

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a classroom. A male teacher with glasses is in the center, looking down at a student's work. To his right, a young boy is also looking at the work. On the far right, a young girl is visible, looking towards the camera. The scene is brightly lit, likely from a window on the right. A large green rectangular overlay covers the top two-thirds of the page, containing the title and author information.

RESEARCH REPORT

Talent Together: Participant Characteristics and Alignment with Michigan's Teacher Workforce Needs

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This research used program data collected and maintained by Talent Together.

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Talent Together: Participant Characteristics and Alignment with Michigan's Teacher Workforce Needs

By: Jason Burns, Jennifer Moriarty, Kevin Brown, Jiwon Baek, and Erica Harbatkin

Recent years have seen growing attention to broad and persistent teacher shortages in Michigan (Kilbride et al. 2021, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026). In response to these challenges, Michigan has made a range of investments in teacher workforce initiatives (Kilbride et al. 2024, 2025, 2026). These investments include more than \$250 million appropriated since the 2023 fiscal year to support “grow-your-own” (GYO) programs (Moriarty et al., 2025). GYO programs can take multiple forms but are generally defined by a goal of growing the teacher workforce by recruiting individuals into teaching who already have a connection to the local schools or community (Kraft & Sanderson Edwards, 2025). Talent Together, which has received approximately \$80 million in state funding, is Michigan’s largest state-funded GYO program. Since it began, Talent Together has admitted nearly 2,000 future educators across 3 cohorts. As of this writing, data are available through fall 2025, which includes the first two years of Talent Together’s implementation. To better understand how Talent Together operates, who is drawn to pursue a teaching credential through Talent Together, and how Talent Together is helping alleviate Michigan’s teacher shortage, in the following sections we review Talent Together’s theory of change, describe the population of candidates who chose to pursue a teaching credential through Talent Together, and analyze alignment between the credentials Talent Together participants are pursuing and statewide shortage areas.

TALENT TOGETHER'S THEORY OF CHANGE

Below we describe Talent Together's theory of change and the structures it uses to support candidates. For more information on how Talent Together is being implemented, we refer readers to Weddle et al. (2026). Talent Together is a statewide consortium that currently works with all 56 intermediate school districts (ISDs) in Michigan dedicated to reducing barriers to entry into the teaching profession and strengthening the state's educator workforce. The program is overseen by a governing board comprised of 15 ISD leaders representing all regions of the state. The board provides strategic direction and financial oversight to advance six primary goals: 1) increase the number of highly qualified, certified educator candidates through ISD collaboration; 2) eliminate vacancies in high-need certification areas; (3) improve alignment between educator and student demographics; 4) improve educational outcomes for students served by program participants; 5) increase retention of novice and experienced teachers; and 6) improve economic mobility for candidates serving in school support roles.

Talent Together recruits teacher candidates in partnership with ISDs and local school districts, with a particular focus on individuals who already serve school communities, including paraprofessionals, community members, and other school-based staff. Recruitment efforts are strategically aligned with districts' workforce needs and support both non-certified staff pursuing initial teacher licensure and certified educators seeking additional endorsements to expand instructional capacity in high-need certification areas. These certification areas include Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, English as a Second Language, Special Education, Secondary Math, and Secondary Integrated Science (Moriarty et al., 2025). Through this approach, Talent Together seeks to increase both the size and diversity of Michigan's educator workforce while responding to regional staffing needs across the state.

To prepare candidates for certification, Talent Together partners with more than 18 postsecondary institutions (PSIs) that offer traditional and alternative educator preparation pathways. Candidates receive individualized guidance to identify programs that align with their educational background, professional goals, and district workforce needs.

The program is organized into four geographic regions serving participating ISDs across Michigan while maintaining a coordinated statewide infrastructure. Each regional team includes a Regional Program Director who oversees partnerships with ISDs and districts, Success Navigators who provide individualized support as candidates progress through certification, and Educator Development Specialists who coach candidates and provide professional learning for participants.

Talent Together's model is intentionally designed to reduce financial and structural barriers to teacher certification while supporting candidates' long-term success in the profession. Tuition and required fees are fully covered, candidates continue earning wages through their employing districts, and coursework is delivered in formats designed to accommodate working professionals. Candidates who are not serving as a teacher of record¹ participate in a year-long paid Registered Apprenticeship Program, where they gradually assume instructional responsibilities under the guidance of trained mentor teachers while receiving ongoing coaching from Talent Together staff. Following certification, graduates commit to teaching in partner districts for three or five years, depending on their pathway, to help strengthen and sustain Michigan's educator workforce.

Figure A1. Talent Together Theory of Change

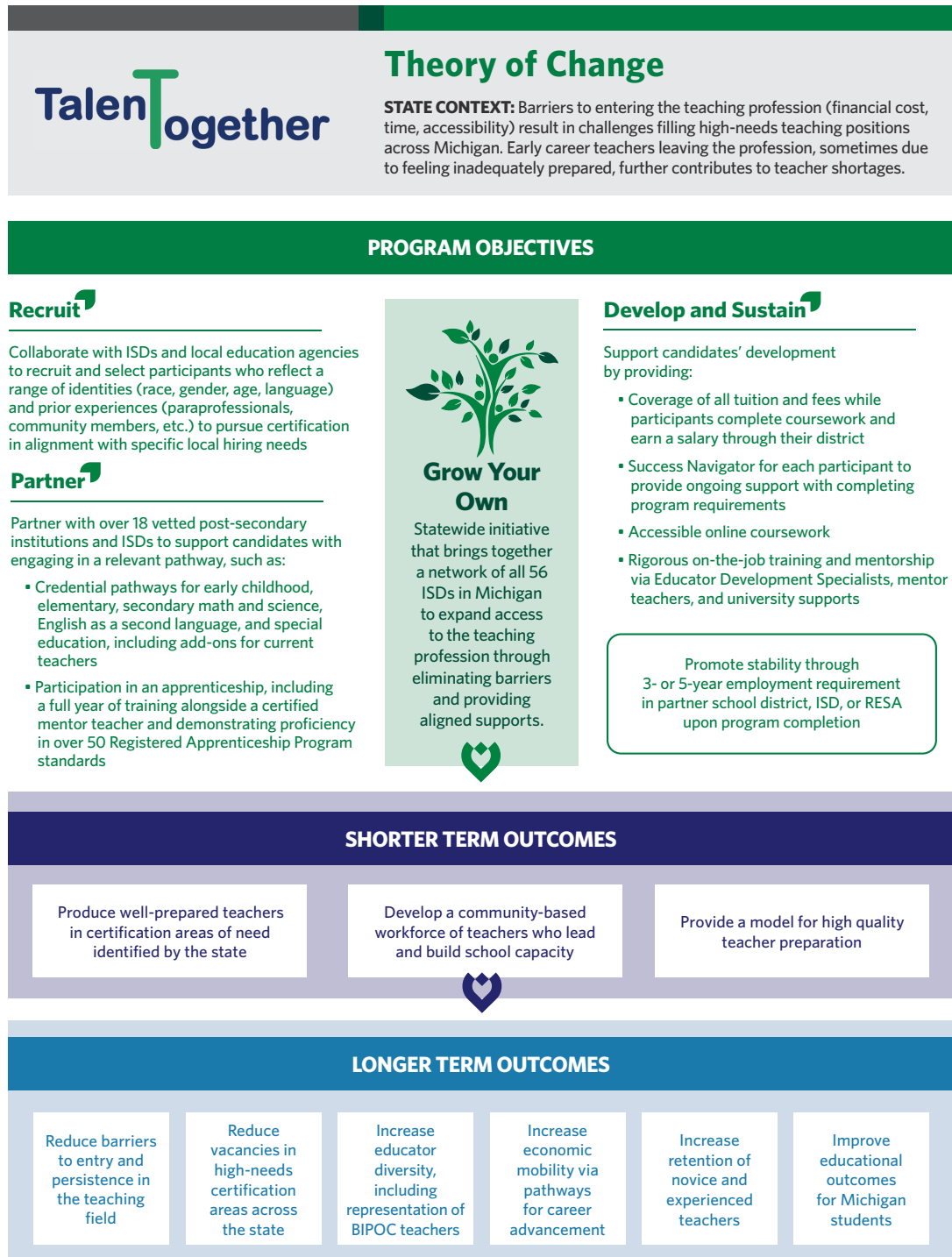


Figure A1 presents the Talent Together Theory of Change, which illustrates how the program's recruitment, preparation, and support strategies are expected to strengthen Michigan's educator workforce by increasing the supply, diversity, and retention of well-prepared teachers. It outlines the

relationships between Talent Together’s core program components, the intended short-, intermediate-, and long-term outcomes, and the overarching goal of ensuring that every student has access to effective educators. The theory of change provides the conceptual framework for evaluating Talent Together, and the findings that follow are organized around the evaluation’s primary research questions.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TALENT TOGETHER PARTICIPANTS

To date, Talent Together has been funded by state appropriations in three fiscal years: \$66.4 million in FY2023², \$12.5 million in FY2025, and \$2.6 million in FY2026. The program selected its first cohort of candidates in the fall of 2023 and has selected additional cohorts of future teachers in each of the following two years. More than 2,000 individuals have joined Talent Together to pursue a teaching credential thus far. To understand how Talent Together is helping those individuals address Michigan’s teacher shortage, our analyses are motivated by the following research questions:

1. How many teacher candidates are recruited/supported through Talent Together?
2. What are the characteristics of candidates supported through Talent Together?
3. To what extent are Talent Together candidates representative of the student population in the schools/districts where they work?
4. What types of communities, districts, schools, and students does Talent Together serve?
5. Is Talent Together supporting the schools/districts with the greatest need for teachers?
6. What certifications and/or endorsements are candidates pursuing through Talent Together? To what extent are these certifications/endorsements aligned with local and/or statewide needs?

