

Washington State Vibrant Teaching Force Alliance  
Meeting Materials for November 6, 2018

# Human Resources Practices for Recruiting, Selecting, and Retaining Teachers of Color

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This resource scan was conducted at the request of the Washington Teacher Diversity Practices Work Group, a project of the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB). The work group's goal is to identify evidence-based human resources (HR) practices for building a diverse teacher workforce in Washington and to develop recommendations for consideration by HR professionals in the state.

## ***Why is this issue important?***

A racially and ethnically diverse teacher workforce provides important benefits to all students. For students of color (students who are Hispanic and/or non-White), having a teacher of the same race or ethnicity may increase test scores and reduce the likelihood of disciplinary issues (Goldhaber, Theobald, & Tien, 2015). Students of color also benefit from higher teacher expectations and seeing members of their own race/ethnicity as role models in positions of authority. In addition, bilingual and bicultural teachers may have a greater ability to engage culturally and linguistically diverse students and to teach in bilingual settings (Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

For White students, diverse learning communities provide exposure to multiple perspectives and can improve their ability to solve problems, think critically, and develop creativity (Page, 2007; Phillips, 2014). Having teachers from multiple backgrounds may also increase White students' sense of civic engagement while offering important cognitive, social, and emotional benefits (Wells, Fox, & Cordova-Cobo, 2016). In short, evidence suggests that there are positive outcomes for students when there is educator diversity, and there is a growing demand for teachers of color—particularly bilingual teachers of color who can work in dual-language immersion settings.

HR professionals face many challenges in recruiting, selecting, and retaining teachers of color (teachers who are Hispanic and/or non-White). Nationally, turnover rates are higher for teachers of color than for White teachers (Bireda & Chait, 2011). Districts typically have limited resources to devote to recruitment efforts (Palaich et al., 2014), and their existing policies

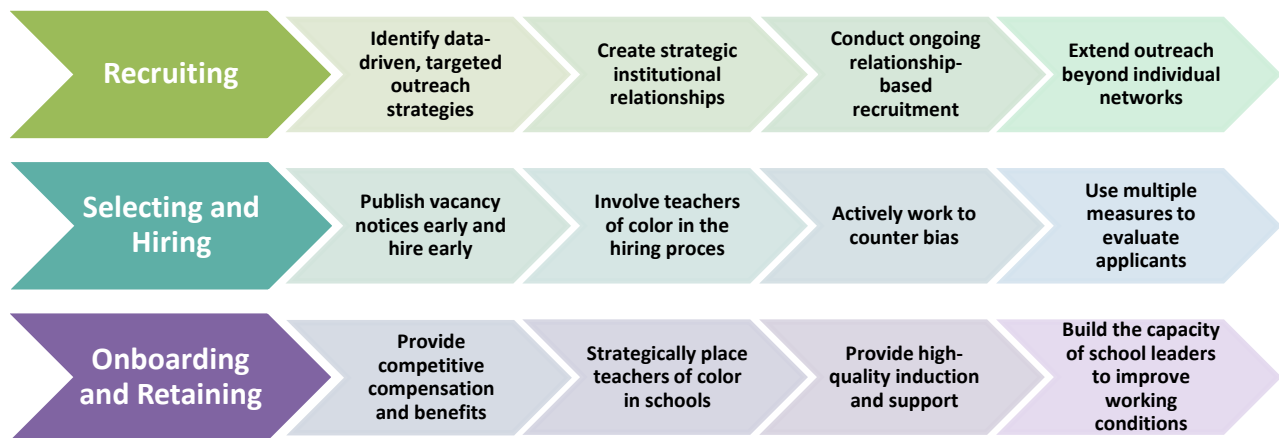
and practices may have a negative impact on their ability to recruit and retain a diverse pool of applicants (Konoske-Graf, Partelow, & Benner, 2016).

### What does this document provide?

Drawing on information from multiple sources—including literature reviews, meta-analyses, case studies, and empirical research—this document provides a summary of practices associated with attracting, hiring, and retaining teachers of color. However, many of the practices described in the research are associated with successfully attracting, hiring, and retaining all teachers. These practices are drawn from research written between 2000 and 2018 that describe strategies to support education HR professionals and administrators in their efforts to diversify their workforce.

These research studies describe HR practices, but they do not always evaluate those practices. This means that we do not always know whether a given practice is effective. Consequently, this summary describes prevalent practices in peer-reviewed literature but does not provide evidence of impact. The practices are organized across three phases of the hiring process: recruiting, selecting and hiring, and onboarding and retaining. Within these phases, we have identified 12 practices that are prevalent in districts that have had some success with diversifying their workforce.

