

Educator of Color Recruiting/Retention/Experience Sense Making Team: “What is the story we want to tell?”

The recruitment and retention of black and brown educators needs to be the priority of Cambridge Public Schools. Lisa Delpit has written extensively about the need for children of color to receive instruction in the context of their culture, because otherwise they are doomed to fail. The implication for children of color in the Cambridge Public Schools, where the majority of educators are not reflective of the students being served, is far-reaching and insidious. It is wholly possible for a child to receive a K-12 education in CPS and never have a Black or Latinx teacher. This is a persistent challenge for this community, where, for decades, parents of color have demanded that the district hire more educators of color and train and provide resources for all current educators and administrators to be increasingly culturally competent. Yet Cambridge continues to pat itself on the back for the success of its over-supported, high-flying white students, unwilling to be honest and put its vast resources where it says its values lie. Due to years of incremental change, what was once a hopeful community of Black and brown parents, has withered to an overall feeling of pessimism; change has been promised before, yet the effects have not been far reaching. Frustrations with the slow pace of change and the uneven competence with which experiences of racism and questions of race and racism continue to be handled, extend to impact new and current educators of color. They enter our schools and are burdened by the lack of cultural competency of their peers, and the additional effort they must place to both protect themselves and students of color from the effects of racism. In order to truly enact change, the Cambridge Public Schools must invest in far reaching and tangible supports for educators of color, ensure that at the district and schools level there is a commitment to transformative change and dismantling systems of oppression - including white supremacy, increase the cultural competency resources provided for ALL teachers, and set higher standards of accountability for pervasive behaviors that negatively impact learning outcomes for all of our children.