Understanding the Experiences of Educators of Color in Knox County Schools

January 2022

Prepared by

TECA

TENNESSEE EDUCATORS of COLOR ALLIANCE

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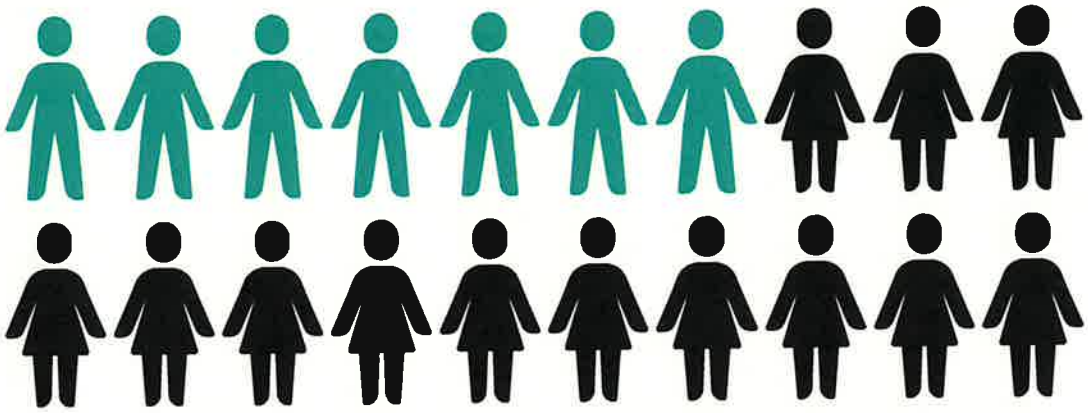
Introduction

Between the weeks of November 22 and December 6, 2021, the Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance (TECA) conducted six focus groups and individual interviews with educators of color across the Knox County School district. Leveraging an email list for educators of color in the district that had accumulated over the past 3 years, TECA sent invitations to over 150 educators of color to participate in focus groups, in addition to asking for referrals from educators and partners. The purpose of the focus groups were to learn more about the experiences of educators of color employed by Knox County Schools, both areas of strength and opportunities, in order to improve upon the district's recruitment and retention strategies to increase educator diversity. A total of 22 people registered for the focus groups; 11 of the registrants participated. Additionally, a total of 9 of the 22 educators that registered for focus groups opted out due to schedule conflicts, and decided to participate in individual interviews. There were 20 participants total, 7 males and 13 females, all who identified as Black.



Participants had complete anonymity during the focus groups and interviews; the only information that was shared was the amount of time that they were employed in the district. The following questions were asked during each focus group:

1. *During your tenure and based on what you have witnessed and experienced, please describe some of the things that the district does well. How do these things impact you?*
2. *During your tenure and based on what you have witnessed and experienced, what are some of the areas of opportunity for the district to improve?*
3. *Reflecting on your own experience, what does KCS do well regarding recruiting educators of color?*
4. *Reflecting on your own experience, what could KCS do better to recruit educators of color?*
5. *Specifically, as an educator of color, what does KCS do to retain educators of color?*
6. *Tell me about the leadership at the district level. What is going well? Where are opportunities to improve?*
7. *Is there anything else you would like to share?*

The following pages contain the findings from the focus groups and individual interviews.

What does KCS do well?

During the conversations, participants shared several things that they felt the district was doing well. While this list is non-exhaustive, it is reflective of the key themes and responses from the focus groups:

1. *The District Listens to Concerns*
   - Participants noted that they feel the district listens to their concerns. This is evident through the creation of the Minority Advisory Council and the hosting of conversations around the hiring and retention of teachers of color. Many feel the district is demonstrating that they value and hear the concerns of current teachers and believe that their insight and perspectives are taken into consideration when decisions are made.
2. *Professional Development*
   - Participants expressed that professional development was available to everyone regardless of tenure.
3. *Strong Foundation*
   - Multiple participants reported that the district had strong pipeline programs in the past, including a leadership academy and partnership with the University of Tennessee-Knoxville (UT). This allows KCS not to reinvent the wheel but to draw on previous programs' frameworks and successes.
4. *Student Academic Support*
   - Participants maintained that KCS was proactive and effective in ensuring students had proper academic accommodations for success regardless of their school.