### HR practices framework



### Practices for recruiting teachers of color

Districts that effectively recruit teachers of color often use **data-driven, targeted strategies to inform their outreach efforts**. Districts are competing for talent with other districts and other professions. The research literature suggests that districts may wish to *use data to forecast their staffing needs* and to determine who is underrepresented in their workforce. These data can also be used to *create marketing campaigns that appeal to candidates of color*, are specific to the position, and highlight the benefits the district has to offer. These benefits may include professional

development, compensation and benefits, a systemwide commitment to meeting the education needs of students of color, and an understanding of the importance of having positive role models for those students.

Research also suggests that districts *ensure recruitment materials, websites, and job postings contain clear and consistent messaging to candidates of color* who may be seeking teaching careers and *share information on job openings locally and across the country* through social media, local news sources, town and district websites, career fairs, educator networks, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, community events, and other outlets (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010; American Institutes for Research, 2016; Bireda & Chait, 2011; Konoske-Graf et al., 2016; Rogers-Ard, Knaus, Epstein, & Mayfield, 2013; Simon, Johnson, & Reinhorn, 2015; Wurtzel & Curtis, 2008).

Districts that effectively recruit teachers of color also develop **strategic institutional relationships**. A large majority of students enrolled in teacher preparation programs are White. To recruit teachers of color, the research literature suggests that districts may wish to *build relationships with faculty members and administrators from local and national institutions that enroll a diverse student body*. These include historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges and universities. Research also suggests that districts *partner with alternative teacher preparation programs*, which are more likely to serve people of color, to identify and recruit teachers by sharing information about anticipated vacancies. Also, districts may wish to *host booths at job fairs and reach out to organizations in which students of color might participate*, including academic, service, military, and veteran organizations, as well as sororities and fraternities (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Clewell & Villegas, 2001; Konoske-Graf et al., 2016; Marrero, 2018; Simon et al., 2015; Villegas & Lucas, 2004).

Districts that effectively recruit teachers of color also engage in **ongoing, relationship-based recruitment**. Teachers of color may be considering higher-paying careers outside of teaching. To recruit teachers of color, the research literature suggests that districts may wish to *build personal relationships with students of color at institutions of higher education*. Districts may wish to begin building relationships months before a job is posted and well before potential candidates decide to apply. Districts can form relationships during campus visits with potential candidates and through alumni calls to students, and they can invite candidates to school or district events to meet current teachers or educators with similar backgrounds (American Institutes for Research, 2016; Bireda & Chait, 2011; Konoske-Graf et al., 2016; Simon et al., 2015; Torres, Santos, Peck, & Cortes, 2004).

Districts that effectively recruit teachers of color often leverage “connectors” to **extend outreach beyond individual networks**. The habitual networks of HR professionals and school and district administrators may not be ideal for identifying and recruiting teachers of color. Instead of relying on these existing relationships, the research literature suggests that districts may wish to *identify informal connectors—teachers of color, paraeducators, or other community members—who can use their broader networks to help the district develop relationships with communities of color*.

Districts can invite these potential connectors on school tours and get them to promote the school and its job opportunities within their networks. In a similar vein, research suggests that successful districts often hire recruiters who are part of the communities from which they are attempting to recruit (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Simon et al., 2015).

### ***Practices for selecting and hiring teachers of color***

Districts that effectively select and hire teachers of color often **publish vacancy notices early in the process and hire early in the process**. The typical hiring calendar often compels the most qualified candidates to accept positions in school districts with early hiring timelines or other fields. The research literature suggests that districts may *generate a large applicant pool through early and effective recruitment*. Ideally, half of the district's new teachers should be hired at least a month before the end of the prior school year. Research literature also suggests that if collective bargaining agreements permit, districts should *offer incentives for veteran teachers to announce their resignation, retirement, and transfer intentions in early spring* so that it is possible to recruit new hires earlier in the season (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Levin & Quinn, 2003).

Districts that effectively select and hire teachers of color also **authentically involve teachers of color in the recruitment and selection of new candidates**. Candidates of color may feel isolated or tokenized during the hiring process. The research literature suggests that providing opportunities for candidates to interact with other teachers of color may help them feel more welcome and connected during the hiring process. Similarly, the research literature suggests that districts may wish to *involve teachers of color in the recruitment and selection of new candidates in meaningful ways*, such as developing and enacting recruitment strategies and leveraging their networks, experience, and recommendations for attracting other teachers of color (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Simon et al., 2015).

