



**Today's
Students**
**Tomorrow's
Teachers™**

For Immediate Release

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Dr. Betty Perkins, Founder, President & CEO of Today's Students Tomorrow's Teachers,™ Addresses Critical Diversity Gap In America's Classrooms at 2015 Teaching & Learning Conference

Declaring a Good Education as a "Civil Right," She Cites Reasons Why Students Of Color in Underserved Communities are not Being Inspired to Consider The Noble Profession of Teaching

White Plains, NY (April 10, 2015) Declaring a good education as a "civil right,"

Dr. Betty Perkins, founder, President and CEO of Today's Students Tomorrow's Teachers™ (TSTT), told a panel of prominent educators that "across America so many students of color in underserved communities are not being inspired to consider the noble profession of teaching, resulting in a critical shortage of teachers of color."

The comments were part of her address as one of the distinguished panelists at the 2015 Teaching & Learning Conference presented by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards held recently in Washington, D.C. In addition to Dr. Perkins, the "Teacher Diversity" panelists included **Linda Darling Hammond**, Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education, Stanford University; **Richard Ingersoll**, Professor of Education and Sociology, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania; **Clifford B. Janey**, Senior Research Scholar at Boston University, School of Education and **Jose Luis Vilson**, New York City Public School teacher and author. The panel was moderated by **Leo Casey**, Executive Director, Albert Shanker Institute.

Dr. Perkins cited key reasons why the teaching profession is not attracting students of color to help address the critical gap between the diversity of the nation's teacher workforce and an ever increasing racially and ethnically diverse student population:

- Lack of affordability/financial stability: "In order to become a teacher, you must be able to go to college, which most people of color cannot afford to do." She cited the average cost for going to college for four years is very costly for students in general and is often more challenging for students of color.
- Misconceptions about the benefits of the profession: "Unfortunately, young people of color are under the mistaken impression that teaching is not a viable and financially rewarding profession. The opposite is just the case and we need to do a better job of communicating the facts that teacher salaries and benefits including retirement are attractive and provide an excellent quality of life to raise a family."
- Failure of Educational System: "Our educational system has done a poor job of preparing students of color for the challenges they will face in school." In addition to noting that most students of color lack good written and verbal communications skills, she cited a recent study by the Center for American Progress that teachers expect less from black and Latino students and as a result, the "students may perform poorly."

Dr. Perkins reviewed how TSTT's 20-year model has been addressing the diversity gap by successfully recruiting, mentoring and training culturally diverse and economically-challenged, talented high school students in New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Virginia.

"Our eight-year, comprehensive and collaborative, pre-collegiate minority teacher recruitment model, which can be replicated elsewhere, has produced

nearly 150 teachers who were inspired to be *competent, committed* and *caring*—what I call the three Cs for being a successful teacher. Any teacher who gets in front of a classroom needs to draw on these three Cs in order to fire the imaginations of students.”

Dr. Perkins recalled her experience growing up in South Carolina when she was inspired by an African-American teacher “who not only cared about my academic achievement but cared about me. That kind of inspiration motivates a student to reach far beyond his or her potential and achieve a high level of success.”

Dr. Perkins said that what makes the TSTT model so effective is its collaborative approach of bringing “all of our community stakeholders including high schools, colleges, parents and the business and local communities together to recruit, prepare and support future teachers of color throughout their high school and college experience.”

”The key is to expose and inspire academically qualified students early in the ninth grade about the noble profession of teaching and then preparing them to do so and providing them with scholarships, mentoring and counseling along the way which is what our model does.”

Using charts to highlight her address, Dr. Perkins noted that TSTT’s students have markedly higher retention rates than students of color and outperform as well students in general based on data provided by the American Council on Education. The high school graduation rate for TSTT students is 90% compared to 78% for students of color and 88% for all students nationally; the college admission rates are 96%, TSTT students; 29%, students of color and 47%, students nationally and the college graduation rates are 70%, TSTT students; 24%, students of color and 41%, students nationally.

”These striking comparative retention rates make a compelling argument that TSTT’s pipeline collaborative approach is very viable in attracting and shaping the next generation of teachers of color,” Dr. Perkins declared.

Dr. Perkins noted that there are nearly 800 TSTT students in the pipeline waiting to become the next generation of teachers. “Like their predecessors, they will continue to close the achievement gap, reduce the dropout rate, enrich our schools and positively impact generations to come.” But, in closing, she warned that as a nation much more needs to be done to close the critical diversity gap in the classroom.

“Solutions will not be easy. It will take hard work, smart policy, and above all, the political will to ensure that the nation has an effective and diverse teacher workforce.”

About Today’s Students Tomorrow’s Teachers™

TSTT is an innovative career development model that addresses teacher shortages by recruiting culturally diverse and economically challenged high school students, mentors and trains them throughout college, and then helps place them as effective teachers in schools in their communities.

TSTT was founded in 1994 by Dr. Bettye H. Perkins, President and Chief Executive Officer. as an early teacher preparation program. According to Dr. Perkins, “Our goal is to close the achievement gap and to ensure that these deserving young people will ultimately be equipped to become highly effective teachers, role models, and leaders in their communities.” For more information visit: www.tstt.org.
