



AMITY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

BETHANY • ORANGE • WOODBRIDGE

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Increasing Educator Diversity Plan

BOE Approved April 2024

Revised Oct 2024

This comprehensive Increasing Diversity Educator Plan was developed in collaborative partnership with the Bethany, Orange, Woodbridge, and Amity school districts, fostering a collective commitment to promoting inclusivity and embracing diversity within the educational landscape.

Vision

We believe that each student has a right to the unimpeded access to the opportunities and resources necessary to develop to their full academic and social potential and that each individual in our community should have a genuine sense of social, emotional, and academic belonging. We further believe the differences in individual and cultural characteristics, identities, and traits of each person and group in our school and community are valuable and that students are better served when teachers and teacher leaders reflect the diversity of our community.

Our beliefs are consistent with the Connecticut State Board of Education's equity and excellence goals for all students. "First, that every student deserves to benefit from the promise of high expectations and standards for what they can learn and be able to do. Second, great schools are safe, diverse, welcoming environments where students thrive and receive exceptional teaching and learning. And third, great teachers and leaders are supported throughout their careers with quality professional learning that continues to grow and refine educator practice."¹

Policies

Public Act No 18-34 and Public Act 23-167 – Increasing Educator Diversity

Currently, boards of education, under Public Act No 18-34², must have a written plan for

¹ Connecticut State Department of Education et.al. "Creating a District Plan to Increase the Racial, Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity of Your Educator Workforce: A Guidebook for Hiring and Selection," n.d. https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Talent_Office/HiringAndSelectionGuidebook.pdf.

² Connecticut General Assembly. An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention., Public Act No. 18-34 § (2018). <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2018/ACT/pa/pdf/2018PA-00034-R00SB-00455-PA.pdf>.

“minority educator recruitment” to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation and provide students with opportunities to interact with teachers from other racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. Public Act No 18-34. The Public Act 23-167 changes the plan’s name to the “increasing educator diversity” plan and the Act requires that boards of education submit their “increasing educator diversity” plans to the Commissioner of Education for review and approval.³

BOE Policy P4111(a) Personnel – Certified/Non-Certified Recruitment and Selection

The Board recognizes the diversity of the people who live in the school district and believes that this characteristic should have an important bearing on all aspects of the ARSD activities. The Board believes it is especially important that this diversity of population be recognized in the recruitment and assignment of personnel. The Board shall develop and implement a written plan for minority staff recruitment. (May 2021)

BOE Policy P4111.1 Personnel – Certified/Non-Certified Equal Employment Opportunity

The Board of Education (Board) will provide equal employment opportunities for all persons without regard to race, color, religious creed, age, veterans' status, genetic information, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify or expression, or physical disability. The Board directs the administration to set as a goal the recruitment, selection, and employment of qualified people among racial and ethnic minority groups to the end that the Amity Regional School District No. 5 (ARSD) employees will proportionately mirror the racial and ethnic composition of this community. (Feb 2021)

BOE Policy P4111.3 Personnel – Certified/Non-Certified Minority Recruitment Plan

The Amity Regional School District No. 5 (ARSD) Board of Education (Board) recognizes that fundamental to a quality education is the need to provide students with an opportunity to interact with students and educators from different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. The Board believes that a skillful and diverse staff contributes significantly to high quality, engaging learning environments, predicated on a climate of inclusion. To this end the Board directs the Superintendent to enact a planning process for the recruitment of a diverse staff. (May 2021)

