



Ten Essential Questions to Support Teachers of Color

Learning Forward Virtual Conference 2020

Teach Plus
www.teachplus.org



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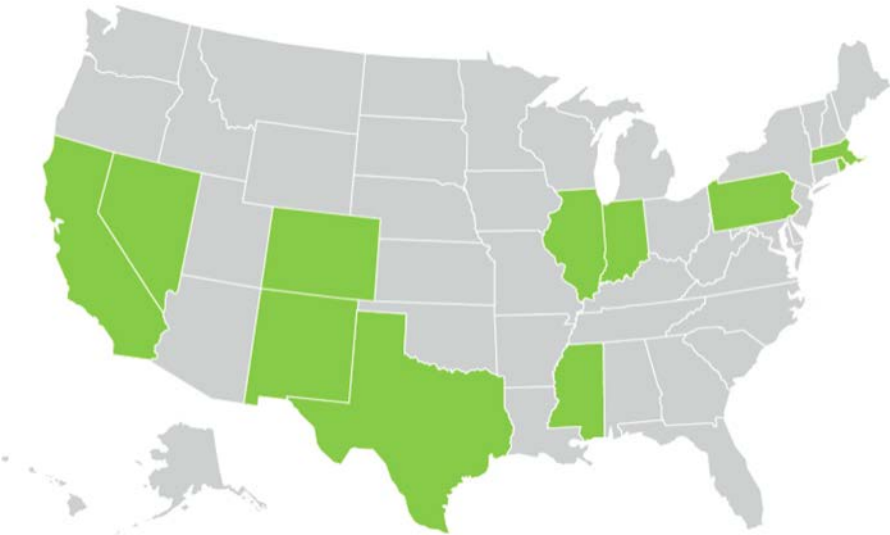
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Teach Plus Teacher Leadership



452

Leading Instructional
Change in their Schools
and Districts

321

Leading Policy and
Systems Change in their
State

773

Total Teach Plus Teacher
Leaders addressing
educational equity at the local,
state, and national levels

Why are schools and districts struggling to grow and support a **diverse teaching workforce**?



What we observe in schools...

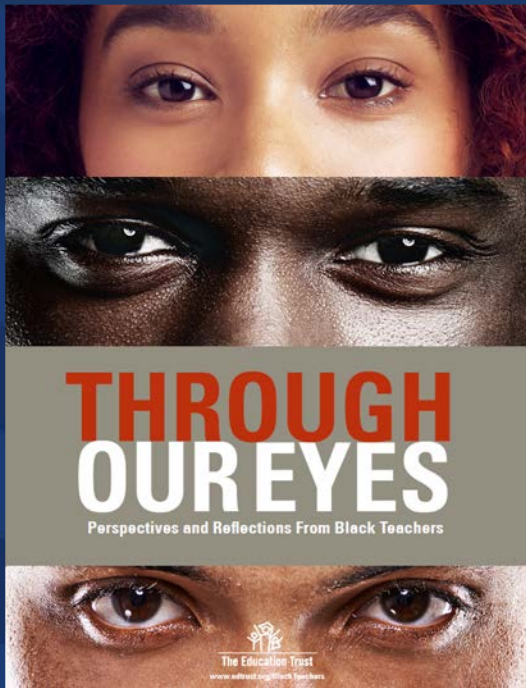
- + More than 50 percent of all our students are people of color.
(U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2016)
- + Teachers of color make up just 20 percent of our educator workforce.
(Taie & Goldring, 2017)
- + Teachers of color are more likely to leave schools when compared to their White counterparts.
(Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017)



Why is this a problem?

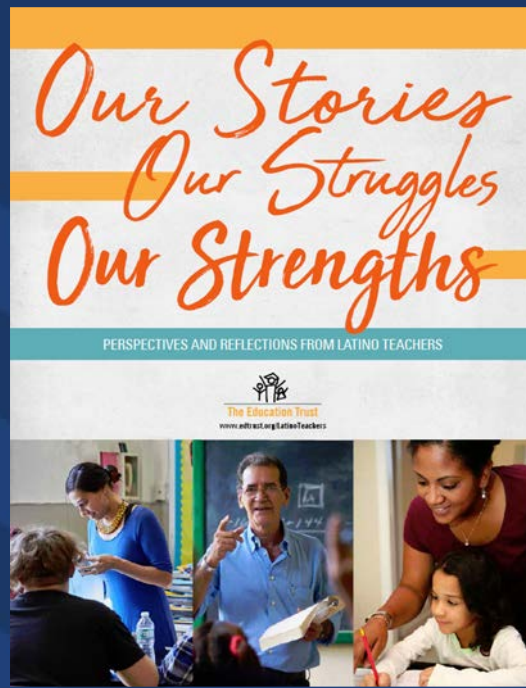
- + All students benefit from having a diverse teaching workforce.
(Cherng & Halpin, 2016)
- + Teachers of color are particularly beneficial for students of color.
(Dee, 2014; Gershenson, Hart, Lindsay, & Papageorge, 2017)
- + Teacher shortages are driven by high turnover.
(Ingersoll & May, 2011; Sutchter, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016)

