

Cultural Proficiency and Inclusiveness Update, 2011–2012 to 2013–2014

WHAT IS THE CULTURAL PROFICIENCY AND INCLUSIVENESS INITIATIVE?

In an effort to improve the work environment for district staff and the educational experience for students, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) was charged with the goal of implementing a program designed to improve cultural proficiency and inclusiveness district wide through the use of workshops, job studies, and other training programs. According to the Cultural Proficiency and Inclusiveness (CP & I) initiative's website cultural proficiency occurs when adults understand that their personal cultures and backgrounds impact others, including students in AISD. Inclusiveness is defined as showing respect, understanding, and acceptance, and valuing diversity as an asset with the AISD community. Fall 2011, the Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) administered the Teaching Diverse Students Survey to gather baseline data on campus and central office staff members' attitudes toward the goals of the CP & I initiative in their workplace. This survey is administered biannually to determine if AISD staff members' perceptions have changed over time. In Fall 2013, 1,943 central office and campus staff members completed the Teaching Diverse Students Survey (see sidebar for a description of the survey). Staff rated most items favorably (above 3.0, see green line in Figure 1), with the exception of those related to professional expertise.

What is the Teaching Diverse Students Survey? The teaching survey was developed by Teaching Tolerance and consists of four subscales: shared beliefs (the degree to which the school community shares common beliefs and commitments related to diverse students' needs), professional expertise (the degree to which professional development opportunities address the needs of diverse students), actions of school leaders (the degree to which school leaders foster a campus community that addresses the needs of diverse students), and school policies and processes (the degree to which school policies promote the needs of diverse students). In 2013, some items were reworded and new items were added to the survey.

Figure 1. Teaching Diverse Students Survey Campus Su

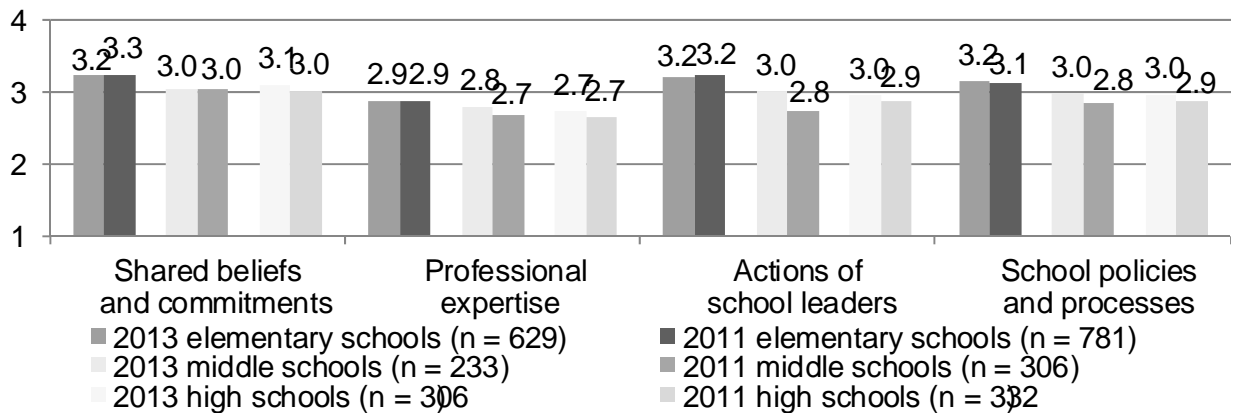
WHAT IS THE NO PLACE FOR HATE® INITIATIVE?

In 2011, as part of the district's ongoing effort to improve cultural proficiency and inclusiveness, AISD partnered with the Austin chapter of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) with the aim of making AISD a No Place for Hate district by 2014. Using training and resources geared toward embracing cultural diversity and reducing prejudice, the No Place for Hate initiative helps schools create an environment in which all students and staff feel supported, valued and respected, and believe they can succeed. To earn the No Place for Hate designation, students and staff must sign the Resolution of Respect and complete three different No Place for Hate activities in the span of one academic year. In the 2011–2012 school year, the first year AISD participated in a No Place for Hate initiative, students and staff members (including staff from AISD's central office) signed the Resolution of Respect. By the end of the year, 40 campuses and AISD's central office earned the No Place for Hate designation (see Appendix A for a list of the schools that earned 2012 No Place for Hate designation).

DID CAMPUS STAFF MEMBERS' ATTITUDES CHANGE OVER TIME?

