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Student and Teacher Diversity in the Mountain West

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STUDENT AND TEACHER DIVERSITY IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST

K-12 Education Fact Sheet No. 4 | August 2021

Prepared by: Marie A. Falcone, Guadalupe De La Rosa, Caitlin J. Saladino, and William E. Brown, Jr.

PURPOSE:

This fact sheet highlights public K-12 teacher and student diversity in the Mountain West states of Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. We explore data from Michael Hansen and Diana Quintero’s “Mountain West states face growing teacher diversity gaps”¹ a 2018 Brookings Institution report. Specifically, we explore the teacher and student population in Mountain West states by race, revealing a disproportionate gap between students of color and teachers of color.

ABOUT THE DATA:

Michael Hansen and Diana Quintero’s report² on teacher diversity in the Mountain West utilizes calculations from Student Staffing Surveys (1993-2012), the Common Core of Data (2003-2018), the Statistics in brief from the National Center for Education Statistics (2001), and the American Community Survey for 2016. These sources show a slow progression in teacher diversity to support a rapidly diversifying student population.

KEY FINDINGS:

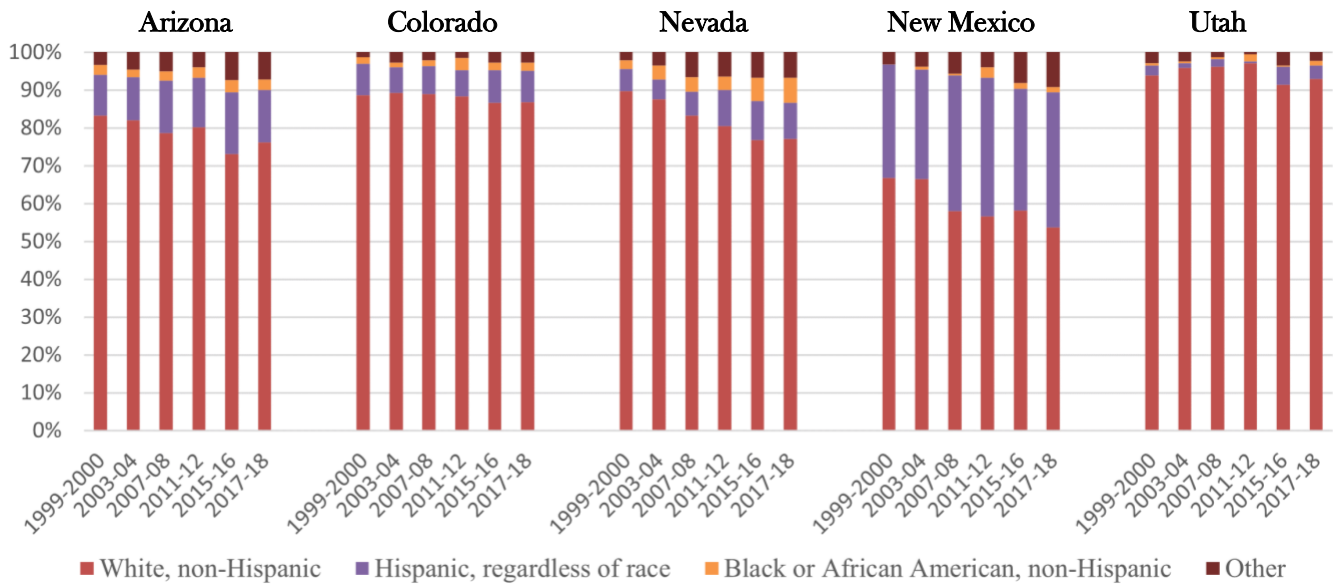
1. Nevada contains the largest percentage disparity in the Mountain West states where 68.1% of the student population is non-white and 22.9% of the teacher population is non-white.
2. Among Mountain West states, New Mexico and Nevada have experienced the largest percent change in non-white teachers between 1999 and 2018, with an increase of 13.0% and 12.7% respectively.
3. Among Mountain West states, Nevada experienced the largest percent increase in students of color (27%) between 1999 and 2018.

¹ Michael Hansen & Diana Quintero, “Mountain West states face growing teacher diversity gaps,” December 2018, The Brookings Institution, (brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/12/18/mountain-west-states-face-growing-teacher-diversity-gaps/).

² Ibid.

