Recruiting Diverse Teachers

Build Your Understanding

Before diving into diversity recruitment work, we recommend that teams individually and collaboratively deepen their understanding of race, equity and diversity. Some suggestions for this work include:

Know that your language matters. When talking about this topic, don’t use “deficit-based” language (e.g., “teachers of color don’t do well on the credentialing tests”). Instead, use language that explains the bias and complexity behind the test scores (e.g., “research shows that tests are often biased against people of color, so we don’t recommend using them as a selection tool”).

- Check out this tip sheet from Racial Equity Tools that asks how can we avoid “blaming the victim” when presenting information on poor outcomes for different racial, ethnic, language or immigrant group.

Build your understanding of race and equity by reviewing some of the following resources and through conducting your own research.

- “School Segregation, the Continuing Tragedy of Ferguson” by Nikole Hannah Jones
- “This American Life: The Problem We All Live With,” Part 1 and Part 2, tells the story of Michael Brown’s school district through the students who remain there. “It is a story of children locked away from opportunity, what happens when those children are given a chance to escape failing schools, and what happens to those children left behind...Above all, it is a story of the staggering education inequality we are willing to accept.”
- “This American Life: Harper High School,” Part 1 and Part 2, is a stark two-part radio series that follows students, school staff, and families as they confront and cope with the deeply disruptive impact of gun violence on their everyday lives. The series offers revelatory insights into gang geography, youth culture, the corrosive impact of trauma, and the overwhelming limitations to stemming the tide of violence.
- Implicit Bias and Microaggressions: The Macro Impact of Small Acts, presented by Derald Wing Sue as part of Stanford University’s “Diversity & Inclusion at Stanford” event in January 2015.

Read the research. For starters, review this research showing that for Black boys, having just one Black teacher between 3rd-5th grade has tremendous benefits when it comes to high school completion. Furthermore, this research shows that the positive effects of a diverse teacher body positively impacts all students.

Understand your DEI goals. This work should be aligned to your broader goals and mission, so it’s important for team members to internalize this and be able to draw clear connections to their teacher recruitment work. For instance, if your broader DEI goals are met, what would successful teacher recruitment look like? What outcomes would be achieved? Why?

Set Goals

Next, we recommend setting goals around diversity recruitment targets to ensure that there’s a system to track the ratio of diversity at each stage in the application.

Plan for lower conversion rates. Gaps in conversion rates between races shouldn’t be considered a given—you should actively work to minimize or eliminate any gaps. For the purposes of recruitment and setting targets, however, build in a conversion rate gap in your projections. This will force you to over-recruit and have a heightened focus on diversity. Adjust your projections once you have initial data for a decent sample size.

Remove barriers where possible. While you should plan for lower conversion rates, actively problem solve when those gaps do emerge and see what steps you can take to level the playing field. For instance, if fewer candidates of
color are applying to certain subject areas or are advancing to the ready for schools bucket below the target, review all available data and processes to understand why and identify what steps may be taken to ensure a fair, equitable process. For instance, it may be that certain roles need to be more heavily promoted to candidates of color, application language and screening materials could be reviewed for implicit bias, and/or screeners may need additional norming.

**Set diversity-specific recruitment strategies.** While there’s no silver bullet strategy, we recommend the following:

- **Focus on diverse markets.** Target cities, neighborhoods, and universities with a higher ratio of people of color.
- **Skip niche tactics.** There’s no shortage of diversity-focused job boards, but these rarely produce results. While there’s rarely harm in adding postings to these sites since they’re relatively inexpensive, don’t expect much (or any) result.
- **Over-represent diverse teachers in all marketing.** Examine all marketing materials and ensure that teachers who represent the type of diversity you’re targeting are amplified in your marketing materials. But be wary of swinging too far on the pendulum—teachers may feel like they were given the bait and switch if they see marketing materials that are wildly different than the reality of the schools they’ll be working in.

**Ensure that you can track diversity data.** Gather this information on candidates by adding ethnicity questions to the application so that this information can be monitored at the candidate, subject area, and stage levels. For example:

- **Select you race/ethnicity (Select all that apply):**
  - Race (check all that apply):
    - White
    - Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
    - Black or African American
    - Asian
    - American Indian or Alaskan Native
    - Middle Eastern or North African
    - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
    - Some other race, ethnicity, or origin
    - Prefer to self-describe:
    - Prefer not to say

**Amplify strategies that work.** Once you have data on the recruitment sources for your diverse applicants, adjust your recruitment strategy to incorporate more of what’s working.