



# BEST PRACTICES FOR INCREASING STAFF DIVERSITY

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	3
KEY FINDINGS.....	3
SECTION I: BEST PRACTICES FOR RECRUITING DIVERSE STAFF .....	5
Grow Your Own Programs .....	5
Partnering with Higher Education Institutions.....	6
Alternative Certification Programs.....	7
Financial Barriers .....	9
Leverage Federal Funds.....	9
Inclusive Job Postings and Descriptions.....	10
Inclusive Marketing.....	12
SECTION II: BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT .....	14
Equity Strategies For Community Engagement .....	14
Community Involvement in The Hiring Process .....	15
Community Support.....	16
SECTION III: COMMUNITY-BASED ENGAGEMENT DISCUSSION GUIDE.....	17
Discussion Guide .....	17

# INTRODUCTION

Public school districts across the nation struggle to recruit and retain educational staff (e.g., teachers, district-level personnel, support staff) and particularly persons of color. There is a critical shortage of teachers of color in small rural school districts, where low salaries, limited resources, and competition with larger neighbor districts contribute to the difficulty of recruiting staff.<sup>1</sup> To guide staffing and diversity initiatives at partner districts, Hanover Research (Hanover) presents this best practices report on increasing staff diversity and engaging community members in creating a comprehensive diversity hiring plan. Hanover divides this report into three sections:

- **Section I: Best Practices in Recruiting Diverse Staff** discusses notable diverse recruiting practices, such as teacher residencies, Grow Your Own programs, partnerships with higher-education institutions, alternative teacher pathways, and high-level marketing practices.
- **Section II: Best Practices in Community Engagement** discusses opportunities to invite community stakeholders, families, and students into the staff recruiting process.
- **Section III: Community-Based Discussion Guide** provides key questions for facilitated dialogue between district leaders and community members.

## KEY FINDINGS



**Districts often use GYO programs, higher education partnerships, alternative certification pathways, and incentives to expand traditional outreach and recruitment efforts.** These strategies target main challenges that deter teachers from working in rural districts, including low pay, geographic and social isolation, and difficult working conditions. GYO programs aim to address these issues by creating a teacher pipeline that attracts students to teach in their home districts and diversifies the state's educator workforce. Additionally, partnerships with higher education institutions and alternative teacher preparation programs allow districts to solidify a diverse recruitment pipeline by providing structured training, practical experience, and clear directions towards formal teaching and educational positions.



**Inclusive job postings and descriptions contain language that welcomes all individuals regardless of background.** These descriptions go beyond standard anti-discriminatory language and demonstrates a celebration of diversity in applicants. Additionally, inclusive job postings only include the minimum requirements and education and avoid biased language. By posting only minimum requirements, districts are more likely to receive applications from women and people of color, who often do not submit applications for which they do not meet all criteria.



**Developing effective hiring and marketing strategies supports districts' recruitment efforts for expanding staff diversity.** Notable strategies include alternative outreach methods and creating an inclusive hiring team comprised of individuals with diverse backgrounds, including teachers and families. These teams can draw from corporate marketing strategies to develop branding and messaging tactics that engage diverse applicants and expand applicant pools. For example, hiring teams and leaders should carefully place adds and create content that is aware of or careful to avoid tone, language, representation, context, appropriation, and stereotypes.

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<sup>1</sup> Guha, R., M.E. Hyler, and L. Darling-Hammond. "The Teacher Residency: An Innovative Model for Preparing Teachers." *Learning Policy Institute*, September 15, 2016. [2] Carver-Thomas, D. and K. Grayson. "Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse, High-Quality Teacher Workforce." *Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)*, April 2017. <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/strategies-recruiting-retaining-diverse-high-quality-teacher-workforce/>



**Effective use of state and federal funding and strategies to reduce financial barriers support district recruitment and retention initiatives.** State and federal funding can address issues of low pay by supplying financial aid for teachers through scholarships, grants, and loan forgiveness programs. Additionally, cost of living stipends and loyalty bonuses are among strategies districts can use to help address financial barriers experienced by teachers from minority backgrounds.

# SECTION I: BEST PRACTICES FOR RECRUITING DIVERSE STAFF

In the following subsections, Hanover discusses best practices for district-led recruitment strategies of diverse candidates to rural areas, such as early outreach programs, partnerships with colleges and universities, and collaboration with alternative certification programs.

## GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAMS

**Grow Your Own (GYO) programs develop a pipeline for prospective teachers.** Through these programs, prospective teachers (e.g., high school students, paraprofessionals, after-school program staff, community members) return to their communities after finishing university or certification requirements and fill district positions.<sup>2</sup> GYO programs include two main goals:<sup>3</sup>

- To encourage and support students who express an interest in teaching and school leadership at a young age; and
- To help districts grow their educator pipeline by attracting students to home districts to diversify the state's educator workforce.

GYO programs typically involve a partnership between a school district and a national organization, a higher education institution, or a community-based organization.<sup>4</sup> These programs are particularly strong among high school students and effectively provide support for black students who want to pursue a career in education. GYO programs address the issues of teacher shortages, lack of teacher diversity, and the lack of understanding of the local community.<sup>5</sup> Teachers who went through the GYO pipeline have higher rates of retention and express that these programs removed barriers that would have otherwise deterred them from pursuing a teaching degree.<sup>6</sup>

