



**RUTGERS**

Graduate School of Education

*Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education*

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

## **X Township Public Schools Findings Report and Recommendations**

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## Executive Summary

The mission of the X School District, in partnership with the community, is to create, inspire and empower our students to meet challenges and achieve success. The aim of this project is aligned with the district and specifically the Strategic Planning Committee which seeks to provide outstanding education for all our students.

In order to support X in these endeavors, through NJDOE grant funding with Rutgers Graduate School of Education and X TLOC began the process of assessing the current status of key aspects of X's functions regarding retention and recruitment of teachers of color and creating a more diverse workforce. The assessment process of X's retention and recruitment policies and procedures thus far consists of 4 key areas:

- Recruitment
- Hiring
- Induction
- Retention

The reimagining of schools has been a topic of conversation over the last century, but little has been done to truly change the educational landscape for students of color. For people of color to be whole in a system fraught with injustices, there must be active and intentional steps taken to revamp the educational system. The first step toward achieving this goal is to increase the presence of diverse, highly qualified, and justice-oriented teachers of color. A report by the Learning Policy Institute revealed that when taught by teachers of color, all students have better academic performance, improved graduation rates, and are more likely to go to college (Carver-Thomas, D. 2018). Unfortunately, the data indicates that districts are experiencing a decline in teachers of color nationwide. As of 2017, approximately 17% of the certified staff population in New Jersey were teachers of color, while the student population in New Jersey consisted of 56% students of other races including Black, Latinx, Asian, Native American, or Hawaiian Native (Weber, 2019).

In comparison, X's student population is made up of 84% Non-white students and 12% Non-white teachers. This equates to a 72% disparity gap between the nonwhite student population and the nonwhite teacher population. This disparity in representation means that students of color are not seeing themselves in the teaching staff which statistically has negative implications in their school experiences. For example, in New Jersey, Black students are 5.4 times more likely to be suspended compared to their white counterparts (Groeger, 2018). As Carver-Thomas states "a variety of programs, policies, and practices hold promise in helping to bolster the pipeline of teachers of color recruited and retained in teaching. (Carver-Thomas, 2018). There needs to be an intentional commitment within our district to increase teacher diversity and retention through strong mentorship to overcome barriers, cultural competency training, and investment in our Grow Your Own Programs.

**Our mission statement:** Our group will establish the importance of this project through data and research. We will present this initiative outlining the benefits of recruiting and retaining more teachers of color and how this will make a positive impact on the community, staff, and all students. We will be mindful of all perspectives, time, and space by establishing and following group norms.

### **Who are you looking to help?**

Our goal is to help the district become more culturally responsive and inclusive. We hope to balance out the education staff so that it reflects the student population, which will have the intended result of benefiting all our current students and education staff.

### **What impact do you want to achieve?**

It is our hope to increase the diversity within X's teaching staff. We want to identify ways to better the experience of teachers of color to have an increased retention rate.

This Findings and Recommendations Report highlights the data-informed conclusions of five previously identified Teacher Leaders of Color, representing X Township Schools. This Findings and Recommendation Report is comprised of the following sections:

- **Section 1** - District Wide Environmental Scan Data
- **Section 2** - Key Themes 1 - 5  
Each key theme centers around a critical component or focus area of Recruitment and Retention of Teachers of Color (TOC).
  - a. Key Themes Data - data that was available on the key theme.
    - i. Relevant data- defined as any specific information that is quantitatively or qualitatively collected by the district
    - ii. Relevant Policy - defined as any specific information that quantitatively or qualitatively reflects the efficacy of the policy.
    - iii. Strengths- defined as data that was discovered during the assessment phase that supports the potential utility of the data collected by the district
    - iv. Challenges- omissions or challenges in the data that leave gaps in analyzing policy or practice.
    - v. Recommendations- Detailed recommendations for new or improved data tools and policies or procedures in this focus area.

- **Section 3 - Key Theme 6**

Key Theme 6 outlines elements that emerged from the data collection and analysis that relate to the workplace culture for Teachers of Color (TOC) in the district.

a. Significant Elements - Elements that were significant in the systems analysis and environmental scan are addressed here.

- i. Relevant data- defined as any specific information that quantitatively or qualitatively reflects the element.
- ii. Strengths- defined as data that was discovered during the assessment phase that supports the potential achievement of success in a given element
- iii. Challenges- defined as data that was discovered during the assessment phase that could be a barrier to the potential achievement of success in a given element
- iv. Recommendations- Detailed recommendations for new or improved data management, policies, or procedures for this element.

