

Have You Been *Wondering?* **WHAT IS DEIB?** (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging)

Overview: What is it?

Conversations and initiatives focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are foundational to supporting students in an ever-changing and complex world. By centering dialogue about our differences and how to navigate through them, we equip students with skills to become problem solvers, address conflict, and contribute to their communities in meaningful ways. The 21st-century context in which our students are learning and growing requires collaboration, flexibility, and creativity. Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging efforts are central to cultivating these skills and help ensure that all students can thrive in their classroom and school communities, understand their place in the world, and take action to solve some of the world's most pressing challenges.

Why Now?

National/International Context

National and international conversations about the necessity and importance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging have been taking place for decades. In recent years, these conversations have come to the forefront as we grapple with ongoing and increasingly visible manifestations of systemic inequities related to structural violence, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and educational access, to name a few.

Utah Context

In Utah, there are overlapping and connected conversations focused on equity and inclusion, especially at local colleges and universities, such as Westminster, Salt Lake Community College, and the University of Utah as well as at peer schools like McGillis, Waterford, and Park City Day. We must continue to lean into tough conversations and practice growing our skills in this area.

Research Context

The research is clear about the relationship between feelings of belonging and student performance inside and outside of the classroom—without strong feelings of belonging, students are less motivated and less likely to succeed in their endeavors. As a school, our responsibility is to cultivate these feelings of belonging for each student, especially those who have been historically marginalized.



DEFINITIONS

DIVERSITY: The full range of human differences within overarching similarities. These characteristics include, but are not limited to ability, age, class, educational attainment, gender, national origin, race, sexual orientation, and religion.

EQUITY: A process that recognizes that not everyone starts in the same place; it is not synonymous with equality. Equity also takes historical inequities into consideration when designing opportunities or distributing resources to attend to both individual and communal needs.

INCLUSION: The condition that exists when policies, practices, and other actions create equitable opportunities, access, voice, respect, and support in an organizational context or culture. Inclusion does not indicate a lack of disagreement but creates a space for everyone to voice their perspective and engage in dialogue across differences.

BELONGING: Fulfillment of the human need to be taken in, cared for, protected, and valued by a group, community, or organization. Belonging is created through actions that express affinity, empathy, and generosity and also allows for redress of grievances and more.

Definitions adapted from the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

Current Debate

The current debate over equity and inclusion work in school settings often centers on concerns about academic rigor, a perceived lowering of standards, or teaching students to feel bad about their identities, allegedly causing further divisions. However, equity and inclusion are not antithetical to academic rigor and do not ask us to lower our standards for anyone. Rather, working through an equity lens means supporting all students so that they each feel like they can thrive in our school setting and meet the high expectations we have for them. Furthermore, recognizing and celebrating our differences does not lead to further divides but rather helps us understand other individuals' experiences, enlarging our own understanding of the world. We recognize the need to continue to name historical and contemporary inequities to learn from them and work towards a school environment that values each community member, one that promotes a shared sense of responsibility for each other's well-being and success. By centering both belonging and a strong academic program, we raise expectations for the leaders of tomorrow by equipping them with the skills and knowledge they will need to embrace a dynamic and ever-changing world.

What is Happening at Rowland Hall?

As an independent school in Salt Lake City committed to promoting equity and inclusion, Rowland Hall is taking ongoing steps to work towards creating belonging for all. You can read about these efforts in our Fine Print Magazine and by visiting our [website](#). Some key articles include:

- [Rowland Hall Celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Beloved Community](#)
- [Come Together: Why Dr. Chandani Patel Believes That Building Collaboration Skills Today Can Create Leaders of Tomorrow](#)
- [Computing for All at Rowland Hall](#)
- [Two Rowland Hall Educators Share Expertise in USA Today Article on Sex Education](#)
- [Rowland Hall's Ongoing Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

We strive to create a school culture that recognizes individual differences, brings people together, and generates innovative and robust solutions to contemporary challenges by understanding historical inequities and present-day opportunities.



READ WATCH LISTEN

READ

- [What are Mirrors and Windows](#)

WATCH

- [Dear America by Gabrielle Gorman](#)

LISTEN

- [Code Switch - What about your friends?](#), NPR

FURTHER READING & RESOURCES

[Author Heather McGhee on how racism harms all of society](#), NPR

[On 'Difficult' conversations](#), Inside Higher Ed

[Rowland Hall parent looks for diversity in workplace leadership](#)

[Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 101](#), University of Colorado, Denver