Data and Methods

To answer these research questions, we use multiple forms of data. The first is programmatic data collected by Talent Together for cohorts 1-3. This includes identifiers for each candidate, the cohort in which each candidate joined Talent Together, whether each candidate was pursuing a credential through Talent Together’s registered apprenticeship program, each candidate’s pathway (whether they are pursuing their initial Michigan teaching certificate or are a currently certified teacher pursuing an additional endorsement in a high-needs area), their intended endorsement, and their status in the program as of fall 2025 (active, completed, or withdrawn from the program). For ease of interpretation, for some analyses we follow Kilbride et al. (2026) and map specific endorsements to their general certification areas of Special Education, Elementary, Secondary Science, Secondary Math, English as a Second Language (ESL), and Early Childhood.³

The second source of data is administrative data regularly collected by the Michigan Department of Education and made available through the Michigan Education Research Institute (MERI). These data contain observations dating back to 2012 through the fall of 2025, though most analyses use data from the most recent collection (fall 2025). These data include student characteristics such as demographics, achievement, and attendance. They also include

information on all staff who work in Michigan's K-12 districts, such as their demographics, job assignments, and work history. Finally, the data include information on vacant teaching positions reported by districts and whether positions are permanently or temporarily filled. To estimate the extent of shortages in a given year, we follow the method outlined in Kilbride et al. (2026) to create composite measures of teacher shortages using staffing data from the 2024-2025 school year, including teacher turnover rates, number of under-credentialed teachers, and number of vacancies in the district. These measures are assigned to geographic districts, which group charter schools in the geographically bounded areas of traditional public school districts. After deidentifying program data, we merge it with state administrative data to link information about candidates' experiences and goals related to Talent Together with their K-12 employment records and the student populations in the districts where they work.

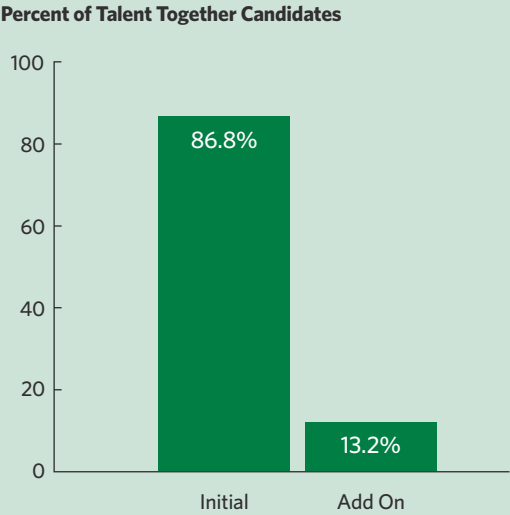
Program data from Talent Together contain records for 1,883 unique individuals. Of this group, we are able to match 1,717 with state administrative records. Prior to analysis, we employ a set of sample restrictions to 1) identify staff who were actively working in a Michigan PK-12 public school district or ISD during the relevant collection, and 2) separate K-12 staff from early childhood staff working in PK-12 districts and ISDs. To identify staff who were actively working during the relevant collection, we drop observations that are: associated with a private school, adult education setting, migrant education program, or non-instructional ancillary facility; coded as being "temporarily filled;" have a full-time equivalent (FTE) of 0 or a missing FTE; are a virtual teacher; or not associated with active employment as of the collection's count day. One notable exception to these restrictions is that an observation was not dropped based on its FTE if that observation was associated with a Talent Together candidate pursuing a credential through its registered apprenticeship program.⁴

We then distinguish early childhood and K-12 staff by identifying early childhood staff as those who: work in an early childhood setting or work in an assignment associated with early childhood programming. We identify the early childhood education and K-12 tracks of Talent Together by assigning participants pursuing only an endorsement in Early Childhood Education to the early childhood track and all other participants to the K-12 track. This results in a sample of 1,537 unique Talent Together participants who work in a K-12 setting and 166 who work in an early childhood setting. Some analyses further restrict these samples to include only individuals with active employment as of Michigan's fall 2025 staffing data collection, yielding a K-12 sample of 1,244 and an early childhood sample of 152.

To understand how Talent Together recruits different types of staff into teaching, some analyses categorize staff into one of four groups based on whether their primary job assignment requires a certification and whether it is in an instructional setting. These groups are: teachers; non-certified instructional staff such as paraprofessionals; certified non-instructional staff like counselors and administrators; and non-certified non-instructional staff like secretaries, custodians, foodservice workers, etc.⁵

In the following sections we use these data to answer the research questions listed above. We conduct separate analyses for the K-12 and early childhood components of Talent Together as these pathways serve meaningfully different parts of Michigan's public education system, making separate analyses more appropriate.

FIGURE 1.1. Talent Together
Candidates by Pathway



Source: Talent Together program data.

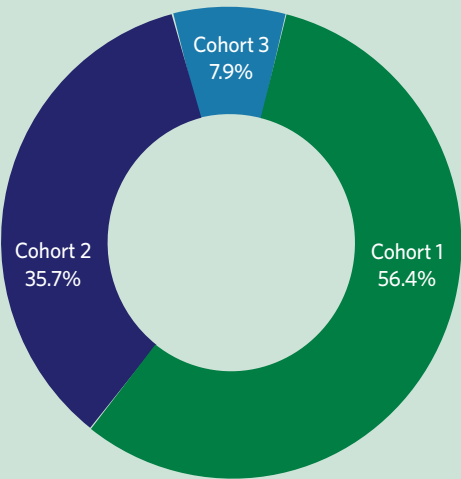
Analyses of K-12 Pathways Through Talent Together

The following subsections are motivated by the six research questions listed above to examine how Talent Together’s theory of change is playing out in practice. To protect the identity of individuals represented in MERI data, statistics cannot represent a group of 10 or fewer individuals. As a result, some analyses that use MERI data use cell suppression, combine groups, or round percentages.

RQ1: How many teacher candidates are recruited/ supported through Talent Together?

Talent Together operates statewide to increase the number of certified teachers in high-needs areas. Across the first three cohorts, Talent Together selected a total of 1,883 individuals. Figure 1.1 presents the composition of this group by pathway – whether they are pursuing their initial teaching certification or are currently working as a teacher and pursuing an additional endorsement. This shows that the vast majority of Talent Together candidates, 86.8%, are pursuing their first Michigan teaching endorsement, indicating that most of those who receive certification through Talent Together will be growing Michigan’s teacher workforce.

FIGURE 1.2. Talent Together
Candidates by Cohort



Source: Talent Together program data.

The composition of candidates by cohort is illustrated in Figure 1.2, which shows that cohorts decreased in size over time. Figure 1.2 shows that cohort 1 is by far the largest, accounting for 56.4% of all candidates, followed by cohort 2 with 35.7% of candidates and finally by cohort 3 with 7.8% of candidates. This concentration of candidates in cohort 1 likely reflects decisions related to Talent Together’s target population and the timelines imposed by its funding. Talent Together’s first appropriation accounts for over 80% of its total state funding to date and runs from fall 2023 through the conclusion of the 2026 calendar year - though subsequent appropriations extend into future years. Given that most candidates are pursuing their initial teaching certification (see Figure 1.1), which could take multiple years to earn if they do not already hold a bachelor’s degree, Talent Together’s strategy of recruiting more candidates in the first year provided them more time to complete their credential.

To examine how candidates are progressing through their respective programs, Figure 1.3 disaggregates the population of candidates based on their program status at the beginning of fall

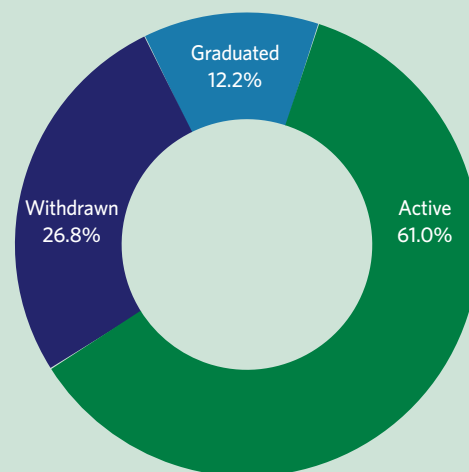
2025. This period falls at roughly the midpoint between when the first Talent Together candidates began receiving support and when Talent Together's first, and largest, appropriation expires at the end of 2026. At that time, 12.2% of the Talent Together candidates who were actively employed at that time had earned a credential through Talent Together while 61% were still actively pursuing one and just over one-fourth of candidates (26.8%) had withdrawn from Talent Together. As the vast majority of candidates were pursuing an initial teaching credential (see Figure 1.1), it is perhaps unsurprising that most of them had not yet completed their program as of fall 2025. At the same time, the fact that more than one out of every four candidates who joined Talent Together to pursue a teaching credential subsequently withdrew underscores the importance of understanding the challenges participants face on their path to becoming a teacher. While data on persistence through teacher preparation programs specifically is not readily available, research suggests that attrition is common more broadly within the teacher pipeline. Analyzing data on postsecondary course-taking in Michigan institutions of higher education from the 2010-2011 through the 2021-2022 academic years, Kilbride et al. (2023) found that among students who ever took a freshman-level education course⁶, just 26% went on to take a student teaching internship. Even among students who took a senior-level education course, nearly one-in-three did not go on to a student teaching internship. While the findings presented here and in Kilbride et al. (2023) use different measures, together they suggest that pathways into teaching are characterized by substantial attrition. This provides important context for understanding the teacher pipeline, including participation in both traditional teacher preparation and Grow Your Own programs.

Together, Figure 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 show that the candidates Talent Together has recruited are overwhelmingly working to earn their first teaching credential, joined mostly in the first cohort that started programming in 2024, and that after three semesters approximately 60% are still working toward their credential while about 1 in 8 have already earned a new credential. This suggests that graduates of Talent Together may meaningfully grow Michigan's teacher workforce in the coming years, though future analyses will be needed to examine how candidates ultimately progress through the program.

RQ2: What are the characteristics of candidates supported through Talent Together?