- **Section 4 - Summary of Recommendations**

- **Section 5 - Conclusion and Next Steps**

- Appendix
- References



## **Section 1: District Wide Environmental Scan**

A critical step in the assessment process is identifying appropriate methods for collecting data. The most important aspect in choosing a method is ensuring that these methods will provide information and data needed to determine the extent of strengths, challenges, and areas of improvement needed in a specific area(s). For the purposes of this Findings Report, here are the methods used to collect data with a brief description of the process:

### **Stakeholder Analysis**

As a team we identified current stakeholders in our district, their current engagement, our desired engagement, and their motivation for diversifying the teaching profession. Within this analysis, the targeted stakeholders include the Central Office staff, building-based administrators, as well as the teaching staff at each school. For each identified stakeholder, it is our intention to increase the level of engagement while prioritizing the recruitment and hiring processes. The desired engagement was rated on a scale of +3, being the highest, to -3, being the lowest level of engagement. It is imperative to impart change that will help close the diversity gap between our student and teaching population. We are hoping that an increase in engagement with our stakeholders will impact change within the recruitment and hiring processes.

### **Stakeholder: Central Office**

Desired Engagement: +3

Motivation:

- Better representation of the student population.
- Close the achievement gap/ increase the graduation rate.
- Interrupt systemic problems within the district to create a better culture for staff and students.

What Can Be Done:

- Address concerns directly.
- Break down stereotypical views and implicit biases through district wide efforts.
- Begin tracking hiring and retention data.
- Create relationships with varied colleges/universities for a more diverse hiring pool.
- Create incentives/programs to retain teachers of color such as racial affinity groups.

**Stakeholder: Building Administration**

Desired Engagement: +3

Examples of Involvement:

- TOC can serve as mentors within the district and offer unique perspectives.
- Close achievement gap
- Promote a stronger teaching force and encourage representation within the teaching staff.

What Can Be Done:

- Have uncomfortable conversations
- Address specific building concerns directly
- Form culturally relevant support groups

**Stakeholder: Teachers**

Desired Engagement: +3

Motivation:

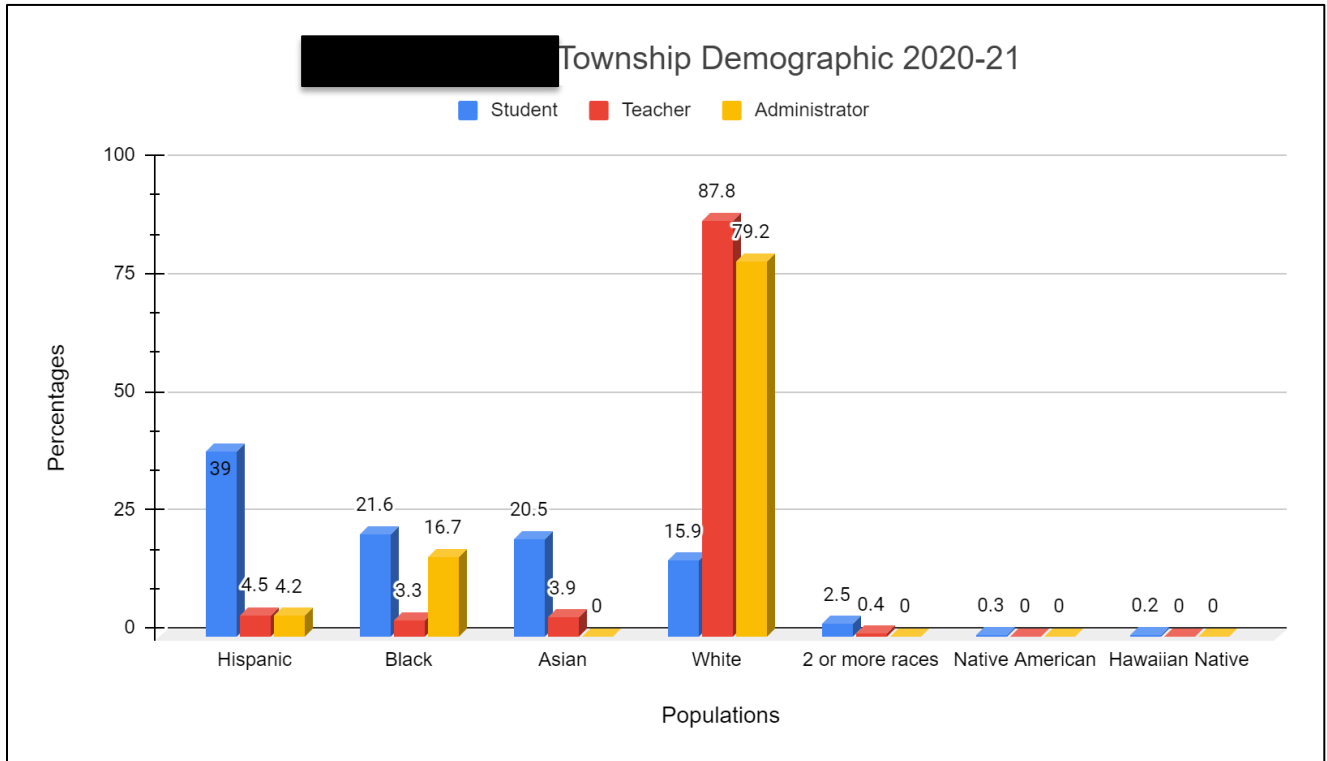
- TOC serve as mentors within the district and offer unique perspectives
- Close achievement gap
- Representation of the student body
- Stronger teaching force

What Can Be Done:

- Have uncomfortable conversations
- Create more student-driven programming to nurture future teachers
- Culturally relevant support groups

### Organizational Scan of Existing Data

This graph represents the demographics of students, teachers, and administrators in our district. The data clearly shows there is a disparity between the students of color and teachers of color. This disparity must be addressed to meet the needs of our students of color.

