

Inclusive Hiring & Retention Practices at La Honda Pescadero Unified School District

April 2021

Purpose: One of our key goals at LHPUSD is to improve our hiring practices to create a staff that better reflects the student body of our schools. Studies have shown that in schools that are more racially and ethnically diverse, students' academic performance and social emotional well being improve, more positive role modeling occurs, teachers and students tend to be more culturally aware, and students are less likely to hold implicit biases in adulthood.¹ The positive impact is particularly powerful for students of color, but studies also suggest that all students can benefit from a more diverse teacher workforce.² To support the goal of advancing faculty and staff diversity at LHPUSD, we have scanned the research around best practices and share a summary of these strategies to inform improving future hiring and retention practices and results at LHPUSD.

The following are a summary of key strategies & examples of equity-focused practices associated with these strategies to operationalize the goals above:

Build a strong pipeline of diverse candidates through partnership, community engagement, and targeted outreach practices.

- *Partner with local teacher prep programs* (e.g. UCSC, San Jose State & CSU MB as primary feeder programs) not only to recruit teacher candidates once they are ready for the job market but to provide student teacher placements, with potential incentive structures, specifically for candidates of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

¹Carver-Thomas, D. (2018). [Diversifying the teaching profession: How to recruit and retain teachers of color](#). Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

²ibid at 5-6.

- *Explore alternative certification pathways* for pipeline development³ serving the area or surrounding counties with a focus on diverse candidate recruitment (e.g. Marshall Residency Program, Alder Graduate School).
- *Consider partnership possibilities to shape a “Grow Your Own” program* with intern/ tutoring possibilities as part of service learning at LHPUSD and other local schools in connection with teacher preparation program as a recruitment strategy.
- *Invest in significant outreach efforts* to build a large and more diverse pool. Successful outreach efforts in other locations have involved ongoing cultivation and building networks of informal relationships with “connectors” such as teachers of color already at the school site who could reach out to their places of worship, alumni organizations, fraternal organizations, and other networks to support a strong pipeline. These efforts should be particularly tailored to hard to fill subject areas as shortages persist in CA⁴ and the County.
- *For each search, conduct a market analysis* about the relative availability of candidates in the state and the county, including teachers of color. Each search committee should be tasked with doing outreach appropriate for their discipline. Such outreach typically includes connecting with societies, preparation programs in specific content areas, interest groups that represent teachers from diverse backgrounds, etc. The Board of Trustees could play a role in monitoring the diversity of the pool at multiple stages, and work with the Superintendent to pause or stop a search if the pool is insufficiently representative of the available diversity.

Hiring practices need to elevate a commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion from job inception.

- *Shape job descriptions to elevate JEDI.* Advertisements might include statements such as “The successful candidate must be able to work with students, faculty, and staff from a wide

³ “In 2013, a quarter of all new teachers of color entered teaching through an alternative certification pathway.” Ibid at 7. “While the quality of alternative certification programs varies, research has shown that teachers with the least comprehensive teacher preparation are two to three times more likely to leave their teaching position or teaching altogether than the most prepared candidates, exacerbating shortages of teachers of color and contributing to school instability.” Ingersoll, R., & May, H. (2011). Recruitment, retention and the minority teacher shortage. CPRE Research Report #RR-69. Philadelphia, PA: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.

⁴85 percent of LEAs are experiencing hiring challenges in specific subject areas in grades 7 through 12. At the secondary level, the most acute shortages are reported in special education, life and physical sciences, and mathematics. Pg. 28, [Teacher Recruitment Strategies in CA](#), Veritas Research & Evaluation Group.

range of social and cultural backgrounds. We are especially interested in candidates who can ‘contribute to the diversity and excellence of the school community through their teaching and service,’ and ‘We welcome candidates who understand the barriers facing students from historically underrepresented groups (as evidenced by life experiences and educational background), and who have experience in justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion with respect to teaching, mentoring, life experiences, or service towards building an equitable and diverse scholarly environment.’” The Board of Trustees should approve all advertisements, checking for gendered language and requiring inclusion of diversity-encouraging text.

- *Ensure the interview process is shaped with equity as a central design principle.* All search committees must include a diversity liaison, someone who is tasked to pay attention to equity and inclusion throughout the search. It is recommended that LHPUSD invest in fair hiring training and additional learning opportunities for all search committees, and this includes focus areas such as implicit bias training and training on the evaluation of contribution to diversity statements.⁵

Searches should first use redacted statements of contributions to justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion for the first round of screening, and then proceed normally with those applications that made it through the first round. The goal of this should be to highlight contributions to justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in these searches, in order to hire more faculty who would continue to contribute to diversity and inclusion efforts at LHPUSD. This should be done by introducing the use of rubrics for evaluating the statements of contributions to justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. This should get departments thinking about contributions to diversity and actively considering these contributions as an important factor in hiring decisions, not only through foregrounding the statements, but also by asking all interviewees to give a short presentation on contributions to justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. This might also prompt that faculty would have more conversations about working to advance justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion, catalyzed by the searches and inspired by the ideas that candidates put forward.

