Building Faculty Diversity: What Matters

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Byron Fouts, Lake Ridge Academy
Christie Walters, Columbus School for Girls
Craig Jones, Wellington School
Deidre Hamlar Crockett, Columbus Academy
Denise Hunt, Canton Country Day School
Diane Nichols, Hathaway Brown School
Eileen Hall, Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy
Gabriela DiSanto, Old Trail School
James Gutowski, Gilmour Academy
Kimberly McCoy, Lake Ridge Academy
Matt Wolfe, Village Academy Schools
Megan Wittmann, Wellington School
Michelle Alexander, Seven Hills School
Nan Hadley, Columbus School for Girls
Radine Brown, Hawken School
Tresonne Peters, Cincinnati Country Day School

Regina Daily, Seven Hills School, Facilitator
Stephen Drosdeck, CCIS, Executive Director, Facilitator
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Special thanks to Anne H. Carter of IMPACT Consulting and Diversity Matters for her presentation on

What Schools Can Learn from Corporate Diversity Initiatives
A Call to Renewed Commitment and Action

“In some ways, schools should be less surprised by the difficulty of finding teachers of color than they should be by the fact that any teacher of color would choose to teach in a predominately white institution. Even with all the benefits of teaching in an independent school, it takes a pretty big leap of faith.”

*Hiring and Retaining Teachers of Color; The Why and How of It*, Michael Brosnan

Association of Independent School in New England, 2001

The proof is in the numbers. Independent schools throughout Ohio have a similar issue. Diversity is increasing within student enrollment, but faculty and staff diversity is not. Seeing the statistics is a stark reminder of how far we still have to go.

People of Color among Students and Faculties:

<table>
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<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAIS members</td>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>21.20%</td>
<td>11.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAIS members</td>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>18.20%</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Thanks to Anne H. Carter for attention to the statistics*

Schools that promise to prepare students for the future must help them understand how to function in a multicultural society and a multicultural organization. Students who learn in diverse environments have a greater ability to be successful in a multicultural world. If our students are unable to recognize their culture in the school community around them, how will that impact their future?

There are many benefits to addressing current diversity issues within independent schools. One benefit to students, faculty/staff, and parents is the value of an accurate representation of the students’ world. Students who are able to see and connect with positive role models in their own image are more likely to be good students and contributors to the community.

In AISNE’s Guide to Hiring and Retaining Teachers of Color, Michael Brosnan writes, “Schools should be motivated by mission. But, in the end, all are motivated by financial needs. As Braverman and Looney note, ‘If you are interested in financial health, you have to be interested in demographic trends and what those trends suggest about the future. And those trends tell you that you need to be concerned with diversity’.” In the competitive world of education, embracing diversity is critical to the success of the 21st century independent school and its students.
Valuing the contributions of the diverse members of our school community creates an environment of understanding and acceptance that stimulates personal growth enhancing the community as a whole. It also adds depth and richness to the school community and to a curriculum reflective of our ever evolving world. Diversity provides multiple perspectives that enrich opportunities for learning and teaching. Each of us benefits from belonging to a community that includes people who are familiar to us as well as those who are different. This broad perspective provides us the opportunity to think beyond our own range of vision.

As independent schools recommit to tackling the issues of diversity within their school communities, it is imperative that they look at the demographic shifts and trends in their respective regions. Understanding the impact of globalization and its effects on the local community is critical to the social, emotional, and educational growth of independent schools and their constituents. The need to reflect the changing demographics of the world has become a crucial key to understanding the value of diversity within the independent school setting. Statistics indicate that as minority groups increase throughout the state of Ohio, so do their buying power, or ability to afford higher levels of education.

Faculty/Staff Diversity: Crucial to School Sustainability

- Dispels myths and stereotypes about independent schools, people of color, and “qualified” candidates.
- Provides a safe, non-threatening environment to create a diverse and inclusive community.
- Promotes an environment where diverse students, faculty, and families can identify and connect with similar groups.
- Creates a thinking, growing, and progressive community.
- Acknowledges globalization and the changing demographics of our external world
Groundwork: Why Aren’t We “There” Yet?

A new independent school administrator who is also a person of color was invited to a reception with the board of trustees. She was greeted at the door by the host of the reception, yet found herself feeling a bit anxious and on her own. Having anticipated (and hoped for) a welcoming introduction, she felt a cordial distance ultimately leaving this defining event with a feeling of not having made any genuine connections or that her presence mattered. This “cordial distance” contrasted with the administrator’s family and cultural background which emphasized that the responsibility for welcome and making newcomers comfortable falls to the host and/or those with the social power.

Lasting Change = Substantive Preparation

For many years, independent schools have included the term Diversity in strategic plans, goal setting sessions, and faculty/staff training and meetings. Plans were developed and implementation begun. Yet, there is still a significant gap between goals and results. Why is this the case? More importantly, what can schools do to make greater progress in this area?

