

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Report Form

Instructions:

Please send an electronic copy of the Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers final completed report by June 30, 2021 to Grants.PELSB@state.mn.us.

Report components:

- I. Coversheet
- II. Teacher Mentorship & Retention of effective Teachers Program Narrative – Please describe how you have strengthened and/or supplemented your existing mentorship and retention efforts and how the awarded funds allowed you to do this work. Additionally, describe any specific work done to support teachers new to the profession or district, including teaching residents, teachers of color, teachers who are American Indian, teachers in license shortage areas, teachers with special needs, and/or experienced teachers in need of peer coaching. Finally, using the methodologies outlined in the “Progress Monitoring” portion of your original proposal, evaluate the effectiveness of the funded work.
- III. Program Data – Please provide data from the year funded by the grant. Please also describe how grant funding has impacted the data from the most recent reporting year. You are welcome to include graphs.
- IV. Additional Reporting Requirements – Please provide information on any additional funding that was used to support mentorship and retention efforts. Districts and schools must also provide information on retention strategies that were developed as a part of the grant program.
- V. Teacher Mentorship & Retention of effective Teachers Grant Funds Expenditure – Please list all awarded funds, differentiating between funds spent and funds yet to be spent this fiscal year. Fill in the “method of progress monitoring” and “data” columns based on the information in sections VI of your proposal.

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Report

Grantee Information

Legal Name of Applicant Organization	East Metro Integration District dba Equity Alliance MN
Total Grant Amount	
Identify the category you applied under	<input type="checkbox"/> a school district <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> group of school districts <input type="checkbox"/> a coalition of school districts, teachers <u>and</u> teacher education institutions <input type="checkbox"/> a coalition of schools, teachers <u>or</u> non-licensed educators

Identified Official with Authority

Name of official with authority to sign	Sebastian Witherspoon
Title	Executive Director
Address	6063 Hudson Rd. Suite 218
City, State and Zip code + 4	Woodbury, MN 55125
Phone Number and Email	651-379-2675

Primary Program Contact

Name of program contact	Regina Seabrook
Title	Director of Research, Curriculum & Professional Development
Address	6063 Hudson Rd. Suite 218
City, State and Zip code + 4	Woodbury, MN 55125
Phone Number and Email	651-379-2657

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Program Narrative

The Equity Alliance MN Educator of Color Cohort met throughout the 2020-2021 school year. They explored the question of what it meant to be a culturally responsive teacher as a Teacher of Color/American Indian teacher in Minnesota schools. The cohort met both affinity based peer mentoring needs and professional development needs. They created a space to talk about the issues that are important to them and to advance their learning in culturally specific ways and without having to educate their colleagues about educational equity. Because there are so few Teachers of Color and American Indian teachers in Minnesota's schools, they often found themselves educating their colleagues on equity issues and thus missing the opportunity to learn alongside them.

The cohort met for four full day sessions in October, January, April and May. They also met for four check-in sessions during December, February, March, and April. The check-in sessions occurred mostly during the months when there was no full day session, with the exception of April and provided time for cohort members to network and to dialogue about current issues in education and to share their experiences.

Forty-nine Teachers of Color and American Indian teachers signed up for the cohort and twenty-three attended the first full day session in October. Fifteen teachers attended the second session in January. Ten participants comprised the core of the cohort and attended all sessions and most of the check-in sessions.

We believe the COVID 19 pandemic affected our participation numbers. It was nearly impossible for teachers to get substitutes and some principals came up with alternative ways to ensure attendance. Also because of the pandemic, some participants experienced many transitions in their assignments. Many teachers also shared how the changes affected their students and expressed deep concern.

One teacher of color who had a desire to participate shared:

"I was reassigned 3 times this year. From 5th and 6th grade classes DL asynchronous to their DL student support when hybrid first failed, to the 4th grade DL class teacher in the 2nd transition-Feb. 8. This one is overwhelming as 4th used all different platforms and the students taken from their teachers and classmates were deeply affected-sad and distrustful.

