

Motivations, Perceptions, and Aspirations concerning Teaching as a Career for High School Students from Racially/Ethnically Diverse Backgrounds

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Abstract : This study explores the factors that motivate urban high school students from racially/ethnically diverse backgrounds to choose teaching as a future career. It draws on in-depth interviews with high school students of color living in an urban downtown located in an intermountain area in the U.S. Using the factors influencing teaching choice (FIT-Choice) model, this study examines the motivations, mobility experiences, and aspirations of participating high school students who self-identified as Latino/a, Tongan, and Chinese. The study identifies influential factors -both challenges and strengthening effects- that high school students of color experience in their career decision making. The study concludes that self-perceptions of teaching abilities, parental support, social connections, job security, and prior work with children during the internship in K-12 classroom motivated them to be a teacher. Limitations such as financial struggles of parents, the low social status of teaching career, and the low salary and benefit packages in the U.S. are among the factors that cause students to waver in or doubt their career choice.

Keywords : career development, diversifying teaching force, FIT-Choice, high school students of color

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