

Statement on Matters of Race and Equity

Rationale for statement on Matters of Race and Equity

Race relations and racism, along with other forms of bigotry, are well documented in the history of the United States. What has developed over the more than five hundred years of European settlement of the Americas has directly resulted in the social, economic, political, and academic inequities present in the United States today. The history of academic inequities in the United States is long and very well documented. These academic inequities start at an early age and are tied to economic inequities that are equally well documented. The results of these inequities are consistently reflected across the United States in the disparity in numbers of students from different racial and ethnic communities who participate in the more academically demanding pathways offered in our public, private and charter schools, and in particular IB Diploma Programmes. This reality is clearly reflected in the data of the Millbrook Diploma Programme, collected over its 10-year history.

From the start of this programme in 2011, the Diploma Programme faculty has established policies and practices to promote equitable opportunities for all of our students. These policies and practices include

- open access to the Diploma Programme for all students
- the formation of an Equity and Access Committee
- conversations with students, and among students and teachers about race, ethnicity and equity
- faculty professional development about race, ethnicity and equity
- classroom practices that build equity conversations into the curriculum

We have put forth an effort that we believe has served the Diploma Programme and its students well, but it has not been enough. We know there is more, and will always be more we can and must do to provide an environment where our African American, Hispanic, Asian students and all other consistently marginalized students can feel safe and comfortable in this demanding academic environment. If students do feel discomfort as members of the IB Diploma Programme at Millbrook, we hope it is because of the academic risk they chose to take, and not because of the color of their skin. Only then will we have truly created a programme where access is really open to all.

Framework for Action

The IB Organization is driven by a **mission statement** that describes the objectives all IB programmes should strive to achieve. These objectives include

- [developing] inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.
- [encouraging] students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

In order to achieve these objectives the Diploma Programme faculty will plan for and implement:

- continued and increased promotion of **International Mindedness** in all of our students. International mindedness is, at its core, the recognition of cultures, locally, domestically and internationally, and the understanding that these unique cultures add critical value to our world and our own growth and experiences.
- continued and increased promotion of the **IB Learner Profile**. The Learner Profile is, “the IB’s mission in action. It requires IB learners to strive to become inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers (courageous), balanced and reflective. These attributes of internationally minded people represent a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that go beyond a concern for intellectual development and academic content. They imply a commitment to implement standards and practices that help all members of the school community learn to respect themselves, others and the world around them.” (What is an IB Education, p. 1)
- Continued and increased promotion of the IBO’s **Approaches to Learning (ATL)** to support all students’ development of the skills needed to cultivate the Learner Profile traits discussed above. The ATLs include communication, a broad cluster of skills that include the abilities to “listen to, and understand, various spoken messages in a variety of communicative situations,” to “read and understand different texts,” and to “take full account of other viewpoints, whether expressed in written or oral form.” (IBO’s Approaches to Teaching and Learning)

Intent to Take Action

The IB mission statement is the ideal we strive for in the IB education of our Diploma Programme students. The IB Learner Profile, international mindedness and the IBO's Approaches to Learning are the tools and characteristics we focus on to achieve that ideal. The actions listed below are some of **the actions we pledge to take to improve all of our students' IB educations and help them develop as people.**

- We will continue to learn about our students and their needs, and about our own systemic and personal biases that impact the way we work with and treat our students of color.
- We will continue our work with the Equity and Access Committee on a consistent basis with monthly meetings and open dialogue about the climate of the Diploma Programme and ways to affect necessary change.
- We will be vigilant in the way we respond to racist and other bigotted comments that are intentionally or unintentionally put forward in our Diploma Programme classes and activities.
- We will guard against and intervene in moments when bigotted ideology is couched in professions of intellectual debate and academic discourse.
- We will continue to build into our curriculum relevant connections to content that honor and explore matters directly relevant to students of color and promote the increased understanding of and respect for their peers among all Diploma Programme students.
- We will construct a formal confidential system for reporting verbal and emotional abuses by students or teachers
- We will write and publish a formal code of conduct on student and faculty norms and expectations.

Thank you,
Loren Baron
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