Educator Diversity Matters:

Strategies for Charter Leaders to Recruit, Hire, and Sustain Teachers of Color

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Introduction

The role a school and its teachers play in a child's life is undeniable. Both influence how children understand the world they live in, their place in that world, and their perceptions of future possibilities. Schools where students have opportunities to engage with multicultural curriculum materials, experience culturally responsive and sustaining school climates, and learn in classrooms led by teachers from racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse backgrounds are especially impactful. Students attending schools with these characteristics are more likely to:

- develop positive identities,
- develop cultural competencies that can combat stereotypes,
- reduce unconscious biases, and
- develop greater social cohesion.[1]

Furthermore, students of color who have teachers of color are also less likely to experience exclusionary discipline practices and are more likely to improve their academic performance and graduate high school.[2] Increasing teacher diversity is thus an effective strategy for creating more equitable learning environments and outcomes for all students. Students of color attending schools that embrace these principles benefit from the *mirrors* and *windows* teachers of color present:

- the *mirror* that makes it possible for them to see their identity and culture represented in affirming and sustaining ways, and
- the *window* that allows them to understand and develop empathy for the experiences of others.

In our increasingly diverse society, representation matters. Research shows that **all students benefit** from having a diverse group of teachers that come from a variety of backgrounds as they prepare to enter an increasingly global society.[3]

Yet, as the percentage of students of color increases and becomes the majority in this country, there is a gap in representation for teachers of color. Increasing teacher diversity is of particular importance to the charter school sector as charter schools are more likely to serve students of color than traditional public schools. Based on pre-pandemic data, approximately 70% of the students attending charter schools were students of color while only 32% of teachers in charter schools were teachers of color.[4] Additionally, in light of recent racial tensions and social unrest, it is crucial that more teachers of color are present in education to provide all students with more perspectives on how we can realize more interracial respect, understanding, and empathy. Thus, it is imperative that charter schools and their leaders leverage their autonomy and responsiveness in efforts to recruit, hire, and sustain an even greater proportion of teachers of color.

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[1] Carter et al., 2013; The Education Trust, 2017; Wells, 2014

[2] Dee, 2004; Eddy & Easton-Brooks, 2011; Lindsay & Hart, 2017

[3] Cherng & Halpin, 2016

[4] Student demographic statistics are estimated based on data from the Common Core of Data for the 2019–2020 school year. Teacher demographic statistics are based on data from the 2017–2018 National Teacher and Principal Survey.

This publication is designed to support charter school leaders' efforts to achieve educational equity by focusing on one key strategy—building a pipeline of teachers of color through effective *recruiting, hiring, and sustaining* strategies:

◀ Section 1 provides an overview of the research on the importance of having a diverse teacher workforce, and in particular more teachers of color, who enact pedagogies and practices that are culturally responsive and sustaining.

◀ Section 2 features strategies Drew Charter School and DSST are successfully implementing to recruit, hire, and sustain teachers of color.

◀ Section 3 highlights key strategies for recruiting, hiring, and sustaining teachers of color. It also contains reflection questions for you to consider with your staff, as well as resources that can support your charter school.

SUSTAINING VS. RETAINING

In this publication, we primarily use the term sustaining rather than retaining teachers of color. According to Dr. Saroja Warner, "In the work to increase educator diversity, the goal of retaining teachers of color is best met when we create conditions in schools and in the profession where those teachers are valued, safe, and thrive. Changing our focus from *retaining* of teachers of color to *sustaining* teachers of color underscores the importance of establishing cultures within schools that are supportive and welcoming for teachers of color. The theory of action is that if school leaders create culturally affirming, safe, and inclusive schools where teachers feel sustained in their work to advance educational equity, then teachers of color will both be attracted to work in those schools and choose to stay. Through establishing such a school culture, teacher retention, particularly for teachers of color, becomes less of an issue."

