



Office of Diversity Management

Results, Accomplishments, & Successes

2007—2009

Diversity and Professional Development

One of the greatest accomplishments of the Office of Diversity Management was professional development activities for administrators, teachers, and other staff. Over 95% of all principals at the elementary, middle and high school level received Diversity Effectiveness Training about the harmful effects of cultural stereotypes, lowered academic expectations, and systemic barriers that prevent students from reaching their full academic potential. The diversity training at schools is site specific and

tailored to identify the diversity challenges through the use of academic data, discipline data, and the anecdotal observations of minority and majority teachers. Schools such as Garner Elementary, Jewett School of the Arts, and Doris Sanders benefitted tremendously from this type of training. The Diversity Effectiveness Training was also extended to new teachers in the Teacher Induction Program (TIPS), as well as various district departments such as Human Resources, Business Services, Information/



Schools benefit tremendously from Diversity Effectiveness Training.

Technology, Transportation and Facilities.

Parent and Student Engagement

Empowering Parents

The Polk County School District Parent Engagement Program emphasizes parent engagement as an empowering form of parental involvement. This initiative is designed to impact student achievement and student discipline by surrounding young people with sensitive, caring adults who are committed to a better academic future for all children. Our focus is on providing effective parenting skills training, extending parent and community involvement in support of student learning, and working directly with students toward specific goals that impact attendance, academic achievement and behavior. Our mission is

to:

- Strengthen Home-to-School Partnerships
- Impact Student Achievement
- Increase Community and Parent Involvement in Support of Student Learning

Implementing Success

Successful implementation of the Program is currently being offered at the following Title I schools:

- Gibbons Street Elem.
- Jesse Keen Elem.
- Sandhill Elem.
- McLaughlin Middle

- Westwood Middle

Each of these schools is assigned a Parent Outreach Facilitator. Facilitators are performance-based and accountable field representatives for the District whose jobs are to: build greater parental support for schools and teachers, establish goals to promote learning gains for students, assist parents with understanding student academic requirements, and be an overall cheerleader for parent re-engagement in their child's education.

Refer to page 4 of this newsletter for a graph that shows the involvement of our parents in the Parent Engagement Program.

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The Don'ts.....

- Stereotype or judge
 - Ridicule others...it could come back on you
 - Assume that members of generations or other groups think and act the same
 - Entertain the belief that YOUR WAY is the best and only way....because sometimes there really is another way
 - Presume that you and everything about you is more than everyone else
 - Think that it is ok to succeed at another's expense
- ASK IF YOU DON'T KNOW.....

100 New Mentors



Research in mentoring suggests that students with mentors have less discipline referrals and should increase in school attendance.

The office of Diversity Management is especially proud of our efforts to recruit new mentors for students struggling with academics, behavioral and lifestyle issues. During the 07-08 school year, we joined forces with the Department of Community Relations and the Winter Haven Chamber of Commerce to collaborate on a recruiting initia-

tive that succeeded in placing 100 new mentors into our schools. The mentors made a commitment to see a student once a week in an effort to improve positive behavior, set goals, and help students succeed in school. Research in mentoring suggests that students with mentors have 33% less discipline referrals, and 76% to 95% increase in

attendance. The recruitment was successful because people from all walks of life and professions responded to the call, especially minority urban professionals, one of our target groups for the recruitment. In our Parent Engagement schools, we also recruited mentors from among the staff, parents, and community.



Chinese Proverb:

If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody.

Community Responsiveness

Polk County Public schools and the community have seen a dramatic change in the Hispanic/Latino population. Out of nearly 92,000 students, 20,529 are Hispanic students compared to 21,518 who are African-American students. Therefore, any major incident in the community involving students will eventually have an impact on schools-community relations. One such major incident did take place during the 07-08 school year in a middle school community involving the death of a Hispanic student and the outcry of many Hispanic parents. The incident itself did not take place on school grounds, but parents were concerned about the possibility of potential incidents among students. The

Office of Diversity Management with guidance from the Superintendent's School Safety Services took a leadership role in facilitating student discussions, responding to frequent parent concerns, working with the Lakeland Police Department, and fielding inquiries from government agencies about the atmosphere at the school. As a result, many rumors were addressed, parents felt empowered to voice their concerns, and students worked to minimize conflict. A liaison to Hispanic parents was placed at the school permanently, an extra school resource officer was temporarily assigned to the campus, a multicultural club was started among the students, and a new conflict resolu-

tion program for students is being implemented by the Diversity Management Office during the 08-09 school year. The leadership shown by the Office of Diversity Management during the middle school incident is only one example of many concerns and disputes the Office manages throughout the year to ensure the district is responsive to staff and our many stakeholders.