A central goal of Talent Together is to expand Michigan's pool of qualified teachers while increasing the diversity of the educator workforce. The program recruits many candidates from individuals already working in schools, including both certified educators and school-based staff pursuing initial certification. If Talent Together is making progress toward its goal of diversifying the teacher pipeline, we would expect Talent Together candidates to be a more diverse group than the teachers currently working in Michigan schools.

FIGURE 1.3. Talent Together Participants by Status



Source: Talent Together program data, MERI data.

Table 2.1 compares the characteristics of all Talent Together candidates observed in fall 2025 with educators working in the same types of assignments statewide and in the same districts where Talent Together candidates are employed. Broadly, Talent Together candidates span a range of school-based roles but are concentrated in instructional positions and tend to be newer to the districts in which they work. Among those already working as teachers, Talent Together candidates are also more racially diverse than teachers statewide and in Talent Together employing districts.

There are three key takeaways from Table 2.1. First, most Talent Together candidates already work in instructional roles. Teaching roles account for nearly half of candidate assignments, and another third were in non-certified instructional positions. Together, these groups accounted for more than

80% of candidate assignments. This pattern reflects Talent Together emphasis on recruiting individuals who are already embedded in schools and supporting them as they pursue certification or additional credentials.

Second, Talent Together candidates tend to be earlier in their careers within their current districts than employees in comparable roles. Across assignment groups, candidates generally had less in-district experience and were less likely to have 15 or more years of experience than comparable employees. The difference was particularly pronounced among teachers: about 50% of Talent Together teachers had four or fewer years of experience, compared with about 30% of teachers statewide and in Talent Together employing districts.

Third, demographic differences vary across assignment groups, with the clearest differences among teachers. Women made up the majority of Talent Together candidates across all four assignment groups, as they do in the broader

educator workforce, although Talent Together teachers and non-certified non-instructional staff included larger shares of women than comparable employees. Talent Together teachers also had a notably different racial composition from teachers statewide and in Talent Together employing districts: about 16% were Black compared with about 7% of teachers statewide and in Talent Together employing districts, while a smaller share were White.

Together, these findings suggest that Talent Together is reaching a pool of candidates who are already connected to Michigan schools but are generally newer to their employing districts. Among candidates already working as teachers, the program is also supporting a more racially diverse group than the state's existing teacher workforce, consistent with Talent Together's goal of increasing diversity in the teacher pipeline.

Talent Together's emphasizes recruiting individuals who are already embedded in schools and supporting them as they pursue certification or additional credentials.

TABLE 2.1. Educator Characteristics, All Candidates - Fall 2025												
	Statewide				Talent Together Employing Districts				Talent Together Participants			
	Teacher	Certified Non-teaching	Not Certified Instructional	Not Certified Non-instructional	Teacher	Certified Non-teaching	Not Certified Instructional	Not Certified Non-instructional	Teacher	Certified Non-teaching	Not Certified Instructional	Not Certified Non-instructional
N	82,046	24,965	28,091	103,827	67,110	21,164	23,752	87,010	598	36	422	200
Female	76.0%	75.9%	88.4%	66.8%	76.1%	76.9%	88.1%	67.0%	82.1%	72.2%	87.2%	78.0%
YEARS OF IN-DISTRICT EXPERIENCE												
0-4 years	30.7%	33.2%	51.2%	52.7%	29.6%	32.6%	50.6%	52.5%	49.9%	>40.0%	41.7%	42.9%
5-9 years	22.5%	23.1%	23.4%	22.4%	22.2%	23.1%	23.5%	22.3%	32.5%	<20.0%	37.3%	40.4%
10-14 years	12.6%	13.4%	11.3%	11.1%	12.8%	13.6%	11.7%	11.2%	9.3%	<20.0%	14.0%	11.1%
15+ years	34.2%	30.2%	14.1%	13.8%	35.5%	30.7%	14.3%	14.1%	8.3%	<20.0%	7.0%	5.6%
RACE/ETHNICITY												
Asian	1.3%	0.8%	2.3%	1.7%	1.2%	0.9%	2.3%	1.8%	<5.0%	<10.0%	2.4%	<5.0%
Black	7.1%	10.7%	13.1%	14.4%	7.0%	10.7%	13.4%	14.5%	15.7%	<10.0%	13.0%	15.5%
Hispanic or Latino	1.9%	1.6%	3.8%	3.5%	1.9%	1.6%	3.9%	3.4%	<5.0%	0.0%	3.3%	5.0%
Two or more races	1.3%	1.0%	0.9%	0.7%	1.3%	1.0%	0.9%	0.7%	<5.0%	0.0%	<2.0%	<5.0%
Other	0.4%	0.6%	0.9%	0.9%	0.4%	0.6%	1.0%	0.9%	<5.0%	<5.0%	<2.0%	<5.0%
White	88.0%	85.3%	78.8%	78.8%	88.2%	85.2%	78.4%	78.7%	76.4%	>80.0%	79.6%	77.0%

Note: The total sample n of 1,256 is higher than the 1,244 unique RPIC count by 12. This is because 12 individuals have equivalent max FTE counts in two different categories.

Sources: Talent Together program data, MERI data.

TABLE 2.2. Educator Characteristics, Active and Graduated Candidates Only - Fall 2025												
Statewide				Talent Together Employing Districts				Talent Together Participants				
	Teacher	Certified Non-teaching	Not Certified Instructional	Not Certified Non-instructional	Teacher	Certified Non-teaching	Not Certified Instructional	Not Certified Non-instructional	Teacher	Certified Non-teaching	Not Certified Instructional	Not Certified Non-instructional
N	82,046	24,965	28,091	103,827	59,968	18,744	21,325	78,080	474	21	309	117
Female	76.0%	75.9%	88.4%	66.8%	76.2%	76.8%	87.8%	66.9%	83.3%	76.2%	90.0%	76.1%
YEARS OF IN-DISTRICT EXPERIENCE												
0-4 years	30.7%	33.2%	51.2%	52.7%	29.5%	32.6%	50.6%	52.6%	49.9%	>40%	42.6%	48.3%
5-9 years	22.5%	23.1%	23.4%	22.4%	22.4%	23.2%	23.3%	22.2%	33.8%	<25.0%	38.9%	35.3%
10-14 years	12.6%	13.4%	11.3%	11.1%	12.9%	13.5%	11.7%	11.1%	8.5%	<15.0%	12.5%	12.1%
15+ years	34.2%	30.2%	14.1%	13.8%	35.2%	30.7%	14.4%	14.2%	7.9%	<30.0%	5.9%	4.3%
RACE/ETHNICITY												
Asian	1.3%	0.8%	2.3%	1.7%	1.2%	0.9%	2.4%	1.9%	<5.0%	<5.0%	<3.0%	<5.0%
Black	7.1%	10.7%	13.1%	14.4%	7.1%	11.4%	13.8%	15.0%	15.0%	<10.0%	11.3%	16.2%
Hispanic or Latino	1.9%	1.6%	3.8%	3.5%	2.0%	1.6%	4.1%	3.6%	<5.0%	0.0%	3.6%	<10.0%
Two or more races	1.3%	1.0%	0.9%	0.7%	1.3%	1.1%	0.9%	0.7%	<5.0%	0.0%	<3.0%	<5.0%
Other	0.4%	0.6%	0.9%	0.9%	0.4%	0.6%	1.0%	0.9%	<5.0%	<5.0%	<3.0%	<5.0%
White	88.0%	85.3%	78.8%	78.8%	87.9%	84.5%	77.7%	78.0%	76.8%	>80.0%	81.6%	74.4%

Note: The total sample n of 921 is higher than the 911 unique RPIC count by 10. This is because 10 individuals have equivalent max FTE counts in two different categories.

Sources: Talent Together program data, MERI data.

Candidates who withdraw from Talent Together may differ from those who remain in or complete the program, so we next examine whether excluding withdrawn candidates changes the pattern above. Table 2.2 repeats the same comparisons for candidates who remained active or had graduated by fall 2025. Broadly, the characteristics of these candidates look very similar to those of the full Talent Together sample. They remained concentrated in teacher and non-certified instructional roles, generally have less in-district experience than employees in comparable positions, and show similar demographic patterns across assignment groups. Among teachers in particular, active and graduated Talent Together candidates continued to include a substantially larger share of Black candidates and a smaller share of White candidates than teachers statewide and in Talent Together employing districts.

Taken together, Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show that the overall profile of Talent Together candidates changes little when we exclude those who withdraw. The program's active and graduated candidates remain largely embedded in instructional roles and relatively early in their district careers, while those already working as teachers remain more racially diverse than Michigan's existing teacher workforce.

Table 2.3 examines the racial and ethnic composition of Talent Together candidates by program status. This comparison helps show not only who Talent Together is recruiting, but also whether the racial and ethnic diversity of the candidate pool carries through as candidates remain in and complete the program.

Three key takeaways are evident in Table 2.3. First, Talent Together candidates remain predominantly White, although the program supports a more racially diverse group than Michigan's existing teacher workforce. White candidates account for about 78% of Talent Together participants overall. At the same time, as Table 2.1 shows, Talent Together teachers include a substantially larger share of Black educators and a smaller share of White educators than teachers statewide and in Talent Together employing districts.

TABLE 2.3. Race/Ethnicity by Status - Fall 2025				
Race/Ethnicity	All	Active	Withdrawn	Graduated
Asian	27 (2.2%)	16 (2.1%)	<10 (2.0%)	<10 (<6.0%)
Black	182 (14.6%)	118 (15.6%)	>50 (>15.0%)	<10 (<6.0%)
Hispanic or Latino	40 (3.2%)	25 (3.3%)	<15 (<5.0%)	<10 (<6.0%)
Two or More Races	18 (1.5%)	<15 (<2.0%)	<10 (<2.0%)	<10 (<6.0%)
Other	11 (0.9%)	<15 (<2.0%)	<10 (<2.0%)	-
White	966 (77.7%)	581 (76.6%)	255 (76.6%)	130 (85.5%)
TOTAL	1,244	759	333	152

Sources: Talent Together program data, MERI data.