KCS opportunities for growth

While participants expressed praise for some district practices they also shared opportunities for the district to continue to improve. Many of the conversations circulated around previous programs that were successful in creating leadership pipelines and recruitment initiatives, however, since those programs have ended participants witnessed a notable change. Additional thoughts and themes that emerged were the following:

1. *Recruitment partnerships*
   - Educators expressed that they would like to see KCS partner with minority-serving institutions in "Grow Your Own" programs to recruit more teachers of colort and provide local high school students opportunities to engage the profession to garner interest early.
2. *Leadership Opportunities*
   - Educators of color described barriers to gaining access to leadership opportunities, i.e., promotions, leading PDs, and leadership development programs. Educators also felt like there was a lack of access to the internal networks and leaders that might recommend or decide who is selected for the opportunities. Many feel that implicit bias may have play a role in the decision-making. Several participants from the focus groups expressed that they had applied for various positions and programs collectively, but had been denied despite experience.
3. *Lack of Resources Between Learning Communities*
   - Educators highlighted disparities in resources between schools in different learning communities. It was suggested that schools with high minority populations, namely in East Knoxville, had fewer resources than schools that did not—ultimately lacking the resources necessary to support marginalized students and ensure teacher success.
4. *Lack of support regarding Social Issues*
   - Educators expressed that they appreciated the district's willingness, and more specifically the Superintendent, to engage and address issues regarding equity; however, they did not feel like they had support when bringing these issues and providing feedback to administration or the district.
5. *Lack of communication around issues*
   - Many educators stated that communications between the district and the teachers were unclear. Teachers expressed the desire to know more about initiatives around opportunities for current teachers of color as well as plans for recruitment and retention.
6. *Diverse placement of educators of Color*
   - Educators of Color expressed concern about being placed, almost exclusively, in schools with the highest population of students of color and most significant challenges, and are not given the opportunity to work in schools outside of East Knoxville.

Recruiting Educators of Color

Successes

Participants in the focus groups provided context for what they believe the district is doing well as it relates to recruiting more teachers of color to the district. Some spoke from their own experiences being recruited, while others spoke to what they perceive the efforts look like based on communications from the district.

Several participants stated that the implementation of the minority advisory committee showed a deliberate effort by the district to listen to feedback for recruitment efforts from teachers of color. Overall, many are not currently aware of the district's plan

Challenges

While the focus groups acknowledged that the district is making an effort to improve educator diversity, there were also reflections, concerns, and suggestions to improve these efforts. Some areas to be addressed are:

Intentional Recruiting Strategy: Several participants expressed their admiration for past recruitment initiatives and the necessity for a similar program to be implemented. Namely, Dr. Brooke Dennard's focus on recruiting educators of color, both the program and the impact. Participants shared that this recruitment strategy successfully gained more educators of color and framed Knox County's position in diversity.

Transparency and Communication: A majority of applicants expressed the lack of communication on the district's part regarding efforts to recruit teachers of color and opportunities to forward those efforts. Many educators were unaware if there was any intentional recruitment taking place. In contrast, others expressed that while they heard there were initiatives, they had no details and could not rely on evidence in their school environment. Teachers desire to be kept updated on the district's plans and progress towards diversity and inclusivity of teachers.

Grow Your Own Initiatives: Participants particularly mentioned Grow Your Own initiatives as means of piquing interest in a career in education at the high school and college level. They called upon Dr. McIntyre's previous partnership between UT Knox and Knox County Schools and an opportunity to reinstate and expand that program beyond supporting aspiring administrators. Some suggestions for expansion are with high schools and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Students at the collegiate levels that are part of Black Educators of Tomorrow (BET) at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville and the Student Tennessee Education Association (STEA) could be engaged as well.