Multiple states have implemented GYO programs and are seeing beneficial outcomes. For example, in Colorado, two high schools with GYO programs partnered with the University of Colorado Boulder's School of Education to offer guaranteed admission to any high school student interested in pursuing a degree in education and enrolled in their high school's teaching program.<sup>7</sup> Conversely, in rural school districts in Kentucky, GYO programs help students accrue college credit before graduating high school; and in Montana, GYO programs particularly benefit tribal schools that see major teacher shortages.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Carver-Thomas, D. "Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color." Learning Policy Institute, April 2018. [https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Diversifying\\_Teaching\\_Profession\\_REPORT\\_0.pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Diversifying_Teaching_Profession_REPORT_0.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Bulleted text adapted from: Garcia, A. "A 50-State Scan of Grow Your Own Teacher Policies and Programs." New America, May 3, 2021. <http://newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/grow-your-own-teachers/> [2] "Mississippi's Grow-Your-Own Teacher Initiative." The Mississippi Department of Education, 2019. <https://www.mdek12.org/OETA/Mississippi-Grow-Your-Own-Teacher-Initiative>

<sup>4</sup> Garcia, Op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> Valenzuela, A. "Grow Your Own Educator Programs: A Review of the Literature with an Emphasis on Equity-Based Approaches." *Intercultural Development Research Association*, November 2017. [2] "EdRising Academy | Educators Rising." Educators Rising. <https://educatorsrising.org/edrisingacademy/>

<sup>6</sup> Garcia, Op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> "Guaranteed Admission Now Offered to High Schoolers Who Study Education." University of Colorado Boulder School of Education, October 19, 2018. <https://www.colorado.edu/education/2018/10/19/guaranteed-admission-now-offered-high-schoolers-who-study-education>





<sup>8</sup> Stroud, G.L. "Will 'Grow-Your-Own' Teacher Programs Be Enough to Address the Rural Teacher Shortage?" Education Post, April 22, 2021. <https://educationpost.org/will-grow-your-own-teacher-programs-be-enough-to-address-the-rural-teacher-shortage/>

Furthermore, in 2019, the Mississippi Department of Education released a report outlining strategies for implementing two GYO programs (i.e., Teacher Academy and Educators Rising).

Figure 1.1: describes these programs and two other national models: Teacher Cadet and Pathways2Teaching.

9

**Figure 1.1: Grow Your Own Programs**

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
 <p>Teaching Academy</p>	Teaching Academy is a high school program that aims to attract students to education. Teacher Academy offers education-specific courses, informational support to guide students through pursuing a teaching degree, and hands-on experiences like classroom observation and participation. <sup>10</sup>
 <p>Educators Rising</p>	Educators Rising is a national organization with chapters in 32 states, including Mississippi. The organization provides a developed curriculum for middle and high school students that develops students' interest in teaching and provides technical and clinical teaching experience before college. <sup>11</sup>
 <p>Teacher Cadet</p>	Teacher Cadet has two main goals: encouraging academically talented high school students to consider teaching as a career and developing future community leaders who will become civic advocates for public education. It is a dual credit accrual course taught for a minimum of one class period per day for a year. <sup>12</sup>
 <p>Pathways2Teaching</p>	Pathways2Teaching is a teacher pipeline and pathway for youth from vulnerable communities to return to their communities as educators. Goals include increasing diversity in the teaching profession and better preparing low-income and first-generation high school students for college. <sup>13</sup>

Source: Multiple sources cited within the figure

Notably, GYO programs help address challenges with recruiting non-local teachers; however, GYO programs do not entirely solve the teacher shortage crisis.<sup>14</sup> Schools must also incentivize teachers to stay in rural area. Such retention strategies include increasing salaries and building a welcoming and inclusive environment that attracts a diverse teacher workforce.<sup>15</sup>

## PARTNERING WITH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Districts should develop and cultivate partnerships with local colleges and universities to increase the diversity of their teaching applicants. The Center for American Progress notes that, to ensure that teacher candidates align with district needs, “there is a need for greater collaboration between teacher-preparation programs and the school districts likely to hire program graduates.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>9</sup> “Mississippi’s Grow-Your-Own Teacher Initiative,” Op. cit., p. 14. [2] “EdRising Academy | Educators Rising,” Op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> “Mississippi’s Grow-Your-Own Teacher Initiative,” Op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> “EdRising Academy | Educators Rising,” Op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> “Teacher Cadets Overview.” Teacher Cadets. <https://www.teachercadets.com/teacher-cadets-overview.html>

<sup>13</sup> “Pathways2Teaching.” Pathways2Teaching. <https://www.pathways2teaching.com/>

<sup>14</sup> Stroud, Op. cit.

<sup>15</sup> Morton, N. “Rural Schools Have a Teacher Shortage. Why Don’t People Who Live There, Teach There?” The Hechinger Report, April 13, 2021. <https://hechingerreport.org/rural-schools-have-a-teacher-shortage-why-dont-people-who-live-there-teach-there/>

<sup>16</sup> Text quoted nearly verbatim with minor adaptations from Partee, G.L. “Retaining Teachers of Color in Our Public Schools.” Center for American Progress, 2014.

## TEACHER RESIDENCIES

**Teacher residencies constitute a notable district/university partnership offering practical learning experience, support, and a clear post-program career pathway.**<sup>17</sup> Specifically, these programs, which are particularly effective for recruiting and retaining non-white teachers, are “partnerships between districts and universities that subsidize and improve teachers’ training to teach in high need schools and high-demand subject areas” while completing formal coursework.<sup>18</sup> Participants also receive financial support through a stipend or scholarship and agree to work in their residency district.<sup>19</sup> To support these programs, the National Center for Teacher Residencies developed five steps to creating and supporting teacher residency programs:<sup>20</sup>

1. Culturally responsive recruitment and equitable selection;
2. Rigorous selection and support of teacher mentors;
3. Intensive pre-service preparation focused on the specific needs of teachers in high-need schools;
4. Aligned induction support; and
5. Strategic hiring of graduates.

