Hello, I'm Susan Providence, a current math specialist and former 3rd grade teacher at Battle Creek Elementary School. Currently, in our city, state, and country many of our teachers look different than the students they are teaching. Similar to racial and ethnic achievement gaps, the lack of teacher diversity is a problem across all schools and districts. As a teacher of color, one of the avenues the district works tirelessly on is making sure that books purchased reflect the students in our classrooms since research has shown that when students are able to make connections to what they are reading, they are more engaged in the learning and academic improves. This tends to be the main reason why representation is significant within the classroom. Additionally, it's also just as important that the teachers who are standing before our students reflect those students within our classroom.

Racial representation matters in the classroom. Current research concerning race and education has made a clear and evidence-based argument as to why a teacher's racial identity is not only essential for student success but, also includes: education policy, and teacher effectiveness, and is a necessary tool to help close the racial and ethnic achievement gap. Throughout the country, no matter how success is measured, students benefit from having instructors who look like them. We need to maintain pathways to tiered licensure, and not poke holes in it. We need to increase the diversity our teachers, and we need to allow access into the profession. The removal of the pathway of 3 years of experience to move from a tier 2 to teacher tier 3 is wrong. The removal of this pathway would primarily affect teachers of color, and marginalized communities that are desperately needed in our schools. Teachers of color are invaluable to our students, we must remove barriers, not create them. Thank you.