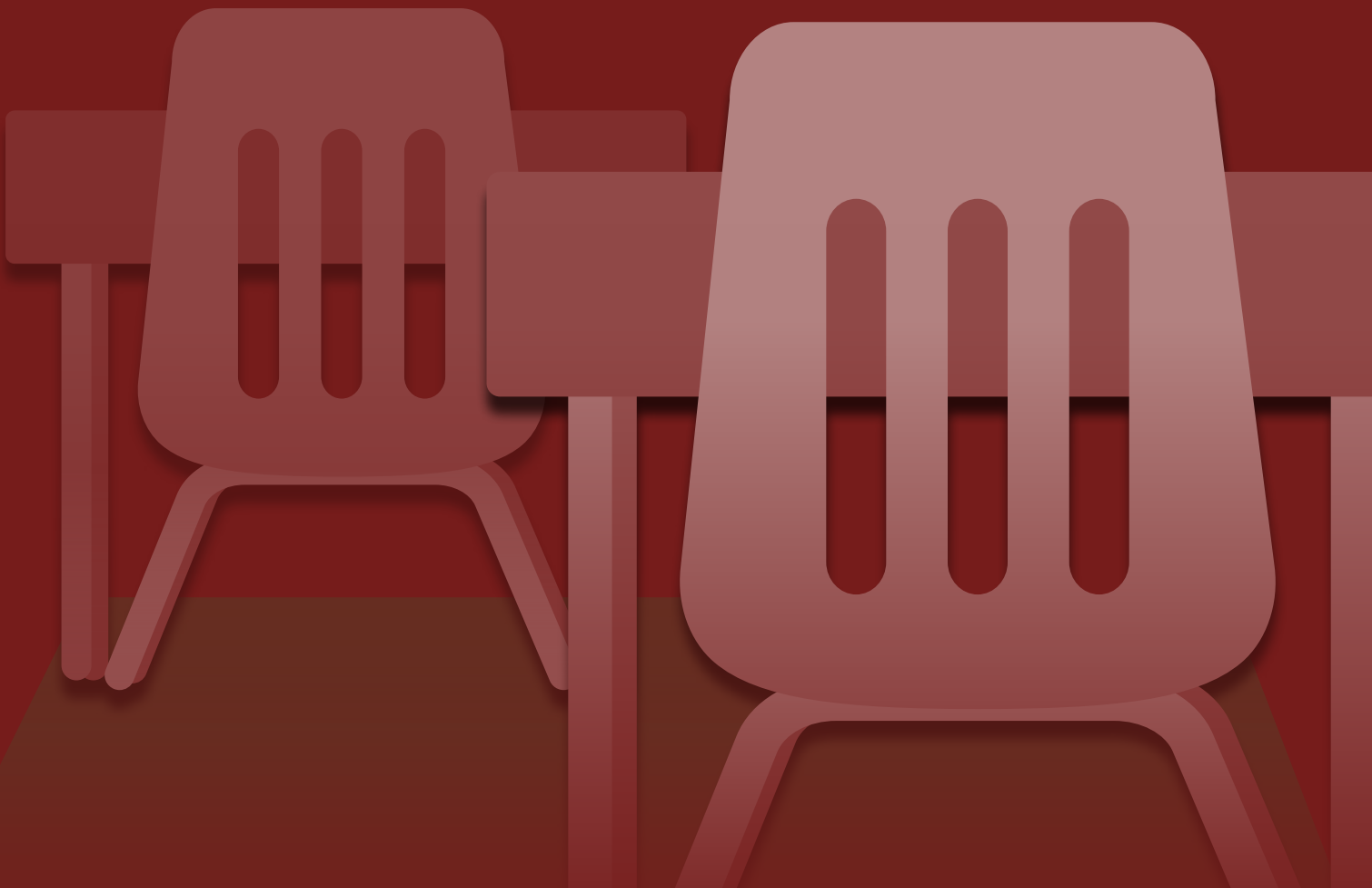NEW HAMPSHIRE CENTER
for Justice & Equity

"The Belonging Case" for Diversity

By: Jacob A. Bennett | *August 2023*

A Focused Review of Literature with Relevance to the Roles and Accountabilities for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Officials in Public Education Systems

Rationale Statement

The NH Center for Justice & Equity's work is organized into six sectors of effort: Civic Engagement, Economic Development, Education, Government, Health, and Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice. Within the Education sector, the NHCJE team sought to better understand the current evidence around the need for and roles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) professionals in schools. NHCJE commissioned this literature review to synthesize and summarize this evidence base. The goal was to provide educational professionals, administrators, policy makers, parents, students, and other stakeholders with an understanding of how and why the role of DEIJ professionals have developed and evolved in NH and nationwide.

NHCJE is pleased to provide this report to inform important conversations about DEIJ and its critical role in the education system.

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I. Introduction

At the start of 2023, the state of New Hampshire counts four public school districts with a staff member dedicated to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice ("DEIJ"), with all four roles having been created since 2021. At the same time, in this state and across the country, DEIJ efforts in public education are under attack, being labeled as discriminatory violations of state and federal laws with new laws being proposed and passed over the past three years (Schwartz, 2023). This "moral panic" (DeMitchell, Fossey, and DeMitchell, 2022) has resulted in the pulling of books off shelves on the basis of "divisive" racial or gendered content and the removal of rainbow stickers and family photos or any other indicia of support for or identification with LGBTQIA+ issues (Lavietes, 2022). It is in this context that this literature review has been conducted, with a focus on clarifying the value of diversity with particular interest in the roles and accountabilities for DEIJ officials in public education.

In the following pages, I will describe my methodology; review conceptualizations of diversity; summarize findings of peer-reviewed literature with relevance to diversity in public education; and analyze position descriptions for DEIJ officials in New Hampshire. In the discussion, I consider opportunities and challenges to ongoing district-level DEIJ work in New Hampshire, and I conclude with reflections on calls to make more room for disability in diversity efforts, utilize non-traditional pathways to increase teacher diversity, and rethink organizational structures and cultures for lasting change.

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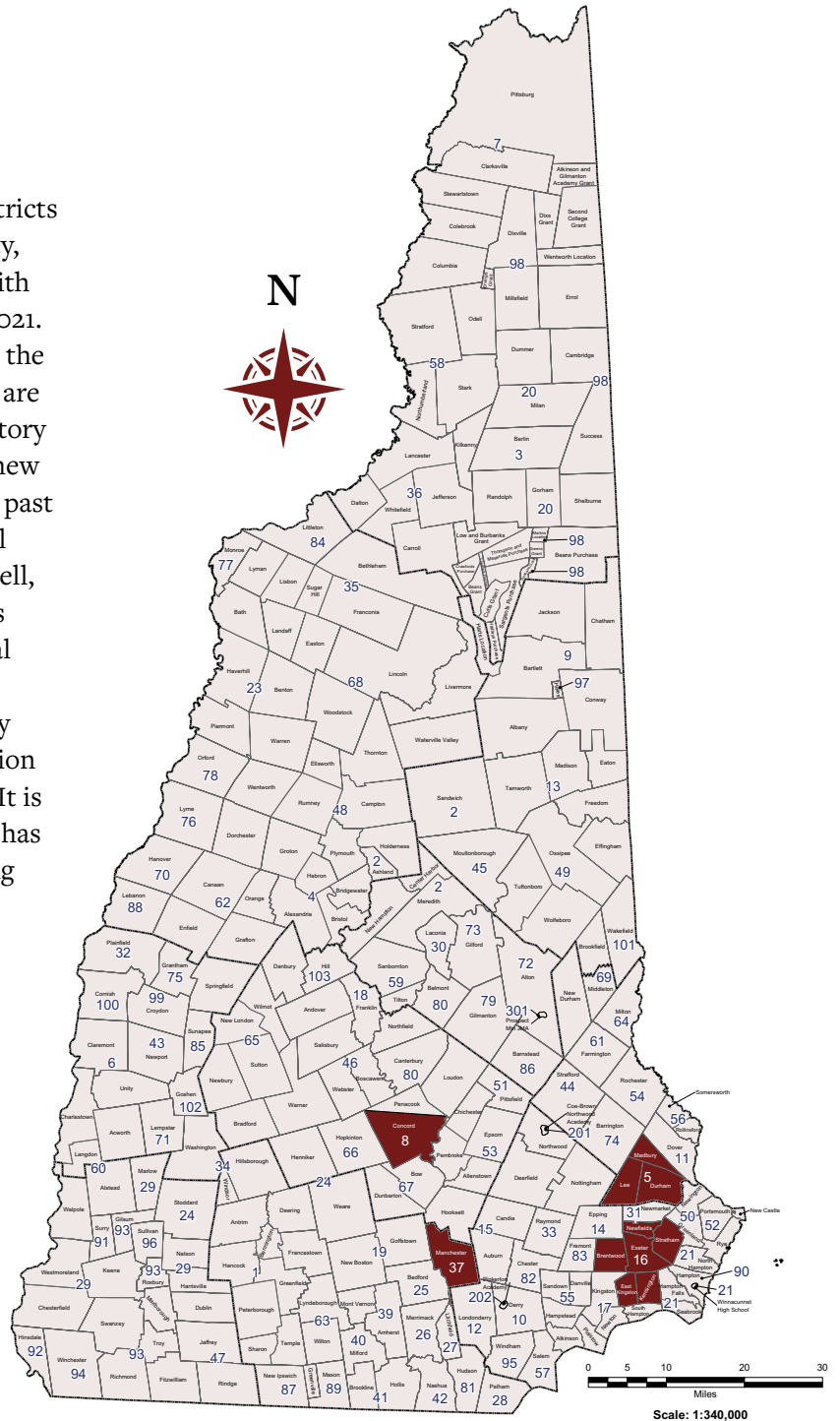
Map generated from information from:

