



Horizons National Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Framework¹

Horizons National represents a network of affiliates across the country who have a unified mission to advance educational equity so that all children receive the supports they need to thrive. Horizons National and the Horizons Network operate within a dynamic and diverse ecosystem providing high-quality, student-centered out-of-school learning. Horizons National delivers services and resources for the Network, creating a community of educators, staff, and volunteer leaders committed to educational equity.

We Affirm That:

- Horizons students and their families represent diversity and multiculturalism broadly. Horizons communities, predominantly identify as People of Color and are unique. Each community and family bring their own set of assets and strengths to the Horizons Network.
- The communities we serve are typically those who have been historically subject to social and economic discriminatory practices and the resulting disparities, which created an imbalance of resources, including access to out-of-school learning.
- Opportunity is not equal. The barriers created by systems and structures of power, institutionalized privilege, and racism mean educational inequity is experienced disproportionately in communities of color.
- The education gaps that occur when learning opportunities are not equally available have widened at an alarming rate and constitute a national crisis in education. Conversely, when these opportunities are available, additional supports, like summer and afterschool programs, accelerate learning and learning recovery.

We Will:

- Acknowledge and strive to address the impact of disproportionate adverse lived experiences that result from the intersectionality of race, culture, ethnicity, economic disparities, social determinants, and institutional racism.
- Advance educational equity through a partnership with diverse stakeholders to support truthful, bold, and intentional whole-child program models that diminish unconscious bias and elevate a culture of inclusion and belonging for all.
- Build on our progress and continually work to become the anti-racist organization we envision by prioritizing and incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout our structures, systems, and practices.
- Speak out and advocate against policies and actions that negatively impact the opportunities and well-being of students and their communities. As allies, we will partner with local, state, and national efforts to address educational inequities.



APPENDIX A: Definitions

“Definitions anchor us in principles. This is not a light point: If we don’t do the basic work of defining the kind of people, we want to be in language that is stable and consistent, we can’t work toward stable, consistent goals. Some of my most consequential steps toward being an antiracist have been the moments when I arrived at basic definitions.” – Ibram X. Kendi, How to Be an Antiracist

- **Access/Accessibility** is the goal of institutions to 1) give equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience; 2) create the necessary conditions so that individuals and organizations desiring to, who are eligible to, use services, facilities, programs, and employment opportunities; and 3) make space for the characteristics that each person brings. To achieve access/accessibility requires additional services, or the removal of any actual or potential barriers preventing equitable participation.
- **Ally** is a person of one social identity group who stands up in support of members of another group, typically a member of dominant identity advocating and supporting a socially marginalized group.
- **Allyship** is not self-defined—it must be recognized by the people we seek to ally ourselves with. Allyship is the process of where someone with privilege and power seeks to learn about the experiences of marginalized groups of people, develops empathy for the group of people, and identifies ways to extend their own privilege to the marginalized group (transferring the benefits of one’s privilege to those who lack it). Allyship is not an identity—it is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people.
- **Antiracism** is a process of actively identifying and opposing racism. The goal of antiracism is to challenge racism and actively change the policies, behaviors, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions. Antiracism is rooted in action. It is about taking steps to eliminate racism at the individual, institutional, and structural levels.
- **Belonging** is feeling like you are an important member of a group connected to a social, spatial, cultural, professional, or other type of group or a community. Belongingness is the human emotional need to be an accepted member of a group while feeling able to present yourself authentically.
- **Culture** encompasses the social behavior, institutions, and norms found in communities, groups, and any form of societal structures and practices. It includes aspects of knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups.
- **Diversity** describes the myriad ways in which people differ such as race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, religion, economic class, education, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, mental and physical ability, and learning styles.
- **Educational Equity** is when each student receives what they need to develop their full academic and social potential. This means that no matter what a student’s background, language, race, economic profile, gender, learning capability, disability, or family history, each student can get the support and resources they need to achieve their educational goals.



- **Equity** is the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement, while simultaneously striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations, and that fairness regarding these imbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.
- **Inclusion** is the ability of the organization to ensure that all social identities are fully integrated into the cultural dynamics, leadership, and decision-making structures. It is the act of creating involvement, environments, and empowerment in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to participate fully. An inclusive and welcoming climate with equal access to opportunities and resources embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people.
- **Intersectionality** means that all of us have multiple identities that intersect, such as gender, race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ability, work styles, political views, etc. Our intersectional identities sometimes allow us to experience privilege, while at other times, they expose us to endure oppression. At all times, we should avoid reducing ourselves or others to any one aspect of our identities. We are a combination of our intersecting identities, which makes each of us authentically original rather than monoliths.
- **Institutional Racism** refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create disadvantages for people from groups typically classified as people of color and who have been historically and persistently marginalized. These practices are further compounded through intersectional demographics of race combined with women, immigrants, or other groups.
- **Racism** is a system of advantage based on race. The belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race. The concept of racism is widely thought of as simply personal prejudice, but in fact, it is a complex system of racial hierarchies and inequities. At the micro level of racism, or individual level, are internalized and interpersonal racism. At the macro level of racism, we look beyond the individuals to the broader dynamics, including institutional and systemic/structural racism.
- **Thriving** and robust equity is a dynamic process that goes beyond well-being to include individual and collective growth in grounding and agency. Robust equity is the intentional counter to inequality, institutionalized privilege and prejudice, and systemic deficits, and is the intentional promotion of thriving across multiple domains for those who experience inequity and injustice.
- **Whole Child** is a teaching philosophy that prioritizes all the developmental and personal needs of students in addition to their academic achievements.

For a brief background on the development and context of our Equity Framework, you can view [this video](#).