Second, withdrawal rates did not differ substantially across racial and ethnic groups, suggesting that differential withdrawal has not meaningfully changed the racial and ethnic composition of the Talent Together candidate pool.

Third, the current group of Talent Together graduates is less racially diverse than the active candidate pool. This difference may reflect variation in program pathways and timing rather than a narrowing of diversity as candidates move through Talent Together. Some candidates enter the program as current teachers pursuing additional credentials, while others are working toward initial certification, and these groups may progress through the program at different rates. As a result, the graduates observed to date may not yet reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of Talent Together's broader pool of candidates.

Taken together, these patterns suggest that Talent Together is recruiting a candidate pool that is more racially diverse than Michigan's existing teacher workforce and that this diversity appears to persist among candidates who remain active in the program. Although the current group of graduates is less diverse, the composition of Talent Together completers may change as the broader pool of active candidates progresses through the program.

TABLE 2.4. Participant Assignment Group by Status - Fall 2025				
Assignment Area (2025 Data)	All	Active	Withdrawn	Graduated
Teacher	598 (47.6%)	329 (42.9%)	124 (37.0%)	145 (94.2%)
Non-Certified Instructional	422 (33.6%)	308 (40.2%)	113 (33.7%)	<10 (<5.0%)
Non-Certified Non-Instructional	200 (15.9%)	113 (14.7%)	83 (24.8%)	<10 (<5.0%)
Certified Non-Teacher	36 (2.9%)	17 (2.2%)	15 (4.5%)	<10 (<5.0%)
TOTAL*	1,256	767	335	154

*Note: Total exceeds unique RPIC count by 12 due to 12 individuals operating in two assignments.

Sources: Talent Together program data, MERI data.

Table 2.4 examines the roles (job assignments) in which Talent Together candidates work and how those roles differ by program status. Because Talent Together recruits heavily from individuals working in schools and aims to support their movement into certified teaching positions, candidates' assignments provide another indication of where they are situated in the educator workforce and how that changes as they progress through the program.

Overall, most Talent Together candidates already work in instructional roles, and most of the graduates are working as teachers. Teachers and non-certified instructional staff together account for more than 80% of assignments overall and a similar share among active candidates. This distribution reflects how Talent Together strengthens the educator workforce by supporting non-certified school-based staff in earning initial certification while also helping current teachers expand their qualifications.

Among candidates who had completed the program, nearly all were working as teachers by fall 2025. This pattern aligns with Talent Together's goal of supporting candidates into certified teaching positions.

Together, these patterns show that Talent Together is largely supporting individuals who already work in instructional settings and that nearly all candidates who complete the program move into or remain in teaching roles. These findings are consistent with the program's aim of developing an existing school-based workforce into a supply of certified teachers.

RQ3: To what extent are Talent Together candidates representative of the student population in the schools and districts where they work?

One of Talent Together's goals is to improve alignment between the demographic composition of Michigan's educator workforce and the students it serves. If Talent Together is making progress toward this goal, we would expect the demographic composition of its candidates to more closely resemble the student population than the existing teacher workforce. Figures 3.1-3.4 examine this question by comparing Talent Together candidates with students and teachers in Talent Together districts and statewide.

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 present these comparisons for all Talent Together candidates observed in fall 2025, showing how candidates compare with students and teachers across district locale, gender, and race/ethnicity. The figure shows three main patterns. First, as Figure 3.1 shows, Talent Together candidates are more concentrated in rural or town districts than the students and teachers in Talent Together districts. More than one-third of candidates work in rural or town districts, compared with about 28% of students and teachers. Correspondingly, candidates are less concentrated in city and suburban districts.

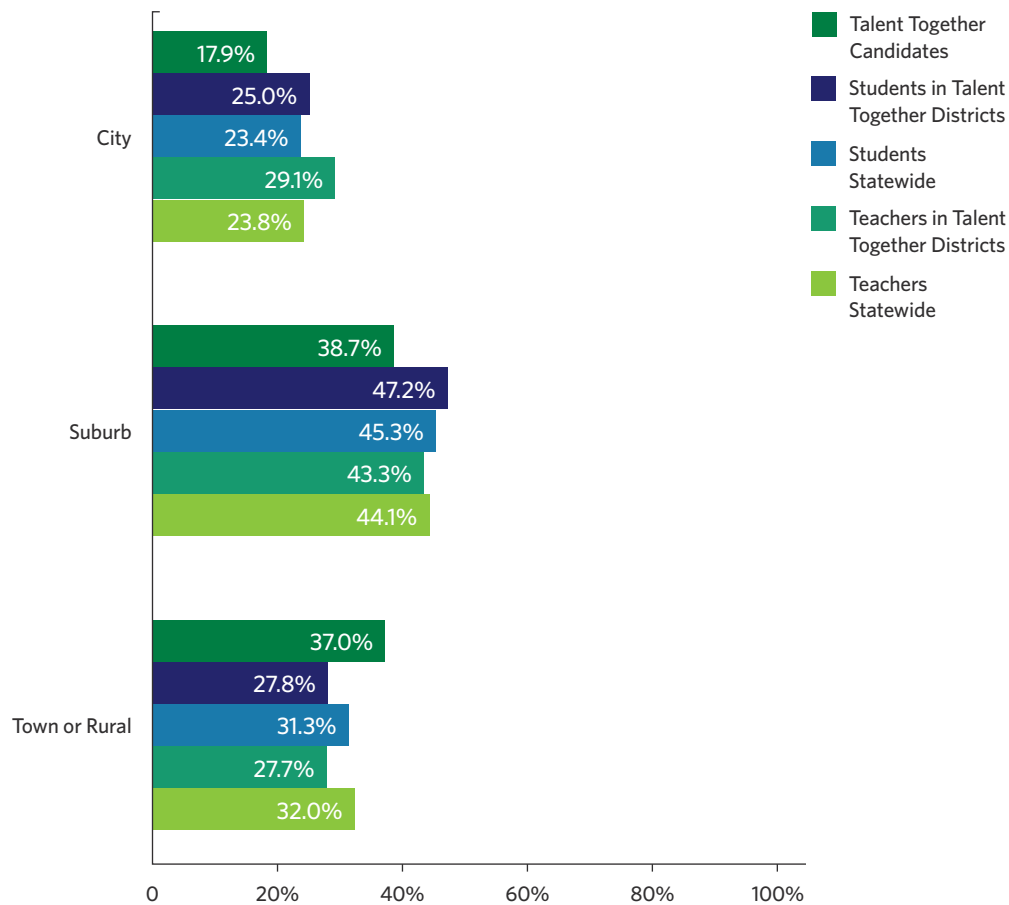
Second, Talent Together candidates do not more closely reflect students in terms of gender. The top of Figure 3.2 illustrates that male candidates account for 17% of Talent Together candidates, compared with about half of students and about 24% of teachers in Talent Together districts. The gender gap between candidates and students is therefore larger than the corresponding gap between current teachers and students.

Third, Talent Together candidates more closely reflect the racial and ethnic composition of students than do current teachers, as shown in Figure 3.2. This difference is particularly notable for Black candidates. Black candidates account for about 15% of Talent Together candidates, compared with about 18% of students but only 7% to 8% of teachers in Talent Together districts and statewide. Although Talent Together candidates do not fully match the racial and ethnic composition of students, the largest remaining gap is among Latino candidates, whose representation remains substantially below their share of the student population.

Talent Together is largely supporting individuals who already work in instructional settings and that nearly all candidates who complete the program move into or remain in teaching roles.

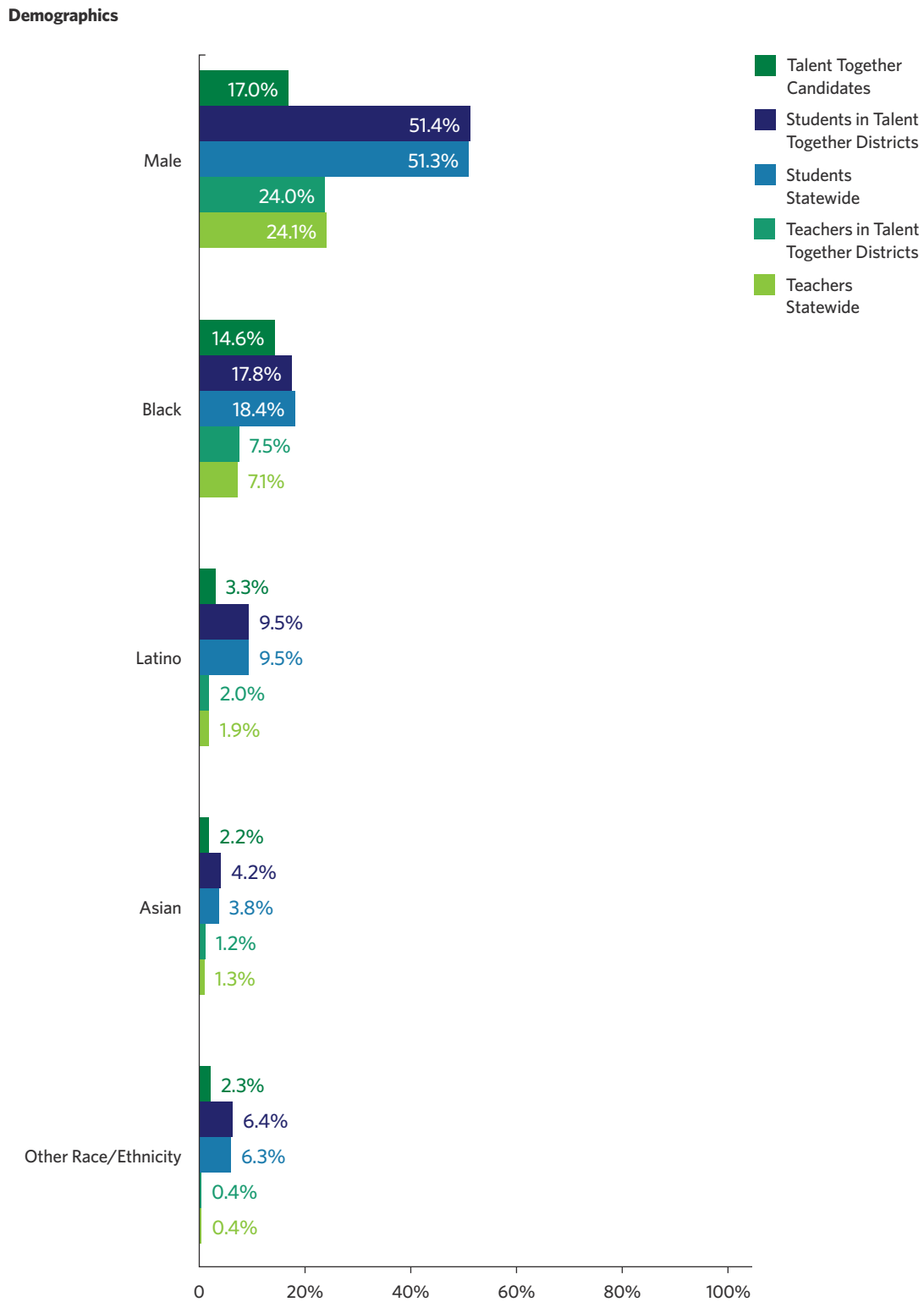
FIGURE 3.1 Comparison of All Talent Together Participants With Teachers and Students: Locale

