

OAK HILL ACADEMY

COMMITMENT STATEMENT ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Oak Hill Academy

Commitment Statement on Cultural Diversity

We believe in a world that is inclusive in approach and where equal opportunities exist for all. Our school is a place where all members create and feel a sense of belonging.

We champion our community members' individual and organizational diversity and inclusion efforts to advance all facets of our children's education. For the past few school years, Oak Hill Academy has over 40% non-white students as compared to 37% for all NJAIS.

Oak Hill Academy is committed to exposing students to the cultural diversity in the world around us. Students learn to understand and appreciate the differences of varied cultures. OHA is fortunate to have a population that comes from many different backgrounds and is eager to celebrate each. Teachers highlight topics of diversity, weaving them into the curriculum, and provide evidence and measurement of the students' learning of these topics.

A highlight of Oak Hill's curriculum includes a two-year program in fifth and sixth grades entitled "Global Studies" followed by a half year of World History and one and a half years of American History. Our own Heritage Day, observed every year in fourth grade, involves a tradition of learning about each family's traditions and culture, while sharing a banquet of varied foods as a culminating experience. However, the rich diversity and belonging within the school is celebrated throughout all years at Oak Hill Academy.

Across the curriculum, from Pre-K to the 8th grade, projects, literature, celebrations, and guest speakers enhance learning about our diverse backgrounds. Novels are studied in order to examine the perspective of authors from various ethnic and social groups. The literature offered allows storytelling, which becomes a powerful conduit for studying the past, examining the present, and constructing the future. The school has an extensive program that studies and performs culturally diverse pieces in music, art, and drama. These include performances from Native American lore as well as Spanish speaking countries, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. In the early years from PreK-4, classes celebrate heritage, spirit, and customs using literature, activities, and presentations.

In 2017, the school used the protocol from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools for its accreditation with the topic “Diversity Across the Curriculum.” The problem statement read, “Students who are aware and sensitive to cultural difference and who have a greater acceptance and understanding of the rapidly changing world would demonstrate respect and appreciation for each other’s differences and become cooperative members of society.”

The school implements initiatives that support diversity and inclusion in all of its collective endeavors as well as creating a supportive learning environment that encompasses respectful communication of diverse perspectives, experiences, and realities.