

Workplace Diversity - Plan of Action

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My understandings, values, and attitudes have expanded and changed during the course of this class. I found the diversity vocabulary chart to be quite helpful. It allowed me to put down what I thought were the definitions of some terms such as ethnocentrism, intersectionality, critical theory and more, then we were able to research the actual dictionary definition of the terms, and rewrite our own definition. I think this strategy was a really good way to show the improvement achieved in the course of the class. The definitions that I made up at the beginning of the course were not always the same as the ones that I rewrote myself at the end of the course, after completing the research and learning. I also found the group slideshow presentations to be very enlightening and thoughtful. The ability for each team to research a topic in a very detailed manner, and present it in a clear and understandable format made a few of the chapters in *Difference Matters: Communicating Social Identity* book more (B. Allen, 2010) easier to navigate and digest. I also found it enlightening to work with my fellow classmates. They had a wide range of backgrounds and experiences and were very knowledgeable on our chapter topic, *Ability Matters*.

My attitude and response to diversity can affect the access, equity, and opportunity of the diverse people I encounter in my daily life in many ways. By being inclusive and open to all types of people I hope to make them feel more comfortable, included, and successful in their endeavors, whether that is my students, staff, or just others I come across in life. Having the opposite attitude and response to diversity could greatly negatively impact relationships, provide biases, microaggressions, distrust, and an unhealthy environment to live or work in. I absolutely can not stand racism or bigotry of any type and I will call it out immediately whenever I see it, regardless of who the perpetrator is. Luckily, I almost never come across people that are outwardly racist, sexist, bigoted or opposed to diversity and inclusion. This isn't to say that some

of the people I know don't hold those types of beliefs but may instead be concealing it more now that so much awareness has been brought to improvement of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The biggest systemic barrier in America is wealth inequality. Wealth allows people the ability to choose their jobs, improve their education, choose where they live, and almost every other aspect of their lives. According to Hanks et al. (2018) "Wealth in this country is unequally distributed by race—and particularly between white and black households. African American families have a fraction of the wealth of white families, leaving them more economically insecure and with far fewer opportunities for economic mobility." Another systemic inequality that I know exists in my workplace is the learning barrier for non english speaking students. I don't believe that we have a bilingual program where I work and that prevents students from being able to learn. I think adding a bilingual education program, and hiring more Spanish speaking teachers, would be a great start to solving this inequality.

The most significant information and insights that I've gained from this term that will inform my working relationships, communication abilities, and culturally responsive practices with my peers, students, clients, and colleagues from diverse social identity groups was understanding how deep systemic inequalities can be, and how poverty and lack of opportunities only perpetuates these inequalities. According to Hanks et al. (2018) there are many aspects that contribute to the considerable wealth gap between White and Black Americans, stating that "African Americans own approximately one-tenth of the wealth of white Americans. In 2016, the median wealth for non retired black households 25 years old and older was less than one-tenth that of similarly situated white households." The wealth gap persists regardless of education level and age. The largest driver of this disparity historically was the enslavement of Black Americans. It may seem like a long time ago but it was only a couple generations, about

150 years. Even after Blacks were freed, the systems used to oppress them remained, such as the inability to get a loan for a house and the police forces' overwhelming bias towards Black Americans. White Americans have been able to save generational wealth in the form of houses, stocks, savings, etc. while Black Americans were generally denied access to these things. We need to change any and all remaining systemically racist policies in government and private businesses if we ever want equality in America. Another inequality that I deal with on a daily basis is disability. I teach adults that are on the spectrum and they are a wonderful group of students. There are regional health and occupation centers that pay for the cost of the program and help promote independence, and job research. I'm very glad to see that this type of program was created to combat the inequity that existed based on ability not long ago.

Diversity Plan of Action

Springs Charter school is highly dedicated to the inclusion, diversity, success, and well-being of our students and stakeholders. Stakeholders of Springs Charter School include its students, administrators, teachers, staff members, parents, families, community members, local business leaders, the school board and county and state representatives. At Springs our student population is mostly, 56%, minority. 43% of students are White, 41% are Hispanic/Latino, 7% are two or more races, 5.5% of the students are Black, and 2.2% are Asian or Pacific Islanders. 55% percent of our students are considered economically disadvantaged (U.S. News, 2021). This data is for the 2018-2019 school year. The benefits of an increased diversity program are many. Diversity is shown to increase critical thinking in students. "By presenting students with

viewpoints far different from their own, it gives them the opportunity to think critically about their own beliefs and examine the world in fresh ways.” (School of Education - American University, 2022). Diversity in schools also prepares students for adulthood and entering the workforce. Having a diverse workforce allows students to see staff that look like themselves. According to the American Council on Education (2012), diversity enriches the educational experience, promotes personal-growth, strengthens communities and the workplace environment, and enhances the country's economic possibilities, and makes for an overall better school environment that promotes learning, inclusion, understanding, and success. We will make it a point to learn about the cultural diversity and backgrounds of our fellow staff members and students and celebrate it with events such as cultural festivals. All staff members will be trained on diversity and inclusion every year, this is already something that we at Springs Charter School do and are proud of. This is my proposed diversity action plan for the next three years.

Vision

Our vision is to have, and maintain, a respectful, inclusive and diverse school environment for all students, staff, and stakeholders.

Priorities

The priorities and goals of the diversity action plan are as follows.

1. Create and maintain an inclusive and welcoming environment for all stakeholders.
2. Staff diversity.
3. Promote achievement and success of all students, staff and stakeholders.

Plan

Goals	Objective	Actions	Leaders	Due Date	Success
Create and maintain an inclusive and welcoming environment for all stakeholders.	Create a culture that values inclusion and diversity and actively celebrates and promotes it.	Teach about the benefits of diversity. Create cultural awareness programs.	All stakeholders	2025	Increase in students reporting they are comfortable and welcome at school.
Staff diversity	Hire teachers and staff members from a diverse background of potential employees	Post job listings in a variety of places. Have a short list of diverse individuals to choose from for each position.	Human resources, hiring managers.	2025	Increase in staff diversity.
Promote achievement and success of all students, staff and stakeholders.	Provide equal opportunities to all staff and students to be successful.	Allow for customized learning based on ability. Focus on student strengths.	Leadership, principals, board members and senior staff.	2025	Increased test scores.

Evaluation

The success of the diversity action plan will be measured quantitatively. There are three data points that we are measuring to determine success.

1. Student and staff survey feedback on how comfortable and included they feel at school.

2. Internal data on staff diversity increase.
3. Increased test scores across all grades and subjects.

Conclusion

If all of the stakeholders for Springs Charter School can work together to promote inclusion, diversity, learning and success we will all grow and thrive together and celebrate each other's differences respectfully.

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