my own educational journey, the importance of African-American teachers did not register until college. I was placed into an environment that was the complete opposite of where I came from. I went from being surrounded by African-American professionals in K-12 and educators to only seeing one to two in college. However, I was still able to take some classes by African-American professors who later became my mentors and truly helped and guided me throughout the remainder of my college career. Their presence in my life and what they have done for me exemplifies the need for African-American educators within schools. More specifically, within K-12 education, it is crucial that students see African-Americans teachers. Research suggests that African American teachers positively impact all students academically and socially. Black students are more likely to have higher test scores, academic performance, and graduation rates when taught by an African American teacher. White students have more positive perceptions of African American teachers and feel more academically challenged (Dee, 2004; Cherng & Halpin, 2016; "Diversify the Teaching Profession", 2018). Due to these findings, universities across the country are working to implement curriculum in teacher education programs (TEPs) revolving around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to combat the decreasing population of African American educators in K-12. In this thesis, I will examine research that discusses why there is a current lack of African American teachers in K-12 classrooms, current TEP designs, and more importantly, how DEI curriculum can foster a more diverse and inclusive environment for pre-service teachers of all backgrounds. Through a project-based learning approach, a model was developed to demonstrate how to recruit and

retain potential African American teachers through curriculum development that can be utilized by schools/colleges of education at universities to recruit more African American students into teacher education programs.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Lack of African American Teachers in K-12 Public Schools**

American K-12 public schools lack African American teachers for a number of reasons. Pursuing a profession in teaching can be quite difficult for minority students. They tend to steer clear of the profession all together due to admissions requirements, minimal support services, lack of minority professional staff, other professions providing better pay, limited advancement opportunities (Case, Shive, Ingebretson, & Spiegel, 1988; Farinde, Allen, & Lewis, 2016; Madkins, 2011). For admissions requirements, some teacher education programs require additional writing exams, higher GPA requirements, and standardized test scores. Admissions requirements for universities and their respective teacher education programs can set minority applicants at a disadvantage. That disadvantage largely stems from the standardized testing that is required of nearly all applicants of any university or college (Case et. al., 1988; Madkins, 2011; Branch, 2001). Nevertheless, students prevail past that obstacle only to be faced with another one and that is the admissions requirements of teacher education programs, if they choose to pursue that career path. Many students, especially minority students, do not become educators for many reasons, such as more opportunities in other fields, teachers' salaries, and discouragement among minority educators (Farinde et. al., 2016; Madkins, 2011; Chmelynski, 2006). According to the National Education Association (NEA) (2018), the average teacher's starting salary is \$39,249. Comparatively, computer engineers' starting salary is \$71,007

(“Engineers Get Top Pay,” 2020). Alongside those deterrents, if one chooses to pursue the profession regardless, teacher education programs present them with even more obstacles. A majority of these programs have requirements of their own that hinder minority enrollment, such as standardized test scores and grade point averages (GPA) (Laman & Reeves, 1983; Mercer, 1984). These criteria prevent the recruitment and retention of minority students in teacher education programs. These criteria do not measure the quality of these applicants and eliminate quality applicants that may have not received the necessary admittance score or GPA. (Branch, 2001; Bennett, McWhorter & Kuykendall, 2006). If students succeed in the PRAXIS exams and receive their license, they are now officially in the field of education. Minority teachers are in high demand as the teacher workforce is predominantly White and female. The population of minority students in K-12 public schools is rapidly increasing while there is still a major deficiency in minority teachers. While White teachers have a turnover rate of 15 percent, minority teachers have a 19 percent turnover rate due to the lack of necessary resources and support in their respective schools and districts (i.e. support groups, administrative assistance) low salary, and little opportunity for advancement (Farinde et. al, 2016; Boser, 2014; Boykin, 1992; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

### **Teacher Education Programs**

There are various trends in teacher education programs, such as curriculum and testing biases, within the United States that seemingly link to low admittance or retention of pre-service African American teachers.

*Testing Biases and Admission Requirements for Teacher Education Programs*



One common trend amongst teacher education programs are their admission requirements and testing biases. Many teacher education programs follow the standard admissions process of colleges and universities during initial admittance. In 1982, 41 percent of teacher education programs required some form of standardized test prior to admissions, (41%) required an interview, and (38%) required a written language test (Laman & Reeves, 1983). However, during the education reform movement of the 1980s, there was a substantial growth in teacher competency testing due to the great desire for higher quality education. According to Justiz & Kameen (1988), by 1987, twenty seven states required testing of applicants for admission to teacher education programs and over 40 implemented some sort of written test that is required before full certification. With this addition to the admissions process, the minority teaching population declined rapidly. Many researchers and educators have vocalized that these requirements not only are ineffective in screening for successful teachers but also establish biases toward pre-service African American teachers as they fall behind their White counterparts in testing (Bell & Morsink, 1986; Rudner, 1987; Smith, 1984). This rise of testing and other quantitative measures in admissions has prevented many highly qualified minority teachers from entering the programs, let alone the classroom.