The Teaching Diverse Students survey is used to assess AISD staff members' attitudes toward concepts considered integral to both the cultural proficiency and inclusiveness initiative and the No Place for Hate initiative. In 2013, average scores remained high, with elementary school staff reporting more favorable attitudes (i.e., >3.0, as designated by the green line in Figure 2) than did their peers at the middle and high school levels. The following sections analyse changes in the level of agreement over time for each subscale for the central office survey items.

Figure 2. Teaching Diverse Students Survey Campus Scores, by School Level Over Time



Source: 2013–2014 Teaching Diverse Students survey
 Note: Response optional

Shared beliefs and commitments. In general, campus staff members were in agreement with items related to shared beliefs and commitments remained stable over time (Table 1). Campus staff at the elementary school level rated these items significantly higher than did their peers at the middle and high school levels $F(2, 1,184) = 12.55, p < .01$; Figure 2). Level of agreement with items on the Teaching Diverse Students survey over time suggested that staff in schools earning the 2012 No Place for Hate designation were more likely to agree that teachers of different backgrounds collaborate to enhance their students’ learning in 2013 than they were in 2011 (an increase from 81% to 89%; Appendix B #3).

Table 1. All AISD Campus Staff Members’ Agreement With Items Related to Shared Beliefs and Commitments, by School Level and Year

	Elementary		Middle		High	
	2011	2013	2011	2013	2011	2013
1. Teachers talk openly with one another about how to address issues relating to race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ableness in the school.	81%	81%	70%	76%	79%	77%
2. Teachers talk with students about issues relating to race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ableness as they arise in the school.	78%	79%	71%	78%	81%	78%
3. Teachers of different races, ethnicities, religions, gender identities, sexual orientations, and ability levels collaborate to enhance the learning experiences of all students.	87%	89%	79%	84%	81%	85%
4. Teachers at this school expect students to achieve at high levels and provide them the support necessary to do so.	96%	95%	88%	87%	90%	91%
5. Teachers and administrators openly reject the idea that students cannot achieve academically because of conditions in their homes and communities.	84%	81%	71%	82%	75%	81%
6. Teachers and administrators believe that they can significantly influence students’ motivation to learn.	98%	97%	84%	88%	90%	92%
7. Teachers help students acquire skills they need to learn with and from students of different racial, ethnic, religious, social classes, gender identities, sexual orientations and ability level groups.	93%	93%	86%	82%	88%	90%
8. Teachers make an effort to understand their students’ backgrounds, experiences and interests.	94%	94%	89%	85%	88%	89%

Source: Fall 2011 and 2013 Teaching Diverse Students survey

Note: Response options ranged from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Percentages represent the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly

Professional expertise. In 2013, ratings of professional expertise remained low with elementary school staff members' ratings significantly higher than those of their peers at the high school level ($F(2, 1,167) = 5.05, p < .05$; Figure 1). Notably, more than one-third of staff at each level disagreed that professional development activities helped them learn how to investigate and understand how their students' diverse backgrounds contribute to learning and behavior (Table 2). They also disagreed that they had learned how their personal reactions to students might affect their relationships and interactions with them. High school staff were more likely to agree in 2013 than in 2011 that priorities for professional development activities addressed achievement gaps and student performance for the various student groups. Staff at 2012 No Place for Hate designated schools did not report improvements in their ratings of these items in 2013. However, staff at schools that did not earn the No Place for Hate designation in 2012 were more likely in 2013 than in 2011 to agree that professional development activities helped staff members exa

earning the No Place for Hate designation in 2013. The professional development activities targeted toward aspiring No Place for Hate schools may have benefitted staff members' feelings regarding relationships with diverse students and staff. To further improve all staff members' ratings of these items, additional professional development activities should be geared towards improving staff members' professional expertise as it relates to working and teaching with diverse students and staff.

Actions of school leaders.

School policies and processes. Consistent with other subscales, staff members’ ratings of items related to school policies and processes generally remained stable in 2013 (Table 4). Elementary school staff members rating these items higher than their middle and high school peers ($F(2, 1,183) = 14.60, p < .01$; Figure 2). However, staff members from schools earning a No Place for Hate designation in 2012 reported improvements for several items in 2013. For example, staff members at No Place for Hate designated schools expressed greater agreement in 2013 than they did the prior year with the fact that their school honored and used languages other than English (an increase from 80% to 86%; Appendix B, #27); that rules governing student behavior were understood and discipline actions were carried out equitably among students (an increase from 78% to 90%; Appendix B, #29); and that disciplinary actions rarely removed students from class (an increase from 86% to 92%; Appendix B, #30). Additionally, staff members from schools earning the No Place for Hate designation in 2012 agreed more in 2013 than in 2011 that family engagement strategies were well-developed and that the program staff reached out to culturally and linguistically diverse families (an increase from 73% to 81%; Appendix B, #32). Again, this increase could be related to the implementation of No Place for Hate activities at all AISD campuses in 2013.

