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# *Teacher retention is an important yet underdeveloped lever for diversification in Maryland districts.*

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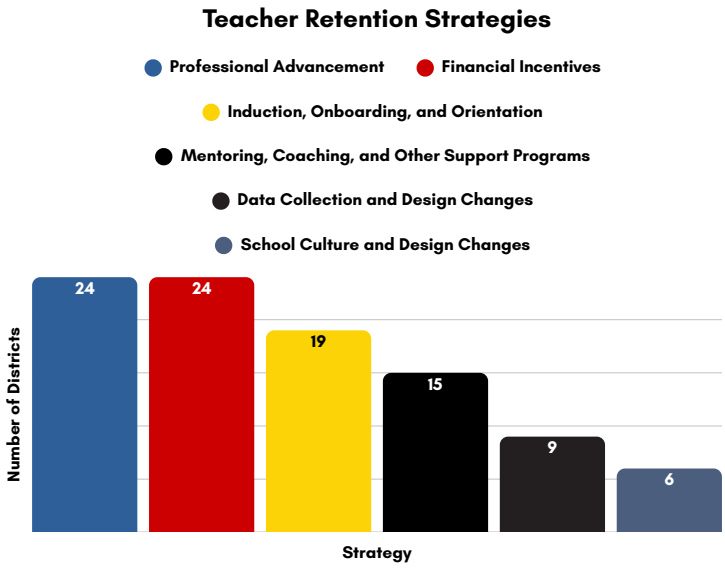
## Retention is another key piece of the teacher diversification puzzle.

A primary goal of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is to diversify its teacher workforce. This goal is twofold, requiring enhancements to both ***teacher recruitment*** and ***teacher retention*** practices. Our first brief on this topic explored Maryland districts' teacher recruitment efforts, noting that diversification of the teacher workforce is an important yet lofty goal. This brief explores how districts are endeavoring to ***retain*** a diverse teacher workforce, which appears to be another challenging goal for districts across the state. In 2023-24, the turnover rate for all Maryland teachers was 10.7%. This rate was higher for Black (13.8%) and Hispanic (11.5%) teachers.[1] Our brief sheds light on districts' strategies for retention of a diverse teacher workforce, and highlights some efforts that we have identified as most promising, given their alignment with academic literature.

## Teacher retention efforts are plentiful and promising overall, but few are race-conscious.

While half of districts described teacher retention as a challenge, almost all noted that it was a priority. The most common strategies for retention were professional advancement (e.g., creating pathways to leadership roles) and financial incentives (e.g., salary raises), which were often associated with advancement pathways. These strategies are aligned with recommendations from the academic literature, and thus appear to have high potential to improve retention.[2]

In addition to these promising strategies, most districts also described offering professional development, induction, and mentoring opportunities. Academic literature suggests that these strategies can support retention *if* they are focused on factors related to teacher turnover, including working conditions and self-efficacy for teaching.[3] But relatively few districts provided detail about whether their efforts addressed these factors, leaving questions about the degree to which they can improve retention. Furthermore, few strategies focused explicitly on addressing the racialized school conditions that teachers of color face—which is key if these efforts are to successfully retain a diverse teacher workforce.[4]




Overall, these findings suggest that districts may need to be more attentive to how their retention strategies are addressing teachers' working conditions and self-efficacy, and the racialized conditions teachers of color face. But our analysis also revealed some promising retention strategies that address these factors. We highlight a few examples in the sections that follow.

## Induction and Onboarding in Harford County

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) described systematic support for new teachers in the district through induction and coaching programs that aim to enhance teachers' self-efficacy and sense of community. The district noted that first-year educators attend a "New Hire Orientation," which introduces them to "content curriculum, evidence-informed instructional strategies, and resources available to them." Furthermore, HCPS instructional coaches provide "job-embedded support" for new and nontenured teachers through

**About this Brief.** Our research team reviewed Maryland districts' 2024 Blueprint implementation plans, which were submitted to the Accountability and Implementation Board and are publicly available, to better understand their challenges with and strategies for retaining a diverse teacher workforce. Comprehensive findings from this analysis are detailed in this slide deck.

"demonstration lessons, co-teaching, co-planning, data collection, reflective conversations, [and] visits to master teachers' classrooms." The district has also collected data to better understand whether these supports are having intended effects, and found that "an overwhelming percentage of staff … indicate the induction experiences are helpful and identify the instructional coach as the most significant support to their effectiveness and retention."

## Mentorship Opportunities in Somerset County

Somerset County Public Schools (SCPS) offered one example of a promising teacher mentorship program. SCPS described how their Office of Mentoring supports all new and non-tenured teachers with full-time mentors, who provide support in areas that could improve teachers' working conditions and self-efficacy for teaching. For example, the district noted that mentors provide guidance in areas such as "lesson planning, classroom management, student behaviors, … and coaching for improvement." Additionally, mentors offer "daily support in the classroom, on-the-job training, and professional development events."

## Improving School Culture in Washington County

Washington County Public Schools (WCPS) described a comprehensive effort to improve school culture, with the goal of "cultivat[ing] an environment where diversity thrives and where every member of the … workforce feels valued." For example, the district appears to be developing affinity spaces that could help teachers of color feel a greater sense of belongingness, including by "intentionally welcom[ing] and onboard[ing] diverse staff" and "develop[ing] opportunities for students, staff, and faculty from diverse groups to connect with others who share their backgrounds." Furthermore, WCPS plans to create professional development opportunities that address "inclusive environments, diversity, unconscious bias, and culturally responsive practices."

Overall, these examples of promising retention strategies —which align well with the academic literature—have the potential to support Maryland's important, lofty goal of diversifying the teacher workforce.

## Endnotes


[1] Maryland State Department of Education (2024). *Maryland's teacher workforce: Supply, demand, and diversity.*

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