

McLean County Unit District No. 5
Diversity Plan
2006-2007

Preface

Unit 5 strives at all times to provide a welcoming environment for students and their families, faculty and staff, and community members of all backgrounds, interests, and abilities. The District emphasizes respecting individual differences (including, but not limited to: nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, socioeconomic and geographic backgrounds, age, religion, and disabilities), maximizing human potential, and actively seeking to increase the educational participation and achievement of all individuals.

Actions to Increase Diversity

In order to attain the mission of “educating each student to achieve personal excellence”, Unit 5 will actively participate in the process of promoting the increased understanding and appreciation of diversity throughout the District community. Unit 5 is committed to providing curricular offerings and co-curricular activities that contribute to the goals of establishing a welcoming environment, maximizing human potential, and actively working to increase the participation and achievement of persons from all segments of our society. Essential to this process are a faculty and staff whose resources, technology, norms, attitudes, beliefs, physical environment, and culture embody the concept of diversity. The Unit 5 Diversity Plan calls upon the educational community to become increasingly diverse by evaluating and enhancing recruitment and retention strategies, and by extending the concept of diversity to include an understanding and appreciation for cultural pluralism and mutual respect.

The District has established goals and objectives for achieving its desired aim of addressing diverse needs. Allocating time and resources to these objectives is necessary, as is periodic evaluation of progress toward the achievement of desired outcomes.

Goal and Objective Statements

*All stated objectives shall be implemented for the entirety of the 2006-2007 academic year and attained by June 2007. As noted in Goal 6, an annual evaluation, revision, and reporting process shall be completed by July 2007 as a means of assessing the effectiveness and future content of the Unit 5 Diversity Plan.

Goal 1 – *Promote understanding and appreciation of diversity through various modes of communication.*

- Staff and student handbooks shall contain an annually updated statement from the Superintendent regarding the District’s commitment to diversity.
- The Unit 5 Diversity Plan shall be directly distributed to all staff for review on an annual basis and provided to all individuals who come into contact with students in the school

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environment. The Diversity Plan shall also be made available in paper and electronic formats at all District facilities for distribution to staff, volunteers, students, and community members.

- District informational material shall be made available, upon request, in paper, electronic, and multiple language formats.
- “Unit 5 Embraces Diversity” informational brochures shall be annually updated and distributed throughout the Unit 5 community in paper and electronic formats. Components of this document shall include: the Superintendent’s diversity message, a listing of District diversity programs, a copy of the Unit 5 Diversity Plan, a description of the Concerns Resolution Process, and District contact information.
- Unit 5 school public display areas shall showcase information and activities reflective of diversity in the Unit 5 community.
- The District shall actively involve parents in initiatives that promote understanding and appreciation of diversity.

Goal 2 - Increase access to information on diversity.

- The diversity portion of the Unit 5 website shall be expanded to include Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC) updates, a calendar of District diversity events, and diversity information and resources for parent, staff, and student use.
- School newsletters and District publications shall include diversity information pertinent to the needs of the Unit 5 community, including DAC updates. During the first quarter of the 2006-2007 academic year, information specifically pertaining to the purpose and content of the Unit 5 Diversity Plan shall be included in each school newsletter. This informational article also shall describe the manner in which copies of the Unit 5 Diversity Plan may be obtained for further review.
- All student registration packets for the 2007-2008 school year shall include a copy of the Unit 5 Diversity Plan.
- Administrators shall be required to plan, promote, and support diversity training and activities for faculty and staff members.
- The DAC shall maintain and expand the Diversity Resource Guide. The Diversity Resource Guide is a directory of individuals and groups that may serve as diversity planning and programming resources for the Unit 5 community.
- The District shall provide information to new faculty and staff regarding local organizations and resources that address issues and concerns relating to diversity.

Goal 3 – Include and emphasize the importance of diversity in the District’s adopted curriculum and academic support processes.

- In cooperation with the DAC and District administrators, principals shall be required to provide two mandatory diversity training sessions for their staff members each academic year, and shall report the results of such activities, semi-annually, to the office of the Superintendent.

- The District shall identify current curriculum and academic support processes addressing diverse needs, and shall review such processes at least once during each academic year.
- The District shall recommend that individuals involved in the textbook adoption process consider whether the text and accompanying materials offer information from a diverse perspective that encourages the understanding and appreciation of individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- The District shall promote cooperative diversity education activities and participate in local initiatives that provide opportunities for interaction with diverse representatives from the community.
- All schools shall be cognizant and respectful of the diversity of beliefs of all students as specific activities are scheduled and planned.

Goal 4 – Implement strategies that are designed to improve the retention, achievement, and educational experiences of students from diverse backgrounds.

- All student orientation programs shall include components that are designed to increase student understanding of others in the context of living and participating in a diverse environment.
- Building principals, in cooperation with staff and community members, shall establish programs incorporating advising, mentorship, and leadership instruction to specifically address the needs of students from diverse backgrounds.
- The District shall annually evaluate achievement, retention, and graduation data pertaining to students from diverse backgrounds, particularly as these compare to District-wide data for all students. Results of these analyses shall be communicated to the Unit 5 community and serve as the basis for policy formulation, implementation, modification, or elimination.

Goal 5 – Implement strategies that are designed to increase the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds.

- The DAC shall assist in the preparation of recruitment packets in both paper and electronic formats, and the formation of recruitment teams consisting of diverse membership. The DAC shall plan for optimal use of prepared recruitment information and recruitment team resources.
- The District and the DAC shall continue to strengthen working relationships with local community organizations that serve as referral agents for a diverse pool of candidates.
- The District shall emphasize - to faculty, staff, students, parents, and the community- - the importance of understanding and appreciating diversity in the workplace and of respecting diverse needs.
- The District shall create a welcoming school environment for new staff members that addresses and supports professional and social needs.

Goal 6 – *Establish and maintain an annual process of diversity planning and evaluation in alignment with District Strategic Plan timelines.*

- The members of the DAC shall annually evaluate progress towards the attainment of Diversity Plan objectives and the relevance of the Diversity Plan to District needs and Strategic Plan objectives.
- As part of the annual diversity and strategic planning processes, the DAC shall host a meeting at which all interested community members may share suggestions for revisions to the Diversity Plan. In collaboration with the Superintendent, the DAC shall then propose appropriate revisions to the Diversity Plan.
- By July 2007, the members of the DAC shall provide a report to the Board of Education and community evaluating progress towards attainment of Diversity Plan objectives, and making recommendations for Diversity Plan revisions.
- The DAC shall survey students, faculty, and staff regarding their perceptions of diversity to serve as a guide for future programming, services, and activities.
- The Diversity Officer shall continue to be responsible for ensuring that the Diversity Plan is implemented and will assist with the resolution of diversity issues by serving as the “point person” for collaboration and communication with the DAC.

Conclusion

The Unit 5 Diversity Plan, through the establishment of goal statements and objectives, builds upon existing processes and initiatives. The Diversity Plan is the formalized document that will guide and promote the ongoing articulation, implementation, and evaluation of strategies to address diversity and all related concerns.

The members of the 2005-2006 Unit 5 Diversity Advisory Committee:

Margarita Alvarez	Jamal Nassar
George Gordon	Sam Rodriguez
Mary Jefferson	Neal Shah

were responsible for evaluating the Diversity Plan and making recommendations for its revision to the Board of Education.