

October 2017
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Recruiting and Retaining a More Racially Diverse Workforce in Osseo Area Schools

October 6, 2017
Board of Directors Meeting

7:00 a.m.
Grand Hall,
TIES Conference Center
St. Paul

October 27, 2017
Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting

7:30 a.m.
Lexington Room,
TIES Conference Center
St. Paul

November 3, 2017
Board of Directors Meeting

7:00 a.m.
Grand Hall,
TIES Conference Center
St. Paul

SAVE THE DATE

December 8, 2017
AMSD Annual Conference

8:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
Grand Hall,
TIES Conference Center
St. Paul

In 2012, Osseo Area Schools established a strategic focus on equitable student achievement, which is defined as:

1. Ensuring high levels of achievement for all students, and
2. Accelerating growth for students of color and other underperforming groups, in order to
3. Close the achievement gap on all state-mandated measures.

More than five years of systemic racial equity work has created an organizational culture increasingly conducive to changes in practice aimed at eliminating racially predictable disparities in academic outcomes.

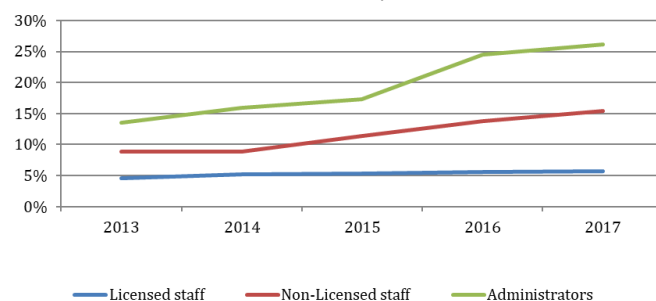
Most notably, those changes in practice include:

- Moving to standards-based instruction and grading;
- Implementing alternatives to suspension along with trauma-informed restorative measures to reduce exclusionary disciplinary practices;
- Adding culturally-influenced meals to nutrition services menus; and
- Implementing culturally responsive instructional practices.

Emerging organizational practices are anchored in a new [Racial Equity in Educational Achievement Policy/Procedure](#) and sustained, in part, through foundational professional development that provides common vocabulary and language tools to promote productive conversation about race and aims to increase consciousness about the impact of race on learning.

This article describes Osseo Area Schools' emerging practices regarding the recruitment and retention of a work force that builds toward a workforce that reflects the demographics of enrolled students, who are approximately 55% students of color.

Osseo Area Schools
Percentage of total employees
who are staff of color, FY 2013-2017



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AMSD's Mission

To advocate for state education policy that enables metropolitan school districts to improve student learning.



Association of
Metropolitan School Districts

From the Chair

AMSD board members had the opportunity to hear an engaging and informative presentation from Dr. Bill Morris during the September board of directors meeting. Dr. Morris, and his colleague Peter Leatherman, are nationally-respected public opinion pollsters who work extensively with school districts and other local units of government. Their latest polling results show that Minnesotans strongly favor bringing more stability to Minnesota's education funding system. Specifically, 61% of poll respondents support requiring the education funding formula to increase automatically by the rate of inflation annually. Likewise, 61% support allowing locally-elected school boards to renew an existing operating referendum if it is at the same level. Thus far, that strong public support has not been heard by state policymakers. I encourage AMSD members and public education advocates to talk about these and other important issues with your local legislators as we prepare for the 2018 legislative session.

Steve Adams, school board member from Hopkins Public Schools, is chair of AMSD.

Osseo Area Schools Building a Workforce To Reflect Demographics of Enrolled Students

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Over the past three years, the district has seen results that are both encouraging and challenging. From 2014 to 2017:

- The percentage of non-licensed and administrative new hires who are people of color nearly doubled.
- The overall percentage of employees of color in administrative positions grew by more than 10 percentage points.
- The overall percentage of employees of color in non-licensed positions grew by more than six percentage points.
- While the district has seen encouraging progress for non-licensed and administrative positions, it's been harder to move the needle on increasing the percentage of staff of color in licensed staff positions.

Four fundamental premises

The above results are the outcome of several years of effort that have been rooted in four fundamental premises:

1) Student-centered, research-based foundation

According to the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, students benefit from a racially diverse and culturally competence workforce in multiple ways, including:

- Increased presence of role models for students of color.
- Opportunity for all students to learn more about racial diversity.
- Access to cultural brokers who can help students navigate school and promote increased involvement of other teachers and students' parents/guardians.

