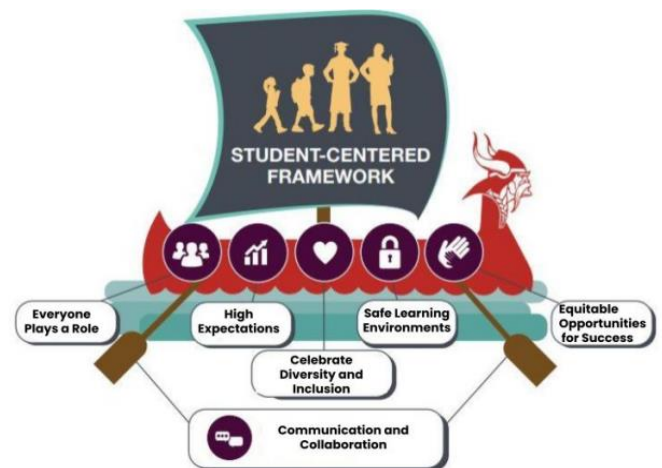


What's at the Heart of Recruiting, Retaining, and Promoting a Diverse Workforce?

Princeton City Schools

The best human capital systems in schools are committed to their vision for students and have aligned their people system – how they find, grow, and keep talent– to deliver on that vision. Princeton City Schools is a standout district in promoting a diverse workforce. The district's strengths exist systemically across its entire people system because its students are at the heart of that system.

Princeton City Schools, located in the Cincinnati area, has over 6,000 students, 80% of which are students of color. Of the district's nearly 800 staff members, 18% are certificated educators of color, and 48% are classified staff of color, percentages well above Ohio's average of 5.8% ([Ohio Department of Education](#)). Princeton is committed to student-centered learning and providing an inclusive environment with equitable opportunities for all students. The district recognizes the benefits to students if the demographics of its teachers reflect the student demographics. ([Villegas, Irvine, Hanushek, et al.](#); [J. Hopkins](#)). To achieve these goals, the district made them a focal point in its strategic plan and created an actionable equity plan with identified objectives and key activities.



Branding & Recruitment of a Diverse Workforce

The Princeton City Schools culture truly values and celebrates the uniqueness and contributions of teachers, students, and the community. This value is evident well beyond a slogan or tagline – it appears across Princeton City Schools' [website](#) and in the Portrait of a Princeton Graduate. It is felt in the **#vikingdiff** messaging, the day-to-day experiences in the buildings, and within the programs in place (for example, [Inclusive Schools Week](#) or [The Students for Equitable Education Summit](#)). Perhaps

where it is the most compelling is in the actions and priorities of district leaders to value and celebrate its people ([Viking Voices: The People of Princeton](#)).

"We know we have a collective responsibility as a district to foster a healthy, equitable culture," said Dr. Kevin Jamison, assistant superintendent for human resources. "That's why it's a focus of our strategic plan and supported with several strategies."

Princeton City Schools is poised to activate its plans and increase success in recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce. Key recruitment strategies include:

- **Cultivate Homegrown Talent** – Plans to partner with Xavier University to encourage and mentor middle and high school students of color interested in teaching to consider the profession. Offer a future teacher club for students aspiring to go into education.
- **Update Job Applications** – Include cultural fit and competency ratings as a criterion of employment offers.
- **Establish and Expand Partnerships with Colleges and Universities** – Focus on creating opportunities for students of color in teaching or administration and transitional/alternative programs for licensure.
- **Historically Black Colleges and Universities Recruitment** - Partners with organizations like Thurgood Marshall College Fund and Accelerate Great Schools to recruit and engage education majors attending HBCUs.

A robust Grow Your Own (GYO) program for classified staff currently in place for Princeton City Schools provides a path to additional certified teachers and further diversifying the staff. Thanks to partnerships and programs with colleges like Xavier University, Mount St. Joseph University, and Ohio State University, there are several options for classified staff to obtain licensure for teaching. The district received Ohio Educator Diversity grant funding for each GYO program to help cover any fees and offset tuition.

Access tools and ideas from the [Grow Your Own Toolkit](#) on Ohio's Human Capital Resource Center.

Retaining a Diverse Workforce & Employee Wellness

Princeton City Schools recognizes the connections between its ability to recruit and retain talent. The district has specific strategies in place to retain a diverse workforce:

- **Continuous DBIE Learning for All Staff** – Utilize the Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion, and Equity (DBIE) Framework in training, workshops, and committees with current and new staff.
- **Create and Enhance Mentoring Programs and Pathways** - Collaborate with staff and community partners on feedback regarding advancement opportunities for employees of color.
- **Conduct Exit and Stay Interviews** – Make recommendations to improve future employee experiences based on information received from staff leaving the district and current staff.

One of the district's key moves was creating a mentoring program called **Supporting Princeton Educators of Color through Training, Relationships, and Affirmation (SPECTRA)**. Not only does the program offer support for new educators, but it also helps to build a system of support for all employees of color within the district. The goals of SPECTRA include:

1. Create a critical consciousness of common challenges that educators are likely to encounter by virtue of their racial, cultural, or ethnic status. Common challenges include feelings of isolation, tokenism, biased perceptions about ability, authority, or expertise, perceptions of the value of teaching or service.
2. Support new educators of color as they begin their careers at Princeton City Schools.

Through fellowship events, professional development, and panel discussions, SPECTRA helps foster a sense of community that Princeton hopes will lead to educators deciding to remain with the district.

At this critical time of workforce shortages where K-12 education is the leading industry for burnout rates ([Gallup](#)), Princeton is also a leader in [Employee Wellness efforts](#) for both students and staff. As a result of a district-wide wellbeing and culture survey, Princeton currently partners with Supportline by Curalinc Healthcare and Wellworks for You for its employee wellness programming. This benefits all staff and is prioritized in communication efforts for recruitment and retention efforts overall.

Suggested conversation guide: [The Power of Teacher Diversity: Fostering Inclusive Conversations Through Mentoring](#) on Ohio's Human Capital Resource Center.

What Princeton Has Learned & Measuring Their Impact

Princeton City Schools found that the most effective way to increase participation in the classified staff GYO program and SPECTRA was through one-on-one encouragement. Communicating these efforts' purpose and alignment with the larger strategic plan has also helped build community support. The district recognizes that support from its teacher and classified unions is also valuable.

As these programs continue to develop, Princeton City Schools will use several data points to measure success. They plan to take qualitative data they receive from exit interviews and event surveys to determine how to improve. The key indicators of program effectiveness will be the number of educators retained from year-to-year and demographic information that more closely aligns with the student population.

"We're proud of our work so far, and we're looking forward to seeing the impact of it," said Dr. Jamison.