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13	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON	
	FOR THE EASTERN DIST	RICT OF WASHINGTON
14	FOR THE EASTERN DIST	RICT OF WASHINGTON
14 15	JIN ZHU,	RICT OF WASHINGTON NO. 2:15-CV-00263
	JIN ZHU,	NO. 2:15-CV-00263
15 16		NO. 2:15-CV-00263 COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY
15	JIN ZHU, Plaintiff, v. BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL	NO. 2:15-CV-00263 COMPLAINT AND
15 16 17 18	JIN ZHU, Plaintiff, v.	NO. 2:15-CV-00263 COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY
15 16 17 18	JIN ZHU, Plaintiff, v. BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL	NO. 2:15-CV-00263 COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY
15 16 17 18 19	JIN ZHU, Plaintiff, v. BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 75,	NO. 2:15-CV-00263 COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY
115 116 117 118 119 220 221	JIN ZHU, Plaintiff, v. BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 75,	NO. 2:15-CV-00263 COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY
15 16 17 18 19 20 21	JIN ZHU, Plaintiff, v. BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 75,	NO. 2:15-CV-00263 COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY
115 116 117 118 119 20 21 22 23	JIN ZHU, Plaintiff, v. BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 75, Defendant. Mr. Zhu, by and through his attorne	NO. 2:15-CV-00263 COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY
15 16 17	JIN ZHU, Plaintiff, v. BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 75, Defendant. Mr. Zhu, by and through his attorne	NO. 2:15-CV-00263 COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY ys, alleges:

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1. Defendant, BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 75 ("Bridgeport") is a municipal government agency located in the State of Washington.

- 2. Plaintiff, JIN ZHU ("Mr. Zhu"), resided in Waterville, Washington at all times relevant to this lawsuit.
- 3. All acts complained of occurred within the Eastern District of Washington.
- 4. The Federal Court for the Eastern District of Washington has personal jurisdiction over the parties and subject matter jurisdiction for the claims in this complaint pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1981, 28 U.S.C. § 1331, and 28 U.S.C. § 1367(a).
- 5. Venue is proper in the Eastern District of Washington under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) because the acts and omissions complained herein occurred in the District and Defendant conducts business there.
- 6. On July 24, 2015, Mr. Zhu mailed (via certified mail, return receipt requested, tracking number 70150640000374349326) a RCW 4.96.020 Notice of Tort Claim to Bridgeport. Bridgeport received the Notice of Tort Claim on July 27, 2015. Sixty days have expired since July 27, 2015, therefore Mr. Zhu has complied with the administrative preconditions of filing this lawsuit and the statute of limitations regarding his federal and state claims was tolled during that sixty day timeframe and the five court days following.

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INTRADISTRICT ASSIGNMENT

This action arose in Douglas County, Washington. Therefore, Mr. Zhu 7. respectfully requests that the case be assigned to the Spokane Division of the Eastern District of Washington.

III. **FACTS**

8. Plaintiff re-alleges the above paragraphs.

II.

- Mr. Zhu worked as a secondary math teacher at Waterville Secondary 9. School of Waterville School District ("Waterville") from 2006 to 2012.
- During Mr. Zhu's tenure at Waterville he was the subject of racial 10. discrimination, reported that discrimination, and experienced retaliation following his report of the same.
- 11. Those events ultimately led to Mr. Zhu filing a federal lawsuit against Waterville.
 - 12. Bridgeport knew that Mr. Zhu took legal action against Waterville.
- Bridgeport knew that Mr. Zhu resolved his legal dispute with 13. Waterville.
- 14. Bridgeport, cognizant of the risks associated with hiring an employee not afraid to enforce state and federal anti-discrimination laws, chose to hire less qualified candidates for the below-referenced positions.