Prepared 12/18/2018 by:
NH Department of Safety
Division of Emergency Services
Mapping Section

Scale: 1:340,000

4 out of 110 NH SAUs have a DEIJ Official

II. Methodology

For this targeted review of literature, it was my goal to identify:

- **Legal underpinnings of the case for diversity in educational contexts**

- **Other justifications for encouraging diversity**

- **Academic studies of the effects of diversity on student learning and other related concepts**

- **Possible accountabilities beyond traditional academic measures like test scores and grades**

- **Duties and background expected of a DEIJ officer in New Hampshire**

To find relevant literature on student outcomes tied to diversity in education, I conducted a search of the online library system of the University of New Hampshire, limiting results to peer-reviewed journal publications that addressed diversity in public education. I looked first for meta-analyses or systematic reviews, then individual studies, so long as they addressed the relevant concerns of the review.

For legal documents like court decisions, I relied mostly on WestLaw's database but also located pertinent filings and transcripts through court Web sites and PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Documents).

I also searched online using DuckDuckGo's search engine for relevant articles, Webinars, lectures, and Podcast episodes in order to ensure a broad sweep of discourse around relevant issues addressed here.

I only report on findings from these searches in cases where sources advance understanding of the meaning and value of diversity in public education.

III. Defining and Valuing "Diversity"

The prevalence of the term "diversity," and consensus around its meaning, can be illustrated by noting the similarities between definitions offered by the United States Chamber of Commerce (n.d.), on the one hand, and New Hampshire Public Radio (a National Public Radio station) (Whitelaw, 2010), on the other. The former includes non-judgmental recognition of differences in "race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, language, (dis)ability, age, religious commitment or political perspective," and the latter includes race, gender, age, sexual preference, and disability in its conception.

From the perspective of global management consulting firm McKinsey (2022), "[d]iversity refers to who is represented in the workforce" and clarifies the ways this representation can cross lines of gender, age, ethnicity, physical ability, and neurological function. The Greater Good Science Center (2023) at University of California, Berkeley describes the term as "both an obvious fact of human life—namely, that there are many different kinds of people" and also an "idea that this diversity drives cultural, economic, and social vitality and innovation." The American Library Association provides several references (including a *bona fide* dictionary entry), choosing to begin with "appreciation and understanding for people with different backgrounds and cultures." One example that seems to capture most common elements of a definition of "diversity" is this from the National Association of Counties (2022):

The presence of different and multiple characteristics that make up individual and collective identities, including race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, language, and physical ability. (p. 2)

> Compare all that to the start of the response I received from OpenAI's ChatGPT when I queried, "What is diversity and what is its value to society?":

> Diversity refers to the presence of differences among individuals, including differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, ability, religion, and socioeconomic status. It recognizes that each person has unique experiences and perspectives that shape their identity, and that these differences should be respected and celebrated.

Diversity (*noun*)

"It seems there is great enough understanding of diversity that most definitions exist in harmony with others..."

> "…**diversity** drives cultural, economic, and social vitality and innovation."
>
> (Science Center, 2023)

It seems there is great enough understanding of diversity that most definitions exist in harmony with others and, despite their differences, do not seem to negate meaning and meaningful application of the term, even when filtered through an algorithm.

Before moving onto a review of academic literature and position descriptions, I also want to briefly sketch out the ways diversity has been construed as a facet of legal compliance, as a business asset or human resource, and as a mechanism to support sense of belonging in all students. These broad categories of conceptualization are not exhaustive, nor is my coverage within these groupings; instead, I have sought to present areas of active and constructive discourse relevant to the concept at hand: the role of DEIJ officers in public school districts.

A. The Legal Case

The constitutionality of desegregation and affirmative action has been grounded in the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection clause, with diversity being held out by the United States Supreme Court as a compelling state interest since 1978 in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*. While the Court's majority in that decision, written by Justice Lewis F. Powell, determined that a racial quota system was unconstitutional, they also allowed then that "the interest of diversity is compelling in the context of a university's admissions program" (p. 314). In another landmark decision to consider race-conscious admissions policies 25 years later,

the Court's majority stated clearly in *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003) that it "endorse[d] Justice Powell's view that student body diversity is a compelling state interest that can justify the use of race in university admissions" (p. 325).

An underlying rationale for the 14th Amendment was to ensure the equal treatment of formerly enslaved people who were ostensibly protected from re-enslavement by the 13th Amendment, but who were not yet protected from *un*equal treatment under law and so could be placed back in "involuntary servitude" for violations of laws, even when patently unfair or arbitrarily enforced, as discussed at length at the 150th Anniversary Conversation with Constitutional and Reconstruction Historians (Gilder Lehrman Center, 2016), including moderation by Yale University's David Blight and commentary from Akhil Reed Amar and John Fabian Witt of Yale Law School, Tomiko Brown-Nagin of Harvard Law School, Eric Foner of Columbia University, and Amy Dru Stanley of University of Chicago.

Nevertheless, divergence from the Court's own precedents establishing the value and constitutionality of diversity were apparent just a few years after *Grutter* when Chief Justice John Roberts wrote for a plurality in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*: "The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race" (2007, p. 748). A tautology rather than a strategy, this statement in its reductive simplicity diminishes the ongoing challenges for underrepresented minorities in education contexts and suggests that remedial efforts to address and repair *existing harm* are the real danger to society rather than documented and persistent racial disparities themselves. Mickelson (2007) writes of the opinions in the case:

> [T]he four-Justice plurality opinion dismissed the social science evidence on the benefits of integration as insufficiently compelling to support race-conscious school integration practices. A majority of five Justices, drawing

upon the corpus of social science research that shows school racial composition influences outcomes, decided that race-conscious school integration and reduction of racial isolation are important goals (while a different 5-4 majority rejected two voluntary school plans that achieved these goals by giving preference to individual students on the basis of their race). (p. 8)

Mickelson (2007) goes on to summarize a long list of empirically-based claims about the benefits of diversity in K-12 education and refers as well to an amicus brief filed on behalf of the school districts by 553 researchers from 42 states and 201 different educational institutions. In that brief (Brief for 553 Social Scientists, 2006), the amici summarize their arguments and justify them on the strength of a "body of research that has developed since the Court declared government-sanctioned school racial segregation unconstitutional in *Brown v. Board of Education*," a compendium which "supports three interrelated conclusions:

1. racially integrated schools provide significant benefits to students and communities,

2. racially isolated schools have harmful educational implications for students, and

3. race-conscious policies are necessary to maintain racial integration in schools." (p. 2)

Despite all that, despite the history of the 14th Amendment as a race-conscious attempt to affirm the place of formerly-enslaved people in all areas of public life, on June 29, 2023, in a 6-3 majority opinion in *Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina, et al.*, the Supreme Court nevertheless overturned four decades of jurisprudence on which colleges and universities have relied when crafting race-conscious admissions policies, defying its own precedent (set in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978) and narrowed in *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003)) that diversity serves a compelling state interest in educational contexts.

The following excerpts from amicus briefs filed with the Supreme Court in Students for Fair Admissions speak to the legal underpinnings of a compelling interest in achieving diversity, and voice overwhelming support of diversity as a vital, legal, and constitutional consideration for purposes of educational attainment, business performance, and democratic function in our society.

- Amici have a compelling interest in enrolling diverse classes. Studies consistently show that diversity—including racial diversity—meaningfully improves learning experiences, complex thinking, and non-cognitive abilities. Diversity also generates pedagogical

"...racial **diversity improves** decision-making by increasing creativity, communication, and accuracy within teams."

(Brief for Major American Business Enterprises, 2022, pp. 4-5)

innovations and decreases prejudice. These benefits are especially pronounced at liberal arts colleges and small universities, where smaller class sizes lead to greater engagement among diverse students. (Brief for Amherst, et al., 2022, p. 3)

- Racial and ethnic diversity enhance business performance. Research and experience demonstrate that racial diversity improves decision-making by increasing creativity, communication, and accuracy within teams. Experience in a diverse university environment prepares students to interact with and serve racially diverse client and customer bases and to work with people of all backgrounds. The result is a business community more aligned with the public, increased profits, and business success. Reflecting those performance benefits, American businesses have invested substantially in diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives that are designed, in part, to promote internal racial and ethnic diversity. (Brief for Major American Business Enterprises, 2022, pp. 4-5)

"Experience in a diverse university environment **prepares students** to interact with and serve racially diverse client and customer bases and to work with people of all backgrounds."
(Brief for Major American Business Enterprises, 2022, pp. 4-5)

- Emphasizing the need to address "the effect of segregation itself on public education," and the role education plays in "our democratic society" to foster "good citizenship," the *Brown* Court envisioned an ideal where all students have meaningful educational opportunities, can learn from one another, and can do so in a way that avoids the racial and ethnic isolation that was so pernicious at that time. This Court extended these principles to the higher education context—first in *Bakke*, and then in *Grutter*—by permitting the use of race as one of many factors to achieve the educational benefits of diversity on a college campus. (Brief for Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, et al., 2022, pp. 3-4)

Thus, the Court rejected precedent on affirmative action, against the grain not only of modern jurisprudence, but also against the stated interests of "thirty-three private, highly selective residential colleges" (Brief for Amherst, et al., 2022), nearly seventy corporations operating in the United States, including Apple, Google, Biogen, Cisco, GE, Hershey, Kraft Heinz, Proctor and Gamble, and Salesforce (Brief for Major American Business Enterprises, 2022), and more than sixty currently-serving legislators (Brief for Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, et al., 2022).

