



December 15, 2024

Dear Field of Dreams Academy, Family and Community:

At the Field of Dreams Academy, we believe our differences shape and strengthen us. Diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) play a critical role in how we operate and create a culture in which everyone feels heard and represented. Our (DEI) is framed around a commitment and dedication to being an anti-racist organization that advances social justice. Grounded in our mission of preparing students to be successful in the classroom, athletic field, among their peers, and become transformative leaders in their community.

We are grateful to everyone who has engaged so deeply over the past years in the actions we have taken and the progress we have made towards delivering on these commitments. Taking this journey as one Field of Dreams Academy community is important to us, and we look forward to our continued work and progress together.

### ***Academic Culture***

We continue to focus on developing the caring and nurturing environments that enable our students to thrive both personally and academically on their path to college, with strong authentic relationships between teachers and students and effective school systems.

- We continue to provide *more flexibility for how students engage* inside and outside of the classroom, including being thoughtful about what circumstances in learning from home may look like as well.
- The importance of socioemotional well-being has never been greater, and *student emotional learning and development* is key to both wellness and academic success. Our Wealth and Health Creation Group has been researching and analyzing the field of socioemotional learning and will train at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.



- We are excited to pilot a 9-12 socioemotional learning curriculum this upcoming spring (2025), in anticipation of a network-wide rollout next fall.
- Schools continue to invest daily in *community-building*, both in remote and hybrid settings, where activities include team building, core value lessons, discussions about current events, and goal setting for the week.
- Students 9-12 are also participating in three *school DEI sessions*. Our student leadership team will be trained to co-facilitate these sessions alongside staff members from their perspective school DEI team. It is inspiring to witness our young leaders engaging in self-advocacy and empowerment through these sessions.

### ***Professional Development (PD)***

Through ongoing trainings and discussions, we are continuing to focus on how we can be more diverse, equitable, and inclusive at all levels of the organization.

- Every school has a *DEI team* of at least 2-3 staff members who have been trained to facilitate monthly campus-level discussions on issues of equity and inclusion, and we have also created a team of Home Office/Regional DEI PD facilitators as well.
- All Field of Dreams Academy staff participated in a *foundational PD session* designed to create a shared vocabulary and understanding around DEI issues and culturally responsive teaching.
- School staff have continued to be trained on how to form strong learning partnerships with students, with an emphasis on *culturally responsive teaching* that leads to high instructional standards that meet the diverse needs and identities of our students.



## Curriculum

We know how important and powerful it is for our students to see their diversity, culture, and identity reflected in their curriculum. In the upcoming school year, we will focus on stories of people of color in STEM education and careers.

This focus will allow us to leverage our commitment to challenge and position our students to improve their academic performance.

- All our curriculum has been *reviewed* from a DEI lens and our lead lesson planners have all been trained on how to be more culturally responsive when creating future materials.
- We strengthened *feedback loops* to ensure we have effective communication and channels for sharing thoughts and improvements to our curriculum.
- We are working on *prioritizing additional texts* that address issues relevant to and impacting communities of color and that focus on historical events from historically marginalized perspectives.

## Feedback and Ongoing Work

The Field of Dreams Academy is committed to serving our community. We understand the importance of listening to learning and engage with respect and purpose to our community.

- *Promise54*, a leading organization in DEI and talent work, has been helping us assess our DEI practices and will be working to help articulate our vision and roadmap to achieve that vision. To support this work, we have created a Field of Dreams Academy-wide *DEI Working Group* with representation across regions, grade-spans, positions, and identities.



- *All Field of Dreams Academy staff* had an opportunity to share feedback on diversity, equity, and inclusion via an anonymous survey conducted by Promise54, and staff focus groups are being convened to allow for deeper input and insight. Staff will also be asked to share feedback via our usual mid-year staff survey when we return in January. We have also worked to clarify channels for everyone at Field of Dreams Academy on where to go for support with concerns.
- *All families and all HS students* will be asked to share their feedback about their Field of Dreams Academy experience in a survey that will be sent in January. We look forward to the continued input and advice.
- We have also begun to map out a *vision for ongoing alumni engagement* beyond support for college completion and will be engaging our alums later this school year for critical input.

We are proud of the progress we have made, while being cognizant of the continued work to do on our journey to be all inclusive organization. Every day, we are honored and humbled that our students flourish as part of our community, that families choose to entrust us with their children, that our staff choose to join the Field of Dreams Academy, and that our community partners, donors, and volunteers continue to support our work. We know it is because all of you believe in our mission and our schools as we do, and we look forward to continuing to grow even stronger as one Field of Dreams Academy community in 2025 and beyond!

Respectfully,

*Terry Johnson*

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