Urbanicity



Sources: Talent Together program data, MERI data.

FIGURE 3.2 Comparison of All Talent Together Participants With Teachers and Students: Demographics

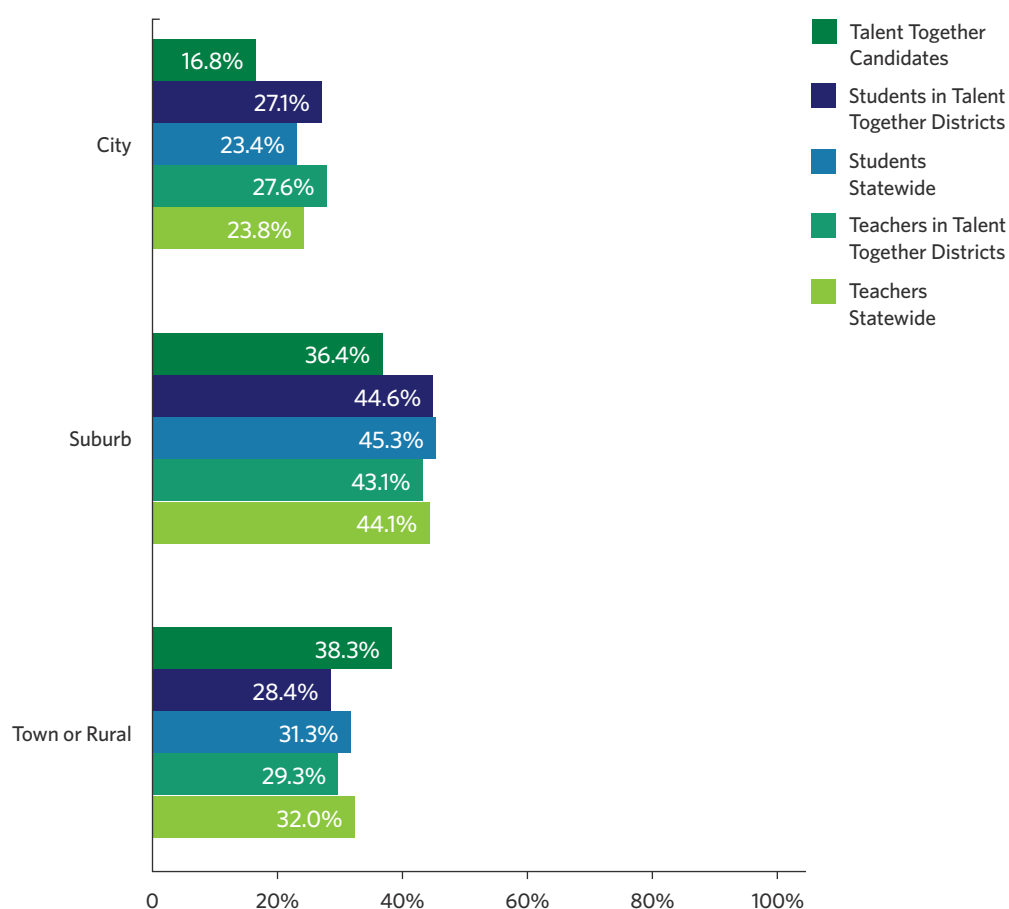


Sources: Talent Together program data, MERI data.

Because candidates who withdraw from Talent Together may differ from those who remain in or complete the program, Figures 3.3 and 3.4 repeat these comparisons after excluding candidates who had withdrawn from Talent Together by fall 2025. The patterns change little. Active and graduated candidates continue to more closely reflect the racial and ethnic composition of students than does the existing teacher workforce, particularly for Black candidates, while gaps remain for Latino and male candidates. Active and graduated candidates also remain more concentrated in rural or town districts relative to students and teachers in Talent Together districts.

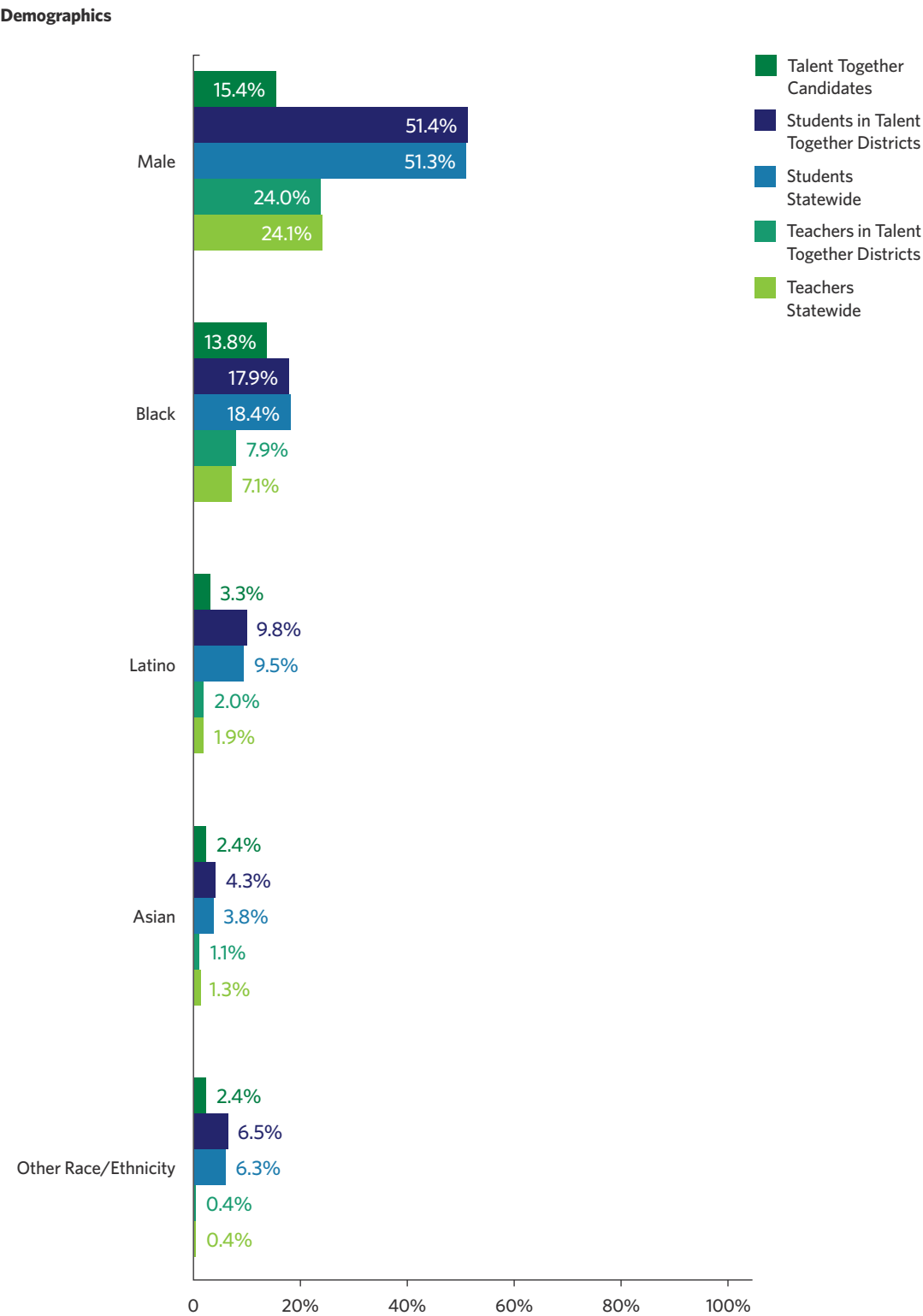
FIGURE 3.3 Comparison of Active and Graduated Talent Together Participants With Teachers and Students: Locale

Urbanicity



Sources: Talent Together program data, MERI data.

FIGURE 3.4 Comparison of Active and Graduated Talent Together Participants With Teachers and Students: Demographics



Sources: Talent Together program data, MERI data.

Talent Together candidates more closely reflect the racial and ethnic composition of students than does the existing teacher workforce, particularly through greater representation of Black educators.

Together, the Figures presented in this section suggest that Talent Together candidates more closely reflect the racial and ethnic composition of students than does the existing teacher workforce, particularly through greater representation of Black educators. These patterns are consistent with progress toward Talent Together's goal of improving alignment between educator and student demographics, although the alignment does not extend across all dimensions. Latino

and male candidates remain underrepresented relative to students, and candidates are more concentrated in rural or town districts than the student population in Talent Together districts. These patterns remain similar when withdrawn candidates are excluded.