In order for any change to be successful within a community, all constituencies must be prepared -- the ground must be fertile, so to speak. All individuals involved in the process must have an awareness of the institution, its history and traditions, and the perceived norms that have evolved from this history. The entire school community and anyone who partners with the school will be affected by this potential change. Therefore, the past must be acknowledged before everyone can move forward.

Creating an environment that is inclusive and welcomes change will require time and planning. The foundation must be built on a commitment by the school administration to develop a more diverse faculty. This commitment must be articulated and visible to the entire community through the mission of the school and strategic plan, ongoing conversations and continuous measurement.

A series of school wide formal and informal conversations around the topic of diversity is a critical stating point. It is vital not to be daunted by the inevitable groans and comments about being tired of talking about diversity or the skepticism of those who point out that we have been talking for a long time but not progressed much beyond lip service. These conversations will help the dominant culture shift its focus from what are perceived as losses (e.g., quality, power, a way of life) to how the community will be enriched. Some of these conversations will be fact –based, providing demographic information and statistics regarding local, state and national data, and the school’s data in the same areas. Some of these conversations should take on the difficult topics, including those around “white privilege” and “tokenism”. What do these sound like and how they are
manifested within the institution? It is imperative that these conversations take place in a way that leads to self-reflection and in a productive environment that creates some level of discomfort yet still encourages continued dialogue.

All change creates apprehension; there is an optimal level of anxiety needed for learning and change to occur. Unfortunately, when the topic of change is centered on diversity, the process often come to a screeching halt or is watered down into something less uncomfortable. Change requires all participants to examine their own biases, prejudices, and long-held beliefs, a difficult and often frightening task. These feelings are normal but facing them can no longer be ignored. Schools that will be successful in the future will reflect the growing diversity and demographics of our communities and society.

As outlined earlier, there are many reasons for initiatives to increase faculty diversity, the most important of which is to meet the needs of the students enrolled in the institution. All members of the community, however, will respond to different motivations. For some, the realization that this will add value to the business and impact the school’s financial sustainability will be powerful; for others, the belief that this is morally just will be a motivator, and for others, it will be the goal of developing students who will be the leaders of the future and who will make a difference in the world.

This is a critical charge, requiring strong unwavering leadership. In *The Colors of Excellence*, authors Pearl Kane and Alfonso Orsini point out that cultural change in a school requires “getting a handle on where the power lies. If the board or the parent body is controlling the school, matters of diversity, then that group must be fully apprised and in agreement... Otherwise, the school will be hampered in its efforts.”

**Affirming Diversity**

In her article, “What Does It Mean To Affirm Diversity?” University of Massachusetts Professor, Sonia Nieto acknowledges that in the 1950s educational paradigms supported the notion that all students were “cut from the same cloth,” and students were given messages that anything having to do with one’s home culture had to be abandoned at school. In 2007, the messages sent to students of independent schools have only become more subtle.

As educators, Nieto says, we no longer can afford to behave as if diversity were a dirty word.... Effectively teaching students of all backgrounds means respecting and affirming who they are. To become effective teachers of all students,
educators must undergo a profound shift in their beliefs, attitudes and values about difference. In many U.S. classrooms, cultural, linguistic and other differences are commonly viewed as temporary, if troublesome, barriers to learning. Consequently, students of diverse backgrounds are treated as walking sets of deficiencies, as if they had nothing to bring to the educational enterprise.”

To overcome this natural inclination to assimilate students into present independent school cultures, education and growth of diverse and culturally competent independent school faculty must be expected.

When a school community respects its students, it respects the diverse communities from which they come. Adult representation from those communities should be more fully integrated into the fabric of independent schools. How then, does a school fulfill its expectation to attract, hire and retain people from these diverse communities into historically homogenous independent school environments? Research suggests that it starts with creating a welcoming climate for diversity.

What Is A Welcoming Environment?

Independent schools generally view their institutions as warm and friendly places. After all this is in our literature about how we work with children and it is very much a part of our admission efforts. How do we insure that our schools are also welcoming to faculty and staff of color? From this perspective a welcoming environment:

- creates momentum with open and honest discussions
- does not tip toe around important issues.
- is respectful and demonstrates an openness to living in another’s shoes.
- has people of color in all positions and in all divisions.
- makes people of color feel safe, valued and appreciated.
- has support networks and affinity groups for people of color.
- generates activities and encourages dialogue which supports everyone’s growth
- supports interconnectedness.
- supports relationships that are warm, sincere, genuine, and consistent.
- has more than enough listening ears and non-judgmental attitudes to go around.
- changes when necessary for sustainability.

