

## Creating a Regional Teacher of Color Network



District Name  
**Avonworth School District**  
District City, State  
**Pittsburgh, PA**  
Superintendent  
**Dr. Jeff Hadley**



District Name  
**Hampton Township School District**  
District City, State  
**Allison Park, PA**  
Superintendent  
**Dr. Michael Loughead**



District Name  
**South Fayette Township**  
District City, State  
**McDonald, PA**  
Superintendent  
**Dr. Michelle Miller**

### Connect And Commit Building a Diverse Team and Identifying the Challenge

#### Challenge Statement

To enhance teacher diversity in Southwestern PA, districts must employ innovative recruitment, retention, and cross-district collaboration strategies to address barriers impacting educators from underrepresented backgrounds.

#### Solution Concept

To counter the shortage of teachers of color in Pittsburgh Metro, Avonworth, Hampton Township, and South Fayette districts and their teacher of color leaders collaboratively launched "Teaching is My Favorite Color." This regional network provides mentorship, workshops, and insightful sessions for professional growth and support.

### Inquire And Investigate Conducting Research to Gather and Analyze Data

#### Understanding The Challenge

Recruiting and retaining teachers of color is a complex challenge. Limited representation, systemic barriers, and inadequate support impede recruitment. Retention suffers from a lack of sustained mentorship, professional growth, and isolation. Regional demographics and educational dynamics further complicate this issue.

#### Creating a Journey Map

Gaining insight into the present-day encounters of teachers from diverse racial backgrounds offers a crucial understanding of their current difficulties. The initial step involved inviting educators to recount their journeys – detailing their individual

experiences and elements influencing their decision to remain or leave the field of education. This approach reveals possibilities for tailoring programs to align with their specific requirements.

#### Identifying Goals And Outcomes

The "Teaching is My Favorite Color" program yields numerous benefits for teachers of color and the Pittsburgh Metro Area school communities. It empowers educators, fosters belonging, provides professional development, and aids in attracting and retaining diverse teachers through its collaborative approach.



### Implement And Sustain Growing a Regional Teacher of Color Network

#### Supporting The Team

To effectively create a program like the Teaching is My Favorite Color, it is vital for the team to support educators of color as leaders and a diverse group of decision-makers who are accountable for the outcomes.

#### For the TIMFC, the team includes:

Educators of Color, District Superintendents, DEI Director, Higher Education Partners, Local Non-Profit Leaders

#### Sustaining The Work

**Facilitating Network Expansion:** The districts' aim is to cultivate and augment the network by establishing strategic alliances with universities and regional school districts.

**Continuation of networking within the region:** Provide formal and informal PD and social event to educators of color.

**Provide advocacy for students of color in schools and higher ed:** Provide resources to students of color in educational preparation programs in local universities—target required courses for students to connect with TIMFC.

### Design And Develop Creating Solutions to Address the Challenge

#### Creating Recruitment And Retention Ideas

The team generated ideas in Design Studios to define a new journey for teachers of color. The Studios focused on how teachers of color become educators, learn about teaching opportunities, are selected for positions, and grow into teacher leaders.

Some ideas that emerged:

- Professional development tailored to BIPOC educators
- Providing a safe space for BIPOC educators to discuss challenges
- Mentoring and networking opportunities for BIPOC educators and pre-service educators

#### Designing a Solution

Avonworth, Hampton Township, and South Fayette Districts collaboratively crafted the "Teaching is My Favorite Color" initiative. They intentionally established a professional learning community for teachers of color, organizing gatherings, mentorship programs, workshops, and guest speaker sessions. This concerted effort addressed recruiting and retention challenges supportively and collaboratively.



*"I have struggled to find my worth in education. This has been rejuvenating for me."*  
– **Deshanna Wisniewski**  
Second Grade Teacher  
Hampton Township School District  
(Pennsylvania)