TEACH PLUS

EQUITY AND DIVERSITY BY DESIGN:

RECOMMENDATIONS ON RECRUITING AND RETAINING TEACHERS OF COLOR IN ILLINOIS

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INTRODUCTION

While the Illinois student population has become more racially and linguistically diverse, the Illinois teaching force has not reflected this growing diversity. Research substantiates the significant benefits teachers of color have for all students. Teachers of color have been shown to increase student engagement, improve reading and math test scores, and boost college attendance rates for students of color while also ensuring White students feel cared for and challenged.[1] Thus the gap between student and teacher diversity is a cause for concern in the Illinois educational system. Although efforts to recruit more teachers of color have produced a steadily-increasing pipeline of diverse applicants, the rate of attrition tends to erode these recruitment efforts. Teachers of color are leaving the profession at higher rates than their White colleagues.[2]

In 2017, students of color made up 52 percent of Illinois' student population. In the same year, teachers of color comprised only 14 percent of the teaching population.[3] Without clear practices and systemic policy measures to recruit and retain teachers of color, students in Illinois will be disadvantaged, concluded the Council of Chief State School Officers' (CCSSO) in its report *A Vision and Guidance for a Diverse and Learner Ready Teacher Workforce*, which noted "a diverse teacher workforce is valuable for all students in a pluralistic society, a racially diverse teacher workforce is a necessary step to advance educational equity."[4]

We are a group of Teach Plus Illinois Teaching Policy Fellows who teach across schools and districts in our state. Our students come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, educational settings (public and charter) and urban, rural, and suburban areas. Understanding the urgency of this issue, we conducted focus groups with teachers of color across the state of Illinois in the fall of 2018. We wanted to:

1. Gather information and research about teachers of color in Illinois.
2. Build consensus about what can be done to attract, retain, and develop teachers of color.
3. Garner insights from teachers of color on their experiences about the intersection of race and education.

FINDINGS

1. Teachers of color report a need for specialized supports that take into account their social-emotional well-being as they take on the "invisible tax" that most White teachers never experience.
2. Teachers of color report needing equitable access to leadership opportunities and upward mobility in the school systems they serve.
3. Teachers of color need adequate compensation that accounts for historical and ongoing racial wealth gaps and the additional unpaid work that teachers of color often perform in their schools.
4. Teachers of color report a need for identity-based literacy in the workplace to reduce the extra "invisible tax" placed on teachers of color, and to improve working conditions for faculty and staff of color and the learning conditions for students of color.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Implement districtwide mentorship programs, diversity dialogues, and affinity groups that support teachers of color staying in the classroom.
2. Create pathways to leadership for teachers of color by providing leadership stipends, in-house leadership programs, and ongoing bias and critical race theory training for school administrators.
3. Provide fair and equitable compensation to make teaching a sustainable career path for all teachers.
4. Implement requirements to improve identity-based literacy on behalf of teachers and students of color in K-12 institutions, teacher licensure programs, and the Illinois State Board of Education.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF FINDINGS

Almost half of the focus group respondents emphasized, either explicitly or implicitly, a common theme regarding the impact of "taxes" (both financial and "invisible") placed on teachers of color. Historically, they have had duties and responsibilities that have extended beyond the classroom. Oftentimes, teachers of color have had "the economic and social progress of their children in their hands."[5] This section will provide historical context defining those "taxes" and why they exist.

Inequitable practices have existed in the American educational system since its inception. The impact of the system's racist roots continue to plague many of the nation's students and teachers. The desire to remedy systemic problems, especially eliminating achievement disparities, places high demands on teachers. These demands are further exacerbated for teachers of color. For them, there are additional responsibilities assumed necessary to make schools with diverse populations run effectively. These duties may include but are not limited to quelling behavior issues, acting as translators, serving as advocates, mentors, and cultural liaisons, creating or curating culturally-responsive lessons, serving on additional equity committees, teaching students how to code switch and developing positive and lasting relationships with students of color who they may not teach directly. This imposed labor is known as an "invisible tax." These "invisible taxes" require teachers of color to be a catchall in an attempt to level the playing field for students of color.

