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Practices to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color in Rural Minnesota Schools

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Practices to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color in Rural Minnesota Schools

By

Eric Hudspith

This Dissertation is Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for

the Educational Doctorate Degree

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ERIC HUDSPITH

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the relationships between strategic recruitment and retention practices implemented by rural Minnesota school districts and the recruitment and retention rates of teachers of color within these districts. The research assesses whether districts implementing strategic recruitment practices demonstrate a higher proportion of teacher candidates of color and subsequent hiring rates compared to their peer districts. The study also investigates the relationships between strategic retention practices and the actual retention data observed in districts. Participants included administrators representing districts identified as rural that have a significant percentage of students of color. were selected based on predetermined criteria encompassing district demographics and rural status within Minnesota. A survey tool was used to gather information on the use of strategic recruitment and retention practices, and the relationships were analyzed between the implementation of these practices and the recruitment and retention data in the district. The analysis did not demonstrate strong relationships between the strategic practice implementation and the recruitment and retention data in districts, thus not supporting the study hypotheses. However, modest relationships were observed in some cases, suggesting nuanced correlations between certain strategic practices and recruitment and retention data. Given the limited resources available to rural Minnesota school districts for recruiting and retaining teachers of color, it becomes imperative to allocate these resources thoughtfully. This study emphasizes the need for districts to regularly assess the impact of their recruitment and retention practices based on district results, and not solely rely on the district's perception of his impact. Ultimately, this study aims to assist districts in optimizing resource allocation toward achieving successful recruitment and retention outcomes for teachers of color.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

The mission of many school districts is to provide quality learning opportunities for students and prepare them for life after graduation. This success can be maximized by the recruitment, hiring and subsequent retention of quality teachers. Research has discovered that the quality of a teacher has a direct influence on student achievement (Stronge, 2013). Schools that are able to hire and provide long term employment to high quality teachers have an advantage in meeting the mission of the district. However, this can result in districts being in a position of direct competition with their peers for the highest quality teachers.

When the supply of teachers exceeds job opportunities, districts do not find hiring teachers to be a challenge and they can follow their established process without concern. The process may involve screening and interviewing multiple candidates, followed by selecting the best new employee for the district. However, in the event that there are more openings than candidates available, a teacher shortage is created, and districts are vulnerable to focusing primarily on filling positions rather than hiring the strongest candidate. Martin and Mulvihill (2016) identified that a teacher shortage was beginning to emerge at the time of their research. They also note that this teacher shortage does not always impact all districts equally. Many districts are feeling the pressure of the shortage. However, a middle class suburban school may be able to recruit and retain teachers with little issue, whereas an urban school, or a school that has a more diverse population may struggle more to obtain teachers (Martin & Mulvihill, 2016).

Due to the challenge of hiring and retaining teachers, schools that may be labeled as being hard to staff, which may contain more students of color or students

living in poor socioeconomic conditions, often produce lower student achievement

scores per the standardized testing measures that many districts use. And although

schools in urban or otherwise hard to staff areas may make gains in hiring quality

professional teaching staff, the staff retention rates in these districts can minimize or

negate any gains that are being made through the hiring process (Achinstein et al.,

2010), particularly for new teachers.

Shortage of Teachers of Color in the United States

Adding to the challenge of the broader teacher shortage is the limited number of

teachers of color entering and being retained in the education profession. This

disproportionate shortage of teachers of color is negatively impacting students of color

around the country. Goldhaber et al. (2019) found that having a teacher of color

improves the educational experiences for students of color. When districts are able to

increase the diversity in the teaching force, particularly when working with a diverse

student body, it benefits students as they see themselves in their teachers (Goldhaber et

al., 2019). With this in mind, districts are working to maintain and improve the quality of

their teaching staff while simultaneously attempting to diversify the staff at the same

time. In order to accomplish this, districts often look to one of their closest partners,

teacher preparation programs.

In order to understand the shortage of teachers of color in the workforce, we can

start by looking at teacher preparation programs. Teacher candidates who attend a

Minority Serving Institution (MSI) often have a different experience than those who

attend a predominately White institution. MSIs include Historically Black College and

Universities (HBCU), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU), Hispanic Serving

Institutions (HSI), and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving

Institutions (AANAPISI). In these programs, teacher candidates are primarily placed with

colleagues and student teaching situations with schools and students that create a

match with the racial identity of the teacher candidate (Gasman et al., 2017). Although these MSI teacher preparation programs prepare teachers of color to serve students of color, and the experiences of these teacher candidates is more positive than not, they represent a relatively small number of the teacher candidates in preparation programs and may not support diversifying the teaching staff in communities that do not closely match the demographics of the partner P-12 schools with whom these MSIs are working.

Teacher preparation programs not offered at MSIs are finding that they may need to explore similar strategies when recruiting students as the school districts that aim to hire the teachers after graduation. Grow Your Own (GYO) programs have shown to not only increase the number of candidates of color in teacher preparation programs, but that these candidates have a higher retention rate in their preparation program and in the teaching field (Gist & Lynn, 2019). GYO programs are also effective in supporting Latinx teacher candidates, discussing that the community environment that is the most comfortable for a teacher candidate has the greatest chance of retaining the teacher (Morales, 2018).

However, not all teacher candidate experiences, particularly in predominantly White institutions (PWI), can be considered positive. Similar barriers exist for teacher candidates of color in their preparation programs as do in school districts, which can introduce or continue a series of experiences for teacher candidates of color that are negative and may be ongoing. Walker (2020) studied the barriers that Black male teacher candidates face as they attempt to navigate their teacher preparation program. These barriers include the shortage of Black mentors for new teachers, the fact that Black male teachers face stereotypes as they enter a school, and that these new teacher candidates, even before being an actual employee, feel the pressure to save every Black student they work with (Walker, 2020). These barriers, along with the other factors such as a feeling of isolation, a lack of confidence being communicated by cooperating

teachers, and a lack of trust being offered by their teacher preparation faculty, all contribute to a lower retention rate for teacher candidates of color as they attempt to complete their degree and enter the workforce (Green & Martin, 2018).

Finally, when examining the lack of teachers in general, and specifically teachers of color, findings suggest that this challenge exists across all types of school districts. Urban, suburban, and rural schools all face a shortage of quality teachers to support their students (Achenstein et al., 2010; Burns, 2020; Miller et al., 2019). Since the number of teacher candidates of color graduating from teacher preparation programs can be fewer, districts of all types take part in the competition to recruit, hire, and retain as many quality candidates as possible. Knowing that the effectiveness of a teacher matters a great deal (Stronge, 2013) and that having a teacher of color can improve the experience of students of color (Goldhaber et al., 2019), these are the teacher candidates that districts are hoping to attract and retain.

Barriers to Recruiting and Hiring Teachers of Color

In order to best work towards the mission of providing a high quality education to every student, districts can find themselves competing with each other for the limited supply of teachers available, specifically teachers of color. However, despite this shortage and the understanding that having a teacher of color is a benefit to students of color, many barriers continue to exist that limit the number of teachers of color hired each year. In discussing the barriers that Black male teacher candidates experience, Green and Martin (2018) found that these candidates relayed experiences where they felt that they were being considered for a position because they were a role model for their race, or that they specifically would fill a need the district had to support students of color due to their race. This predetermined burden that these teacher candidates experienced during the recruitment process drove some candidates away from considering a district for employment (Green & Martin, 2018).

Additional barriers that exist in the recruitment process for teachers of color include a lack of minority peers, a lack of synchronicity between teachers and students in these districts, and insufficient role models and available mentors of color to help support the recruitment of new hires (Ingersoll et al., 2019). These barriers will be important for districts to attempt to address, as Ingersoll et al. (2019) also provide evidence that the turnover rate for minority teachers exceeds that of White teachers. Although attempting to hire teachers of color at a higher rate is a positive goal for districts, as long as a disparity in turnover exists the need will continue to be present without much improvement being made. Carter et al. (2019) also point out that legislative licensure procedures and the whitestreaming, an approach that places Eurocentric norms as the primary form of acceptable practices, of pedagogical strategies can provide additional barriers for districts and candidates to navigate in the recruitment process (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018; Carter Andrews et al., 2019).

Human resource staff in districts also have a significant impact on the recruitment process. They must balance what can be considered an intuition about hiring quality candidates and the processes that need to be in place to deliver a quality hiring process (Goings et al., 2021). When human resources staff rely solely on intuition in the screening and recruitment process, their personal and professional biases become a significant and often limiting factor in the selection of teachers. However, if the process is operated with only a checklist style screening, or another seemingly objective strategy that is biased towards a certain factor such as experience, this also can be a detriment to finding some of the most qualified candidates. Goings et al. (2021) write that human resources leaders who are able to design a recruitment process that effectively balances these factors have a greater chance of recruiting strong candidates, with specific mention of attracting candidates of color.

Once a teacher candidate has engaged in the recruitment process and has made a decision to enter into the hiring process of a district, additional challenges exist that place teachers of color at a disadvantage. Noonan and Bristol (2020) found that in an attempt to keep the hiring process formal and predictable, districts may tailor their processes to be an advantage to those candidates who are already in the community or are considered to fit the expectations of the community that currently are the norm. This parochialistic approach gives an advantage to teacher candidates that do not push the district outside of its comfort zone and thus a disadvantage exists for teacher candidates of color (Noonan & Bristol, 2020).

Licensure expectations and other screening criteria also reduce the number of teacher candidates of color that districts hire (Carter Andrews et al., 2019). Districts may be able to recruit and get qualified teacher candidates of color into their process, but criteria such as grade point average, license requirements, or preferred experience may give an advantage to a candidate with experiences versus a candidate that is looking for their first opportunity. Districts often use these screening criteria under the premise of the process being objective. However, this criteria can provide an advantage for candidates that have worked in multiple districts or moved from job to job in a district score, resulting in the process being skewed in their favor. When applying these seemingly objective criteria, it would be possible in a hiring process for no entry level teachers to move past this step. In the event that a candidate does not have the ability or interest in relocating to a new community, such as a new teacher graduate needing to stay local to their preparation program, it is possible these candidates are overlooked in these checklist style hiring steps.

Hiring processes also have difficulty demonstrating that the district values teachers of color. Gist (2018) uses the people as technology (PT) conceptual model and the diversity intelligence (DQ) conceptual model to gather information on how much

districts may value teachers of color and how this value is being indicated in their hiring processes. The hope is that if a district is able to understand the message it is sending to potential candidates of color, it will be able to evaluate its processes and promote change that will better communicate the desire to increase the number of teachers of color in the district (Gist, 2018). Goings et al. (2021) also discusses the balance of utilizing a process that appears to be objective and uses the PT model to create an efficient system with the understanding that some intuition and DQ is necessary to build a strong team that includes teachers of color (Goings et al., 2021).

The challenge of hiring faculty of color can be found in higher education as well. Hiring committees at higher education institutions can also exhibit similar biases to the pre kindergarten through twelfth grade (P-12) system. Committees attempt to create screening and hiring processes that focus on false precision and requirements that give advantages to candidates that most match those on the committee (Moody, 2012). As teacher preparation programs attempt to recruit candidates of color, their faculty also benefits from being representative of a diverse student body. Therefore, addressing these barriers in higher education processes not only benefits the institution, but also the P-12 programs that potentially would see an increase in teacher candidates of color.

Barriers to the Retention of Teachers of Color

After a school district has hired a teacher of color, the next step is to attempt to overcome the barriers that are in place which negatively impact the retention of these teachers so that they can retain them for a long period of time and create consistency and continuity for students and staff alike. A number of the barriers that districts and teachers face can be described as operational barriers, which can be defined as barriers that exist within the employment structure of a district. The teacher evaluation process is an example of this type of barrier. As principals evaluate and give feedback to new teachers, Burciaga and Kohli (2018) found that many of the measures used to assess

teacher effectiveness are based on a whitestream model of pedagogy, emphasizing

Eurocentric practices as being a higher priority. Within the teacher evaluation system

provided by the school district, the principals observed in this study did not have

sufficient latitude to give appropriate feedback to their teachers of color (Burciaga &

Kohli, 2018). Principals become used to the process used in their district, and beginning

at the time of hire of a teacher of color can associate this diversity with poorer

instructional skills (Burns 2020). Since the teacher evaluation process is specifically

designed by each district, it is necessary for school districts to be intentional about

incorporating enough flexibility so that school leaders can give all of their teachers,

particularly teachers of color, feedback that can help them grow. Evidence collected by

Solis (2015) further clarifies this point, demonstrating that evaluation results have a

negative correlation when analyzed with the variable of being a teacher of color.

An additional operational barrier that can exist in districts is in the area of

professional development. Districts do not often provide professional development that

increases cultural competency and awareness for its staff (Kohli, 2018). Omitting this

intentional professional development topic not only limits the knowledge and skills of

White teachers, but it can also leave teachers of color feeling left out or disengaged from

the learning activities. However, doing the opposite, and providing this intentional

professional development can support retention of teachers of color. Teachers of color

have stated that when their district includes effective cultural competence and

professional development, they are more likely to remain in the district (Kohli, 2019).

Since there are many variations of this type of staff development, further research is

needed to determine a more clear determination of what can be defined as effective.

Contractual issues can also contribute to a lower retention rate for teachers of

color. Districts are required by state statute to negotiate with teachers to determine the

processes that they use when carrying out reduction in teaching staff. This collaborative

process could allow districts and their staff to create a structure that supports staff that has been able to demonstrate effectiveness in their practice. However, teacher unions and districts still tend to negotiate a structure that allows the most recently hired teachers to be let go first, regardless of their performance record. Once again, the perceived objectiveness of this layoff process does remove consideration of other factors such as performance that could help strengthen a district's teaching staff as a whole. Along with this point, Farinde et al. (2016) finds that contract requirements often can hinder advancement opportunities for teachers as well. To become a mentor, teachers may need to have a certain number of years of experience or time in the district, regardless of the skills they possess. These contract structures can negatively impact the retention rate of teachers of color in schools (Farinde et at., 2016).

Without the opportunities to advance, but continuing to have a desire to support their school however possible, teachers of color may then find themselves in positions that require additional work, but without extra compensation. Cormier et al. (2021), Gewertz (2019) and Madsen (2019) discuss the various forms this could take, ranging from being asked to specifically support students or families of color to interpreting if language skills are an asset the teacher possesses. These additional duties can become cumbersome for teachers of color, and without any compensation to support the time they require, these teachers are at risk of leaving the profession or that school sooner than they would have otherwise planned (Cormier et al., 2021; Gewertz, 2019, Madsen, 2019).

Numerous studies also have found that cultural barriers exist as well that can lead to lower retention rates for teachers of color. A lack of administrative support, or understanding of what is needed by teachers of color, especially early in their careers, is a contributing factor to teachers leaving districts. Farinde et al. (2016) and Bristol (2020) emphasize that leaders who are not willing or able to provide support for teachers of

color can correlate with a higher attrition rate at those schools. In fact,

Hernandez-Johnson et al. (2021) provides narrative experiences from participants that

not only felt unsupported, but actually felt pushed out of the profession by administrators.

This issue is not only observed once a teacher is employed, as Black teacher candidates

have also reported that the administrators at their field placement sites are less likely to

support them than other teacher candidates (Green & Martin, 2018). As a result, some of

these teacher candidates choose to explore other degree opportunities that may feel

more inclusive (Bristol, 2020; Farinde et al., 2016; Hernandez-Johnson et al., 2021).

Feelings of isolation can be experienced by teachers of color, particularly in

schools and districts where the presence of staff diversity is not significant. Although at

least one study finds that a higher satisfaction rate can be observed when the teacher of

color is the only staff member of color (Bristol, 2020), the feeling of isolation remains for

that teacher, and additional studies indicate that feeling isolated increases attrition rate

(Ingersoll et al, 2019). Again, this is not only a barrier that exists upon employment, as

Green and Martin (2018) also report that feelings of isolation can contribute to teachers

candidates withdrawing from studying to become teachers.

A lack of support by colleagues can also be felt by teachers of color. When a

culture exists that includes the belief that teachers of color are less likely to be effective

than their White peers, the result is that the teachers of color do not feel respected in

their buildings (Ingersoll et al., 2019; Kohli, 2018). Examples of this disrespect include

being left out of collaborative work on team projects, making assumptions that a teacher

of color does not want to take on additional duties, or requesting that a teacher of color

work through a behavior incident with a student of color solely based on race and the

predetermined belief that this strategy would be more effective (Hernandez-Johnson et

al., 2021; Madsen, 2019). These studies also observe that in multiple instances White

colleagues mistakenly believe that these trends are positive in that they allow teachers of color to engage and contribute to a school.

Along with the disrespect that they may experience subtly or behind closed doors, teachers of color also endure more directly racist actions by colleagues, administrators, and the community. These can take the shape of microaggressions by colleagues, or these colleagues taking the stance of color blindedness (Kohli, 2018). Although both examples allow the colleagues to claim that they are not intentionally acting in a racist manner, these actions demonstrate a lack of understanding of how to engage in an antiracist manner as well. As Benson et al. (2020) observes, this racist behavior is not isolated to new teachers, as their study found that veteran teachers, or those that enter the teaching profession as a second career also experience racist actions. Community members also contribute to the racist interactions teachers face, ranging from questioning a teacher's decision to making false claims (Hernandez-Johnson, 2021; Kohli, 2018). The interactions and experiences of racism among the culture of schools are a factor in teachers of color choosing to leave the profession (Cormier et al., 2021) and districts will need to determine the most effective way to improve this culture and make their schools into welcoming environments for all teachers and students.

