# The Gilbert School

# Increasing Educator Diversity Plan

## Team Members:

Steve Barone

Patrick Brintle

Francesca Daniele

Debra Lewis

Jessica Pelletier

Josh Penn

Kate Rohlfing

Greg Shugrue

# Vision and Mission Statement

The Gilbert School is committed to ensuring that all our students are prepared to be thoughtful and productive citizens in a complex, global society.

In pursuing this Mission, we believe that:

- All students can learn and be successful.
- All students are valued and deserve an education that addresses their academic, physical, and social/emotional needs.
- All students are entitled to a safe, healthy, and respectful learning environment.
- All The Gilbert School community members must uphold high expectations, be accountable, and demonstrate a commitment to excellence.
- Celebrating the heritage of The Gilbert School strengthens community pride and inspires individual accomplishments.

# Theory of Action

If we create a safe, healthy, and welcoming school environment that is inclusive and values the unique contributions of all stakeholders, then employees will feel respected and empowered to take on leadership roles, leading to greater engagement and involvement. By fostering an environment that reflects the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of our community, we will attract, retain, and support a diverse pool of educators, ultimately enhancing the overall educational experience and outcomes for all students.

# Recruitment

## Goal

Increase the diversity of educators within the district.

Who Manages the Goal?

- School Leadership: Administration, Department Leadership, Human Resources
- Additional Stakeholders: Teachers, Community Organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce), Local Universities and Teacher Prep Programs

## Strategies and Key Activities

1. Develop Recruitment Materials:
   Create recruitment brochures and promotional materials that highlight the district's commitment to diversity and inclusion.
   - Timeline: Complete by January 2025.
   - Benchmark: Ensure all recruitment materials are distributed to key partners (e.g., teacher prep programs, and community organizations) by February 2025.
2. Expand Outreach and Increase Applicant Pool:
   Develop partnerships and outreach strategies to increase the number of applicants of color.
   - Timeline: Initiate outreach efforts by January 2025, with ongoing engagement throughout the year.
   - Benchmark: Achieve a 10% increase in applicants from underrepresented groups within the first year.
3. Participate in Recruitment Fairs:
   Attend recruitment fairs at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU), Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), Sacred Heart University (SHU), and St. Joseph's University to connect with diverse candidates.
   - Timeline: Attend at least three recruitment fairs each quarter (October, January, April, July).
   - Benchmark: Increase participation in targeted recruitment fairs by 10% annually.

4. Expand Outreach Network:
   Strengthen and expand outreach to teacher preparation programs, local chambers of commerce, and community colleges (e.g., Northwestern Connecticut Community College (NCCC)).
   - Timeline: Begin expanding outreach by December 2024, with biannual reviews of network expansion effectiveness.
   - Benchmark: Establish at least three new partnerships with teacher preparation programs or community organizations by June 2025.
5. Utilize Demographic Data for Recruitment Analysis:
   Use Edsight Secure to provide demographic data on teacher candidates to assess recruitment progress.
   - Timeline: Conduct quarterly data analysis sessions (end of October, January, April, and July).
   - Benchmark: Review and adjust recruitment strategies based on data analysis, aiming for a 5% quarterly increase in diverse applicants.
6. Create a Mentorship Program for Aspiring Educators of Color:
   Develop a mentorship program for students, support staff, and others of color interested in pursuing careers in education.
   - Timeline: Launch the program by the start of the 2025-2026 school year.
   - Benchmark: Pair at least 50% of program participants with a mentor by October 2025.
7. Increase Faculty Participation in Student Teacher Programs:
   Train more faculty to qualify for supervising student teachers and build partnerships with local universities.
   - Timeline: Begin training by September 2024, and aim to double the number of qualified faculty by June 2025.
   - Benchmark: Establish partnerships with at least three new universities for student-teacher placements by the end of the 2024-2025 school year.

## Indicators of Progress

- Quarterly Review of Applicant Demographics:
  Conduct quarterly reviews of demographic data provided by Applitrack to analyze applicant diversity.

    - Benchmark: Aim for a 10% increase in applicants from underrepresented groups within the first year.
- Quarterly Review of Faculty and Staff Demographics:
  Evaluate the demographic data of newly hired faculty and staff quarterly to assess progress toward increasing diversity.
    - Benchmark: Achieve at least a 5% increase in diverse hires each quarter.
- Participation in Recruitment Fairs:
  Track the number of job fairs attended each quarter.
    - Benchmark: Target participation in at least three fairs per quarter and increase by 10% annually.
- Follow-Up Engagement with Prospective Candidates:
  Engage prospective candidates and network connections monthly (12 times annually) to maintain interest.
    - Benchmark: Establish and maintain contact with at least 50% of prospective candidates identified as potential hires within a week of initial contact.

