

Exploring the Lived Experiences of Superintendents of Color in Oregon

A groundbreaking new study on the barriers facing Oregon's superintendents of color and possible solutions was made public.

PORTLAND, OR, UNITED STATES, March 2, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A [groundbreaking new study](#) on the barriers facing Oregon's superintendents of color and possible solutions was made public.

The study, "[Exploring the Lived Experiences of Superintendents of Color in Oregon](#)," was co-authored by Tanisha Tate Woodson, Destiny McLennan and Dr. Karen Perez of Education Northwest and is based on

interviews with 16 superintendents of color from across the state. It was commissioned and funded by the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators, the Oregon School Boards Association, and the Oregon Department of Education.

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*Superintendents of Color
Report*

Fewer than 5 percent of Oregon superintendents identify as persons of color, despite that nearly 2 in 5 students statewide are racially, ethnically and/or linguistically diverse.

The report makes several recommendations for recruiting and retaining superintendents of color, among them: using talent acquisition firms, training board members on hiring and support systems, applying an equity lens to applicant pools, better mentoring and supporting superintendents of color, developing pathway programs for candidates, updating contract language, and creating safety plans for

superintendents.

LIVED EXPERIENCES **Superintendents of Color in Oregon**

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[The study also describes significant bias](#) directed toward superintendents of color and even threats against personal safety. "Superintendents of color, especially women superintendents, reported incidents where their physical safety was threatened," the report notes.

"People aren't going to understand that I have to circle the block and take a different way home every day. People don't know the stories of intruders I've had in my house...So, there's a personal safety issue here with being an outspoken leader, right? But if I don't say it, who's going to say it?"

"Across Oregon, we have a shared goal to make sure that every single young person has access to a high-quality education. We know that diversity among adults in schools benefits students of all backgrounds, but we also know superintendents in our state are not representative of Oregon's growing number of racially, ethnically, and/or linguistically diverse students," ODE Director Colt Gill said.

"The study makes a compelling case for swift and real changes to support the recruitment, retention, and wellbeing of superintendents of color — in districts, in school boards, and at a state policy level. Specifically, policy change at each of these levels can ensure greater protections and privacy should threats, intimidation, harassment, or smear campaigns occur, as well as accountability if discriminatory practices occur."

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