

POLICY
RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND EQUITY

The Board of Trustees of Rhode Island School for the Deaf is committed to fostering a diverse, equitable and inclusive community. This commitment embraces differences within our school community, including but not limited to differences in physical and mental abilities, hearing status and identity, race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.

We value the ways in which these differences strengthen our efforts to ensure that all Rhode Island children and youth who are deaf and hard of hearing become literate, independent, and productive citizens who set and achieve their own life goals. The Board believes that commitment toward diversity, equity and inclusion is necessary for the advancement of our students.

Diversity:

We recognize that diversity is expressed in myriad forms as listed, but not limited to, those differences mentioned above.

Equity:

We seek to ensure fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all peoples. This must be accomplished while also striving to eliminate barriers that have historically barred full participation by all people, and especially those barriers that have been present for deaf and hard of hearing people. A policy of equity is one that grants equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of, but not limited to, physical and mental abilities, hearing status and identity, race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.

Inclusion:

By inclusion, we mean that our school and programs are places where individual and community differences are welcomed, varying perspectives are encouraged, people feel acknowledged and valued, and the community exhibits a characteristic of inclusion of all abilities and persons.

The Board adopts initiatives that are rooted in diversity, equity, and inclusion as applied to, but not limited to, the following:

- practices and policies on recruitment and selection,
- compensation and benefits,
- promotions and transfers,
- professional development and training, including anti-racism training,
- social and recreational programs,
- lay-offs, terminations and personnel actions,
- and the ongoing development of a work and learning environment that is built on the strong premise of diversity, equity and inclusion that expects and requires:

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- respectful and continuous communication among students, staff, families and stakeholders.
- representation and participation by the diverse perspectives within our community
- contributions promoting a greater understanding and respect for the diversity of this community.

The Board will

- model the social justice and racial equality tenants of equity and inclusion throughout our work
- participate in Bias Training, including anti-racism training
- review policies and procedures through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion as part of its commitment to eliminate institutional racism; and
- ensure that agendas, plans, policies, procedures, and programs are designed to ensure that students understand the tenants of social justice and equality.

All policies, practices and procedures shall clearly reflect these principles and shall be carried out with these principles in mind.

Approved: October 14, 2020