# RECRUITING SUPPORTING SUSTAINING
## TEACHERS OF COLOR

2021
**EQUITY**&**BEYOND**

# RSS WORKGROUP
## RECOMMENDATION FRAMEWORK

**The growing racial diversity of K-12 students in America illustrates the importance of a racially diverse pipeline of teachers in Delaware.**

To effectively recruit, support and sustain (RSS) Teachers of Color, Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) must ensure historical barriers are addressed in their organizational systems. The RSS workgroup has discussed the significant impact that Teachers of Color have on all students, and specifically students of color. Teachers of Color are critical change agents in educational systems and communities, and their recruitment and cultivation is critical to student success. Preparing a diverse workforce in Delaware impacts not just students from marginalized communities; it impacts all children. A diverse teacher workforce contributes to a more just, equitable, and prosperous society while ensuring that our most vulnerable communities have the privileges and accesses they need for an equitable future.

The RSS workgroup recommendations are categorized into three pillars, developed by Equity & Beyond, that promote the recruitment, support, and sustainment of Teachers of Color in Delaware:

## RECRUITMENT
### calling to serve

- Recruitment policies and processes
- Narrative change

## SUPPORT
### building beloved community

- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Addressing barriers
- Partnering with communities
- Engaging with alumni

## EQUITY PLANNING
### equity is intentional, not accidental

- Equity audit
- Professional learning
- Dismantling implicit and explicit bias
- Strategic planning

## CROSS-CUTTING ENABLERS

- Data and systems
- Staffing, training, and personnel support
- Communications

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# RECRUITMENT
## CALLING TO SERVE

Effective, well-prepared Teachers of Color positively impact the academic, social-emotional, and whole-child success of all students. This, in turn, positively impacts communities and society. IHEs and LEAS should reimagine their current recruitment strategies and goals to remove the barriers that historically have prevented prospective Teachers of Color from entering the profession. IHEs serve a critical role in teacher preparation, and the prospective teachers in their programs must be prepared to meet the unique challenges that many marginalized students face. While recruitment policies alone do not address the systemic barriers Teachers of Color face when entering the profession, they are critical to building a beloved community.

# RECRUITMENT

## COMPONENTS

- Recruitment policies and processes
- Narrative change

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**1.1.** **Delaware LEAs and IHEs should thoroughly assess the cultural competency of all applicants and collaborate to set standardized expectations relating to cultural responsiveness for all teaching candidates.** LEAs and IHEs perform a vital role in the assessment and recruitment process for all teaching candidates and support staff. Since, presently, the majority of educators in the Delaware teaching pipeline are white, it is critical that they be prepared to work with marginalized students. LEAs and IHEs should develop a cultural responsiveness hiring rubric to ensure cultural competency is considered in hiring decisions and to assess and identify professional learning resources to support the growth-mindset needs of all teachers and staff. Since IHEs are responsible for the training and development of teaching candidates who will enter LEAs, it is imperative that LEAs be explicit in their expectations of candidate preparation in the area of cultural competency from IHE partners.

**1.2.** **LEAs should develop programs to recruit and develop teacher candidates from postsecondary, paraprofessional and other support staff roles.** Research[1] has shown that people in these roles are more likely to reflect the diversity of their locality and to continue to teach in their communities. In addition, historically marginalized populations are overrepresented in these roles. Candidates can be identified during the annual performance review process and provided a pathway to teacher certification. The Delaware Department of Education (DDoE) should support these programs through LEA-based partnerships, financial and programmatic support, and the removal of regulatory barriers that have prevented candidates of color from entering the profession.

# RECRUITMENT

**1.3.** **LEAs and IHEs should create new roles within their recruitment teams, with clear goals and expectations, to exclusively engage and recruit Teachers of Color.** In LEAs, the recruiter should be responsible for developing a pipeline specifically for candidates of color by forming relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and developing partnerships with other IHEs that have a history of recruiting and supporting a racially diverse pipeline of candidates. IHEs should create a similar role within School of Education recruitment teams to create partnerships with private and community-based organizations to actively recruit teacher candidates of color to their programs of study and support marginalized students.

**1.4.** **IHEs and LEAs should advocate for financial assistance programs to underwrite the cost of attendance for candidates of color.** The cost of teacher preparation remains a barrier for many candidates of color due to debt and other financial constraints. To ensure a diverse pipeline of teaching candidates in Delaware, this barrier must be removed. IHEs and LEAs should include financial assistance programs for teaching candidates of color as part of their advocacy agendas towards state policymakers. In partnership with the state and philanthropic organizations, IHEs should leverage existing funding opportunities, such as SEED grants, that have proven effective in providing financial support to teachers of color, and pursue programs such as scholarships, tuition reimbursement, and loan forgiveness that award financial support for students willing to commit to teach with local LEAs for a duration of time.