As a result of our involvement, rumors were addressed and parents felt empowered to voice their concerns, and students worked to minimize conflicts.



Researchers say that parental involvement results in:

- Higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates
- Better school attendance
- Increased motivation, better self-esteem
- Lower rates of suspension
- Decreased use of drugs and alcohol
- Fewer instances of violent behavior

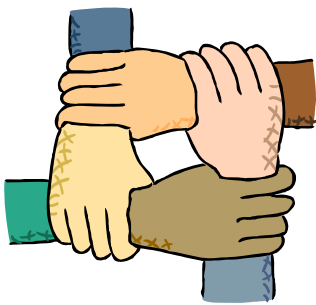
Superintendent's Diversity Breakfast

In April, 2008, 400 citizens from all walks of life and diverse cultural backgrounds attended the Superintendent's Annual Diversity Breakfast which was held at First Presbyterian Church in Lakeland. The breakfast reinforced the core values of teamwork, cooperation, collaboration and inclusion. The community was treated to greetings from the Polk Board of County Commissioners, Polk County School Board and the University of South Florida. Hundreds of professionals, business, educational, and community leaders had the opportunity to hear firsthand the diversity accomplishments of the District from Dr. Gail McKinzie, Superintendent of Polk County Schools.

She used the occasion to define the concept of diversity as encompassing acceptance, respect, and the understanding that each individual is unique.

She also reminded the audience that diversity includes the dimensions of: race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio economic status, age, physical disabilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. She encouraged the audience to move beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within our District.

Dr. McKinzie also thanked the members of the District Diversity Council, a highly diverse group of citizens and community leaders who planned and hosted the breakfast. Organizing the Diversity Council and the successful Diversity Breakfast are examples of accomplishments for the Office of Diversity Management.



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Students enrolled in the Parent Engagement Program are benefitting from the Program. Their academic records continue to show great growth.

Demographic Characteristics of Parent Engagement Program-enrolled Students

RACE		GENDER		Economically Disadvantaged
Asian	<1%	Female	37.6%	97%
Black	33%	Male	62.4%	
Hispanic	25%			
Indian	<1%			
Multi-Racial	3%			
White	37%			

Polk County Public Schools

Programs Initiated to Close the Achievement Gap, Improve Drop Out Prevention and Improve Relations

With the diverse student body that Polk County has, it was necessary to initiate programs that would assist in closing the achievement gap between white students and minorities students. The following are a few programs that proved to be very successful:

- Career Academies
- Learning-Focused Solutions
- Nova-Net Credit Recovery
- Spell Read for Struggling Readers

Steps to improve Drop-out rates among minorities (especially African American male students):

- College and Career Counselors
- Dual Enrollment
- Travis and Ridge Courses taught on high school campuses

Sensitivity training programs provided to improve the relationship between staff members, students and parents

were:

- Diversity Effectiveness Training

for District Psychologists, Social Workers and ESE Departments, Superintendent's Cabinet, Principals, Facilities Department, Finance Department, and at various school sites across the District.

The Office of Diversity Management offers sensitivity trainings throughout the District at the request of schools/ departments.



Polk County is improving dropout prevention by initiating programs to Close the Achievement Gap, and Improving Relations with Sensitivity Training.

10 Ways to Respect and Appreciate our Common Heritage

1. Develop an understanding of cultures other than your own.
2. Notice people's similarities, not their differences.
3. Respect the opinions and rights of everyone.
4. Understand how stereotypes can be harmful.
5. Treat others the way you would like to be treated.
6. Try to put yourself in another's shoes to understand his or her viewpoint.
7. Don't put others down because of their differences.
8. Include everyone in your activities.
9. Remember everyone is special and has unique qualities.
10. Make a difference by keeping an open mind and heart.



“Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common. Celebrate it every day.”
Maya Angelou

Concept of Diversity



Diversity competence is knowing that the bonds between us and the issues that affect us must be stronger than the differences that divide us.

