Beliefs, Attitudes, and Practices of Principals with Respect to Hiring Diverse Teachers

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Listening...requires not only open eyes and ears, but open hearts and minds. We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs...It is not easy, but it is the only way to learn what it might feel like to be someone else and the only way to start the dialogue. – Lisa Delpit
A. Keywords

- Diversity
- Equity & inclusion
- Hiring
- Exclusion
- Hegemony
- Leadership & development process
- Student success factors
- Professional development
- Differentiated lens
B. Abstract

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M.Ed. Thesis report, Linköpings University, Sweden

The purpose of this study is to explore the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of principals with regard to equity and inclusion specific to hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds. A qualitative design and narrative analysis guided this study. Twelve principals and vice-principals from six high schools in one school district in Ontario participated in the study by answering questions on a self-completion web questionnaire. The findings were analyzed using four categories with regard to hiring diverse teachers: 1) current understanding of diversity in the school community; 2) current practices for diversity hiring; 3) beliefs and attitudes for diversity hiring and existing barriers; 4) solutions and future learning opportunities.

Data were analysed using thematic analysis. The overall themes that emerged from the data were: a) valuing the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion; b) not valuing diversity and providing rationale for not considering diversity and equity.

The findings revealed that principals were able to define diversity in their own words. However, principals did not always value diversity in teacher candidates in their hiring practices. The questions used by principals to interview teachers – based on those recommended by the school board’s interview questions – did not include questions that would elicit and support responses from teacher candidates with regard to teaching diverse students or that reveal the value of their own diversity. The findings revealed that there are various barriers due to biases, hiring attitudes and current practices. Finally, the findings revealed that some principals are resistant to additional learning and professional development activities, saying they see no barriers for diverse teacher candidates being hired. However, some principals are open to more training and learning opportunities and see professional development as a catalyst in bringing positive change with respect to hiring practices and valuing diversity.

A discussion of the findings with reference to current literature is provided. In conclusion, questions and approaches for further studies are identified.
### C. Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ALGC</td>
<td>Adult Learning and Global Change (Intercontinental M.Ed. Program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ</td>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning</td>
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<td>PD</td>
<td>Professional development</td>
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<td>VP</td>
<td>Vice-principal</td>
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D. Declaration

I declare that Beliefs, Attitudes, and Practices of Principals with Respect to Hiring Diverse Teachers is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full name:  Gursev Singh

Date:  January, 2011
E. Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

*If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place.* – Margaret Mead

**Context and Background**

Equity and inclusion is a global challenge. It is particularly challenging for a nation like Canada with a pluralistic society. Canadians think of themselves as living in a peaceful, multicultural society that respects diversity. Indeed, in recent decades Canadian society has become increasingly diverse. Source countries for Canada’s immigrants have shifted: in the mid-1950s nearly 95% of all immigrants came from Europe and the US; by the mid-1990s more than 60% of immigrants came from Asia (Baeker, 2002). Therefore, the percentage of visible minorities in Canadian society has been increasing rapidly. In addition, the Aboriginal population of Canada is growing more rapidly than the non-Aboriginal population (Statistics Canada, 2008). But, Canada’s diversity in the 21st Century goes beyond gender, race, ethnicity, religion, language and skin colour. The group identified as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) has become part of the diverse social fabric and, along with groups like those representing physically challenged citizens, their rights to equal opportunity are also now protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Despite Canadians’ image of themselves as a welcoming and unbiased people, the problems of discrimination and barriers to equal opportunity have been well-documented by women, visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, LGBTQ and other disadvantaged groups in Canada. The different levels and departments of government, hospitals, police and various other organizations including educational institutions from elementary to post-secondary have been seeking ways to respond by implementing policies to address the problems and barriers that diverse groups face.

In Canada, education is a provincial responsibility. In the researcher’s local context of the province of Ontario, education is governed principally by The Education Act and its regulations. This legislation sets out the duties and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and the duties and responsibilities of school boards, school board supervisory officers, principals, teachers, parents and students. The Ministry of Education in Ontario recently released a document *Realizing the Promise of Diversity - Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (April 2009). This strategy mirrors a similar document, *Antiracism and Ethno-Cultural Equity in*
School Boards (Ontario, 1993), and recognizes Ontario's growing multicultural diversity; it aims to promote inclusive education, as well as to understand, identify, and eliminate the biases, barriers, and power dynamics that limit students’ prospects for learning, growing, and fully contributing to society. These documents and policies seek to provide a framework for inclusive curriculum for students, educating teachers, and hiring diverse teachers. These documents also bring to light the existence of systemic barriers relating to various dimensions of diversity such as ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical ability, intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status; such barriers may impede fair practice with respect to hiring, mentoring, promotion, and others. The document Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (Ontario, 2009) affirms the values of fairness, equity, and respect as essential principles of Ontario’s publicly funded education system.

However, implementing equity and inclusion policies in any institution does not immediately guarantee their effective practice. In May 2009, just a month after the Ministry of Education released Ontario’s equity and inclusive education strategy, the researcher attended a professional development conference in Toronto on equity and inclusive leadership. At this conference metropolitan school boards (serving metropolitan cities such as those in and around the Greater Toronto Area) reported their progress in the past two decades in creating equity and inclusion policies and hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds and marginalized minority groups. On the other hand, non-metropolitan school boards acknowledged their continuing challenges with regard to hiring diverse teachers and in the education of their teachers and hiring teams. Not only were participants from the metropolitan boards representative of diverse groups (cultures, races, faiths etc.), but they also demonstrated an understanding of the related issues. Conference discussions revealed that non-metropolitan boards were predominantly white in terms of staff, and still needing to change the hegemonic culture and power structure in order for transformation to occur. Conference speakers noted that while the student bodies in non-metropolitan school boards may be diverse in terms of ethnicity, race, colour, faith/religion, the teaching staff does not reflect that diversity.

Conference seminars and discussions focused on the need to hire more teachers of colour, diverse faiths, ethnicity, etc. One panellist at the conference shared that some teachers in her school board wondered why they had to learn about equity, inclusion, and diversity when they did not have a racially diverse student population (which was predominantly Caucasian). She revealed her struggle trying to explain to the teachers that race or skin colour is not the only
defining factor for diversity. Hence, the conference brought together issues of diversity, equity and inclusion with issues of the attitudes and beliefs of the teaching workforce and practices of school hiring teams.

**Organization of Thesis**

This thesis starts with an introductory chapter setting the stage for the study with the context and background, followed by reasons for undertaking this study, and finally a section on the research aims and questions. The literature review chapter follows and reveals the scholarly work that exists with respect to this study topic. The third chapter explains the research methodology, covering the topics of design, theoretical framework, research method, sampling, questionnaire, data analysis, ethics and bias. The fourth chapter reports the findings from the questionnaire, providing the results from the study using specific and meaningful themes. This is followed by the discussion and concluding chapter which dwells on what can be learned from the responses, how these responses compare to existing literature, what suggestions are provided by other researchers to create change with reference to training hiring teams and hiring diverse teachers, and reflections on direction for future research in this area.

**Terminology**

The term “principal” refers to both, principals and vice-principals. High school refers to secondary schools (grades 9 to 12). A few terms are used interchangeably throughout this document. The phrase “hiring committees” and “hiring teams” are used interchangeably. Similarly, hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds, hiring diversity, diversity hiring, and hiring diverse teachers are used with the same intent and meaning.

**Rationale for Study**

Literature shows that due to changing demographics and the increasingly multicultural nature of student populations in communities within US and Canada, it is essential that students learn to live in a diverse world (Collins, 2006). To ensure student success and to prepare students for the ever-increasing global influence on their lives, researchers and governmental organizations have identified the value and importance of hiring a diverse teaching staff in schools (Ryan, 2006; West, 2004; Ontario 1993, 2009; William, 2000, Turner, 2002).

Principals and vice-principals are an important part of teacher hiring teams; their decisions on which teachers are hired affect students and school communities for decades. Teachers in
Ontario schools have secure, well-paying jobs. Additionally, the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan is one of the top teacher pension plans in Canada. For these reasons, a teacher could be employed within the school system for over 30 years before retiring. Hence, the social justice issues and impact of teacher hiring is long lasting on the student community.

The topic of equity and inclusion and the principals’ beliefs, attitudes, and practices for hiring diverse teachers is of interest to school districts in general because it relates to leadership training, succession planning, and policy development. Hence, this study may be of interest not only locally to teachers, principals, superintendents, human resources officers, and teacher hiring teams within the province of Ontario and within Canada, but also to school and higher education systems around the globe. It is hoped that this research will bring new knowledge and provide material for further research.

**Research Aim and Questions**

The research aim is to study the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of principals with regard to hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds. In keeping with this aim, this study will address the following questions:

A. What are the current practices of principals and vice-principals to create a diverse teacher workforce and how do these compare with the existing body of literature?

B. What are the beliefs and attitudes of principals about hiring diverse teaching staff?

C. What parameters, if any, are being used by principals to glean out and differentiate the additional skills and capabilities diverse teachers would bring to a school?

D. What are the barriers or challenges to hiring diverse teaching staff in a school board?

E. What kind of learning (formal or informal) do principals take part in with respect to equity and inclusion, and does this have an impact on hiring diverse teachers?

F. What professional development would principals like a school board to provide that would further the screening, hiring, and retention of teacher from diverse groups?

The literature search was done with the above research aim and questions in mind. As presented in the next chapter, the result of the literature review was a rich base of scholarly writings and work in the area of hiring educators from diverse backgrounds.
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Great achievements are not born from a single vision but from the combination of many distinctive viewpoints. Diversity opens minds and unlocks our potential to solve any problem we may face. – Author unknown

The aim of this study was to investigate the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of principals with regard to hiring teachers representing diverse groups. Given this aim, the focus in this literature review was to discover what scholars, researchers, and educational practitioners have said about this subject.

Search Parameters and Organization of Literature Review

The literature review was conducted using search terms and phrases such as “hiring diverse teachers”; “diversity hiring practices in schools”; “studies showing effect of equity and inclusion training on hiring diverse teaching staff”; “aversive racism”; “inclusive leadership and social justice for schools”; “how school principals learn about hiring diversity.” Searches revealed articles and studies published in educational journals and other verified sources such as school boards, universities, and governmental educational institutions. The result was a wealth of scholarly papers and studies on hiring practices with special reference to screening, hiring, mentoring, retention, and promotion of educators from diverse groups.

A number of studies and articles referred to hiring practices in schools. Many studies also referred to hiring practices in colleges and universities. Both types are relevant and valuable because the reasoning for hiring diverse teachers and for changing the culture of organizations is similar in many respects for both higher education institutions and kindergarten to grade 12 schools. The central concerns are student success (because not all students are able to succeed given the normative force of hegemonic culture in schools) and providing students with diverse role models so that they can experience diversity in their learning environment and succeed in the global economy.

This literature review is organized into the following six areas: defining diversity, why hire diverse teachers, the history of equity and inclusion initiatives in Ontario, educational approaches to equity and inclusion, uncovering barriers and biases in the search and hiring process, and need for change and new paradigms for hiring diverse teachers.
Defining Diversity

As a starting point, researchers suggest that there must be a clear and universal definition of diversity, which includes institution-specific language so that all members understand what diversity means within the context of their institution. Once a clear definition of diversity is established, it can be included in recruitment and succession planning policies and strategies (Adams & Bargerhuff, 2005; Robinson-Neal, 2009). Readings on diversity have traditionally focused on racial and ethnic differences, as have statistics maintained by institutions of higher education (Hon, Chance, & Weigold, 1999 as cited in Adam and Bargerhuff, 2005). Diversity amongst teachers must go beyond the historical contexts of race, ethnicity, and colour to be inclusive of other forms of diversity including customs, beliefs, culture, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status (Williams, 2000; Ontario, 2009).

Adams & Bargerhuff (2005) point out that Wright State University, in its efforts to hire diverse educators, used the following definition of diversity stated by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education:

[Diversity is] differences among groups of people and individuals based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, language, exceptionalities, religion, sexual orientation, and geographic region in which they live.

Ontario (2009) Ministry of Education’s recent document, Realizing the Promise of Diversity - Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, provides the following definitions of diversity and equity:

[Diversity is] the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

[Equity is] a condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences (p. 4).

As suggested by researchers (Adams & Bargerhuff, 2005; Robinson-Neal, 2009) such definitions can guide school board administrators, principals and hiring team members in their work of creating a diverse teacher workforce.
**Why Hire Diverse Teachers?**

The argument for equitable representation of diverse teachers is relatively new. In the past two decades, researchers and educational organizations began asking for policies and strategies to hire more diverse educators (Ontario, 1993; Ontario, 2009; National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2004; Toronto District School Board, 2007). For example, the consistent rationale behind this has been the belief that diverse teachers have much to offer to, and provide an important link between, the education system, the students, and the communities in which teachers and students live, learn, and work (Ryan et al., 2009).

Research shows that there has been a steady growth in ethnic and racial diversity in North American school communities. Within the Canadian context, due to the growth in the multicultural composition of society, all students need to learn social skills to network with diverse groups of people and to succeed in work and life. Statistics Canada (2008) revealed that by 2017 visible minorities will represent more than 50% of the population in Toronto and Vancouver and that one of every 5 Canadians will be foreign-born (Statistics Canada, 2008; CBC News, 2005). However, changing community demographics have not yet translated into diversification of teaching staff in schools, colleges and universities (Collins and Kritsonis, 2006; Kayes, 2006).

Arguments for hiring diverse teaching staff go beyond the issue of basic equity. Literature reveals that a diverse faculty contributes directly to educational quality by enriching students’ intellectual, moral, and civic development (Turner, 2002; Ross, 2003). Adams and Bargerhuff (2005) posit that diverse teachers expose students to a wide range of ideas, beliefs and life experiences that helps them to become critical and complex thinkers, and culturally proficient citizens.

Ross (2003) found that “many researchers, practitioners, policy makers, and parents have called for a teaching force that reflects the growing diversity of the student population” (p. 6). In preparing to live in a diverse world, students need to see teachers who represent this diversity working together. Interaction with diverse teachers helps students from mainstream communities to develop tolerance, acceptance, and appreciation for learning, living, and working cooperatively with diverse people (West, 1994). Collins and Kritsonis (2006) quoted a survey conducted by Bernard Hodes Group for a PhD project, which found that professor diversity enhances the educational experience of all: 93% of respondents felt that minority professors have
a positive impact on minority students; 84% of respondents felt that minority professors also positively impact the education of non-minority students. The greater the diversity seen in the faculty, the greater the diversity seen in curricular content and teaching methods. The researchers noted that diverse backgrounds translate to student success and “a more effective school” (p. 3).

Scholars and educational organizations agree that for students to be socially successful in today’s global society and to have this as one of their learning objectives, they must appreciate diversity, learn to respect others, value differences, and build positive relationships with their diverse peers (Brown, 1998; West, 1994; Ontario, 1993; Ontario, 2009). When situated in diversity, all students (not just minority students, but those from majority or homogenous groups as well) learn to understand their own identity and culture, which in turn forms a basis for valuing diversity and identity of the “other” (Davies, 2002). The process of discovering one’s identity and culture can help students and educators to place diversity as part of “us” rather than of the “other.”

Students gain from having teachers and role models who speak and sound like them, and have similar life experiences (Jan, 2006). At the same time, homogenous groups of students gain from exposure to diversity in teaching staff and faculty, to new ways of looking at the world, and to new ideas. Diversifying teaching staff helps minority students see role models in positions of knowledge, social and political importance, and power. This demonstrates that all qualified individuals regardless of ethnicity, religious affiliations, or other identifying factors that have historically kept minorities from achieving such status can achieve these positions. In addition, representing diversity within teaching staff helps break down negative stereotypes held by mainstream students (West, 1994; Williams, 2000). The importance of having people of colour and diverse backgrounds as role models and in positions of influence cannot be underestimated. For example, Ryan et al. (2009) point out that the reaction to the recent election and inauguration of Barak Obama as the first Black president of the United States speaks volumes; they quote an anonymous reader’s comment embodying the inspiration felt by many at that time, published in the Toronto Star:

I’m so grateful to finally have a living role model, someone who is like me, someone who inspires me to be better. Will America’s resurrection spill across the border into Canada? Will the black community awaken and begin to assert its political capital that has laid dormant for far too long? This is my HOPE. This PRESIDENT through his example has given me reason to BELIEVE! (p. 594)
Therefore, diversity does not need to be characterized as a “problem” to be solved; it can be seen as a crucial element of intellectual inquiry and embraced as a way of enhancing learning in a democratic society (Turner, 2002). Teams hiring diverse staff can keep in mind that the teacher and student worlds are not separate, but rather influence each other (Antonio, 2003). Therefore, diversity recruiting is not undertaken only for teachers and faculty, but also for all levels from student body to staff and administration (Adams and Bargerhuff, 2005). However, while most colleges and universities want to diversify their faculties, they are not sure how to achieve this (Turner, 2002).

For diversity initiatives to be successful, the starting point is a commitment from the highest levels of leadership, making the achievement of teacher diversity the goal and an integral part of the overall strategic plan of the organization (Knowles & Harleston, 1997 as cited in Adams and Bargerhuff, 2005). In keeping with these ideas, and to drive change in Ontario schools, the Ontario Ministry of Education created guidelines for antiracism and ethno-cultural equity in school boards in 1993, and an equity and inclusive education strategy entitled *Realizing the Promise of Diversity* in 2009.

**History of Equity and Inclusive Education Initiatives in Ontario**

Bascia (2001) points out that in the early 1990s in Ontario, a host of policies from the Ministry of Education charged schools to become responsive to culturally diverse students. These policies encouraged school-based development of programs for immigrant and racial minority students. There was a new imperative to make curriculum content and teaching approaches culturally inclusive (Dei, 1994) and to diversify the teaching staff to reflect the diversity of Ontario’s population (Ontario, 1993). These policies were intended to permeate all aspects of a school board’s organizational structure in an effort to “equip all students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to live and work effectively in an increasingly diverse world, and engage them to appreciate diversity and reject discriminatory attitudes and behaviour” (Ontario, 1993, p. 5). The policies called on school boards to ensure that the curriculum and learning experiences provided for students in school are modified to “ensure that the cultural and racial identities of all students are affirmed…to reflect the diversity of staff, students, parents, and the community” p. 14). School boards were charged with providing staff development to broaden their expertise through courses, workshops, and community consultation. As Bascia (2001) notes, “in a some-what oblique nod to the racial and ethnic homogeneity of the teaching
pool, hiring and promotion practices were to be modified to encourage greater racial and cultural diversity of school board staff” (p. 253).