#### *Curriculum within Teacher Education Programs*

Within the teacher education programs, there is a commonality with curriculum. Much of the curriculum within these programs is more theoretical, has little connection to practice, and lacks consistency and connection among courses and faculty (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Edmundson, 1990). Pre-service teachers thus lack the proper skills and pedagogy to then provide

their diverse classroom with a culturally relevant curriculum. With classrooms growing more diverse and inclusive everyday but the teacher workforce remaining mostly homogenous in racial and ethnic demographics, it is imperative that teachers implement a curriculum that matches their audience. It is also imperative that pre-service teachers are exposed to a teacher education curriculum that assists them in critical thinking and pedagogy that promotes diversity and inclusion and empowers their students through their curriculum. In 2000, only 32 percent of teachers felt well prepared in teaching diverse curriculum to a culturally diverse classroom (Parsad, Lewis, & Farris, 2001). With such a rapid increase in diversity in student populations, teacher education schools in the U.S. rarely support this kind of curriculum. Current curriculums in teacher education programs in the U.S. do not follow a cohesive pathway and are much more general and foundational. For example, courses that study general education history or basic pedagogy compared to specific pedagogical courses that benefit diverse classrooms or education history that is culturally-relevant can change the dynamic of a teacher education program. These programs should be designed to “help prospective teachers to deeply understand a wide array of things about learning, social and cultural contexts, and teaching and be able to enact these understanding in complex classrooms serving increasingly diverse students” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, pg. 302).

### **The Importance of African American Teachers**

African American teachers in the classroom as student populations are becoming more diverse and inclusive, especially as the minority student population continues to rise in the coming years with the number estimated to reach 55 percent by 2027 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). African American teachers are more equipped than their White colleagues in connecting

their African American students' cultures and lives to curriculum (Irvine, 1988; King, 1993). Researchers interviewed African American students on their views of having African American teachers. Students voiced that having teachers of their race provided them with a culturally-immersed curriculum in which students get "to read about African American culture and how it relates to them, by introducing African American culture and its ties to Africa, and by focusing on the connections between education and the larger world" (Wilder, 2000, pg. 214). These students felt more motivated to learn and expand their education beyond the classroom as they felt represented through their education. African American teachers are important to K-12 public schools and provide benefits to not only African American students but other students as well.

## **Methodology**

### ***Methods of Data Collection***

When starting this research, I was looking to examine teacher education programs from three states---Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. Within those three states, I would research teacher education programs of four public, 4-year universities and colleges from each state. The rationale for this is private universities and colleges tend to cost more and therefore, would be less likely to have large student populations. On average, private, 4-year institutions cost \$41,468 per year while public, 4-year institutions cost \$19,488 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). This means putting fewer teachers in the K-12 public school system and even less African American teachers. From each state, I attempted to have at least one research university, one liberal arts university, and one historically black university or college (HBCU). However, Tennessee does not have any public HBCUs or four-year liberal arts colleges or universities.

Also, Georgia does not have any 4-year liberal arts college or university. However, later on in my research I decided to dwindle the study down to Tennessee and Georgia due to the influx of Georgia residents attending public Tennessee universities and colleges with reduced tuition policies and vice versa for Tennessee residents in some Georgia schools. For Tennessee, I gathered information from University of Tennessee at Knoxville (public), University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (public), Middle Tennessee State University (public), and University of Memphis (public). As for Georgia, I examined programs from Georgia State University (public), University of Georgia (public), Kennesaw State University (public), and Fort Valley State University (public, HBCU). Within these universities and their teacher education programs, I chose the most common education majors that end in teacher licensure. These majors include early childhood education, elementary education, middle grades education, and secondary education.

### ***Methodology/Data Collection***

Through qualitative and quantitative data collection, the following questions were addressed to determine trends of DEI curriculum from public universities in Tennessee and Georgia:

1. What are the criteria for admissions into teacher programs in each state? Each university?
2. Which state has the most diverse and inclusive curriculum in TEPs? Why?
3. Does the curriculum correspond to the density of the minority population in the teacher education program(s)?
4. What majors have the most courses in DEI?

