

Lower turnover rates, higher pay for teachers who share race with principal, study shows

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With ever-declining budgets, education administrators across the nation have been struggling for years with an increasing teacher turnover rate. Now, researchers at the University of Missouri have found that race may play a role in teacher turnover. Lael Keiser, an associate professor at the Truman School of Public Affairs and an associate professor in the department of political science in the College of Arts and Science, and Jason Grissom, who is now an assistant professor at Vanderbilt University, found that turnover rates are lower among teachers who are of the same race as their school principals.

"Teachers are substantially more likely to stay in schools run by a principal of the same race," Keiser said. "Teachers who share the same race as their principal also report higher [job satisfaction](#), particularly in schools with African-American principals. This association may be driven by differences in how such schools are managed, given that teachers who share the same race as their principal report higher levels of administrative support and more recognition than other teachers report."

For their study, Keiser and Grissom researched data from the Schools and Staffing Survey and the Teacher Follow-up Survey, both of which are administered by the National Center for Education Statistics. They also found that white teachers with white principals received more money in supplemental salaries, such as stipends for coaching or sponsoring clubs, than African-American teachers with white principals. In schools with African-American principals, the supplemental salary

rates were roughly the same.

The study also showed that African-American teachers reported much higher rates of intangible benefits, such as administrative support and encouragement, classroom autonomy and recognition for good job performance, when they worked for an African-American principal. The rates were roughly the same for all teachers under white principals.

"The data show race plays a significant role in the principal-teacher relationship," Keiser said. "It appears that African-American teachers generally have a more positive experience when the principal is of the same [race](#)."

Keiser says that previous research has shown that minority teachers improve the educational experience of minority students. Because of this, Keiser believes that her study shows the importance for maintaining the diversity of principals within schools as well.

"Our results illustrate that an important factor in maintaining the racial diversity of teachers is the diversity of the principals that supervise these teachers. We hope these findings could provide justification for policymakers to undertake programs targeted at increasing the flow of minority [teachers](#) into the principal pipeline."

Keiser and Grissom's study was published in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*.

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

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