While teachers of color recognize that their cultural expertise and inherent connection to students of color are valuable to the larger community, they also realize their extra labor is often met with lack of support, compensation, or acknowledgment. Ironically, they willingly take on more work than their White colleagues in environments that view them as aggressive, downgrade their expertise, and fail to promote them correlative to their White peers. It is not surprising that, as noted by former U.S. Secretary of Education John King, the additional duties ["invisible taxes"] take an emotional toll that can lead teachers of color to burn out and to ultimately leave the profession.[6]

The financial "tax" placed on teachers of color concerns the lapses of generational wealth that exist between people of color and White families in the United States.[7] Forbes Magazine reported in 2019 that four hundred years after the first African slaves arrived on the shores of what is now called the United States, African-Americans with a college degree had less median wealth than Whites *without* a college degree.[8] Given the lower salaries in teaching compared to other professions like law, politics, medicine, or engineering, entering the teaching profession, especially as a person of color, may not be financially feasible, especially as most people of color with college degrees seek employment that can provide financial stability.

The research echoes this sentiment. Because of relatively low wages, the teaching profession is more accessible to teachers who have access to greater wealth. Based on the historical racial wealth gap, this often makes the teaching profession more accessible to White teachers. New research reports that college enrollment rates for Black and White students have coincided.[9] This enrollment rate, however, has not diminished historic wealth gaps between Black and White families. In fact, according to Laura Sullivan, Tatjana Meschede, Lars Dietrich, and Thomas Shapiro, "...black households with college-educated heads have 33 percent less wealth than white households headed by high school dropouts."[10] The researchers note that this overwhelming disparity is closely linked to intergenerational wealth transmission:

"Among college-educated households, very few black households (nine percent) received [a financial gift of $10,000 or more], compared with close to one-third of college-educated white households (32 percent)."[11] Further, "...close to three times as many college-educated black households than white college-educated houses provided financial support to their parents."[12] These factors contribute significantly to the ways in which current teaching salaries act as a deterrent for teachers of color entering the profession and force others to search for alternative careers.

This problem is exacerbated in teacher leadership opportunities. As identified earlier in this report, a majority of public school educators are White. Additionally, a 2016 U.S. Department of Education study finds that educational leaders, across the nation, are, also, predominantly White.[13] School leaders fail to reflect the diversity of our classrooms. An overwhelming majority of public school leadership is White and male, a 30-year trend articulated in the concerns of current educators of color. This trend is evident to teachers of color who see it as a hindrance to hiring practices for teachers of color overall but also when it comes to teachers of color obtaining educational leadership roles in Illinois. One of the focus group respondents, a Black public educator, stated that the lack of diversity in Illinois' educational leadership has many implications because *"school districts administrators will not see the need [to hire more teachers of color] if they are not of color themselves."* The inability for teachers of color to obtain positions of leadership further aggravates the financial burden teachers of color experience.

METHODOLOGY

Teach Plus Illinois Teaching Policy Fellows facilitated focus groups across the state specifically for educators of color to elicit information about the recruitment and retention of teachers of color. Focus groups occurred in the Fall of 2018. Over 30 teachers participated in the focus groups, with 32 completing questionnaires responding to seven questions.[14]

In our focus groups:

- Sixty-eight percent of respondents work in a district public school setting; 23 percent work in a public charter public school; six percent of the respondents were former educators no longer working in the field and three percent of the respondents were retired educators.
- The average years of teaching experience was 13, ranging from one year to 47 years of experience.
- Sixteen percent were elementary (grades K-5) educators, three percent were middle school educators (grades 6-8), and 71 percent of respondents were high school educators (grades 9-12).
- Ninety-seven percent of respondents identified as being a person of color: 43 percent of respondents identity as Latina/o/x; 40 percent identify as Black; 10 percent of respondents identify as Asian.
- Most of the respondents are from urban or suburban areas around the state.