Section 1 – Research on the Impact of Recruiting, Hiring, and Sustaining Teachers of Color

All students benefit when they experience learning in classrooms led by teachers from diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. Students of color demonstrate greater academic achievement and social-emotional development in classes with teachers of color. The effects are even more pronounced when students of color have teachers of color that match their race or ethnicity. Research has found Black teachers are more likely to have higher academic expectations for Black students, and that Black students are more likely to be placed in advanced courses when they have Black teachers.[5] Having a Black teacher is also associated with other improved outcomes for Black students, including:

performance on standardized tests,[6]	decreases in exclusionary discipline,[7] and	an increased likelihood of attending a four-year college.[8]

Similarly, for Latino/a students, having a Latino/a teacher meant increased opportunities to learn in classrooms where cultural and linguistic diversity were affirmed and valued,[9] which in turn was associated with improved learning outcomes.[10] Latino/a students with Latino/a teachers have fewer unexcused absences on average and attend more school—a sign that Latino/a students are more engaged and more likely to come to school when taught by Latino/a teachers.[11]

White teachers can also benefit from working with teachers of color as they can provide perspectives on how to improve culturally responsive and sustaining education (CRSE) practices. CRSE views diversity, culture, and language as assets and sources of knowledge. As such, CRSE aims to build welcoming and affirming environments for all students through high expectations, rigorous instruction, inclusive curricula and assessments, and ongoing professional learning for educators.[12]

Additionally, teachers of color can also bring differing perspectives and experiences that lend themselves to innovative strategies to address classroom and school-wide challenges. Studies outside the education sector have found that greater employee diversity is linked with stronger organizational outcomes. For instance, a report by McKinsey and Company found that companies that were in the top quartile of

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[5] See this link for a summary of this research: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL-NEI_Educator_Diversity_infographic.pdf

[6] Dee, 2004; Eddy & Easton-Brooks, 2011

[7] Lindsay & Hart, 2017

[8] Gershenson et al., 2018

[9] Lara & Fránquiz, 2015; Monzó & Rueda, 2001

[10] López, 2016

[11] Gottfried et al., 2021

[12] New York State Department of Education, 2019

racial/ethnic diversity were 35% more likely to have financial returns above their industry median.[13] Travis Bristol, an expert in equity and diversifying the teaching profession, reasons that the findings of the McKinsey study naturally extend to education as well:

> " Similar to the realization by the 321 global executives, increasing the number of teachers of color in America's schools can facilitate creative solutions to solving challenging problems - such as improving learning for historically marginalized students. Latino, Asian, and Black teachers are well positioned to bring new ideas to their colleagues on how to make the curriculum culturally responsive, for example. And, the presence of these teachers of color can serve as a sounding board to White teachers attempting to navigate unfamiliar cultural terrain."
>
> *Travis Bristol , PhD[14]*

Racial diversity can benefit White students as well.[14] A recent study found that all students, including White students, have a more favorable perception of teachers of color.[15] Additionally, having racially diverse classmates can support learning for all students. Researchers have documented that exposure to students of different races can prompt the construction of novel ideas and can improve higher-order cognitive skills, including problem-solving.[16] White students can benefit from racially and ethnically diverse learning contexts in that the presence of diverse classmates stimulates an increase in the complexity with which all students approach a given issue. Research shows that including different, divergent perspectives in classroom discourse can lead to the kind of learning outcomes, such as critical thinking and perspective-takin, that all educators value.[17]

The Importance of Supporting and Sustaining Teachers of Color

Cultivating and supporting a diverse teacher workforce requires creating culturally inclusive and sustaining school cultures. National data indicate that Latino/a and Black teachers leave the profession at higher rates than White teachers.[18] One contributing factor typically identified by teachers of color as a reason for leaving teaching is poor working conditions.[19] Teachers of color are more likely to teach in under-resourced schools serving large numbers of students of color, where turnover rates are higher for all teachers.[20]

Additionally, teachers of color may experience more adverse teaching conditions regardless of the quality of the schools in which they teach—from microaggressions to explicit racial discrimination and stereotyping. Many teachers of color report that their colleagues do not respect their expertise as educators

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[13] Hunt et al., 2015

[14] Wells et al., 2016

[15] Cherng & Halpin, 2016

[16] Ancheta, 2013; Antonio et al., 2004

[17] Pitt & Packard, 2012; Sommers et al., 2008

[18] Ingersoll et al., 2019

[19] Bednar & Gicheva, 2017; Carver-Thomas, 2017

[20] Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Simon & Johnson, 2015

and that they are often assigned roles that do not respect their training as educators, such as being the unofficial translator or school disciplinarian.[21]

