



Strategies To Reduce Bias In Your Community

Last Update 6/27/21

Hiring

- Examine the language and images of your websites, social media, job descriptions, etc. - whom does it invite or discourage? Is your commitment to diversity visible? Do you highlight pedagogy and practices that are inclusive? Analyze advertised job description for biased language.
- Analyze for gateway bias (outreach in private colleges, independent school fairs, etc. that already exclude or significantly reduce various groups). Be intentional about recruiting practices that cast a large net beyond traditional avenues.
- Identify organizations that promote alternative pipelines such as Breakthrough Collaborative, HBCUs, IRT (Institute for Recruitment of Teachers), women's colleges and leadership cohorts, etc.
- Engage the community (events, certification trainings, key-note speaker sponsorship and exposure, develop a pipeline with local community members in educational settings.
- Remove markers of identity in resumes before teams review them. Consider this when setting up Zoom/Skype, versus phone interviews. These markers include information pertaining to schooling, indications of race or ethnicity, age or geographical location
- Identify desired competencies ahead of time (and define what evidence of meeting them looks like) and agree upon structured questions for interviews that everyone uses. This could be the work of the All School Diversity Committee or divisional diversity committees. Establishing these BEFORE jobs become available to allow for intentional and uniform practices.
- Identify and be open to alternate educational and employment experiences that lead a candidate to be qualified in terms of desired competencies.
- Score resumes and interviews for agreed upon competencies (and define what evidence of meeting them looks like), with an agreed upon scoring scale (not gut). Be consistent with scoring practices by having your team score the same resume to verify inter-rater reliability.
- Ensure that hiring committee members are diverse in age, race, gender and represent key areas of the institution including study body. Expand hiring team beyond division-specific hiring committees.
- Distribute leadership in the hiring process (train committees, scrub resumes, vet questions, plan tours, prep observations etc...).
- Consider investing in using search firms to expressly support a diverse candidate pool, especially for searches in Divisions/Departments where we are especially deficient in racial and ethnic diversity (Lower School, Development, etc.).
- Have all members of a hiring committee work through the Harvard implicit bias tests before reviewing resumes and/or before conducting interviews/visits to identify situations for special consideration.
- Have the hiring committee engage in shared readings or videos like NAIS's "Bias Among The Well Intentioned" or "Hire The Scrapper" on YouTube.

- Add pre-defined interview teams and assign questions to them.
- Make sure demo lesson observation contains a cross section of the school.
- Onboard new staff to values, commitments and practices so you don't "drift back." Be consistent with re-enforcing those values, commitments and practices throughout your school year.
- Consider setting long-term (3-5 yr.) specific retention and hiring goals for POC. Conduct a post-mortem of your results and analyze the process for refinement opportunities.

Salary Equity

- Make the salary scale structure transparent.
- Conduct a salary audit, including all areas like athletics, facilities, environmental services and other part time staff:
 - Are there any patterns around salaries and identities (e.g. do women and men make the same if they do the same job?).
 - Are there any patterns around FTE and workload (e.g. do People of Color have additional responsibilities such as committees, task forces, and affinity group leadership without additional compensation or reduction in workload?).
 - Who has advocated for and received salary increases or reduction in workload?
- Evaluate what you give experience credit for. Are there alternative paths or experiences that should be included?
- Minimize salary negotiations
 - Make the first offer according to the salary structure.
 - Describe "exception worthy examples" and incorporate into the salary structure so everyone can access the benefit.
- Audit teachers' teaching load and contact hours across roles and divisions to ensure equity.
- Research the history of confidentiality in salaries and put together a presentation for the board on why transparency is important and accountability is necessary.
- Help new hires understand the salary structure.

Admissions

- Analyze for gateway bias (word of mouth, just feeder schools, admissions fairs, etc. that already exclude or significantly reduce various groups).
- Create in-bound marketing opportunities to engage the local community (example: open houses that do not require an invitation).
- Withhold photographs, names, age and other identifiers of race or geographic location from the admissions committee until after a decision is reached.
- Examine the language and images of your admissions materials - whom does it invite or discourage? Is your commitment to diversity visible?
- Build meaningful partnerships with marginalized communities (local teachers, community centers, church leaders, etc.). Create a plan to develop relationships with feeder schools and organizations that serve student populations that are underrepresented.
- Examine the makeup of your admissions committee. Consider adding diversity practitioners to admissions review team to provide additional perspective in review of challenging admission decision cases.
- Create a list of objective criteria that is applied to all students, ensure interview and essay questions draw out those criteria, and use rubrics to assess their meeting/not meeting those criteria.

- Name areas where there is a risk of preferential treatment (legacy, donors, distant states, international, sports, etc.) and then commit/be transparent or minimize them.
- When creating the class, aim for representation and diversity, not tokenism or “twokenism.”
- Evaluate socio-economic status of applicants to determine if there is a risk of reinforcing the POC/financial aid stereotype.
- Include the diversity director in the admissions committee.
- Consider setting long-term (3-5 yr.) specific retention and enrollment goals for POC. Conduct a post-mortem of your results and analyze the process for refinement opportunities.