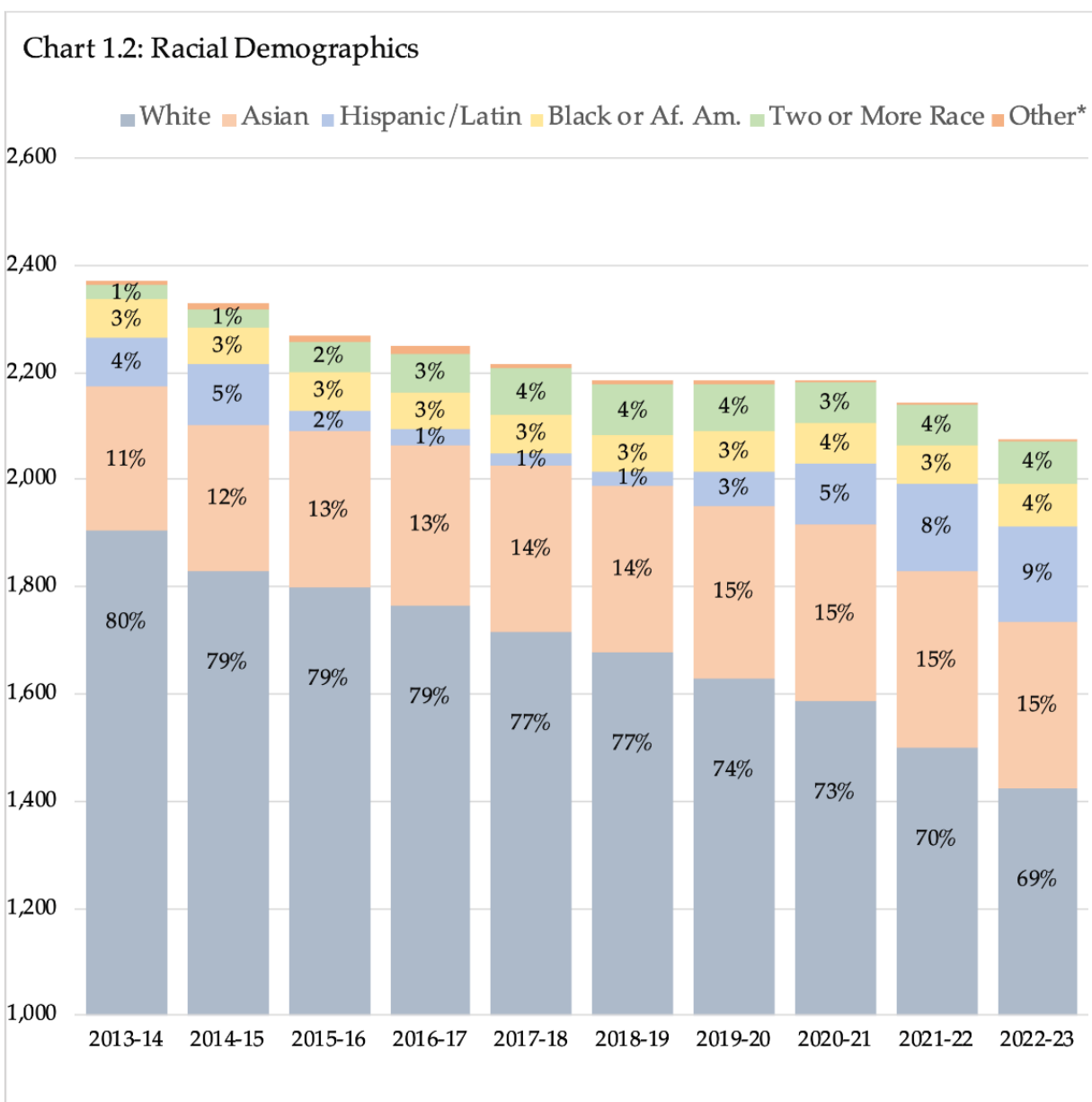
Demographics (STUDENTS /STAFF)

Racial Demographics

In Chart 1.2 you can see a shift in the racial makeup of the district over the last ten years. Again, the Y axis shows the student count and each racial identity block within the column is labeled with the percent of the student body for that specific year. Hispanic and Asian identifying-students had the largest percentage increases. The Hispanic population as grown from 4% to 9% of the student body (an increase of 91%). The Asian population

