

River Forest Schools: District 90

Recruiting and Hiring Review: Findings and Recommendations

June 1, 2017

Thank You!

Alma Advisory Group would like to thank the following for their support during this review:

River Forest principals and AP, teachers, Board members, and central office staff, whose time and candid feedback provided rich and valuable insight for this report.

Pamela Jenkins, HR Specialist, for providing significant amounts of data in a short timeframe.

Superintendent Ed Condon for ensuring we had access to the people and data needed to conduct our analysis.

Table of Contents

Purpose of the Assessment

Key Findings

Recommendations

Appendix

Purpose of the Assessment

Alma Advisory Group's study sought to answer the following questions:

- **Recruitment - Is the district strategically recruiting and selecting high potential candidates?**
 - What attracts high-caliber candidates to D.90? What practices or policies may hurt recruiting efforts?
 - Is the district tapping into strong local and national sources to successfully attract a diverse and high-quality candidate pool that represents the district's evolving student demographic?
- **Hiring – Is the district able to screen and hire great candidates?**
 - Do principals have a streamlined and competency-based process to screen and select teachers?
 - Are hiring timelines early enough to support hiring the best candidates ahead of competition?

Our methodology included four key activities:



River Forest's mission includes a commitment to inclusivity and hiring high quality, diverse teachers

River Forest is already achieving strong results – with 94 percent of all students meeting or exceeding the Illinois Learning Standards in reading, and 97 percent in math – and has won numerous Academic Excellence Awards.

River Forest's mission is to provide *educational excellence for each child*, which includes commitment to diversity and hiring high quality teachers:



Core values/Commitments:

We believe in equity and inclusivity for all. We will ensure that every student feels empowered to achieve to his or her full potential, commit to provide equitable opportunities for all learners, grow an inclusive school community, and demonstrate we value diversity.



Goal: High Quality Workforce

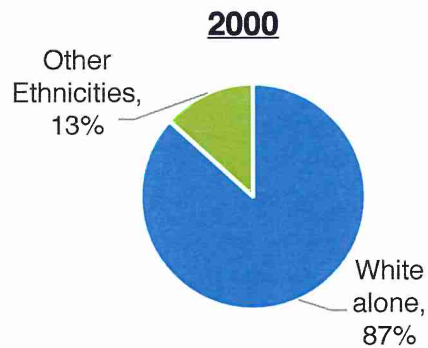
Recruit, develop, support and retain a **high-performing and diverse staff that practices collaboration and pursues continuous improvement.**

Several times during our visit, River Forest staff mentioned that they want to provide a **world class education for every child.**

Hiring high quality, diverse teachers is essential to achieving this mission.

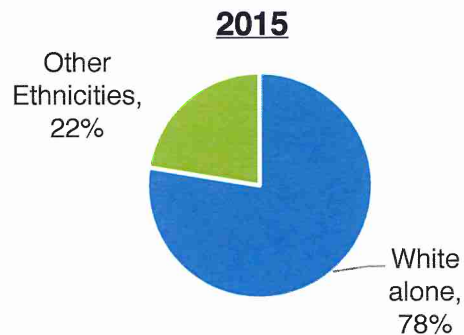
River Forest is an increasingly worldly and diverse community

In the last 15 years diversity in River Forest increased by 68%¹



Other Ethnicities 2000:

- Black: 4.8%
- Hispanic: 4.0%
- Asian: 3.1%
- Two or more: 1.2%



Other Ethnicities 2015:

- Asian: 7.7%
- Hispanic: 5.7%
- Black: 5.3%
- Two or more: 3.2%

River Forest attracts a diverse and worldly community

Most common origin of foreign born residents in River Forest¹

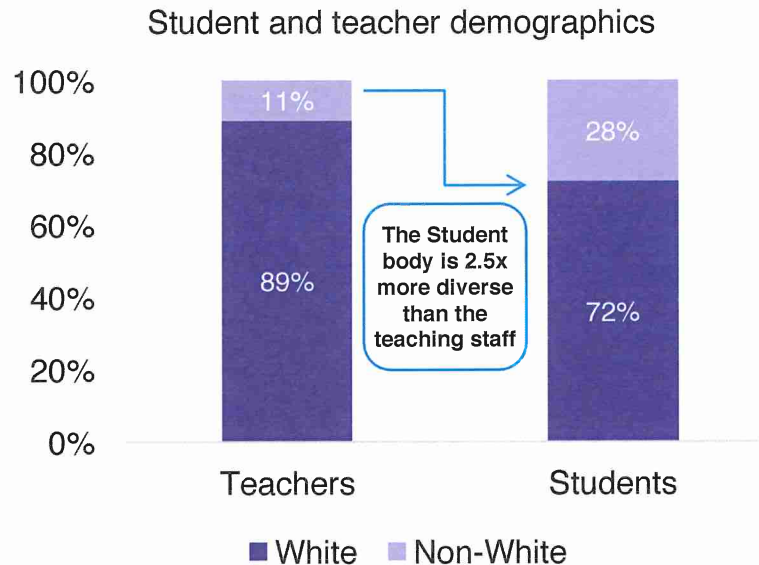
- 136 India
- 120 Philippines
- 81 Poland
- 50 Canada
- 39 Ecuador
- 38 China
- 36 Thailand
- 35 Vietnam
- 33 Mexico
- 30 United Kingdom
- 29 Korea

River Forest has more Canadian immigrants than Mexican

Source: 1) Demographic data is from city-data.com, which pulls data from the US census

River Forest's students are significantly more diverse than the teaching staff

While 28% of River Forests students are diverse, only 11% of teachers are diverse



- Recent hiring shows this trend continuing: of the teachers who have been with the district less than 3 years, only 12% are diverse.
- These trends are consistent across schools – while figures vary slightly, all three schools have significantly more diverse students than teachers. And at all schools, 85%+ of recently hired teachers are white.

Source: 1) River Forest HR data from "HR Teacher Data File." Based on current data, as of March 2017. Hiring data from River Forest Applitrack data. Data is from the last three years. Note, candidates could check an interest in multiple positions, and many did so. This analysis only looks at applicants who applied for a full time teaching position.

River Forest students have limited exposure to diverse teachers: only half of all students will have a diverse teacher in Elementary School

In both elementary schools, if current trends continue:

- **Almost half, 46% of students, will never have a teacher of color.** Of the students who do have a diverse teacher, they will likely only have one.
- There are no African American teachers at Lincoln Elementary and only one at Willard Elementary, making it **unlikely that students will have an Black teacher prior to middle school.**

In Roosevelt Middle school, less than 1 in 10 classes are taught by teachers of color, meaning exposure to diverse teachers is limited.

School Name	Asian	Black	Black/White	Hispanic	Hispanic/Asian	White	Total	% White
Willard School	2	1		1		27	31	87%
Lincoln School	2			2	1	31	36	86%
Roosevelt School	1	1	2	1		55	60	92%
Total (Average)	5	2	2	4	1	113	127	89%

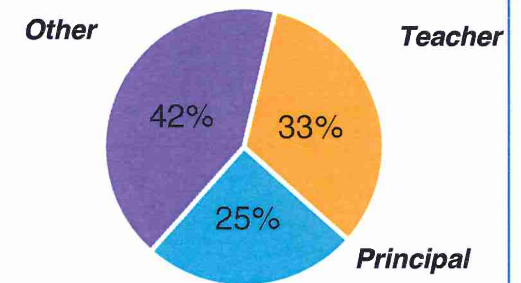
Source: River Forest HR data from "HR Teacher Data File." Based on current data, as of March 2017.

Why recruiting and hiring high quality teachers matters: they are essential to student learning

Teacher quality has a direct and significant impact on student learning

- The effect of teaching on student learning is **greater than student ethnicity, family income, school attributes or class size.**²
- Having a great teacher 1 year is not enough – **students need great teachers every year.** Students with three consecutive years of effective teaching outperform students with ineffective teachers by 52 percentage points.³
- Hiring a diverse, high quality teacher force is important for:
 - The organization: **more diverse organizations make better decisions.**⁴
 - **Teachers, leaders and students all benefit** from diverse perspectives.⁵

School-based Factors Impacting Student Achievement



One third of a school's impact on student achievement is attributable to teacher effectiveness.¹

1. Marzano, Waters & McNulty. "School leadership that works: From research to results." Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (2005)

2. Nye, Konstantopoulos and Hedges. "How Large are Teacher Effects?" Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis (2004)

3. Sanders & Horn. "Research Findings from the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) Database" (1996)

4. Hunt, Layton and Prince. "Diversity Matters." McKinsey (February 2, 2015).

5. Cherng and Haplin. "The Importance of Minority Teachers: Student Perceptions of Minority Versus White Teachers." Educational Researcher (2016)

Increases in diversity can lead to better decision making for schools...

