

THE AISNE GUIDE TO

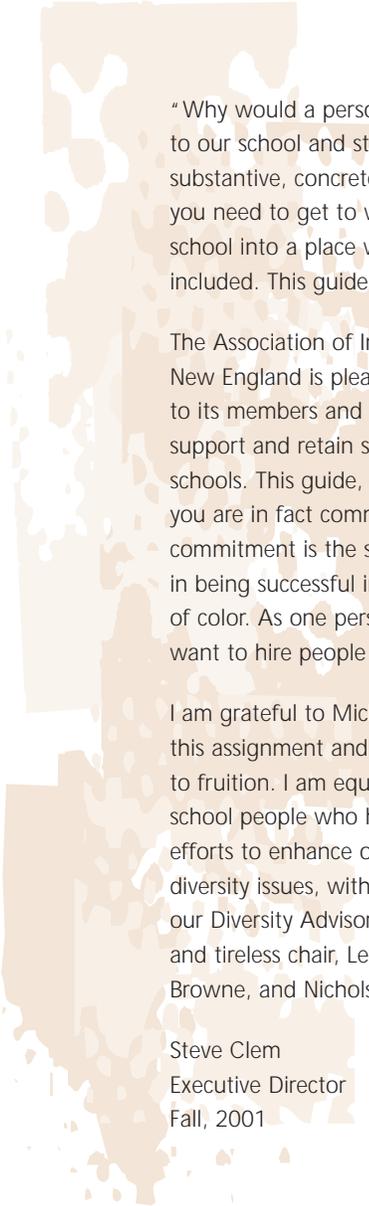
Hiring and
Retaining

Teachers of Color

The Why and How of It

Michael Brosnan

AISNE Association of Independent Schools in New England

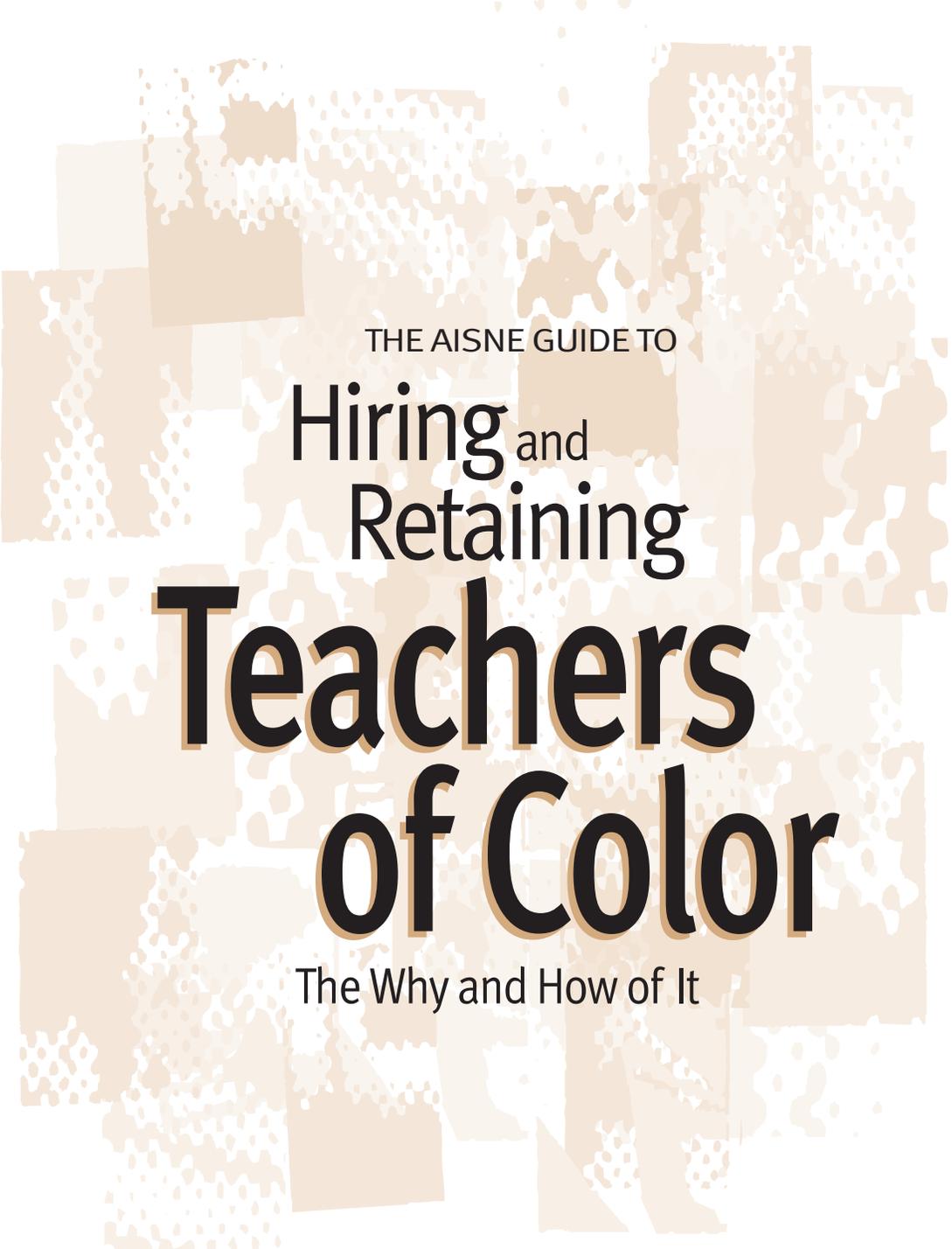


“Why would a person of color want to come to our school and stay?” If you don’t have substantive, concrete answers to that question, you need to get to work on transforming your school into a place where everyone will feel included. This guide can help.

The Association of Independent Schools in New England is pleased to offer this resource to its members and to anyone seeking to hire, support and retain staff of color in independent schools. This guide, of course, presupposes that you are in fact committed to doing this. That commitment is the single most important factor in being successful in hiring teachers and staff of color. As one person put it, “If you really want to hire people of color, you will.”

I am grateful to Michael Brosnan for taking on this assignment and for bringing it so successfully to fruition. I am equally grateful to all of the school people who have supported AISNE’s efforts to enhance our services to schools around diversity issues, with particular appreciation to our Diversity Advisory Group and its engaged and tireless chair, Lewis Bryant of Buckingham, Browne, and Nichols School.

Steve Clem
Executive Director
Fall, 2001



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The Why and How of It

“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 predominantly white institution. Even with all the benefits of teaching in an independent school, it takes a pretty big leap of faith.”

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Luthern Williams, diversity director, Winsor School

Overview

It's late February. You have an opening on your faculty for a history teacher next fall. You have booked time at the NAIS conference to interview candidates. You sit down with the résumés and realize you have only one person of color in the pile. You're busy. You have, among other things, conference sessions to attend, teachers to hire, money to raise for the new capital campaign, but somewhere in the back of your mind you feel frustrated because you want more people of color on your faculty. You just don't know how to get qualified candidates to apply. You interview the top candidates on your list. The candidate of color would be a good fit, but says she has received an offer from another school and, all things considered, she thinks it's a better match for her. Sorry.

So what happens next?

The reality is that if you're thinking about hiring a teacher of color for the first time in February, your odds of finding someone are slim. You can try calling the teacher placement agencies you know best and making as much noise as possible. You can pay for a large ad in big city newspapers and *Education Week*, post the ad on one of the online education job sites, but you shouldn't expect to solve the problem in this sort of reactive way. At this point in the history of our country, given the current cultural forces and the economy, you have no choice but to think more carefully about the hiring process early in the year — be proactive instead of reactive — if you expect success in diversifying your teaching and administrative staff.

It's important to know this, too: Even if you find good candidates of color, without carefully laid strategic plans to diversify your school community in as many ways as possible, these candidates are unlikely to sign up for teaching duty at your school.

The good news is that many independent schools have been successful at hiring teachers of color — and diversifying their communities in a variety of ways that fulfill their missions. But it requires not only a school's willingness to change in fundamental ways, but a clear resolve and a long-term commitment.

Start with questions

Before you worry about hiring strategies, it's best to ask a basic question: Why do you want to hire teachers (and administrators) of color?

