



Diversifying Marin’s Educator Workforce

Shifting the Recruitment and Hiring System

Context

Marin Educators for Equity Initiative (MEEI)

Marin Promise Partners believe that all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, zip code or financial circumstance have a better chance of reaching their full educational potential when they have access to culturally responsive learning environments created by racially diverse educators. The goal of [MEEI](#) is to improve student access to culturally responsive learning environments created by racially diverse educators. To accomplish this goal the number of educators of color across Marin will need to increase so that the workforce more closely aligns with the demographics of the student population. The initiative’s overall approach centers the needs and aspirations of BIPOC* students and aims to directly address the structural racism that has historically created barriers for people of color to attain careers in education. The initiative focuses in three interwoven areas: “Grow Your Own” Pathways, Recruiting & Hiring Diversity, and Retaining Quality Educators.

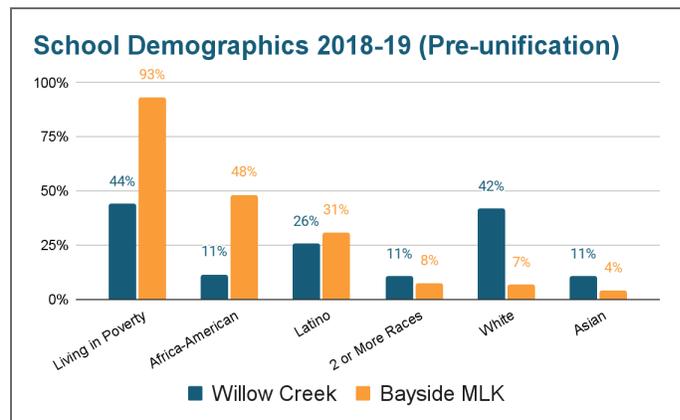


Through a case study approach featuring the Sausalito Marin City School District and its Superintendent, Dr. Itoco Garcia, this Learning Brief explores the promising recruitment and hiring systemic shifts that have been identified by Partners in the Initiative.

- * BIPOC - Black, Indigeneous and people of color
- Click [HERE](#) to read a full description of MEEI.
- This Learning Brief was developed based on the work of MEEI and through interviews with Dr. Itoco Garcia. Also see the Partnership’s related [Learning Brief: Antiracist Education Cradle to Career](#)
- MEEI’s work aligns very closely with the framework and strategies articulated by the [Learning Policy Institute](#).

Sausalito-Marin City School District (SMCSD)

SMCSD’s [Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Academy](#), the newly [unified](#) one-school, two-campus district, has overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles over the past few years. It has fulfilled the State Attorney General’s order to desegregate by the 2020-21 school year. It has merged the facilities, families and faculty of two demographically very different schools - a 400 student independent Charter school, Willow Creek Academy, and a 119 student public neighborhood school, Bayside MLK. And, it has supported some of the county’s





most vulnerable children to weather the pandemic storm. By using COVID funding to bring on interim staff and lower class-size ratios, SMCS D created enough social distancing to keep its doors open to in-person learning.

Through all of this, the district also accomplished the much-sought-after goal of increasing the diversity of its staff. Thanks, in great measure to the courageous, equity focused practices implemented by Dr. Itoco Garcia, 1 of only 2 BIPOC Superintendents in the county, the district has turned a corner and is starting a new bright chapter for students in southern Marin.

