



RUTGERS

Graduate School of Education

Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education

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

X Public School District Findings Report and Recommendations

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June 2022

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Executive Summary

X Public Schools (X) in partnership with the Rutgers Graduate School of Education developed detailed plans for recruiting and retaining teachers of color by attracting qualified candidates, tailoring mentorship, and increasing job satisfaction. In order to support X Public Schools in these endeavors, teachers --- were appointed by the district as Teacher Leaders of Color (TLOC). In June of 2021, they began the process of assessing key aspects of X 's functioning with regard to recruitment and retention of teachers of color and sustaining a diverse teaching workforce. This assessment process of X 's policies and procedures resulted in a comprehensive report in four key areas:

- Recruitment
- Hiring
- Mentoring
- Retention

This Report highlights the findings from the TLOC representing X Public Schools. Key findings included:

- A lack of systematic recruiting efforts
- Limited use of data to track hiring
- Inconsistent procedures for interviewing teacher candidates
- Limited oversight of the mentoring program
- Lack of professional development opportunities to support culturally relevant pedagogy
- Work environments where microaggressions go unaddressed

To address these challenges, the plan recommends the following:

- Create an HR position that tracks data and focuses on recruiting TOCs
- Implement common interview processes and criteria across the district
- Incorporate additional components into the mentoring program aimed at improving diversity and retention
- Develop a district culture that addresses microaggressions, provides learning opportunities around culturally relevant pedagogy and supports perspectives and needs of TOCs.

These recommendations can support X in recruiting and retaining high quality TOCs to better serve the community and our students through educational continuity through providing a workplace culture where all teachers and students can thrive and flourish.

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 specific area(s). For the purposes of this report, the processes to collect data are briefly described below:

- Monthly work sessions beginning July 2021 culminating in completion of this report in June 2022
 - Establish group norms and goals
 - Data collection from district records
 - Interviews and surveys of stakeholders about hiring policies, workplace culture, experience in district – administrators and teachers of color
 - Analysis of data collected
 - Analysis of policies for hiring, retention, and mentoring, including examining those from other districts across the state
 - Participation in workshops with various educational professionals

In the state of New Jersey, there exists significant race and gender incongruity among teachers and students. The figures below show a teaching workforce in NJ that is over 83% white and 65% female, yet students in NJ schools are majority students of color (see Figure 1). This led to a report from New Jersey Policy Perspectives that concludes, “This racial and gender homogeneity has created a teaching workforce that looks very different from the state’s student population” (Weber, 2019, p. 17).

