Increasing Educator Diversity Plan

Bethany • Orange • Woodbridge • Amity

November 2024

This comprehensive Increasing Diversity Educator Plan was collaboratively developed in 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

Bethany Public Schools "Bethany Public School District Strategic Action Plan 2020-2025." March 11, 2020.

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Policy 0523(a) Mission, Goals, Objectives - Equity and Diversity, February 8, 2023.

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Policy 1118(a) Community Relations - Non-Discrimination, December 14, 2022.

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Regulation 1118(a) Community Relations - Discrimination Complaints from Community Members, October 1, 2021..

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[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.

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Policy 4111(a) and 4211(a) Personnel - Certified/Non-Certified - Recruitment and Selection, December 8, 2021.

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Policy 4111(b) and 4211(b) Personnel - Certified/Non-Certified - Recruitment and Selection, December 8, 2021.

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Policy 4111.1 and 4211.1 Personnel - Certified/Non-Certified - Equal Employment Opportunity, December 8, 2021.

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Regulation 4111.3 and 4211.3 Personnel - Certified/Non-Certified - Minority Recruitment, May 11, 2022.

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Policy 4118.11(a) and 4218.11(a) Personnel - Certified/Classified - Non-Discrimination and Equal Education Opportunity, December 8, 2021

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Policy 4118.11(b) and 4218.11(b) Personnel - Certified/Classified - Non-Discrimination and Equal Education Opportunity, December 8, 2021

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Policy 4118.11(c) and 4218.11(c) Personnel - Certified/Classified - Non-Discrimination and Equal Education Opportunity, December 8, 2021

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Regulation 4118.11(a) and 4218.11(a) Personnel - Certified/Certified/Non-Certified - Discrimination Complaints, October 1, 2021

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Regulation 4118.11(b) and 4218.11(b) Personnel - Certified/Certified/Non-Certified - Discrimination Complaints, October 1, 2021

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Regulation 4118.11(c) and 4218.11(c) Personnel - Certified/Certified/Non-Certified - Discrimination Complaints, October 1, 2021

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Regulation 4118.11(d) and 4218.11(d) Personnel - Certified/Certified/Non-Certified - Discrimination Complaints, October 1, 2021

Bethany Public Schools "BOE Regulation 4118.11(e) and 4218.11(e) Personnel - Certified/Certified/Non-Certified - Discrimination Complaints, October 1, 2021

Demographics (STUDENTS/ STAFF)

The following demographic information represents the district and state trend data for the percentage of students and diverse educators as found on the Connecticut State Department of Education EdSight portal.