Retaining Educators of Color

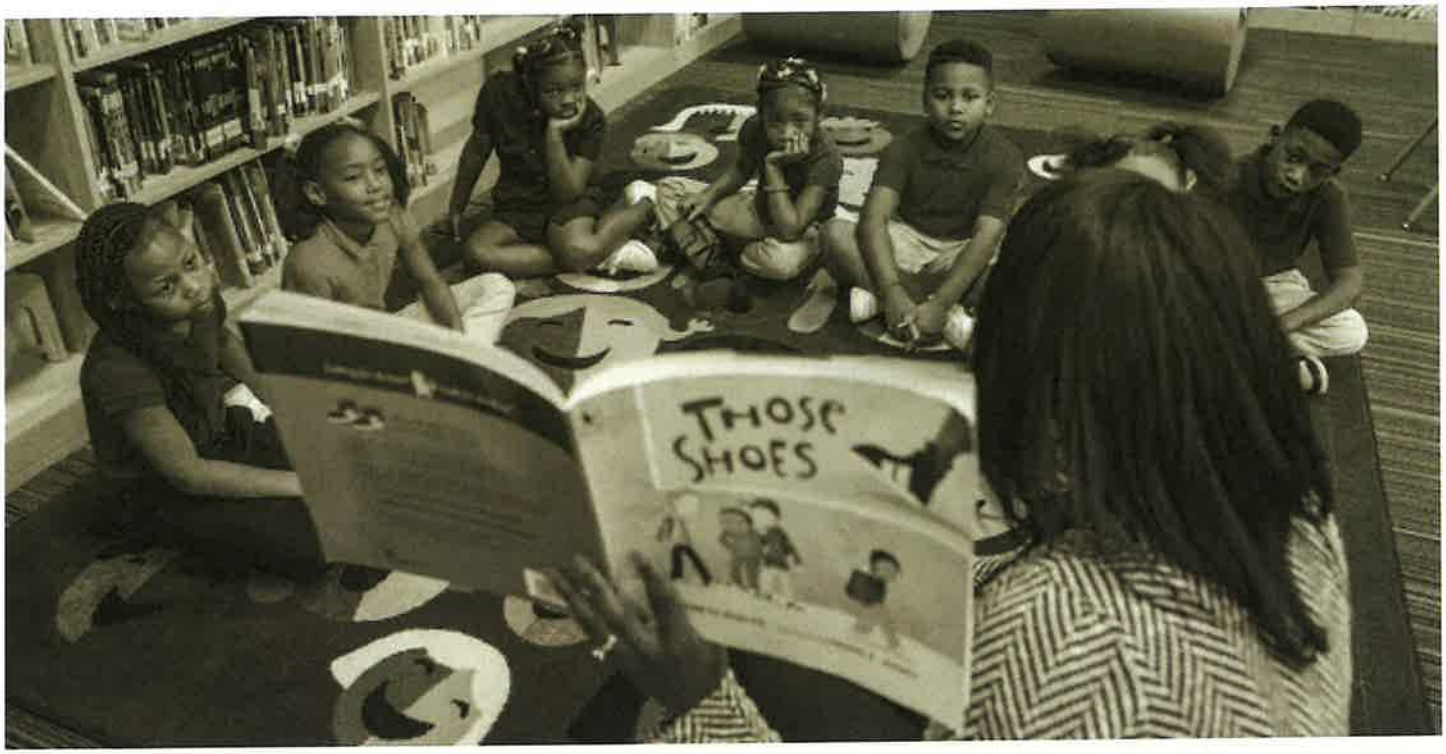
Educators echoed that no intentional steps are being taken to prevent attrition of teachers of color. Attrition was expressed specifically because the many feel the district is not actively trying to retain teachers of color, nor are they preventing them from going to other districts or leaving teaching altogether.

Leadership: Participants do not understand hiring practices in the district; however, many believe that school leaders are responsible for hiring. When leadership does not align with the values and interests of hiring candidates from diverse backgrounds, candidates of color that are applying and interviewing for jobs are viewed differently in the process and, as a result, are at a disadvantage. Additionally, teachers expressed concern about the role of nepotism in the hiring process and felt leadership appointments were predetermined based on inaccessible internal networks.

Pay and Incentives: Participants suggested that the district consider offering increased wages, hiring bonuses, and incentives. Participants shared their knowledge of neighboring districts' targeted incentives for teachers of Color and their success in drawing away Knox County educators. They also felt that there was an opportunity to pay for leadership development opportunities and provide other incentives that help retain current teachers and entice prospective ones. These opportunities would be offered to everyone in the district and ensure educators of color have equitable access to participate.

Racial Isolation: Participants shared that they are either at schools with a concentration of students of color or are racially isolated at schools with few faculty and students of color. Both environments pose unique challenges. There was a consensus for teachers in majority-minority schools that their students come from the most vulnerable backgrounds and challenges yet lack the valuable and necessary resources for success. For teachers who are the minority, advocacy on their behalf and students of color can be intimidating and challenging. Consequently, teachers who work in isolation feel judged by their peers, creating a feeling of inadequacy and seclusion. Unsurprisingly, teachers seek to connect with other teachers of color in their learning communities and across the district. Teachers in the focus groups shared they feel they have no room for movement or growth within the district due to the pattern of placement. They believe they are used solely to support students of Color.

Affinity Spaces: Currently, there are no affinity spaces that exist formally in the district. Many participants expressed feeling disconnected from a network that they were not sure existed. They rarely get the chance to connect with other teachers of color in their learning communities and across the district.



District & School Site Leadership

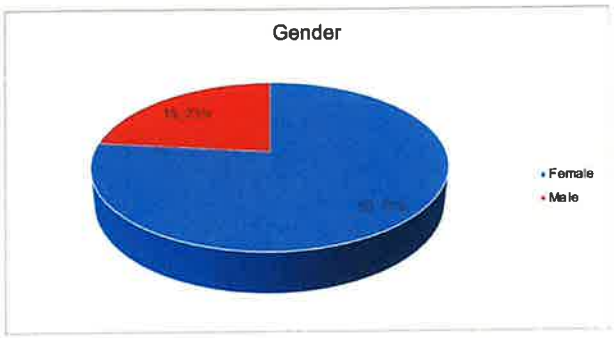
Strengths & Opportunities

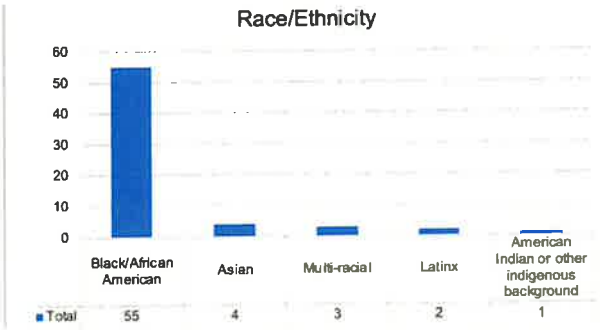
Aside from the Minority Advisory Council's involvement with sharing feedback with the administrators at Central Office, many focus group participants are unaware of the district leadership's strategy to address recruitment and retention for teachers of color. Many reflected on previous leadership's programs and intentions which included having a recruiter dedicated to increasing teacher diversity at the district level, and a leadership program that was accessible for educators of color to become administrators. Other responses beyond that were vague.