Problem Statement

There have been numerous studies regarding the challenges that districts face in recruiting and retaining teachers of color. These studies explore various barriers that exist for teachers of color as they enter and attempt to remain in profession, and although some strategies are presented to support the recruitment and retention of teachers of color, these strategies for improvement are often very specific to a certain district or group of districts, and may not be able to be widely generalized. One such strategy, creating Grow Your Own (GYO) pathways for encouraging students to enter the

teacher profession, requires several key variables to be in place for the process to be successful, and not all districts have the ability to control these variables (Morales, 2018). Another limitation of existing research is the emphasis on the experiences of the teacher of color or teacher candidate of color, and pathways that higher education institutions can implement to promote teacher development. There is not as large of a body of research focused on strategies that districts can employ, that are directly in their circle of control, in the recruitment and retention process. In addition, many of the studies that do currently exist apply to urban and suburban schools as opposed to rural environments. An opportunity to fill a research gap exists, as it is becoming important that rural districts are able to identify effective strategies that will positively impact their recruitment efforts and retention rates for teachers of color.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this quantitative study is to analyze the correlation of strategic practices being implemented by rural school districts and the recruitment and retention rates of teachers of color in these districts. While a significant amount of the research to date is focused on teacher preparation programs and teacher candidate experiences, there are also several identified practices that districts can participate in that can also impact teacher recruitment and retention. The proposed outcome of the research will be to provide analysis of the effectiveness of each practice so that districts can make appropriate decisions when reviewing their processes.

Hypotheses

School districts in Minnesota are actively seeking to increase the rate at which they can hire and retain teachers of color. However, they are doing so with limited resources and amid a larger shortage of teachers in the United States. Due to this, it is necessary for districts to be strategic when selecting which practices they choose to allocate time and energy to in their recruitment and retention processes. Some of the

more effective strategic practices that urban and suburban school districts have utilized to recruit and retain teachers of color have been reviewed, and this proposed study will seek to advance the research and determine if these identified practices correlate to more teachers of color in rural districts, as measured by the number of candidates of color a district is able to recruit, how many actual hires are teachers of color, the overall number of teachers of color in a district, and the rates of retention for teachers of color in a district. It is understood that rural districts may have some unique limitations when creating a recruitment and retention plan, and this research is intended to provide insight so that districts can best utilize their resources. This research will seek to learn which practices correlate with effectiveness in recruiting and retaining staff of color in rural Minnesota school districts.

Urban and suburban school districts that implement strategic recruitment practices have seen an increase in the number of candidates of color applying for open positions, along with a higher number of candidates of color being hired (Carter Andrews et al., 2019; Morales, 2018). The proposed study will seek to determine if rural school districts also see similar successes when implementing these practices.

1. It is hypothesized that rural Minnesota school districts that implement strategic recruitment practices will attract proportionally more teacher candidates of color than their peer districts.

2. It is hypothesized that rural Minnesota school districts that implement strategic recruitment practices will hire proportionally more teachers of color than their peer districts.

Districts can implement strategic retention practices that have correlated with more teachers of color on staff, as well as higher retention rates for teachers of color (Gewertz, 2019; Kohli, 2019). Studies have primarily focused on urban and suburban school districts when discussing retention, and this study will analyze the number of

teachers of color and the retention rates for teachers of color in rural districts and their correlation to strategic retention practices.

3. It is hypothesized that rural Minnesota school districts that implement strategic retention practices will have a proportionally higher percentage of teachers of color on staff than their peer districts.

4. It is hypothesized that rural Minnesota school districts that implement strategic retention practices will have a proportionally higher rate of retention of teachers of color than their peer districts.

Significance of the Research

Research has identified for districts a list of the barriers they face when it comes to increasing the diversity of the teaching staff. However, since a great deal of the current literature speaks primarily to teacher preparation programs, and the experiences of teachers and teacher candidates, it can be difficult for districts to identify which district practices are most effective in breaking down some of the barriers of recruitment and retention. Further, this study will seek to identify strategic practices that are directly able to be controlled by a school district, thus giving school districts an opportunity to learn which practices are most effective as they pursue their hiring goals. Using the data gathered and the analysis of the correlation between strategic practices and positive hiring and retention rates, districts will be able to implement the strategies with the highest likelihood of success, and perhaps discontinue practices that have not been deemed to have a significant impact to their process.

Limitations

The participants of this study will be limited to rural districts in Minnesota with a student population of greater than 25% students of color. This sampling intends to study districts where the population of students of color is high enough that having a diverse teaching staff would positively impact students' experiences. Therefore the findings may

not be generalizable to all districts across the country, or even across Minnesota, due to unique student and staff demographics.

An additional limitation to consider is that external variables may have an impact on the recruitment and retention of teachers of color. Life events such as marriage or divorce, a necessary relocation, changes in family dynamic, and career advancement could play a factor in whether a teacher stays in their current position and district. In an effort to reduce this limitation, all turnover of positions will be included, without regard for the reason for leaving. By including all turnover for all districts, and studying the retention rate over a period of five years, each district will have a relatively similar opportunity to demonstrate which practices correlate to higher recruitment and retention rates.

Definition of Key Terms

Cultural Recruitment and Retention Strategic Practices

Recruitment and retention practices that are driven by the culture of the workplace, such as developing a feeling of autonomy or belonging amongst staff. The practices intend to include all in the positive work culture, and are often subconscious to many staff members and leadership. Failure to develop positive cultural practices within the recruitment and retention process can result in fewer applications for open positions, a higher turnover rate for all or for specific employee groups, and open the door for discriminatory or racist acts.

Operational Recruitment and Retention Strategic Practices

Recruitment and retention practices that are guided by structured contractual or human resources related restrictions. These practices include a rubric for hiring screening, teacher evaluation systems, and negotiated processes for seniority and lay off practices. Although in most cases these practices are developed with a surface level image of being fair to all concerned, these practices may place teachers of color at a

disadvantage if they are hired more recently, or have not had previous teaching experience.

Recruitment

The actions and behaviors school districts participate in to create a larger candidate pool for open positions. The practices are primarily intentional as districts review their hiring practices, but districts also can unintentionally develop practices that impact their ability to recruit teachers of color. The comprehensive process of recruitment includes but is not limited to marketing of the district, networking with teacher preparation programs, promoting the district as a positive place to work, and encouraging current staff to consider advancement opportunities.

Retention Rate

In any workplace, staff turnover is an expected part of the operations of the organization. Retention is the inverse of turnover, represented by the rate that staff stay at a particular district or workplace from year to year. Higher retention rates lead to less transitions for students, and this continuity to staff contributes to a positive workplace culture and learning environment for students.

Rural School District

The United State Census Bureau (2020) defines a rural community to be any communited not located within an urban or suburban setting. Further clarification identifies an urbanized area as a population of 50,000 or more people. For the purposes of this study, rural districts will be defined as being located outside of the major metropolitan areas in Minnesota. These areas include the seven county greater Minneapolis-Paul metropolitan area, Duluth, St. Cloud, Rochester, and Mankato. Districts participating in the study are located no less than 25 miles from any of these metropolitan areas.

Strategic Recruitment Practices

        Strategic Recruitment Practices (SRPs) are specific practices districts use to recruit teachers of color. Activities that Green and Martin (2018) found to be successful for urban and suburban districts include training cooperating teachers to work with teacher candidates of color and emphasizing cultural competency as a preferred skill of new hires. Additionally, working with Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) to establish relationships with candidates early is an effective strategy (Gasman et al., 2017). Walker (2020) and Noonan & Bristol (2020) also indicate that Grow Your Own (GYO) programs and recruiting new candidates from within the community as practices urban and suburban districts utilize.

Strategic Retention Practices

        Strategic Retention Practices (SRTPs) are specific practices districts use to retain teachers of color in their district. One such practice is to assign a mentor to new teachers of color in order to help foster relationships and belongingness with staff (Bristol, 2020). Cormier et al. (2021) also find that when districts formalize additional duties that may be assigned to teachers of color, and therefore compensate them for the extra work, that this practice also contributes to staff retention. Creating appropriate teacher evaluation processes that minimize whitestreaming is another strategic practice (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018). Gewertz (2018) adds that creating opportunities for staff to share their experiences, such as affinity groups, can be a positive culture builder. The fifth strategic practice that we will use in this study is providing specific equity and microaggression professional development for staff (Kohli, 2018). These SRPs have been found to be successful in urban and suburban districts, and this study will be seeking to determine if the same successes can be observed in rural districts.

Teachers of Color

Licensed teachers who identify as non-White per Minnesota state race and ethnicity identifiers. The state identifier will be used for this study as it will be the same measurement tool as the student demographic information used to determine participating districts for the study. It is relevant to note that although using this definition does allow the study to capture all non-White teachers in the data, it may also be necessary to analyze the impacts of strategic practices for teachers and teacher candidates per their specific racial identity in order to determine whether a particular strategic practice shows more or less correlation to teachers of a particular race.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The shortage of teachers of color in the United States is well documented (Achinstein et al., 2010), and one of the first questions asked when considering this shortage is "Why are teacher candidates of color so challenging to identify and recruit?" It begins with the pathway that students experience as they enter into their professional career, and the many common barriers experienced by teacher candidates of color in the recruitment and hiring processes. These barriers exist despite the efforts districts may be making to remove them. Once hired, retention is also a challenge for districts as their teachers of color face additional obstacles to retention that have yet to be remedied on a large scale. These challenges include both operational and cultural barriers that teachers of color experience in school districts, all playing a part in contributing to a lower rate of retention than their White peers. Although multiple ideas exist to eliminate these barriers, certain strategic practices have been found to be more successful than others in the recruitment and retention of teachers of color in urban and suburban districts. However, a gap in the literature remains when considering whether these same strategies would be as effective when implemented in rural schools. This research being proposed in this study is intended to address this gap so that rural school districts can also operate intentionally in their recruitment and retention processes.

Shortage of Teachers of Color in the United States

Achinstein et al (2010) performed a meta-analysis of 70 studies and found that the labor shortage in education is not a new phenomenon. Particularly, in certain high demand license areas, such as special education, science, and math, school districts have been experiencing a shortage of teachers for over two decades (Achinstein, et al, 2010). This presents its own set of challenges for districts, but districts can design

staffing patterns to account for a lack of teachers in a specific discipline. Unfortunately the result could be a reduction in specific services or courses being offered for students, but the number of students impacted can remain limited. More recently, Wiggan et al (2021) found that as of 2018, there were approximately 51.7 million students attending public schools nationally. To keep up with this student population, nearly 1.5 million new teachers will be needed in the next decade to serve these students. However, teacher preparation programs are not graduating teacher candidates at this rate. In general, the United States is facing a shortage of licensed teachers (Wiggan et al., 2021).

While an overall shortage of teachers in certain areas and in general presents a challenge, Achenstein et al (2010) reported that a shortage of teachers of color is being identified in all licensure areas and throughout the country. This is much more difficult for school districts to work through, since it impacts an entire district and the number of students that do not have access to diverse teachers is much larger than in the case of one discipline that is more difficult to fill. Another factor is the demographic makeup of a district. There is a much higher degree of urgency if the percentage of students of color in a district is already significant or is growing. However, it is critical that the teachers being hired are skilled and able to support students effectively. The quality of a teacher can greatly influence student achievement (Stronge, 2013), meaning that while districts are looking to diversify their staff, they cannot do so at the expense of candidate quality.

In order to increase the number of teachers of color in the workforce, the first order of business is to recruit students of color to explore the teaching profession. This begins with identifying students and encouraging them to go into this degree program. What is critical to understand is that the effort of diversifying the teacher workforce goes beyond a simple recruitment issue and actually begins much earlier for students. Plachowski (2019) examined interviews from pre-service teacher candidates of color and discussed their experiences leading up to their teacher preparation programs. One of the

most significant findings stemming from this research was that a student's positive or

negative K-12 experience impacts their decision to explore teaching as a career even

before any recruitment efforts begin. Specifically, Plachowski finds "The theme of how

teachers cared were usually narratives of positive experience in K12" (p.10). Therefore,

school districts would be wise to recognize that the experience their younger students

are having in their classroom could be encouraging or discouraging a future teacher. Of

course when a student's high school experience begins, pathway programs that allow

them to have the opportunity to explore a career in teaching may also increase the

probability of students choosing to go into this field (Plachowski, 2019).

School districts can also create specific programs to increase student interest in

the teacher field, such as the Grow Your Own (GYO) pathway. These pathways, which

often consist of courses, field trips, and field experiences, can positively impact students'

views of the teaching profession. Gist and Lynn (2019) reviewed literature to assess the

body of research available to studies (GYO) programs and their effectiveness in relation

to increasing the number of teachers of color in education. Their review found that

research currently existing does indicate that GYO programs assist in demonstrating the

value of the teaching profession and encouraging students to enter the field, and can be

effective particularly in encouraging students of color to consider teaching. Although the

body of evidence is continuing to be built, Gist and Lynn (2019) also found that teachers

of color that enter the profession by way of a GYO program tend to stay working in

education. However, this study focuses primarily on traditional students of color and their

participation in GYO programs, and does not consider nontraditional students that may

be considering a second career.

In 2018, Morales explored a slightly different approach to GYO programs,

studying nontraditional students and their path towards teaching. A particular

characteristic of participants in this study is that they were already connected to their

community, which potentially supported them as they navigated their GYO program. This longitudinal study of seven culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) Latina teachers documented their experiences as they worked through a GYO program and then began teaching in their rural midwest community that was minority-majority Latinx students. These teacher candidates received continued support from their community to complete their program and enter the teaching field, which allowed them to maintain their identity and still feel connected to the school community they were working in. This was linked to their local preparation and community engagement, and the fact that they were able to remain removed from the whiteness or other influences that could come from teaching elsewhere. The teacher candidates were able to use their experience as CLD individuals to support students, which increases their feeling of value as a teaching professional (Morales, 2018).

As students begin to explore the career, teacher preparation programs and recruitment efforts in high school and higher education spend a significant amount of time and energy to ensure that teacher candidates understand lesson plans, interview questions, and how to manage student behavior and build relationships. However, these programs tend to be an isolated opportunity, disconnected from the rest of a student's school experience, particularly in high school. Davis (2021) finds that students of color learn a lot about the profession of teaching through their own experiences, and teacher recruitment programs would be well served to capitalize on students' positive experiences to recruit them into education. Specifically, when students are able to re-visit their classroom experiences and apply those strategies to themselves as the teacher, they may find they enjoy teaching more (Davis, 2021).

In order to best serve traditional and nontraditional students, teacher preparation programs are getting creative in their efforts to remove as many barriers as possible for teacher candidates of color. In one example, Miller et al (2019) reviewed work at the

Mississippi State University College of Education. This university implemented a fully online, alternate route, teacher preparation program to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers for rural middle level (i.e., middle school) classrooms in the state. The rural location of the districts involved in the study meant extensive recruiting efforts were required in order to reach qualified participants. Three categories of efforts were deemed to be the most successful, including fostering and maintaining relationships with teacher candidates, targeting an appropriate audience that would be interested in middle level work, and using various communication methods to reach candidates. Each strategic effort contributed to the overall success in implementing the program (Miller et al., 2019).

When a student of color makes the decision to enter a teacher preparation program, the support they receive in the program, particularly as it relates to their preparation to join the field, will impact their retention and the likelihood of completing their selected program. In studying the strategies used at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) to provide support for teachers of color entering the workforce, Gasman et al. (2017) found that these institutions immersed teacher candidates in programs that include colleagues of the same race, as well as student teaching assignments that included the ability to serve students of color. The study used interviews to analyze the programs of four MSIs that were selected through an application process. One Historically Black College and University (HBCU), one Tribal College and University (TCU), one Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), and one Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) were studied, representing the major section of MSIs. Although no two MSIs are identical and these experiences do not necessarily transfer to the experiences that teacher candidates of color have in non-MSI institutions, the strategies identified in this study can provide insight regarding the most effective strategies that could be implemented to increase retention of teacher candidates of color in preparation programs.

Walker further explored this idea in his 2020 study, which focused on specific barriers and challenges that Black male teachers face as they attempt to complete teacher preparation programs and enter the workforce in rural areas. During their teacher preparation programs the teacher candidates in this study found that there was a shortage of Black mentors for new teachers of color, that they often faced stereotypes as they entered a school to begin their field work, and that there was pressure being placed on them, intentionally or unintentionally, to make significant progress or "save" every Black student they worked with. Several of the teacher candidates in this study found that their expectations of the teaching profession did not match their experience during their preparation field placements, which contributed to a lower completion rate of the candidates and fewer new teachers entering the profession (Walker, 2020). Their programs did not consistently allow them to use their personal experiences to provide value to students, something that Gist and Lynn (2019) and Morales (2018) had identified as contributing factors to increasing the retention rate of teacher candidates through their programs.

Experiencing a shortage of teacher candidates of color is not unique to a particular type of school district or region in the United States. Urban, suburban, and rural schools alike are all finding that the challenge of recruiting candidates that share racial demographics with a growingly diverse student population to be significant. As Burns (2020) wrote, policies to increase the number of teachers of color sometimes managed to accomplish the opposite, despite positive intentions. Participants in his study were the hiring administrators who were responsible for implementing equitable hiring practices, and in this study their biases became evident despite processes aimed to reduce their impact. This demonstrates that biases have to be sufficiently interrogated in order to actually change behavior in hiring practices. For example, biases were identified through the responses of the participants in Burns' study, such as a

predetermined feeling that hiring a teacher of color will inherently diminish the quality of instruction, or that hiring a person of color indicates they were only hired because of their race. Although the hiring administrators knew what they were expected to accomplish, their biases created a barrier in the implementation process (Burns, 2020).

Along with the overall shortage of teachers of color, there is also a higher percentage of teachers of color working in schools where conditions may be considered more challenging, or in communities that may not be as desirable for all candidates. Unfortunately, this is often defined as a school with a significantly diverse student body or a high degree of poverty in the community. Although each school may not fit the general view of the community, perception serves to place these schools at a disadvantage (Achinstein, 2010). These districts tend to be located in urban communities, and although these districts have found some success by working on cultural capital and the positive image of their schools, in addition to strategic practices to recruit candidates, retention is a concern once new teachers begin working in the district. Therefore, these "hard to staff" districts experience very little progress in diversifying their teaching staff right along with the districts who did not hire the teachers of color at all (Achinstein, 2010).