Studies indicate that students of color have higher academic, personal, and social performance when taught by teachers and support staff from their own ethnic/racial groups. Culturally competent teachers can also promote similar gains with students from ethnic groups different from their own.

2) Support from highest level of the organization and a long-term view

Osseo's intention to develop a more racially diverse workforce was established as priority work in the district's strategic plan in 2013, and the focus on that work has been sustained ever since.

In addition to approving recruitment and retention as priority work in the strategic plan every year, the school board has approved annual budgets that align financial resources to recruitment and retention goals. The board understands that a long-term approach is necessary to sustain the work because it requires not only changes within the system, but also efforts to influence external forces, e.g. the state legislature, in order to affect change.

3) Strategic partnerships

A key strategic partnership was created between Osseo and Metropolitan State University in 2017. Metro State's Urban Educator Program trains teachers to be successful with highly diverse student populations. The agreement will deliver a coordinated program for district students and/or employees to pursue a teaching degree at Metro State.

Informal partnerships have been formed with community organizations such as City of Brooklyn Park-Brooklyn, African Immigrant Services and Education Minnesota-Osseo, the local teachers union.

4) Willingness to change entrenched operational procedures and to create new practices

Osseo's human resources staff identified four areas that required new ways of thinking and working:

- Expanding recruitment efforts.
- Re-engineering the application, screening and hiring process.
- Developing retention strategies to support new and current employees of color.
- Developing and implementing a metrics framework to provide the data necessary to inform future decision making and action.

Different results require different action

Changes and innovations have included:

- Improved community outreach and marketing efforts, including increased presence at career fairs, storytelling through video, and

Osseo Area Schools Recruitment and Retention Plan



2017

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Every Student Succeeds Act Plan Submitted

On September 18, 2017, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) submitted the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan to the U.S. Department of Education for review and approval. The plan was developed over the past 21 months, after more than 300 statewide meetings with stakeholders. A draft plan was released on August 1, 2017 with public comments collected during the month of August. The plan reflects feedback received during stakeholder meetings and submitted written comments. The U.S. Department of Education has 120 days to respond to Minnesota's ESSA plan.

In a letter to education stakeholders, Commissioner Brenda Cassellius outlined the changes made since the draft plan release. The MDE also released an updated ESSA State Plan Executive Summary. The information below summarizes several documents prepared by the MDE. You can access all of the Minnesota ESSA state plan documents on the [MDE web page](#).

Summary of Notable Provision in the Minnesota ESSA Plan

Area	Goal
Reading/Language Arts and Math	The state's achievement rate will be 90 percent, with no student group below 85 percent, by 2025.
Third Grade Reading/Language Arts	Reach a third-grade reading/language arts achievement rate of 90 percent, with no student group below 85 percent, by 2025.
Eighth Grade Math	Reach an eighth-grade math achievement rate of 90 percent, with no student group below 85 percent, by 2025.
Four-Year Graduation Rate	Four-year graduation rate will be 90 percent, with no student group below 85 percent, by 2020.
English Language Proficiency	85 percent of students making progress in achieving English language proficiency by the year 2025. A student is considered to be making progress toward proficiency if they reach their individual target, demonstrating they are on a trajectory to become proficient in English. (New goal in plan submitted on September 18)
Attendance	Consistent attendance goal will be 95 percent overall, with no student group below 90 percent, by 2020. Consistent attendance will be used as the state's school quality or student success indicator in the short-term, with plans to expand this indicator in the future. A student is considered a consistent attendee if they attend school at least 90 percent of the time.

Assessment

- Under ESSA, Minnesota will continue to administer the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS). These assessments are aligned to the most recent version of Minnesota's Academic Standards. Students will continue to take reading and math tests in grades 3-8 and once in high school, and the science test in grades 5 and 8 and once in high school.
- Beginning in 2018, Minnesota will provide translations of academic words throughout the math and science MCAs in Spanish, Somali and Hmong languages. The translations will be of academic words using a pop-up in the online test and a word list in the paper accommodation.
- ESSA requires that states factor test participation into their accountability systems. In Minnesota, students who do not take their grade level MCA will count similarly to students who are not proficient, although they will not be identified that way in state records or reporting to parents.

Accountability

- The plan submitted on September 18 includes more details on the alignment of the World's Best Workforce (WBWF), specifically, the desire to do future work in the areas of school readiness (using Kindergarten Entry Profile statewide) and career and college readiness (data reporting on the Minnesota Report Card).
- The proposed accountability system will be used to prioritize support for identified schools. The system emphasizes partnership and improvement instead of a limited set of consequences. Accountability indicators are publicly reported for all schools and disaggregated at the student level.

