



Increasing Educator Diversity Plan



Recruitment - Hiring & Selection - Retention

District: Avon Public Schools

Team Leads:

Roberto Medic, Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Tasonn Haynes, Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator

Team Members:

Stephanie Lockhart, Principal, Avon High School

Jamaal Lee, Assistant Principal, Avon High School

Chaker Dridi, World Language Teacher, Avon High School

Olivia Barnes, Social Worker, Avon High School

Tiffany Gooding, School Psychologist

Avon Public Schools Equity Statement:

The Avon Board of Education and the Avon Public Schools (together, known as the “District”) value diversity of backgrounds, beliefs, and perspectives and are committed to promoting an equitable and inclusive environment. All students and staff, regardless of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic have the right to access opportunities and supports available throughout the District’s educational programs.

The District recognizes that societal bias, discrimination, intolerance, and other forms of discriminatory practices can create barriers to student progress in public education. The District is therefore committed to continue working toward identifying and addressing any barriers or practices that can lead to disparities among various groups in the school community, and enhancing cultural competence throughout the District’s educational programs, for both students and staff.

We remain committed to promoting an equitable and inclusive educational environment that provides all members of the school community with opportunities, support, and resources that facilitate learning and growth. To that end, we use our mission and statement of beliefs, detailed in the Blueprint for Excellence, to guide and inform our decisions, areas of focus, and actions.

Increasing Educator Diversity Vision Statement:

Fostering a Diverse Community of Educators for an Empowered Future

At Avon Public Schools, we envision a future where our district thrives as a diverse and inclusive community, rich with educators who reflect the varied backgrounds, cultures, and experiences of our student body. We are committed to proactively increasing educator

diversity and cultivating an environment where all individuals feel seen, valued, respected, and empowered.

Our vision is centered around the belief that a diverse community of educators enhances the educational experience for all students. We recognize that a more diverse teaching staff provides unique perspectives, cultural competency, and a broader range of role models that enrich the learning environment. By embracing diversity, we aim to foster an inclusive culture that celebrates individuality and promotes equal opportunities for every student.

Vision for Increasing Educator Diversity

What Increasing Educator Diversity Will Look Like in Avon Public Schools:

- ☐ A workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the student body (e.g., aiming for at least 10% of educators to be from diverse backgrounds).
- ☐ A welcoming and inclusive environment where diverse staff feel valued and supported.
- ☐ Improved student outcomes and cultural competence as a result of diverse teaching perspectives.
- ☐ Regular district-wide celebrations and recognition of diversity in staff and student achievements.

Adequacy of Strategies

How Strategies Are Adequate:

- ☐ **Recruitment:** Targeted outreach to diverse candidates through job fairs and partnerships with diverse institutions will broaden the applicant pool.
- ☐ **Hiring & Selection:** Implementing diverse interview panels and standardized questions ensures that the hiring process is equitable and aligns with diversity goals.
- ☐ **Retention:** Check-ins and mentorship programs will provide ongoing support, fostering a sense of belonging and community among diverse staff.

Measuring Progress and Indicators

Progress Measurement:

- ☐ **Recruitment:** Track the percentage of diverse applicants who complete the optional demographic fields in the application portal. Aiming for a target of 25% by Spring 2030.
- ☐ **Hiring:** Monitor the composition of interview panels and the percentage of diverse hires each year.
- ☐ **Retention:** Analyze retention rates of diverse staff, aiming for a target of 90% over five years.

Indicators of Progress:

- ☐ Annual reports on the demographic breakdown of applicants, hires, and retained staff.
- ☐ Interviews assessing job satisfaction and belonging among diverse educators.
- ☐ Feedback from affinity groups and professional development.

Theory of Action:

If we proactively work to surmount the barriers to the recruitment, hiring, and retention of staff that is representative of our linguistically and culturally diverse student population, **then** we will create an environment that enriches educational experiences, promotes cultural understanding, and prepares students for success in a global society.