- Diversity must be a part of an institution's core values and strategic plan.
- Diversity is not about counting people....it is about making people count.
- Diversity is understanding that good ideas come in all colors, races, gender, and ethnicities.
- Diversity competence is knowing that the bonds between us and the issues that affect us must be stronger than the differences that divide us.
- Diversity maturity is the ability to communicate and negotiate various cultural and socio-economic terrains.
- Diversity is a core set of values that emphasize inclusion, empathy, teamwork, openness, and a genuine respect for differences.
- Diversity is leadership driven as opposed to externally driven by laws, sanctions, and decrees.
- Diversity deliberately creates an environment and climate of hope, belonging, acceptance, tolerance, and consensus.
- Diversity is all the ways we are similar and different.
- The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or ideologies.

Diversity Definitions

Inclusion—The process by which efforts are made to ensure that everyone regardless of color or circumstance can achieve their true potential.



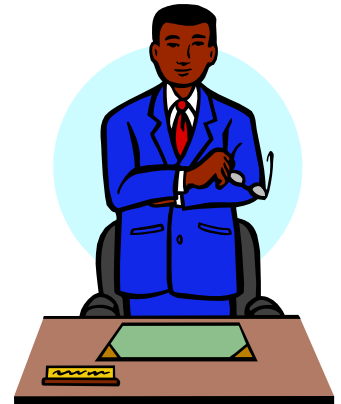
Culture—Culture is a shared way of life that binds people together by patterns and customs and makes them an identifiable group.

1. Diversity—Those unique human characteristics that make us different as well as the many universal qualities that make us the same.
2. Inclusion—The process by which efforts are made to ensure that everyone regardless of color or circumstances can achieve their true potential.
3. Cultural Competence—The ability to negotiate diverse social contexts with understanding, respect and skill.
4. Race—Race is a social historical concept dependent on society's perceptions that differences exist and are important.
5. Ethnic Group—A group that shares a common history, language, economic life and culture that has developed over time. A sense of peoplehood is one of the most important characteristics of an ethnic group. An ethnic group also shares economic and political interests. Cultural characteristics, rather than biological traits, are the essential attributes of an ethnic group.
6. Nationality—The status of belonging to a particular nation by birth or naturalization.
7. Culture—Culture is a shared way of life that binds people together by patterns and customs and makes them an identifiable group.
8. Cultural Heritage—Cultural heritage is the identity we received from the culture that we have internalized. This self-identity may be different from surface appearance of physical characteristics.
9. Assimilation—Cultural Assimilation is the process whereby a minority group gradually adopts the customs and attitudes of the prevailing culture.
10. Stereotype—Ideas held about members of particular groups, based primarily on membership in that group. They can be positive or negative prejudicial, and may be used to justify certain discriminatory behaviors. Some people consider all stereotypes to be negative. Stereotypes are rarely completely accurate, based on some kernel of truth, or completely fabricated. Stereotypes are seen by many as undesirable beliefs imposed to justify the acts of discrimination and oppression.
11. Bias—A bias is a prejudice in a general or specific sense, usually in the sense for having a preference to one particular point of view or ideological perspective.
12. Disability—the physical or mental characteristics of an individual that prevent or limit him or her from performing specific tasks.
13. Prejudice—A set of rigid and unfavorable attitudes toward a particular individual or group that is formed without consideration of facts. Prejudice is a set of attitudes that often leads to discrimination, the differential treatment of particular individuals and groups.

Ethnic Administrators in Polk County During 2007-08

Polk County Public schools has shown significant growth in placing minorities in leadership roles throughout the District and its schools. The necessity to show all children role models in these roles is very important. We are making every effort to strategically identify recruitment venues that will assist us in attracting, recruiting and retaining administrators and teachers who reflect the diversity of our student body. Polk County Schools received the Top 100 Employers Award from The Black Collegian magazine for the Class of 2008. The Collegiate Employment Research Institute is located within Michigan State University.

Ethnicity	District Office Admin.	School Principal	Assistant Principal
Black	16	20	40
Hispanic	2	2	3
Others	1		



It is necessary to show children role models of every ethnicity in leadership roles.