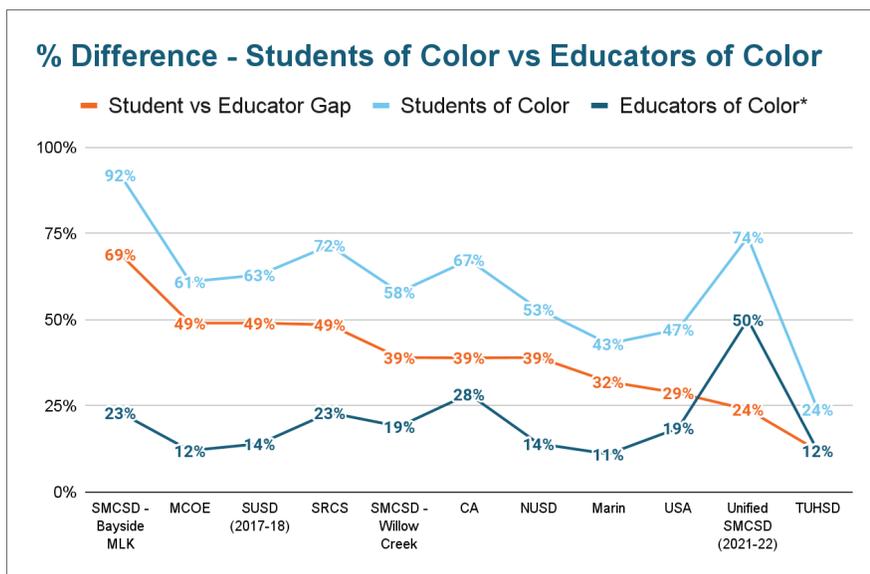
Click [HERE](#) to Learn more about SMCS D and [HERE](#) and [HERE](#) to listen to several Podcasts about the desegregation process.

The Challenge: What Is the Data Telling us?

“Black students who had one Black teacher between Kindergarten and third grade are 7% more likely to graduate from high school and 13% more likely to enroll in college” [EdTrust West Brief](#)

All students, especially students of color, benefit when they have an opportunity to learn from BIPOC educators. Not only do students do better academically but they also improve their engagement and attendance, confidence, feelings of inclusion and belonging, and participation in important extracurricular experiences. Click [HERE](#) to see studies and resources. Click [HERE](#) to read student voices.

“Unfortunately, the diversity of the national [state, county, and district] public school teacher workforce does not reflect the diversity of the student population” [Edsource](#). While BIPOC students in Marin make up 43% of the public school student population, BIPOC Educators make up only 11% of the workforce (teachers, administrators and student services). That’s a 32% demographic disparity between teachers and students of color.



2018-19 data unless otherwise noted.

Districts listed are part of the [Partnership’s strategic geographic focus areas](#) and data can be found on the [Partnership Website](#).

SMCS D 2021-22 Data is self reported from SMCS D.

* CA & USA data from [EdSource](#) and does not include Administrators and Student Services as does the other Partnership data.

Given Marin’s total educator population (2,216), and an annual



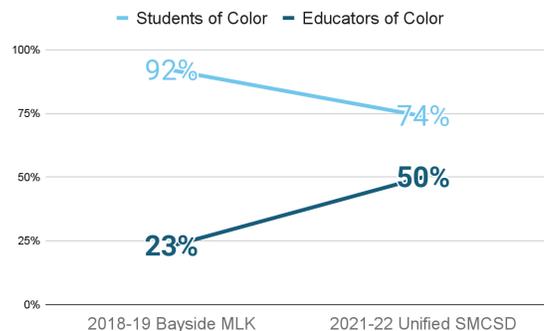
turnover rate of about 8%/yr, closing the 32% gap between students of color and educators of color by 2028 will require adding about 465 more BIPOC educators to the current 245 cohort. This would mean that over the next 5 years, approximately 53% of all new hires will need to be BIPOC educators.

According to MEEI data, some, but not all of this growth may come from the initiative’s “grow your own” pathways strategy in which the approximately 140 local BIPOC Marin paraprofessionals and certificated employees interested in becoming teachers or administrators are encouraged and supported to complete a credentialing program. However, even if 100% of these individuals eventually become employed by local districts, over the next 5 years Marin will still need to recruit and hire about 325 additional BIPOC educators from other sources to achieve representational parity with the BIPOC student population.

A Bright Spot: What Is the Data Telling us?

