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Vermont Teacher Diversity Scholarship Program /Vermont Research Partnership Study of Diversity of School Personnel and Recruiting Practices

October 3, 2010



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Introduction

This study of diversity in the teaching workforce in Vermont was begun during the fall of 2007 with a series of discussions that were held with the Vermont Research Partners, consisting of representatives of the Vermont Department of Education, Vermont Superintendents Association, Vermont School Boards Association, Vermont Principals Association, Vermont NEA, Vermont Agency of Human Services and the University of Vermont. The design of the study including its study questions and questionnaire emerged over a period of two years until, in the fall of 2009, the data collection began with an on-line computer-administered survey to all Vermont Superintendents. One year later, responses to the survey have been received from forty-three of the sixty superintendents.

The study was supported by the Vermont Research Partnership in collaboration with the Vermont Teach for Diversity Scholarship Program. Most of the work of compiling the results and presenting the following report was done by students who were in high school, in the undergraduate program at UVM and the graduate program in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at UVM under the supervision of faculty and the staff of the VRP and James M. Jeffords Center for Policy Research.

The data represented in the study came directly from the 2000 US Census, Vermont Department of Education reports of staffing for Vermont Schools in 2000 and 2010, and responses from superintendents of schools or their designees. The discussion of the results of the survey and the policy implications for Vermont communities represent only the opinions of the authors at the Vermont Research Partnership and the James M. Jeffords Center. No endorsement of these opinions is implied by the fact that the Partners listed earlier were in agreement that the study needed to be done and shared with the public.

The context for this study may be summarized by the following observations made by the local press in Burlington and by community members who spoke at the early meetings among the Partners as the study was being designed.

- As the Free Press so aptly pointed out (August 21, 2007, editorial) a more diverse teaching staff in Vermont schools would benefit all children. Learning to live in a more culturally diverse world is part of the preparation needed by all students in order to be successful at work as well as comfortable with their neighbors. In fact, not to have a diverse teaching workforce is to deny all students of the opportunities to learn about themselves and other cultures.
- Many Vermont students will leave Vermont and find education and employment in areas of the country and world that are far more diverse than Vermont. Most will not have related to a person of color in a position of authority until they find themselves in the new environment.

- At the same time certain areas of Vermont are rapidly becoming more and more diverse. In-migration from urban areas of the nation and foreign lands, post 9/11, has brought new faces, new languages and new opportunities in Winooski, Burlington, Brattleboro, Springfield and Rutland, to name a few communities. Without a concerted effort to find and retain teachers who are more like the students who are arriving, many of these students will never see a person like themselves in a position of authority in their schools.
- Over the past five years at several meetings where people of color met with school and community leaders about the lack of diversity in the education workforce, time and again observations about the need for diversity have been expressed. Speakers often said that students of color being educated in Vermont deserve more. In fact, they said, it is the moral and ethical obligation of policy makers to do everything in their power to provide students of color with an equal opportunity to succeed. If no action is taken and results are not obtained, more and more children may suffer from the effects of having teachers who have lower expectations and who do not understand their culture. These same community members also said that white students will be limited to the perspective of teachers whose backgrounds mirror their own. Attracting and keeping talented people with diverse cultural backgrounds to work in our schools is not easy. The fact that many school districts have tried to recruit these talented individuals with very limited success tells us that probably no one method will produce the results requested by the parents who confronted school administrators in Burlington recently. It seems likely that doing what we have always done to attract diverse teachers and expecting a different result will only serve to maintain the status quo.

Disclaimer

The following report is the result of the survey of the Diversity of School Personnel and Recruiting Practices carried out by the Vermont Research Partnership on behalf of the partners indicated above. The observations, opinions about the data and recommendations are the sole responsibility of the authors.

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The authors acknowledge the contributions of each of the Partners to the Vermont Research Partnership named above. Of particular note in these regards were Jeff Francis, Winton Goodrich, Angelo Dorta, Ken Page, Curtis Reed, Jim Woodard, Wendy Koenig and all of the Vermont superintendents who responded to the survey. Commissioner Vilaseca and Secretary Hofmann were supportive of this effort as well.

We are especially grateful to Andrea Meyers, John Rogers and Luke Tress for their efforts in the compilation of the results and writing the report.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine the relative level of educator diversity in Vermont districts and to describe the policies and practices that may be in use in Vermont districts to increase diversity. The Vermont Research Partnership which includes members from the Vermont Department of Education, Vermont Superintendents Association, Vermont Principals Association and Vermont School Boards Association have endorsed this attempt to collect baseline data that may serve to inform Vermonters about this important issue. While there are many limitations of such a survey effort concerning data related to the cultural representation of diverse groups of professionals, the summary finding of the study is that there are very few people of diverse cultural background currently teaching and leading Vermont's teaching workforce. Specific findings are enumerated below. Following the discussion of limitations and findings, a discussion of the issues which may arise from these data and the implications for policy and practice are discussed.

STUDY METHODS

The study consisted of a review of US Census and Vermont Department of Education published data on teacher and administrative staffing levels for the years 2000 and 2010 and a survey of Vermont Superintendents (n=60) representing the 60 supervisory unions and unified school districts in Vermont during the years 2009-2010 (See Table 1, below). The survey of teacher and administrator incidence and recruiting practices was developed during a year-long process of researching the literature on diversity in the workforce, (references attached) and by circulating several drafts of the study questions and items to partner representatives. The survey was created as an on-line survey at the University of Vermont and the link to the survey was communicated to the superintendents by Vermont Commissioner Armando Vilaseca in November, 2009.

As survey results were received at the University of Vermont throughout the spring of 2010, they were tabulated and reviewed by staff at the Vermont Teach for Diversity Program. In August, 2010, study findings were reviewed by the partners to the study and following that review, the study was released through the James M. Jeffords Center for Policy Research.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Counting people in professions who are part of a larger population has many inherent limitations most of which are evident in the following study. These limitations include:

- Whether in US Census tabulations or reports from school districts people are mainly self-identified as members of subgroups of the population. School districts have reported several types of tabulations for purposes of affirmative action during the past two decades, but the categories of reporting have changed from time to time and the criteria for reporting in a particular category are not always clear. The present study sought to clarify the reporting categories according to concerns expressed by teachers, school board members, administrators and scholars in the field of demography.
- Of the 60 supervisory unions and districts in Vermont 43 responded to the survey. Four of the 43 districts requested that only one of their schools respond to the survey. So, the total of district level responses was 38 districts.
- The total number of administrators in the 43 Vermont districts that responded to the survey in 2010 was 490. The total number of teachers among the 43 districts was 6,964. Since there were 8399 teachers employed statewide in 2010. This means that approximately 80% of the State's teachers were represented by the sample. Since there were 1365 administrators across the state, the 43 responding districts accounted for 37% of the total administrative workforce. The difference in proportions of administrators and teachers between the respondent sample and the State totals may be accounted for by the combination of response factors. The four districts responding for only one school would obviously lower the numbers of administrators in the respondent sample. It is possible that districts that did not report with the survey may have had a lower representation of culturally diverse staff members than those who did report. District office staff may have used slightly different rosters of teachers and administrators between the time they responded to the statewide statistical collection of personnel and the survey data.
- A map indicating the distribution of reporting school districts is appended to this report.