Bascia (2001) posits that there is inequitable access to positions of administrative authority within the educational system. This impacts hiring practices; for example, predominantly Caucasian hiring teams may not recognize the immediacy and need for hiring diverse teachers from different faiths, ethnicity, or race because they may not see a direct effect on themselves and their families as they are already in privileged positions. Davies (2002) states that "when those who shape an identity are always white, male and middle class, these factors become entangled with and lend legitimacy and authority to an already powerful and privileged identity” (p. 32).

The Ontario (2009) Ministry of Education strategy for equity and inclusive education points out a number of issues that are at the forefront. While Canadians embrace multiculturalism, human rights, and diversity, there are ongoing incidents of exclusion in schools due to homophobia, cyber-bullying, hate propaganda; and “there has been a documented increase in reported incidents of anti-Black racism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia” (p. 7). The suicide rate among homosexual students is higher than among heterosexual students; and groups such as the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops has called on schools to fulfil their obligation in providing a positive school environment that is free of harassment, violence, and malice. In fact, the Supreme Court of Canada acknowledged in 2005 that racism against visible minorities “is so notorious and indisputable that its existence needs to be treated as a social fact” (p. 7).

The Ontario (2009) Ministry of Education envisions an inclusive education system where “all students, parents, and other members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, accepted, are welcomed and respected; every student is supported and inspired to succeed in a culture of high expectations for learning; all staff and students value diversity and demonstrate respect for others and a commitment to establishing a just and caring society” (p. 10).

Under its “action items,” Ontario’s (2009) equity and inclusive education strategy calls for each school board to develop and implement equity and inclusive education policies and guidelines; and for each school to create and support a positive school environment that fosters and promotes equity, inclusion, and diversity. The strategy recognizes Ontario’s growing diversity as a strength. In addition to promoting inclusive education, the strategy aims to understand,
identify, and eliminate the biases, barriers, and power dynamics that limit students’ potential for learning, growing, and fully contributing to society.

With respect to this research topic, the Ontario (2009) strategy states that “systemic barriers may also impede fair practice with respect to hiring, mentoring, promotion, and succession planning” (p. 11). The strategy points out that barriers may be related to various dimensions of diversity and that the equity and inclusive education strategy reaffirms the values of fairness, equity, and respect as essential principles of Ontario’s publicly funded education system.

The need for Ontario to engage in creation of a new strategy for equity and inclusion in 2009, sixteen years after its first document in 1993, confirms that change is slow and the task continues for bringing about transformation in school boards. The above history and discussions illustrate that there is movement to bring about change in the Ontario school system with regard to equity and inclusion. In the next section, the discussion turns to literature pointing to specific elements to be addressed for change to happen in such a context.

**Educational Approaches to Equity and Inclusion**

**Exclusion**

Ryan (2005) has recognized the existence of marginalization and exclusion and its manifestations in schools, communities, and workplaces with reference to poverty, ethnicity and reactions to diversity, gender and sexual orientation. Ryan explains that while he as a privileged person in his social location has benefited from being included, there are many others who are excluded. He notes that his position within gender, ethnic, class, and sexual orientation relationships almost always guarantees him access to privileges others may not have. His white skin, European heritage, mastery of English, comfortable economic position, masculinity, and heterosexuality have helped him overcome most initial barriers. However, Ryan states that this is not the situation for others: women, non-Caucasians, non-Europeans, speakers of non-English languages, gays and lesbians, and the poor are regularly excluded from many social and educational activities and forced to wait on the sidelines and watch the “game.”

McIntosh (1988), an American educator, noticed that while men agreed that women were disadvantaged in the workplace they were not willing to acknowledge that men are privileged and gain advantages from women’s disadvantages. McIntosh posits that as a white person, she had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been
taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts her at an advantage. She notes that whites learn not to recognize white privilege, just as males learn not to recognize male privilege. In addition, McIntosh suggests that as a member of the racial majority culture in her workplace, she carries an invisible knapsack full of subtle privileges that she has learned to take for granted. For instance, as a Caucasian she can arrange to be in the company of people of her race most of the time. She can turn on the TV or open the front page of the newspaper and see people of her race widely represented. She is never asked to speak for all the people of her racial group; when she is told about the national heritage or about "civilization," she is shown that people of her colour made it what it is. Ironically, “In a world where race – demarcated by skin colour and other related characteristics – is a marker of value, those who do not have white skin do not have the same privileges as white people…” (Ryan et. al., 2009, p. 594).

Researchers point out that overt, racist beliefs such as aversion to diversity and views that see “non-Western” immigrants as a threat to their community – as is shown by post 9/11 reactions against Arabs and Muslims – are a contributing factors to exclusion in schools (Bissoonath, Buchanan, Morely & Robins, cited by Ryan, 2005). Ryan (2005) states that school organization is hierarchical and school principals, by virtue of the power vested in them, routinely make choices on behalf of teachers, students, and community members. These choices may favour privileged groups and exclude others.

Exclusion due to sexual orientation is common in schools and has led to violent incidents against students and educators who are gay (Lugg, 2003; Ryan, 2005). The recent history of exclusion due to homophobia documents that in the 1960s school officials in Florida and California conducted witch-hunts to weed out gay teachers (Blount, 2003). Blount also points out that in the 1980s, educators suspected of being gay were at risk of losing their jobs.

**Equity and inclusion**

Ryan (2003) classifies educational approaches to diversity employed by educators over the years into three areas: conservative, liberal/pluralist, or critical. The conservative view is least interested in promoting inclusive practice, while the critical view supports inclusive practice the most. The liberal/pluralist approach falls somewhere in the middle. Early conservatives, believing in the biological and cultural inferiority of diverse others, rationalized exclusion and devoted fewer resources to the education of minorities. More recently, conservatives no longer try to maintain the belief in the inferiority of diverse groups; rather, they emphasize assimilation
of different cultures and groups into the majority culture by upholding the virtues of social cohesion and nationhood, for instance.

Ryan (2003) points out that liberal/pluralist views promote equity and inclusion of non-Anglo cultures in school activities to improve the self-esteem and academic success of students from these groups. This view gives rise to multiculturalism and supports the valuing and honouring of differences in the various cultures in society. Proponents of critical approaches to inclusion of diversity advocate addressing and removing the extensive patterns of unequal power so that students of marginalized groups can achieve sustained patterns of success. The critical camp openly campaigns for and maintains that equity and inclusion “can only be achieved when people recognize, understand and change the structures that constrain and exclude individuals and groups from the privileges that others enjoy” (p. 38).

A subgroup of the critical school is the antiracist approach to education, which came up as an alternative to multicultural education. Antiracists believe that racism is systematic (built into the current culture of the organization) and they acknowledge both the behaviour and structural nature of racism. For instance, antiracists maintain that organizational structures and behaviour are inseparable; institutions and values go hand in hand. Antiracists maintain that people act and are shaped by the larger circumstances and context in which they are situated (West, 1994, as cited in Ryan, 2003). More recent approaches of critical antiracism, multiculturalism and postmodernism have begun to address these issues with respect to the global village where individual and group identities continue to evolve in complex ways (Ryan, 2003).

While equity is defined as a condition of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people, equity does not mean treating everyone the same without regard for individual differences (Ontario, 2009). The reason for this clarification in Ontario’s (2009) strategy for equity and inclusive education is that equity has often been misunderstood to mean treating everybody equally, not giving special consideration to people’s differences because of their diversity. This aspect of equity understanding along with the power dynamics of existing dominant culture in school boards is credited with making it difficult to change the various aspects of exclusion and inclusion.
Uncovering Barriers & Biases in the Search and Hiring Process

Researchers reveal that efforts to diversify teaching staff continue to be among the least successful elements of educational institutions’ commitment to diversity (Turner, 2002; Smith et al., 2004; Kayes, 2006). A core theme revealed in the literature is that diversification of teaching staff cannot occur without the realization that various biases, assumptions and stereotypes influence the perceptions, judgements, and decisions of hiring teams (Kayes, 2006). As outlined below, current literature offers some explanations for the low numbers of diverse educators in schools and institutions of higher education.

Resistance to change

One challenging issue is the ability, or inability, to identify and understand resistance. One of the reasons diversity hiring and affirmative action policies fail is that resistance to diversity hiring is part of the institutional climate (Kayes, 2006). Addressing resistance to diversity is more complex and difficult than creating policies, strategies, and short-term fixes; failing to address resistance results in temporary changes and not in long-term diversification of staff. Kayes (2006) points out that educational institutions whose staff who hold biases and stereotypes “cannot become progressive, multicultural education environments without the consent and cooperation of these individuals” (p. 65). In addition, support, or lack thereof, from administrators has a major influence on efforts to recruit and hire diverse teachers (Adams and Bargerhuff, 2005; Smith et al., 2004; Kayes, 2006).

Furthermore, candidates may be eliminated or rated highly depending on which graduate school they attended (Turner, 2002). Hiring teams may also display a tendency where they show preference for candidates who are like them in educational background, social skills, values, and behaviours (Brosnan, 2001; Turner, 2002). University hiring committees can be uncomfortable with applicants whose research interests are different from theirs or to which they are unaccustomed. For example, if a diverse candidate has interests in studying a topic related to his or her own diverse group, this is often regarded as self-serving or narrow (Phillips, 2002 as cited in Adams and Bargerhuff, 2005).

Intercultural sensitivity

Kayes (2006) has suggested applying Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993) to understand resistance to diverse hiring. In Bennett’s model, individuals in
predominantly white search and hiring teams are located in three levels of intercultural sensitivity – defence, minimization, or acceptance. People in the defence level view diversity as a threat and equate incompetence, affirmative action, and special privileges with diverse candidates; they overtly deny them equal opportunity. Educators who are in the minimization level prefer to focus on ethnocentric similarities rather than differences; they consider diverse candidates who are like themselves and provide a “best-fit” to the dominant culture of their department or institution. Ethnocentric similarities mean that one's own culture is experienced as central to reality in some form. For example, researchers found that dysconscious racism – a subtle, unconscious form of discrimination – is deeply embedded in personal belief systems and can hamper an individual’s or search committee’s ability to see diverse teacher applicants in new and more inclusive ways (Rodriguez and Berryman, 2002). Dysconscious racism may cause hiring teams to “favour candidates who are like them, not necessarily racially or ethnically, but in terms of educational background, social skills, values, and behaviours” (Turner, 2002, p. 20).

Kayes (2006) argues that the majority of white educators are minimizers and the requirement to find the “best-fit” for the job has become a major hidden barrier to hiring diverse educators. Educators in the acceptance level recognize, appreciate, and value cultural differences and would be strong advocates for hiring diversity; however, they “generally feel ill-equipped (even paralyzed) from advocating necessary changes in hiring practices, systems, policies, and procedures” (p. 66).

Kayes (2006) provides a scenario at a predominantly white educational institution with an eight-person search committee, two of whom are in defence, four are minimizers, and two are in acceptance. Given the make-up of the search team, how likely is it that an African-American or Latino candidate will be “considered, interviewed, and recommended by this kind of a search committee, even with an affirmative action officer involved?” (p. 66).

The theory of aversive racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998, 2000, 2005) also proposes subtle, indirect expressions of prejudice in white search and hiring committees. Daovidio and Gaertner found that aversive racists have an unconscious, emotional conflict because of their need to maintain a genuinely non-prejudiced self-image while they experience unintentional, negative, race-based feelings. Dovidio (1997 as cited in Kayes, 2006) explains how aversive racism can affect a hiring committee’s deliberations:
For instance, an employer influenced by feelings of aversive racism might subtly re-evaluate the most important qualifications for a job, depending on the race of different applicants. If, say, a White applicant had broader experience and a Black applicant had more up-to-date training, the employer would decide that experience was more important; if the White applicant had more recent training and the Black more experience, the employer would decide that experience was less important. Thus, the aversive racist would find a way to hire the White applicant without admitting to himself or herself that racial bias played a role in the choice (p. A60).

Rodriguez and Berryman (2002) also point to institutional racism – institutional practices that hiring teams may take for granted – as a major barrier in hiring diverse educators.

**Effect of cultural and racial identity on hiring**

Kayes (2006) suggests two models of racial and cultural identity that can be relevant in understanding the potential tension that can occur between racially and culturally diverse candidates and predominantly white hiring teams and institutions. For instance, Cross’ (1991 as cited by Kayes, 2006) Stages of Nigrescence identifies four stages of Black identification for African Americans: i) pre-encounter – where the individual is assimilated and for whom race is an unimportant aspect of his/her identity; ii) encounter – where the individual, because of experiences of discrimination and hostility, makes race a more salient part of his/her identity; iii) immersion/emersion – where the individual becomes totally immersed in his/her racial group in order to prove how central Black identity is to self-definition; and iv) internalization – where the individual not only internalizes a Black identity but also affirms other aspects of his/her identity (gender, nationality, faith etc.).

In comparison to Cross’ model, Helm’s Stages of Racial Consciousness Among Whites (1985 as cited in Kayes, 2006) are divided into five levels: i) contact – Whites may be aware of other cultures, but they see themselves as individuals and not cultural beings; ii) disintegration – Whites experience dissonance as they realize that they are part of a racist, dominant culture and may avoid diverse cultural groups because they feel personally responsible; iii) reintegration – Whites feel they are under attack, become defensive about their own culture, and refuse to empathize with other cultural groups; iv) pseudo-independence – Whites begin to accept differences on a cognitive level and seek greater knowledge of other cultural groups; and v) autonomy – Whites actively seek out cross-cultural interactions and begin to re-evaluate their own culture. Kayes (2006) offers a reflection of the conflict that can occur if an African-American candidate who is identified in immersion interviews with a search committee of white educators who are either in the disintegration or reintegration stages of racial consciousness:
If this candidate ends up being hired, which is highly unlikely, he or she will eventually leave because of the constant, subtle tensions between cultural identities. If a diverse candidate is selected by this kind of search committee, it will be more likely that he/she will be an assimilated minority, which again reinforces the requirement for minorities to fit into the dominant White culture and consequently eliminates many other diverse candidates from consideration (p. 66).

Given the above contexts of intercultural sensitivity and cultural identity, it is important to provide professional development for members of the selection and hiring teams (Kayes, 2006).

Professional development for search and hiring teams and the whole organization
Researchers have discovered that barriers hindering efforts to recruit and hire diverse educators include resistance to – and lack of – professional development, insufficient funding for training and traditional hiring practices (Adams and Bargerhuff, 2005). Kayes (2006) argues that “the mistaken belief that members of search committees, by virtue of their academic degrees, achievements, and reputations, do not taint the search and hiring process with this kind of bias is a major reason why there has been limited progress on diverse faculty/staff hiring in predominantly White institutions” (p. 66). For institutional culture to evolve to a place where diversity is valued as a competitive advantage for the institution and individuals, comprehensive diversity education must be provided for search and hiring teams and all individuals of that institution; professional development must be designed to help search and hiring teams to examine how their biases can undermine the hiring process (Kayes, 2006).

The fear of reverse discrimination and the legal issues
Studies point out the legal impact of hiring diversity as well as not hiring diversity. Primarily, a homogenous faculty or teaching staff not only fails to represent the diversity of views and experiences crucial to a good education, but it leaves an organization exposed to discrimination lawsuits which can be expensive and negatively impact staff morale (Springer, 2004). Research by Springer (2004) also reveals the following: fear of reverse discrimination claims are overrated; having a diverse faculty limits such claims; having a clear institutional commitment to diversity in both policies and hiring provides a strong defence and proof against claims of discrimination; a diverse faculty in such institutions is less likely to engage in the kind of discrimination that creates legal liability. When institutions uphold teaching standards and hire qualified teachers from diverse backgrounds, they limit reverse discrimination claims (Williams, 2000; Collins and Kritsonis, 2006).
Myths that support the status quo

The literature identifies myths supporting the status quo and resistance to diversity hiring.

Myth #1 – Increasing the diverse applicant pool will bring more diverse teachers into schools

Smith et al. (2004) found that university and college administrators quoted the argument that there is a small pool of qualified candidates from diverse groups in order to justify lack of diverse faculty. While some researchers state that the concern over the lack of diverse applicants is a legitimate one, they found that in order to achieve greater success, search processes must change (Adams and Bargerhuff, 2005; Collins and Kritsonis, 2006; Smith et al., 2004). Barriers such as the absence of aggressive hiring strategies and an inability to identify diverse applicants are prevalent in institutions that are not committed to diversifying their faculty (Adams and Bargerhuff, 2005; Smith et al., 2004).

Researchers point out that educational institutions need to actively seek out diverse teachers by advertising vacant positions widely to reach all possible diverse candidates (Adams and Bargerhuff, 2005; Collins and Kritsonis, 2006; Brosnan, 2001). When hiring diverse educators is a priority, job descriptions and evaluation of educators focus on the importance of cultural competencies (IEL, 2005 as cited in Robinson-Neal, 2009); in addition, the composition of the advertisement calls attention to essential qualifications without inadvertently limiting access to persons whose culture, income, experience, or references may be atypical (Adams and Bargerhuff, 2005). Candidates from minority groups are overlooked because they are not privy to or part of the typical networks in which information about teaching positions is shared between administrators and candidates from majority groups (Turner & Myers, 1999).

On the other hand, Kayes (2006) argues that the notion that increasing the pool of diverse teacher candidates will automatically result in diverse hires is a myth. Creating programs to increase the pool of diverse teachers graduating from teacher’s college reinforces the notion that the only reason for the dearth of diverse hires is that there is a lack of diverse candidates in the pool or among those applying for positions. The institutional cultures, systematic biases, and search/hiring team cultures also overtly and covertly undermine the goal of hiring diverse teaching staff.

