

# Advancing & Measuring Successful DEI Work In Your School

**Dr. Rodney Glasgow**

President, The Glasgow Group

Head of School, Sandy Spring Friends School



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# Norms

- Be fully present
- Speak from the “I” perspective. Be authentic.
- Be crisp; say what’s core
- Listen to understand, not to judge.
- Lean into discomfort.
- Disagreement is a learning opportunity.
- Honor confidentiality.



# Current strategic issues for independent schools:



- The rise in identity-based tensions among both students, faculty, and families - polarization and the denial of others' experiences
- George Floyd: The rapid acceleration of diversity work in private schools
- Anti-CRT: The rapid deceleration of diversity work in public schools
- The call for more balanced rhetoric and the validation of conservative perspectives amid the call for firmer political stances - using the politics of civility to dampen conversation; using normalcy and routine to sideline conversation; the language of indoctrination
- Financial aid and the squeeze on the upper middle class
- The challenges and inequities highlighted by Covid and virtual/hybrid learning models





What thrills you about the DEI work that your school is doing?

What do you fear most as your school continues and deepens its DEI work?

What is one question or conversation topic you have about DEI work in our schools?



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# NAIS JOBS-TO-BE-DONE

RESEARCH



## Job 1

Help me help my  
child overcome  
obstacles



## Job 2

Help me fulfill my  
child's potential in a  
values-aligned  
community



## Job 3

Help me  
develop a  
well-rounded  
person who will  
impact the world

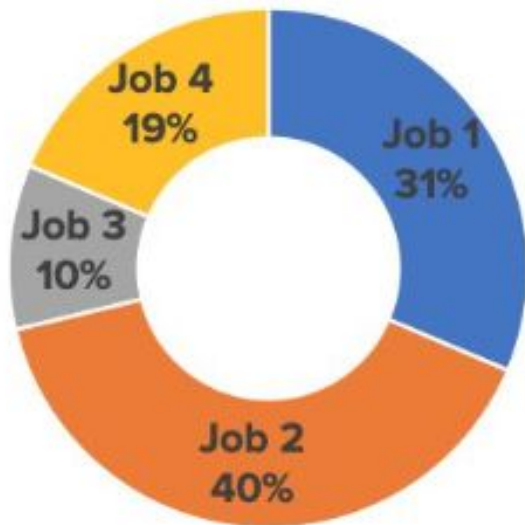


## Job 4

Help me realize my  
plan for my  
talented child

# Most Parents Are in Job 2

## JTBD Overall Distribution



- May 2020 study, 2,300+ parents
- Job 2 most prevalent
- Jobs 1 and 2 account for ~70%
- Job 3 least prevalent (10%)

### Job 1

Help me help my child overcome obstacles

### Job 2

Help me fulfill my child's potential in a values-aligned community

### Job 3

Help me develop a well-rounded person who will impact the world

### Job 4

Help me realize my plan for my talented child

SOURCE: NAIS, "Why Parents Choose Independent Schools: A National, Quantitative Analysis" (May 2020)