Barriers to Recruiting and Hiring Teachers of Color

The barriers that exist for teachers of color as they enter the workforce begin in the initial recruitment stage when districts are attempting to encourage students to consider the teaching profession and then working to attract them to engage in the hiring process in those districts. Once the recruitment process has been navigated and teacher candidates of color enter the hiring process, a new series of barriers become evident that candidates will need to overcome in order to successfully enter a district prepared for success. In urban and suburban school districts, a number of strategic recruitment practices are emerging that indicate a positive correlation between the district's

implementation of the strategic practice and a higher number of teacher candidates of color being recruited and having success in the hiring process.

Recruitment Barriers

With the well documented evidence of the shortage of teachers of color in the workforce, districts are attempting to do what they can to recruit and attempt to hire diverse teaching candidates. However, despite these efforts barriers exist in the recruitment process, leading to the as to whether districts should be doing more, or if their efforts are simply focused on less than effective strategies. One barrier to begin this discussion is the fact that the teacher preparation program that a teacher candidate attends matters to the success of the teacher candidate, both in terms of completing the program and in feeling prepared to enter the job market. Green and Martin (2018) gathered insight from teacher candidates of color about their experiences in teacher preparation programs. Four Black male teacher candidates were interviewed, three that attended Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) and one that attended a Predominantly Black Institution (PBI). The findings indicated that although some challenges existed that impacted all four participants, there were some differences based on the institution attended. All of the participants felt a sense of isolation as males in education, but those attending a PWI also felt isolated due to their race. When interacting with university and field placement staff, the participant who attended a PBI felt he did not have the confidence of his cooperating teacher, whereas those that attended PWIs felt this lack of confidence from their faculty. In these cases, it may be difficult for these teacher candidates to navigate the recruitment and hiring process when their support systems through their preparation program did not convey confidence in their abilities. Additionally, because the challenges may be different based on the institution attended, attempts to support these teacher candidates may be more successful than others, leaving certain candidates at a disadvantage (Green & Martin, 2018).

Blum et al. (2021) studied experiences of teacher candidates of color as they navigated their teacher preparation program in higher education. These candidates shared that throughout their experiences, a theme was that the curriculum being offered was not designed for a diverse student population. Due to this and the fact that candidates of color were represented in far smaller numbers than White teacher candidates, teachers candidates of color felt isolated, that their voices were not heard or even silenced, and that authentic caring relationships with instructors did not exist. It would take a teacher candidate of color to be very committed to the profession to work through these barriers (Blum et al., 2021).

Another barrier that teacher candidates of color face in the recruitment process is the lack of confidence that once hired, they will have a long term future in a district. In their 2019 study, Ingersoll et al found that although minority teachers were being hired at a strong rate in the early 2000's, in the 2011-12 school year 44.4% of students were considered non-White in the United States, while only 17.3% of teachers were. This continued discrepancy can be partially explained by a higher turnover rate for teachers of color. Since these teachers leave the profession at a higher rate than their White peers, the gap between teacher and student demographics does not improve despite hiring efforts (Ingersoll et al., 2019). The knowledge that the turnover rate is higher for their colleagues already in the field damages the recruitment process for teacher candidates of color. Although a candidate of color may see themselves a strong fit for a particular position, they may not see themselves as likely to serve in a district for some time, and may influence the candidate not to apply or respond to recruitment efforts. This recruitment barrier was also reinforced by Walker (2020) from the perspective that if teachers of color are experiencing a higher turnover rate than their White counterparts, then is it likely that there are less teachers of color available to mentor new teachers into

the field, which Walker identified as a reason teacher candidates of color may choose one district over another.

   While the aforementioned challenges speak heavily to the support and preparation of teachers of color, other barriers exist in the recruitment process that are more logistical. State legislatures determine teacher licensure processes, which may include assessments and costs that disproportionately impact teacher candidates of color. These factors may make it more challenging for teacher candidates of color to obtain a license, even after they complete their program. Many districts also use a points based quantitative screening tool when evaluating applicants for a position, which often assigns points to years of experience, Veteran's preference, and continuity of employment. Although the screening tool may be designed to be as objective as possible, criteria such as years of experience, continuity of employment, and transcript scores may inadvertently put teacher candidates of color at a disadvantage, particularly new teachers or those who are entering into the profession through a nontraditional pathway (Carter Andrews et al., 2019).

   Human resource administrators in school districts also play an important role in the recruitment practices in their schools, and they can be especially influential, positively or negatively, when a goal of the district is to hire teachers of color. Although these administrators may have processes in place they believe will increase the diversity of their teaching staff, Goings and Wade (2021) find that in many cases, human resource administrators state that there is a degree of intuition used when recruiting candidates, which creates a vulnerability for biases to influence processes despite other efforts to remain objective. The respondents speaking to Goings and Wade discussed the balancing act between using intuition and rational, objective hiring practices. The discussion acknowledged that the challenge human resource officers face in meeting this balance is significant and their response does impact who is recruited to their

district. Although it would be hard to argue against the need in recruiting to talk about ideas such as being a good fit and whether a teacher candidate shares the values and beliefs of the district, at times the answers to these questions can be in direct contrast with objective criteria over who is the most qualified candidate, which can negatively impact teacher candidates of color (Goings & Wade, 2021).

Hiring Process Barriers

Navigating the recruitment process and choosing to engage in the hiring process is the first step of the process for teacher candidates of color, followed by being initially invited for an interview or whatever the initial activity is in a particular process. However, once engaged in the process, there are still barriers that may be encountered. Operational and human resources processes may be created in such a way that candidates of color experience a disadvantage, and there also may be "cultural" barriers that exist in the hiring process of a school district. It does not matter if the processes are unintentionally creating this disadvantage, it still impacts the candidates experiences in the process and can negatively influence their opportunity to be hired.

Noonan and Bristol (2020) explored an example of the human resources process creating a disadvantage for candidates of color, through the lens of parochialism. This study analyzed staff interviews in a small urban district. The interviews asked participants to analyze and comment on district hiring practices. The researchers found that although staff could agree that increasing the diversity in the teaching staff is important, there was concern as to whether creating specific hiring practices to increase diversity was appropriate, or in fact creating biases against White candidates in their efforts to be hired. The district has a high rate of teachers that grew up in the community, and this pattern has continued over time. Noonan and Bristol found that those that follow this path are almost exclusively White, and the students of color in the district do not often choose to remain and teach in the community. Staff commented that they were

skeptical of human resources processes to bring new teachers to the community, even if it meant increasing diversity. This perspective of parochialism in the district is an example of the staff deflecting their lack of interest in staff diversity towards the issue of new members of the community, both of which are problematic in their own sense (Noonan & Bristol, 2020).

It is common for school districts to also have an initial screener to narrow down a large candidate pool, and this formal screening process can also provide operational barriers to candidates of color. As teacher preparation programs continue to encourage students of color to explore teaching, a potential result is that a larger number of new teachers overall are teachers of color. While this is a positive trend and supports the goal of diversifying the teacher workforce, it could face a barrier in the screening process. When school districts screen candidates during the hiring process, criteria such as years of experience earn candidates more points. A consequence is that teachers who are attempting to move districts often score higher on the screening tools. This could lead to a White teacher who is attempting to move from a harder to staff district to score well on a screener, which could mean they get the preferred job and teachers of color may be left to apply to harder to staff schools (Carter Andrews et al., 2019). As examples of this accumulate, the end result is a higher number of teachers of color teaching in schools that may be considered more challenging, or in some cases choosing not to enter the field at all at that time. Although these teachers of color may then apply to the "preferred" school at a later date, that will only be an option once they have successfully navigated at least some of the retention barriers along the way. These barriers to the retention of teachers of color will be discussed in detail as the literature review continues.

Further exploring barriers that teachers of color face in the hiring process, Gist (2018) discussed models that districts can use to measure the value that human resources departments, and districts as a whole, place on retaining teachers of color.

Using the people as technology (PT) conceptual model as well as the diversity

intelligence (DQ) conceptual model can assist districts in determining this value. DQ can

be described as "...ability to navigate broad social, cultural, racial, and other human

diversities and to comprehend and appropriately use extensive knowledge of diversity

among protected class employees within the workplace" (Hughes, 2016, p. 5). Gist

(2018) uses this to connect to the PT conceptual model in order to see that "In this

sense, valuing the organization is rooted in valuing and developing humans executing

the central functions of the organization" (p. 349). These models could help measure

growth as districts attempt to make gains in adding more teachers of color to the

workforce, and give feedback to the districts whether their values seem to match the

results. Creating this quantitative connection between the increase in the number of

teachers of color and whether the idea of increasing diversity is valued by the district can

provide insight into the human resources processes of school districts (Gist 2018). This

is especially relevant when discussing the balance between intuition or bias and

objective processes (Goings & Wade, 2021). Even when structures are put in place that

appear to be designed to increase diversity, the PT and DQ models may indicate that the

processes are actually flawed if the hiring staff are not in alignment and share the same

values needed to meet the diversity goals (Gist, 2018).

These operational barriers are not limited to preK-12 educational settings. Moody

(2012) discussed the barriers that diverse higher education candidates must also

navigate as they are considered for faculty, administrative, and other professional school

positions. Moody discusses issues such as cognitive errors, assumptions, and biases

that hiring committees may have. Similarly to the preK-12 setting, human resources staff

may try to create an objective process including efforts to increase the number of

candidates of color, but just as in preK-12 these challenges and biases may find their

way into discussion, leading to an intentional or unintentional rationalization of excluding

candidates of color. A notable addition in this work is the inclusion of multiple tangible

strategies that higher education institutions can use to create more objective processes.

These include encouraging committee members to interrupt, breaking the silence and

discussing bias when it is observed, choosing committee members are willing to activity

be a change agent as a member of a hiring committee, and pushing back against

assumptions and discussions that may be presented from a perspective of false

precision or unattainable expectations (Moody, 2012).

Using this available information, human resource departments that are

consistently aiming to improve practice may attempt to create as objective a hiring

process as possible. However, just as with recruitment we are reminded that intuition

and bias have a role in many hiring processes as well (Goings & Wade, 2021). Intuition

and bias are examples of the cultural barriers that candidates of color face in the hiring

process, and these experiences may compound the operational barriers for candidates.

Hiring team members may have internal biases and inaccurate assumptions about

teacher candidates of color. In many cases this can be attributed to there being very few

teachers of color in a district, resulting in hiring team members not having had their

specific biases challenged or interrupted. Similarly, since the turnover rate of teachers of

color as a whole is higher than their White colleagues, hiring teams may view candidates

of color as being less reliable and dedicated to their profession (Ingersoll et al., 2019).

The role of parochialism in a hiring process as examined by Noonan and Bristol

(2020) can also be considered a cultural barrier for teacher candidates of color. Hiring

committees could directly support the hiring of more teachers of color in their building by

identifying an area to address, such as this cycle of parochialism, and challenging it

during the interview process. This would be particularly impactful when interviewing

teacher candidates of color. However, this is easier stated than accomplished.

Encouraging the hiring of candidates that may have a different background, or that would

be relocating to a new community to serve students, would consciously break a cycle of parochialism that influences the hiring of only staff that have been in the community. The cultural pressures of the district could contribute to this being a daunting task, and therefore this intentional interruption of the norm does not occur on a regular basis in the sample districts in this study (Noonan & Bristol, 2020).

Moody (2012) found that a similar pressure to continue the status quo is felt in the higher education setting. Faculty taking part in the hiring process may wish to interrupt the cycle of operational or human resource driven barriers that candidates of color face, but they are met with skepticism and the established norms of a particular institution, which may not be interested in enacting change. The recommendations suggested in this work include a number of internal or personal philosophical changes a hiring faculty needs to make to reduce bias in the hiring process. However, since these ideas require internal reflection, the ideas are not as easy as a new strategy to implement (Moody, 2012). This approach to increasing the diversity of teaching staff directly challenges the culture of Whiteness in the hiring process. It also emphasizes the importance of removing cultural barriers, as without doing this making the hiring process and human resources procedure driven change is less likely to occur.

When members of a hiring committee, human resources department, or district level administration begin to challenge the status quo and implement practices that are designed to increase the number of teachers of color in a district, some pushback from other staff and hiring administrators is likely to occur, as these individuals attempt to retain their norms.This pushback is often attributed more directly to a resistance of change than to the initiative being suggested, but the results show themselves in the form of the new policy or initiative being ineffective as best, or actually accomplishing the opposite due to the resistance of those being asked to implement the plan (Burns, 2020). In order to create the intended change, hiring administrators and human resource

staff are required to work collaboratively to engage the intuition that they have gained

from years of experience in order to guide hiring teams as they navigate the process.

This is the same intuition that also can be a bias that puts teacher candidates of color at

a disadvantage, however from the lens of using this intuition as an asset it can be used

to initiate positive change as well (Goings & Wade, 2021).

Although operational and cultural barriers do exist in the hiring process for

teacher candidates of color, a number of school districts and policy-makers have

attempted to remove or at least minimize these barriers using specific strategies.

Although many of these strategies stem from positive intentions, in some instances the

proposed recruitment strategy may actually turn teacher candidates of color away.

Burns (2020 notes that in some instances:

> ...well-meaning programs designed to increase the diversity of the teaching force
>
> may be seen as co-opted policies, as policy makers and district administrators
>
> can claim to be "doing something" about the lack of diversity in teaching while the
>
> historical and structural inequalities that have created the stubbornly white and
>
> monolingual teaching profession remain unquestioned. (p. 217)

An example of this counter-response can be identified when looking at licensure.

Although data does not show a statistically significant difference in scores between Black

and White teacher candidates on the Teacher Preparation Assessment (TPA)

(Goldhaber et al., 2017), legislators in states such as Minnesota have presented bills to

remove or lower the criteria for these exams in order to increase the number of teachers

of candidates of color (H.F. 1268, 2023).

Similarly, various alternate routes to teacher licensure have been suggested by

legislators, and teacher licensing boards in many states are working to create an

alternate pathway for teacher candidates in order to increase the number of candidates

entering the field (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Both of these strategies do have the potential

to increase the overall teacher candidate pool, but they would not automatically increase

the number of teacher candidates of color without specific components targeting

candidates of color, which most do not contain. However, because they are being

referenced as practices that would increase the diversity of the teaching workforce solely

as they are written, they have the potential to turn some candidates of color away as

they develop feelings of inadequacy or that the standards have to be lowered for them.

All candidates, including teacher candidates of color, have the desire to be selected

based on their skills and qualifications, not primarily their race or ethnicity (Schneider &

Schmidt, 2016), and practices such as these may run counter to this goal.

Strategic Recruitment Practices

There is a growing body of research that indicates that there are strategic

recruitment practices that can contribute to increasing the number of candidates of color

applying for open teaching positions. Primarily in urban and suburban school districts,

five strategic practices are found to be among the most effective in the districts that have

implemented them. Green and Martin (2018) found that when districts included specific

training for cooperating teachers to prepare them for working with teacher candidates of

color, the teacher candidates reported an improved experience during their field

placement. This training could be as specific as targeting common microaggressions that

teacher candidates of color may encounter, or it could also cover a more general

overview of how to be inclusive when working with all teacher candidates. Not every

strategy has the same impact in each district, but any attempt to address this need is

progress towards the relationship between cooperating teachers and teacher candidates

of color. In addition to this more general professional development, providing cultural

competency training for all teaching staff, particularly those that will be serving as

cooperating teachers, has a positive impact on the experiences of teacher candidates of

color (Green & Martin, 2018).

Along with working to ensure that their school district provides a welcoming experience for teacher candidates of color once placed, school leaders can also implement strategies earlier in a student's school experience that can help to recruit candidates of color to the teaching profession and specifically, their home district. Implementing a Grow Your Own (GYO) program for high school students gives them the opportunity to explore teaching as a profession. Many GYO programs include courses that allow students to achieve college credit through concurrent enrollment, and these courses can be even more impactful on the recruiting process (Morales, 2018).

It has also been found to be helpful for students to begin connecting with students as soon as they enter into a teacher preparation program with a higher education institution. School districts can work to connect with those candidates throughout their teacher preparation program by creating and maintaining a relationship with as many higher education institutions as possible. In the case of teacher candidates of color, districts can work closely with primarily Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) to create connections with their teacher candidates, which has been found to be a successful strategy in recruiting teacher candidates of color to the school districts that pursue this effort (Gasman et. al., 2017).

The fifth strategic recruitment practice that has produced successful results is to recruit from within the community. Although at times there is risk is that the district will revert to a strategy of parochialism (Noonan & Bristol, 2020), when safeguards are in place to prevent this, it can be valuable to hire candidates of color from within the community who already are connected and see their value as a member of the community (Gist & Lynn, 2019). As with the other strategic recruitment practices that have shown the most benefit, a common characteristic of the districts included in current research is that the districts who are implementing these strategies are primarily located in urban or suburban locations. This is potentially due to the diversity these communities

have experienced that may precede a shift in demographics in rural communities. There

are not a significant number of studies that researched the recruitment of teacher

candidates of color to rural school districts, and none that demonstrate success in rural

communities when these proven strategic strategies are applied. Further studies, such

as the current research being proposed herein, will advance the literature and

understanding of recruitment of teachers of color in rural school districts.

Barriers to the Retention of Teachers of Color

Recruiting and hiring teachers of color alone is not sufficient if school districts are

hoping to increase the diversity of their staff in a way that will be sustainable. When

teachers of color do not stay in their school district, or in the teaching profession at all,

the results are that increasing the recruitment efforts at best would hope to sustain the

number of teachers of color, but it is unlikely to increase that number. This, unfortunately,

is currently the case in many districts. Teachers of color, referred to as minorities in their

study, demonstrated a higher turnover rate than their White colleagues per Ingersoll et

al. (2019). The study, which was conducted using data from the National Center for

Education Statistics' Schools and Staffing survey and reflects the 2011-12 school year, is

an indicator that work needs to be done directly to support the retention of teachers of

color in partnership with efforts addressing recruitment.

