

Thoughts On Hiring and Developing Policies and

Systems to Recruit Teachers of Color

January 2014

Purpose and Goal:

The beginning of the calendar year is focused on budgets, retaining, and hiring new faculty. In the Buffalo area it comes during a key enrollment period each year as the incoming freshmen class emerges.

It is important to review hiring practices and involve the entire school community in the process. This is the ideal time to consider how to diversify your faculty and create a climate that continues to emphasize the multicultural philosophy we are striving to attain.

Here are some suggestions for schools to consider.

Resource book: *The Colors of Excellence: Hiring and Keeping Teachers of Color in Independent Schools,* Pearl Rock Kane and Alfonso J. Orsini, editors, Teachers College Press, New York, 2003.

The Need for teachers of color:

* Conduct frank conversations with all faculty about the necessity of promoting diversity; the ways diversity is manifested at the school; the amount of ethnic/racial tension on campus and the degree that increased diversity increases or defuses racial tension.
* Develop formal criteria to analyze the progress of those responsible for diversity work at your school. Evaluate their success and seek ways to help them.
* Ask alumni of color to return to school to discuss their experiences while they were students, and discuss their perspective on the school’s diversity efforts over the years.
* Create affinity groups of parents of color in addition to school-wide diversity committees.
* Include board members of color in these groups.
* Provide those responsible for diversity work with direct access to senior administrators and clearly-defined job responsibilities.
* Promote school-wide anti-bias training for the entire school community – head of school, board of trustees, administrators, staff, teachers, parents, and students.
* Invite prominent individuals of color in the community as well as parents and alumni of color to speak at school assemblies.

Recruiting Faculty of Color:

* Start early
* Create an action plan: delineate goals, course of action, develop timetable
* Review progress regularly
* Inform the entire school community of the plan and its progress
* Pursue people identified throughout the year, even before specific openings become available
* Find creative ways to capitalize on the talents of people of color to strengthen the faculty
* Join with independent schools in the region to strengthen recruitment efforts and pool resources for recruitment
* Set up a pro-active recruitment team
* Allow the head of school to work directly with chairs of departments and division directors to explore openings
* A hiring committee should be supervised by a single individual, accountable for coordinating all recruitment efforts
* Include representatives from each level of the school, as well as students and board members
* Expand the recruitment network to include:
* Alumni, teachers, and parents
  + Local colleges and universities-target specific academic departments, clubs, and organizations
  + Historically black colleges and universities
  + Local and national job fairs
  + Recruitment agencies and consortia that target people of color
  + Non-profit organizations such as local churches, community based organizations, the NAACP, the United Negro College Fund, and the Urban League
  + Business contacts as a source for candidates considering new career options.

Hiring Policies and Practices for Faculty of Color

* Involve the entire school community in creating a hiring policy
* The board of trustees must state their commitment to a diverse faculty, whichshould be reflected in the school's mission statement and strategic plan
* The faculty and parents should help the school head define long- and short-term hiring goals, minimum job qualifications, and specific selection criteria
* A hiring committee should reflect the diversity the school is seeking to create and include students, faculty, and staff from each level of the school
* Train committee members through role plays, case studies, and simulations
* Familiarize the committee with NAIS hiring guidelines
* Charge the committee with conducting interviews and authorize the committee to make final recommendations to the head of school
* Conduct effective and thorough interviews that give candidates the advantages of working in an independent school.
* Interview strong candidates even if there are no immediate job openings
* Get feedback by conducting exit interviews from faculty leaving the school and candidates who turn down an offer
* Allow candidates an honest look at what is happening at the school
* Enable candidates to meet alone with existing faculty of color
* Carefully review job descriptions and articulate the breadth of the roles candidates will need to play
* Clarify the perks associated with teaching in independent school that offset relatively low salaries, and describe other structures, such as mentoring/internship programs, that may appeal to candidates
* Evaluate a candidate's "intangible" assets in addition to degrees, experience, and pedagogical skills, discuss what it means to be "qualified"

Some final thoughts:

There are many ways we could collaborate together as BISSNET schools to increase the diversity of our faculties as well as help with good hiring and retaining of faculty.

Lets share new ideas and good existing policies and practices.