- 15. Bridgeport declares that it is "an equal opportunity employer" on its official website, job opening announcements, and employment application forms.
- 16. Bridgeport's 2011-2016 Affirmative Action Plan, page 6 "Problem Areas Identification," points out "Ethnic Minorities: The numerical analysis of the District's total work force in 2010-2011 reveals that 23.83% of our staff members were ethnic minorities (0% of administrators, 6.52% of certificated and 17.31% of classified). In comparison, 87.1% of our student population is ethnic minority"
- 17. The Bridgeport's 2011-2016 Affirmative Action Plan, page 7 "Goals and Timelines," urges "..... constant effort and vigilance is necessary to continue to diversify the small and rather homogeneous employee group Goal 1: Continue to balance the ethnic minority representation by employing and/or promoting employees to reflect our community and students populations."
- 18. On August 8, 2012, Mr. Zhu applied for the Bridgeport's Middle School Math Intervention Teacher position.
- 19. On August 10, 2012 at 2:34 p.m., Mr. Zhu emailed Bridgeport's Superintendent, Scott Sattler:

I realize that I do have additional information to make available for the application. Attached is the Waterville Students ITBS Math Results. As you can see: 1. Only 27% of students in 1st grade, 47% in 2nd grade, 50% in 3rd grade, 36% in 4th grade, 40% in 5th grade, 20% in 6th grade, 6% in 7th grade, and 17% in 8th grade scored at or above grade level; 2. 75% of students in 9th grade who took my Math Intervention class were at or above grade level. The results prove that my Math

Intervention class was effective in improving middle school students' math skills and assessment performance. Please contact me if you have any question regarding this information or my application packet.

- 20. Mr. Sattler did not respond to Mr. Zhu's August 10th email.
- 21. Bridgeport did not interview Mr. Zhu for the Middle School Math Intervention Teacher position related to the above-referenced 2012 job announcement.
- 22. Bridgeport posted a second Middle School Math Intervention Teacher opening in March 2013.
- 23. Mr. Zhu applied for the 2013 Middle School Math Intervention Teacher position.
- 24. On March 28, 2013 at 1:51 p.m., Mr. Zhu asked, via email, the following of Mr. Sattler:

Attached are my updated resume and letter of interest for the position this year. Could you please confirm to me that I have submitted all the required materials for the application? If you need any additional information for the sake of a complete and objective assessment of my competency for the position, could you please let me know?

- 25. On March 29, 2013 at 6:55 a.m., Mr. Sattler replied, via email, "I have received your complete application and will forward all your information to our selection committee."
- 26. On March 27, 2013, Bridgeport posted a Middle School Science Teacher opening.

- 27. On April 8, 2013, Mr. Zhu applied for the Middle School Science Teacher position.
 - 28. On April 8, 2013 at 11:06 a.m., Mr. Zhu emailed Mr. Sattler:

I also saw your school district's notice of an opening for a middle school science teacher. I possess the required qualifications for the position. Since you have confirmed that my application is complete, I only need to submit a cover letter for the position. Attached is my cover letter. Could you please let me know if the application needs any other information? Could you also please tell me when your selection committee will conduct interviews for the two positions for which I have applied?

- 29. Mr. Sattler did not respond to Mr. Zhu's April 8th email.
- 30. On April 9, 2013 at 11:22 a.m., Mr. Zhu asked, via email, Bridgeport employee Diane Hull:

Attached is my cover letter for the middle school science teacher position. Could you please let me know if the application needs any other information to be complete? When will your school district start the selection process?

- 31. Ms. Hull did not respond to Mr. Zhu's April 9th email.
- 32. On April 18, 2013 at 8:21 a.m., Mr. Zhu emailed Ms. Hull, "I have mailed letter for the middle school science teacher my cover you because I did not hear anything from the position to school district regarding my application for this position."
 - 33. Ms. Hull did not respond to Mr. Zhu's April 18th email.