As shown on the right side of the graph above (the Unified SMCS D 2021-22 data spike) and in the graph to the right, there is a bright spot in this data. Over the last three years (2019-20 to 2021-22) SMCS D has quadrupled its teachers of color (3 to 12) resulting in BIPOC teachers now making up about 50% of its teacher workforce. 66% of the district’s key administrative positions (2 of 3) are also now held by BIPOC educators (superintendent and principal). And, the district has dramatically increased the number of BIPOC candidates applying for each job opening (>25 per opening).

The Gap is Closing Between Students and Educators of Color in SMCS D



Why Does This Gap Exist? (Key Factors)

Partners engaged in MEEI know the importance of increasing the number of BIPOC educators in their district. However, simply having the will does not necessarily mean you have found the way. Shifting policies, practices, resources and power structures to accomplish this goal often remains a challenge.

Here are some of the factors influencing this challenge:

- Marin’s local pool of potential candidates is predominantly white. According to recent [US Census](#) data, only 32% of Marin’s workforce age population, 25 to 59 years olds, are people of color.
- Change is slow - Hiring can’t happen until there are job openings. According to the [California Department of Education](#), about 147-166 teachers, or 8% of Marin’s educator workforce, turns over each year. This limits the rate at which the educator workforce demographic can change over time. A shift in the rate of open positions, as happened with SMCS D during COVID, highlights its impact (SMCS D temporarily decreased teacher ratios to about 1:10 to increase social distancing during COVID which accelerated the district’s BIPOC hiring options).
- The lived experience of the person doing the recruiting and hiring makes a difference.



- Traditional hiring policies and practices rely on linear, written applications as a “gatekeeping” screening tool prior to in-person engagement.
- Workplace culture matters to prospective employees. Equity practices that focus on BIPOC specific support and retention demonstrate that a district is walking its talk and that district-wide efforts go beyond recruitment & hiring. A 2019 listening survey of Educators of Color (EOCs) throughout the county conducted by [E3: Education, Excellence & Equity](#) showed that 68% would not recommend another EOC take a position in the county's education system, noting racist policies, practices, and culturally unresponsive work environments as the primary factors.
- The cost of living in Marin, especially housing costs, greatly outpace the salary range of most educators.
- Local educator pipeline infrastructure in urban areas is often more fully developed than the infrastructure that currently exists in Marin. Urban areas with local institutions of higher education have an existing pipeline to train teachers and administrators who are then more likely to stay local for work.
- You can't improve what you can't see - robust, disaggregated shared data, as has been collected through MEEI, is an important element in continuing to improve BIPOC educator pipelines.

What's the Solution? Lessons Learned from SMCS and MEEI

Making bold, systemic shifts that change the status quo, such as those listed below, takes courage, passion, and dedication. And, while not every district is going to have the lived experience expertise of a BIPOC leader like Dr. Garcia, some, but not all, of the insights he shares in this Learning Brief can be applied across the county. Does success in recruiting and hiring BIPOC staff require an educator of color doing the hiring? What role does affinity-based trust and credibility play in the recruiting and hiring process? These deeper questions point to the foundational role that leadership plays throughout all of the shifts described below.

Shift #1 - Partner with people of color in the recruitment, screening, and hiring process: Candidates of color will relate to BIPOC hiring staff differently than white staff. And, BIPOC staff doing the hiring often bring implicit ways of listening and understanding that are different from those of their white colleagues. Having BIPOC staff involved in the hiring process will also demonstrate in actions, not just words, the culture of the organization. “I was probably more hands-on than other Superintendents might have been in hiring teachers and staff because I knew my lived experience would help balance potential blindspots in the hiring process,” noted Dr. Garcia. Not all districts will have BIPOC leadership, but all districts can find trusted BIPOC partners and coaches.

In addition to the important role hiring BIPOC leaders can play in the recruitment and hiring process, here are a few practices in this area to consider if you do not have BIPOC hiring staff already on board:

- Consider contracting with an equity coach for the HR staff to consult with.