### ***Criteria for Admissions***

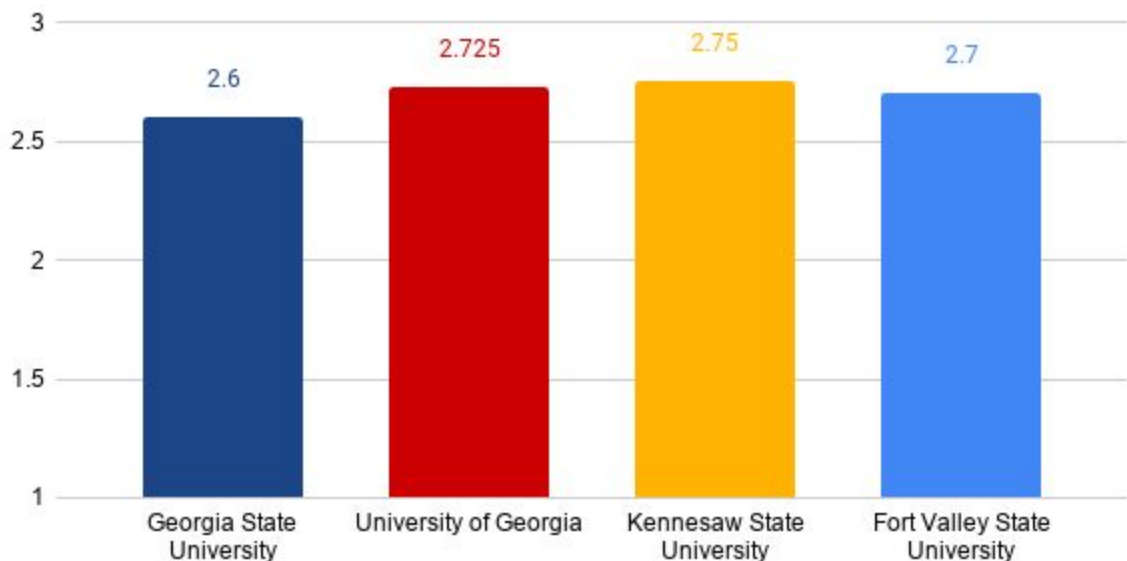
**Georgia (See Appendix A)**

For Georgia, all the universities that were examined in this study require that prior to admissions in a teacher education program, pre-service teachers are required to take both the Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators (GACE) Program Admission Assessment, Georgia Educator Ethics Program Entry Assessment, and Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) Pre-Service Certification application. The purpose of the GACE Assessment is to “help the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) ensure that candidates have the knowledge and skills needed to perform the job of an educator in Georgia’s public schools” (“For Test Takers”, 2020). Pre-service teachers are tested on mathematics, reading, and writing; the reading and mathematics tests are multiple choice while the writing test is both multiple choice and written response. Next, they are required to take the Georgia Educator Ethics Program Entry Assessment. This assessment was designed to educate pre-service educators on the Georgia Code of Ethics for Educators and also provide them with the skills and knowledge on ethical decision making in education. Lastly, pre-service teachers are required to obtain a GaPSC Pre-Service Certificate, which ensures the safety of school children, provides opportunities for pre-service teachers to apply their knowledge and skills, and standardizes the background check process in order to eliminate those who are ineligible or unsuitable for the profession, assist in understanding the Georgia Code of Ethics. These state requirements are the first step to ensuring that Georgia produces cognizant educators for their K-12 public schools. However, there are other TEP admission’s requirements that various universities and majors have that differ from one another.

For the universities that were examined for this study, all of them have an average minimum 2.7 GPA requirement that must be met in order to be admitted into the teacher education program of the respective school. Along with the GPA requirement, students are required to take and pass, with a grade of “C” or higher, the following courses: EDUC 2110: Investigating Critical and Contemporary Issues in Education, EDUC 2120: Exploring Sociocultural Perspectives on Diversity, and EDUC 2130: Exploring Teaching and Learning. These exact courses are offered at all of the Georgia schools in this study. There are some other requirements that are necessary for admission to teacher education programs of the respective university (i.e. essays/statement of purpose/writing samples, resumes, letter(s) of recommendation).

### Average Minimum GPA Requirement Prior to Admissions to TEPs

Georgia Teacher Education Programs and Majors



Georgia State University requires that students seeking to obtain their licensure in Special Education (B.S.Ed.) or Middle Level Education (B.S.Ed.) participate in an interview and/or

submit a writing sample with their application. For someone seeking licensure in Elementary Education (B.S.Ed.), they are required to attend an informational session before admittance into the program. University of Georgia has a larger selection of majors for teacher licensure. For their “high-demand” majors—Early Childhood Education (B.S.Ed.) and Middle Grades Education (B.S.Ed.)—each of these require a statement of purpose or other form of written response and a resume to acknowledge outside experiences centered around the education profession (*See Appendix B*). As for their other majors, Mathematics Education (B.S.Ed.) requires documented proof of at least 30 hours of mathematics tutoring of grades 6-12 in a structured setting, an essay reflecting on the experience, and an evaluation by coordinator or supervisor of the tutoring. Special Education (B.S.Ed.) requires a statement of purpose answering a written prompt and resume. The remaining majors, Health and Physical Education (B.S.Ed.) and Science Education (B.S.Ed.), have no additional requirements for admissions into TEP.

Kennesaw State University does not require any additional admission requirements prior to admittance into TEP except for the Health and Physical Education (B.S.) degree. This major requires that one apply to both the Bagwell College of Education and the Department of Health Promotion and Physical Education. Students are expected to apply and be admitted into the Bagwell College of Education first before applying to the Department of Health Promotion and Physical Education. In addition to the Bagwell College of Education requirements, admission requirements in the Department of Health Promotion and Physical Education include two faculty recommendations and one advisor recommendation, completed Academic advisor form, demonstrated interest through participation in and contribution to the majors’ clubs and other activities, and a written essay/statement of purpose. All the other majors (Early Childhood

Education - Birth through Kindergarten (B.S.), Elementary Education (B.S.), Middle Grades Education (B.S.), and Secondary Education (B.S.Ed.)) do not have any additional admission requirements.

Lastly, Fort Valley State University, a historically black college or university, requires a much larger list of admissions requirements for their teacher education programs. They require that all students seeking admittance have “acceptable or above” ratings on their evaluation of candidate’s disposition and professional behaviors form, interview, three letters of recommendation, writing sample, and proof of membership in Student Professional Association of Georgia Education (SPAGE).

In order to obtain full licensure in the state of Georgia and before exiting a teacher education program, all students must take and pass the GACE Content Assessment and the Georgia Educator Ethics Program Exit (360) Assessment.

### **Tennessee (*See Appendix A*)**

Unlike Georgia, Tennessee does not have any state testing for admittance into a teacher education program. However, For the universities that were examined for this study, all of them have an average minimum 2.75 GPA requirement that must be met in order to be admitted into the teacher education program of the respective school. Other admissions requirements are at the discretion of the university’s TEP. Therefore, each university being studied will vary based on admissions requirements and criteria.

