



Retaining African American Teachers

AFRICAN AMERICAN TEACHER RETENTION

African American teacher retention is a persistent issue in school improvement. Beyond the obvious that teacher attrition implies dissatisfaction of some kind, attrition has some very real and negative effects on schools and districts. Teaching is an extremely difficult profession, and some individuals may realize that they are not suited to the challenge. Additionally, some attrition is part of the natural life cycle of any organization, as employees retire or resign for reasons outside of the organization's control.

While it is true that some degree of teacher turnover is both healthy and inevitable, the exodus of large numbers of teachers over time, especially African American teachers, diminishes the overall capacity of a school/district to serve its students equitably. In addition, high teacher turnover creates new problems related to recruiting and onboarding new African American teachers.

DEFINITION OF TEACHER IN SDIRC

Instructional personnel (teacher) means any K-12 staff member whose function includes the provision of direct instructional services to students. Instructional personnel (teacher) also includes K-12 personnel whose functions provide direct support in the learning process of students.

AFRICAN AMERICAN RETENTION STRATEGIES

Supporting and satisfying the needs of teachers are the most important factors in retaining highly qualified teachers. This factor is especially true when school districts are tasked with recruiting and retaining African American teachers. It is widely held that teachers with positive perceptions about their working conditions are much more likely to stay at their current school than educators who are more negative about their conditions of work. Factors such as time, leadership, professional development, access to resources, and empowerment all have a significant influence on the degree of satisfaction African American teachers feel in their jobs.

- A. Establish a “Welcome to the SDIRC” effect: continue to implement efficient processes for onboarding new teachers; create a cohort orientation experience prior to the first day in the classroom
- B. Expand the New Teacher Orientation/Academy: provide three to five days of paid induction, prior to the start of school, that focuses on beliefs, priorities, and District resources
- C. Expand the mentoring for new teachers as the norm: partner new teachers with experienced and effective veteran teachers for structured and ongoing support; build on existing work where appropriate
- D. Continue to build the capacity of principals to support new teachers: provide guidance on structures that allow for mentor/mentee interaction; add mentoring to principal evaluation; ensure appropriate assignments for new teachers
- E. Dedicate a District office employee to support each new African American teacher

MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS

- A. Data Gathering
 - a. Number of African American teachers who left
 - b. Reasons why African American teachers left
- B. Data Analysis
 - a. The SDIRC will review the retention data of all teachers and summarize the information-developing an analysis of the overall effectiveness of the retention activities.
- C. Evaluation
 - a. The SDIRC will review the analysis during the late summer and fall and will make suggestions for revision periodically throughout the fall and winter. These suggestions will be incorporated into the next recruitment and retention plan. In addition, the Deputy Superintendent and Executive Director of Human Resources will work with school-based administrators and District administrators to gather feedback about the recruitment and retention efforts of the year. Their feedback will be used to revise the upcoming recruitment and retention plan.