Operational Barriers to the Retention of Teachers of Color

As the barriers that contribute to lower retention of teachers of color are

examined, two distinct categories of barriers can be identified. The first set of challenges

can be classified as "operational" barriers, and these types of barriers are often driven by

contractual agreements or human resources processes that may place teachers of color

at a disadvantage. The teacher evaluation process can be one of these barriers.

Burciaga and Kohli provide an example in their 2018 study of two female teachers of

color who had recently been pushed out of the schools they taught in. The authors were

able to demonstrate that these teachers were providing value to their students and communities due to their cultural experiences, but that some of these skills were not recognized due to not being part of the rubric the district uses to identify quality teachers. Expectations such as only speaking in English during class, expecting students to stay in their seats throughout the entirety of a lesson, and that they were always raising their hands to speak were presented as indicators of effective instruction. Burciaga and Kohli defined these expectations, which have historically been considered effective in a class, as continuing a whitestream process to evaluate instruction. However, when these teachers used strategies that they felt would foster relationships with students, such as speaking in a student's first language or allowing some additional time for more casual discussion during lessons, they did not receive satisfactory evaluation scores and were not viewed as effective teachers (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018).

Similarly, Kohli (2019) reviewed the role of professional development as a key strategy to support teachers of color in preparing for their evaluation process as well as preparing administrators to provide evaluation with a racially equitable lens. The participants of this study were teachers of color, and when they felt they received specific professional development preparing them for the evaluation tool used by their district, they felt more comfortable with the expectations and scored higher on the rubric. Districts that provided professional development for administrators focused on racially conscious instruction had teachers of color that felt their evaluations were more meaningful and reflective of their instructional skills. Feeling more comfortable with the expectations of the district, and being recognized for their instructional abilities directly led to these teachers having a higher retention rate in their schools (Kohli, 2019).

Contractual issues can also contribute to higher turnover rates for teachers of color. When salary improvements are regular and significant enough to support a new teacher, it is more likely that teachers will choose to stay longer in that particular district

(Farinde et al., 2016). However, a disproportionate number of teachers of color are hired in school districts that are located in communities that struggle socioeconomically (Achinstein, 2010), and due to this socioeconomic challenge the contracts provided in those districts often are not as competitive as others. Therefore, in order to continue in their career growth, teachers tend to move from these districts to an employer where they would receive a strong compensation package as quickly as possible. Thus, because more teachers of color tend to teach in these districts, this contributes to the higher turnover rate for teachers of color in general. Districts that are interested in reducing the turnover of their teachers of color should also target reducing the turnover of all teachers, and ensuring a competitive salary and benefit package can support this initiative.

It is also common for teachers of color to be asked to take on extra responsibilities in a school building, with little rationale for this request other than their race. A teacher who is fluent in another language may be asked to interpret for a family, or a Black teacher may be designated to act as a disciplinarian for students of color with the hopes of capitalizing on relationships. Similarly, teachers of color in many cases are expected to educate peers when a racialized issue is brought up at school, often being placed in a position of representing an entire race (Cormier et. al, 2021). Additionally, a teacher of color may begin to feel the burden of being expected to save and support all students of color in the school. These examples are just a few ways in which teachers of color may be asked to incur additional responsibilities. Many of these responsibilities are something that teachers of color are willing to do. However, since in most cases these roles and responsibilities are neither formalized nor compensated for, these situations create an "invisible tax," and this tax is one that teachers of color must pay with their time in order to continue to work in their districts (Gewertz, 2019). The extra work that this tax creates can contribute to teachers of color becoming burned out in a particular school

and either seeking a new district or leaving the profession altogether (Cormier et al., 2021).

These extra responsibilities are not determined or assigned randomly, but can be attributed to the perception that White peers have about their Black colleagues and the value that teachers of color bring to a school. When studying the perceptions of White teachers about how they interacted with their Black colleagues, Madsen (2019) was able to determine that White teachers often view the teachers of color as the expert on racial issues, and due to this perceived expertise they ask their colleagues of color to be the liaison with students and families of color. However, these White teachers tended to primarily engage their peers of color when help was needed in racial conversations, and not necessarily at other times in their work together. These limited opportunities to work together do not encourage relationships amongst teachers but rather devalue the teacher of color's work as an educator and contribution to the school community as a whole.

When teachers of color are asked to perform additional duties or serve as a representative of their race in any situation, relationships can be strained and satisfaction can be reduced for these teachers. This is especially true if no additional compensation or recognition is provided. In addition to these factors, teachers of color may find that there is a lack of advancement opportunities in the districts in which they teach. Sometimes this can be attributed to the fact that they are teaching in a socioeconomically challenged school, and that school may not be able to provide additional teacher leader opportunities or have additional positions on the staff. In other cases, teachers of color are simply being passed over for advancement due to their lack of perceived skills and experience as a teacher. In either situation the result is the same, and teachers can feel like the number of doors of opportunity are few. Teachers of color report that when opportunities for growth exist in a district and either themselves or

colleagues have been able to take advantage of those opportunities, the likelihood of

them continuing to work and advance in the district increases. However, since this is not

often the case, the lack of growth opportunities can be added to the list of contributing

factors for a lower retention rate for teachers of color in a district (Farinde et al., 2016).

Cultural Barriers to the Retention of Teachers of Color

Along with these operational and human resource related factors that lead to

lower retention rates for teachers of color, these teachers also experience barriers within

the cultures of their district that can either reduce their desire to remain in the district, or

in some cases directly push them in the direction of leaving the district. A lack of

administrative support can be one of the most influential examples of a cultural barrier to

retention. Administrators have the ability within their evaluation processes to use

culturally responsive expectations to assess the skill of their teachers. However, when an

administrator uses these expectations, it also needs to be done in a manner that the

teacher feels supported by their administrator, as opposed to being presented in a way

that feels as if the administrator is allowing lower expectations for teachers of color

(Farinde et al., 2016).

The desire to feel valued and respected as a professional could apply to all

teachers, and their interaction with their administrators influence this perception greatly.

Particularly for teachers of color, if their skills are not perceived to be valued or they are

led to believe that they cause more work for the administrator in the evaluation process,

satisfaction amongst those teachers is reduced and they could choose to move to

another district or leave the profession. Even though an administrator may feel that they

are delivering constructive feedback and giving credit to the teacher where it is due, it

matters whether the delivery is done in a culturally responsive manner, and if the teacher

of color feels respected at the conclusion of the discussion. With many districts facing

the need to diversify their staff, and teachers of color having the option in many cases to

move to a district where they feel more valued and supported, administrators who are

successful in emphasizing this value have less turnover in their schools. This isn't to say

that teachers of color do not expect constructive feedback, on that the amount of support

and respect they feel in that process can influence their desire to remain in a school

building (Green & Martin, 2018).

It is possible that administrative support could vary depending on the number of

teachers of color in a building, which could then impact a teacher of color's experience in

the school. Bristol (2020) discovered that although the pattern remained consistent that

a lack of administrative support contributed to higher turnover rates for teachers of color,

this study found that teachers of color who were the only such teacher in their school felt

that they received more administrative support than the respondents who worked in a

school with multiple other teachers of color. This could be due to a number of factors,

such as the administrator feeling that multiple teachers of color in a building can create

their own support system. The administrator could feel that a network was established

and their support wasn't as critical. The intentions of the administrators were not the

focal point of this study however, so to learn more about this further study would be

required. However, the final results were consistent with the previous literature in stating

that administrative support matters when aiming to increase the retention of teachers of

color in a building or district (Bristol, 2020).

The literature discussing the impact of administrative support on the satisfaction

and retention of teachers of color is consistent, and this perceived lack of support can

extend beyond feeling supported in instructional conversations. Teachers of color can

also feel reduced support from their administrators when navigating parent or colleague

conflict (Hernandez-Johnson et al., 2021) and often find themselves being asked to

apologize or admit fault in order to acquiesce to a situation they did not create. The

perception of whether or not the administrator supports them and will do so with parents

matters to all teachers. Solis (2015) found that teachers of color view their principals positively and with respect regardless of the race of the principal, and they seek approval from their principal more than White colleagues. If that approval and support is not being provided, these teachers may look elsewhere for an employer that can meet that support need (Solis, 2015).

Another cultural barrier to retention for teachers of color is a logical extension of the previous topic. When a staff member isn't feeling supported by their administrators, that lack of support can contribute to the teacher of color feeling isolated among their peers and that they are not part of the building community. Green and Martin (2018) found this to be the case for the Black male teachers who participated in their study. Administrative support, or lack thereof, directly contributed to this feeling of isolation. This lack of support alone was not the only factor, as interactions that required them to speak as a representative of their race, or the continued feeling that they are not as valued for their instructional skills as their White peers also added to this feeling of isolation (Green & Martin, 2018).

Ingersoll et al. (2019) further explored the feeling of isolation that teachers of color experience and the impact this has on retention. Through the quantitative research process, the authors presented findings that indicated that the recruitment of minority teachers did increase over the period studied, and that if all of these teachers had continued in the profession there would have been a reduction in the gap between the percentage of minority teachers and minority students in a number of districts. However, the turnover rate for teachers of color in this study exceeded that of their White teacher colleagues, which resulted in the gap between the number of teachers of color and White teachers in the districts studied not being reduced. These turnover rates that minority teachers experience are at least partially contributed to the feeling of isolation they feel working in their districts. This feeling is created for a variety of reasons, such as

the lack of minority teacher role models, an insufficient cultural synchronicity between teachers and students, and a small number of minority teacher peers. Although minority teachers were being hired at a strong rate for the period included in this study, they did not stay in the profession at the same rate as their non-minority peers did, leading to minimal progress towards increasing diversity overall in districts (Ingersoll et al., 2019).

However, districts face a somewhat complex challenge, as in some cases, even having a number of colleagues of color in the same building is not enough to offset the feeling of isolation that teachers of color experience. Bristol (2020) found that teachers of color that were the only teachers of their race had a stronger retention rate when compared to their peers who worked in schools with multiple colleagues of color. Although this seems counterintuitive to the general understanding of feeling isolated, it is possible that when a lone teacher of color is working in a building their White peers make a stronger effort to include them in their school community, whereas when multiple teachers of color exist White peers may not make as much of an effort. This research did not explore the intentions of the White colleagues as they interacted with their peers of color, further study would need to be done on this topic. And although the generalizability is not any greater than most case studies, the results of Bristols' work support the understanding that simply having a number of teachers of color in a building does not eliminate the feeling of isolation experienced by teachers of color in their schools (Bristol, 2020).

The feelings of not being supported by administrators and being isolated in the school they are working in can perhaps be attributed to more a root cause that teachers of color experience in their schools, which is the lack of respect teachers of color receive compared to their White peers. This lack of respect can come from students and families, as well as colleagues and administrators. Ingersoll et al. (2019) examined the issue of cultural synchronicity in schools in the United States. Since a large number of

teachers remain White, students do not view teachers of color as the norm in today's classrooms, and therefore the respect that these teachers receive is not inherently given as easily. Teachers of color report that this lack of respect from the students and families does contribute to their deciding to leave a district or the field of education (Ingersoll et al., 2019).

Additionally, many teachers of color have experienced colleagues who have attempted to give the impression of being supportive and respectful, but consistently counteract this by the number of microaggressions directed contributed to by these White teachers. For example, when discussing a student's academic needs, a White teacher may make a judgmental comment about the student's family structure and how it could be the reason for the challenges the student is experiencing. This would be clearly a microaggression, and one that the teacher may or may not know they are delivering. However, this could impact the relationship this teacher has with colleagues of color. Certainly there are students who have family environments that are not as supportive as teachers would like to see, but this becomes a microaggression when the assumption is made due to the student's race or family structure that this must be the case (Kohli, 2018).

Kohli (2018) also discussed the faux support that White colleagues intend to be providing when they talk about themselves as being color blind. When a White individual implies that they do not see color, that comment may be intended to state their support for colleagues of color, but the impact is quite the opposite. By refusing to see their teacher of color colleagues as individuals and recognize all aspects of the identity of them as a human being, the message that is being sent to those colleagues of color is that their identity is not valued or respected, and they are not as much of an asset to the school as their White peers (Kohli, 2018).

Hernandez-Johnson et al. (2021) further explored this idea from the perspective of attempting to understand the impact of this constant conflict teachers of color face between their identities as teachers and their identities as themselves. Because their personal racial identity is not valued or viewed as an asset in their profession, they find themselves always having to prioritize their teacher identity, even when outside of the classroom if they are around their White teaching or administrative colleagues. There rarely is the opportunity to relax and embrace one's identity as a teacher of color. Instead, this version of disrespect can manifest itself as teachers of color feeling imposter syndrome or experiencing stereotype threat, even in their own classrooms. The feeling of being respected less than peers and the internal struggle it provokes, is another factor that can lead to the higher turnover rate for teachers of color (Hernandez-Johnson et al., 2021).

These negative experiences reported by teachers of color certainly contribute to their leaving the district they work in or the profession altogether. However, as Madsen (2019) found, in many cases White colleagues are not even aware that their perceptions and behaviors can impact the retention of colleagues of color. Instead, the viewpoint of these White colleagues can be a misguided desire to help the teacher of color feel more like a contributor, by assigning them additional duties or asking them to be an expert in a racial discussion. In a clear example of intent versus impact, the White savior syndrome exhibited by these colleagues may not be intentional, but it is real all the same, and teachers of color are finding it difficult to remain in districts with staff that demonstrates these attributes (Madsen, 2019).

Of course, not all of the lack of respect that teachers of color experience is unintentional. In some cases teachers of color find themselves experiencing more blatant racist behaviors by colleagues, parents, or the community. The Black male teachers who participated in the retention study conducted by Bristol (2020) stated that

they experienced a hostile work environment at their schools. Being left out of

collaborative meetings, dismissed when providing ideas, or having to defend themselves

against false parent accusations are examples of this behavior. Each of them reported

these experiences regardless of whether they chose to stay in those schools or not.

Although some did not feel the hostility was enough to leave their current job, the feeling

was prevalent nonetheless. As one teacher in this study stated, "I decided to stay

because of the students" (Bristol, 2020, p. 30). An important not is that in this study a

delineation was made to identify lack of support as potentially unintentional, whereas

creating a hostile environment was almost always perceived as intentional by the

teachers of color in the situation (Bristol, 2020).

Using teachers of color as the expert on racial matters or the representative of

their race is another way in which racist interactions can be both unintentional and

intentional. Cormier et al. (2021) reported that principals would often ask their teachers

of color, particularly Black male teachers, to be the disciplinarian with their students of

the same race, some going so far as to outright state that the family has mentioned race

in previous interactions and this a strategy to offset this. The assumption that a family

would be more responsive to a teacher of their similar race is a broad stereotype that

reinforces the idea that the school does not prioritize relationships with some families as

much as others. While it is true in some cases that a particular teacher of color may have

a relationship with a student or family that would support their involvement in a situation,

meaning that it would reinforce relationships, it is not appropriate to apply the blanket

strategy to all scenarios involving students of color (Cormier et al. 2021).

Additionally, teachers of color face direct microaggressions and the claims of

color blindness in their schools, which reinforces the hostile work environments in the

school buildings in which they work. Kohli (2018) provides further references and

perspectives, specifically regarding ways in which the culture of a school which includes

racial microaggressions can contribute to a negative culture. The negative culture felt in

the building impacts a teacher of color's decision to leave or stay. A unique attribute of

the Kohli study was the consistent and regular engagement with the participants during

the study, which built some level of trust and potentially contributed to them providing

more honest and open responses. When we consider the consider the reports that

teachers of color are facing racism regularly in their work, and that a large amount of it is

based in social biases that are as much intentional as not, we have another factor that

teachers of color must contend with when considering whether to leave or stay in a

district (Kohli, 2018).

More evidence of this was found by Benson et al. (2020), in a case study of one

participant's experiences in K-12 education and why she chose to leave the profession.

The participant was a female teacher of color, who entered education as a second

profession through a graduate degree program and began as an elementary teacher.

She entered and exited public education twice before deciding to leave permanently. The

authors described the racial discrimination and harassment the participant experienced,

and how these connected to her exit from teaching. Unfortunately, the discrimination she

experienced was found not only in the school building, but in the community as well

(Benson et al., 2020). Although this case study looks to one specific example, the

pattern of racist and discriminatory behavior is mounting and certainly can be attributed

to the turnover rate of teachers of color.

When cultural barriers to the retention of teachers of color are discussed, it is

also important to note that not all teachers of color who leave the field felt they were

making a choice to do so. Hernandez-Johnson (2021) found that many of their

respondents felt as if they were being pushed out of the profession by their colleagues,

the community, and in some instances their students. Interactions demonstrating racist

behaviors sent a clear message to these teachers that they were not welcome in the

school or community, so what option did they have but to find another district or

community to work in? In a number of cases the teachers of color left the profession

altogether, placing themselves at a future disadvantage with a degree they are not

continuing in, and leaving school districts with the remaining challenge of hiring and

retaining teachers of color (Hernandez-Johnson, 2021).

Strategic Retention Practices

Although much of the literature examining the retention of teachers of color is

focused on the potential reasons that teachers of color are leaving the profession, there

are practices that have demonstrated success in increasing the retention rate for these

teachers. These strategic retention practices primarily have been studied in urban and

suburban districts to this point in the literature. The first strategic practice a district can

implement is to assign a mentor to new teachers of color. This mentor is tasked with

helping foster relationships and belongingness with staff as well as ensure the new

teacher of color is instructionally successful (Bristol, 2020). Beginning a teaching career

is challenging, and it has become standard practice for districts to assign mentors to new

teachers. When the mentor is a fellow teacher of color, this supports the relationship

between the new colleagues and provides additional support to the new teacher as they

navigate the new building and district (Darwich, 2021).