Avon Educator Diversity Data:

2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
3.8%	4.7%	4.4%	3.7%	5.2%	6.2%
11	14	13	11	16	19

Data Overview:

The data represents two key metrics over six academic years:

- ☐ Percentage of Educator Diversity
- ☐ Number of Diverse Educators

Growth Trends:

- Initial Increase:** From 3.8% to 4.7% in the first two years, indicating a positive trend toward increasing diversity.
- Fluctuation:** A slight decrease to 4.4% in 2020-2021 and further down to 3.7% in 2021-2022 suggests some instability in diversity efforts during these years.
- Significant Jump:** A notable increase to 5.2% in 2022-2023, followed by a substantial rise to 19% in 2023-2024. This spike indicates a substantial improvement in educator diversity, potentially reflecting successful initiatives or recruitment strategies.
- Gradual Growth:** An increase from 11 to 14 educators in the first two years, followed by a slight decline and stabilization at 11 in 2021-2022.
- Recovery and Growth:** The number rose to 16 in 2022-2023, showing recovery from previous dips, and reached 19 in 2023-2024, aligning with the percentage increase.

Data Analysis:

Positive Trajectory: The data indicates a generally positive trajectory toward increasing diversity among educators, particularly notable in the most recent year.

Impact of Initiatives: The dramatic rise in 2023–2024 suggests effective diversity recruitment strategies or policies that were implemented in the previous year. Understanding what changes led to this increase could provide valuable insights for sustaining and further improving diversity.

Need for Stability: While the overall trend is encouraging, the fluctuations in the intervening years highlight the need for sustained efforts and strategies to maintain and build upon these gains, ensuring that diversity does not revert to previous levels.

7/1/2024 - Present				
Number of Applicants	469			
Gender	Applied	Percent of Total Applicants	Hired	Percent of Total Hired
Total Applicants	469		12	
Declined to Identify	19	4.05%	2	16.67%
Female	341	72.71%	9	75.00%
Male	109	23.24%	1	8.33%
	469	100.00%	12	100.00%
Ethnic Background	Applied	Percent of Total Applicants	Hired	Percent of Total Hired
Total Applicants	469		12	
Declined to Identify	89	18.98%	5	41.67%
White (Non Hispanic)	322	68.66%	7	58.33%
African-American/Black (Non Hispanic)	6	1.28%	0	0.00%
Asian	12	2.56%	0	0.00%
Pacific Islander	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
American Indian	1	0.21%	0	0.00%
Alaskan Native	0	0.00%	0	0.00%

Hispanic	26	5.54%	0	0.00%
Opted Not to Answer	13	2.77%	0	0.00%
	469	100.00%	12	100.00%

Analysis:

- ☐ **Predominance of White Applicants:** A significant majority (68.66%) of applicants were White (Non-Hispanic), and of those, 58.33% were hired. This suggests that while this group is well-represented in hiring, it does not reflect a diverse applicant pool.
- ☐ **Lack of Diversity in Hiring:** There were no hires from African-American, Asian, Hispanic, or Indigenous backgrounds, which indicates a critical lack of diversity in the hired pool compared to the applicant pool.
- ☐ **High Rate of Declined Identification:** The 18.98% that declined to identify their ethnicity had a higher hiring rate (41.67%) than those who identified as White, indicating that those who chose not to disclose may have been more competitive.

Conclusion

The data reveals a strong gender bias towards hiring females, with male candidates facing lower hiring rates. Ethnically, despite a large pool of applicants, the hired candidates lack diversity, with no representation from several minority groups.

Recruitment

Goal (What are we trying to do?)

Previous Goal: Expand the applicant pool of candidates who are racially, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse.

Revised SMART Goal:

By 2030, we will increase the percentage of certified staff who are racially, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse from the current 6.2% to 9.48%. This will involve actively expanding the applicant pool to include candidates from underrepresented racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds.

- ☐ **Specific:** The goal is to increase the percentage of certified staff who are racially, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse from 6.2% to 9.48% by 2030.
- ☐ **Measurable:** We will monitor the percentage of diverse candidates in the applicant pool and track hiring data to evaluate progress toward the target percentage.
- ☐ **Attainable:** Given current trends and with strengthened recruitment strategies, this goal is achievable and realistic.
- ☐ **Ambitious:** Achieving an approximate 52.90% increase in diversity among certified staff reflects a strong and proactive commitment to fostering an inclusive environment.
- ☐ **Relevant:** This goal supports the district's mission to cultivate a diverse educator workforce that mirrors the diversity of our student population.
- ☐ **Time-bound:** The target is set for completion by Spring 2030, ensuring a clear timeline for implementation and assessment.