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga requires, prior to admission, that students

1. Have a minimum 2.75 GPA (cumulative, UTC, education, and content)



2. Pass EDUC 2010: Education in the United States with a minimum grade of “C” or higher with documented field experience.
3. Complete Checkpoint 1 application which ensures that students have met the School of Education’s testing requirement and acknowledges all of the TEP’s policies, procedures, and expectations moving forward.
4. Pass PRAXIS Core Writing Exam with a score of at least 162.
5. Have one of the following test scores:
  - ACT: Composite Score of 21
  - SAT: Re-centered Score of 1020
  - Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators: Math 150, Reading 156, Writing 162
6. Obtain liability insurance
7. Have a professional resume that demonstrates successful field experiences and other volunteer experiences centered around education and professional development.
8. Interview with TEP panel

University of Tennessee at Knoxville (UTK) operates differently from all the other schools in this study. All of their programs within their College of Education are undergraduate minors. Students are to pursue a Bachelor of Art (B.A.) or a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) while completing a minor within the teacher education program. However, for admission to the teacher education program, students are required to:

1. Have minimum 2.75 GPA

2. Have one of the following test scores:
  - ACT: Composite Score of 21
  - SAT: Re-centered Score of 1020
  - Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators: Math 150, Reading 156, Writing 162
3. Complete the Professional Competencies, Attitudes, and Dispositions (ProCADs) questionnaire.
4. Interview with Boards of Admission
5. Demonstrate experience working with children and youth with an interest in teaching.

In addition to the teacher education program admissions requirements, mathematics majors are required to have completed and passed MATH 141 Calculus I and MATH 142 Calculus II with a grade of “C” or higher. As for early childhood education majors, they are required to complete and pass CFS 350 Early Childhood Education I: Environments for Children with a grade of “C” or higher.

Middle Tennessee State University’s College of Education teacher education program requires students prior to admittance:

1. Have minimum 2.75 GPA
2. Have one of the following test scores:
  - ACT: Enhanced Score of 22
  - SAT: Score of 1080

- Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators: Math 150, Reading 156,  
Writing 162
3. Complete EESE 1010 Teachers as Problem Solvers and EESE 1011 Creating Differentiated Instruction with a grade of “C” or higher.
  4. Participate in three (3) favorable faculty interviews: (1) faculty in professional education, (1) faculty in major department or general education, and (1) classroom teacher/practitioner.
  5. Obtain disciplinary clearance

Lastly, University of Memphis requires students applying to the undergraduate teacher education program to have the following:

1. Minimum 2.75 GPA
2. Have one of the following test scores:
  - ACT: Enhanced Score of 21
  - SAT: Re-centered Score of 1020
  - Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators: Math 150, Reading 156,  
Writing 162

For all teacher education programs in the state of Tennessee and Georgia, students are required to provide a background check prior to admissions.

#### *Diverse Curriculum within Teacher Education Programs*

After admittance into the teacher education program, students are provided a curriculum that some schools set up in two separate parts, major or core courses and professional education. Within these two parts, some teacher education programs require courses that are centered

around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). More specifically, for Georgia, all the universities listed within this study, except Kennesaw State University, are required to take the same three DEI courses prior to admissions and pass with a grade of “C” or higher: EDUC 2110: Investigating Critical & Contemporary Issues in Education, EDUC 2120: Exploring Sociocultural Perspectives on Diversity, and EDUC 2130: Exploring Teaching and Learning. Furthermore, each university’s programs have varying amounts of DEI courses that are required.

## **Georgia**

### *Georgia State University*

Georgia State University’s College of Education and Human Development offers five programs that students can obtain teaching licensure. All of these programs require that students take and pass EXC 4020 Characteristics and Instructional Strategies for Students with Disabilities with a grade of “B” or higher as a part of GaPSC certification requirements. Georgia State University does not separate their curriculums into two separate categories as the other universities have done. Each individual program has their own required amount of DEI courses before obtaining licensure. For Birth Through Five (B.S.Ed.), students are required to take the following courses:

- BRFV 4370 Language, Literacy, and Cognition-CTW
- BRFV 4400 Family and Community Relationships
- EXC 3560 Observation and Assessment for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers
- EXC 4520 Methods for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities
- EXC 4520 Methods for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Children with Disabilities

For Elementary Education (B.S.Ed.), there are two program options for completing the degree. One track is a concentration in Early Childhood Education (P-5) with a English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Endorsement or a concentration in Early Childhood Education (P-5) and Early Childhood Special Education (P-5) Dual Certification. As for a concentration in Early Childhood Education (P-5) with a English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Endorsement, students are required to take the following courses:

- ECE 3255 ESOL: Cultural Foundations-CTW
- ECE 3440 ESOL: Curriculum and Instruction
- ECE 3603 Mathematics Methods in Elementary Education: Primary Grades
- ECE 3604 Mathematics Methods in Elementary Education: Upper Grades
- ECE 3663 Classroom Management & Practicum III: Contextualizing Teaching and Learning\*

For a concentration in Early Childhood Education (P-5) and Early Childhood Special Education (P-5) Dual Certification, students are required to take the following courses:

- ECE 3255 ESOL: Cultural Foundations-CTW
- ECE 3603 Mathematics Methods in Elementary Education: Primary Grades
- ECE 3604 Mathematics Methods in Elementary Education: Upper Grades
- EXC 4560 Education Evaluation of Students with Disabilities
- EXC 4570 Individual and Classroom Management\*
- EXC 4580 Instructional Methods for Students with Behavior Learning Disabilities

For Special Education (B.S.Ed.), there are three different concentration areas. There is a

concentration in Adapted Curriculum, concentration in Deaf Education, and concentration in General Curriculum. For the purposes of this study and its commonality, concentration in General Curriculum will be examined. This major requires that students complete twelve (12) hours in a content concentration: language arts, mathematics, reading, science, or social studies. There will not be focus on the content concentrations in this study. The main focus will be the General Curriculum concentration courses. For this concentration, students are required to take the following courses:

- EXC 4140 Issues of Diversity in Special Education in Urban Environments
- EXC 4190 Alternative Approaches to Literacy Instruction for Students with Disabilities
- EXC 4530 Methods for Teaching Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Children with Disabilities
- EXC 4560 Educational Evaluation of Students with Disabilities
- EXC 4600 Infusing Co-teaching Strategies across the Content Areas

