

I. Policy Statement

The Howard County Board of Education recognizes the important social and educational benefits of maintaining a diverse staff. In particular, Board believes that interaction with staff from varied backgrounds enhances the educational experiences of all students by providing an environment that contributes to an understanding of diversity and the enrichment of the academic program. To this end, the Board supports efforts to provide for a diverse workforce, particularly when there is evidence of significant underutilization of a particular group. It is committed to doing so while also fulfilling its responsibility to ensure that employment practices are free of discrimination and that equal employment opportunities are provided for all persons.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the pursuit of a diverse workforce and the implementation of employment practices that are free of discrimination.

III. Definitions

- A. Affirmative Action - The deliberate implementation of procedures designed to provide equal employment opportunities for all individuals while making efforts to provide for a diverse workforce.
- B. Affirmative Action Program - Policies, practices and procedures used to ensure that all qualified applicants and employees receive equal opportunities for recruitment, appointment, advancement and other terms and privileges associated with employment. Affirmative action programs include the evaluation of workforce composition compared to relevant labor pools and practical steps to address underutilization.

IV. Standards

- A. The Board of Education will comply fully with all applicable federal, state and local nondiscrimination laws with regard to equal employment opportunities.
- B. Illegal discrimination is forbidden in any employment policy or practice, including the recruitment, employment, assignment, compensation, promotion, retention and transfer of employees.

- C. The Superintendent will work to provide diversity of the workforce in order to provide a more enriched educational experience to students.
- D. The Superintendent will respond to significant underutilization of a particular race, ethnicity or gender within appropriate job categories, where it exists, through a program of Affirmative Action.
- E. The Superintendent will submit annually to the Board, a report regarding staff turnover and projected needs. The report will include history, long-range plans, racial composition and distribution of staff and students, information on trends, and describe any affirmative action programs being utilized, and the progress being made to achieve the stated goals.

V. Compliance

The Superintendent is responsible for implementing procedures that will ensure compliance with this policy, as well as local, state, and federal laws regarding employment. Procedures are expected to address the areas of recruitment, employment, assignment, compensation, promotion, retention, transfer and dismissal.

VI. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures for the implementation of this policy.

VII. References

- A. Legal
Federal Law
§1400, U.S.C. 20, §794, U.S.C. 29, §504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article
§§9-104, 4-205, 6-401(d), 6-501(f), Title 9
- B. Other Board Policies

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I. General

The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring nondiscrimination in employment and implementing, directing, and maintaining an Affirmative Action Program.

II. Specific responsibilities related to implementing an Affirmative Action Program are as follows:

A. Office of Equity Assurance

1. Assist in the review of policies and procedures related to equal employment opportunities, as appropriate.
2. As needed, review Howard County Public Schools' personnel policies and procedures related to recruitment, promotion, and hiring to determine the following:
 - a. Compliance with Federal and State guidelines.
 - b. Effectiveness in meeting objectives.
 - c. Need for revision.
 - d. Conduct meetings and workshops for administrators and supervisors to explain, clarify, and review the purpose and responsibility of implementation of an Affirmative Action Program.
 - e. Provide direct assistance to administrators and other appropriate individuals in carrying out equal employment practices.
 - f. Assist in development and implementation of monitoring procedures to measure effectiveness of the program initiatives and processes.
 - g. Serve as liaison with governmental agencies and special interest groups in equal employment opportunity and affirmative action matters.

B. Office of Human Resources

1. Develop recruitment, promotion, and employment procedures consistent with affirmative action including the following:
 - a. Advertise in a manner to attract the widest pool of applicants to include all present employees of the Howard County Public School System, as appropriate.

- b. Identify the Howard County Board of Education as an equal opportunity employer in all recruitment materials and other employment publications.
2. Develop and maintain recruitment sources such as:
 - a. Colleges and universities that have large numbers of students from underutilized groups.
 - b. Facilities and resources of organizations serving underutilized groups.
 - c. Maryland State Employment Services Offices.
 - d. Government Agencies.
 - e. Local special interest groups.
3. Review recruitment and application materials to ensure:
 - a. Job announcements for classified and professional employees are uniform in format.
 - b. Applications contain only job-related questions.
 - c. The Howard County Board of Education is identified as "An Equal Opportunity Employer."
 - d. Personal interviews limit their scope to job-related questions.
4. Develop recruitment procedures that:
 - a. Use trained recruiters who reflect the diversity of staff and students in the school system.
 - b. Encourage underutilized groups and other special interest groups to refer qualified applicants.
5. Establish selection, appointment, and assignment procedures that:
 - a. Ensure that selection panels reflect the diversity of staff and students in the school system.
 - b. Limit personal interview questions to those that are job-related.
 - c. Develop selection processes that relate to essential job functions:
 - i. Discuss specific needs with appropriate personnel (*i.e.* principal, cafeteria manager, etc.).
 - ii. Screen available applications in terms of essential job requirements.
 - iii. Involve principal and/or other administrators and supervisors in the selection process.
 - d. Review and update:
 - i. Job descriptions.
 - ii. Application forms and procedures.

- iii. Position titles.
- iv. Interview procedures and techniques.
- v. Career counseling and training programs for present employees.
- e. Report staffing patterns to assist administrators in maintaining balanced staffing throughout the school system.

- 6. Prepare an annual report and others, as needed, on recruitment and employment results including:
 - a. Annual review of staff patterns.
 - b. Results of recruitment efforts.
 - c. Report and respond to practices and procedures which may cause discrimination complaints.
 - d. Recommendation to the Superintendent of ideas and suggestions for improvement.

C. Administrative and Supervisory Personnel

- 1. Take leadership role in observing the spirit and intent of affirmative action and laws and regulations and policies concerning discrimination.
- 2. Take leadership role in their division or section in relation to an Affirmative Action Program and procedures including:
 - a. Review the employee potential for leadership without distinction or discrimination.
 - b. Identification of specific areas of underutilization.
 - c. Communication of the purpose and procedures of the Affirmative Action Program to all members in the school or department.
 - d. Participate in meetings and workshops which serve to explain, clarify, and review purposes, procedures, and responsibility for implementation of the Affirmative Action Program.
- 3. Assess the school's or section's progress related to the Affirmative Action Program.

D. Office of Public Information

- 1. Publicize the Board's commitment to workforce diversity and nondiscrimination to promote understanding among employees and employee organizations and the community in general.
- 2. Publish information related to workforce diversity and nondiscrimination in various publications.

3. Assure distribution of materials as needed.

III. Concerns, questions, or complaints related to implementation of this policy should be submitted in writing to the Superintendent.

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