Increasing teacher diversity can sustain and help retain teachers of color by reducing feelings of isolation, frustration, and fatigue.[22] Increasing teacher diversity can strengthen teacher retention by:[23]

Improving teacher satisfaction

Reducing feelings of isolation, frustration, and fatigue
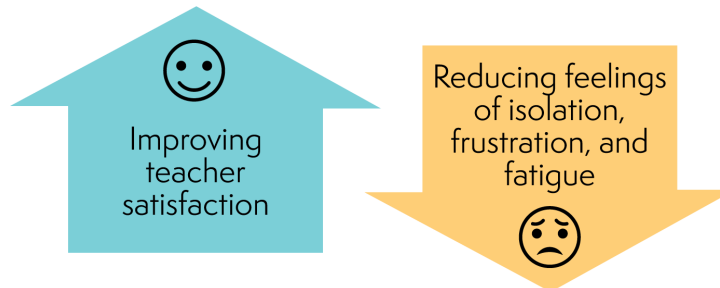
Schools can further help teachers of color feel more connected and supported by creating opportunities to collaborate and network, such as through affinity groups or mentoring structures for new teachers of color.[24] Opportunities for teachers of color to collaborate and design culturally responsive curricula can engender professional respect. Such opportunities can improve retention by providing professional incentives and career advancement. For example, providing Latino/Chicano teachers in one Arizona school district with opportunities to create culturally responsive curricula helped reduce feelings of burnout and helped teachers connect with their students through shared cultural experiences.[25]

Creating school cultures that are inclusive and sustaining—where teachers of color are valued and supported, their expertise recognized, and their accomplishments applauded—can increase the effectiveness of recruiting and retaining teachers of color. Doing so requires charter school leaders to disrupt behaviors and dismantle practices and policies that create barriers to racial equity. Charter school leaders play a critical role as instructional leaders by modeling what it means to be culturally responsive, leading professional learning that addresses implicit bias, and supporting teachers' development of culturally responsive and sustaining practices. In doing so, charter school leaders can create teaching and learning environments that embrace diversity as an asset and foster school cultures that recruit, hire, and sustain teachers of color.[26]

In the following section, we highlight how two charter schools have implemented a number of strategies to recruit, hire, and sustain teachers of color in their organizations.

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[21] Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Griffin, 2018

[22] Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Osler, 2016; Simon & Johnson, 2015

[23] Ingersoll, 2001; Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Sutcher et al., 2016

[24] Carver-Thomas, 2017

[25] Rix, 2021

[26] Warner, 2019; Warner, 2020

Section 2 – Charter School Spotlights

Drew Charter School

Drew Charter School in Atlanta, Georgia, serves pre-K through Grade 12 through two campuses. Their mission is to educate, nurture, and empower all students to achieve their full potential as part of an exemplary, innovative, and equity-centered community. Most students served by Drew are Black (68%). Latino students make up less than 1% of the student population, and White students make up 26%. Additionally, approximately 39% of the students qualify for free-and-reduced-price meals, less than 1% are classified as English learners, and approximately 9% are classified as students with disabilities.

Drew has a representative teacher population with 64% of teachers being Black, 26% White, and 2% Hispanic/Latino. Most teachers at Drew are Black females (56%), and about 15% of teachers are Black males. This is significant considering that nationally the teacher workforce is predominantly White and female (about 80%) and Black men make up less than 2% of the educator workforce.[27]

Strategies for recruiting, hiring, and sustaining teachers of color

Drew is prioritizing a culturally responsive and inclusive culture, recruitment of Black male educators, and local teacher preparation partnerships to recruit, hire, and sustain teachers of color.

Focus on sustaining a culturally responsive and inclusive culture

Leaders at Drew have clearly stated in their strategic plan that their goal is to "ensure that Drew recruits and retains a diverse, highly engaged, top-quality staff that is committed to the mission and vision of the organization." According to Terra Gay, Director of Culture and Equity, "Our commitment to our mission and strategic direction to center equity at our school directly impacts our ability to attract a diverse pool of candidates that are also seeking, and are committed to, cultural inclusion and equity in curriculum and pedagogy."