As noted in these and other briefs, Supreme Court decisions about desegregation in public education (e.g., Brown v. Board of Education) and affirmative action in college and university admissions (e.g., Grutter v. Bollinger) describe a clear and compelling case for a state interest in diversity across student populations at all levels of education (see also, Mikulyuk and Braddock, 2018), despite the most recent Supreme Court decision about taking race into account as a factor in admissions.

B. The Business Case

I quoted above from a McKinsey (2022) statement on workforce diversity, and that same statement describes the benefit diversity provides to business in broad terms: "Companies that are diverse, equitable, and inclusive are

better able to respond to challenges, win top talent, and meet the needs of different customer bases" (n.p.). This bears similarity to "representative bureaucracy," which Grissom, Kern, and Rodriguez (2015) argue applies in education, and which describes "the idea that a governmental organization is better situated to serve its clients when its employee composition reflects that of its client population" (p. 185). In another report describing the third in a series of McKinsey studies going back to 2014, altogether "encompassing 15 countries and more than 1,000 large companies" (Dixon-Fyle, et al., 2020, p. 3), authors tout the financial outperformance of firms with greater gender, ethnic, and cultural representation at the executive level:

> Our 2019 analysis finds that companies in the top quartile of gender diversity on executive teams were 25 percent more likely to experience above-average profitability than peer companies in the fourth quartile. This is up from 21 percent in 2017 and 15 percent in 2014. Moreover, we found that the higher the representation, the higher the likelihood of outperformance. Companies with more than 30 percent women on their executive teams are significantly more likely to outperform those with between 10 and 30 percent women, and these companies in turn are more likely to outperform those with fewer or no women executives. [...]

The effective conclusion from McKinsey after years of study is that it pays off to pay attention to diversity in matters of hiring and leadership:

> In the case of ethnic and cultural diversity, the findings are equally compelling. We found that companies in the top quartile outperformed those in the fourth by 36 percent in terms of profitability in 2019, slightly up from 33 percent in 2017 and 35 percent in 2014. (McKinsey, 2020, n.p.)

Troubling that line of inquiry, though, and especially worth consideration for those interested in the success of DEIJ efforts, is a set of six studies conducted and reported

"...companies in the top quartile of gender diversity on executive teams were **25 percent more likely** to experience above-average profitability than peer companies in the fourth quartile."

(Dixon-Fyle, et al., 2020, p. 3)

on by Georgeac and Rattan (2023), in which they studied "organizational diversity cases" or "organizations' set of justifications for why diversity matters to them" (p. 1). While these studies are focused on new or prospective hires, frequently graduate students, they provide an interesting twist to consider when designing programs for teacher recruitment, hiring, orientation, and retention. Included in the first study were the organizational diversity cases of 410 of the Fortune 500 corporations, which were overwhelmingly what the researchers describe as "the business case," which touts the benefits of diversity to the organization:

> diversity is valuable because of its benefits for organizations' performance, whether directly (e.g., better financial performance) or indirectly (e.g., through greater informational diversity, better recruitment, access to customer segments, etc.). Because the defining feature of the business case is its depiction of diversity as a means to an end— which is reaping benefits for organizations' performance (e.g., "We value diversity

because it makes good business sense")—we characterize it as an *instrumental* rhetoric. (p. 3)

While 404 of the 410 Fortune 500 companies fell into the "business case" category (81% of all Fortune 500), only 6 (or 1% of all Fortune 500) fell into what the researchers describe as "the fairness case":

> diversity is inherently valuable on the grounds of fairness and social justice principles (e.g., "We value diversity because it is the right thing to do"). Because the defining feature of the fairness case is its depiction of diversity as an end in itself (rather than as a means to achieve performance), we characterize it as a *noninstrumental* rhetoric. (pp. 2-3)

Across the next five studies the researchers found that found that LGBTQ+ participants anticipated lower sense of belonging when organizations utilized the business (v. fairness) case; that female participants reported similarly lower senses of belonging in science, technology, engineering, and math fields; and that business (v. fairness and control) cases negatively affect sense of belonging among Black participants. Taken together, the researchers conclude "that the most prevalent organizational diversity case works against organizations' stated diversity goals, by paradoxically warding off the very groups they need to attract to become more diverse" (p. 30).

C. The Belonging Case

As indicated in a pointed discussion by Georgeac and Rattan (2023) on "sense of belonging," which they define as "describ[ing] the extent to which one feels like an accepted member of a group, whose contributions are valued by others in the setting" (p. 4, citing Good et al., 2012), there is a way to think about diversity that looks to the effects on individuals rather than on organizations, and to effects of well-being or other measures of success beyond test scores (Ferlazzo, 2018; Kamenetz, 2015; Koretz, 2008). I am calling this "the belonging case," and it is based in a sense of basic human needs and rights. As Walton and Cohen (2007) put it:

> The need for *social belonging*—for seeing oneself as socially connected—is a basic human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; see also MacDonald & Leary, 2005). Indeed, a sense of social connectedness predicts favorable outcomes. Perceived availability of social support buffers mental and physical health (Bolger, Zuckerman, & Kessler, 2000; Spiegel, Bloom, Kraemer, & Gottheil, 1989), and feeling respected in the workplace predicts compliance with authority figures (Tyler & Blader, 2003; see also Baumeister, Twenge, & Nuss, 2002). In domains of achievement, we suggest, people are sensitive to the quality of their social bonds. (p. 82)

In their paper reporting on two studies into the ways "belonging uncertainty" impacts motivation and achievement of Black students, Walton and Cohen "suggest that, in academic and professional settings, members of socially stigmatized groups are more uncertain of the quality of their social bonds and thus more sensitive to issues of social belonging" (p. 82).

In addition to the examples provided above, I have found a useful guide in Gillies' (2017) article "Teaching pre-service teachers about belonging," which is just one of several in a special issue of *International Journal of Whole Schooling* devoted to belonging. This conceptualization also locates belonging as a basic necessity:

> A student's feeling of belonging with her classmates extends beyond just being important; it is critical. Identified as a basic human need on Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* (1943), belonging is synonymous with the

human need for love, and must be present along with the other basic needs in order for a person to lead a happy, satisfied life (Maslow, 1943). Belonging is sensed and experienced through feelings and relationships with others and can be a strong determinant of school success.

Often visible in terms of sociability, belonging is an internalized phenomenon experienced by individuals as one individual among others:

> A person's sense of belonging involves another person, a group, or a community that is not complete without that person, and consequently that person is incomplete without the other, group, or community (Baskin, Wampold, Quintana, & Enright, 2010). The significance of students' feelings of belonging is great and directly impacts other important things; belonging affects students' academic motivation (Faircloth & Hamm, 2011), academic aspirations, choices, persistence, and performance (Murphy &

Zirkel, 2015), as well as academic, social, and emotional outcomes (Appleton, Christenson, Kim, & Reschly, 2006).

And the ties between belonging and success persist with students into college:

> Research shows that faculty diversity supports student success. It's an important piece of the college completion puzzle and can have a significant impact on students' sense of belonging, retention rates, and persistence. When Black and Latino college students learn from Black and Latino faculty, they are more likely to complete college, in no small part because Black and Latino faculty members can serve as strong mentors and role models to students of color, promote persistence toward a degree, and help create a more inclusive campus climate. (Bitar, et al., 2022, p. 3)

Belonging is important for students' well-being, development, and achievement at all levels, and warrants serious consideration as a metric of accountability for DEIJ efforts and officers.

"The need for **social belonging**—for seeing oneself as socially connected—is a basic human motivation."

(Baumeister & Leary, 1995; see also MacDonald & Leary, 2005)

## IV. Empirical Studies of Diversity in Education

Studies of the academic impacts of "diversifying the classroom" (Lindsay, Blom, Tilsley, 2017) show clear evidence of the positive outcomes for students when they learn from teachers – at least *one* – who are the same race as them. Studies also show that white teachers represent a larger proportion of all teachers than what is reflected in the student population, with a particularly stark gap between the proportion of students who identify as Hispanic and that of teachers who identify as Hispanic (Lindsay, et al., 2017, n.p.). This disparity is evident in states with an overwhelming White majority, as in New Hampshire, which is 89.6% White (NHCJE, 2023) but whose teachers are 97% White (Lindsay, et al., 2017). Even so, reporting from the Carsey School of Public Policy (2020) at the University of New Hampshire notes that "the relatively small Hispanic population and population of color more than doubled from 60,500 in 2000 to 176,880 in 2020, accounting for over three-quarters of the total population increase in this period" (n.p.). Gains in population for minority groups were as follows:

The biggest growth was in populations identifying as two or more races or as an "other" race that wasn't listed. This group has steadily increased since 2000, although changes to data processing in 2020 complicate direct comparisons over time. Hispanics are the next largest racial-ethnic group in New Hampshire with 59,500 residents, or 4.3 percent of the population. The Asian population is 35,600 (2.6 percent), and Black number 18,700 (1.4 percent). Each of these three groups more than doubled in size between 2000 and 2020. (Carsey, 2020, n.p.)