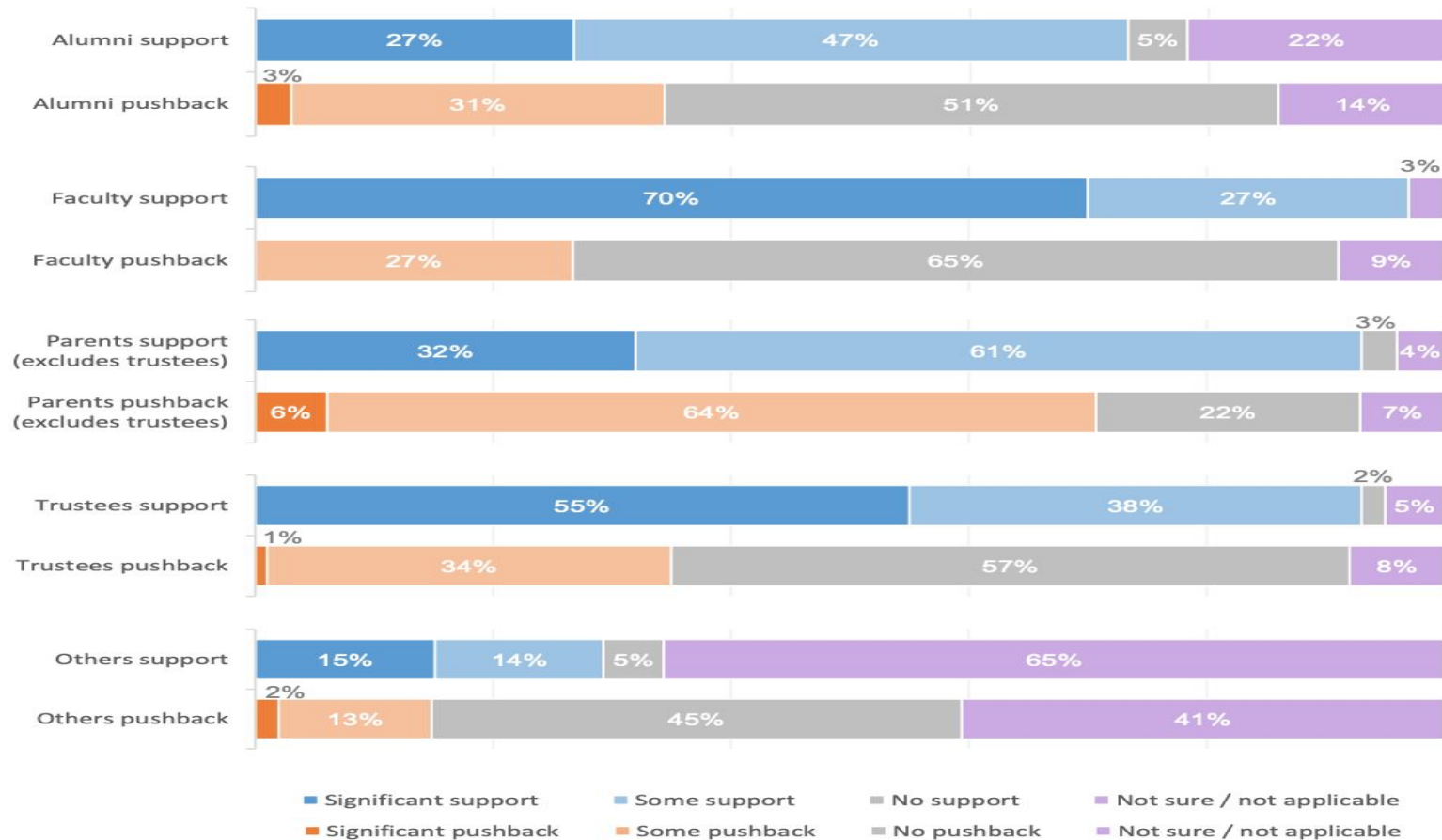
If he were a parent in your school, and this happened at a Parents Association meeting, what would your response be?