## Resources Required

- Recruitment materials (e.g., one-page handout about the school)
- Access to platforms like Applitrack, Indeed, Edsight Secure, School Spring, and CTREAP
- Potential research into alternative hiring software and AI tools to detect bias

## Risks and Mitigation

- Risk: Inaccurate or limited data from Applitrack regarding applicants' identities.
    - Mitigation: Cross-reference with other data sources and encourage self-identification by applicants.

## Communication and Engagement Efforts

- Collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce, NCCC, local childcare establishments, ARC, and other community organizations to expand outreach and recruitment efforts.

# Hiring and Selection

## Goal:

Evaluate and enhance current hiring practices to ensure they are equitable and effective in attracting and considering a more diverse staff.

Who Manages the Goal?

- School Leadership: Administration, Department Leadership, Human Resources
- Additional Stakeholders: Faculty Representatives, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, Community Members

## Strategies and Key Activities

1. Audit Job Descriptions for Bias:
   Review all existing job descriptions to identify and eliminate potential biases.
   - Timeline: Begin at the start of the 2024-2025 school year and continue as an ongoing process.
   - Benchmark: Complete the audit of all existing job descriptions by December 2024, with ongoing reviews of new postings.
2. Develop Standardized Interview Questions and Rubrics:
   Create equitable, standardized, and position-specific interview questions and rubrics to ensure fairness in the hiring process.
   - Timeline: Complete by June 2025.
   - Benchmark: Finalize and implement all interview questions and rubrics in hiring processes by the end of the 2024-2025 school year.
3. Establish Consistent Protocol and Timeline for Application Review:
   Develop and implement a consistent protocol and timeline for reviewing applications to enhance transparency and fairness.
   - Timeline: Launch by November 2024, with quarterly reviews to assess effectiveness.
   - Benchmark: Apply the new protocol to 100% of job openings posted after November 2024.

4. Provide Professional Development for Equitable Hiring Practices:
   Identify and select professional development resources to train staff on equitable hiring practices.
   - Timeline: Select resources by January 2025, with training sessions beginning by March 2025.
   - Benchmark: Ensure all hiring committee members complete at least one training session by March 2025.
5. Ensure Diversity in Interviewing Committees:
   Form diverse interviewing committees to reflect a range of perspectives and experiences.
   - Timeline: Implement by the start of the 2024-2025 school year, with monthly reviews.
   - Benchmark: Use Applitrack data to achieve a 10% increase in the diversity of committee members each month.

## Indicators of Progress

- Mentorship for New Teachers:
  Launch a mentor program for teachers new to the building by the start of the 2024-2025 school year.
  - Benchmark: Pair 100% of new teachers with a mentor within their first month.
- Audit of Job Descriptions for Bias:
  Begin auditing all job descriptions for potential bias at the start of the 2024-2025 school year.
  - Benchmark: Complete the audit of all existing job descriptions by December 2024, with continuous review of new postings.
- Standardized Interview Questions and Rubrics:
  Develop and finalize equitable, standardized, and relevant interview questions and rubrics by June 2025.
  - Benchmark: Implement these questions and rubrics in all hiring processes by the end of the 2024-2025 school year.
- Consistent Protocol for Application Review:
  Apply the new protocol to all job openings posted after November 2024.
  - Benchmark: Review the protocol quarterly and adjust based on feedback.

- Professional Development for Equitable Hiring Practices:
  Create a dedicated hiring committee trained in equitable hiring practices by March 2025.
    - Benchmark: Ensure all members complete at least one training session by March 2025.
- Monitor and Evaluate Diversity in the Hiring Process:
  Track demographic data monthly using Applitrack to monitor the diversity of interview candidates.
    - Benchmark: Aim for a 5% increase in interviews with diverse candidates each month.

## Resources Required

- Utilize available resources: Applitrack, Indeed, Edsight Secure, School Spring, CTREAP
- Research alternative hiring software options.
- Investigate AI tools to identify and mitigate bias in interview questions.
- Engage in the CREC DEI Professional Learning Series (CREC DEI Professional Learning Series).

## Risks and Mitigation

- Risk: Applicant may decline job due to geographic location, competitive salary, or lack of available housing.
    - Mitigation: Provide information on local amenities, highlight the benefits of working in the district, and explore potential partnerships to offer housing assistance or incentives.