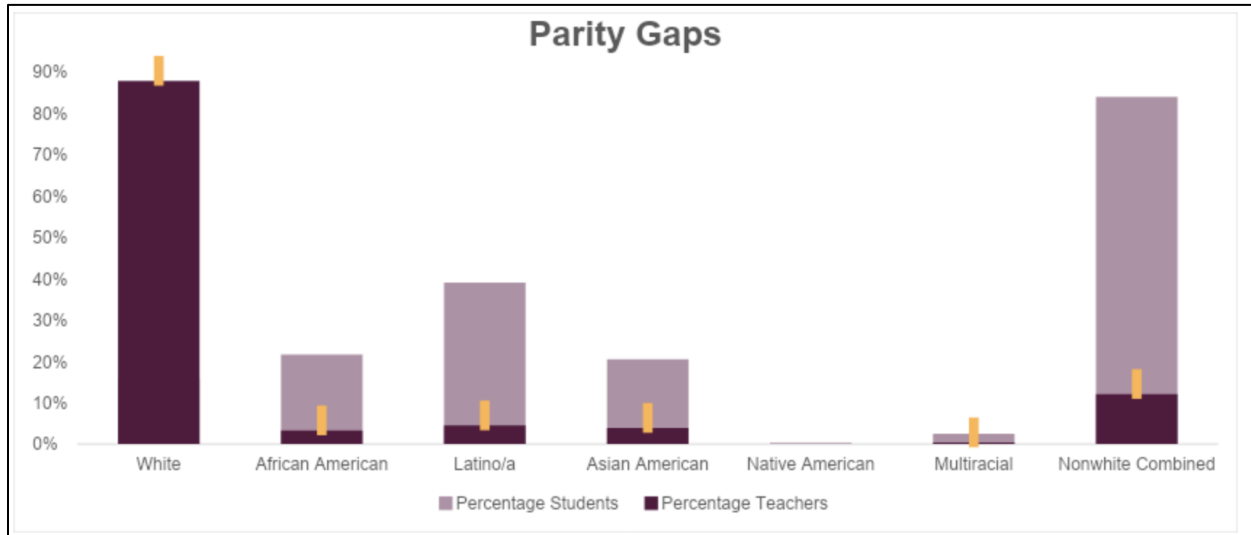


### Data Table

Populations	Hispanic	Black	Asian	White	2 or more races	Native American	Hawaiian Native
<b>Student</b>	39	21.6	20.5	15.9	2.5	0.3	0.2
<b>Teacher</b>	4.5	3.3	3.9	87.8	0.4	0	0
<b>Administrator</b>	4.2	16.7	0	79.2	0	0	0



This chart shows the disparity between the demographics of students of color and teachers of color.

