A Care For People

Strategic Action Plan for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at Moses Brown (2021-24)
Introduction

As a Friends school, Moses Brown’s mission is “to inspire the inner promise of each student and instill the utmost care for learning, people and place.” We believe in the dignity, worth and potential of each child. And our goal is to equip each rising generation to seek truth, care for others and protect the planet we call home.

This powerful purpose has motivated the school for 236 years, and in each successive era the school has tried to live up to the demands of this vision through constant self-assessment and growth. In this spirit, we ask: how should Moses Brown, a Friends school, respond to the legacy of bias, prejudice and discrimination in America? What role will we play in the national movement for equity and justice?

This is not an abstract concept for us. Every year, despite Moses Brown’s best efforts, students report incidents of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of bias and insensitivity that mar their sense of belonging in our community. As a Friends school, we promise to honor each child’s Inner Light, celebrate differences, and provide an environment where all feel valued, respected and supported. And yet for some, these values seem aspirational at best.

Over the past year, the Board, Administrative Council and I have met with many constituency groups at the school to talk about concrete steps we might take to make MB a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community for all. From these conversations, bolstered by abundant research, we have developed this strategic action plan — a guide to the most immediate steps our community will take to help make MB a place where every person finds belonging and has equitable access to learn and thrive.

In 2021, our school community finds itself at a critical moment as we assess our past, present and future through a lens of inclusion and equity. I look forward to working with the entire community to ensure that caring for people remains absolutely integral to our Quaker model of educational excellence.

Matt Glendinning

April 2021
In June of 2020, Moses Brown launched a strategic planning process focused on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). In order to tap our community’s wisdom and galvanize collective action, we enlisted input through a series of workshops with different constituency groups, where individual experiences and suggestions for change were shared. This iterative process helped identify needs and clarify priorities, and it led to the action steps identified below.

This plan will guide DEI work at Moses Brown over the next three years (2021–24). The plan lays out measurable objectives to which we will assign responsibilities, timeframes and accountability measures. It is intended to be a living, working document that will continue to evolve — particularly as we hire a new Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for the 2021–22 school year.

Ultimately, our goal is to use this strategic framework to bring about transformational change and ensure that the school is authentically living its mission and supporting all community members in becoming and being their best, true selves.
I. Leadership and Resources

**Goal:** Ensure that the school has the necessary resources and leadership to create an inclusive and equitable community.

1. Clearly articulate and publicize the school’s commitment to DEI

2. Enhance engagement by the Board of Trustees:
   - Increase involvement with the All-School Diversity Committee or other DEI-focused groups, or form a Board-level committee focused on DEI
   - Undertake formal DEI training at least every two years
   - Evaluate nominating processes and board/committee composition
   - Assess Board decision-making processes, ensuring the inclusion of DEI perspectives

3. Hire a full-time Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, who reports to the Head of School and is a member of the senior administrative team

4. Establish an Office of Community and Equity, co-led by the DEI Director and the Director of Friends Education, focused on helping all members of the MB community feel a sense of belonging and, in collaboration with key partners (e.g., ombuds, HR coordinator, health practitioners), caring for individuals’ wellbeing

5. Strengthen the practice of decision-making across the school, e.g., using Quaker process (‘sense of the meeting’) and Design Thinking protocols to ensure that all voices are heard, and all perspectives considered

6. Ensure that the manner in which people are named to leadership positions is equitable and consistent

7. Ensure that every person in a named/compensated leadership position has completed foundational training in cultural competency, implicit bias and giving/getting feedback; require senior administrators to undertake advanced DEI training (e.g., NAIS Diversity Leadership Institute, SEED program)

8. Enhance the Human Resources function at MB, ensuring that all employees understand their rights and responsibilities and the resources available to them

9. Ensure that DEI activities are supported primarily by operational or endowed funding (i.e., a specific, non-discretionary amount annually). Increase existing funding by:
   - Establishing the Russ Carpenter ’59 Endowed Fund for Attending the NAIS People of Color Conference ($20,000 annually)
   - Using summer professional development stipends, including the Miller Summer Travel/Study Award, to incentivize and support DEI work and curriculum development
II. Health, Safety and Dignity

**Goal:** Through policies and practices, uphold the health, safety and dignity of each person in the community.

1. **Adopt a school-wide Community Code** (a concise declaration of values governing our relationship to each other, to our work and to the mission of the school, to be positively affirmed by all community members annually)

2. **Ensure that MB’s Safe School policies** (e.g., anti-harassment and discrimination statements) are complete, and the process for reporting and consequences for violation clear. Communicate these protocols to all faculty, staff, students and parents annually.

3. **Establish a clear, effective and transparent process** for reporting and responding to incidents of identity-based bias, discrimination and racism (e.g., Learning for Justice’s Responding to Hate and Bias at School, or StopIt Solutions).

4. **Establish school-wide policy and practices** governing the teaching of primary textual material that includes the N-word or other offensive slurs.

5. **Ensure that transgender and gender nonbinary community members** are fully supported and feel a sense of safety, belonging and dignity.

6. **Augment social-emotional and mental/physical Health curriculum** and align with development of cultural competency skills to help students build self-awareness, knowledge of their own identities, empathy, trusting relationships, self-confidence, decision-making and communication skills.
III. Diversity

**Goal:** Ensure that the MB community includes a vital diversity of identities, voices and perspectives.

1. Collect self-identification data from the MB community more regularly and reliably as a means for increasing and monitoring vital diversity in the community.