FINDINGS

The findings of the survey are presented below according to the questions which were answered by superintendents or their designees:

Counts of Teachers and Administrators from the Survey and the Census

Survey Questions 2 through 10: What is the current approximate number of teachers and administrators in the district who are either full or part-time (not including aides or other staff)?

Teachers of diverse cultural background currently employed in the school districts:

The basis upon which the following statements are made is the respondent base among the 38 school districts and five additional schools. The summary statement to characterize the presence of teachers with diverse cultural backgrounds as defined above is that very few teachers of diverse cultural background are to be found Vermont school districts and schools.

There were 61, full and part-time teachers of diverse cultural background reported by districts and schools in 2010. With an admittedly different method of sampling and ten years ago, in the 2000 Census, a total of 226 diverse teachers were reported. Among the estimated total 8400 teachers reported in 2000, it appears, in relative terms, as if the proportional representation of as many as 165 diverse teachers may have left teaching during the time period between 2000 and 2010. As a proportion of the total teaching workforce reported by the survey districts which numbered 6964 in 2010, the district reported proportion of the sampled districts amounts to about .9% (9/ tenths of one percent). In 2000, the census estimated the proportion at .02% (2/100's of one percent). It probably matters little in real terms what the percentage actually was in 2000 and is today since whether Census-estimated numbers or district-reported numbers are used to describe the representation of diverse teachers in the teaching workforce, the representation is vanishingly small.

The current demographic according to the study showed that of full and part-time teachers of diverse cultural background reported by the districts:

- 10 were Black/African American,
- 11 were Native American or Pacific Islander
- 16 were Asian,
- 16 were Central/South American/Hispanic/Latino,
- 8 were Eastern European, and

Administrators of diverse cultural background currently employed in the school districts:

There were 7, full and part-time administrators of diverse cultural background reported by districts and schools in 2010. With an admittedly different method of sampling, ten years ago in the 2000 Census, a total of 48 (full time equivalent) diverse administrators were reported. Among the estimated 48 administrators reported in 2000, it appears that between 2000 and 2010 the numbers may have declined from about 48 to 7. As a proportion of the total administrative workforce which numbered about 490 administrators in 2010, the district-

reported proportion of the sampled districts amounts to about .01%. (1/100's of one percent). In 2000, the census estimated the proportion at .03% (3/100's of one percent)

The current demographic breakdown according to the study showed that of full and part-time administrators of diverse cultural background reported by the districts:

- 2 were Black/African American,
- 1 was Asian,
- 2 were Native American,
- 2 were Central/South American/Hispanic/Latino,
- none was Eastern European

Comparisons of survey data with previous reports.

The table below indicates the relative distribution of teacher/administrator types and the estimates, based on the 2000 Census distribution of teacher and administrator types who represented culturally diverse teachers and administrators in Census Rural Areas where 91% of the population was considered to be White in rural schools.

Table 1

Comparison of Vermont Department of Education, US Census and the Diversity Survey

	2000 Base ¹	2000 FTE Numbers ² of Diverse	2000 Census ² %	2010 Base ³	2010 Count ³ Diverse	2010% ³
Administrators	1365	47.78	0.035	490	7	0.014
Teachers						
Elementary	3192	45.96	0.014			
Itinerant*	680	15.64	0.003			
Secondary	3280	97.74	0.030			
Special Educators	1247	21.82	0.018			
	8399	181.17	0.022	6964	61	0.9

***This category was eliminated in 2004 and the itinerant teachers were reclassified as elementary or secondary.**

Sources:

- 1 Vermont Department of Education
- 2 US Census 2000: File STF 4
- 3 Vermont Teacher Diversity Survey

Discussion of the Counts

What may account for the drop in numbers and proportional representation of diverse teachers and administrators? First, the limitations in sampling and methods for gathering the data in the present study and Census may account for some of the proportional differences across years. Second, with such small numbers of diverse teachers and administrators the proportions are likely to be unstable and somewhat prone to error. However, the errors might be quite large and still account for a picture of both decline and low representation. For example, the proportional decline for teachers is slightly more than half of the total numbers of diverse teachers while the total number of teachers has actually remained constant over the ten year period. Third, the policies and practices in school districts that are associated with recruitment, selection and retention of candidates for teaching and administrative vacancies may vary from district to district and may influence the composition of the teaching workforce over a ten year period. The following discussion describes district responses to questions designed to illuminate district policy and practice related to the recruitment and retention of a diverse teaching workforce. Data are presented as they were recorded from the questionnaire for each question with a brief discussion of the findings.

Policy and Practice

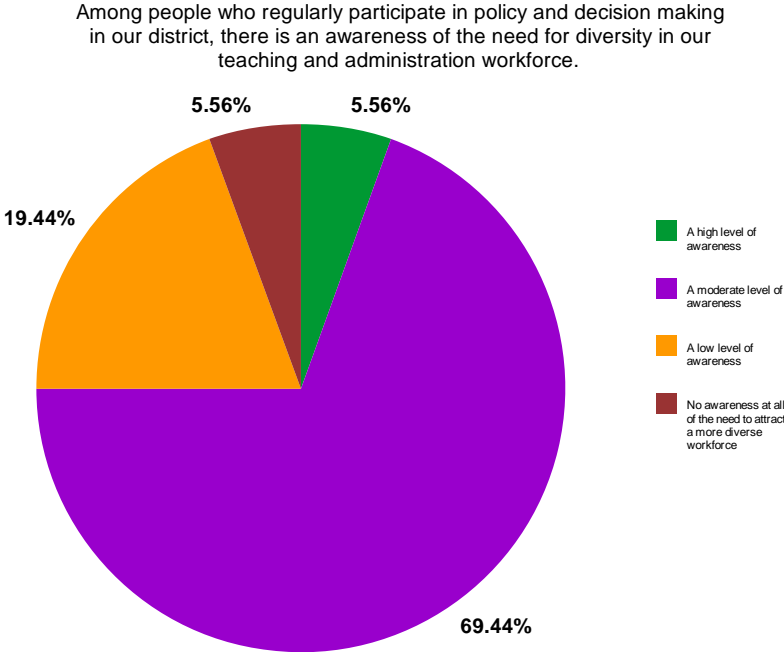
In addition to a tabulation of the counts and percentages of Teachers and Administrators, several questions were asked concerning the attitudes expressed by district policy and decision makers about the need for diversity in the education workforce, barriers to recruitment and retention of staff, resources that are currently allocated to the recruitment process, knowledge of the pool of candidates, strategies employed for recruiting, and the results that have been obtained in the attempts made to attract and hire culturally diverse staff.