Cultural Proficiency—Patricia Guerra, Asst. Professor in the Dept. of Edu. and Community Leadership, Texas State Univ.—San Marcos and Co-founder of Transforming Schools for a Multicultural Society

ASSESSMENT IS THE FIRST STEP TO CREATING A SCHOOL THAT EDUCATES EVERYBODY

Becoming culturally proficient is no longer a job requirement only for teachers in inner-city schools. Rural, urban, and suburban communities once predominantly populated by white middle-class families are becoming increasingly diverse. At the same time, teaching faculties at these schools remain largely white. As a result, many teachers, even those with years of experience, find themselves working in an unfamiliar classroom environment, and many schools with long histories of academic success have come under the watchful eye of their states for failing to adequately educate students from culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse backgrounds. Understandably, school leaders are looking to district staff developers to help create culturally proficient teachers who can successfully

educate all children, not just some.

WHAT IS CULTURAL PROFICIENCY?

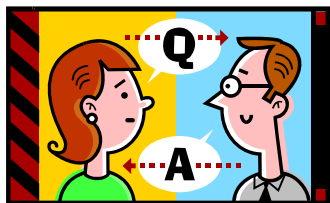
Cultural proficiency is defined as “the policies and practices of an organization or the values and behaviors of an individual that enable the agency or person to interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment” (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 1999). The diverse composition of today’s classrooms demands that schools and educators be culturally proficient. Yet few of them are. When schools are culturally proficient, they have high levels of achievement for all students, minimal failures or dropouts, equitable enrollment in gifted and advanced placement classes, few and more valid referrals to special education, fewer discipline problems, and teachers who feel empowered. Further, because diversity in a culturally proficient school is viewed as a resource and not

as a barrier to teaching, learning, and interacting, students and families are validated for what they bring. They feel welcomed and valued, resulting in greater parent and community involvement. Additionally, culturally proficient teachers build on students’ “funds of knowledge” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) and make accommodations in their practice and interactions to better serve the thinking, learning, communication, and relational styles of diverse students and families. Finally, culturally proficient schools continuously assess systems, policies, and procedures to determine if they favor some groups over others. If so, they are transformed and made responsive.



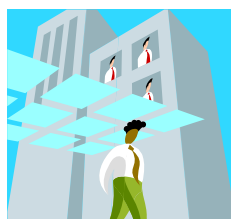
The diverse composition of today’s classrooms demands that schools and educators be culturally proficient.

DIVERSITY FACTIODES



Some interesting facts on Diversity.

“We should all know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.”
 Maya Angelou



Discrimination or harassment threaten the safety, security, and well-being of everyone who has an interest in our schools.

- In Polk County Public Schools there are 63 languages spoken, representing 51 countries.
- According to the Lakeland Ledger, 1.2% of Polk County residents hold a Doctorate degree.
- 71% of worldwide Internet users are outside of North America. 75% of the world are non-whites, and barriers to communication have dropped because of the Internet.
- The U.S. can have an \$805 billion increase in personal income if we close the achievement gap—or 3.95 billion decrease if nothing changes.
- The State of Florida graduation rate during the 06-07 school year was White—81%, Black—58.7%, Hispanic—66%
- In Florida, minority students in the 4th grade are better readers than 7 years ago.
- 90/90/90 Schools are high achieving schools that are 90% minority, 90% free or reduced lunch, and 90% at or above grade level.
- Hispanic males are 2.5% of school Principals/ Administrators and black males are 4.9% in Polk County Schools.
- Only 10% of the Haitian population speaks French.
- Florida Statute 1003.42 mandated that multicultural education be incorporated into the curriculum.
- Over 65% of elementary school students in Polk County meet the criteria for free or reduced lunch.
- The aftermath of Katrina in New Orleans reintroduced many Americans to the reality of poverty all around us.

Discrimination and Harassment Policy—excerpt from Polk County Public Schools Equity Handbook 2008-10

Stated Policy—The School Board of Polk County, Florida, forbids and affirmatively commits to preventing discrimination or harassment against any person, including employee, applicant for employment or student, on the basis of sex, race, national origin, language spoken, color, marital status, homelessness, or disability or other basis prohibited by law. All persons involved in any activity of the School Board have the right to an environment free from discrimination and harassment. The Board will not tolerate sexual, racial, disability harassment activity by any of its employees or students, or non-employee volunteers who work under the control of school authorities.

