

Teacher Mentorship and Retention Grant

PELSB FY21 Report

Roseville Area Schools ISD #623

Prepared by:

Roberta A. Hernandez, Grantee (Report Narrative)

Shari Thompson, Director of Business Services

Melissa Sonnek, Elementary Program Coordinator

Sung Ja Shin, Minnesota Humanities Center Program Manager

Noella O'Rourke, Human Resources support

Denise Stoos, PELSB budget support

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

Grantee Information

Legal Name of Applicant Organization	ISD #623 Roseville Area School District
Total Grant Amount	\$71,508 Amendment approved 1/2/20 rolled \$5000 over from FY20 PELSB grant to make the total \$76,508
Identify the category you applied under	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a school district

Identified Official with Authority

Name of official with authority to sign	Shari Thompson
Title	Director of Business Services
Address	Roseville Area Schools ISD 623 1251 County Road B2 W
City, State and Zip code + 4	Roseville Area Schools ISD 623 1251 County Road B2 W Roseville, MN 55113
Phone Number and Email	651-635-1615 shari.thompson@isd623.org

Primary Program Contact

Name of program contact	Roberta A. Hernandez
Title	Academic Interventionist, PELSB Lead Mentor
Address	Roseville Area Schools ISD 623 1251 County Road B2 W
	Roseville, MN 55113

City, State and Zip code + 4	
Phone Number and Email	651-491-3535 Roberta.hernandez@isd623.org

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Program Narrative

As the 2020-2021 school year was the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic, we adjusted our grant proposal while working towards our long-term goal: to retain our BIPOC educators while mentoring them to identify, navigate and challenge the systemic and interpersonal racism that exists in our district and schools. We did this through the PELSB grant funded BIPOC mentorship program for BIPOC educators and through our Future Oriented Community of United Support (F.O.C.U.S.) BIPOC affinity group.

Our district, as many others, went through several variations of school models for our students due to the pandemic including distance learning, some grades offered the option to return in person if desired, then they returned to distance, hybrid, return to in-person in late winter, and a final chance to return in the early spring. This took a toll on teachers, especially new teachers and those hired as additional staff needed for teaching during the pandemic, either in-person or virtually. The racial unrest and ongoing racial oppression continue to impact our BIPOC educators. The deep exhaustion and overwhelm both professionally and personally was a key factor of consideration in implementing our grant this year.

Roseville Area Schools has a rigorous district mentorship program that our new teachers participate in. In talking with new BIPOC hires for the 2020-21 school year, their preference was for more relational mentoring, and some expressed the desire for mutuality in that relationship. This fits with our intentional move to strengthen use of our cultural community wealth. I believe moving forward that mentoring which is designed and implemented for BIPOC educators needs to be reflective of our ways of being and doing instead of reflecting the institutional mentoring programs that hire. The Restoring Our Roots PELSB grant, which I (Roberta also co-authored) developed a “Femtorship” model which aligns more closely with BIPOC educators’ ways of being and knowing. We will use this model in the future. As defined in the Restoring Our Roots PELSB grant report, *“Femtorship’ is mentorship through a collective that is rooted in care, healing and centering our whole selves as sources of strength. This allows mentorship to be seen as circular rather than hierarchical. It is not transactional but reciprocal, based on mutuality in relationships, meaning that experienced teachers also depend on the wisdoms and assets of early career educators or teachers newly hired.”*

Also, for the F.O.C.U.S. group, I observed that several newly hired teachers not participating in the PELSB mentorship program but, did attend the F.O.C.U.S. affinity group meetings. And some teachers in their 2nd year that didn’t participate in the PELSB mentoring program for their 1st year, did participate in the mentoring program their 2nd year. Our affinity group is focused on building cultural capital, community, and capacity. It is mentoring all of us in another way of relationships and learning from scholars that were available through our PELSB funded partnership with the Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC).

This partnership with MHC used Story Circles to decenter power and model ways to increase student voice in the classroom, which our BIPOC teachers took back to their students. The scholars of color that presented in sessions showed us the simple way we are naturally in our lives and teaching as BIPOC teachers resonates with our BIPOC students as well. We looked at racial identity development, anti-blackness in communities of color, multi-racial identities as well. It was a

time of affirmation for teachers. The scholars added to our skills and understandings while supporting our affinity group goals of building capacity, developing cultural community wealth, and building community. When teachers came to each session, they reported feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, and overworked in the beginning. When they left the session, they reported feeling refreshed, grounded, seen, and heard in our BIPOC community. And they took additional tools they were given back to their students. This PELSB supported work translated immediately into our teaching practices.

We also were strengthened to use our perspectives, experience, and observations to impact direction for the district to take in its equity work. Systems were put into place from concerns and issues we addressed for retention of BIPOC teachers. More BIPOC teachers were included in district listening sessions and district committees as well. BIPOC teachers said they feel stronger about stepping up and using their voices to advocate for themselves as well as their students and families of color. PELSB funds provided opportunities to increase our skills and our capacity to do this district level equity work.