The summary finding statement across these questions is that while there is general agreement that a culturally diverse workforce is needed, there are many perceived barriers to obtaining this goal, there are few resources currently being allocated to the recruitment process and the retention is only moderately successful. Finally, the results obtained from the efforts thus far attempted are generally reflective of the counts in both the 2000 Census data and the current

count of culturally diverse teachers, which is to say, their numbers appear to be very small and declining.

Question 11: Among people who regularly participate in policy and decision making in our district, there is an awareness of the need for diversity in our teaching and administration workforce.

Of the 40 respondents to this question, most (62.5%) felt there was a moderate level of awareness for the need of diversity in our teaching and administration workforce. Four respondents provided comments. “There is awareness, but we have not discussed ways to increase diversity among administrators, teachers and staff. It very difficult to get qualified applicants...we focus on candidates' ability to do their job.” said one respondent. Another commented that “Budgets are tight.” While a third suggested that, “Awareness and desire is present. Recruiting diverse folks to work in one of the whitest states in the nation will always be a challenge.”

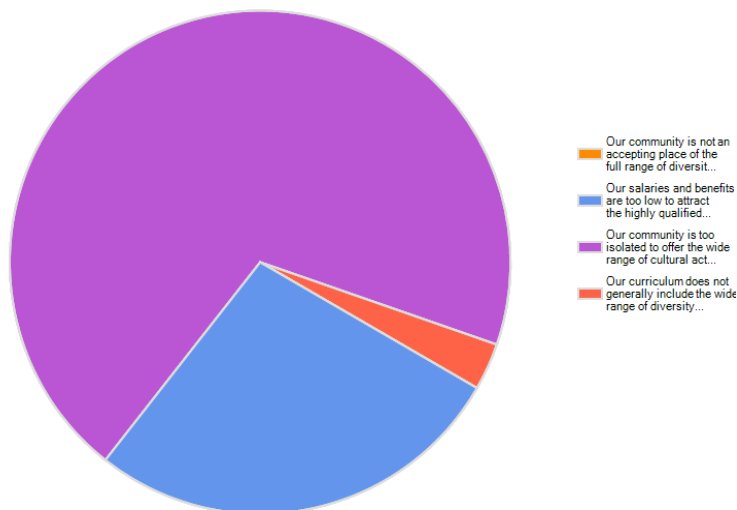


Question 18 and 19: From my point of view, the following circumstances are barriers to the recruitment and the retention of teachers or administrators with diverse cultural backgrounds (Mark all that apply)

- The districts (92%) believe our community is too isolated to offer the wide range of cultural activities teachers and administrators with diverse cultural backgrounds find appealing, acting as a barrier for recruitment, and 83.3% believe it acts as a barrier for the retention of those individuals.
- 37% replied that salaries and benefits are too low to attract the highly qualified persons we are seeking.
- 4% of districts responded that our curriculum does not generally include the wide range of diversity of content in history, language, and culture.
- 41.7% of districts identified having few culturally diverse students as another barrier to the retention of teachers and administrators with diverse backgrounds.
- One district replied, “We may be too rural to attract applicants of diverse backgrounds.”
- Another districted commented, “We are in Vermont. There are few to none minority applicants that apply.”

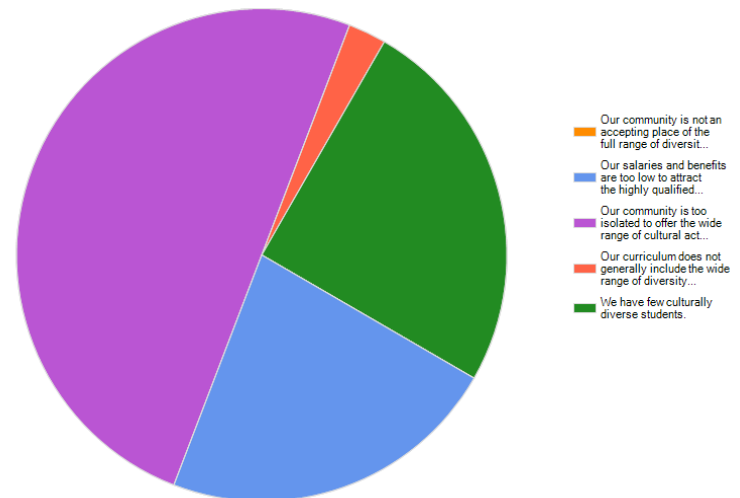
Graph of Question 18

From my point of view, the following circumstances are barriers to the recruitment of teachers or administrators with diverse cultural backgrounds (Mark all that apply)



Graph of Question 19

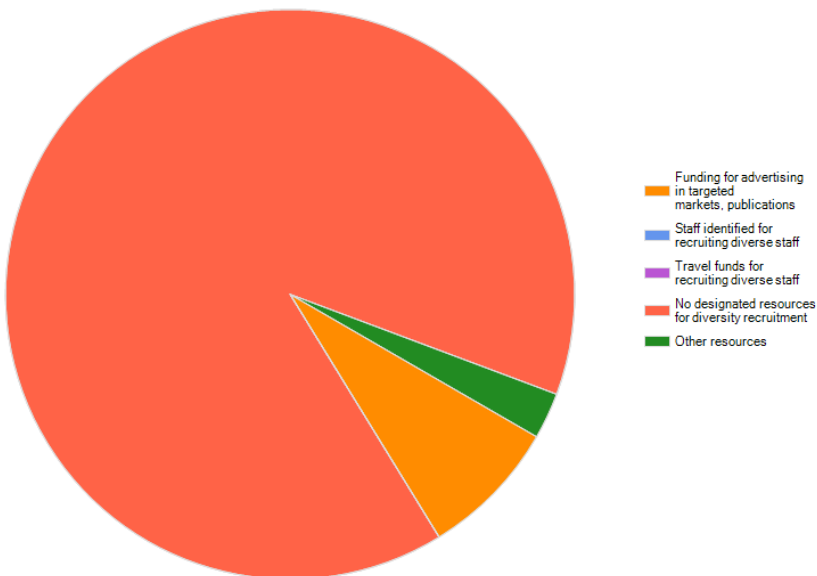
From my point of view, the following circumstances are barriers to the retention of teachers or administrators with diverse cultural backgrounds: (Mark all that apply)