Why are **teachers of color leaving** and what can schools, districts, and states do?



*Through Our Eyes:
Perspectives and
Reflections From
Black Teachers*

Education Trust
(2016)



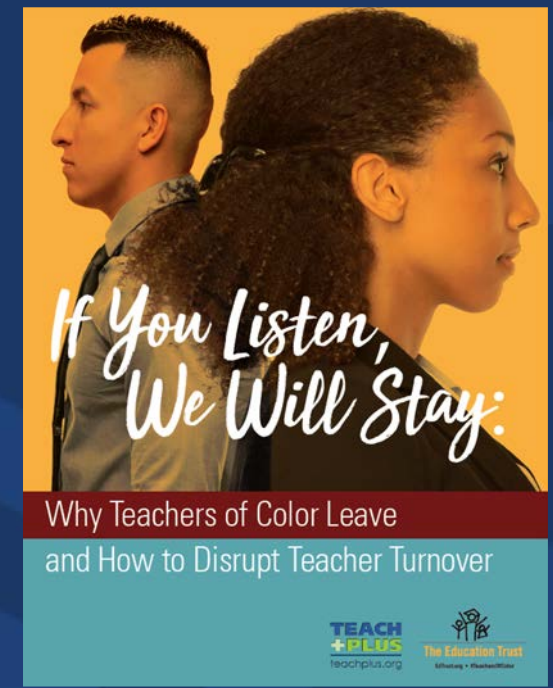
*Our Stories, Our
Struggles, Our
Strengths:
Perspectives and
Reflections From
Latino Teachers*

Education Trust
(2018)



*Diversifying the
Teaching Profession:
How to Recruit and
Retain Teachers of
Color*

Learning Policy
Institute (2018)



*If You Listen, We Will
Stay: Why Teachers of
Color Leave and How
to Disrupt Teacher
Turnover*


Education Trust &
Teach Plus (2019)

Our research



- + Joint research partnership between **The Education Trust & Teach Plus**
- + **Focus Groups**
Conducted focus groups with 88 teachers of color across the country
- + **Case studies**
Developed case studies of two district offices, three traditional public schools, and two public charter schools.

For the focus groups, *five challenges* emerged that teachers of color face in the workforce:



1) *They experience an antagonistic work culture that leaves them feeling unwelcome and/or invisible.*

2) *They feel undervalued because they take on more than their fair share of responsibility but are not recognized or compensated for the work that they do.*

3) *They feel that they are deprived of agency and autonomy in their schools because of an inability to tailor their teaching to the population of students they serve.*

4) *They feel that they are navigating unfavorable working conditions, which lack the supports needed for them to grow as professionals.*

5) *They bear the high cost of being a teacher of color, which takes a toll on them financially and psychologically.*

Think Ahead...

Are your schools welcoming environments for all teachers? How do you know?

In the case studies, *five solutions* emerged that could keep teachers of color in the workforce:

1) *Schools should be places that culturally affirm teachers of color, i.e., where the goals and values of the school match up with the goals and values of the teachers.*

2) *Schools should be places that affirm a teacher's humanity and racial identity allowing teachers of color to feel free to be their authentic selves.*

3) *Principals should create schools where they empower and invest in teachers, i.e., by providing pathways to leadership, informal and formal opportunities for mentorship, and the freedom to tailor teaching to the population of students in the classroom.*

4) *School leaders should place a premium on building a schoolwide family where it's easy to build relationships, find a mentor, and hold each other accountable.*

5) *District leaders need to make retaining teachers of color a priority by emphasizing methods of compensation for the extra work these teachers take on, and prioritizing hiring and placement of teachers of color to build cohorts and reduce isolation.*

Think Ahead...

How do your district's professional development and learning offerings support diversity and equity?