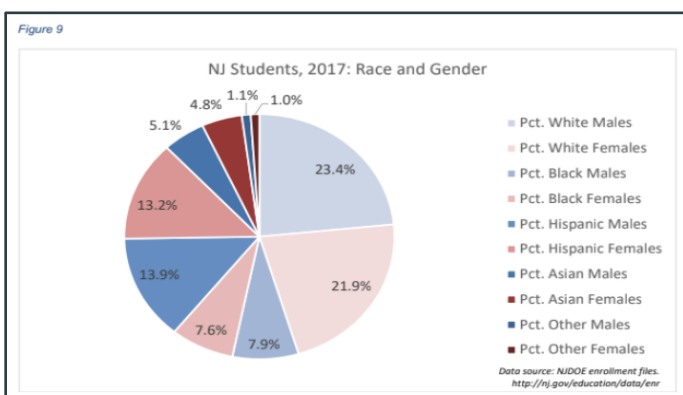
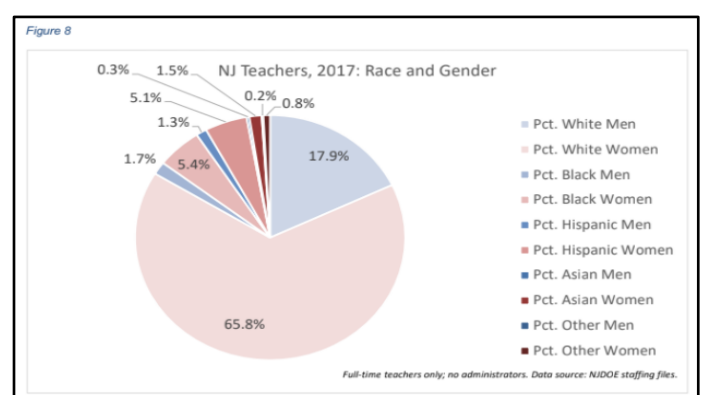
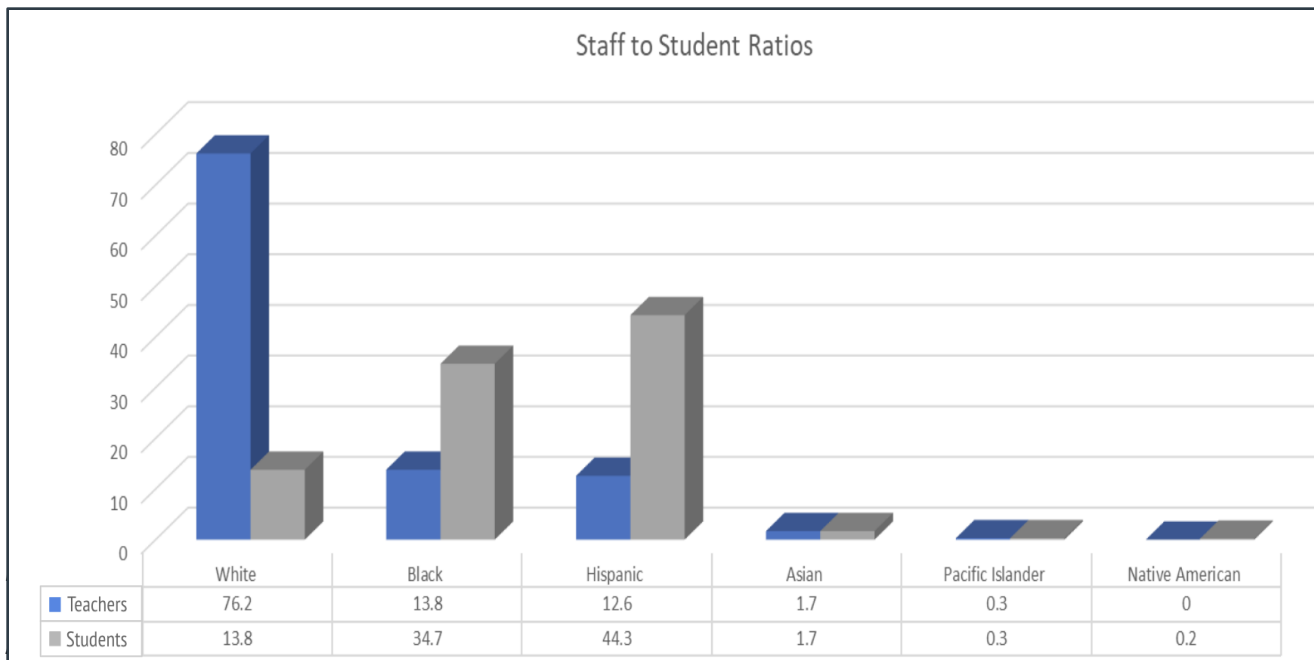


Figure 1: New Jersey’s Teacher Workforce, 2019



The incongruity between teacher and student representation across the state of New Jersey is comparable in the X district. Figure 2 shows data for X where the teaching workforce is 76.2% white, despite serving students that are 86% students of color. Rita Kohli, associate professor, and author of *Teachers of Color: Resisting Racism and Reclaiming Education*, concludes that “While a myriad of educational policies and practices work in concert to fuel these gross racial disparities, research has demonstrated that the overwhelming whiteness and monolingualism of the teaching profession contributes to the

disenfranchisement of students of color.” Therefore, hiring and retaining Teachers of Color is critical for the success of the students in the district.



The City of X is a bustling, dynamic metropolis. Our students are poised to become productive contributors to the global economy. Our parents, administrators, school board members, teachers, faculty, and staff make concerted efforts to prepare students for future success. By better recruiting and supporting a diverse teaching workforce, we cannot only provide students with enriched cultural experiences, but also do much to expand their horizons, develop their self-esteem, and raise their own expectations for success.

Working together, we can enhance efforts already begun in X, with the collaborative goal of improving student achievement. Ultimately, it is through shared vision, open, honest dialogue, and courageous action that we will succeed in truly embracing and celebrating diversity in our district.

B. Organizational Scan of Existing Data

An organizational scan of the X district shows that there are a lack of consistent systems in place to adequately address the essentially homogeneous teaching staff comprised of white females. Significant research on race and gender matching has been performed over the past decade, and the results illuminate the overall benefits of increasing teacher diversity – including better academic student performance, improved graduation rates and increased college enrollment (Gershenson, Hansen, and Lindsay, 2021).

Further, the social emotional benefits positively impact absenteeism and behavioral issues (Redding, 2019). Scholar David Blazar (2021) summarized the research literature, finding that Teachers of Color have higher expectations for Students of Color, are more likely to use culturally relevant teaching, provide caring classroom environments, support students in confronting issues of racism, advocate and mentor students of color, and stay in the profession longer in high minority schools than white teachers.

