RUTGERS
Graduate School of Education

Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education

Teacher Leaders of Color
Diversifying the Teaching Profession Project
2021-2022

X Public Schools
Findings Report and Recommendations

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Executive Summary

In an effort to increase the number of Teachers of Color (TOC) in New Jersey schools, X Public Schools was selected as a partner district alongside Rutgers Graduate School of Education to implement the Diversifying Teachers Project (DTP), a state funded initiative. The purpose of DTP was to document effective programs, strategies, and resources to increase the placement, support, and retention of TOC.

In order to support X in this endeavor ----- were designated as Teacher Leaders of Color (TLOC) to conduct an organizational scan and provide findings and recommendations across the following key themes:

- Recruitment
- Hiring
- Retention

As outlined in the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan of X, this effort coincides with priority two, human capital. This priority includes but is not limited to increasing the number of culturally competent applicants and increasing the retention of high performing staff. The recruitment and support of TOC who reflect and represent the diversity within our student population is a critical component in achieving our mission of creating a nurturing environment that allows students to attain their ultimate potential.

This report highlights important recommendations from the TLOC, including:

- Consistently gather and analyze data with respect to recruiting, hiring, and retaining TOCs.
- Create incentives to increase hiring of TOC.
- Develop interviewing policies and practices that center cultural relevance.
- Provide professional experiences that value the voices of TOC and develop an inclusive environment.

Section 1: District Environmental Scan

A critical step in the findings process is identifying appropriate methods for collecting data. When determining a data collection methodology to employ it is imperative that the technique chosen provides data that accurately identifies the improvement needed in specific areas. For the purposes of this report, the methods used to collect data include the following:

- NJ School Performance Demographic Report
- Meeting with X Public Schools Human Resources department
- TOC survey

A. Organizational Scan of Existing Data

The disparities in racial demographics of X staff and students align with national and state trends. Specifically, X has a teaching workforce that is 61.6% white despite white students representing *less than one percent* of the school population. The racial disparities are less stark for administrators, though the differences are still noteworthy.

Category	Students in District	Teachers in District	Administrators in District	Students in State	Teachers in State	Administrators in State
Female	49.0%	79.0%	50-60%	49.0%	77.0%	56.0%
Male	51.0%	21.0%	40-50%	51.0%	23.0%	44.0%
Non-Binary/Undesignated Gender	≤1%	≤1%	≤10%	≤1%	≤1%	≤1%
White	0.6%	61.6%	46.6%	40.5%	82.9%	76.8%
Hispanic	91.5%	21.5%	27.6%	31.2%	7.8%	7.6%
Black or African American	7.0%	11.6%	25.9%	15.0%	6.5%	14.0%
Asian	0.4%	4.7%	0.0%	10.4%	2.2%	1.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Two or More Races	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	2.6%	0.2%	0.2%

Figure 1: X School District Student/Faculty Demographics (2020-21 SY)

B. Gathering Additional Data

Initial information was gathered from the Director of Human Resources, who provided the demographic information of the staff and student body. We then proceeded to conduct a survey of 66 teachers of color to share their personal experiences with the recruitment, hiring, and mentoring structures in place at X, as well as to understand the experiences Teachers of Color have in the workplace. We also conducted interviews with building

administrators to better understand the hiring practices that exist throughout the district. Through extensive review of state and national reports, we endeavored to compare and contrast our district's practices with other districts and began to look for best practices that could be implemented throughout X to address the diversity of the teaching staff.

C. District Environmental Scan Recommendations

- Analyze district needs (see page 22):
- Conduct, "District Demographic Diversity Profile" (see page 31)
- Implement, "Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Voluntary Data Sheets" to begin mapping X hiring process (see page 32)
- Utilize, "Data Inquiry Tool" to analyze and discuss data collection (see pages 34-35)

Section 2: Key Themes

Key Theme 1: Recruitment

Given the diversity of student backgrounds in most schools, high-quality teaching should focus on the competence to teach diverse student populations (Solis, 2004). Consequently, the recruitment and hiring of Teachers of Color should reflect and represent the diversity within our student population. An effective recruitment plan must attract and select candidates that embody the vision and goals of the district as well as those who possess the cultural capital that can generate long-lasting effects on student achievement and teacher retention. Currently, there is no relevant data that shows how Teachers of Color are recruited to X Schools. Furthermore, the Recruitment & Hiring system in place provides limited details on applicant demographics so there is no current process in place to track when an applicant of color applies for a position, if they are interviewed, and if they are hired via Applitrack (X Human Resources Department).

