

Breck School | Community Commitments

Overview

The year long process engaged numerous stakeholders and hundreds of voices. This included any document pertaining to DEI at Breck, from letters from alumni as well as community-wide surveys. All of this data contributed to the development of the following seven areas, which were determined to be the most meaningful opportunities for change.

Following the initial writing process, the core team revised the commitments with various stakeholders, adding clear roles and responsibilities to ensure Breck could sustainably enact these commitments.



Community Commitments

Establish a Restorative Ethos

Restorative practices are a relationship-centered, holistic approach to creating a healthy, safe, and equitable community. By centering the teaching and practice of community building, conflict resolution, and communication skills, we support healthy relationships through accountability when harm is caused. To begin, we are focusing on using restorative circles during times of conflict in the Upper School and as a part of regular community building in 7th grade in Middle School.

Create brave spaces for dialogue, feedback, and learning

Brave spaces are learning environments in which people offer authentic voice to their lived experiences without judgment and where discomfort is understood as a natural part of relationships. We value the diversity of thought, knowing that the skills of critical thinking and discourse with dignity require practice and development. While brave spaces are essential in the classroom, they are just as important for our adult community members including faculty/staff, school leaders, and parents/caregivers.

Clarify Breck's Vision on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work and how this lives in practice

Clarity and consistency are key in order for our DEI work to be successful. This commitment is focused on clarity as well as alignment between what we say and what we do as an organization. We also need to work to align our DEI philosophy with our Mission, Values, and Outcome Statement. Breck School leaders will clarify both who Breck is and who Breck isn't, both in stated commitments and in practice.

Clarify Roles and Responsibilities and create a clear structure of DEI leadership

Diversity, equity, and inclusion work is a responsibility shared by all community members, however, dedicated resources and a clear structure of leadership is necessary in order to institutionalize our DEI work and achieve consistent implementation in all aspects of school life. For this work to be comprehensively integrated, the vision for DEI leadership will concurrently build DEI capacity for all employees, inspire collective ownership of these goals, and provide clear guidance and expertise from specific school leaders.

Continue Professional Development in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Best Practices

School leadership and faculty are responsible for creating classroom climates and a school culture where all students feel they belong and can equitably thrive. Breck will be a leader in offering professional development that is informed by research and the practice of culturally responsive pedagogy, restorative practices, anti-bias/anti-racist/anti-oppression, intercultural competence, equity literacy, et cetera. We believe it takes all of us for the Breck community to be a space that actively counters prejudice and discrimination.

Strategically Evaluate Our Practices

As Breck continues to deepen commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion work, continued evaluation and review of day to day practices is critical. While several areas of school life were shared by community members, we have identified three areas listed below as strategic next steps. We are starting with Admissions, College Counseling, and Human Resources as they continue significantly to the climate and culture of the School.

Review and Align Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Classroom Experience with DEI Philosophy

Breck will commit to a pedagogy that centers critical thinking, a sense of belonging, diversity of thought, that results in equitable experiences and outcomes. Our work in this area will prioritize healthy relationships and discourse with dignity. We will embrace difference, so that all students may feel seen throughout the curriculum, classroom, and school experience. We will name and acknowledge racism and systemic oppression that fosters inequalities. We will also teach about non-dominant identities through a strengths based approach and we will honor intersectionality in conversations about identity development, privilege, and marginalization holding the complexity of dynamics of power and access.