



Simsbury Public Schools Increasing Educator Diversity Plan



Committee Members:

Neil Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent for Administration

Tayarisha Batchelor, Director of Equity & Access

Meg Evans, Elementary Principal, Squadron Line School

Cindi Freilinger, Human Resources Coordinator

Katie Krasula, Director of Pupil Services

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Simsbury Public Schools

Vision Statement: Recruitment & Retention

In the Simsbury Public Schools (SPS), an equitable system ensures that all members of our community can reach their full potential. We recognize that by addressing biases and inequities, we can remove the barriers to creating a safe and inclusive environment for all.

Specific to the recruitment and retention of a more racially and ethnically diverse workforce:

We are committed to increasing the knowledge and understanding of the history of educators of color and its impact on our ability to recruit, hire, and retain a diverse staff.

We are committed to hiring, investing in, and retaining passionate and exceptional staff who will contribute to a challenging, innovative, and collaborative culture.

We examine hiring data (both process and outcomes), create policies, and provide frequent and relevant training to leaders and hiring committees.

As a retention strategy, we provide professional development in standards-based instruction, core subject knowledge, instructional technology, cultural awareness, and other topics related to inclusivity and belonging.

We provide space for Employee Resource Groups focused on various diversity dimensions, providing a platform for employees to connect, share experiences, and contribute to organizational initiatives.

The BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Color) Affinity Group offers recommendations that support the retention and recruitment of all staff, focusing on individuals who identify as BIPOC and males as underrepresented groups in SPS.



BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) RECOMMENDATIONS:

The BIPOC Affinity Group is an inclusive and intersectional group of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color devoted to ensuring space for all students and staff to feel a sense of belonging. The group aims to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Simsbury Public Schools.

Recruitment Strategies:

- Include the BIPOC team in the hiring process
- Include the BIPOC team at recruitment fairs
- Promotion and visibility of the BIPOC team
- Provide a mentoring program for new staff

Retention Strategies:

- Onboarding- offering comprehensive induction to support teachers of color in their first years of teaching
- BIPOC meetings using affinity group protocols for safe spaces
- BIPOC book club
- BIPOC staff leading sessions on cultural competence
- Quarterly Check-Ins focused on staff's sense of belonging
- Align strategies to the recruitment of male staff

Strategies to increase cultural competence:

- Professional development for all staff
- Bank of resources for staff on cultural competence
- Developing a process to gain feedback during exit interviews to use in planning



Theory of Action

If we proactively address biases and inequities in our systems for recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff, then we will create a safe, inclusive, and more diverse community for all.

District Demographic Diversity Profile September 2023



SIMSBUURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

	American Indian or Alaska native		Asian		Black or African American		Hispanic or Latino		Pacific Islander		Two or more		White		Non-White	Non-White Goal	Position Total	Educators of Color Total	No Race Data	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	%	%				
District Level Administrators Central Office Staff, Superintendent(s) and Department Chairs	0	0.0%	1	4.0%	2	8.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	22	88.0%	12.0%		District Level Administrators	25	3	
School Level Administrators Principals and Assistant Principals	0	0.0%	0	1.0%	1	7.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	92.3%	7.7%		School Level Administrators	13	1	
General Education Teachers Non-Central Office Curriculum Coaches	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	100.0%	0.0%		General Education Teachers	8	0	
General Education Teachers Teachers and Instructors (PK-5)	0	0.0%	3	2.0%	3	2.0%	2	1.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	143	94.7%	5.3%		General Education Teachers (PK-5)	151	8	
General Education Teachers Teachers and Instructors (6-8)	0	0.0%	2	4.3%	0	0.0%	1	2.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	43	93.5%	6.5%		General Education Teachers (6-8)	46	3	
General Education Teachers Teachers and Instructors (9-12)	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	5	5.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	91	93.8%	6.2%		General Education Teachers (9-12)	97	6	
Special Education Teachers	0	0.0%	1	2.3%	1	2.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	41	95.3%	4.7%		Special Education Teachers	43	2	
Non-Instructional Support Staff Counselors, Social Workers, Psychologists, and Speech and Language Pathologists	0	0.0%	2	5.3%	2	5.3%	1	2.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	33	86.8%	13.2%		Non-Instructional Support Staff	38	5	
Non-Certified Staff Paraeducators, custodians, cafeteria staff, secretarial staff, etc.	0	0.0%	10	3.0%	11	36.5%	17	5.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	296	88.6%	11.4%		Non-Certified Staff	334	38	