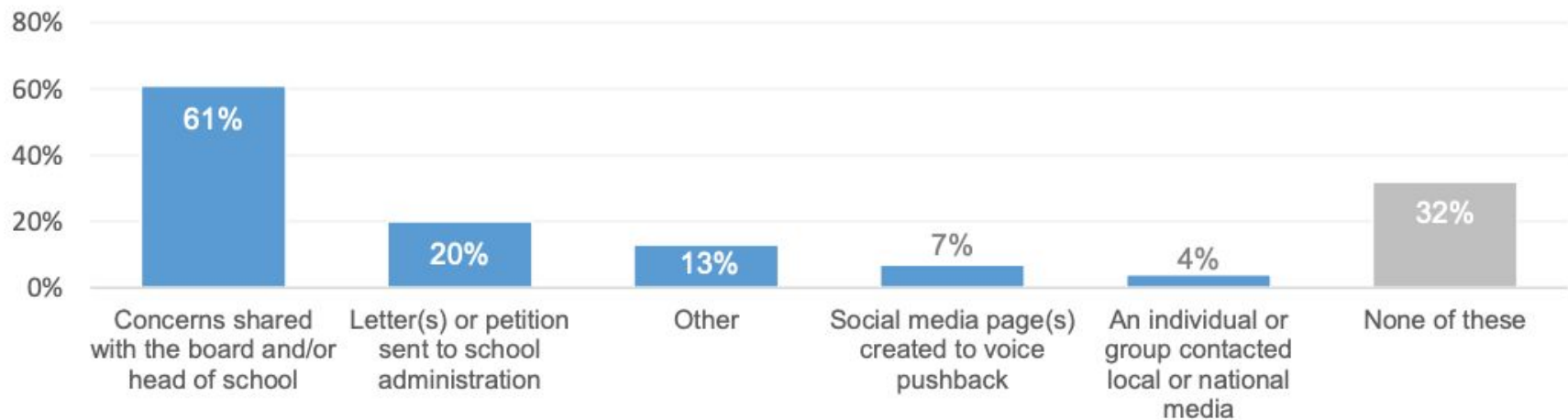


How would you describe the level of pushback and support that your school has received from the following groups on your diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice initiatives?\*

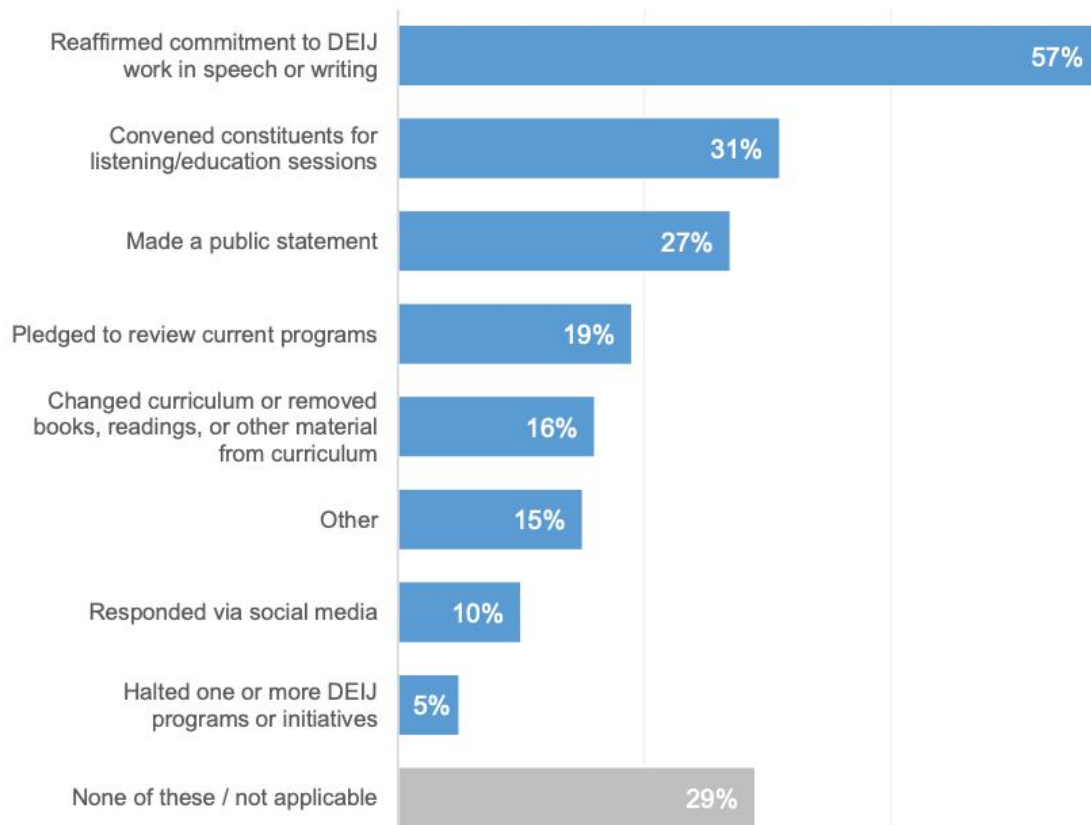
*Consider the intensity of pushback/support, not number of individuals.*



To the best of your knowledge, have any of the following occurred at your school in a display of pushback against diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice initiatives, including but not limited to discussions of Critical Race Theory? Please select all that apply.



If applicable, which of the following actions, if any, has your school taken to respond to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice pushback? Please select all that apply.





The why is not a reaction.

The why is a continuation of your school's story. The why is that it is a part of your school's identity, its molecule.

Ask yourself, really, is IEJB mission appropriate for your school?



