Good evening Chairman, Madame Vice Chairman and members of the Loudoun County School Board,

As an advisory committee to the Loudoun County School Board, it is incumbent upon the Minority Student Achievement Advisory Committee to bring to your attention a concern regarding the recruitment, selection and hiring of Loudoun County Public School teachers. MSAAC continues to be troubled by the fact that the minority representation of licensed educators in LCPS does not match minority representation in the student population.

Why does it matter that LCPS has a diversity gap among our educators?

- The diversity gap matters because according to the Virginia DOE School Quality Profile for LCPS, the enrollment and diversity of our K-12 students is growing exponentially.
- The diversity gap matters because research cited by David Figlio from experts like Thomas Dee, Anna Egalite, Brian Kisida, and Marcus Winters, and others tells us that “outcomes such as test scores, attendance, and suspension rates are affected by the demographic match between teachers and students.”
- The diversity gap matters because Gershenson, Hart, Lindsay, and Papageorge found in 2017 that “if a black male student has at least one black teacher in the third, fourth, or fifth grade, he is significantly less likely to drop out of high school and more likely to aspire to attend a four-year college”.
- The diversity gap matters because we have disparities in the gifted and talented program. A 2016 Vanderbilt University study by Grissom and Redding found that black students were being referred to gifted programs, particularly in reading, at significantly lower rates when taught by non-Black teachers; both white and non-white teachers had the same referral rate for white children.
- The diversity gap matters because the National Education Association reports that, “A teaching force that represents the nation’s racial, ethnic, and linguistic cultures and effectively incorporates this background and knowledge to enhance students’ academic achievement is advantageous to the academic performance of students of all backgrounds, and for students of color specifically,”
- The diversity gap matters because the race/ethnicity and gender of our current teaching workforce is sending a strong message to our students: to become a K-12 teacher you need to be a white, non-Hispanic female. The demographics of our current teaching workforce suggest to boys and minorities that becoming a teacher is not possible. This is especially detrimental to students who are looking for role models to aspire to in their community.
- The diversity gap matters because the underrepresentation of minority teachers relative to the proportion of minority school-aged students maybe limiting our students, especially our minority students.
- The diversity gap matters because ALL LCPS students matter!

We need the school board to quickly address this complex issue. If the source of the problem is our talent acquisition process then let’s develop a process that is more equitable and fair. If the source of the problem is the fact that we don’t have enough minorities graduating with a bachelor’s degree and
pursuing a degree in education, then we need to understand the barriers to our students entering the teaching field and leverage more broadly initiatives like CAMPUS and the Excellent Options Club. It is time to stop blaming the national shortage of teachers for our problems. Diversity recruiters alone, can’t close the diversity gap among educators. LCPS needs to take accountability for this important problem and actively improve policies, procedures and practices so they benefit our students rather than hinder their academic, social and cultural growth.

MSAAC strongly urges the board to take measures that will:

1. Hold principals accountable for consistently following established hiring practices that allow for all candidates to be fairly considered for licensed positions; remove opportunities for preferential treatment and circumventing the candidate identification and selection process.

2. Deliver consistent and impartial selection practices across all Loudoun County public schools consisting of an inclusive and diverse hiring panel. The panel should at a minimum include the principal, an HR Representative, a grade level team lead and a PTA representative to the make final hiring recommendations.

3. Require recruiters to present to principals a diverse candidate slate for all licensed teaching positions with both internal and external candidates.

4. Shorten the hiring cycle time so we don’t lose talented and qualified teachers of all backgrounds, genders and ethnicities/races.

All students, regardless of their race, gender and ethnicity have waited long enough for a change; it is imperative that we demonstrate our commitment to our students through our actions.

References