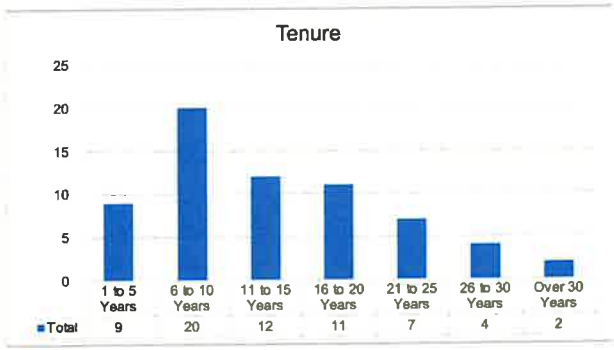
Participants also suggested that school administrators can help or hurt the cause of recruiting and retaining teachers of color. Some feel that it is not a priority for their school administrators to recruit and retain teachers of color and that is the reason that they are racially isolated as either the only teacher of color, or one of a small few. Other participants suggested that when school administrators have prioritized this, they felt valued and tended to receive more support, which encouraged them to stay.

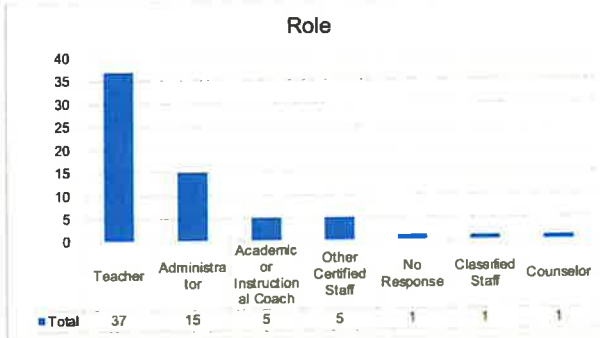
Educators of Color Insight Survey

During the month of December, TECA administered an insight survey in an effort to capture data from educators that were not able to participate in the focus groups and individual interviews. We received responses from 65 certified educators of color ranging from 1 to 30 years of experience and various roles across the district. The graphs below provide further context for the demographics of the respondents.









The survey's questions were asked in four broad categories: 1) Recruiting efforts, 2) Retention, 3) Support, and 4) Educational equity. Questions were structured in a Likert scale format where respondents rated from 1 to 5. The 1 through 5 rating had a different meaning based on the category that was being addressed. See the following:

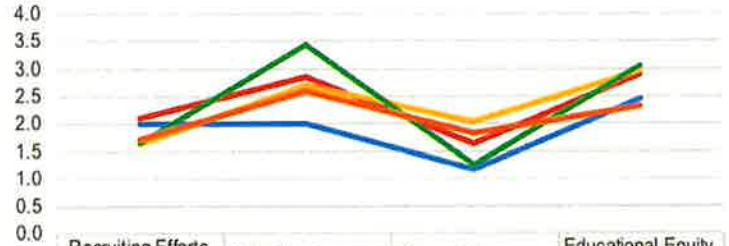
- Recruiting efforts: Rating of 1 is ineffective to Rating of 5 as effective
- Retention: Rating of 1 is strongly disagree to Rating of 5 as strongly agree
- Support: Rating of 1 is not at all to Rating of 5 as frequently
- Educational equity: Rating of 1 is strongly disagree to Rating of 5 as strongly agree

Below you will see a visual depiction of the average ratings for each category disaggregated by gender, race and ethnicity, years of experience working in the district, and roles. Based on the responses across categories, the lowest scores were represented by the youngest tenured and most veteran educators.