FINDING 1. TEACHERS OF COLOR REPORT A NEED FOR SPECIALIZED SUPPORTS THAT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THEIR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING AS THEY TAKE ON THE "INVISIBLE TAX" THAT MOST WHITE TEACHERS NEVER EXPERIENCE.

Focus group participants consistently pointed to a lack of specialized supports when it comes to their overall satisfaction in the classroom. As a result of the numerous "invisible taxes" faced, they reported feelings of isolation, emotional fatigue, and burnout. These factors impact their job satisfaction and lead many to consider exiting the profession at rates higher than their White colleagues.

An 11th grade veteran teacher linked the "invisible taxes" to schools' inability to retain teachers of color, stating, *"I believe this drastic turnover of teachers of color stems from severe burnout. The standards for us are much higher, stereotypically, because we should be able to handle our kids. Whereas, in my own experience, I have seen the "other" teachers as being praised for doing less than what we do, i.e., providing food, shelter, money, psychological counseling. We are pressured to do more than our best. Seldom are teachers of color employed in level 1 schools with level 1 resources."*

In their feedback, teachers of color also reiterated feelings of frustration, stating that oftentimes they feel devalued and undermined in their work. When asked how districts could combat this, one teacher suggested, *"Districts should have a committee in place to specifically help support and mentor teachers of color. This group should include veteran teachers from the school who are willing to mentor and share knowledge about the culture of that school."*

The need to be heard in a safe space was consistently articulated by participants. One teacher shared:

> *Teachers of color need to feel that their lived experiences are heard and they need to be equipped with tools to be able to handle those [lived experiences in the classroom].*

Another teacher said:

> *On a daily basis, teachers of color in predominantly White spaces have to deal with microaggressions from both teachers, staff, and administrators. Many times when teachers of color are hired there is no community of support, and that teacher is often left alone. Administration treats all teachers the same when we are not having the same experiences.*

Teacher responses highlighted the importance of specialized supports that can help ease the stress that comes from carrying an "invisible tax". By implementing multi-tiered levels of support, teachers of color can feel that they are valued and heard by staff members throughout the building. They can also begin to build upon the work of each other in order to ease the amount of extra labor they feel they need to bring into the profession.

FINDING 2. TEACHERS OF COLOR REPORT NEEDING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND UPWARD MOBILITY IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEMS THEY SERVE.

There was a general consensus among focus group participants that there is a lack of equitable opportunities to upwardly navigate their careers. Several respondents indicated they feel locked out of opportunities to share their expertise and advance the profession and themselves. These teachers concluded that this lack of equity plays a fundamental role in Illinois' inability to retain and recruit teachers of color. They asserted that even when teachers of color assume additional leadership roles, support, compensation, and recognition are minimal and in most cases non-existent.

One Black middle school educator stated she feels *"relegated to lead only when the topic is equity. My school leadership does not value the whole of what I bring to the profession. The door is often closed to teachers of color who want and can lead initiatives, professional development and curriculum beyond equity."*[15]

There was also a recurrent idea that inherent bias and prejudice keep teachers of color from leadership opportunities. A Latina teacher who teaches third grade English language learners said, *"Teachers of color do not have as much support as all other groups have. In addition we are always seen as the experts in our own culture or language. We are burn[t] out! We are not seen as persons who can be leaders and for that reason many times we are not recognized for the work that we can do."* Another educator attributed bias to an overall lack of *"recognition and respect within the field. Not having the opportunity to have leadership opportunities or a voice when it comes to different areas of school policies"* which leaves teachers of color out of education's power structure.

