

*Amherst Public Schools  
Pelham Elementary School  
Amherst-Pelham Regional School District*

**Social Justice Commitment**

**Glossary**

**SOCIAL JUSTICE**

- ◆ The concept of a society in which justice is achieved in every aspect of society, rather than merely the administration of law. It is generally thought of as a society which affords individuals and groups fair treatment and a just share of the benefits of society. (Different proponents of social justice have developed different interpretations of what constitutes *fair treatment* and a *just share*.) It can also refer to the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within a society.

**ABLEISM**

- ◆ A system of advantage based on physical or mental characteristics

**AGEISM**

- ◆ A system of advantage on age

**ALANA**

- ◆ African, Latina/o, Asian, Native American

**ANTI-SEMITISM**

- ◆ A system of advantage which targets people of Jewish decent and based on thefear, dislike or hatred of Jews, people of Jewish descent or Judaism.

## **ACCULTURATION**

- ◆ A process through which a cultural group takes on parts of a different culture, but does not give up its own way of life.

## **ASSIMILATION**

- ◆ The process through which one cultural group adapts to the attitudes, belief systems and ways of life of another culture. Degrees of assimilation range widely. In some cases a group will, over time, lose its cultural distinctiveness and adopt the attitudes, belief systems and ways of life of a dominant culture. In other cases a cultural group will become part of a new culture, while maintaining important aspects of its tradition and cultural distinctiveness.

## **BIAS**

- ◆ A conscious or unconscious preference that inhibits a person's capacity for impartial judgment. An unfair act or policy which results from a prejudicial mindset.

## **BIGOTRY**

- ◆ Intolerant prejudice which glorifies one's own group but denigrates members of other groups.

## **CLASSISM**

- ◆ A system of advantage based on socioeconomic class.

## **COMMUNITY**

- ◆ A group of people whose members are connected to one another through a common identity, set of experiences or shared purpose.

## **COLLUSION**

- ◆ When people act, consciously or unconsciously, to perpetuate oppression or to prevent others from working to eliminate oppression.

## **CULTURE**

- ◆ A description given to a group of people who share a common experience or history. They may also share common language, religion, tradition, values, etc. The learned behaviors, customs and way of life of a group of people.

## **DECULTURALIZATION**

- ◆ A tool of oppression; deculturalization is the process of stripping away the culture of a conquered and/or dominated people. It is done through
  1. Segregation and isolation
  2. Forced change of language
  3. Imposition of a dominant culture through the curriculum
  4. Imposition of dominant culture through textbooks
  5. Denial of expression of dominated group's culture
  6. Use of teachers from dominating group

## **DISCRIMINATION**

- ◆ Differential treatment that favors one individual, group, or object over another. The source of discrimination is prejudice.

## **DIVERSITY**

- ◆ The numerous variants of identity, skill, appearance, abilities, characteristics and other characteristics of any group. The level of difference represented within any group.

## **DOMINANT GROUP**

- ◆ Set the parameters within which subordinates operate.
- ◆ Hold the power and authority in society...(to determine) the structure of society.
- ◆ Seen as the norm for society

## **ETHNIC GROUP**

- ◆ A group of people who share a common culture, language, history and geographic origin.

## **HETEROSEXISM**

- ◆ A system of advantage based on sexual orientation.

## **HOMOPHOBIA**

- ◆ The fear, dislike or hatred of gay men, lesbians and bisexuals. Also, the fear of being labeled by association with gay men, lesbians, bisexuals or transgendered people

## **INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION**

- ◆ The thoughts and feelings created in a targeted person who starts to believe and then internalize the prevailing negative stereotypes about his or her own group. Internalized oppression involves confusion, self-doubt, and feelings of low-esteem.

## **MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION**

- ◆ A reform movement designed to change the total educational environment so that students from diverse racial and ethnic groups, both gender groups, exceptional students, and student from each social-class groups will experience equal educational opportunities in schools, colleges, and universities. A major assumption of multicultural education is that some students, because of their particular racial, ethnic, gender, and cultural characteristics, have a better chance to succeed in educational institutions as they are currently structured than do students who belong to other groups or who have different cultural and gender characteristics

## **OPPRESSION**

- ◆ The systematic subjugation of a social group by another social group with access to social power.  
OPPRESSION = POWER + PREJUDICE.

## **PEOPLE OF COLOR (ALSO TARGET GROUP)**

- ◆ Those groups in the U.S. that are and have been historically targeted by racism. Non-white is inappropriate because it defines people by what they are not. Minorities is inappropriate because it refers to groups that represent the majority of the world's population.

## **POWER**

- ◆ By power, we mean social power which provides access to resources and access to decision makers to get what you want done as well as the ability to influence others and to set standards for appropriate behavior which reflect the norms and values of the group in power. Oppression operates at three levels: individual, institutional, and cultural. Often all three levels are functioning at the same time.

## **PREJUDICE**

- ◆ An attitude, opinion or feeling which is based on limited information, often stereotypes. Prejudice is usually, but not always, negative; positive and negative prejudices alike are damaging because they deny the individuality of the person. No one is free of prejudice.

## **PRIVILEGES**

- ◆ Advantages, rewards or benefits given to those in the dominant group (whites, males, Christians, heterosexuals, etc.) without their asking for them. Privileges are bestowed unintentionally, unconsciously and automatically. Often these privileges are invisible to the receiver.

## **RACE**

- ◆ A social construction

## **RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT**

- ◆ The process of defining for oneself the personal significance and social meaning of belonging to a particular group.

## **RACISM**

- ◆ A system of advantage based on race.
- ◆ Involves cultural messages and institutional policies and practices as well as beliefs and actions of individuals
- ◆ In the U.S. there is clear advantage to whites and disadvantage to People of Color as noted in social indicators.

## **STEREOTYPE**

- ◆ An untruth, oversimplification, or generalization about the traits and behaviors of an entire people. Stereotypes, either positive or negative, are applied to each member of the group, without regard to each individual's personal characteristics.

WORK IN PROGRESS