A 2015 McKinsey report points to several benefits of having a diverse staff, including improved decision making. Authors write: *“Diversity of informed views enables objections and alternatives to be explored more efficiently and solutions to emerge more readily and be adopted with greater confidence”*.

- For companies, this translates into better results: companies in the top quartile of ethnic **diversity are 35% more likely to earn returns above the industry average**.
- For school systems, this means the impact on all students will more likely be taken into account in decision making
- Increasing diversity **improves employee satisfaction for diverse staff**. To *start* seeing these effects organizations need to reach a 15% threshold - River Forest can achieve this threshold by **hiring just 5 diverse teachers**

Source: Hunt, Layton and Prince. “Diversity Matters.” McKinsey (February 2, 2015). Notes: The study was compiled using 186 US companies and 180 UK and LA companies. Results are statistically significant.

...And increased diversity can lead to a better outcomes for ALL students

A landmark New York University study found that ALL students, including white students, prefer teachers of color. The study found:

- Students felt more motivated and supported by their Black and Latino teachers.
- Students had significantly more favorable perceptions of Latino teachers across all categories.
- Asian American students had an especially favorable view of Black teachers - surprising the researchers.

About the Study

Study is based on survey data from the Gates funded MET study, which included over 50,000 students and 1,680 teachers.

Researchers looked at middle school grades and reviewed survey questions, including:

- How much does this teacher challenge his/her students?
- How supportive is he/she?
- How well does he/she manage the classroom?
- How captivating does he/she make the subject?

Results were statistically significant, even after other factors were controlled for. Study shows correlation, not causation.

“If you’re a Black teacher, you understand you’re not in the mainstream and you know how to navigate the world essentially embodying an identity that is sometimes highly stigmatized... (middle school) kids are struggling with their own identities and how to come to terms with their own difference and development. I think these middle school teachers can use their own identities and experience to bridge that relationship with all types of students.”

Cherng, NYU study author explains his thoughts on the results

Source: Cherng and Haplin. “The Importance of Minority Teachers: Student Perceptions of Minority Versus White Teachers.” Educational Researcher (2016); Notes: report analyzed data from the 2009-2010 school year of the Measure of Effective Teaching study. The researchers focused on data from 1,680 teachers in 200 urban schools, along with their more than 50,000 students in grades six through nine. The study was widely covered in the press, including NPR, CNN, Edweek and the Huffington Post. Articles referenced: Kamentzf, Anya. “Study Finds Students Of All Races Prefer Teachers Of Color”. NPR (October 7, 2016); Howard, Jacqueline. *Students of all races favor teacher diversity, and here’s why*. CNN (October 14, 2016).

Table of Contents

Purpose of the Assessment

Key Findings

Recommendations

Appendix

Finding: River Forest has many strengths to build on

Recruitment and Hiring

- **Principals** have lots of say in who they hire, and are **actively engaged in the hiring process**.
- River Forest is attractive to teachers: for 27 openings, River Forest received over 1,900 applications, or an average of **70 applicants for each position**.¹
- There is **a high level of satisfaction** with the staff hired: schools are satisfied with their hires and students agree that they have good teachers who believe they can learn.²

Perceptions²

Teachers report that they **'love teaching in River Forest.'** River Forest does several things that make it an attractive place to teach:

- River Forest is **supportive of teachers and is well resourced**: teachers receive the resources and support they need in order to improve their craft. All teachers – including diverse teachers – mentioned River Forest provides teachers the **resources they need to excel**.
- River Forest is perceived as **a welcoming environment** and teachers are respected by parents.
- River Forest has already identified that **work around diversity is important** and started to address issues with diversity.