⁵For example, The Black Teacher Project offers “Hiring Black Teachers 101,” a workshop that gets at the heart of how hiring practices can be more inclusive of prospective Black teachers.

- *Implement holistic selection review process.*⁶ Consider holistic candidate selection criteria not based solely on standard metrics but additional measures such as in-service teaching effectiveness and demonstrating culturally-responsive teaching practices.
- *Shift hiring timelines as early as is practical* as research suggests in-demand candidates of color may be more likely to be available for hire earlier in the year.⁷ School systems can offer incentives for veteran teachers to announce their resignation, retirement, and transfer intentions in early spring so that it is possible to recruit new hires earlier in the season.⁸

With cost of living⁹ and student loan costs as a key barrier to recruitment and retention of teacher candidates¹⁰, an even heightened challenge for many candidates of diverse backgrounds, consider a range of creative outreach and financial incentives to support recruitment and retention.

- Continue to monitor state efforts for loan forgiveness, but also *consider private philanthropy to invest in a fund that alleviates financial burdens* specifically for teachers of color in the areas of loan forgiveness and/or affordable housing.
- *Support teachers in finding affordable housing* by investing in connecting teacher candidates to real estate agents to support them in finding affordable housing in the area or working with local government agencies on affordable housing options.¹¹

⁶The Education Trust–West, in collaboration with California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), created [*Recruiting & Retaining Educators of Color: Hiring Practices to Diversify Your Candidate Pool & Strategies to Support and Retain Educators*](#); 2020.

⁷Carver-Thomas, D. at 26.

⁸*ibid.*

⁹“The cost of workforce housing, especially in many desirable locations across the state, threatens to force teachers out of certain real estate markets. As of July 2017, the average rental cost for a two-bedroom apartment in California was approximately \$2,240, but that figure varies widely.” Teacher Recruitment in CA at 31.

¹⁰Between 2006 and 2016, tuition and fees at four-year universities increased by an average 63 percent, far outpacing increases in the overall Consumer Price Index. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, The Economics Daily, College tuition and fees increased 63 percent since January 2006.

¹¹ Teacher Recruitment in CA, pg. 31, Veritas Research & Evaluation Group

- *Explore financially sustainable strategies to increase teacher salaries.* While this effort is already underway, it is notable as a strategy that may also support increasing hiring of teachers of color.

Pipeline and hiring efforts must be accompanied by thoughtful efforts around retention and culture building.¹²

- *Offer comprehensive induction* to support beginning teachers of color in their first years of teaching. Induction often includes being matched with a veteran mentor teacher and can also include seminars, classroom assistance, time to collaborate with other teachers, coaching and feedback from experienced teachers, and reduced workloads. Ensure mentors are carefully selected, including having demonstrating evidence of commitment to justice, diversity, equity and inclusion. If possible, provide release time for mentors to support induction. In addition to formal mentorship, cultivate informal opportunities for mentorship between veteran and new teachers of color who share critical identities.¹³
- *Create culturally affirming school environments.*¹⁴ Dedicate the resources and time for professional learning on advancing racial equity in schools for school leadership, staff, and teachers. Ensure curricula, as well as learning and work environments, are inclusive and respectful of all racial and ethnic groups.
- *Empower and invest in teachers' professional growth* and career advancement by offering funding for professional learning opportunities and options for leadership (such as partial release time for mentoring).
- *Review disaggregated data on recruitment and retention.* As the Board and school leadership, review teacher recruitment, retention, and job satisfaction data, ensure such data is race-specific and disaggregated.

¹²“High turnover rates have offset successful recruitment of teachers of color in recent years and continue to contribute to unmet demand for teachers of color.” Carver-Thomas, D. at 15.

¹³The Education Trust - West. Recruiting & Retaining Educators of Color: Hiring Practices to Diversify Your Candidate Pool & Strategies to Support and Retain Teachers of Color, 2020

¹⁴Dixon, D. & Griffen, A. If You Listen, We Will Stay, The Education Trust 2019.

copied from UC Davis Practices:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Develop inclusive position descriptions:

Language for position descriptions should be inclusive and focus on candidate's experience and skill set.

Circulate position announcements with intentionality:

Positions should be advertised to diverse groups and professional networks. A three week minimum posting period is recommended to ensure that external hiring sites reach a more diverse candidate pool. HR has a standard two week posting period, thus the open duration should be intentionally addressed and confirmed once listed through HR.

Assemble a diverse Recruitment Advisory Committee (RAC):

All recruitments should utilize a Recruitment Advisory Committee (RAC) for candidate review. RACs need to be diverse in composition to mitigate bias (implicit or explicit) from impacting the candidate review and selection process. The Chair of the RAC should provide RAC members with an overview of the committee's commitment to equitable hiring practices and tips for preparing and engaging in the process.

Implement an equitable candidate review and selection process:

The committee should review and select interview questions based on core competencies and skills identified as essential to the position. A rubric should be developed for the review process with a focus on each candidate's advising experience, education, competency, commitment to equity, etc.

helpful information from University of Washington:
<https://careers.uw.edu/equitable-hiring/>