Additionally, teacher residencies allow districts to establish a pipeline of potential teachers to support through their training and education with the expectation that participating residents will remain at their school for at least three years. Notably, many former residents often continue to grow in their original resident district by becoming mentors, principals, and senior administrators.<sup>21</sup>

## DUAL ENROLLMENT PATHWAYS

**Dual-enrollment pathways are partnerships between school districts and nearby institutions that allow high school students to enroll in higher education courses.**<sup>22</sup> Students who participate in dual-enrollment programs are more likely to finish high school and “experience greater postsecondary success.”<sup>23</sup> Typically, only students with high grade point averages (GPAs) can participate in dual enrollment programs; however, middle-achieving high school students can equally succeed in and benefit from dual enrollment coursework.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, dual-enrollment pathways enable students to partake in mentorship programs with undergraduate students at the partnership institution, from whom they can learn to navigate the college application process and better prepare for the academic and social transition to college.<sup>25</sup>

## ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

**Districts can partner with alternative certification programs to capture a larger, diverse candidate pool.** For many individuals considering teaching, traditional teacher certification acts as a barrier to entry. This barrier has negative consequences for schools that are less successful at recruiting highly qualified teachers. Alternative certification programs provide learning opportunities to people who earned their bachelor’s

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<sup>17</sup> Guha, Hyler, and Darling-Hammond, Op. cit. [2] Carver-Thomas, “Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color,” Op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> Carver-Thomas, “Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color,” Op. cit., p. vi.

<sup>19</sup> Carver-Thomas, D. “Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color.” *Learning Policy Institute*, April 2018.

<sup>20</sup> Bulleted text reproduced verbatim from “Our Residency Model.” National Center for Teacher Residencies. <https://nctrresidencies.org/about-nctr/our-residency-model/>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> “Recruiting & Retaining Educators of Color: Hiring Practices to Diversify Your Candidate Pool & Strategies to Support and Retain Educators.” The Education Trust-West, 2017. [https://west.edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/EducationTrustWest\\_2020\\_Recruiting-and-Retaining-Educators-of-Color.pdf](https://west.edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/EducationTrustWest_2020_Recruiting-and-Retaining-Educators-of-Color.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Zinth, J. and E. Barnett. “Rethinking Dual Enrollment to Reach More Students.” *Education Commission of the States*, May 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> “Pathways to Teacher Diversity.” Lasell University. <https://www.lasell.edu/academics/schools/school-of-humanities-education-justice-and-social-sciences/educators-and-diversity/pathways-to-teacher-diversity/our-approach.html>

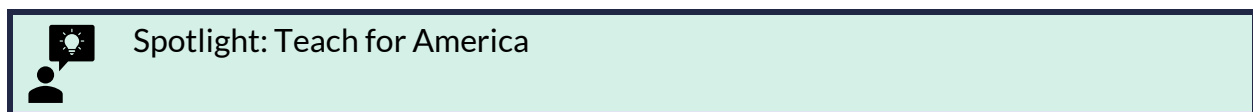
degree but did not study education or formally complete a teaching preparation program.<sup>26</sup> Alternative certification programs often specifically focus on recruiting teachers to hard-to-staff schools and helping paraprofessionals and classified staff more easily enter the profession.<sup>27</sup>

Though nearly 90 percent of teacher candidates enroll in traditional teacher education programs operated through higher education institutions, candidates in alternative teacher preparation programs are more likely to be people of color. The overall candidate pool from these programs is smaller but more racially diverse than traditional programs.<sup>28</sup> Specifically, teachers of color comprise 35 percent and 42 percent of all enrollees in alternative higher education-based and non-higher education programs, respectively, and only 26 percent of traditional programs, signaling a racial gap among program demographics.<sup>29</sup> Programs for alternative certification include Teach for America (TFA), the American Board, and emergency teacher certifications. Figure 1.2 outlines the main characteristics of these three programs, and the spotlight immediately following examines TFA’s emphasis on diverse staff recruitment.

**Figure 1.2: Alternative Certification Programs**

PROGRAM	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS
TFA	TFA is a national two-year program that places “qualified teaching candidates” in one of 53 high-need regions of the U.S. <sup>30</sup> TFA aims to pursue equitable teaching practices, strengthen school relationships with local communities, and achieve meaningful outcomes for students. <sup>31</sup>
American Board	The American Board offers a flexible, online teaching certification program. The program is entirely self-paced, and, therefore, especially accessible for working professionals or people with families who cannot commit the time to immersive programs like TFA. <sup>32</sup> American Board offers two online courses, and teachers usually become certified in seven to 10 months. <sup>33</sup>
Emergency Teaching Certification	Emergency Teaching Certifications are temporary licenses given to people with bachelor’s degrees in areas with extreme teacher shortages. <sup>34</sup> Mississippi is one of the few states that provides emergency teacher licenses, given the severity of the state’s teacher shortages. <sup>35</sup> Salaries for teachers who hold emergency licenses are comparable to teachers with standard certification. <sup>36</sup> This option works well for teachers who are enrolled simultaneously in a standard certification program but want to help fill the immediate need for teachers in certain areas. <sup>37</sup>

Source: Multiple sources cited within the figure



<sup>26</sup> “Alternative Teacher Certification Guide.” Teacher Certification Degrees.

<https://www.teachercertificationdegrees.com/alternative/>

<sup>27</sup> “Mississippi’s Grow-Your-Own Teacher Initiative,” Op. cit.