2. Ensure that the MB community — board and board committees, administration, Parents’ and Alumni Association boards, faculty, staff, coaches and students — reflects the diversity of our surrounding area in terms of race, gender and socio-economic status. Engage the community in determining the level of diversity that is both sustainable and appropriate for fulfilling the school’s mission (e.g., attain 33% people of color by 2026).

3. Audit MB’s hiring, evaluation, and promotion practices and outcomes from a DEI perspective; provide anti-bias training for all search committees and implement anti-bias measures.

4. Audit MB’s Admissions and Financial Aid practices to ensure effective enrollment of students who add to the diversity of the community; clarify and share the criteria for any possible deviations from standardized aid calculations.

5. Assess attrition trends of both students and employees from a DEI perspective.

6. Ensure that MB’s promotional materials accurately and appropriately reflect the visible diversity of the MB community. Seek permission annually from students of color before using their image in promotional materials.
IV. Cultural Competency

**Goal:** Ensure that all members of the MB community have the skills to understand, appreciate, and interact effectively with people of different cultures, backgrounds and identities.

1. Refine and implement our current shared definition and understanding of “cultural competency” and its value to fulfilling MB’s mission

2. Update the orientation process for new employees, with stronger emphasis on DEI; continue DEI training throughout first year at MB

3. Require all faculty, staff and coaches to undertake formal DEI training every two years (especially in cultural competency, culturally responsive pedagogy, anti-racism and implicit bias)

4. Require all employees to adopt an annual goal focused on DEI and build accountability for progress into the evaluation process

5. Audit MB’s curriculum and pedagogy for DEI and multicultural content:
   - Ensure that a diversity of experiences and viewpoints and the perspective of traditionally underrepresented groups are amply represented and regularly explored
   - Consider adopting the Learning for Justice Framework for Anti-Bias Education across the curriculum and advisory program, especially the call for allyship and action in the face of phobias and hate
   - Create and publish a specific DEI/Social Justice scope and sequence for each division

6. Enhance special programming — affinity groups, clubs, activities, conferences, workshops — to ensure that students engage in meaningful learning focused on identity, power and social inequality. Create opportunities for students to uncover their own biases and privileges

7. Expand parent/public programming (e.g., speaker series, assemblies, films, heritage celebrations) and explore ways to foster DEI dialogue at home
V. Equity and Inclusion

**Goal**: Ensure that all members of the MB community feel valued and have equitable opportunity to contribute and thrive.

1. Audit the physical environment and practices of MB (signage, symbols, publications, rituals, holidays, meetings, classrooms, physical accessibility) to identify and address barriers to inclusion and belonging.

2. Review MB’s Admissions practices to ensure that families representing different identities — e.g., race, language, sexual orientation, religion, ability, socio-economic level — feel a sense of welcome and belonging.

3. Provide effective and inclusive ways to orient, mentor, support and retain new students and families, especially those from underrepresented groups.

4. Review existing co-curriculars, clubs and activities to ensure they are accessible and equitable; review identity-based affinity and ally groups (e.g., racial affinity groups, SPEAKS, GSA, Equal Voice) to ensure there are sufficient programs to support all student identities.

5. Assess the equity of pay and benefits for faculty and staff; ensure the use of benchmarking for staff and administrative positions; provide transparency for stipend positions; clarify and share the criteria for any possible deviations from published pay scales.

6. Conduct an Equity Audit, including follow up to identity-related issues (especially gender) identified in the 2020 Workplace Climate Survey.

7. Audit the real (total) costs of attending MB, and create a more proactive, transparent means of helping families in need defray ancillary costs (e.g., books, laptop, tickets, trips, tutoring, lunch, team snacks, special attire, athletic gear, gifts, college applications).

8. Ensure that there are multiple, low- or no-cost ways for parents to engage in the life of the school.
VI. Assessment and Communication

Goal: Build systems that more regularly collect data, evaluate programs and communicate with the school community.

1. Create a dashboard tool that tracks critical DEI metrics longitudinally on an annual basis and supports strategic planning and decision making:
   - Gender and racial composition of decision-making groups (board, administration, department chairs, MBAA and PA boards, US student senate)
   - Gender and racial composition of leadership positions (team leaders, committee clerks etc.)
   - Gender and racial diversity of faculty, staff and students, and socio-economic diversity of students (% supported with financial aid)
   - Financial Aid (discount rate, distribution of aid to groups prioritized for admission)
   - Employee professional development (annual hours devoted to DEI)
   - Experience of students, segmented by race and gender:
     - Enrollment in advanced courses
     - Grade point average
     - Involvement in disciplinary process
     - Admission and retention
     - Reports of bias or discrimination
     - Leadership representation (e.g., US Senate, DC pool, captainships)

2. Explore ongoing ways to assess equity and inclusivity within the MB community (e.g., NAIS AIM instrument, Pollyanna or similar community culture survey, focus groups, regular roundtable discussions, exit surveys and interviews, and personal narratives to follow up on trends in data)

3. Ensure that MB’s commitment and ongoing work around DEI are accurately and effectively communicated at both the institutional and divisional level (e.g., family communications, bi-annual newsletter, website, social media)

Diversity Leadership Team

**All-School Diversity Committee**
- Elizabeth Grumbach
- Karim Sow
- Erik Wilker

**Upper School**
- Chandra Harris
- Kelena Reid

**Lower School**
- Simone Ahlborn
- OJ Martí

**Middle School**
- Dominique Avila
- Yulie Lee