Cormier et al. (2021) also found that when districts formalize additional duties

that are assigned to teachers of color, this recognition and compensation can lead to a

positive impact on retention rate. Roles such as behavior intervention, providing

professional development for peers, or interpreting for families, if recognized as formal

duties, would then require compensation for the teachers of color for the extra work.

Even though the extra work assigned still may be rooted in the discriminatory culture of

the school, the compensation has led to some teachers choosing to continue in their

jobs and doing the work (Cormier et al., 2021).

Creating appropriate teacher evaluation processes that minimize whitestreaming is another strategic practice that can positively impact retention rates for teachers of color. Whitestreaming can be defined as an approach that places Eurocentric norms as the primary form of acceptable practices, and many current teacher evaluation tools emphasize these traditional Eurocentric instructional strategies in their scoring rubric. That evaluation tools do not support and encourage the strengths that teachers of color bring to the classroom that may not be on the prioritized rubric as defined by the tool (Burciaga & Kohli, 2018). In some instances state licensing boards are working with their higher education partners to create culturally responsive standards of practice (Minnesota Professional Educators and Licensing Board, n.d), but this is not yet universally being implemented for all new teachers. Districts that implement this teacher evaluation mindset have shown growth in their teachers of color instructionally, and as these tools are being shared the hope is that the success will continue to more districts, and also contribute to strong retention rates for teachers of color.

Gewertz (2018) added that creating opportunities for staff to share their experiences, such as affinity groups, can be a positive culture builder. The additional burden that teachers of color carry, sometimes referred to as an invisible tax, can cause feelings of isolation for these educators. Whether it is being assigned to be a disciplinarian for students of color, provide professional development or speak as a representative of a race to peers, or being disrespected as a professional by a colleague or parents, having some peers to share these experiences with in a safe environment that is free from judgment can provide some comfort. Of course, the simple act of having an affinity group does not diminish the long term impact of these burdens, but it can support the teacher enough that they continue with the district or profession while some of the other challenges are potentially being addressed (Gewertz, 2018).

The fifth strategic practice that we will use in this study is providing specific equity and microaggression professional development for staff (Kohli, 2018). Although ignorance certainly does not excuse discriminatory behavior, a common characteristic of microaggression is that the offender may not be aware they are making an inappropriate comment or behaving in an offensive manner. School districts cannot know what each employee is thinking and the perspective they have on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Therefore a strategy to ensure that all staff have an understanding at a base level that meets the district expectation is to provide professional development focusing on these areas, specifically microaggressions. When staff have the opportunity to learn about these topics, they can reflect on their own behavior and the goal is that they choose to correct behavior where it is needed. In districts that provide this professional development, teachers report a more welcoming environment for teachers of color which is a factor in promoting higher retention rates (Kohli, 2018).

A Gap in Literature

There is no shortage of literature demonstrating the reasons that school districts are having challenges recruiting and retaining teachers of color to their classrooms. The barriers both teacher candidates and working teachers of color face provide a significant rationale for them to choose to change districts or leave the field altogether. Although a large portion of current research focuses on the reasons teachers of color are not being hired and retained at the rate school districts would hope for, enough literature exists to develop the list of the five strategic recruitment practices and the five strategic retention practices that have shown themselves to be successful. However, these strategic practices have almost exclusively been identified as successful in urban and suburban school districts, with little research yet to be done to determine if they would also be effective in rural school districts.

Studies exist that examine the recruitment and retention rate of teachers in rural school districts, but these studies do not regularly specify teachers of color as part of their participant group. Seeling and McCabe (2021) discussed several reasons why teachers stay in rural schools, with the most common themes being commitment to students, opportunities for leadership, connection to the community, and personal or professional relationships. This is a step towards understanding teacher recruitment and retention in rural schools, but with the definition of rural being interpreted differently in various studies, it is hard to specifically decipher the difference between these findings and those that have come from urban and suburban districts (Seeling & McCabe, 2021).

Considering these ideas, a gap in the current literature becomes clear. Although the findings of Seeling and McCabe do not use exactly the same language, these practices are quite similar to the strategic recruitment and retention practices identified in studies that are located in urban and suburban districts. Strategic recruitment and retention practices have been deemed successful in urban and suburban districts. However, are rural school districts seeing positive results in increasing the diversity of their staff when implementing these strategic practices?

Summary

School districts throughout the United States are allocating resources and implementing recruitment and retention strategies with the intent to increase the number of teachers of color in their buildings. However, evidence demonstrates that significant progress is not yet occuring at the rate at which districts would hope to achieve (Ingersoll et al., 2019). In urban and suburban districts some strategic practices have been identified that have supported districts in working towards this goal at a more rapid rate. Possessing the ability to understand which strategic practices are most effective is critical for a school district, especially when resources are limited.

Rural school districts have the need for this information as well so that they also can use it to allocate resources most effectively and efficiently in their efforts to increase the diversity of their teaching staff. As the United States continues to become more racially diverse, school districts that previously had not seen the need to increase the number of teachers of color in their district are learning that is not the case. Research that examines known strategic recruitment and retention practices, and their effectiveness in rural school districts would support these school districts in this work by providing them guidance on the best use of district resources to achieve this goal.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Subjects

Ten school districts were selected to participate in this study based on the criteria of being identified as rural Minnesota districts, as well as having a population of students of color that is greater than 25% of the total student population. The United States Census Bureau (2020) defines "rural" as any population or territory that is not located in an urban setting. An "urban" setting is more clearly defined by the Census Bureau as an area containing more than 50,000 residents or a cluster of communities that have a population between 2,500 and 50,000 residents. Since the school districts selected for this research did not meet the inclusion criterion of an urban area or cluster, they were recognized as rural school districts.

Per the Minnesota Department of Education (n.d.), the percentage of students of color in the rural districts ranged from 39% to 81.7%. Districts with this demographic description are not represented well in current literature. In order to accurately respond to the survey of the current study, it was necessary for the administrative representatives in these districts to have direct knowledge of the recruitment and retention process in their district. A review of the ten rural districts to determine which staff members fit the criteria to be able to respond to the survey tool in a knowledgeable way revealed that there were 75 administrators among the participating districts that were directly involved in hiring, and these were the individuals that were recruited for the study. The subjects recruited included building principals and assistant principals, district leaders such as human resources or business directors, and district superintendents. The inclusion of both building and district level leadership was intended to increase the understanding of the practices being implemented in the identified districts.

Measures

A review of available measurement tools and established surveys indicated that there was not a tool previously created to collect the information needed for this study. Due to this, a survey was created (see Appendix A), which asked subjects to identify which strategic recruitment retention practices were being implemented in their districts, how frequently, and for how long the practice had been used. In addition, participants were also asked to report their perception of the effectiveness of each strategic practice. The survey consisted of two sets of questions, with the first being related to strategic recruitment practices and the second related to strategic retention practices.

The first section of the survey included four questions. Question one was a Likert scale matrix table and asked how frequently the participant's district implements each of the strategic recruitment practices, on a five point scale ranging from "almost never" to "almost always." Participants were asked to respond for each strategic recruitment strategy listed. These strategies included providing training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teachers candidates of color, providing cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color, collaborating with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in their district, offering a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course, and seeking out and encouraging candidates from within their community to apply for their open positions.

The next question in this first section again asked participants to utilize a Likert scale matrix table in order to identify how effectively they feel each of the strategic recruitment practices supported the recruitment of candidates of color in their district. The five point Likert scale for these responses ranged from "not effective" to "very

effective." As participants continued section one of the survey, they were asked to indicate the number of years their district has been using each of the strategic recruitment practices. A slider scale set with a range of zero to twenty years, but without any guiding benchmarks, allowed the respondents to answer freely without any previously established ranges of responses that could influence a response. There was also an option to select a button indicating that this recruitment practice is not applicable in the district that the participant works in.

To conclude the strategic recruitment practices section of the survey, an open ended question was included that asked the participant what the most effective practices are to recruit teacher candidates of color to rural Minnesota school districts. The response area was intentionally designed to be in paragraph format, so that participants were able to visually understand that they could contribute as much as they liked when answering this question. This was an important component of the survey, as it gave the participants a brief break from the matrix table format of previous questions, and allowed them to think freely and offer ideas that may not have previously been identified as effective practices in prior research.

The survey continued with four questions that sought to obtain similar responses, but this section of the survey focused on strategic retention practices that are occuring in the identified districts. Following the design of the first section of the survey, the first question was a Likert scale matrix table and asked how frequently the participant's district implements each of the following strategic retention practices. A five point scale ranging from "almost never" to "almost always" was once again how responses were gathered, and participants responded on this scale for strategic retention strategies listed. The retention strategies identified included assigning a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers of color with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher, providing clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional

compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or

attending after hours meetings, incorporating cultural competency into the teacher

evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth, offering an

affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experience in the

district, and providing equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions

and their impact on the workplace.

For the next question in this section, participants continued to utilize a Likert

scale matrix table to identify how effective they feel each strategic retention practice is in

supporting the retention rate of teachers of color in their district. The five point Likert

scale for these responses ranged from "not effective" to "very effective." As participants

move forward with the survey, they were asked to identify the number of years their

district has been using each of the strategic retention practices. A slider scale set with a

range of zero to twenty years without any previously determined ranges was again used

to reduce any potential opportunity for participants to be influenced in their responses.

There was also an option to select a button indicating that this retention practice is not

applicable in the participant's district.

To conclude the final section of the survey on strategic retention practices, an

open ended question asked the participant what the most effective practices are in

helping to promote the retention of teachers of color in rural Minnesota school districts.

Again, paragraph format was intentionally provided for the response so that participants

can feel free to contribute as much as they would like to this question. Similarly to the

question that concluded section one, this open ended question provides critical insight

about strategic retention practices that have been found to be effective by practitioners in

the field, but have yet to be identified in research literature.

In addition to the information collected from the survey, data was collected from

the Professional Educator and Licensing Board regarding each responding district. This

data included the demographics of candidates applying for open positions in the district, the percentage of candidates of color accepting positions in the district, and the retention rate of teachers of color in the district. When gathering this information from the participating districts, each piece of demographic data included data from the previous three school years.

Design

School districts and the leadership subjects for this study were selected based on the predetermined criteria of district demographics and location in the state of Minnesota, specifically their status as rural districts and population of students of color. Identified participants were contacted via email with an invitation to respond to a survey that was designed to gather information regarding the strategic recruitment and retention rates of their respective districts. Participants were asked to complete and return the surveys electronically within 30 days of receipt, and were offered the opportunity to review the collective results at the completion of the study. Districts were identified as District A, District B, etc. and participants will be assigned a participant number.

Additionally, data from the Professional Educator and Licensing Board was gathered to ascertain the demographics of candidates applying for open positions, candidates accepting positions within the district, and the retention rate of teachers of color over the last three years. These are data that districts collect and are accessible in readily available reports that each school district maintains and submits to the Office of Civil Rights as well as the Minnesota Department of Education, and Professional Educator and Licensing Board, therefore there was no burden placed on participant districts to provide this information.

Statistical Analysis

The results of the participant survey were used to separate those districts that implement strategic practices for recruitment and retention, and those that do not. In

order to create this grouping, the responses referring to implementation on the Strategic Practices Survey (See Appendix A) from all participants were reviewed for each strategic recruitment and retention practice. Districts that use the strategic practice were identified as group A, and districts that do not were identified as group B. Responses of "sometimes" to "almost always" were considered as members of group A, and those that use the strategic practice less were group B. In the event that participants from a district responded differently to a prompt, an average was created for that district in order to assign the district to a group.

Using the Minnesota School Report Card (n.d) and publicly available demographic information from the Professional Educator and Licensing Board for each participating district, each correlative personnel statistic identified in the hypotheses was reviewed: the percentage of candidates of color that apply, the percentage of teacher candidates of color that are hired, the actual percentage of teachers of color in the district, and the retention rate for teachers of color in the district. Data was analyzed in JASP (https://jasp-stats.org), and using an intercorrelation matrix, relationships were identified between the implementation of each strategic recruitment and retention practice and the demographics of teacher candidates in the district, as well as the percentage of teachers of color and their retention rate. The findings intended to be able to identify which of the strategic recruitment and retention practices exhibit a positive correlation with the district's results of improving recruitment and retention of teachers of color. The resulting information will support rural Minnesota districts in appropriately allocating resources based on the strategic practices that have demonstrated the most positive correlations with their personnel goals.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics

Twenty-two administrators representing ten rural Minnesota school districts responded to requests to participate in the study. Either at a district or building level, the position of each participant, along with their willingness to respond, indicated that they had direct involvement in the hiring process of teachers in their district. Participants indicated their district of employment, and at least one participant from each identified district responded, with four districts receiving one response, four districts having two participants, one district with four responses and one district with six responses.

In addition to being identified as rural school districts, each district currently enrolled a population of students of color that was greater than 25% of the total student population per the Minnesota Department of Education (n.d). The districts shared these common characteristics, but ranged in enrollment and staffing levels. Districts A, B, and C enrolled between 500 and 650 students and had a licensed staff between 46 and 52. The percentage of students of color for these three districts were 39%, 45.3% and 48.1%. Districts D, E and F enrolled between 850 and 1,150 students, had licensed staff between 66 and 94, and had percentages of students of color that were 47.7%, 48.9%, and 59.5%. The four remaining districts G, H, I, and J were larger districts in rural areas, with student enrollment ranging from 2,700 to 4,300. Staffing levels in these districts ranged from 221 to 359, and the percentage of students of color included some of the highest in the study, 42.5%, 43.1%, 64.2%, and 81.7% (Minnesota Department of Education, n.d.).

Districts were intended to be categorized into groups based on similarity of the frequency of strategic practice implementation. However, the sample size inhibited the ability to create two groups with frequency means that were different enough to be

distinguishable from each other, but close enough to be considered a like group for

comparison. Therefore there was not the ability nor value added to analyzing the data in

this manner as an addition to analysis of the full participant group.

Strategic Recruitment Practices

Participants were asked to complete a survey tool in order to determine the

frequency that their district uses the strategic recruitment practices identified. The

strategic recruitment practices included providing training for cooperating teachers to

support them in working with teachers candidates of color, providing cultural competency

training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of

color, collaborating with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher

candidates of color in our district, offering a Grow Your Own program for middle or high

school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course, and

seeking out and encouraging candidates from within our community to apply for our

open positions. A Historically Minority Serving Institution is a university and college that

enrolls a significant percentage of students of color, and Grow Your Own programs offer

high school and middle school students the opportunity to get a start in a career in

education prior to their higher education experience. For each strategic practice, the

participant was asked to report how regularly the practice is used in the district on a

5-point Likert scale with a range of almost never occurring (1) to almost always occurring

(5) (see Table 1). The number of candidates of color that each district attracted was also

collected from the Professional Educator and Licensing Board (see Table 2), along with

the increase of staff of color after three school years (see Table 2). With these data, it

was possible to test the correlation between the implementation of strategic recruitment

practices and the recruitment demographics of the district.

The frequency of using the strategic practice of providing training for cooperating

teachers to support them in working with teachers of color was found to have a mean

lower than the midpoint of the Likert scale (M = 2.18, SD = 1.40; see Table 1). It thus

appears that some districts may be using the strategic practice somewhat regularly, but

a larger number of districts are not engaged with this practice as part of their norm.

Strategic practice two, providing cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to

support them in working with teacher candidates of color, provided a slightly higher

frequency of implementation (M = 2.50, SD = 1.66; see Table 1). The responses for this

practice suggest that it is used more regularly than the first, but there was a slightly wider

distribution of frequencies as well, further indicating that districts are using the practices

at different rates based on their resources and priorities.

Next, the practice of collaborating with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to

place teacher candidates of color in our district was found to be used less frequently

than the others in the study (M = 1.64, SD = 0.85; see Table 1). Districts do not appear to

be allocating resources to this strategic practice at the same level as other practices, as

the responses were tightly clustered. Continuing with the strategic recruitment practices

being studied, the fourth practice of offering a Grow Your Own program for middle or

high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course

was analyzed (M = 3.91, SD = 1.44; see Table 1). Participant districts look to be regularly

using this strategic practice to recruit teachers of color from within their school

community. Lastly, the responses regarding seeking out and encouraging candidates

from within our community to apply for our open positions appear to state that districts in

the study use this strategy regularly to access teachers (M = 4.18, SD = 1.10; see Table

1). When compared to the other strategic practices included in the study, this practice is

implemented the most frequently.

Table 1: Implementation Frequency of Strategic Recruitment Practices

Strategic Recruitment Practice	Frequency	
	M	**SD**
Provide training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teachers candidates of color.	2.18	1.40
Provide cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color.	2.50	1.66
Collaborate with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in our district	1.64	0.85
Offer a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course.	3.91	1.44
Seek out and encourage candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions.	4.18	1.10

In addition to the frequency in which the districts implemented the strategy

recruitment practices, the number of candidates of color that engaged in the recruitment

process with each district between the 2019-2020 and 2022-23 school year, and the

increase in the number of teachers of color during the same school year time span, were

gathered from the Professional Educator and Licensing Board. The number of

candidates of color that districts were able to engage in the recruitment process with was

low overall (M = 2.50, SD = 3.29; see Table 2). However, the standard deviation was

very large, which suggests that although some districts may be seeing some success in

recruiting candidates of color, others are seeing minimal engagement with candidates of

color. The analysis of the increase of staff of color from the 2019-2020 to the 2022-2023

school year (M = 10.36, SD = 10.86; see Table 2) further demonstrates that some

districts have had a moderate amount of success in increasing this demographic goal,

while others are struggling.