Rationale—Incidents of impermissible discrimination or harassment either tolerated or committed by School Board employees, students or anyone participating in a School Board activity threatens the safety, security and well-being of not only those against whom such actions are direct, but everyone who has an interest in our schools. Such actions create the wholly unacceptable impression that our school system neither accepts nor requires compliance with the concepts of equal opportunity and treatment under the law. For these reasons, the School Board has adopted this policy as its strident commitment to requiring and ensuring that all School Board activities will take place without harassment or impermissible discrimination being directed against any person.

Application—In recognition of the emphasis placed on this policy by the School Board, any substantiated violation of this policy will be deemed a serious violation and shall be addressed accordingly. All administrators, managers and supervisors are expected and required to ensure that this policy is fully implemented and vigorously enforced.

Any person who alleges harassment or discrimination by any staff member may use the Educational Equity Complaint Procedure or may complain directly to the building Principal or Equity and Compliance Officer. If the direct administrator or supervisor is the offending person, the report should be made to the next higher level of administration or supervision or the Equity and Compliance Officer.

- Equity Handbook: English, Spanish, Haitian-Creole
 - Equity Complaint Form
- Complaints filed should be forwarded to:

Patricia Hunter, Equity & Compliance, HR, Polk County Public Schools, P. O. Box 391 Bartow, FL 33831

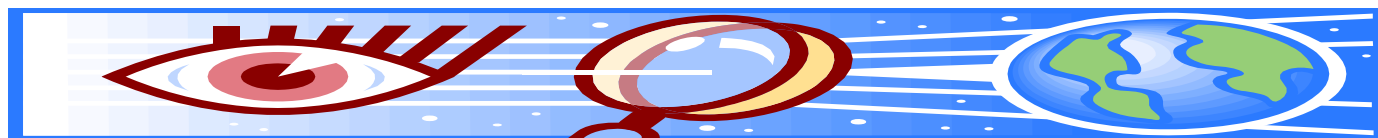
7 Things Everyone Should Know About Race

Copyright © California Newsreel, 2003 Race - The Power of an Illusion

Our eyes tell us that people look different. No one has trouble distinguishing a Czech from a Chinese, but what do those differences mean? Are they biological? Has race always been with us? How does race affect people today? There's less—and more—to race than meets the eye:

- Race is a modern idea. Ancient societies, like the Greeks, did not divide people according to physical distinctions, but according to religion, status, class, even language. The English language didn't even have the word "race" until it turns up in 1508 in a poem by William Dunbar referring to a line of kings.
- Race has no genetic basis. Not one characteristic, trait or even gene distinguishes all the members of one so-called race from all the members of another so-called race.
- Human subspecies don't exist. Unlike many animals, modern humans simply haven't been around long enough or isolated enough to evolve into separate subspecies or races. Despite surface appearances, we are one of the most similar of all species.
- Skin color really is only skin deep. Most traits are inherited independently from one another. The genes influencing skin color have nothing to do with the genes influencing hair from, eye shape, blood type, musical talent, athletic ability or forms of intelligence. Knowing someone's skin color doesn't necessarily tell you anything else about him or her.
- Most variation is within, not between, "races." Of the small amount of total human variation, 85% exists within any local population, be they Italians, Kurds, Koreans or Cherokees. About 94% can be found within any continent. That means two random Koreans may be as genetically different as a Korean and an Italian.
- Race isn't biological, but racism is still real. Race is a powerful social idea that gives people different access to opportunities and resources. Our government and social institutions have created advantages that disproportionately channel wealth, power, and resources to white people. This affects everyone, whether we are aware of it or not.
- Colorblindness will not end racism. Pretending race doesn't exist is not the same as creating equality. Race is more than stereotypes and individual prejudice. To combat racism, we need to identify and remedy social policies and institutional practices that advantage some groups at the expense of others.

Our eyes tells us that people look different. Despite surface appearances, we are one of the most similar of all species. Skin color is really only skin deep. There's less—and more—to race than meets the eye.



