WOODBRIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

40 Beecher Road- South, Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525

Increasing Educator Diversity Plan

September, 2024

CSDE Approved 12/17/2024

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."

Policies

Public Act 18-34: An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Public Act 23-167: An Act Concerning Transparency in Education

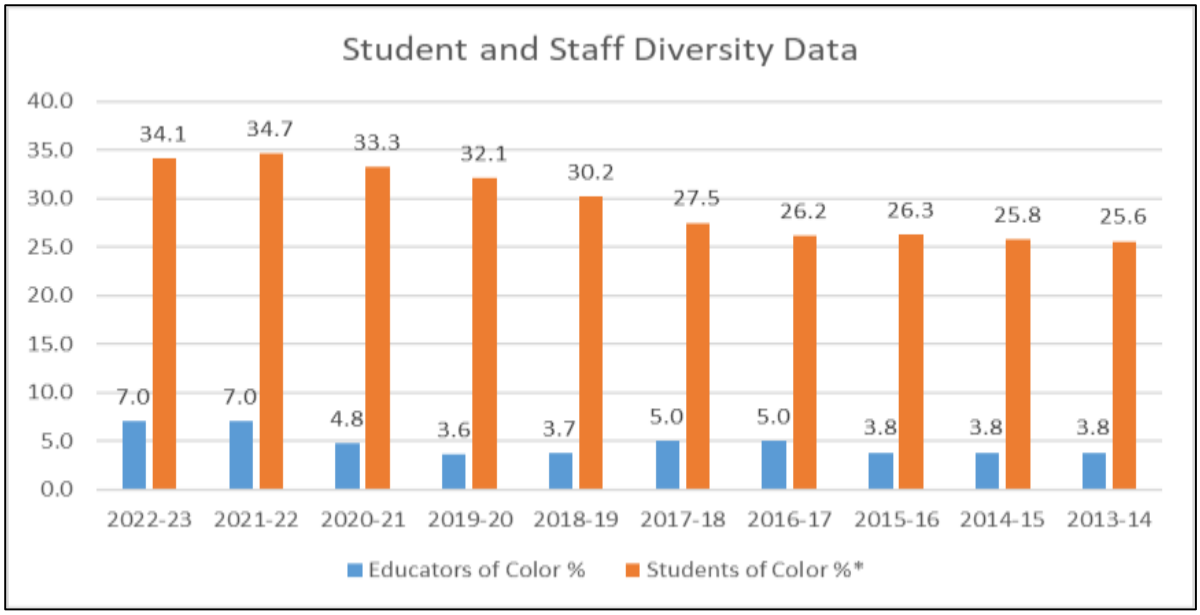
BOE Policy P4111/ 4211.1 Personnel – Certified/Non-Certified Recruitment & Selection Affirmative Action: *The Board of Education will provide equal employment opportunities for all persons without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, age, veteran status, genetic information, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability) including pregnancy. The Board of Education 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 school district's employees will proportionately mirror the racial and ethnic composition of this community.*

BOE Policy 0523 Mission-Goals-Objectives Equity and Diversity: *The Woodbridge School District welcomes, respects, and values the diversity of its students, parents, staff, and the residents of Woodbridge and guests of the District. The District is committed to advancing participation in, contribution to, benefits from, and enjoyment from learning and work experience by all students, parents, staff, residents of the Town and guests of the District. Every student deserves a respectful learning environment in which their diversity is valued and contributed to successful academic outcomes.*

Demographic Data (STUDENTS STAFF)

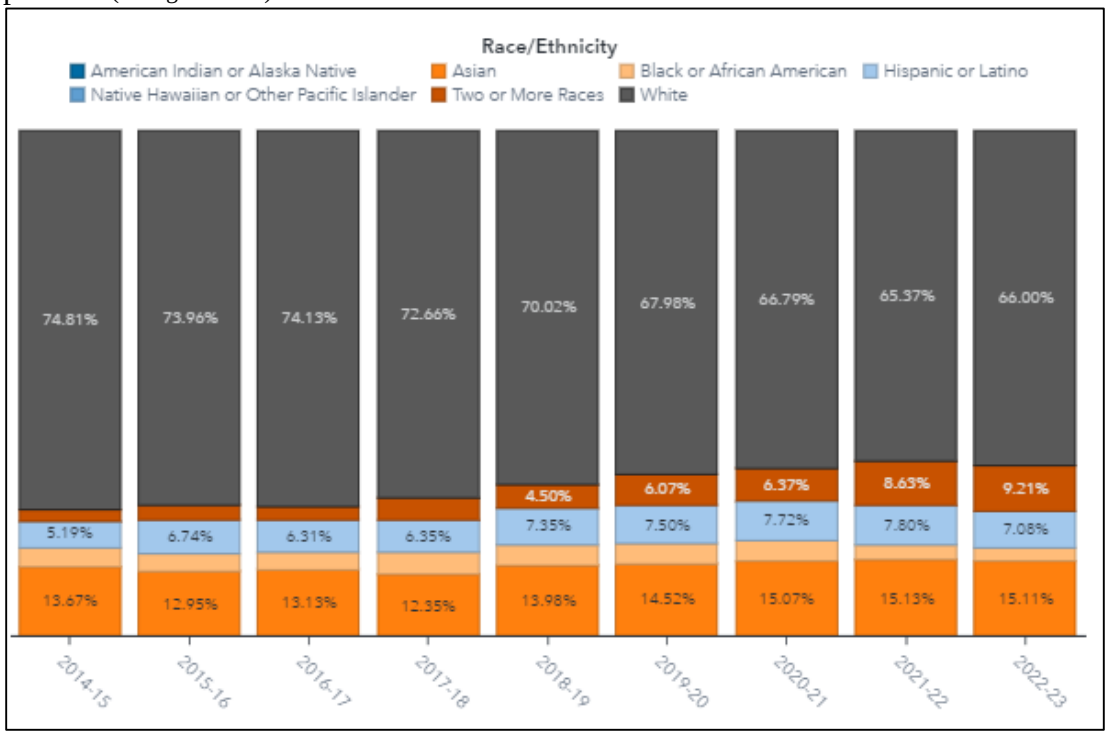
Educator Diversity (Race only)