School Support

- Schools will be identified in categories through a process with multiple stages that weigh the indicators. See the [ESSA State Plan Executive Summary](#) for graphs with outlines of the stages.
 - *Lowest 5% of Title I Elementary and Middle Schools
 - *Lowest 5% of Title I High Schools
 - *Any Student Group Performing Similarly to the Lowest 5% of Title I Elementary and Middle Schools
 - *Any Student Group Performing Similarly to the Lowest 5% of Title I High Schools
 - *Elementary and Middle Schools with Any Consistently Underperforming Student Group
 - *High Schools with Any Consistently Underperforming Student Group

The order of stages in the decision process establishes the weight placed on each indicator and allows the state to prioritize and place much greater weight on the academic indicators in the first and second stages.

Two additional types of schools that are eligible for support (**a change with the September 18 plan**):

- *Any Title I school that demonstrates low performance on Stage 1 and Stage 2 indicators, but with consistent attendance higher than the threshold used to identify the bottom 5 percent will be identified for targeted support and improvement.

ESSA Plan Outlines Academic Indicators

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*If a Title I school is in the lowest 25 percent of Title I schools for any Stage 1 indicator and is not otherwise identified for support under ESSA, its district is eligible for support under the WBWF.

- Under ESSA, any public high school in the state with a graduation rate below 67 percent overall, or for any student group, will be identified for support.

- Minnesota will identify schools for support every three years. In addition to not being reidentified, in order to exit support and improvement status, schools must also meet the criteria below (**This criteria has been revised with the September 18 plan**).

*Exiting comprehensive support and improvement status: A school must not fall below the 25th percentile of Title I schools in any Stage 1 indicator. A school must also show improvement on all indicators that led to its initial identification. If a school fails to do either of these things, even though it was not reidentified for comprehensive support, it will be moved to targeted support and improvement.

*Exiting targeted support and improvement status: The student group for which the school was identified must not perform below the 25th percentile of Title I schools in any Stage 1 indicator. The student group for which the school was identified must also show improvement on all indicators that led to its initial identification. If a school fails to do either of these things, the school will remain in targeted support and improvement status.

Minnesota's Academic Indicators	
Indicator 1 Academic Achievement: all schools	*An achievement rate using math and reading tests will give points for students in the “meets standards” or “exceeds standards” levels. *Any student that does not participate in an assessment, with the exception of medically-exempt students, will count as “not proficient” in the academic achievement indicator calculation.
Indicator 2 Academic Progress: elementary and middle schools	A transition matrix using math and reading tests will award points for students increasing achievement levels (e.g. moving from “does not meet standards” to “partially meets standards”).
Indicator 3 Graduation Rate: high schools	*The indicator will use a school's four-year and seven-year graduation rates. *Students who drop out after less than half an academic year at a school will be counted at the high school they attended for the most time. *Four-, five-, six- and seven-year rates will be reported on the Minnesota Report Card.
Indicator 4 Progress Toward English Language Proficiency: all schools	A growth index will measure how each English learner scored relative to their individual growth-to-proficiency target on the ACCESS test.
Indicator 5 - School Quality/Student Success: all schools	*This new indicator will shift over time as more data becomes available. *2018: Consistent attendance will be used to identify schools. *2019/2020: Consistent attendance will be used to identify schools. Well-rounded education and career and college readiness data will be separately reported as available. *2021: Consistent attendance, well-rounded education, and career and college readiness data will be used to identify schools. *A student will be determined to be chronically absent if their attendance rate is at or below 90 percent during the days they were enrolled at a school. A student must be enrolled for at least half an academic year to be included in a school's calculation. The consistent attendance rate will be calculated by subtracting the percentage of chronically absent students from 100 percent. For example, if 3 percent of English learners at a school are chronically absent, the consistent attendance rate for English learners at that school would be 97 percent. MDE will continue to examine options and opportunities to use in-school suspension data in a meaningful way within the consistent attendance indicator (new statement in plan submitted on September 18).