We had a panel of 3 BIPOC educators virtually meet with our district Urban Pathways high school course. We intentionally included teachers at the beginning of their teaching career as well as established educators. The course instructor reported that this exchange which we also did last year proved again to be a highlight of the course for the students. She also reported that having teachers in different stages of their careers was more effective than the panel last year for the student to hear and learn. Relationships with these students will hopefully continue next year when we return to in person teaching and learning as panelists reported wanting to have these students come and observe them teach next year. The PELSB funds provided this opportunity to mentor future BIPOC educators.

Finally, it seems from looking at participant data that individual capacity drove the choices made by year 1 and year 2 BIPOC teachers in participating either in the PELSB mentoring program or the PELSB supported affinity group during the 2020-2021 school year.

A challenge in evaluating how effective the grant was in teacher retention is compounded by a significant district budget deficit during the 2020-2021 school year which caused many year 1 and year 2 teachers to be non-renewed, both BIPOC teachers and white teachers as well. We are looking to address this with a change in policy in the coming years regarding "Last In First Out" as most of our BIPOC educators are the most recently hired each year.

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		2	1	7 (2 mentees FY20)		
Tier 2 new to the profession or district						
Tier 1 teachers new to the profession or district						
Teaching residents*						
Teacher in license shortage areas		2		3		
Teachers with special needs						
Experienced teachers in need of peer coaching						
Total: All teachers supported by grant funding		2	1	7		

*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 grant 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 through PELSB Grant funds
American Indian or Alaskan Native		
Asian		1
Black, Not of Hispanic Origin		4
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		
Hispanic	1	4
Multiple Categories		1
White, Not of Hispanic Origin		
Total	1	10

Analysis of Data

During the FY21 school year, we increased the stipend for mentors and had more respond. If we apply for a future grant, including a matching stipend for mentees would incentivize more to participate as well. By providing a matching stipend, we would hold to our values of “femtorship” to support mutuality in relationship and circular rather than hierarchal learning and support to each other.

In attendance records for the F.O.C.U.S. affinity group sessions, among the 46 BIPOC attendees over the year, 9 were PELSB mentees. There were 6 other first year teachers in the district that attended but did not participate in the formal PELSB mentoring program.

Two of the mentees participated in the FY20 BIPOC PELSB mentorship program as well. So, this was their 2nd year.

The data reported from the district Human Resources Department show that of the 10 PELSB mentees, 2 were long term substitutes whose assignments ended in June 2021. And 1 SPED teacher was not renewed after this, her first year, due to budget cuts.

Given the reported feelings of overwhelm and exhaustion that our BIPOC educators expressed throughout the 2020-2021 academic year, the PELSB funds enabled us to provide relational support, added learning that was differentiated to meet the holistic needs of BIPOC educators, and skills to navigate a racialized district/school climate as well as take back to their students. These provided deeply needed spaces of rest, regrouping and refreshing during this pandemic year of racial unrest. We are grateful for the opportunities we gained through PELSB funding and hope for more in the future.

Roberta A. Hernandez
PELSB grantee

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.

The district did not include added incentives to the contract. We are working with the union negotiation team to press for this as a part of the next round of negotiations, giving them contract language to include and using the collective voices of F.O.C.U.S. to demand we are represented in this contract by addressing this as well as other contract issues that can lead to retention. I have also been working with the H.R. specialist along with the Assistant Superintendent as they consider policy change that would be another way to ensure that recently hired BIPOC educators are not among the first to be non-renewed when district budget deficits require changing teachers and class sizes.

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.

Our Elementary Program coordinator, Assistant Superintendent, and Director of Business Services have contributed ongoing in-kind hours. This time was dedicated to ongoing collaboration in with the lead mentor, monitoring financial expenditures and recording budget data, communicating different elements of the PELSB grant with a larger audience including but not limited to principals, administrators, and staff and ongoing collaboration with our lead BITOC mentor to retain and support new BITOC staff.

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
\$18,786.45	Stipends including benefits-Lead Mentor and Mentors of Color Stipends	X Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Induction	Director of Business budget report and funds dissemination	1 Lead Mentor 10 Mentors of Color
\$482.63	Licensed Subs for Teachers of color speaking to Urban Pathways High School Course	X Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Induction	Director of Business budget report and funds dissemination	3 teachers participated in the Urban Pathways panel presentation
\$2,000.00	Rita Kohli – Mentor Training Amendment 11/2/20 \$10,000 allocated	X Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Induction	Director of Business budget report and funds dissemination	These funds were part of amendment on 11/2/20 to provide training for our Mentors of color. \$10000 was reallocated, but we were only able to use \$2000
\$15,000.00	Affinity Group Facilitator. Cost-partner with MN Humanities \$2500 carryover FY20 Amendment 11/2/20 \$7500 allocated	X Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Induction	Director of Business budget report and funds dissemination	This was the partnership with Minnesota Humanities Center. Affinity Group Facilitator is not the best descriptor in retrospect.
\$618.93	Books for FOCUS Group Amendment 11/2/20 \$1,000 allocated	X Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Induction	Director of Business budget report and funds dissemination	These funds were part of amendment on 11/2/20 to provide resources for teachers. \$1000 was reallocated, but only used \$618.93