Getting into more detail regarding those demographic shifts, Johnson (2021) reports that "20.2% of New Hampshire's under age 18 population belonged to a minority group in 2020, with Hispanics, Asians, and those of two or more races representing the largest shares" (p. 1), with "the proportion of the adult population that is minority [...] at 11.1%" (p. 2, see Figure below). Johnson attributes the child diversity growth to two trends, first that "[t]he minority child population grew by 16,800 (47.9%) between 2010 and 2020" (p. 1) and second that during the same timeframe "the non-Hispanic White child
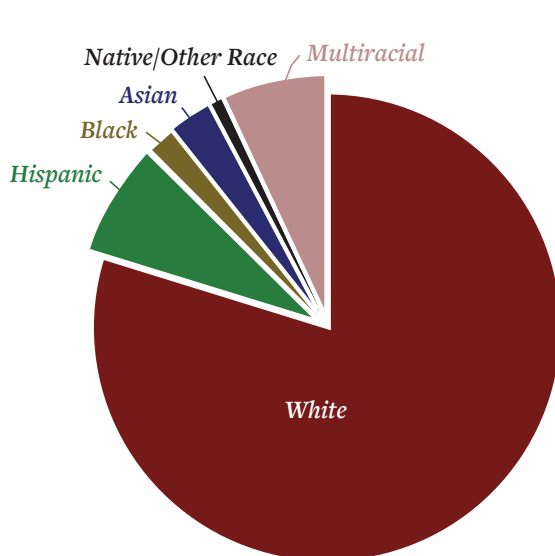
Children, Under 18*
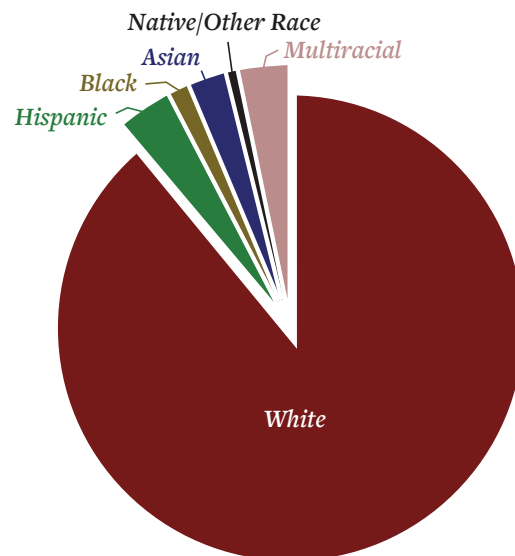
Adults, 18 and Over*

population declined by 47,200 (-18.7%)" (p. 2). Underscoring the import of these rather drastic demographic differences across age and race/ethnicity, Johnson also recognizes the responsibility public school systems must meet regarding the needs of a changing population: "New Hampshire's growing racial-ethnic diversity, especially among those under age 18, means that youth centered institutions, such as schools and health care providers, have been the first to serve a diverse population" (p. 2).

Broadening the scope from New Hampshire to the wider field of education research, consider an excerpt of outcomes from a summary provided by Mickelson (2007), illustrating the consensus from "hundreds of scholarly articles on the effects of school and classroom composition on educational outcomes" (p. 8):

- Desegregated schools and classrooms have positive effects on achievement. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills of all students are likely to improve in racially diverse classrooms.

- Positive effects can occur at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

- Desegregated learning environments can have positive effects on mathematics and language achievement.

- Students from all racial and social class backgrounds are likely to demonstrate higher achievement in racially balanced schools. To be sure, there are variations in the size of the effects by state, by subject matter, school level and ethnic group.

- Racial isolation has harmful effects on the achievement of Black and many Latino students. Research is less clear about harmful effects of racial isolation on Whites and Asian Americans, although there are some studies that indicate racially-isolated White schools may not be optimal for Whites either.

- The ways that schools and classrooms are organized contribute to the opportunities to learn within them. Compared to racially-

> ## "Critical thinking and problem-solving skills of all students are **likely to improve** in racially diverse classrooms."
> (Mickelson, 2007)

isolated minority schools, diverse schools and classrooms are more likely to offer higher quality and greater equity in opportunities to learn.

- Adults, especially members of disadvantaged minority groups, who attended desegregated K-12 schools are more likely to attain higher education, to have higher status jobs, and to live and work in racially diverse settings compared to their counterparts who attended racially isolated minority schools.

In Redding's (2019) "review of the effect of student-teacher racial/ethnic matching on teacher perceptions of students and student academic and behavioral outcomes," the researcher synthesized results from three dozen peer-reviewed quantitative studies that examined the following outcomes at the individual student level:

1. teacher ratings of student behavior

2. teacher ratings of student academic performance

3. student test scores, and

4. other behavioral outcomes (p. 509)

> "Racial isolation has **harmful effects** on the achievement of Black and many Latino students."
> (Mickelson, 2007, p. 8)

In an overview of results with regard to these four domains, Redding observed that "teacher ratings of students' classroom behavior indicates that externalized problem behaviors are the only behavioral rating that are consistently rated differently depending on the race of the teacher," but that "[t]hese differences were substantial" (p. 523) for Black and Latino/a students. Noting that teachers' decisions to escalate in response to disruptive behavior is just the first of several steps of possible escalation, Redding makes clear the implications for academic performance of minority students. As for teacher rating of academic performance, "Black and Latino/a students also tend to receive more favorable ratings of their academic ability when assigned to a co-racial or co-ethnic teacher, although this evidence is generally stronger in middle and high schools than elementary schools" (p. 523). Evidence of effect on test scores is less determinative; despite suggestions that Black students' academic achievement improves when they learn from Black teachers, there are other studies that "find no evidence of improved test performance" (p. 523). In the end, though, Redding's discussion recalls the important and significant links between same-race teachers and "reduced risk of exclusionary discipline, an increased likelihood of being assigned to a gifted and talented program, improved attendance, and a decreased risk of dropping out of school" (p. 524).