Independent schools everywhere do struggle with diversity issues. But this much is clear: In independent schools, what is needed most is a school leader with unflappable clarity and commitment to the process. The responsibility can be shared-and should be-but the work can’t be completely delegated to others. If a school head needs to delegate work in order to get important projects done, he or she should find something else to pass along. Without solid leadership in diversity, a school won’t meet with success. Guide to Hiring and Retaining Faculty of Color, AISNE, (Brosnan), 2001
Administrative Responsibility: Actively Recruiting and Retaining-People of Color.

School communities, starting with the Head of School and supported by the Board of Trustees, must develop accountability systems and establish effective practices to recruit and retain people of color. Leadership responsibility might be in the domain of the Division Heads who should be actively supporting, accessing, and monitoring the process and growth. A strategic plan that does not address diversity will severely challenge the effort. The strategic plan must demonstrate hiring practices that address the recruitment of underrepresented groups. Strategies to involve the dominant culture in the changes will expedite the process and strengthen the transition. Readings, meetings, open dialogue, and research will vary for each institution. In order to nurture acceptance of people of color, the retention of new hires requires the active support of mentoring programs and administrative support.

Leadership responsibility for diversity is crucial but assessment of this process is everyone’s job. It is important to set goals or benchmarks and evaluate progress. If there is to be substantial and sustainable progress statewide, the Heads of School must monitor this collaboratively, perhaps at one of their two yearly meetings. Using statistics, literature, and reviewing various approaches could offer a rich exchange of ideas, support, and approaches.

What is necessary for success? Clear energetic leadership and support (both formal and informal) throughout the school culture are essential. In addition, it is important to create dynamic, sustainable assessment processes to provide detailed feedback and the basis for effective adjustment of practice. It is critical to the success of a school that it take the extra time to formulate ideas and action plans to help bridge the gap between what the current situation is and what it can become.

A framework for progress:

**STEP 1** – *Assess the interviewing process:* What works? What doesn’t? How many applicants are people of color? Who evaluates these applicants? Who is actively seeking out these applicants? Who is hiring? Are enough genuinely committed people involved?

**STEP 2** – *Evaluate retention:* Why do people of color leave? Why do they stay? This is a ‘touchy’ subject. Asking someone to explain why he or she decided to leave could be unpleasant, but institutions that don’t seek accurate feedback and learn, suppress their growth. Consider the advantages of objective ways to conduct exit interviews, such as employing a firm or agency to collect data.

**STEP 3** – *Start dialogue:* Begin talking to everyone about their concerns with faculty hiring. Find out what parents, students and teachers think
about the current situation. Get a broad point of view so that changes can be made step by step.

**STEP 4 – Gather data:** Find statistics. What is the percentage of faculty of color in independent schools in Ohio? How does your school compare? What is the current percentage of students of color in your area? What are the trends over the next several years?

**STEP 5 – Work Hard:** Schools will have to change where they post jobs, how they advertise openings and their time lines for interviewing potential teachers. It will be hard work, but most rewarding work is always a little harder! In fact, making connections to minority associations within the community may be part of the first step! (We have included lists of some of these organizations for outreach in the Resources on pages 22-23)

NOW is the time to talk about it, but more importantly, to go beyond the talk that so often is only “lip service”, and make the change happen. It will take time, effort, dialogue, honesty, and open communication, but it will make a difference!

_The good news is that schools that align their “walk” with their “talk” have seen their communities come alive in exciting ways. It takes energy, and risk, but it’s not about subjecting oneself to pain and ridicule. It’s about growing. It’s about finding a deeper truth. It’s about getting moral clarity about the past and moving forward with greater knowledge and commitment._

Michael Brosnan, *Hiring and Retaining Teachers of Color; The Why and How of It*, Association of Independent Schools in New England
Hiring: Grappling with Myths and Realities

The development of a diverse faculty requires a hiring process that can identify and attract candidates from populations of color. This, in turn, advances the mission of the institution while broadening the perspective of the school community. This section identifies myths that can hamper the development of a productive hiring process and lists practices that have proven to be unsuccessful in producing minority hires. Though the obstacles can be daunting, the hiring process can also provide the best avenue to creating a diverse faculty. We also recommend a hiring process that can be productive and flexible enough to benefit most school environments.

As the reader knows from the opening paragraph, Ohio independent schools lag significantly behind our peer schools nationally in hiring and retaining teachers from minority populations yet there are substantial minority populations in the major Ohio cities in which OAIS schools are located. This fact points to the need to review and reconsider current hiring practices.

**Myths of Minority Hiring:**

Matters of race and ethnicity have been integral elements of American culture for centuries. Independent schools, as part of that same culture, share in the same problems and misperceptions that affect American society as a whole. As a result, it becomes necessary to name and dispel the myths that hinder the hiring process. These can include popular misconceptions that:

- qualified minority candidates “just aren’t out there.”
- private schools are playgrounds for the privileged.
- hiring minority candidates will diminish school standards.
- hiring a person of color will adversely affect the school culture.
- retention is only a matter of generous salary.
- there is an unspoken hiring quota.