C. Gathering more information

Information was gathered from a variety of sources, beginning with the receipt of data from X Central Office extracted from Applitrack and Systems 3000. We analyzed that data and created charts to consolidate the information. In addition, we conducted surveys of teachers of color to share their narratives of personal experiences with recruitment, hiring, and mentoring processes in the X district, as well as to understand the experiences Teachers of Color have in the workplace. We also conducted interviews with building administrators to discuss hiring practices. Through extensive review of state and national reports, scholarly journals, and texts, we endeavored to compare and contrast our district's practices with other districts and looked for best practices that could be implemented in the X district to address the diversity of the teaching staff.

D. Policy Review

A review of the X district policies revealed a lack of consistency related to recruitment and hiring. Currently, recruitment is not done in a timely manner, limiting the pool of candidates because many accept positions in other districts that recruit earlier. In addition, candidates are not vetted using standardized processes with regard to interview questions, demo lessons, and rubrics, nor are there common criteria to evaluate candidates. Further, mentoring and PD opportunities are not being maximized in order to retain TOCs and encourage their success and job satisfaction. Conventional thinking has not provided sufficient results in terms of recruitment, hiring, and retention of teachers of color; therefore, expanding recruitment practices, implementing specific hiring policies, and providing targeted mentoring support is needed.

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

In this section, we highlight key themes, supported by data analysis, identifying strengths and challenges for the district moving forward.

Key Theme 1: Recruitment

Relevant Data

Teachers of Color in X were invited to participate in an anonymous survey about the experience of recruitment, hiring and working in the district.

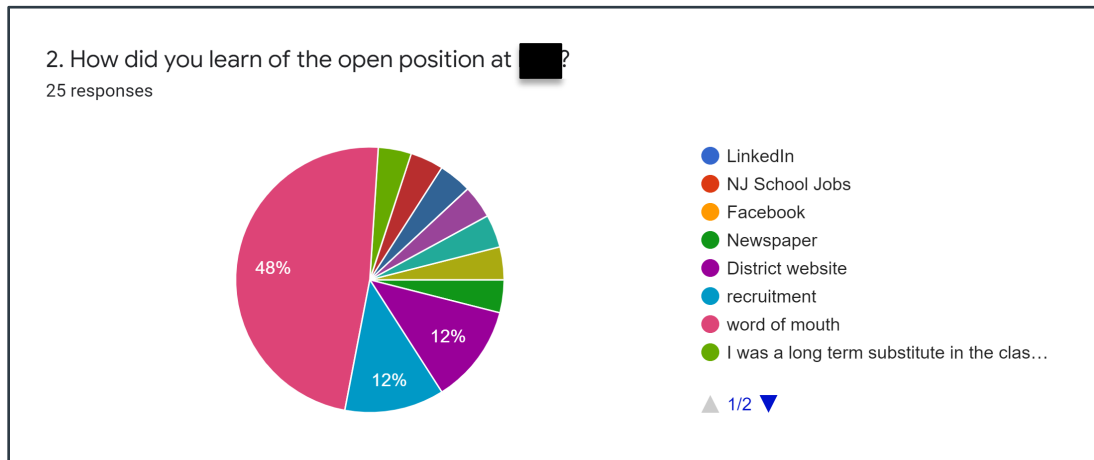


Figure 3: Survey X Recurring for Open Positions

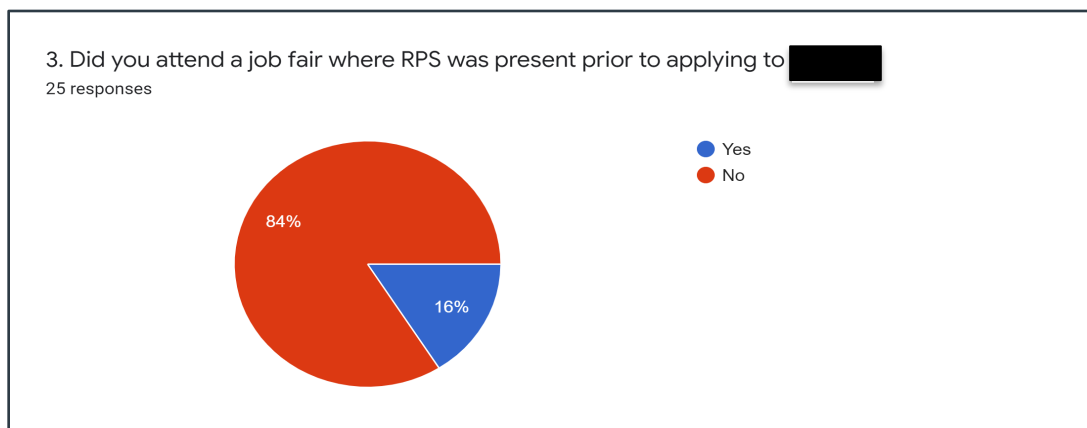


Figure 4: Survey X Recruiting at job Fairs

- **Policy and Practice**

- There are no common policies and practice across X with respect to recruiting.
- Recruitment is primarily done through postings on the district website via Applitrack and paper postings at the main office of each district school building.
- X does not have a consistent presence at job fairs and other recruitment events featuring diverse candidates

- **Strengths**

- Candidates who are actively looking for employment in specific school districts will visit the district website to view postings.
- Faculty and staff members within the district can inform potential candidates in their professional and personal circles of opportunities within the district.
- There is an equity team at the administrative level who can facilitate diversifying recruitment and hiring policies.