RQ4: What types of communities, districts, schools, and students does Talent Together serve?

Talent Together is a statewide initiative involving all 56 of Michigan's intermediate school districts. Given that broad scope, an important question is how widely the program reaches across the state and whether the districts and students supported by Talent Together reflect the characteristics of Michigan's students overall.

Table 4.1 shows characteristics of schools statewide in Column 1, those served by active or graduated Talent Together candidates in Column 2, and those served by all candidates ever enrolled in Talent Together in Column 3. Columns 2 and 3 show that Talent Together has broad reach across Michigan. Candidates work in about half of the state's 882 districts (including charters, formally called public school academies, or PSAs). However, Talent Together candidates represent a much larger share of traditional public school districts than charter schools.

Column 2 shows that 60% of traditional public school districts, compared with 26.7% of charter districts, employ an active or graduated Talent Together candidate. That said, this figure understates the program's reach in terms of student exposure; in total, more than 70% of the state's public school students attend districts served by at least one Talent Together candidate, though here, too, representation varies by sector, with active or graduated Talent Together candidates working in districts that serve 76.8% of students in traditional public school districts compared with 34.2% of students in charter schools. Looking near the bottom of Table 4.1 shows that students in Talent Together districts are slightly more likely to attend school in an urban district and slightly less likely to attend school in a rural district. Broadly, though, the schools served by Talent Together candidates mirror the state school population in terms of demographics, socioeconomics, and test scores.

TABLE 4.1. Comparison of Student Characteristics in Talent Together Districts with Michigan Overall - Fall 2025

	Statewide	TT Employed Districts (active/graduated)	TT Employed Districts (incl withdrawn)
N (students)	1,419,742	1,020,226	1,152,222
Traditional Public Schools	1,199,739	921,866	1,027,134
Charter Districts	155,919	53,273	72,934
ISD Districts	64,084	45,087	52,154
N (districts)	882	440	518
Traditional Public Schools	536	322	370
Charter Districts	288	77	101
ISD Districts	56	41	47
Female	48.7%	48.6%	48.6%
Charter	11.0%	5.2%	6.3%
Traditional Public Schools	84.5%	90.4%	89.1%
ISD District	4.5%	4.4%	4.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
Asian	3.8%	4.3%	4.2%
Black	18.4%	17.9%	17.8%
Hispanic or Latino	9.5%	9.8%	9.5%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Two or more races	5.6%	5.8%	5.7%
White	62.0%	61.5%	62.2%
City	23.4%	27.1%	25.0%
Suburb	45.3%	44.6%	47.2%
Rural/Town	31.3%	28.4%	27.8%
Other demographics			
Economically Disadvantaged	50.1%	48.7%	48.7%
Students With Disabilities	15.2%	15.6%	15.5%
English Learners	7.1%	7.5%	7.4%
Student achievement			
M-STEP ELA Z-score	0.000	-0.022	-0.002
M-STEP Math Z-score	0.000	-0.028	-0.006
SAT ELA Z-score	0.002	-0.008	0.012
SAT Math Z-score	0.002	-0.014	0.007

Note: State-operated districts are included in the statewide total but are not shown separately. As a result, the total number of districts exceeds the sum of traditional public school districts, charter districts, and ISDs.

Sources: Talent Together program data, MERI data.

RQ5: Is Talent Together supporting the districts with the greatest need for teachers?

A core goal of grow-your-own and teacher apprenticeship programs is to mitigate teacher shortages, particularly in hard-to-staff school settings and in high-needs subject areas. A large body of research points to school demographics and achievement as key factors associated with staffing shortages. To the extent that Talent Together is training teachers in these high-needs settings, we might expect to observe that Talent Together teachers are located in districts with higher rates of historically underserved student populations and lower test scores. We do not observe this above in Table 4.1.

We examine this possibility more directly by examining teacher-specific measures related to turnover and licensure. Table 5.1 compares Talent Together districts with statewide averages on turnover, percent unlicensed teachers, and percent of teachers with an interim certification. Together, these measures provide a landscape of demand for qualified teachers; districts with higher rates of turnover will have greater teacher replacement needs, and districts with greater shares of unlicensed and interim-certified teachers will have greater need for qualified teachers to staff their schools.

TABLE 5.1. Average Teacher Shortage Measures, Statewide vs Talent Together Districts								
	Statewide				Talent Together Employed Districts			
fall year	% left district	% left school	% unlicensed	% interim cert.	% left district	% left school	% unlicensed	% interim cert
2021	20.5	27.9	7.6	2.7	17.5	26.7	6.3	1.9
2022	21.8	28.9	10.7	3.3	18.6	27.1	9.1	2.5
2023	19.8	27.4	11.1	4.4	17.8	26.6	9.7	3.3
2024	18.9	26.4	11.4	5.1	17.2	25.9	10.1	4.1

Note: Talent Together Employed Districts include all districts where Talent Together candidates are observed as employees in Fall 2025.

Sources: Talent Together program data, MERI data.

There are three key takeaways. First, as evidenced by the Talent Together column, the program is indeed serving districts with meaningful demand for teachers by these measures. On average, these districts lose 17-18% of their teachers each year, and are increasingly reliant on teachers who are not fully certified (i.e., unlicensed or interim certified).

Second, however, these staffing challenges do not appear to be more salient in districts served by Talent Together than the average district statewide. Rather, the districts with Talent Together teachers appear to have somewhat less need, at least on average. Specifically, in each year from fall 2021 through fall 2024, supported districts tended to have lower rates of turnover, unlicensed teachers, and interim/emergency certified teachers than the state average. While these differences are descriptively small, they are meaningful, particularly for the license/certification measures.

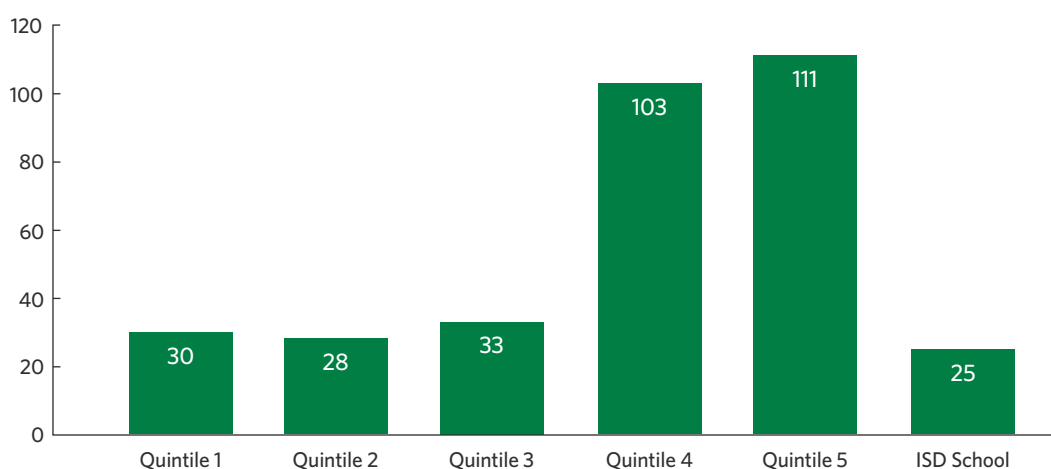
Third, districts served by Talent Together have similar trajectories on these measures to the statewide average. Since 2021, turnover has fallen statewide whereas reliance on teachers who are unlicensed or working under a temporary credential has climbed. Trajectories in districts with Talent Together teachers look broadly similar to the statewide figures.

Together, these three takeaways point to substantial and growing need for qualified teachers statewide. Talent Together is training teachers in districts that clearly have staffing needs on average, which ought to support the program goals of mitigating staffing shortages in high-needs districts. However, the program’s reach may not yet be extending fully to the state’s highest needs districts.

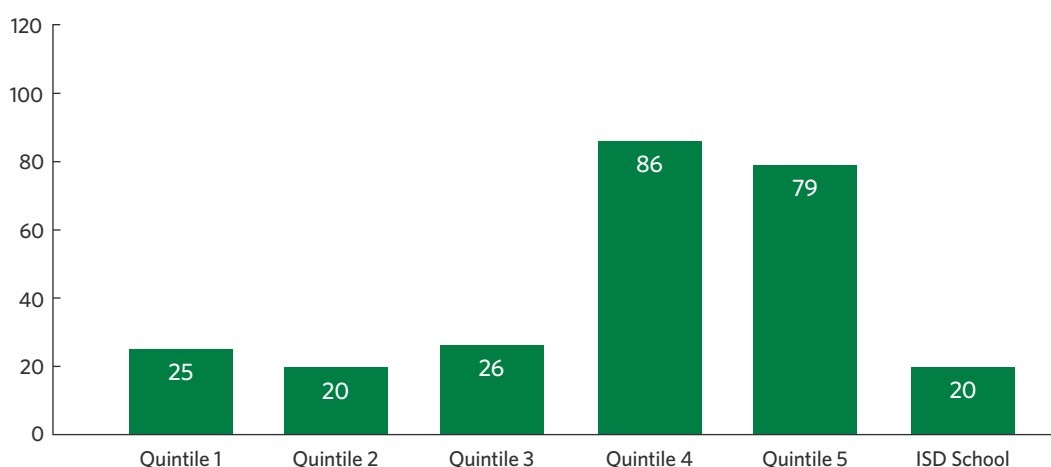
Figures 5.1 and 5.2 speak more directly to the magnitude and nature of Talent Together's reach in districts with the highest staffing needs. Here, we break all districts into quintiles based on a composite index that captures teacher shortage severity in the 2024-2025 school year.⁷ Districts in lower quintiles have less severe shortages while districts in higher quintiles have more pronounced shortages. We then provide a count of teachers trained in districts in each of those quintiles. Figure 5.1 shows the number of certified teachers who used or are using the program to obtain a certification in an additional endorsement area, whereas Figure 5.2 shows the number of not-yet-certified teachers using the program to obtain an initial teaching certification.

