

WRDSB HIRING STRATEGY

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Acting on our Commitments

On October 21, 2013, the WRDSB “**Moving Forward: Building an Inclusive Workforce**”¹ document was released to the system. The document maps out a vision for building an inclusive workforce through implementation of a fair, inclusive and equitable hiring practices strategy.

This blueprint for action rests on five clearly articulated commitments:

Commitment 1: Through collaboration and education, develop greater clarity and focus around barriers and opportunities that currently exist with respect to fair, inclusive and equitable hiring practices. Commit to a journey of continuous improvement toward fair, inclusive and equitable hiring practices.

Commitment 2: Articulate an Action Plan that will remove barriers, affirm supportive

existing practices and integrate new strategies that serve to support fair, inclusive and equitable hiring processes. The plan should include defined strategies, success criteria, timelines, metrics and identified accountability.

Commitment 3: Develop a communication plan to assist staff with understanding the need and rationale for revising and strengthening our hiring processes in order to increase staff confidence in a fair, inclusive and equitable hiring process.

Commitment 4: Develop supportive policies, procedures and guidelines that support fair, inclusive and equitable hiring practices. Ensure that every job posting includes a clear statement of WRDSB beliefs about fair, inclusive and equitable hiring practices and our commitment to providing appropriate accommodation.

Commitment 5: Develop and provide tools, training and resources to ensure that those responsible for academic hiring have the supports needed to conduct fair, equitable and inclusive selection processes.

¹ Available online at http://www.wrdsb.ca/careers/files/2013/11/WRDSB_2013-14_HiringStrategy_WEB.pdf

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What We've Accomplished



In an effort to move the initiative forward, a steering team comprised of twelve system leaders has met on a regular basis in an effort to build a foundation for the creation of an Action Plan to be released in January 2014. The actions of this group to date include:

- ✓ Establish a Fair, Inclusive and Equitable Hiring Practices (FIEHP) Steering Team and associated Terms of Reference.
- ✓ Meet with appropriate stakeholder groups to receive input and to create awareness. Meetings occurred with Administrative

Advisory Council, WREA, SSPA, SSVPA, Trustees, Staff Advisory, Leadership Development Steering Team and the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group (Fall 2013).

- ✓ Prepare and introduce "blueprint document" (**Moving Forward: Building and Inclusive Workforce**) to system leaders (October 22, 2013 System Leaders Meeting).
- ✓ Deliver "Bias Awareness" training to all system leaders (October 22, 2013).
- ✓ Conduct focus group sessions with major stakeholder groups to increase engagement and ensure that all voices are heard. Collate focus group report for consideration by the steering team (December 2013 and ongoing).
- ✓ Develop an awareness and understanding of various training program and support options that may be of assistance in supporting the training and capacity of competent leaders (Fall 2013).

- ✓ Conduct a thorough audit of all current related policies and procedures. Review current "Guidelines for Employee Candidate Screening and Interviewing and Selection" document and revise to create a new procedure for review and in anticipation of implementation (Fall 2013 and ongoing).
- ✓ Revise the "Careers" tab on the board website and ensure that the "blueprint document" (**Moving Forward: Building and Inclusive Workforce**) is linked at the site and available electronically (December 2013).
- ✓ Develop a Communication Plan to support effective communication to the system around our vision and progress (December 2013).
- ✓ Include an equity commitment statement on every job posting (posting developed and ready for implementation January 2013).
- ✓ Develop interview questions and "look fors" that can be incorporated into OT interview process (Fall 2013).
- ✓ Develop "Case Study" training program for delivery to all administrators through Family of School meetings (prepared December 2013, to be implemented February 2014).

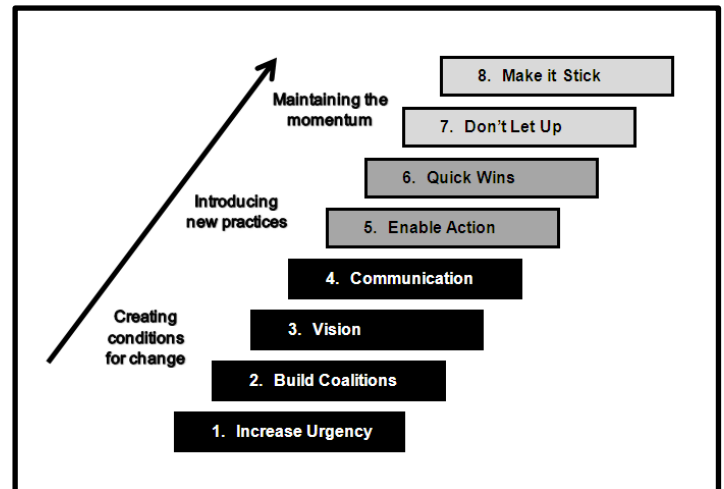
Supporting Systemic Change

Our Action Plan, as the name suggests, represents a call to action. It is an aspirational plan underpinned by the notion that change is required ... the status quo is no longer acceptable. If there was no belief in a need for change, we would not dedicate resources and time to formulating a plan ... we would simply celebrate our past success and optimistically anticipate more of the same. Change is difficult. The process is made easier when those leading change do so with a deep understanding of how to lead change and with sensitivity to the dynamics and challenges of leading change.