- **Challenges**

- Word-of-mouth recruitment limits the pool of candidates.
- Social media snapshots of job postings are unpolished and do not portray an image of professionalism.
- Currently there is no human resources department to maintain comprehensive data as it relates to recruitment and hiring with an additional focus on TOC candidates.
- There is no specific point person charged with the responsibility of analyzing recruitment data in order to make recommendations for increasing the TOC candidate pool.

Key Theme 2: Hiring Processes

Relevant Data

- Inconsistent data received from X Central Office created challenges in portraying a clear picture comparing applicants to new hires (e.g., 2018-2019 data shows 28 new hires, but only 20 applications received).
- Available data demonstrates parity gaps in terms of applications received from TOC and male candidates.

Table 1: Applicant Demographics

Applicants									
	# of Applicants	Female	Male	No Answer	Black/ African- American	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	White	No Answer
2018-2019	20	15	3	2	1	4	0	12	3
2019-2020	56	35	15	6	5	17	4	21	6
2020-2021	222*	145	58	7	16	29	22	123	10

*Note: There were several administrative positions open this year resulting in an extremely high application pool across positions.

Table 2: New Hire Demographics

New Hires 2018 - 2021						
	Female	Male	Black/ African-American	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	White
2018-2019 = 28 new hires	23 (-6*)	5 (-1)	3 (-1)	4 (-1)	0	21 (-5)
2019-2020 = 25 new hires	19 (-4)	6	4	7	2 (-2)	10 (-2)
2020-2021 = 4 new hires	2 (-1)	2 (-1)	0	0	0	4 (-2)

* Note: Minus sign denotes new hires not retained

● **Policy and Practice**

- There are currently no policies in place regarding targeted hiring practices pertaining to teachers of color.
- Hiring process is inconsistent from interviewing to demo lessons to rubrics used to evaluate candidates.
- Teachers and administrators have reported many variations in the hiring process ranging from interviewers present, demonstration lesson requirements, interview questions, etc.

● **Strengths**

- Increase in the number of applicants though this may be an irregularity.
- Reporting tools exist to collect basic demographic information (Applitrack, Systems 3000).
- District’s strategic plan adopted in 2018 by the X Board of Education contains the objective of “meeting the diverse needs of students.” To that end, the following has occurred:
 - Partnered with Rutgers University GSE on the DTP Project for the 2021-2022 school year to create this report which serves as a comprehensive action plan.

● **Challenges**

- No human resource representative to record and report hiring data.
- Data not collected regarding how hiring teams are formed.
 - hiring teams are inconsistent from building to building.
 - hiring teams are formed based on administrator availability rather than job description.

- Data is currently not collected regarding teacher interviews.
- Candidate requirements are inconsistent across the district.
 - demo lesson requirement
 - specific interview questions
 - culturally relevant pedagogy assessment
- Hiring data on diversity and inclusion is not being used to drive decision making across the district.
- Applitrack and Systems 3000 are not being used to their full capabilities, hindering the district from having relevant demographic data.

Key Theme 3: Teachers of Color Mentoring

Relevant Data

- The mentor teachers selected are majority white and female. There is no focused effort to select TOC for mentoring and cooperating roles from within.
- The district is missing an opportunity to show existing diversity to teacher candidates.

Table 3: Mentor Teacher Demographics

Mentor Teachers						
	Female	Male	Black/ African-American	Hispanic	Asian	White
2019-2020	8	2	3	0	0	7
2020-2021	3	0	1	1	0	1
2021-2022	7	2	1	2	1	5

Table 4: Cooperating Teacher Demographics

Cooperating Teachers						
	Female	Male	Black/ African-American	Hispanic	Asian	White
Fall 2019	49	10	10	4	2	43
Spring 2020	36	5	6	5	2	28
Fall 2020	33	5	1	6	1	30
Spring 2021	24	5	5	2	0	22
Fall 2021	20	4	3	2	0	19

● **Policies and Practice**

- The New Jersey Department of Education requires that “all novice teachers who hold a CEAS or a CE and are registered in the PTP must be mentored in accordance with state regulations for a minimum of thirty weeks... Mentoring and mentoring time must be tracked by each employer. Employers may choose to pay the associated mentor fees for their novice teachers” (New Jersey Department of Education, 2022).