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- Our school is committed to this work because our mission states \_\_\_\_\_.
- When our school was founded, this work was at the center, and we know this because\_\_\_\_\_.
- While our school was founded in a time where this work was not central, we are now centralizing this work because we know it does align with the founding vision of \_\_\_\_\_.
- IEJB work looks different now, of course, but in the earlier days of our school we were doing this work when we \_\_\_\_\_.





# What could we do now?

Do a full DEIB audit - culture, curriculum, professional development, policies and procedures

Create an annual community survey on belonging

- I feel comfortable being myself at school.
- At our school, every student belongs and is treated equitably regardless of their (age, ability, race, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, family structure)
- This year, how many incidents of bias, discrimination, or negative targeting did you witness based on someone's (identifiers)
- This year, the school did an effective job at furthering a culture of belonging and inclusivity
- When issues about (identifiers) arise at school, the school handles them appropriately.

Keep a 3-5 year trend dashboard and report out key progress and updates regularly to your school community

Invest in the education of parents, alumni, and board



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## Quick audit: How does your school define diversity?

- Where is your school focusing on the DEIJB cycle?
  - **Diversity** - The presence of different identities, experiences, and perspectives
  - **Equity** - Everyone gets the resources that they need to be successful
  - **Inclusion** - A culture that allows for people to see themselves reflected in the institution (I'm a part of this room)
  - **Justice** - A system of accountability and repair for wrong-doing (I'm safe in this room)
  - **Belonging** - Being valued and respected with a sense of agency and trust in the process (This is my room, too)



# Where is one place you know you will find systemic inequity in the experience of your school?

- What constituents are most impacted? (Students? Parents? Employees?)
- What is causing the inequity?
  - Policies or lack thereof?
  - Actions or Inaction?
  - Resource allocation?



# LEVELS OF INCLUSIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITIES



## THE RESISTANT SCHOOL COMMUNITY (NEGATIVE ACTION)

ACTIVELY RESISTS EFFORT TO DIVERSIFY. MAY HAVE REASONS WHY DIVERSITY CANNOT WORK IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT. MAKING CONSCIOUS EFFORTS NOT TO INVEST IN DIVERSITY WORK. FEELS THAT A FOCUS ON DIVERSITY DISRUPTS THE UNITY OF THE SCHOOL.



## THE OBLIVIOUS SCHOOL COMMUNITY (NON-ACTION)

DOES NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THE NEED TO DIVERSIFY. IS NOT CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED FOR DIVERSITY PROGRAMMING. FEELS THAT TREATING PEOPLE DIFFERENTLY BASED ON IDENTITY IS NOT IN LINE WITH THE SCHOOL'S PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY AND INCLUSION.



## THE KNEE-JERK SCHOOL COMMUNITY (RE-ACTION)

ACKNOWLEDGES THE NEED TO MANAGE DIVERSITY AS PART OF TROUBLESHOOTING STRATEGIES. ONLY ENGAGES IN DIVERSITY WORK IN RESPONSE TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS. FIXES ONE DIVERSITY "ISSUE" AND THEN DOES NO FURTHER WORK UNTIL ANOTHER "ISSUE" ARISES.



## THE IMAGE CONSCIOUS SCHOOL COMMUNITY (SYMBOLIC ACTION)

ADDRESSES THE NEED TO DIVERSIFY AS A PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOL. IN ORDER TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE WITH PEER SCHOOLS, SCHOOL SEEKS TO MAINTAIN A DIVERSE POPULATION AND DIVERSITY PROGRAMMING SUCH AS ASSEMBLIES, CLUBS, AFFINITY GROUPS, ETC. DOES NOT WANT DIVERSITY WORK TO CHALLENGE THE FOUNDATIONAL PRACTICES OF THE SCHOOL. WANTS TO USE DIVERSITY WORK TO ENHANCE THE PUBLIC PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL, AND THEREFORE, IS NOT SUPPORTIVE OF DIVERSITY WORK THAT COULD CREATE PUBLIC CONFLICT OR UNREST. INVESTS IN THE FOOD, FOLKS, AND FUN MODEL. HAS DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP IN TOKEN POSITIONS.



