

Manual for Developing Youth Diversity Councils

in Central Arkansas Schools



**Developed by
The Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission
Education Committee
And
RCDC Staff**

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National Educational Service
1252 Loesch Road
P. O. Box 8
Bloomington, IN 47402
(800) 733-6786 Fax (812) 336-7790

Teaching Tolerance
Order Department
400 Washington Avenue
Montgomery, Alabama 36104
(334) 956-8200 Fax (334) 956-8486

Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission
500 West Markham
Suite 220W
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 244-5483 Fax (501) 244-5467

Introduction

Central Arkansas is becoming an increasingly culturally diverse community, and its schools reflect this growing trend. However, fears and misunderstanding lead to divisions between groups when people feel threatened by those who are "different" from themselves. Too often, these divisions enter our schools and classrooms as well. We cannot hope to build safe, inclusive, cooperative schools without understanding and appreciating diverse culture in our community. As concerned citizens and educators, we need to know how to overcome cultural differences in our efforts to reach our students. If we prepare students to live and work in an increasingly diverse society, then we have a responsibility to address diversity and to give students the skills for understanding, managing, and appreciating that diversity.

The Racial and Cultural Diversity Education Committee members and Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission staff have created this Manual to assist educators in creating Youth Diversity Councils in schools. We believe that an increased understanding of other races, cultures and ethnicities will help every classroom teacher improve the learning environment. Hopefully, improved race relations and intercultural understanding will help our schools achieve the goals of "No Child Left Behind," which entails improving the performance level of all students.

Youth Diversity Councils give students the opportunity to explore various multicultural concepts and strategies and practice communication and conflict resolution skills. In summary, Diversity Councils are based on the ideas that we are not all the same, that differences can create divisions among us, that education can help us find common ground in spite of our differences and that unity is essential to solving problems that affect us all. These beliefs can provide a powerful incentive to implementing diversity education in our school. Diversity Councils allow us to move from thinking about diversity issues to acting on them.

SECTION ONE

Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission

The seeds for the Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission were planted in the fertile ground of the City's FUTURE-Little Rock program in 1974 and continue through the Vision Little Rock process to examine typical city concerns – crime, education, racism. Race relations kept surfacing as an obstacle to achieving goals in each of these task force areas. Race relations were identified as the second most important area needing the city's attention by the FUTURE-Little Rock program and sixth as a priority for city concerns by the Vision Little Rock process.

The Commission believes it is vital to focus energy on two fronts concurrently: Education to transform individual attitudes and behaviors of prejudice and racism. Institutional change with regard to empowering institutions to dismantle racism, and to valuing and utilizing diversity. These two approaches must be integrated to produce a community that truly reflects racial and cultural harmony.

Mission - The Commission dedicates itself to dismantling racism and reducing prejudice within the City of Little Rock, through modeling, education, mediation and policy development.

Goals - To ensure that Little Rock's institutions will be free of policies, procedures, and practices, which encourage, support or perpetuate racism; To promote attitudes free of ideas, rooted in fear and ignorance, that devalue people and prevent understanding, respect and acceptance of diversity.



Logo - The logo is itself a beacon of hope and its significance speaks to the importance of unity among our different cultures and races. At the core, we are all part of the same human family. From that core, we separate into many directions of diversity, each being of equal value. That diversity then feeds back into the center, giving us strength and richness, thus the arrows simultaneously flow inward and radiate outward. The colors of the logo include red, which signifies conflict, fading to purple to reflect the awakening of the possibilities for resolution. Finally, the hues blend to the point of calmness and final resolution reflected by shades of blue.

Organizational Chart

City of Little Rock Racial & Cultural Diversity Commission

City of Little Rock Racial & Cultural Diversity Education Committee

City of Little Rock Racial & Cultural Diversity Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)

High School Youth Diversity Councils as Affiliate Chapters

North Pulaski-PCSSD	Central High-LRSD	Mt. St. Mary Academy
Mills-PCSSD	Hall- LRSD	Pulaski Academy
NLR West Campus-NLR	Robinson-PCSSD	

**YAC = maximum of 4 students per school
Advisors = maximum of 3 adults**

Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission Education Committee

Purpose: To assist educational institutions in Pulaski County with the sharing of information and working together on initiatives to promote positive race relations and to develop an understanding of other cultures.