● **Strengths**

- X has a mentoring handbook that provides recommendations on roles and responsibilities, classroom management tips, communication suggestions, etc.
- X has a mentoring program for new hires.

● **Challenges**

- Administrator oversight of the mentor/mentee relationships is insufficient in order to ensure that mentees are receiving consistent guidance and support.
- Teacher mentors are not selected based on effectiveness and not informed directly when deemed ineffective about how to improve.
- Continuous professional development is not required in order to maintain eligibility as a mentor.
- X currently elects to not pay the mentorship fees for new teachers; mentees pay for mentorship, regardless of effectiveness of experience.

Key Theme 4: Teachers of Color Retention

Relevant Data

- While the district has increased the number of teachers of color hired each year, the absence of exit surveys and other methods of demographic data collected makes it difficult to work toward improving teacher turnover rates or implementing policies to foster retention.
- Research shows that US public school districts spend on average approximately \$20,000.00 on each new hire including school and district expenses related to separation, recruitment, hiring, and training (Carver-Thomas, & Darling-Hammond, 2017). For one third of that amount, directed toward recruitment and mentoring, the district could significantly reduce teacher turnover (see [Link to Learning Policy Institute Turnover Calculator](#)).

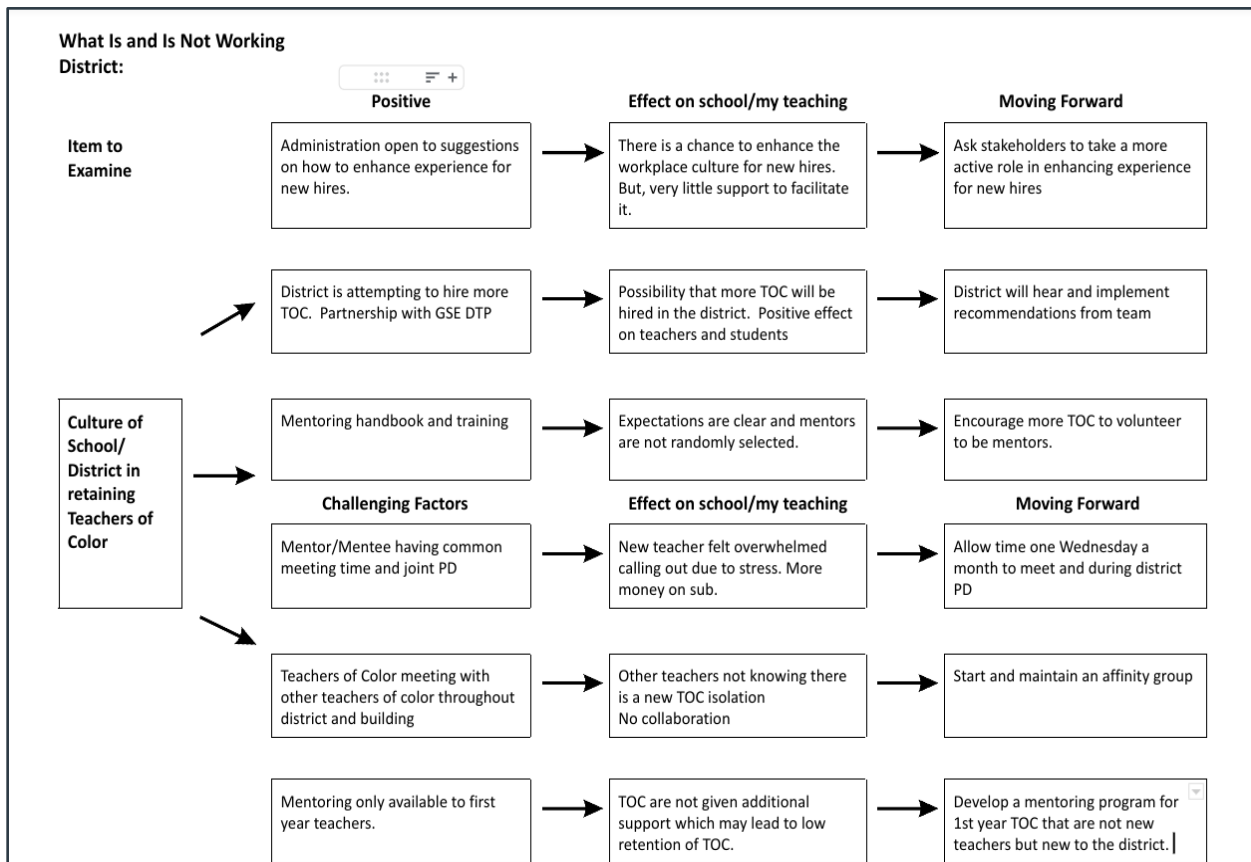


Figure 4: TOC Retention Chart

- **Policy and Practice**

- None.