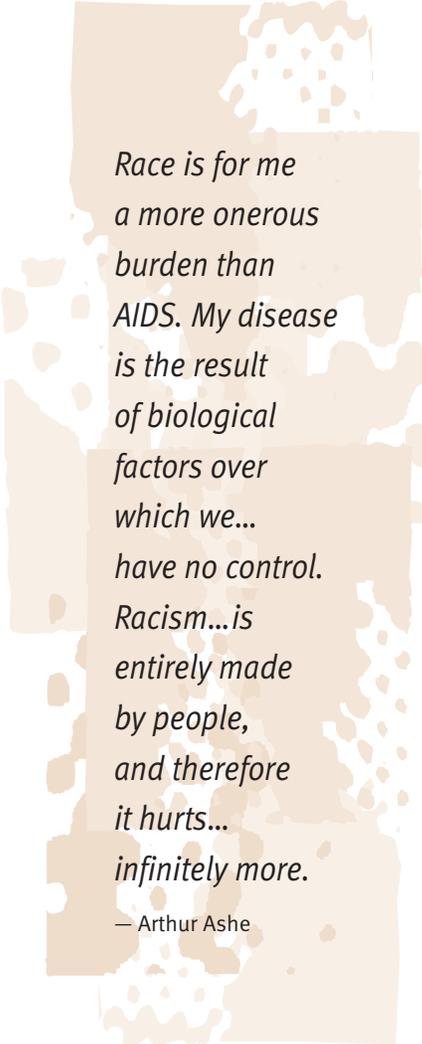
The question seems simple, but it's really just the gateway to a series of questions and to a better understanding of your school's history, its mission,

its sense of where its going, and its connection to the world as it is. Answering it allows you greater clarity about other related questions — and better responses to those in your school who prefer the status quo to changes of this nature.

Some preliminary questions to consider:

- If your school has had good college placements with an all-white faculty, or with only a few teachers of color, what's the motivation for hiring more teachers of color?
- If your school is at full capacity (possibly with a waiting list), why change anything?
- How do you respond to the board member and alumnus who say the school needs to be colorblind in its hiring and admission policies?
- What do you think the new teachers of color will bring to the school community?
- What expectations will you have of them?
- What accommodations are you making for their success in your community?
- To what degree is your school involved in broader diversity work and how does the hiring of teachers of color fit into this work?
- How does hiring teachers of color connect with your mission statement?
- What exactly will you say to your trustees, teachers, parents, students, and alumni about the plan to hire more teachers of color — especially to the detractors?

What you'll find here are some tried and true strategies from a number of schools for hiring teachers of color. But hiring a teacher of color is only part of your concern, the second part, which is why the strategic details come later. First, we'll explore the "why" of it — the foundation work. As one long-time director of diversity planning says, "Hiring teachers of color and diversifying



*Race is for me
a more onerous
burden than
AIDS. My disease
is the result
of biological
factors over
which we...
have no control.
Racism...is
entirely made
by people,
and therefore
it hurts...
infinitely more.*

— Arthur Ashe

To suggest that the problem of the twenty-first century will be the problem of the color line is not to ignore the changes that have occurred in this as well as in other centuries. It is merely to take notice of the obvious fact that the changes have not been sufficient to eliminate the color line as a problem, arguably the most tragic and persistent social problem of the nation's history.

— John Hope Franklin

your student body shouldn't be your first step. Too many schools have brought in teachers and students of color and then tried to figure out the implications. Rather, a school needs to work on itself first, examine the institutional culture. Heads and gatekeepers in schools also need to think about their own commitment to the process."

In order to answer some of the overarching questions, it helps to look at the pragmatic, academic, and moral reasons for hiring teachers of color. This discussion extends more broadly to diversity issues in general — that is, to diversifying your administrative and teaching staffs, your student body, and your board of trustees in as many ways as possible in an effort to reflect the world around you. But for the sake of

focus, we'll stick close to the topic at hand: hiring more teachers of color. At this point in time, it's a troublesome area for independent schools.

Once you get clarity about the "why" of it, it's easier to move on to the "how."

But one more thing before moving on. Race relations in America (and in the world) range from uneasy to tense. America has made strides in this area, but the country, obviously, does not speak with a unified voice about race. There are newspaper stories every day that remind us of this. There are big stories, like the beating of Rodney King, the undoing of affirmative action in California universities, or the disproportionate number of people of color in our jails (and on death row). There are also quieter stories — take the high-school drop-out rate for Latina teens, for instance — that

nevertheless speak volumes about the racial divide. A recent study by the Harvard Civil Rights Project indicates that America is losing ground in terms of integration of our schools. Segregation of white students and students of color is higher today than it was thirty years ago. Seventy percent of all African-American students, for instance, attend schools that are predominantly African American. Race matters in America are volcanic; they can lay dormant for years and explode almost without warning. White teachers and administrators — the majority of professional adults in your school community — may also feel threatened by the process of diversification, believing that they could be the "losers" in the drive toward a multicultural community. Some will undoubtedly argue that the focus on hiring teachers of color only widens the racial divide by drawing attention to differences and not to similarities. All of this — and more — will come to bear in a school community when it decides to change its basic racial make-up over time.

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.

Reasons for hiring more teachers of color

Demography is destiny

Indicators suggest that in very short time the demographic make-up in the U.S. will be far more diverse than it is today. By the year 2030, all racial groups in the U.S. will fit the definition of "minority." In a 1999 article in *Independent School* titled "Tomorrow is Today," authors Peter Braverman and Scott Looney describe the demographic, sociological, and economic trends, all of which indicate a very different marketplace for independent schools in the coming decades. "Schools [that] take assertive positive action to attract and retain a wider array of students and families will find the marketplace of the early twenty-first century more hospitable..." they write. "Waiting much longer may mean waiting too long."

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 and market your school to a broader spectrum of families.

Preparing students for the new world

Along with the motivation to keep your school afloat, diversifying your student body and teaching staff makes sense if you're serious about preparing students for their adult world to come. Any school that promises to prepare students for the future must help them understand how to function in a multicultural society and in a multicultural organization. Over the past decade, corporate America has been working hard to train top and middle management in how to manage a diverse workforce. Think of the advantages students from diverse schools have when they enter the corporate world with a better understanding of diversity.

Along these lines, it might help to know that the corporate world is ahead of the independent school world in understanding the importance of diversity. Why? It's partly because most Americans live in segregated communities and attend homogenous schools and churches. The workplace is the one place where the races currently mix in ways that closely mirror the society. Businesses connect productivity with worker harmony. But businesses have also studied the economic and demographic trends and know that their financial success depends on their understanding of a diverse marketplace. The greater their own diversity, they reason, the more likely they are to thrive.

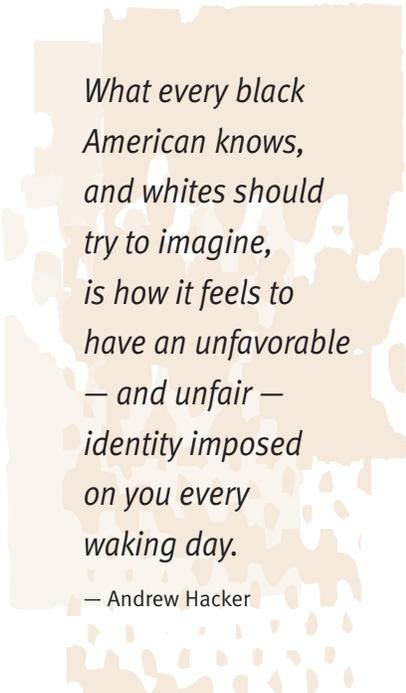
Many schools are working hard these days to analyze their curricula and find ways to make them more multicultural, including, among other things, a more balanced approach to history that contains contributions from other cultures besides Europeans and literature that isn't so heavily weighted in favor of white men. They are also considering how to account for the various multiple intelligences, while continuing to offer the sort of academic preparedness for the next level that has been the hallmark of independent school success over the years. This is all good and important work. Students need a better, more balanced view of history and a better understanding of how the world functions and of the various contributions of various cultures (and of women). All students in independent schools should see themselves reflected in their studies. But it's also important to remember that a vast satchel of information is not what students need today. Roland S. Barth, in his book *Learning by Heart*, reminds us

that in 1950, high school graduates learned about 75 percent of all they needed to be successful in the workplace. Today, the estimate is that high school graduates learn about 2 percent of all they need to know, even though they leave high school knowing far more than the graduates of the 1950s. "The notion that we can acquire, once and for all, a basic kit of knowledge that will hold us in good stead for the rest of our lives is folly," Barth writes. The difference between the 1950s and today lies in the speed of change in human knowledge.

What business leaders will tell you is that they need people with a variety of skills, including problem solving skills, interpersonal skills, creative thinking skills, listening skills, the ability to work well in teams, strong oral and written communication skills, and leadership skills. Since these skills will be applied to a multicultural world, it only makes sense that they are taught and practiced in multicultural schools with diverse teaching staffs.