Goals: To expose faculty, staff, and students to other cultures beyond a superficial level. To insure that people from all races and cultures feel comfortable on school campuses. To move beyond bi-culturalism (African-American and white).

Racial and Cultural Diversity Initiatives

WorldFest is an annual event held in the fall that provides a variety of educational opportunities to children, youth and adults that visibly demonstrate how we are diverse and encourage growth in our awareness of valuing our diversity. It is an interactive multicultural event celebrating the different cultures through music, food, song and dance.

Keepin' It Real is organized by the RCDC Youth Diversity Advisory Committee, which is made up of students from Central Arkansas high schools. The highlight of this event is a series of workshops conducted by students discussing the racial/cultural environment at their schools and how to enhance that environment.

Youth Diversity Advisory Committee is an arm of the RCDC Education Committee that advises and encourages central Arkansas educators, students, and others to play a leadership role in addressing the issues of diversity and education.

School-Based Diversity Council is an on-going initiative that promotes inclusion at area schools with an emphasis on tolerance, unity, and diversity education. Its purpose is as follows:

- To promote open, honest dialogue about diversity issues among students, faculty, staff, and the administration of high schools in Pulaski County, both public and private
- To promote interracial closeness, trust, and positive attitudes toward others of different cultural and /or ethnic background.
- To provide opportunities for personal development and leadership enhancement
- To provide opportunities for making decisions and assuming responsibilities

SECTION TWO

City of Little Rock RCDC Youth Diversity Council Advisory Committee and Affiliate Council's Constitution

PREAMBLE:

Given the strength that comes out of an organization those functions as a community of individuals working together to promote racial harmony and to recognize student achievement, the City of Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission Youth Diversity Council Advisory Committee was formed in the fall of 2004. Its aim is to bring representative groups of students together from area schools to collectively promote better race relations among their individual student bodies and the entire school community within Pulaski County. This is achieved through sponsorship and support of school based Diversity Councils that promote diversity related activities.

I. Name of Organization

The name of this organization is the City of Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission Youth Diversity Council Advisory Committee (YDCAC). School based chapters in each area high school that wish to affiliate with YDCAC shall be know as their respective school's Youth Diversity Council (YDC).

II. Purpose of the Organization

A. Purpose of the Advisory Committee and Youth Diversity Councils

1. To promote open, honest dialogue about diversity issues among students, faculty, and administration of high schools in Pulaski County, both public and private.
2. To promote interracial closeness, trust, and positive attitudes toward others of different cultural and/or ethnic background.
3. To provide opportunities for personal development and leadership skills enhancement.
4. To provide opportunities for making decisions and for assuming responsibilities.

B. Additional Purpose of the Advisory Committee

1. To assist area schools in the formation and sustainability of Youth Diversity Councils that network with the City of Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission Youth Advisory Committee.

III. Duties of the Advisory Committee and Affiliate Chapters

A. To promote racial harmony, unity, cooperation and diversity appreciation between the various ethnic, religious, and cultural groups on school campuses within Pulaski County by:

1. Providing a forum for representatives of various ethnic, religious, and cultural groups to meet regularly and work collectively on diversity related issues.
2. Participating in the annual World Fest and Keepin' It Real Conference sponsored by LRRCDC.

3. Providing opportunities for YDCAC members and YDC members to participate in at least two projects during the current school year that are not related directly to their respective school or cultural group.
4. Sponsoring recognition events to celebrate student achievements.
5. Coordinating events at individual schools, between schools when applicable, and with the City of Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission.
6. Providing other services as needed or desired by the City of Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission.

IV. Membership of the Organization

- A. Membership of the Advisory Committee
 1. The membership of YDCAC is made up of four representatives appointed by the affiliate chapter of each high school.
 2. Members of YDCAC serve a two-year term as their school's representative. The affiliate chapter will fill vacancies.
 3. YDCAC members shall convene monthly but not less than once a quarter to plan and implement projects for the general good of all schools represented on the Committee.
 4. Member at large positions may be filled on the YDCAC with students from schools that do not have affiliate chapters.
- B. Membership of the Youth Diversity Councils
 1. Membership is open to all students willing to promote the ideals and beliefs as stated under the "purposes, duties, and responsibilities" of this organization.
 2. Specific membership guidelines shall be set by each chapter in the By Laws established by the chapter.