Question 12: Our district allocates the following for recruitment of teachers and administrators of diverse cultural background:

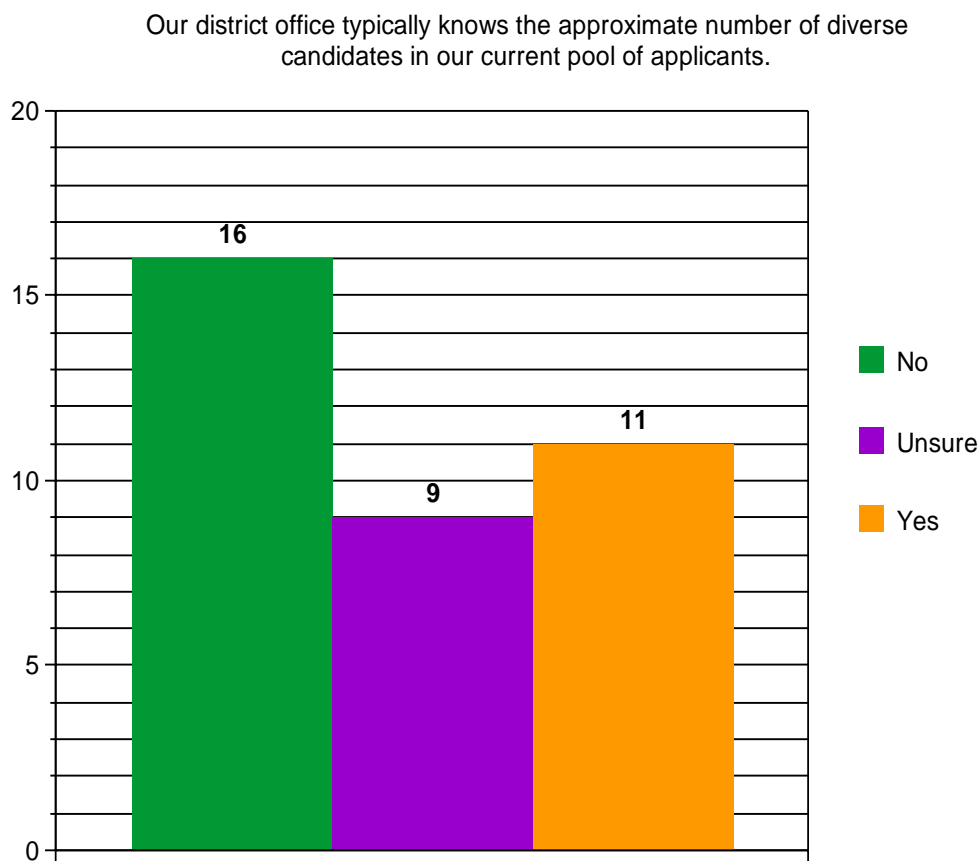
As shown by the graph (below), 34 districts (89.5%), the majority, responded that there are ‘no designated resources for diversity recruitment’ and 3 districts responded that there is funding for advertising in targeted markets, publications.’ One district answered ‘other resources.’

Our district allocates the following for recruitment of teachers and administrators of diverse cultural background:



13: Our district office typically knows the approximate number of diverse candidates in our current pool of applicants.

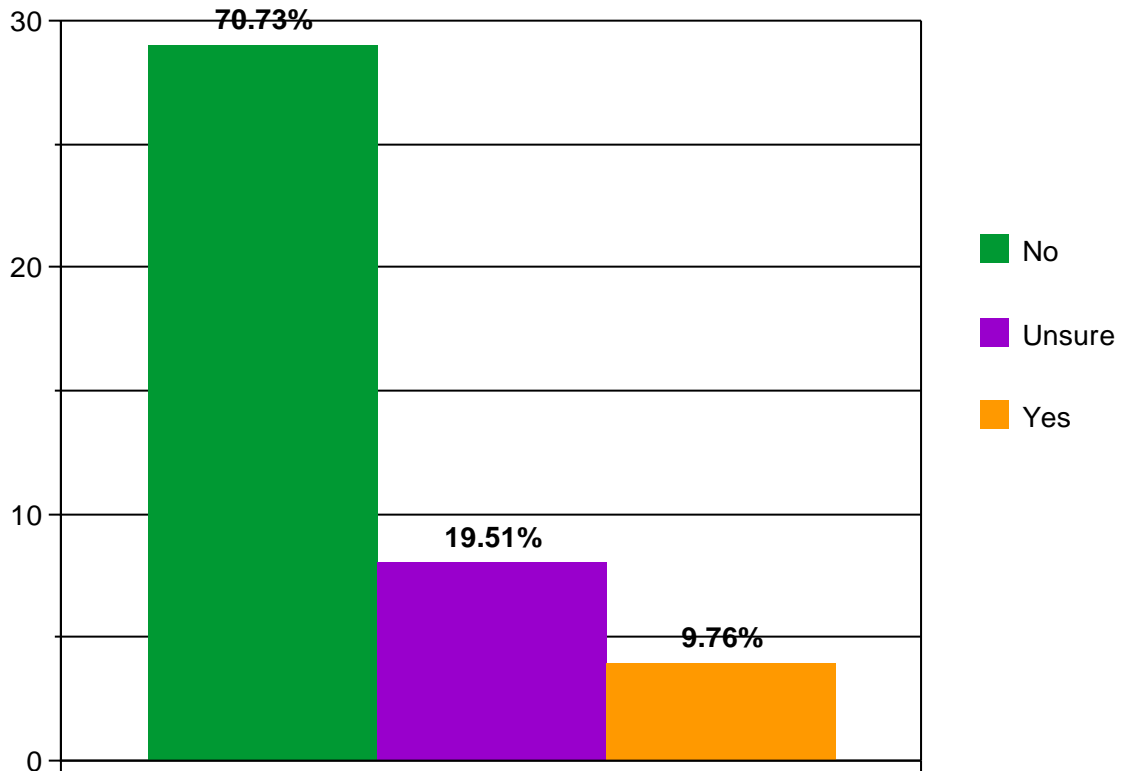
Out of the 41 districts that responded to this question, 61% did not know the approximate number of diverse candidates in our current pool of applicants, 26.8% responded 'yes' and 5 others left comments. One response was, "Unless the candidate makes this clear we don't know." Another commented saying, "We interview all qualified candidates and hire the best candidate from the applicant pool regardless of background and diversity."