- **Strengths**

- An Equity Team of administrators has been established to begin a needs assessment related to inclusion and diversity.
- X have demonstrated interest in diversity by partnering with Rutgers on the DTP project.

- **Challenges**

- Survey of TOCs found that no assessment of building culture and microaggressions in the workplace has been conducted.
- Lack of specific professional development provided on culturally responsive pedagogy.
- Lack of retention policies in general nor those specific to TOCs.

Key Theme 5: Workplace Culture and Morale

Relevant Data

- Teachers of color in the district were surveyed and asked to provide their perspective and experiences working in X Public Schools. The chart below represents surveyed TOC perspectives on workplace microaggressions.
- Survey Pool Includes:
 - 25 TOC
 - 19 females and 6 males
 - Hired ranged from 1991-2019
- Teachers of color often feel unheard and overlooked. Forty percent (40%) of survey respondents reported having their own ideas taken by colleagues and presented as their own. Due to the small percentage of teachers of color in the district, they are spread among district buildings and are often isolated within departments. In order to recruit and retain teachers of color, it is important that teachers feel that the district is creating an environment that is conducive to their success in the profession. Scholar, author, and activist bell hooks (2014) affirmed that “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). As a district who prides itself on our diversity, we need to provide these supportive communities for our teachers of color. At this point, there are few opportunities for teachers of color to collaborate and share their experiences and ideas.

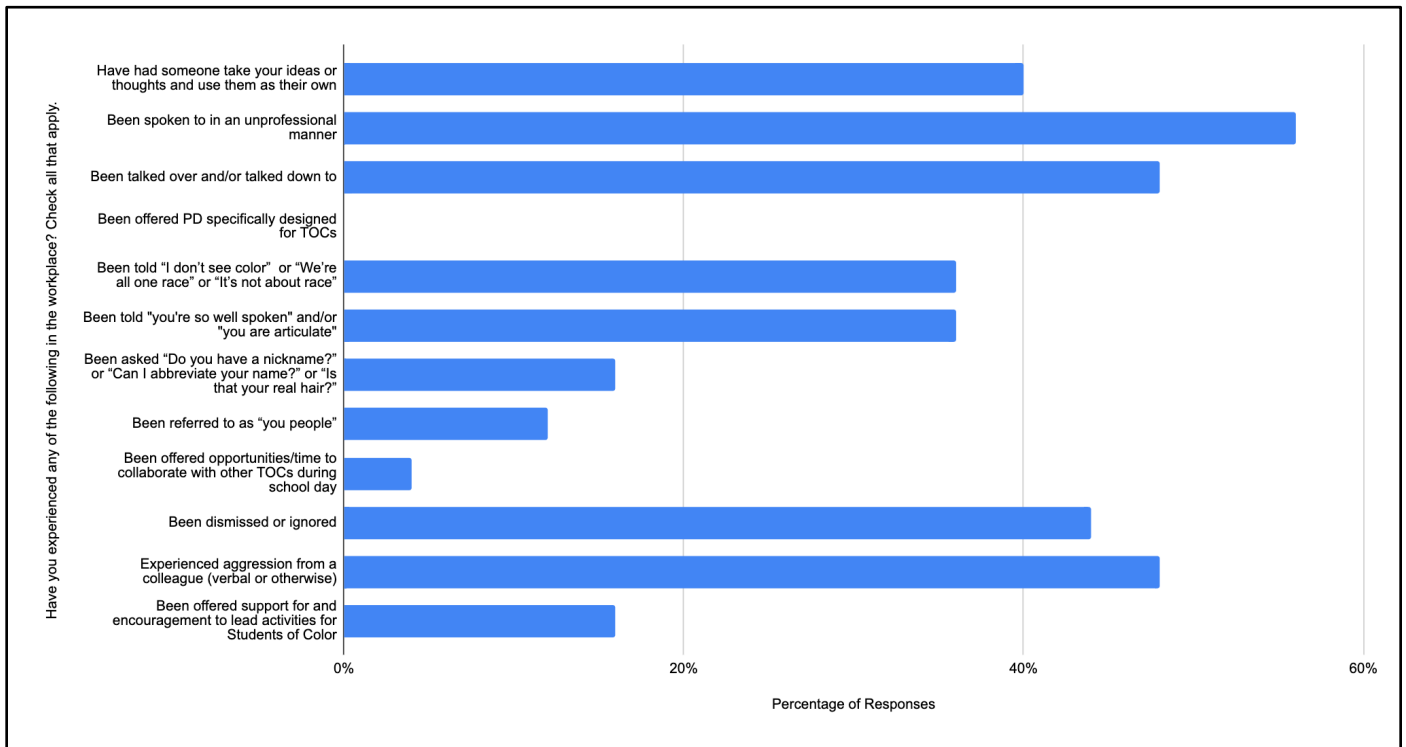


Figure 5: TOC Workplace Experiences

- **Policy and Practice**

- None

- **Strengths**

- X student population is largely comprised of students of color representing various cultural backgrounds.
- The community at large is welcoming to diversity and inclusivity.