- 34. On May 1, 2013 at 3:28 p.m., Mr. Zhu asked Mr. Sattler via email, "Did you receive my cover letter for the middle school science teacher position? Could you please tell me when your selection committee will conduct interviews for the two positions for which I have applied?"
 - 35. Mr. Sattler did not respond to Mr. Zhu's May 1st email.
- 36. On May 9, 2013 at 9:07 a.m., Mr. Zhu asked Mr. Sattler again via email the following: "Attached is a recommendation letter I received recently. Could you please forward it to your selection committee? As the end of this school year is one month away, I wonder whether you know when your committee will start selection for the two OUF positions for which I have applied." The supervisory recommendation letter was dated April 25, 2013. OUF means "open until filled" and relates to the Middle School Math Intervention Teacher position and the Middle School Science Teacher position.
 - 37. Mr. Sattler did not respond to Mr. Zhu's May 9th email.
- 38. Bridgeport did not interview Mr. Zhu for the Middle School Math Intervention Teacher position.
- 39. Bridgeport did not interview Mr. Zhu for the Middle School Science Teacher position.
- 40. On May 14, 2013 at 1:28 p.m., Mr. Zhu asked Mr. Sattler again via email the following: "I have noticed that the Middle school Math Intervention COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL- 7

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Teacher and Middle School Science Teacher positions were removed from your school district's website. Did you already select applicants for the two OUF position? If not, when will you?"

- 41. On May 14, 2013 at 1:57 p.m., Mr. Sattler finally answered Mr. Zhu as follows: "Both Math and Science have been filled in Bridgeport School District.

 Your application and complete file was considered by the interview committee."
- 42. Bridgeport selected Edith Ellen Haughey Sattler for the Middle School Math Intervention Teacher position in 2012.
 - 43. Upon information and belief, Ms. Sattler is related to Mr. Sattler.
- 44. Ms. Sattler's college transcripts reveal that she took no more than three math-related courses, the most recent being an "Elementary Math" class taken in 1968. Ms. Sattler's educational certificate contains no endorsement.
- 45. Upon information and belief Ms. Sattler vacated the Middle School Math Intervention Teacher position which, in turn, led Bridgeport to re-open the job position in 2013.
- 46. Bridgeport selected Frank Lynn Moore II for the Middle School Math Intervention Teacher position in 2013. In 2002, Mr. Moore received a Bachelor's degree of Arts with a major in Religion from Whitworth University. In 2012, he received a Master's degree of Education with a major in teaching K-8 from an unidentified university. Mr. Moore's education certificate was issued on July 3, COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR JURY

2012. Elementary Education is Mr. Moore's endorsement. Mr. Moore had no

certificated teaching experience when he applied for the position in 2013.

47. Bridgeport also selected Kara Jo Lashai Smith for the Middle School

Science Teacher position in 2013. Ms. Smith's advection certificate was issued on

- Science Teacher position in 2013. Ms. Smith's education certificate was issued on July 31, 2013. Her endorsements are Elementary Education and Middle Level Mathematics. Ms. Smith had no certificated teaching experience when she applied for the position in 2013.
- 48. By way of comparison, Mr. Zhu's education and experience during the above timeframe consisted of (1) a Bachelor's Degree of Engineering, (2) a Master's Degree of Arts (a three-year graduate school program), (3) admission into a Ph.D. World History research program after receiving excellent scores in three entrance tests relating to that program, (4) a year of secondary education program at Saint Martin's College, (5) scoring 166 on Educational Testing Service (ETS)'s Praxis II Mathematics: Content Knowledge test in 2006 and 172 points on the ETS Praxis II Physics: Content Knowledge test in 2008 - scores that ranked Mr. Zhu in the top 15% of all ETS math test takers and 6 points higher than the high end of the average performance range of all ETS physics test takers, (6) Mathematics (5-12th grade), Physics (5-12th grade), Chemistry (5-12th grade), and Middle Level Math/Science (4-9th grade) endorsements, and (7) having taught a wide ranges of

science and math subjects (including Math Intervention for more than three years) to students of multiple grades in Washington State since 2005.

