

Creating Inclusive Workplaces for Black Teachers



About the video

This Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest video explores why Black teachers leave the teaching profession and the best practices for retaining them. The video discusses relevant research on the importance of staffing Black teachers, challenges that Black teachers face, and six research-based strategies for creating work environments that are culturally affirming and promote the retention of Black teachers. It features the perspectives and insights of researchers, school leaders, and teachers from diverse backgrounds. The video was produced by the REL [Midwest Achievement Gap Research Alliance](#) (MAGRA), which is dedicated to increasing the region's capacity to access, conduct, interpret, and make sense of research on improving outcomes among Black students.

In the video, Tammie Causey, Ph.D. (REL Midwest); Etai Mizrav (REL Midwest); and Curtis Jones, Ph.D., (University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee) discuss the importance of teachers of color, particularly for Black student achievement, and explore why Black teachers leave the teaching profession at higher rates than their White colleagues,¹ along with best practices for retaining Black teachers. They discuss the role of an antiracist approach to creating inclusive workplaces for Black teachers and how teachers and students are served. The video also highlights how staff from Evanston Township High School in Illinois, a large high school that serves a diverse student community, work to create and sustain an inclusive work environment for Black teachers. It features two school leaders, Marcus Campbell, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent/Principal, and Toya Campbell, Chief Human Resources Officer, along with two teachers, Ganae McAlpin-Toney, National Board Certified teacher, and Matthew Walsh.

When you're looking to fundamentally change how a school has been structured from the beginning and who it's been structured for, that takes some ground-level, foundational, hard work to begin to chip away at that, to begin to help people understand that, to begin to support people as they are afraid of that, and to encourage and inspire people to move forward into an unknown.

— Marcus Campbell, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent/Principal, Evanston Township High School, Evanston, Illinois

Six strategies for creating inclusive workplaces that are described in the video

1. Connect Black educators through mentorship.
2. Grow your own staff by developing and hiring staff linked to the school community.
3. Create an affinity space for race and culture.
4. Use data to drive improvement.
5. Provide loan forgiveness and scholarship opportunities.
6. Recruit and develop culturally competent teachers and leaders.



Scan the QR code to watch the video.

Intended audience

REL Midwest created this video as a tool for teachers, school leaders, and district leaders to use when they engage in strategic planning efforts to develop more inclusive environments for Black teachers. Although the video focuses on

1 Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/diversifying-teaching-profession-report>; Gershenson, S., Hart, C., Hyman, J., Lindsay, C., & Papageorge, N. W. (2018). *The long-run impacts of same-race teachers* (No. w25254). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from <https://www.nber.org/papers/w25254>

examples from Wisconsin and Illinois, the best practices and strategies shared are relevant for educators across the country. REL Midwest suggests that individuals watch the video and use the following questions as a starting point for a discussion on how a school or district can create more inclusive environments for Black teachers.

? Discussion questions

To examine and revise policy using an antiracist framework, begin by asking these questions:

- What are our existing policies and practices?
- What unintended consequences are we seeing as a result of them?
- How are educators working together to better understand each other?



Other questions to consider:

- How have your school and district colleagues created more inclusive working environments for Black teachers? What practices or strategies have they implemented?
- How would you apply the strategies highlighted in the video to develop more inclusive environments for Black teachers in your school or district?
- If you were part of an effort to improve retention rates of Black teachers within your school or district, whom would you involve in those conversations? What steps would you and others need to take to translate those discussions into actions?
- What challenges do you see in creating supportive working environments for Black teachers, and what are possible ways to overcome these challenges?
- How do the strategies shown in the documentary align with the goals of your school and/or district?
- How does your school and district collect feedback from teachers? How often are responses sorted by demographic groups to better understand the unique experiences of Black teachers?

Related REL Midwest resources

- Watch our video, [Supporting Black students' excellence](#), about the strategies that Wisconsin's Racine Unified School District is implementing to improve educational outcomes for Black students.
- Read a [systematic review of research on evidence-supported interventions that may improve academic outcomes for Black students](#).

About REL Midwest

REL Midwest is part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. REL Midwest works in partnership with practitioners in seven Midwest states to conduct applied research and provide training, coaching, and technical support to create a more evidence-based education system. To learn more, visit the [REL Midwest website](#) and follow [@RELMidwest on Twitter](#).