## THE CULTURALLY COMPETENT SCHOOL COMMUNITY (PRO-ACTION)

CONSIDERS THE NEED TO DIVERSIFY AS A STRATEGIC PRIORITY. KNOWS THAT DIVERSITY ENHANCES THE CLASSROOM AND THE COMMUNITY. VALUES THE MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES THAT DIVERSITY BRINGS. FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION ARE TRAINED IN BASIC PRINCIPLES OF DIVERSITY, GUIDED BY A DIVERSITY MISSION/VISION STATEMENT. HAS LEADERSHIP IN DIVERSITY AT THE SENIOR LEVEL, AND GIVES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TIME AS WELL AS TIME IN THE CLASSROOM AND DURING COMMUNITY MEETINGS TO ENGAGE STUDENTS IN DIVERSITY WORK. CONSIDERS SUPPORT FOR DIVERSITY IN ALL ADMISSIONS AND HIRING PRACTICES.



## THE EQUITABLE/INCLUSIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITY (FORWARD ACTION)

UNDERSTANDS THAT SUSTAINABLE DIVERSITY REQUIRES A SYSTEMIC APPROACH THAT CREATES AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF INCLUSIVITY. DIVERSITY IS CRITICAL TO THE MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL AND IS STATED EXPLICITLY. COMMITMENT TO AND KNOWLEDGE OF DIVERSITY IS A JOB EXPECTATION FOR EMPLOYEES AND AN EXPECTATION FOR ALL STUDENTS. THE BOARD IS ENGAGED IN INCREASING THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF DIVERSITY AND CONSIDERS DIVERSITY STRATEGICALLY AS THEY CONDUCT LONG-TERM PLANNING FOR THE SCHOOL. THE HEAD OF SCHOOL SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO THE SCHOOL'S COMMITMENT AT IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS.





# THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL SYSTEM

WHAT IS MISSION-APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR SCHOOL?

WHAT IS THE BOARD'S VISION FOR YOUR SCHOOL?



## MARKETING

HOW IS THE SCHOOL PROMOTING ITSELF?



## ENROLLMENT

WHO CHOOSES TO BECOME A PART OF THE SCHOOL?



## SELECTION

HOW ARE PEOPLE SELECTED TO BE A PART OF THE SCHOOL?



## APPLICATION

HOW DO PEOPLE EXPRESS INTEREST IN BEING A PART OF THE SCHOOL?



## ORIENTATION

HOW ARE PEOPLE WELCOMED INTO THE SCHOOL?



## EXPERIENCE

HOW DO PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT BEING A PART OF THE SCHOOL?



## ASSIGNMENT

HOW ARE PEOPLE'S ROLES WITHIN THE SCHOOL DETERMINED?



## DEPARTURE

## INSTITUTIONALIZATION

WHO IS LEAVING FEELING POSITIVELY ABOUT THE INSTITUTION?



## EXIT

WHO IS LEAVING FEELING NEGATIVELY ABOUT THE INSTITUTION?



## EJECTION

WHO IS BEING COUNSELED OUT AND WHY?



What are three measures of your school's diversity that you would find interesting and important to track over time?

- Why is it an important measure?
- Who is tracking (or could track) this information?
- What would you want the graph of this measure to look like over time? (Should it increase, decrease, stabilize?)



Dashboards measure the health of the institution at present and over time.



# DEI at the board level

**Mission-driven:** *Where does diversity live in the mission and vision of the school? Where and how is that articulated?*

**Data-driven:** *What data does the board track to measure the institution's success at diversity?*

**Goal-driven:** *Where does diversity live in the annual and strategic goals of the Head of School and the board?*

**Policy-driven:** *What policies should the board change, enact, commission, or support to sustain diversity?*

**Message-driven:** *What messages should the board send (To Whom? When? How? Why?) to keep the community clear about the school's commitment to diversity?*

**Internally-driven:** *What on-going education is needed at the board level, and what changes of board practice or policy need to occur to ensure diversity in the board room?*

**Crisis-ready:** *What should the board prepare for that might threaten the school's work towards fulfilling its mission, or the sustainability of the school itself?*



Step 1: Is it a crisis? Why? What is the crisis?

