

Building Beloved Community

FSA Diversity Plan

THE FRIENDS SCHOOL OF ATLANTA
August, 2015

FSA Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide challenging academics in a diverse environment, drawing on the Quaker values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship to empower our students to go out into the world with conscience, conviction and compassion.

FSA Vision Statement

The Friends School of Atlanta continues a 325-year Quaker tradition of education based on the belief that there is that of God or goodness in every person. The school manifests Quaker values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship.

We believe that all students have within themselves unique capacities for learning and achievement. The learning program provides opportunities for students to achieve their highest academic levels. In a supportive learning environment, students develop their capacities through independent thought, service and responsible action, thereby fostering life-long learning, self-confidence and respect for others. We provide a caring, cooperative atmosphere encouraging students to support each other as equals, and discourage that which would set one student above another.

The belief of Friends that individuals must find their own way leads to respect for the faith of everyone. Following the Quaker tradition of meeting corporately in reflective silent worship, an integral part of the school is the weekly meeting where the community gathers in silence to attend to the inner voice of the Spirit. This is a time to reflect upon experience, share thoughts with one another and seek truth.

Quaker values, based in the worth of each person, are reaffirmed in the school by listening and negotiating in the spirit of unity. These same values lead us to strive for diversity among students, families, faculty, staff, the Board of Trustees and in all areas of school life. As students incorporate the value of human respect into their lives, we believe they will take their wisdom and turn it toward social issues that extend beyond the immediate community to the world at large.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Justice Statement

The Friends School of Atlanta is committed to diversity and community far beyond the traditional practice of inclusion. Guided by the Quaker value of equality, we are a diverse, welcoming community of learners and seekers. Our student population and teaching staff represent a broad spectrum of racial, economic, ethnic and religious backgrounds and differing physical abilities, sexual orientations and family structures. As an educational institution, we have seen how learning is enriched by the challenges and joys that come with this variety of voices and experiences.

“Beloved community,” in Friends tradition, is a community not of politics or science, but of common beliefs. Because of this tradition, expressed in very early Quaker writings, Friends find a common ground with the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As we strive to create this beloved community, we purposefully engage in self-evaluation and reflection. Dismantling the dividing walls of injustice is an ongoing task. We resolve to expand and nurture diversity in our student body, parents, faculty and staff, administration, and Board of Trustees. We will continue to model a nurturing learning environment with as diverse a student body as can be found in any independent school in the Southeast.

Objective: Building Beloved Community Through Diversity, Equity and Justice

Through enlightened and rigorous education, a strong commitment to social justice, and active engagement of our community of diverse families, we strive to support our children and their families on the journey of love and in finding the goodness in each of us.

Strategy 1: Support Sustained Enrollment of Diverse Families

- ❑ Participate in admissions events and other school events that attract diverse families
- ❑ Provide orientation to FSA and ongoing support for all families about Friends education and the mission of FSA
- ❑ Empower diverse families to claim ownership of FSA and to become school community leaders
- ❑ Work intentionally to seek out a diverse student body

Strategy 2: Employ Diverse Faculty and Staff

- ❑ Seek to hire a diverse administration, faculty and staff
- ❑ Provide an orientation to FSA and ongoing support for faculty and staff about Friends education and the mission of FSA

Strategy 3: Provide All Community Members Opportunities to Grow in Their Understanding of FSA's Mission and Its Connection to Beloved Community

- ❑ Provide educational opportunities to FSA community that focus on FSA's mission and fostering the Beloved Community
- ❑ Support a diversified Board of Trustees and create an Advisory Board to include civil/human rights, community, civic and corporate representatives who can share externally FSA's commitments, successes, philosophies, etc.
- ❑ Create welcoming and ongoing events sponsored by the community to encourage friendship, participation, open dialogue and belonging
- ❑ Intentionally model and practice justice and equity in the community
- ❑ Create community service and mission requirements that bring FSA students and families into contact and communication with community and human rights organizers/activists

- ❑ Develop curriculum requirements on social justice that bring FSA students into contact with community organizations focused on elements of Beloved Community
- ❑ Create process to identify barriers and biases that inhibit full participation of students, parents, faculty and staff, and community and continue to support practices that eliminate barriers within the FSA community.