District Demographic Diversity Profile September 2024

SIMSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



	American Indian or Alaska native		Asian		Black or African American		Hispanic or Latino		Pacific Islander		Two or more		White		Non-White	Non-White Goal	Position Total	Educators of Color Total	No Race Data	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	%	%				
District Level Administrators Central Office Staff, Superintendent(s) and Department Chairs	0	0.0%	1	4.3%	1	4.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	21	91.3%	8.7%		District Level Administrators	23	2	
School Level Administrators Principals and Assistant Principals	0	0.0%	0	1.0%	1	7.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	92.3%	7.7%		School Level Administrators	13	1	
General Education Teachers Non-Central Office Curriculum Coaches	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	100.0%	0.0%		General Education Teachers	6	0	
General Education Teachers Teachers and Instructors (PK-5)	0	0.0%	3	2.0%	3	2.0%	2	1.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	144	94.7%	5.3%		General Education Teachers (PK-5)	152	8	
General Education Teachers Teachers and Instructors (6-8)	0	0.0%	2	4.4%	0	0.0%	1	2.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	42	93.3%	6.7%		General Education Teachers (6-8)	45	3	
General Education Teachers Teachers and Instructors (9-12)	0	0.0%	1	1.1%	0	0.0%	4	4.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	90	94.7%	5.3%		General Education Teachers (9-12)	95	5	
Special Education Teachers	0	0.0%	1	2.2%	1	2.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	43	95.6%	4.4%		Special Education Teachers	45	2	
Non-Instructional Support Staff Counselors, Social Workers, Psychologists, and Speech and Language Pathologists	0	0.0%	2	5.6%	2	5.6%	1	2.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	31	86.1%	13.9%		Non-Instructional Support Staff	36	5	
Non-Certified Staff Paraeducators, custodians, cafeteria staff, secretarial staff, etc.	0	0.0%	10	3.0%	17	36.6%	18	5.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	288	86.5%	13.5%		Non-Certified Staff	333	45	



RECRUITMENT

Goal: Utilizing the district template provided by the CSDE, increase the percentage of underrepresented racially and ethnically diverse staff hired to fill openings in order to raise the overall percentage of certified staff from 6.3% to 10% and to raise the overall percentage of all staff from 13.5% to 17.5% by August, 2027.

Who Manages the Goal: Neil Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent for Administration

Strategies/Key Activities	Who Owns This?	By When?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of Employee Resource Groups attend recruitment fairs. 	Director of Equity & Access	Determined by Recruitment Fair schedule by March 1, 2025 and annually thereafter.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversify recruitment efforts, i.e., advertising, marketing materials, and recruiting at universities with diverse population of students – review annually. 	Assistant Superintendent for Administration	By March 1, 2025 and annually thereafter.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop partnerships with colleges and university affinity groups to promote the district’s goals 	Director of Equity & Access	By March 1, 2025 and annually thereafter.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide recruitment materials to current staff to promote the district’s goals. 	Assistant Superintendent for Administration	By March 1, 2025 and annually thereafter send to all staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight pathways for career development and advancement that ensures diverse candidates equal opportunities for professional growth. 	Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning and Director of Equity & Access	By August 1, 2025 and annually thereafter.



RECRUITMENT

Strategies/Key Activities	Indicators of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of Employee Resource Groups attend recruitment fairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More diverse candidates will visit our booths and apply for positions. Track and review data from the visitors at recruitment fairs annually.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversify recruitment efforts, i.e., advertising, marketing materials, and recruiting at universities with diverse population of students – review annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track diversity recruiting through hiring/selection/retention.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop partnerships with colleges and university affinity groups to promote the district’s goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually review data to track the professional development opportunities, leadership opportunities, and career advancement for diverse candidates within the organization.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide recruitment materials to current staff to promote the district’s goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More diverse candidates apply after receiving information from current staff members. Track data from Applicant Database regarding where applicants hear of vacancies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight pathways for career development and advancement that ensures diverse candidates equal opportunities for professional growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track and annually review enrollment and participation rates in academic programs and utilization of tuition reimbursement funds.

