Executive Summary

Purpose of Report: To update the Board on the progress of initiatives within the Strategic Plan to enhance cultural responsiveness and diversity of the workforce.

The Sioux Falls School District has several initiatives in progress to meet the Strategic Plan goals of being culturally responsive and to develop a workforce reflective of student diversity.

Over the past 25 years, the diversity of student ethnicity has gone from 6% to 36% in the District. Culturally responsive teaching recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning, and the District is working with the University of South Dakota (USD) on practices and models. A systemic plan is being developed to raise awareness and understanding for all members of the workforce.

The District is working in two ways to increase diversity in the workforce. First, a relationship with USD is fostering a pathway for current students to become teachers in the District. In addition to learning about a similar program at Eastern Oregon University, District officials have already met with many students to discuss the opportunity. The District is also developing a teacher internship pilot program to offer five paid teaching internships to interested community members to have the opportunity to teach alongside District teachers and get a feel for the profession during the 2017-18 school year.

Administrative Recommendation to School Board: Acknowledge the progress toward exploring a model to expand staff group’s awareness of culturally responsive practices and program strategies to expand the diversity of our teaching workforce.
Enhancing Cultural Responsiveness and Diversity in the SFSD Workforce

**Purpose of Report:** To update the Board on the progress of initiatives within the Strategic Plan to enhance cultural responsiveness and the diversity of the teaching workforce.

**Priority Areas 2 and 3:** School Culture and Climate and District Staff

**Priority Statement 4 and 5:** SFSD will develop strategies to enhance a culturally responsive workforce; SFSD will develop strategies to enhance the quality and diversity of its workforce.

**Strategic Initiative 2.4-1:** Evaluate and select a model to stimulate dialogue and reflection for all staff groups about culturally responsive practices.

**Strategic Initiative 3.5-1:** Recruit a more diverse workforce reflective of our student population

**Explanation:**
The Sioux Falls School District (SFSD) recognizes that over the past twenty-five years, the diversity of the District’s student population has increased. The student population has gradually changed over that time from approximately 94% to 64% Caucasian. Through the strategic planning process, two areas were identified in response to this gradual change.

**Culturally responsive practices:**
Culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning. Acknowledging, responding to, and celebrating fundamental cultures offers full, equitable access to education for students from all cultures. Dialogue with representatives from the University of South Dakota (USD) about culturally responsive practices and models to consider moving forward in the SFSD began in August 2016. In January 2017, USD began facilitating dialogue with a Think Tank group of SFSD building and District level administrators. This group will attend a June 2017 “Diversity Conference” session hosted and fiscally supported by USD regarding these practices. Through dialogue and study, the Think Tank will develop a systemic plan for raising awareness and understanding of the practices and develop an action plan to reach all members of the SFSD workforce.

**Recruiting a more diverse teaching workforce:**
The SFSD is committed to developing a workforce that is more reflective of our student population. The attainment of this goal will assist our students of diversity in seeing the potential of their career-oriented goals as they see teachers of diverse backgrounds leading their classrooms. Currently, our student population is comprised of 36% minority
students, and 64% Caucasian. Our teaching staff consists of 2% minority population. There are two avenues we are pursuing to reach our goal of increasing diversity in our workforce:

**Program 1: Grow Your Own**

Knowing that 60% of teachers nationally work in a school that is within 20 miles of where they grew up has fostered a dialogue to appropriately address the goal. A relationship with the University of South Dakota (USD) to pursue a SFSD Teacher Pathway was started during the 2016-2017 school year. A similar program was been developed in Oregon between Eastern Oregon University and local school districts. Eastern Oregon University staff will be meeting with administrators from the SFSD and USD during the month of April 2017. The group will work to lay out a potential plan for a SFSD Teacher Pathway to start during the 2018-2019 school year in each of our high schools.

In the meantime, we have started discussions with our minority students to spark interest. The following steps have been taken, or will be completed, during the 2016-2017 school year:

1. Meetings to inform recommended students of diversity of a career in education
   a. November and December of 2016
   b. 46 Students present
2. Second round of meetings with students of diversity that desired to hear more information specific to a career in education
   a. February 2017
   b. USD and SFSD representatives presented to students
   c. 26 Students present
3. Job Shadow experiences for students
   a. With elementary, middle and high school teachers in a classroom
   b. Proposed meeting to be held in April and/or May
4. A trip to visit the USD campus and education department is tentatively set for April 26th

**Program 2: SFSD Potential Teacher Internship Program**

The SFSD is offering five (5) paid teacher internship positions as part of a pilot program to recruit potential teachers to the teaching field for the 2017-2018 school year. Those selected will receive a nine (9) week paid internship in the subject area and grade level of teaching that they have the greatest desire to potentially teach in. The location and exact start and end date will be determined after the individuals have been selected. Those selected will work nine (9) weeks of internship time alongside a current SFSD
educator. The selected individuals will be able to lesson plan, co-teach selected lessons, attend staff and collaboration meetings, and participate in the other general expectations of a teacher, to gain a hands-on experience for nine (9) weeks prior to deciding to continue their education to become a certified teacher. Application for this opportunity will be open to any individual with a 4-year degree.

**Costs:** TBD

**Committee Participation:** Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources Director, 10 Think Tank study committee members including Elementary, Middle and High School Principals and two Directors.

**Summary:** The SFSD is committed to building a culture that is responsive and inclusive of all students. Toward that goal, teams are studying and researching models to deliver information to all SFSD workforce members. In addition, the process of increasing diversity of teachers is in the beginning stages with two program options.

**Administrative Recommendations to School Board:** Acknowledge the progress toward exploring a model to expand staff awareness of culturally responsive practices and program strategies to expand the diversity of our teaching workforce.