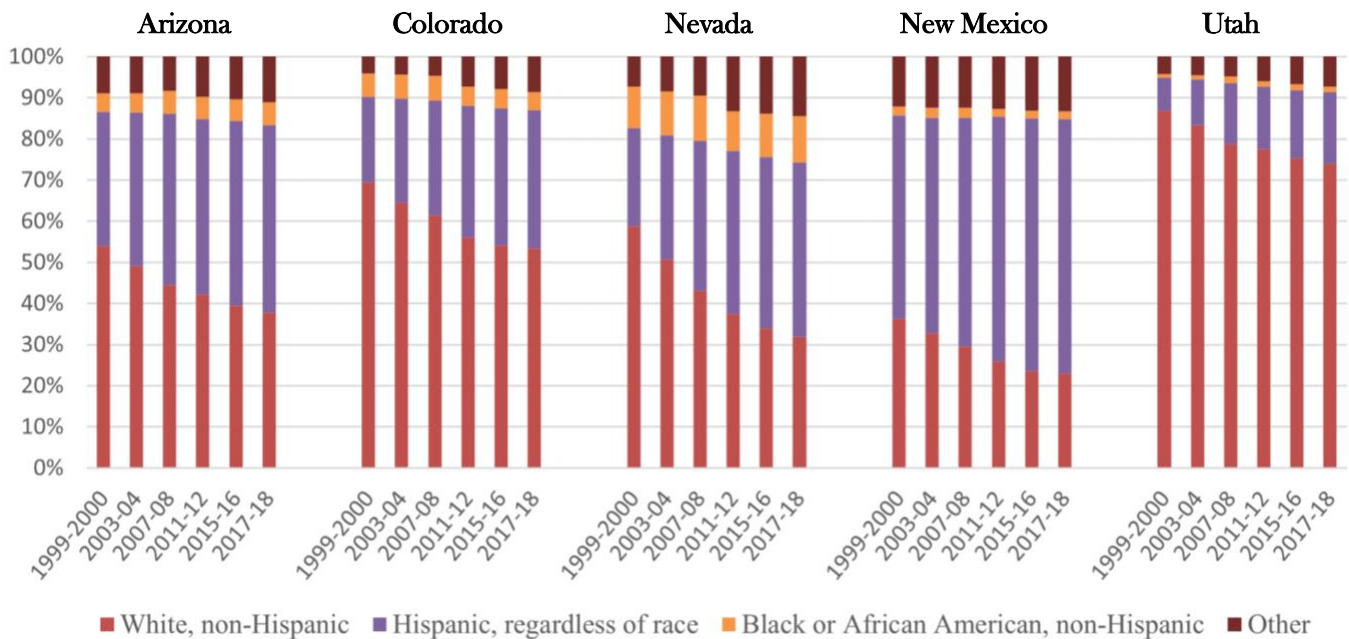
Figures 1 and 2 depict the change in demographics across the Mountain West states by racial group from 1999 to 2018. The graphs show a general decrease in the overall percentage of white students and teachers. The graphs also show a significant disparity between the percentage of non-white students to non-white teachers in each state.

Figure 1: Teacher Demographics by Race in the Mountain West



Adapted from Michael Hansen & Diana Quintero, "Mountain West states face growing teacher diversity gaps," December 2018, The Brookings Institution, (brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/12/18/mountain-west-states-face-growing-teacher-diversity-gaps/).