# SUPPORT
## BUILDING A BELOVED COMMUNITY FOR TEACHERS OF COLOR

IHEs and LEAs must build strong, interconnected systems that celebrate and support the achievement and development of Teachers of Color. The retention of Teachers of Color is connected to the overall peer community on their campuses. Internal and external stakeholders play an important part in the experience and retention of these educators.

School administrators make hiring decisions, facilitate instructional growth and coaching, set norms for students and staff, and define school culture. School Leaders are often a defining factor in whether Teachers of Color remain in the classroom, and recent research[2] shows that administrative support is key to improving the retention of Teachers of Color.

# SUPPORT

## COMPONENTS

- Mentoring
- Coaching
- Addressing barriers
- Partnering with communities
- Engaging with alumni

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**2.1.** **LEAs should establish and assess partnerships with IHEs to create leadership development programs that support school leaders in meeting the unique needs of Teachers of Color, checking for implicit and explicit biases that impact decision making, and creating a sense of belonging on their campuses.** A sense of belonging is the feeling of security and support that arises from the acceptance and inclusion of diverse identities and perspectives. When an individual can bring their full self to work, while also embracing the intersectional identities of others, a sense of belonging becomes normalized. Creating a sense of belonging positively impacts interpersonal relationships on campus, boosts teacher retention, and leads to collaboration, problem solving, and better decision making. Belonging is what unlocks the power and value of diversity in your organization.

**2.2.** **LEAs should collect and analyze qualitative factors that impact Teachers of Color in addition to quantitative indicators.** Qualitative resources that can be explored include focus groups, exit survey responses related to school leadership, and teacher improvement plans. It is important to note that data systems cannot fully capture the experiences of Teachers of Color; these systems should reinforce intentional efforts to listen to Teachers of Color directly and hold all stakeholders, including School Leadership, District Leadership, and Department Heads, accountable for ensuring a sense of belonging.

# SUPPORT

**2.3.** **LEAs and IHEs should develop Race and Equity Groups to ensure educators have meaningful, constructive discussions about race and its impact on systemic inequities.** Numerous studies have shown that race plays a significant role in sustaining the opportunity gap in our school systems and classrooms. To address these gaps, LEAs and IHEs must create a culture and structure that encourages all educators to discuss race openly, honestly, confidently, and as safely as possible in the school environment. Following initial race and equity trainings (see recommendation 3.1), LEAs and IHEs should create space for teachers to continue their discussion and development in peer Race and Equity Groups (REGs). The goal of the REG sessions is to give educators with similar racial or ethnic backgrounds an opportunity to openly and honestly talk about race and its intersecting issues. When this work is done in large group settings, it often forces Teachers of Color to teach their peers in other racial groups, relive traumatic experiences, and suffer intentional or unintentional aggressions, all of which can impede organizational change that ensures educational equity for all students. REG sessions allow educators to pursue growth in a format that is conducive to vulnerability, safety, and trust-building, and discuss race and equity with their colleagues and students confidently.

**2.4.** **LEAs should review and adapt their onboarding, mentorship, and support programs to ensure they are meeting the unique needs of Teachers of Color during their first three years in the classroom.** The first three years are critical for Teachers of Color[3], and robust support and mentorship structures are critical to their development and retention. Existing mentorship structures should be reimagined specifically for, and with input from, Teachers of Color, and current and retired educators should be recruited to provide mentorship at every stage of a candidate's development. Onboarding, mentorship, and support programming could include seminars, classroom assistance, time to collaborate with other teachers, coaching and feedback from experienced teachers, and reduced workloads. External partnerships can also be pursued to connect Teachers of Color with their peers regionally and nationally. Groups such as Profound Gentlemen[4] and Black Girls Teach[5] have robust curricula that connect Black educators with peers nationally and locally for cohort-based mentorship and professional learning opportunities throughout the year.

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# EQUITY PLANNING
## EQUITY IS INTENTIONAL, NOT ACCIDENTAL

IHEs and LEAs must embrace that becoming an anti-racist organization is a transformative concept that fundamentally points towards liberating new ways of thinking and elevating marginalized voices. Knowing that racism is based on a politically and socially constructed concept of race, they must acknowledge that it interacts in complex ways with sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression. Systemic inequities can only be addressed through intentional planning and a commitment to anti-racist practices. Becoming an organization that centers anti-racism requires persistent self-awareness, constant internal-criticism, and regular self-examination via the use of equity audits.