- 49. Bridgeport knew of Mr. Zhu's above-referenced qualifications (and more) because Mr. Zhu listed those qualifications (and others) on his employment applications.
- 50. In his letter dated July 15, 2013, Mr. Sattler, in response to Mr. Zhu's inquiry as to why he was not selected for any interview, explained why Mr. Zhu was not chosen for the three positions:

Clearly, the district had other qualified candidates that were more interesting to the district at the time. Still, I can appreciate your desire to improve your chances at future positions so I will point out to you that we had terrific candidates with recent experience and we noticed that your information was a bit outdated. In your cover letter you shared that your indicator of student success in your classroom was based on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. This test has not been relevant in our area since 1996. Also, your recommendations were limited to a letter from a colleague, not a supervisor, dated 2012 and a letter from a teacher supervising your student teaching back in 2005. Of course, more current supervisory recommendations would have been more relevant to your application and carried more weight during the screening process.

- 51. Mr. Sattler's claims are inaccurate.
- 52. Bridgeport School District Middle School Math Intervention Teacher qualifications included "Highly Qualified Requirements of the NCLB." As a Washington teacher certificated before 1987, Ms. Sattler did not meet the below-referenced five highly qualified criteria to teach middle school math. However,

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Bridgeport still employed her instead of considering a qualified candidate like Mr. Zhu.

- 53. According to the information disclosed by Mr. Sattler, (1) Ms. Sattler had no declared major or minor for her Bachelor's degree. Her Master's degree major was "Prof. Dev. Biling Ed/ESL". Math was not Ms. Sattler's major, so she did not meet the first highly qualified criterion of having "A major in the core academic subject." (2) Ms. Sattler only had a total of fifteen quarter hours of possibly math-related courses at the college level, so she did not meet the second highly qualified criterion of having "The equivalent of a major (45 quarter hours or 30 semester hours) in the core academic subject." (3) Ms. Sattler possesses no national board certificate, so she did not meet the third highly qualified criterion of having a "National Board certification in the core academic subject." (4) Ms. Sattler took no Praxis II exam, so she did not meet the fourth highly qualified criterion of having "Passed a Praxis II exam in the core academic subject." (5) Ms. Sattler had not taught middle school math intervention for the school year of 2011-2012, so she did not have the current school year evaluation to meet the fifth highly qualified criterion of having "Been evaluated as satisfactory in annual evaluations while teaching the core academic subject."
- 54. Mr. Sattler's claim that "we had terrific candidates with recent experience" was inaccurate because (1) Ms. Sattler had not taught math intervention COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR JURY

before 2012, so she did not have recent experience of teaching math intervention

before she applied for the Middle School Math Intervention Teacher position; and (2) The Bridgeport School District Certificated Employee Contract signed by Ms. Thornton (formerly Ms. Smith) and Mr. Sattler on August 20, 2013 shows that the verification of her experience is "0 YR". The significance of this is she had no certificated teaching experience at all. (3) The Bridgeport School District Certificated Employee Contract signed by Mr. Moore on September 15, 2013 and by Mr. Sattler on September 17, 2013 shows that the verification of his experience is "0 YR". Again, the significance of this is he had no certificated teaching experience at all.

- 55. Mr. Sattler's claim that "we noticed that your information was a bit outdated" is inaccurate because Mr. Zhu was still teaching math (including Math Intervention classes) and science until the spring of 2012 and he applied for the Bridgeport School District Middle School Math Intervention Teacher position in the summer of 2012.
- 56. Mr. Sattler's July 15, 2013, letter rejected the indicator of Mr. Zhu's student success because "[t]his test (the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in math) has not been relevant in our area since 1996." Mr. Sattler's claim is inaccurate. Waterville and Bridgeport are both in Douglas County, and their distance is only about 43

miles by driving. However, Waterville still paid for its students to take the Iowa

Tests of Basic Skills in math in 2008.

