

Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

Q: What does Diversity Equity and Inclusion mean?

A: Diversity is the presence of differences within a given setting. Diversity comes in the many forms of our social identities, such as age, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, and socioeconomic status. Equity is the process of ensuring that processes and programs are impartial, fair and provide equal possible outcomes for every individual. Inclusion is the practice of ensuring that people feel a sense of belonging.

Q: Why does Diversity Equity and Inclusion matter?

Diversity is the beauty of life. Equity recognizes what makes us special and provides each person the opportunity to develop our unique gifts. Inclusion welcomes our whole selves and provides the space to offer our unique talents and perspectives.

A: Within education: Diversity and inclusion improve teaching and learning. People learn and enrich their abilities to think critically and creatively as they engage in conversations across differences, especially when all learners' abilities and attributes are embraced.

A: Within a PTA: An organization that recognizes diversity values differences and similarities among people through its actions and accountability. When PTAs fully represent their communities, they gain strength and effectiveness through increased volunteer and resource support.

A: Within a community: Having diversity and inclusion will improve the balance of opinions, views in any setting. A well-balanced world will accept different opinions and reduce fears towards differences. A well-balanced world can also improve the average cultural competency in the society.

Q: If I want to learn more about PTA Equity issues and movements, where can I go?

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- [SESEC](#) (Southeast Seattle Education Coalition)
 - [Roadmaps project](#)
 - [Nice White Parents Podcast series](#)
 - [PTSA Equity Pledge](#)
 - [FACES](#)
 - [Integrated Schools \(Katy Strange Seattle Chapter lead\)](#)
 - [UW School Equity Data Page](#)
 - [Alliance for Education Resource Pages](#)

Q: How can the McDonald community promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

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- Be aware of unconscious bias
 - Communicate the importance of managing bias
 - Develop a training program within our PTA
 - Acknowledge holidays of all cultures
 - Make it easy for people to participate in meetings/activities
 - Facilitate ongoing feedback
 - Assess school/PTA policies
 - Track progress over time

Q: How much is the PTA expected to focus its energy on the entire Seattle school district community vs. our own school?

A: The PTA board is made of several positions that are directly established for the benefit of our own school. DEI Team would hope the positions that hold the ability to also help outside of the McDonald community would consider doing so as well. DEI Team is actively available to assist with efforts within and outside of McDonald International.

McDonald DEI committee

Q: Does McDonald have its own DEI committee?

A: Yes. Formed in fall 2019 and meeting monthly ever since, McDonald's Social Justice DEI Committee is an inclusive and collaborative group of teachers and parents with diverse identities who are committed to addressing racial injustice and other social justice issues that impact our McDonald community and beyond. Membership and participation are open to all and we would love to see you at our next meeting!

Q: What does the DEI committee do? Are there any subcommittees?

A: The DEI committee promotes the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion—internally within the committee; at school in support of the Racial Equity Team (RET - who are McDonald teachers and staff); and in the McDonald International and greater Seattle Public Schools community in collaboration with the PTA. Examples of DEI committee activities include:

- DEI committee meeting (monthly)
- Social justice book club (every other week)
- Community Partnership subcommittee meeting (monthly)
- Support McDonald community of DEI learning (Parent ED about BLM 13 principles, DEI FAQ, ...etc.)
- Attending McDonald PTA board meeting (monthly)
- Committee activity report via Scottie's News (monthly)

Q: Can you tell us examples of the DEI committee's work?

A: **Whole school Sakura art project** along with learning about Japanese internment camps in Art class throughout the AAPI (Asian & Pacific Islander) hate crime spike in 2020.

Black Lives Matter sub-committee has been working with McDonald administration since 2018 to **bring BLM curriculum into our school**, coordinate speakers for Parent Education as well as student assemblies.

Supporting the Racial Equity Team (RET - who are McDonald teachers and staff) while creating a clear system for students and families to report racist or non inclusive incidents at McDonald. DEI is a supportive branch of that process should RET need assistance.

Community Partnership Team - see below for full descriptions of this team and their process.

Q: How is the DEI team meeting the needs of the families within our own school community?

A: This is a growing topic. At the moment the DEI team is working with the teachers on the in-house Racial Equity Team (RET) at McDonald to support families who have reported racist incidents at the school. Together the DEI and RET are creating a reporting option for children, families and staff to ensure they are

given the attention and responsiveness they deserve. This answer will be updated as this develops.

Q: How can I join or learn more about this committee?

A: DEI committee meets monthly via zoom. The next meeting info can be found in our weekly PTA newsletter "Scottie's News". You are also welcome to email us at dei@mcdonaldpta.org.

Sharing resource with other schools / Community Partnership Fund

Q: Why Support Resource Sharing with Other Schools?

A: [Well documented disparities in resources](#) and systemic imbalances built on years of injustice persist across Seattle. Several schools have taken up DEI and social justice committees to educate their communities about the issues and their drivers, and an increasing number of schools are looking at how to leverage their relative privileges, such as PTA organizational strength and capacities and substantial annual fundraising budgets, to advance educational and social equity. In particular, several schools are actively supporting lower-resourced and higher-need schools with monetary contributions offered either annually or semi-annually in a lump sum, either negotiated annually by the PTA board or set as an agreed percentage of a school's annual fundraising budget.

Q: What is the Community Partnership Fund?