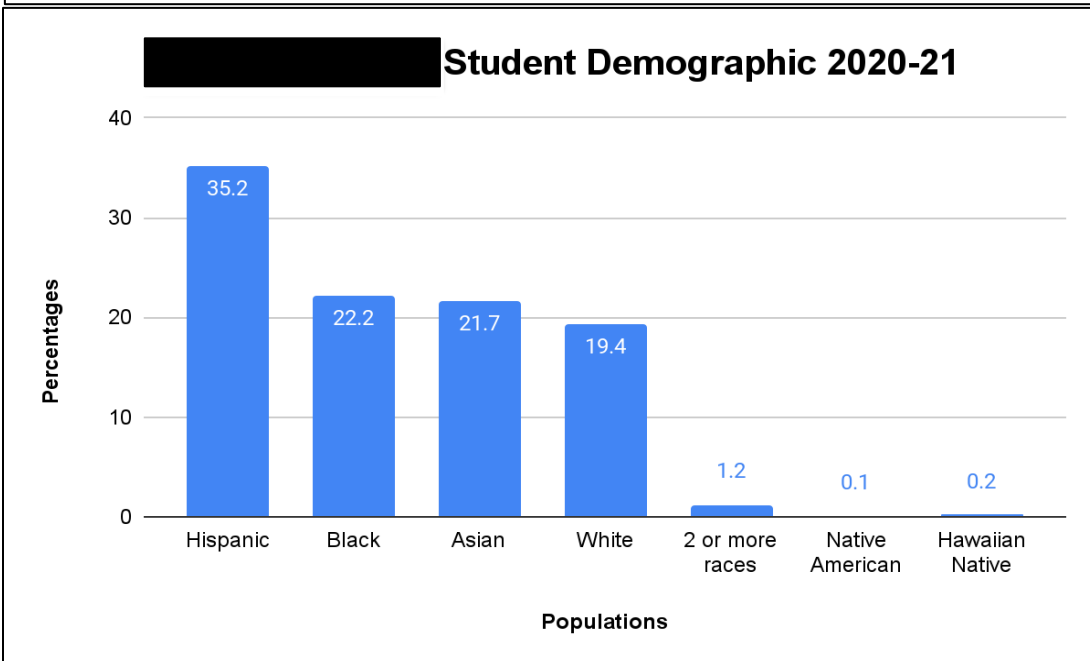
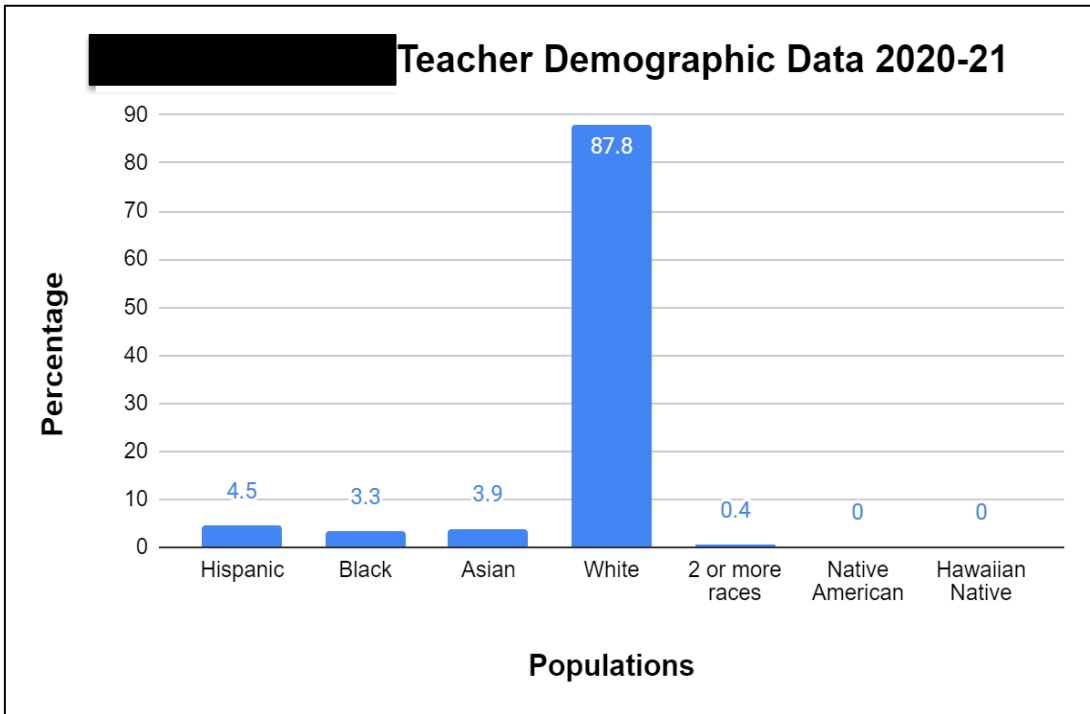


## Section 2: Key Themes in Recruitment and Retention of Teachers of Color

After completion of the collection of data from each assessment method described in Section One, the Teacher Leaders of Color from X compiled, reviewed, and analyzed the data and noted several key theme areas that arose from the data. In this section, the Teacher Leaders of Color from X have highlighted those key themes and provided relevant data captured, strengths, and challenges.