State of Florida Multicultural Mandate—Florida Statute 1003.42

The Florida Legislature passed FLORIDA STATUTE 1003.42 requiring public schools to teach "the history of the Holocaust (1933-1945) in a manner that leads to an investigation of human behavior, an understanding of the ramification of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping and an examination of what it means to be a responsible and respectful person, for the

purposes of encouraging tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society and for nurturing and protecting democratic values and institutions." In the spring of 1994, the Florida Legislature amended the Statute requiring instruction in Florida's public schools to include the history of African Americans, including "the history of African peoples, the political conflicts that led

to the development of slavery, the passage to America, the enslavement experience, abolition, and the contributions of African Americans to society."

In 1998, the Statute was further amended to include "the study of Hispanic and Women's contributions to the United States."



Straight Talk With Students—Donald Dowridge, Motivational Speaker.



The two men spoke with the group about school life, home life, street life and the struggles they encounter in trying to avoid the pitfalls of hopelessness and failure.

In every school district and in most schools, administration can identify the students with troubled pasts and harder attitudes towards rules and authority figures. Many of these students are repeatedly suspended for behavior. They become alienated from school, fall behind in class work, and eventually drop out of school.

Most schools have a core group of students who generally fit this description, and some adults have given up on trying to reach these students. The Office of Diver-

sity Management, however, has not given up on these students.

Recently, Otis Anthony, Senior Director of Diversity Management and a motivational speaker, joined forces with Donald Dowridge, a former gang member and current motivational speaker from Tampa, in an effort to reach those core students in seven schools. The two men had down to earth / heart to heart conversations with selected students at Winter Haven High, Kathleen High, Boone Middle, Denison Middle, Lake Alfred Middle, Jewett School of

the Arts, and Mulberry Middle schools. The feedback from students, parents, teachers, and administrators was tremendous. These so-called hard core students were visibly moved by the real talk that covered school life, home life, street life, and the struggles they encounter in trying to avoid the pitfalls of hopelessness and failure. The motivational tour was initiated by the Office of Diversity Management.



The district continues to aggressively recruit and identify strategies to attract Hispanic and African American C. Q, HQ teachers and administrators.

Office of Recruiting—Anissa Wilfalk, Sr. Coordinator of Recruiting/PCSB

One of the primary goals of the Office of Recruiting is to attract, recruit, and retain certified, qualified, and highly qualified K-12 teachers and administrators for PCSB. Over the past three years, the district has hired over 3,000 new teachers. The district continues to aggressively recruit and identify strategies to attract Hispanic and African American C, Q, HQ teachers and admin-

istrators. Some of the strategies include, advertising and marketing in a variety of online and paper publications that target minority people groups, and participation in several HBCU career/education fairs and information sessions.

The Office of Recruiting continues to develop strategies that will provide the district with a competitive edge. The district's Teachers You Have

Options Program is a collaborative program between the district, PEF, and community business partners. The program provides discounts on services and products to teachers and /or all staff. In addition, new teachers were eligible to receive up to \$6,000 in bonuses through the district's 2008-09 New Teacher Bonus Program.

Making Learning Exciting and Relevant—Dr. Chance Lewis, Ph.D—consultant

On Friday, January 9, 2009 at Bartow Sr. High School Auditorium the Assistant Principals of the district were treated to an eye-opening presentation by Dr. Chance Lewis, Ph.D, an educational consultant and Associate Professor of Urban Education, at Texas A&M University.

The purpose of the seminar was to assist schools in developing effective teaching strategies for all students who are struggling academi-

cally, including minority students.

Dr. Lewis believes that when you teach to accomplish state standards the lessons must be highly relevant to the students' lives and come from the center of their daily existence outside of school.

In other words, teachers must convert the objectives of the standard into real life lessons in Writing, English, Math, Science and Social

Studies. The lessons may come from popular culture, music, the desire to play sports or drive their first car.

Dr. Chance Lewis asked the audience to seriously think about the following quote: "I don't become what I think I can. I don't become what you think I can. I become what I think you think I can."



"I don't become what I think I can. I don't become what you think I can. I become what I think you think I can."
Dr. Chance Lewis

Diversity Curriculum for Educators

The office of Diversity Management has developed a training curriculum for Polk County Schools that is designed to take teachers on a journey of self-discovery by exploring one's values, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, misconceptions, biases, prejudices, strengths, and weaknesses as it relates to teaching diverse students in public schools in a pluralistic democratic society. It is expected to challenge individual assumptions, resolve personal conflicts, affirm philosophical beliefs, and encourage the development of a multicultural educational framework for creating classroom communities of learners.