<sup>28</sup> “Title II: Higher Education Act.” U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2015. p. 1.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED576131.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> “Ways to Earn Alternative Teaching Certification.” All Education Schools. <https://www.alleducationschools.com/teacher-certification/alternative/>

<sup>31</sup> “Teach For America’s Core Values Guide Our Mission.” Teach for America. <https://www.teachforamerica.org/what-we-do/values>

<sup>32</sup> “Ways to Earn Alternative Teaching Certification,” Op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> “Become a Teacher in Mississippi.” American Board. <https://www.americanboard.org/mississippi/>

<sup>34</sup> “Ways to Earn Alternative Teaching Certification,” Op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Nichols, L. “Mississippi Emergency Teacher Certification.” Sapling. <https://www.sapling.com/7972936/mississippi-emergency-teacher-certification>

<sup>37</sup> “Ways to Earn Alternative Teaching Certification,” Op. cit.



**TFA is one of the most diverse teacher preparation programs in the country**, drawing about half of its participants from minority backgrounds.<sup>38</sup> Notably, the program’s recruitment team receives specialized training to help them relate to all types of applicants and emphasizes meeting with candidates individually or in small groups to build relationships (rather than waiting for potential candidates to approach TFA).<sup>39</sup> Using a data dashboard, recruiters research campuses with the highest percentages of students of color, where they speak to classes and student organizations about the benefits of TFA. For its current teachers, TFA seeks frequent input from members of color to ensure they feel “comfortable and welcome,” and has ensured cultural competence in its staff with an organization-wide, multisession diversity series.<sup>40</sup> TFA indicates the Greater Delta of Arkansas and Mississippi as their highest need area for teaching placements and aims to place as many corps members there as possible.<sup>41</sup>

## FINANCIAL BARRIERS

School districts can help remove the financial barriers to teaching by addressing some of the major compensation burdens that deter teachers from seeking jobs in low-income areas. Programs that creatively “weave resources together and provide necessary support” attract more diverse candidates.<sup>42</sup> Figure 1.3 outlines actions that school districts can take to support teachers financially.

**Figure 1.3: School District Solutions to Teacher Financial Barriers**

Helping candidates apply for teacher scholarships and loan forgiveness programs

Offering service scholarships and loan forgiveness in exchange for a commitment to teaching in their school for four years

Paying for books, technology access, and childcare support

Offering stipends for living costs

Paying substitute teachers loyalty bonuses

Source: State of Washington Professional Educator Standards Board, Learning Policy Institute, The Education Trust-West, and California County Superintendents Educational Services Association<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, school districts can rethink their hiring timelines and begin the process early in the spring before the coming school year. Candidates of color often experience higher loan debt and may find positions at schools offering security immediately upon graduation more attractive.<sup>44</sup>

## LEVERAGE FEDERAL FUNDS

**Title II, Part A of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) outlines certain areas where schools can use funding to develop diversity initiatives.** These initiatives may include recruiting effective teachers, improving the

<sup>38</sup> Partelow, L. et al. “America Needs More Teachers of Color and a More Selective Teaching Profession.” Center for American Progress, September 14, 2017. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2017/09/14/437667/america-needs-teachers-color-selective-teaching-profession/>

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> “High-Need Regions.” Teach for America. <https://www.teachforamerica.org/how-to-join/placement/high-need-regions>

<sup>42</sup> “Grow Your Own Teachers.” State of Washington Professional Educator Standards Board, 2016.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B\\_bsOb2aZbo8ekVrbFFXd1JTcJg/view?usp=embed\\_facebook](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_bsOb2aZbo8ekVrbFFXd1JTcJg/view?usp=embed_facebook)

<sup>43</sup> Figure adapted from: Ibid. [2] Carver-Thomas, “Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color,” Op. cit. [2] “Recruiting & Retaining Educators of Color,” Op. cit.

<sup>44</sup> Carver-Thomas, “Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color,” Op. cit., p. 26.

teacher distribution, and providing low-income schools with additional resources to attract teachers.<sup>45</sup> Districts can also access funds under Higher Education Act (HEA) Title II, and AmeriCorps, in addition to investing funds from ESSA to support teacher residencies.<sup>46</sup> Allocation of ESSA Title II, Part A, and Title III, Part A funds may support the purposes shown in Figure 1.4.<sup>47</sup>

**Figure 1.4: Initiatives Supported by ESSA Funding**

SECTION	DESCRIPTION
Title II, Part A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expert help in screening candidates and enabling hiring</li> <li>▪ Differential and incentive pay for teachers, principals, or other school leaders in high-need academic subject areas and specialty areas, which may include performance-based pay system</li> <li>▪ Teacher, paraprofessional, principal, or other school leader advancement and professional growth, and an emphasis on leadership opportunities, multiple career paths, and pay differentiation</li> <li>▪ New teacher, principal, or other school leader induction and mentoring programs that are designed to increase the retention of effective teachers, principals, or other school leaders</li> <li>▪ Recruiting qualified individuals from other fields to become teachers, principals, or other school leaders, including mid-career professionals from other occupations, former military personnel, and recent graduates of institutions of higher education with records of academic distinction who demonstrate potential to become effective teachers, principals, or other school leaders</li> </ul>
Title III, Part A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recruiting and supporting personnel, including teachers and paraprofessionals who have been specifically trained or are being trained to provide services to immigrant children and youth where districts are experiencing substantial increases in Immigrant Children and Youth (ESEA section 3115(e)(1)(B))</li> </ul>