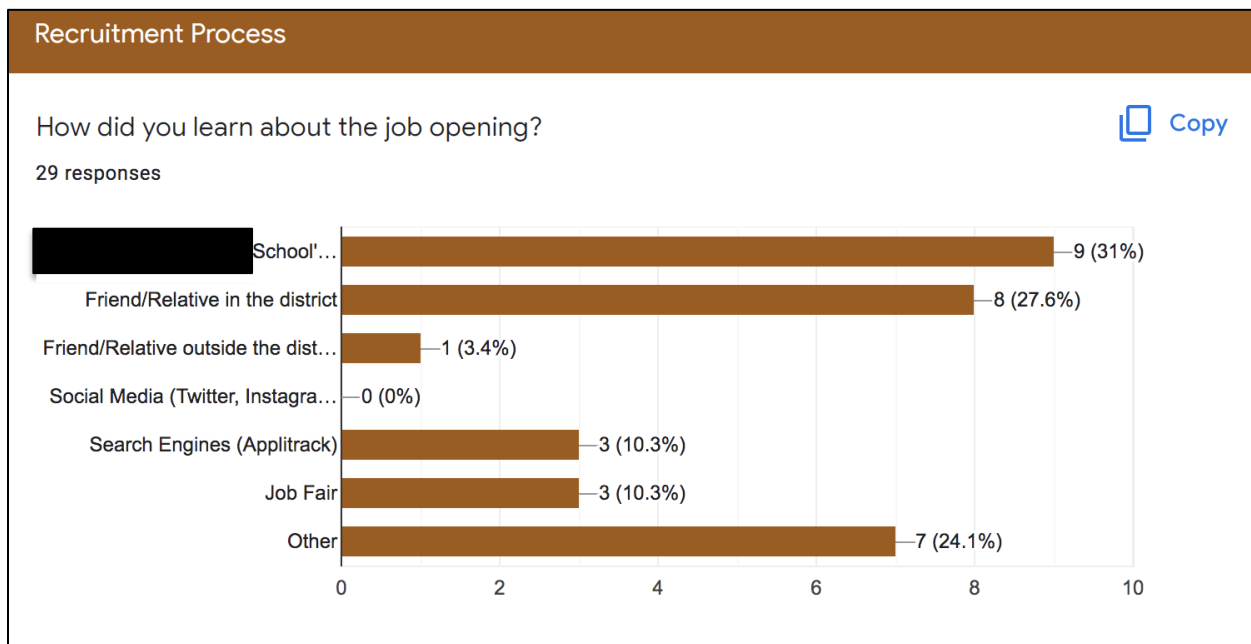
### Key Theme 1: Recruitment

As shown below, the bar graph shows an overwhelming disparity between teachers of color and white teachers. We paired this bar graph with data representing the student demographics within our district. Through the efforts of the initiative, we would like to increase the diversity within our teaching staff to closely resemble our student body.



## Findings

All Teachers of Color (TOC) in X were invited to participate in an anonymous survey. The graph below shows the results for how current TOC discovered their positions. The district website, and information from a friend or relative in the district were the most common ways in which TOC discovered new positions.



## Recommendations

We recommend creating a formal position for a Recruitment and Retention specialist. Their responsibilities would include but are not limited to attending recruitment fairs and building relationships with universities and prospective candidates of color. This role could also encompass retention efforts in the form of a more structured follow-through on our current mentoring program. See example posting from another district. This position will foster an intentional formal and consistent data tracking system.

- [Recruitment and Retention Specialist Position](#)
- The recruitment committee would also attend job fairs and provide feedback on the data tracking and trends.
- Continue to collect and monitor the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity data of teachers and leaders by district and by school.

- Developing a X promotional video that reflects our community (including a highlight of the diversity and district employees. Specifically, those who are Alumni of X Schools)
- Utilize Central Jersey Pride to increase the recruitment of TOC. This program boosts teacher hires and will increase our candidate pool. This can increase retention by reducing isolation among teachers of color.
- Create relationships with other universities (Kean, Rutgers, William Paterson, TCNJ). Look into their organizations for candidates of color.
- Career fairs have not been fully utilized so there is a lack of data and accountability to support their effectiveness.
- There is a lack of teachers of color in the hiring pool and thus a lack of TOC being hired across the district.
- While some teachers of color are being hired, the numbers are disproportionate to the number of white teachers being hired.
- We believe our district is not making this a priority. Educators within our district should be invited to attend the recruitment fairs to provide a personal testimony for our district.

#### **Cost of Not Changing**

- Our district stays stagnant in terms of our staff not representing our study body. Lack of diverse educators.
- Retention rates for teachers of color may be negatively impacted.
- Low morale/teaching in isolation.
- Limits the progression of creating a culturally competent staff that truly reflects the community and student body.

#### **Costs of Changing**

- This will cost time, money, and coverage to attend the career fairs, record data, and foster relationships with other universities.
- This will require a financial investment and intentional budgeting for this position.

### Recruitment Policies and Procedures

- There are a variety of career fairs available for administrators to take part in when looking to recruit applicants. Currently, there are virtual and in-person career fairs available. We can utilize our partnerships with Rutgers University, Central Jersey PRIDE, TCNJ, and Rider University. We can also leverage connections with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's).
- Many candidates use the Applitrack website which allows administrators to view the applications for many open positions. Through our data collection and interviews with administrators, we learned that principals are the first point of contact in the screening process.
- We need more information on what that first screening looks like within our district.

### Strengths

- Some administrators are aware of resources available for recruitment such as colleges and job fairs. One career fair that has been used in the past is CJ Pride (Central Jersey Program for Recruitment of Diverse Educators) which holds a career fair once a year and is sponsored by approximately 62 school districts.

### Challenges

We are not adequately utilizing a variety of available resources for recruiting teachers of color. We have partnerships with universities and administrators have a connection to CJ Pride. There is currently no data being collected on the number of candidate recruitments from these job fairs or how many candidates of color get hired for an open position. Additionally, we have a program at the high school called Tomorrow's Teacher, which has the potential to be a Grow Your Own, but it is being underutilized and lacks follow-through with the graduates.