Such myths can affect a school’s perception of minority candidates as well as those candidates’s perception of the schools themselves. Regardless of their origin or perspectives, such misperceptions are detrimental to understanding and stand in the way of authentic diversity.
**Hiring Processes**

One misconception is that hiring involves getting candidates of color to find the school rather than the school reaching out. “There are so few well-qualified minority candidates and we are all competing for the same few.” The reality is that hiring, especially hiring people of color, presents significant challenges for independent schools; how do schools effectively hire people of color? Some of the obstacles that interviewers face are: qualifications of people of color (especially in light of the tendency to prefer candidates who have some connection to the independent school world which is very small), adaptability to an independent school environment, acceptance by current staff and faculty, longevity, higher expectations placed on people of color, salary considerations for candidates with college loans and the list goes on.

Hiring people of color adds tremendously to the quality of the school provided the hiring process has been well defined and there is an active and viable retention strategy in place. At the beginning of the hiring process the following considerations may provide a foundation not only to attract interested people of color but also to develop programs to retain people of color. There are risks that schools WILL and MUST be willing to take, and ground that schools WILL and MUST be willing to break.

**Defining the Position**

A well-defined and clearly communicated job description is essential to beginning a recruitment program. The committee chairperson or individual charged with leading the search must articulate and define both the hard skills (education, previous experience, technology skills) and soft skills (personality, versatility, sense of humor, etc) required for the available position. One serious challenge is how to deal with the unspoken agenda that can accompany identification of “qualifications.” Beginning a search without investigating the necessary (absolute and definitive) requirements will result in a search where neither the school, the interviewer, nor the candidate is reading from the same book. Share the proposed job description with those who have a critical, yet objective eye for clarity and content. An opinion from someone other than those intimately involved with the recruiting process can be informative, effective, and enlightening.

**Honing Interviewer Skills**

Educating those who have been charged with performing the interviews is critical. Each interviewer must:
- have a clear understanding of the job requirements
- know the do’s and the don’ts of interviewing from a legal perspective
- screen resumes and conduct telephone interviews
- understand, adopt and be committed to the school’s position on diversity
- know how to probe for the answers relevant to the position requirements.

Each interviewer should be accountable for ensuring that every interested candidate receives equitable treatment.
Marketing The Position

In order to make a fruitful effort to recruit qualified minority candidates schools must expand their range of vision to reach qualified minority candidates. Reliance on the usual placement agencies that serve independent schools is not adequate. Consider the following:

- ethnic community organizations/associations such as the Urban League
- church groups
- search firms dedicated to people of color (such as NEMNET, etc.)
- referrals from the school’s parent community, alumni association, and current faculty
- local colleges
- networking with other independent schools, utilizing local and national independent school associations (such as CCIS, OAIS, ISACS, NAIS),
- media (especially newspapers, radio, magazines, that serve the minority community)
- implementing a job/career fair
- providing a chance for potential candidates to visit the school. perhaps via an open house luncheon or a public event of interest to teachers
- NB: see pages. 22-23 for more specific ideas to reach the minority community

It is crucial to understand that the majority of people are either completely unfamiliar with independent schools or are influenced by the stereotypes that circulate in the popular media. Not recognizing how much education about the nature of independent schools in general as well as the uniqueness of a particular school is needed is a real handicap.

Bear in mind that getting the full attention of minority organizations will require more than an email, letter, or telephone call. A personal face-to-face meeting in many cases is the best way to let an organization know the seriousness of your request for their services. Communicating your school’s commitment to diversity is essential. In addition, you must do your homework to determine the priorities of each organization.

Constant interfacing on a regular basis whether or not there are positions available builds a foundation and establishes a trust between the school and the various agencies and organizations that will only enhance your future needs. Other ideas to consider include seeking substitutes of color and establishing internships for candidates of color as a way of introducing a more diverse adult population within your school.

Selecting Candidates to Interview

Determining which candidates are to interview on-site is the part of the recruiting process where personal preferences can become hindrances. It is “easy and convenient” to hire the person (usually a person who is not a person of color) who has been performing in the position on a temporary basis. This approach, however, undercuts the intended efforts on
diversity hiring. The key words in creating a diverse workforce are fair, equitable, unbiased, and open. Evaluate this temporary employee the same way that you evaluate all of the other resumes that you have received. Be cognizant of the natural tendency to hire in one’s own image.