Instilling confidence and making connections

We may be straying a little into the next section on moral reasons for hiring more teachers of color (what imagined line was ever clearly drawn?), but while we're on the subject of practical and academic reasons for diversifying your teaching staff, you can also consider the self-esteem and confidence of your students. You can support student of colors all you want with white teachers, but it's pretty clear that they'll have a stronger self-image, and are thus more likely to be good students and contributors to the community, if they see themselves reflected in the adults around them. JoAnn Deak, in her book *How Girls Thrive*, also notes that girls need "connectedness" in their lives. What better way to provide such connectedness for your students of color than to have adults like them in your school community?

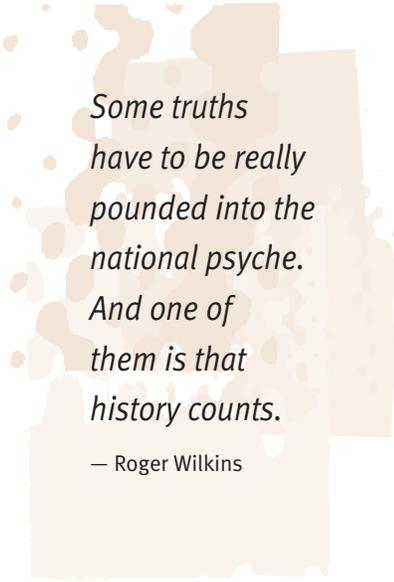


*What every black
American knows,
and whites should
try to imagine,
is how it feels to
have an unfavorable
— and unfair —
identity imposed
on you every
waking day.*

— Andrew Hacker

Moral reasons for hiring teachers of color

The word “elite” is double-edged. Administrators in independent schools understand that their schools are aberrations in American society. On one hand, their graduates have a high degree of success in college and beyond — a kind of elitism one can easily endorse. Parents send their children to these institutions primarily for the academic and character development that will help them do well in life. At the same time, independent schools exclude most of America — close to 99 percent. Such exclusivity would be morally acceptable only in the degree to which the institutions reflected the American society, but many independent schools have a long history of not mirroring the nation’s diversity in race (or socioeconomic status). This partly explains why many schools are working so hard at diversity these days. Academic elitism is one thing, but exclusivity based on race and economics is another — if you consider your institution to be a morally guided one.



*Some truths
have to be really
pounded into the
national psyche.
And one of
them is that
history counts.*

— Roger Wilkins

History

If the press and the general public take potshots at independent schools for being socially exclusive places, one can understand their viewpoint. Art Powell, in his book *Lessons from Privilege: The American Prep School Tradition*, delves deeply into this historical exclusivity, tracing the thinking of schools back to the 1930s, when “prep schools assumed that homogeneous com-

munities were major assets.” By mid-century, Powell notes, “alongside a cultural elitism irrelevant and uninteresting to most Americans lurked a social exclusivity very easy to dislike. Prep schools opened their doors to desirable student groups and closed their doors to others. In the eyes of critics such as C. Wright Mills... exclusive prep schools were agents in a conspiracy of the already privileged to perpetuate their privilege forever.”

In the traditional prep schools of the Northeast, the exclusion was based primarily on race and class and any changes to this were slow in coming. In the South, in the ten years following the 1954 Brown Supreme

Court case, many new independent schools were founded for the exclusive education of white children.

The good news is that much of this history has been transformed into the fuel that drives morally guided change in independent schools — that leads them to debate their public purpose. Today you find most independent schools asking questions about this purpose and embracing the concept that they must work to be more diverse and more connected to the community at large — ready to move on from their past social exclusivity. Still, as Art Powell notes, “Near the century’s end most were perhaps more apt to celebrate diversity than to attain it.” The road to equity and justice has, indeed, been a slow one for independent schools.

Myth of the level playing field

At the heart of diversity work is a clear understanding that, racially speaking, the playing field has never been level — and that it is still not level today, even given the advances we’ve made as a nation. Pick up almost any current issue of *Education Week* and you’ll find stories that focus on this uneven playing field and the advantages in educational opportunities based on race. A good example is Julian Weissglass’s recent article, “Racism and the Achievement Gap.” Weissglass, the director of the National Coalition for Equity in Education and a nongovernmental delegate at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, argues that a deep-seated racism, still quite invisible to many in this society, is at the heart of the education achievement gap between white students and students of color. David Wellman, in his book *Portraits of White Racism*, defines racism as a “system of advantages based on race.” Under this definition, the advantaged race in America is white, and among the advantages white people have is access to better schools. If you agree with this, you start to see independent schools as part of the racial problem in America. This does not mean that racism is the fault of the people who work in independent schools. But it does mean that people in schools are in a position to address the problem — as so many are doing.

Diverse faculty: necessity, not luxury

When it comes to hiring teachers of color, independent schools collectively are not doing well at all. In their soon-to-be-published book, *People of Color in Independent Schools*, authors Pearl Rock Kane and Alfonso Orsini point out that “just over 7 percent of the ... teachers employed by independent schools were people of color as compared with the approximately 13 percent teachers of color working in our nation’s public schools.” To make matters worse, in their own

study in 1997, the authors investigated these numbers further. If you take Hawaii out of the picture (where the number of teachers of color is high), the percentage falls to under 5 percent. In addition, the authors found that 233 schools (27 percent of those surveyed) did not have any people of color on their staffs. These figures, the authors write, “suggest that many students graduating from independent schools may never interact with a teacher of color over the course of their pre-collegiate studies.”

While schools should certainly think about their strengths — nurture them, improve upon them, exalt in them — it’s best to view the lack of diversity in the teaching staff as a clear weakness that schools need to address in order to fulfill their various missions.

Is it possible to educate truly moral leaders with good character if we educate them in schools that have no teachers of color? Perhaps. But when it comes to interacting with people of color in their professional and personal lives, white students who have had little interaction with students of color and teachers of color will be ill-equipped. It’s likely they will end up drawing upon the harmful racial stereotypes played out in the cliché-ridden media.

Role models

For the student of color in independent schools, the importance of teachers of color can’t be stressed enough. Kane and Orsini conclude that for the students of color in independent schools, “many of whom have moved alone into a very elite version of white-dominated society, the teacher of color who has already successfully negotiated such a world could be a great source of wisdom, a provider of cues for behavior, a source of inspiration, and a cultural decoder. For white students and many students of color as well at these institutions, many of whom have seen people of color working only in service and labor positions, teachers of color could be the only people of color they see in professional roles.”

Orsini and Kane conclude, “Consider the conception of people of color that such an experience will shape in the minds of...students.”

For these students, it comes down to a matter of identity — which connects to the self-esteem issue noted earlier. We all form our identities not only in home and in the culture at large, but also in the school and classroom. Schools can help us feel good about ourselves or help us feel as if we’re not important.

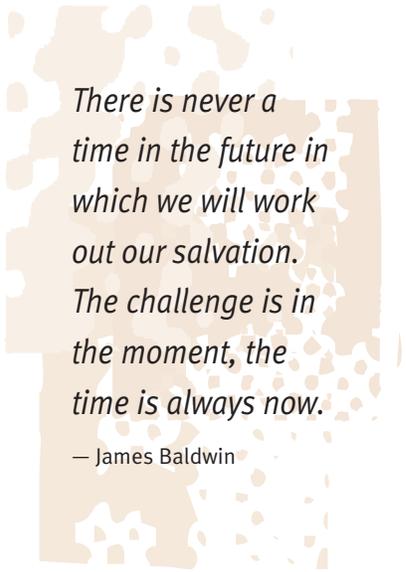
But you don’t have to ask professional researchers to know this; you can ask the students themselves. At a recent student diversity conference, students of

color were asked about what they needed from a school. One wrote, “We want more faculty of color — a wider variety of teachers (Asian, African-American, etc.) teaching a wide variety of subjects.” Another wrote, “We’d like a few dorm parents of color.” Both these desires for mentors of color were seconded

by others. They also spoke of the need to be taken as seriously as white students, to be graded by the same criteria as white students. They asked that teachers have cultural training so they don’t single out students of color to speak for their race anymore than they would single out a white person to speak for, say, Christopher Columbus or Richard Nixon. They ask for understanding when students of color sit together. They ask for a multicultural curriculum. In short, as one student succinctly put it, “We want adults to be more culturally sensitive.”