Question 15: Our district has written policies and procedures in place to guide the recruitment process of teachers and administrators of diverse cultural background.

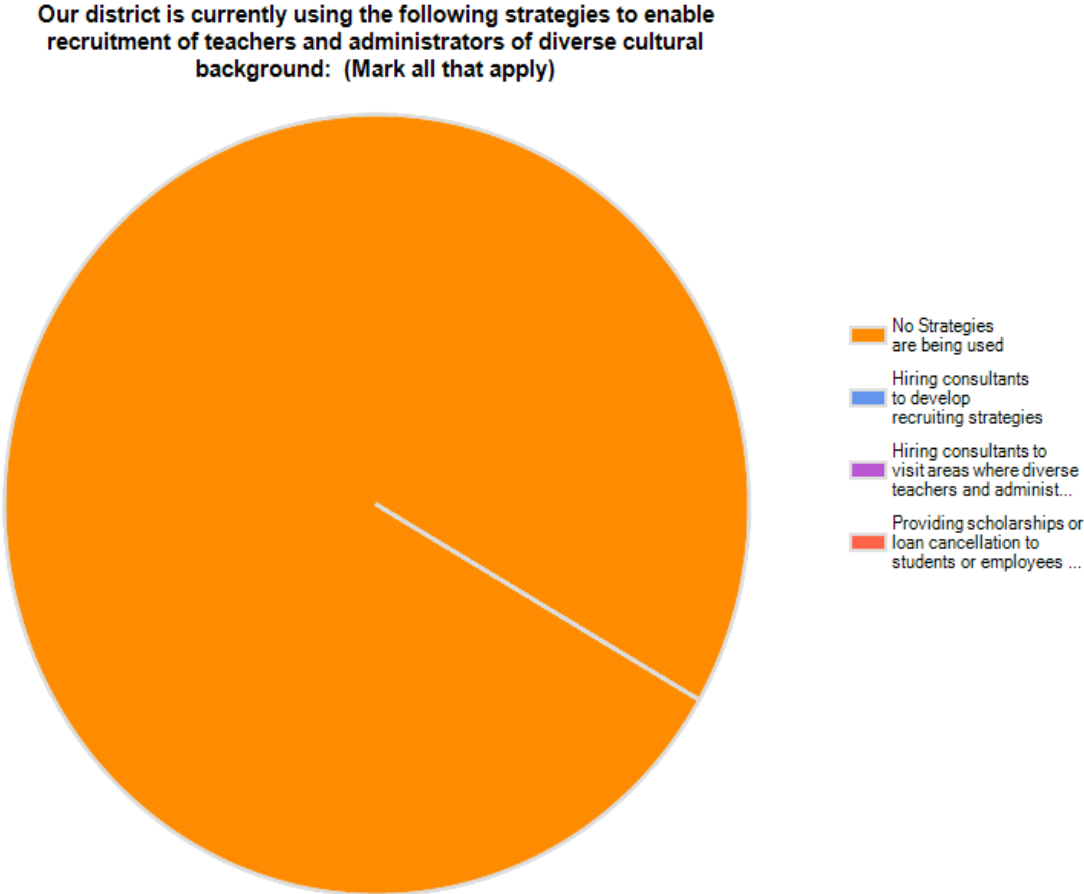
Out of the 41 districts that responded to this question, 29 (70.7%) of them answered 'no'. The majority of districts have not written policies and procedures in place to guide the recruitment process of teachers and administrators of diverse cultural background. There were 8 respondents who were unsure, and only 4 who replied 'yes.'

Our district has written policies and procedures in place to guide the recruitment process of teachers and administrators of diverse cultural background.



Question 16: Our district is currently using the following strategies to enable recruitment of teachers and administrators of diverse cultural background: (Mark all that apply)

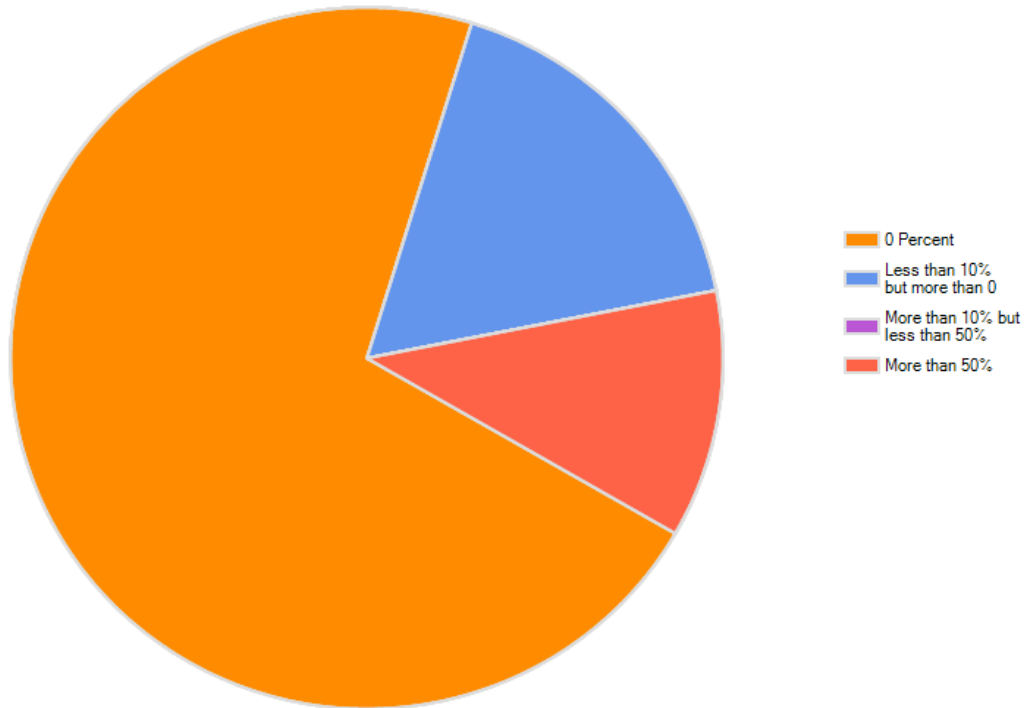
As shown by the graph (below), 100% of the districts agree that no strategies are currently being used to enable recruitment of teachers and administrators of diverse cultural background.