**On-Site Interviews**

Once the decision has been made as to which candidates are to be scheduled for an on-site interview, the school must be in a position not only to evaluate the candidate’s credentials with regard to the job requirements, but also to “sell” the school to the candidate. Interviews are a two-way street; just as the school is evaluating the candidate in terms of the job requirements, the candidate is evaluating the school in terms of his or her career objectives and goals. Let the candidate know that he or she has been invited for this interview based on their qualifications. Be frank and honest with regard to the culture and environment of your school.

**Final Recommendation**

This should never be a unilateral decision. If there is no formal search committee, the person charged with recruiting should always enlist the feedback from others. Collaborate, discuss, and review each candidate based on the job requirements. Ensure that the people of color have been fairly reviewed (no hidden agendas). In the best interest of the candidate, do not be afraid to ask questions of the decision maker.

**Evaluating the Recruiting Process**

Reconvene your search committee; openly and candidly debrief the process for continuous improvement. Some things to consider:

- Did we ask questions of each candidate that centered on the job requirements?
- Did we ask the same questions of every candidate?
- Did we receive each candidate with the same level of enthusiasm and interest?
- Were we honest and frank regarding the culture and environment of the school?
- Have we scrutinized our mindsets for remnants of bias or limited imagination?
- What things were not done that could have been done?
- What changes should be recommended for future recruiting efforts?

In the event that a school has interviewed a minority candidate, and the candidate was offered the position but didn’t accept, it is beneficial to the school to conduct some kind of follow-up to determine why he or she didn’t accept the position. Obtaining this kind of information will help the hiring committee and manager with issues they might not be aware of and can address with future candidates of color. Document your findings for future reference; inform your head of school of those areas that impede an objective recruiting process.
Accountability in the Hiring Process

“A good coach will hold the team accountable for both their actions and their results.”
- Catherine Pulsifer, Good-bye Manager, Hello Coach!

“Perhaps nothing in our society is more needed for those in positions of authority than accountability. Too often, those with authority are able (and willing) to surround themselves with people who support their decisions without question. “
- Anonymous

Within many independent schools, there is mystery surrounding the hiring process. Many constituents within the school community are not knowledgeable of the steps involved in bringing in candidates for open positions. Not only are they unaware of the steps involved in hiring, but also they are not aware of who makes the decisions about who to interview or who is hired. Schools must become more transparent in their hiring processes if real change is to take place.

When working to advance faculty and staff diversity, it is important to take a look at the level of accountability in place for those involved in the hiring process. To guarantee that a sincere effort is being made to increase the number of minority hires, it is imperative that schools develop a system of checks and balances.

Building Accountability

How does a school build accountability within the hiring process? First and foremost, schools need to put their hiring practices in writing. Then, these practices need to be continually reviewed and evaluated. Ask the hard questions:

- Are the practices equitable for all candidates?
- Who do these practices favor?
- Are the best practices being employed for the school based on its mission and the goals set forth in its strategic plan?
- Are the right people involved in the hiring process?

This last question is extremely important to consider. If the school is making a sincere effort to advance diversity hires, the people involved in the hiring process must also be dedicated to this effort. Without this type of integral support, schools cannot hope to advance faculty diversity; for it is often the search committees and the interviewers that stall forward movement. As Jim Collins states in his book Good to Great, it’s all about “getting the right people on the bus.”

Evaluating and Tracking Hiring Practices

Through evaluation, areas of weakness are uncovered and can be addressed, as well as revamped. Effective changes can then be made and instituted. By evaluating one’s hiring practices, an institution is better able to examine whether it is truly employing the best
strategies for recruiting, interviewing, and hiring, not just persons of color, but all faculty and staff members. Being open about one’s practices also allows schools to constantly refine and tune its hiring process to fit the needs, mission, and goals of the institution.

Many schools throughout the nation have found that creating a tracking system which is outlined as a part of its hiring practices is extremely helpful. Tracking:

- enables an institution to have a statistical tool in place that can measure the effectiveness of their hiring strategies.
- measures the number of interviewees, the number of applicants that are persons of color, the number of candidates that were offered positions, as well as the number of persons that accepted positions.
- can be used to monitor the amount of turnover within divisions, which divisions are being successful in bringing in candidates of color and which are not, as well as who conducted the interviews.
- can record how relationships with potential candidates were established, such as recruitment fairs, networking, connection with community organizations, or recommendation from faculty members.

At the end of a hiring season, with a statistical record of its practice, an institution can prepare more knowledgeably for the upcoming season. It can also clearly validate whether a school is, indeed, following through on its commitment of bringing in candidates of color. It is imperative that institutions constantly evaluate their practices in an effort to insure that the school is doing its best to recruit and hire persons of color.

It’s all about employing best practice.

Avoiding the Revolving Door

“People don’t leave schools, they leave people.”