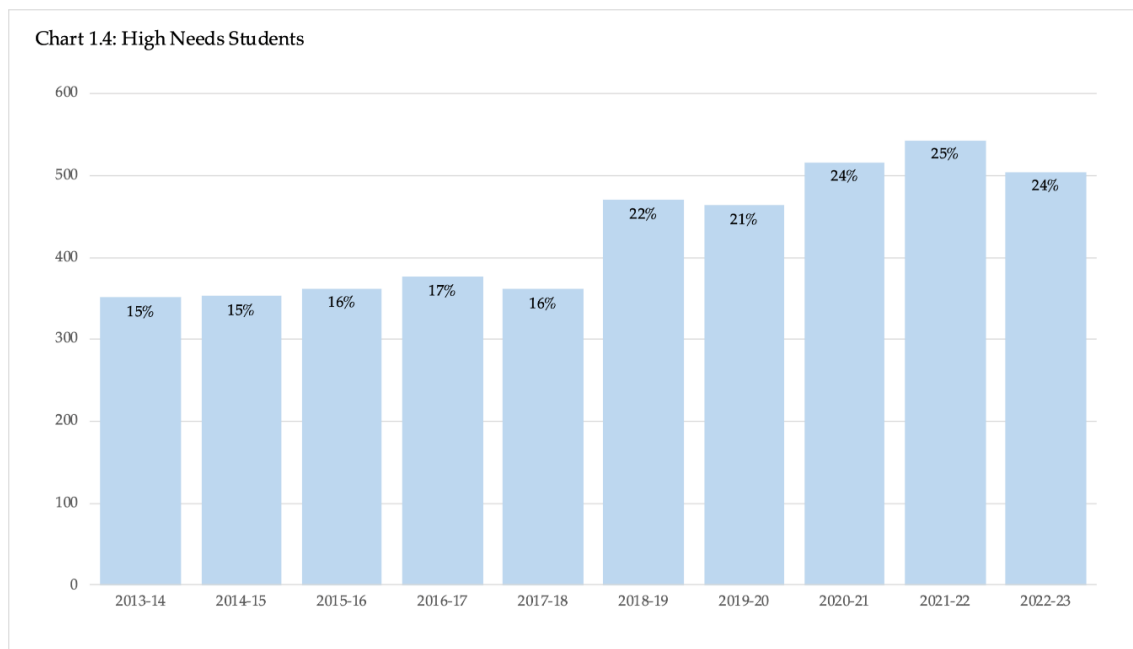
³ Shipman, A, and Goodwin LLP Legislation Summary. “2023 Education Legislation Summary,” August 3, 2023. <https://www.shipmangoodwin.com/insights/2023-education-legislation-summary.html>

has gone from 11 to 15% of the student body (an increase of 17%). The white population has declined from 80% of the total student count to 69% (a decrease of 25%). Students who identify with two or more races has gone from 1% to 4%. The Black or African American population has remained somewhat steady at 3% or 4% over the last ten years.