V. Example Position Descriptions

In response to the identified benefits on focused work around diversity in education, schools have established dedicated DEIJ roles within the school system. There are examples across the country of positions focused on DEIJ issues in public education. Conducting a casual online search for position descriptions, I found examples for Chief Diversity Officer, Worcester Public Schools, Massachusetts; Director of Equity, Dublin Unified School District, California; and Director of Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Oregon Department of Education. New Hampshire in early 2023 counts one chief equity officer, two director-level positions, and one coordinator-level position. Given this review is focused on diversity in public education and also on state-level issues, I report below only on the official NH position descriptions as they existed in 2022, which I received directly from the four districts' staff. I also note that my review includes only the final versions of the position descriptions and does not include in-depth position analysis (Oregon State University, 2023). I do, however, provide a brief analysis of the content of each position description, including direct replication of education and/or experience requirements and a summary of essential functions and responsibilities.
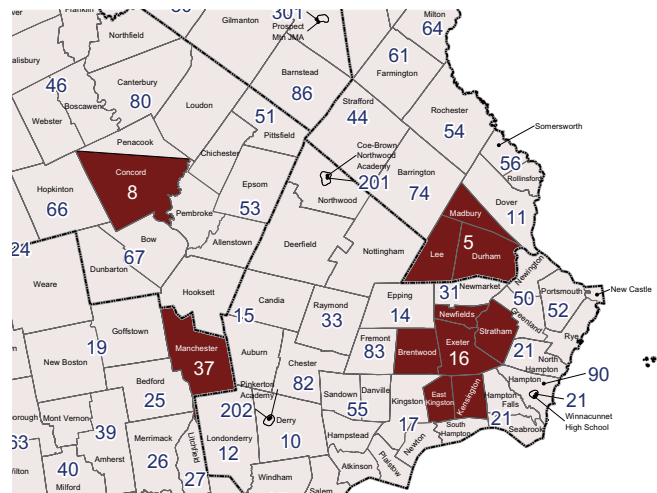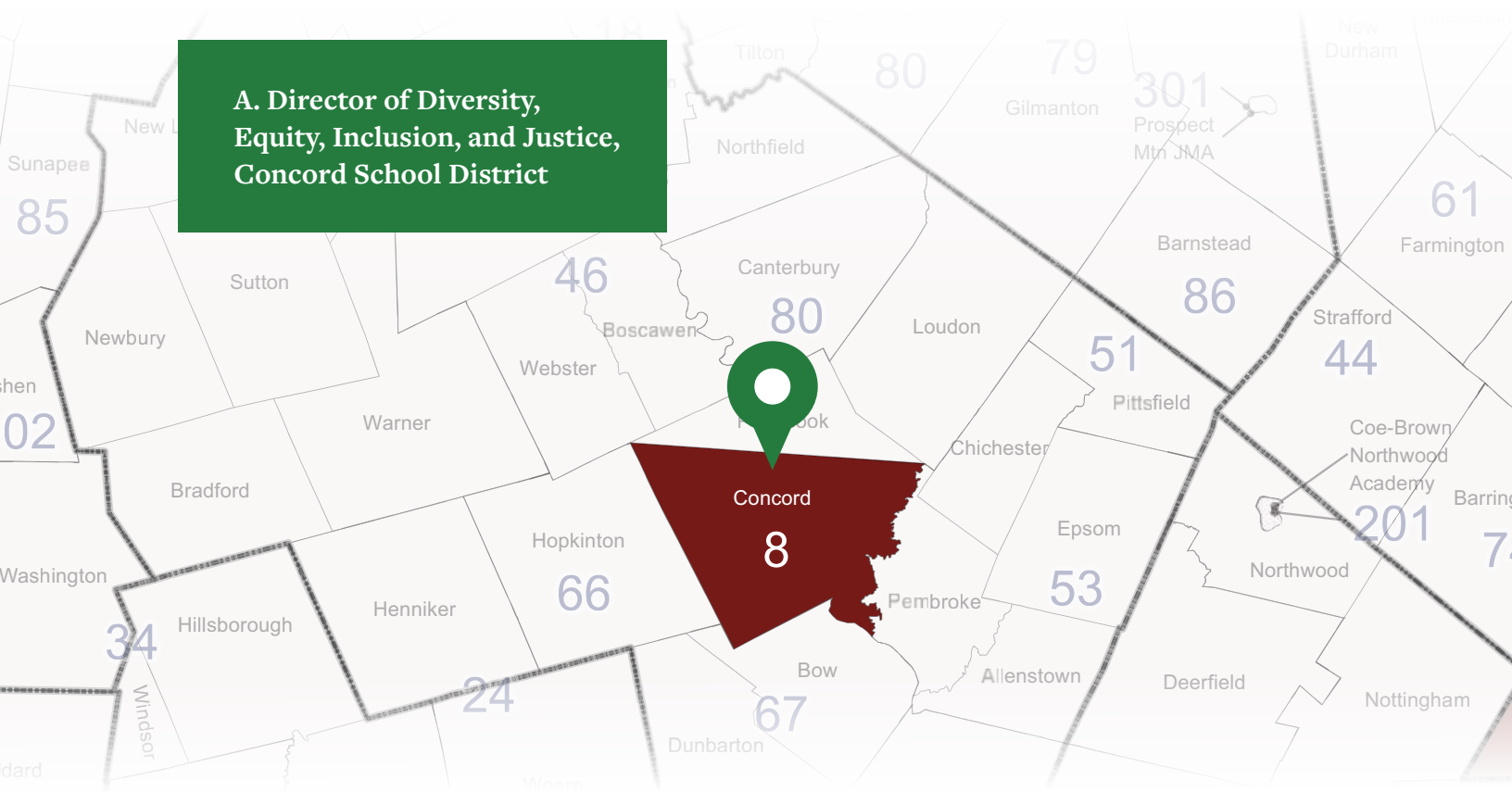
A. Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice, Concord School District

1. Required Education and/or Experience

Education required: Bachelor's degree in human relations, ethnic studies, sociology, or other social impact discipline.

Life experience in supporting diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice efforts in an education or non-profit setting in lieu of degree will be accepted.

The ideal candidate must have the proven ability to engage in effective conversations about race, have historical knowledge of the many forms of oppression, and understand different forms of bias and how to respond effectively to instances of oppression, discrimination, or bias, all while building the capacity for doing so in others.

## 2. Summary of Essential Functions and Responsibilities

The primary function of the Director position is to collaborate with faculty and staff to promote a deep understanding of how sustainability, equity, and justice issues are inextricably linked and how they combine environmental, social, economic, and cultural factors in complex and dynamic ways. In addition to this, the Director also facilitates and coordinates professional learning experiences, building relationships with faculty, students, and staff, and supporting their classroom practices. They work closely with school-based DEIJ teams to develop and implement equitable programs, practices, and policies that build capacity around DEIJ work among faculty, staff, and students.

The Director recognizes the importance of DEIJ in the school district and explicitly communicates this need to stakeholders, including but not limited to the School Board, leadership, faculty and staff, students, and community members, using a variety of media. Finally, the Coordinator facilitates SAU-wide DEIJ interest groups, bringing together individuals who are passionate about promoting sustainability, equity, and justice in the school district.

B. Chief Equity Officer,
Manchester School District
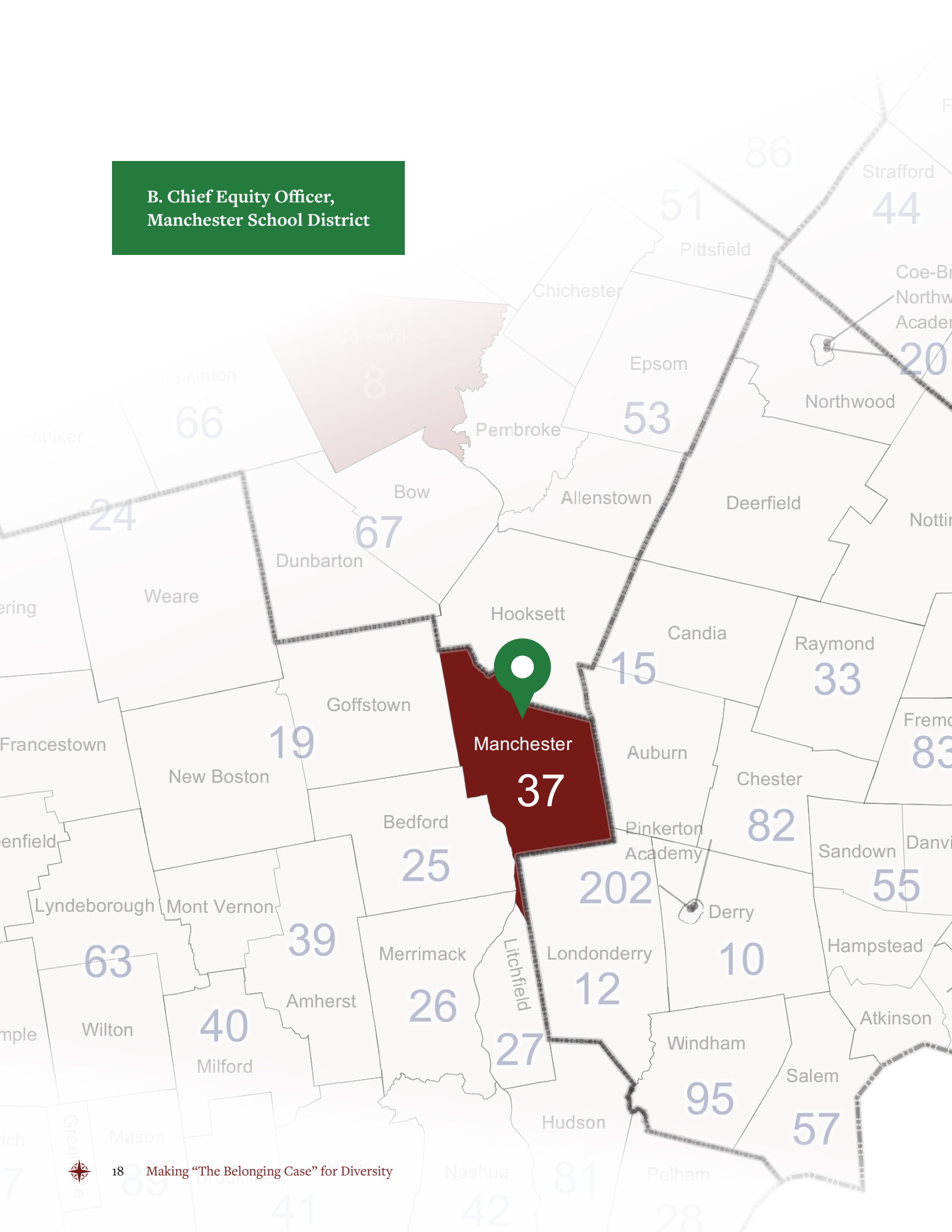
1. Required Education and/or Experience

Education required: Master's degree in Education, Public Policy, Public Administration, Human Resources, Organizational Development, Psychology, Ethnic Studies, Multicultural Studies, JD, or a related field from an accredited college or university.

Certification: Have or be able to obtain a New Hampshire Department of Education license in one or more of the following: School Principal, District Administration, Superintendent.

Preferred characteristics:

- 10 years of experience in a results-oriented leadership role developing and monitoring initiatives around diversity, equity, inclusion or related work.

- Doctorate degree (Ph.D. or Ed.D. in Education, Public Policy, Public Administration, Organizational Development, Ethnic Studies, Multicultural Studies or related field.

- Successful experience as a public-school teacher, public school principal, or public central office administrator in an urban and /or diverse environment.

- Working knowledge of families of color in diverse settings.