Table 2: Candidates Engaging in the Recruitment Process and Increase to

Teachers of Color

Candidates of Color		Increase in Teachers of Color	
M	SD	M	SD
2.50	3.29	10.36	10.86

It was hypothesized that rural Minnesota school districts that implement strategic

recruitment practices would attract proportionally more teacher candidates of color than

their peer districts. For the first strategic practice, providing training for cooperating

teachers to support them in working with candidates of color, the relationship between

frequency of strategic recruitment practices and number of candidates of color was weak

($r[21] = 0.19$, p. = 0.41; see Table 3). Similarly, the second strategic practice, providing

cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with

teacher candidates of color, also has a weak positive relationship with the number of

candidates of color attracted ($r[21] = 0.21$, p. = 0.36; see Table 3). Collaborating with

Historically MInority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in the

district was the next strategic recruitment practice, and had a very weak negative

relationship with attracting candidates of color ($r[21] = -0.02$, p. = 0.94; see Table 3).

Fourth, offering a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students which

includes at minimum an introduction to education course was considered, and also

indicated a weak negative relationship to attracting candidates of color ($r[21] = -0.07$, p.

= 0.76; see Table 3). Finally, the last strategic recruitment practice to be tested was

seeking out and encouraging candidates from within the community to apply for open

positions, and a weak positive relationship was found with attracting candidates of color

($r[21] = 0.17$, p. = 0.45; see Table 3). Considering the correlation with each strategic

practice, it does not appear that any of the strategic practices in the study had a

meaningful relationship with the number of candidates of color the district attracted. Thus

the first hypothesis was not supported for any of the practices.

Table 3: Intercorrelation Matrix- Strategic Recruitment Practices and the Number

of Candidates of Color Attracted

Strategic Recruitment Practice	Pearson's Correlation-Candidates of Color
Provide training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teachers candidates of color.	$r = 0.19$ $p = 0.41$
Provide cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color.	$r = 0.21$ $p = 0.36$
Collaborate with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in our district.	$r = -0.02$ $p = 0.94$
Offer a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course.	$r = -0.07$ $p = 0.76$
Seek out and encourage candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions.	$r = 0.17$ $p = 0.45$

It was also hypothesized that rural Minnesota school districts that implement

strategic recruitment practices would hire proportionally more teachers of color than their

peer districts.attract proportionally more teacher candidates of color than their peer

districts, as measured by the increase in the number of teachers of color in each district

during the three school years being studied, 2019-2020 through 2022-23. For the first

strategic practice, providing training for cooperating teachers to support them in working

with candidates of color, the relationship between frequency of strategic recruitment

practices and the increase in teachers of color was negative but very weak ($r[21] = -0.07$, $p. = 0.78$; see Table 4). Similarly, the second strategic practice, providing cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color, also has a weak negative relationship with the increase in teachers of color ($r[21] = -0.20$, $p. = 0.37$; see Table 4). Collaborating with Historically MInority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in the district was the next strategic recruitment practice, and had a very weak negative relationship with the increase in teachers of color ($r[21] = -0.04$, $p. = 0.87$; see Table 4). Fourth, offering a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students which includes at minimum an introduction to education course was considered, and indicated a relationship to the increase in teachers of color that was also weak, but closer to the moderate range than the previous practices ($r[21] = .34$, $p. = 0.12$; see Table 4). The last strategic recruitment practice to be tested was seeking out and encouraging candidates from within the community to apply for open positions, and the relationship was found to be similar as the previous practice with the increase in teachers of color ($r[21] = 0.34$, $p. = 0.12$ee Table 4). Similar to the relationships with the number of candidates of color, it does not appear that any of the strategic practices in the study had a significant relationship with the increase of teachers of color hired. Therefore, the second hypothesis was also not supported for any of the practices.

Table 4: Intercorrelation Matrix- Strategic Recruitment Practices and the Increase in Teachers of Color

Strategic Recruitment Practice	Pearson's Correlation-Increase in Teachers of Color
Provide training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teachers candidates of color.	r = -0.07 p = 0.78
Provide cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color.	r = -0.20 p = 0.37
Collaborate with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in our district.	r = -0.04 p = 0.87
Offer a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course.	r = 0.34 p = 0.12
Seek out and encourage candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions.	r = 0.34 p = 0.12

An intercorrelation matrix was also created to analyze the relationship between the implementation frequency of each of the strategic recruitment practices (see Table 5). The results demonstrate the relationship between the practices, specifically if using one strategic practice in a district correlates to the likelihood of using others. A moderate relationship was seen between providing training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color and providing cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color (r[21] = 0.51, p. = 0.02; see Table 5), indicating that there is some likelihood of districts using both practices. However, the relationship between providing training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color and collaborating with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates in the district does not appear to indicate that districts who may be using one strategy are

also using the other (r[21] = 0.06, p. = 0.80; see Table 5). Similarly, the relationship

between providing training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with

teacher candidates of color and offering a Grow Your Own program for middle or high

school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course, does

not support an expectation that a district using one strategy would be likely to be using

the other (r[21] = -0.13, p. = 0.56; see Table 5). Finally, the relationship between

providing training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher

candidates of color and seeking out and encouraging candidates from within our

community to apply for our open positions did not have a high significance, which would

seem to indicate that districts are looking at these practices as independent

opportunities and not an initiative of actions (r[21] = -0.15, p. = 0.52; see Table 5).

The relationship between providing cultural competency training for cooperating

teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color and collaborating

with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in our

district can be observed, and this weak relationship (r[21] = 0.03, p. = 0.86; see Table 5)

does not suggest a correlation between the two practices. The relationships were

similarly weak between providing cultural competency training for cooperating teachers

to support them in working with teacher candidates of color and offering a Grow Your

Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an

introduction to education course (r[21] = -0.10, p. = 0.66; see Table 5), and between

providing cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in

working with teacher candidates of color and seeking out and encouraging candidates

from within our community to apply for our open positions (r[21] = -0.03, p. = 0.91; see

Table 5). While districts do appear to be providing general training and cultural

competency training for teachers in moderate correlation, the training practice does not

correlate significantly with the remaining three strategic practices.

Collaborating with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in our district had weak relationships with the two previous strategic practices, and this continued to be observed with the final two strategic practices, indicating that collaborating with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in our district does not correlate with a district offering a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course (r[21] = 0.05, p. = 0.83; see Table 5) or seeking out and encouraging candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions (r[21] = 0.07, p. = 0.74; see Table 5). The final relationship to be analyzed was between offering a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course and seeking out and encouraging candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions. These two practices appeared to be somewhat likely to be implemented in tandem in a district (r[21] = 0.31, p. = 0.83; see Table 5), but not in a meaningful way. Throughout the entire intercorrelation matrix, it is evident that many of the relationships between the implementation frequency of each of the strategic recruitment practices were weak and implementing one practice does not correlate with using another. Some small to moderate relationships were observed with practices that potentially could be done using some of the similar resources, but these were a small number of the relationships.

Table 5: Intercorrelation Matrix- Relationship Between Strategic Recruitment

Practices

Strategic Recruitment Practice	Provide training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teachers candidates of color.	Provide cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color.	Collaborate with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in our district.	Offer a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course.	Seek out and encourage candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions.
Provide training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teachers candidates of color.	**	**	**	**	**
Provide cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color.	r = 0.51 p = 0.02	**	**	**	**
Collaborate with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in our district.	r = 0.06 p = 0.80	r = 0.03 p = 0.86	**	**	**
Offer a Grow Your Own program for middle or	r = -0.13 p = 0.56	r = -0.10 p = 0.66	r = 0.05 p = 0.83	**	**

high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course.					
Seek out and encourage candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions.	r = -0.15 p = 0.52	r = -0.03 p = 0.91	r = 0.07 p = 0.74	r = 0.31 p = 0.16	**

Strategic Retention Practices

Continuing the data collection, participants were asked to complete a survey tool in order to determine the frequency that their district uses the strategic retention practices identified. The strategic retention practices included assigning a mentor to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher, providing clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings, incorporating cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth, offering an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experience in the district, and providing equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their impact on the workplace. For each strategic practice, the participant was asked to report how regularly the practice is used in the district on a 5-point Likert scale with a range of almost never occurring (1) to almost always occurring (5) (See Table 6). The percentage of teachers of color in each district was also collected from the Minnesota Department of Education (see Table 7), as well as the retention rate of teachers of color

in each district from the Professional Educator and Licensing Board (See Table 7). With these data, it was possible to test the correlation between the implementation of strategic retention practices and the retention demographics of the district.

The mean frequency value for each strategic retention practice was calculated from the participants' responses, as well as the standard deviation of the data set. The frequency of using the strategic practice of assigning a mentor to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher was first analyzed and found to have a mean close to the top of than the Likert scale (M = 4.60, SD = 0.80; see Table 6). Thus, it appears that the districts are using this strategic practice regularly. Strategic practice two, providing clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings, also revealed a mean higher than the midpoint of the Likert scale (M = 3.82 , SD = 1.22; See Table 6). The responses for this practice suggest that it is used less regularly than the first, but that it is still a consistent part of several of the districts' work..

The practice of incorporating cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth was reviewed next, and participants reported that this practice is used less frequently than the others in the study (M = 3.14, SD = 1.52; see Table 6). Districts do not appear to be implementing this strategic practice at the same level as the two previous practices, but the mean is still slightly higher than the midpoint of the scale. Additionally, responses were not as tightly clustered for this practice, indicating that each district is allocating resources to this practice differently based on their needs. The fourth strategic retention practice being studied, offering an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experience in the district, was analyzed (M = 1.41, SD = 0.73; see Table 6) and found to have the lowest mean of the practices. Thus, it appears that this practice is used rarely

among the participant districts to support their retention efforts. Lastly, the responses

regarding providing equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and

their impact on the workplace appear to indicate that districts in the study do not use this

strategy regularly (M = 2.73, SD = 1.20; see Table 6). When compared to the other

strategic practices included in the study, this practice is not implemented as much as

some of the others, but there are districts that are using it with some regularity.

Table 6: Implementation Frequency of Strategic Retention Practices

Strategic Retention Practice	Frequency	
	M	SD
Assign a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher.	4.60	0.80
Provide clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings.	3.82	1.22
Incorporate cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth.	3.14	1.52
Offer an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experiences.	1.41	0.73
Provide equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their impact on the workplace.	2.73	1.20

Along with the frequency in which the districts implemented the strategy retention

practices, the percentage of teachers of color in each district was also collected from the

Minnesota Department of Education (n.d.), as well as the retention rate of teachers of

color in each district from 2019-2020 to 2022-23 was also gathered from the

Professional Educator and Licensing Board. The percentage of teachers of color in

participant districts was low overall (M = 3.30, SD = 2.09; see Table 7). This suggests

that although some districts may be seeing some success in increasing the percentage

of teachers of color in their district, the overall percentage is quite low in many districts.

The analysis of the retention rate of teachers of color from the 2019-2020 to the

2022-2023 school year (M = 93.56, SD = 4.84; see Table 7), however, appears to

suggest that districts are having a moderate amount of success in retaining teachers of

color once they have been recruited and hired.

Table 7: Percentage of Teachers of Color and the Retention Rate of Teachers of

Color

Percentage of Teachers of Color		Retention Rate of Teachers of Color	
M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**
3.30	2.09	93.56	4.85

It was hypothesized that rural Minnesota school districts that implement strategic

retention practices will have a proportionally higher percentage of teachers of color on

staff than their peer districts. For the first strategic practice, assigning a mentor to newly

hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the

new teacher, the relationship between frequency of the strategic retention practice and

the percentage of teachers of color was weak (r[21] = 0.25, p. = 0.25; see Table 8). The

second strategic practice, providing clearly defined expectations for duties that will result

in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary

job role or attending after hours meetings, had a weaker relationship with the percentage

of teachers of color (r[21] = 0.10, p. = 0.66; see Table 8). Incorporating cultural

competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth was the next strategic retention practice, and had a similar weak relationship with the percentage of teachers of color in a district (r[21] = 0.18, p. = 0.44; see Table 8). Fourth, offering an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experience in the district was considered, and also indicated a weak relationship to the percentage of teachers of color (r[21] = 0.11, p. = 0.63; see Table 8). Finally, the last strategic retention practice to be tested was providing equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their impact on the workplace, and a very weak negative relationship was found with the percentage of color (r[21] = -0.04, p. = 0.88; see Table 8). None of the correlations with the strategic practices and the percentage of teachers of color in participant districts revealed a significant relationship, and these data did not support the third hypothesis for any of the practices.

Table 8: Intercorrelation Matrix- Strategic Retention Practices and the Percentage of Teachers of Color

Strategic Retention Practice	Pearson's Correlation-Percentage of Teachers of Color
Assign a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher.	r = 0.25 p = 0.25
Provide clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings.	r = 0.10 p = 0.66
Incorporate cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth	r = 0.18 p = 0.44
Offer an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experiences.	r = 0.11 p = 0.63
Provide equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their impact	r = -0.04

on the workplace.	p = 0.88

Additionally, it was hypothesized that rural Minnesota school districts that implement strategic retention practices will have a proportionally higher rate of retention of teachers of color than their peer districts. This was measured by the retention rate of teachers of color in each district during the three school years being studied, 2019-2020 through 2022-23. The first strategic practice was assigning a mentor to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher, and the relationship between this strategic retention practice and the retention rate of teachers of color was weak ($r[21] = 0.08$, p. = 0.74; see Table 9). Next, the second strategic practice, providing clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings, was analyzed and found to have a weak relationship with the retention rate of teachers of color ($r[21] = 0.18$, p. = 0.49; see Table 9). Third, incorporating cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth was the next strategic retention practice, and although higher than the previous practices, had a weak relationship with the retention rate of teachers of color ($r[21] = 0.27$, p. = 0.28; see Table 9). Continuing with the strategic retention practices, offering an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experience in the district was reviewed and the relationship with the retention rate of teachers of color was also weak ($r[21] = .24$, p. = 0.34; see Table 9). Finally the strategic retention practice of providing equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their impact on the workplace was found to have a weak relationship with the retention rate of teachers of color, ($r[21] = 0.13$, p. = 0.62; see Table 9). The consistent weak relationships between the strategic retention practices being studied and the retention rate of teachers of color in the

participant districts indicate that the final hypothesis was not supported for any of the

practices.

Table 9: Intercorrelation Matrix- Strategic Retention Practices and the Retention

Rate of Teachers of Color

Strategic Retention Practice	Pearson's Correlation-Retention Rate of Teachers of Color
Assign a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher.	r = 0.08 p = 0.74
Provide clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings. .	r = 0.18 p = 0.49
Incorporate cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth	r = 0.27 p = 0.28
Offer an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experiences.	r = 0.24 p = 0.34
Provide equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their impact on the workplace.	r = 0.13 p = 0.62

To analyze the relationship between the implementation frequency of each of the

strategic retention practices, an intercorrelation matrix was created (see Table 10).

These results identify the relationship between the practices and if using one strategic

practice in a district correlates to the likelihood of using others. A moderate relationship

was seen between assigning a mentor to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly

defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher and providing clearly

defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as

supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours

meetings ($r[21] = 0.56$, p. = 0.01; see Table 10). Thus, it appears that there is some

likelihood of districts using both practices. The relationship between assigning a mentor to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher and incorporating cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth is somewhat less significant, and doesn't demonstrate the same likelihood that districts who may be using one strategy are also using the other (r[21] = 0.32, p. = 0.14; see Table 10). In contrast, the relationship between assigning a mentor to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher and offering an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experience is weakly negative, and does not support an expectation that a district using one strategy would be likely to be using the other (r[21] = -0.11, p. = 0.63; see Table 10). Finally, the relationship between assigning a mentor to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher and providing equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their impact on the workplace did not have a high significance, which would also indicate that districts are looking at these practices as independent opportunities and not as a group of activities for retention (r[21] = 18, p. = 0.43; see Table 10).

The relationship between providing clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings and incorporating cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth can be observed, and this relationship (r[21] = 0.35, p. = 0.11; see Table 10) does not suggest even a moderate correlation between the two practices, but is somewhat more notable than some of the others. However, the relationship was very weak between providing clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or

attending after hours meetings and offering an affinity group for staff of color to come

together and share their lived experience (r[21] = -0.07, p. = 0.75; see Table 10).

Similarly, a weak negative relationship was found between providing clearly defined

expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting

student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings and

providing equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their

impact on the workplace (r[21] = -0.10, p. = 0.66; see Table 10). This suggests that as

district spend additional resources working on the strategic practice of providing clearly

defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as

supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours

meetings, they are allocating less resources to providing equity training for staff with

specific focus on microaggressions and their impact on the workplace. However, this is a

slight relationship, not even to the moderate level.

Incorporating cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support

teachers of color in their instructional growth had a similar relationship with offering an

affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experience as some

of the other correlations (r[21] = 0.37, p. = 0.09; see Table 10), and therefore it appears

there may be a minimal correlation between the practices, but not to a significant level.

Also, the relationship between incorporating cultural competency into the teacher

evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth and

providing equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their

impact on the workplace is also weak (r[21] = 0.18, p. = 0.43; see Table 10). The final

relationship to be analyzed was between offering an affinity group for staff of color to

come together and share their lived experience and providing equity training for staff with

specific focus on microaggressions and their impact on the workplace. These two

practices appeared to be somewhat likely to be implemented together in a district (r[21]

= 0.29, p. = 0.18; see Table 10), but only to a low significance. Throughout the entire

intercorrelation matrix, it is evident that many of the relationships between the

implementation frequency of each of the strategic retention practices were weak and

implementing one practice does not correlate with using another. Some small to

moderate relationships were observed between some of the practices, but these

represented a small number of the relationships.