Who Manages the goal?

- ☐ Roberto Medic – Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Strategies/Key Activities (How are we going to do it?)

- ☐ **Attend Diversity-Focused Job Fairs and Events:** Participate in job fairs and events specifically designed to attract diverse candidates. These events may be organized by educational institutions, community organizations, or diversity-focused professional associations. Ensure that district representatives actively engage with potential candidates and provide information about Avon Public Schools' commitment to diversity and inclusion.
 - ☐ **Who:** Tasonn Haynes (Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator) will coordinate participation and ensure diverse staff representation.
 - ☐ **By When:** Ongoing through Spring 2030.
- ☐ **Include diverse staff** at recruitment fairs
 - ☐ **Who:** Each school principal will identify and engage diverse staff to participate.
 - ☐ **By When:** Ongoing through Spring 2030.
- ☐ **Collaborate with Colleges and Universities:** Develop partnerships with colleges and universities that have diverse student populations and strong education programs. Engage with career services offices, faculty members, and student organizations to promote job opportunities within Avon Public Schools. Request assistance in sharing job postings and organizing recruitment events on campus. (Leverage HBCU, Greek fraternity and sorority connections.)
 - ☐ **Who:** Tasonn Haynes will develop partnerships and manage communications.
 - ☐ **By When:** Initial partnerships established by Fall 2026.
- ☐ **Cultivate Relationships with Alternative Certification Programs:** Connect with alternative certification programs that attract candidates from diverse backgrounds. These programs often cater to individuals who are transitioning into teaching from other professions or have non-traditional pathways to certification. Establish relationships with program administrators to promote Avon Public Schools as a desirable destination for diverse candidates.
 - ☐ **Who:** Roberto Medic will lead outreach efforts to alternative certification programs.

☐ **By When:** Ongoing through Spring 2030.

☐ **Explore “grow your own” programs:** Connect with various school districts, to learn, and assess implementation of “EdRising” programs to determine if this would be a strategy for future implementation at APS.

☐ **Who:** Tasonn Haynes will research and propose options for implementation.

☐ **By When:** Findings presented by Winter 2028.

Indicators of Progress: (How will we know if we are on track for success?)

- ☐ Regular updates will be provided by Roberto Medic to the district leadership team on recruitment efforts and applicant demographics.
- ☐ District representation at hiring fairs; especially those specific to candidates of color
- ☐ Established communication channels at all Connecticut state colleges and universities, with additional microtargeting of various Public & Private universities.
- ☐ Increased number of ethnically and racially diverse applicants demonstrating interest in employment at Avon Public Schools

Resources Required: (What people, time, money, and technology will be needed?)

- ☐ Creation of recruitment materials, tablecloths, handouts, giveaways, etc.
- ☐ Time to proactively establish relationships with various schools and alternative routes to certification programs.
- ☐ Potential travel expenses to engage with HBCUs
- ☐ Chromebooks for completion of application at various fair
- ☐ District Website adjustment to reflect the focus of our recruitment efforts

Risks & Mitigation: (What could go wrong? How will we make that less likely to happen?)

- ☐ Recruitment fairs vary in their effectiveness in recruiting applicants
- ☐ A smaller applicant pool of educators who are ethnically and culturally diverse
- ☐ Lack of interest in working in a suburban setting that is not already known to be a diverse working environment
- ☐ The aforementioned requires our recruitment efforts to be multifaceted.

Community/Engagement Efforts: (Who needs to be consulted/engaged? What needs to be communicated? To Whom?)

- ☐ All APS personnel with an affiliation with recruitment need to be abreast of the hiring process and pertinent information related to prospective candidates

- ☐ HR should collaborate with diverse members of the staff to develop recruitment materials.
- ☐ Ensure that diverse representation is utilized to complement engagement efforts

Hiring & Selection

Goal (What are we trying to do?)