First, one must understand the various dimensions of a multicultural society and develop a genuine appreciation and respect for diversity and its strengths. Poet Maya Angelou eloquently stated that "in diversity there is beauty and there is strength." It is the objective of this training to empower each educator to discover the beauty and strength in each student.

America can be described as multicultural because of seven diverse facets: racial and ethnic cultures, class differences, language (English language learners, dialects, accents), exceptionalities, gender, age,

and religion. Our United States of America has the most diverse population of citizens in the world. In fact, it was built by a multicultural citizenry and has established a public education system that must provide access to knowledge and success for every student. To ensure that our diversity is our strength, we must understand that conflict, disagreements, and misunderstandings occur not because of our differences. Rather, it is the judgments we make about others based on stereotypes, bias, and misinformation that divides us.



The training curriculum is designed to take teachers on a journey of self-discovery.

**Results,
Accomplishments,
& Successes**

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10 Ways to Avoid A Discrimination Lawsuit

An excerpt from DiversityInc., Special Issue 2007

1. Send the right message—express company's commitment to diversity.
2. Be clear about performance—communicate expectations.
3. Have a clear process to handle problems—communicate how employees raise and resolve disputes.
4. Always cite the specific performance issue at hand—describe specific negative behaviors.
5. Make sure all nondiscriminatory policies cover as many forms of discrimination as possible—all forms of harassment must be included in policies.
6. Use employee-resource groups to communicate your message and get feedback—have employee-resource groups or forums where issues can be crystallized.
7. Use employee climate surveys for bi-directional communication—survey employees on diversity issues.
8. Train managers and employees to communicate well—properly communicate with supervisors or employees when a coworker offends.
9. Have policies on all forms of electronic communication—have policies on e-mail, instant-messaging, etc. to cover all forms of electronics.
10. Monitor, monitor, monitor—have strong tools in place to monitor, promote, hiring and firing decisions, complete with evaluative strategies.

The Polk County School System offers a diverse variety of programs.

The Polk Preschool Programs are built on the premise that every family, regardless of economic status, needs support. Given that support, every member of the family can grow. Together the family members will gain confidence in themselves as individuals and as a family unit. We understand how important it is to you and your family that you have the information you need to make an informed decision. If you have questions concerning the Preschool Program, contact: Matti G. Friedt, Director for Preschool Programs, 648-3047.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is provided at every school, K-12. The objective of this program is to develop English language proficiency in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The ESOL classroom consists of students

from diverse backgrounds who enter school at various levels of English proficiency. Instruction of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students must also address their social, academic, and cognitive development. Comprehensible instructions must be provided in the grade level of content area classroom through ESOL strategies. If you are interested in obtaining dictionaries, picture dictionaries, word-by-word books, or talk systems, contact the ESOL office. Spanish classes are made available for employees as well. For more info on this and more, contact:

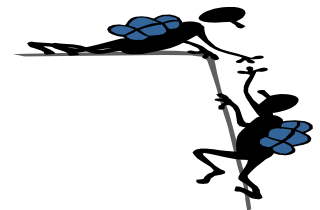
Chane Eplin, Director of ESOL Services, 647-4700.

Workforce Education offers assistance, information and guidance on school academies, programs such as Agriscience, Health Science, Business Tech-

nology, Diversified, Industrial, and Marketing services which include adult education, farm workers, GED, Tech Prep, and Teen Parent, school enterprises in business, childcare, culinary, fashion, and technology. If you have any questions contact John Small, Senior Director, 519-8437.

Supplier Diversity Department promotes the objective of creating equity in inclusion by way of outreach-encouragement, support, and development of small and minority owned businesses. If you are interested in becoming a vendor, please complete a PCSB Vendor Application located on the county's website.

Submit your Vendor Application along with a copy of your small, minority, or women-owned business certification and marketing brochure to:



Purchasing Department
P. O. Box 391
Bartow, FL 33831

If you have any questions on the Supplier Diversity Dept. contact Michael Garner, Supplier Manager, 534-0820.

For more information on programs offered at Polk County Public schools please visit the website: www.polk-fl.net

The mission of Polk County Public Schools is to ensure rigorous, relevant learning experiences that result in high achievement for our students.