RECRUITMENT



Resources

- Purchase of ChromeBooks/iPads for ease of registering at Recruitment fairs.
- Cost of annual review and update of recruitment materials.
- The Director of Equity & Access will employ quantitative analysis to examine data, identify trends and patterns, and make recommendations for plan revisions.

Risks & Mitigation

- **Risk:** Staying current with recruitment strategies as fairs become less important. **Mitigation:** Increase visibility through creative advertising and outreach efforts.
- **Risk:** More diverse districts being attractive to candidates of color. **Mitigation:** Highlight Simsbury's gains in diversifying in order to compete with districts that are already more diverse.

Communication/Engagement Efforts

- Share and unpack the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan with all stakeholders in the recruitment process, especially Administrative Council members and Instructional Leadership Team
- Human Resources to work collaboratively with Employee Resource Groups to develop new recruitment materials
- Team members to meet 3 x annually to review IED Plan and tracking of indicators of progress to update as needed
- Approval by Board of Education



HIRING & SELECTION

Goal: Utilizing the district template provided by the CSDE, increase the percentage of underrepresented racially and ethnically diverse staff hired to fill openings in order to raise the overall percentage of certified staff from 6.3% to 10% and to raise the overall percentage of all staff from 13.5% to 17.5% by August, 2027.

Who Manages the Goal: Neil Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent for Administration

Strategies/Key Activities	Who Owns This?	By When?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kick off meeting with administrators and supervisors responsible for hiring. 	Assistant Superintendent for Administration	By April 1, 2025 and annually thereafter.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include members of Employee Resource Groups on Interview teams. 	Leader of hiring committee (Building Principal and/or Department Supervisors)	TBD Based on vacancy timelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Interview questions to provide more opportunity for candidates of color to share their qualifications & experiences. 	Leader of hiring committee (Building Principal and/or Department Supervisors)	On-going efforts based on vacancy timelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information during interview process about the support/mentorship provided. 	Leader of hiring committee (Building Principal and/or Department Supervisors)	On-going efforts based on vacancy timelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all hiring committees to review implicit bias in the hiring and selection process training materials as well as review the district's IED plan before participating on a committee. 	Assistant Superintendent for Administration	Prior to participation on a hiring committee. TBD Based on vacancy timelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the development of a comprehensive onboarding program that introduces new hires to the organization's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. 	Assistant Superintendent for Administration & Director of Equity & Access	August, 2026



HIRING & SELECTION

Goal: Utilizing the district template provided by the CSDE, increase the percentage of underrepresented racially and ethnically diverse staff hired to fill openings in order to raise the overall percentage of certified staff from 6.3% to 10% and to raise the overall percentage of all staff from 13.5% to 17.5% by August, 2027.

Who Manages the Goal: Neil Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent for Administration

Strategies/Key Activities	Indicators of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kick off meeting with administrators and supervisors responsible for hiring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track the completion rates of implicit bias training among hiring committees, and review at end of hiring season.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include members of Employee Resource Groups on Interview teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committees will select more candidates of color for interviews upon initial application review to be monitored by using tool supplied by Human Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Interview questions to provide more opportunity for candidates of color to share their qualifications & experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More candidates of color will be recommended for hire. Utilize database populated at recruitment and Frontline to assist in building the pools.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information during interview process about the support/mentorship provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New hires will share that knowledge of support/mentorship programs assisted in their choice to come to Simsbury. Data collected through surveys.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all hiring committees to review implicit bias in the hiring and selection process training materials as well as review the district's IED plan before participating on a committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track the completion rates of implicit bias training among hiring committees, and review at end of hiring season.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the development of a comprehensive onboarding program that introduces new hires to the organization's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive feedback from the onboarding training session for Equity & Access.

HIRING & SELECTION



Resources

- Develop a bank of culturally appropriate interview questions to ensure a fair and inclusive assessment of candidates.
- Professional Development time for department supervisors and administrators for interview process.
- Substitutes for Employee Resource Group members to participate.
- Expertise and experience in DEI to conduct training sessions and training materials.

Risks & Mitigation

- **Risk:** Failure to review the plan or review the video. **Mitigation:** Checklist to be created to provide system for tracking completion.
- **Risk:** Availability of members of Employee Resource Groups to participate. **Mitigation:** Prioritize substitute coverage.
- **Risk:** Resistance to DEI efforts. **Mitigation:** Ensure that transparent information is shared about the process, the qualifications, and expertise of potential candidates, the district's needs, and the benefits of a diverse workplace.
- **Risk:** The onboarding program may become outdated or ineffective over time due to changes in the organization, industry, legal landscape, or the diverse needs of new hires, including intersectionality within various groups. **Mitigation:** Commitment to continuous review and improvement of onboarding program.