Sources: 1) River Forest Applitrack data, 2013-2016. Includes only teacher openings and applications that checked 'teacher';

2) Perceptions are from: 1) River Forest surveys of parents, teachers and students (2016) 2) Alma interviews with staff and focus group with teachers and principals (April 18th, 2016) and 3) Beckless, Chastity. "Diversity Focus Group Initiative." Beckless Consulting (March 21, 2017)

Finding: Some perceptions may hurt River Forest's ability to attract diverse staff and are not supported by evidence

What we heard....

- There are not enough diverse applicants, and that diverse candidates are harder to attract, hire and retain.



What the data says.....

- River Forest already receives many diverse applicants: **there is an 8:1 ratio of diverse applicants to openings.**¹



To compare: both TFA and NYC Teaching Fellows highlight their selectivity. They have 6-8 total applicants for each spot.^{4,5}

Several people thought...

- Diverse teachers may be less attracted to work in River Forest because they would prefer to teach higher need students.



The evidence shows...

- River Forest's diverse teachers were attracted by the districts ability to give them the tools they need to excel in their craft.²
- Hundreds of diverse teachers apply to work in River Forest.
- The Chicagoland area is a rich market for highly experienced, diverse educators. CPS alone employs 8,900 Black and Hispanic teachers (43%).³

Some people worried....

- Strategies for hiring more diverse staff could mean reducing standards.



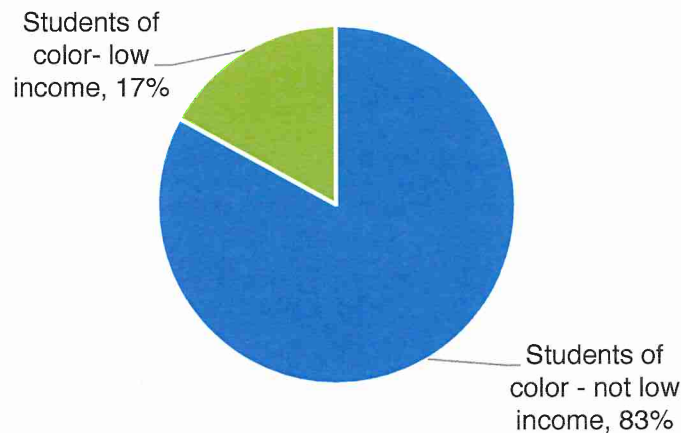
Research suggests...

- Developing sound, rigorous competency based hiring practices will lead to strong hiring decisions and can lead to an increase in diversity, as performance based screening has been shown to minimize bias.

Sources: 1) River Forest HR data from Applitrack. Data from 2013-2016; 2) Beckless, Chastity. "Diversity Focus Group Initiative." Beckless Consulting (March 21, 2017) 3) CPS Factsheet. http://cps.edu/About_CPS/At-a-glance/Pages/Stats_and_facts.aspx (updated April, 2017) 4) <http://www.nycf.org/about/history.html> 5) <https://www.teachforamerica.org/sites/default/files/2014.selection.overview.pdf>

Finding: Stakeholders frequently used the words 'low income' and 'minority' interchangeably, but this does not reflect River Forest

In River Forest, only 17% of students of color qualify for a free or reduced price lunch¹



Many people of color in River Forest hail from middle class or affluent backgrounds

- Diverse teachers in River Forest report coming from suburban backgrounds.²
- The majority of diverse students are not low income and many are affluent. The median value of a home owned by African Americans in River Forest is \$718,000 and \$559,000 for Hispanic homeowners.³