What school, district, and state leaders can do to retain teachers of color:

- 1) Value teachers of color by providing loan forgiveness, service scholarships, loan repayment incentives, and relocation incentives for teachers coming into the field.*
- 2) Collect and disaggregate data (by race/ethnicity) on teacher recruitment, hiring, and retention.*
- 3) Invest in the recruitment, preparation, and development of strong, diverse leaders committed to positive working conditions for a diverse workforce.*
- 4) Empower teachers of color by ensuring that curriculum, learning environments, and work environments are inclusive and respectful of all racial and ethnic groups.*

Recommendation #1

Value teachers of color by providing loan forgiveness, service scholarships, loan repayment incentives, and relocation incentives for teachers coming into the field.

- + Compensation is important for all teachers, and it is not just relegated to teacher pay. The research shows teachers of color take on more responsibilities inside and outside of the classroom that often go unrecognized.
- + Therefore, school districts should provide additional financial compensation for expanded duties and responsibilities (e.g., mentorship, translation, etc.), promotional opportunities, and recognition. This would ease the financial burden that teachers of color face as they navigate the profession.

Recommendation #2

Collect and disaggregate data (by race/ethnicity) on teacher recruitment, hiring, and retention.

- + Data should be publicly available and user-friendly. Not only will this data reveal shortages in demographics, but it will also identify areas with greatest potential to transform school climates.
- + School climate and exit interview data should also be collected and disaggregated to fully explore teachers' experiences in schools with support and professional development. There is no way of knowing the perceptions of teachers without asking them about their experiences.
- + With this data, leaders should identify and rectify racial bias in interactions among educators through professional development and ongoing training in cultural competence, racial equity, and unconscious bias. Surveys of teachers should also examine their experiences with race and racism, which would improve school teaching conditions that play a role in the retention of teachers of color.

From Research to Action: Illinois



- **Communications**

- Three authors recorded a video podcast for a series hosted by the Illinois Principals Association about how principals could improve recruitment and retention of teachers of color
- Six teachers published a set of recommendations in the Illinois Association of School Boards bimonthly magazine
- All six authors presented their work at the Illinois Education Association Representative Assembly, in a breakout session

- **Impact:**

- One teacher shared the work with her local superintendent, and secured a commitment to create and provide funding for an affinity group for teachers of color in the district.
- Two teachers shared the work to a consortium of 30 suburban HR directors. After sharing and discussion, the HR directors agreed to all ask their districts to fund \$5,000 stipends for alumni of color who come back to student teach in their district
- State Board planned a \$5m increase in diverse educator recruitment, pre-Covid



IPA Talks Interview

Recommendation #3

Invest in the recruitment, preparation, and development of strong, diverse leaders committed to positive working conditions for a diverse workforce.

- + Committed and invested leaders are a key component to diversifying the teacher workforce. This means leaders at all levels must reflect on one's understanding of race and racism and engage with how race influences their work. Without an understanding of how racism and systemic oppression play a role in the schooling institution, it's impossible to address the needs of teachers of color.
- + This starts with creating a school culture that nurtures, welcomes, and makes teachers of color feel like they belong. It also means creating the space for teachers of color to be their authentic selves both as human beings and as people of color. Affirming their cultures in the school will also allow teachers of color to build strong, positive relationships with other teachers, their students, and administrators.

Recommendation #4

Empower teachers of color by ensuring curriculum and learning and work environments are inclusive and respectful of all racial ethnic groups.