Previous Goal: Evaluate current interview practices to ensure they are equitable and conducive to attracting highly qualified candidates who are racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse.

Revised SMART Goal:

By Spring 2025, ensure that at least one member of each interview panel for teaching positions is a staff member of color or the District Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator, and implement standardized interview questions that address diversity and inclusion for all candidates.

- ☐ **Specific:** Defines a percentage of diverse panel representation and the implementation of standardized questions.
- ☐ **Measurable:** Track the composition of interview panels and the use of specific questions.
- ☐ **Attainable:** Involving the District Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator and utilizing existing staff members makes this goal feasible.
- ☐ **Ambitious:** While it may seem modest, ensuring diverse representation on every panel is a significant step toward inclusivity.
- ☐ **Relevant:** Directly supports the aim of equitable hiring practices and the inclusion of diverse perspectives.
- ☐ **Time-bound:** Set for completion by Spring 2025.

Who Manages the goal?

- ☐ Roberto Medic - Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Strategies/Key Activities (How are we going to do it?)

- ☐ Diverse representation during the interview process
 - ☐ **Who:** Tasonn Haynes will track panel compositions and ensure compliance.
 - ☐ **By When:** Ongoing through Spring 2030.
- ☐ Articulate APS goals centered on Increasing Educator Diversity
 - ☐ **Who:** Roberto Medic will ensure all interviewers are educated on the district's diversity goals.
 - ☐ **By When:** Training sessions completed by annually beginning Winter of 2025

- ☐ Ensure all interview committees follow uniform processes, and include opportunities for candidates to expound on qualifications and/or experiences that align with our Blueprint for Excellence.
 - ☐ **Who:** Tasonn Haynes will develop and distribute standardized interview question guidelines. [DEI Interview Question Bank](#)
 - ☐ **By When:** Guidelines finalized by Winter 2025.

Indicators of Progress: (How will we know if we are on track for success?)

- ☐ Semi-annual reports from Tasonn Haynes to Roberto Medic on the diversity of interview panels and use of standardized questions.
- ☐ Review participation rates of current diverse staff in interview participation.
- ☐ Utilize interview questions or performance tasks that grant candidates an opportunity for candidates to expound on qualifications and/or experiences that align with our Blueprint for Excellence.

Resources Required: (What people, time, money, and technology will be needed?)

- ☐ Coverage for diverse staff participating on interview committees
- ☐ Time to reevaluate current interview questions, and create a bank of questions that speak specifically to the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Risks & Mitigation: (What could go wrong? How will we make that less likely to happen?)

- ☐ The applicant pool for diverse educators tends to be rather slim based on the overall need in the state of Connecticut.
- ☐ diverse applicants may feel more comfortable demonstrating interest in already well-known towns that are historically more diverse.
- ☐ The availability of diverse staff may prove to be a challenge, considering the small number of diverse staff currently present in APS. This factor is only exacerbated by the irregularity in the timing of hiring.
- ☐ Misalignment between communication and action. Regularly evaluate the recruitment and hiring process to ensure that it aligns with Avon Public Schools' statement on equity, and make adjustments where necessary.
- ☐ The creativity and persistence of our efforts will aid in mitigating some of the possible risks.

Community/Engagement Efforts: (Who needs to be consulted/engaged? What needs to be communicated? To Whom?)

- ☐ Communication to all individuals who will be a part of any interview committee

- ☐ APS Increasing Educator Diversity goals and rationale.
- ☐ Anti-bias in hiring professional development.

Retention

Goal (What are we trying to do?)

Previous Goal: Retain our current diverse staff and any newly hired diverse staff.

Revised SMART Goal:

Achieve a retention rate of 90% for diverse staff over the next five years, with biannual check-ins to assess job satisfaction and sense of belonging.

Specific: Clearly states the retention rate target and the method of assessment.

Measurable: Retention rates can be tracked using HR data, and check-in feedback can be quantitatively analyzed.

Attainable: An 90% retention rate is realistic with proper support systems in place.

Ambitious: Aiming for a high retention rate reflects a serious commitment to staff support.

Relevant: Directly relates to the goal of maintaining a diverse workforce.

Time-bound: Specifies a five-year timeframe with biannual assessments.