Displays a comparison of the district's educator and student racial diversity for a ten-year trend. (EdSight Public)

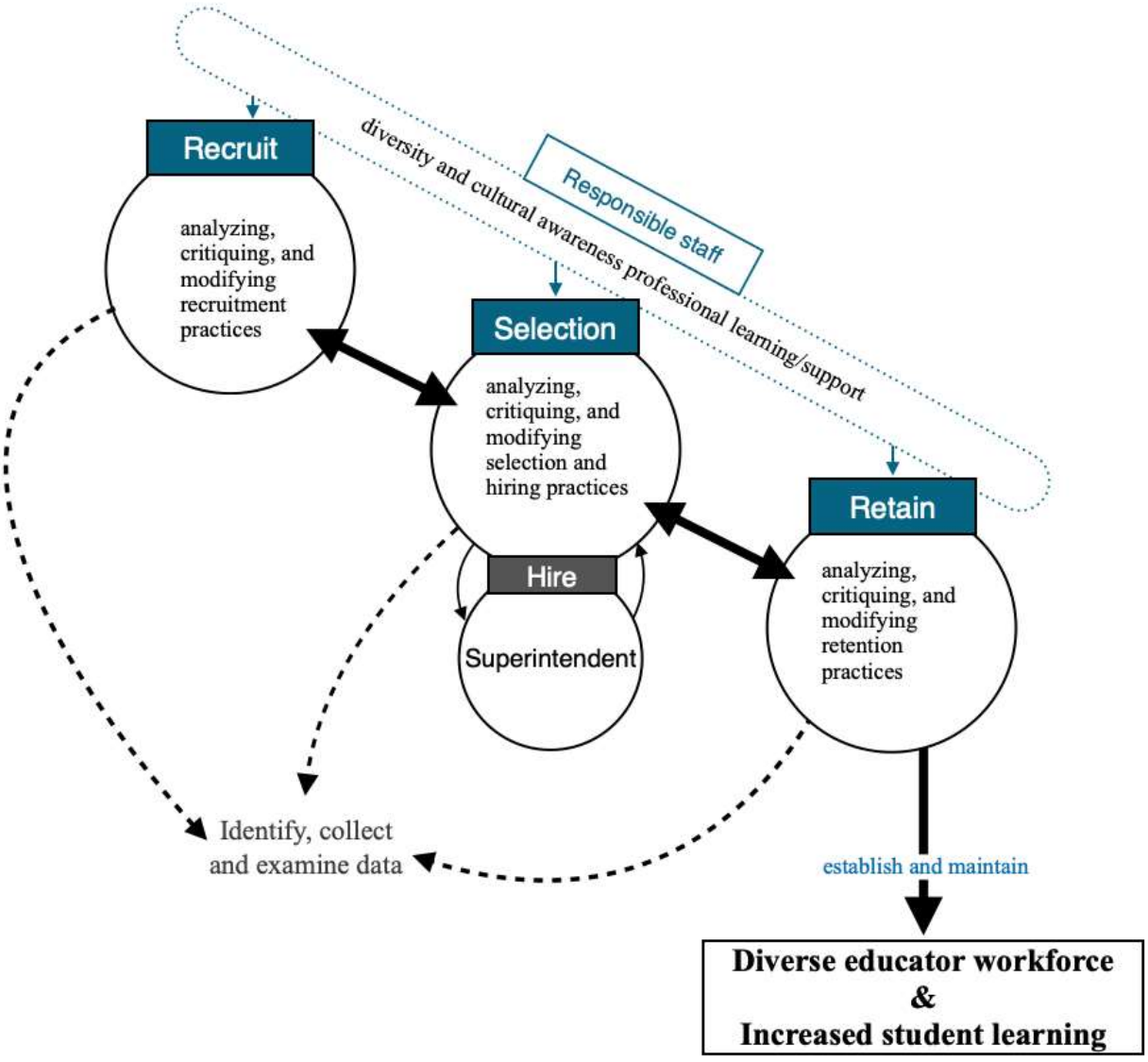


Student Racial Demographics

The shift in the racial makeup of the district over the last ten years. The Y axis shows student count and each racial identity block within the column is labeled with the percent of the student body for that specific year. *When small values have been suppressed to protect student confidentiality, percentages are based on the unsuppressed values only. This may result in graphs showing 100% when other student group values are present. (EdSight Public)