For Health and Physical Education (B.S.Ed.), students are required to take the following courses:

- KH 3700 Sexuality Education for P-12

For Middle Level Education (B.S.Ed.), similar to Special Education (B.S.Ed.), students are required to select two (2) areas of concentration: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students also have the option of adding Special Education or ESOL as a concentration. This study will not be focusing on the course within those concentrations but rather the course required for the major content. For the major content in Middle Level Education (B.S.Ed.), students are required to take the following courses:

- EDCI 3200 Organization and Instruction of the Middle Grades Curriculum
- EDCI 3220 Understanding and Supporting Middle School Learners

*University of Georgia*

The programs identified in this study, except for Health and Physical Education (B.S.Ed.), follow a cohort-based model. For Middle Grades Education (B.S.Ed.), which is a “high-demand” major, there is a 25-student cap for their incoming cohort. Each program has their own curriculum to follow. Health and Physical Education (B.S.Ed.), students are required to take the following courses:

- HPRB 5060 Educational Strategies in Human Sexuality
- KINS 3302S Multicultural Service Learning Practicum
- KINS 5620/7620-5620L/7620L Adapted Physical Education

Early Childhood Education (B.S.Ed.), a high-demand major, students are required to take the following courses:

- LLED 5040/7040 Language and Culture in the Classroom
- SPED 4020/6020 Inclusion of Students with Special Needs: PreK-Grade 5

Middle Grades Education (Grades 4-8) (B.S.Ed.), a high-demand major, students are required to choose two areas of concentration: language arts, mathematics, social studies, or science. This study will not be focusing on the course required in those concentrations but rather the major content. For the major content, students are required to take the following courses:

- EDMG 5010/7010 Community Contexts in Middle Grades Education
- EDMG 5035L/7035L Middle Grades Curriculum Laboratory
- EDMG 5020L/7020L Educating Young Adolescents Laboratory

- SPED 4030/6030 Inclusion of Students with Special Needs: Grades 6-12

There are three areas of emphasis for Special Education (B.S.Ed.) majors to choose from:

Adapted Curriculum, General Curriculum, and Educational Studies. This study will be focusing on the major/core courses required under the General Curriculum area of emphasis. Special Education (B.S.Ed.) majors in the General Education area of emphasis are required to take the following courses:

- SPED 4200 Advanced Instructional for Individuals with Mild Disabilities
- SPED 5400 Collaboration Among Families and Professionals

*Kennesaw State University*

For the education majors being studied within Kennesaw State University's teacher education program, they are only required to take EDUC 2110 Investigating Critical and Contemporary Issues in Education and pass with a grade of "C" or higher prior to admissions. For Early Childhood Education Birth through Kindergarten Education (B.S.) majors, students are required to take the following courses:

- ECE 3510 Fostering Young Children's Learning through Play
- ECE 3575: International Approaches to Early Care and Learning
- EDUC 2120 Sociocultural Influences on Teaching and Learning
- EDUC 2130 Exploring Teaching and Learning
- ECE 2590 Families, Communities and Schools: Partners in Education
- INED 3304 Education of Exceptional Students
- ITEC 3100 Improving Learning with Technology in Elementary Classrooms
- ECE 3520 Infant and Toddler Curriculum and Assessment



- ECE 4515 Methods in Teaching and the Development of Teaching Language & Literacy in Birth through Kindergarten
- ECE 4535 Methods of Instruction and Identification of B-5 Children with Special Needs

Elementary Education (B.S.) students are required to take the following courses:

- EDUC 2120 Sociocultural Influences on Teaching and Learning
- EDUC 2130 Exploring Teaching and Learning
- ECE 3320 Teaching Reading and Writing in the Elementary Grades PK-2
- ECE 3330 Teaching Reading and Writing in the Elementary Grades 3-5
- ITEC 3100 Improving Learning with Technology in Elementary Classrooms
- INED 3304 Education of Exceptional Students
- ECE 2250 Child Development and Early Learning
- INED 4483 Methods and Materials for Teaching ESOL in the K-5 Classroom
- ECE 4403 Teaching Social Studies in Early Childhood Education
- ECE 4408 Teaching Mathematics in Grades P-2
- ECE 4409 Teaching Mathematics in Grades 3-5
- ECE 4410 Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum
- ECE 4475 Designing and Sustaining a Classroom Learning Community

There are four content areas that students are required to choose from. They are expected to choose two content areas (primary and secondary) among language arts, science, social studies and mathematics. This study will not be focusing on the courses within those content areas but

rather the major/core courses. Middle Grades Education (B.S.) students are required to take the following courses:

- EDMG 3300 Success in the Middle: Adolescent Development and Middle Grades Advocacy
- EDMG 3350 Planning, Instruction, and Assessment in the Middle Grades
- EDRD 3330 Methods and Materials for Middle Grades Content Area Reading and Writing
- EDSM 3360 Classroom Management in the Middle Grades and Secondary Education
- INED 3300 Educating Students with Exceptionalities in Inclusive Settings
- INED 4431 Foundations for Teaching Diverse English Learners
- ITEC 3200 Improving Learning with Technology in Middle Grade Classrooms

There are four content areas that students are required to choose from. They are expected to choose among mathematics, chemistry, physics, or broad field with a biology emphasis. This study will not be focusing on the courses within those content areas but rather the major/core courses. Secondary Education (B.S.) students are required to take the following courses:

- INED 3305 Education of Students with Exceptionalities in an Inclusive Setting I
- INED 3306 Education of Students with Exceptionalities in an Inclusive Setting II
- INED 4435 Foundations of Teaching Adolescent English Learners
- INED 4436 Foundations of Teaching Adolescent English Learners II
- ITEC 3300 Improving Learning with Technology in High School Classrooms
- EDSM 3360 Classroom Management in Middle Grades and Secondary Education

Health and Physical Education (P-12) (B.S.) students are required to take the following courses:

- HPE 3250 Family Health and Sexuality
- EDUC 2120 Sociocultural Influences on Teaching and Learning
- EDUC 2130 Exploring Teaching and Learning
- HPE 3750 Adapted Physical Education
- INED 4437 Education for Linguistically Diverse Students
- ITEC 3300 Improving Learning with Technology in High School Classrooms

*Fort Valley State University*

Early Childhood/Special Education (B.S.Ed.) students are required to take the following courses:

- EDUC 2503 Exceptionalities and Instruction
- ECSP 3131 Nature and Curriculum Needs of the Early Childhood/Special Education Learner
- ECSP 4000 Characteristics of the Special Education Learner
- ECSP 4020 Diagnosis and Remediation of Reading
- ECSP 4005 Inclusive Practices

Middle Grades Education (B.S.Ed.) program does not require any DEI courses for students following admittance into the program.

Health and Physical Education (B.S.Ed.) students are required to take the following courses:

- HLTH 3430 Human Sexuality

**Tennessee***University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (See Appendix C)*

For Elementary Education K-5 and English as a Second Language (P-12) (B.S.), students are required to take the following courses:

- EDUC 2460 Families: Home, School, Community Partnerships
- EDUC 3170 Designing Instruction for the Inclusive Classroom
- EDUC 3180 Methods in Special Education
- EDUC 3220 Literacy I: Instruction for Emergent Learners (Birth-1st Grade)
- EDUC 3220 Literacy II: Instruction for Elementary Learners (2nd-5th Grade)
- EDUC 3600 Foundations in Teaching English as a Second Language
- EDUC 3700 Language and Culture
- EDUC 3800 Strategies and Methods for Teaching ESL (Birth to 5th Grade)
- EDUC 4350 Assessment and IEP Development in Special Education
- EDUC 3950 Guidance and Management in Inclusive Elementary Classrooms

Middle Grades Education (B.S.) has four concentrations: english, mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences. This study will not be focusing on the courses within the specific concentrations but rather the core education courses that are required. Students are required to take the following courses:

- EDUC 3170 Designing Instruction for the Inclusive Classroom
- EDUC 3210 Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas
- EDUC 2200 Survey of Exceptional Learners
- EDUC 2420 Adolescent Development

Secondary Education (B.S.) has five concentrations: economics, english, geography, history, and political science. This study will not be focusing on the courses within the specific concentrations but rather the core education courses that are required. Students are required to take the following courses:

- EDUC 3210 Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas
- EDUC 2200 Survey of Exceptional Learners
- EDUC 2420 Adolescent Development

Early Childhood and Early Childhood Special Education (B.S.) students are required to take the following courses:

- EDUC 2460 Families: Home, School, Community Partnerships
- EDUC 3090 Young Exceptional Learners: Characteristics and Needs
- EDUC 3170 Designing Instruction for the Inclusive Classroom
- EDUC 3180 Methods in Special Education
- EDUC 3220 Literacy I: Instruction for Emergent Learners (Birth-1st Grade)
- EDUC 3220 Literacy II: Instruction for Elementary Learners (2nd-5th Grade)
- EDUC 3150 Methods in Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education
- EDUC 3350 Diversity in the Schools
- EDUC 4350 Assessment and IEP Development in Special Education
- EDUC 3950 Guidance and Management in Inclusive Elementary Classrooms

Exceptional Learning K-12 Comprehensive (B.S.) students are required to take the following courses:

- EDUC 3170 Designing Instruction for the Inclusive Classroom
- EDUC 3180 Methods in Special Education
- EDUC 3220 Literacy I: Instruction for Emergent Learners (Birth-1st Grade)
- EDUC 3220 Literacy II: Instruction for Elementary Learners (2nd-5th Grade)
- EDUC 4280 Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorder
- EDUC 4350 Assessment and IEP Development in Special Education
- EDUC 4150 Instructional Technology for the Adolescent Exceptional Student
- EDUC 4250 Procedures for Individuals with Physical and Multiple Disabilities
- EDUC 4260 Instructional Procedures for Individuals with Moderate, Severe, or Multiple
- EDUC 3950 Guidance and Management in Inclusive Elementary Classrooms

*University of Tennessee at Knoxville (See Appendix D)*

The teacher education program at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville operates differently from all the programs examined in this study. Their teacher education programs are set up as minors that pair with a major in the College of Arts and Sciences. The minors include Elementary Education, Middle Grades, and VolsTeach (Math and Science for Grades 6-12). With the exception of VolsTeach, the rest are all based in a five-year licensure program. Students are able to take their professional education courses in the post-baccalaureate professional year as a way to also obtain their master's degree. For the purposes of this study, there will be no inclusion of post-baccalaureate courses.

Elementary Education (K-5) minors are required to take the following courses:

- ETEC 486 Integrating Technology into the Curriculum

- SPED 402 Professional Studies: Special Education and Diverse Learners

Early Childhood Education (Pre-K-3) majors are required to take the following courses:

- CFS 106 Introduction to ECE
- CFS 320 Family Interaction
- CFS 385 Diversity Among Children and Families
- ETEC 486 Integrating Technology into the Curriculum
- CFS 405 Development of Professional Skills
- SPED 402 Professional Studies: Special Education and Diverse Learners

Middle Grades Education minors are required to take the following courses:

- ETEC 486 Integrating Technology into the Curriculum
- SPED 402 Professional Studies: Special Education and Diverse Learners

VolsTeach minors do not require the same courses that the other minors require.