57. Mr. Sattler's claim that "your recommendations were limited to a letter from a colleague, not a supervisor, dated 2012 and a letter from a teacher supervising your student teaching back in 2005" is inaccurate because neither Bridgeport's Notices of Opening for Middle School Math Intervention Teacher position nor Bridgeport's Notice of Opening for Middle School Science Teacher position asked for recommendations. Bridgeport's application form did not ask for recommendations, either. Yet Mr. Zhu submitted a supervisory recommendation letter dated April 25, 2013.

- 58. Bridgeport School District's 2011-2016 Affirmative Action Plan page 7 "Goals and Timelines" urges "..... constant effort and vigilance is necessary to continue to diversify the small and rather homogeneous employee group Goal 1: Continue to balance the ethnic minority representation by employing and/or promoting employees to reflect our community and students populations."
- 59. In a letter dated October 14, 2013, Mr. Sattler informed Mr. Zhu, that Ms. Sattler, Mr. Moore, and Ms. Smith do not belong to any minority group.
- 60. Although Bridgeport's minority teacher population (6.5% in the school year of 2013-2014) is grossly underrepresented in comparison to the

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absolute majority of minority student population (89.7% in the school year of 2013-2014), Mr. Zhu did not get any of the three jobs.

- 61. Although Mr. Zhu met the highly qualified criteria in middle school math, Ms. Sattler (who did not meet the qualification criteria) was inexplicably preferred over Mr. Zhu.
- 62. Mr. Zhu had extensive certificated teaching experience over Mr. Moore and Ms. Smith who had none, yet Bridgeport, in violation of its own policies, still preferred them over Mr. Zhu.

IV. CAUSES OF ACTION

(CAUSE OF ACTION NO. 1 – VIOLATION OF 42 U.S.C. § 1981, AS AMENDED – DISCRIMINATION & RETALIATION)

- 1. Plaintiff re-alleges the above paragraphs.
- 2. "Analysis of an employment discrimination claim under § 1981 follows the same legal principles as those applicable in a Title VII disparate treatment case." Fonseca v. Sysco Food Servs. of Arizona, Inc., 374 F.3d 840, 850 (9th Cir. 2004).
- 3. To that end an individual asserting a § 1981 discrimination claim must establish "(1) he is a member of a protected class; (2) he was qualified for his position; (3) he experienced an adverse employment action; and (4) similarly situated individuals outside his protected class were treated more favorably, or other

circumstances surrounding the adverse employment action give rise to an inference of discrimination." *Fonseca*, 374 F.3d at 847.

- 4. As to point (1), Mr. Zhu, a Chinese immigrant, is a member of a protected race for the purpose of a § 1981, as amended under the Civil Rights Act of 1991, claim as Bridgeport's discriminatory acts prevented him from enjoying all benefits, terms, and conditions of an employment contract with Bridgeport. *See Manatt v. Bank of Am., NA*, 339 F.3d 792, 798 (9th Cir.2003).
- 5. As to point (2), Mr. Zhu was qualified for the above-referenced Bridgeport job openings.
- 6. As to point (3), Mr. Zhu experienced an adverse employment action by not being hired for positions of which he was qualified. Mr. Zhu was harmed by Bridgeport's policy and customs, and violation of the law by, *inter alia*, claiming to advance affirmative action policies but not following them, not hiring job applicants (like Mr. Zhu) who previously sued their former employers for civil rights violations, and not hiring qualified minority teachers (like Mr. Zhu) and instead hiring less qualified teachers of a Caucasian race.
- 7. As to point (4), the following circumstances exist that give rise to an inference of discriminatory animus.
- 8. <u>First</u>, the close proximity between Mr. Zhu's March 2012 settlement of his lawsuit with Waterville (an event that was published in the local newspaper)

 COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR JURY
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and Mr. Zhu's August 2012 non-hire for the Middle School Math Intervention Teacher is circumstantial evidence of discrimination.