Drew has effectively achieved racial representation in their teacher workforce. They attribute their success to their focus on creating the type of school culture that not only attracts teachers, particularly teachers of color, but also encourages them to stay at the school. Drew's leaders have fostered an inclusive culture by investing in teacher professional development on culturally responsive pedagogy, cultural competency, teaching about race and racism, developing consciousness of care and equity education, and empathy. Teachers at Drew receive ongoing support for mental health and wellness and are provided resources and opportunities to discuss issues related to culture, race, and racism as a team.

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[27] Borowski & Will, 2021

Teachers also play active roles in operationalizing equity at Drew. They advise school leaders about programming, including writing and revising curriculum to ensure it is inclusive and representative of students' cultures as well as leading professional learning communities on various equity issues. Drew has parent and student equity committees designed to foster belonging for all students and families as members of the school community.

Intentional efforts to recruit and sustain Black male educators

Drew acknowledges and values the important contributions Black male teachers make to supporting positive academic and prosocial outcomes for students, particularly Black boys.[28] As Gay explains, "Part of creating a culture at Drew that is inclusive means making Drew a place where Black male educators and future Black male educators see themselves as members of the Drew community." Leaders have implemented special trainings and mentoring programs and affinity groups, as well as created leadership opportunities to recruit and sustain Black male teachers. These strategies, designed to meet the particular needs of Black male teachers, have contributed to increasing their sense of belonging, value, and growth—all factors associated with these teachers' decisions to stay in the profession and supported by the following quotes:[29]

> " When I arrived at Drew in 2005, I was immediately struck by the number of Black men in classrooms, from kindergarten to middle school. I was supported and mentored by so many of those men. Now that I am in a position to be a mentor myself, I am so appreciative and excited about the direction and intentionality of administrators to officially foster those bonds between the Black male educators in all academies."
>
> *Sterling Slaughter, Sr., STEAM & Social Justice Instructor*

> " I decided to work at Charles R. Drew Charter School because I could see from the outside looking in that this was an educational community which valued diverse people and thought and allowed those positive principles, as well of others, to help in the way that they educate and guide their students. The reason why I have stayed at Drew Charter is because my observations from the outside were only confirmed once I entered the building, especially as a Black male educator who is granted the opportunity to bring my own lived experience to my students. This school helps me to service students in the way I would have loved to be served as a young Black child who never had a Black male educator to look up to."
>
> *Khalil Pettway, Theater Arts/Drama Instructor*

Developing partnerships to recruit and hire teachers through multiple pathways

Drew is also leveraging partnerships with teacher preparation programs to increase teacher diversity, a common strategy for school systems across the nation called "Grow Your Own (GYO) programs." GYO programs typically involve partnerships between school districts or schools, institutions of higher education, and community-based organizations to provide local opportunities for prospective educators to earn college credit or teaching certification simultaneously. In addition to conventional teacher preparation programs, leaders at Drew have invested in partnerships in the metro Atlanta

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[28] Causey, 2020

[29] Griffin & Tackie, 2016

region and nationally, like Georgia State University's CREATE Teacher Residency and Hands on Atlanta. They have leveraged those partnerships to support professional learning for teachers and build bridges that connects Drew to diverse potential teacher talent pools. Gay emphasizes, "We don't have to do a lot of [teacher] recruiting at Drew," which is in part attributable to the positive and productive partnerships Drew has cultivated and the reputation we have earned in the community.

Impact

Leaders at Drew proudly report that staff demographics closely match student demographics. Additionally, leaders at Drew cited the percentage of Black male teachers on staff as further evidence that their efforts to recruit, hire, and sustain teachers of color were having the desired impact. Through the strategies shared, Drew reported they no longer have to put much effort into teacher recruitment as many potential teaching candidates actively seek out Drew for employment.

This evidence of impact was also affirmed by staff surveys that reported largely positive feedback on trainings on equity, race, and cultural responsiveness. Teacher residency candidates have also shared that they feel like they can be more authentic as Black educators.

Parents, too, feel like they can be more involved and shape the school's culture at Drew through committees like the Parent Equity Committee and a Parent Advisory Committee. Drew uses frequent check-ins, focus groups, and parent surveys to learn about how families are being impacted by Drew. One parent reported of her child's experience: "I am so impressed with the understanding of racism and privilege that Drew has educated her about."