### Recruitment Recommendations

- The first step would be to hire an Equity and Diversity Director. When a district has explicit leadership to champion equity and diversity, the initiative will come from a positional authority and have the follow-through needed to build momentum and long-term success.
- Grow Your Own Programs: using our homegrown programs (Tomorrow's Teacher) and specifically recruiting students of color from student organizations such as the Black Alliance, Latin American club etc.). A report from the National Education Policy Center states that "a distinct feature of GYO programs, at least during the first two decades of the 21st century, has been the explicit commitment to recruit from the local school community". (Gist, C. D, 2022)
  - Gist states that in order for Grow Your Own programs to advance justice and equity in teacher preparation there needs to be "commitment and ability of these programs to be

guided by equity and justice values that not only shift their structures and practices related to selection, recruitment, and preparation, but also the power dynamics between institutions of higher education and communities”. (Gist, C. D, 2022)

- We are looking to strengthen our relationship with partnering universities within their prospective educators of color.
- We recommend that the Central Office and building administrators collect recruitment data for our district and standardize the screening process to ensure equity and inclusion of diverse candidates.
- Relationships and Recruitment from MSI/HBCUs, Rutgers (Urban Teaching Fellows), Tomorrow’s Teacher in conjunction with Black Cultural Alliance.
- Attend more hiring fairs, especially those with higher attendance of candidates of color.
- Educating changing the mindset of current staff through international and long-term professional development.

## **Key Theme 2: Hiring Processes - Interviews with Admin Hiring Data**

**Strengths** - There is some evidence of rubrics and question banks being used during interviews. These rubrics are used with the hiring committees, which are composed of different staff members.

**Challenges** - Based on our data, administrators make up their own questions and that information is not stored in a centralized location. We are looking for transparency, consistent rubrics, and questions that specifically address culturally responsive teaching and practices.

### **Hiring Policies and Procedures**

- Information and practices vary among the district schools.
- Principals screen applications. Then the secretary sets up interviews by looking through the list of applicants.
- Applicants may or may not go through different rounds of screening and the pool may or may not be screened holistically for diversity.
- Principals will screen every applicant for appropriate certifications and select who is invited for interviews.

- A hiring committee is formed. However, the constitution of the committee varies from school to school and position to position. Factors include: the nature of the open position, who is available at the building, the teachers' schedule, and what positions are available.
- The committee makes the hiring recommendation based on qualifications and candidate answers to the interview questions. Candidates may be asked to provide a demonstration lesson for 2-3 observers as a second-round interview. These practices are inconsistent.
- The personnel office will determine salary and benefits.
- The building principal recommends who goes forward to the next round of interviews and gives a final recommendation to the assistant superintendent.
- The administrative team then comes to consensus on who to hire for the position.

**Strengths** - Part of the interview process involves candidates performing a demonstration lesson which allows the administration to get a better sense of the candidate. However, this is not consistent for all applicants. The vetting process is also thorough in terms of the number of interviews.

**Challenges** - X does not have a formalized hiring document or rubric that addresses culturally responsive hiring practices. [See Example Union Public Schools](#). Additionally, there is a lack of a formal rating system for the interview and hiring committee when interviewing teaching candidates. There may also be a lack of diversity on the hiring committee; diverse perspectives is not a required characteristic of the committee. There is limited data collected to show the demographics of candidates being hired from year to year.

### **Hiring Recommendations**

- Changing policies and practices surrounding the interview process. Consistency of said policies and protocols (screening, hiring, interviewing, candidate selection).
- Maintaining data collection to ensure equitable hiring practices.
- Digging deeper to see the strategies our administration uses to recruit and retain teachers of color. Using the surveys to collect data regarding recruitment and hiring processes.
- Experience of TLOC in our district to create change based on their experiences.

- Include Rubrics and Questioning in the hiring process which include seeking candidates that possess culturally relevant instructional practices. Providing a hiring rubric for the district will maintain equity and consistency amongst all schools in the district

### **Key Theme 3: Induction**

#### **Our Findings: Current Practice**

##### ***Meeting #1***

- Share a Google Classroom for that year's New Certificated Staff as an open forum for questions and resources throughout the year (includes a review of recently published books/literature for new school staff/teachers and top strategies for influencing students in a positive way each day)
- Discuss & share out any strengths and challenges as either a first-year teacher or as a first-year teacher in a new district
- Review AchieveNJ/Marshall Model and timelines for the school year

##### ***Meeting #2***

- Review the X School's Human Resources site and revisit important internal procedures and protocols for certificated staff
- Review AchieveNJ/Marshall Model and timelines for the mid- year review

##### ***Meeting #3***

- Finishing the school year strong
- Revisit strengths and challenges as either a first-year teacher or as a first-year teacher in a new district from Meeting #1 and compare to now (April)
- Review AchieveNJ/Marshall Model and timelines for the end- year review

#### **Induction Recommendations**

- Further data collection is needed to understand the full scope of the current induction program.