Average Rating by Gender

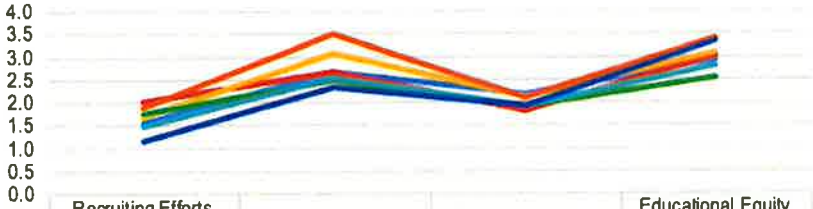
	Recruiting Efforts Average	Retention Average	Support Average	Educational Equity Average
Female	1.7	2.8	2.0	3.0
Male	1.6	2.6	2.0	2.7

Average Rating by Race/Ethnicity



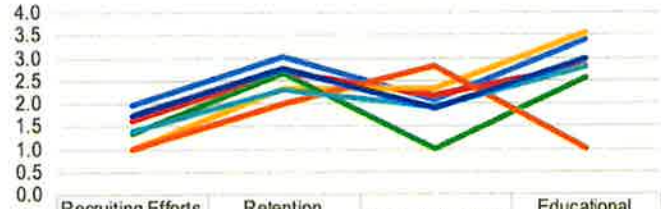
	Recruiting Efforts Average	Retention Average	Support Average	Educational Equity Average
American Indian or other indigenous background	2.0	2.0	1.2	2.4
Asian	2.1	2.9	1.6	2.9
Black/African American	1.6	2.7	2.0	3.0
Latinx	1.7	3.4	1.3	3.1
Multi-racial	1.7	2.6	1.8	2.3

Average Rating by Tenure



	Recruiting Efforts Average	Retention Average	Support Average	Educational Equity Average
1 to 5 Years	1.5	2.7	2.2	2.9
11 to 15 Years	2.0	2.7	1.8	3.0
16 to 20 Years	1.7	3.1	2.1	3.1
21 to 25 Years	1.8	2.5	1.9	2.5
26 to 30 Years	1.9	3.5	2.1	3.4
6 to 10 Years	1.5	2.5	1.9	2.8
Over 30 Years	1.2	2.3	1.9	3.3

Average Rating by Role



	Recruiting Efforts Average	Retention Average	Support Average	Educational Equity Average
Academic or Instructional Coach	2.0	3.0	2.1	3.4
Administrator	1.6	2.7	2.2	2.8
Classified Staff	1.0	2.3	2.3	3.6
Counselor	1.3	2.7	1.0	2.6
No Response	1.0	2.0	2.8	1.0
Other Certified Staff	1.4	2.3	1.9	2.8
Teacher	1.7	2.8	1.9	3.0

Averages by Category and Questions

On the pages following, you will receive summaries of the four categories and all the questions associated with them. The responses will be representative of all the respondents that participated organized by their tenure in the district; the average at the end of each column is reflective of all the questions asked in a specific category and the participants' responses. If you would like to disaggregate the questions by race and ethnicity, or gender, please reference the dashboard that was provided.

Recruiting Efforts (Rating of 1 is ineffective to Rating of 5 as effective; 3 is neutral)

Tenure	How effective are HCS (at the district level) efforts at recruiting educators of color	How effective are the efforts to recruit educators of color at your school site you work at or learning community you support	How effective are the efforts to recruit educators of color from neighboring districts	How effective are the efforts to recruit educators of color from neighboring states	How effective are the efforts to recruit educators of color from HBCUs	How effective are the efforts to recruit from within the school district i.e. classified staff	Recruiting Efforts Average
1 to 5 Years	1.5	1.8	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.9	1.5
6 to 10 Years	1.6	1.8	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.8	1.5
11 to 15 Years	2.1	2.2	1.8	2.1	1.7	1.9	2.0
16 to 20 Years	1.6	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.7
21 to 25 Years	1.9	2.0	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.9	1.8
26 to 30 Years	2.0	1.5	2.0	1.7	1.7	2.5	1.9
Over 30 Years	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.2
Grand Total	**1.7**	**1.9**	**1.5**	**1.6**	**1.4**	**1.9**	**1.7**

Retention (Rating of 1 is strongly disagree to Rating of 5 as strongly agree; 3 is neutral)

Tenure	There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school among teachers and leadership?	Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them	Teachers are recognized as educational experts	Educators of color are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles	Educators of color are viewed as effective leaders in this school	As an educator of color, do you feel you have ample opportunity for growth and development in your school	As an educator of color, do you feel you have ample opportunity for growth and development in the district?	As an educator of color, do you feel racially isolated in your school?	As an educator of color, do you feel you have opportunities to engage with you other educators of color in your building, learning community, or across the district?	Retention Average
1 to 5 Years	3.0	2.3	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.9	2.4	2.8	2.7
11 to 15 Years	3.0	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.8	1.8	3.2	2.6	2.7
16 to 20 Years	3.5	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.2	2.4	3.3	2.3	3.1
21 to 25 Years	2.4	2.7	3.0	2.0	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.7	2.6	2.5
26 to 30 Years	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.5	4.3	3.5	2.8	2.3	3.5
6 to 10 Years	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.1	3.1	1.9	2.5
Over 30 Years	3.5	2.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	1.5	1.5	5.0	1.5	2.3
Grand Total	**3.0**	**2.8**	**2.8**	**2.7**	**2.8**	**2.9**	**2.3**	**3.1**	**2.3**	**2.7**