Myth #2 – Hiring decisions are made only on the merit of the candidates

Olivas (1994 as cited by Smith et al., 2004) suggests that “for most schools, white candidates with good (but not sterling) credentials are routinely considered and hired, while the high-
demand/low-supply mythology about minorities persists” (p. 133). Similarly, Busenberg and Smith question whether hiring decisions are made on merit alone, pointing out that “informal systems of preference still mould much of American life, and take marked importance over merit” (1997, p. 170 as cited in Smith et al., 2004).

Furthermore, research suggests that there is an underlying power dynamic and hegemonic culture whereby “the qualifications of minorities alone are almost irrelevant [in the hiring process], instead personal and political preferences, prejudices and fears of majority faculty and inaction of administrators play a larger role in the final decisions reached” (de la Luz Reyes and Halcon 1991, p. 179 as cited in Smith et al., 2004).

**Myth #3 – Senior administration’s advocacy for diversity automatically translates into hiring of diverse teachers**

Another myth is that if trustees, human resources officers, and other senior administrators openly advocate for hiring diversity, then it will materialize in the hiring and retention of diverse educators. “This myth assumes that those who serve on search committees also prioritize diverse hiring when in reality many have never even discussed, let alone agreed upon institutional and departmental advantages of a diverse faculty and staff” (Kayes, 2006, p. 65). As mentioned earlier, the importance of defining diversity and creating mission statements for diversity cannot be underestimated. There needs to be a commitment on the part of school boards that requires a discussion to take place among hiring team members about what the concepts of equity, inclusion, and diversity mean when seeking out diverse candidates (Adams & Bargerhuff, 2005).

**Need for Change and New Paradigms for Diversifying Teaching Staff**

Researchers have made a number of suggestions for hiring diverse educators. These include removing attitudinal and structural barriers, involving administrators in driving forward a stronger organizational commitment to diversity, urging staff to become involved in programs that speak to diversity issues, strengthening the support for diverse educators, and adequate professional development for hiring teams and the whole organization (Adams & Bargerhuff, 2005; Brosnan, 2001; Kayes, 2006; Smith et al., 2004).

Similarly, Robinson-Neal (2009) argues that to bring about transformation and change, educational leaders must attend to their own strengths and weaknesses in areas such as cultural competencies, biases, desire to develop improved levels of cultural competency (for themselves
and for the other staff, faculty, and administrators), ability to engage the various constituencies served by the institution, and ability to develop diverse collaborative partnerships and strategic alliances.

**Inclusive leadership in schools**

Ryan (2006) posits that inclusive school leadership is necessary for equity and inclusion. Inclusive leadership employs a number of practices that include “advocating for inclusion, educating participants, developing critical consciousness, nurturing dialogue, emphasizing student learning and classroom practice, adopting inclusive decision and policy making strategies, and incorporating whole school approaches” (p. 11). Ryan (2006) argues that school improvement is a function of diverse people working together in different roles using a multitude of resources, rather than as a function of individual people doing remarkable things in isolation. Inclusive leadership may see inclusion of teachers from disadvantaged and marginalized groups in institutional practices as a way to achieve social justice.

Ryan (2006) describes the conservative view of inclusion, which looks at including everyone in the social processes of school communities by simply integrating the marginalized and excluded into the existing system. In this view, people are integrated so that the system can continue to run smoothly without fundamental changes or conflicts. The status quo does not change. The problem with this view is that the disadvantaged groups still cannot participate because they do not have the resources, tools or skills to do so, or the means to acquire them. The conservative view does not allow changes to adapt and count for cultural, ethnic, and other forms of diversity. It is an inflexible system, absorbing diverse groups and communities without changing its inherent characteristic.

Ryan (2006) suggests that meaningful inclusion would require the school system to change and this does not sit well with those in power. This is an important task for inclusive leadership to struggle with and strive for. Inclusion is achieved when the structural and inherent features of an already unequal system are changed. This allows access to all and also allows the included people to shape systemic practices so that they can contribute, participate, and benefit from the system just like everyone else. Such a change empowers the marginalized, allowing them to gain confidence, to develop skills, and to control their participation and contribution in the system.

Researchers state that inclusive leadership is educative (Evans, 1999; Smyth, 1989 as cited in Ryan, 2006). The various stakeholders in a diverse school community (administrators, teachers,
students, and parents) learn about inclusive and exclusive practices and strategies in order to implement inclusive practices (Ryan, 2003 as cited in Ryan, 2006). It is also particularly important to understand that members of various diverse groups, especially minorities, may not identify with what others from more homogeneous contexts take for granted (Ryan, 2006). For instance, teacher candidates from marginalized communities may not know how to network or may not know what and how to answer interview questions compared with their peers from the majority white population. The educative dialogue for inclusion between administrators and parents is a two-way street where both need to communicate and learn about existing issues and opportunities. Diverse parents can help educators learn about themselves and their communities. These educative efforts must be systematic and sustained with programs like organizational learning (Senge, 1990 as cited in Ryan, 2006). When dealing with sensitive matters such as racism, school leaders must find the balance of maintaining positive pressure to be critical and reflective about current assumptions and practices without being confrontational, yet not becoming too comfortable. Such strategies empower educators to move away from fear and guilt, to a place of acknowledging mistakes and discussing the issues in a constructive manner (Gillborn, 1995, as cited in Ryan, 2006).

Engaging others in critical conversations is an important element in helping individuals break out of their normal patterns of thinking (Ryan, 2006). These conversations can help school communities to recognize, acknowledge, critique and amend those indiscernible practices that impede inclusion. For such learning to occur, educational leadership needs to develop the critical consciousness in members of the school community (Anderson, 1990; Blasé & Anderson, 1995; Foster, 1989; Grundy, 1993 as cited in Ryan 2006). Additionally, educational leaders take a transformational approach and become social architects and agents of change by investing themselves emotionally and intellectually in clarifying and giving meaning to emerging values (Northouse, 2004 & Yoder, 2005 as cited in Robinson-Neal, 2009).

While inclusive leadership offers much promise, researchers point out various barriers. These include resistance to acknowledging or recognizing exclusive practices, zeal for exclusive measures of accountability, administrative approaches that strengthen existing hierarchies, policies that place responsibility for what’s happening in schools in the hands of single individuals such as administrators, and scepticism towards efforts to empower people (Ryan, 2006). Despite the formidable barriers, for the benefit of both students and communities, it is important to forge ahead and put inclusive leadership into practice in schools (Ryan, 2006).
Success in diversifying teaching staff can be achieved by setting goals and implementing strategies (Adams and Bargerhuff, 2005; Robinson-Neal, 2009; Kayes, 2006).

**Professional development for hiring teams**

Kayes (2006) found that inclusive educational cultures that retain diverse students and educators could not be shaped without the understanding and the skills needed for intercultural competence. Institutions need to employ an approach that helps the institutional culture to evolve into one that values diversity as a competitive advantage. This evolution cannot happen without comprehensive diversity education (Robinson-Neal, 2009; Kayes, 2006).

Kayes (2006) proposes the following five professional development goals for hiring committees in predominantly white institutions (p. 66-67): assist them in moving out of the defence and minimization stages of intercultural sensitivity, and into acceptance; support them in developing into pseudo-independent and autonomous stages of racial consciousness; increase their intercultural awareness and understanding; build their knowledge and skills in intercultural competence; and enable them to identify and address their cultural biases in the search and hiring process.

Researchers propose that professional development can help organizations to promote a number of essential elements for successful recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion of diverse educators. These include:

*Communicate within the institution* so that discussions about the need for, and value of, diversity and about how to accomplish the goal, go beyond the administration level. Inter- and intra-departmental dialogue that will help staff, administrators, and faculty to air out issues related to resistance to diversity as well as internal racism issues is important (Kayes, 2006). Adams and Bargerhuff (2005) found that Wright State University implemented two major steps in its effort to hire a diverse faculty. Firstly, they initiated and actively encouraged discussions about diversity throughout the institution in an attempt to “demystify the power that it holds while encouraging the critical perspective and discussion of all those involved” (p. 543). The second step involved developing a checklist for diversity hiring and included a holistic view of the hiring process with three sections: pre-search, active search, and post search.

*Re-assess hiring practices* to properly search and hiring initiatives with the mission and goals of diversity for the organization. Although search and hiring teams are one part of the diverse hiring
practice, diversification cannot occur without realizing the “biases, assumptions, and stereotypes that influence perceptions, judgments, and decisions…inclusive educational cultures that retain diverse students and employees can not be created without knowledge and skills in intercultural competence” (Kayes, 2006, p. 69).

*Study and share research findings* related to recruitment and retention of educators within the larger academic community (school boards, colleges, universities) since research regarding diversity is limited (Jackson, 2003 as cited by Robinson-Neal, 2009).

*Support and encourage diverse hires* with educational leaders recognizing that when employees from diverse backgrounds feel valued in their positions, they are more likely to stay with the institution. These employees will also be more likely to encourage diverse colleagues to apply for employment (Robinson-Neal, 2009; Kayes, 2006; Brosnan, 2001). Employees tend to feel valued when there are opportunities for advancement within the institution (Lewis, 2005 as cited in Robinson-Neal, 2009). For example, the superintendent from the Association of Independent Schools in New England points out that if the teachers and administrators have not thought about why a person of color would like to come and teach in their school, then they have a lot of work to do (Brosnan, 2001).

**Summary**

This literature review looked at the importance and need for hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds, and at the best practices in hiring and retaining diverse teachers. The readings explored various issues relating to hiring diverse educators in schools and higher education institutions. Conducting a literature review benefitted this study in many ways. The literature review revealed what existing studies had done on the topic and prevented “reinventing the wheel” or duplication of effort and resources (Bryman, 2008). The literature review helped the researcher understand what educational approaches exist with regard to equity, inclusion, and exclusion. As suggested by Bryman (2008), existing research revealed key concepts, characteristics, and variables to be studied. The literature review pointed out the value of hiring diverse educators, the barriers that exist in this regard, and how best to train staff and administration to create a culture of inclusion within the organization.

Existing literature supported the rationale behind this study, providing evidence for the importance and benefits of hiring diverse teachers to support student success in multicultural
school districts, as well as in schools with a mono-cultural student population. Furthermore, the literature review gave direction to the research and helped generate research questions for the study. Finally, the literature review also helped formulate themes and categories used in grouping the responses from the study questionnaire for reporting and discussing the findings.
Chapter 3 – Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

Research Design

A qualitative research design was employed for this study for a number of reasons. The literature review revealed a lack of qualitative studies about the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of principals and hiring teams in Ontario schools with regard to hiring diverse teachers. As pointed out by Bryman (2008) “…the qualitative researcher seeks an understanding of behaviour, values, beliefs, and so on in terms of the context in which the research is conducted” (p. 394). A qualitative research methodology served as an appropriate method to allow for the examination of the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of principals with respect to hiring diverse teachers. This design also allowed for the interpretation of the responses of the small group of participants and helped to provide a contextual understanding and analysis. Another reason to choose a qualitative research design for this study is that it allowed a thematic analysis or interpretation of the responses.

Epistemology

Qualitative research in its epistemological consideration places “emphasis on the ways in which individuals interpret their social world” (Bryman, 2008, p. 22). This interpretivist consideration in the research design is important because the researcher has tried to see the issues from the participants’ point of view or “eyes” to understand what they see as important and significant practices when hiring teachers. This is an important component of interpretivist epistemology (Bryman, 2008).

Ontology

This research also observes the ontological position of constructionism that “social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision” (Bryman, 2008, p. 19). Seale (2004) recognizes that within the constructionist view knowledge is socially constructed. In doing the study, the researcher was constructing new knowledge by virtue of the questions and by prior understanding of the social context as a teacher working within a school community. The participants’ reflections and answers were not by chance, but rather were elicited through particular questioning. Bryman (2008) observes that in recent years, constructionism “has also come to include the notion that researchers’ own accounts of the social world are constructions” (p. 19).
Research Method

As a method for collecting responses or data, a questionnaire was designed to survey high school principals that would reveal their beliefs, attitudes, view points, current knowledge, formal and informal learning, and practices with respect to hiring diverse teachers. The questionnaire (or email/web-based interview) was designed for self-completion using a web service. In addition to reading Bryman (2008) for direction, the researcher consulted with principals, teachers, and a school board superintendent with regard to the research method. The self-completion web questionnaire was chosen over a face-to-face interview because, given the time constraints and resources for the study, it would have been difficult to secure interviews with principals. Also transcription of interview recordings is time-consuming. The web questionnaire allowed the principals time to reflect and formulate their responses. One of the disadvantages of a web questionnaire is that it provides no chance to clarify responses or probe further, as would be possible in a face-to-face interview. However, the web questionnaire allowed participants to answer questions on their own time, letting them formulate their responses and thoughts without the pressure of the researcher sitting in front of them waiting for an answer. In addition, the principals were able to maintain their anonymity in answering questions about their practices.

Sixteen principals at six high schools in one Ontario school board were contacted by phone and invited to complete a questionnaire for a study being conducting as part of an M.Ed. thesis project relating to equity and inclusion. All participants were assured that participant anonymity would be maintained in reporting the results. This made it more likely that participants might respond candidly rather than in a politically correct manner. With anonymity, there might be more responses and a higher completion rate. All 16 principals agreed to fill out the questionnaire. Once participants confirmed their willingness to answer the questions, the URL link to the questionnaire prepared on www.surveymonkey.com was emailed to the principals. Two weeks after the original email, a reminder email was sent out with the URL link to maximize participation.

Of the 16 principals contacted, 12 completed the questionnaire. Of the four that did not fill out the questionnaire, one principal emailed saying completing the survey was not possible because the information was not available to answer the questions that were of sensitive nature, and there was no time to seek out the information. As per Mangione (1995, as cited in Bryman, 2008), this response rate of 75% is very good. Once surveys were completed and the deadline to complete the survey had passed, all 16 principals were sent an email letter, thanking them for their
participation, providing some debriefing about the study, and with two articles attached (Kayes, 2006 and Brosnan, 2001) from the literature review for further reading, if they were interested. At this point, a few principals communicated that they found the materials and questionnaire thought provoking and interesting. One principal also provided the interview evaluation form and questions that the school board provides them for reference checks. This information was helpful in revealing what direction the school board provides to hiring teams.

**Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was developed with the assistance of the school board’s Assistant Superintendent of Equity & Inclusion. Two meetings were held at the school board office. The first meeting focused on the research focus and aim; the second meeting focused on survey questions. The questionnaire went through some revisions with the help of a vice-principal and some teachers. The VP provided new questions to add to the questionnaire and the teachers provided suggestions for improving the questions so that they were not leading or suggesting. While most questions were open, a number of closed questions were also included to gather data.

The original questionnaire had 18 questions. As suggested by Bryman (2008), a short questionnaire is more appealing and gets a higher completion rate. Given that principals are busy with multiple school issues on a daily basis, preparing a short questionnaire that might get a good completion rate was an important consideration. The final questionnaire was revised and updated to have ten questions where some of the original questions were removed and some were kept as sub-questions for a larger question. (See Appendix A for the questionnaire.) Since keeping the questionnaire short was important, it was organized into ten main questions and some sub-questions.

The questionnaire was designed to start with a question that the principals might find easy to answer. Once their thoughts started to flow, they might feel empowered to complete the rest of the questions. The first question was, “List the top 5 qualities you would consider when interviewing a teaching candidate.” The information is easy to reflect on because principals and VPs are regularly involved in interviews throughout the school year and they would readily be able to pick the top areas teacher interviewees are evaluated on during an interview. Yet, this information also provides important data about what qualities principals value most when hiring teachers, and if they look at teacher diversity or intercultural proficiency as a valued asset in the top five qualities. In general, the questionnaire sought to find answers for three areas with regard
to equity and inclusion, and hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds: current practices, current understanding beliefs and attitudes, and future learning opportunities. (See Appendix B for the purpose of the questions.)

On the suggestion of a principal and VP, the questionnaire was hosted on www.surveymonkey.com. As noted by Bryman (2008), web questionnaires have various benefits over paper questionnaires. The web questionnaire was professional and appealing in terms of appearance on this online service. The questions were neatly formatted on an attractive background, and provided plenty of space under each question for responses to be typed. The URL link to the questionnaire was sent by email to the principals; they completed the questionnaire on their own time and data were submitted online. Responses were given anonymously and this allowed respondents to provide more candid information than they would have done in a face-to-face interview. The researcher was able to go online and check regularly how many participants had completed the questionnaire and look at their answers. Response collection was straightforward – the typed responses from the web service were electronically copied and pasted into a word processor for analysis.

**Sampling**

This study employed purposive sampling of high school principals and VPs from one Ontario school board. As noted by Bryman (2008), the goal of purposive sampling is to choose participants in a strategic way so that the participants are relevant to the research question. Both principals and VPs were chosen because the superintendent helping to formulate the research aim and questions pointed out that when teachers attend the Principal’s Qualifications Program in Ontario, for training to become principals, there is no distinction between the courses to become a VP or to become a principal. In addition, most hiring teams in the school board consist of the school principal and a VP. It was a logical choice then to survey the principals and VPs for this study. In this study, the term “principal” refers to both principals and VPs, where VPs are not specified.

While, it may have been fruitful to choose principals from elementary (K-6), middle (grades 7-8, and secondary school (grade 9-12) and provide the study with a broader scope and data, sampling secondary school principals provided a more defined focus. The choice of principals seemed appropriate for this study because it is this group of school administrators who screen the
applications and interview candidates; their recommendations to the school board play a major role in what teachers are hired.