Communication/Engagement Efforts

- Annual kick-off meeting with administrators and supervisors responsible for hiring.
- Engagement with other members of Employee Resource Groups.
- Administrators and supervisors managing interview processes will communicate explicitly about IED plan and goals.

RETENTION

Goal: Baseline percentage for racially and ethnically diverse employees who returned to their positions in 2024-25 was 95.5%. Goal is to maintain or increase that percentage and to track it over multiple years.

Who Manages the Goal: Neil Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent for Administration

Strategies/Key Activities	Who Owns This?	By When?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive onboarding, orientation, and training 	Assistant Superintendent for Administration	Spring/Fall
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign mentor trained in cultural competence 	Director of Equity & Access	By September 15 th annually or within 30 days for new hires after September 15 th
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support Employee Resource Groups (ERG's) providing opportunities and resources for diverse staff to contribute to organizational initiatives 	Director of Equity & Access	Bi-monthly from September to June
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIPOC meetings using affinity group protocols 	Director of Equity & Access	Bi-monthly from September to June
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIPOC Book Club 	Director of Equity & Access	Monthly from October – May
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIPOC staff leading sessions on cultural competence during professional learning community (PLC) meetings, and district-based PD dates 	Director of Equity & Access	November and March PD days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New staff surveys and formal/informal check in's to monitor progress and address any concerns. 	Director of Equity & Access	Twice annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PD for all staff on cultural competence 	Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning/Director of Equity & Access/Building Principals	Annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exit Interview Data 	Assistant Superintendent for Administration	On-going based on separation dates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Employee Assistance Program 	Assistant Superintendent for Administration	Continued communications to staff

RETENTION

Goal: Baseline percentage for racially and ethnically diverse employees who returned to their positions in 2024-25 was 95.5%. Goal is to maintain or increase that percentage and to track it over multiple years.

Who Manages the Goal: Neil Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent for Administration

Strategies/Key Activities	Indicators of Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive onboarding, orientation, and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased retention of staff of color
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign mentor trained in cultural competence 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support ERG's providing opportunities and resources for diverse staff to contribute to organizational initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of new hires who report feeling well-informed about the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion after completing the onboarding program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIPOC meetings using affinity group protocols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of staff that participates in affinity groups and reports feeling connected via climate and culture survey.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIPOC Book Club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of participation in book club, feedback submitted at end of book club, and survey data.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BIPOC staff leading sessions on cultural competence during professional learning community (PLC) meetings, and district-based PD dates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of BIPOC staff leading sessions will increase.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New staff surveys and formal/informal check in's to monitor progress and address any concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increased feeling of belonging as measured by qualitative data.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PD for all staff on cultural competence 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exit Interview Data 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Employee Assistance Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased usage of EAP program.



RETENTION



Resources

- Cost of Employee Assistance Program.
- Professional Development Funds and time for planning delivery of sessions.
- Scheduling and tracking system for regular check ins, exit interviews, and quarterly surveys.
- Books for book club and trained facilitator skilled in group dynamics, active listening, and conflict resolution.

Risks & Mitigation

- **Risk:** Low use of Employee Assistance Program. **Mitigation:** Regular reminders of program.
- **Risk:** Lack of Professional Development Funding. **Mitigation:** Prioritize in budget process.
- **Risk:** Low percentage of participation in surveys. **Mitigation:** Incentivize with perks (i.e., pizza lunch, coverage for a duty, etc.)
- **Risk:** The content of books may trigger negative emotions. **Mitigation:** Be cognizant of choices
- **Risk:** Risk of tokenization or stereotyping if BIPOC staff are solely responsible for presenting on cultural awareness. **Mitigation:** Include teachers from all ethnicities to present

Communication/Engagement Efforts

- Building administrators – regular check-ins with teachers of color
- Continued reach out by Employee Resource Group
- Commitment by assigned mentors/building buddies
- Invitation for all to attend BIPOC book club.



Simsbury Public Schools Increasing Educator Diversity Plan