I know I am feeling what many felt a year ago new to all of this, but at this time of the year, it is like trying to jump onto a fast moving train. Thankfully my team is supportive and they were very skilled and enjoyed DL teaching, for the most part, so I am hoping with more time and resiliency, I will start sleeping and stop boo-hooing."

One Teaching and Learning Director asked:

"Is there any possibility of considering different dates to increase participation in this valuable opportunity? Fridays are a hardship to find substitutes in a normal year, and with COVID we are all struggling to find classroom coverage for ill or quarantined staff. Most of us are not scheduling any district PD at all on school days because of the severe sub shortage. Instead we are providing PD on flex days, after school or on weekends."

The cohort members discussed changing the meeting dates and times to support increased participation. They decided that it was better to meet the needs of the ten committed cohort members than adjust the schedule to accommodate more participants. They had coalesced into a community and did not want to disrupt their synergy and momentum.

Part of the day, during the full day sessions focused on what Dr. Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz calls The Archaeology of Self. Participants explore racial and cultural autobiographies and dialoged about how their lived experiences were part of their classroom practice as Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers and how their presence positively influenced all students. The second part of the day focused on culturally responsive teaching practices and included classroom observation, critique and dialogue about ideas for implementation. More specifically, participants explored the research of Dr. Debra Loewenberg Ball about use of discretionary space in the classroom. At the end of each session, participants were invited to think of ways to incorporate their learning into their practice. Because of the disruptions with COVID-19 and teachers expressing feeling overwhelmed, they were not required to document their learning in logs.

Participants provided valuable end of the year feedback. They shared the things that they experienced in the cohort that were beneficial, the things they experienced that were less than beneficial as well as key takeaways from their overall experience.

“Thank you for providing a safe place to discuss the worries, stress, and general feeling of overwhelm that we may feel each day. Thank you for giving us more tools to add to our "toolbox" to be able to address both our needs and our students' needs.”

The comment that the cohort was a safe space came up repeatedly in the feedback. Participants shared that they valued being in community with other Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers. Almost all of the participants were either the only or one of few Teachers of Color/American Indian Teachers in their schools and/or districts. Participants also reported that they benefitted from the articles, strategies and other resources shared.

One participant shared that she came to the realization that “there was nothing wrong with her”. This statement reflects the challenge of teaching in racial isolation and without affinity based support. Teachers often feel that they have to defend their teaching practice and ways of being in environments that are not culturally responsive, welcoming or inclusive of diverse students and staff. Cohorts such as this can support Teacher of color and American Indian Teacher retention because they help teachers stay grounded in their truths, nourished with culturally responsive professional development and focused on the gifts they bring to students. In essence, affinity based mentorship programming support teachers in keeping their “eyes on the prize”.

Participants also shared that they appreciated the differentiated approach to instruction, the holistic approach to exploring content as well as the pacing and flexibility to accommodate their learning needs.

Participants noted that they would have preferred meeting in person and would have like to have received some of the resources ahead of time. Equity Alliance MN used its learning management system to deliver resources prior to full day sessions but did not share all resources prior to the sessions. Participants also shared that they would have preferred to have more Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers participate and more teachers from their respective districts participate.

Participants came to a deeper awareness of the need for the voices of Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in shaping education in Minnesota. They understood that the work they did was meaningful and that, because of participating in the cohort, they were not alone in the work. They appreciated that the curriculum centered the research of scholars of color and white ally scholars and believed that they had more of an understanding of how of how to help students connect their learning to their lives and support academic achievement.

Participants were not required to keep action research logs this year. Common grounding in CRT and navigating the complexities and providing support during the pandemic took priority.

Many participants expressed a desire to participate in the cohort next school year and thanked Equity Alliance MN for reviving its Educator of Color Cohort.

Participants will have an opportunity to attend a summer conference planned by the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers.

Because participation numbers were lower than expected and three of the four sessions had one facilitator, and all check-in sessions had one facilitator, Equity Alliance MN is requesting that funds for the second facilitator be used for programming for the 2021-2022 school year. See budget amendment.