V. Attendance Requirements of the Organization

- A. Attendance Requirements of Advisory Committee
 1. An attendance record shall be maintained at each meeting.
 2. Advisory Committee members will be allowed to have no more than two unexcused absences in any given school year. Upon the third unexcused absence, he/she will be notified of their termination from the YCDAC. A request will be made to the affiliate school for a replacement delegate.
- B. Attendance Requirements of Youth Diversity Council members
 1. Attendance requirements for Youth Diversity Council members shall be established and enforced as stipulated in the By-Laws of each affiliate chapter.

VI. Qualifications for Officers on the Advisory Committee and Youth Diversity Council

- A. An officer must be willing to lend his/her time and talents for the benefit of the general membership.
 1. Each officer must be free to perform all duties required of the position.
 2. He/She must attend all meetings unless excused by the respective group president and the designated sponsor.
 3. He/She must be willing to participate in at least two YDC Advisory Committee initiated projects per year and a specified number of projects designated in their respective school YDC By-Laws.

4. He/She must be enrolled in and in good standing at their respective school.
5. All officer positions shall be filled by mid September of the current school year.

VII. Official Duties of Officers of the Advisory Committee and Youth Diversity Council

A. President

1. The president shall have been a member of the YDC Advisory committee and /or their respective school Diversity Council for at least one year prior to assuming the presidency and is elected by the members of their respective group.
2. He/She shall preside at all meetings.
3. Special meetings may be called in consultation with the sponsor.
4. He/She shall contact the sponsor at least five days prior to the meeting to prepare the agenda and have copies made for the members.
5. He/She shall perform other duties as specified by their respective group with sponsor consultation and prior approval.

B. Vice President

1. The Vice President shall be a member of the YDC Advisory committee and /or their respective school Diversity Council and is elected by the members of their respective group.
2. The Vice President shall not be a senior for the current term of office.
3. He/She shall preside in the president's absence.
4. He/She shall assist the president in carrying out his or her duties.
5. He/She shall perform other duties as specified by their respective group with sponsor consultation and prior approval.

C. Secretary

1. The Secretary shall be a member of the YDCAC and/or their respective YDC selected by the members.
2. He/She shall make and maintain attendance records of members.
3. He/She shall handle correspondence, take minutes at each meeting, and email a copy to the sponsor for dissemination.
5. He/She shall perform other duties as specified by their respective group with sponsor consultation and prior approval.

D. Public Relations Coordinator

1. The Public Relations Coordinator shall keep a calendar of group events and notify members.
2. He/She shall assist in contacting all members as requested.
3. He/She shall assist the sponsor in handling other public relations matters before the YDC.

E. Adult Sponsor(s)

1. The Youth Diversity Committee shall have at least one official sponsor and no more than three adult advisors selected each year in consultation with the Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission Education Committee and/or the school administrative liaison.
2. The official adult sponsor(s) shall attend all meetings of YDC.
3. He/She shall review and monitor the attendance of all members.

4. He/She shall oversee financial transactions in consultation with the City of Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission and/or the school administrative liaison.
5. He/She shall perform other duties as specified by the City of Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission and/or the school administrative liaison.
6. The duties of the Youth Diversity Council adult sponsor shall be established and supervised by the administrative liaison of each respective school.

VIII. Meeting Procedures

- A. Meetings of the Advisory Committee
 1. Regular meetings shall be once a month unless otherwise notified.
 2. Regular meeting dates, times, and locations shall be set in conjunction with the LRDS school calendar based on the sponsor's consultation with various school administrative liaisons. A simple majority of official voting advisory members constitutes a quorum for business purposes.
 4. Called meetings of the Advisory Committee shall be determined by the agreement of the president and the sponsor. The president is responsible for notifying members at the request of the sponsor.
- B. Meetings of Youth Diversity Councils
 1. Regular meetings shall be minimally once a quarter with once a month preferable.
 2. Regular meeting dates, times, and locations shall be set in consultation with the individual school calendar after consultation by the chapter sponsor and their respective administrative liaison.
 3. Other meeting guidelines shall be set in the chapter By Laws.