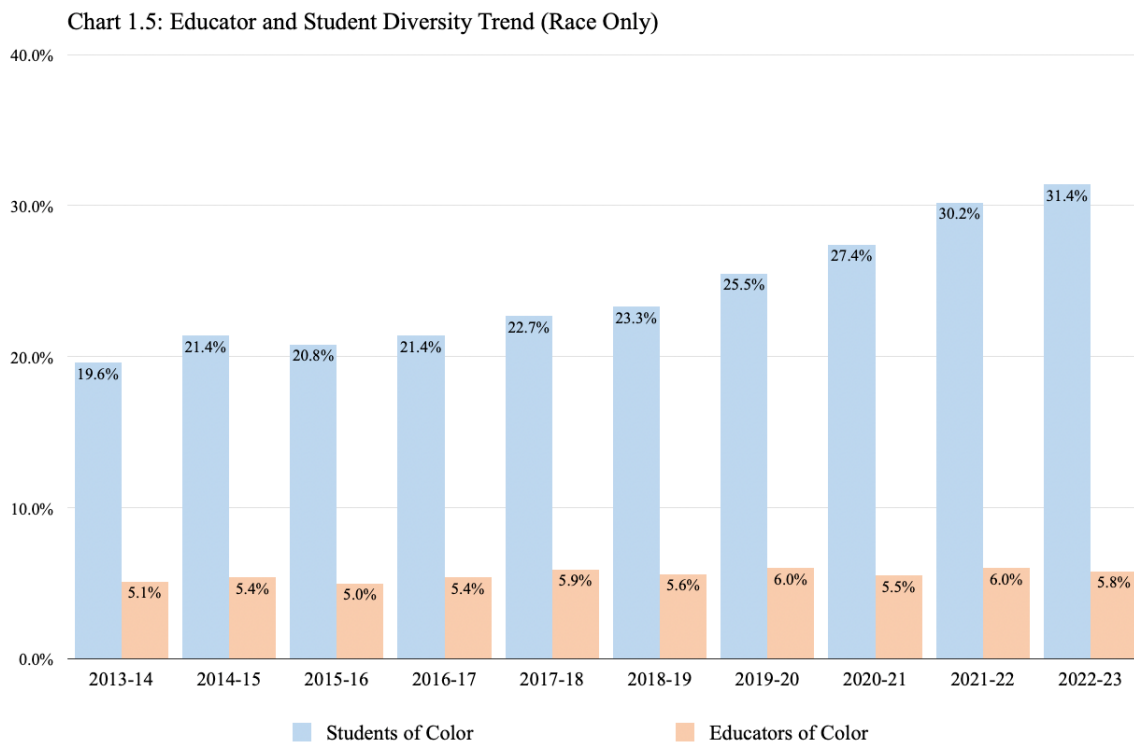
High Needs Students

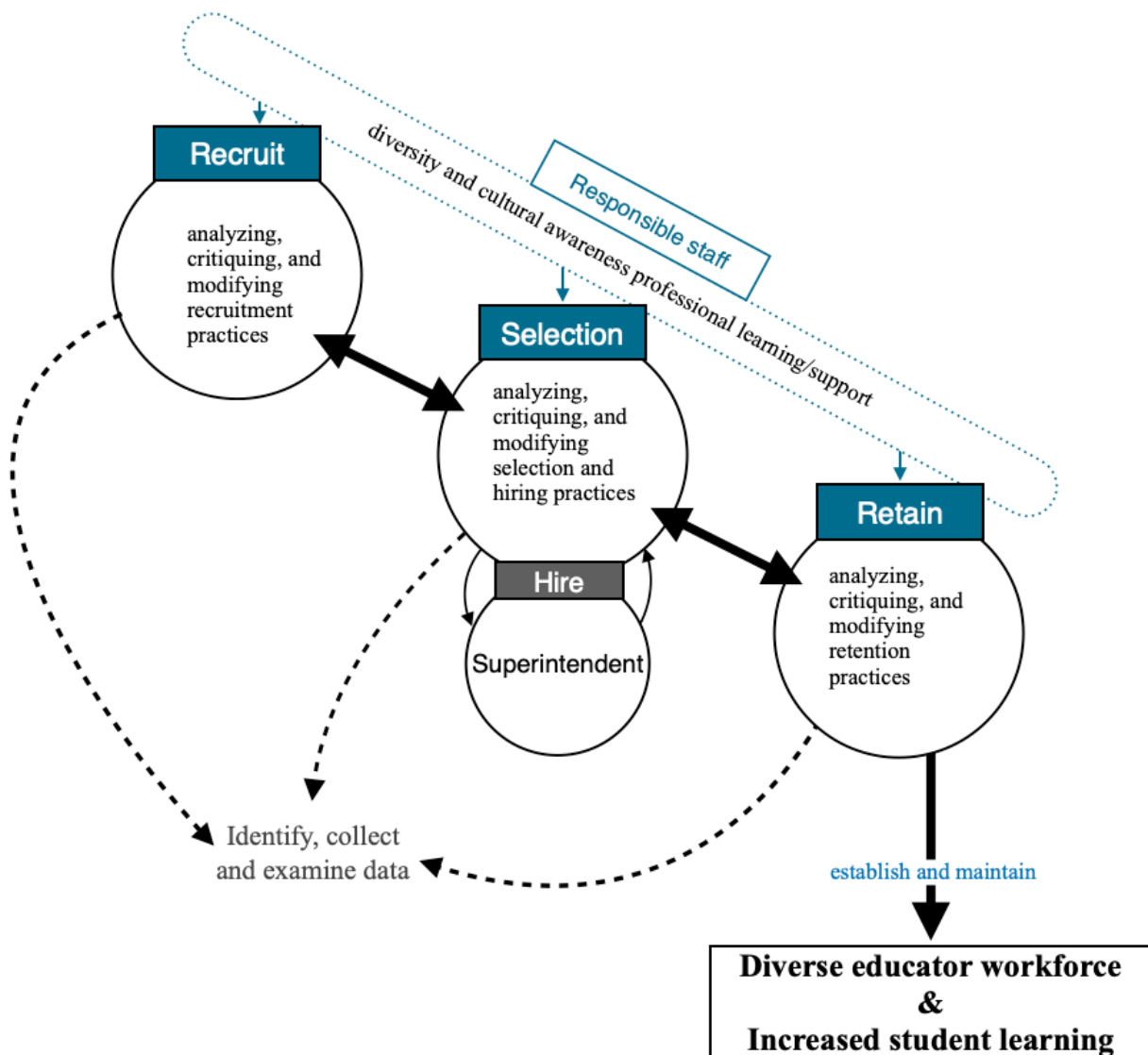
Chart 1. 4 displays high needs students at all of Amity's campuses. *High needs* is a category that includes students with disabilities, free and reduced lunch eligibility, and English language learners. The total number of high needs students in the district grew from 351 to 504 (an increase of 43%). As a percentage of the total population, Amity's high needs students grew from 15% to 25%.