Districts that effectively select and hire teachers of color **actively work to counter bias in the selection and hiring process**. Racial, ethnic, and cultural biases shape definitions and measurements of effective teaching. For example, some educators assume subjects that involve a deep understanding of math, technology, and science can't be effectively taught by Latinos or other instructors of color. To counter this, the research literature suggests that districts may wish to *train administrators and teachers who are involved in hiring to recognize implicit bias and use behavior-based interviewing techniques to reveal candidates' experience, knowledge, and strengths* to increase the hiring of culturally and linguistically diverse teacher candidates (Chalkboard Project, 2017; State of Washington, King County, 2017; Marrero, 2018; Rogers-Ard et al., 2013).

Districts that effectively select and hire teachers of color also use **multiple measures to evaluate the qualifications of applicants**. Teachers' certifications, education, and experience are not always the best predictors of their performance in the classroom and may function as gatekeepers for teachers of color. The research literature suggests that districts may wish to *use multiple measures—including performance-based tasks—during the hiring process* to resolve some of these limitations and support the recruitment of a diverse workforce. For example, districts can invite candidates to perform a sample lesson or submit a video of a previous lesson to

incorporate important measures—such as teaching style, management techniques, and fit—into hiring (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006; Konoske-Graf et al., 2016; Wurtzel & Curtis, 2008).

### **Practices for onboarding and retaining teachers of color**

Districts that effectively onboard and retain teachers of color offer **competitive compensation and benefits**. Teachers of color are less likely to be satisfied with their salary, compared with White teachers, due to lower rates of pay, less teaching experience, lack of available career options, placement in public schools with fewer resources, and less satisfaction with the way their schools are run. The research literature suggests that districts may wish to *invest in all teachers' salaries to reduce costly turnover*. It may also be helpful to provide competitive compensation packages that are commensurate with other professions and with those of peer teachers. If higher pay is not an option, consider other supports, such as *providing resources for field trips, special programs, professional development, and leadership opportunities and supporting tuition and student loan forgiveness procedures* that can slightly mitigate low pay (Balu, Béteille, & Loeb, 2009; Boser, 2011; Grissom, Viano, & Selin, 2016; Konoske-Graf et al., 2016).

Districts that effectively onboard and retain teachers of color also **strategically and intentionally place teachers of color in schools**. Teachers of color are more likely to be placed in schools with weak organizational conditions, poor leadership, and difficult working conditions, which increases the likelihood of attrition. Before placement, the research literature suggests that districts *consider the organizational conditions of the school, the strength of the school's leadership team, and overall fit, as well as how assignments are aligned with new hires' content expertise*. The literature also recommends that districts *ensure teachers' experience level matches students' need* and consider a cycle of deployment and redeployment in high-need schools (Behrstock & Coggshall, 2009; Chalkboard Project, 2017; Educators 4 Excellence—Minnesota, 2015; Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2017; Simon et al., 2015; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Wurtzel & Curtis, 2008).

Districts that effectively onboard and retain teachers of color often design and implement **high-quality induction and early support** for new teachers of color. Dealing with low expectations for students, lack of support, inequity in school policies, micro-aggressions, and bias leads to feelings of isolation, dissatisfaction, and burnout, particularly among teachers of color. The research literature suggests that districts *provide new teachers of color with the opportunity to work collaboratively with other educators, participate in support groups for new teachers, and be mentored by trained, qualified colleagues*—particularly other teachers of color. The research literature also recommends reduced workloads for new teachers, as well as opportunities for professional development and growth early in new hires' tenure (Behrstock & Coggshall, 2009; Chalkboard Project, 2017; Educators 4 Excellence—Minnesota, 2015; Konoske-Graf et al., 2016; Marrero, 2018; Simon et al., 2015; Wurtzel & Curtis, 2008).

Finally, districts that effectively onboard and retain teachers of color have often **built the capacity of school leaders to improve working conditions**. Dissatisfaction with school leadership, especially regarding a lack of instructional autonomy and influence in school

decisions, leads to high turnover rates among teachers of color. The research literature suggests that districts offer ongoing professional learning opportunities for school leaders to develop the skills to support diverse students and staff members and support teachers of color to become school and district leaders. Districts may also wish to nurture leadership that promotes inclusion, tolerance, and acceptance throughout the school; invests in mentorship and leadership opportunities for educators of color; and ensures autonomy and respect are provided to teachers of color (Boser, 2011; Carver-Thomas; 2018; Grissom et al., 2016; Marrero, 2018; Martin, 2011).

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