Respondents suggested that they are not chosen by administrators for leadership tasks because their administrators view the roles of teachers of color as transactional and not transformative. According to a Black educator who has taught in the public school system for 26 years, *"Once teachers of colored are hired, the are no longer valued. Minority hires are used in the diversity count but not the decision-making process. Additionally, most districts do not look to hire administrative staff from this pool. Most districts cultivate and hire Caucasians in these positions regardless of job performance."*

Additionally, a 10th grade Black public school teacher shared, *"Over the course of the last decade, I have seen teachers of color leave in order to seek out leadership opportunities. Unfortunately, I've even had people in administrative positions admit they overlooked a particular staff member [of color] believing that she needed more [years of] experience while promoting those [White colleagues] with similar years of experience."*

Focus group participants attribute a decrease in morale and retention of teachers of color to inequitable opportunities to lead and grow. Illinois teachers of color often fail to receive opportunities to advance themselves professionally and monetarily.

FINDING 3. TEACHERS OF COLOR REPORT A NEED FOR ADEQUATE COMPENSATION THAT ACCOUNTS FOR HISTORICAL AND ONGOING RACIAL WEALTH GAPS AND THE ADDITIONAL UNPAID WORK THAT TEACHERS OF COLOR OFTEN PERFORM IN THEIR SCHOOLS.

Teachers in the focus groups noted that low teacher wages pose different, and often greater barriers to the recruitment and retention for teachers of color when compared to their White peers. This challenge appears linked to a lack of access to intergenerational wealth for teachers of color. One Chicano former teacher noted, *"I believe we forget that teachers of color still have to deal with issues more prominent in communities of color: poverty, affordable housing, and crime. So the problems compound when we enter the classroom."*

Another teacher, who identifies as a 10th grade Latinx chemistry teacher, echoed this sentiment: *"From my experience, [teachers of color] come from lower [socio-]economic backgrounds. Such educators typically have economic stress that is outside of their immediate selves (i.e. their families). Teacher wages are currently too low for educators to be able to support themselves well and others. I currently sacrifice how I live in order to support my family and I often find myself wondering why I didn't just transition into a higher paying career which I would be qualified for."* A Black teacher asserted that teachers should be *"provided compensation that allow teachers to maintain a middle-class lifestyle that does not require a second job and that keeps pace with inflation."*

Additionally, teachers of color are often called upon to do extra work; work that is not expected of their White peers, and work that is not compensated. This type of work often includes tasks like translating for parents during meetings or disciplining students. Teachers spoke to the exhaustion this creates. One Black-identifying public school teacher noted, *"Many times teachers of color are given the worst students and are called upon to participate in non-educational activities."* Another K-2 English learner resource and Latinx teacher suggested that schools should, *"Hire family liaisons to help the teachers of color who often serve in a role beyond classroom teacher."*

FINDING 4. TEACHERS OF COLOR REPORT A NEED FOR IDENTITY-BASED LITERACY IN THE WORKPLACE TO REDUCE THE EXTRA "INVISIBLE TAX" PLACED ON TEACHERS OF COLOR, AND TO IMPROVE WORKING CONDITIONS FOR FACULTY AND STAFF OF COLOR AND LEARNING CONDITIONS FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR.

When asked what professional development and professional learning topics should be provided to school staff and teachers to improve Illinois' retention of teachers of color, the respondents reported deficits in two main areas:

1. The lack of contextual knowledge in supporting students and staff of various identities and the desire to hold pedagogically-sound and culturally-relevant practices in engagements with students and staff of color.
2. The lack of ongoing professional development opportunities in which to enrich critical understandings of identity.

Researchers have found that White educators must often be taught about the pain of racism in order to not perpetuate it,[16] while teachers of color are typically aware of the trauma racism can cause through personal encounters.[17] This finding echoes the reality many of the teachers expressed in the focus group. One Latinx-identifying high school teacher from Chicago said, "*Teachers of color often take on (or are put in positions of) mentoring students of color, especially in schools where staff is predominately White. It results in an emotional toll for teachers of color. Additionally, schools are not prepared for diverse staff…*" As such, it is imperative that the workplace critically examine the ways in which it replicates this racial and racist dynamic in K-12 spaces.