Support (Rating of 1 is Not at all to Rating of 5 as Frequently; 3 is neutral)

Tenure	This school provides instructional materials that reflect the diverse background of our students and community	Data is analyzed with an equity lens	Equity professional development is provided at my school or district level	My identity is affirmed	I feel colleagues at school or work site understand me as a person	I feel connected to other adults at my school or work site	I feel like my colleagues respect me	I feel like my administrators or supervisors respect me	Overall, I feel like I belong at my school or work site	Educational Equity Average
1 to 5 Years	2.8	2.3	2.3	2.7	3.0	3.6	3.4	3.1	3.2	2.9
11 to 15 Years	2.9	2.6	2.3	2.7	2.8	3.3	3.8	3.4	3.3	3.0
16 to 20 Years	2.4	2.2	2.5	2.7	3.1	3.5	4.0	3.6	3.6	3.1
21 to 25 Years	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.6	2.6	2.9	2.7	3.1	2.9	2.5
26 to 30 Years	2.5	3.3	3.0	3.5	2.8	3.7	4.3	4.3	3.7	3.4
6 to 10 Years	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.9	3.6	3.4	3.2	2.8
Over 30 Years	2.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	2.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	3.3
Grand Total	**2.5**	**2.4**	**2.4**	**2.7**	**2.8**	**3.2**	**3.6**	**3.4**	**3.3**	**2.9**

Educational Equity (Rating of 1 is strongly disagree to Rating of 5 as strongly agree; 3 is neutral)

Tenure	How often do school leaders or other administratorsencourage you to teach about people from diverse races, ethnicities, or cultures	How confident are you that adults at your school or work site can have honest conversations with each other about race	At your school or work site, how often are you encouraged to think more deeply about race-related topics	How comfortable are you discussing race-related topics with your colleagues	How often do adults at your school or work site have important conversations about race, even when they might be uncomfortable	When there are major news events related to race, how often do adults at your school or work site talk about them with each other	Support Average
1 to 5 Years	2.6	1.9	1.9	2.8	2.0	1.9	2.2
6 to 10 Years	1.7	1.9	1.5	2.9	1.9	1.7	1.9
11 to 15 Years	1.8	1.8	1.5	2.4	1.7	1.6	1.8
16 to 20 Years	1.9	2.1	2.0	2.8	1.9	1.9	2.1
21 to 25 Years	1.9	1.7	1.9	2.4	1.7	1.9	1.9
26 to 30 Years	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.8	1.8	1.8	2.1
Over 30 Years	2.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.5	2.0	1.9
Grand Total	**1.9**	**1.9**	**1.7**	**2.7**	**1.8**	**1.8**	**2.0**

Open Response Questions

In addition to the survey questions, there were a few open response questions. Below you will find each question and some of the responses that were provided:

1. **Is there anything additional that you would like to add about the efforts to recruit more educators of color? This can be both things that are going well and areas of opportunity to improve.**

    - *"I don't think it's a priority at any level of the educational process from college prep, to hiring to retention. Not having positive experiences as students of color definitely have an influence on adults of color wanting to pursue a career in education. I don't think there are any authentic initiatives to bring POC into the educational field. Being a male, my personal experience has been less than stellar. I wish that I could mention things that are going well, but I cannot name any."*
    - *"KCS can not just look to recruit Black Educators but they must focus on retention as well. Recruitment and retention goes hand and hand."*
    - *"Being an African woman and not having grown up in east Tennessee, it was truly a culture shock when I moved here. I lived in Nashville for a year and they clearly have more diversity in their school system than Knox County Schools. I have found myself on many occasions being the only African-American person in a building of over a hundred employees. I have been in various positions within the district and the same holds true. It is really unfortunate because we as a district do a wonderful job when it comes to talking about equity, but we do a horrible job executing equity in our schools. Not providing a diverse pool of educators and administrators is a HUGE disservice to not only faculty/staff, but for our students and to our community."*
    - *"Our students need to see people who look like them in educator positions and administrative positions. I think we send the wrong message when we hire a sprinkle of African-American teachers/administrators and several janitorial staff. I think it sends the wrong message to our students that is- your race doesn't add up to much and does not showcase the diversity of educated and talented individuals that Knoxville has to offer. As a parent, it is even worse...of course, my son can look to me as a African-American educator to strive for greatness, but what about all the classes that he has and he has never had a black teacher before and he is entering the eighth grade. I have to be intentional in my efforts to celebrate Black History Month, Hispanic Month, etc. because those types of holidays are not celebrated in our schools nor in our classrooms. We need this survey because my hope is that it will shed light on the disparities in our district as a whole and that those in leadership roles will take the necessary steps to move us forward in the right direction for our students...they deserve equity not every once in a while, but everyday."*