The purposive sample of principals may also be considered a convenience sample – that is, a sample where participants are easily available due to proximity (Bryman, 2008) – because the researcher knew the principals through prior interactions in the school board. With the exception of one VP, the researcher knew the participants or had met them on one or more occasions (during interviews, school events, or from teaching in those schools). At one point the sample seemed to have a small snowball sampling effect (Bryman, 2008) because the principal at one school said he would ask his two VPs to complete the questionnaire. The sample included both male and female principals and was from the predominant white Anglo-Saxon community.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, which is considered by Bryman (2008) as “one of the most common approaches to qualitative data analysis” (p. 554), was used in this research. Bryman further points out that the idea in this approach is to construct an index of central themes and sub-themes through reading both the literature and the data, responses, and/or field notes. This process of indexing is also referred to as coding in various forms of qualitative data analysis. Lofland and Lofland (1995 as cited by Bryman, 2008), provided questions that could be used as considerations when developing codes or themes. Some examples are as follows: What is this item of data about? Of what topic is this item of data an instance? What question about a topic does this data suggest? What sort of answer to a question about a topic does this item of data imply? What is happening here? What are people doing? What do people say they are doing? What kind of event is going on?

In addition, Bryman (2008) suggests that while creating codes or indexing one should first read the initial data without taking notes; then re-read while making notes and noting keywords used by respondents for later use as names for themes; then review the themes and consider how they might related the literature review; and finally, generate many codes, shortening the list later. Using this process, the responses were read and re-read to glean out a core set of themes that were represented. The themes are presented in the findings in Chapter 4. Then the responses were analyzed based on the themes and emerging patterns.
**Ethics**

Various measures were taken to maintain the anonymity of respondents. Firstly, the name of the school board where this research was conducted has been omitted from this thesis. The school board that was studied is a non-metropolitan school board. The majority of the 72 school boards in Ontario are non-metropolitan. Therefore, the confidentiality of the participants is further maintained. Participants’ names and school names were not collected in the questionnaire. The survey responses were collected via www.surveymonkey.com and respondents remained anonymous to the researcher. To further protect the confidentiality of respondents the gender of the respondents was not collected. In referring to the respondents in the findings and discussion chapters, the pronouns “he” and “she” are used randomly and do not reflect the gender of the participants.

**Bias**

Discussing and researching equity and inclusion in hiring diverse teachers may be a sensitive topic for hiring teams. It is possible that the principals who agreed to complete the questionnaire were comfortable with equity and inclusion issues and hiring diversity or completed the questionnaire because they knew the researcher from interactions with them at the school board. On the other hand, principals who were reserved or held biases may not have completed the questionnaire; or if they did participate, they may have been more “guarded” in their responses because they may have wanted to sound politically correct. This could lead to social desirability bias whereby participants give answers that they perceive as desirable in the social context (Bryman, 2008). Finally, there is the possibility of researcher bias because of the researcher’s experiences as a visible minority teacher – a Sikh teacher with turban and flowing beard – working in a predominantly white teacher population in Ontario, with understandings and perspectives about diversity issues that have been shaped by life experiences.

While qualitative research findings are not easily generalized or transferred, this sample of principals is typical of those in Ontario school boards. Ontario principals are former teachers who have taught for at least five years, are certified by the Ontario College of Teachers, and have completed a Principals’ Qualifications program. While readers are cautioned not to generalize the findings, this study may be of interest in the local context to non-metropolitan school boards in Ontario and perhaps in the global context.
Chapter 4 – Findings

You can’t bridge a gap unless you can recognize it. – Natalie Middleton (in Lushington, 2009)

Categories/Themes Found in Data

To report the findings four category/theme headings have been used: 1) Current understanding of diversity in the school community, 2) Current practices for diversity hiring, 3) Beliefs and attitudes for diversity hiring and existing barriers, and 4) Solutions and future learning opportunities.

The reporting of findings focuses on the comments and suggestions provided by the respondents. In the analysis of data, two underlying themes emerged in the responses to the survey with respect to the position of respondents:

a) Valuing and seeing the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Respondents in this position provided reflections that showed that they value diversity. These respondents also pointed out problems in the current hiring process, and also solutions such as more training and professional development.

b) Providing justification and rationale for not considering diversity and equity when hiring teachers and not valuing diversity. Responses revealed evidence of bias, resistance to change, a lack of professional development, a lack of understanding of barriers in hiring diversity, and a lack of intercultural sensitivity. Respondents in this position also provided reflections that may have alluded to the problem of lack of supply of diverse teacher candidates and may offer solutions to this problem.

The positions of particular respondents have been reported by using quotes from their answers. Where needed, the pronoun “he” or “she” has been randomly used so that the respondent’s anonymity is maintained. As questionnaires were completed online they were automatically given a number. The respondent number has been used to refer to a respondent at times to help follow the position held on diversity (i.e. valuing or not valuing). For the full list of questions asked in the research questionnaire, see Appendix A.

There was a rationale behind the questions related to the Ontario school context. There is socio-political pressure on Ontario school boards, an expectation, to cater to the needs of diverse students be it in curriculum and assessment or be it in providing diverse teacher role models. The
Ontario Ministry of Education (2009) has asked all school boards in Ontario to follow the equity and inclusion strategy framework it has provided, to “review existing community partnerships to support the principles of equity and inclusive education and to reflect the diversity of the broader community” (p. 21). As part of this initiative, school boards have been given a four-year period from 2009 to 2012 to create diversity policies and “implement strategies to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents, and the community, so that diverse groups and the broader community have better board-level representation and greater access to board initiatives” (p. 21). With regard to this study, the Ministry of Education (2009) has charged Ontario school boards to “implement positive employment practices that support equitable hiring, mentoring, retention, promotion, and succession planning” (p. 23) and “have religious accommodation guidelines in place, and communicate these guidelines to the school community” (p. 21).

1. Current understanding of diversity in the school community

Defining diversity

Question 2 on the survey asked the principals “How do you define diversity?” The responses show that 10 out of 12 principals understood the meaning of diversity as difference, variety, and range of characteristics in individuals. The following characteristics of diversity were listed in the answers: interests, beliefs, values, gender, sexual preference, race, ethnicity, skin colour, cultures, age, social economic background, education, religion, age, experience, linguistic, areas of expertise/talent. One principal listed linguistic diversity. No one included physical ability/exceptionality. While there was no universal or comprehensive definition most answers were in line with the Ontario Ministry of Education (Ontario, 2009) definition.

One principal did not respond to this question while another principal wrote, “This is very difficult to answer - I predict that if you ask 10 different people to define diversity, you may end up with 10 different answers.” This suggests that she believes it is difficult to reach consensus on a definition for diversity.

Understanding, valuing, and engaging in diversity dialogue in the school context

While providing the definition, two out of 10 principals noted the value of diversity and went on to mention its positive impact in the school context: one respondent said that “diversity adds richness to a community and when celebrated, serves to bring people together;” another
respondent added that “we need to live in a world that embraces each person's differences and enjoy how unique we all are. Knowledge about another person goes a long way in helping us accept and benefit from the one another.”

Question 3 was a multi-part question and gathered statistics about the school population and the extent to which principals know about teacher diversity and engage in dialogue in this regard within their school. There were a number of “no response” and “don’t know” responses to certain statistics about diversity among their teaching staff. A table format is helpful for viewing all the responses here. See Table 1 for details.

There was a high response rate for the first two sub-questions. The answers to Question 3a-b show that on average 4% of teachers are from visible minorities. Questions 3c-d-e inquired about how many teachers from diverse backgrounds were on staff. Four out of 12 principals knew these numbers. Three principals believed that the question asking about the number of teachers from minority faiths/religions was a personal and private matter along with the question about teachers from the LGBTQ community. On the other hand, two principals knew that their school has 12-13 teachers from the LGBTQ community.

In responding to the question, “How many teachers are from a faith group other than Roman Catholic or Protestant faith?” some principals knew of staff from minority faith groups. There were a number of “don’t know” responses and others gave justification for not knowing the answer:

“Without polling the staff I have no idea.”
“I would not know the answer to this. I believe that one's faith is a private and personal matter. Just as I would expect not to be questioned about my belief-system at my place of employment, I would not do this to other Board employees.”
“3 that I am aware of: a Sikh, a Muslim and a Jew. I'm sure there are others but I don't know...not my business to know.”
“Unknown and would not ask since it is a topic that many will not share.”
“1 - Bahai, the rest I am unaware.”
“Don't really know since this is not an area of discussion, do know that. We have Baha'i and Muslim.”

Note that there is increasing direction from the Ontario Ministry of Education for school board employees to respect and value the needs of students and employees from multi-faith groups.
Responses to Question 3f-g revealed the number of students in the school and whether the teachers are representative of the diversity in the student population they teach. Nine out of 11 of principals concluded that their teachers are not representative of the diverse student population in their school:

“No, the student population is much more diverse.”
“Nope, not in terms of visible minorities, ethnicity.”
“Based on skin colour alone, not really. This school has an incredibly diverse student body.” “No...as a student population we are heavily white, but our staff is even more so.”
“We do not cover the socio economic range of our students, we are not an ethnically diverse student body.”

Despite all the “no answers” to earlier questions, 11 respondents were able to compare the number of students in their school to the number of teachers with respect to diversity.

Four of the 11 principals specified that the teachers were not representative on certain diversity variables but perhaps on other variables. These responses included,

“…could be proportionately to linguistic diversity.”

One principal observed that linguistic diversity might be represented in teachers.
Table 1: Responses to Question 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent#</th>
<th>a) # of Teachers in the school</th>
<th>b) # of visible minority teachers?</th>
<th>c) # of teachers from faiths other than Roman Catholic/Protestant faith?</th>
<th>d) # of teachers from LGBTQ community?</th>
<th>e) # of teachers from other diverse groups? Which?</th>
<th>f) # of students in the school</th>
<th>g) Are teachers representative of student population?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1350</td>
<td>Culture - NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>yes 2 aboriginal</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Don’t know, faith is private</td>
<td>Don’t know, it’s private</td>
<td>Yes - gender, socio-eco.</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>Race- No Gender-Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 Muslim, 1 Sikh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes, linguistic</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>no, maybe linguistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Yes, NA</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>Yes in many ways. skin colour - No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3, Sikh, Muslim, Jew, not my business to know</td>
<td>No idea or concern</td>
<td>No, NA</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Don’t know, would not ask</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 Bahai</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No, NA</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 Bahai, 1 Muslim, Not an area of discussion</td>
<td>At least 2</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **Current practices for diversity hiring**

The results below reveal current practices among principals.

**What are the top 5 qualities considered by principals when interviewing teacher candidates?**

The first question on the questionnaire asked the principals to “list the top 5 qualities you consider when interviewing a teaching candidate.” The results revealed principals’ current practice when interviewing, and what they see as important when considering teacher candidates. Qualifications and experience were considered important by 10 out of 12 respondents. They looked for “expert knowledge of the subject matter and the Ontario curriculum,” “subject mastery,” “experience - both teaching and non teaching,” “experience - relevant to the position,” professionalism, competence, strong references and teacher evaluation. These qualities seem to be common in most areas of hiring. As pointed by Adams & Bargerhuff (2005), when hiring diverse teachers it is key to emphasize important qualifications and capabilities without inadvertently limiting access to persons whose culture, income, experience, or references may be atypical.

The second most sought after quality was a teacher’s genuine interest and passion for teaching and helping children. Nine out of 12 principals highlighted the need for a candidate to have a “passion for helping others to learn,” must “connect with students/genuine and authentic caring for kids,” be “student-centered and prepared to do whatever it takes to help a student meet with success,” must enjoy the field of study, be “understanding of teens...what makes them tick. As well as understanding...they must actually like teenagers.”

The third most considered factor (9 out of 12) was the candidate’s personal abilities and attributes that make him/her the best fit. These include the “ability/interest in teamwork,” how well the candidate will fit into the department or school culture, “personable (able to get along with colleagues and a range of people),” “ability to relate to others,” strong interpersonal skills/communication skills, “ability in classroom to meet students’ needs,” “ability to teach a variety of learners” (i.e. differentiated instruction), and the “ability to problem solve.”

The fourth most recurring trait (7 out of 12 responses) was the ability to build community with comments including “ability to build relationships with students and staff,” be “caring (building relationships with students),” “how and what do they add to the school community in terms of interests outside of classroom,” “inclusive (community builder),” “passion/desire to contribute to
the school community,” “involvement in school life,” and “coaching/extra curricular
contributions.”

The fifth most frequently mentioned quality considered by five out of 12 principals was a
candidates personal traits such as “high emotional intelligence,” “sense of humour and ability to
relate to others,” “strong values (celebrates diversity, honest, accepting, open, etc.),” “flexibility
and compassion/empathy in dealing with multiple personalities/intelligences,” “patience and
understanding,” “lifelong learner,” “passion for teaching,” “confident, earnest, reflective,” and a
“keen/go getter.”

Two principals said they also consider as an important quality the interview skills and
relationship built with the interview team. One principal pointed out that the value added skills
and experiences a candidate brings are also considered. The responses indicate that most
principals did not consider knowledge and understanding of equity and inclusion principles.

*Is a differentiated perspective/lens used to screen and hire diverse candidates?*
Questions 4, 5, and 6 were tailored to gather information about current practices when hiring
teachers and to find if principals use, or are directed by the school board to use, a differentiated
lens or perspective to screen and hire diverse teachers.

Question 4 asked “Is there an effort and/or process to screen and interview best candidates from
a diversity perspective?” The responses revealed that there was not. Eight out of 12 principals
stated that there is no process or effort (or very little effort) to screen and interview diverse
candidates with comments like “No. There is no direction from the system to give weight to
teaching candidates for qualities other than experience, qualifications” and “Very little.
Questions during an interview are geared towards instruction and classroom management.”
Another principal explained, “applicants apply through an on-line system. Pictures of the
applicant are not included as part of the application process. Nor is there disclosure regarding
faith, beliefs, sexual orientation and the like. A review of the applicants experience is compared
with the requirements of the specific needs of the school and from there candidates are contacted
for an interview.”

Of the 12 respondents, four said that they focus on hiring the best candidate, that the process is
neutral and the best candidate will be selected: “We hire the best candidate no matter what
background/race/religion/sexual orientation they come from. We do not consciously hire
minorities.” One principal provided reasoning for not screening for diversity saying, “In behavioural-based questioning, we are looking for the candidate whose skills and experiences in the role (or similar to) position them as the best fit. There is no ‘affirmative action’ initiative in place.” Another principal reflected, “I don't believe there is a process to screen candidates from a diversity perspective. The focus is always – who is the best candidate? What we probably need to have challenged is that our own stereotypes and biases come into play when deciding what constitutes ‘the best candidate’ and these biases may be screening out candidates who are part of what you have been referring to as diverse groups.”

Two principals indicated that where two candidates are equally qualified, and one brings needed diversity, then their diversity would be a factor in the screening or hiring: “I am aware of the desirability of representing our student population in our teaching population. In a circumstance where two candidates were equal and one could bring an element of needed diversity, that would be a factor.”

After completing the questionnaire, one principal forwarded me the Interview Evaluation form provided by the school board. This secondary data was helpful. The form reveals that interview teams are asked to evaluate a teacher candidate in six areas: 1) classroom management, 2) teaching/learning/evaluation strategies, 3) planning, 4) interpersonal/communication skills, 5) community involvement/related experience, 6) and program specialty skills. The reference check form asks the following two questions from the referee: “How long have you known the applicant and in what capacity?” and “Please comment on the applicant in the following areas: classroom management skills; teaching/learning/evaluation strategies; and planning.” This reveals that the school board does not expect the hiring team to look at the teacher’s knowledge about equity and inclusion issues, or ask questions about what skills they possess to be able to build relationships with a diverse/multicultural school community. The onus seems to be on the teacher candidate to explain about their ability to connect or give attention to a diverse student population; there is no explicit reference or expectation relating an assessment of intercultural proficiency skill set to the hiring team in its interviews.

Question 5 asked: a) Have you given or would you give preference to a candidate over another because of their gender? b) Have you considered or given weight to the cultural, ethnic, colour, or faith background of a candidate when hiring, retaining, promoting teachers for your school? To the first part of this question, five of the 12 respondents said that they would not give
preference to a candidate over another because of their gender. One respondent wrote, “No, absolutely not, it would be discriminatory.” Five principals said that “yes,” gender would be considered for certain areas of teaching and need like in physical education courses, or when balancing out male and female counsellors in guidance, and among administrators. Two respondents did not answer. The results show that over half of principals did not recognize the need for differentiated hiring based on gender in some areas of teaching or they were not comfortable answering the question.

For the second part of this question, seven principals said no, they had not considered or given weight to cultural, ethnic, colour, or faith background of a candidate in hiring, retaining, and promoting teachers. One principal could not recall interviewing a visible minority candidate. One respondent provided a rationale for not considering the value of these forms of diversity when hiring candidates because “there is no Affirmative Action initiatives currently in place.” However, four respondents said “yes.” One respondent noted that these circumstances are rare “primarily because of the relative scarcity of candidates from diverse cultural, ethnic or colour background.” Another respondent noted that it could be challenging to convince “other members of a hiring team when the best candidate has qualifications from another country but no local experience or is a less than perfect English as a second language speaker...there can be a reluctance to hire a teacher who doesn't speak English perfectly.” This response reveals insights into the dynamics in a hiring team when there is no process or prior discussion to hire diversity.