- Mentors should work closely with those in charge of induction to ensure that it is a cohesive and comprehensive experience for inductees (Wong, 2004).
- The induction process should follow new teachers past their first year, treating it similarly to a cohort with opportunities for incoming teachers to build strong connections amongst themselves and allow for the opportunity of targeted professional development. This has the potential to aid in retention and with cross-curricular instruction.

## **Key Theme 4: Teachers of Color Mentoring**

### *Mentoring Data*

- **Relevant Data** - This information is missing from our district.
- **Strengths** - The lack of structure precludes the ability to have “strengths”.
- **Challenges** - We do not have any consistent or relevant data regarding the mentors within our district. We would like data to see the recurring mentors and how long they have been a mentor.

### **Mentoring Policies and Procedures**

- **Relevant Policy** - The X District Mentoring Plan (2021)
- **Strengths** - There is currently a mentoring program in place which does have criteria for mentors and outlines responsibilities that help to hold mentees and mentors accountable. There is a mentoring action plan which seems promising.
- **Challenges** - There are more negative experiences with the current mentoring practices than positive, for TOCs. This seems especially true in buddy programs which are less structured or enforced in comparison to the mentoring program. The impact seems to be between the 1st and 3rd year, the lack of initial support impacts the retention rate. There is currently no focus on mentoring and inducting TOCs.

### **Mentoring Recommendations**

- Neptune school district’s model is an example of a designated mentor leader and multi-year mentoring program (find national data on the effectiveness of multi-year versus single year programs).
  - District Staff Development Coordinator- See the job description in the appendix.

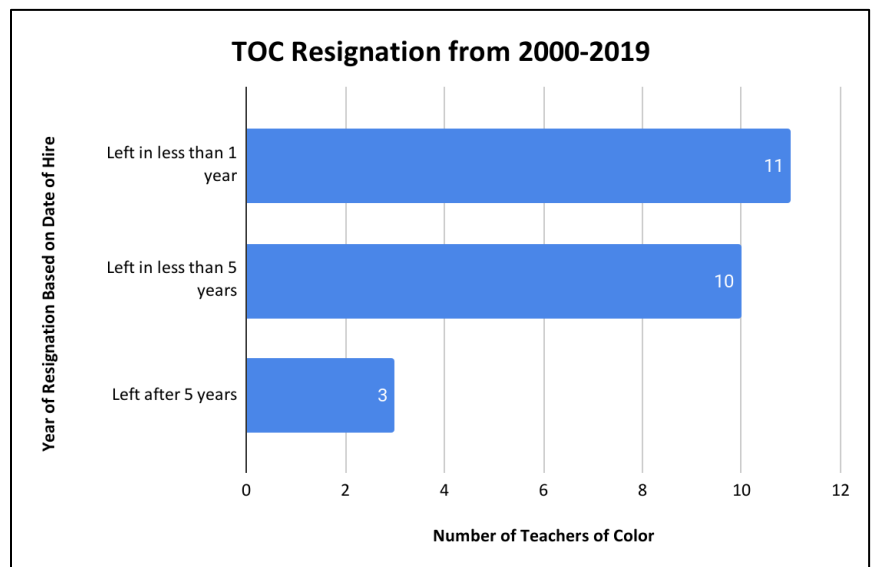
- A more structured mentoring program that is more sought after by potential mentors (through incentives) could help create stronger relationships between mentor and mentees, and thus improve the mentees' experience in the district.
- In framing the district's goal and vision, there should be explicit language in regard to supporting TOCs by pairing them with mentors of color. Additionally, there should be a TOC support group within our district. This TOC support group will be available to meet with novice teachers several times throughout the year. In conjunction with the mentor teacher support, the novice teacher will be able to build a stronger support system and increase the likelihood of retention.
- Holding all parties accountable through a reflection piece. There must be a system where individuals and administrators are reading the feedback from mentors/mentees. The proposed mentoring committee could have the responsibility of gathering and analyzing data on mentors and the overall program. They will report their findings to the administrators.

## Key Theme 5: Teachers of Color Retention

### Retention Data

- **Relevant Data**

- From 2000-2019, approximately 24 teachers of color separated from X Township. Within that number, approximately 88% of TOCs left the district in less than five years from their respective start dates.



- In the last 20 years, only 12% of TOC have spent most of their teaching career at X, meaning at least 10 years.

- **Strengths**

- 78% of black teachers currently have their master's degree or Master's + 30 credits
- 61% of Hispanic teachers currently have their master's degree or Master's + 30 credits
- 65% of Asian teachers currently have their master's degree or Master's + 30 credits

- **Challenges**

- There appears to be a large gap between teachers of color and white teachers.
  - 87.8% White
  - 12.2% Teachers of Color
  - There is a discrepancy between the highest degree attained by staff and tenured teachers
    - 78% of black teachers currently have their master's degree or master's + 30, while 65% are tenured.
    - 56% of White teachers currently have their master's degree or master's +30. while 71% are tenured.

### **Retention Policies and Procedures**

- According to Administration, there is currently no formal plan in place, therefore we the following changes to the retention policies are recommended.