Question 14: Our district has interviewed teachers or administrators with diverse cultural backgrounds and has made job offers to diverse individuals. The acceptance rate for our offers in the most recent year was approximately:

As represented by the pie chart (below), a majority of districts, 71.4%, responded that the acceptance rate of job offers made to teachers and administrators with diverse cultural backgrounds in the most recent year was 0 percent. The remaining districts felt the acceptance rate was generally very low.

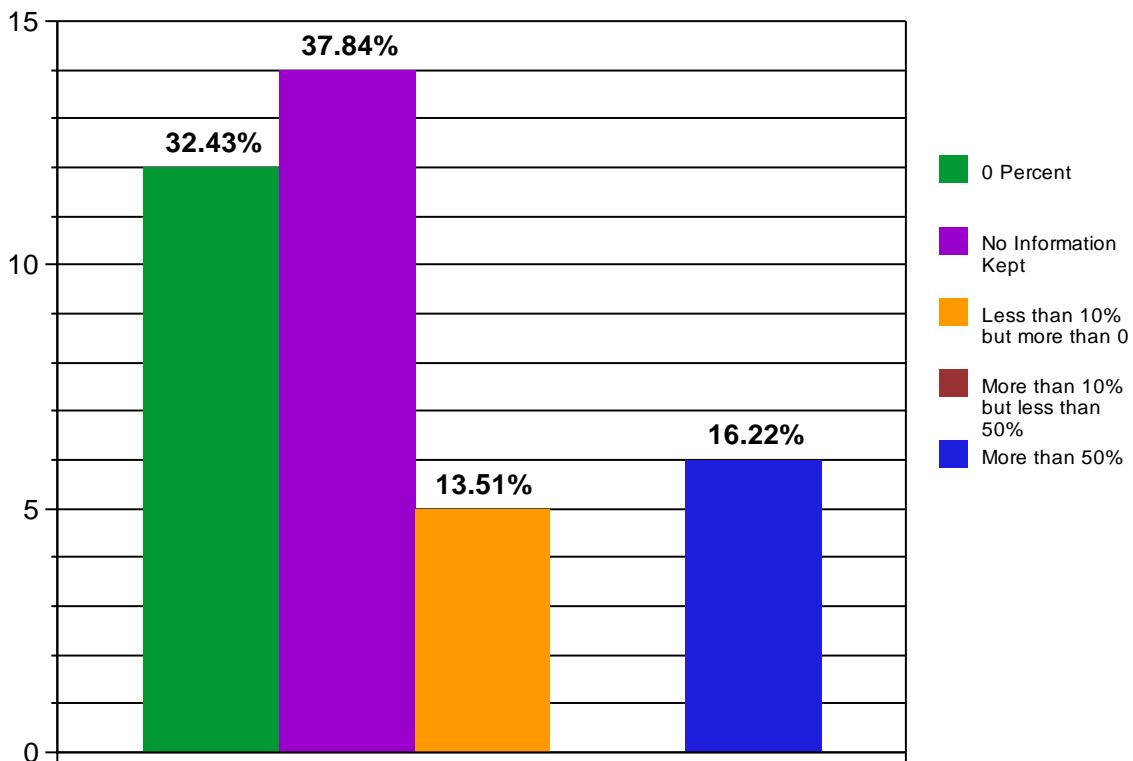
Our district has interviewed teachers or administrators with diverse cultural backgrounds and has made job offers to diverse individuals. The acceptance rate for our offers in the most recent year was approximately:



Question 17: Our district has hired teachers or administrators with diverse cultural backgrounds in positions in our district during the past five years. Over the past five years the retention rate would be approximately: (from 0 to more than 50%)

70% of respondents indicated the retention rate was either '0 percent' or unknown for hired teachers or administrators with diverse cultural backgrounds during the past five years.

Our district has hired teachers or administrators with diverse cultural backgrounds in positions in our district during the past five years. Over the past five years the retention rate would be approximately



Discussion and Recommendations

Recruitment of Teachers and Administrators with diverse cultural backgrounds (What affects the numbers?)

Relatively little is known about how to successfully recruit individuals who are members of diverse cultural groups into occupations that tend to be staffed by the dominant culture. We have attempted to query Vermont school districts about perception of the need, perceived barriers to recruitment and hiring, allocation of resources to recruitment, knowledge of the pool of candidates, strategies and assessment of the results of recent attempts to recruit. Researchers have found that the need for diversity in the work force is prevalent. According to an article written by Kecia Thomas and P. Gail Wise in the *Journal of Business and Psychology*, (1991) due to the changes in the U.S. work force, for example the increases in minority workers as a proportion, organizations need to be cognizant of how to attract a different profile of applicant. A more diverse population requires greater diversity in the work force.

The article suggests that in order to attract diverse individuals we first have to know what is of greatest significance to individuals making a job choice. The study showed that minority candidates viewed demographic composition as an important influence on their attraction to an organization. Also, the chances of hiring minorities for positions traditionally held by white males were enhanced if the job incumbent was a minority. Another recruitment strategy suggested by the study to attract diverse individuals was to have a “managing diversity” policy as opposed to affirmative action programs. Thomas (1995) defines “managing diversity” as enabling every member of the work force to perform to his/her potential; it is the ability to manage an organization without unnatural advantage or disadvantage for any group. Thomas follows this with the following observation:

“The orientation toward minorities may be more salient for minorities than to non-minorities, and an organization’s affirmative action/equal employment policies as well as the representation of people of color throughout the organization represent a company’s orientation toward minorities” (p. 7).

The 1991 Thomas and Wise study also states that the data collected by the study implies that, “organizations may be able to strategically recruit certain types of people by emphasizing diversity issues during the recruitment process.” Also the study suggests that the current demographic composition of the workforce and projected changes, and future programs that reflect a strong value of diversity could also be helpful to the recruitment of

diverse applicants. Diversity programs are a strategic way of competing with other states and districts to attract qualified and diverse individuals.

Defining Diversity: Terms are Important

The discussion of diversity in the workforce often centers on the definition of what is meant by the term “diverse.” How inclusive or exclusive the term is meant to be often defines the way in which policies are perceived, laws interpreted, and fairness or lack of fairness ascribed to attitudes and actions. The attempt to define groups of teachers and administrators who are not “white” in the most inclusive way led the authors of the survey to attempt to define diversity according to the categories enumerated by the US Census and to differentiate diverse from white by listing these categories as follows:

Currently a citizen or resident (U.S. Born) who would answer "yes" to:

- *Black/African American
- *American Indian or Alaska Native or Pacific Islander
- *Asian
- *Hispanic or Latino
- *Other

Currently a Person of Immigrant Status who would answer "yes" to:

- *Black African
- *Asian
- *Central/South American
- *European
- *Other

The above categories in the Diversity Survey tended to create some confusion in at least two instances:

First, when confronted with the category “Other ” respondents had to make a decision about whether to count all of the teachers and administrators in the district or only include those who did not fit the preceding categories but who were also either “persons of color” or culturally diverse. By contacting the districts that counted large numbers of “Others” we were able to determine how the counts were made.

