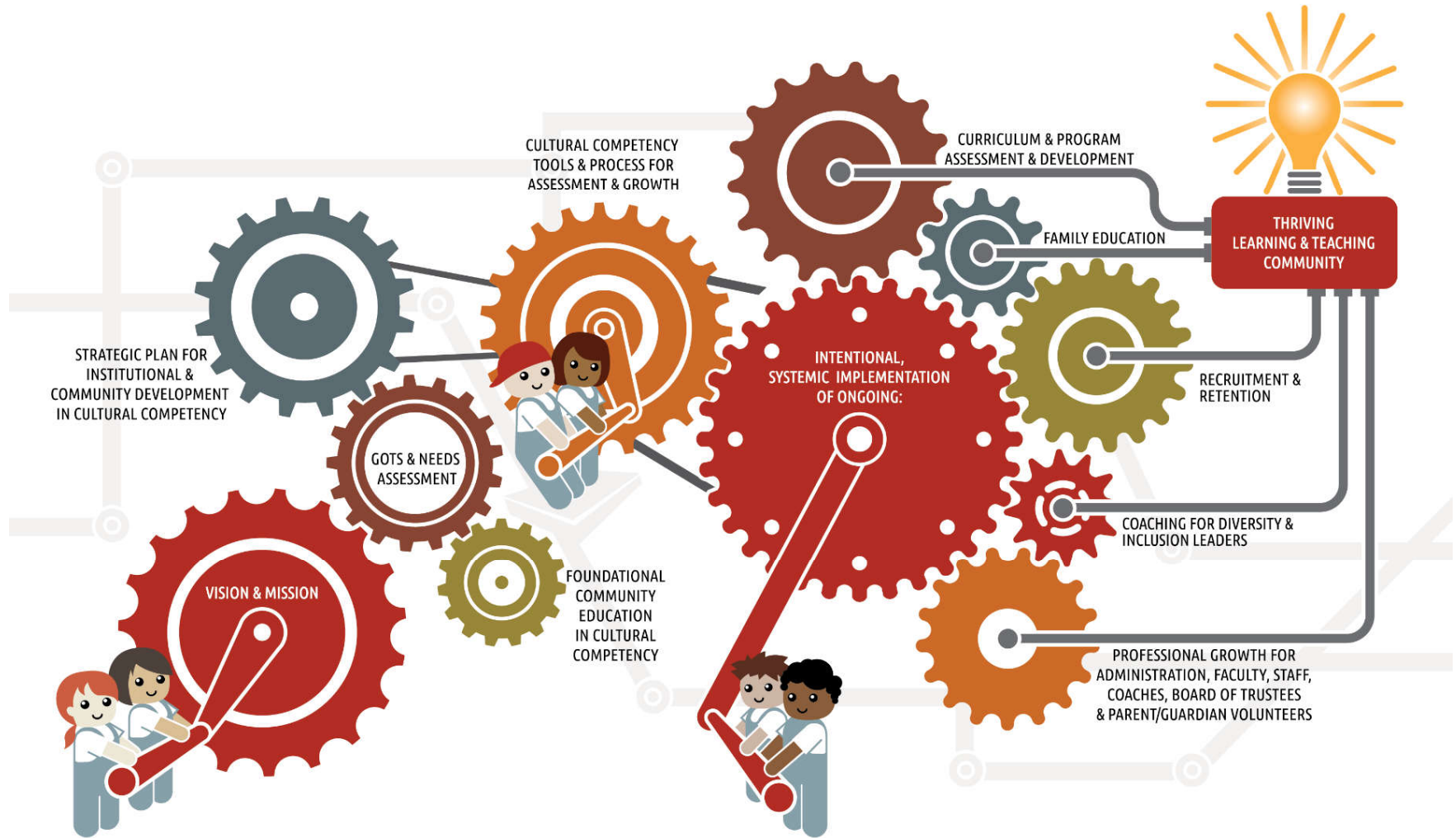


Inclusion & Equity: A System & Process



A framework for advancing equity and inclusion institutionally
Winter 2020

The institutional priorities below are the shared responsibility of the board, administration and other leadership positions/roles that may exist within the school structure/community (ex. diversity committees, faculty and parent/guardian leaders). In discerning who should be responsible for what, it may be helpful to consider what cross-leadership structures have been successful in the past, and what diversity (of identities, experiences, perspectives and roles within the community) is vital for the most robust teams, processes and outcomes in advancing inclusion and equity not only for the community at large, but within the leadership team, as well.