FIGURE 5.1. Add-On and Graduated Talent Together Participants by Teacher Shortage Severity

Talent Together Add-On or Graduated Candidates Working in Fall 2025, by 2024-25 Composite Shortage Measure



Talent Together Add-On or Graduated Candidates Working in Fall 2025, Excluding Withdrawn

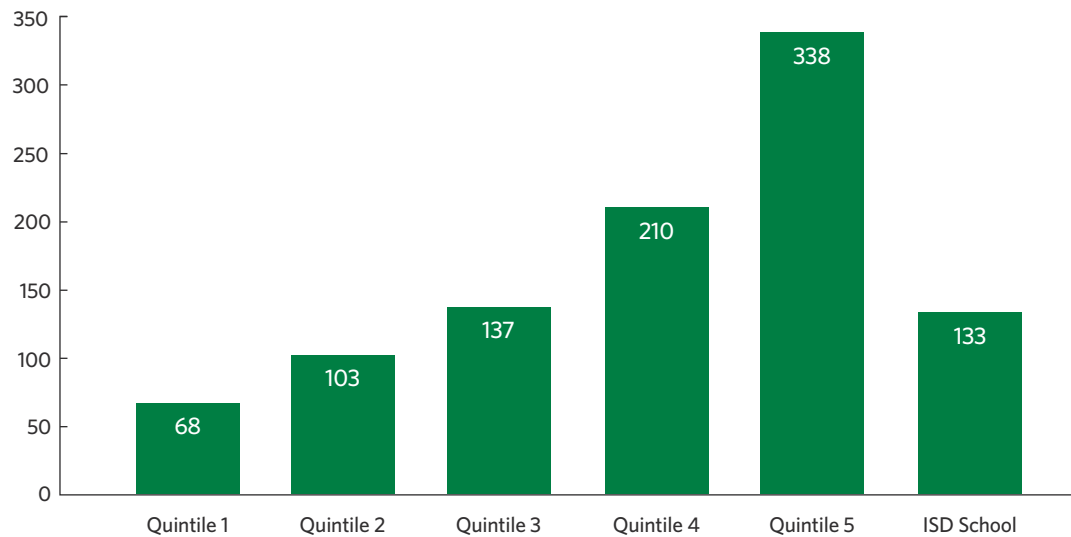


Note: The above figures show the number of Talent Together candidates who already have a teaching certification (pathway includes "Add On" or "Certification Only" + already hold certification recognized by the state), organized by quintile of the 2024-25 district composite shortage metric. Candidates working in ISD districts are totaled in the rightmost bar of each graph. A higher composite measure indicates a more severe overall teacher shortage (i.e., districts in quintile 5 represent those facing the worst teacher shortages, based on the composite calculation in the given school year). Counts in this graph include candidates who joined Talent Together pursuing an initial teaching certification and earned their certification by fall 2025.

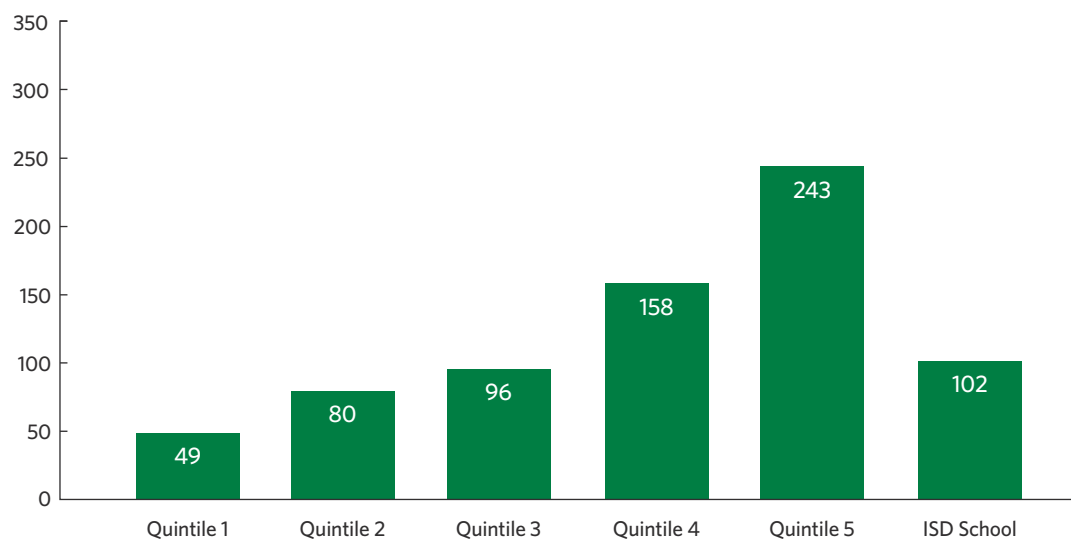
Sources: Talent Together program data, MERI data.

FIGURE 5.2. Initial Certification Talent Together Participants by Teacher Shortage Severity

Talent Together Initial Certification Candidates Working in Fall 2025, by 2024-25 Composite Shortage Measure



Talent Together Initial Certification Candidates Working in Fall 2025, Excluding Withdrawn



Note: The above figures show the number of Talent Together candidates who do not yet have their initial teaching certification (pathway includes “Initial Cert.” or “Certification Only” + no certification recognized by the state), organized by quintile of the 2024-25 district composite shortage metric. Candidates working in ISD districts are totaled in the rightmost bar of each graph. A higher composite measure indicates a more severe overall teacher shortage (i.e., districts in quintile 5 represent those facing the worst teacher shortages, based on the composite calculation in the given school year). Counts in this graph include candidates who joined Talent Together pursuing an initial teaching certification and earned their certification by fall 2025.

Sources: Talent Together program data, MERI data.

Figure 5.1 shows that 214 of the 330 educators using the program to obtain an additional endorsement work in one of the top two quintiles in terms of shortage severity. Put another way, 65% of Talent Together teachers obtaining an additional endorsement were employed in the 40% of districts with the greatest staffing needs. Patterns appear similar when excluding teachers who withdrew from the program, shown in the second panel of the figure. The second panel also shows that patterns of withdrawal appear to differ by district need. For example, Figure 5.1 shows that 32 of 111 participants (29%) in the highest-need quintile withdrew from the program, whereas 17 of the 103 participants (15%) in the next-highest-need quintile withdrew. This finding underscores the particular challenges of addressing teacher shortages in the highest need districts.

Whereas Figure 5.1 shows that two-thirds of existing teachers being supported to obtain additional endorsements are concentrated in the two highest-needs district quintiles, Figure 5.2 points to a less pronounced difference across quintiles on initial teaching certifications. Here, 55% of teachers receiving initial endorsements are located in one of the two highest-needs quintiles, and the number of teachers pursuing initial certification declines steadily from the highest- to lowest- need quintile.

Together, these findings suggest that Talent Together is preparing teachers in Michigan's highest-needs districts. However, the districts with the most pressing staffing challenges may be more inclined to stretch their existing human capital through add-on endorsements, whereas districts with fewer staffing challenges seem more inclined to leverage the program to train new teachers for their initial certifications.

65% of Talent Together teachers obtaining an additional endorsement were employed in the 40% of districts with the greatest staffing needs.

RQ6: What certifications and/or endorsements are candidates pursuing through Talent Together? To what extent are these certifications/endorsements aligned with local and/or statewide needs?

Talent Together aims to address teacher shortages by providing training, preparation, and certification for aspiring teachers in critical subject areas. To better understand the extent to which the program has made progress toward achieving this goal, we look at both the types of certifications that candidates are pursuing as well as whether those certifications are aligned with statewide needs. We also examine the status of Talent Together participants as of 2025 to understand how many candidates have graduated, withdrawn, or are currently active to illuminate how Talent Together is contributing to the supply of teachers.

Figure 6.1 shows the intended certification areas of Talent Together candidates. The most common type of credential pursued is Special Education (40.9%), followed by Elementary Education (35.7%), Secondary Science (7.6%), Secondary Math (7%), English as a Second Language (4.9%), unknown/undecided (3.9%), and Early Childhood Education (less than 1%). Of these, Special

Education, Secondary Science, and Secondary Math are among the certification areas in Michigan with the most pronounced shortages (Kilbride et al., 2026), while the severity of shortages for elementary teachers varies considerably. This means that more than half of Talent Together

candidates chose to pursue an endorsement that is well aligned with the state’s needs. At the same time, it will be important for Talent Together staff to work with candidates pursuing an elementary certification to ensure they are placed in districts experiencing a shortage in that area.

To understand the rate at which Talent Together candidates are completing their programs, we compare their status as of fall 2025 by endorsement area, shown in Table 6.1. If all candidates were progressing through their credentialing program at a similar rate, there would be limited variation across certification areas in the share of candidates who were still actively pursuing their intended credential, those who had withdrawn, and those who had completed their credential.

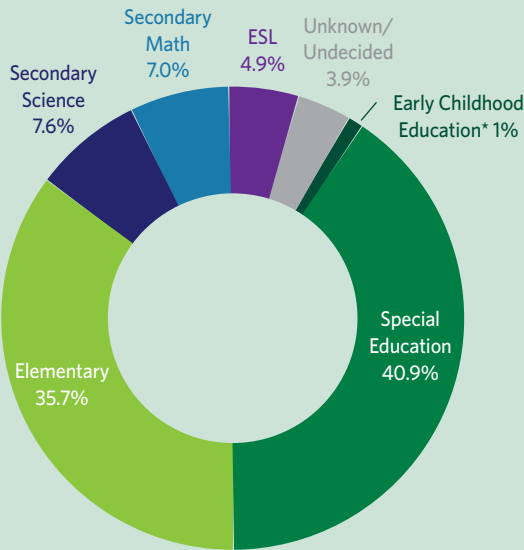
Several key patterns emerge from Table 6.1. First, those who chose to pursue a credential in English as a second language (ESL) have by far the highest completion rate, more than double that of any other credential type. Because one cannot earn an ESL endorsement unless they already have another teaching certification or are working on one, this higher rate is likely a product of the fact that many of those pursuing an ESL endorsement are already teachers and therefore may need less time to complete their program.