While hiring is a key component in the development of a diverse faculty, it is only half the battle. Once minority candidates have been hired, they must find their work environment to be one that is appropriately supportive. The Association of American Colleges and Universities recently released a study titled Revolving Door Undermines Efforts to Increase Faculty Racial/Ethnic Diversity. Independent schools experience the same discouraging fate when they do not focus intently on retention as a critical aspect of increasing faculty diversity.
Retaining people of color on a school’s professional staff is possible when they are embraced by a school culture that is inclusive in all of its undertakings. An authentically inclusive community is one that moves beyond tolerance to appreciate and value its own diversity.

School communities are created by the people with whom we serve. Therefore, retention should be viewed through the lens of the community of which we are members. Nothing is as painful for any individual as the feeling of being isolated socially or professionally.

**Obstacles to Retention**

The reasons why faculty leave can be as varied as the teachers themselves. Experience indicates, however, that certain trends can be identified as common reasons why people of color choose to leave independent schools. These include:

- subtle expectations that people of color will be representatives for their entire race - whether it is being portrayed as “shining examples” of diversity, constantly being included in school publicity photos, being expected to join diversity committees, etc.
- a lack of support within the school community (students, parents, faculty/staff, administration and board).
- a lack of “critical mass” – “When I look around, I do not see anyone who looks like me?”
- a perception of false commitment from the administration and community – assurances given and ignored
- having qualifications constantly questioned by parents.
- a community afraid to acknowledge difference, denying inequities and privilege. - “We treat everyone the same, we don’t see color.”
- limited opportunity for career advancement within the community
- isolation and feelings of loneliness – “I’m the only one, the first.”
- toleration of an unhealthy climate manifested by subtle innuendo, reliance on stereotypes and inappropriate humor
- the perception of inequitable treatment regarding salary, promotion, and/or support.
- feeling of being “cut off from the herd” personally and/or professionally
- a lack of community accountability for inappropriate behavior

Mrs. Davis was new to Lemon Tree Prep but with 12 years of experience in the public schools and a Teacher of the Year award, she was confident that she, and other African Americans measured up to the school’s teaching standards. As she began her first parent teacher conference, the parents began, “Now just exactly what are your teaching credentials and where did you go to college?”

The Diversity Director Dilemma:

Creating and hiring for a Diversity Director or Coordinator position makes a positive statement about a school’s commitment to diversity. By the same token, having the position and a person can be construed by members of the school community as absolving them of responsibility for diversity work.
Based on our collective experience there are at least four efforts that work in promoting the retention of a diverse faculty. These include:

- establishing connections/networking,
- school wide diversity initiatives,
- professional and personal validation, and
- vocal support

**Connections/Networking:**

Personal contact is the most effective means of nurturing a diverse learning community. Examples include:

- making and maintaining personal connections within the school community (students, parents, faculty/staff, administrators, board)
- maintaining a confidential non-evaluative mentoring program linking new and veteran teachers.
- fostering support systems such as affinity groups, community organizations, alliances with other independent schools, etc.
- appropriate connections between teachers and students.
- cultural/social integration among all members of the faculty, allowing them to share their personal stories comfortably.
- administrative supervision that is supportive of diversity and invites dialogue.

“I knew I could stay when I found an administrator who understood my experience.”

**Diversity Initiatives:**

In order to retain faculty and staff of color, schools should employ diversity strategic plans (growing out of the institution’s strategic plan) that work to increase awareness and create an inclusive community. The most effective diversity initiatives are those that:

- include an obvious commitment from the head of school to actively recruit a diverse faculty/support staff/administrative population;
- receive active support from within the school community (students, parents, faculty/staff, administrators, board);
- are directly linked to the school’s mission statement;
- acknowledge and are honest about the school’s history and how it influences the current school climate/culture.
Here are suggestions for implementation of strategic initiatives.

- Implement on-going diversity training for the entire school community
- Create and support clubs, activities, programs and curriculum designed to increase diversity awareness amongst the student population.
- Develop avenues to bring in more people of color (speakers, substitute teachers, consultants, etc.)
- Develop networks with community organizations in order for the school to connect with its local population.

In addition, it is important for support systems, such as SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) and the school’s Diversity Committee to remain viable and visible on campus. These groups are able to keep a pulse on the diversity issues of the institution, as well as provide opportunities for continued engagement of the community in discussion of pertinent diversity issues.

**Professional Validation:**

Are the professional contributions of faculty of color visible to and acknowledged by the school community? Do your faculty of color feel professionally supported and validated? Support and validation include:

- A fair compensation & benefit system
- The acknowledgement of expertise within the school community
- The identification of the person of color as a resource, not a spokesperson for the race
- Active support of personal and professional growth of its faculty members
- Clear communication concerning the practice of interviewing and hiring the best candidate, thus dispelling the myth that one is hired solely to increase the diversity of the faculty/staff/administration.
- The opportunity for persons of color to self identify and outline their roles within and beyond school community.