One principal did not answer with a “yes” or “no” to the questions but did mention that she would hire in the best interest of the students. However, there was no clarification provided about what was considered to be in the best interest of the students. Table 2 below provides the responses given.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent #</th>
<th>Have you given or would you give preference to a candidate over another because of their gender?</th>
<th>Have you considered or given weight to the cultural, ethnic, colour, or faith background of a candidate when hiring, retaining, promoting teachers for your school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, gave weight to cultural background when hiring for an ESL position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No, but by virtue of finding the best fit a minority candidate might be given preference. Qualified individuals are promoted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No, can’t remember interviewing any visible minority people. But that would not affect decision to hire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes, in boys’ Phys. Ed.</td>
<td>No. Although I am very aware of the fact that our staff is not representative of our student population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes, when it comes to balancing out the number of male and female counsellors or male and female administrators, gender may come into play.</td>
<td>No, staff &amp; students are fairly homogeneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No, would be discriminatory</td>
<td>No, no affirmative action initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Yes, at times depends on the need of dept., program, students</td>
<td>Yes. This is a value added. I have considered this against the experience. Difficulty is challenging other members of a hiring team when the best candidate has qualifications from another country but no local experience or is a less than perfect English as a second language speaker....there can be a reluctance to hire a teacher who doesn't speak English perfectly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>Many aspects of the school community are considered when &quot;staffing&quot; a school. Regarding hiring, consideration is given to the best interest of the student or students that the teacher will be working with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Yes, In a Phys. Ed. setting or perhaps a congregated class with specific needs.</td>
<td>No...I try to look for the best qualified candidate who is also the best fit for the position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>No, absolutely not</td>
<td>Yes. I hire based on the ability of the applicant. If two applicants meet the bar and are equal in terms of relating to students and preparing appropriate lessons I will take a candidate that can offer a cultural or ethnic background that compliments our student population. As far as I have been told, the public education system does not focus on one's faith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Yes, in Phys. Ed.</td>
<td>No. Not that I am aware of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>No answer.</td>
<td>Yes. I have considered different backgrounds when hiring. However, these have been rare circumstances primarily because of the relative scarcity of candidates from diverse cultural, ethnic or colour background. Frankly, I never enquire about faith.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 6 asked whether during the screening, interview, and hiring process there is consideration given to the additional skills a diverse candidate may bring to the classroom and the school community. Respondents were expected to provide a reason. One principal did not answer the question saying, “not sure what you mean by a ‘diverse’ candidate.” The response conflicted with this principal’s earlier answers where he did provide positive responses regarding hiring diverse teachers and did provide a definition for diversity.

Half the respondents said “yes,” they do take into consideration the additional skills a diverse candidate brings. This showed that six of the 12 of the principals do use some form of differentiated “lens” when hiring, screening, and interviewing and value diversity. There were more “yes” responses in this question than in Question 4 where the majority of respondents said there is no process to screen and interview diverse candidates. Perhaps, the reason for this difference in response is because more principals are willing to consider the benefits of diversity if the opportunity presents itself, or they were beginning to reflect about what ought to be done. However, the school board has not implemented a process to screen and interview diverse teachers.

The responses from five of the 12 principals reveal that they do not use a differentiated lens or make a concerted effort to glean out additional skills a candidate might bring and qualifications are a primary factor in hiring the “best fit” teacher for the job. A couple of these principals agree that a candidate may have additional skills that may be considered if they are as qualified as other candidates and if the candidate answers in the interview to reveal these additional/value added skills and abilities. However, there is no indication that these diverse candidates will be screened and interviewed in the first place. One respondent argues against using a differentiated lens to look at the additional qualities a diverse candidate may bring:

“One person's definition of ‘giving special consideration’ is another person's definition of ‘discrimination’ (or reverse discrimination). Having lived through the Affirmative Action incentives of the 1980's and 1990's (and the backlash and controversy therein), I truly believe that employers must truly look for the best candidate for the job and must rely on behavioural-based hiring practices as a means to ensure that the process is as unbiased as possible. More needs to happen to effect the supply of candidates (e.g. encourage more diversity amongst teacher-candidates) rather than top-down initiatives to skew the demand for candidates. As with every other preceding equity incentive, change will occur but perhaps not on the timeline some may wish to see it occur.”

Hence, the results show that some principals may have had negative experiences with affirmative action and blame the lack of supply of qualified diverse candidates. On the other hand, other
principals seem to value diversity and state that they would consider the skills brought by diverse candidates during the interview. One respondent said, “I certainly would consider the skills of a ‘diverse candidate’ could bring to my school and education in general. I recognize that there are many minority students who do not see themselves as teachers because every teacher they have had has been white. Nor do many students feel as connected to teachers who to them represent a different culture and who may not understand the plight of these students even if they are open minded and caring.” Another principal added, “Yes... depending on the school, the value added or additional skills can enhance existing programs or support existing programs.” Another principal wrote, “Yes! I am always hopeful that candidates will come forward that can complement our cultural diversity in our schools. My practice has always been to balance my staff so that students can come to school with the same cultural experiences that we now enjoy in our community.” Another respondent stated, “I definitely do. A teacher is more than just a ‘deliverer of curriculum.’ They are also a role model and help to build the life of a vibrant and active school community.” Finally, another respondent stated, “Yes, I do take this into consideration. I have not interviewed many people from diverse backgrounds other than from the LGBTQ community. I'm now reflecting on why that is? I typically hire from the group of people that have been student teachers volunteers with our school or within the board. When I look back, there are very few visible minorities represented in that group… Is this something that the Teacher's Colleges are proliferating?”

**Current professional development/learning and its effect on hiring practices**

Question 9 explored the kind of formal and informal learning principals have had concerning equity and inclusion, and if and how these learning opportunities affect hiring practices. The data reveals that most principals have had some informal or formal learning in equity and inclusion issues but not specific to hiring diversity. This learning has not influenced the hiring practices for most principals. One principal did not respond to the question. Two out of 12 principals said they had no training in this regard: “I have had no formal training in equity and inclusion as it pertains to hiring practices” and “To be honest I can not recall a single conference or workshop that focused specifically on equity and inclusion.”

Half of the principals (six out of 12) indicated that they have had some discussion with colleagues, done some reading, and/or had a little bit of professional development, but nothing substantial:
“One of the vice-principals at our school did an equity and inclusion workshop with staff at the start of the year.”
“The professional learning has really just been this year and I think the focus of the learning has been more a message of - tolerance and acceptance - it hasn't yet gone beyond this.”
“Very little formal...certainly some informal conversations with colleagues. I try to have conversations with all staff focused on their interests and strengths. I will certainly learn from a colleague who comes from a diverse background as I have not those experiences.”
“I have read board system memos about equity and inclusion. I have also read a number of books about boys in education and they often have a chapter about diversity.”
“Our equity and inclusion department is creating more opportunities for Principals to dialogue.”
“I have not had many formal opportunities but have participated in a number of informal conversations with colleagues and superintendents. I have also engaged my current staff from diverse cultures in conversations about their experiences as a member of a minority...”

Three principals indicated that they had university training or a long list of professional development in this regard.

Five of the 12 respondents said that the training had no effect on hiring practices. One principal stated, “I believe that we hire the best candidate who fits with the focus of our school hence I do not believe that these learning opportunities have affected our hiring practices.” Another principal noted, “Other work experiences have affected my hiring practices more so than any formal training. That is, I supervised international languages program where staff was comprised of visible minority, multi-lingual and foreign trained professionals.” This principal’s observation reveals the value of working with diverse people has an effect on the beliefs and attitudes towards hiring diversity. Another principal who has had formal university education at the undergraduate and graduate level on employment equity and gender bias argues against any special consideration of diversity during hiring and puts the responsibility for change on the supply of suitable diverse candidates: “Equity issues are very familiar to me. The massive public backlash and dismal failure that Affirmative Action programs historically have had have solidified in my mind that more needs to occur to affect the supply/pool of suitable candidates.”

Three out of 12 principals said that their learning has had some effect on hiring practices. One respondent wrote,

“I think the learning has motivated me to read more and learn more about diversity and indirectly it has influenced my hiring practises. Last fall I hired a visible minority but not because he was a visible minority - I hired him because he was the best candidate. I am now wondering if he didn't necessarily rank as number 1, if I would have considered him because he would provide our students with a visible role model? As I think about this, I
think there is a need to be more deliberate and intentional. We all tend to hire those qualities we value most and perhaps we need to value diversity more?”

3. Beliefs and attitudes for diversity hiring and existing barriers

This section of the findings refers to responses to Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 about principals’ beliefs and attitudes towards hiring diverse teachers and the existing barriers. It is beneficial to look briefly at the definition of beliefs and attitude before proceeding. According to Kotelnikov (www.1000ventures.com), “beliefs are the assumptions we make about ourselves, about others in the world and about how we expect things to be. Beliefs are about how we think things really are, what we think is really true and what therefore expect as likely consequences that will follow from our behaviour.”

An attitude, on the other hand, is “a predisposition to approach or avoid an idea, event, person or object. In other words, it is a tendency to act in one way or another toward an ‘attitude object.’ In some cases, these attitude objects can be quite specific, such as a food, color, or individual. They can also be somewhat less specific. For example, someone who has a negative attitude toward ‘change’ would probably extend it to anything representing change – leaders, technology, meetings...the list is nearly endless” (Johnston, www.principalspartnership.com).

Question 7 asked the respondents if they could give examples of interview questions that can help reveal the additional skills that a potential teacher candidate from a diverse background may bring to the classroom. This question looks at principals’ beliefs and attitude towards providing interview questions that value diversity. Two respondents said “No,” they could not provide any questions. Three respondents believed that it is the responsibility of the teacher candidate to use the interview as an opportunity to explain how their diverse background and skills could benefit the students and the school:

“I try to ask questions that allow ALL the candidates the opportunity to highlight their skills.”

“I see job interviews as an opportunity for candidates to really share with me their passions in education and give me a glimpse into them as a person. I would hope that they would take the time to talk about their diversity and how it can be helpful in providing a different perspective or a better opportunity to connect with some students.”

“Typically, candidates are provided time near the end of an interview to share things that may not have been touched upon in the previous questions. Responses may include questions about the position and/or additional skills that were not discussed.”

Seven respondents provided one or more sample questions:
“Describe some ways in which you can contribute to the culture of our school.”
“Tell me what strengths you bring to your role as teacher? What three important qualities do you bring to this position? Please explain. We are a multi cultural school. What would you specifically bring to our school that would support our diversity?”
“In my previous school, we always asked potential teacher candidates how they would address the diversity in the classroom (as teachers teaching a diverse population of students).”
“Please highlight something about yourself that will set you apart from other candidates?”
“We always ask candidates what strengths they bring to teaching. We always provide candidates an opportunity to give us additional information that we may not have learned in the interview. We ask candidates what they bring to the role of a teacher outside of the classroom.”
“At my school we celebrate and value community. How would you contribute to building community at this school? I like this question because it isn't asking about typical coaching or clubs, it asks about community. I'm looking for candidates who get what we mean by "community" and get that it's more than just coaching or running a club - it's connecting with kids, it's building an inclusive community where everyone feels valued and celebrated. It's a community that models acceptance, inclusiveness and celebrates how we are different.”

These responses reveal that five out of 12 of the principals believe the current hiring process is fair to diverse candidates from minority groups. Hence, no additional questions are required to glean out additional skills, or the responsibility was on the candidate to feel comfortable about what to share in front of the hiring team with respect to their diversity and additional skill set.

Of the seven principals who provided questions to glean out additional qualities and skills from diverse candidates, five had a question to get the candidate to speak about diversity. Two principals felt that their question about how the teacher would build community was sufficient. In answering, respondents did not define diversity and community. Some put the responsibility on the candidate to decide how much to risk and put out in the interview.

**Beliefs and attitude about the barriers to diversity hiring**

Answers to Question 8 “What are the barriers or challenges to hiring diverse teaching staff in our school board?” revealed principals’ beliefs, attitude and understanding of existing barriers. One principal did not respond to this question and four out of 12 principals hold the belief that there are no barriers or they do not see any barriers to diversity hiring:

“I don't see any barriers or challenges. Individuals who are best equipped to be in the classroom in our school are the ones chosen.”
“I have not come across any other significant barriers whether they be structural or attitudinal. Educators, as a whole, from my experience tend to be very open minded and encouraging of diversity.”
“I don't believe that there are barriers; in fact I would believe that the school board looks favourably on hiring diverse teaching staff.”
“I honestly don't see any. That being said, I am sure there are barriers that I am unaware of that prevent some people from even applying and hence being considered. Now, whether these barriers are an issue for all candidates or just those from a diverse background I don't know. However, that comment comes from my ignorance as a white male who has not run into any barriers.”

The last response reveals that the principal is open to reflecting on his perspective as a white male principal.

Eight out of 12 principals pointed out six areas of barriers to hiring diverse teachers as noted in Table 3.

Table 3 – Responses for barriers to hiring diversity

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1. Scarcity or lack of supply of diverse candidates</th>
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<td>“few candidates who either self-identify or are of a visible minority.”</td>
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<td>“As I mentioned earlier I have yet to interview a visible minority. I recognize that this poses a real challenge as until minority students see themselves in the role they are not likely to pursue the profession.”</td>
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<td>“Perhaps the question could be re-phrased to look at encouraging children of diverse backgrounds to work towards earning a Bachelor of Education degree. Perhaps increasing the number of applicants considered to come from diverse backgrounds would have an impact on the number of diverse teachers hired.”</td>
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<td>“The supply of &quot;diverse&quot; candidates needs to be examined. Why are there not more &quot;diverse&quot; candidates seeking employment in our Board? What can the Faculties of Education/Boards of Education do to make the profession attractive to &quot;diverse&quot; people? How is teaching as a profession viewed/promoted within different cultural groups so that the best and brightest want to become teachers? Do families from &quot;diverse groups&quot; promote teaching as the ideal occupation for their children (vs. others)?”</td>
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<th>2. Lack of recognition for foreign experience and value added qualities</th>
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<td>“formal inclusion of equity and diversity in our question and evaluation of teaching staff (including board paperwork for human resources)”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“There is no equivalency granted for foreign experience.”</td>
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<th>3. Lack of training of the hiring team and lack of reflection on biases, beliefs and attitudes</th>
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<td>“training around equity and diversity”</td>
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<td>“More awareness of our own biases and the need for more understanding of cultural differences (for example someone of aboriginal background interviews quite differently from someone who comes from a WASP [White Anglo-Saxon Protestant] background). Those differences might be considered weaknesses. We need to understand why they are not weaknesses.”</td>
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<td>“in another school board, I have witnessed many times that qualified teaching candidates from other countries, not be given a job over equally or less qualified candidates. Often the concerns would focus on language issues or on answers provided during interviews that did not align necessarily with what interviewers were expecting due to cultural differences.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bias that “foreign trained professionals are not as competent as Canadian/ Ontario trained teachers.”</td>
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• “Police and Fire departments both went through a similar process in the 1990's and, as a result, changed their hiring practices to be more skill/behavioral based to route out a bias towards hiring white males.”

4. Lack of diverse teacher role models for students so they too may want to become teachers

• “…until minority students see themselves in the role they are not likely to pursue the profession.”
• “I’m not sure we fully appreciate the need for our students to see themselves in our teaching staff - for them to have role models that they can identify with. The research certainly supports this - for example the "all black school" in TDSB.”

5. Power dynamics of those dominating education in Ontario and grouping of minority teachers in metropolitan school boards.

• “Teaching in Ontario is very much a white Anglo-Saxon dominated profession - minorities are largely visible in the Metro Toronto area but no so much outside of the GTA.”

6. Candidates lack of competency and poor language skills

• “The extent to which a candidate's interview skills and portfolio are as strong as the advantage of his/her cultural, ethnic, religious background and its contributions to school climate and culture.”
• “Some candidates do not have a strong grasp of the English language. It is difficult to determine whether students will be able to understand what the teacher is saying. This is probably the most challenging obstacle.”

Principals’ attitudes towards their role in increasing teacher diversity

Responses revealed that most principals have an attitude that they could not have an effect on increasing teacher diversity. Respondents believe that their job is to hire the best-qualified and best-fit candidate. Yet they believe that there is a lack of supply of diverse teachers and it is up to diverse candidates to convey the advantages of their diversity to the school community. One principal put the onus on the children from diverse communities and their families to discuss the importance of them becoming teachers and encourage them to follow that route of study.

Attitudes about being trained and skilled for diversity hiring

Some principals indicated that they would like more training to promote diversity hiring, some didn’t think it would help, some felt very well trained, while one principal felt offended that someone might think that he needs more training and professional development in this area. When asked what professional development could the board provide to further the hiring of diverse teachers, he wrote, “Principals will hire the best people for the jobs. Put more diversity in the pool from which we draw from, then perhaps you'll get a more ‘diverse’ outcome. I find it personally offensive that I would be either (a) asked to discriminate for/against anyone or (b) be perceived that I need coaching on equity and inclusion issues.”
4. Solutions and future learning opportunities

The results also reveal that the principals have taken the opportunity to provide an understanding of the problems and solutions in their answers to various questions. A number of principals pointed out that a major problem is the lack of teachers from diverse groups:

“It raises the question does the teaching profession seem attractive to people of diverse backgrounds and lifestyles? If not, why is this?”

“Why are there not more ‘diverse’ candidates seeking employment in our Board? What can the Faculties of Education/Boards of Education do to make the profession attractive to ‘diverse’ people? How is teaching as a profession viewed/promoted within different cultural groups so that the best and brightest want to become teachers? Do families from ‘diverse groups’ promote teaching as the ideal occupation for their children (vs. others)?”

Other problems identified were the candidate’s grasp of English language and the biases/stereotypes about certain groups of people help by members of the hiring team.

Solutions for increasing the supply of diverse candidates and other relevant approaches were mentioned by a number of principals: “More needs to happen to affect the supply of candidates (e.g. encourage more diversity amongst teacher-candidates) rather than top-down initiatives to skew the demand for candidates.” Another principal provided a three-part solution, “I suggest that children from diverse backgrounds should be encouraged to consider teaching as a career. I would then look to the B.Ed. entrance requirements and marketing that is used to attract potential teachers the programs. From there I would look at school board recruiting practices.” Some principals suggested more training for the principals while others said more training was not needed: “Not so much learning programs on their own but pressure (e.g. specific direction to hire visible minority teachers - affirmative action like in other sectors.)” Then there were those who were against implementing directives like affirmative action. As far as suggestions for solutions go, there are differing opinions provided by the respondents.

Specific suggestions for future training and Professional Development

The last question on the survey asked principals’ perspective on what professional development opportunities the school board could provide. Two principals did not respond to this question while two principals felt that specific professional development was not needed. One of these principals was offended that he would be perceived as needing more training in equity and inclusion.
Seven of respondents believe that training and professional development with respect to diversity hiring practices would be helpful and welcome. Some of their responses are as follows:

“The PD needs to quote the research that currently exists that speaks to the need for diversity in our schools in terms of teaching staff. We need to be able to examine our biases, to learn and understand cultural differences, and to intentionally build hiring practises that promote diversity.”
“Diversity within the context of hiring practices: Stress the value of diversity in schools e.g. how a more diverse teacher population would help our students, both minority and non-minority; provide visible minority role models.”
“Equity and inclusivity training, information on changing demographics in Ontario schools, benefits of students seeming themselves in teaching staff.”
“Educational program teaching the basics of each culture; prepare a manual that highlights the beliefs, traditions, celebrations that each culture has.”
“In equity and inclusion training, have students and teachers talk about their experiences and perspectives.”