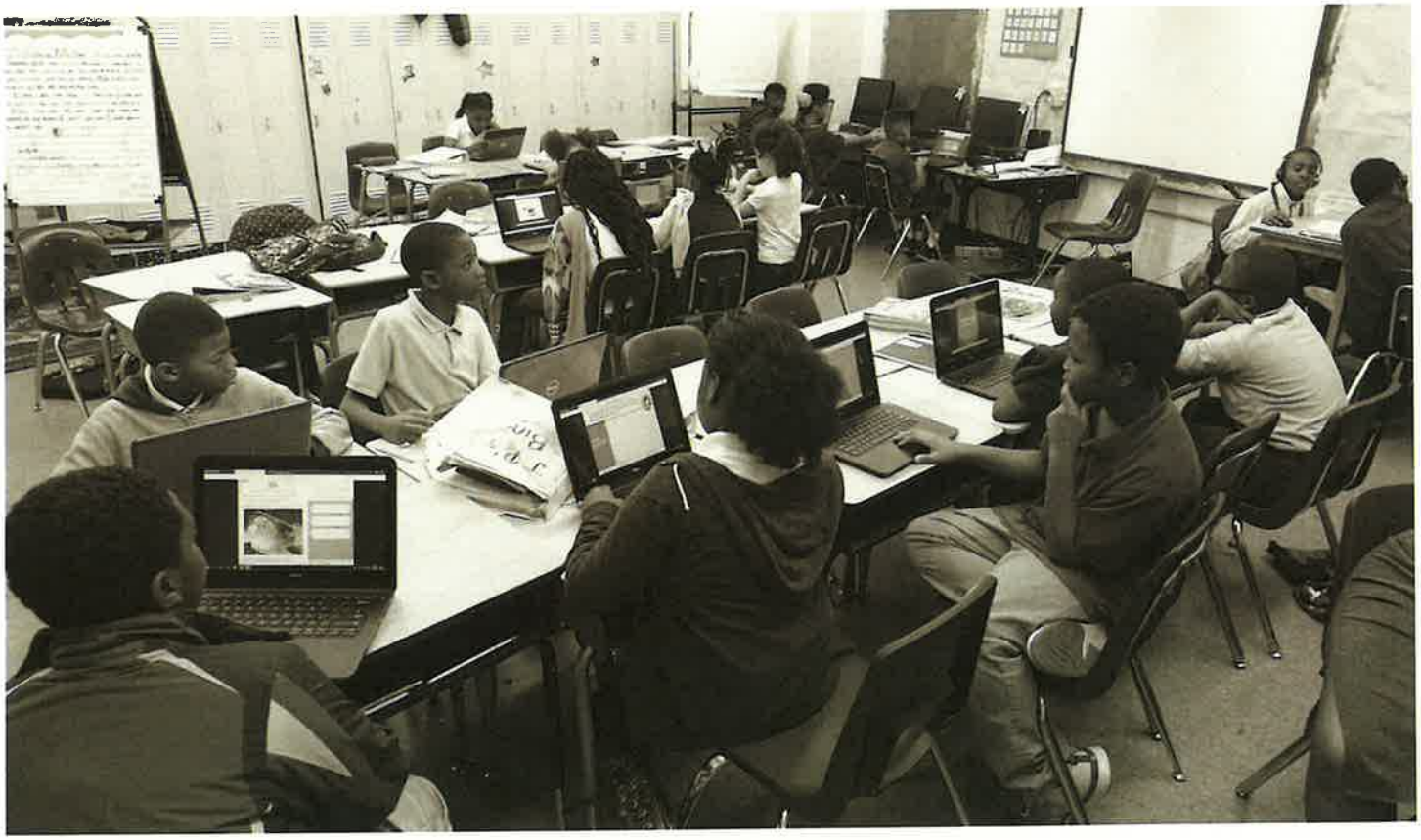
2. Is there anything additional that you would like to add about the efforts to retain more educators of color and leadership at the district or school level? This can be both things that are going and areas of opportunity to improve.

- *"Educators of color can thrive not only in the inner-city school, but we can thrive in the suburban ones as well. Sometimes, I feel like I'm marketed to only be able to work with students that look like me. That is not a problem; however, it becomes a problem when I try to step and experience other areas of Knox County."*
- *"Promote educators of color. When people do their homework in this district there are no black faces on the publications, no blacks in leadership. If more black people were in leadership we wouldn't have a problem recruiting teachers of color. Aloa snatched 10 teachers from AE last year alone. This is not the case if they felt valued, were well compensated and promoted for their expertise."*
- *"There are not many opportunities for growth for minorities in our district. Councils have been created for teachers of color to resolve issues but I don't hear or see the impact. I have gone on several interviews within the district for administrative positions since I got my license in 2010 as well as other minorities and have not moved outside my current role even though I have the experience. I've always had great LOE scores and felt like I've always interviewed well. I have requested feedback several times to inquire what skills I need to work on and she has yet to follow up with me...I should be hired because of the skills and knowledge I've acquired, not because I'm a minority. Minorities in the district are held to a different standard."*
- *"As an educator of color my experience, talent and expertise are often ignored. Non-educators of color with less experience, talent, and expertise are promoted at an expedited pace. The process for them includes mentorship and interview coaching even with less experience and more documented failures."*