Recruitment Findings

- According to the State of New Jersey Department of Education (2021), students of color make up 99% of X student population while 38.1% of the workforce are TOC.
- Based on the anonymous survey, Figure 3 shows results for how current TOC discovered their positions. Interestingly, word of mouth and the district website were the most common ways in which TOC discovered new positions.

Figure 3: Survey Results on Recruiting

- The Human Resources Department attends and hosts job fairs for potential candidates (postings are placed on School Jobs, Twitter, LinkedIn, and K12JobSpots).

- Current staff are networking and leveraging their own contacts to attract prospective teachers.

- The Human Resources department is knowledgeable about their roles and the roles of others within their department.

- Many recruitment policies and procedures are designed to comply with New Jersey Department of Education guidelines, policies, and regulations.

Recruitment Recommendations

- Conduct, "Recruitment, Hiring, and Selection Self-Assessment" (see pages 36-39).
- Continue to collect and monitor the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity data of teachers and leaders by district and by school (NJ School Performance Report).
- Offer incentives to attract racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse candidates to seek employment at X (e.g., stipends for referrals, pay increases, and housing assistance).
- Continue to implement initiatives and programs aimed at attracting racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students and paraeducators to pursue careers in education such as the X High School Teaching Career Path initiative.
- Develop job descriptions that attract racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse candidates by incorporating the need to demonstrate understanding of culturally responsive pedagogy as a required qualification.
- Attend events explicitly recruiting TOC through CJPride, HBCUs, or Hispanic Serving Institutions. Continue to partner with colleges & universities to meet with future TOC to provide mock interviews, answer FAQs, give tips/best practices for interviewing and what to expect during their first year of teaching and beyond.

Key Theme 2: Hiring

Districts that establish and sustain a culturally responsive hiring initiative attending to issues of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other demographic characteristics can have a positive impact on teachers' social group membership. Increasing the diversity of teachers in X can be an effective way to boost student engagement and improve academic performance among students. Research has found that students tend to perform better academically if they are exposed to teachers who look like them (Gershenson et al., 2021). Students possess a firmer grasp of their cultural identity and social-emotional knowledge when their culture or a part of their identity is represented in the teaching staff. Professor Tom Dee stated, *"When minority students see someone at the blackboard that looks like you, it helps you reconceive what's possible"* (as quoted in Samuel, 2020). In a school that has a high percentage of non-native English-speaking students, it would be beneficial to hire someone who is bilingual in Spanish as compared to hiring a person who is monolingual. This example

benefits not only the students, but the parents too as those who speak a language other than English may avoid school functions (i.e., Back to School Night, Parent Conferences, Individual Education Planning (IEP) meetings).

Data collection during the hiring process can be tracked from beginning to end to understanding how inclusive and successful the hiring process is for TOCs. Collecting and analyzing the data can inform the district on the processes of hiring teachers of color and possible reasons why teachers were not hired. The analysis can be used to improve hiring practices and policies. Currently, there is no data collected and analyzed to determine the number of teachers of color that are already in classrooms. According to The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) (2021), employers with over 100 employees are required to collect data on the diversity of the workforce. Companies use the government form of the EEO-1 to collect data for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. According to SHRM (2021), tracking of such data of race and gender can help create a more diverse workforce. When tracking demographic data, Human Resource can periodically review its recruitment strategies and hiring decisions to make adjustments that may result in increasing a pool of applicants that represent teachers of color.

Hiring Findings

- X hired a Recruitment and Retention Human Resources Specialist to assist the school district in enhancing performance and efficiency in employee recruitment and retention.
- X does not yet collect candidate data throughout the application process to understand what happens to applicants, specifically TOC, over the course of the hiring cycle.
- Interview processes and procedures vary throughout X based on building administrators.

Hiring Recommendations

- Utilize resume and interview procedures, checklists, and/or protocols that assess cultural responsiveness, promote an equity mindset, and attract racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse candidates (see page 39).
- Prepare staff to engage in culturally responsive recruitment, selection, and hiring practices for all hires (see page 39).

- Collect candidate data throughout the application process to understand what happens to applicants, specifically TOC, over the course of the hiring cycle.

