



DEI Statement: The Call to Elevate Equity

At Waterford.org, equity is at the heart of our mission. We firmly believe that childhood academic experiences set the foundation for a lifetime of learning—and learning is a process that never ends. As an evolving educational nonprofit, we are constantly learning as well. Addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in our organization takes dedication, time, and practice. We will make mistakes, correct them, and try again. In doing this work, we recognize the need to push past our comfort zones and create brave new spaces where growth can happen. Our DEI goals are crucial to achieving our mission of universal literacy.

Authenticity is central to Waterford’s approach to DEI. We bring our whole selves to our work and foster spaces where everyone feels comfortable contributing to the greater conversation. Whether we are discussing curriculum design, talking with families about their child’s progress, interacting with our school partners, or recruiting new talent, we ensure that diverse voices are equitably represented and welcome. This is ongoing work that begins with awareness, and it is sustained through individual efforts, organizational initiatives, partnerships with schools and families, and our commitment to ongoing learning.

Because DEI work is an ongoing learning process, we will continue to share our newfound knowledge, updated DEI goals, and accomplishments around educational equity in this space.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Definitions

At Waterford.org, it’s important that we articulate what diversity, equity, and inclusion mean for us. Our definitions capture the dual nature of our work—making DEI efforts a priority both within the organization and in the work we do with our partners and families.

Diversity

We believe diversity is fundamental in serving all learners and families. Diversity includes attracting, developing, and retaining team members who represent different: ages, races, genders, sexual orientations, sexes, ethnicities, political persuasions, religions, languages, socio-economic statuses, cultures, physical abilities, and other characteristics that make us individually different. A diverse team provides a wide range of thoughts, experiences, and perspectives to our workplace. Diversity helps individuals and the organization as a whole challenge assumptions, increase creativity, and spur innovation in our work, allowing us to live out our mission and vision.

Equity

We believe equity provides an opportunity for everyone to reach their full potential regardless of identity. This includes employees, partners, students, and families. Our mission is to ensure every child and family we serve has the tools and support they need to be successful in education. Individual employees work to recognize our areas of privilege and welcome discussion when those interfere with equitable outcomes for our internal and external community.

Inclusion

Team members are encouraged to bring their full, authentic selves to the workplace. Individual differences and contributions are valued at all levels of the organization; all team members contribute to the organization's success. We believe inclusion is only possible when everyone feels a sense of belonging, combined with physical and psychological safety. Employees are encouraged to challenge the status quo where needed.

In order to be truly equitable, Waterford.org believes we must create awareness, find the courage to think differently, make space for new ideas, and invite partners to support us (and hold us accountable) along the way. We understand the process of elevating equity is both internal and external. Internally, we use ongoing education to challenge our own thoughts and biases. Externally, we are willing to have tough conversations with others in hopes of creating meaningful change and impact.

We strive to listen to and learn from (and with) the children, families, and educators we serve. Through surveys, focus groups, interviews, and conversations, we learn to better meet their needs and uncover ways to better represent all learners. Through this co-construction and continuous improvement, Waterford delivers excellence and equity for all learners.