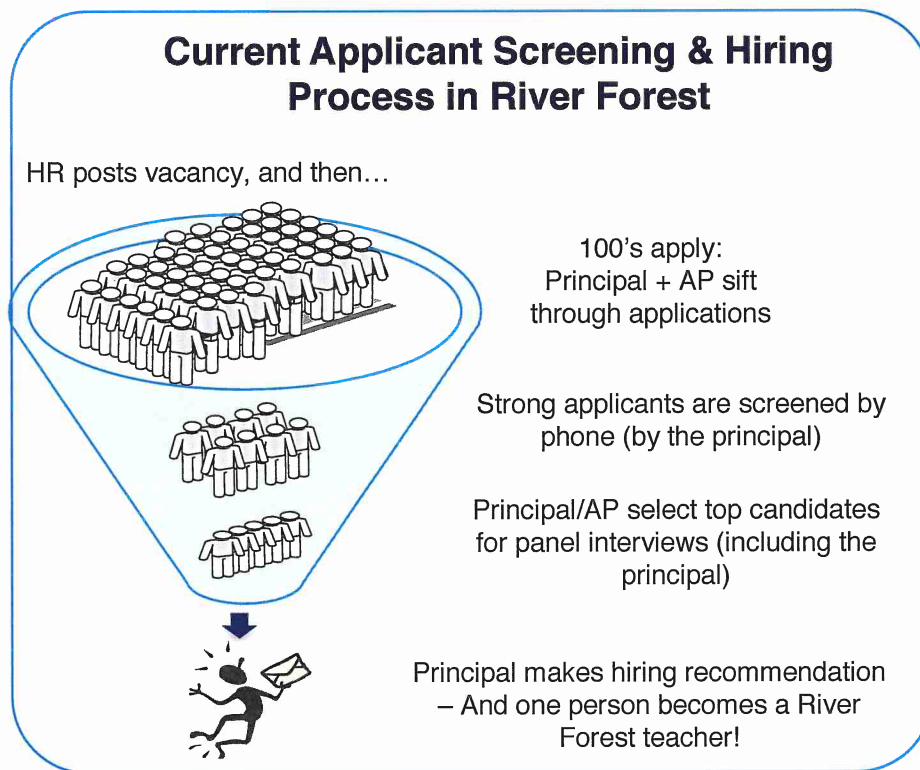
Sources:

1) River Forest data files 2016-17. Minority students include the following categories: Black/African American, Hispanic, Indian, Asian and mixed race.

2) Beckless, Chastity. "Diversity Focus Group Initiative." Beckless Consulting (March 21, 2017)

3) Demographic data is from city-data.com website, which pulls data from the US census

Finding: Screening and hiring practices give principals autonomy but are time consuming and don't provide tools to identify top talent



Positives:

- Principals are the key decision makers and have lots of say in the hiring process.

Challenges:

- Principals and their APs are left spending hours screening through 100's of applications.
- School leaders don't have the tools they need to understand which candidates are truly the highest potential.
- HR is underutilized as a resource in supporting this process.

Source: From Alma interviews with staff and focus groups with teachers and principals (April 18th, 2016)

Case study: One district found increasing rigor and providing strong support led to great results: *principal satisfaction and diversity both increased*

In 2016, Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) developed a competency-based teacher hiring process

Issue:

- MMSD's hiring process was arduous for principals, suffered from a persistent lack of diverse hires and was characterized by late job offers

Strategy:

- Utilized HR to boost recruitment efforts and help prioritize the highest potential candidates. Principals also began to **use HR to reliably pre-screen candidates**.
- Implemented a **competency and performance based hiring process** which included a **data analysis activity, a school walk through and a sample lesson**. This enabled principals to **better assess** candidates based on a set of competencies including:
 - quality instructional practices
 - cultural competence
 - data proficiency
- Interview notes were saved and shared, enabling **principals to learn from each other** and from past experience.
- **Moved up the hiring process** to make offers during the spring.

Results:

- 80% of teachers were hired by July 30, compared to only 50% in the prior year.
- 23% of new hires were diverse – an increase over 40% from the prior years.

Madison School District making progress on hiring teachers of color

ABIGAIL BECKER | The Capital Times | abecker@madison.com | @abecker_4
Jul 30, 2016



PHOTO BY M.P. KING -- State Journal

Buy Now

In addition to selecting the highest potential candidates, this approach mitigated bias, according to the HR Executive Director of MMSD.

Sources: Becker, Abigail. "Madison School District Making Progress on Hiring Teachers of Color." The Cap Times. <http://host.madison.com> (July 30, 2016);
Additional background provided by Monica Rosen (May, 2017)