2. Summary of Essential Functions and Responsibilities

The Chief Equity Officer holds the district's primary responsibility to foster and grow the commitment to DEI within the organization, including developing policies and systems that promote diversity, equity, and inclusivity. They are an active member of the Superintendent's Cabinet and advise the Board of School Committee and Cabinet, monitoring progress of the district's plan for excellence and equity, ensuring that it incorporates DEI considerations. They also create and assess key performance indicators and continuously review equity data

and trends to promote transparency in decision-making.

The Chief Equity Officer supervises the HR Director to ensure diverse and inclusive staffing through equitable processes and increased diversity in teaching and leadership. They also supervise the Executive Director of English Language Development (ELD) to ensure ELD students receive necessary teaching and intervention supports and are fully integrated into each school.

In partnership with the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching, Learning, and Leading, the Chief Equity Officer helps oversee the elimination of the four-leveled system in middle and high schools and supports school teams in developing and implementing instructional and opportunity gap goals.

They increase transparency on how district decisions and policies impact equity and collaborate with central office and school leaders to create an inclusive climate and equitable work environment for all. They develop and implement district-wide professional learning for staff and partners to mitigate implicit bias, promote cultural responsiveness, and increase understanding of historically marginalized populations. They ensure equitable access to high-quality programs and rigorous courses for all students and schools, partnering with families and external organizations to identify barriers and develop plans for improvement.

In order to provide support and training for parents and guardians navigating the school system, the Chief Equity Officer seeks grants and coordinates internal and external resources/ funds to advance equity work, and partners with external organizations to promote and align equity efforts citywide. They attend all Board of School Committee meetings and prepare reports as appropriate, evaluating staff as assigned, and performing other duties as assigned by the Superintendent.

C. Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice, Exeter Region Cooperative School District

1. Required Education and/or Experience

Education required: Bachelor's degree in human relations, ethnic studies, sociology, or other social impact discipline. Master's preferred.

Graduated responsibilities and/or life experience in driving diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice efforts in an education or non-profit setting.

The ideal candidate must have the proven ability to engage in effective conversations about race, have historical knowledge of the many forms of oppression, and understand the different forms of bias and how to respond effectively to them while building this capacity of others.

2. Summary of Essential Functions and Responsibilities

The position of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Director is responsible for promoting and advocating for equitable practices for all members of the SAU community. The Director works closely with the school-based DEIJ teams to develop and implement programs to build knowledge, skill, and competency for all staff members. They also serve as a member and trainer for the senior leadership team, with a focus on anti-racist, anti-biased, and anti-oppression management.

Communication is a key function of this role. The Director must communicate professionally to a broad audience of stakeholders, using various modes such as classroom/school visitation, social media platforms, public speaking events, school board meetings, and moderated public forums. They plan and lead professional learning experiences throughout the year to address ongoing and ad-hoc needs around issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice.

The Director collaborates with the senior leadership team to create, implement, and
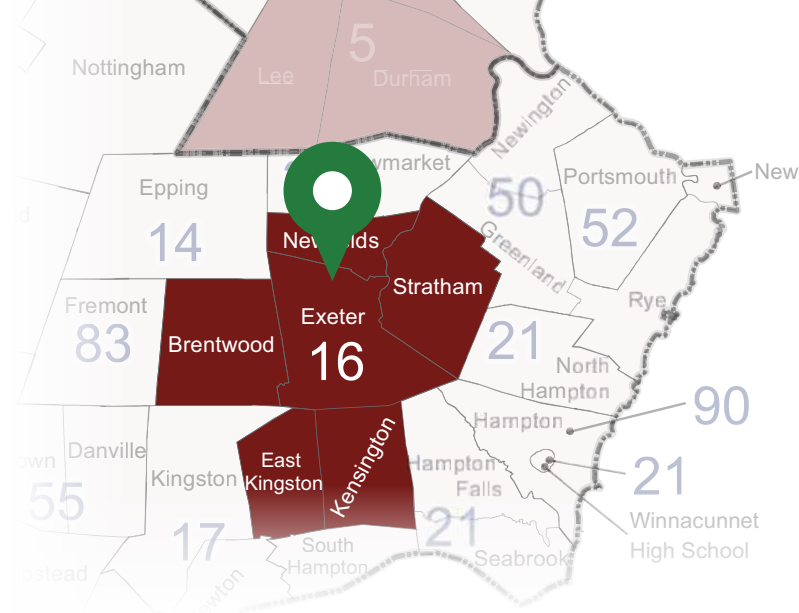
monitor systems and programs designed to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all staff and students. They oversee the development and facilitation of SAU-wide interest groups while assisting schools with identity-focused affinity groups. The Director also collaborates with the Director of Human Resources to develop and implement additional initiatives for the recruitment and retention of people of color.

Another crucial responsibility of the Director is to facilitate and lead the SAU 16 Anti-Discrimination Task Force in its mission to address discriminatory acts, processes, and policies in schools and the school system. They develop district-wide accountability measures around equity and inclusion and lead progress monitoring efforts towards success against those metrics.

Additionally, the Director provides support and consultation to school and district leaders in assessing challenges and opportunities and implementing responsive strategies. They serve as a regular and active listener to employees, students, school board, and community members to both gain insight into current concerns and assess the effectiveness of the districts' approaches to equity, inclusion, antiracism, and anti-bias strategies. Overall, the Director plays a critical role in ensuring that the SAU community fosters a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable environment for all.
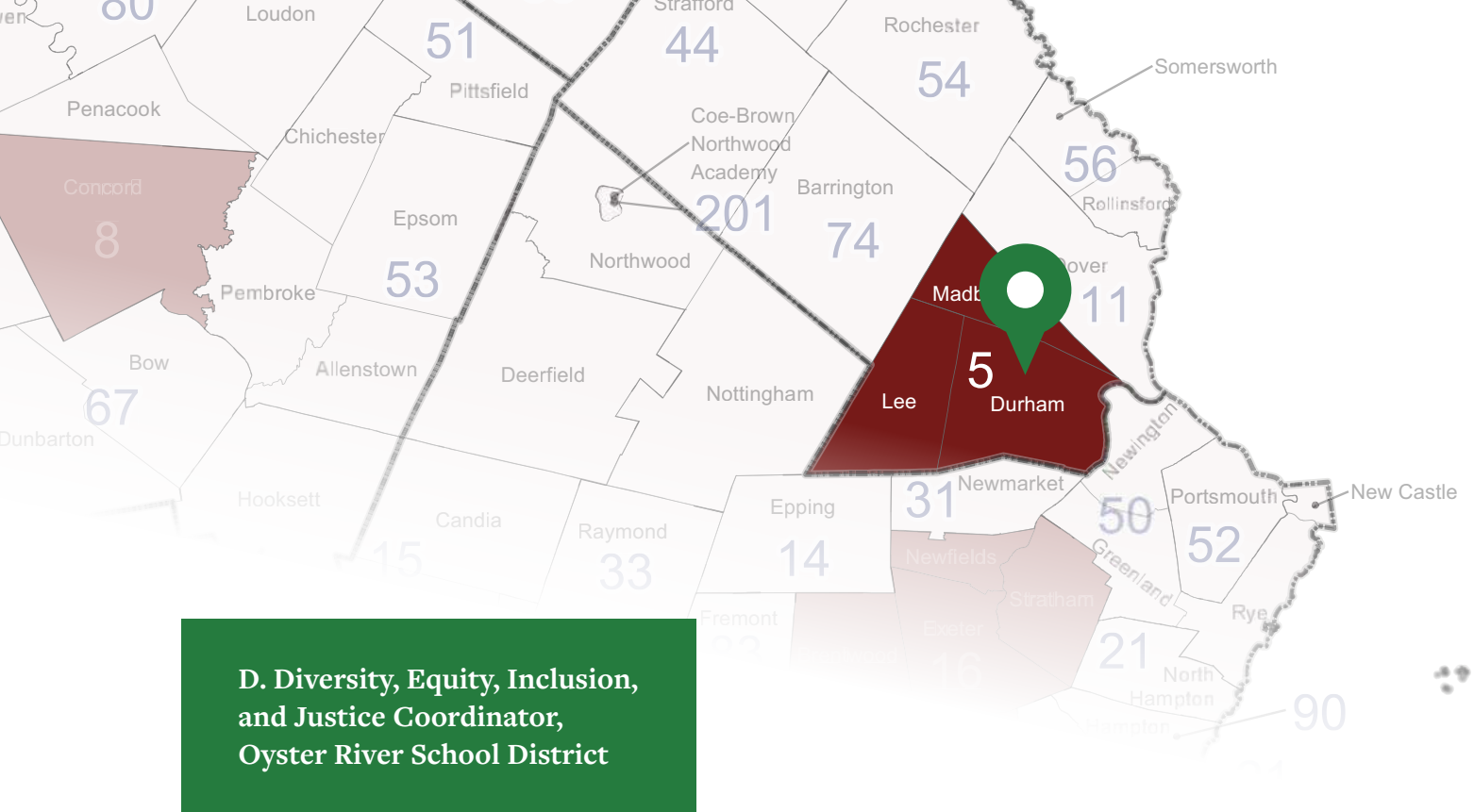
D. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Coordinator, Oyster River School District

1. Required Education and/or Experience

Education required: Bachelor's degree in human relations, ethnic studies, sociology, or other social impact discipline. Master's preferred.

Graduate responsibilities and/or life experience in supporting diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice efforts in an education or non-profit setting.