Table 4. All AISD Campus Staff Members’ Agreement With Items Related to School Policies and Processes, by School Level and Year

	Elementary		Middle		High	
	2011	2013	2011	2013	2011	2013
1. The school has well publicized explicit and coherent policies that seek to ensure that all students and staff experience no discrimination based on race/ethnicity, language, social class, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or ableness.	84%	87%	73%	84%	76%	83%
2. Campus staff seek to ensure that students of all races, ethnic social classes, religions, gender identities, sexual orientations ability levels have access to rigorous courses, such as honors, Gifted and Advanced Placement.	94%	93%	87%	89%	88%	92%
3. Tracking and inflexible ability grouping for instruction are not allowed.	82%	84%	66%	73%	72%	78%
4. Campus staff ensure that struggling students will receive the extra time and support they need to achieve academically.	93%	93%	90%	91%	91%	94%
5. The curriculum helps all students understand the unique historical and contemporary experiences of different racial, ethnic, and religious groups.	79%	80%	67%	74%	68%	73%
6. The curriculum engages students in learning through positive interactions with students of different racial, ethnic, socio-economic and religious backgrounds.	85%	86%	77%	83%	80%	84%
7. The school honors and makes use of languages of students who speak a language other than English at home.	89%	92%	71%	81%	74%	79%
8. Efforts are made to recruit and retain a racially, ethnically, & age-diverse staff.	81%	82%	71%	77%	74%	76%

Source: Fall 2011 and 2013 Teaching Diverse Students survey
 Note: Response options ranged from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree

Central office. Central office staff also were asked questions regarding their perceptions of how the district promoted the needs of diverse students. Rati

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	2011 (n = 190)
1. Central office staff and administrators do not openly with one another about how to address issues relating to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and ability in our schools.	63%
2. Staff and administrators in central office do not openly reject the idea that students cannot achieve academically because of conditions in their homes or communities.	62%
3. Staff and administrators in central office do not believe that teachers can significantly influence students' motivation to learn.	95%
4. Priorities for professional development for central office employees include substantial emphasis on gaps and discrepancies regarding the performance of different groups of students.	64%
5. Professional development activities he	

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Appendix A. No Place for Hate Schools and Designation Status, 2011–2012

Austin Vertical Team	Crockett Vertical Team	LBJ Vertical Team	Travis Vertical Team
Austin HS*	Crockett HS*	LBJ HS*	Travis HS*
O. Henry MS*	Bedichek MS	Garcia MS	Fulmore MS*
Small MS*	Covington MS*	Pearce MS*	Mendez MS
Barton Hills EL*	Boone EL*	Andrews EL*	Becker EL*
Bryker Woods EL*	Cunningham EL	Blanton EL*	Dawson EL*
Casis EL*	Galindo EL*	Harris EL	Houston EL*
Mathews EL*	Joslin EL*	Jordan EL*	Linder EL*
Oak Hill EL*	Odom EL*	Norman EL*	Rodriguez EL*
Patton EL*	Pleasant Hill EL*	Overton EL	Travis Heights EL*
Pease EL*	St. Elmo EL*	Pecan Springs EL**	Uphaus ECC
Sanchez EL	Sunset Valley EL*	Sims EL*	AISD Central Office
Zilker EL*	Williams EL*	Widen EL*	

Source: Cultural Proficiency and Inclusiveness database

Note: * Indicates the school earned the No Place for Hate designation in the 2011 school year.