Second, however, the issue of color as a determinant of a category or the broader term of cultural or ethnic diversity remained to confound the counting. The latter issue has

been discussed by such observers of language and culture as the late William Safire, who on November 20, 1988, published a column in the New York Times discussing the derivation of the term “people of color”, which, he observed gained popular recognition in the “I Have a Dream” speech of Dr. Martin Luther King delivered at the Lincoln Memorial in August of 1963. Safire pointed out that the term color had been used to differentiate race in America as early as 1793 in a pamphlet printed at Boston University. Safire also observed that over the years, however, “color” has had several interpretations that have at times become pejorative and at other times a positive and unifying term.

The broader more inclusive term (diverse) was more likely to yield larger numbers of diverse teachers and administrators. Thus, the resulting small numbers of teachers and administrators has little effect on the conclusion reached by the authors that even the broadest definition of diversity yields very few diverse teachers. For the remainder of the discussion of the results the terms “diverse teachers and administrators” and “teachers and administrators of color” are used advisedly as the broader and narrower terms in the overall context of “diversity.”

The Need for Diversity among School Teachers and Administrators

The research clearly demonstrates that students from all backgrounds benefit from having been taught by a diverse pool of teachers (Sleeter & Thao, 2007; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Arguments for a diverse teaching force include, the need for role models who are of color, the potential of teachers of color to improve academic outcomes and school experiences of students of color (Klopfsengein, (2005), and the workforce rationale. Sleeter & Thao discuss the importance of considering race because race, language, and culture, impacts teachers’ delivery in the classroom. Sleeter & Thao also note that students of color are much more likely to have their academic ability questioned, to be taught by teachers who are uncomfortable around them and their families, and who are not versed in teaching strategies that best meet their needs.

Barriers to Recruiting and Retaining Teachers and Administrators of Color

The problem of not being able to recruit and retain adequate numbers of teachers and administrators of color has been discussed throughout this document. This issue has drawn attention to both policy makers and educators alike (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). In the research conducted for this report, administrators cite the fact that Vermont is particularly difficult to staff with a diverse teaching and administrator pool because of its demographics. This is supported by Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, and Wycloff’s (2005) work that revealed that teachers were more likely to leave more distant schools to move to schools

closer to communities where they were raised. Demographics are certainly a factor, however, Borman and Dowling (2008) also found that women were more likely to leave the teaching profession than men; that women who were of higher socio-economic backgrounds, younger than 36, and White were also groups likely to leave the teaching profession prematurely. Teachers who scored high on standardized tests and those who had obtained graduate degrees were also likely to leave teaching.

The plethora of reasons teachers leave the profession make it difficult to devise a retention plan, however, there are mediating school contextual variables found to impact teacher retention rates (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001b; Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005). The first condition discussed is student behavior and student characteristics, which can only be indirectly controlled by school administration. Teachers tend to leave when they are placed in a high poverty school or where there are behavioral problems. There is good news for states or districts that cannot control student characteristics. Though student characteristics have a bearing on teacher retention rates, school conditions, something administration can control, override the impact of student conditions (Ingersoll, 2003).

Conditions such as organizational capital, financial, human, and social capital work to determine whether teachers will stay in or leave teaching positions (Ogawa, Sexton, Freitas, 2008). Teachers who feel supported financially, socially, and organizationally are more likely to remain in their schools. Teachers who are supported in these ways have the resources to work with and feel more secure and appreciated in their positions. Although there is little that can be done as far as student characteristics, administrators at the school, district, and state levels have the power to control the school environment to make it more comfortable for teachers. Administrators can demand that schools are adequately resourced and that they are provided with the funding to make their schools attractive to teachers.

The Development of Policies, Procedures, and Strategies

The time has come to seriously consider policies and procedures that might move the discussion forward. We note that these are not new concerns among people of color, newly arrived immigrants and community members alike. To move forward, Vermont must consider policies that would work given the context of Vermont. If Vermont, or any state for that matter, desires to move forward with regard to the retention of faculty members of color, the research must be taken into account as policies, procedures, and strategies are developed. The following points should be considered:

- The first commitment that must be made to school is the need for adequate financial resources. Teachers must feel that they can teach using the highest quality educational tools, curricula, books, and equipment. This is attractive to teachers choosing between a struggling school and one that is equipped with everything she/he needs to be successful. Further, the facilities must also reflect prosperity. Teachers must also be paid well if they are expected to uproot from their current posts to move to Vermont.
- Teachers of color also need governance or organizational support (Achinson, Ogawa, Sexton & Freitas, 2010). They need policy structures that are equitable and impartial. Teachers of color need to see that because of impartiality and fairness in the organizational structure that upward mobility is possible. They need to feel valued and a part of the organizational structure. According to Achison et al., teachers of color need policies and governance structures that afford teachers of color the support of site administration, professional autonomy in determining instructional practices, and influence in decision making regarding the curriculum (2010).
- Policies and procedures also need to be in place that provide teachers the opportunities to establish social capital (Achinson et al., 2010). Isolation is a known phenomenon in the teaching profession. If teachers are to be maintained in a geographically challenged area, they need to have strong social ties. Social ties can be supported through policy and the structure of the school organization. Internal organizational structures that support social capital building among teachers and the educational community include: high quality professional development, projects that require collaboration, mentoring programs, and social support programs for teachers of color. Administrators can also reach beyond to school walls to local churches or other organizations catering to populations of color.
- If schools and school districts are to recruit and retain teachers of color, then actions to do so must be bold and pro-active. Districts must reach beyond efforts of the past to search for qualified candidates of color. The state must be marketed in areas where diverse candidates will be found. Additionally, districts in the state of Vermont must be willing to comb the field until the best candidates of color are located and hired. Once hired, districts must provide them with the necessary resources, organizational support, and outlets for productive social interaction. Without this type of resolve, there will likely be more excuses than results.