Challenging the status quo

One of the difficulties in diversity work is in the way information about diversity challenges the status quo, and all those who have been working in the status quo for many years. Administrators and teachers in white-dominant schools who have been preparing students for college for years without feeling the need to diversify either the staff or student body can easily get defensive about what seems to be an attack on their way of doing things. Again, one can point out the college admission records, the achievements of alumni, the brilliance of certain teachers, the inclusion of community service, and the infusion of values. Or whatever a school has done well. But we have too much information about the problems caused by a lack of diversity in the teaching staff — and the flat-out immorality of it — to let it go. Simply put, the horse is out of the barn; schools have to act. And there are so many thoughtful studies of racism and race relations in the United States published in recent years, as well as consultants and other specialists who can guide a school, that it’s hard to think of a compelling reason why a school wouldn’t move forward with diversity work in a carefully orchestrated institutional manner. It’s not an easy journey, but, being a moral one, it’s fairly easy to see its importance and, in doing so, make it a priority for the school.



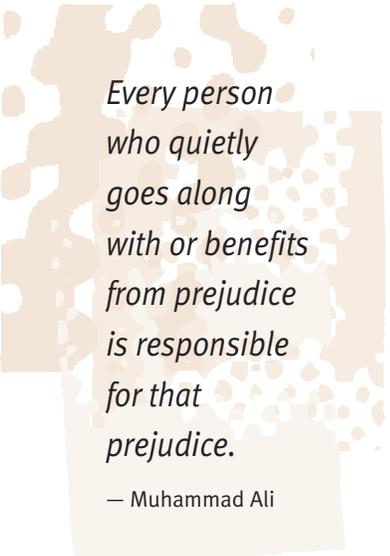
*There is never a
time in the future in
which we will work
out our salvation.
The challenge is in
the moment, the
time is always now.*

— James Baldwin

Working with white teachers and administrators

If your school is made up mostly of white teachers and administrators, the last thing in the world that will convince them that the school should become more diverse is to blame them. As composer and playwright

George C. Wolfe notes, “As soon as guilt and rage enter the room, everyone wants to exit.” Still, it’s important to discuss whiteness in your school community and what it means and how it connects with diversity efforts. It only makes sense that, if your school is mostly white and your mission statement proclaims that the school should be a diverse place, you talk about it. You can’t let “whiteness” be invisible while you talk about color.



Every person who quietly goes along with or benefits from prejudice is responsible for that prejudice.

— Muhammad Ali

This is one of the areas where the work gets hard. For one, many white people don’t see themselves as white — that is, they don’t define themselves by their race, but by other traits (male, Italian-American, Catholic, elementary school teacher, athlete, extrovert, husband, father — almost any trait except race). For another, within the white community, as within all other racial communities, there is a wide spectrum of differences. As Beverly Daniel Tatum notes in *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, “White lesbians sometimes find it hard to claim privileged status as whites when they are so targeted by homophobia and heterosexism, often at the hands of other whites.” It doesn’t even have to be that obvious. For example, many Irish-Americans, two generations removed from outright discrimination in this country, don’t like the idea of being linked to any segment of the American Brahmin community. Nevertheless, talking about whiteness in schools is pivotal. Helping white educators understand their own racial identity will help them understand their role in diversifying their community, and this, in turn, will help a school reach its goal much more quickly than it would if everyone tiptoes around the issue.

Understanding whiteness doesn’t mean that the white people on your campus have to bear the burden of guilt for all oppression of people of color throughout history. But understanding that history and how it

contributes to current inequities in a nation that proclaims itself as the world’s greatest democracy can help your school find its way beyond the deadening stasis of endless talk accompanied by little action.

People of color shouldn’t be put in the role of pushing an institution with a white majority into action. White people need to be involved at every step. Better yet, they should lead.

As one director of community and multicultural development points out, “Once you are able to educate the community and garnish the support of the majority, once you reach a level of understanding that this work is equally educational and beneficial to all, then you’ll see movement.”

And to understand whiteness is to understand that race blindness is nice in theory, but not in practice, since it misses a number of truths about life in America today — among them that there are still glaring inequities in access to housing, jobs, and education. To understand whiteness is to also understand that racism is not just about outright acts of hatred against others (most people in independent schools are unfailingly kind and caring), but about — as Peggy McIntosh, associate director of Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, says in her seminal article, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” — “invisible systems conferring dominance” on one group. To varying degrees, white people in America have more privileges than people of color. White people move more easily through their days in America than do people of color. White people are afforded a greater benefit of the doubt than people of color. Life might not be easy for white people, but in America it’s easier for them than for people of color.

In the area of education, there are numerous examples of how systemic advantage plays out. Even something as seemingly neutral as standardized testing has proven to be biased in favor of the white and wealthy. The SAT’s were originally designed as an indicator of how well an independent school student would perform as a freshman in Ivy League colleges. Over time, the test morphed into an indicator of all sorts of things, including how almost all high school students will fare in any college. Kenneth Wesson, who as a founding member of the Association of Black Psychologists fought to minimize the importance of I.Q. tests in schools (because of their inherent bias), points out that studies of the SAT have proven that the test consistently over-predicts the success of males and under-predicts the success of females in college. More insidious, the test is also a more accurate predictor of socioeconomic status than of success in college. “Family income plays such a prominent role in test scores,” he writes, “that

some testing analysts have facetiously proposed gauging something they call the 'Volvo Effect' as a way to save vast amounts of money on standardized tests. Simply count the number of Volvos, sport utility vehicles, and comparably priced luxury cars used to transport students to and from a given school, and use that figure to measure 'school quality.'" Standardized tests, by their very nature, require a broad spectrum of results. A broad spectrum means winners and losers. And because the test is biased, the winners are generally wealthy, white, and male. And, yet, it is still the primary entrance exam for college in America.

In light of this, Wesson challenges educators. "Let's be honest," he writes. "If poor, inner-city children consistently outscored children from wealthy suburban homes on standardized tests, is anyone naive enough to believe that we would still insist on using these tests as indicators of success? Would we continue to advocate the use of such tests if there were evidence that they presented inner-city students with a sizable edge in the distribution of future job opportunities?" These are telling questions.

It's not hard to see that there are social inequities in our country. It's harder, however, to see how our own lives and work connect with those inequities. For white educators, as Peggy McIntosh points out, the first step is to acknowledge and define white privilege — for "describing white privilege," she writes, "makes one newly accountable." After pointing out twenty-six ways in which she feels advantaged as a white person (and this is just a sampling), she concludes by raising the question, "What will we do with such knowledge?" The answer is simply that one has the choice of using privilege to one's personal advantage and to preserve the status quo or using this "arbitrarily awarded power to try to reconstruct power systems based on a broader base."

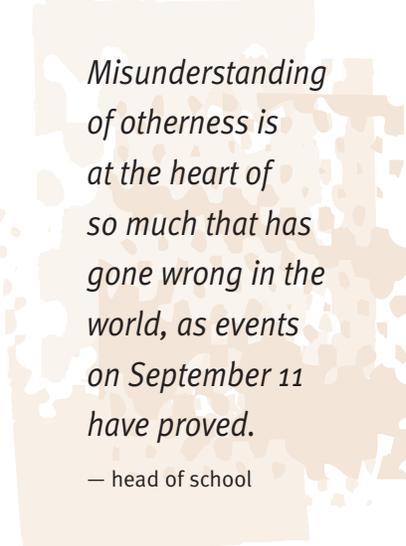
At diversity workshops involving white educators, one often hears the comment that white educators need to lean into their discomfort, or push beyond their comfort zone. This may be true, but it also sounds a bit too much like taking medicine. The good news is that schools that align their "walk" with 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.

Hiring teachers of color

There are three finalists for a position, one of them a person of color. Your school has a stated plan that it wants to become a multicultural organization and, because of this, it wants a candidate of color in the finalist group. After a small committee chooses the finalists, it introduces the candidates to a broader segment of the school community and asks those who meet and interview the candidates to offer a brief evaluation and recommendation. The school does this a number of times for various positions — and in almost every case, the person of color is not hired. Why? Responses from those doing the hiring are variations on the following: "I just don't think he (or she) would fit in here."

Unless we are trained in how to interview candidates, especially candidates whose cultural backgrounds are different from ours, we are likely to gravitate toward the candidate who seems most like us. One's qualifications almost don't matter at this point (though we often study those qualifications with a fine-toothed comb and find reasons there for dismissing any candidate). Unfortunately, what tends to matter most is our comfort level. Is this someone I think I can work with? Is this someone I'd like to have lunch with? Do we have anything in common? It is this kind of thinking, for instance, that would allow partners in a law firm full of Ivy Leaguers to hire more Ivy Leaguers, even though the school they attended is far less important than their skills in, say, estate and trust law. It's all about our unexamined comfort levels. In white-dominant schools, heads must recognize this trend (in themselves and others) and learn to work against it in constructive ways.

