



BRIEF

# Incentives, ongoing support key to attracting and retaining teachers of color

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## Dive Brief:

- Higher compensation, providing alternative pathways to teaching, and forging partnerships with historically black colleges and universities are proactive ways that districts can build a diversified teacher workforce. But once these teachers are hired, it's important for leaders not to pigeon-hole them into disciplinary roles, working as language translators or teaching only remedial classes, District Administration reports.
- Some districts have seen marked success in this effort by forming groups, such as The Fellowship: Black Male Educators for Social Justice in Philadelphia and the BOND Project in Maryland's Montgomery County Public Schools. These efforts seek to encourage students' interest in the teaching profession and develop recruitment, retention and mentoring strategies for ongoing support of teachers of color.
- The Council of Chief State School Officers' multi-state Diverse and Learner-Ready Teachers Initiative will also share strategies for developing a diverse teaching corps with state leaders.

## Dive Insight:

Interest in the teaching profession has declined as the nation's student population has grown more diverse. In the 2015

Condition of Future Educators, only 4% of U.S. high school graduates who took the ACT test said they intended to pursue a career as an educator. In 2010, this figure was 7% and in 2000, it was 11%. In addition, the report notes that students who were interested had lower-than-average achievement levels, particularly in STEM areas. In fact, the last time that interest in the teaching profession saw a spike was during the Great Recession.

The situation is more dire for attracting teachers of color to the field. Although the number has increased in the past 30 years, teachers of color still represent less than 25% of the teaching workforce. While many studies recognize the important role teachers of color play in education and in the quest for greater academic achievement, attracting and retaining teachers of color continues to remain a challenge.

A 2018 report by the Brookings Institution suggests that certain financial bonuses and incentives can help improve diversity in the teaching workforce. "Most individuals do not go into teaching for the money, but financial rewards can be powerful motivators that help nudge teachers on the margin," says the report, noting that even when incentives are offered to all prospective teachers, they may be especially "effective in promoting racial diversity."

Districts also face the challenge of providing the necessary support and incentives to retain a more diverse educator workforce. Strong induction and residency programs have proven effective in some cases. However, ongoing support from mentors in organizations such as the ones discussed in the article may also be a critical element in strengthening the pipeline for the future.

### **Recommended Reading:**

**DA** District Administration K12 district leaders build diversity in teaching staffs [↗](#)