IX. Committee Structure

- A. The Advisory Committee and the school chapters may be assisted by subcommittees that cover areas implied in the purposes, duties, and responsibilities.
- B. Subcommittees shall carry out the task directives of their respective group.
- C. Subcommittees must submit in writing all program and project proposals for consideration by the Advisory Committee and /or the affiliate chapter.
- D. Subcommittees of the Advisory Committee may consist of any member of the Advisory Committee and invited members of participating high schools and invited guests.

X. Amendments and Revisions to the Constitution

- A. Any youth attending high school in the central Arkansas area can propose an amendment to the Constitution by submitting a petition outlining the proposal along with 25 YDC member signatures.

- B. Proposed amendments shall be presented to an Advisory Committee officers and/or the official sponsor in writing at least 15 days prior to a meeting of the Advisory Committee.
- C. Proposed amendments which receive a two thirds vote of the Advisory committee membership for the current year shall be effective within 30 days following approval by the Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission Education Committee in consultation with various area school administrative liaisons.

XI. By Laws

- A. The City of Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Youth Advisory committee and the School Based Youth Diversity Councils shall create a set of by laws to govern the specific operation of their respective groups. These by laws shall be submitted to the Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission Education Committee for review to note compliance with the mission statement, goals and objectives.
- B. **By-laws Revisions by School Chapters**
Additions or proposed changes (amendments) to the By-Laws of each school chapter shall be consistent with this Constitution. All proposals must be presented in writing to their respective school sponsor at least 15 days prior to a vote. A two-thirds vote of the official membership in attendance at the meeting called for the purpose of voting decides the question subject to the approval of the Youth Diversity Council Advisory Committee and Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission (LRRCDC) Education Committee if any aspect of the proposed revision is not consistent with the purpose and mission of this constitution. Said proposal shall be effective within 30 days following final consideration and approval by the LRRCDC Education Committee.

City of Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission Youth Diversity Council Advisory Committee By-Laws to The Constitution

- I. Purpose, Duties, and Membership Composition of the Youth Diversity Committee**
Each school represented shall have four student members. Members may be added to the Committee at the beginning of each school semester. In the case that a member exceeds their allotted times to miss a meeting, that member will not be eligible to renew his/her membership for one year following the membership termination.
- II. Election Procedures for the Officers of the Youth Diversity Advisory Committee and Youth Diversity Council**
 - A. The official sponsor is responsible for determining and distributing, at least one week in advance:
 - 1. Election information, dates, and due date procedures if any.
 - a. Filing and nomination process for office.
 - b. Campaign procedures if any.
 - 2. Preliminary and general balloting procedures.
The sponsor will provide paper ballots.

- B. Every student filing for membership on the Advisory Committee must have submitted proof of their 2.0 grade point and meet all requirements set by their represented school as a member of this group.
- C. Every student elected to an Advisory Committee position shall be required to sign a commitment contract acknowledging his or her duties, responsibilities, and code of conduct as specified by the Advisory Committee.
- D. Every student filing for membership on the YDC Advisory Committee must have spent one year on their individual school Diversity council with the exception to the selection of members for the 2005 school year.

Submitted by Youth Diversity Council Advisory Board Sponsor:

Sponsor Signature

Date

Reviewed by LRRCDC

Date

Organizing the Youth Diversity Council

Perhaps the most critical organizational issue, upon which the success of the council depends, is the selection of the council sponsor(s). The success of the program is intricately linked to the skills, commitment and personal charisma of the sponsor. He/she will wear many hats; that of consummate planner and organizer, mentor, encourager, surrogate parent, advocate and organizational champion. Obviously, the council sponsor cannot do all of this alone, but must rely on the support and assistance of the school principal, teachers, other staff, parents and community partners.

The following list identifies specific program organizational tasks that should be included in the planning phase.