- **Challenges**

- Workplace microaggressions contribute to teacher dissatisfaction and low retention.
- Insufficient number of TOCs in district to serve in various roles such as cooperating teachers, mentors, teacher leaders.
- X is not capitalizing on the diverse backgrounds of current TOCs.
- Lack of cohesion in individual district school celebrations of cultural diversity.

Section 3: Summary of Recommendations

Utilizing the information gleaned from the analysis, the following section contains recommendations for actions to be taken by X Public Schools to achieve the desired goals outlined in the Executive Summary.

First and foremost, the expeditious appointment of a Human Resources Director is of critical importance. This recommendation cuts across all aspects of recruiting and retention. Several potential responsibilities for this role are listed in Figure 6.

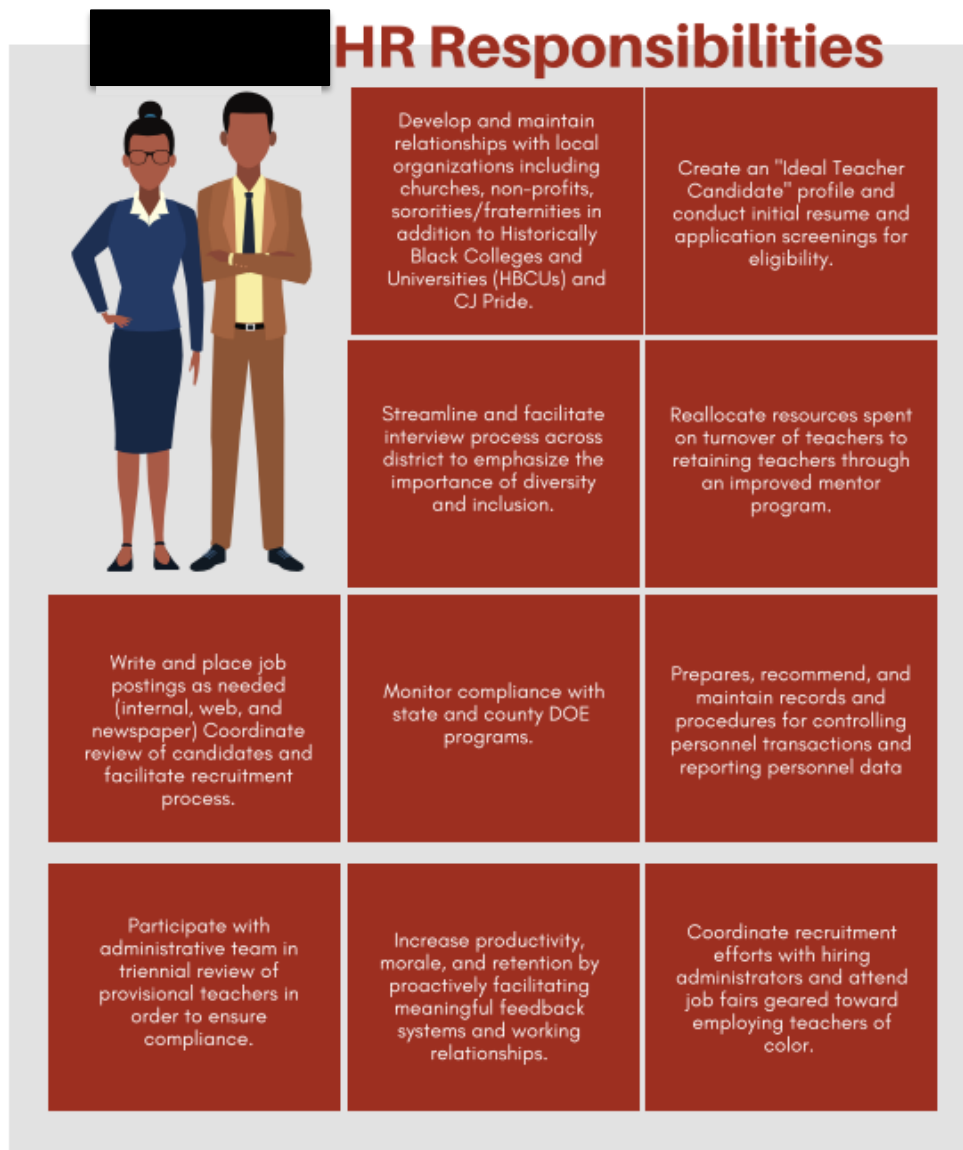


Figure 6: HR Position Responsibilities

Recruitment Recommendations

1. Create promotional video for X to highlight district culture, achievement, and values.
2. Improve visual appearance and ease of use of Applitrack.
3. Develop consistent district-wide vision, mission, and value statements.
4. Use the current Tomorrow's Teachers Program to recruit future TOC. Revisit and revise Tomorrow's Teachers Program curriculum with a focus on recruiting TOC.
5. Create a TOC grant program to offer loan forgiveness/incentives for TOC.
6. Develop a district-wide social media presence.