Who Manages the goal?

- ☐ Roberto Medic - Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Strategies/Key Activities (How are we going to do it?)

- ☐ Building opportunities for our current diverse staff to meet with and forge relationships with newly hired diverse staff.
 - ☐ **Who:** Tasonn Haynes will organize events and mentorship opportunities.
 - ☐ **By When:** Events scheduled quarterly beginning Spring 2025o
- ☐ Continued ALL STAFF PD centered on Cultural Competency
 - ☐ **Who:** All district administrators will participate in and promote cultural competency training.
 - ☐ **By When:** ongoing annual Cultural Competency Training sessions
- ☐ Continued district recognition of the rich diversity present in Avon.
 - ☐ **Who:** Tasonn Haynes will oversee recognition initiatives and events.
 - ☐ **By When:** Ongoing on a monthly basis

- ☐ Partner with other school districts to learn more about the effectiveness of implemented affinity groups.
 - ☐ **Who:** Tasonn Haynes will lead outreach to neighboring districts for best practices.
 - ☐ **By When:** Initial partnerships established by Fall 2025.

Indicators of Progress: (How will we know if we are on track for success?)

- ☐ Retention of diverse staff
- ☐ Biannual check-in with diverse staff: [Biannual BIPOC Staff Check-In Questions](#)
- ☐ Annual analysis of retention rates

Resource Allocation

Resources Required: (What people, time, money, and technology will be needed?)

- ☐ **Personnel:** Dedicated roles for the Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator, recruitment team members and ally/mentorship coordination.
- ☐ **Financial:** Budget for recruitment materials, diversity training, and events celebrating diversity.
- ☐ **Technological:** Tools for tracking recruitment data and staff feedback (e.g., survey platforms, interviews).
- ☐ **Professional Learning:** Ongoing cultural competency training for all staff.

Risks & Mitigation: (What could go wrong? How will we make that less likely to happen?)

- ☐ **Risk:** Limited applicant pool for diverse educators.
 - ☐ **Mitigation:** Broaden recruitment strategies by establishing partnerships with a wider range of colleges, universities, and community organizations that serve
- ☐ **Risk:** High turnover of diverse staff due to lack of support.
 - ☐ **Mitigation:** Implement robust mentorship and professional development programs, ensuring diversity training is prioritized in PD schedules.
 - ☐ diverse populations.
- ☐ **Risk:** Resistance to change from existing staff.
 - ☐ **Mitigation:** Communicate the importance of diversity in education and involve staff in discussions and training sessions to foster buy-in.

Stakeholder Engagement

Key Stakeholders:

- ☐ **District Leadership:** Support from the Superintendent and school board is crucial for resource allocation and priority setting.
- ☐ **HR Department:** Integral for tracking diversity metrics and ensuring equitable hiring practices.
- ☐ **Teachers and Staff:** Involvement in recruitment and mentorship initiatives to create a supportive environment.
- ☐ **Community Organizations:** Partnerships can enhance outreach to diverse candidates.

Leveraging Support:

- ☐ Regularly engage stakeholders through meetings, forums, and updates to discuss progress and gather input on strategies and initiatives.

Community/Engagement Efforts: (Who needs to be consulted/engaged? What needs to be communicated? To Whom?)

Communication Strategy

Communication Plan:

- ☐ **Messaging:** Clearly communicate the goals and importance of increasing educator diversity to all staff and stakeholders.
- ☐ **Modes of Communication:** Utilize emails, text messaging, and staff meetings
- ☐ **Frequency and Timing:** Provide biannual updates on progress and celebrate successes throughout the year.
- ☐ **Messengers:** Utilize district leadership, the Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator, and diverse staff members to convey messages.
- ☐ **Audience:** Target all staff, community members, and potential applicants to raise awareness and support.

Onboarding New Leaders/Key Staff

Onboarding Strategy:

- ☐ Develop an onboarding manual that includes the district's diversity goals, strategies, and expectations.
 - ☐ [Avon Public School IED Plan Handbook](#)

- ☐ Schedule orientation sessions focused on diversity initiatives for new leaders and key staff.
- ☐ Pair new leaders with mentors who are knowledgeable about the district's diversity efforts.