3. ***Is there anything additional that you would like to add about educational equity or school climate? This can be both things that are going well and areas of opportunity to improve.***

- *"Professional development is not ongoing. It was offered as part of cultural diversity training. Also, I feel administrators in my building respect me as an individual and feel I make a contribution to the school. I feel it's supervisors at the district level that downplay my abilities."*
- *"I feel stuck. I'm overly complemented and I'm well-respected by staff, but can I advance? Are there other advancement opportunities? Minority children spend WAY TOO much time in RLC; staff need to learn how to have these conversations; they always end up in my office while I sort out details and mentor teachers. Whew!"*

- *"With the exception of 2 buildings I have worked in, I was in the minority when it came to celebrating Black History Month. As a classroom teacher, I was told that I would head the Black History activities because I am black. The same thing happened to me as an administrator at a school in a rural community. This should not be. I sense that if there were no black person in the building then there would be no acknowledgement of Black History Month. We also have Hispanic Heritage Month which my class celebrated as well. We have to think outside of our bubble and all be accountable for learning each other's history. The cultural diversity training in the district we have is one and done. I do not feel teachers see the significance or even accept that we all have biases. This is a challenge for our building as we seek to meet our students' social and emotional needs. If you do not know where the students are coming from and often pity the home life, it is hard to move forward with the relationships in the community."*
- *"The guidance counselor does a few lessons on cultural diversity. The district does a cultural diversity session at the district level. I don't know of any other training sessions. Diversity training should not be a one and done thing. It should be continuous and a part of District Learning Days as a required session."*



Recommendations

Based on insight and perspectives that were shared during focus groups, interviews, and surveys, TECA offers the following recommendations for KCS to consider for implementation:

1. ***Establish affinity groups:*** Educators shared that many are working in isolations and do not know other educators in the community. Establishing affinity groups that could meet regularly i.e. once a month, to begin to build and strengthen relationships among educators of color in the district. This space can also be used to gain feedback and offer support that is specific to educators of color.
2. ***Institute inclusive hiring practices:*** While districts are working to create plans to adhere to the Educator Diversity Policy, it will be important to review how existing practices align with district goals and strategies to increase educator diversity.
3. ***Track human capital data:*** Understanding and organizing the human capital data is essential. Keeping track of how many people of color apply for certified roles, how many are hired, and how many are leaving the district will be important. Additionally, being able to track the number of educators that are applying for leadership positions and opportunities, and how many are accepted is important too.
4. ***Invest in development:*** Leveraging dollars to invest in professional development, training, and leadership development is an opportunity to work towards retention. Being able to offset the cost of PD, training, certificates, and degrees develops skills and enhances licenses with additional endorsements, which in turn, adds value to educators that will add value to the communities, schools, and students they serve.
5. ***Expand leadership opportunities:*** Participants want access to leadership opportunities equitably. Leadership opportunities and positions can be positions on committees and councils, fellowships, aspiring leadership programs, teacher leader roles, department chairs, administrator roles, and instructional/academic coaches. Tracking who applies and who gets selected for these roles and opportunities is important. There should be an established goal for each opportunity that is committed to a certain number of qualified educators of colors being selected.
6. ***Launch a mentoring program:*** Early career educators of color or educators of color that are new to the district, could be connected with veteran educators of color in the district as mentors. Many veteran educators that participated named that they would have benefitted from having a mentor teacher early in their careers; they are now willing to pay it forward to serve as mentors themselves. Leveraging a group like the Minority Advisory Council or creating a new collective of educators dedicated to working with the Director of Advancement and Diversity to establish this program would be useful.

Conclusion

Educators of color across the district provided insight and reflections based on both their personal and professional lived experiences during their tenure with Knox County Schools. While not indicative of all the educators of color in the district, after engaging with nearly 90 educators of color, this information can be an integral component in the future decision-making as it relates to talent and human capital. It is recommended that the information in this report be taken into consideration as the district continues to develop and refine its recruitment and retention strategies to support the shift towards a more racial and ethnic diversity educator workforce.

Acknowledgements

The Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance is grateful for the generous support from the **Knox Education Foundation** to fully fund a new project focused on district partnership and engagement to increase and sustain teacher diversity in Knox County. Without this support, this project would not be possible. Our hope is that through this work the district will gain an understanding of the challenges and successes directly from the educators of color that have been most impacted by the racial inequities that have existed in the district's educator workforce. We hope that the recommendations will be taken into consideration for implementation, and the district continues to embrace and support increasing teacher diversity.

We thank you for your continued support and partnership!

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