



Recruiting & Retaining Educators of Color:

**Hiring Practices to Diversify Your Candidate Pool &
Strategies to Support and Retain Educators**



#SEENHEARDREFLECTED

Addressing California's Teacher of Color Shortage

By The Education Trust-West and California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA)



Recruiting and Retaining Educators of Color Matters

Educators of color:

teachers, assistant principals, and principals in the P-12 system who are Native American, Black, Latinx, Pacific Islander, Asian, Middle Eastern, Arab, and/or multi-racial.

Resources

- [Seen, Heard, Reflected: A Look at California's Teacher of Color Shortage](#)
- [Resources and research from National Center for Teacher Residencies](#)

All students benefit from having educators and administrators of color. Studies show that when schools are more racially and ethnically diverse, students' academic performance improves, more positive role modeling occurs, teachers and students tend to be more culturally aware, and students are less likely to hold implicit biases in adulthood.¹

While the number of educators of color has grown in recent years, studies also show that schools and districts struggle to recruit and retain newly hired educators of color. Educators of color, who are more likely to enter the profession from alternate career pathways, cite experiencing an antagonistic school culture, navigating unfavorable conditions, and bearing high costs as reasons for leaving the profession.⁴ Improving both recruitment and retention of educators of color is critical to building inclusive and welcoming learning environments for both students and educators.

Recruitment Tips

How to reach a more diverse pool of candidates:

- Commit to “Grow Your Own (GYO)” programs:
 - Plan prospective educator workshops and ask local schools, students, and community members to promote them.
 - Create career programs that encourage high school students to return to teach in their local community.
 - Incentivize family members, volunteers, and school-site personnel to become substitute teachers or para-professionals.
- Build relationships with local universities and colleges, career-transition programs, community-based organizations, afterschool programs, credentialing programs, and local industry human resource departments.²
- Create articulation agreements and dual enrollment pathways with local community colleges to help create teacher pipelines in rural and hard-to-staff areas.¹
- Advertise to job-alike careers and associations of underrepresented populations.

Retention Tips

How to support educators of color:

- Use Title II and other sources of funding to mentor and support new teachers with coaching and other robust professional, academic, and emotional support as well as school-based actions such as reduced work-loads, collaborative planning time, and seminars.⁵
- Provide formal and informal opportunities for mentorship between veteran and new teachers of color who share critical identities, and compensate mentor teachers. Establish affinity groups.⁴
- Build a schoolwide family⁴ by celebrating staff milestones and finding ways for staff to connect with one another.

How to create culturally affirming school environments:

- Educate school leaders on affirming teachers’ humanity and racial or ethnic identity through anti-bias trainings.

How to appeal to a diverse pool of candidates:

- Offer and/or help candidates apply for scholarships and loan forgiveness programs to help pay for credentialing.¹
- Pay substitute teachers market rate and loyalty bonuses. Offer higher pay for completing trainings.
- Identify multiple-subject teachers with skills in hard-to-hire subject areas and offer them financial incentives to earn a second credential.

How to improve existing recruitment processes:

- Implement holistic candidate selection criteria not based solely on GPA and test scores, such as in-service teaching effectiveness and demonstrating culturally-responsive teaching practices.^{1,3}
- Rethink timelines so hiring starts earlier. Candidates of color are often saddled with higher loan debt, so may be more attracted to positions that offer a secure hire soon after graduation.¹
- Ask teachers of color to serve on hiring committees, and consider compensation.
- Provide opportunities for community stakeholders, students, and families to screen candidates.
- Invest in multiple paths (like night/weekend classes) to the teaching profession and provide ongoing support to ensure retention of new staff.³
- Collect and disaggregate data (by race and ethnicity) on recruitment and hiring.

- Provide interdepartmental trainings to ensure that curriculum and learning environments are inclusive and respectful of all racial and ethnic groups.⁴
- Honor the impact that educators of color have on students by hosting staff celebrations.

How to improve existing retention processes:

- Partner with local teacher preparation programs to offer high-retention pathways, such as teacher residencies.^{1,5}
- Empower and invest in teachers’ professional growth by offering professional learning and covering conference and travel costs, and providing a path to career advancement into administration and educational leadership opportunities.
- Adopt a priority at the district and/or county office of education level that incentivizes retention of teachers of color.⁴
- Collect and disaggregate race-specific data on turnover rates, job satisfaction, and support teachers need to stay in the classroom.⁴

California has one of the most racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse and vibrant school populations in the country. As classrooms continue to become more diverse, there is a growing need to cultivate educators that are well prepared and who reflect the student population. While the COVID-19 pandemic has upended schooling and the economy, it has also spotlighted known educational inequities and the ominous reality that they could be exacerbated. The pandemic, along with our country's current racial reckoning movement, presents California with a unique window to double-down on previous investments towards an educator workforce that is more reflective of our student demographics. Now is the time to sustain and expand the educator of color pipeline so that we ensure that all students, especially low-income students of color, have access and opportunities to rigorous and engaging learning, both through distance learning and in-person instruction.

Administrators, board members, and staff at the schoolsite, district, and county office level play a critical role in shaping a student's school experience. This guide is designed for all education stakeholders to start conversations and explore ideas on how to better recruit, hire, and retain a diverse teacher and administrator workforce.

Endnotes

1. Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). *Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.
2. Gentilucci, J. L., & Brescia, J. J. (2017). *Teacher recruitment in California: An analysis of effective strategies*. San Luis Obispo, CA: Veritas Research and Evaluation Group.
3. Warner, S.R., & Duncan, E. (2019). *A vision and guidance for a diverse and learner-ready teacher workforce*. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.
4. Dixon, R.D., Griffin, A.R., & Teoh, M.B. (2019). "If you listen, we will stay: Why teachers of color leave and how to disrupt teacher turnover.", *The Education Trust & Teach Plus*, Washington DC.
5. Darling-Hammond, L., Goldhaber, D., Strunk, K.O., & Sutchter, L. (2018) *Teacher supply falls short of demand in high-needs fields, locations*. CA: Getting Down to Facts II. Page 12.

**For more information on the
#SeenHeardReflected campaign,
go to bit.ly/seenheardreflected.**



The Education Trust—West



California County Superintendents
Educational Services Association