Key Theme 3: Retention

"Teacher induction and mentoring programs are increasingly promoted as an effective mechanism for improving new teacher quality, new teacher retention, and student outcomes" (Caven et al., 2021). Through mentorship, teachers develop a sense of belonging, opportunities for inquiry, reflection, and professional growth. However, a mentoring program that is intentional about meeting the needs of its TOCs can create a culture where TOCs can be themselves in a way that improves the school environment. As a result, TOCs will stay within the profession and reduce the district costs of replacing teachers, which depletes resources that are needed elsewhere.

In the words of bell hooks (2014), "One of the most vital ways we sustain ourselves is by building communities of resistance, places where we know we are not alone" (p. 227). One of the best ways to retain Teachers of Color is to design spaces for their voices to be heard and their talents to be acknowledged, valued, and appreciated. Such spaces can be curated in the form of district-wide and school-wide affinity groups where teachers who share common experiences can gather with the intention of finding connection, support, and inspiration across the district or within schools. Furthermore, the implementation of critical professional development (CPD) would mitigate feelings of isolation, frustration, and fatigue that contribute to Teachers of Color leaving the profession (Carver-Thomas, 2018). CPD spaces for teachers are places of professional learning that are designed to engage educators in dialogue, build solidarity, and provide shared leadership (Kohli, 2021).

Retention Findings

- Based on the number of resignations from this SY 2021-2022 alone, 38% were teachers of color (X Human Resources Department).
- Based on the survey, 66% of Teachers of Color either somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the fact that they have a voice in determining the content of in-service professional development programs at their school. In addition, 82.3% of Teachers of Color believe that staff training around diversity, unconscious bias, equity, and inclusion are necessary to help support their teaching and professional growth.

- Mentoring policies and procedures are designed to comply with New Jersey Department of Education policies and regulations (*Mentoring Policies and Procedures*).

Retention Recommendations

- Develop a system to accurately monitor teacher retention at the teacher, school, and district level as a means to identify contributing factors (see pages 21- 22).

- Create district-wide and school-wide affinity groups where teachers who share common identities can gather with the intention of finding connection, support, and inspiration because receiving support from other teachers of color can support retention (Caven et al., 2021). Therefore, anyone who advocates for the importance and need to recruit and retain Teachers of Colors, regardless of race, can play a contributing role in the process.

- Intentionally pair new teachers with a mentor of the same race/ethnicity or gender to support professional growth considering relational and identity-related experiences.

- Sponsor district events (e.g., tailgates, socials, fairs, celebrations/recognition for staff members once they receive tenure, Teacher of the Decade) that boost staff morale, school pride, and relationships amongst staff and administration.

- Provide opportunities for inclusive decision making on professional development such as culturally relevant pedagogy, restorative practices, and social justice issues.

- Develop an improved mentoring program that incorporates the following:
  – Outlines mentor standards related to diversity (see page 12) and provides opportunities for mentors to engage in professional development related to these standards as a means to improving their mentoring practices.
  – Lengthening the current mentoring program from one year to a four-year cohort-model induction program. The purpose is to allow for a gradual approach to the mentoring and induction process to increase the retention of teachers of color, save cost of replacing teachers, and increase achievement for students of color. Over the four years teachers and mentors would engage in a series of conversations, individually and as a cohort, regarding various topics, such as differentiated instruction, classroom management, cultural competency, and work-life balance.

- Annual data collection from both the mentors and mentees to drive decision-making.
- Incorporate at least three to five collegial classroom visits and complete reflections on these experiences. Each observation must be observed and reported within a specific time frame/cycle.

Section 3: Conclusion and Next Steps

Moving forward, utilizing the assistance and support of the Teacher Leaders of Color, X Public Schools will engage in a comprehensive review of each recommendation. This process will identify X Public Schools priorities and develop an action plan that supports the successful creation and implementation of the recommendations put forth in this report.

The TLOC will work with X Public Schools to define the goals for the district and clearly outline the action steps needed. As mentioned previously, X Public Schools leadership has demonstrated a readiness for change and a desire to strengthen the synergy between staff, stakeholders, and the community. Aligning X Public Schools with the recommendations in this report will ensure sustained success for the future of X Public Schools. By focusing on the recruitment, hiring, and retention of Teachers of Colors, X Public Schools will create a more diverse and equitable workforce that steadily improves the social-emotional and academic development of X Public Schools students.

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