**Vocal Majority Allies:**

Within the institution, issues regarding diversity issues should be raised not only by persons of color, but by advocates/allies in the community who are not members of underrepresented groups. For effective discourse, the school must make strides to create a safe environment for underrepresented groups and their allies to discuss difficult issues. An effective ally must be:
aware of inequities faced by persons of color;
• willing to learn, grow and remain engaged despite conflict;
• willing to reach out socially, emotionally, and professionally to persons of color
• willing to stand up for equity and justice

“The head of school filled positions with people of color. She hired them with the mindset of setting them up for success rather than failure. She carried on these campaigns in spite of grumbles of resentment from some of the school community. The head’s leadership and attitude is the most important in the hiring process.”

Sustaining the Effort

The tongue-in-cheek definition of insanity…doing the same things over and over again and expecting different results occurred to us in discussing the sense of weariness that underlay our conversations as we first gathered. Some spoke in frustration of what has seemed like lip service to authentically implementing diversity. Others spoke of disappointment that well-intentioned efforts seemed to yield few results. One person of color who decided not to participate in the conference spoke poignantly of being tired of being one of only a few to raise the diversity flag in an effort to help the school community move forward. All of this speaks to the need to take different approaches if OAIS schools are to increase the diversity of our professional staffs. And, the energy and enthusiasm generated as those committed to diversity worked together, speaks to the need for greater collaboration and opportunity to share successes as well as frustrations.

Successfully diversifying the faculty and staff in independent schools is a daunting task requiring long-term commitment and conscious efforts to combat the feeling of “been there, done that, it didn’t work.” There are obstacles. However, fulfilling the ethical commitment of our schools to equity and justice and treating all members of the community with dignity and respect are important. We know it matters to students of color to have mentors and role models in whom they can see themselves reflected. We also know that as the demographics convert the current “majority” into the numerical “minority, all students are better educated when they learn to work in diverse and multicultural environments. And, we know that some of our schools both in Ohio and around the country have made great strides in building inclusive faculties. We must find more effective ways to share the secrets to that success and to collaborate in order to sustain the commitment.

The challenge is in the moment, the time is always now!
-James Baldwin
A Note on Language and Terminology

Our discussions led inevitably to discussions about language and definitions of terms. The most fundamental was “are we talking about ‘people of color’ or are we talking about ‘people from all underrepresented groups’ in our schools.” For the sake of clarity and expediency, we agreed that this paper is about people of color as NAIS uses the term. Our earnest hope is that much of what we have written will be applicable to inclusion generally.

The development of common language is important to this dialogue, even though we chose to focus on the topic at hand in the brief time we had together. A school community could do worse than to initiate an earnest conversation by trying to reach consensus on some or all of the words and phrases below. Our brainstorming of some possible meanings follows.

Try This:

- With a group of colleagues, brainstorm meanings of each of the terms in bold.
- Generate specific examples or illustrations from your experience of each meaning.
- Discuss differences in the assumptions underlying each definition.
- Consider the value of developing common language for the genuine dialogue

Dominant Culture
- The one that is heard most
- Majority not dominant
- Signifies that there is a subordinate
- Majority
- Predominate (preferred)
- Group that rules, usually the majority

Tokenism
- Being treated as concessions to diversity requirements but do not have equal voice to influence school culture
- The minimum representation of a group
- A symbol or representation of one’s entire racial ethnic group
- A symbolic addition
- Used superficially to show compliance
- A representative or statistic, not a resource
- Having a visible or obvious person of a difference to be a part of a group to impress
- The policy or practice of making a symbolic effort
Diversity

- Appreciation, understanding of, respect, really getting the most out of everyone, and acknowledging the separate groups. A reciprocity at all time, that we are all enriched and become something else.
- Use categories to count numbers that are different from the majority.
- Diversity is defined on difference; this can incorporate race, culture, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age and ability.
- The differences within a group, organization or organism
- Quantitatively, it occurs with little effect
- Many different thoughts, shapes, sizes, abilities, colors, cultures, ethnic/social/gender/economic variety
- Dissimilar

Inclusion

- Presupposes that there is an in and an out, that there is a majority and a minority.
- Need to facilitate: most of our schools operate with an assimilation model.
- Unitig everyone in a total group-no one left behind
- Combination of policies, practices, and attitudes that welcome and incorporate ideas and contributions of all.
- Broader term than diversity. Requires personal change in behavior
- The addition or adding to inclusion involves an environment where all are not only included, but are appreciated.
- Qualitatively, environment, which supports, fosters, and values multiple perspectives and experiences.

Assimilation

- Process of one group moving into the culture of another and losing much of the previous culture.
- The process of adopting the norms of the dominant culture.
- Assimilation requires the taking way of self in order to fit in with expectations/standards of the mainstream.
- Groups designed to support specific needs, especially underrepresented.

