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How Race-Related Stress Could Be Driving Educators of Color Away From the Job

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When teachers of color experience high levels of race-based stress in schools, they can also have an increasingly negative sense of belonging, according to new research.

For the study, we analyzed survey data from educators of color across Iowa. To get at whether they were experiencing race-based stress, we asked whether the educators felt supported raising concerns with their peers about racism in schools or if they felt the need to ignore or avoid it. I conducted this research along with my colleagues – education researcher Duhita Mahatmya and community and behavioral health professor Eboneé Johnson.

Teachers reported less support from colleagues than did principals. Over 75% of the teachers in our sample (175 out of 229) reported a negative sense of belonging, especially when they thought school districts would not devise policies to actively address equity and racism.