Of course, there is another side to this coin: Why would a person of color want to work in your school? As one diversity specialist says, "The number one question teachers of color will ask themselves is, 'Wouldn't I be better off working in a school where there is a diverse population already in place, where children really



*Misunderstanding
of otherness is
at the heart of
so much that has
gone wrong in the
world, as events
on September 11
have proved.*

— head of school

(continued on page 14)

What Students of Color Want You to Know

The following quotes come from students of color attending a recent Student of Color Conference. They were asked, among other things, to respond to the question, "What do the adults in your school need to understand and do to make your school a better place for students of color?" The responses were anonymous.

We want adults to understand that students of color are full and total students.

Know that black students/students of color are not trying to exclude themselves when they sit together and hang out together.

Understand that it's difficult for students of color to have only one or two of their race in their entire class.

Teachers need to understand that we all need to pay attention to diversity.

The faculty and head of school should have dinner with students of color.

We want adults to be more culturally sensitive.

Teachers are always asking if I can afford it — assuming the students of color are on financial aid.

We want teachers to understand class issues — and not make assumptions about our family, where we are from, our income, etc.

Get involved.

More variety of food: Chinese, soul food, Asian food, Hispanic food. Different cultures are in the school so we should have various, good food choices.

Understand the complexities of our lives and the adjustments that we need to make in order to fit in here.

We want teachers to make an effort to develop meaningful relationships with students of color, as they do with the white students.

We want more faculty of color — a wider variety of teachers (Asian, African-American, etc.) teaching a wide variety of subjects.

We need to create a multicultural curriculum, especially in already established classes.

Offer a wider spectrum of entertainment (not just movies about white people).

Why do you accept us to private schools? Because we are black and you need the numbers? It feels like either that or for sports.

Give diversity clubs a chance — give them a budget, too.

Know that, for many students of color, it is difficult to adjust to an environment that is so much different from anything they ever experienced.

We want support but not in a patronizing way. Support the person based on individual need.

Keep an unbiased opinion while teaching.

Don't expect students of color to be cultural representatives. Specifically in history classes, tensions can arise in class when the subject turns to people of color. Teachers need to stop pointing out students of color and asking them to speak for their race.

Have faculty of color who can socialize with and relate to the students.

Don't take into account race when grading.

need a motivated, talented teacher like me?’ It certainly gives you pause. I hope it encourages schools to push harder for school communities where all teachers would answer, ‘No, I’m serving a good cause right here.’”

Earlier, we raised the question: Why do you want to hire a teacher of color? If there is vagueness in your response, there will be vagueness in your process and you are not likely to succeed. Attend any diversity workshop and you’re bound to hear one complaint over and over: “We’ve talked about this for years, but nothing has changed.” This sort of stasis — in which a school proclaims its intention to become a multicultural organization and does little more than talk about it — can be worse than not doing anything at all. It raises expectations and hopes, only to slowly erode those hopes and replace them with a culture of cynicism and despair. The good people you can hardly afford to lose

may start leaving for other schools.

The basic premise is that any effort to hire teachers of color, if it is to be successful, must coincide with steps to become a multicultural organization. It’s not just a matter of bringing in a Latino and an Asian-American teacher, say, and announcing that your work is done. It’s a matter of carefully restructuring the school climate and culture — from the board of trustees down — to fulfill the stated mission of the school. And then being ready to discuss and debate the relative value of your school’s diversity efforts — to continuously take one’s pulse, like a long-distance runner. Doing so, schools find, creates an atmosphere and culture inviting to teachers of color.

A candid examination of race matters takes us to the core of the crisis of American democracy. And the degree to which race matters in the plight and predicament of fellow citizens is a crucial measure of whether we can keep alive the best of this democratic experiment we call America.

— Cornel West

Hiring teachers of color

1. *Connect the need to hire more teachers of color with the school’s mission*
2. *Get clarity on the climate and culture in the school*
3. *Create a sense of urgency*
4. *Make the case that hiring people of color is good for business*
5. *Outline strategic issues related to hiring more teachers of color for the coming year(s)*
6. *Head needs to be empathetic, but uncompromising*
7. *Establish a hiring committee*
8. *Establish clear hiring procedures*
9. *Advertise positions widely*
10. *Seek out candidates of color at job fairs*
11. *Push teacher placement firms to find the candidates you want*
12. *Don’t hire résumés*
13. *Make your ads inclusive*
14. *Get to know more people of color for networking purposes*
15. *Offer incentives to others to find candidates of color*
16. *Make the school attractive to teachers of color in as many ways as possible*
17. *Consider the visual impact of your campus (your hidden curriculum)*
18. *Find ways to bring as many people of color as possible onto your campus annually*
19. *Don’t forget good salaries and benefits*
20. *Connect with local colleges and universities that offer degrees in education*
21. *Be creative in your recruiting and hiring*

What follows is an essential list of steps schools have taken to diversify their teaching staffs. Most of it comes from the work at schools that have had success in hiring teachers of color. Some of these steps overlap the work at a number of schools; some are unique to individual schools.

1. Connect the need to hire more teachers of color with the school's mission

As noted, it does start with mission. A school — especially the school head, with the blessing of the board of trustees — needs to make sure everyone understands the mission. If the mission includes a statement about the importance of diversity, or the importance of inclusivity, then and only then can a school start to analyze how well it is doing in regard to its mission.

If your school wants to make a commitment to diversity, but it's not clearly outlined in the mission statement, the school needs to revisit the mission statement and rewrite it in a way that will direct everyone's daily work towards this goal.

2. Get clarity on the climate and culture in the school

The schools that have had success hiring teachers of color, or in diversifying their communities in any dimension, are schools that are no longer content to live with uncertainty. They want to know exactly how well, or how badly, they are doing in this regard. Some hire consultants who specialize in organizational diversity. Many hire directors of diversity, not just to coordinate diversity programs, but to make sure someone is being paid to view everything a school does through the lens of diversity — programs, curriculum, hiring, admissions, fund-raising, business practices, food service, etc. "Tradition" is an important word in the independent school world. But schools are looking carefully to distinguish between their deeply held values and unexamined habits so they can move forward with their diversity efforts.

3. Create a sense of urgency

If the school community doesn't feel a sense of urgency regarding hiring teachers of color, or diversifying the teaching staff in a variety of ways, things are unlikely to change any time soon. Finding the urgency in an independent school is difficult for the simple reason that a school, under current economic conditions, often can continue to function as it had in the past without diversifying its staff or student body. School heads are finding that they need to generate the

urgency, beyond the handful of believers — pointing out the practical reasons and moral imperatives driving this change. Diversity needs a school head willing to get involved at every level and to help everyone in the school understand that hiring people of color is an institutional strategic priority.

4. Make the case that hiring people of color is good for business

The logic is there — as outlined in the section on practical and moral reasons for diversifying the teaching staff — and it's compelling. Schools find they need to express it clearly enough, loud enough, and often enough to convince everyone that they're serious about change.

5. Outline strategic issues related to hiring more teachers of color for the coming year(s)

A mission statement is a school's lodestar, but its strategic plan — a step-by-step plan to achieve the mission — guides the daily work. Along with clarifying the mission regarding diversity, schools that have met with success have clarified the steps they needed to take to reach their goal.

Every school has a strategic plan for the way it will conduct all sorts of business, for the way the school will evolve in the coming year or years. Diversity initiatives should be threaded throughout these plans. If you're serious.

6. Head needs to be empathetic, but uncompromising

If you're a school head, you need to be uncompromising because the mission statement says you must be uncompromising. But you also must be empathetic. All change comes hard. Change to a school's culture and climate, to its essential character, comes harder still. If you have a predominantly white faculty and you tell them that you plan to diversify the teaching staff in the coming years, you can bet that some teachers will feel threatened. You can bet that some will resist.

Most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist.

— Peggy McIntosh

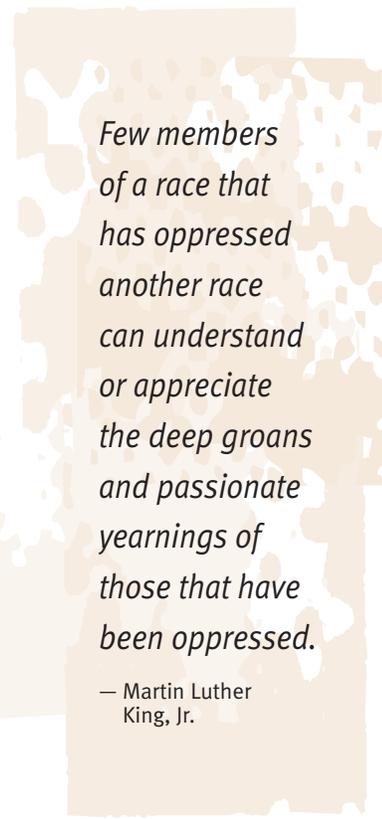
You should listen. You should care about the feelings of your teaching staff. You should give room for debate and discussion. But you should keep everyone moving in the direction you know to be right. This is probably the trickiest step, because it's the area where things can fall apart or where things can coalesce.