**Who** determines that it **is** a crisis?



**Crisis:** A reactive allocation of resources aimed at recovery and/or prevention of loss sparked by a personal or institutional risk



# Crisis Checklist: Does It Fit Two of These?

- **Loss of Credibility:** Could the situation call into question legal, ethical, or professional credibility that could undermine personal or institutional authority? Could the situation damage the school's internal or external credibility or viability (threat to mission; reputational risk)
- **Multiple Stakeholders:** Could the situation negatively impact more than one constituent group within the school community?
- **Scalability:** How quickly could this escalate? How damaging would this be if it is public? What is the potential to go viral on social media? What is the potential to go viral in the drop-off circle?
- **National Relevance:** How does this situation align with recent headlines and local, regional, and national focus? How does the context, climate, and focus beyond the school impact how this situation will be viewed?
- **Emotional Impact:** Could this have a high emotional impact within the school? Could this have a high emotional impact beyond the school?
- **Repetitive Failure:** Is there a trend in this situation that could be damaging to the health, sustainability or reputation of the institution? Have you faced a similar situation that did not go well and may get connected to this one when the narrative is told?

# But what is belonging really, particularly in a school?

- Understanding the rules and norms
- Knowing how to do well academically/professionally and socially
- Feeling a sense of agency, control, predictability, and fairness over what happens to you
- Knowing that, within reason, your needs - physically, intellectually, emotionally - will be seen and addressed
- Feeling permission to take risks, make mistakes, and still be allowed to be a full part of the school/work experience
- Feeling like there is some connection between who you are and what the school is about (and the traditions and history of the school), as well as between yourself outside of school and yourself inside of the school



# Proactively and reactively, how are you messaging the school's diversity efforts?



# Guiding Question #1

**Where does diversity live in your school's mission and values? What words, specific to your school, do you want to use to clarify your approach to diversity?**

*Sandy Spring Friends School provides a welcoming and nurturing learning community with Friends testimonies and Meeting for Worship central to its life and vitality. A challenging academic curriculum, enriched arts program, inclusive athletics, and service opportunities promote intellectual excellence and strength of character. Recognizing the unique worth of each person, the School strives to develop individual talents and foster caring and effective citizens of the world.*

*Our Motto: "Let Your Lives Speak"*

*Our Values: Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, Stewardship*

*The word for the moment: Belonging*



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# Guiding Question #2

**When will the school make active statements and declarations about DEI? What are local, regional, and national happenings that the school may need to be prepared to make a statement about, and what is the foundation of that statement?**

Determine the criteria for the line between:

- the school taking a political stance
- addressing issues of human and civil rights that impact members of its community
- using moments of education sparked by internal or external events to be clear about the school's values and expectations



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*Let Your Lives Speak*



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*A new parent emails you and says:*

I'm pulling my kid. This is not the school we thought it was when we went through the admissions process. You said you honored all voices and perspectives. I don't feel like my perspective is honored at all, and I don't want my kid learning this misinformation and being indoctrinated by your teachers. People are people, and I just want my kid to know that.



# Guiding Question #3



**What are the specific messages about diversity at the school that the school wants to promote, and how do they match up to the school's reality around DEI?**

- Have an understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement around DEI, and be clear about those.
- Market both for where you are and where you are going, and own both of those places as well as the journey between them.
- Do not promote an image of the school that is not aligned with the school's current realities around DEI. This is the quickest way to produce negative reputation in DEI among constituencies. Remember that admissions materials, interviews and tours as well as prospective employee materials, interviews and tours are also part of the communication and marketing process.

*Sell what's in stock, market the future, explain what's on back order!*



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# Guiding Question #4

**What are you currently DOING around diversity, equity, and inclusion? Set your marketing and communications strategy for DEI around your actions, backed by your philosophy. The philosophy is no longer enough if it is not actionable and acted upon.**

- Know what your school's philosophy on diversity is, and be able to state it clearly.
- Know what your school is doing in DEI and the value of each action to the education of the students, and be able to state it clearly.
- Actively use research from the fields of education and psychology to address the validity and developmental appropriateness of the school's DEI work.
- Use data from your own school - both qualitative and quantitative - to support the communications around your actions in DEI.



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## Closing Journal:

When it comes to DEIJB, what is a systemic issue that we are trying to fix, because if we don't fix it, it will significantly threaten our ability to live our mission and vision, or even threaten our sustainability as a school?

When it comes to DEIJB, what is a systemic opportunity that we are trying to leverage, because if we leverage it, it will significantly enhance our ability to live our mission and vision, or even enhance our sustainability as a school?