**A look at respondents and their perspectives**

The data analysis revealed patterns of thought among principals. A few principals held a perspective that did not value diversity and they provided justification and rationale for not considering equity and diversity principles in hiring practices. Their responses may reveal barriers to hiring diversity including bias, resistance to change, lack of sensitivity, knowledge, and professional development. On the other hand, some principals’ responses showed a valuing of diversity and at the same time being reflective and critical of current practices. These principals pointed out the existing barriers and wanted to learn more about diversity hiring.
Chapter 5 – Discussion

Action is an integral and indispensable component of transformative learning. – Mezirow

In this chapter, the results are discussed under four main headings: Understanding of diversity and its implications for school community; Impact of beliefs and attitudes towards diversity, equity & inclusion; Barriers due to biases, hiring attitudes, and current practices; Learning and professional development as a catalyst for change. Under these headings, the findings are interpreted and related to existing studies and literature.

Understanding of diversity and its implications for school community

The results showed that most of the principals defined diversity with the understanding that diversity is difference, and encompasses a variety of diversity variables. However, the responses revealed that there was no consensus on a definition of diversity among these educators. One principal pointed out that if you ask “ten different people to define diversity, you may end up with ten different answers.” Another principal chose not to respond at all. Researchers have pointed out that leaders in an organization should develop clear and universal definitions and statements of diversity and equity before they embark on changing the organization’s hiring process to value diversity (Adams & Bargerhuff, 2005; Robinson-Neal, 2009). Just as an organization expects everyone in it to know its mission statement, school boards and hiring committees can benefit from a common definition of diversity.

Researching literature for this study revealed that many schools had a clear policy and/or commitment towards diversity and for supporting equity and inclusion, often displayed on their websites. For instance, Centennial College (2009) in Toronto has an equity and diversity policy posted on its website (see Appendix C for full statement). The College and its board of governors state that they value and embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion because it is fundamental to its mission to educate students to become successful in their careers and as global citizens who value social justice. In addition, the Centennial College diversity statement recognizes the inequities and barriers to equitable participation that exist in the system. Similarly, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) in its Equity Foundations Statement (2007) recognizes that there are systematic biases that prevent the equitable treatment of students and employees. With respect to hiring practices, the TDSB will ensure that “our hiring and promotion practices are bias-free, and promote equitable representation of our diversity at all levels of the school system; that all our employees have equitable opportunities for advancement; that their skills and
knowledge are valued and used appropriately; and that they have equitable access to available support for their professional development needs” (p. 3).

The responses to Question 3 reveal that most of the respondents – people responsible for hiring, and for hiring diverse candidates for their diverse school population – do not seem comfortable with creating open dialogue about diversity and marginalized groups in their school community. Literature reveals the need for open dialogue about diversity in the student and teacher community: the Ontario Ministry of Education (2009) states that “racism, religious intolerance, homophobia, and gender-based violence are still evident in our communities and – unfortunately – in our schools” (p. 7). The Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops notes that suicide rates among homosexual students are higher than among their heterosexual peers and calls for positive action, reinforcing the “right of each student to be free of harassment, violence or malice in speech or action is unequivocal and schools carry the clear obligation to provide a positive school environment for all students and staff” (as quoted in Ontario, 2009, p. 7). When asked if their teacher population represented the diverse student population in their schools, all respondents seem to make a connection and were able to reflect on the question; most said the teachers in their schools are not representative of student diversity. Respondents who may not make these comparisons in their regular practice, seemed to make the connection and reflect on this comparison when asked the question.

In response to the question if the principals knew the faith their minority teachers belonged to, some respondents wrote that the number of teachers for minority faiths is unknown. They would not ask this since “it is a topic that many will not share.” This indicates that principals may hold a belief that teachers from minority faiths do not want to discuss or talk about their faith-based identity. Yet, the Ministry of Education has directed school boards to create a school environment to respect and value the needs of multi-faith students and employees. Ontario (2009) points out that “although there are increasing numbers of students from various faith communities in our schools, only twelve boards [out of 72 Ontario school boards] report that they have policies or guidelines relating to religious accommodation, and only three of those could be considered comprehensive. In this context, we believe a system-wide approach is required.” (p. 9). The TDSB (2007) *Equity in Education* guidelines for the accommodation of religious requirements, practices, and observances state that it “values the uniqueness and diversity of its students and community, and understands that people from diverse religious communities need to work and study in environments that are safe and respectful.”
Ontario (2009) points out that anti-Semitism, anti-Black sentiments and “Islamophobia” are present in Canadian society. To address these issues, the Ontario Ministry of Education has been developing equity and inclusion strategies and urging their implementation in all schools (Ontario, 2009). Almost two decades ago, Ontario (1993) directed school boards to address the issues of ethno-cultural inequity and racism and charged administrators and teachers to learn about and be cognizant of Ontario’s multicultural and multi-faith population. Teachers were to be empowered to teach children to celebrate and respect all faiths and cultures. The findings from this research lead to some new questions for future research. If principals are not comfortable with setting a respectful tone for an open environment to learn about the culture of their minority staff, then are teachers in these schools connecting with students from minority communities or faith groups to learn about their values and traditions? Do teachers see the work of connecting with a diverse student population as a burden or do they find it empowering? Do students from minority communities or faith groups feel included in the school or does the majority marginalize them through non-recognition and lack of understanding?

**Impact of beliefs and attitudes towards diversity, equity & inclusion**

While positive beliefs and attitudes were noted, the responses also revealed that there seemed to be barriers due to beliefs, understanding, and attitudes, which might negatively affect the school board’s ability to move forward with hiring and retaining diverse teachers.

**Beliefs that value diversity, equity and inclusion**

Some principals believe that they can have an impact on hiring diversity or that diversity is important and should be valued. Respondents mention that systemic barriers exist, diversity needs to be valued, and that they would consider the skills a diverse candidate could bring to the school and education in general. “A teacher is more than just a ‘deliverer of curriculum.’ They are also a role model and help to build the life of a vibrant and active school community,” wrote one principal. Similarly, these respondents believe that, “there are many minority students who do not see themselves as teachers because every teacher they have had has been white. Nor do many students feel as connected to teachers who to them represent a different culture and who may not understand the plight of these students even if they are open-minded and caring.” These respondents believe that principals, as part of the hiring team, can ask questions that help elicit or reveal the additional skills a diverse candidates brings: “Depending on the school, the value added or additional skills a diverse candidate brings can enhance existing programs or support
existing programs.” In a circumstance where two candidates are equal and one can bring an element of needed diversity, it becomes a factor in the final decision. One principal believes that “our equity and inclusion department is creating more opportunities for principals to dialogue.”

Furthermore, one respondent believes that they need to challenge their “own stereotypes and biases that come into play when deciding what constitutes ‘the best candidate’ and these biases may be screening out candidates from diverse groups. We all tend to hire those qualities we value most and perhaps we need to value diversity more.” This principal also believes that learning about equity and inclusion has motivated more reading and learning about diversity and indirectly influenced personal hiring practices. Watson (2006) states that “we do not necessarily behave the way we do because of what we are; rather we may also become who we are because of what we do. The relationship is thus complex, reciprocal, unfixed and open to change” (p. 510). Adult learning is an adaptive function of reflection and action due to the experiential contexts and situations in which adults find themselves. Perhaps principals who are critically reflective of their practices and who see the need for change and value diversity, need to be supported, given more training, and given a voice in the school system so they can become catalysts for change.

Beliefs that justify/rationalize the status quo and form barriers

A number of responses reveal beliefs or assumptions that negatively affect hiring of diverse teachers. For instance, some principals expressed the belief that there are no barriers to hiring diverse teachers and therefore, the playing field is level, so to speak, for all teacher candidates. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2009) holds school boards accountable to “implement strategies to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents, and the community, so that diverse groups and the broader community have better board-level representation and greater access to board initiatives” (p. 21). Hence, a belief that there are no barriers or discriminatory practices can be a barrier in itself. In addition, the findings reveal that there is confusion about what is discrimination; that is, respondents say that their current practices are not discriminatory, but giving special consideration to qualified diverse teach candidates would be. The responses reveal that some principals do not believe in differentiation of teacher candidates who would be a benefit to student success.

Another belief some principals hold is that there are not enough diverse teacher candidates in Ontario. They cite this as the reason diverse candidates are not hired. One respondent argued that
“there is a lack of diverse candidates and the supply of diverse candidates should be addressed.” Respondents reasoned that the lack of diverse candidates might mean that the Ontario teaching profession is not attracting diverse people. Yet, the supply of Ontario certified teacher candidates is similar for non-metropolitan boards and metropolitan boards such as the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and other Greater Toronto Area school boards where there is a considerable population of diverse teachers. This raises some questions for future research: For instance, how do other nearby school boards like TDSB attract and hire diverse teachers from the same supply of teachers, while principals at non-metropolitan school boards find that there is a lack of diverse applicants? Is there a different paradigm that could be used to provide incentives to diverse candidates to come and teach in non-metropolitan school boards to fill the diversity gap?

However, as Kayes (2006) points out, the “low supply of diverse candidates” argument fails to challenge or critique in a meaningful way the systematic bias that is responsible for the unequal power relationships that steadily disenfranchise minority students and teachers. Kayes (2006) stresses that increasing the pool of diverse teacher candidates will not automatically result in hiring of these candidates because the institutional cultures, systematic biases, and search/hiring team cultures can overtly and/or covertly undermine the goal of hiring diverse educators. The concern about the supply may be legitimate to a certain degree. However, there may be other factors at play due to which the existing diverse teachers in Ontario are not accessed by non-metropolitan school boards. Smith et al. (2004), giving the example of the lack of Latino lawyers in the Latino law school faculty, quote Olivas (1994) as asking why is it that the law schools do not see it their responsibility to recruit and graduate more Latino lawyers? Smith et. al. (2004) found that “even in fields with more scholars of color, such as education and psychology, the faculty is not diverse” (p. 135).

The principals themselves pose some questions in their responses: What is keeping children from diverse groups from applying to teacher’s colleges and for jobs in education? Are families of marginalized and minority groups not encouraging or creating dialogue with their children to become teachers? A contributing factor may be that when 90-100% of teachers in schools (as revealed in these results) are from the privileged white majority, students from diverse minority groups do not see role models from their groups that might create a thought and emotion in them to become teachers. Another factor maybe that the families of diverse students may not have the knowledge and tools to encourage their children to become teachers. Yet another factor is
perhaps children from the privileged majority are affirmed by role models from their communities (teachers, principals, etc.), while minority students do not have enough diverse teacher role models. How then does a community increase the supply of diverse teachers when there are not enough diverse teacher role models in the school system? Ryan et al. (2009) traced the shortage of diverse teachers in Canada to two institutional shortcomings: “inequitable schooling practices that limit the number of students willing and able to enter the teaching force, and discriminatory licensing and hiring practices that exclude those who have already completed their teacher education programs” (p. 609). These researchers posit that for Canada to have a more diverse workforce, “those working towards this end will need to acknowledge the systematic nature of the problems associated with this shortage and incorporate this knowledge into any solutions” (p. 609).

An assumption that emerges from the responses is that the existing networks to find teacher candidates are sufficient. However, Adams & Bargerhuff (2005) suggest that “too often, candidates from minority populations are overlooked because they are not a part of the primary networks of senior faculty and administrators” (p. 542). The assumption that minority diverse groups have access to the same networks to make connections and learn about jobs in the schools system, as the teacher candidates from majority communities do, may hinder the ability to create equitable hiring opportunities for candidates from the disadvantaged groups. Diverse candidates, who may or may not live in a particular school district, may have no idea about the informal networks with principals that often lead to employment. Some principals revealed that they may interview and hire teacher candidates who have done teaching internships at their school. One principal stated, “I typically hire from the group of people that have been student teachers/volunteers with my school or within the board. When I look back, there are very few visible minorities represented in that group.”

With respect to the advantaged and disadvantaged position in society due to gender and race, McIntosh (1988) found that people of privilege may be able to recognize a group’s disadvantaged position without recognizing their own advantaged position. McIntosh (1988) found that men agreeing that women were disadvantaged in the workplace were not willing to acknowledge that men were privileged and gaining advantages from women’s disadvantages. McIntosh posits that as a white person, she had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which put her at an advantage. She notes that whites learn not to recognize white
privilege, just as males learn not to recognize male privilege. “In a world where race – demarcated by skin colour and other related characteristics – is a marker of value, those who do not have white skin do not have the same privileges as white people” (Ryan et. al., 2009, p. 594).

Beliefs and values of hiring team members also seem to create barriers to hiring diversity. For example, in the survey responses, some principals seem to believe that the presence of an “accent” in a candidate – as one respondent says, speaking “less than perfect English as a second language speaker” – may be a hindrance in student learning. Hence, it seems that a candidate with a non-Canadian English accent may not be seen as being the best-fit for the job: “there can be a reluctance to hire a teacher who doesn’t speak English perfectly,” wrote one respondent. The research of Ross (2003) challenges this belief. Ross (2003) found that some teachers approached to be host/mentor teachers to new immigrant teacher interns in the Newcomers - Extended Teacher Education Program (ETEP) in the USA declined involvement because of concerns that primary grade students would not be able to understand the interns because of their accents and imperfect grammatical structure. However, Ross (2003) notes that this was not the case and that “as a supervisor my observation is that students adapt to the accent and understand the Newcomers-ETEP interns faster than the adult teachers do” (p. 36).

**Barriers due to biases, hiring attitudes, and current practices**

The results reveal that the school board of the respondents does not direct or encourage principals to look for diversity and provides no process or policy for diversity hiring. This is in line with the findings of Lushington (2009) who wrote, “while some Ontario school boards are winning prizes in Europe for commitment to equity in education, others are discovering that they don’t have a policy on file.” In analyzing the responses, various attitudinal barriers towards hiring diversity surface, such as contentment with status quo, disinterest and or discomfort in dealing with diversity or equity and inclusion issues, resistance to change, and de-prioritizing diversity as an issue for school community. With regard to barriers embedded in hiring practices, the principals responded that they look for similarities between candidates and school context – which means sameness. The responses did not reveal that diversity was in the forefront when making hiring decision. In practice, for the respondents, “equity” seems to mean treating all teacher candidates equally. Lushington (2009) found that all over the province of Ontario “classroom teachers are living the daily experience of a changing world, where equal access to public education for all can no longer mean treating everyone the same.” While defining equity,
the Ontario (2009) Ministry of Education states, “equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences” (p. 4). Hence, literature supports the thought that equity in hiring and the term “equal opportunity employer” does not mean treating all teacher candidates the same, but rather equity promotes using differentiation to value diversity when screening and interviewing candidates.

A few respondents indicated that they enjoy, and learn from, talking with teachers of diversity. However, the survey results indicate that some principals may be apprehensive of making an error, being labelled for favouring diversity, or offending teachers by asking questions that might promote diversity. Some respondents placed the responsibility on potential diverse teacher candidates during an interview to mention benefits of their diversity and their ability to connect with diverse students. This practice may deter the diverse teacher candidate from opening up about their diverse skills if they are not invited by the hiring team to comment on the value of the additional skills they may bring to the school. Another attitudinal barrier may be the devaluing of diversity training for members of the hiring team. In addition, respondents did not recognize systematic biases in the current recruitment procedures; for example, respondents did not question if the current recruitment system could better access the supply of diverse teacher candidates that exists outside the school district and within other areas of Ontario. One respondent acknowledged a personal bias against teacher candidates whose training is non-Canadian.

**Hiring the teacher who is the “best-fit”**

While four out of 12 principals agreed that they tend to hire the “best-fit” teacher, only a few acknowledged that the current lens which they use to hire the best-fit may be biased due to personal preferences in communication style, personal and emotional comfort-zone, and cultural mindset. One respondent wrote, “We hire the best candidate no matter what background/race/religion/sexual orientation they come from. We do not consciously hire minorities.” Another principal wrote about current hiring practice: “The focus is always - who is the best candidate? What we probably need to have challenged is that our own stereotypes and biases come into play when deciding what constitutes ‘the best candidate’ and these biases may be screening out candidates who are part of what you have been referring to as diverse groups.” This principal points out a fundamental reason for hiring team members to act differently: to recognize the stereotypes and biases that may be screening out competent diverse teacher candidates. Interestingly, West (1994) found that diverse teacher candidates who affirmed the
status quo and demonstrated white mainstream educational beliefs, professional practices, and values had a better chance of being employed and retained than those who challenge existing practices. West believes that “culturally diverse applicants who display submissive contentment and gratitude for their jobs are often hired” (p. 11).

Question 4 set out to find if there is an effort and/or process to screen and interview best candidates from a diversity perspective. A few respondents write that they screen for the best-fit to school climate/culture. However, there is no indication that hiring teams screen for diversity variables that might make a better fit for the students and school community. It seems the school board has not put in place a process to screen diverse candidates before interviews so that there is a greater probability of interviewing diverse candidates.

Researchers suggest that intercultural insensitivity and communication style biases can also play a role in who is considered to be the best-fit. As discussed in the literature review, Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993, as cited in Kayes, 2006) suggests that individuals on predominantly white search and hiring teams are located in three levels of intercultural sensitivity – defence, minimization, or acceptance. People who in defence level view diversity as a threat. Principals at this level equate incompetence, affirmative action, and special privileges with diverse candidates and overtly deny them equal opportunity. Principals who are minimizers prefer to focus on ethnocentric similarities rather than differences, and to consider diverse candidates who are like themselves, justifying that these teacher candidates are the best-fit for the school. Finally, principals at the acceptance level recognize, appreciate, and value cultural differences and would be strong advocates for hiring diversity. This level of intercultural sensitivity seems to apply to some respondents. However, these principals may “feel ill-equipped (even paralyzed) from advocating necessary changes in hiring practices, systems, policies, and procedures” (Kayes, 2006, p. 66).