% Students and Educators of Color, Trend
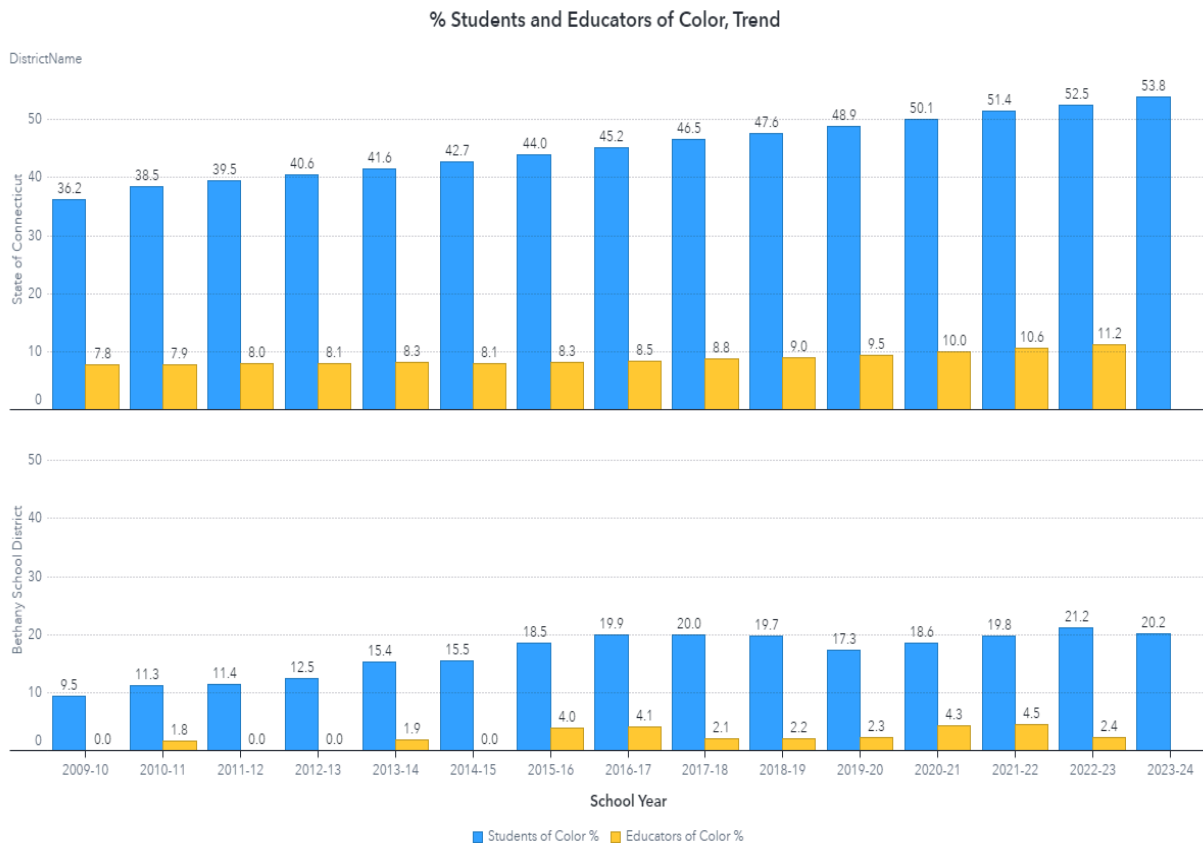
School Year: 2022 -2023
Students of Color %: 21.2
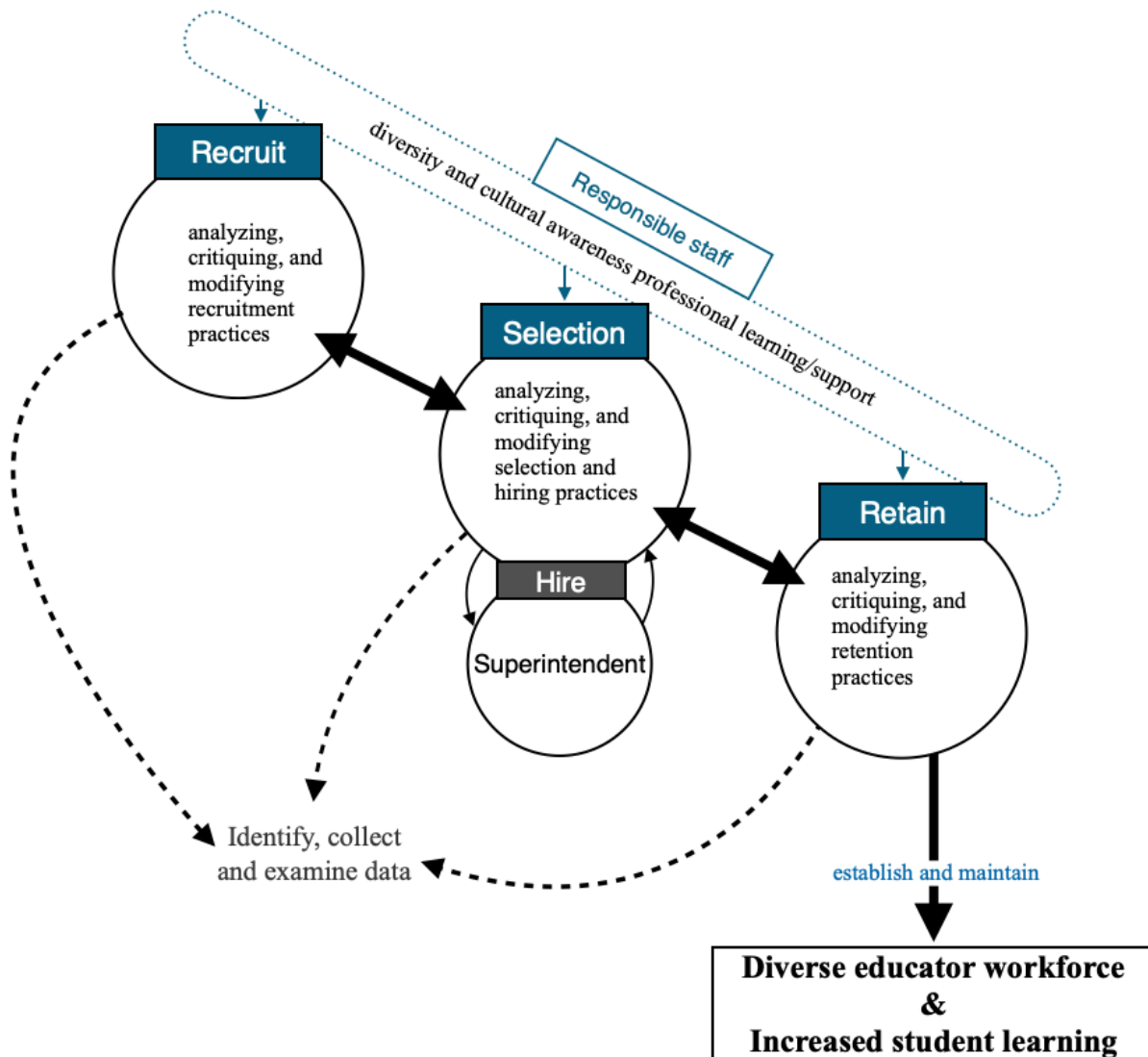Educators of Color %: 2.4
Students of Color Count: 91
All Student Count: 429
Educators of Color Count: 1
All Educator Count: 42