Source: Mississippi Grow Your Own Initiative<sup>48</sup>

## INCLUSIVE JOB POSTINGS AND DESCRIPTIONS

In addition to personnel and financial strategies, school districts can thoughtfully attract diverse candidates to their schools through various marketing strategies, including inclusive language in job postings. According to Randstad Canada, “An inclusive job description is worded in such a way that no one feels excluded or uncomfortable when they are applying for the job based upon their gender, cultural or ethnic origin and background, or a disability they might have.”<sup>49</sup> It is critical that inclusive job postings only list the minimum job requirements and education levels necessary to begin employment.<sup>50</sup> Listing additional requirements can be discriminatory, as women and people of color are less likely to apply for a job unless they meet all qualifications.<sup>51</sup> Inclusive job descriptions also avoid using words such as “expert,” as this type of language often discourages diverse candidates from applying.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>45</sup> “Mississippi’s Grow-Your-Own Teacher Initiative,” Op. cit. [2] “Addressing the Teacher Shortage: What Districts Can Do.” Learning Policy Institute, 2016. [https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Addressing\\_Teacher\\_Shortage\\_What\\_Districts\\_Can\\_Do\\_FACTSHEET.pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Addressing_Teacher_Shortage_What_Districts_Can_Do_FACTSHEET.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> “Addressing the Teacher Shortage: What Districts Can Do,” Op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> “Mississippi’s Grow-Your-Own Teacher Initiative,” Op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>48</sup> Figure text adapted nearly verbatim from “Mississippi’s Grow-Your-Own Teacher Initiative,” Op. cit.

<sup>49</sup> “Tips to Write an Inclusive Job Description.” Randstad Canada, September 29, 2019.

<sup>50</sup> “Position Descriptions and Job Posting Guidelines.” University of Washington-Human Resources. <https://hr.uw.edu/diversity/hiring/position-description-guidelines/>

<sup>51</sup> Superville, D.R. “To Recruit More Teachers of Color, This District Posted a Unique Job Ad.” Education Week, July 24, 2019. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/to-recruit-more-teachers-of-color-this-district-posted-a-unique-job-ad/2019/07>


<sup>52</sup> Baeza, C. “An Inclusive Workplace Begins with the Wording of Job Ads.” NEWS BBVA, March 7, 2019. <https://www.bbva.com/en/an-inclusive-workplace-begins-with-the-wording-of-job-ads/>

Additionally, districts can use inclusive and diversity-specific language in addition to, or instead of, standard anti-discriminatory language in job descriptions, as shown in Figure 1.5.<sup>53</sup> Although standard anti-discriminatory language demonstrates districts' efforts to comply with U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) laws, adding positive, inclusive language signals a district's active effort towards meeting diversity, equity, and inclusivity goals.<sup>54</sup>

**Figure 1.5: Traditional Versus Inclusive Job Posting Language**

TRADITIONAL ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE	INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE
<p>The Dry Creek JESD does not discriminate on the basis of the person's actual or perceived race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, veteran status, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sex or sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law, ordinance or regulation, in its educational program(s) or employment.</p>	<p>Inclusive School celebrates the diversity of our school and local communities including race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. We welcome candidates representing the diversity of the world in our educational program, admission policies, financial aid program, staff hiring, and other school-administered programs.</p>

Source: Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District and National Association of Independent Schools<sup>55</sup>



### Spotlight: North Clackamas School District

In 2019, the North Clackamas School District, located in Milwaukie, Oregon, posted a job for an elementary school teacher containing language addressing how women and people of color historically are less likely to apply to a job unless they meet all the requirements. The post also included language inviting these individuals to apply regardless of these trends.<sup>56</sup> The district now posts this language on its jobs application page and in several job postings, as follows:<sup>57</sup>

The North Clackamas School District strives to create an inclusive environment that welcomes and values the diversity of our staff and students. We foster fairness, equity, and inclusion to create a workplace environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

Studies have shown that women and people of color are less likely to apply for jobs unless they believe they meet every one of the qualifications as described in a job description. We are most interested in finding the best candidate for the job, and that candidate may be one who comes from a less traditional background. We would encourage you to apply, even if you don't believe you meet every one of our qualifications described. If you are unsure whether you meet the qualifications of this position, or how this would be determined, please feel free to contact Human Resources to discuss your application. Preference will be given to those applicants with work or lived experience with culturally, linguistically and racially diverse communities.

Source: North Clackamas School District

<sup>53</sup> Cort, J. "A 5-Step Approach to Aligning Hiring and Diversity Goals." National Association of Independent Schools, 2018. <https://www.nais.org/magazine/independent-school/fall-2018/a-5-step-approach-to-aligning-hiring-and-diversity-goals/>

<sup>54</sup> "Prohibited Employment Policies/Practices." U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. <https://www.eeoc.gov/prohibited-employment-policiespractices> [2] Arigbe, O. "Can Your Job Posting Attract Diverse Candidates?" The SHRM Blog-Society for Human Resource Management, August 6, 2020. <https://blog.shrm.org/blog/can-your-job-posting-attract-diverse-candidates>

<sup>55</sup> Figure contents reproduced verbatim from: "Assistant Principal - Elementary School at Dry Creek Joint Elementary." Dry Creek Joint Unified School District, December 2020. <https://www.edjoin.org/Home/DistrictJobPosting/1350268> [2] Cort, Op. cit.