In addition, Kayes (2006) argues that predominantly white hiring teams may hire the “best-fit” not aware that aversive racism and lack of intercultural sensitivity are at play in the decision making, whereby a white educator is hired over a black educator, for instance. Adams & Bargerhuff (2005) note that dysconscious racism may be at work in hiring decisions whereby search committees prefer candidates who are like them in educational background, social skills, values, and behaviours; these candidates may be rated more highly than comparable candidates from other races or ethnicity. In many cases “the ‘fit’ requirement has become a major, covert
barrier to diverse hiring” (Kayes, 2006, p. 66). Kayes also posits that both verbal and non-verbal communication style differences can result in miscommunication and misunderstanding. When looking for the “best-fit” teacher, hiring teams will often make a judgement and prefer a candidate who communicates like them. The following example gives a snapshot of what may happen when communication style bias exists:

“Consider this real instance of communication style discrimination: a White male and an African-American male were both equally qualified for a position, but in the interview, the White male answered in a very linear style while the African-American male answered in a more circular fashion; the predominantly White and (linear-style) search committee insisted that the White male should be offered the position without really even understanding how their own communication style biases influenced their decision. In addition, because communication conflicts across cultural differences can regularly impact the daily institutional lives of diverse faculty and staff, they often precipitate the kind of intercultural conflict that drives diverse faculty and staff out of predominantly White institutions” (Kayes, 2006, p. 68).

Ryan (2003) feels that principals will be taken aback if told there is racism in their schools; no hiring team or school board administration wants to hear (or admit) there is systematic racism and barriers to hiring diverse teacher. Just as aversive racism is not being noticed, faith-based exclusion also may not be noted in hiring teams’ biases. DeVault (1999) suggests the need for ethno-racial references in our dialogues. In researching African-American nutritionists, DeVault discovered that they started to reveal stories about their ethnicity only once the interviewer had established a rapport and invited ethno-racial references in the dialogue. Similarly, in diversity hiring there may be a need for explicit interview questions that provide a comfortable place for teacher candidates from visible ethnic, racial, and/or faith-based minorities to express what skills and capabilities they possess to engage students in learning. As such, DeVault (1999) charges that it is essential for professionals to have knowledge about ethnicity.

As a result of this study various questions arise for discussion and could perhaps fuel future research. If two teacher candidates are equal, do principals chose the needed diverse candidate or do they choose the majority candidate? What is the “cut-off” point where the hiring team might say that a candidate has fluently answered the needed questions and direct itself to look at those additional skills that a candidate brings? When a minority candidate is scoring a bit lower compared to a candidate from the majority white community, what lens is used to evaluate the added benefit of the diverse candidate to the school system and to students? As one respondent wrote, “Last fall I hired a visible minority but not because he was a visible minority – I hired him because he was the best candidate. I am now wondering if he didn't necessarily rank as number
one, if I would have considered him because he would provide our students with a visible role model? As I think about this, I think there is a need to be more deliberate and intentional. We all tend to hire those qualities we value most and perhaps we need to value diversity more?"

The results also show that some respondents may value diversity, or believe that diverse teachers are a best-fit, only in situations where the teacher has to teach a diverse or multicultural student population or an English as a Second Language (ESL) course. For instance one respondent wrote, “I have given weight to the cultural background of a candidate when hiring for an ESL position.” This statement gives rise to another discussion: Is the diverse teacher a best-fit only in schools that represent that form of diversity or is a diverse teacher a best-fit in a homogeneous school as well? Lushington (2009) argues that diverse teacher role models are important for all students and “not just for kids who feel excluded by the system.” Lushington (2009) quotes Arifa Ghaffar, previously from Pakistan but currently an Ontario Certified Teacher, about one of her experiences: “I went to see a principal about a job. She said, ‘You have all these experiences but we don’t have any Muslim kids here. You should go to Toronto.’ I told her, ‘You don’t have to have Muslim kids – I am a teacher’.” A similar bias may exist in the respondents who believe that they need to value and consider teacher diversity only for schools that have student populations that represent that form of diversity.

**Resistance to practices akin to affirmative action**

The results indicate a resistance to any hiring practice that might sound like “affirmative action” even though the questionnaire did not refer to affirmative action policies. Some respondents are resistant to screening for diverse candidates or giving preference to additional skills brought by diverse candidates that would benefit students. For example, one principal’s responses are as follows:

“In behavioural-based questioning, we are looking for the candidate whose skills and experiences in the role (or similar to) position them as the best fit. There is no ‘affirmative action’ initiative in place.”

“Having lived through the Affirmative Action incentives of the 1980's and 1990's (and the backlash and controversy therein), I truly believe that employers must truly look for the best candidate for the job and must rely on behavioural-based hiring practices as a means to ensure that the process is as unbiased as possible.”

In addition, Springer (2004) suggests that hiring teams may also fear having to deal with complaints of reverse discrimination from applicants belonging to the majority.
When asked what additional learning programs the school board could provide to hiring teams one principal responds, “My one comment would be that I hope we don't head towards a practice where I am told I must hire a female teacher for a position or I must hire a teacher from a particular background for a position. I think we have done a better job of late in hiring more females into high school jobs because more and more females have qualified themselves and applied. Maybe that is the direction we need to (or are) head(ing).” Such a response leads to these questions: What if a school needs more female teachers but females teachers are not applying to the school board? Would hiring teams go out of their way to advertise and network with female teachers who exist in other cities to apply? Would hiring teams consider doing the same for other forms of needed diversity? West (1994) notes that the belief, held by many North American mainstream educators, that less qualified diverse applicants will become eligible solely because of their diverse background, is a myth; in the USA and Canada all teachers must be certified by a college of teachers or by a degree granting university before they can teach.

West (1994) argues that many mainstream or white educators fear affirmative action because “they believe affirmative action programs give unfair and preferential treatment to the culturally diverse or otherwise protected class designated applicant” (p. 11) when ordinarily the applicant would not be considered. However, affirmative action programs merely intend to hire qualified diverse teachers. West (1994) further notes that “these mainstream adversaries fail to realize that affirmative action plans are either voluntarily designed, or judicially or executively ordered due to documented imbalances, prior discriminatory practices or policies under some type of reconciliation agreements” (p. 11). Yet this does not mean the unqualified applicants will be hired just by virtue of their diversity.

Peggy McIntosh, an esteemed scholar in the area of race relations, has gone to the extent of stating that “most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist” (as quoted by Brosnan, 2004, p. 15).

Researchers have stated that if aversive racism is present in the organization and if training is not provided to value diversity and to remove biases against minority groups, then affirmative action initiatives will likely fail (Brown, 2004; Kayes, 2006). Brown (2004) argues that without history, people fail to understand how current societal tensions have emerged from events and trends of the past. She quotes Dewey (1938) who noted:
The nature of the issues cannot be understood save as we know they came about. The institutions and customs that exist in the present and that gave rise to present social ills and dislocations did not arise overnight. They have a long history behind them. Attempts to deal with them simply on the basis of what is obvious in the present are bound to result in adoption of superficial measures which in the end will only render existing problems more acute and more difficult to solve. (p. 77)

Kayes (2006) calls an affirmative action approach only a “bare-minimum approach” that needs to evolve into an institutional culture that values diversity as a competitive advantage. This transformation cannot happen without comprehensive diversity education. As stated by Dewey in the above quote, measures such as affirmative action policies cannot change the underlying problems of bias and stereotypes that are deep rooted in the psyche of the privileged white majority, which must be addressed before seeing changes in hiring and retention of diverse teachers.

Brosnan (2001) quoted Clarence Page as saying, “as racism has become less visibly obvious since the 1960s, it has become easier for those not directly victimized by it to ignore it” (p. 17). Hence, the privileged white majority of educators may not see, or may not want to see, from the lens of the minority even if they understand the need for hiring diversity. Since hegemonic structures may be in place, leaders may not move on the idea of training principals in the area of hiring diversity because they may not feel the urgency to be proactive in this area.

**Learning and professional development as a catalyst for change**

**Opinions about professional development**

In responding to Question 7, which asked for examples of interview questions helpful for eliciting additional skills from candidates of diverse backgrounds, only a few principals were able to provide questions. The rest felt that there was no need to, or could not think of questions in this regard. The responses may indicate a need to develop capacity for valuing diversity not only in hiring teams but in all members of the organization by providing learning opportunities (Smith et. al., 2004; Kayes, 2006).

While some respondents welcomed additional training and professional development, some educators did not see the need for such training saying there are no barriers to hiring diverse teachers. For example, one respondent wrote, ‘Principals will hire the best people for the jobs. Put more diversity in the pool from which we draw from, then perhaps you'll get a more ‘diverse’ outcome. I find it personally offensive that I would be either (a) asked to discriminate
for/against anyone or (b) be perceived that I need coaching on equity and inclusion issues.” These responses suggest that principals’ opinions about professional development relate to whether or not they see the need for diversity as a relevant, valued issue. As suggested by researchers (Smith et. al. 2004; Adams & Bargerhuff, 2005; Kayes, 2006), a first step may be to provide comprehensive training for hiring teams so they may see the barriers faced by diverse candidates in the hiring process and the hiring advantages that exist for mainstream candidates.

Literature reveals that certain Ontario school boards and teacher’s colleges are already providing training in diversity, equity, and inclusion. For example, Schoemer, an Ontario teacher, credits the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) for giving her tools to tackle equity issues: “We were taught to look for missing perspectives, to develop critical thinking. To ask: Who is telling the story? Whose voice is missing?” (as quoted in Lushington, 2009). Similarly, Natalie Middleton gives credit to a workshop called Diversity Matters run by her school board where “you start by examining yourself, your own biases and prejudices” (as quoted in Lushington, 2009).

The final survey question asked, “What additional learning programs for principals could the board provide to further the goals of equity and inclusion in hiring, retaining, and promoting diverse teaching staff?” One respondent provided a three-part solution that puts the onus on diverse groups, faculties of education, and then the school board’s recruiting practices: “I will refer to a previous response where I suggested that children from diverse backgrounds should be encouraged to consider teaching as a career. I would then look to the B.Ed. entrance requirements and marketing that is used to attract potential teachers the programs. From there I would look at school board recruiting practices.” This response provides some of the steps that might be taken to address the problem if supply of diverse teachers was the main issue in hiring diverse teachers. For example, professors at University of Toronto’s OISE initiated a special approach to increasing the pool of diverse teachers: they invited students of colour and minority groups to OISE for a day to listen to educators and to consider becoming teachers in diverse school communities around the Greater Toronto Area (Brown, 2008). The professors at teacher’s colleges are encouraging diverse students to take up teaching as a profession so future students can have teachers from diverse backgrounds because they see it as important for the teacher population to represent the students they serve. Non-metropolitan school boards may wish to consider the benefits of similar initiatives.
Training that addresses how to model diversity among educators themselves may have the advantage of highlighting the responsibility of educational leaders to encourage members of diverse communities to become teachers and to encourage existing diverse teachers to become administrators. Lushington (2009) mentions that one Toronto area school board is implementing a mentoring program for racialized teachers who may become administrators because the school board sees the importance of increasing minority representations when less than four percent of teachers are non-white. Ghaffar, an Ontario teacher, believes that “unless there are real-life role models of different races and religions teaching the kids, they will not be able to embrace diversity because that is not their reality” (as quoted in Lushington, 2009). Researchers found that to bring in more diverse teacher role models “programs designed to put more teachers of colour in classrooms are currently underway at universities across Canada and the United States and through particular government sponsored programs like Teach in Ontario. Among other things, these programs are designed to encourage students of colour to pursue teaching as a career, recruit them to faculties of education, assist them in getting certified, and support them in their journey” (Ryan et. al., 2009, p. 609).

Training for emotional intelligence – the role of emotions in hiring diversity

The Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF), in its Diversity & Equity Leadership Institute information (2010) – on its website and in its email directed towards teachers, principals, and school board administrators across Canada – has noted that

“Neuroscience research over the last decade reveals that our day-to-day behaviour is dictated - contrary to popular belief - by how we feel rather than what we think. Emotions, invisible and controlling, are rooted in the unconscious mind and frequently impact our actions without our awareness. Developing greater emotional intelligence – self-awareness, empathy and relationship-building – is widely recognized as the most important personal competency for leaders to possess.”

In addition, Myers noted that "studies over the past decade have confirmed, our brains operate with a vast unconscious mind that even Freud never suspected" (as quoted on the CRRF website, 2010).

CRRF (2010) points out that the area of emotions raises profound questions for issues of diversity and equity in the workplace:

“What is the role of emotions in our interactions with people from backgrounds different than our own? How do we uncover our personal ‘blind-spots’ that reside in our unconscious mind in order to create truly inclusive, welcoming environments? What is the role of unconscious bias and emotional triggers in how well we handle conflict that
Given such questions, what emotions might affect the hiring decisions of an all-white hiring team? What sub-conscious feelings might be barriers to hiring diverse candidates, but might create advantages for mainstream teacher candidates when being interviewed by an all-white hiring team? In a situation where there are the hiring team consists of three white members who may hold biases, is a diverse minority teacher candidate likely to mention the importance of his or her value added skills and ability to connect with diverse or homogeneous students? If mentioned, how might it be perceived given that this information is not being actively solicited by the school board’s interview questions?

To address these issues, the CRRF provides professional development through its Diversity & Equity Leadership course, which is grounded in adult pedagogy and layered with information from the fields of neuroscience, social psychology, and bias research. School board leadership might benefit from such a holistic conference, which combines training in anti-racism with emotional intelligence and conflict resolution to balance intellect with emotions, and internal factors with external forces (CRRF, 2010).

**Intercultural competency training**

Researchers have indicated that, in addition to technical skills, educators and leaders need soft skills such as emotional intelligence and intercultural intelligence or intercultural competence – the ability to connect with and feel comfortable with members of diverse groups (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Moloney, 2008). With regard to soft skills such as intercultural communication skills, Kayes (2006) states that “intercultural communication competence, then, becomes just as much of a necessity in a workplace inclusive of differences as effective communication skills are in a harmonious personal relationship” (p. 68). Therefore, training for human resources and search and hiring teams might include how to network with, reach out to, and recruit teachers from various diverse groups (such as minority and marginalized groups based on ethnicity, race, faith/religion, and sexual-orientation).

Teaching positions posted on the www.applytoeducation.com website, which is currently used for promoting teaching positions at various Ontario school boards, may not be reaching the teachers from diverse groups. To avoid attracting like-minded and like-skilled applicants, hiring teams might explore new avenues of advertising such as multicultural newspapers and radio...
stations in the greater Toronto area, and the Professionally Speaking magazine published by the Ontario College of Teachers.

Teachers and educational leaders are charged with educating the next generation of students, which will be diverse (Ontario, 2010; National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, 2004). Moloney (2008) suggests that a cultural diversity amongst teachers needs to be acknowledged and respected for its effectiveness in facilitating intercultural competence in students. As identified in the literature review, many mainstream teachers and hiring team members have old-school thinking and are resistant to change. Due to a lack of intercultural communication skills, teachers may lose patience when teaching diverse students or when working with teachers from backgrounds other than their own. Teachers can learn by listening to what diverse students have to say about teachers’ connection with them. For instance, Brosnan (2001) has provided quotes from students of colour to the question, “What do the adults in your school need to understand and do to make your school a better place for students of colour?” Some of the student responses were:

“Know that students of colour are not trying to exclude themselves when they sit together and hangout together.”
“We want adults to be more culturally sensitive.”
“Understand that it is difficult for students of colour to have only one or two of their race in their entire class.”
“The faculty and the head of the school should have dinner with students of colour.”
“Teachers need to understand that we all need to pay attention to diversity.”
“More variety of food: Chinese, soul food; Asian food; Hispanic food.”
“Different cultures are in the school so we should have various, good food choices.”
“We want more faculty of colour – a wide variety of teachers (Asian, African-American, etc.) teaching a wide variety of subjects.”
“Keep an unbiased opinion while teaching.”
“Don’t take race into account when grading.”
“Give diversity clubs a chance – give them a budget too.”
“Have faculty of colour who can socialize with and relate to the students” (pp. 12-13).

The analogy of the iceberg is used to describe culture, where only the tip of the whole iceberg is visible while there is a lot more that is unseen. Language and Culture Worldwide (2009) describes the “cultural iceberg” as the sum of the external manifestation or observable behaviours and practices of culture such as food, dances, music, arts, greeting rituals, etc., and the unseen broader components of culture such as the complex ideas and deeply-held preferences
and attitudes and values. Misunderstandings could be caused by only viewing the external practices and behaviours of a cultural group. To become culturally proficient would mean going beyond understanding just the visible aspects of a culture and understanding the core values and attitudes of people of that culture. Recent research by the TDSB’s (2010) achievement gap task force found that there is a need for culturally responsive teaching. The task force reported that “racialized and other marginalized students state that access to a supportive relationship with a caring school adult makes the difference between success and failure for them” (p. 7). Hence, there is a need to train the current teacher workforce to value diversity and be culturally proficient.

The Centre for Intercultural Learning (CIL) website, created by the Government of Canada, points out that the purpose of intercultural effectiveness is “to minimise the risk of failure and enhance both the individual's and the organization's chances of success” (Canada, 2009). CIL has created the profile of the Interculturally Effective Person (IEP) and provides three main attributes of an interculturally effective person: the ability to communicate with people of other cultures in a way that earns their respect and trust; the capacity to adapt his/her professional skills (both technical and managerial) to fit local conditions and constraints; and the capability to adjust personally so that she/he is content and generally at ease in the host culture.

The Ontario (2010) Ministry of Education and the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004) supports the need to hire teachers who are culturally effective and value diversity. Their directives point out the need to hire teachers who value the kind of professionalism that helps diverse teachers feel at home in schools and in making change in schools. There is a need to infuse diversity into the existing workforce. There is a need for training principals to manage change and help the organization prepare for being inclusive. In this regard, school boards may need to access training for principals that helps them become more skilled in managing a multicultural and diverse team of teachers.