- 9. <u>Second</u>, the hiring of a vastly lesser qualified employee over a higher qualified employee gives rise to an inference of discrimination and Mr. Zhu was exceptionally more qualified that either successful candidate for either position.
- 10. Third, deviation from policy gives rise to an inference of discrimination. Here Bridgeport holds itself out as an entity with policies geared toward hiring minority teachers but deviated from that policy vis-à-vis Mr. Zhu.
- 11. To establish a 42 U.S.C. § 1981 retaliation claim, a plaintiff must prove "(1) she engaged in a protected activity; (2) she suffered an adverse employment action; and (3) there was a causal connection between the two." *Surrell v. California Water Serv. Co.*, 518 F.3d 1097, 1108 (9th Cir. 2008).
- 12. Here Mr. Zhu engaged in protected activity with regard to his lawsuit against Waterville, suffered an adverse employment action in not getting hired by Bridgeport, and a causal connection exists between the protected activity and adverse action as Bridgeport knew of Mr. Zhu's legal action against Waterville and retaliated against Mr. Zhu, by not hiring him, because it did not want to hire an individual not afraid of suing his employer to enforce civil rights laws.

(CAUSE OF ACTION NO. 2 – VIOLATION OF RCW 49.60.210(1) – RETALIATION & RCW 49.60.180 DISCRIMINATION)

- 13. Plaintiff re-alleges the above paragraphs.
- 14. The WLAD's anti-retaliation statute provides, in part, that "(1) It is an unfair practice for any employer, employment agency, labor union, or other person to discharge, expel, or otherwise discriminate against any person because he or she has opposed any practices forbidden by this chapter, or because he or she has filed a charge, testified, or assisted in any proceeding under this chapter."
- 15. Defendant violated the WLAD by, *inter alia*, refusing to hire Mr. Zhu on account of Mr. Zhu's opposing, by virtue of his lawsuit against Waterville, the race-discrimination that is forbidden by the WLAD.
- 16. The WLAD's anti-discrimination statute makes it illegal for an employer to use a prospective employee's race as a substantial factor in deciding to not hire that employee.
- 17. For the reasons set out above, Mr. Zhu's race was a substantial factor in the Bridgeport's decision to not hire him for any of the three positions.
- 18. Defendant's violation of the WLAD caused Mr. Zhu damages in an amount to be proven at trial.

(CAUSE OF ACTION NO. 3 - VIOLATION OF WASHINGTON'S BLACKLISTING STATUTE - RCW 49.44.010)

19. Plaintiff re-alleges the above-paragraphs.

20. RCW 49.44.010 makes it a criminal offense to "willfully and maliciously make or issue any statement or paper that will tend to influence or prejudice the mind of any employer against the person of such person seeking employment."

- 21. RCW 49.44.010 allows for a civil cause of action.
- 22. Upon information and belief, Bridgeport told the Wenatchee School District, and others, to not hire Mr. Zhu as Mr. Zhu has applied for numerous positions with Wenatchee but has not been hired. Instead, Caucasian applicants with little-to-no teaching experience have been hired for said positions.

V. PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Plaintiff respectfully prays for:

- A. Compensation for all injury and damages suffered by Mr. Zhu including, but not limited to, both economic and non-economic damages, in the amount to be proven at trial including back pay, front pay, pre and post judgment interest, lost benefits of employment, adverse tax consequences of any award for economic damages pursuant to Chapter RCW 49.60 et seq., , exemplary damages, punitive damages, and general damages relating to emotional distress and mental anguish damages as provided by law.
- B. Plaintiff's reasonable attorneys, expert fees, and costs, pursuant to 42 U.S.C.
 § 1988, and as otherwise provided by law under RCW 49.48.030 and 49.60.030(2),
 COMPLAINT AND DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL- 18

1	as well as the <i>private attorney general</i> theory of recovery of reasonable attorned	
2	fees and costs in employment related cases.	
3	C. For such other and further relief as this Court deems just and equitable.	
4	Respectfully submitted this 28th day of September 2015.	
5		
6	/s Matthew Crotty	
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