



Branch Alliance
for Educator Diversity

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NEWS

For Immediate Release

Teacher Preparation Programs at Six Minority Serving Institutions Transform Teacher Preparation by Explicitly Infusing Equity into Programming

- **Teacher Transformation Center aims to help MSIs produce highly effective, diverse teachers.**
- **Alabama A&M University, Mount Saint Mary's University, Texas A&M International University, University of La Verne, Virginia State University and West Texas A&M University comprise Teacher Transformation Center's Second Cohort.**

AUSTIN, TEXAS — Educator preparation providers (EPPs) at six minority serving institutions (MSIs) across the United States selected to participate in Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity's (BranchED) National Teacher Preparation Transformation Center will undergo an immersion process aimed at producing highly effective and diverse teachers.

Institutions comprising BranchED's National Teacher Preparation Transformation Center's Cohort 2 include Alabama A&M University in Huntsville, Ala., Mount Saint Mary's University in Los Angeles, Calif., Texas A&M International University in Laredo, Texas, University of La Verne in La Verne, Calif., Virginia State University in Petersburg, Va., and West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas. The pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade (PK-12) school district partners for these respective institutions also participate in the Transformation Center.

Through participation in the Transformation Center—a three-year program—these colleges and universities join a unique community of practice where each institution's faculty and their respective school district partners can access enhanced resources and professional development, network with others, share data and learn from each other to move forward with sustainability and innovation. The larger goals of BranchED's Transformation Center include both diversifying the teaching profession and intentionally addressing critical issues of educational equity for all students.

“No other entity in the country takes the approach to diversifying the nation's educator workforce the way BranchED does,” BranchED's President and CEO Cassandra Herring, Ph.D., said, explaining, “Our approach is ‘grassroots’ in that we work directly with the MSI educator preparation providers to draft and implement an individualized plan for systemic and sustainable improvement with the goal of ensuring their program graduates are competent and confident in their ability to teach all students – particularly students of color and those from low-socioeconomic backgrounds.” *[Official U.S. MSI designations are defined in the chart near the bottom of this release.]*

The new cohort of institutions lauded the benefits anticipated by participation in BranchED's National Teacher Preparation Transformation Center.

"Our institution is uniquely positioned to take full advantage of this new partnership with Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity and our community partner, Pomona Unified School District," University of La Verne's Dean of LaFetra College of Education Kimberly White-Smith, Ed.D., said, adding, "We hope to be an example of how removing barriers and obstacles that disproportionately impact our educators of color will provide a pipeline of excellence from and back into our communities that we serve."

University of La Verne Professor and Director of Teacher Education Betina Hsieh, Ph.D., "There is still a large demographic diversity gap between the teachers that serve K-12 students and the students themselves. Research has shown that students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds view teachers of color favorably, and students of color perform better when they have teachers of color. We are excited to break down some of those barriers in teacher education by providing multiple pathways to subject-matter competencies, creating opportunities for mentorships with successful teachers of color, finding sustainable funding sources to support our student success, and supporting our faculty to model and engage in culturally affirming, responsive and sustaining practices in teacher education."

"We are grateful to be working on a project that is passion driven. So much of what we do for the state is compliance driven, Mount Saint Mary's University's Department of Education Chair and Professor Carol Johnston, Ph.D., said. "There's a difference between when you are doing the important work of making sure that you are meeting standards and compliance, and when you're working purely because you really feel that passion of what the outcome will be and how that will affect the K-12 students in your community."

Alabama A&M University Dean of Education, Humanities and Behavioral Sciences Lena Walton, Ph.D., said, "We train diverse teachers to meet the needs of diverse populations in the PK-12 schools ... Their program focuses on equity and diversity matters, including preparing candidates how to navigate and address concerns of equity and diversity within PK-12 schools."

Texas A&M International University's College of Education Dean James O'Meara, Ed.D., said, "We will measure the success of our transformation against the following four outcomes: the quality of integrated student support provided to our candidates; the volume of expanded and enriched learning time beyond the traditional curriculum; the frequency of family and community engagement; and the impact of collaborative leadership and practices."

"At VSU, we pride ourselves in being an opportunity University that provides access to students from all backgrounds to attain high academic achievement and employment success rates. We are dedicated to implementing sustainable, quality programming at a scale that will produce

better-prepared teachers to positively impact outcomes for Black, Latino, and low-income students,” Virginia State University College of Education Dean, Willis Walter, Ph.D. said. “This organization provides a supportive framework that is designed to strengthen the quality of data management systems and increase teacher educators’ knowledge in practice-based approaches and inclusive pedagogy. This supports VSU’s goal to provide transformative opportunities to all of our students.”

“The support of BranchEd ... will advance the mission of WTAMU and its educator preparation program in meaningful ways,” West Texas A&M University College of Education and Social Sciences Dean Eddie Henderson, Ed.D., J.D., said, adding, “Commensurately, participation in the Teacher Preparation Transformation Center community will provide WTAMU a unique opportunity to benefit from the shared expertise, experiences, and resources of a broader constituency of experts in the fields of transformation, equity, and educator preparation. Through our participation in the community of thought partners, the high quality and equitable educator preparation program at WTAMU will be elevated to a national forum.”

BranchED’s Transformation Center is rooted in the organization’s work to redefine what constitutes quality educator preparation through commitment to a collective vision that combines “quality” and “diversity” in reflection of the changing demographics in the U.S. The organization launched its first cohort for its National Teacher Preparation Transformation Center in 2018.

“BranchED’s Transformation Center’s first cohort of MSIs made tremendous progress in the first two years of the program,” Herring said. “Data gathered at the end of the second year in Cohort One’s transformation journey [60% of the way through the immersion program] indicated the educator preparation programs and their PK-12 partners realized a full 91% of target on building candidate competence. They also achieved 77% of target on effective data use, as well as 77% and 83% respectively on high quality teacher educators and relationships with PK-12 partners. With respect to indicators of sustainability, the Cohort has attained 77% of target. Overall going into the third year, that Cohort is meeting or exceeding performance expectations in the majority of the categories of measurement and is ahead of schedule.”

Major support for this cohort in BranchED’s National Teacher Preparation Transformation Center comes from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation at the recommendation of Alice L. Walton. Program support also comes from the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation; the Bezalel Fund, a donor advised fund established by Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies; and others.

U.S. Minority Serving Institution Designations

Designation	Requirement for Eligibility
Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-serving Institutions (ANNHs)	Institutions that have an undergraduate enrollment that is at least 20% Alaskan Native students or institutions that have an undergraduate enrollment that is at least 10% Native Hawaiian students
Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving Institutions (AANAPISIs)	Institutions that have an enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least 10% Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander students
Hispanic-serving Institutions (HSIs)	Institutions that have an undergraduate enrollment that is at least 25% Hispanic students
Historically Black College or Universities (HBCUs)	Designated by the Higher Education Act of 1965
Native American-serving non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTIs)	Institutions that are not Tribal Colleges and Universities that have an undergraduate enrollment that is at least 10% Native American students
Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs)	Institutions that are not HBCUs that have an undergraduate enrollment that is at least 40% Black students
Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs)	Designated by the Higher Education Act of 1965

About BranchED

Based in Austin, Texas, Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity is the first and only non-profit organization in the nation dedicated to strengthening and growing educator preparation at Minority Serving Institutions, with broader goals of both diversifying the teaching profession and intentionally addressing critical issues of educational equity for all students. BranchED is expanding its reach into K-12 by supporting principal coaching and development. For more information, visit www.educatordiversity.org.