



**Executive Summary
Assessment of The Climate
For Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at
Thayer Academy
2023**

Presented By: Dr. Keith Hinderlie

All content transmitted in and attached to this report is legally privileged and confidential under applicable laws, and is intended only for the person or entity to which it is specifically addressed. If any recipient of this message is not a named intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any review, retransmission, dissemination, copy, disclosure or other use of, or taking any action in reliance upon, this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibited.

If you have received this report in error, please do not print it, copy it, forward it or use it for any purpose. Please notify Hinderlie and Associates and the Head of School at Thayer Academy immediately, and delete this report from your system. Thank you for your cooperation.

NAIS PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR EQUITY AND JUSTICE
Approved by the NAIS board of trustees in November 2012

Available in its entirety at:
<https://www.nais.org/learn/principles-of-good-practice/>

“Preamble: The following principles provide common ground for interaction between independent school professionals and their many constituents. The Principles of Good Practice for member schools define high standards and ethical behavior in key areas of school operations to guide schools in becoming the best education communities they can be, to embed the expectation of professionalism, and to further our sector’s core values of transparency, excellence and inclusivity.”

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. The school establishes the foundations for its commitment to equity and justice in its defining documents (mission, core values and/or philosophy statements).
2. The board of trustees and the head of school articulate strategic goals and objectives that promote diversity, inclusion, equity and justice.
3. The school develops meaningful requirements for cross-cultural competency and provides training and support for all members of its community.
4. The board of trustees and the head of school maintain accountability by periodically monitoring and assessing school culture and ongoing efforts in admission, hiring, retention, financial aid and curriculum development.
5. The school works deliberately to ensure that the board of trustees, administration, faculty, staff and student body reflect our country’s diversity.
6. The head of school designates an individual in leadership to coordinate diversity initiatives who has the training, authority and support needed to influence key areas of policy development, decision-making, budget and management.
7. The school uses inclusive language in all written, electronic and oral communication.
8. The school adopts a nondiscrimination statement applicable to the administration of all of its programs and policies, that fully complies with and surpasses local, state and federal law.

3

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank Chris Fortunato, Head of School, and his team for making our visit possible, and for providing the necessary resources to complete our work. We also extend our gratitude to Matthew Chiden and Sarah Miller, for their immeasurable assistance and support. We are very appreciative of Thayer Academy’s students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni and board members, who took time to meet with us and share their observations. The entire Thayer Academy community showed that they are genuinely interested in Thayer Academy’s success, future and the well-being of all members of the community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Keith Hinderlie, of Hinderlie and Associates, conducted a comprehensive climate assessment of the Thayer Academy October 23-27, 2023. The week included: (1) on campus and Zoom meetings with key faculty and staff, administration, parents and trustees, (2) a review of key demographic data, policies, procedures and documents and (3) an anonymous online survey sent to employees, trustees, parents and Upper School students. Overall, we were impressed by the evident sense of community, caring and optimism toward greater inclusiveness and belonging at Thayer Academy.

MAJOR THEMES

In our Assessments, Hinderlie & Associates examines three major dimensions of school operations, with three themes that are discussed throughout each dimension.

DIMENSIONS OF ASSESSMENT

- Systems & Structure
- Policies, Programs & People
- Impacts & Outcomes

MAJOR THEMES

- Diversity & Bias
- Initiatives & Support
- Curricula & Training

Thayer Academy is looking to build a strong DEIJ foundation, and the school is poised for leadership in inclusive and multicultural practice. It is critical that Thayer Academy maintain the momentum, rather than slide toward complacency and a resurgence of the status quo. Our site visit highlighted Thayer's resource-rich campus, with a range of impressive facilities that allow the school to offer a variety of learning experiences and opportunities.

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Professionals, model programs and events that can support the school's efforts in these areas are available in Appendix B, an annotated resource list. Thayer Academy can build on current successes by developing:

INFRASTRUCTURE

- A restructured Office of Equity and Inclusion
- Protocols for responding to bias incidents
- Recruitment and retention plans for diverse faculty, staff and students

EDUCATION

- DEIJ competency standards
- Streamlined classroom resources and coaching
- Intensive and frequent DEIJ training for all community members

COMMUNICATION

- Comprehensive, clear and consistent DEIJ communication strategies
- Seamless integration of all internal and external communications
- Responses to voices expressing DEIJ fatigue

EVALUATION

- A DEIJ Leadership Progress Dashboard
- Periodic community DEIJ self-evaluations, based on established standards
- A thorough multicultural curriculum audit/review/alignment across divisions