<sup>56</sup> Superville, D.R. "To Recruit More Teachers of Color, This District Posted a Unique Job Ad." *Education Week*, July 24, 2019. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/to-recruit-more-teachers-of-color-this-district-posted-a-unique-job-ad/2019/07>

<sup>57</sup> Block quote reproduced verbatim from "Welcome." North Clackamas School District. <https://www.applitrack.com/nclack/onlineapp/>

Furthermore, using neutral, un-coded language in job advertisements reduces the likelihood of racial, religious, or ethnic bias. For example, references to “professionalism” or “professional attire/dress/appearance” imply inherent cultural prejudice and should be excluded from job descriptions.<sup>58</sup> Figure 1.6 lists additional ways to eliminate racial bias in job descriptions and postings.<sup>59</sup>

**Figure 1.6: Eliminating Racial Bias in Job Descriptions**

Never mention race or national origin

Avoid language that may deter qualified non-native English speakers from applying (e.g., “strong English-language skills”)

A “clean-shaven” requirement can exclude candidates whose faith requires them to maintain facial hair (it also indicates the position is for men only)

Source: Monster.com<sup>60</sup>



Note: Job postings should also include multiple ways for applicants to contact the hiring manager and submit materials (e.g., website portal, e-mail, fax, regular mail) promotes inclusive recruitment.<sup>61</sup>

## INCLUSIVE MARKETING

Districts can effectively target and recruit diverse candidates through inclusive marketing, which “refers to the messaging, people, processes and technologies that enable marginalized or underrepresented groups to fully experience and connect with brands.”<sup>62</sup> Inclusive marketing also promotes perspectives from minority groups and other historically discriminated populations, allows districts to enhance communication with diverse community stakeholders, and reduces implicit biases.<sup>63</sup>

**Creating and promoting an inclusive brand can help districts increase the likelihood of building a more extensive, diverse candidate group.** All marketing language should include the district’s commitment to an environment that celebrates and promotes diverse individuals, backgrounds, values, ideas, and perspectives.<sup>64</sup> Adapting strategies from businesses and corporations, districts should begin developing inclusive marketing and brand strategies by surveying and conducting focus groups with current teachers and staff from minority and historically underrepresented groups to solicit their opinions and perspectives on recruiting diverse candidates. Districts should then examine the diversity of their human resources, recruitment, and marketing departments, followed by hiring or contracting individuals who can provide any

<sup>58</sup> Agarwal, P. “How To Minimize Unconscious Bias During Recruitment.” Forbes, February 20, 2019.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/pragyaagarwaleurope/2019/02/20/how-to-minimize-unconscious-bias-during-recruitment/>

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Figure contents quoted verbatim with modifications from “How to Write More Inclusive Job Descriptions.” Monster.Com, June 15, 2020. <https://hiring.monster.com/employer-resources/workforce-management/diversity-in-the-workplace/inclusive-job-descriptions/>

<sup>61</sup> “Steps for Writing an Inclusive Job Posting.” HireforTalent.Ca, 2017. [http://hirefortalent.ca/images/pdf/tools/4.3\\_How-to-Write-an-Inclusive-Job-Posting\\_EN.pdf](http://hirefortalent.ca/images/pdf/tools/4.3_How-to-Write-an-Inclusive-Job-Posting_EN.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> Xavier, R. “Let’s Talk About Inclusive Marketing.” Accenture, February 4, 2020. <https://www.accenture.com/us-en/blogs/interactive-insights-blog/lets-talk-inclusive-marketing>

<sup>63</sup> Siegel, A. “What Is Inclusive Marketing and Why Is It Important?” The 360 Blog from Salesforce, February 6, 2019. <https://www.salesforce.com/blog/inclusive-marketing-equality-trailhead/>

<sup>64</sup> Douglas, E. “8 Promising Practices for Recruiting Diverse Educator Talent.” Education Week, September 23, 2014. <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/opinion-8-promising-practices-for-recruiting-diverse-educator-talent/2014/09>

missing viewpoints. Before publicizing content, marketing content generators must examine their assumptions and adhere to six inclusive marketing principles, shown in Figure 1.7.<sup>65</sup>

**Figure 1.7: Six Principles of Inclusive Marketing**

<b>START WITH TONE</b>	In planning marketing messaging, consider its intended subject, topic, message, and overall impact of marketing messaging to reach the right and respectful tone.
<b>BE INTENTIONAL WITH LANGUAGE</b>	Carefully consider every word, symbol, or phrase — not just what the words say, but also word placement (how and where).
<b>ENSURE REPRESENTATION</b>	For example, before publishing an advertisement, a brochure, or uploading website content, consider if it reflects society.
<b>CONSIDER CONTEXT</b>	Examine the circumstances that inform an event or piece of content. Context could mean the historical or cultural influences and extends to the content’s order and hierarchy.
<b>AVOID APPROPRIATION</b>	Engage in cultural respect and awareness by being mindful of nuance and historical context, honoring and learning the culture, seeking guidance and diverse opinions, evaluating intent and impact, and elevating authentic voices.
<b>COUNTER-STEREOTYPE</b>	Feature content going against a standardized image representing an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment.

Source: Salesforce<sup>66</sup>

**Inclusive marketing requires that districts reach diverse populations through mediums catered to their needs and interests.** For example, “[Districts] might consider placing ads with organizations specifically geared toward supporting diverse backgrounds, including student and faculty diversity conferences, professional development workshops, and advocacy groups.”<sup>67</sup> Posting jobs on social media also allows districts to reach more diverse candidates.<sup>68</sup> Districts might consider working with staff from minority and historically underrepresented groups and other internal diversity advocates to promote job opportunities through job fairs, webinars, conferences, and individual conversations.<sup>69</sup> Alternatively, hiring a diversity recruitment company can assist in recruiting and marketing diverse candidates.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Gynn, A. “How to Do Diverse and Inclusive Content Marketing That Matters.” Content Marketing Institute, June 5, 2020. <https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2020/06/diverse-inclusive-content-marketing/> [2] Siegel, “What Is Inclusive Marketing and Why Is It Important?,” Op. cit.

<sup>66</sup> Figure text reproduced verbatim with modifications from Siegel, A. “What Is Inclusive Marketing?” The 360 Blog from Salesforce, February 6, 2019. <https://www.salesforce.com/blog/inclusive-marketing-equality-trailhead/>

<sup>67</sup> Cort, Op. cit.