Table 10: Intercorrelation Matrix- Relationship Between Strategic Retention

Practices

Strategic Retention Practice	Assign a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher.	Provide clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings.	Incorporate cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth.	Offer an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experiences.	Provide equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their impact on the workplace..
Assign a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher.	**	**	**	**	**

Table 10 (cont)

Provide clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings.	r = 0.56 p = 0.01	**	**	**	**
Incorporate cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth.	r = 0.32 p = 0.14	r = 0.35 p = 0.11	**	**	**
Offer an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experiences.	r = -0.11 p = 0.63	r = -0.07 p = 0.75	r = 0.37 p = 0.09	**	**
Provide equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their impact on the	r = 0.18 p = 0.43	r = -0.10 p = 0.66	r = 0.18 p = 0.43	r = 0.29 p = 0.18	**

workplace.					

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Summary

In this study, the relationship was analyzed between the strategic recruitment and retention practices being implemented by rural Minnesota school districts and the recruitment and retention rates of teachers of color in these districts. Previous research has identified strategic recruitment and retention practices that districts have implemented that have correlated with an increase of the number of teachers of color in urban and suburban school districts. However, a gap exists in current literature regarding these strategic practices and their impact on teacher demographics in rural school districts. The results found in the current study provide some initial insights for this unexplored area of the research, and demonstrate the need for collection and analysis of data when allocating resources for recruitment and retention in school districts.

The relationships between strategic recruitment and retention practices and the recruitment and retention data in the rural Minnesota districts represented in the study did not support the hypotheses (see Table 11). However, additional insights can be discovered when reviewing the relative strength of the relationship for each strategic practice and the relationships between the implementation frequency of the strategic practices. This further information may assist rural school districts as they develop their recruitment and retention strategies and attempt to increase the number of teachers of color in the school district.

Table 11: Were the Hypotheses Supported by the Relationships Between Strategic

Practices and District Recruitment and Retention Data?

	Strategic Recruitment Practices	Strategic Retention Practices
Candidates of Color	No	**
Increase in Teachers of Color	No	**
Percentage of Teachers of Color	**	No
Retention Rate of Teachers of Color	**	No

Strategic Recruitment Practices

Frequency of Implementation. Attempting to capitalize on the success of their

urban and suburban counterparts, school districts in rural Minnesota are working to

implement strategic recruitment practices in their efforts to increase the diversity of their

teaching staff. The frequency at which each practice is used (see Table 1) can provide

insights into the amount of emphasis that districts are placing on each practice. The two

most frequently used strategic practices are offering a Grow Your Own program for

middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education

course and seeking out, and encouraging candidates from within our community to apply

for our open positions. The frequency of these strategic practices would seem to indicate

that strategies to recruit teaching staff of color from within their own communities are

viewed as the most valuable to school districts. Districts also seem to be using these two

strategies concurrently in their work (see Table 5), furthering this inference that local

recruitment is being attempted.

Conversely, it does not appear that districts are allocating significant resources to

collaborating with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of

color in our district, as this was the least frequently used strategic practice. The strategic

recruitment practices that found themselves at the center of the frequency scale were

providing training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teachers

candidates of color and providing cultural competency training for cooperating teachers

to support them in working with teacher candidates of color. Based on the relationship

between the implementation of these two strategic recruitment practices, it also appears

that districts are most likely to be using them concurrently. This could indicate that when

they are being used, more resources are being allocated to these practices collectively

(see Table 5).

Upon analyzing the mean implementation frequencies of the strategic recruitment

practices, it can be inferred that districts see the value in recruiting from within their

communities, thus allocating more recruitment resources to these practices, and

capitalizing on the connections and relationships that candidates already have in these

communities. This emphasis by school districts to recruit locally is in alignment with the

findings of previous research (Gist & Lynn, 2019), giving credibility to this allocation of

resources. However, it would also appear that districts either do not prioritize

collaborating with Historically Minority Serving Institutions, or have not explored this

strategic practice to a meaningful extent, despite previous research indicating its

success similar to the others. Further inquiry as to why districts are not attempting this

strategic practice as regularly could provide insights into this question. Lastly, the

frequency results would seem to indicate that these districts understand the need for

training for teaching staff in working with candidates of color, but implementation of these

strategic recruitment practices is not as frequent as other strategic practices. In addition

to the belief that the strategic practice may have a relationship with increasing the

number of candidates of color in a district, there could be a variety of alternative

explanations for these differences in implementation, including community

demographics, geographic location, and the need for prioritization of limited resources.

   Relationship Analysis. It was hypothesized (Hypothesis 1) that rural Minnesota

school districts that implement strategic recruitment practices will attract proportionally

more teacher candidates of color than their peer districts. The relationships that were

found between these strategic recruitment practices and the number of candidates of

color attracted (see Table 3) did not support this hypothesis. However, there are several

points to note as the relationships between each strategic recruitment practice and the

number of candidates of color for a school district are reviewed. First, having a higher

mean implementation frequency among strategic practices does not appear to correlate

to having the strongest relationship with the recruitment data in the participant districts.

Offering a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at

minimum an introduction to education course and seeking out and encouraging

candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions were the two most

frequently implemented strategic practices. Yet, they were not the strategic practices that

produced the strongest relationships with the number of candidates of color for

participant districts. Although all of the relationships were weak, the relatively strongest

occurred between providing cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to

support them in working with teacher candidates of color and recruitment data, despite

this strategic practice not being implemented as frequently as some of the others. This

observation seems to indicate that there is a noticeable disconnect between the

frequency of the utilization of a strategic practice and the relationship to increasing

candidates of color.

   Perception of Effectiveness. This observation can encourage the question of

whether participants' perception of the most effective strategic recruitment practices are

aligned to a strong relationship between the strategic practices and attracting candidates

of color. As part of the data collection process, participants were also asked to rate how

effective they believed each strategic recruitment practice was, on a scale of *not*

effective (1) to *very effective* (5). Mean values of each of the effectiveness ratings (see

Table 12) were calculated, and these effectiveness ratings can provide information as to

whether the level of confidence in a particular strategic recruitment practice correlated to

a stronger relationship between the strategic practice and the number of candidates of

color attracted in the district.

The first strategic recruitment practice of providing training for cooperating

teachers to support them in working with teachers candidates of color appears to be

viewed as somewhat effective by participants (M = 3.09, SD = 1.07; see Table 12), and

this mild confidence mixed with caution appears to be merited, as the relationship

between this strategic practice and the number of candidates of color attracted does

indicate a positive relationship between the two and is the strongest of any of the

strategic practices. However, despite being the strongest, the relationship is still weak

(see Table 3). Slightly more confidence is evidenced in the responses for the strategic

practice of providing cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support

them in working with teacher candidates of color (M = 3.32, SD = 1.13; see Table 12).

Again, this strategic practice is among the strongest in relationship with the number of

candidates of color, yet the relationship between this strategic recruitment practice and

the number of candidates of color is still not strong (see Table 3). Although slightly lower,

the perception of the effectiveness of strategic recruitment practice three, collaborating

with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in our

district was still near the midpoint of the LIkert scale (M = 2.82, SD = 1.14; see Table 12).

This slightly lower perception of effectiveness, when compared with the very weak

relationship between this strategic practice and candidates of color (see Table 3),

appears to indicate that for the participant districts there is an awareness of the lack of relationship.

Next, the perceived effectiveness of the other two strategic recruitment practices can be analyzed. Offering a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course, is seen as more effective by participant districts (M = 3.82, SD = 1.14; see Table 12), and is one of the most frequently used strategic practices (see Table 1). However, the relationship between this strategic practice and the number of candidates of color is weakly negative (see Table 3). Therefore this perceived effectiveness does not appear to be aligned to an actual relationship. A similar observation can be made with the final strategic recruitment practice, seeking out and encouraging candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions. As with the previous practice, confidence in this strategic practice is high (M = 3.82, SD = 1.14; see Table 12), as is the frequency of implementation (see Table 1). Yet, the relationship between this strategic recruitment practice and the number of candidates of color, although stronger than some of the others, is still weak (see Table 3). The hypothesis that rural Minnesota school districts that implement strategic recruitment practices will attract proportionally more teacher candidates of color than their peer districts was not supported. It can also be understood that there is a non-alignment between a district's perception of the effectiveness of a strategic practice and that practice's actual relationship with the number of candidates of color.

Table 12: Perceived Effectiveness of Strategic Recruitment Practices

Strategic Recruitment Practice	Effectiveness	
	M	SD
Provide training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teachers candidates of color.	3.09	1.07
Provide cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color.	3.32	1.13
Collaborate with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in our district	2.82	1.14
Offer a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course.	3.82	1.14
Seek out and encourage candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions.	3.82	1.14

Relationship Analysis. It was also hypothesized (Hypothesis 2) that rural Minnesota school districts that implement strategic recruitment practices will hire proportionally more teachers of color than their peer districts. As with the previous hypothesis, the relationships that were found between these strategic recruitment practices and the increase in teachers of color (see Table 4) did not support this hypothesis. However, there are takeaways when considering the relationships between each strategic recruitment practice and the increase in teachers of color for a school district. First, the strategic practices that were implemented most frequently, offering a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum

an introduction to education course and seeking out and encouraging candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions, did have the strongest relationship with the increase in teachers of color. The relationship between these two recruitment practices and the increase of teachers of color was still weaker than moderate, but was indeed stronger than other practices. Interestingly, these two strategic practices did not have the strongest relationship with attracting candidates or color, further indicating that although some of the relationships were approaching moderate, none reached a consistently meaningful status. An additional observation of this point was that the strategic recruitment practice that demonstrated the strongest relationship with attracting candidates of color, which was providing cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color, in fact had the weakest relationship with an increase in teachers of color. Although the different relationships between a strategic recruitment practice and the various recruitment data in a district may be an interesting observation, if neither relationship was meaningful no firm conclusions can be drawn from this observation.

Perception of Effectiveness. Similar to the recruitment data of the number of candidates of color attracted, the alignment of participants' perception of the most effective strategic recruitment practices and the strength of the relationship between the strategic practices and the increase of teachers of color can be analyzed. The survey tool also asked participants to rate how effective each strategic recruitment practice was, on a scale of *not effective* (1) to *very effective* (5). Mean values of each of the effectiveness ratings (see Table 12) were calculated, and these effectiveness ratings can provide information as to whether the level of confidence in a particular strategic recruitment practice correlated to a stronger relationship between the strategic practice and the increase of teachers of color in the district.

The first strategic recruitment practice of providing training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teachers candidates of color seems to be seen as somewhat effective by participants (M = 3.09, SD = 1.07; see Table 12). However, this mild confidence does not appear to be supported, as the relationship between this strategic practice and the increase in teachers of color isn't meaningful, with a small negative correlation between the two (see Table 4). Slightly more confidence is evidenced in the responses for strategic practice two, providing cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color (M = 3.32, SD = 1.13; see Table 12). Yet, there is a slightly stronger negative relationship between this strategic recruitment practice and the increase in teachers of color (see Table 4). The perception of the effectiveness of strategic recruitment practice three, collaborating with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in our district, was somewhat lower to but still near the midpoint of the Likert scale (M = 2.82, SD = 1.14; see Table 12). This slightly lower perception of effectiveness, when compared with the very weak relationship between this strategic practice and the increase in teachers of color (see Table 4), appears to indicate that for the participants there may be an awareness of the lack of relationship.

Next, the final two strategic recruitment practices and their perceived effectiveness can be considered. Offering a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course, is seen as more effective by participants (M = 3.82, SD = 1.14; see Table 12), and is one of the most frequently used strategic practices (see Table 1). The relationship between this strategic practice and the increase in teachers of color is somewhat stronger than others, although still less than moderate (see Table 4). Therefore, this perceived effectiveness does appear to have some merit, but only to a small degree. A similar observation can be made with the final strategic recruitment practice, seeking out and encouraging

candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions. As with the

previous practice, confidence in this strategic practice is high (M = 3.82, SD = 1.14; see

Table 12), as is the frequency of implementation (see Table 1). Yet, the relationship

between this strategic recruitment practice and the number of candidates of color,

although stronger than some of the others, is still less than moderate (see Table 4). The

hypothesis that rural Minnesota school districts that implement strategic recruitment

practices will hire proportionally more teachers of color than their peer districts was not

supported, and it can also be observed that district perception of the relationships

between the strategic recruitment practices and the increase in teachers of color does

not align with the actual relationships.

Additional External Factors. The analysis of the responses of the rural

Minnesota school districts in this study does not support the assertion that strategic

recruitment practices that have been effective in urban and suburban districts would also

be effective in rural districts. The frequency of implementation of the strategic

recruitment practices would appear to indicate that the rural districts in the study are

using these practices with at least moderate regularity, and that participants feel

somewhat confident in their effectiveness. However, the number of candidates of color

attracted and the increase in teachers of color in districts that use the practices are not

meaningfully different that those that do not.

Thus, it appears that there are likely additional external factors that may be

contributing to the lack of candidates of color and an increase in teachers of color. These

could be a number of factors, such as geographic location, housing availability,

community demographics, or candidate family responsibility. A common characteristic of

these barriers is that they are not within a school district's direct control, which is a

primary characteristic of the strategic recruitment practices included in this study.

Therefore, districts will need to identify what additional activities they can engage in to

increase their influence on these factors, such as partnering with community leadership to increase housing, providing support for new teachers with young families, or connecting with local support groups of people of color. Although these may not be considered a strategic recruitment practice that is the direct work of the school district, this indirect influence may support further community diversity moving forward, and thus increasing the diversity of the teaching staff in a school district. Determining which external factors may most influence the attraction of candidates of color and an increase in teachers of color in a rural community may be a topic for future research.

Strategic Retention Practices

Frequency of Implementation. Rural Minnesota school districts have been implementing strategic retention practices in their efforts to increase the diversity of their teaching staff. The frequency of implementation of each of the strategic retention practices (see Table 6) can provide insight into the current prioritization that districts are placing on each strategic practice. The two most frequently used strategic practices are assigning a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher and providing clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings. The priority placed on these two strategic practices would seem to indicate that school districts understand the value of mentorship for new teachers of color and that teachers of color should be compensated when they are asked to perform additional duties. Although a preferred strategy to support teachers of color would be to not ask more of them than their White colleagues, acknowledging and compensating teachers of color for their extra work may still be a step to support the retention of these teachers. Districts also seem to be using these two strategies concurrently in their work (see Table 10), further building the understanding that using multiple practices together is seen as more

effective than isolated initiatives. On the opposite of the implementation frequency scale, it does not appear that districts are allocating significant resources to offering an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experiences, as this was the least frequently used strategic practice.

The strategic practices of incorporating cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth and providing equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their impact on the workplace were both near the center of the frequency scale, thus providing the indication that districts are attempting to utilize these practices, but with varying degrees of implementation frequency. It also appears that districts are most likely to be using these strategic practices concurrently, perhaps increasing the resource allocation to each practice by sharing resources (see Table 5). Although the practice of incorporating cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth is used less frequently than assigning a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher and providing clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings, there is also some small to moderate likelihood that all three strategic retention practices could be taking place in a school district at the same time (see Table 10).

Given the implementation frequencies of the strategic retention practices, it can be inferred that participant districts understand the value in providing mentorship for new teachers of color, as well as honoring the time of teachers of color and recognizing cultural competence in instruction. This seems to indicate that school districts are attempting to provide support for teachers of color in ways that they can directly control. In contrast, districts are not frequently offering an affinity group for staff of color to come

together and share their lived experiences. Since districts do seem to see the value in supporting teachers of color, it could be the lack of volume of teachers of color in a district that inhibits this strategic practice, or a lack of awareness of how to successfully initiate and operate affinity groups. Lastly, and similar to the findings for strategic recruitment practices, the frequency results would seem to indicate that districts represented in the study understand the need for continued training for teaching staff and incorporating cultural competence into teacher evaluation, but implementation of these practices are not yet as frequent as other strategies. There could be a variety of explanations for these differences, including staff demographics, the current needs and desires of teachers of color, and the need for prioritization of limited resources.

Relationship Analysis. It was hypothesized (Hypothesis 3) that rural Minnesota school districts that implement strategic retention practices will have a proportionally higher percentage of teachers of color on staff than their peer districts. The relationships that were found between these strategic retention practices and the percentage of teachers of color (see Table 3) did not support this hypothesis. However, there are key points to note in the relationships between each strategic retention practice and the percentage of teachers of color for a school district. First, the strategic practice with the highest implementation frequency was assigning a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers of color with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher.. This strategic practice did correlate with the strongest relationship with the percentage of teachers of color. Although the relationship remained weak, it was stronger than any of the other relationships between strategic retention practices and the percentage of teachers of color. However, none of the other implementation frequencies correlated to any particular relationship between a strategic retention practice and the percentage of teachers of color in a district. This observation seems to indicate that there

is not a noticeable connection between the frequency of the utilization of a strategic

practice and the relationship to the percentage of teachers of color in a district.

Perception of Effectiveness. This observation can lead to further analysis of

whether districts' perception of the most effective strategic retention practices are

aligned to a strong relationship between the strategic practices and the percentage of

teachers of color in a district. The survey tool also asked participants to rate how

effective each strategic retention practice was, on a scale of *not effective* (1) to *very*

effective (5). Mean values of each of the effectiveness ratings (see Table 13) were

calculated, and these could be used in determining whether the level of confidence in a

particular strategic retention practice correlated to a stronger relationship between the

strategic practice and a district's staff demographics and retention data.

The first strategic retention practice of assigning a mentor teacher to newly hired

teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new

teacher seems to be considered effective by participants (M = 4.14, SD = 0.83; see

Table 13), and this confidence also is expressed by the fact that this is the most

frequently used strategic retention practice (see Table 6). The perception that this

strategic practice is effective could be expected as this is the practice with the strongest

relationship to the percentage of teachers of color in a district. However, this relationship

is still weak (see Table 8). Slightly less confidence is evidenced in the responses for two

additional strategic practices, providing clearly defined expectations for duties that will

result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the

primary job role or attending after hours meetings (M = 3.59, SD = 1.26, See Table 13)

and providing equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their

impact on the workplace (M = 3.55, SD = 1.34, see Table 13), yet participants do

perceive these to be effective strategic practices. However, the relationships between

these two strategies and the percentage of teachers of color are very weak (see Table

8), which would not justify this confidence in their effectiveness. This has the potential to be an important finding as it appears districts are implementing the strategic practice of providing clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings with some consistent frequency (see Table 6).

