

## Diversity Committee End of Year Report

This year the Diversity Committee set goals to complete the following:

1. Create a school wide philosophy regarding diversity that would include concepts like privilege, acceptance, and celebration of diversity; an understanding that diversity is more than having people of diverse backgrounds attend U-High but making sure they are accepted and academically successful during their time at U-High.
  - a. See attached for the final draft of the diversity philosophy.
  - b. We are currently in the process of getting the philosophy approved by the Shared Governance Committee and then Keystone Council for inclusion in Essential Qualities.
2. Creating a three tiered plan for students, parents, and faculty/staff to address issues of diversity at U-High.
  - a. The student plan is to have the Diversity Club become an umbrella organization under which all diversity clubs would fall. Once a month they would meet to discuss event planning and cooperation across clubs. So far there are only three diversity clubs Shadez, GSA, and Diversity Club, our hope is that by creating an umbrella organization more clubs will emerge to support students of diverse backgrounds.
  - b. Our goal for next year is to discover how best to reach out and support parents of children of diverse backgrounds at U-High
  - c. For faculty our goal for the coming years is to present the faculty with research for supporting students from diverse backgrounds academically. How best to make sure that ALL students, no matter their race, gender, sexual orientation, class, or ability, are prepared to be successful in college. In addition to this, our plan is to show teachers in students' own words that U-high is not as accepting or tolerant as we believe, and how best to address student use of microaggressions and in some cases racial slurs and hate language.

Next year the Diversity Committee plans to continue our effort to achieve the goals listed above.

According to U-High's Essential School Structures document, the Diversity Committee was created "to monitor student achievement, admissions, school climate and faculty awareness related to the diverse student population, as well as to research diversity issues and develop best practices and policy related to diversity." Moreover, the goal of this committee is to "create, review, revise and recommend policy to Keystone Council regarding diversity"—policy that would will affect the increasingly diverse body of U-High students, faculty, and parents. There is, however, no official definition of diversity in this document and, therefore, no definition accepted and embraced throughout the building. This makes the Diversity Committee's purpose difficult to articulate and the goals even more difficult to attain. Therefore, on behalf of my co-chair for the Diversity Committee, Latrice Ferguson, and all the members of the Diversity Committee, I respectfully request the Shared Governance Committee consider the following philosophy of diversity as an addition to the Essential School Structures:

Diversity refers to the ways in which people are both similar and unique. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity (including language and culture), gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, diversity is more than physical appearance and quantitative data. It is a way of being, acting, understanding, knowing, and valuing peoples who are within our school community. By acknowledging diversity, we are promoting a socially just environment. This means the following:

- Understanding and appreciating interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment.
- Practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own.
- Recognizing that personal, cultural and institutionalized discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others;
- Building alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination.<sup>2</sup>
- Creating a safe school environment—both inside and outside of the building—for positive, nurturing celebration, discussion, and disagreement.

---

<sup>1</sup> Carter, Jeannine, ed. "Definitions Helpful to Understand Diversity in Education." Denver Public Schools. Last modified February 1, 2003. Accessed September 28, 2012. <http://diversity.dpsk12.org/definitions>.

<sup>2</sup> QCC Diversity Committee, ed. "Definition of Diversity." Queensborough Community College. Accessed September 28, 2012. <http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/diversity/definition.html>.