

NAIS SAMPLE DIVERSITY STANDARDS

Introduction

Effective beginning teachers are successful in teaching a diverse population of students. They affirm that diversity truly exists and believe that education is fundamentally a cultural process that ultimately contributes to the academic success or failure of students. Diversity includes exceptionalities, race, ethnicity, religious backgrounds, gender, language (linguistic differences) socio-economic levels, and any of the other ways in which our society defines human differences (age, geography, sexual orientation, and national origins).

Beginning teachers of diverse students have a keen sense of equity, a strong commitment to their profession, knowledge of their students' cultures and needs, and the ability to translate cultural knowledge into pedagogical strategies. These are the teachers who hold high expectations for all students and legitimize their students' backgrounds as part of the school's curriculum.

The ultimate goal of these diversity standards is to develop in every child's teacher the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to ensure success for all students. Embracing and implementing these standards will have profound implications on the education of all our children.

Given the increased diversity of students, the standards in this document are intended to both stand alone and be infused across content areas in grades P-12. Concepts of accessibility, integration, cultural relevance and mutual respect are central to all avenues of learning. To implement these concepts, effective beginning teachers use multiple and unbiased teaching strategies, instructional materials and assessment procedures. In addition, teachers foster an inclusive and safe environment (cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically) in which all students grow as individuals and as a community of learners.

In order for children to be successful learners, effective beginning teachers must welcome and accept all students in their classrooms. These teachers must have knowledge of the diverse backgrounds, cultures and learning styles of their students. In doing so, they are able to apply sound pedagogical practices that will enhance their selection of goals, methods, and materials for diverse learners.

One method by which effective beginning teachers develop and refine their practice is through a culturally responsive professional development program, which invites the entire school community to meet the needs of individual learners. Since teaching is learning, beginning teachers engage in ongoing self-reflection of instructional and social practice. Their analyses result in adapted plans to enhance the learning experiences of P-12 students. With such reflections effective beginning teachers evolve as leaders in the advancement of academic excellence and educational equity. Teachers as leaders sustain and maintain the value of a community of diverse leaders.

Standards and Indicators

Standard 1: Teachers understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) they teach and can create classroom environments and learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter accessible, meaningful and culturally relevant for diverse learners.

Indicator 1: Teachers select, evaluate and incorporate unbiased instructional materials

Indicator 2: Teachers use multiple strategies to address the needs of individual learners.

Indicator 3: Teachers create a safe, inclusive and caring environment in which all students can learn.

Indicator 4: Teachers use a variety of assessment procedures/instruments.

Standard 2: Teachers understand how students' cognitive, physical, socio-cultural, linguistic, emotional, and moral development influences learning and address these factors when making instructional decisions.

Indicator 1: Teachers seek and apply good matches among instructional goals, methods, and materials, and students' skills and abilities

Indicator 2: Teachers assist students in developing multiple learning strategies to address discipline specific content, communication, critical thinking, and problem solving skills

Indicator 3: Teachers modify instruction and assessment to meet the needs of individual student.

Standard 3: Teachers work collaboratively to develop linkages with parents/caretakers, school colleagues, community members and agencies that enhance the educational experiences and well being of diverse learners.

Indicator 1: Teachers develop strategies to communicate with the families of their students, help them understand and value the educational process and encourage their participation in a variety of school activities.

Indicator 2: Teachers recognize and value the family's role in education and offer them suggestions on how to help their children complete school-related tasks.

Indicator 3: Teachers make links with the learners' other environments on behalf of students, by working with in-school personnel, and community professionals and agencies.

Indicator 4: Teachers talk with and listen to the student, are sensitive and responsive to clues of distress or conflict, investigate situations, and seek outside help as needed and appropriate to remedy problems.

Standard 4: Teachers acknowledge and understand that diversity exists in society and utilize this diversity to strengthen the classroom environment to meet the needs of individual learners.

Indicator 1: Teachers become knowledgeable of diverse cultures and encourage families to share the richness of their backgrounds.

Indicator 2: Teachers provide opportunities for students and their families to share their diversities.

Indicator 3: Teachers promote appreciation and respect for diversity by rejecting the use of stereotypes.

Indicator 4: Teachers provide P-12 students with the skills necessary for evaluating their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors to enable them to understand how their attitudes affect their behaviors.

Standard 5: Teachers of diverse students demonstrate leadership by contributing to the growth and development of their colleagues, their school and the advancement of educational equity.

Indicator 1: Teachers become strong advocates for educational equity.

Indicator 2: Teachers continually refine practices that address the individual needs of diverse learners.

Indicator 3: Teachers are proactive and deliberate in promoting and fostering respect among students.

Standard 6: Teachers of diverse students are reflective practitioners who are committed to educational equity.

Indicator 1: Teachers identify own biases and reflect on them in terms of practice.

Indicator 2: Teachers provide equity and access to learning in classroom.