- Organize a planning and implementation team
- Develop student recruitment procedures
- Develop staff and Student Orientation plan
- Develop public Relations and Community Outreach plan
- Develop organization maintenance and sustainability plan

Characteristics of an Effective Sponsor

The challenge and key to creating a successful diversity council is in selecting a skilled and committed sponsor. Co-sponsors are recommended in order to spread responsibility among several individuals.

Do Select

- √ Individuals able to devote time to the Council
- √ Individuals with effective communication and presentation skills
- √ Someone who enjoys and respects young people
- √ Persons interested in diversity issues
- √ Individuals respected by their peers

Council Sponsor Responsibilities Include:

Council Start-Up

- Organizing an implementation team
- Coordinating and overseeing all aspects of council implementation in consultation with the school principal
- Designing a recruitment process
- Designing a community support plan

Orientation/Training

- Planning and coordination of student/teacher orientation
- Coordinating all aspects of school-based awareness/orientation plan including time, place, agenda and obtaining permission and support of building principal

Outreach and Publicity

- Coordinating in-school publicity and education of staff, students and parents
- Maintaining positive relations and support of administrative staff, teachers, support staff, parents and community.
- Keeping the school and community updated on council projects and progress

Program Maintenance

- Recruiting new members
- Maintaining record of accomplishments
- Planning and facilitating regular meetings of the council
- Identifying and maintaining sources of financial and technical support

School-based Implementation Team (Optional)

The implementation team should consist of individuals from diverse backgrounds who are willing to promote the mission and goals of the council and provide support and assistance to the council sponsors.

A team of 8-10 people is recommended and should include the sponsors, a building administrator, teachers, parents, counselor and student representation.

Under the leadership of the council sponsor, the implementation team is responsible for developing and supporting an implementation plan which includes:

- Student/teacher orientation
- Member recruitment
- Community support
- Development and implementation of a public relations plan
- Monitor progress and celebrate accomplishments

Monthly meetings should be sufficient after the council begins to operate smoothly. However, more frequent meetings may be necessary during the council start-up phase.

Building a Support Base

There are at least five main sources of influence in most schools: (1) school administrators, (2) school faculty, (3) parents, (4) students and (5) interested community groups. Approaching each and gaining their support is critical to the council's success. Some suggested approaches are shared below.

(1) **School Administration Support** ultimately set the climate of the school. Most principals will see the value of a Diversity Council in the school as a way to support and enhance the learning environment. Discuss your ideas about the council's importance to promoting a positive climate for academic success by helping to create a strong sense of community and belongingness among all students and staff. Other ideas to enlist the support of your school administrators include:

- schedule a meeting with the principal and/or the administrative team to discuss the council's implementation plan. Avoid stressful times of the day.

- leave an outline of key implementation ideas in writing. Make note of any supportive remarks so that you can refer to them later.
- invite the principal or his/her designee to serve on the Diversity Council.
- be positive and avoid being defensive.
- identify other schools who are successfully implementing a Diversity Council and encourage the principal to contact them.

(2) **Staff Support** can either make or break a program regardless of its merits. A faculty can “sabotage” a well intentioned and meritorious program, just as it can be its champion or cheerleader. It is most important to cultivate the support of the faculty. Their support and cooperation will be much stronger if they are personally involved. Even though they will not all be directly involved, they all need to be aware of the councils mission and projects. Plan a presentation during a faculty meeting or meet with small groups of staff.

- Provide the faculty with an informational sheet, outlining the purpose, long range goals, and possible activities/projects that students may be involved in.
- Recruit teachers who are supportive of the need to affirmatively address diversity issues within the school environment to assist with presentations to the faculty, parents and community groups.
- Develop a promotional video using school staff and students to make the case for implementing proactive strategies that address issues of diversity.

(3) **Student Body Support**

The basic ingredient of a strong, effective Diversity Council is the student. It is essential to keep in mind that the entire student body must be the focus. Sponsors must actively recruit a diverse and representative sampling of students to assist with initial planning, staff/student orientation, and publicity. By involving students from the beginning, the stage is set for establishing credibility and acceptance by other students.