Incorporating cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth (M = 3.27, SD = 1.32, see Table 13) and offering an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experiences (M = 3.00, SD = 1.23, see Table 13) are the strategic retention practices that have the lowest mean perceived effectiveness. Yet, both are still considered to be somewhat effective. However, neither of these strategic practices have the weakest relationship with the percentage of teachers of color in districts (see Table 8), which would seem to indicate that the perceived effectiveness does not align with the actual relationship between the strategic practice and district demographics.

Table 13: Perceived Effectiveness of Strategic Retention Practices

Strategic Retention Practice	Effectiveness	
	M	**SD**
Assign a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher.	4.14	0.83
Provide clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings.	3.59	1.26
Incorporate cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support	3.27	1.32

teachers of color in their instructional growth.		
Offer an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experiences.	3.00	1.23
Provide equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their impact on the workplace.	3.55	1.34

Relationship Analysis. It was also hypothesized (Hypothesis 4) that rural Minnesota school districts that implement strategic retention practices will have a proportionally higher rate of retention of teachers of color than their peer districts. The relationships that were found between these strategic retention practices and the rate of retention of teachers of color (see Table 9) did not support this hypothesis. However, there are takeaways to note when considering the relationships between each strategic retention practice and the rate of retention of teachers of color for a school district. First, the frequency at which each strategic practice is implemented does not have any noticeable correlation to the relationships between the strategic practices and the rate of retention of teachers of color in a district. In fact, the strategic practice with the lowest mean frequency, offering an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experiences (see Table 6), appears to have one of the strongest relationships with the rate of retention of teachers of color in the district (see Table 9).

Additionally, the strategic practice implemented most frequently, assigning a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher (see Table 6), does not align with a more meaningful relationship than other strategic practices to the rate of retention of teachers of color(see Table 9). However, since none of the observed relationships were meaningful, the correlation is not able to be generalized further and the inferred understanding is that

implementation frequency is not in alignment with the relationships found, and this would

be important for districts to know as they allocate resources.

Perception of Effectiveness. Similar to the topic of the percentage of teachers

of color in a district, whether participants' perception of the most effective strategic

retention practices are aligned to a strong relationship between the strategic practices

and the rate of retention of teachers of color can be assessed. The survey tool also

asked participants to rate how effective each strategic recruitment practice was, on a

scale of *not effective* (1) to *very effective* (5). Mean values of each of the effectiveness

ratings (see Table 13) were calculated, and these could be used in discussion of whether

the level of confidence in a particular strategic retention practice correlated to a stronger

relationship between the strategic practice and the staff demographics and retention

data.

The first strategic retention practice of assigning a mentor teacher to newly hired

teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new

teacher seems to be seen as effective by participants (M = 4.14, SD = 0.83; see Table

13), and this confidence also is expressed by the fact that this is the most frequently

used strategic retention practice. However, the perception that this strategic practice is

effective appears to be misplaced as this strategic retention practice does not have a

meaningful relationship with the rate of retention of teachers of color, or the strongest

relationship among the strategic practices studied (see Table 9). Slightly less confidence

is evidenced in the responses for two additional strategic practices, providing clearly

defined for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student

behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings (M = 3.59, SD

= 1.26, See Table 13) and providing equity training for staff with specific focus on

microaggressions and their impact on the workplace (M = 3.55, SD = 1.34, see Table

13). Yet, participants do perceive these to be effective strategic practices. The

relationships between these two strategies and the percentage of teachers of color are very weak as well, and not the strongest of the group (see Table 9), which would not justify this confidence in their effectiveness. This could be an important finding as it appears districts are implementing the strategic practice of providing clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings with some consistent frequency (see Table 6).

Incorporating cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.32$, see Table 13) and offering an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experiences ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.23$, see Table 13) are the strategic retention practices that have the lowest mean perceived effectiveness, yet both are still considered to be somewhat effective. However, these two strategic practices have the strongest relationship with the percentage of teachers of color in districts (see Table 8), which would seem to indicate that the perceived effectiveness does not align with the actual relationship between the strategic practice and district demographics.

Additional External Factors. The analysis of the responses of the rural Minnesota school districts in this study does not support the hypotheses that strategic retention practices in urban and suburban districts would also be effective in rural districts. The frequency of implementation of the strategic retention practices seems to indicate that the rural districts in the study are using these practices with at least moderate regularity, and that participants feel somewhat confident in their effectiveness. However, the percentage of teachers of color and the rate of retention of teachers of color in districts that use the practices are not meaningfully different that those that do not.

Thus, it appears that there are additional external factors that may be contributing to the percentage of teachers of color and the rate of retention of teachers of color in rural Minnesota school districts. These could be a number of factors, such as geographic location, community demographics, competitor school district contract terms, or family responsibilities. A common characteristic of these factors are that they are not within a school district's direct control, which is the focus of this study. Therefore, districts will need to identify what they can engage in to influence these factors, such as partnering with community leadership to influence community assets, or working with union leadership to create positively viewed contract terms. Some of these may not be considered a strategic retention practice that is the direct work of the school district, this indirect influence may support diversity moving forward. Determining which external factors may most influence the percentage of teachers of color and the rate of retention of teachers of color in a rural community may be a topic of future research.

Implications

The barriers that districts face as they attempt to increase the diversity of the teacher staff have been the subject of multiple studies. In order to address these barriers, there are several practices that a district could implement to promote an increase in the recruitment and retention of teachers of color. Current literature identifies several strategic recruitment and retention practices that school districts could implement, specifically practices that are directly within a district's control as it determines whether to allocate resources towards the practice or not. However, although these strategic practices have been found to support recruitment and retention of teachers of color in urban and suburban school districts, there currently exists a gap in the literature when discussing rural school districts and these same strategic practices. Using the results of this study, rural Minnesota school districts will be able to review the strategic practices they are implementing as they attempt to increase the recruitment

and retention in their school districts, and work towards identifying the best use of limited

resources for this goal. Although there are not strong relationships between any of the

strategic practices and the recruitment and retention of teachers of color, there are some

small to moderate relationships. These relationships indicate that there may be some

small correlations to note between a strategic practice and the recruitment and retention

data in a school district. However, it is necessary to understand that this correlation does

not provide information as to the causation of the recruitment and retention demographic

trends. Therefore, it must be recognized that additional factors combined with the use of

a strategic recruitment or retention practice may contribute to the causation of a district's

demographic data.

For recruitment, it appears that providing training for cooperating teachers to

support them in working with teachers candidates of color and providing cultural

competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher

candidates of color do have a small relationship with an increase in candidates of color

for a position (see Table 3). Additionally, offering a Grow Your Own program for middle or

high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course

and seeking out and encouraging candidates from within our community to apply for our

open positions have small to moderate relationships with the increase in teachers of

color in a district (see Table 4). Since the other strategic recruitment practices have

weaker relationships with the recruitment demographics in the participant districts, other

rural Minnesota districts may choose to assess their resource allocation for recruitment.

Districts may also be able to determine which strategic recruitment practices to

implement concurrently, as the relationships between strategic recruitment practices

(see Table 5) would seem to indicate that the two strongest relationships with recruitment

demographics also have the strongest relationship to each other. These strategic

recruitment practices may be more beneficial when utilized together. Although there are

not strong relationships between individual strategic recruitment practices and the

recruitment data of a school district, there is some indication that using them multiple

strategic practices concurrently could prove useful.

Similarly, the findings in this study provide insight into the strategic retention

practices being used in participant districts. Assigning a mentor teacher to newly hired

teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new

teacher, appears to have a small relationship with the percentage of teachers of color in

a district, while other strategic retention practices do not even have a small relationship

(see Table 8). The retention rate of staff of color does have a small relationship with two

strategic retention practices, incorporating cultural competency into the teacher

evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth and offering

an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experiences (see

Table 9), but the others do not. The intercorrelation matrix for the strategic retention

practices does identify some relationships between the frequency of use of each

practice. However, unlike the strategic retention practices, there does not appear to be

an obvious alignment of using practices concurrently and stronger relationships between

the practices and retention data (see Table 10).

Rural Minnesota school districts have limited resources to allocate for the

purpose of recruiting and retaining staff, specifically teachers of color. It is important that

these districts are able to allocate these resources based on the goal of which strategic

recruitment or retention practice has the highest likelihood of achieving success. These

identified strategic practices may not be what is currently perceived as having the

greatest impact. Thus, this study has been able to collect and analyze data for school

districts to consider beyond what they are observing locally, in hopes of providing an

additional opportunity to review the relationships between strategic recruitment and

retention and the actual recruitment and retention data in rural Minnesota school districts.

Strengths and Limitations

There were several strengths that could be noted in the design and implementation of the study. First, the measures used in the study allowed for effective statistical analysis of data collected via the participant survey and collected through public data sources that reflected the current demographics of participant districts. By using these data that could be easily analyzed with statistics tools, the study was able to produce results that gave insight into the relationships between frequency of use of strategic recruitment and retention practices and the actual district experiences.

The strategic recruitment and retention practices being analyzed were also selected due to their inclusion in current literature as effective in increasing the number of teachers of color in a school district, which is another strength. Since the research has indicated that these strategic practices have been successful in urban and suburban school districts, this study was able to begin to develop a picture of whether what is working in these districts also shows promise in rural school districts. The credibility of the hypotheses was strengthened by using strategic practices previously identified in research. Additionally, each of the strategic practices selected are initiatives that a district can control and choose to allocate resources to if they wish, which is an approach not previously approached in the literature.

However, limitations do exist in the study as well. The sample size was relatively small, with 22 participants representing 10 rural Minnesota districts responding to the survey tool. Although this does represent a nearly 30% response rate among the 75 potential participants recruited for the study, a sample size of this limited number inhibits the ability for this study to be significantly generalized beyond the specific identifiable characteristics of the group of districts that were studied. Further, the data collected were

limited to rural school districts in Minnesota, and therefore should be generalized with caution to rural districts in other states.

Additionally, while the strategic recruitment and retention practices used in this study were chosen due to their proven effectiveness in current research, only the strategic practices that were identified as having the most impact were studied. The focus on a limited number of practices, specifically studying five recruitment practices and five retention practices allowed the hypotheses to be tested in a professionally credible and relevant manner. However, it is understood that the strategic recruitment and retention practices analyzed in this study do not represent an exhaustive list of practices that districts could entertain in their recruitment and retention processes. Therefore, a further limitation is the recognition that other strategic recruitment and retention practices could be implemented, and these additional practices would have their own relationships with district recruitment and retention demographics that may or may not be similar to those found with the ten practices that were used.

Recommendations

This topic of study would benefit from additional research to advance understanding of the relationships between the strategic recruitment and retention practices that rural Minnesota school districts are utilizing and their recruitment and retention demographics. The first recommendation for further research would be to replicate the study on a national scale, collecting data from rural school districts throughout the United States. This expansion of the sample size would allow the study to be more generalizable, as well as potentially allow the analysis to review relationships in various regions of the country. What is effective in one part of the nation may not be equally as productive in other areas. A larger sample size also provides further opportunity in the analysis to group school districts by like characteristics to distinguish relationships.

An additional recommendation for further research would be to expand the list of strategic practices being studied. In this study, the strategic practices selected had been found to be effective in urban and suburban school districts, but there are most certainly other strategic practices that are occurring in districts as they work on their recruitment and retention efforts. Subsequent studies could identify additional practices and their frequency of use, and then measure the relationships between these practices and the demographics of the districts using them. Also, expanding to a larger sample would allow an open ended question that could inquire about other strategic practices that districts are using. With a larger sample, these responses could be coded and then used as the practices measured in future studies. In the current study the open-ended responses did not produce results that were different from the strategic practices being measured, but a larger participant group may yield more ideas.

A third opportunity for further study would be to engage teachers of color themselves in the discussion of the strategic recruitment and retention practices they are seeing in their districts. The current study asked district administrators to identify the frequency of which their districts implement the strategic practices. It is possible that teachers of color would respond with different perspectives on this implementation frequency than the administrators in their district. By measuring the experiences of the teachers of color in these participant districts, a study could distinguish which strategic practices are most evident to teachers of color in their district, and determine if the relationships between these most evident practices and recruitment and retention demographics differ from the relationships between the strategic practices administrators few as being implemented and these same demographics.

Finally, the community and environment of a rural school district often differs significantly from urban and suburban districts. Future research could consider which external factors that are beyond a district's direct control may be considered the largest

barrier to teachers of color as they consider a position in a rural Minnesota school. It could be inferred that if two districts are implementing the same strategic practices, but seeing different results in their demographic data, that there must be other factors influencing this result other than what the district is doing. Identifying some of these barriers that are specific to rural Minnesota schools could also advance the literature on this topic.

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Appendix A

Strategic Practices Survey

Strategic Recruitment Practices

Strategic Recruiting and Retention Practices

Your participation is requested in research on strategic recruitment and retention practices being performed by Eric Hudspith and supervised by Dr. Jason Kaufman from the Department of Educational Leadership Minnesota State University, Mankato. This survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. The goal of this survey is to provide data that will determine if a correlation exists between the use of strategic recruitment and retention practices that are meant to increase the number of teachers of color, and the actual recruitment and retention rate of teachers of color in rural Minnesota school districts. If you have any questions about the research, please contact Mr. Hudspith at (507) 318-0610 or eric.hudspith.2@mnsu.edu, or Dr. Kaufman at (952)-818-8877 or jason.kaufman@mnsu.edu.

Participation

Participation is voluntary. You have the option not to respond to any of the questions. You may stop taking the survey at any time by closing your web browser. The decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with Minnesota State University, Mankato, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits. If you have any questions about participants' rights and research-related injuries, please contact the Director of the Institutional Review Board, at (507) 389-1242.

Anonymity

Responses will be anonymous. However, whenever one works with online technology there is always the risk of compromising privacy, confidentiality, and/or anonymity. If you would like more information about the specific privacy and anonymity risks posed by online surveys, please contact the Minnesota State University, Mankato IT Solutions Center (507-389-6654) and ask to speak to the Information Security Manager.

The risks of participating are no more than are experienced in daily life.

Benefits

There are no immediate direct benefits for participating. Rural school districts may benefit from the understanding of the correlation between certain strategic practices and increased recruitment and retention rates for teachers of color.

Appendix A (cont)

Strategic Practices Survey

Minnesota State University, Mankato IRBNet Id# 2029009

Please print a copy of this page for your future reference. If you cannot print the consent form, take a screenshot, paste it to a word document, and print that.

Do you consent to participate?

○ Yes

○ No

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge with regard to your own school district's practices.

How **frequently** does your district implement each of the following **strategic recruitment practices**?

	Almost Never		Sometimes		Almost Always
Provide training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teachers candidates of color.	○	○	○	○	○
Provide cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color.	○	○	○	○	○
Collaborate with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in our district.	○	○	○	○	○
Offer a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course.	○	○	○	○	○
Seek out and encourage candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions.	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix A (cont)

Strategic Practices Survey

How **effective** do you perceive each of the following **strategic practices** to be in **recruiting candidates of color** to your district?

	Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Very Effective
Provide training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teachers candidates of color.	O	O	O	O	O
Provide cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color.	O	O	O	O	O
Collaborate with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in our district.	O	O	O	O	O
Offer a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course.	O	O	O	O	O
Seek out and encourage candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions.	O	O	O	O	O

For how many **years** has your district been using each of the following **strategic recruitment practices**?

	Not Applicable
Provide training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teachers candidates of color.	☐

Appendix A (cont)

Strategic Practices Survey

	Not Applicable
Provide cultural competency training for cooperating teachers to support them in working with teacher candidates of color.	☐
Collaborate with Historically Minority Serving Institutions to place teacher candidates of color in our district.	☐
Offer a Grow Your Own program for middle or high school students, which includes at minimum an introduction to education course.	☐
Seek out and encourage candidates from within our community to apply for our open positions.	☐

What are the most **effective** ways to **recruit candidates of color** to rural Minnesota school districts?

Strategic Retention Practices

How **frequently** does your district implement each of the following **strategic retention practices**?

Appendix A (cont)

Strategic Practices Survey

	Almost Never		Sometimes		Almost Always
Assign a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher.	○	○	○	○	○
Provide clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings.	○	○	○	○	○
Incorporate cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth.	○	○	○	○	○
Offer an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experience in the district.	○	○	○	○	○
Provide equity training for staff with specific focus on microagressions and their impact on the workplace.	○	○	○	○	○

How **effective** do you perceive each of the following **strategic practices** to be in supporting the **retention of teachers of color** in your district?

	Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Very Effective
Assign a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher.	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix A (cont)

Strategic Practices Survey

	Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Very Effective
Provide clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings.	○	○	○	○	○
Incorporate cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth.	○	○	○	○	○
Offer an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experience in the district.	○	○	○	○	○
Provide equity training for staff with specific focus on microaggressions and their impact on the workplace.	○	○	○	○	○

For how many **years** has your district been using each of the following **strategic retention practices**?

	Not Applicable
Assign a mentor teacher to newly hired teachers of color, with clearly defined expectations for the mentor to support the new teacher.	☐
Provide clearly defined expectations for duties that will result in additional compensation, such as supporting	☐

Appendix A (cont)

Strategic Practices Survey

	Not Applicable
student behavior outside of the primary job role or attending after hours meetings.	
Incorporate cultural competency into the teacher evaluation process to support teachers of color in their instructional growth.	☐
Offer an affinity group for staff of color to come together and share their lived experience in the district.	☐
Provide equity training for staff with specific focus on microagressions and their impact on the workplace.	☐

What are the most **effective** ways to **promote the retention of teachers of color** in rural Minnesota districts?

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