One former teacher who identifies as Latina said, "*Many teachers of color come into the profession with the fact in mind that most of the students they are serving identify with them, whether it be through shared experiences or because they too are members of the community of people of color. This puts teachers in a position to become more than just educators to support the students they serve, leading to a burn out at a much faster rate. Teachers of color are often the minority of their staff at their schools. If the professional community is not intentional about honoring and supporting the unique challenges a teacher of color experiences, this also leaves the teacher feeling dissatisfied.*"

Bonilla-Silva argues that in disregarding racial difference, we do not challenge dominant cultural themes in our society or in our schools, the ones which are often marginalizing teachers and students of color.[18] But the work cannot begin and end with focusing on racism alone. Educators need development on all forms of identity-based oppressions. One Black-identifying 10th grade history teacher said: "*Teachers are often taught about the inclusive classroom in regards to students with special needs, however there should also be more required professional development around racial, ethnic, and gender inclusivity.*"

RECOMMENDATION 1. IMPLEMENT DISTRICTWIDE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS, DIVERSITY DIALOGUES, AND AFFINITY GROUPS THAT SUPPORT TEACHERS OF COLOR STAYING IN THE CLASSROOM.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Research shows that many educators leave the classroom when they lack strong support and continued opportunities to grow.[19] Structured mentorship programs combat this problem. After implementing programs focused on comprehensive and multi-tiered mentorship/induction programs, Connecticut schools saw a 31 percent increase in teacher retention.[20] Making this multi-tiered level of support available to novice and veteran teachers of color would not only help to amplify the voices of teachers of color, but would also serve to reignite the passion of veteran teachers. Additionally, mentoring programs could help alleviate some of the isolation felt by new teachers of color in social and professional settings.[21] Illinois teachers of color should have access to structured and comprehensive mentorship programs. While the Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) 2018 Teach Illinois report acknowledges funding for such programs has been limited and inconsistent, mentorship programs should nonetheless be prioritized with a specific call for veteran teachers of color to act as soundboards for novice teachers of color.[22]

DIVERSITY DIALOGUES

Diversity dialogues are structured forums used to build awareness, establish comfort when engaging in intersectional dialogue, and create actions that lead to social justice. These multirace forums would help bridge the gap of understanding between the realities of teachers of color while they participate and work within Whitestream schools. For Illinois' teachers, diversity dialogues should be implemented to build community, promote diversity, and provide pathways to leadership that many teachers of color feel are not feasible. These dialogues have been implemented at various college campuses throughout the United States with topics spanning from inclusive spaces to talking about race in the workplace.[23] These diversity dialogues should be implemented at district levels to ensure equity, inclusion, and safety for our students and staff of color.

AFFINITY GROUPS

Race-based affinity groups for teachers of color throughout the country have already proven successful. One such program, The Black Teacher Project, found that their affinity-based professional development decreased isolation and increased retention for Black teachers. These groups would greatly benefit teachers of color in Illinois by giving them the opportunity to come together in a safe, shared space to discuss issues related to their identity as well as a safe environment to identify and implement actionables that promote social justice and equity. Affinity groups could help with the constant reflection and introspection teachers of color crave as they continue to serve students who oftentimes mirror themselves. Affinity groups are essential to the retention of teachers of color in Illinois. In a large district with a fair amount of diversity, an affinity group like this could happen within the district itself. In smaller districts, or districts that have only a very small number of teachers of color, affinity groups could be hosted by the Regional Office of Education, spanning multiple school districts.

RECOMMENDATION 2. CREATE PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP FOR TEACHERS OF COLOR BY PROVIDING IN-HOUSE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS, LEADERSHIP STIPENDS, AND MANDATE ONGOING BIAS AND CRITICAL RACE THEORY TRAINING FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS.

