



Action Required

Information Only

TO: Dr. Greg Baker, Superintendent
 FROM: Arionda Feeney, Executive Director
 DATE: June 7, 2024
 SUBJECT: Annual Affirmative Action Progress Report

Introduction

Bellingham Public Schools is committed to enhancing diversity in all aspects of the organization. To address this commitment, the Board adopted a five-year affirmative action plan in February 2019. This plan is effective 2019-2024 and is available to OSPI, Bellingham Public School staff, and the Bellingham community upon request. The five-year plan requires an annual progress report on new employees that were hired in the previous year and a utilization analysis of total staff. This is the fifth annual update for the 2019-2024 affirmative action plan. The annual affirmative action progress report is developed following completion of the S-275 report submitted to OSPI each November. The S-275 serves a variety of purposes including establishment of the data for year-to-year hiring and staff utilization comparisons.

Included with this report are attachments displaying data from the October 2023 S-275 report analysis, the 2019-2024 affirmative action plan goals, and the positions included in each affirmative action job category. Copies of this annual affirmative action update report are disseminated to all district and building administrators and employee association leaders and will be posted on Staff Hub.

Connection to the Bellingham Promise

There is a strong connection between the overarching purpose of the affirmative action plan and the Bellingham Promise. The philosophy of The Promise is an essential part of the district’s commitment to facilitate change that will lead to recruiting and hiring a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable staff. The key strategy of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Bellingham Promise includes a broader scope of diversity than what is represented in this report. The focus of our current affirmative action plan is specifically related to diversifying our staff based on race and gender.

The following statistics summarize hiring trends from October of 2014 to 2023.

Report Year	Certificated Staff New Hires	Classified Staff New Hires	Total New Hires
Oct. 2014	93	71	164
Oct. 2015	105	110	215
Oct. 2016	73	73	146
Oct. 2017	82	91	173
Oct. 2018	103	130	233
Oct. 2019	46	108	154
Oct. 2020	52	21	73
Oct. 2021	60	123	183
Oct. 2022	35	163	198
Oct. 2023	7	69	76

Applicant data

The affirmative action plan monitors applicant data. Tracking trends in applicant data is important because a major goal of the affirmative action program is to implement recruiting strategies to attract and employ a more diverse pool of candidates that is reflective of our community and student demographics.

Affirmative action applicant information is tracked and maintained separately from other job application materials and is dependent on information voluntarily provided by each applicant. District data shows that between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023, there were a total of 1,410 new job applicants with a total of 286 individuals, 20.3% indicating ethnic minority status. In fact, our five-year trend indicates a slow upward growth of attracting applicants of color to apply for positions with Bellingham Public Schools (12.3% of total applicants in 2018 identified as minority, as compared 20.3% in 2023).

The following comparisons of new applicant data annually from October 2014, through October 2023, provide an overview of new job applicants and hiring trends. This data suggests that recruitment efforts continue to yield positive results, even in a year when overall hiring was limited.

While the applicant data shows a slight increase in diverse candidates, those selected for open certificated positions have held steady at 14.29%. Our ability to hire new certificated staff in the fall of 2023 was limited by budgetary constraints, however the data continues to highlight continued efforts to diversify our teachers and administrators who identify as one or more races. Regarding classified staff, we have significantly increased the percentile of new hires that are one or more races – from 18.40% to just over 32%.

Comparison data of all new applicants annually from October 2014 – October 2023										
Applicant Data by Year	October 2014	October 2015	October 2016	October 2017	October 2018	October 2019	October 2020	October 2021	October 2022	October 2023
Total new applicants	2463	3216	2552	2109	2552	1984	1597	1907	1903	1410
Total applicants indicating minority status (including disabled and veteran)	562	631	400	310	313	261	251	339	374	286
Percentage of applicants indicating minority status	22.8%	19.6%	15.7%	14.7%	12.3%	13.16%	15.72%	17.78%	19.65%	20.3%
Total number of new certificated staff hired	93	105	73	82	103	46	52	60	35	7
Total certificated new hires indicating ethnic minority status	12	7	4	5	9	7	7	10	5	1
Percentage of new hire certificated staff with ethnic minority status	12.9%	6.7%	5.5%	6.1%	8.7%	15.22%	13.46%	16.67%	14.29%	14.29%
Total number of new classified staff hired	71	110	73	91	130	108	21	123	163	62
Total classified new hires indicating ethnic minority status	14	15	9	16	23	12	8	24	30	20
Percentage of new hire classified staff with ethnic minority status	19.7%	13.6%	12.3%	17.6%	17.7%	11.11%	38.10%	19.51%	18.40%	32.26%

2023 Action Steps to Diversify staff:

This year, our team focused on three intentional efforts to support our commitment to diversify our staff. First, when certificated staffing reductions were necessary, we worked with our labor leaders to retain staff of color at our most highly impacted schools. We also hosted a BIPOC Job Fair sought to increase the number of applicants of color who apply for all types of positions with Bellingham Public Schools. Additionally, we also provided professional our leaders with specific professional learning around anti-racist/anti-bias applicant screening practices.