Table of Contents

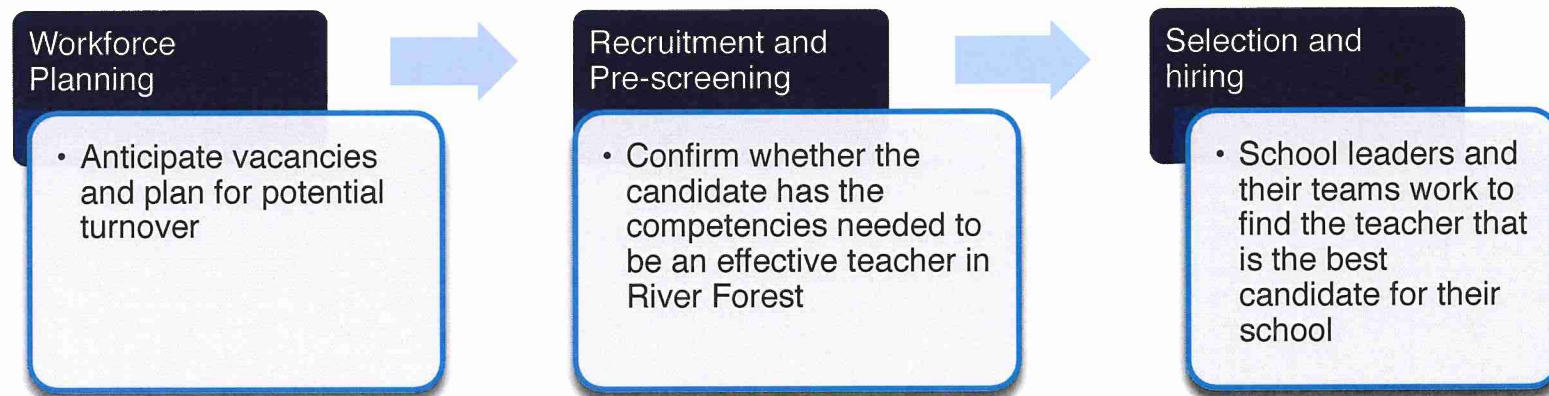
Purpose of the Assessment

Key Findings

Recommendations

Appendix

Recommendation: Develop a three step process for selecting great teachers



Recommendation: Develop a comprehensive, competency-based framework to use throughout the screening and hiring process

How does competency-based interviewing work?

Interviewer creates a rubric to identify specific competencies to be measured



Candidate has opportunities to demonstrate competencies



Interviewer seeks out evidence of competencies

What is competency-based interviewing?

- Principals are in control of who they hire
- Not based on gut or impression
- A more rigorous measure of competency
- Greater equity and objectivity
- Legally sound
- Opportunity for candidate to demonstrate competency
- More transparent conversation about skills and proficiency

Example: Denver Public School¹



Denver Public School developed a competency-based Teacher Hiring Toolkit that includes the following elements:

- **Resume Screen + Phone Screen:** HR uses a rubric to capture evidence of core competencies that are important to the schools
- **Scenario-based interview questions + demonstration lessons:** Gives candidates candidates the opportunity to demonstrate competency on the following dimensions: Cultural Competence, Classroom Management, Achievement Oriented Instruction, Content Knowledge & Delivery, and Professionalism
- **Reference checks:** Provides a view of a candidate's actual work rather than how they present themselves in an interview setting

Recommendation: Expand the role of HR to include active recruitment, initial application screening and candidate management

HR Role in Applicant Screening & Hiring

Current Role of HR:

- HR posts the vacancy internally and externally to local job boards.

Expansion:

- HR ensures the position is **posted broadly**, especially on sites known to attract diverse applicants.
- HR coordinates recruiting **visits to campuses** known to graduate **high quality, diverse applicants**.
- After a competency based rubric has been established, **HR screens applicants**.
- HR keeps high potential candidates warm through active follow-up.
- **HR time is protected** a year in advance to ensure that hiring is prioritized.
- *HR could further be leveraged to do the initial, competency based phone screen.*

Anticipated Advantages:

- River Forest receives **more high quality, diverse applicants**.
- All candidate receive a **thoughtful, competency based first screen**.
- Strong, diverse candidates are **less likely to get overlooked**.
- Teacher selection is likely to be completed earlier...before strong candidates have other offers.

Principals will...

- **Save time** by not going through initial screening
- Interview candidates most likely to be effective teachers, and still make the final hiring recommendation.