Educator Diversity (Race only)

Chart 1.5 displays a comparison of the educator and student racial diversity ten-year trend. In 2022-23 there were 14 of 240 educators of color which was 5.8% and 651 of 2,075 students of color representing 31.4%, a difference of 25.6%. In 2013-14 there were 12 of 235 educators of color which was 5.1% and 466 of 2,372 students of color representing 19.6%, a difference of 14.5%.





If the District proactively engages in researching, establishing, and implementing diverse, inclusive, and equitable hiring and selection practices; continuously analyzes, critiques, and modifies recruitment, selection, and retention practices; and concurrently provides professional learning support to enhance diversity and cultural awareness among responsible staff, then we will witness an increase in the establishment and maintenance of a more diverse educator workforce. This workforce will be reflective of our student population and community, and as a result, prepare our students for an increasingly diverse world.

Structures, Practices, and Strategies

RECRUITMENT GOAL

Recruit educators from underrepresented racial or ethnic groups to increase their representation within our workforce and better align with the diverse demographics of our student population.

Who Manages the Goal –

Superintendent – Jennifer Byars
Extended Leadership Team

Key Strategies

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME
Review the applications for teaching and administrative positions to ensure they are structured to recognize applicant's experiences with diverse groups.	DEI Instructional Coach, Peter Downhour	Spring 2025
Participate in education career fairs and local job fairs, including those that are sponsored by the racially and ethnically diverse community organizations or otherwise targeted toward underrepresented segments of the community.	HR Specialist, Patti Welton; Extended Leadership Team	Spring 2025
Form partnerships through Connecticut alumna networks with historically Black colleges and universities and Hispanic-serving institutes to attract diverse candidates.	DEI Instructional Coach, Peter Downhour	January 2026
Expand DEI webpage to highlight efforts in the District to improve inclusion and belonging experienced by both students and staff.	DEI Instructional Coach, Peter Downhour	Winter 2024
Implement voluntary applicant surveys to collect demographics on applicants to inform the effectiveness of the strategies in the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan.	DEI Instructional Coach, Peter Downhour	Fall 2024

Indicators of Progress –

- Updated Teacher and Administrator Application
- Knowledge of baseline of diversity of applicants
- Number of career and job fairs attended
- Monthly review and addition information on DEI webpage
- Increase in the diversity of applicants from the baseline

Resources –

- Frontline Resources
- Networks with Connecticut colleges and universities
- Connection to alumni networks for HBCUs and other diverse colleges and universities
- Website manager

- Qualtrics or other survey instrument

Risks and Mitigation –

- The updated application does allow for the demonstrated applicants' experiences with diverse groups; quarterly review of applications.
- Limited resources for attending job fairs or advertising: Prioritize events and publications with the highest potential for reaching diverse candidates, and seek alternative funding sources if necessary
- Limited networking opportunities; used alternate resources such as Handshake
- Failure to update website regularly; quarterly updates
- Applicant failing to complete voluntary survey; Data on applicant demographics leaked; quarterly review by DEI Coordinator.