- **Staffing Considerations** – Due to declining enrollment, we needed to reduce certificated staff in the spring of 2023. Many of our newly hired teachers in the past few years are teachers of identify as one or more race. Because these teachers had the least seniority in our system, the non-renewals would have adversely impacted our staff of color and our deliberate efforts to diversify our workforce. Additionally, many of our staff of color teach at our most diverse schools in the district. To remedy this, we worked with our labor leaders and collectively prioritized keeping as many certificated staff of color as possible. This intentional effort allowed us to continue to make steady progress, even in a year that our overall staffing numbers were lower than previous years.
- **BIPOC Job Fair** –We hosted our second BIPOC job fair this year and successfully invited a variety of applicants to apply for positions across all departments of our District. There were over 100 people in attendance, representing multiple ethnicities and languages. During the event, the HR team was present, with computers, to assist potential applicants in completing their online job profile. This was particularly important because we've received feedback that our online application system can be challenging for some applicants, and we wanted to reduce this barrier. We also had several interpreters on-site and leaders from different departments to offer information to potential applicants. Finally, we offered resume and application materials help for folks who wanted feedback on their resume materials. While it was hard to quantify the number of attendees that applied for and were offered positions, the event was well attended and positively received by our diverse community members. The intention is to continue to host this event each year and adjust our approach to attract as many applicants as possible.
- **Professional Learning for Leaders** – A trend that we noticed in the data is that the fact that our number of applicants of color has grown over the last three years, but our number of new certificated staff of color has remained constant. To address this discrepancy, we provided specific professional learning for our leaders who will be screening applications. This training was provided to all our building principals and assistant principals, our directors of teaching and learning and several executive members. In partnership with our Director of EDI, the learning focused on awareness of one's own bias, the phenomena of confirmation bias and opportunities to calibrate screening protocols among colleagues. The feedback for the training was positive and we anticipate an increase in applicants of color screening into the interview process. This is ongoing work and a training protocol call that will need to be revisited each year.

On-Going Affirmative Action Goals

The district utilizes a variety of recruiting, communication, and outreach efforts to facilitate attainment of affirmative action goals. The human resources department is responsible for implementing and monitoring the following support activities:

- The Bellingham Promise serves as a compass and resource for all staff and community members regarding our collective commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).
- The district uses recruitment sources and procedures that ensure qualified, protected-class applicants are identified and recruited.
- The district Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Director and Human Resources Department collaborate by regularly reviewing and discussing hiring processes and retention of under-represented minority staff. Current work includes the examination of the district's online application system and website to ensure a more inclusive design, identifying and removing barriers such as job descriptions and interview questions for the purpose of eliminating barriers and unintentional bias, and planning opportunities for hosting job fairs to provide information and support for persons of color.
- The district Human Resources Executive Director sits on the Bias and Equity Committee and provides input on hiring, training and processing around incidents of inappropriate staff behavior. This committee is also drafting a Bias Policy that will be submitted to the Board in the Fall 2023.

- Continue training and support for district leaders with their commitment to transform schools to more inclusive environments for staff, students, and families.
- Continue to increase and expand EDI trainings for all staff.
- Host job fairs in-district and at community facilities to attract diverse candidates.
- Schedule dates for our HR Team to remove barriers from applicants who are pursuing job opportunities with the district by providing technical supports, share information about job opportunities, and how to apply for positions.
- Distribute job recruitment information in schools and the Family Resource Centers.
- Advertise and recruit through targeted college and professional associations.
- Banners outside schools and other facilities such as the Transportation Department, with high community traffic.
- Continue trainings for Administrators and interview teams to ensure personal, cultural, and institutional biases do not interfere with the screening, interviewing, and hiring of diverse candidates.
- As vacancies occur, remind recruiting and hiring authorities of the district's commitment and goals under the affirmative action plan.
- Monitor the employee selection process for inclusion of underutilized protected class.

If there are any questions or concerns about the report or analysis, please contact me.