The ideal candidate must have the proven ability to engage in effective conversations about race, have historical knowledge of the many forms of oppression, and understand different forms of bias and how to respond effectively to instances of oppression, discrimination or bias, all while building the capacity of doing so in others.

Successful NH State Police criminal records check and FBI Fingerprint Clearance Report and Disclosure Statement in accordance with state law.

2. Summary of Essential Functions and Responsibilities

The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Coordinator collaborates with faculty and staff to promote the understanding that sustainability, equity, and justice issues are interconnected and include environmental, social, economic, and cultural factors in complex and dynamic ways. In addition, the coordinator plans and leads professional learning experiences to support teachers and staff in implementing equitable practices in their classrooms.

The coordinator also supports DEIJ teams in schools to develop and implement equitable programs, practices, and policies that help build capacity around DEIJ work among faculty, staff, and students. They recognize and communicate the importance of centering inclusivity, equity, and justice within the district and work to shape compassionate and equitable practices and procedures throughout SAU 5.

Communication is a key aspect of the coordinator's responsibilities. They communicate professionally with a broad range of stakeholders, including the School Board, leadership, faculty and staff, students, and community members, using various mediums. Additionally, the coordinator facilitates SAU-wide DEIJ interest groups and is responsible for developing and monitoring an ongoing review process to assess progress toward district goals as articulated in the ORCSD Strategic Plan.

E. Summarizing DEIJ Roles in Public Education

Overall, DEIJ positions have responsibility for a broad range of activities, which are essential to the success of K-12 public school students. These job functions combine to create an environment where all students feel valued and supported. By promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice, they help students develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in school and in life. Some of the ways they contribute to the success of students include:

Addressing discrimination and bias: DEIJ officers work to address discrimination and bias in schools. They investigate incidents of discrimination and bias and work with school administrators to develop strategies to prevent future incidents.

Promoting a culture of respect and inclusivity: DEIJ officers work to create a culture of respect and inclusivity in schools by encouraging diversity and embracing differences. They help students and staff understand and appreciate cultural, ethnic, and racial differences, and they promote open dialogue and understanding of these differences.

Advocating for marginalized students: DEIJ officers advocate for marginalized students, including students of color, students with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ students, and students from low-income families. They work to ensure that these students have equal access to educational opportunities and are not discriminated against.

Providing training and education: DEIJ officers provide training and education to staff, students, and families on issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. They help students understand the importance of these values and how they can contribute to a positive and inclusive school environment.

Creating a sense of community: DEIJ officers work to create a sense of community in schools by fostering relationships among staff, students, and families. They organize events and activities that celebrate diversity and promote inclusivity, such as cultural festivals and diversity workshops.

VI. Conclusion:
Diversity is About Belonging, and That's Just the Beginning

The overwhelming consensus across many studies, individually and taken in aggregate, is that increasing the diversity of teachers is a benefit to the students they teach, especially when students of color have at least one teacher of the same race. And there is a parallel consensus among scholars and leaders in education, human resources, and business that a diverse population learns better and works more creatively, more effectively, and more sustainably. There is also recognition that the job of tending to district-wide diversity is more than one person can handle and is a concern and responsibility that should be embedded throughout all levels and programs (Rice-Boothe and Marshall, 2022; Robinson and Downey, 2023).

Coupled with this constant legal pressure in the courts is the economic pressure derived from "permanent austerity public finance" (Poulos, 2022), which drains resources from public systems even when those systems or their policies are popular. According to Pierson (1996; 2002), "permanent austerity" succeeds despite unpopularity due to outsized influence of politically-connected and monied interests:

> Welfare state expansion involved the enactment of popular policies in a relatively undeveloped interest-group environment. By contrast, welfare state retrenchment generally requires elected officials to pursue unpopular policies that must withstand the scrutiny of both voters and well-entrenched networks of interest groups. (Pierson, 1996, pp. 143-144)

Permanent austerity is a long-standing norm in New Hampshire, where inequitable state funding for public education (NHFPI, 2022) has been a subject of court battles for decades (Bratton, 2022), and where appropriations for higher education have been at or near the bottom of state rankings in terms of both per-capita cost and per-pupil expenditure, also for decades (per documents obtained by the author from the State Higher Education Executive Officer Association).

Finally, as noted in a study conducted through collaboration between the Society for Human Resource Management, Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, and Trusaic, around two-thirds (65%) of surveyed organizations identified diversity as a goal, but merely one-third (33%) reported having much success "creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace" (2021). In other words, there are challenges facing DEIJ workers and others who seek to improve the rate of success of their efforts.

But there are also areas for new work and expansion, and that's what I want to close with: forward-looking recommendations for action and change, framed as opportunities to meet rather than obstacles to overcome.

In these final pages I reiterate a call to "expand the parameters of diversity" to include disability; recall the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy, which begins with a search for excellence and not deficit; offer one possible trend for teacher

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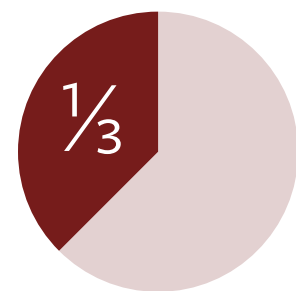
(Society for Human Resource Management, Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, and Trusaic, 2021)

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training that could help diversify the teacher pipeline; and point to research in shared equity leadership as a possible source for ideas about systemic and organizational change that lasts.

A. Culturally Relevant/Sustaining Pedagogy

Frustrated by depictions of Black students as deficient, Ladson-Billings (1990) began interviewing and observing teachers who embodied "culturally relevant teaching" in their ability to help Black students succeed in the class. This concept would evolve in follow-up studies and publications (1992a; 1992b; 1992c) and emerge as "culturally relevant pedagogy" (1995a; 1995b) or "just good teaching!" (1995a). In describing the origins and tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy, Ladson-Billings (1995b) arrives at "three broad propositions" that center around:

- the *conceptions of self and others* held by culturally relevant teachers

- teachers believed all their students capable of success, their pedagogy as "in the process of becoming," and saw themselves as members of a community to which they gave back through their teaching (pp. 478-479)

- the manner in which *social relations* are structured by culturally relevant teachers

- teachers model social interactions with students that are "equitable and reciprocal," and encourage students to learn in collaboration with, and with responsibility for, each other (pp. 480-481)

- the *conceptions of knowledge* held by culturally relevant teachers

- teachers conceptualize knowledge as shared, constructed, and capable of being repurposed, not static or bounded, and to develop and assess students' knowledge teachers should scaffold lessons and measure multiple forms of excellence (pp. 481-482).

Nearly a quarter-century after coining "culturally relevant pedagogy," Ladson-Billings would continue to revise and remix her scholarship:

> Scholarship, like culture, is fluid, and the title of this essay, "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 2.0: a.k.a. the Remix," is intended to reflect this fluidity. The notion of a remix means that there was an original version and that there may be more versions to come, taking previously developed ideas and synthesizing them to create new and exciting forms. […] In this spirit, the authors in this symposium work hard to develop a newer, fresher version of culturally relevant pedagogy that meets the needs of this century's students. In developing this theory, culturally *sustaining* pedagogy (Paris, 2012), these authors use culturally relevant pedagogy as the place where the "beat drops" and then layer the multiple ways that this notion of pedagogy shifts, changes, adapts, recycles, and recreates instructional spaces to ensure that consistently marginalized students are repositioned into a place of normativity— that is, that they become subjects in the instructional process, not mere objects. (Ladson-Billings, 2012, pp. 75-76)

Even while recognizing the "persistence of race in education" (Ladson-Billings, 2012), it is possible to stay fresh through change and adaptation. Part of the promise or hope of culturally relevant – or *responsive* (Curry-Stevens, et al., 2014), or *sustaining* – pedagogy is that the work is never quite finished and that there is always room for growth and improvement.

B. Apprenticeship Programs and other "Grow Your Own" Initiatives

A report from the Urban Institute (Lindsey, et al., 2017) shows that the majority of Black, Hispanic, and Asian teachers became teachers without earning a teaching degree, finding another pathway to the profession. According to the underlying data from the 2016 American Community Survey, Black teachers are 1.6 times more likely to become a teacher without graduating from a degree program; Hispanic teachers 1.5 times more likely; and Asian teachers 3.2 times more likely. Even among White teachers, who again make up roughly 87% of the

teacher corps in New Hampshire (NHCJE, 2023), the are only 1.15 times more likely to become a teacher by earning a teaching degree (Lindsey, et al., 2017, n.p.).

For practical reasons, state-based resources for teacher preparation like some of those listed by Olson (2023) are not equally viable across the states, and some federal options like student loan forgiveness have in recent years either proven unworkable (Minsky, 2020) or are undergoing court review (Totenberg, 2023). One proven avenue to increase and diversify the teaching corps, though, is the Grow Your Own ("GYO") model (Olson, 2023, pp. 12-14). An example of successful GYO programming can be found in Tennessee, which is the first state to receive a permanent approval from the United States Department of Labor ("DOL") to apply its apprenticeship model to teacher-training (TN Dept. of Ed., 2022). Tennessee, already familiar with GYO as evidenced by its 65 programs at the time of the DOL approval (TN Dept. of Ed., 2022, n.p.), reports that it "provide[s] innovative, no-cost pathways to the teaching profession" and engages teaching apprentices in "hands-on work experience while earning a wage that increases during the progression of the program."