Student Involvement may include:

- Organize and prepare a cadre of students to make presentations about the Diversity Council to classrooms clubs, homerooms and the Student Council.
- Allow the cadre to design eye catching posters to recruit students to serve on the council
- Have students to design and implement your publicity campaign using a variety of media approaches.
- Sponsor a logo contest to encourage student involvement and identification with the council. The winning logo design would be the official council symbol used on t-shirts, communication and integrated within the publicity campaign.

(4) **Parent/Community Involvement**

Parent/community support is another base to establish for the school-based Student Diversity Council. You may choose to get the Council up and running and then inform parents and community stakeholders of your efforts; or you may want to invite them to an introductory meeting where

you have the opportunity to solicit their support. Sending a written invitation to the meeting is a way to get their attention. In addition to a letter, you may also consider accessing other media outlets to get the word out such as the school newspaper, radio, TV stations, local newspapers, etc. Involve the students in the presentations; those who are eager and committed can be invaluable in providing information that demonstrates a need for the Council.

Whichever approach you choose, it is important to:

- √ Provide a brief overview of the mission of a Student Diversity Council and its potential positive impact school-wide.
- √ Discuss the goals and objectives, relating them to improvements in academics and the learning climate in the school.
- √ Provide an opportunity for questions, answering them by relating the program goals and your ideas to their concerns and needs. Don't become defensive.
- √ Summarize the themes or significant ideas that have emerged from the discussion and again relate those to the goals of the Diversity Council.
- √ Keep parents and community leaders informed of your progress; seek volunteers. This is the beginning of your "ongoing support system".

Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment can be handled in a variety of ways.

- Ask staff for recommendation. Guidelines to use include:
 1. Students who can successfully relate to others from various ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds.
 2. Ability to work as a team member
 3. Dependable
 4. Self-confidence
 5. Leadership potential
- Students should also be encouraged to self-refer.

School and Community Projects

Having a visible presence in the school in helping to foster positive social dynamics among all students, staff and parents should be a primary goal of the Diversity Council. School Projects can be the glue that begins to bind students and staff to each other in supportive and nurturing relationships across racial, ethnic and cultural lines.

Diversity Councils should plan to sponsor at least one school-based and one community-based project during the year. These are in addition to the two required projects: World Fest and the Keepin' It Real Conference sponsored by the Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission. A list of suggested projects are provided for your review.

Public Relations

Goal: To develop and implement public relations strategies that will allow you to keep your publics informed about the diversity council and why what activities are being implemented at your school

Suggested Publicity Strategies

1. Diversity Council Brochure
2. Diversity Council Newsletter
3. Diversity Council promotional items: buttons, pencils, pens, banners, flyers, etc.
4. Logo/T-shirt
5. Assembly Presentations
6. Student Calendar
7. Recognition Certificates
8. Diversity Mugs
9. Student Folders (Designed by Diversity Council)
10. Awards Program
11. Media Campaigns- using a variety of media outlets
12. Develop promotional video
13. Make PTA, faculty meeting and school board presentations.
14. Create a Diversity Bulletin Board and display news, events and projects being implemented.
15. Sponsor a logo and poster contest to encourage student participation and increase awareness of the council.
16. Sponsor annual awards/recognition event to highlight students and/or staff who have performed exemplary service toward fostering understanding, acceptance and trust among all school staff, students, parents and the community.

City of Little Rock Youth Diversity Council Advisory Board Application 2006-2007

Diversity Ambassador: An official student representative with a special mission

The City of Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission is initiating an area wide Youth Diversity Council that would play an extremely important role in carrying on the mission of LRRCDC. Ambassadors spread positive words and the spirit of cooperation and understanding throughout the community and throughout their individual schools. As a part of this **Special Mission**, your responsibilities will include.

- Working with other Ambassadors in planning events during the summer, as well as, the school year.
- Going on several school visits to assist others in setting up school diversity councils.
- Attending monthly meetings on either an evening or weekend.
- Planning and attending at least one annual “Keeping It Real” type event.
- Participating at the school level in other various diversity related events.

STUDENT INFORMATION (Please print)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ **CELL:** _____

SCHOOL: _____ **GRADE (2006-07)** _____

Home E-Mail: _____

School Sponsor/Advisor Name: _____

References: Provide the names and phone numbers of two school personnel who can attest to your character, sense of responsibility and commitment to diversity education.