This initiative is led by a steering team that understands that we are on a collective journey and that we are learning alongside of our colleagues. We have taken time to understand change leadership as articulated by John Kotter, an internationally renowned leader in the field of change management.

Kotter's model is simplistically represented in the diagram below.

The diagram seems to suggest a linear progression of steps to be completed in sequence. We know, of course, that complex changes such as those envisioned in this plan do not unfold sequentially. As such, the steps must be integrated and attended to at every step of the journey. This framework for thinking about change is foundational to the plan we anticipate bringing forward.



John Kotter's CHANGE LEADERSHIP Framework. For further information, visit

<http://www.kotterinternational.com/our-principles/changesteps>

A Lesson in Bias Awareness

Heightism: the practice of discriminating against short stature and a glorification of those taller in stature.

Why Do We Love Tall Men? (Excerpt from BLINK by Malcolm Gladwell)

Or what if the person you are interviewing is tall? On a conscious level, I'm sure that all of us don't think that we treat tall people any differently from short people. But there's plenty of evidence to suggest that height—particularly in men—does trigger a certain set of very positive, unconscious associations. I polled about half of the companies on the Fortune 500 list—the largest corporations in the United States—asking each company questions about its CEO. The heads of big companies are, as I'm sure comes as no surprise to anyone, overwhelmingly white men, which undoubtedly reflects some kind of implicit bias. But they are also virtually all

tall: In my sample, I found that on average CEOs were just a shade under six feet. Given that the average American male is 5'9" that means that CEOs, as a group, have about three inches on the rest of their sex. But this statistic actually understates matters. In the U.S. population, about 14.5 percent of all men are six feet or over. Among CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, that number is 58 percent. Even more strikingly, in the general American population, 3.9 percent of adult men are 6'2" or taller. Among my CEO sample, 30 percent were 6'2" or taller. The lack of women or minorities among the top executive ranks at least has a plausible explanation. For years, for a number of reasons having to do with discrimination and cultural patterns, there simply weren't a lot of women and minorities entering the management ranks of American corporations. So today, when boards of directors look for people with the necessary experience to be candidates for top positions, they can argue somewhat plausibly that there aren't a lot of women and minorities in the executive pipeline. But this is simply not true of short people. It is possible to staff a company entirely with white males, but it is not possible to staff a company without short people: there simply aren't enough tall people to go around. Yet none of those short people ever seem to make it into the executive suite. Of the tens of millions of American men below 5'6", a

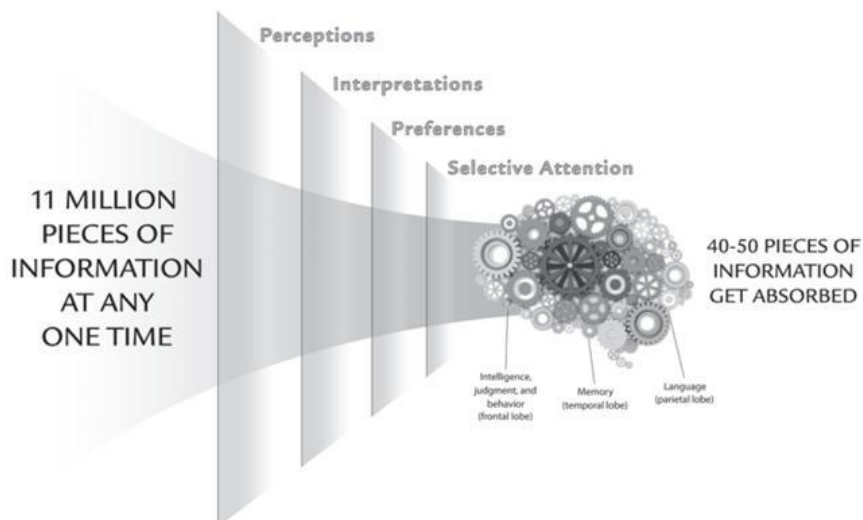
grand total of ten—in my sample—have reached the level of CEO, which says that being short is probably as much, or more, of a handicap to corporate success as being a woman or an African-American. (The grand exception to all of these trends is American Express CEO Kenneth Chenault, who is both on the short side (5'9") and black. He must be a remarkable man to have overcome two Warren Harding Errors.)