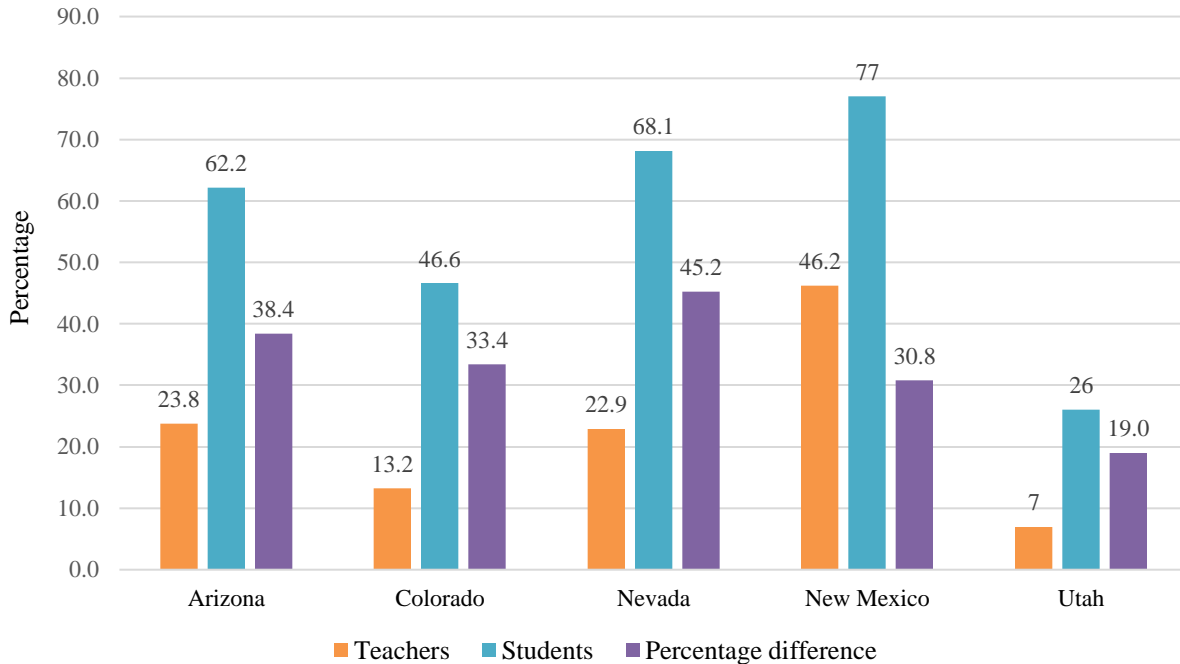
Figure 2: Student Demographics by Race in the Mountain West



Adapted from Michael Hansen & Diana Quintero, "Mountain West states face growing teacher diversity gaps," December 2018, The Brookings Institution, (brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/12/18/mountain-west-states-face-growing-teacher-diversity-gaps/).

Figure 3 represents the disparity between non-white students and non-white teachers in 2018. Nevada shows the largest disparity in the Mountain West states with a 45.2% percentage difference between non-white students and non-white teachers. New Mexico, Colorado, and Arizona fall second, third, and fourth respectively with disparities of 30.8%, 33.4% and 38.4%. Utah has the smallest disparity with only 19%.

Figure 3: Percentage Comparison of Non-White Students and Teachers in the Mountain West, 2018



Adapted from Michael Hansen & Diana Quintero, “Mountain West states face growing teacher diversity gaps,” December 2018, The Brookings Institution, (brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/12/18/mountain-west-states-face-growing-teacher-diversity-gaps/).

Table 1 compares the percentage of non-white teachers in the 1999-2000 school year and the 2017-2018 school year. New Mexico and Nevada have had the largest percent change in non-white teachers with an increase of 13% and 12.7% respectively. Arizona falls in the middle with a 7.1% change. Colorado and Utah follow last with a percentage change of 1.9% and 1.0% in non-white teachers.

Table 1: Percent Change of Non-White Teachers in the Mountain West, 1999 to 2018

State	Percent of Teachers who are Non-white 1999	Percent of Teachers who are Non-white 2018	Percent Change
Arizona	16.7	23.8	7.1
Colorado	11.3	13.2	1.9
Nevada	10.2	22.9	12.7
New Mexico	33.2	46.2	13.0
Utah	6.0	7.0	1.0

Adapted from Michael Hansen & Diana Quintero, “Mountain West states face growing teacher diversity gaps,” December 2018, The Brookings Institution, (brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/12/18/mountain-west-states-face-growing-teacher-diversity-gaps/).

Table 2 shows the percentage change of students of color from the 1999-2000 school year to the 2017-2018 school year. Nevada has had the largest percent increase change in students of color with 27%. Arizona and Colorado follow second and third with 16.2% and 16.1% respectively. New Mexico and Utah have the least percent change in non-white students with 13.2% and 12.9% respectively. When compared to Table 1, the percentage change of non-white students has increased at a much higher rate than that of non-white teachers. New Mexico has the closest percent change with an increase of 13.2% non-white students compared to a 13% increase of non-white teachers. However, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, and Utah percent change of non-white students more than double that of non-white teachers.

Table 2: Percent Change of Students in the Mountain West, 1999 to 2018

State	Percent of Students who are Non-white 1999	Percent of Students who are Non-white 2018	Percent Change
Arizona	46.0	62.2	16.2
Colorado	30.5	46.6	16.1
Nevada	41.1	68.1	27.0
New Mexico	63.8	77.0	13.2
Utah	13.1	26.0	12.9

Adapted from Michael Hansen & Diana Quintero, "Mountain West states face growing teacher diversity gaps," December 2018, The Brookings Institution, (brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/12/18/mountain-west-states-face-growing-teacher-diversity-gaps/).