7. Establish a hiring committee

Some schools create a hiring committee that oversees all new appointments. Most schools involve key members of the administration and faculty when hiring

new teachers, but few have a committee that oversees all hiring.

Such a committee can monitor the school's process for hiring and make sure the various hiring teams know what they are looking for. One Massachusetts independent school has just such a committee, which includes the school's director of diversity. "For one, we talk about the dangers in self-replication — hiring people like ourselves — and how it happens," says the school's dean of faculty. "We talk about how to analyze a résumé and get clarity on what we are looking for. The temptation is to choose



Few members of a race that has oppressed another race can understand or appreciate the deep groans and passionate yearnings of those that have been oppressed.

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

a candidate like oneself, whose experiences are more familiar. That tendency can work against diversity."

8. Establish clear hiring procedures

The hiring committee can do this work for the school. The important thing here is to make sure that the essential language in all jobs advertisements is the same and that they not only include a list of required skills for each position, but that they note the school's commitment to diversity. The director of diversity planning in one school notes that her school gets this message across three times in every job ad. Each ad begins with a thumbnail description of the schools that includes the following sentence: "With a diverse national student body and faculty, [the school]

maintains high academic standards within an inclusive community." After the description of the position, all ads note that, "Although teacher certification is not required, interest in working within a multicultural boarding community is." Finally, along with the school's general nondiscrimination clause, all ads reinforce the school's commitment to diversity by saying, "[The school] seeks candidates who would add to the racial, cultural and gender diversity of the school community."

A number of schools make sure that the director of diversity is either part of the hiring committee or a consultant to the committee.

9. Advertise positions widely

The advice of many schools that have had success hiring teachers of color is this: wean your school of traditional job fairs. Or at least reduce your dependency on them. Traditional independent school job fairs may offer you many candidates qualified to teach in your schools. They are nice one-stop shops. But they won't necessarily turn up the candidates of color you are looking for. The truth about independent school job fairs is that few people outside of the independent school world even know they exist.

That said, it's nice to know that many of the organizations running job fairs for independent schools today are focusing more energy on finding diverse candidates. AISNE, for instance, runs an annual diversity job fair. In addition to its online employment services, NEMNET, the National Education Minority Network, offers regional job fairs for schools and candidates of color. NAIS now includes a job fair at its annual People of Color Conference. Some schools also send recruiters to people of color job fairs that are designed for all professions, not just teaching. As one dean of faculty points out, with the latter approach you must think of it as a long-term strategy, since it takes time to establish a presence at such large events.

But spending time at job fairs is just one strategy. To get the candidates you are looking for, schools recommend that you advertise in places where a large number of people of color are apt to see your ad, including in major newspapers, the Internet, and publications designed for people of color. In Boston, for instance, in addition to the *Boston Globe*, a school could advertise in *The Bay State Banner*, *Sanpan*, and *La Semana*.

In addition, some schools visit and recruit from African-American colleges and universities. You can also do yourself a favor and visit colleges and universities that don't make the *U.S. News and World Report* top-twenty list. These sometimes overlooked colleges

and universities are full of engaging, smart, committed people who could contribute a great deal to an independent school community. And many of them have career centers for alumni where you can also list job openings online.

10. Seek out candidates of color at job fairs

When you attend a job fair for teachers, seek out teachers of color. Don't wait for candidates to come to you. Quite often there are good candidates in the room who haven't given your school much thought. Simply stopping by and saying hello can carry a lot of weight. As one school recruiter put it, "If there is a magical moment in turning someone's interest toward your school, it's this: one person expressing an interest in another."

11. Push teacher placement firms to find the candidates you want

These firms profit (or earn revenue) by placing teachers in independent schools. Most of them are trying to attract more candidates of color. But if you find you're not getting the candidates you want through placement agencies, you have the option of not using them. If you stop hiring teachers through these agencies until they start offering the candidates you want, they will soon start offering the candidates you want. You could also consider giving these firms an incentive by offering them, say, an extra \$1,000, for finding you a candidate of color that you eventually hire.

12. Don't hire résumés

We have a tendency to hire candidates like ourselves, or choose the candidate with the most chock-a-block full résumé, reasoning that such a candidate must be the "most qualified." Schools that have had success hiring teachers of color have learned to think more carefully about the qualifications and qualities they really want — and to get training in better hiring practices. If a candidate for an English position, for instance, attended an independent school and an Ivy League college, does this make him or her a more qualified candidate than the one who attended a public school and a state university or a small liberal arts college? It depends. It's most important to get clarity about what qualities you are looking for. Often, the "better" résumé is judged better because the candidate is part of a privileged majority that comes with a number of advantages (access to an independent school education and an Ivy League college, and, perhaps, a valuable internship). But these may not be the most important factors — and certainly shouldn't

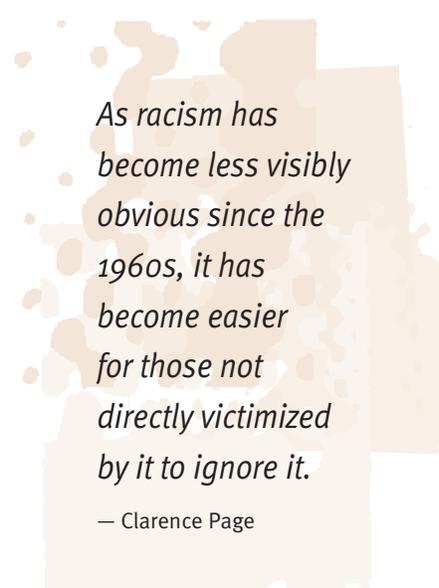
turn you away from a candidate with a different experience. It might be more important, for instance, to know the extent to which a candidate has worked in a multicultural setting.

As Beverly Daniel Tatum notes in *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, "Schools concerned about meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population should be looking specifically for teachers of all backgrounds with demonstrated experience in working with multiracial populations, with courses on their transcripts like Psychology of Racism; Race, Class Culture, and Gender in the Classroom; and Foundations of Multicultural Education, to name a few." The essential message is: Get clarity on exactly what qualifications are important and don't get sidetracked by anything else.

13. Make your ads inclusive

Along with using your job ads as a way to announce your school's commitment to diversity, a school should also consider the other details of the ad. One school head, who has dramatically increased the number of teachers of color at his school in the past two years, points out the near mathematical impossibility of hiring teachers of color based on the criteria noted in a typical job ad. If, for instance, you are looking for a teacher who "has familiarity with independent schools," the odds of finding a teacher of color is about the same as the odds of getting attacked by a shark. "If 5 percent of the independent school graduates go on to become teachers, and 1 percent of the U.S. population attends independent schools, and 16 percent of this 1 percent are people of color, how can you possibly expect to find teachers of color familiar with independent schools? Schools like to hire teachers who fit a particular mold, but we can't continue to do this if we want more teachers of color."

In addition to the language of a job ad, consider the design of it. It doesn't hurt to make it visually attractive and engaging.



As racism has become less visibly obvious since the 1960s, it has become easier for those not directly victimized by it to ignore it.

— Clarence Page

14. Get to know more people of color for networking purposes

As one school head points out, “A person responsible for hiring should put himself or herself in places, both professionally and personally, where he or she will have contact with people of color.” This should be an expectation for anyone responsible for hiring.

We all use networking in our lives — for friendship, support, and profit. You need to start establishing networks that will connect you to more people of color.

We can at least try to understand our own motives, passions, and prejudices, so as to be conscious of what we are doing when we appeal to those of others. This is very difficult, because our own prejudice and emotional bias always seem to us so rational.

— T.S. Eliot

Besides doing this on a personal level, a school can make better efforts at connecting with its parents of color. Many schools work hard to connect with their parents of color knowing full well that those parents can help the schools find more teachers of color. “You need parents as allies,” says a director of diversity. “It affects student retention, which can affect applicants and influence teachers of color to come here. It’s all connected.”

Now that schools are graduating a higher number of students of color, they should also make sure they keep close ties with these new alumni. If any of them enter the field of

education, you’ll have a better chance of bringing them back to your school to teach if they feel connected.

15. Offer incentives to others to find candidates of color

Your parent body and alumni are particularly good resources. If parents or alumni know you are looking for teachers of color and that you want their help, they’ll connect you to potential candidates fairly quickly. You can also offer incentives to your teachers. Just as some phone companies give you breaks when you sign up friends and family, you can offer financial rewards to teachers who recommend candidates of color who eventually sign on.