IN-HOUSE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Similar to grow-your-own programs, school leadership should facilitate in-house stipend programs that target teachers who aspire to lead and nurture their leadership capacity. These programs could lead to a teacher leader endorsement and provide training and recognition to teacher leaders who already exist within the school, such as department chairpersons, instructional leadership team, grade level team leaders, instructional coaches and other school-based leaders. In-house programs have the potential to give administrators and teachers collective responsibility for all aspects of school success through a distributed leadership model.

LEADERSHIP ENDORSEMENT STIPENDS

School districts should incentivize teachers of color to seek a leadership endorsement by offering a stipend for teachers of color with this credential. Additionally, districts should partner with universities to provide leadership endorsement-based programs to teachers. Teachers are typically funding their leadership endeavors out-of-pocket, making it increasingly difficult to acquire the credential for teachers of color already facing an intergenerational wealth gap.

BIAS AND CRITICAL RACE THEORY TRAINING FOR ADMINISTRATORS

District staff, including administrators and human resource staff, should be required to complete ongoing bias and critical race theory trainings to identify and alleviate the impact of implicit bias on teacher promotions and upward mobility. Bias and critical theory training could help administrators to identify and reconcile their implicit ideas regarding the leadership capacity of teachers of color. It could also promote adequate bias training for teachers facilitating a climate of cultural awareness, trauma-informed practice, and bias-free education.

RECOMMENDATION 3. PROVIDE FAIR AND EQUITABLE COMPENSATION TO MAKE TEACHING A SUSTAINABLE CAREER PATH FOR ALL TEACHERS.

Recruiting and successfully retaining an increased number of teachers of color means providing equitable compensation for those teachers. As one Latina third grade teacher of English learners mentioned, *"The state needs to implement a policy that attaches money to the hiring of teachers of color."* Feng and Sass's research, "The Impact of Incentives to Recruit and Retain Teachers in 'Hard-to-Staff' Subjects," indicates increased retention of teachers when loan forgiveness and retention bonus programs were in place.[24] Their research indicated a 10 percent reduction in teacher turnover annually because of loan forgiveness programs, while a one-time bonus program reduced teacher turnover by nearly a third the year of its implementation.[25] Additionally, data published by the Brookings Institution indicates that loan forgiveness programs are especially effective for attracting teachers of color, even doubling the number of teachers of color in a building.[26]

Illinois, therefore, should create a loan forgiveness program specifically targeting teachers of color. Illinois should also encourage districts to implement signing or retention bonus payment programs for teachers of color. While such programs would be a significant investment for Illinois, as the cost totalled around $63 million in the Florida programs studied by Feng and Sass, the researchers reported "they were worth the price."[27]

RECOMMENDATION 4. IMPLEMENT REQUIREMENTS TO IMPROVE IDENTITY-BASED LITERACY ON BEHALF OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS OF COLOR IN K-12 INSTITUTIONS, TEACHER LICENSURE PROGRAMS, AND THE ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Identity-based literacy is rooted in a critical race/critical social-theoretical framework. Identity-based literacy is defined as the competency and consciousness of individuals to examine systems of oppression through acknowledging the intersections of race and other identities including but not limited to: class, gender identity, gender expression, sex, religion, ability, age, sexual orientation, language, etc. Educational researchers have centered critical race/critical social theories in frameworks over the last 40 years to disrupt and dismantle dominant ideologies and to provide more equitable learning opportunities, specifically for our most marginalized and vulnerable students, students of color.