DSST Public Schools

DSST Public Schools is a network of 16 charter middle and high schools in historically underserved communities in Denver and Aurora, Colorado. Their mission is to "transform urban public education by eliminating educational inequity and preparing all students for success in college and the 21st century." The students served by DSST are predominantly students of color: 59% Latino, 19% Black, 13% White, 4% Asian, 4% two or more races, and 1% other. Among them, 70% qualify for free-and-reduced-price meals and 38% are identified as English learners. Additionally, 11% of students receive special education services while 32% receive multilingual services and 100% of graduates have been admitted to college.

DSST has a diverse staff and teacher population and has greater representation of teachers of color than both the state and national average.[30] Among teachers in DSST, 71% identify as White and 26% identify as teachers of color.[31]

One of the key equity initiatives that DSST is responding to is the Black Excellence Resolution (BER) that was passed by Denver Public School's Board of Education in February 2019. It required all schools in Denver to implement Black Excellence Plans by the 2020–21 school year. Schools must now dedicate tools, resources, and talent to ensure that Black student success is prioritized. Therefore, each DSST school is required to create a Black Excellence Plan that is informed by student outcome data and addresses disproportionalities and disparities across student populations in special education, gifted and talented participation, and discipline.

For DSST, the BER represents targeted universalism.[32] These efforts also highlight barriers and obstacles for multiple groups including multilingual learners, students receiving special education services, students and staff identifying as LGBTQIA, and Latino/a students. This is a critical lens given that 59% of DSST's students and 51% of their staff of color are Latino/a. Due to recognizing the universalism of the BER, DSST can address cross-functional experiences for Black students, staff, and families that may also impact additional groups and elevate the needs of staff and students who are neurodiverse or participate in Advanced Placement and STEM certificates. Looking forward, Denver Public Schools is working to increase awareness of Black Excellence Plans among school-based staff and community members to help build district-wide coherency. Plans for the 2021–22 school year included a more explicit focus on Black family engagement. Consequently, DSST has refined its approach to hiring and sustaining teachers of color. Each school now has clear goals for hiring and retaining teachers of color, and DSST has underscored the importance of embedding culturally responsive practices into classrooms.

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[30] Schaeffer, 2021

[31] There were 3% who did not choose to answer the question or left the answer blank.

[32] Targeted universalism is a framework that establishes universal goals for all groups concerned yet pursues these goals with targeted strategies for different groups based on how they are situated culturally and historically. See Targeted Universalism: Our Path Forward for more on how targeted universalism promises equitable learning environments for all students.

Strategies for recruiting, hiring, and sustaining teachers of color

DSST is prioritizing educator diversity in strategic planning, addressing bias in the hiring process, and community engagement to recruit, hire, and sustain teachers of color.

Prioritizing educator diversity in strategic planning and recruiting

Establishing goals is a critical first step to increase teacher diversity. In accordance with BER, each DSST school has defined goals for increasing the racial diversity of teachers to serve its students more equitably. For instance, one school is aiming to retain 90% of teachers of color and have 50% of new hires be teachers of color for the 2022–23 school year.

Schools also need to dedicate resources to achieve teacher diversity goals. According to Dr. Aaron J. Griffen, Chief Equity Officer at DSST, "We understand that what we value is understood in relation to what we budget for, and our funding models are designed for us to put our money where our priorities are." As evidence of DSST's commitment to increasing teacher diversity, they have allocated funding to implement the following strategies:

- establishing an apprentice teacher program,
- attending recruitment fairs specifically targeting teachers of color,
- recruiting at community events,
- providing hiring bias training,
- providing stipends and specific development for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaison roles, and
- creating a full-time Community Engagement Manager (CEM) for each DSST school.

Addressing bias in the hiring process

Research has shown that many teachers of color fall out of the pipeline at the hiring stage due to racial biases that play out in the hiring process. DSST has been proactive in addressing potential biases in the hiring process. Leaders have invested resources in examining their recruitment and selection practices, policies, and processes to identify where bias may be hindering their efforts to hire highly qualified teachers of color. They have also revised interview protocols to help them develop a more comprehensive understanding of candidates, moving beyond the conventional test scores and other measures of what makes for a good teacher. DSST emphasizes the importance of using the interview and vetting process to determine candidates' beliefs about students and staff from diverse backgrounds and experiences and to understand their dispositions on equity, inclusion, and belonging. DSST has also implemented training for staff involved in the hiring and selection process to address personal and systemic biases that may be present.

