Breck

Statement of Philosophy on Discourse with Dignity in the Breck Community

At Breck we engage in conversations that reflect our values of inquiry, inclusion, and reason. Through relationship, we grow our intellectual curiosity and ability to engage difference in ideology, belief, and experience. Our culture of discourse extends beyond our classrooms into the hallways, dining rooms, and all other community spaces. We commit to a practice of discourse with dignity that develops both listening and speaking skills, as well as the courage to express our authentic selves. This practice aligns with our school's Mission and Values of developing engaged and respectful citizens. We acknowledge the role of discourse in the development of intellectual curiosity, self-knowledge, and social responsibility.

A good conversation should:

1. feel intellectually and emotionally engaging.
2. create opportunities to be brave and safe. This may include discomfort but should work to counter bias, judgement, and prejudice.
3. center compassion and seek to understand.
4. broaden your lens and, at times, change your mind.
5. include both listening and speaking as expressions of inquiry, inclusion, and reason.
6. just be the beginning!

Community Agreements

1. **Use "I statements"** focusing on your lived experiences and perspective.
2. **Respect confidentiality,** knowing that sharing the ideas of others beyond the scope of the conversation is not the purpose. Leave the story to the storyteller.
3. **Embrace discomfort,** knowing it is essential for growth and understanding.
4. **Practice accountability,** especially when discovering the impact of a statement or behavior.
5. **Be mindful of equity of voice,** both in how you are speaking or not speaking. Leverage your voice and silence to understand, not to judge or wield power.
6. **Engagement matters** as a way we show respect to one another.
7. **These agreements** can be reviewed, revised, and revisited as needed by this shared community.