<sup>68</sup> Cavicchia, M. “Is There Bias in Your Hiring Process? Removing It Takes Diligence, Self-Awareness.” *Bar Leader-American Bar Association*, 4:26, August 2016. [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/bar\\_services/publications/bar\\_leader/2015-16/july-august/is-there-bias-in-your-hiring-process/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/bar_services/publications/bar_leader/2015-16/july-august/is-there-bias-in-your-hiring-process/)

<sup>69</sup> Douglas, Op. cit.

<sup>70</sup> “Diversity Recruitment.” Sparks Group. <https://sparksgroupinc.com/diversity-recruiting/>

# SECTION II: BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**School districts can find more effective solutions to school-based issues when they collaborate with the local community.** Once school leaders develop an understanding of equitable community engagement practices, they can begin to address staff diversity. School districts can involve community members in hiring conversation to expand recruitment solutions and share accountability and responsibility for diversity. The following subsections outline this process and other ways schools and communities can collaborate to support their local school district.

## EQUITY STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Great Schools Partnership defines equitable community engagement as schools, families, and local community organizations collaborating to improve school districts and support the overall student experience.<sup>71</sup> Students learn better when their families and community are actively engaged in their schools, and schools that engage with their communities are better equipped to “solve local problems, contribute to civic life, and respond to a changing economy.”<sup>72</sup> To foster effective and equitable community engagement, districts must consider community needs and values when implementing strategies and building school programs.<sup>73</sup> The following equity strategies provide examples of how districts can thoughtfully engage community members:<sup>74</sup>

- Giving marginalized voices more than just a seat at the table; those in power must also raise marginalized voices and involve them in the decision-making process;
- Encouraging all school community members to share their ideas and opinions;
- Talking less and listening more. The goal isn’t just to hear but also to understand perspectives other than your own;
- Eliminating linguistic, financial, and other barriers to community engagement. This may involve translation services, childcare, or changing the location or time of school meetings to make them more accessible;
- Recognizing that trust is earned and developed over time. Trust requires relationship-building, empathetic listening, and earnest efforts to engage with other perspectives;
- Communicating with (not to) your school community in a way they can understand. Don’t use “edu-speak” or technical jargon when plain language will do;
- Interrogating your own privilege and biases. Know your blind spots and rely on other members of your school community to help you navigate around them;
- Intentionally reaching out to and proactively involving marginalized voices—including communities of color and those who are economically disadvantaged. Go to them instead of expecting them to come to you;
- Never assuming any members of your school community do not care about or do not value education, or that they are not informed enough to make important decisions; and

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<sup>71</sup> “The Case for Community Engagement.” Great Schools Partnership.

<https://www.greatschoolspartnership.org/resources/equitable-community-engagement/the-case-for-community-engagement/>

<sup>72</sup> “The Case for Community Engagement,” Op. cit.

<sup>73</sup> Jacques, C. and A. Villegas. “Strategies for Equitable Family Engagement.” *State Support Network*, December 2018. p. 13.

<sup>74</sup> Text quoted verbatim from “The Case for Community Engagement,” Op. cit.

- Embracing the idea that students’ families are their advocates. Work to understand where they are coming from and what they care about.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE HIRING PROCESS

School districts can establish hiring committees that emphasize diverse applicants in their selection process to support these and other diversity-motivated hiring efforts. The Center for American Progress recommends that districts “include diverse perspectives—both in terms of race and ethnicity and in terms of job position—on the hiring committee and invite teachers to join school leaders and district representatives when interviewing candidates.”<sup>75</sup> When building the hiring committee, districts can also invite community stakeholders, students, and families to participate in the recruitment process.<sup>76</sup> Parents and students offer insight into ways schools can be more effective. Additionally, including families can foster early and strong relationships between schools and families.<sup>77</sup> Figure 2.1 outlines strategies for involving community members in the hiring process.

**Figure 2.1: Community Involvement in Hiring Strategies**

<b>GOALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Plan measurable goals for parent and student participation in the hiring process.</li> <li>■ Goal example: “Parents and students will be 90% of the hiring decisions.”</li> </ul>
<b>PARENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Coach parents on the rubrics being used and ask for feedback throughout the entire process, not only for feedback on the candidate.</li> <li>■ Ask: “On a scale of 1-10, 10 being highly valued, how valued did they feel during this process?”</li> </ul>
<b>STUDENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Create a process for students to actively participate.</li> <li>■ Ask students to share direct feedback after a candidate demonstrates activity—this shows the candidate that the school values student voice and creates an opportunity for the school to affirm or redirect the student.</li> </ul>
<b>CLARITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Be clear about how you will use student/parent feedback to decide, particularly when it differs from that of the school staff.</li> <li>■ Have vulnerable and open conversations with the hiring committee and facilitate these conversations thoughtfully.</li> </ul>

Source: Philly’s 7th Ward<sup>78</sup>



### Spotlight: Rocketship Education Charter Schools

At Rocketship Education charter schools in Washington, D.C., parents participate in the teacher hiring process months before the school year begins. Parent involvement varies throughout the process, sometimes three to six families are trained to conduct panel interviews, and at other times the school hosts a community-wide meeting so parents can meet job finalists.<sup>79</sup> Many parents expressed that this was the “first time that they have played such an active role in their child’s schooling.”<sup>80</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Konoske-Graf, A., L. Partelow, and M. Benner. “To Attract Great Teachers, School Districts Must Improve Their Human Capital Systems.” Center for American Progress, December 22, 2016. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2016/12/22/295574/to-attract-great-teachers-school-districts-must-improve-their-human-capital-systems/>

<sup>76</sup> “Recruiting & Retaining Educators of Color,” Op. cit.