16. Make the school attractive to teachers of color in as many ways as possible

It’s one thing to get candidates of color. It’s another to hire them (and still another to retain them). You obviously need to think carefully about the job from their point of view. Why should a teacher of color work at your school? It’s nice that you can point to the school’s low student-teacher ratio, the great success in college admissions, and the high degree of autonomy in the classroom. There are some fabulous perks to teaching in an independent school, and you should not overlook them. But this is not enough.

Peal Rock Kane and Alfonso Orsini, in an article in *Independent School* on attracting and retaining teachers of color, note that there are specific things you can do to make your school attractive to teachers of color. Their most important question, they say, is: “Will a candidate entering the school be greeted with warmth and acceptance and interest, or with a posture of exalted scrutiny?”

Teachers of color want a real voice in the school. They should feel respected and feel that they are contributing to the community in ways that are valued. They want a significant population of students of color and a multicultural curriculum — one that draws from the contributions of various races, ethnicities, cultures, and gender (something beyond Western literature as we’ve known it to be taught in schools over the past thirty years). If they don’t see that these things are already in place (or coming), they are not likely to join your faculty.

It will also help if you conduct racial sensitivity workshops for all faculty and administrators. Especially while your school is in the process of becoming multicultural, you need to have carefully orchestrated forums for discussion of ideas as they relate to diversity.

Also, in the interviewing stage, many schools make sure that candidates of color meet with current teachers of color on campus. Although the candidates may be polite about it, they are definitely concerned about how they’ll fit in to a predominantly white campus. And it helps them immensely to meet with current teachers of color to talk about their experiences at a school.

Your school’s commitment to diversity must be palpable to candidates.

17. Consider the visual impact of your campus (your hidden curriculum)

It's a tough balance these days between having pride in a school's history and excluding people. If a school's entrance foyer is loaded with large portraits of white-haired white men, no matter how good they were in their day, the school will likely have a problem attracting teachers of color (or women). To the degree possible, the visual look of the campus should reflect the school's stated values. "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 predominantly white institution. Even with all the benefits of teaching in an independent school, it takes a pretty big leap of faith."

18. Find ways to bring as many people of color as possible onto your campus annually

Schools that offer summer institutes and conferences for educators can attract teachers of color to their campuses regularly. For many teachers of color, independent schools, even well known ones, are mysterious places. Helping to demystify independent education is a first step in recruiting teachers of color. Along with participating in the summer events, visiting teachers of color will also get a good sense of the school and the community. This, in turn, can make them good candidates for positions on the faculty when openings do occur.

19. Don't forget good salaries and benefits

Good teachers generally work out of a sense of concern for (and love of) children and an interest in helping the society in some way. They are engaged in the process. They like being around young people and watching them develop physically, intellectually, and spiritually. But they are not martyrs. They want the security of a salary that will allow them to live in the community in which they teach. They want to eventually own a home. They want benefits that will protect them and support them in retirement. They want, as one school head puts it, to live with "economic dignity." Now that we suddenly seem to be in a buyer's market, a school can lose teachers quickly if the salary and benefits don't match their needs. Because there is a limit of how high a school can go with salaries, some schools are doing a number of creative things to help teachers. One Connecticut day school has bought housing in the area that the school can rent back to teachers at an affordable rate. The board of trustees at a California school has begun to set up annual venture capital funds on behalf of the school's teachers.

20. Connect with local colleges and universities that offer degrees in education

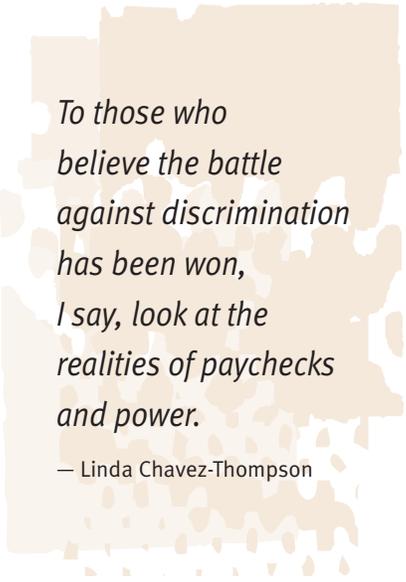
Some independent schools have found it helpful to connect with nearby colleges and universities with teacher-education programs and letting these institutions know of the school's interest in hiring more teachers of color. They also encourage students of color in these undergraduate and graduate programs to visit the independent school campus and perhaps fulfill their student-teaching requirement at the school. Some independent schools offer teacher-training programs leading toward state certification or an advanced degree. Attracting college students of color to your school is also a way of potentially attracting them to teach there in the future.

21. Be creative in your recruiting and hiring

"It's important to be flexible about hiring," says a head of a Massachusetts school. "You don't always look to find someone who is the perfect fit. If a candidate of color would be good on your staff, you can find a way to make it work, just as long as job equity and pay equity are considered."

A New Hampshire school has recently created a handful of teaching fellowships — full-time, multiyear appointments — which the school can use to hire teachers of color even when there is no position open in the faculty. The fellowships, some of them fully endowed (one in the name of Thurgood Marshall), allow the school to be flexible in hiring teachers of color. In some cases, the fellowship can lead to full-time employment in the future.

When it comes to recruiting practices, some schools think creatively about tapping new sources and considering ways to involve others in the school community in the process. One New Hampshire school, for instance, likes to think of admission office events as potential teacher-recruiting events. When the school sends out a team to a job fair in San Francisco, it is likely to include an Asian-American teacher or administrator. If a team goes to Washington, DC, it is likely to include an African-American teacher or administrator. The idea is to think about the local audience and to consider all school events as potential recruiting opportunities.



To those who believe the battle against discrimination has been won, I say, look at the realities of paychecks and power.

— Linda Chavez-Thompson

Retaining faculty of color

Hiring teachers of color and keeping them are connected, but separate, issues. If you follow the above steps for hiring teachers of color, you're also taking steps toward retaining them. If the school is, indeed, a welcoming place for teachers of color — if they feel their work is important, they feel they have something to contribute to the students and the community, they feel supported and fairly compensated, etc. — then they are likely to stick around, at least for an average length of time in this fairly peripatetic country.

Yet it's also important to acknowledge that retaining teachers of color seems to be as difficult as attracting them these days. So it's clearly necessary to think carefully and proactively about taking steps to retain teachers of color.

The following are among the steps schools can take to help ensure that teachers of color stay around a while.

1. Create an environment that truly reflects your commitment to diversity

For teachers of color, it's the overall package that matters. As noted earlier, the visual impact of the campus is important, as is the visual impact in the school publications. But that's just a starting point.

What matters more is the way adults interact in your

community and the school's commitment to diversity. It's the old axiom: actions speak louder than words. What you do carries more weight than what you say. What is the percentage of students of color on campus? What is your commitment to a multicultural curriculum? Is your school community involved in anti-bias training? How many administrators of color help lead the school? Do you have a diversity director? Is the head supportive of the teachers of color? Etc.

A diversity director is critical these days. You're not looking for someone who can help coordinate

diversity events (which matter) as much as you're looking for someone who has the power and authority to hold up everything a school does — all policies and practices — to the lens of diversity. The schools in which diversity directors have the most impact are schools that include them on key committees and have them reporting directly to the head. Even then, some schools think the title "diversity director" is too limiting. The director of community and multicultural development at a Massachusetts boarding school says, "That the school puts community first in my title reflects the understanding that diversity and multicultural issues are integral part of the overall community."

It's widely agreed on that schools need to be working toward having a "critical mass" of teachers and students of color. Harvard professor of education Charles Vert Willie, in his studies of critical mass, says that, for critical mass, a school needs 25 percent student of color and 20 percent teachers of color.

Ultimately, a school's commitment to diversity will reveal itself in the school's commitment to its students — to helping students become what one diversity consultant calls "the full expression of who one is."

"Not only do we need a facile climate in which children can gain greater insight into their identity," he says, "but we also must be careful to make our schools mindful, inclusive, and safe places — the three dimensions of equity. Are all children safe in our schools? Are they included in all aspects of school life? Do their parents feel welcome? Is there anything in the hierarchy that excludes, precludes, or secludes children?" Take care of this and you'll find that teachers of color will want to stay.

2. Clarify your expectations of new teachers

In the interviewing processes, of course, it's important to clarify the role of an incoming teacher of color in your school and your expectations. You should also do this again after a teacher is hired. And make yourself available to all teachers of color to discuss the reality of their work — those points where what they expected and what is are at odds.