Name: _____ **Position/Title:** _____

School: _____ **Phone** _____

Name: _____ **Position/Title:** _____

School: _____ **Phone** _____

Diversity Ambassadors Application

1. Why do you think that such a council would be beneficial to the youth of this area?

2. What qualifies do you have that would make you a good representative from your school on a city wide Youth Council?

3. What makes the city of Little Rock unique in the area of diversity?

4. How do you feel about diversity education?

5. What ideas do you have for promoting diversity awareness in the area city schools?

6. What clubs, athletics, and/or extracurricular activities do you plan to be involved in this year?

7. What after school commitments do you currently have that would prevent you from attending a meeting between 4:00 and 8:00 P.M. and/or Saturday morning meeting.

REQUEST FOR RECOGNITION
as a school affiliate of
the City of Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission
Youth Diversity Committee

Date: _____

Dear Principal _____,

We the students of _____ who attended a recent diversity workshop sponsored by the City of Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission formally request that the school administration consider our request to start a Youth Diversity Council on our campus.

This council would hope to open the student's minds to other cultures and encourage them to interact with people of different backgrounds. The Diversity Council will focus on the different cultures enriching America and hopefully our school. We would like to help students find their own culture and be able to share it with others. The committee will sponsor events and participate in other school related activities and would be affiliated with the city wide youth committee that is sponsored by the City of Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission Education Committee.

The Diversity Council would have a president, vice president, recording secretary, and several committee chairs. The chairs might include a craft activity chair, reflection chair, and a cultural focus chair. The committee would meet once a month during lunch or at another time specified by administration for clubs and activities. The officers would meet twice a month.

If you have any question about the role of the City of Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission Youth Diversity Committee, you may contact the LRRCDC Executive Director, Mrs. Carlette Henderson at (501) 244-5483 or _____, who has agreed to be our school sponsor on campus.

Respectfully submitted,



VALUING DIVERSITY AS A COMMUNITY ASSET

THE PLEDGE

I GIVE my personal pledge that I will work to actively demonstrate and enhance my understanding of the value of diversity among people.

I PLEDGE that I will publicly support the value of diversity in our school and work toward racial unity in our community.

I PLEDGE that I will not by my actions or my silence indicate a tolerance of any word or deed that degrades or mocks the diversity of any person.

As part of this pledge,

I WILL respond to any follow-up requests for information regarding what I accomplished or had influence in accomplishing to support my pledge for valuing diversity.

Name _____ Date _____

SECTION THREE

Suggested Projects

Want to get your organization off the ground? Ask lots of students what interests them and what they would like to be a part of. Surveys are easy to initiate, but inviting students to an open forum offers everyone the opportunity to express themselves. It provides a quick start to planning a program that students will take ownership in and help initiate. The following are a few projects that have been successful in other areas and that one can readily get information about how to do.

PROJECTS	DESCRIPTION	DATE
Mix It Up Day	Students eat lunch on this day with a group of students they do not know very well.	11/15/05
Cultural Awareness Day	Students plan activities to share/showcase one's culture...food, customs, traditions, symbols.	Anytime
Host a Family Tree Day	Students make posters or write autobiographies about their family's genealogy.	Anytime
Disability Awareness Day	Team up with a student with a disability for the day and see first hand what life is like from another's perspective and/or volunteer to assist with a Special Olympics event.	2 nd week of November each year
Buddy Mentors	Team up with a new student in your school to help them feel welcome and offer assistance.	Generally in the fall.
Celebrate various ethnic holidays	Research 4 or 5 of the prevalent ethnic subgroups in your school and pick out several of their holidays to showcase, e.g. Cinco de Maya, Kwanzaa, and Yom Kippur.	Varies with the holiday
Cultural Talent Show	Host a talent show and invite students of various cultures to perform ethnic dances, songs, etc.	In the spring
National Inclusive Schools Week	Plan a variety of activities to recognize the diversity of your student body and the unity your school community fosters.	December 5-9
Famous Celebrities	Research the accomplishments of several persons of similar ethnic background to three minority populations within your school and feature them on a bulletin board display.	Anytime
Great Authors	Research the literary accomplishment of several lesser-known ethnic writers and do short excerpts of their work at Diversity Council meetings as part of your program.	On a regular basis at club meetings
Essay/Poetry Contest	Sponsor a writing contest with prizes and a promise to publish in the school newspaper the winning submission on "Aspects of My Culture" or other related topics.	Anytime

SECTION FOUR

GROUND RULES FOR ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Listen carefully and patiently to each person who speaks.
2. Express yourself openly and honestly.
3. Search for the truth from each person's perspective.
4. Avoid belittling or blaming.
5. Maintain each person's confidentiality.