Vision and philosophy

Does your school need to create or revise its DEI statement? Consider whether you currently have a vision, philosophy and/or mission statement that provides enough of a framework for employees and community members to set goals, plan strategically and discern their individual and collective everyday responsibility and accountability for advancing diversity, equity and inclusion, including:

- An understanding of why DEI is vital to your school
 - Direct links to mission, core values and human (not just student) development
- Clarity regarding what your school means by “diversity,” “equity,” “inclusion,” “cultural competency” or other language your school uses
- High-level guidance for institutional strategic planning and goal-setting
- Non-discrimination policy, if not articulated elsewhere

Collective ownership of DEI

Ownership entails understanding and being able to effectively communicate why diversity, equity and inclusion are mission-vital for the school as a whole; and what the vision and expectations for advancing DEI are in your office/area of school life. See *Baseline diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) fluency and growth expectations for leadership*.

Assessment and accountability

What does “success” look like? And how do you measure it? Well-intentioned commitments to diversity all too often stall out without clear goals and accountability. In order to deliver on your school’s promise of DEI, leadership and faculty/staff need:

- Clear and measurable outcomes: What does “becoming more diverse” mean specifically? What are the indicators of a “more equitable and inclusive” community? What are the strategic focus and intended outcomes of current DEI initiatives?
- Dashboard for assessment: As your school strives toward its goals, where is it now? What are useful benchmarks for gauging process and progress?
- Regular assessment to identify impacts, progress and trends

Systems and structures to advance vision and goals

Given the vision, scope and existing foundation for the institutional commitment to DEI, does your school have the systems and structures in place to advance its work? This includes:

- Resources (including knowledge, budget, staffing and time)



CRITICALLY RETHINKING DIVERSITY

- Clear roles, responsibilities, authority and structural support to be effective
- Tools (including cultural competency rubrics, and assessment instruments and processes guiding everyday operations and occasions)
- Strategic planning for institutional growth, including reassessment of systems and structures. See *Appendix B: Do we need a board/board-level DEI committee?*

Everyday cultural competency

Cultural competency¹ as a skillset and growth area should be a shared leadership expectation and practice that inform discussions and decision-making. Basic cultural competency for leadership comprises:

- Creating and practicing a shared lexicon to have vital, clear conversations about diversity, equity and inclusion;
- Identifying core cultural competency practices for leadership to habituate and hold itself accountable for; and
- Investing in ongoing professional growth to advance leadership’s collective knowledge and skills for inclusive and equitable governance and administration.

As part of a school’s leadership team, boards need to articulate, practice and habituate their own internal “1 ft” practice of cultural competency while informing the “10,000 ft” vision of DEI for employees to implement, in order for each board member to:

- Do their best thinking on behalf of the school;
- Recruit, attract and optimize a vitally diverse pool of trustees and trustee candidates; and
- Align the board with the school’s values and model institutional expectations as part of the leadership team.

¹ **Cultural competency** is “not a state at which one arrives; rather it is a process of learning, unlearning, and relearning... throughout a lifetime (AEA, 2011) to “bring into check power imbalances, engage in respectful and dynamic partnerships with others, and hold systems and structures accountable” (Tervalon and Garcia) for equity and inclusion. **Cultural competency** comprises:

- Intentionally growing **oneself**;
- Cultivating relationships with **others**;
- Designing one’s **environment and context** “toward justice” (Parker, 1871);
- Learning and practicing **language, tools and skills**

to advance equity and inclusion, for thriving at the “micro, to mezzo and macro” levels (Chavez, Tervalon, & Murray-Garcia, 2012) of a community.