Strategy 4: Promote Deeper, Meaningful Discussions and Interactions That Promote Finding Goodness in Each of Us

- ❑ Provide focused study for students on the Values of Friends beyond Silent Meeting
- ❑ Develop activities for parents who are seekers or desire to engage in discussions around spirituality, social justice, etc.
- ❑ Provide tools and techniques to promote self-evaluation and reflection on Quaker values for parents and children and families

Strategy 5: Implement Processes to Measure Progress in Achieving Outlined Objectives and Strategies, Identify Problems and Facilitate Solutions

- ❑ Administer cultural sensitivity surveys and/or other types of surveys of the FSA community to better understand our community, judge progress on different issues, identify areas requiring focused attention, etc.
- ❑ Use Gap Analysis for measuring continuous improvement
- ❑ Hold focus groups among children, parents, teachers, administrators, community to obtain feedback on the mission, objectives and strategies as related to the diversity plan.

Roles and Responsibilities of Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has established this Diversity Plan in order to ensure FSA's highest level of commitment to Building Beloved Community.

The Board shall be responsible for:

- ❑ Evaluating the Head of School and Diversity, Equity and Justice (DEJ) Committee in their achievement of the integration of the tenets of the FSA Diversity Plan in FSA's overall mission, goals and objectives; and
- ❑ Updating FSA Diversity Plan, objectives and strategies when supporting evidence suggest such adjustment is required or beneficial to FSA

Roles and Responsibilities of Head of School

The Head of School shall have the following responsibilities and duties for implementation of the FSA Diversity Plan:

- ❑ Integrating tenets of Plan into FSA's strategic plan and daily operations of the school;
- ❑ Communicating and disseminating FSA's commitment to Building Beloved Community to internal and external stakeholders;
- ❑ Developing and overseeing overall implementation plan for execution of FSA Diversity Plan;
- ❑ Developing training requirements and performance evaluation measures for faculty and staff in achieving Plan;
- ❑ Developing curriculum requirements to achieve Plan; and
- ❑ Working with DEJ in the evaluation of organizational achievement of Plan.

Role and Responsibilities of Diversity, Equity and Justice Committee

The Diversity, Equity and Justice Committee shall have the following responsibilities and duties for implementation of the FSA Diversity Plan:

- ❑ Representing Board, act as liaison with Community, Administration and Parents on Plan;
- ❑ Developing and executing implementation plan for parental involvement in the achievement of Plan;
- ❑ Developing and executing implementation plan for interaction between FSA and community in efforts to achieve Plan;
- ❑ Working with Head of School in assessment of achievement of Plan objectives and strategies; and
- ❑ Through DEJ Clerk, providing annual report to the Board of Trustees on achievement of the objectives and strategies of the FSA Diversity Plan.

Roles and Responsibilities of Faculty and Staff

Faculty and Staff shall have the following responsibilities and duties for implementation of the FSA Diversity Plan:

- ❑ Providing input as requested into development of implementation plan;
- ❑ Executing objectives, strategies and tasks as identified by Head of School; and
- ❑ Working with students to understand FSA's Commitment to Building Beloved Community.

History and Definition of Diversity, Equity and Justice Committee

- ❑ To ensure the highest level of commitment to Diversity, Equity and Justice in FSA, in 2001, the Board of Trustees created the Diversity, Equity and Justice Committee.
- ❑ DEJ further reflects the Board's desire to create a school that is truly welcoming and to make sure that issues of diversity, equity

and justice become a part of the working life of the school.

Structure of DEJ

DEJ shall consists of at least the following representatives who shall be appointed by the Board, the Administration, faculty and staff, FSPATA and students, as appropriate.

- ❑ 2 Board Representative(s)
- ❑ 1 Administration Representative
- ❑ 1 Teacher + alternate Representative(s)
- ❑ The Board representative shall serve as the Clerk of DEJ meetings and report to the Board of Trustees on DEJ activity.
- ❑ The appointed members of DEJ will serve as the Executive Committee of DEJ and will hold Executive Sessions on issues requiring confidentiality and privacy.
- ❑ All members of the community are welcome. Except for the representatives designated above, all other participation is voluntary.
- ❑ Parents and students will receive service points for participation.