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	2012 No Place for Hate schools		Non 2012 No Place for Hate schools	
	2011 (n = 485)	2013 (n = 352)	2011 (n = 2,242)	2013 (n = 1,591)
1. Teachers talk openly with one another about how to address issues relating to race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ableness in the school.	79%	77%	76%	77%
2. Teachers talk with students about issues relating to race, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ableness as they arise in the school.	78%	76%	74%	78%
3. Teachers of different races, ethnicities, religions, gender identities, sexual orientations, and ability levels collaborate to enhance the learning experiences of all students.	81%	89%*	83%	86%
4. Teachers at this school expect students to achieve at high levels and provide them the support necessary to do so.	92%	93%	92%	92%
5. Teachers and administrators openly reject the idea that students cannot achieve academically because of conditions in their homes and communities.	77%	82%	76%	80%
6. Teachers and administrators believe that they can significantly influence students' motivation to learn.	93%	93%	93%	93%
7. Teachers help students acquire the skills they need to learn with and from students of different racial, ethnic, religious, social classes, gender identities, sexual orientations and ability level groups.	91%	90%	89%	89%
8. Teachers make an effort to understand their students' backgrounds, experiences and interests.	92%	92%	90%	91%
9. Priorities for professional development include an emphasis on gaps and discrepancies regarding the performance of different groups of students.	81%	80%	76%	78%
10. Professional development activities help teachers investigate and understand how students' race, ethnicity, language, social class, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or ableness				

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Appendix B, continued. All AISD Campus Staff Members' Agreement With Teaching Diverse Students Survey Items for Each Subscale Based on Their 2012 Place for Hate Designation Status and Year.

	2012 No Place for Hate schools		Non 2012 No Place for Hate schools	
	2011 (n = 485)	2013 (n = 352)	2011 (n = 2,242)	2013 (n = 1,591)
13. Teachers are helped to understand how they react to students' dress, accents, nonverbal communication, and dialects and how such reactions affect their interactions with students.	58%	61%	57%	64%*
14. Professional development activities help teachers to develop the knowledge and skills to effectively teach all students.	82%	82%	80%	81%
15. School leaders assert and regularly reinforce the importance of ensuring that all students achieve at high levels.	93%	95%	92%	93%
16. Leaders interact respectfully with all faculty members and make a special effort to engage those who may feel less comfortable or more vulnerable.	79%	85%	76%	80%
17. School leaders acknowledge differences among racial and ethnic groups at the same time that they encourage recognition of common values.	84%	87%	82%	86%*
18. Leaders reinforce, by word and deed, the importance of inter-group collaboration.	82%	89%*	81%	84%
19. Leaders ensure that efforts to improve interracial and intercultural understanding and competence are integral to core efforts to improve teaching and learning.	76%	79%	74%	79%*
20. School leaders take prompt action to understand and deal with the root causes of racial and ethnic conflict among faculty and students.	72%	79%	74%	79%
21. The school has well publicized explicit and coherent policies that seek to ensure that all students and staff experience no discrimination based on race, ethnicity, language, social class, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or ableness.	81%	86%	80%	84%
22. Campus staff seek to ensure that students of all races, ethnicities, social classes, religions, gender identities, sexual orientations, and ability levels have access to rigorous courses, such as honors, Gifted and Advanced Placement.	93%	92%	90%	91%
23. Tracking and inflexible ability grouping for instruction are not allowed.	77%	84%	77%	79%
24. Campus staff ensure that struggling students will receive the extra time and support they need to achieve academically.	92%	93%	91%	92%
25. The curriculum helps all students understand the unique historical and contemporary experiences of different racial, ethnic, and religious groups.	74%	77%	74%	77%
26. The curriculum engages students in learning through positive interactions with students of different racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and religious backgrounds.	81%	86%	82%	84%

Source: Fall 2011 and 2013 Teaching Diverse Students survey

Note: Response options ranged from strongly agreed (4) to strongly disagreed (1). Percentages represent the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

* Indicates a significant improvement from 2011 within No Place for Hate school type

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	2012 No Place for Hate schools		Non 2012 No Place for Hate schools	
	2011 (n = 485)	2013 (n = 352)	2011 (n = 2,242)	2013 (n = 1,591)
27. The school honors and makes use of languages of students who speak a language other than English at home.	80%	86%*	83%	87%
28. Efforts are made to recruit and retain a racially, ethnically, and age-diverse staff.	77%	82%	76%	80%
29. Rules governing student behavior are understood and openly discussed, and disciplinary action is characterized by equity and transparency.	78%	90%*	79%	83%
30. Only as a last resort do disciplinary policies and actions remove students from learning opportunities.	86%	92%*	89%	92%
31. Multiple forms of data are continuously collected and assessed to monitor possible racial, ethnic, religious, social class, gender identity, sexual orientation and ability level differences in student achievement, disciplinary actions, access to learning opportunities and the composition of student learning groups.	81%	83%	79%	84%

81%