A: McDonald PTA provides this opportunity to voluntarily donate any amount that is meaningful to our Community Partnership Fund: This money is donated to other schools' PTAs to support equity in the district.

Q: Are donations to the Community Partnership Fund tax-deductible?

A: Yes. The donations run through the McDonald PTA, which is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The McDonald PTA then disburses the funds to the PTAs of the other schools.

Q: What do the other PTAs do with the funds raised through our Community Partnership Fund?

A: The Community Partnership Funds are supporting families at other schools who are at risk of homelessness, facing food insecurity, and other basic needs. The funds raised by the McDonald PTA go directly to those other PTAs who distribute the funds to families most in need. There is an immense need at these schools and many more around the district.

Q: How can McDonald Make School Partnerships Most Meaningful?

Q: Are community partnerships only about giving money?

A: Too often, "sister school" and related "community support" campaigns, though well intended, smack of a charity mindset and white saviorism, and fail to deepen understanding of the value of nor commitments to addressing significant social and educational inequities throughout the Seattle public school and PTA systems. In response, there is a growing movement toward more meaningful school partnerships built on community and mutual respect and benefit. These partnerships do include resource sharing, but also include more expansive goals such as: prioritizing community connections and relationships among kids, families and staff of diverse backgrounds; decentering the normative perspectives and expectations of the privileged community by listening and responding to needs and perspectives of others; leveraging the relative power in voice and resources of the privileged to advocate for more needs of the partner school and/or the broader school system.

Q: What Level of Effort will Establishing a Meaningful School Partnership Take?

A: Such partnerships require more work than the typical annual check-cutting to "in need schools." They are often challenging work for the school with positional privilege and power, as that school is asked to both acknowledge, decenter, and cede some of its power and resources to another school, and, importantly, to acknowledge and trust that the leaders of that school and community know and can dictate their own needs. Ultimately, these partnerships, when done well, demonstrate that supporting other schools (whether through resource sharing, volunteering, joint experiences, or joint advocacy) is not zero sum, but mutually beneficial for the kids, communities, and schools involved, and are better positioned to have more lasting impacts on DEI and educational justice at the systemic level.

Q: Does McDonald Already have Partner Schools?

A: Not officially at this time. Our DEI team has a subcommittee (Community Partnership Team) that has been building relationships with Concord International Elementary over the 2020/21 and 2021/22 school years but due to the pandemic

creating a partnership has been a slow process.

Q: How has McDonald PTA supported or partnered with schools in the past?

A: Through donation of funds as well as supporting advocacy efforts at the district level.

Q: Which schools did the Community Partnership Fund support most recently?

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- Spring 2020: Concord International (\$30K)
 - Fall 2021: Olympic Hills Elementary, Concord International, and Dearborn Park International (just over \$5K each)

Q: How long would the DEI team suggest the PTA continue to offer fundraising for the Community Partnership Fund each year?

A: DEI Community Partnership Team requests utilizing the duration of fundraising efforts at McDonald for also raising funds toward Community Partnership.

Q: What type of information do we request from the schools we support with the Community Partnership Fund about how the funds were used?

A: Currently we do not request information from the PTA of the other schools on how the funds were used. Asking for detailed information on how funds are used creates a reporting burden on the other PTAs and their already stretched communities which does not fit with principles of equity or [trust-based philanthropy](#). The intention with creating a partnership with other schools is so that we can understand their needs and create mutual trust between McDonald PTA and those other schools. We are leading with trust--trusting that the other PTAs know their communities and families best and will use the funds in the way they see best.

If you're interested in reading more about nonprofit evaluation, reporting burden, and effectiveness through the lens of equity, please check out Vu Le's NonprofitAF blog. Some relevant posts on this topic are [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Q: The Community Partnership Fund sounds a little unstructured. Why?

A: The intention of the Community Partnership Fund is to keep the structure to a minimum because structures are often used to restrict access to funds and other resources from communities of color and those who have less comfort in navigating those

structures. For those without time and practice navigating structures or do not speak English as a first language, those structures become roadblocks. Instead, we are leading with goals and intention. Our goal is to raise money for other schools in Seattle whose communities need support with basic needs. We intend to do so in a way that honors the dignity of those communities and allows them to determine what their priorities and needs are, without needing us to “approve” those needs and priorities.

Community Partnership Subcommittee

Q: What does the Community Partnership Subcommittee do?

A: This subcommittee meets once a month to discuss how we can best be in service to surrounding schools with a focus on building partnership with Concord International Elementary. We communicate with other school's PTA's to find what ways we can best support their community. These supports include anything from a coat drive to a financial contribution to provide assistance for basic needs (food, housing, etc.).

Q: How can I join or learn more about this subcommittee?

A: Attend the monthly DEI Social Justice Team meeting and ask to be informed when the next Community Partnership meeting is taking place. It is valuable to attend the greater DEI meeting first before attending the Community Partnership Team meeting but is not a requirement. If attending the other meeting first is at all a barrier for you please email dei@mcdonaldpta.org and we will connect you with this team directly.

Q: How will/does the Community Partnerships subcommittee link to other work in the broader DEI committee?

A: The partnership committee brings questions/discussion back to the DEI committee to ensure support of all before making decisions. They also bring greater DEI conversations back to their own committee meetings to deepen conversations and to create strategies and action items.