- Consider using an HR recruiting service that specializes in equity related hiring practices to help with the screening and outreach process. Make sure you have an authentic “growth mindset” partnership with the consulting agency so that they are not just helping you find quality BIPOC candidates but are also helping your district grow and learn from the process.
- Proactively reach out to parent, community and student equity teams, including student clubs and community organizations, to help you recruit BIPOC candidates. Engaged community members can be great resources, especially for getting the word out about job openings. Just make sure to set clear boundaries and expectations up front about the decision making process.
- See Shifts #3 and #4 below - you can’t (and shouldn’t) leverage word of mouth networks if you haven’t previously established trusting relationships or don’t already have legitimate credibility.

Shift #2 - Use multiple measures and methods, not just written applications, in evaluating candidates:

Just as districts are shifting toward using more equity-based multiple measure approaches to student evaluations (such as eliminating A-F grading and using project portfolios and oral presentations), so too will districts need to shift to a “multiple measures” approach in hiring staff. There are many different skills required to be a successful teacher, and writing is just one of them. By not relying solely on a written application as the only entryway into the process, qualified candidates who may have been overlooked on paper, will be included in the consideration pipeline.

“There is a lot of implicit bias in screening out through the written word,” noted Dr. Garcia. “Traditional hiring practices that rely on written applications as a prescreening tool before in-person engagement are biased toward a narrow definition of what a ‘quality candidate’ looks like and often overlook untapped potential that can be found through referrals and verbal communication with candidates.” Dr. Garcia also reminds hiring managers that candidates, especially educators of color, may be more skeptical than their white counterparts about working for public schools because of their personal experience with the public school system. Therefore, BIPOC candidates may be less willing to jump through extensive written application hoops. “Getting a personalized invitation from the Superintendent or a quick phone call to ask a question, rather than a form letter from an HR specialist or a broadcast job announcement, can make all the difference,” added Dr. Garcia.

Here are a few practices in this area to consider:

- Make it a practice to interview candidates that are specifically referred to you by trusted, equity-minded credentialing partners (see #3 below). “Put them on the top of the stack.”
- Look for indications of nontraditional pathways that might mirror the experiences of your students such as diverse work histories, immigrant status, language skills, and attendance at non-elite universities that have a history of focusing on BIPOC educator training.
- If you’re intrigued or interested in a unique response on an application for a candidate that may not “check all the boxes,” pick up the phone and have a quick conversation.

Shift #3 - Establish trusting relationships with BIPOC networks: One way or another you will need to build authentic, reciprocal, multifaceted partnerships with BIPOC professional networks, community groups, and credentialing programs that can support the overall equity work of the district. One way to acquire these relationships is to hire BIPOC leaders who bring their networks with them. “As do all Superintendents, I brought my personal and professional social networks with me when I came to this



district, they just happened to have a lot more BIPOC educators in them. My Doctoral program colleagues, the credentialing programs I had worked with, the affinity groups I had, and continue to lead, as well as my network of personal relationships were all people I reached out to when it came time to recruit staff,” noted Dr. Garcia.

If you don’t have BIPOC staff with established networks, you will need to begin cultivating relationships. However, don’t just reach out to these networks to help you recruit BIPOC candidates and provide you with referrals. Build true partnerships that can give you feedback on your hiring process blindspots (Shift #1), internal culture (Shift #4), and that can assist you in developing residencies, placement programs, and affinity support networks.

Here are a few practices in this area to consider:

- Reach out to regional higher education institutions that serve non-traditional students (look for peer and affinity group supports as well as disaggregated data on completion rates), are led by BIPOC staff, or that have a specific BIPOC or equity-lens focus. These may include, but not limited to: [CalStateTeach](#), [USF School of Education](#), [UC Berkeley - BE3 Berkeley Educators for Equity and Excellence](#), [CalState East Bay](#) in Hayward ([OnLine Single Subject Program](#)), [Sonoma State University](#) (a designated Hispanic Serving Institution), [Dominican University of California](#) (a Minority Serving Institution), and [Alder Graduate School of Education](#).
- Get involved in Teacher of Color Advisory Groups such as the one Dr. Garcia created. This work created the momentum that sparked interest from Dominican, Sonoma State, SF State, and University of Redlands.
- Reachout in the local community to equity and BIPOC networks within other systems - Local governments, health departments, libraries and nonprofits ([Marin Government Alliance on Race and Equity -GARE](#), the [Marin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce](#), [Marin Latino Leaders](#), and the [Multicultural Center of Marin](#) are just a few examples)