> " I believe that any and all training that asks us to pause and deepen our self-awareness about the biases we hold and how to move forward with better intentionality to correct for those is invaluable. Hiring people is a deeply human endeavor, and so knowing and accepting our own human weaknesses allows us to show up more fully for our candidates."
>
> *Caroline Guadiani, School Director, DSST Green Valley Ranch Middle School*

> " It's easy to approach hiring from the lens that you carry based on your own life and educational history. Having training specifically targeted at identifying and avoiding bias in hiring processes ensures that we onboard a workforce that represents our whole community and honors everyone's experience and identity throughout our hiring process."
>
> *Elin Curry, DSST Byers Campus*

Providing support that sustains teachers through community engagement

Based on analyses of school culture and climate survey data in the wake of the pandemic, DSST learned that teachers and families were feeling disengaged from one another and struggling to develop the kinds of relationships necessary for ensuring students were well supported. In response, DSST created new full-time CEM positions at each campus for the 2021-22 school year to help foster true partnerships with families and communities to better appreciate, value, and support the social, emotional, and wellness needs of students. CEMs also build regional partnerships that support the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. Ultimately, CEMs sustain the work of teachers by helping them deeply understand the needs of students and families, thereby better positioning teachers to be responsive to the needs of the community.

Impact

Although it is too early to measure the impact of the BER on DSST schools, staff perspectives on the benefits of training on biases in the hiring process and strengthening connections with communities and families through CEMs are indicators that the charter organization is establishing a culture that will recruit, hire, and sustain a greater proportion of teachers of color.

Section 3 – Strategies for Recruiting, Hiring, and Sustaining Teachers of Color

Inspired by the charter sector spotlights in Section 2 and prior research in Section 1, this section provides strategies for recruiting, hiring, and sustaining teachers of color. A prerequisite of this work is for charter schools to develop environments that are or will be supportive of teachers of color. To do so, charter organizations need to incorporate values for equity, CRSE, and recruiting, hiring, and sustaining teachers of color into their mission, vision, and values. Correspondingly, charter schools will need to integrate specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound (SMART) goals relating to these areas into their strategic plans.[33] From this foundation, charter leaders can more effectively implement the following strategies for recruiting, hiring, and sustaining teachers of color.

Recruiting

Strategy	Reflection Questions	Resources
Use data to inform recruitment strategies. Charter schools can effectively recruit teachers of color by analyzing recruitment, interview, hiring, retention, and attrition trends by race and other categories of interest. This can then help refine goals for recruiting teachers of color, such as targeting Black male educators.	• Do gaps currently exist between teacher and student demographics? If so, how large are these gaps? How can you adjust recruitment practices to bring teacher demographics more in line with student demographics? • What trends are present in the race of candidates that are interviewed and offered positions? Does this reflect student demographics? Does it align with your strategic plan? If necessary, how can you adjust?	National Best Practices: Teacher Recruitment and Pipelines
Partner with organizations that prepare future teachers of color. Charters can expand the pool of potential teachers by forming relationships with higher education institutions that predominantly serve future educators of color, like Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Charter leaders can also form relationships and advertise job openings in professional networks that serve educators of color to expand recruitment.	• Are there local HBCUs, Hispanic-serving institutions, or other institutions that train prospective educators of color? How can you advertise job postings with these institutions? • Can you establish a partnership with these institutions to provide prospective educators with practicums or internships on your campus? • Do local universities or distance education programs provide apprenticeship programs that align with your school's values? If so, how can you build relationships with these prospective partners? • Are there professional fraternities, sororities, or other networks of color that can advertise your job openings?	The Educator Diversity Playbook

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[33] The Education Trust-New York, 2019

Strategy	Reflection Questions	Resources
Develop Grow Your Own (GYO) programs. Given disparities in student debt by race,[34] GYO programs can be an effective strategy for recruiting future educators of color who intimately understand their communities. These programs can provide paraprofessionals, community members, non-certified staff, or high school students with financial incentives, career opportunities, and/or college credit to enter the profession.	• Are you providing opportunities for paraprofessionals, tutors, or specialists to become teachers? • Are there local GYO programs that can provide loan forgiveness, service scholarships, or other incentives for prospective educators? Are there local teacher residencies you can leverage? Can you offer additional incentives or support for prospective educators?	A 50-State Scan of Grow Your Own Teacher Policies and Programs How to Start a Grow-Your-Own Teacher Program Webinar Series