VolsTeach is its own program designed for mathematics, science, or engineering majors who desire to explore secondary teaching. This pathway to licensure is a 4-year track unlike the other minors.

*Middle Tennessee State University*

Elementary Education (B.S.) students are required to take the following courses:

- ELED 3000 The Contemporary Classroom through the Lens of Diversity
- SPED 3010 Characteristics and Teaching of Learners with Exceptionalities

Early Childhood Education (B.S.) students are required to take the following courses:

- ECE 4375 Literacy in Early Childhood
- ECE 4360 Administering Early Childhood Programs

- ECE 4320 Assessing Young Children
- ECE 3310 Human Development (Birth to 8)
- CDFS 3320 Family Relations
- SPED 3010 Characteristics and Teaching of Learners with Exceptionalities

Interdisciplinary Studies (6-8) (B.S.) has four concentrations: mathematics, science, english, and social studies. This study will not be focusing on the courses within the specific concentrations but rather the professional education courses that are required. Students are required to take the following courses:

- SPED 3010 Characteristics and Teaching of Learners with Exceptionalities

*University of Memphis*

Integrative Studies, Secondary Math Concentration (B.S.Ed.) students are required to take the following courses:

- ENGL 4531 Methods and Techniques ESL
- SPED 2000 Foundation/Exceptional Learn
- ICL 4001 Teaching/Diverse Environment
- ICL 4008 Teaching Math in Urban Schools

Elementary K-5 and Special Education Interventionist K-8 and 6-12 (B.S.Ed.) students are required to take the following courses:

- SPED 2000 Foundation/Exceptional Learn
- ICL 4001 Teaching/Diverse Environment
- SPED 3803 Classroom/Behavior Management
- SPED 3802 Ed Assessment/Inclusive Set



- ENGL 4531 Methods and Techniques ESL
- SPED 3804 SPED Methods II. Content Area
- SPED 4020 Language/Comm/Diverse Classroom

### **Findings and Data Analysis**

*What are the criteria for admissions into teacher programs in each state? Each university?*

As stated above in the Methods section of the study, Georgia has their own state requirements for pre-service teachers to be admitted into a teacher education program and obtain licensure within the state. Tennessee, however, does not have any state requirements for pre-service teachers prior to admission to teacher education programs. Within each university, each teacher program has their varying requirements for admissions (i.e. essays/statements of purpose/written responses, resumes, interviews, other forms of documentation).

*Which state has the most diverse and inclusive curriculum in TEPs? Why?*

This study shows that Georgia has the most diverse and inclusive curriculum within their TEPs. This can be due to the community these pre-service teachers are about to serve. Georgia State University, Kennesaw State University, University of Georgia, and Fort Valley State University all surround predominantly Black communities (>50 percent), according to the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute (GBPI) (2019). These predominantly Black communities reside in what is known as “The Black Belt.” The Black Belt consists of these counties/districts below presented in *Appendix E*. These pre-service teachers are more likely to serve these communities than others. The curriculum at these universities needs to be diverse and inclusive to ensure successful and well-prepared educators are placed in the classrooms.

*Does the curriculum correspond to the density of the minority population in the teacher education program(s)?*

Unfortunately, this question could not be answered due to the lack of enrollment data gathered for this specific study. However, obtaining that data and comparing and contrasting that to the curriculum is a recommendation for further research.

*What majors have the most courses in DEI?*

There was not much consistency with which majors have the most courses in DEI. Tennessee schools lacked in some majors where Georgia heavily provided the curriculum. All of the majors in Georgia teacher education programs, with the exception of Health and Physical Education (B.S.Ed.), have the most courses in DEI.

*ClearPath*

The literature review and data collection I analyzed for this study was used to create a model ClearPath for teacher education programs. For the purposes of this study, a ClearPath is an undergraduate, 4-year plan that provides students with suggested courses to take during each year. The ClearPath created from this study is general and non-specific to any major concentration/content area. The format was based on the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's ClearPath model for clarity and design. Students seeking admission into the teacher education program will do so during their sophomore year alongside a mentor/advisor that will assist them through the process. Students will spend their first and second year taking university required general education courses. In the second year, they will also be required to take foundational DEI courses, any concentration/content-major specific courses if needed, and participate in a service learning course prior to admissions. In the third year, they will be

officially admitted into the teacher education program in which they will take pedagogical DEI courses, participate in a more in-depth service learning course and prepare for and take the PRAXIS Test relevant to their licensure. Lastly, the fourth year will consist of a full-year residency and professional seminar in which students are able to discuss any professional development issues or accomplishments, exchange ideas and experiences within the classroom, and reflect on their residency experiences (*See Appendix E for ClearPath*).

## **Conclusion**

### *Limitations*

For this study, limitations included a lack of demographic information for TEPs. This information would have provided a better insight on who these teacher education programs are serving and what that means in relation to the curriculum they provide. Another limitation was a lack of comparison to private institutions. This information could have been very useful and helpful in determining what private institutions are doing differently than public institutions and vice versa (i.e. curriculum, TEP design, admissions criteria). Lastly, this study lacked survey data and interviews from pre-service teachers. Insight into how these programs and their curriculums affected their learning or outlook on the profession would have been pivotal to this study and how we assess TEP curriculum moving forward.