Consultation and Communication –

Consultation and engagement with the HR team, hiring managers, and diversity and inclusion committees

- Communication of recruitment efforts and opportunities to internal staff, community organizations, educational institutions, and potential candidates
- Updates and progress reports to the Executive Leadership Team and the DEI Executive Committee to ensure alignment with organizational goals and priorities

HIRING AND SELECTION GOAL

We will decrease the gap between diverse students and diverse educators by employing strategic hiring practices to increase diversity of personnel both interviewed and hired,

Who Manages the Goal –

Superintendent – Jennifer Byars

Extended leadership team

Key Strategies

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME
Implement a written, collaborative, uniform practices for hiring that minimizes the chance for bias on the part of the hiring committee.	Superintendent, Jennifer Byars	Spring 2024
Incorporate questions related to culturally responsive pedagogy into the interview process.	DEI Instructional Coach, Peter Downhour, ELT	Spring 2025
Ensure that interview/hiring committee members have mandatory anti-bias training and information on current student and staff demographics. Training should guard against exclusionary notions of cultural fit and advise that protected statuses should not figure either positively or negatively into employment.	DEI Instructional Coach, Peter Downhour	Spring 2024

Indicators of Progress – from West Hartford directly

- An increase in the number of minority candidates that are interviewed and offered employment.
- The completion rates of implicit bias training among hiring committees
- All committees use a standard set of interview questions consistently during the hiring process

Resources –

- State anti-bias training video; Develop in-house anti-bias training for interview/hiring committees
- Bank of standard interview questions
- Time and process for training interview/hiring committees

Risks and Mitigation –

- Failure to review the hiring process and IED Plan; implement a protocol to ensure committee members review the plan
- Failure to include culturally responsive questions in interviews; HR Director reviews all interview protocols quarterly
- Failure to watch video; attestation form in Frontline

Consultation and Communication –

- District Leadership
- Establish dedicated communication channels to regularly update stakeholders on the inclusive changes to the selection process

- Actively solicit feedback from existing employees or affinity groups to gather insights and feedback

RETENTION GOAL

Ensure the long-term success and connectedness of our diverse employees. Create a workplace culture where every individual feels an authentic sense of belonging and is provided with equitable opportunities for growth and advancement.

Who Manages the Goal –

Superintendent – Jennifer Byars

Extended Leadership Team

Key Strategies

STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	TIME FRAME
Continue the development of a comprehensive onboarding program that introduces new hires to the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion.	Assistant Superintendent, Frank Purcaro	Spring 2024
Initiate and implement year-long mentorship programs that connect employees with experienced mentors who can provide guidance and support (separate from TEAM)	Assistant Superintendent, Frank Purcaro	Fall 2025
Conduct regular diversity and inclusion training sessions for all employees, emphasizing the importance of diverse perspectives and fostering a culture of respect	Assistant Superintendent, Frank Purcaro	Fall 2025
Ensure employees are aware of tuition reimbursement benefits aligned with each bargaining agreement	AEA President, Brian Serapiglia	Summer 2025
Conduct annual school climate surveys at each building that allow employees to freely share their thoughts, concerns, or provide feedback on how the district can improve	DEI Instructional Coach, Peter Downhour	Spring 2024
Promote networking events to foster a sense of belonging within the greater education community.	DEI Instructional Coach, Peter Downhour	Spring 2024

Indicators of Progress –

- Number of teachers attending the new teacher orientation
- Number of teachers partnered with a year-long mentor; number of veteran teachers serving as mentors (outside of TEAM).
- Post PD surveys
- Utilization of tuition reimbursement benefits
- Completed climate surveys
- Number of networking events and opportunities promoted/conducted

Resources –

- Training Materials and Facilitators and Mentors
- Feedback Collection Mechanisms, Survey Tools
- Tuition Reimbursement Benefits and Forms
- Point person for sharing networking opportunities (DEI Coach)

Risks and Mitigation –

- Resistance to Training: Some new hires may resist diversity and inclusion training, mitigate by emphasizing its importance
- Ineffective Training by Mentors: Regularly update training materials based on stakeholder feedback
- Lack of Understanding of importance of PD feedback: Assess training effectiveness through post-training surveys and adjust content as needed
- Low Utilization: Promote tuition benefits
- Surveys are a moment of time: strategic timing of delivery along with time for completion and use with other data for larger understanding.
- Failure to invite all diverse educators to networking; use HR list that is reported to state as source for invitation.

Consultation and Communication –

- PDEC
- Mentors
- AEA Reps
- Principals and School Climate Specialists
- CEA/RDAC – Promotion of Programs and benefits to all staff

Commitment to Review

The District Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee will review this plan biennially for effectiveness of strategies.

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