A flip side of this coin, a dean of faculty notes, is to be honest about everything. "Don't try to pretend everything is great," he says. "If there are problems, work to address them immediately." If a school is committed to diversity over the long haul, it will be willing to address problems as they arise.

One classic mistake some schools make when they first try to diversify their teaching staffs is to hire teachers of color because of the diversity they bring to the school, but then expect them to fit into a climate and culture

Whiteness in a racist, corporate-controlled society is like having the image of an American Express Card... stamped on one's face: immediately you are "universally accepted."

— Manning Marable

that for all intents and purposes excludes them. Along with clarifying your expectations of incoming teachers of color, schools need to clarify their expectations of all members of the community. You can't bring in teachers of color and then conduct business as usual. Bringing in teachers of color means your school is making a commitment to change on every level.

3. Provide ongoing support for teachers of color

You can do this by establishing mentoring opportunities and networks of support for teachers of color. You can also set aside money and time for professional development. This is especially important for new teachers of color with little experience. The head of a California elementary school says that her school offers separate faculty meetings for new teachers so they'll have a place where they can safely ask questions they might be afraid to ask among seasoned teachers. "We also have a network of parents and teachers and administrators," she says, "that works on diversity issues together so that no one ends up feeling like a lone ranger."

You can also create affinity groups on campus that include teachers, administrators, parents, and board members of color. The important thing is not to let teachers feel isolated in your community.

Retaining faculty of color

- 1. Create an environment that truly reflects your commitment to diversity*
- 2. Clarify your expectations of new teachers*
- 3. Provide ongoing support for teachers of color*
- 4. Provide ongoing diversity training for everyone*
- 5. Create an opportunity for growth and leadership*
- 6. Establish a meaningful relationship with your colleagues of color*
- 7. Be willing to grow as a community*
- 8. Analyze everything you do regarding diversity*
- 9. Find ways to connect with public education*

Regarding professional development, there's a lot a school can do. Send teachers of color every year to the NAIS People of Color Conference. Send oneself (if you are a head of school) and all key administrators and division heads to summer diversity institutes and workshops.

Also support professional development opportunities for teachers of color that don't focus on diversity. Good teachers have an insatiable appetite for developing their knowledge and skills in their particular field. A school's efforts to support that development will be greatly appreciated. A school can also help teachers connect with summer programs, apply for NEH grants, enroll in graduate courses — connect with any educational opportunity that will help them in their field and give them a reason to stick around.

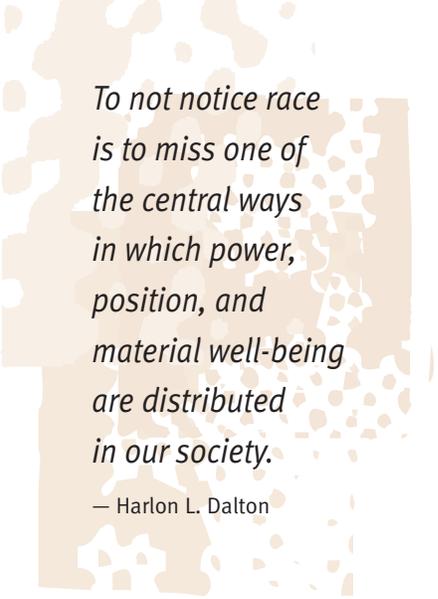
Lists of professional development opportunities are available on the websites of state and regional associations of independent schools, as well as other places.

4. Provide ongoing diversity training for everyone

Along with providing teachers of color opportunities for professional development, a school should also set aside time and money for all teachers to learn more about a multicultural community and about multicultural curriculum. It's important that everyone understands that this is a process and it involves the entire community. If you start to hear engaging, thoughtful conversations about diversity in a variety of settings, you know the issue is on the school's front-burner, where it should be.

5. Create an opportunity for growth and leadership

Offer as many opportunities as possible for teachers of color to act as leaders in your school. Actively encourage teachers of color with leadership potential to consider future headship. But don't overwhelm teachers of color with responsibilities. And don't ever let them carry the weight for all diversity initiatives.



To not notice race is to miss one of the central ways in which power, position, and material well-being are distributed in our society.

— Harlon L. Dalton

*The more we
run away from it,
the more we
run into it.*

— Wynton Marsalis

It's particularly important to think creatively here — and avoid the trappings of stereotypes that would only allow a teacher of color to advance within the realm of diversity leadership. Teachers of color have a natural interest in diversity issues because the issues have an obvious and direct

impact on their lives. If they are interested in this work, they deserve your support. But take conscious steps to make sure you're not steering them in this direction based on their race or preventing them for advancing in areas of school life that are of particular interest to them. Get them on the real promotion track.

6. Establish a meaningful relationship with your colleagues of color

Get to know your teachers of color. If you only talk with them at formal meetings, you can't really know them — or learn from them, or feel as if you're in the same community together.

There are ways you can connect with colleagues of color. Simply stopping to talk in the hall or on the walk between buildings helps. You can also make time in your schedule to visit their classrooms, go out for coffee, or lunch, or dinner, or work with them on school projects, or on extracurricular activities.

Some school heads establish periodic affinity dinners with the various racial groups within the school. This not only gives the people of color in your school a chance to spend time with each other, it gives the head a chance to get to know teachers of color better, to listen to their concerns, and to share some of the school's thoughts about its diversity efforts.

7. Be willing to grow as a community

Schools that have a long history of being mostly white institutions — and have recently focused energy on diversity issues — have to accept the fact that they are figuring this out as they go. Even the best-laid plans can unravel. One can't anticipate everything. A willingness to engage in the process of being multicultural requires a willingness to grow, to encourage all teachers and administrators to work together — and not get caught up in fighting over issues — especially when things get hard. A school that is willing to grow is a school where the administration has demonstrated a willingness to readjust its thinking and planning when needed. It requires good will.

8. Analyze everything you do regarding diversity

Pearl Kane and Alfonso Orsini, in their upcoming book on people of color in independent schools, suggest that you be as analytical as possible about the whole thing. "Keep careful records of how the school is progressing in its goals to diversify," they write. "Review turnover of teachers of color over a ten-year period and reasons for leaving. Consider workload/salaries/rate of promotions compared to all faculty; percentages in senior level administrative positions." You should consider which departments have the most faculty of color and why this is so. You should review the school's mission statement and its long-range plans and consider the criteria you're using to judge your success. You should review all school literature. You should ask alumni of color to return to school to discuss their experiences there.

There is a tendency to dismiss the experiences of those who leave a school unhappily, saying they were not good fits for the school, or they didn't connect with the school culture. But it's just as likely that the school did not follow through on its promise to the teacher. By carefully analyzing what everyone is doing in relationship to the mission, you'll have a better sense of how to proceed to the next level.

9. Find ways to connect with public education

Pearl Kane and Alfonso Orsini, writing in *Independent School*, note many of the above factors as reasons why schools either keep or lose teachers of color. A less obvious factor they discovered is that teachers of color were more likely to stay in independent schools that have ties to local public schools, because they feel less isolated in such a community. Many schools connect with the local community in a variety of ways. Here's another reason to do so consciously.

Conclusion

There is so much energy and hope among the people of color currently working in independent schools. There is much spark among the students of color. There is so much respect for the power of education and the belief that independent schools can play an important role in moving this nation toward its own ideals of justice and equity. But there is still an underlying sense, here and in schools, that the road is long and difficult. Perhaps the most important message is: Don't despair. Don't back down.

Top Fourteen Ways to Drive People of Color from Your School

(Some silly, some not, ALL serious. Use the list to audit your school's policies, procedures, and culture. If you're serious about this work and you're doing any of these things, stop it).

1. Hire a person of color as diversity director and let him or her worry about changing the school culture. Offer him or her little financial or staff support.
2. Hire a person of color as diversity director and let him or her focus on diversity events and nothing else.
3. Assume that the people of color on your campus are only interested in professional development that focuses on diversity.
4. Appoint a teacher of color, who already has a full teaching and coaching load, to be the diversity director on the side. The younger the better.
5. Expect teachers of color to "fit in" to your community without considering their interests or needs.
6. Don't examine your curriculum to consider the degree to which it includes and excludes the contributions of people of color to history, literature, art, science, etc.
7. Exclude people of color from top leadership positions.
8. Allow teachers of color to only mentor and discipline students of color.
9. Don't develop a long-range plan to increase the diversity of your student body.
10. Don't socialize with teachers of color.
11. Don't let people tell their own stories.
12. When faculty and students of color gather together, stare at them and wonder aloud about what they're up to.
13. Brag about how "color-blind" your school is.
14. Never have more than one person of color on the staff.



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