Recommendation: Actively recruit at high potential local universities

High priority strategic recruitment partners – university teacher preparation programs

We have identified five teacher preparation programs to consider as strategic recruitment partners. These schools have programming and student bodies that align with the district's goals for increased teacher diversity:

- National Louis University
- Loyola University Chicago
- North Park University
- Northeastern Illinois University
- Northwestern University

During recruiting, utilize teachers of color as ambassadors to send potential recruits the message that River Forest values diversity

Recommendation: Leverage the employment web page to communicate River Forest's values –including diversity - to applicants

Current River Forest Employment page does not communicate core values to applicants

7776 West Lake Street
River Forest, IL 60905
Ph: 708.771.8282 Fx: 708.771.8291

Home About the District Our Schools Board of Education Strategic Plan 2015 Parent Resources Staff Resources

Home / About D90 / District Information / Employment

Employment Opportunities

Thank you for your interest in District 90.

River Forest School District 90 is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

The School District shall provide equal employment opportunities to all persons regardless of their race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, ancestry, marital status, arrest record, military status or unfavorable military discharge, citizenship status provided the individual is authorized to work in the United States, use of lawful products while not at work, being a victim of domestic or sexual violence, physical or mental handicap or disability, if otherwise able to perform the essential functions of the job with reasonable accommodation, and other legally protected categories.

To establish a pre-employment file, please complete an online application. Your application materials will be retained in active status for one school year.

If your qualifications meet our needs, we will contact you for further information and a possible interview.

Please click here to view our open positions.

Please click here to complete an online application.

Consider adding images and text to communicate values Example: NYC Teaching Fellows webpage

NYC TEACHING FELLOWS

WHO WE ARE THE FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCE YOUR CAREER APPLY

NYC Department of Education

Build a meaningful career.

Use the skills and experiences that brought you success to prepare students to meet their goals.

LEARN MORE

Sources: River Forest website; NYC Schools website

Recommendation: Revise the River Forest website to present a diverse community



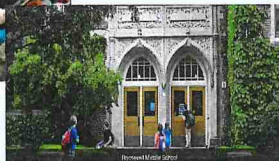
Home page pictures show only white students



Lincoln

Both Elementary schools only show white children

Willard



Roosevelt Middle has 1 photo (out of 3) showing diverse students



Showcase the diversity of the student body on the website. This will let applicants know that they will be working with diverse learners

Recommendation: Elevate diverse staff voices so their perspective is included in the hiring process and in day to day decision-making

Including diverse perspectives in hiring and day-to-day decision-making has a number of benefits:

- Helps ensure diverse perspectives are considered, which will **improve the overall quality of decisions**.
- Helps ensure decisions made **will consider impact on diverse students**.
- Sends the message that **diversity is valued** to other staff, applicants, and to the community at large.
- Could help send the message to diverse applicants that River Forest is a place where they will be welcomed.

Recommendation: Reframe diversity as benefiting ALL Students

Exposing all students to a range of perspectives is part of ensuring that they receive a world-class education, and will benefit them as they enter an increasingly diverse workforce.

- The US is becoming an **increasingly diverse society**. Exposing all students to diverse perspectives in a safe setting will help prepare them to interact with others and **help students develop their own cultural competencies**.
- To the extent that diverse perspectives and viewpoints are presented in the classroom, students will have **a richer learning experience**. Being able to see issues from **multiple perspectives** helps **sharpen critical thinking skills** and **increase awareness of underlying assumptions**.
- Research shows educators of color benefit all students.

“Research has shown that teachers of color tend to empathize with their students, relate to their inside and outside of school realities, teach to the multiple learning styles of students, develop instructional practices that are responsive to students and give students multiple opportunities for success,”

Rich Milner, a professor of education and director of the Center for Urban Education at the University of Pittsburgh¹.

Thank You!

Table of Contents

Purpose of the Assessment

Key Findings

Recommendations

Appendix

Appendix

Methodology Review

To complete our review, Alma carried out the following activities:

Completed a site visit, which included:

- Interviews with the following district leaders and stakeholders: Superintendent, Human Resources Specialist, Board member and Director of Special Education
- Focus groups with: all school leaders (3 principals and 1 AP) and with 12 early career educational staff (10 teachers and 2 other professional staff)

Completed a review of available HR reports and district data, including the following:

- District strategic plan documents
- Data related to vacancies, recruitment, hiring
- Student and staff demographic data
- Educator induction and onboarding documents
- 2016 teacher, student and parent survey results

Conducted external research to benchmark the district in national hiring and diversity employment trends