Is this a deliberate prejudice? Of course not. No one ever says, dismissively, of a potential CEO candidate that *'he's too short.'* This is quite clearly the kind of unconscious prejudice that the IAT picks up. Most of us, in ways that we are not entirely aware of, automatically associate leadership ability with imposing physical stature. We have a sense, in our minds, of what a leader is supposed to look like, and that stereotype is so powerful that when someone fits it, we simply become blind to other considerations. And this isn't confined to the corporate suite. Not long ago, researchers went back and analyzed the data from four large research studies, that had followed thousands of people from birth to adulthood, and calculated that when corrected for variables like age and gender and weight, an inch of height is worth \$789 a year in salary. That means that a person who is six feet tall, but who is otherwise identical to someone who is five foot five, will make on average \$5,525 more per year. As Timothy Judge, one of the authors of the study, points out: "If you take this over the course of a 30-year career and compound it, we're talking about a tall person enjoying literally hundreds of thousands of dollars of earnings advantage." Have you ever wondered why so many mediocrities find their way into positions of authority in companies and organizations? It's because when it comes to even the most important positions, we think that our selection decisions are a good deal more rational than they actually are. We see a tall person, and we swoon.

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<http://gladwell.com/blink/why-do-we-love-tall-men/>

How many "isms" are at work in my subconscious mind influencing my ability to conduct a fair, inclusive and equitable interview?



Think you are immune to bias?

Think about this ...



Possible Interview Questions

1. Our schools have diverse student populations. Please define what diversity means in terms of a school or student population and what experiences or learnings have prepared you to work in such school environments.
 2. What aspects of equity and inclusion would you consider when making decisions in the classroom with respect to instructional practices, classroom management, assessment, student and parent engagement?
 3. Describe your vision of what it means to be an "inclusive" teacher and what actions you have taken to "live" this vision.
 4. Tell us of a time when you were confronted/challenged/presented by/with a situation of discrimination/inequity and what was your response?"
 5. Describe your vision of what it means to be an "inclusive" teacher. Please describe an example of how your vision of inclusivity has shaped or will shape your teaching practice.
 6. What does equity and inclusion look like in your classroom? (Probes: What instructional practices support this? What assessment and/or evaluation tools support this?).
 7. The board has identified equity and inclusion as a core value and has included a commitment to the principles of equity and inclusion in our strategic directions going forward. What have you done to demonstrate that you will be committed to this value as a Waterloo Region DSB teacher?
- gender, sexual orientation, and mental or physical abilities, learning needs, visible/invisible).
 - actual learning, life-experiences and strategies for addressing issues of equity/diversity/inclusion.
 - a demonstrated willingness to learn, to be open and to participate on a community journey of learning.
 - demonstrations of a history of commitment and action in addressing equity/diversity/ inclusion.
 - demonstrates empathy and understanding for students and staff who suffer from the impact of exclusion.
 - demonstrates courage and willingness to learn and act in support of becoming a more inclusive community.
 - able to identify a history of commitment and action that will support our board's commitment.
 - demonstrated ability to be flexible and respectful; awareness of 1st language needs(i.e. interpreters & dual language texts); willingness to accommodate for student needs, seeking out a variety of texts that represent the kids in the class; acknowledge differences and similarities in the classroom community, selecting tasks and topics of interest to both boys and girls, guest speakers/presenters/ off campus experiences from a range of backgrounds and experiences (e.g. service dogs); inclusion and interest in the various holidays/family customs/music of the students in the classroom, promoting positive citizenship, sense of belonging, valuing ideas and differences through actions, etc.
 - Be concerned about candidates who have difficulty speaking to the question (a lack of awareness of the connectivity between day to day practices and equity/inclusion exclusive of race and ethnicity; not having had significant conversations about equity and inclusion; not having given a significant amount of thought to their personal vision and how it is translated into action).

LOOK FORS:

- ability to articulate a vision of what a "diverse student population" references and understanding of the many ways in which students manifest diversity (including, but not limited to a student's cultural background, faith background, economic resources, language abilities,

AFFINITY BIAS

Unconscious patterns can play out in ways that are so subtle they are hard to spot. Imagine, for example, that you are conducting an interview with two people, we'll call them Sally and John. John reminds you of yourself when you were younger, or of someone you know and like. You have that sense of familiarity or "chemistry." You instantly like him, and though you are not aware of why, your mind generates justifications. ("He seems like a straightforward kind of guy. I like the way he 'holds' himself.") You ask him the first interview question and he hems and haws a bit. After all, it's an interview. He's nervous. Because you feel an affinity toward him, you pick up on his nervousness. You want to put him at ease. You say, "John, I know it's an interview, but there's nothing to be nervous about. Take a breath and let me ask the question again." John nails it this time and he's off and running to a great interview. The whole interaction took four seconds, yet it made a world of difference.

Then you sit down with Sally. There is nothing negative about her, just no real connection. It is a very "business-like" interaction. You ask her the first question and she's a little nervous too, but this time you don't pick up on it. This interview moves forward, but not quite as well as John's. The next day a co-worker asks you how the interviews went, and you respond: "John was great...open, easy to talk to. I think he'll be great with staff and clients." And your reply about Sally? "She's okay, I guess." Your perceptions about the interviews constitute your reality. You probably don't even remember the four-second interaction that changed John's entire interview. In fact, if somebody asks you, you would swear you conducted the interviews exactly the same way with the same questions. Your own role in influencing the outcomes was completely invisible to you, driven by your background of comfort with John.

<http://www.cookcross.com/docs/UnconsciousBias.pdf>



**Waterloo Region
District School Board**