PATHWAYS2TEACHING

Recruiting future teachers who understand the local needs and are culturally competent can start as early as high school. Pathways2Teaching is one such GYO program that works with high schools to provide 11th and 12th graders with opportunities to earn up to nine college credit hours while in high school. Margarita Bianco, Ed.D., founded the program in the Denver/Boulder area, and it has expanded to schools in Louisiana. This program emphasizes critical pedagogies, teaching as social justice, inclusion, and the importance of family and community to help students prepare for college and consider future careers as educators. All interested juniors and seniors can participate; prerequisites that function as barriers to historically marginalized students have been intentionally omitted to broaden inclusivity and provide all students with opportunities to develop positive identities. Students have weekly opportunities to tutor elementary students to develop their teaching skills. Participating students also conduct and present on research projects that examine historical and contemporaneous issues in education that relate to inequities and social justice, such as examining disparities in school discipline by race. To date, hundreds of students of color and students from historically marginalized communities have earned college credit and enrolled in postsecondary programs by participating in this program.

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[34] Rafa & Roberts, 2020; Scott-Clayton & Li, 2016

Hiring

Strategy	Reflection Questions	Resources
Form diverse hiring teams. It is crucial that hiring staff are diverse in terms of race, culture, sexual orientation, and other relevant characteristics that align with your students and communities. A diverse hiring team can ensure that multiple cultural lenses are used to screen teacher candidates.	• Who is involved in the interviewing and hiring process? What are the racial and cultural identities of staff involved in hiring and how do they align with your students? Are certain groups omitted? Who else can you involve in the process?	Nine Strategies for Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining Diverse Teachers
Reduce bias of hiring staff. It is essential to train hiring staff on their implicit biases. Doing so can help ensure that teachers of color are not screened out because of biases rooted in racism and cultural differences. It can also help your staff become more clear on your school's hiring goals as well as how to address unfair hiring practices.	• What potential biases do your hiring staff have? How can you know? • Have staff been trained on how biases shape the interviewing and hiring process? What training and resources are available to eliminate biases from this process?	How to Reduce Personal Bias When Hiring
Use multiple measures when evaluating candidates. Candidates of color may be unfairly screened out if hiring decisions are based primarily on test scores and the postsecondary institutions they attended. Thus, it is critical to include multiple measures like demonstration lessons, hypothetical teacher-student scenarios, interactions with students and staff, etc. Placing more weight on performance-based tasks can ensure that candidates of color are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate their qualifications and that you hire teachers who are the best fit for your school.	• What characteristics and values are important for your educators to embody? Is this reflected in your hiring process? Does this process unfairly screen out candidates of color? How can this be changed? • What performance-based tasks are involved in the hiring process? How can you get closer to the classroom and what it means to be an educator on your campus? How can students, educators, and parents be more involved in the hiring process?	Teacher Screening and Hiring: Lessons from the Los Angeles Unified School District

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN HIRING TEACHERS WHO WILL BE WORKING PRIMARILY WITH STUDENTS OF COLOR

Inspired by the work of the Center for Black Educator Development, consider including the following questions in your interviewing and hiring process:[36]

- Why teach in this neighborhood? Why here?

- Can you provide concrete examples and rationale about how you build relationships with students? How about with families? With communities?

- What do you believe you should be held accountable for?

- What strategies have you used to support students' racial identity and its development? What are your commitments toward professional learning on CRSE?

- Can you provide concrete examples of how you have used culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies?

- How does race, class, and privilege play itself out in classrooms? Describe how you handle these topics as an educator.

- What are your strategies and non-negotiables for ensuring students of color are successful? How do you define this success? Can you give examples of how strict authoritativeness lives in your classroom? How does your classroom speak to high standards and inclusivity?