### **Retention Recommendations**

- Pairing new teachers with TOC as mentors when possible. This might also require mentors to be from different grade levels in the case of middle school and elementary schools.
- Creating an in-district support network (racial affinity group) for TOC within our district. Teachers of color share similar experiences being a minority in a primarily white-dominated field. Underrepresented racial and ethnic groups need spaces to speak with others that share experiences like them.
- Focus groups and interviews accumulate authentic data and have conversations to see what TOC needs to feel supported.
- Ongoing mentorship should begin the first year of teaching and continue until tenure.
- More outsourced PD opportunities around diversity and cultural sensitivity, inclusion, and equity for all staff including non-teachers of color. Not just a quick fix.

- Idea: Jefferson County Public Schools, for example, offers the Equity and Inclusion Institute where teachers learn about the need for culturally relevant pedagogy, connecting with parents, building relationships, classroom management, as well as the skills to implement these practices (Vanderhaar, 2014). An evaluation of the institute in 2013-14 found that of the more than 300 educators who attended, 91% changed the way they viewed some of their students. Programs like these may reduce feelings of isolation, frustration, and fatigue teachers of color face.

### **Section 3: Key Elements in Workplace Culture and Morale for Teachers of Color**

This information was gathered through several means including an anonymous google form survey and virtual focus group interviews, in addition to one-on-one interviews.

#### **Element 1- Induction Challenges**

Teachers of color felt unsupported, and some educators did not have a strong mentor or powerful sense of community. Teachers of color felt racial isolation.

- **Relevant Data**
  - Based on focus group interviews with teachers of color within our district, current X teachers of color choose to stay because representation matters to them, and the teachers feel a strong connection to the students they serve.
- **Strengths**
  - There is a mentor program in place which has led to some positive relationships that have been beneficial to the new teacher. At the high school, there is a new teacher committee that meets once a month, giving new teachers a chance to ask questions about the job.

- **Challenges**

- The focus group interviewees shared that while they did have a designated mentor or buddy, unforeseen circumstances led to the mentor or buddy not being able to offer the support needed by the teacher. There was no one checking in on these relationships to ensure the mentoring was occurring effectively. Teachers who have been mentors expressed that they were often asked to be mentors because there was a lack of candidates for the mentor program.

- **Recommendations**

- Form racial affinity groups to provide support to new teachers, giving them a place to express their concerns, a sense of community, and offer support when applicable.
- A supervisory role solely for the mentoring and buddy program would allow for more accountability for the efficacy of the program. This would also strengthen the likelihood of keeping reliable data about the success of the program and could lead to an increase in candidates who apply to be mentors.

## **Element 2 - Culturally Responsive Community Findings**

- **Relevant Data**

- Teachers of color feel that the current work climate is not culturally responsive. Our district can do more to meet the needs of our teachers of color to support our staff. Teachers expressed that carrying out culturally relevant initiatives usually falls on them

- **Strengths**

- Based on administrator interviews, it is clear many administrators from different buildings are interested in bringing forth culturally responsive initiatives but are unsure of how to go about them.

- **Challenges**

- While there have been culturally responsive workshops offered in recent years, there is a lack of follow-up workshops to continue the conversations between staff members. The frequency of culturally responsive workshops is also low, which diminishes engagement from teachers.

- **Recommendations**

- Our district would benefit from consistent workshops on equity each year.
- Outsourcing specialized professionals that focus on equity and diversity.
- PD should build upon one another.
- Focused book clubs/studies that count as PD.

**Workplace Culture First-Hand Accounts:**

- Teachers from our focus group stated that addressing microaggressions is difficult to address in the workplace.
- Teachers of color felt racial isolation within their school.
- Feels like the climate is not culturally responsive.

## **Section 4: Summary of Recommendations**

Utilizing the information gleaned from the above Key Theme areas, the following section contains recommendations for actions to be taken by X Township School to achieve the desired goals areas as outlined in the Executive Summary and listed again below:

- Create an Equity and Diversity Specialist Role whose tasks include:
  - Aiding in the retention of teachers of color through the establishment of affinity groups and expansion of the mentoring program.
  - Establishing more recruitment connections via Tomorrow's Teachers and personalized Grow Your Own initiatives.
- Track data in terms of recruiting and hiring demographics and retention of teachers of color.
- Create consistent procedures for hiring staff across buildings, which includes a focus on culturally relevant interview questions.
- Establish continuous district-wide professional development opportunities that build upon each other and offer the expertise of leaders of color.



## Appendix A: Available Resources



- X Mentoring Document
- X Proposed Recruitment Plan
- Recruitment and Retention Specialist
- Interview Rubric Copy 1
- Interview Rubric Copy 2
- Staff Development Coordinator Position



## References

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Wong, H. K. (2004). Induction programs that keep new teachers teaching and improving. *NASSP Bulletin*, 88(638), 41–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019263650408863804>