Cost/Benefit

- a. Costs: minimal as X has a Broadcasting student program and IT Dept. Grant program would have little cost if balanced with limiting labor costs of recruiting new teachers to replace ones that leave for financial considerations.
- b. Benefits: students who have an inherent connection with the X community become teachers. Grant program would attract TOC making recruiting easier.

Hiring Recommendations

1. Early hiring – begin interviewing process earlier and notify candidates earlier to increase potential pool.
2. Create an “Ideal Teacher Candidate” profile.
3. Require administrative interviewers of color on the hiring team.
4. Include TOCs on each hiring team, even if in an observational capacity.
5. Revamp interview process to create consistent requirements for all teacher candidates, irrespective of building or hiring team and use multiple measures to assess candidate qualifications:
 - o Require demo lessons that showcase culturally responsive teaching.
 - o Require interview questions that showcase understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusion.
 - o Develop district rubrics to assess demo lessons and interviews.
6. Look to current employees seeking to become teachers and support them as part of a “grow your own” strategy.

Cost/Benefit

- a. Costs: included in the responsibilities of the HR Director.
- b. Benefits: more consistency in hiring and would save on administrative time spent on replacement of teachers which takes them away from instructional improvement.

Mentoring Recommendations

1. District should pay mentoring fee for new teachers as allowed by NJ DOE.
2. Overhaul of mentor teacher training to include specific strategies and methods of providing meaningful support to new teachers and a revised mentor handbook to include research driven curriculum that includes CRP and DEI.
3. Multi-year mentoring program (i.e., full support in first year, reduced interactions in second year, etc.).
4. Strategic mentor matching, pairing new TOCs with veteran TOCs and by subject area/grade level.
5. New teachers have one free period (no duty) to visit classrooms, meet with mentor/administrator, extra prep, health, and wellness.
6. Stronger documentation of mentee/mentor teacher interactions and end of mentorship interview to assess the quality of the mentoring experience.

Cost/Benefit

- a. Costs: minimal cost to cover mentor fees.
- b. Benefits: teacher retention because of layered support for novice teachers. Additionally, a strong mentoring program would be attractive to new teacher candidates.

Retention Recommendations

1. Quarterly Administrator check-ins with TOCs to discuss workplace culture.
2. Continue to grow and support this TLOC Committee to create and implement long-term changes.
3. Relocate resources spent on turnover of teachers to retain teachers through improved mentor programs.
4. Provide targeted opportunities for teachers of color to discuss experiences and create opportunities to encourage bridge building among faculty and staff to promote professional relationships.
5. Provide targeted and continuous professional development that will increase teacher success and, therefore, promote retention.

Cost/Benefit

- a. Costs: mitigated by savings on lowering teacher turnover.
- b. Benefits: student achievement will increase with low teacher turnover.

Workplace Culture & Morale Recommendations

1. Create and maintain TOC support groups across the district.
 - a. Racial Affinity Groups – a group of people sharing a common race who gather with the intention of connecting and supporting each other to:
 - i. help address feelings of isolation and loneliness.

- ii. help with the emotional weight of seeing how students of color are affected by racially biased school practices and environments.
 - iii. help with the emotional weight of teaching during racially polarized times and events in society such as police brutality, racial violence, voting rights suppression, etc.
 - iv. help with navigating microaggressions and hostile work cultures.
2. TOCs serving as cooperating teachers will allow teaching candidates exposure to unique perspectives related to educating the X student population

Cost/Benefit

- a. Costs: none.
- b. Benefits: retention of TOC, reducing costs of recruiting new teachers.

Section 4: Conclusion and Next Steps

Moving forward with the assistance and support of the DTP fellows, X School District leadership can dive deeper into each recommendation, identifying X’s priorities and the actions necessary for the successful creation and implementation of a X Roadmap for Change.

We propose a continuation of the monthly team meetings as well as an expansion of the team to include one representative from each district building. Professional release time will allow us to meet, plan, attend workshops, collaborate with the administrative equity team, and implement recommendations.

X School District’s leadership has demonstrated a high readiness for change and a desire to strengthen the trust within the community, stakeholders, and among X staff. Aligning the X Roadmap for Change with the goals listed in this report will ensure future and sustainable success for X’s plans and policies for the recruitment and retention of Teachers of Colors to sustain a more diverse and equitable workforce.

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