## Communication and Engagement Efforts

- Engagement Leads: Human Resources, Head of School, School Corporation, and DEI Committee.
- Ensure transparent communication with all stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and community members, about the progress and changes in hiring practices.

# Retention

## Goal:

Build a community that fosters an inclusive culture and climate where educators of all backgrounds are valued, feel safe, and experience a strong sense of belonging.

Who Manages the Goal?

- School Leadership: Administration, Department Leadership, Human Resources
- Additional Stakeholders: Faculty and Staff Representatives, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, Professional Development Coordinators, Community Members

## Strategies and Key Activities

1. Create an Effective Onboarding Protocol:
   Develop a comprehensive onboarding program that supports new educators through informal check-ins, stay interviews, and needs assessments.
   - Timeline: Start by the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.
   - Benchmark: Conduct onboarding activities for 100% of new hires within their first three months.
2. Seek Funding Opportunities for Initiatives and Training:
   Explore and secure funding to support diversity and inclusion initiatives, including professional development and continuing education opportunities.
   - Timeline: Ongoing, with the first funding opportunities identified by December 2024.
   - Benchmark: Secure at least two new funding sources annually to support retention initiatives.
3. Offer Incentives to Retain Educators of Color:
   Provide targeted incentives such as tuition reimbursement, professional learning opportunities, and career development to retain educators of color.

    - Timeline: Implement by January 2025, with a review of incentives' effectiveness by June 2025.
    - Benchmark: Achieve a 10% increase in retention rates of educators of color by the end of the 2024-2025 school year.
4. Increase Opportunities for Positive Relationship Building and Morale Boosting:
   Organize regular activities (e.g., monthly breakfasts) to foster positive relationships among faculty and staff and boost morale.
    - Timeline: Start monthly activities by October 2024.
    - Benchmark: Conduct at least one morale-boosting activity per month and survey staff quarterly to gauge the impact on morale.
5. Establish a Mentorship Program for New Faculty and Staff:
   Develop a mentorship program to support new faculty and staff members, pairing them with experienced mentors.
    - Timeline: Launch by the start of the 2024-2025 school year.
    - Benchmark: Pair 100% of new staff with a mentor within their first month.
6. Build Capacity for Leadership Opportunities for Educators of Color:
   Provide professional development and other opportunities for educators of color to assume leadership roles within the school.
    - Timeline: Begin offering opportunities by January 2025, with ongoing support and tracking.
    - Benchmark: Increase the number of educators of color in leadership roles by 10% by the end of the 2024-2025 school year.

## Indicators of Progress

- Conduct Climate Surveys:
  Administer quarterly climate surveys to gather feedback on workplace culture and factors affecting staff retention.
    - Benchmark: Achieve at least a 50% response rate for each survey and implement at least two targeted improvements annually based on feedback.
- Conduct Stay Interviews:
  Hold stay interviews with a representative sample of staff quarterly to understand retention challenges and reasons for staying.

    - Benchmark: Complete stay interviews with at least 25% of staff quarterly and implement at least two actionable changes based on feedback.
- Track Diversity Among Staff:
  Monitor staff diversity at the beginning and end of each school year to evaluate progress in increasing representation.
    - Benchmark: Achieve a minimum 5% annual increase in the representation of diverse staff.
- Implement Monthly Mentor Check-Ins:
  Conduct monthly check-ins between mentors and new staff to provide support and gather feedback.
    - Benchmark: Ensure check-ins with 100% of new staff each month and address any issues within two weeks.
- Explore Professional Development Opportunities:
  Identify and implement professional development programs that promote an inclusive school culture and equity.
    - Benchmark: Launch at least two new professional development programs by the end of the 2024-2025 school year and evaluate their effectiveness annually.

## Resources Required

- Data from Human Resources regarding retention rates of educators of color.
- Partnerships with local education associations (e.g., EdAdvance).
- Ongoing professional development on recognizing bias and increasing cultural awareness.
- Access to funding sources for retention initiatives.

Risks and Mitigation

1. Risk: Over-reliance on educators of color to intervene with students of color or to act as race/DEI experts.
    - Mitigation: Provide DEI training for all staff to share the responsibility of fostering an inclusive environment.
2. Risk: Lived experiences/microaggressions are not addressed by leadership.
    - Mitigation: Ensure leadership is trained to recognize and address microaggressions promptly and supportively.

## Communication and Engagement Efforts

- Engage the school community, faculty, and staff in supporting retention goals through regular updates, meetings, and collaboration opportunities.
- Ensure transparent communication of progress, challenges, and successes related to retention initiatives.