

LAMB's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan

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By Maria-Jose Carrasco, Chief of Staff

Last June, as our country was reckoning with the murder of George Floyd and racism, we, as many other organizations, publicly announced what we would do to address this wrong. Specifically, we announced that we would:

- Work with our community to intentionally build into our curriculum lessons on race, social justice, and equity at all levels and in all classes. We will ensure that every classroom and the school libraries will contain books about equity, diversity, and social justice. We will also provide ongoing training to our staff on recognizing and dealing with biases and racism.
- Close the achievement gap between white students and students of color.
- Develop a discipline policy and approach that is restorative rather than punitive. We will do this with the help of outside expertise in antiracism and equity.
- Create a staff recruiting program to increase the number of staff of color, focusing on teachers and administration. We have made some inroads on this for the next school year. Still, I recognize there is much more to do in this area. We are hiring an HR Manager to lead this effort.
- Develop a family outreach plan to increase the number of applicant families from diverse backgrounds. We are hiring a Family Engagement Director to lead this effort.
- Create a forum for our community to identify policies and practices in our school that contribute to systemic racism, developing changes, and ensuring change. We are talking to Parents Amplifying Voices in Education (PAVE) to identify people and resources to help us do this effectively. I invite all of you to participate in this process.

We are very thankful to our staff's Race, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (RIDE) Committee, which had advocated for these and other reforms and who guided our planning. Each of these goals addresses essential areas of our school that need to change or improve if we are indeed an inclusive organization where every member of our community has an equally empowering and equitable experience.

While the pandemic slowed us down, we have been working to operationalize and implement these goals since the start of this school year. For example, we have developed:

- **A year-long staff training plan on anti-bias and antiracism.** We are proud to announce that we have partnered with Amira Mogaji, President of the American Montessori Society, to develop and implement a Montessori-specific 12-month curriculum. Amira is a nationally recognized leader in Montessori education and anti-bias, antiracism work. We looked into different options for in-depth staff training. In the end, while ABAR training curricula do exist for schools, we did not find a Montessori-specific one. We felt it was essential to develop a curriculum specific to our central teaching philosophy to marry learned ABAR skills and knowledge with our education methodology. We will start implementing the curriculum in 2021.
- **An ambitious 3-year Lottery Outreach Project** to increase the number of African American, Latino, and high-risk students at LAMB. As you know, we are sought after school in the District. Last year we had the longest waitlist in the city! Still, not all communities know about us or select us as a lottery choice. While we cannot control who gets a spot at LAMB, we can impact how many folks from diverse backgrounds apply. Hopefully, as the percent of diverse applicants increases, so will the number of folks accepted. This plan included extensive community outreach. We plan to go into communities rather than wait for them to find us. While COVID impacts some of our work this year, we still plan to do some neighborhood outreach and in-person campaign. We are looking for volunteers to help us spread the word; please contact Claudia Silva if you want to help (claudia.s@lambpcs.org). Don't have enough time to volunteer in person? No worries, we will send soon badges and memes you can post on your social media to help us spread the word online.

Each Monthly bulletin will include a description of one of the goals and the implementation plan we are putting in place to move forward in each of these areas.

As you can imagine, this work is not easy, and it will not happen overnight. It will require effort and commitment. Thankfully, we have put together a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Task Force to help us succeed. This Task Force is composed of LAMB board members, teachers, staff, and parents. These folks have volunteered to help us successfully implement the DEI plan by providing input and guidance along the way. They represent different areas of our community and contribute their skills, time, and experiences to become a truly diverse, inclusive, and equitable community.

I look forward to leading the implementation of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan. I believe we have the people and commitment we need to achieve real change. I thank you in advance for helping us succeed in this critical undertaking.