Theory of Action (STRUCTURE - Recruit, Hire and Retain)



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 – *We will 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 –
Vonda Tencza - Superintendent
Jeffrey Jimenez - Human Resources (HR) Specialist & accounts payable
Carrie Borcherding- Director of Special Services, Curriculum & Instruction
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.	HR- Jeff Jimenez	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 – Jeff Jimenez	Spring 2025
Form partnerships through Connecticut alumna networks with historically Black colleges and universities and Hispanic-serving institutes to attract diverse candidates.	Superintendent – Vonda Tencza	January 2026
Implement voluntary applicant surveys to collect demographics on applicants to inform the effectiveness of the strategies in the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan.	HR- Jeff Jimenez	Fall 2024

Indicators of Progress –
- The number of applications reviewed for teaching and administrative positions
- Number of job fairs attended HR Specialist, Administrators, Directors
- Number of partnerships forged with community organizations and minority-focused educational institutions
- Number of applicant surveys collected

Resources –
- Red Rover Resources
- EdSight Secure Educator Diversity Dashboard
- Networks with Connecticut colleges and universities
- Contact Information for college and university placement officers and job/career/recruitment fairs
- Connection to alumni networks for HBCUs and other diverse colleges and universities
- Qualtrics or other survey instrument
- Non-affiliated/neutral party for applicant data collection/aggregation

Risks and Mitigation –
- Revised applications do not recognize applicant's experiences with diverse groups: Quarterly review of the number of application submissions

- 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 with alumni networks: Employing resources like the Handshake platform
- Applicants failing to complete the voluntary survey and applicant demographic data leaked to hiring committee: Quarterly review the applicant survey data by a third party

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 Board of Education 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 –
Vonda Tencza - Superintendent
Extended Leadership Team

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 – V. Tencza HR- J. Jimenez	Spring 2024
Incorporate questions related to diversity, inclusion, and culturally relevant pedagogy into the interview process.	Principal – A. Sherman	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 racially exclusionary notions of cultural fit.	Superintendent – V, Tencza	Spring 2024

Indicators of Progress –

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

Resources –

- State anti-bias training video and in-house anti-bias training for interview/hiring committees
- Bank of standard interview questions inclusive of culturally relevant pedagogy

- Time and process for training interview/hiring committees

Risks and Mitigation –

- A failure to review the hiring process: Create a checklist or protocol to ensure committee members review the plan before participating
- Failure to include culturally responsive questions in interviews: HR Specialist reviews all interview protocols.
- Failure to watch the video: Members complete an attestation sheet in Red Rover

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 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 -
Vonda Tencza - Superintendent
Extended Leadership Team

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 Principals- J. Sapia, C. Tafel	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 Principals- J. Sapia, C. Tafel	Spring 2025
Conduct regular diversity and inclusion training sessions for all employees, emphasizing the importance of diverse perspectives and fostering a culture of respect.	Director of Special Services, Curriculum & Instruction – Carrie Borcherding	Spring 2025

Ensure employees are aware of tuition reimbursement benefits aligned with each bargaining agreement.	HR- J. Jimenez	Spring 2025
Conduct annual climate surveys and exit surveys of all district educators.	Superintendent – V. Tencza	
Promote networking events to foster a sense of belonging within the greater education community.	Assistant Principals- J. Sapia, C. Tafel	Summer 2024; on-going thereafter

Indicators of Progress –

- Percentage of new hires who report feeling well-informed about the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion after completing the onboarding program
- Number of mentorship pairings established and feedback from mentees on the effectiveness of mentorship in providing guidance and support
- Post-training surveys
- Utilization of tuition reimbursement benefits
- School climate survey data & exit survey data
- Number of participants at networking events

Resources –

- Training Materials and Facilitators and Mentors
- Feedback Collection Mechanism
- Survey Tools
- Tuition Reimbursement Benefits

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: Assess training effectiveness through post-training surveys and adjust content as needed
- Low Utilization: Promote programs and benefits for tuition reimbursement
- Low participation in networking events: Use HR lists as a source of information for invitations to events.

Consultation and Communication –

- Communication with PDEC
- Communication with Mentors
- Communication with Educator Union
- Communication with Principal and School Climate Specialist
- Promotion of programs and benefits to all staff

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