C. Shared Equity Leadership and other Models for Change

Along with important programming that supports individuals, from students to teachers-in-training to seasoned educators, it is also important to recognize that lasting change requires organizational transformation. In partnership with the American Council on Education and others, the Pullias Center for Higher Education at the University of Southern California has developed and revised an organizational model for "shared equity leadership" (Pullias, 2023) derived from earlier studies into how shared leadership could help gain buy-in from employees and stakeholders at all levels, and how to leverage that buy-in to build a foundation for lasting organizational change. To be sure, there are distinct and important differences

> "Part of the promise... of culturally relevant... pedagogy is that **the work is never quite finished** and that there is always room for growth and improvement."
>
> (Curry-Stevens, et al., 2014)

in the organizational structures and lines of accountability for schools as compared to colleges and universities, but the underlying premises and goals of the shared equity leadership model are just as valid in both arenas.

Described by Kezar, et al. in 2021, shared equity leadership provides an approach to organizational change "in which equity becomes everyone's responsibility and multiple campus stakeholders collectively share leadership for equity" (p. vii). The model evolved out of previous research into shared leadership and equity leadership (pp. 1-3), and has three major components:

1. critical mass among "individuals who have undergone some sort of personal journey toward critical consciousness or built a critical consciousness, cementing their commitment to equity" (p. 6);

2. attendant to the critical mass, there must also be "values that are shared among members of the leadership team or group" (p. 6); and

3. there must exist "a set of practices that leaders continually enact which both enable them to

> "…"[m]isinformation and negative attitudes toward disability contribute to **lower employment rates** among people with disabilities…"
>
> (Phillips, et al., 2016)

share leadership and to create more just and equitable conditions" (p. 6).

While the collaborative, horizontal nature of the model requires broad participation, the authors allow that "[e]very individual does not have to embody every value and practice we describe here—in fact, few, if any, of the leaders we interviewed are skilled in every one of these areas" (p. 6). Rather than assume all participants in the process will arrive with and leave with the same sets of skills or perspectives, the shared equity leadership model could be said to encourage the sense of belonging that I have described above:

> For example, one leader may be very comfortable being vulnerable and displaying humility but struggle with being uncomfortable when having conversations about race or difference. When working together as part of a shared equity leadership effort, these individuals can lean into their strengths and skills while also helping their colleagues develop in areas where they may have less facility. It is natural within organizations for these differences in strength, skill, and background to exist; shared equity

leadership embraces these differences rather than assuming that everyone will eventually arrive at the same place or fit one particular way of thinking or behaving. (p. 6)

D. Make Way for Disability in Diversity

That discourse around "diversity" has often omitted "disability" from main stage discussions has been a problem of note for decades. Linton, Mello, and O'Neill's (1995) call for "expanding the parameters of diversity" to include disability studies still rings as urgently (Klug and Whitfield, 2003; Muyia Nafukho, et al., 2010; Williams and Hagood, 2019) as it did in the mid-90s. While race tends to be more visible, a person's dis/abilities are not always as apparent, leading to what can be damaging oversight.

Phillips, et al. (2016) note "[m]isinformation and negative attitudes toward disability contribute to lower employment rates among people with disabilities," and cite as a contributing factor "a lack of empirically validated diversity training programs that focus specifically on disability" (p. 264). Muyia Nafukho, et al. (2010), review several human resource-focused studies with an aim of reducing unlawful terminations of employees with disabilities, and summarize the scope of the issue:

> Diversity management, therefore, must take into consideration the various forms of disability—physical (mobility impairment and chronic illness), sensory (visual and hearing impairment), cognitive (mental retardation and learning disability), and emotional (depression and other psychological conditions)—as they interact with different (a) workplace demands and tasks; (b) attitudes and expectations of employers and coworkers; and (c) perceptions of people with disabilities themselves. (p. 395)

Ultimately, this compliance stance relies on a competent understanding of disability as a diversity issue:

> To manage disability as a diversity issue, it is imperative that [Human Resource

Development (HRD) and Human Resource Management (HRM)] practitioners, employees, management, and organizational leaders understand the meaning of disability as a diversity factor in the workplace and the potential impact of disability on critical HRM and HRD practices related to job retention and termination. (p. 395)

As an adjunct phenomenon, there is also a tendency in discourse around diversity, especially along racial or ethnic lines, to use the term "colorblind." Sometimes the usage comes from politicians urging "neutrality" as opposed to affirmative action, say, despite data on disparate racialized outcomes for a number of factors including education; in other cases, it arrives in the text or speech of considerate and avowed advocates of diversity measures. In either case, the term is an example of failure to see how language commonly associated with issues of

racial discrimination may inadvertently introduce other forms of prejudice, in this case against those with a disability affecting their vision.

There is significant scholarship at the intersection of race and disability studies – namely, Disability Studies and Critical Race Theory in Education, or DisCrit (Connor, Ferri, and Annamma, 2016) – that addresses the ripe opportunities to examine race and disability. As a recent doctoral candidate put it in her dissertation:

like CRT (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), DisCrit also acknowledges that other social locations, such as gender and class, "contribute to constructing dis/ability" (Annamma et al., 2013, p. 12). Put differently, DisCrit does not focus on race and disability *to the exclusion* of other markers of identity, such as gender and class (Annamma et al., 2013; Gillborn et al., 2016). (Gerst, 2022, p. 26)

"...shared equity leadership provides an approach to organizational change "in which **equity becomes everyone's responsibility** and multiple campus stakeholders collectively share leadership for equity."

(Kezar, et al., 2021)
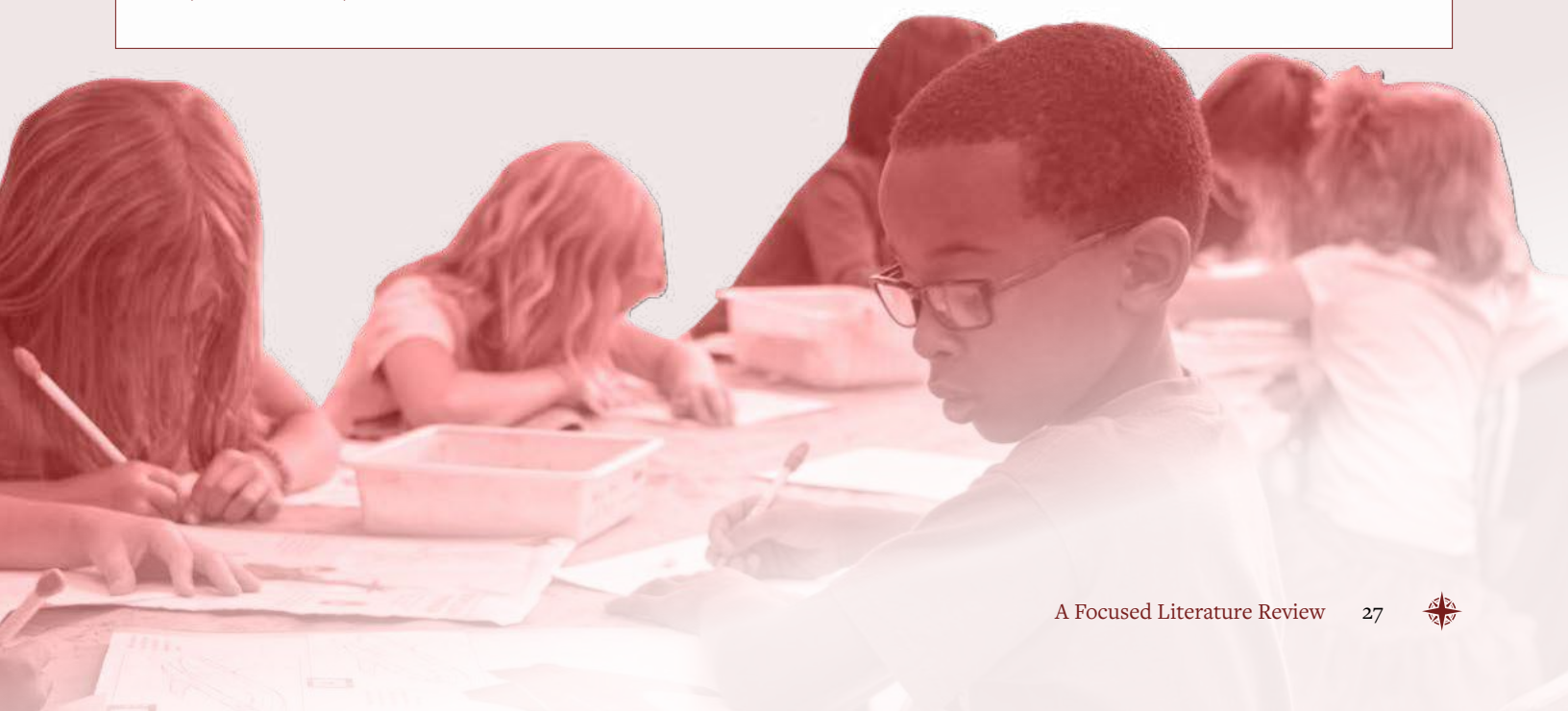
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