Attachments

cc: Administrative
Team
Association
Presidents

ATTACHMENT A

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION NEW STAFF HIRED

OCTOBER 2022- OCTOBER 2023

(As reported to OSPI on S-275 report)

CATEGORY	Total Employees	Women		Minority ¹		Veteran	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Certificated Administrators	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Teachers & Instructional Support Personnel	7	2	29.0%	1	14.29%	0	0.00%
TOTAL CERTIFICATED	7	2	29.0%	1	14.29%	0	0.00%
Classified Administrators/Managers/Supervisors	0	0	.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Instructional Support/Coordinators	2	2	100%	2	100%	0	0.00%
Accounting/Tech/ Exempt							
Exec. Admin Asst./Admin Asst/Paraeducator/Acct/Educational Support	44	36	81.82%	10	22.73%	1	0.79%
Custodial/Maintenance	5	1	20.00%	2	40.00%	0	0.00%
Food Services	3	1	33.33%	2	66.67%	0	0.00%
Transportation	8	3	37.50%	4	50.0%	0	0.00%
TOTAL CLASSIFIED	62	43	69.39%	20	32.26%	0	0.00%
DISTRICT TOTAL	69	45	65.22%	21	30.43%		

¹Minorities include American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Hawaiian Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic

Note the following hiring data for the past three school years.

- 183 new staff were hired between October of 2020 and October of 2021
- 198 new staff were hired between October of 2021 and October of 2022
- 76 new staff were hired between October of 2022 and October of 2023

ATTACHMENT B

Women: hiring and utilization data + progress towards goals

The following chart includes information based on October 2023, data in the S-275 report to OSPI.

- The data indicates a decrease in the total number of staff by seventeen positions. The percentage of women employed remained statistically constant with less than one percentage point reduction.
- The district continued to grow in placing women in administrative positions – from 62.07% to 63.64%. This indicates a deliberate effort to hire women into leadership roles in Bellingham Public Schools.
- Despite reductions in staffing, the percentage of women employed in 2023 remains statistically constant in comparison to the total number of staff.
- The district is committed to hiring and retaining a diverse workforce that is reflective of the district’s students and families. With that in mind, Human Resources will continue to monitor the diversity of its workforce in all job categories.

Job Group	Total staff (including women) employed 2023	Total women employed 2023	Percent total women employed	Availability Annual Placement Rate	Percent Women Expected*	Percent Under Utilized	Goals for 2019 – 2024 Utilization Increase
Certificated Administrators	55	35	63.64%	62.9%	50.3%	N/A	N/A
Teachers/Instructional Support Personnel	845	633	74.91%	72.9%	58.3%	N/A	N/A
Classified Admin./Mgrs./ Supervisors	31	15	48.39%	54.4%	43.5%	N/A	N/A
Instructional Support/Coord. / Accounting/Tech.	46	33	71.74%	35.7%	28.6%	N/A	N/A
Exec. Admin Asst./Admin Asst./ Paraeducator/ Acct./Educ. Support	423	355	83.92%	90.4%	72.3%	N/A	N/A
Custodial/ Maintenance	84	23	27.38%	25.6%	20.5%	0.26%	N/A
Food Service	53	49	92.45%	70.3%	56.2%	N/A	N/A
Transportation	63	26	41.27%	32.5%	26.0%	N/A	N/A
Total	1600	1169	73.06%				

Washington State & Whatcom County statistics used for rows 1-8.

*80% of Total Availability

ATTACHMENT C

Ethnic Minority: hiring and utilization data + progress towards goals

The following chart includes information based on October 2023, data in the S-275 report to OSPI.

- The data indicates an increase in the total number of ethnic minority staff employed by Bellingham Public Schools. Specifically, 24 more staff who identify as minority we employed in 2023, an increase of about 2% of total staff.
- The district is committed to hiring and retaining a diverse workforce that is reflective of the district’s students and families. With that in mind, Human Resources will continue to monitor and expand opportunities and seek out additional options for increasing the diversity of its workforce in all job categories.

Job Group	Total staff (including minority) employed 2023	Total minority staff employed 2023	Percent total Minority employed	Availability Annual Placement Rate	Percent Minority Expected*	Percent under utilized	Goal for 2019 – 2024 Utilization Increase
Certificated Administrators	55	5	9.09%	13.3%	10.6%	NA	NA
Teachers/Instructional Support Personnel	845	78%	9.23%	9.1%	7.3%	N/A	N/A
Classified Admin./Mgrs./Supervisors	31	5	16.31%	15.5%	12.4%	N/A	N/A
Instructional Support/Coord./Acct./Tech.	46	14	30.43%	5.4%	4.3%	N/A	N/A
Exec. Admin. Asst./Admin. Asst./ Paraeducator/ Acct./Educ. Support	423	75	17.73%	6.5%	5.2%	N/A	N/A
Custodial/Maintenance	84	24	28.57%	13.7%	11.0%	N/A	N/A
Food Service	53	13	24.53%	22.7%	18.2%	NA	NA
Transportation	63	7	20.63%	9.2%	7.4%	N/A	N/A
Total	1600	227	14.19%				

Washington State & Whatcom County statistics used for rows 1-8

*80% of Total Availability