**Recognizing and training proactive and inclusive leadership**

In a post-survey conversation, a principal revealed that during a recent teacher interview a candidate from Toronto asked him at the end of the interview why he had not asked any question about how she would integrate equity and inclusion in her teaching practice. The principal replied that the school board had not put such a question on the list of questions to be asked of candidates. To this the candidate replied that with most Greater Toronto Area school boards a
question about equity and inclusion would always be part of the interview. The candidate’s question increased the principal’s awareness of how far ahead the metropolitan school boards were in comparison to non-metropolitan school boards in Ontario. Researchers point out that such interactive discourses are important for adult learners:

“Rational discourse involves a commitment to extended and repeated conversations that evolve over time into a culture of careful listening and cautious openness to new perspectives, not shared understanding in the sense of consensus but rather deeper and richer understandings of our own biases as well as where our colleagues are coming from on particular issues and how each of us differently constructs those issues. Educational psychologist Jerome Bruner (1988) suggested that people are able to process complex information much more easily when it comes in narrative form. Given this, participation in extended and repeated discourse about justice and equity can provide unique opportunities for learner growth, transformation, and empowerment” (Brown 2004, p. 93).

Brown (2004) also points out that another objective of such dialogue is to dismantle the oppressive structures prevalent in education and society. Hence, there is a need for socially just leadership to maintain open conversations, examine and re-examine their perceptions and those of others, and constantly look beneath the surface to seek alternative explanations and ways of understanding. For instance, Ontario schools are publicly funded (with taxpayer dollars) and are serving a diverse population of students. Is there then a moral and social justice imperative to support teachers from all communities to apply for jobs and work for the school boards?

At a Toronto equity & inclusion leadership conference (2009), sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Education, a principal said that “creating equity and inclusion policies is messy business, but it is one that must be done.” With regard to hiring diversity, educational leaders will find that they are dealing with a dimension of change in an area of resistance. Fenwick (2001) quotes Foley saying, “…some of the most powerful learning occurs as people struggle against oppression, as they struggle to make sense of what is happening to them and to work out ways of doing something about it” (p. 41). There is a moral imperative for change with regard to diversity hiring (Brown, 2004). At the same time those who seek to alter the balance of power will need to understand their own role in ending the oppression (Brosnan, 2001). Other researchers state that “for entitled people (dominant group members), their role requires a moral choice to assume personal responsibility and to take personal initiative. For oppressed people (non-dominant group members), their role is to recognize oppression and to commit themselves to self-determination” (Lindsey et. al., 1999, p. 96 as quoted in Brown, 2004). Brown (2004) also
states that “critical, transformative leaders enter and remain in education not to carry on business as usual but to work for social change and social justice” (p. 96).

Researchers have provided various paradigms that can be considered for training of organizations and inclusive leaders (see Brosnan, 2001; Brown, 2004; Kayes, 2006). These researchers provide much “food for thought” when considering questions that may be asked by inclusive leaders and members from diverse groups. For example, Brosnan (2001) states, “In some ways, schools should be less surprised by the difficulty of finding teachers of color than they should be by the fact that any teacher of color would choose to teach in a predominantly white institution” (p. 4). Kayes (2006), in her training sessions, encourages educational leaders to consider the following central issues in the area of institutional transformation:

- Is the institution open to the kind of vision and change that diverse faculty and staff offer?
- What role do minority faculty and staff play in governance, strategic planning, faculty/staff organizations, etc.? Are they treated as central or token?
- Is the institution’s rhetoric on diversity actualized in systems, structures, and policies?

Kayes (2006) also suggests in her training sessions that in the area of community connections diverse staff may ask:

- Is this a community where I would feel included and connected?
- Are there others living here from my cultural group? Do identity networks exist to support my life outside the college or university?

- Does the institution address concerns and issues relevant to my cultural community?

The findings from this study suggest that three to four percent of high school teachers in the non-metropolitan school board studied are from visible minorities. Given these figures, the above issues and questions suggested by Kayes (2006) may be pertinent for hiring teams and educational leaders. In addition, with four out of the 12 respondents in this study revealing openness to diversity to enrich and transform their schools, there seems to be an opportunity to identify, train and support principals who can offer inclusive leadership. Enabling equity and inclusion discourses to be part of the everyday school context may help system wide transformation.
Call for action

Brosnan (2001) states that school leadership needs to create a sense of urgency in hiring diversity beyond a handful of believers, and needs to point out the practical and moral reasons for driving this change. “If the school community doesn’t feel a sense of urgency regarding hiring teachers of color, or diversifying the teaching staff in a variety of ways, things are unlikely to change any time soon” (Brosnan, 2001, p. 15). Scholars also point out that reflection alone does not produce transformation; action based on reflection is necessary for change (Brown, 2004; Freire, 1994).

Arguing the need for action, Rapp et. al. (2001, as cited in Brown, 2004) found that 90% of educational leader were technical drifters – those who emphasize and act on the technical components of their work rather than on the moral imperative. Technical drifters “fail to validate the cultural, intellectual, and emotional identities of people from under-represented groups, they avoid situations where their values (e.g., sexist, racist, classist, homophobic), leadership styles, and professional goals are challenged and dismantled, and they use their positions of power to formally and informally reaffirm their own professional choices” (Brown, 2004, p. 96). Given this disturbing reality, it is important to support inclusive educational leadership, particularly leadership that can help develop critical reflection and assist adult learners to plan and take action (Brown, 2004).

The Ontario (2009) Ministry of Education has also called for action. With regard to needed action in hiring diversity, Brosnan (2001) has quoted Steve Clem, the executive director of the Association of Independent Schools of New England as saying, “Why would a person of color want to come to our school and stay? If you don’t have substantive, concrete answers to that question, you need to get to work on transforming your school into a place where everyone will feel included” (p. 3). Statistics Canada (CBC, 2005) forecasts that by 2017 cities like Toronto and Vancouver will consist of 51% visible minorities. Around the same time Ryan (2009) discovered that in Canada “despite the increase of the proportion of ‘visible minority’ teachers in the general teacher population, the proportion of “visible minority” teachers in the teacher workforce declined between 2001 and 2006” (p. 596). In dealing with such change, Brown (2004) suggests that educational leaders need to be proactive rather than reactive.

Brown (2004) found that an approach using transformative learning theory can be used to teach leaders to be proactive versus reactive, to embrace conflict rather than avoid it, and to engage in critical reflection on the issues of difference, power and privilege. In this way, transformative learning brings new perspectives and leads to action by helping people understand their
distinctive role in ending oppression. In fact, Dunn (1987, as cited in Brown, 2004) suggests that there is an ontological link between one’s beliefs and public behaviour, and that the degree to which the talk about social justice prompts people to activism shows the true connection between personal understanding and public responsibility. Research has found that “whenever educators act on their passionate beliefs, it can and does make a difference” (Brown, 2004, p. 98).

**Consideration for future studies and work in the area of diversity hiring**

This study focused on principals and vice-principals (VPs) from secondary schools. Future researchers could focus on a broader perspective across an entire school board by including principals and VPs from elementary (K-6), middle (grades 7-8), in addition to secondary (9-12) schools. In addition, further research could investigate questions that were not addressed in this study such as the following:

- What are the barriers faced by teachers from diverse communities in getting teaching jobs?
- What will help “level the playing field” so marginalized groups can be on equal ground with teachers who come from privileged groups (such as teachers whose families have been teachers for generations)?
- What biases do current teachers hold that may impact the hiring and retention of diverse teachers?
- How could school boards train principals and teachers to manage intercultural change?
- What does equity mean to members of the hiring teams?
- What does the phrase “equal opportunity employer” mean to members of hiring teams?
- How are students from non-majority ethnic, race, faith etc. groups affected by having teacher role models from those diverse groups?
- What are the pros and cons of placing a visible minority (i.e. ethnic, minority race or faith) teacher in a school with diverse cultures, races, ethnicities, faiths versus a school that is predominantly Caucasian?

Non-metropolitan school boards, who wish to move forward with diversity hiring could start by looking at the diversity statements and policies published by Ontario schools, colleges, and universities in order to create their own diversity statement and policies. As presented earlier,
various examples are available on their websites (see Appendix C for one example); each one sends a clear message to the staff, students and community that the organization embraces and values diversity, equity and inclusion. Studies done by other Ontario school boards provide direction for training for teachers. For example, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), in its 2010 Achievement Gap Task Force report, found that “for racialized groups, the negative effect of systemic racism continues to erect barriers to the full realization of their potential for success” (p. 9). The lowest achieving demographic groups of students in TDSB schools are students of Aboriginal and African decent and “these groups experience the effects of racism to a greater degree than any other group” (p. 9). In this regard, TDSB (2010) has recommended that the school board provide anti-racist education training for its staff at all levels.

The TDSB (2010) has recommended not only learning about culturally responsive teaching, but also incorporating it; and the Board provides the following directions for consideration:

- Establish a procedure for creating opportunities and incentives for teachers with particular skills and interests to work in schools where they are most needed.
- Provide training in culturally responsive instruction and leadership for all principals and vice-principals.
- Establish an in-house certificate course (additional qualifications) for teachers, graduated over a three-year period.
- Encourage all beginning teachers (0-3 years practice) to take training in culturally responsive instruction through the certificate course, over a three-year period.
- Principals, in collaboration with their staff and their school’s professional learning committee, establish demonstration classroom programs for culturally responsive instruction.
- Incorporate culturally responsive instruction criteria into the selection and promotion process for teachers and school administrators.
- Use culturally responsive instruction as an indicator in the assessment process in the District Reviews conducted in the TDSB.

Furthermore, school boards wishing to create positive change by re-shaping training programs, policies, and in implementing a strategy for hiring diverse teachers in their schools may wish to conduct a study of hiring teams’ beliefs, attitudes and practices. School boards may also be able
to invite teacher-union representatives to these training/learning sessions because unions have a major part to play when it comes to protecting teachers and their jobs. In keeping with fulfilling its obligation to equity and inclusion policy directions from the Ontario Ministry of Education (2009), school boards can start a recruitment process that includes what is desirable from a diversity perspective.

**Conclusion**

This research focused on the topic of beliefs, attitudes, and practices of principals in hiring diverse teaching staff at a school board in Ontario. It has yielded new data and findings that may be useful not only to school boards across Ontario, but also to school boards across Canada and perhaps to other countries. The findings may also help stimulate future research in the area of hiring diverse educators. The findings and discussion in this study support existing research and provide ideas for creating positive change in educational institutions for valuing diversity and creating inclusive and caring learning communities.

Within the context of education in Ontario, the Ministry of Education’s (2009) framework for equity and inclusive education in schools has provided a major impetus for change. This framework and policy document has once again brought to the forefront discussions about the importance of diversity in Ontario schools and the need for action. After decades of work in this area, the seeds of positive ideas and thoughts may be ready to germinate on fertile ground.
References


Appendices

Appendix A – Questionnaire

Thank you for your time in completing this survey. The data is being collected for my Master's Thesis. The data will be gathered anonymously and your name or school will not be identified in the analysis.

Please note that the term “principals” refers to principals and VPs.

1. Please list the top 5 qualities you consider when interviewing a teaching candidate.

2. How do you define diversity?

3. Please provide statistics of teacher diversity in your school. Answer as many of the following as possible…

   a) How many teachers do you have on staff?

   b) How many teachers are from a visible minority?

   c) How many teachers are from a faith group other than Roman Catholic or Protestant faith? Please identify the faiths if known.

   d) How many teachers do you have from the LGBTQ community?

   e) Are there other teachers from diverse groups you can identify? If so, what groups and how many from each?

   f) Are teachers at your school representative of the student population you serve?

   g) How many students do you serve?

4. While principals are keenly aware of the need to hire the best candidate for teaching, is there an effort and/or process to screen and interview best candidates from a diversity perspective?

5. a) Have you given or would you give preference to a candidate over another because of their gender?

    b) Have you considered or given weight to the cultural, ethnic, colour, or faith background of a candidate when hiring, retaining, promoting teachers for your school? Please explain.

6. During the screening, interview, and hiring process, do you take into consideration the additional skills a diverse candidate may bring to the classroom and the school community? Why or Why not?

7. Can you give examples of interview questions that can help reveal the additional skills that a candidate from a diverse background may bring to the classroom?

8. What are the barriers or challenges to hiring diverse teaching staff in our school board?

9. a) Please describe the formal and informal learning (conference seminars, readings, discussions with colleagues, principals, superintendents, etc.) that you have had with regard to equity and inclusion?

    b) Have these formal and informal learning opportunities affected your hiring practices? If so, how?

10. What additional learning programs for principals could the board provide to further the goals of equity and inclusion in hiring, retaining, and promoting diverse teaching staff?
Appendix B – Purpose of Questions

The questions sought to find answer for three areas with regard to equity & inclusion and hiring teachers from diverse backgrounds: current practices; current understanding, beliefs, and attitudes; and future learning opportunities.

Current practices

- Questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 were tailored to glean out responses about current practices when hiring teachers.
- Question 3 tried to glean out data that would reveal if principals were comfortable with and had created an open environment in their schools to learn about teachers’ diversity, including those from marginalized minority groups with respect to faith, sexual orientation (LGBTQ community), and other forms of diversity.
- Questions 4, 5, and 6 were meant to find if principals use, or are directed by the school board to use, a differentiated lens/perspective to screen and hire diverse teachers.
- Question 9 explored what kind of formal and informal learning principals have had with regard to equity and inclusion; and if and how these learning opportunities affect hiring practices.

Current understanding, beliefs and attitudes

- Question 2 looked for principals’ understanding of diversity as they presented their definition of the term.
- Question 7 was meant to explore examples of interview questions that principals can provide that value diversity and can help reveal the additional skills that a candidate from a diverse background may bring to the classroom.
- Question 8 revealed principals understanding of barriers to hiring diverse teachers.
- Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, were devised to glean out principals’ beliefs and attitudes towards hiring diverse teachers.

Future learning opportunities

- Question 10 explored principals’ perspective to what professional development opportunities the school board could provide them to learn about equity and inclusion in hiring, retaining, and promoting diverse teaching staff.
Appendix C - Centennial College Statement of Diversity

Centennial College and its Board of Governors value and embrace diversity, equity and inclusion as fundamental to our mission to educate students for career success within a context of global citizenship and social justice.

We recognize that historical and persistent inequities and barriers to equitable participation exist and are well documented in society and within the college.

We believe individual and systemic biases contribute to the marginalization of designated groups. These biases include race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, colour, ethnicity, culture, linguistic origin, citizenship, creed (religion, faith), marital status, socio-economic class, family status, receipt of public assistance or record of offense. We acknowledge that resolving First Nations sovereignty issues is fundamental to pursuing equity and social justice within Canada.

We acknowledge the richness and diversity of the community we serve. As our community has evolved, and our staff and student population have changed, we have implemented policies and practices to address issues of inclusion. In moving forward, we will build on this work to embed commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in every aspect of what we do.

Our Guiding Principles

We believe social justice requires that we value diversity, equity and inclusion. We believe that the principles and practices of diversity, equity and inclusion strengthen the social and economic development, growth and well-being of our student population, our employees, and our local and international communities.

We uphold our social responsibility to contribute to a society that is equitable, fair and just. In accordance with our mission, vision and values, we will demonstrate leadership in eliminating barriers, and implementing and promoting diversity through our Academic Framework, policies, special initiatives and proactive measures.

We are committed to eliminating all forms of harassment and discrimination. We will prevent, remedy and redress these inequities. We will create an environment of inclusion in teaching, learning, employment and support services so we can fully serve our communities and prepare students to excel in the workplace and in society.

We will be accountable for the changes we need to make. We will continue to comply with existing federal and provincial legislative requirements. We will continue to develop and implement goals, policies, competencies and special initiatives founded upon principles of social justice to promote equity and inclusion. We will collect data to track progress and regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the initiatives we undertake, and we will communicate the outcomes to our community.
A safe, secure, inclusive and accessible environment for learning, teaching and working
Centennial College will be free from discrimination, harassment and hate. We will fully support the right of everyone to study, participate and work with dignity in an environment of mutual respect. We will include and respect the abilities, experiences, perspectives and contributions of our students, our employees, our partners and our communities.

Curriculum and instruction that reflect diversity and promote equity and inclusion
Our curriculum and instruction will draw on a variety of knowledge, perspectives and experiences. Our teaching and learning will help students recognize different forms of discrimination and understand the factors that cause inequity in society. Through our commitment to global citizenship and social justice, we will prepare students with the skills and knowledge to challenge unjust practices and build positive human relationships in an increasingly diverse society.

Equitable and accessible opportunities for student success
We will identify and remove institutional barriers that prevent access and impede student success. Our teaching and support services will demonstrate equity and inclusion. We will provide transformative and inclusive curriculum that will help students attain academic excellence and positive social and career outcomes.

Building knowledge and evaluating effectiveness
We will ensure we are knowledgeable about diversity, equity and inclusion. We will critically analyze and research current practices. We will evaluate our effectiveness by tracking our progress, analyzing what is working well and determining how we can best improve.

Human Resource Management systems, policies and practices that reflect diversity and promote equity and inclusion
We will implement bias- and barrier-free recruitment, selection, hiring and promotion at all levels. We will ensure that our employees’ skills and knowledge are respected, valued and used appropriately. We will provide equitable opportunities for professional development and advancement for all employees.

Training and staff development in equity and diversity
We will provide ongoing training and staff development to build understanding and ensure that equity and inclusion are central to the work we do. We will recognize and reward initiatives that support diversity, equity and inclusion.

Accessible and inclusive college communication
We will reflect diversity in communications that promote Centennial College, our programs, services and curriculum. We will ensure that college communication is respectful, and that our information is accessible and widely available.

Strategic engagement with diverse communities
We will undertake strategic outreach to develop meaningful relationships with diverse communities. We will engage with these communities and encourage their fullest contribution to, and participation in, our activities and consultations.
**Relationships and partnerships that align with our mission, vision and values**
We will actively seek relationships that enhance our values and offer domestic and international opportunities to prepare our students to work effectively and successfully in a global and diverse marketplace. We will ensure that our contractual relationships with businesses and organizations comply with our standards of equity, human rights and fairness.

**Committing financial and human resources to promote diversity, equity and inclusion**
We will provide resources to support the work of our employees, our students and our partners in promoting diversity, equity and inclusion.