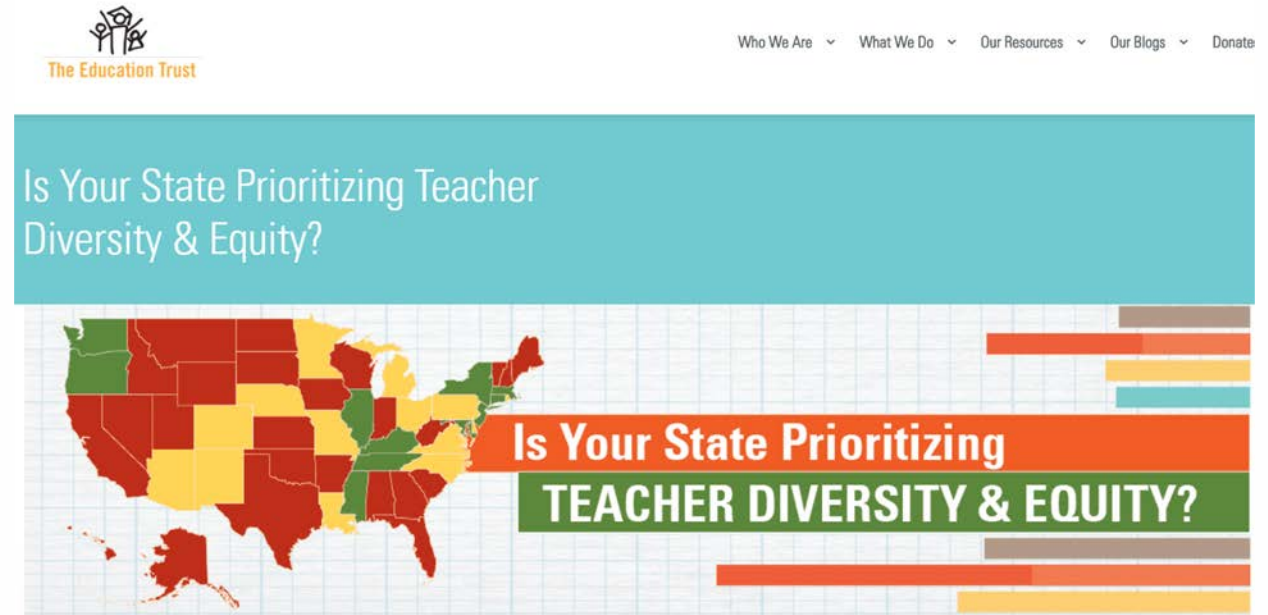
- + This means giving teachers the autonomy to tailor their instructional practices and curricula and make them relevant to the students they serve. It is equally important for district and school leaders to eliminate racial barriers to leadership opportunities, including serving on district advisory committees, teaching advanced courses, and mentoring new teachers.
- + Professional learning and development opportunities should be focused explicitly on issues of equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. Leaders can create support networks for teachers of color that provide mentorship, camaraderie, and professional development.
- + Finally, leaders should create a space for teachers to advocate for themselves and their students. By routinely seeking formal and informal opportunities to check in with their teachers about what's working and what's not, leaders can ensure every person in the building feels like they belong and can thrive.

Teach Plus Texas Ready to Lead

Through the Ready to Lead Fellowship, five outstanding teachers of color from across Texas have founded local teacher organizations dedicated to recruiting students of color into the teaching profession via high quality routes, and to retaining teachers of color through advocacy and locally driven strategies. The program is a variation of Teach Plus' Change Agent Program model.

Data, Policy, and Best Practices

- + Want to better understand the policy context regarding teacher diversity in your state? **The Education Trust** has conducted a 50 state scan of data and policies and identified best practices. See what they learned here: edtrust.org/educator-diversity





Ten Essential Questions

- + We'd like to invite you to join other participants in a discussion around what your schools or district are doing to address teacher diversity.
- + The “Ten Essential Questions” are written for school leaders, but if you are a system, district, or state leader, please calibrate your responses to the appropriate level.
- + When you are placed into your small groups, please introduce yourself to one another, identify a note-taker, and a timekeeper.

Part 1. How are schools and districts doing in supporting, retaining, and growing teachers of color?

Essential Question #1

How well does our school affirm teachers of color?

Essential Question #2

Do teachers of color feel welcome in our school?

Essential Question #3

How well do our school's teachers reflect the kind of diversity we believe our students need?

Part 2. What are schools and districts doing in supporting, retaining, and growing teachers of color?

Essential Question #4

What data and evidence does our school collect to understand teacher diversity and the perspectives of teachers of color?

Essential Question #5

How do our school's recruitment, hiring, and induction practices reflect a commitment to diversity and equity?

Essential Question #6

How do our school's professional development and learning offerings reflect a commitment to diversity and equity?

Essential Question #7

What does our school do to ensure that our leaders are prepared and able to foster an inclusive and affirming culture for teachers of color?

Part 3. What will schools and districts do to better support, retain, and grow teachers of color?

Essential Question #8

How is a commitment to teacher diversity part of our school's overall mission, strategy, and actions? What more should be done?

Essential Question #9

What school policies, programs, or systems need to be addressed to better support, retain, and grow teachers of color?

Essential Question #10

What more can leaders in our schools do to better support, retain, and grow teachers of color?

Would you like to learn more about our work in recruiting, supporting, retaining, and growing teachers of color?

Connect with us:

research@teachplus.org

 [@teachplus](https://twitter.com/teachplus)
 [@tplusresearch](https://twitter.com/tplusresearch)