Shift #4 - Start with the End in Mind: Assessing “fit and match” goes both ways and BIPOC candidates are doing just as much screening as you are. Be a district where BIPOC educators want to work, stay, and grow and lock your achievement in place through embedding shifts in practices, structures and policies into the system.

Recruitment and hiring starts long before you have a job opening. Do your tough, authentic work now to become a workplace that supports diversity, equity and inclusion in all that you do, including proactive and explicit programs that foster BIPOC retention. Shifting practices and creating new cultural norms takes time and must go hand in hand with changing recruitment and hiring practices. As Dr. Garcia points out, “You have to have a top to bottom full inclusion model to change the underlying assumptions. New intentional structures require shifts in hearts and minds.”

While practice and culture shifts can have a large impact, they also need to be locked into the system. Create a board policy, have equity-based LCAP goals, and develop explicit long-term equity action plans, so that when the Board or senior leaders pass the baton over to their replacements those leaders will continue to embody the structures, and implement the practices that have been put in place. “And, in



addition to locking your shifts into the system, establish a succession plan with equity in mind,” notes Dr. Garcia.

Here are a few practices in this area to consider:

- Some BIPOC candidates will have their own list of “fit/match” questions they ask potential employers during the hiring process. Listen carefully to the questions your BIPOC candidates are asking you, not just to their answers to your questions.
- A commitment to equity has to be authentic, not tokenized. Your HR efforts should start with self-awareness and then move into equitable practices and policies before the resulting actions can be felt as truly authentic. Districts need to do a full spectrum of internal work (curriculum, climate, LCAPs, budgets, etc.) alongside shifting their recruitment and hiring strategies.
- Get help from BIPOC led consultants and get feedback from BIPOC community networks. Ask them if they feel your district would be a place they would want to work. If not, make changes.
- Support your existing EoC in affinity support spaces like the MEEI-E3 teacher, administrator, and paraprofessional affinity support groups.

Shift #5 - Be a Visible Equity Champion: When you do make changes or adopt equity plans and policies, make sure to tell your story, early and often, so that it's not a subject that just comes up in the hiring process. Candidates should hear and know about you long before you have a job opening. “Superintendents of Color in the State are a tight knit group. There’s only about 100 of us and word of mouth is a powerful tool. We often refer staff to each other,” noted Dr. Garcia. Waiting to tell candidates about your DEI accomplishments only during the recruitment and hiring process will feel transactional, disingenuous and inauthentic. Make telling your “equity story” a regular part of your district’s communications, and create opportunities for your youth and family to tell the story for you, from their unique perspective. Not only will it help recruit new BIPOC staff, but it will inspire other districts to follow your lead.

Here are a few practices in this area to consider:

- Set measurable goals such as: increase the number of applications received from BIPOC candidates by x%; create a policy that you will interview x% BIPOC applicants before hiring; take a chance on moving a non-traditional candidate into the finalist pool x% of the time etc.
- SMCS D hired [Going Public PR](#), a PR firm, to help with communications during their desegregation process. This investment not only helped with community forums and the complex process of merging the two schools, but the media exposure and PR it created also paid off in outreach for new staff.
- Know your equity “why” and mention it at every opportunity - Know the data for your district - numbers and narratives! Be an outspoken leader and champion for educational equity.

What’s Next?

- Start implementing some of the practice, policy, resource or power structure shifts outlined above.
- Click [HERE](#) to learn more about the Partnership’s MEEI Initiative
- Click [HERE](#) to read the research and find links to data sources.

Version - 5.30.22