School Improvement

- For districts with schools identified under the accountability model, Minnesota's Regional Centers of Excellence partner with leadership teams to facilitate school improvement efforts focused on equity for underserved student support groups. The centers provide on-the-ground assistance to districts and schools to create the capacity and conditions that support change and continuous improvement. Minnesota also provides Title I school improvement grants to districts that serve the most significant numbers of identified schools.
- Schools identified for targeted support and improvement will assess and address resource inequities as part of the required needs assessment and improvement process (**part of the September 18 plan**).
- Minnesota Department of Education will conduct an external, in-depth needs assessment in each school reidentified. Potential interventions are outlined in the state plan (**Examples of additional interventions were outlined in the September 18 plan**). There will be increased requirements for use of funds for reidentified schools. Schools will be required to set aside a minimum of 20 percent of Title I funds to support implementation of the amended school support and improvement plan. MDE is designing and implementing an audit process focusing on implementation of school improvement plans to be used with a small percentage of schools identified for support and improvement. All reidentified schools will be audited annually using this process.
- School readiness data and data on disproportionate rates of suspension and expulsion are a part of comprehensive needs assessment for school improvement planning (**part of the September 18 plan**).

Educator Quality

- Districts will be required to create and regularly update local plans for ensuring low-income students, students of color and American Indian students have equitable access to effective, experienced and in-field teachers, as well as to improve student access to teachers of color and American Indian teachers.
- The state will define “ineffective teacher” as a teacher who is not meeting professional teaching standards as defined in local teacher

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Additional Support for Schools will be Needed

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development and evaluation systems. Data may only be used locally to inform equitable access plans. The state will continue to collect data on teacher experience, licensure and assignment as part of state equitable access planning and public reporting.

- In the September 18 plan, MDE updated the section on how MDE will improve the skills of educators, specifically around trainings for early care and education teachers working with English learners.

English Learners

- When identifying schools for improvement, former English learners (EL) will be included in a school's EL student group for four years after exiting EL status.
- Recently arrived English learners will be expected to take state academic tests during their first year of enrollment. That first year's results will not be included in accountability calculations. In the student's second year of enrollment, their score will be used when calculating academic progress, but not when calculating academic achievement. In the third year of enrollment, scores will be used when calculating both academic progress and academic achievement.

Future Work

- Minnesota's new accountability system is aligned with the same goals of the World's Best Workforce, two of the goals areas, school readiness and career and college readiness will need to be developed for further alignment between systems.
- It is estimated by MDE that Minnesota will identify and support approximately 300-400 schools, more than double the number identified and supported by the NCLB flexibility waiver. State capacity, including resources for support will need to be examined.
- MDE will continue work with stakeholders in the 2017-18 school year to determine the process and measures to identify schools for success. Schools will be recognized beginning in the 2018-19 school year.
- MDE will consult with stakeholders in the 2017-18 school year to continue to develop shared priorities for data reporting and to determine how to present data in a useful and transparent way to benefit families, communities and educators.
- MDE will continue work with stakeholders on the direction for expanding the school quality or student success indicator in the future for identifications made after the 2020-21 school year.
- A process will be established for the state to consider a nationally recognized high school assessment in place of the high school MCAs.
- Develop considerations for Minnesota's next assessment system.
- Development of statewide standardized procedures for identifying and exiting English learners from language instruction educational programs.

Recruitment and Retention Strategies Are Key in Osseo Area Schools

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investing in advertising.

- Shortening the employment application process, developing a guide for hiring managers, and providing candidates with resume writing resources.
- Development of a career ladder to support current students and employees who want to earn their teaching degree. The ladder includes:
 - *Priority consideration for hiring into educational support or teaching positions
 - *Paid time off for student teaching
 - *Seniority credit on the teacher seniority list
- Staff also gathered feedback from employees of color who transferred to other sites within the district to identify issues related to employees feeling welcomed and respected. An affinity luncheon for staff of color was well received in its initial offering last spring.

Future work

In order to sustain and deepen the district's work to recruit and retain a more racially diverse workforce, the following efforts will require continued investment:

- Recruitment strategies, including community outreach, video, career ladder and succession planning, marketing materials and advertising.
- Refinement of the application, screening and selection process, based on stakeholder feedback.
- Development of a teaching career based learning and development program for Osseo students.
- Continued focus on retention strategies such as affinity groups, exit interviews, data analysis, and performance management.
- Implementation of a new Human Resources Management System that will support the metrics framework.

For more information about the employee recruitment and retention efforts in Osseo Area Schools, contact Judy McDonald, executive director of human resources, at mcdonaldj@district279.org or 763-391-7008

This month's member spotlight was submitted by Barbara Olson, APR, School/Community Relations Director, Osseo Area Schools.