Assessment and Grading

- Provide students examples for a range of successful approaches to assignments.
- Have student names be the last thing you see (or generate student numbers through your gradebook).
- Precommit to expected learning outcomes that will be evaluated, and what constitutes meeting those expectations.
- Use rubrics and point systems that have objective and observable evidence as criteria (correct answer, used three sources), and when qualitative criteria is used, (well-reasoned, comprehensive bibliography) that evidence of meeting the criteria is agreed upon to support inter-rater reliability.
- Have final grades reflect final understanding rather than the learning process (ie. don't make the math grade the average of all tests and quizzes, but instead the understanding the student reached)
- Minimize anxiety-inducing assessments like tests that determine a large portion of the grade.
- Minimize resource-dependent assignments like projects done at home with minimal educator support or school resources and supplies.
- Analyze patterns around what the teacher/school values, teach and assess according to the values and analyze equity for students (example of unspoken value: extroversion and talkativeness).
- Use Universal Design For Learning to design activities and assessments that allow alternate ways to access and express learning.
- Allow participation grades to include whole group, small group, listening and written samples (chalk talk, blogs, etc).
- Incorporate student self-reflection.
- Evaluate equity in grading specifically in a virtual setting.

Pedagogy, Curriculum and Lesson Design

- Audit curriculum for inclusivity:
 - What is the identity of the characters in readings? Can all students see themselves somewhere in the readings?
 - Are you teaching a “good guys and bad guys,” a “bootstrap/greatman,” “villains and victims” version of history? How might you incorporate “resisters and allies” as a framework for teaching truthful history?
 - Who are the main characters in history and social studies? What discoverers, inventors, explorers are taught?

- Whose history is taught? How many perspectives of historical events are represented?
- If marginalizing events are taught, is the full history of those marginalized groups taught? Their creativity, their contributions, their heroes, their power and success?
- Incorporate diverse examples of leaders in all fields of study
 - Scientists, inventors, mathematicians in study of STEM fields
 - Artists, musicians, playwrights, poets, etc.
 - Include diverse voices when studying world languages (for example, read literature from Central and South American countries in addition to works by Spanish authors).
- “Decolonize your bookshelf” by evaluating book collections and classroom readings for windows and mirrors.
- Use open-ended and higher order questions and controversies that invite diverse perspectives about readings or historical events.
- Design lessons according to Universal Design for Learning practices (cast.org):
 - Multiple ways to present information
 - Multiple ways for students to express information or learning
 - Student voice and choice
- Decolonize your walls in terms of posters, faces, regions etc.
- Determine goals as an individual or an institution for reducing implicit bias and providing or seeking out professional development that aligns with those goals.
- Allow for processing time to allow all students to formulate answers.
- Request feedback from students.
- Create spaces for faculty to share and discuss how they are integrating DEI approaches.

Student Discipline

- Write clear policy about what constitutes a violation of behavioral standards and clearly communicate to parents and students.
- Teach expected behavior before punishing behavior outside of expectations.
- Actively teach SEL and anti-bias strategies to minimize student misbehavior.
- Make the disciplinary protocol transparent.
- Use a shared recording system that applies consistent categories to students.
- Collect data. Do the disciplinary cases reflect the distribution of the general population? If not, who is over/underrepresented? Explore why.
- Incorporate restorative justice practices.
- Standardize responses to behaviors whenever possible in order to minimize subjectivity in what is deemed discipline-worthy infractions.
- Do not shift responses based on the identity of the person appealing.
- If you have a disciplinary committee, have individual members pre-commit to their assessment before discussing as a group.
- Ensure that your discipline committee reflects diversity.
- Determine who the best person to have a conversation with a student may be (ie. ensure a positive relationship).
- Take steps to ensure that the DEI practitioner is not seen by students, faculty, staff, admin, board, or parents as, “the diversity police.”
- Identify and address microaggressions heard in the community and present them anonymously in faculty/staff/parent group work to show how important DEI is in these spaces.

Meetings

- Who is invited, and who is not? What are the requirements for attendance
- Who speaks? Who takes the majority of the airtime? Set ground rules
- Who is listened to? Did everyone speak?
- Are people attentive to one another, or are they distracted, checking phones, emails, etc. depending who is talking?
- Are similar ideas ignored when it comes from one person and seen as a great idea when it comes from someone else? If this occurs use this as an opportunity to explore implicit bias and explore why there is a different reception of the information.
- Who interrupted? Who was interrupted?
- Is gregariousness or talkativeness rewarded or deliberateness or quiet reflection?
- Who sits next to whom? Does the arrangement change from meeting to meeting? Who sits in a place where everyone can see them? When possible mix up the crowd
- Audit how information is distributed after meetings and to whom.
- Explicitly refer to anti-bias work in meeting in terms of agreements, use protocols for intentionally creating space for everyone, and create a culture of accountability for inclusion.

Educate Your Community

- Actively teach employees about bias, stereotype threat and racial anxiety; help individuals identify their own biases (and check their defensiveness).
- Discuss implicit bias on a regular basis throughout the year to reinforce attention to bias through all of these domains.
- Look explicitly for teachers' inclusive practice, identify them publicly and replicate them.
- Teach about the brain's tendencies toward bias and how to be more intentional in identifying and working against those tendencies.
- Assess your institution's bias (NAIS Assessment of Inclusivity and Multiculturalism).
- Ask yourself:
 - Where do I see implicit biases playing out in our school?
 - What fear or apprehension do I have about addressing this issue?
 - How can I be an ally to colleagues, students, and families who experience bias in our school?
- Include Cultural Competency in observation/evaluation approach.
- Make DEI PD work a priority in the PD budget, and create a plan for all faculty/staff to be able to access.
- Create spaces for students to share stories of identity and experiences that faculty can hear.
- Consider frameworks like SEED to create a parent and student anti-bias group in addition to the faculty/staff anti-bias group.
- Create a "parent ed series" that complements student education.