<sup>77</sup> Seaton, K. “Here’s Why You Have to Include Students and Parents in School Hiring.” Philly’s 7th Ward, August 29, 2017. <https://phillys7thward.org/2017/08/heres-include-students-parents-school-hiring/>

<sup>78</sup> Figure text adapted nearly verbatim from Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Stein, P. “These Parents Are Interviewing Teachers for a New D.C. Charter School.” *Washington Post*, February 14, 2016. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/these-parents-are-interviewing-teachers-for-a-new-dc-charter-school/2016/02/14/f561365c-8be7-40f1-94a7-b6fced587627\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/these-parents-are-interviewing-teachers-for-a-new-dc-charter-school/2016/02/14/f561365c-8be7-40f1-94a7-b6fced587627_story.html) [2] Prothero, A. “At Charter School Network Rocketship, Parents Help Hire Teachers.” *Education Week*, February 24, 2016. <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/at-charter-school-network-rocketship-parents-help-hire-teachers/2016/02>

<sup>80</sup> Stein, Op. cit.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

In addition to schools, many other workplaces in rural communities face hiring shortages, particularly of people of color.<sup>81</sup> One explanation for these shortages is that companies and businesses in rural areas that lack racially and ethnically diverse populations “may have environments in which new employees feel less comfortable, which could, in turn, hinder attraction and retention of new talent.”<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, many features—such as the close-knit community, the lower cost of living, and low crime rates—could attract workers to a small, rural town.<sup>83</sup>

Schools can partner with community organizations to build more inclusive environments that would attract applicants to the area and foster greater levels of comfort in their new environment. Through inclusive collaboration, communities can help rebrand rural teaching by partnering with school districts and expanding connections to local organizations and businesses.<sup>84</sup> To negate the notion of professional isolation, schools can partner with other school districts to involve students and teachers more actively in local community events.<sup>85</sup>

Additionally, districts can partner with families by using community-based organizations to mediate and “build bridges between educators and parents and act as catalysts for change.”<sup>86</sup> For example, a district in North Carolina partnered with “community development corporations and high school alumni associations with deep roots and credibility in their rural communities, which led to reaching and engaging a diverse group of parents and community members.”<sup>87</sup> Figure 2.2 offers four community-focused strategies that align with and expand on previously described strategies that districts can implement to bolster teacher recruitment.

**Figure 2.2: Community Involvement to Bolster Teacher Recruitment**

Commit to “Grow Your Own (GYO)” programs.

Build relationships with local universities and colleges, career-transition programs, community-based organizations, afterschool programs, credentialing programs, and local industry human resource departments.

Create articulation agreements and dual enrollment pathways with local community colleges to help create teacher pipelines in rural and hard-to-staff areas.

Advertise to job-alike careers and associations of underrepresented populations.

Source: The Education Trust–West and California County Superintendents Educational Services Association<sup>88</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Pieper, M. “Building a Diverse Workforce in Rural America: How This Small Town Hired Hundreds.” FAMA. April 21, 2020. <https://blog.fama.io/building-a-diverse-workforce-in-a-rural-setting>

<sup>82</sup> Bozarth, A. and W.M. Strifler. “Strengthening Workforce Development in Rural Areas.” Federal Reserve System, 2019. p. 7. <https://www.investinwork.org/-/media/Files/reports/strengthening-workforce-development-rural-areas.pdf>

<sup>83</sup> Pieper, Op. cit.

<sup>84</sup> Harper, A. “State University Looks at New Ways to Recruit Teachers in Rural Areas.” K-12 Dive, January 4, 2018. <https://www.k12dive.com/news/state-university-looks-at-new-ways-to-recruit-teachers-in-rural-areas/514037/>

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>88</sup> Figure text reproduced verbatim from: “Recruiting & Retaining Educators of Color,” Op. cit., p. 3.



# SECTION III: COMMUNITY-BASED ENGAGEMENT

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

School districts can facilitate equitable community engagement by hosting open and honest discussions that honor the voices of all community members, including students, family members, and other district or local stakeholders. By providing a platform for open discussion, school districts signal that they value all opinions from community members and hope to solve important school issues together.<sup>89</sup> The following section provides discussion questions to educate the community and facilitate an ongoing dialogue regarding immediate and future staff diversity needs. Additionally, district staff members can use the checklists [linked here](#) to guide their preparation for discussions with community members one month before, one week before, the day of, and after conversations.<sup>90</sup>

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

#### ASSESS THE PROBLEM

- How would you describe the overall state of racial makeup of and race relations in the school community?
- What problems do you see in the school community that are related to race and ethnicity?
- Are there any specific factors (e.g., language, socioeconomic status, neighborhood segregation) that compound issues related to race?

#### STAFF DIVERSITY NEEDS

- What factors make increasing staff diversity a difficult challenge to overcome in our community?
- What are some of the underlying conditions and hindering forces that deter teachers of color from coming to our community?
- How do racial divisions adversely impact individuals from specific races and the community-at-large?

#### ACTION

- What are the main changes that need to happen to increase understanding and cooperative action across racial lines?
- What are some steps community members could take to meet diversity needs, particularly among staff, in our schools?

#### FOLLOW UP

- Should we continue and expand this dialogue to get more people involved? How could we do that?
- What will we do to ensure follow-up to this conversation?

*Note: these questions emphasize racial staff diversity but can apply to diversity in all aspects of identity and background, such as gender identity and sexual orientation.*

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<sup>89</sup> “Community Conversations Checklist.” Great Schools Partnership.

<https://www.greatschoolspartnership.org/resources/equitable-community-engagement/community-conversations-checklist/>

<sup>90</sup> Link obtained from: Ibid.

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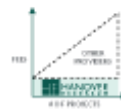
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