White Privilege

- Early American culture where whites have benefits P.O.C. do not enjoy
- Rights/activities afforded to Caucasians at the exclusion of others
- The real privilege that comes with race and is usually assumed (but often accepted without realization) by the person of privilege
• Privileges/advantages that are often unspoken that is available to those that are white.
• Benefits/Power whites have that they do not realize that they possess; exempting from certain burdens of liabilities

**Globalization**

• There are no boundaries or isolationism/people must work together
• Think globally, lower socioeconomic groups get lost in discussion
• Global vs. international
• A worldview
• Cooperative interactions on a global scale

**Consider:**

What do we know about globalization and its effects that fosters appreciation of cultural diversity?
What do we know about the effects of globalization that undermines the appreciation of cultural diversity?

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**The Mirror: Reflection and Discussion**

**At a meeting of the entire professional staff:**
take a long look around the room. Scan each face quickly. What do we look like? Who do we ‘identify’ with? How many of those look fundamentally like you? How many of your colleagues look different? Does anyone look different?

**At a school assembly or other student gathering:**
focus on the students. How diverse are our students? Are several cultures represented throughout the student body and across the grade levels? What different perspectives are being brought into the classroom? Recall one or more times when a student expressed a different vision that surprised you and/or his or her classmates.

**Recall those who have been your personal mentors and allies:**
Did they look like you or not? Imagine trying to grow and advance without a role model who looks like you and understands your cultural legacy.

**Use these reflections as the basis for a discussion whether formal or informal with your colleagues.**
How much does it matter for students that the faculty is less diverse than the student body? How might your school benefit from a more diverse faculty? What will you need to pay attention to?
Resources

Print and On-line

*Diversifying the Faculty*. A Guidebook for Search Committees. Caroline Sotello and Viernes Turner. Published by The Association of American Colleges & Universities.

EdChange-Multicultural & Diversity Consulting and Training for Social Justice (Look for the Multicultural Pavilion)
http://www.edchange.com/


National Association of Independent Schools, [www.nais.org](http://www.nais.org)
Advice from the Experts. November 6, 2002.
Source:

Placement -recruitment

The National Employment Minority Network (NEMNET)
http://www.nemnet.com/

HireDiversity.com: Careers, jobs and employment resources for the Minority
http://www.hirediversity.com/

National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE Career Center)
http://nabse.org/career_center.htm

Link to list of Historically Black Colleges and Universities such as Spellman, Morehouse, Howard, Central State

Newspapers, Magazines and Journals

*Call and Post Ohio*: [www.callandpost.com](http://www.callandpost.com)
*Diverse Issues in Higher Education*: [www.diverseeducation.com](http://www.diverseeducation.com)
*Kaleidoscope*: [www.kaleidoscopemagazine.net](http://www.kaleidoscopemagazine.net)
*Herald – Cincinnati*
Organizations

*African American Organizations*
- Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity – [www.pbs1914.org](http://www.pbs1914.org)
- Sigma Lambda Gamma Sorority – [www.sigmalambdagamma.com](http://www.sigmalambdagamma.com)
- Phi Iota Alpha Fraternity – [www.publicrelationsphiota.org](http://www.publicrelationsphiota.org)
- Gamma Alpha Omega Sorority – [www.gammaalphomega.com](http://www.gammaalphomega.com)
- Iota Phi Theta Fraternity – [www.iotaphitheta.org](http://www.iotaphitheta.org)

Black Business and Professional Association (BPPA): [www.bbpa.org](http://www.bbpa.org)
- Jack and Jill: [www.jack-and-jill.org](http://www.jack-and-jill.org)
- National Alliance of Black School Educators: [www.nabse.org](http://www.nabse.org)
- The Drifters: [www.driftersinc.com](http://www.driftersinc.com)
- Top Ladies of Distinction: [www.tlod.org](http://www.tlod.org)

*Hispanic/Latino Organizations*
- Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs: [www.ochla.midwestlatino.us](http://www.ochla.midwestlatino.us)

*Sororities*
- Alpha Kappa Alpha: [www.aka1908.com](http://www.aka1908.com)
- Delta Sigma Theta: [deltasigmatheta.xohost.com](http://deltasigmatheta.xohost.com)
- National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa: [www.sororitynpdk.org](http://www.sororitynpdk.org)
- Sigma Gamma Rho: [www.sigmagammarho.org](http://www.sigmagammarho.org) [www.sgrho1922.org](http://www.sgrho1922.org)

*Fraternities*
- Alpha Phi Alpha: [www.alphaphialpha.net](http://www.alphaphialpha.net)
- Kappa Alpha Psi: [www.kappaalphapsi1911.com](http://www.kappaalphapsi1911.com)
- Omega Psi Phi: [www.omegapsiphifraternity.org](http://www.omegapsiphifraternity.org)