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Program Data

Please provide the total expected numbers and percentages of total participants for each of the following groups that your program will involve. Numbers may reflect teachers in multiple categories being counted more than once. Each category's percentage is of the total number of teachers being mentored under this grant.

Table 1: Total number of teachers new to the profession or district that received mentoring as a result of this grant.

Teachers Mentored Using Grant Funding	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic	Black	White	Other
Tier 3 Teachers new to the profession or district						0
Tier 2 new to the profession or district				1		
Tier 1 teachers new to the profession or district				2		
Teaching residents*						1
Teacher in license shortage areas			1	3		
Teachers with special needs						
Experienced teachers in need of peer coaching		1		1		
Total: All teachers supported by grant funding						10-12

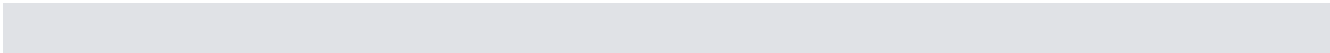
*Teaching residents are those in a special in-service induction program, usually with a reduced instructional loads during the first year of employment and additional mentoring and/or professional development. For the purposes of this grant, residents are not pre-service candidates seeking initial licensure in their field and participating in a PELSB-approved residency program or student teachers completing other licensure programs.

Table 2: Total number of mentors who were paid stipends under this grants for providing mentorship to teachers.

*Please note in your analysis if this data is a duplicated headcount, meaning teachers are counted in more than one racial/ethnic category.

Mentor Demographics	Paid a stipend as part of a larger mentorship program	Paid an additional stipend
American Indian or Alaskan Native	NA	NA
Asian	NA	NA
Black, Not of Hispanic Origin	NA	NA
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	NA	NA
Hispanic	NA	NA
Multiple Categories	NA	NA
White, Not of Hispanic Origin	NA	NA
Total		

Analysis of Data



Survey Data

Participants also took a formal an end of program survey. 12 participants responded to the following prompts.

The Educator of Color Cohort met my need for professional development as a Teacher of Color/American Indian Teacher.

58.3% Strongly Agreed
33.3% Agreed
8.3% Neutral

I received and/or was able to provide peer mentorship support to my colleagues as a result of my participation in the Educator of Color cohort.

41.7% Strongly Agreed
33.3% Agreed
25% Neutral

I have ideas and strategies to support my Culturally Responsive Teaching practice as a result of my participation in the Educator of Color cohort.

66.7% Strongly Agreed
25% Agreed
8.3% Neutral

I am a stronger advocate for myself and other Teachers of Color/American Indian Teachers as a result of my participation in the Educator of Color Cohort.

75% Strongly Agreed
8.3% Agreed
16.7% Neutral

The instructor was knowledgeable about the topic?

75% Strongly Agreed
25% Agreed

The instructor created a safe, inclusive, and welcoming learning environment.

75% Strongly Agreed
25% Agreed

Demographic Data

I Identify as

41.7% Black
25% Asian Pacific Islander
25% Multiracial
8.3% Hispanic

75% Not new to school or district
25% New to school or district

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Additional Reporting Requirements

Retention Strategies

Per Minn. Stat. § 122A.70, a school district that receives a grant must negotiate additional retention strategies for teachers who are of color or who are American Indian in their beginning years of employment, such as financial incentives for working in the school/district for at least five years or providing collegial support through teacher placement. Please describe the strategies your organization developed.

Culturally Responsive Professional Development provided within the context of an Teacher Affinity Group

Additional Funding

Please list any and all additional funding you used to support teacher mentorship and retention efforts. Specify if these funds were used to support teachers new to the profession or district, including teaching residents, teachers of color, teachers who are American Indian, teachers in license shortage areas, teachers with special needs, and/or experienced teachers in need of peer coaching.

N/A

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Funds Expenditure

Table 3: Grant Funds Expenditure

Amount	Description of Use of Funds	Primarily Used for:	Method of Progress Monitoring	Data
NA	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Induction	NA	NA
NA	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Induction	NA	NA
NA	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Induction	NA	NA
NA	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Induction	NA	NA
NA	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Induction	NA	NA