Illinois can achieve this literacy by implementing these three components:

1. K-12 districts should require professional development experiences that improve identity-based literacy competencies for their staff, which will ultimately improve educational experiences for all students. One Asian-identifying teacher from the suburbs north of Chicago suggested that, "*Professional development and professional learning topics that could be done are equity training, forums for discussion, affinity groups in school that are welcoming and not secretive*." Some districts have engaged in work with organizations like Pacific Education Group (P.E.G.), Disruptive Education Equity Project (D.E.E.P.), or Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (S.E.E.D.).[28]
2. Teacher licensure programs at degree-granting institutions of higher education should add course requirements for pre-service teachers and educators that center identity-based literacy development. Gomez discussed the impact her class had in shaping development of pre-service teachers: "We can create opportunities for aspiring teachers to critically reflect on who they are and what their race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and language background means for their teaching and for their future students' learning from them. We can create possibilities for our students to examine the authoritative discourses with which they have been imbued and also to create internally-persuasive ones to guide their identity development as future teachers." Gomez' work highlights the transformative experience students in her Critical Aspects of Teaching, Schooling, and Education course had in learning about identity-based literacy.[29]
3. The Illinois State Board of Education should update the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards and the requirements for continuing development hours related to culturally-relevant pedagogy as part of the licensure and renewal process. This would ensure that new educators are focused on culturally-relevant pedagogy and current educators revisit professional development that would benefit and support a safe culture for educators and students of color. As one Black-identifying teacher from Chicago mentioned, "*...there should also be more required professional development around racial, ethnic, and gender inclusivity*."

CONCLUSION

The American educational system has long been plagued with issues of systemic racism. We believe recruiting and retaining teachers of color is one step in the process of disrupting this system. All children benefit from having teachers who reflect their racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity. Yet, the Illinois teacher workforce remains largely White. Based on the data gathered from a diverse group of teachers of color across the state, teachers of color are lacking opportunities that support recruitment and retention efforts.

While the Illinois State Board of Education has taken steps to address this issue through the formation of the Illinois Diverse Learner and Teacher Ready Network, there are additional actions state entities can take to address this issue: School districts can examine their hiring practices to ensure they're unbiased, principals can complete ongoing professional development to learn how to best support teachers of color, and universities can add critical race theory courses to their teacher preparation programs.

Teachers of color want better for themselves, Illinois' educational system, but most importantly, their students, and Illinois' policy needs to support the expansion and retention of teachers of color in the state's classrooms.

++++++++++++++++ ENDNOTES ++++++++ +++++++

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[10] See endnote 9.

[11] See endnote 9.

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[14] Focus Group Question #1: "The national research on teacher turnover and retention suggests that teachers of color, though being hired at higher rates than White teachers, are also leaving schools at higher rates than White teachers. In your experience as a teacher of color and/or working with other educators of color, what do you attribute this difference in turnover to?" Focus Group Question #2: "What strategies can schools and school leaders use to improve the retention of teachers of color?" Focus Group Question #3: "What strategies can district leaders, such as superintendents or other senior leaders, and district departments or offices, such as the office of human resources, use to improve the retention of teachers of color?" Focus Group Question #4: "What strategies can state departments of education or state leaders use to improve the retention of teachers of color?"Focus Group Question #5: "What professional development and professional learning topics should be provided to school staff and teachers to improve the retention of teachers of color?" Focus Group Question #6: "Have you thought about leaving the classroom, changing schools or districts, or even leaving teaching altogether? What would cause you to leave? If you have been thinking about leaving, what could your school, your district, or your state do to retain you?" Focus Group Question #7: "In general, do you have any other ideas or suggestions on what can be done to improve the retention of teachers of color?"

[15] Because race is a social construct, focus group participants were asked to racially self-identify. Therefore, the racial delineations identified in this report were created by the participants themselves and not prescribed by facilitators.

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[26] Hansen, M., Quintero, D., & Feng, L. (2018, March 20). "Can money attract more minorities into the teaching profession?" Brown Center Chalkboard. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/03/20/can-money-attract-more-minorities-into-the-teaching-profession/.

[27] See endnote 24.

[28] For more information about these organizations, see the following: Pacific Education Group, https://courageousconversation.com/; Disruptive Education Equity Project, http://digdeepforequity.org/.; and Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity, https://nationalseedproject.org.

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