Second, candidates pursuing a credential in special education have a higher rate of being active and a lower rate of withdrawing from the program, and a slightly lower rate of completion as of fall 2025. This pattern may reflect differences in the certification process for special education endorsements compared with other certification areas. For instance, those pursuing a Special Education endorsement through an alternative route teacher preparation program may need to fulfill additional requirements before they are eligible for an interim teaching certificate, and individuals pursuing multiple Special Education endorsements (e.g. Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cognitive Impairments, etc.) may need to complete multiple student teaching internships. As a result, Talent Together candidates pursuing a Special Education teaching credential may need more time to complete their program.⁸

Third, candidates pursuing a credential in Elementary Education were slightly less likely to have withdrawn and slightly more likely to have completed their program.

Lastly, both Secondary Math and Secondary Science have higher rates of withdrawn candidates and lower rates of completion. Given the specialized content knowledge associated with these endorsements, these patterns may reflect additional challenges candidates encounter while pursuing certification.

Figure 6.1. Intended Credentials of Talent Together Candidates



Source: Talent Together program data.

Recent research shows that Michigan is experiencing shortages across a number of areas including Special Education, Secondary Science, and Secondary Math (Kilbride et al., 2026). Additionally, some geographic areas are also experiencing a shortage of elementary-certified teachers. Notably, the certification opportunities provided through Talent Together align with these areas of shortage, suggesting alignment with Michigan's teacher workforce needs.

TABLE 6.1. Intended Endorsement by Status

Certification Area	Active	Withdrawn	Completed	Total
SPED	63.8%	26.7%	9.4%	100%
Elementary	58.6%	30.1%	11.4%	100%
Secondary Science	56.3%	35.3%	8.4%	100%
Secondary Math	55.0%	35.8%	9.2%	100%
ESL	42.1%	32.9%	25.0%	100%
Unknown/ Undecided	0	100%	0	100%
Early Childhood Education*	100%	0%	0%	100%
Total by Status	57.3%	32.3%	10.4%	100%

Note: The analysis shown in this table includes each credential pursued by Talent Together candidates. Because candidates can pursue multiple credentials, the totals here may differ slightly from those shown in Figure 1.3 that analyzes status at the individual level.

** In this table participants pursuing an endorsement for Early Childhood Education are included only if they are also pursuing another K-12 certification. Participants who are pursuing only an Early Childhood Education endorsement are included later in this report within the section "Analyses of Early Childhood Pathways Through Talent Together."*

Source: Talent Together program data.

At the same time, these results reveal patterns that deserve attention in future research. First, while candidates pursuing an Elementary Education endorsement have thus far completed their program at a higher rate than candidates pursuing other endorsements, the fact that teacher shortages in this area vary considerably across the state means that Talent Together may need to work with both districts and candidates to ensure that its graduates take positions where they are needed most. Second, supports, funding, and expected timelines may need to be different for individuals pursuing a special education endorsement if candidates pursuing a Special Education credential do need additional time to earn one. Lastly, compared to Special Education and Elementary Education, comparatively fewer candidates choose to pursue a credential in Secondary Science and Secondary Math, and early analyses of those who do suggest these individuals may be less likely to complete their program. This suggests that grow-your-own programs like Talent Together may be better able to address some teacher shortages than others.

Analyses of Early Childhood Pathways Through Talent Together

Early childhood educators who work within public school districts and ISDs, often as part of [Great Start Readiness Programs](#) or within early childhood centers, play an important role in ensuring children are prepared for successful entry into elementary school. Early childhood education represents another high-need staffing area across the state (Schlegel, 2024), and Talent Together supports candidates who are working toward certifications to work in an early childhood setting. Because much of the early childhood workforce is employed outside of the state's public

schooling system, there is less data available to examine the early childhood teacher workforce overall. In this section, we analyze demographic characteristics and employment data of Talent Together participants to examine how this program is working to bolster this important sector of Michigan’s educator workforce.

Table EC.1 shows select demographic characteristics of Talent Together’s early childhood candidates, disaggregated by program status (those who have withdrawn and those who are either active or have completed their program). This shows that over 85% of Talent Together’s early childhood candidates are women, and about a quarter of candidates are people of color. In these respects, candidates are demographically very similar to the early childcare workforce in Michigan (Schlegel, 2024). The share of candidates who are people of color is higher among those who have withdrawn relative to those who are either still active or have completed their respective program, which suggests candidates of color are slightly more likely to withdraw from the program prior to completion.

TABLE EC.1. Demographic Characteristics of All Early Childhood Candidates		
	n	
Active or Graduated	100	60.2% of all candidates
% Female	*	>85%
% People of Color	24	24%
% Certified Teacher	*	<15%
Withdrawn	66	39.8% of all candidates
% Female	*	>85%
% People of Color	19	28.8%
% Certified Teacher	*	<20%

*Note: Counts are suppressed to protect candidate anonymity.

Sources: Talent Together program data, MERI data

Notably, the rate of program withdrawal across all early childhood candidates is higher than that of K-12 teacher candidates (see earlier in this report for a discussion of Talent Together’s K-12 teacher candidates). Nearly 40% of early childhood candidates withdraw from the program prior to completion, more than 10 percentage points higher than the rate of withdrawal in the K-12 pathway (see Figure 1.3). Future analyses may examine why early childhood candidates exit the program at higher rates than their K-12 peers.

Also highlighted in Table EC.1 is that across all candidates, and regardless of program status, very few of Talent Together’s early childhood candidates already have a teacher certification. This means Talent Together is expanding the early childhood teacher workforce.

Table EC.2 presents statistics on the endorsements Talent Together’s early childhood candidates are pursuing, broken out by status (withdrawn candidates versus those who are active or have completed their program). This shows that the majority of early childhood candidates

in Talent Together are pursuing an Early Childhood Education teaching endorsement, the only endorsement area that covers teaching children as young as infants. Most others are seeking an endorsement for the PK-3 grade bands. Candidates seeking Early Childhood Education certification have a disproportionately high program withdrawal rate compared to the other endorsement pathways, suggesting they may face additional challenges.

TABLE EC.2. Teaching Endorsements Sought by Early Childhood Candidates		
Endorsement Area	Active or Graduated	Withdrawn
Lower Elementary (PK-3)	31 (31%)	11 (16.7%)
Early Childhood Education	53 (53%)	41 (62.1%)
Other*	16 (16%)	14 (21.2%)
TOTAL	100	66

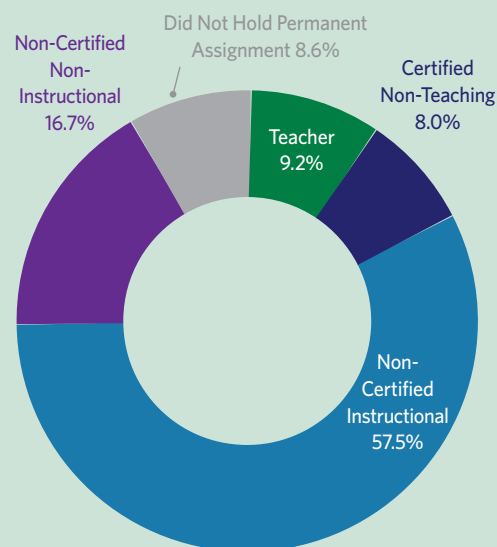
*Note: Includes Special Education, ESL, and Unknown certification areas, which cannot be shown individually due to low counts in each category.

Source: Talent Together program data.

Figure EC.1 aggregates early childhood candidates in cohorts 1-3 to display the type of employment held, if any, the year before they joined Talent Together. As mentioned above and shown in Table EC.1, over 90% of early childhood candidates do not yet hold a teaching certification. Employment records indicate that about three-quarters of early childhood candidates were working as non-certified instructional employees (mostly paraprofessionals) or in non-certified non-instructional roles (including roles in child care). Those who worked in certified non-teaching roles include, for example, associate teachers who may not yet have initial teacher certification. The few candidates who were working in teaching assignments prior to joining Talent Together may be seeking an additional endorsement or may include candidates filling teaching roles regardless of certification held.

Overall, while early childhood program withdrawal rates have been relatively high among the first three cohorts, Talent Together's early childhood pathway is increasing the number of certified teachers who work in early childhood settings.

FIGURE EC.1. Early Childhood Candidates' Roles Prior to Joining Talent Together



Source: Talent Together program data, MERI data.

ENDNOTES

1. Here, a teacher of record refers to someone who is the primary provider of instruction in a classroom.
2. These funds were appropriated from the 2023 fiscal year, but this appropriation was made with supplemental funding from that fiscal year which was included in the FY2024 budget that passed in late July of 2023.
3. For example, we label a candidate as pursuing a Special Education endorsement if they are pursuing any type of special education endorsement such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cognitive Impairment, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Emotional Impairment, or any other endorsement within the area of special education
4. Preliminary analyses showed that a number of apprentices are coded by their districts as being student teachers or substitute teachers that often have an FTE value that is 0 or missing. Excepting apprentices from the zero or missing FTE restriction allows us to retain a larger share of Talent Together candidates in our analyses.
5. These categorizations are based only on their job assignment. In a scenario in which an individual held a teaching certification but worked as a secretary, they would be classified as non-certified non-instructional staff as that best captures their duties at that time.
6. Kilbride et al. (2023) coded courses as 100-level (freshman), 200-level (sophomore), 300-level (junior), and 400-level (senior), and separately identified course codes associated with a student teaching internship. Notably, the authors were not able to identify the intended major of students included in the study.
7. Composite shortage metrics were calculated following the procedures outlined in Kilbride et al., 2026 to estimate the extent of teacher shortages across geographic districts.
8. See https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/specialeducation/approvals/BecomingSpecialEducationTeacher_Michigan.pdf?rev=96028cb71bce4c538aba874a8264901c for additional information on requirements for becoming a special educator in Michigan.

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