

AISGW STATEMENT ON EQUITY AND JUSTICE

The determination to build and sustain equity and justice in AISGW schools is driven by our common humanity and the need for us to promote community standards of civility and respect for human dignity. We recognize that families and individuals reflect a variety of forms, attributes, and cultures and that all deserve to live and learn in a safe and supportive school environment. It is imperative that students be prepared to function effectively in a pluralistic society and to strive for a future in which peace and understanding prevail.

Individual schools, by their nature, are individualistic, self-governing, and self-directing; each has its own mission and governing philosophy. As a community of independent schools, AISGW believes:

1. That all members of independent school communities – students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni – require an environment of safety, acceptance, inclusion, and support free from prejudice and discrimination, without regard to their personal characteristics, beliefs, or identities.
2. That schools are part of a global society; their school communities include members from many diverse populations whose presence offers multicultural perspectives.
3. That the term “diverse” includes the following eight identities: ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Additional attributes with impact on the diversity of a community include marital status, family configuration (i.e., adopted, blended, single parent, etc.), physical appearance, geographic origin, and current circumstances (i.e., family death, chronic illness, divorce, etc.).

Creating and sustaining an equitable and just independent school community are based on inclusion, diversity, and multiculturalism and require commitment, reflection, and conscious and deliberate action, as well as constant vigilance. We believe that building and sustaining a diverse and equitable school community cannot succeed without leadership from those responsible for the school’s governance. We also believe that each AISGW school community possesses the potential talent and resolve to embrace these principles proactively. The following guidelines¹ provide the foundation for such a community:

1. The school establishes the foundation for its commitment to equity and justice in its mission statement and strategic planning.
2. The school respects, affirms, and protects the dignity and worth of each member of the school community.

¹ These guidelines are taken from previously published NAIS Principles of Good Practice for Equity and Justice.

3. The school establishes, publishes, implements, and reviews policies that promote equity and justice in the life of the school.
4. The school supports the ongoing education of the board, parents, students, and all school personnel as part of the process of creating and sustaining an equitable and just community.
5. The school ensures an anti-bias environment by assessing school culture and addressing issues of equity and justice in pedagogy, assessment, curriculum, program, admission, and hiring.
6. The school values each and every child, recognizing and teaching to varied learning styles, abilities, and life experiences.
7. The school uses inclusive, anti-bias language in written and oral communication.
8. The school complies with local, state, and federal laws and regulations that promote diversity.
9. The school provides appropriate opportunities for leadership and participation in decision-making to all members of the school community.
10. The school includes all families and guardians as partners in the process of creating and sustaining an equitable and just community.
11. The school expects from its students and all members of the community an appreciation of and responsibility for the principles of equity and justice.

AISGW Beliefs and Actions to Support Equity and Justice

1. The AISGW office fulfills the spirit and specifics of this statement in its own practices, educational programs, and other services to its schools. AISGW seeks a broadly representative membership in all its committees and task forces.
2. AISGW sponsors educational programs that inform member schools and their staffs of the necessity of implementing goals of equity and justice and the ways in which multicultural perspectives can enhance curriculum and the life of the school.
3. AISGW supports member schools' commitment to diversity concerns, especially those traditionally underrepresented in independent schools.
4. AISGW makes use of research and surveys to educate member schools as to progress toward equity and justice and to provide examples of excellence.