Specific Local Strategies

- The goal to broaden and intensify the effort to diversify Vermont's schools and school personnel can be accomplished with the help of community partners. As partners unite, we can discuss how we can help schools to develop winning strategies, such as listed above. Because the plan noted above includes the need for extra resources, community partners can discuss ways to help schools obtain resources in the form of salary incentives for the recruitment and the retention of diverse faculty and administrators. This fund could be from a private funding source such as the Business Roundtable and Legislature.
- Another way to increase the diversity in the applicant pool is to target new graduates from colleges of teacher education. This strategy might prove more successful than recruiting veteran teachers because newly graduated teachers are less likely to have established roots in a particular place. The first teachers to attempt to recruit would be University of Vermont because of the obvious close proximity. Vermont's own Teacher Diversity Scholarship Program which has a good record of placing diverse teachers in Vermont schools could be expanded to many more Vermont communities with community and private foundation support to provide college loan cancellation opportunities for teacher candidates with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Final Words

As this study is released the authors are reminded once again that its view is limited by the survey's scope and its methods. There are many views of diversity in Vermont's schools and communities. There are several initiatives underway in Vermont that are related to the concerns about the lack of diversity described in the foregoing report. For example, *School Spring*, (<http://www.schoolspring.com/toc/?emp>) a Vermont based company that provides teacher and administrator recruitment services to individuals and school districts, has adopted a link on its own website to the magazine/website for *Teachers of Color*. (<http://www.teachersofcolor.com>). School districts choosing to adopt a proactive program for recruiting diverse teachers and administrators can develop materials and link their efforts to a wider network of recruiters and candidates.

There continues to be community group activity on behalf of both the growing diverse communities in Burlington, Brattleboro, Winooski and Rutland. Boards of education can expect concerned parents and community members to continue to attend board meetings, write articles and letters to the local press and advocate for a wider range of cultural representation in the teaching workforce. These concerns are apt to grow and

to find expression in political campaigns when candidates for office are questioned about their long term vision for public education.

At the national level, local and state level recruiters could work their way outward to neighboring states. A national program like “Teach for America” (which recently received a fifty million dollar Federal grant) might be developed and designed as “Teachers of Color for America” or, “Diverse Teachers for America” for teachers in hard to staff areas.

The current survey has but scratched the surface of a problem and its potential solutions (there will be many). As a recent article in *7 Days*, by Ken Picard (August 25, 2010) has observed, Vermont has several problems to overcome if it is to find a balance of diversity in its schools. Problems such as:

- the perception that there are too few jobs available because of declining enrollments,
- the requirement (or perceived requirement) that when schools downsize or consolidate the most recent hires will be let go and those with seniority will stay (resulting in few new hires),
- the perception that Vermont communities may not welcome teachers who are diverse, the lack of awareness that diversity is value added to our public schools and,
- the outright denial that the need for diversity exists,

...ought to be discussed by state leaders and community members with the purpose in mind to arrive at a vision for Vermont education that matches the needs of all students.

October 3, 2010

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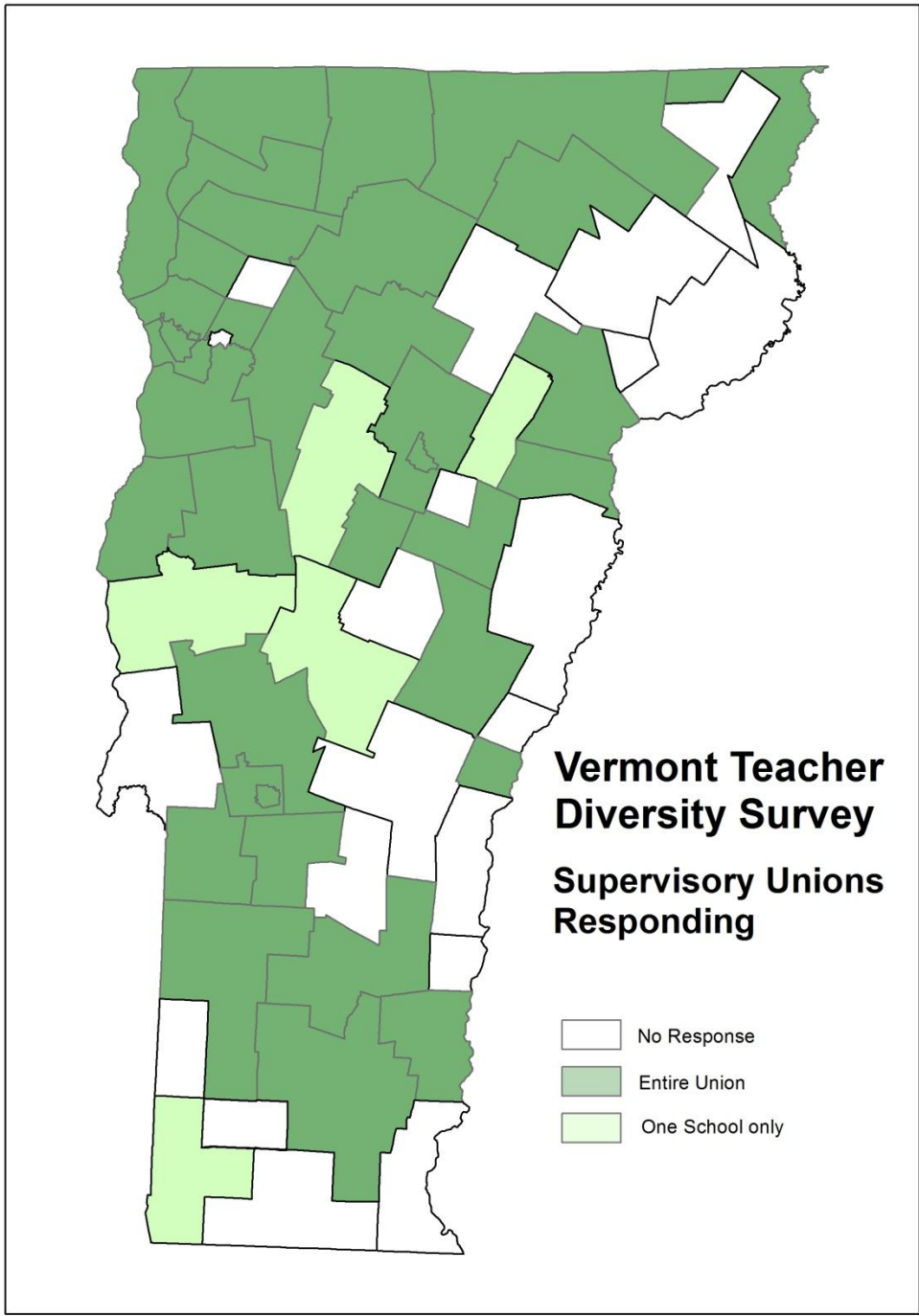
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APPENDICES:

The map below indicates the distribution of responding superintendents representing 60 Vermont School Districts.

The Diversity Questionnaire is available from: H. Bud Meyers at the above address.



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