Sustaining

Strategy	Reflection Questions	Resources
Cultivate culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogies. Developing CRSE can not only benefit an increasingly diverse student body, it can also help teachers of color see their cultures reflected in the school's instructional model. CRSE can help sustain teachers' investment in the profession by deepening connections with students. Furthermore, teachers of color who are proficient with these pedagogies can assume leadership roles through training staff on CRSE and writing and developing curriculum.	• What is your school's dominant cultural pedagogy? How do you know?[36] How does it align with your students' backgrounds? How does it not? What can improve? • Are educators of color involved in selecting and revising curriculum and instructional frameworks in your school? How so? Do you need to be more inclusive in how you make curriculum and instruction decisions?	[Culturally Responsive Teaching: A 50-State Survey of Teaching Standards](#)

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[35] El-Mekki, 2018; El-Mekki, 2021

[36] El-Mekki, 2021; Gershenson et al., 2021

Strategy	Reflection Questions	Resources
Fairly compensate teachers of color for their time and value their expertise. Teachers of color are often tasked with roles that aren't aligned with their training, such as Black male teachers being assigned the role of the disciplinarian or Latino/a teachers being the unofficial community liaison and translator.[37] These additional responsibilities can become burdens and often come without additional compensation. It is imperative that teachers of color are valued for their expertise and not restricted by race or culture-related roles.	• What roles do educators of color fulfill? Do they align with their job description? Are some teachers of color being tasked with responsibilities that are "stereotypical" or extending beyond their role? If so, how can you fairly compensate teachers of color for additional responsibilities or ensure responsibilities reflect their areas of interest and professional growth? • Are you making earnest efforts to value teachers of color for their strengths as educators? How so?	Our Stories, Our Struggles, Our Strengths: Perspectives and Reflections from Latino Teachers
Create opportunities for teachers of color to connect. Teachers of color who are isolated from their peers are more likely to leave the profession.[38] Schools can counteract this by connecting teachers of color with professional organizations that serve teachers of color. Charter leaders can also provide opportunities for camaraderie and mentorship by forming affinity groups or providing other networking opportunities on campus or through their charter networks.	• Do teachers of color feel isolated racially in this school? How do you know? How can you help teachers of color feel less isolated? • Are there local or national organizations with which you can connect teachers of color?	Respecting Educator Activists of Color: The Anti-Racist Guide to Teacher Retention
Provide leadership and growth opportunities for teachers of color. Providing and promoting opportunities for leadership can help teachers of color feel valued while also providing financial rewards and career advancement. Charter school leaders can consider forming leadership apprenticeship programs that focus on promoting teachers of color. School leaders can also provide opportunities for teachers of color to take on more informal leadership roles, such as mentorship, committee positions, or teaching advanced courses	• What opportunities do teachers of color have for advancement in your school for teaching and leadership? What can you add? Are you providing incentives for advancement? Can you partner with a local organization to further train and develop educators of color?	The Educator Diversity Playbook

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37 Gershenson et al., 2021

38 Gershenson et al., 2021

Conclusion

As our country becomes more racially diverse, it is imperative that all schools make efforts to recruit, hire, and sustain teachers of color. Increasing the racial diversity of teachers and providing practitioners with opportunities to grow in CRSE will ensure that all students—but particularly students of color—have access to effective instruction. Positive exposure to individuals from a variety of races and ethnic groups, especially in childhood, helps to break stereotypes, allows students to grow more comfortable with differences, reduces unconscious or implicit biases, and contributes to greater social cohesion. Increasing opportunities for students of color to be taught by teachers who share their race, ethnicity, and background supports academic and prosocial outcomes for both students of color and White students. Diversity in the workforce also benefits teachers, creating multicultural spaces for teachers to grow, learn, and become stronger practitioners over the course of their careers.

Building a diverse teacher workforce, however, requires that charter school leaders

- Incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into their mission, vision, and values;
- Establish SMART goals for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and sustaining teachers of color; and
- Integrate CRSE and anti-racist practices into their schools.

Additionally, diversifying the teacher workforce is possible through intentional investments, both financial and human, in the strategies highlighted in this report for recruiting, hiring, and sustaining teachers of color. Such investments can lead to dramatic improvements in educational equity. By taking action in ways the charter schools highlighted in this report have—and others yet to be imagined—charter school leaders can make a real impact and create a new diverse and equitable environment for both students and teachers and improve our education system as a whole.

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