### *Recommendations*

For further research and implementation, my recommendations include:

1. ***Implementing a one-day workshop for prospective students seeking to apply to teacher education programs.*** This could be beneficial for students that are struggling with the

admissions criteria and need some further assistance ensuring that all requirements are met.

2. ***Creating a general education course that also introduces students to the foundation of education (can fulfill a general education requirement and a TEP requirement).*** This gives students exposure into education without the full commitment of applying to the program. This may spark interest into the program and give students the initiative to ask questions about TEPs. If students choose not to move forward with education, they still have fulfilled a general education requirement.
3. ***Providing foundation DEI courses alongside pedagogical DEI courses.*** Many universities within this study provide a plethora of pedagogical DEI courses but very few courses that discuss the foundation of the cultures and communities they serve. It would be beneficial for TEPs to implement these types of courses to ensure pre-service teachers are addressing their classrooms and communities with the appropriate lens.
4. ***Creating formal partnerships with schools/school districts to ensure job security after graduation.*** Many students, especially students of color, leave the city in which they received their undergraduate degree due to lack of job security. If teacher education programs created partnerships with schools/school districts within their communities and guaranteed jobs for those graduating TEPs and obtaining licensure, this can ensure that K-12 public schools within that area are getting highly qualified educators and those educators have job security right out of post-baccalaureate.

### References

- Bell, M. L., & Morsink, C. V. (1986). Quality and equity in the preparation of black teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education, 37*(2), 16-20.
- Bennett, C. I., McWhorter, L. M., & Kuykendall, J. A. (2006). Will I ever teach? Latino and African American students' perspectives on PRAXIS I. *American Educational Research Journal, 43*(3), 531-575.
- Boser, U. (2014). Teacher Diversity Revisited: A New State-by-State Analysis. *Center for American Progress*.
- Branch, A. J. (2001). Increasing the numbers of teachers of color in K-12 public schools. *The Educational Forum, 65*(3), 254-261.
- Case, C. W., Shive, R. J., Ingebretson, K., & Spiegel, V. M. (1988). Minority teacher education: Minorities recruitment and retention methods. *Journal of Teacher Education, 39*(4), 54-57.
- Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.
- Carver-Thomas, D., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it.
- Cherng, H. Y. S., & Halpin, P. F. (2016). The importance of minority teachers: Student perceptions of minority versus White teachers. *Educational Researcher, 45*(7), 407-420.
- Chmelynski, C. (2006). Getting more men and blacks into teaching. *The Education Digest, 71*(5), 40.

- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21st-century teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 57*(3), 300-314.
- Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (2005). Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Dee, T. S. (2004). Teachers, race, and student achievement in a randomized experiment. *Review of Economics and Statistics, 86*(1), 195–210.
- Edmundson, P. J. (1990). A normative look at the curriculum in teacher education. *The Phi Delta Kappan, 71*(9), 717-722.
- Farinde, A. A., Allen, A., & Lewis, C. W. (2016). Retaining Black teachers: An examination of Black female teachers' intentions to remain in K-12 classrooms. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 49*(1), 115-127.
- Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators (GACE) (n.d.). *For Test Takers*.  
<https://gace.ets.org>.
- Georgia Map with Selectable Counties*. GeorgiaInfo.  
<https://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/histcountymaps/statemap.htm>.
- Hunter-Boykin, H. S. (1992). Responses to the African American teacher shortage: "We grow our own" through the teacher preparation program at Coolidge High School. *The Journal of Negro Education, 61*(4), 483-495.
- Irvine, J. J. (1988). An analysis of the problem of disappearing Black educators. *The Elementary School Journal, 88*, 503-513. doi:10.1086/461553.
- Justiz, M. J., & Kameen, M. C. (1988). Increasing the representation of minorities in the teaching profession. *Peabody Journal of Education, 66*(1), 91-99.

- King, S. H. (1993). The limited presence of African-American teachers. *Review of Educational Research*, 63(2), 115-149.
- Laman, A. E., & Reeves, D. E. (1983). Admission to teacher education programs: The status and trends. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 34(1), 2-4.
- Madkins, T. C. (2011). The Black teacher shortage: A literature review of historical and contemporary trends. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 417-427.
- Mercer, W. A. (1984). Teacher education admission requirements: Alternatives for black prospective teachers and other minorities. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(1), 26-29.
- National Center for Education Statistics (2017). Enrollment and percentage distribution of enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity and region: Selected years, fall 1995 through fall 2027. [Data set]. Digest of Education Statistics, National Education Association.  
[https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17\\_203.50.asp?referrer=raceindicators](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_203.50.asp?referrer=raceindicators).
- National Education Association (2018). Tuition costs of colleges and universities (NCES 2018-070) [Data set]. U.S. Department of Education, National Education Association.  
<https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=76>.
- Owens, S. (2019 October 10). *Education in Georgia's Black Belt: Policy Solutions to Help Overcome a History of Exclusion*. Georgia Budget and Policy Institute.  
<https://gbpi.org/2019/education-in-georgias-black-belt/>.
- Parsad, B., Lewis, L., & Farris, E. (2001). Teacher preparation and professional development: 2000. *Education Statistics Quarterly*, 3, 33-36.

Rudner, L. M. (1987). What's happening in teacher testing: An analysis of state teacher testing. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Smith, G. P. (1984). The critical issue of excellence and equity in competency testing. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(2), 6-9.

Wilder, M. (2000). Increasing African American teachers' presence in American schools: Voices of students who care. *Urban Education*, 35(2), 205-220.

2020 *Engineering Salary Statistics*. Michigan Tech University.

<https://www.mtu.edu/engineering/outreach/welcome/salary/>.



**APPENDICES**