*Data for the 2023-2024 data is not yet listed in the portal

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 – W*e 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 –
Kai Byrd - Superintendent
Brandy Spargo - Human Resources (HR) Specialist
Cheryl Kiesel - 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 Director - Brandy Spargo	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 Director - Brandy Spargo	Spring 2025
Form partnerships through Connecticut alumna networks with historically Black colleges and universities and Hispanic-serving institutes to attract diverse candidates.	Superintendent - Kai Byrd	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 Director - Brandy Spargo	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 –
- Frontline 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 applicants 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 –
Kai Byrd - 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 - Kai Byrd HR Director - Brandy Spargo	Spring 2024
Incorporate questions related to diversity, inclusion, and culturally relevant pedagogy into the interview process.	Principal - Thomas Reed-Swale	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 - Kai Byrd	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 Director reviews all interview protocols.
- Failure to watch the video: Members complete an attestation sheet 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 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 -
Kai Byrd - 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 Principal - Jacqueline Nathman	Spring 2024
Initiate and implement year-long mentorship programs that connect employees with experienced mentors who can provide guidance and support (separate fromTEAM).	Assistant Principal - Jacqueline Nathman	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 - Cheryl Kiesel	Spring 2025
Ensure employees are aware of tuition reimbursement benefits aligned with each bargaining agreement.	HR Director - Brandy Spargo	Spring 2025
Conduct annual climate surveys of all district educators.	Superintendent - Kai Byrd	
Promote networking events to foster a sense of belonging within the greater education community.	Assistant Principal - Jaqueline Nathman	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
- 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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