IHEs and LEAs should ensure their overall organization and staff are supported in pursuing professional learning opportunities and creating equitable policies and procedures that address systemic barriers to the recruitment and sustainment of Teachers of Color. IHEs and LEAs should create intentional planning processes to establish systems, policies and behaviors that eliminate the unfair distribution of material and non-material access and opportunity that results in outcome and experience differences predictable by dimensions of identity.

# EQUITY PLANNING

## COMPONENTS

- Equity audit
- Professional learning
- Dismantling implicit and explicit bias
- Strategic planning

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**3.1.** **IHEs and LEAs should implement mandatory embedded professional development on unpacking implicit and explicit bias.** All individuals have bias, and it is important that it is recognized and disrupted to ensure that organizational progress towards anti-racism and supporting Teachers of Color is sustained. Staff should leave the training with a firm understanding of what their implicit and explicit biases are and a plan to address them with their supervisor. The training objectives below are foundational to begin the work of supporting and shifting mindsets.

1. *Why Race?* - Learners will grapple with why the education community needs to engage in meaningful discussions of race and equity across lines of difference.

2. *The Impact of Bias* - Learners will unpack bias in the education community and its impact on education systems.

3. *Styles of Listening* - Learners will explore different styles of listening, their importance in understanding marginalized communities, and how to apply them in their context.

4. *The Realities of Power and Authority* - Learners will explore power dynamics and how societal values influence how they see the world.

5. *Gender Identity and Expression* - Learners will develop a base understanding of gender identity and expression so they are better prepared to support staff and students and define the concept of intersectionality.

# EQUITY PLANNING

**3.2.** **LEAs and IHEs should ensure data systems have the ability to monitor racial diversity and equity.** These systems should produce quantitative and qualitative data on recruitment, retention, satisfaction, exits, and removals of Teachers of Color. Data systems should capture responses from teachers and staff as their roles intersect with diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism policies and programs to create and refine professional learning objectives. These responses should also guide LEA campuses in identifying systems and supports that need to be improved to meet the needs of Teachers of Color, and guide IHEs in identifying courses that are not meeting the needs of candidates. DDoE should assist in the creation of these systems by providing resources that foster innovation and encourage the collection of data points that will both aid recruitment and help LEAs and IHEs better understand why teaching candidates of color exit the pipeline.

**3.3.** **LEAs and IHEs should work towards becoming anti-racist organizations by creating an action-oriented Strategic Equity Plan.** LEAs and IHEs must be cognizant that the systemic inequities that impact Teachers of Color must be addressed on a continuing basis, and should intentionally create anti-racist policies and procedures that promote the recruitment and sustainment of Teachers of Color. RSS Workgroup members have identified stakeholders who should participate in this work, and leadership should be assigned to an internal senior leader to ensure organizational impact. LEAs and IHEs should consistently work towards becoming an anti-racist organization by establishing action-oriented strategies that:

1. Ensure racial and cultural differences are seen as assets
2. Address racism and intersecting systems of social oppression through institutional and systemic changes to hiring, compensation, and professional development
3. Directly confront systems of thought and practice that normalize racism and other ideologies of oppression
4. Center learning new skills, mindsets, and ways of questioning

**3.4.** **IHEs and LEAs should prioritize funding efforts to eradicate the systemic barriers that prevent the recruitment and retention of Teachers of Color.** The issues that prevent the recruitment, sustainment, and support of Teachers of Color are deeply rooted in our society and institutions, and the recommendations set forth cannot be executed without funding, capacity building, and organizational alignment. Confronting them will require that significant financial and human resources are allocated towards ongoing professional learning, strategic planning, data systems, recruitment, and the other priorities listed in these recommendations.

# ENDNOTES

1   Carter Andrews, D. J., Castro, E., Cho, C. L., Petchauer, E., Richmond, G., & Floden, R. (2019). Changing the Narrative on Diversifying the Teaching Workforce: A Look at Historical and Contemporary Factors That Inform Recruitment and Retention of Teachers of Color. Journal of Teacher Education, 70(1), 6–12. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487118812418

2   Bryan, Nathaniel, Johnson, Lamar, and Milton Williams, Toni. (2016). Preparing Black Male Teachers for the Gifted Classroom: Recommendations for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The Journal of Negro Education, Vol. 85, No. 4, Special Focus: Student Cultural Experiences with Educational Preparations and Recommendations for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Fall 2016), pp. 489-504. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7709/jnegroeducation.85.4.0489.

3   Bryan, Johnson, and Milton Williams. (2016).

4   https://www.profoundgentlemen.org

5   https://www.blackgirlsteach.com

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