REMEMBER:

- We can agree to disagree. Opinions can and will clash, but people should not.
- When we are confronted with different perspectives, many of us have been taught to support and defend a position or belief, rather than to seek the truth.
- We all have differing perspectives based on our different backgrounds. The sum of our perceptions can lead us closer to the truth.

HOW ARE FAMILIES ALIKE?

OBJECTIVES

To help individuals see the various communication that they share regardless of background, race, or culture.

DESCRIPTION

Leader lists family characteristics and students discuss how these have an impact on their values and relationships.

MATERIALS

Overhead, flip chart, or handout

PROCEDURES

1. List various family characteristics. As you state each characteristic, have students stand up if they fit into a category. For example, "Stand up if you are the firstborn in your family." The following are some examples of categories that can be used:

Firstborn

Middle child

Youngest child

Have grandmother grandfather

Does not have grandmother or grandfather

Lives with a stepparent

Does not live with a step-parent

All boys in the family

All girls in the family

Both girls and boys in the family

Only child in family

2 children in the family

3 children in family

4-5 in the family

6 or more in the family

2. Place students into groups based on common answers (e.g., all firstborn, etc.) Have them discuss the following questions:
 - What behaviors, attitudes, values, habits, or interests do you have in common?
 - How does your category affect the way you are treated in your family?
 - Does this category affect the way you relate to and interact with others?

3. Now provide categories that are more personal:

Two-parent family

One-parent family

Raised by grandparent(s)

Foster child

Foreign-born parents

Family that has someone with a disability

Stepchild

Racially and ethnically diverse family

Divorced Parents

4. Have students in small/large groups discuss how this category influences or affects their daily life, their relationship, their expectations, and their values. Use questions in Procedure #2.

FOLLOW-UP

Lead a discussion about what students learned from this activity. Ask them if they think their responses to above situation are shaped by racial and/or cultural differences. Ask why or why not.

Use students' responses, if appropriate, to summarize the activity:

Regardless of race, ethnicity, or cultural background, many individuals share similar family experiences.

COMMON GROUND

OBJECTIVES

To help students increase awareness that no matter how different they may seem from others, they still have many things in common.

DESCRIPTION

Students from small, diverse groups (4-6 students in each) to share commonalities. The first phase identifies general shared commonalities, and the second phase identifies important personal shared commonalities.

MATERIALS

Pencils and Paper

PROCEDURES

1. Direct students to form groups that reflect as much diversity as possible.
2. Ask students to develop a list of 10 things they all have in common. Suggest that they not list the obvious things such as “we are the people,” or “we all go to school.”
3. Next, ask students to find the three things they have in common with each other that are most important to them. (These three things do not have to come from the original list of 10)

FOLLOW-UP

Ask the students to recall the things that they had in common. Ask, “If we have so many these important things in common, then what is it that divide us?” Answers can be verbally shared, role played, or done through story telling or rap.

Use students’ responses, if appropriate, to highlight the following points of the summary:

Regardless of our backgrounds we have not only superficial things in common but also some “deeper” and perhaps more important things as well

UNITY IS A BALANCING ACT

OBJECTIVE

For students to experience and explore how they need to work cooperatively as a team to accomplish certain challenges.

DESCRIPTION

Students must use various balancing strategies in order to fit the entire group in a small area.

MATERIALS

Masking Tape

PROCEDURES

1. Divide the class into groups of eight to nine people each.
2. Mark off an area that is 36'' by 22'' on the floor within this small square and remain in it for at least 15 seconds.

Note to the facilitator: *Since the square is too small for the group to fit into, the group must strategize how to accomplish this task. Groups will need to come up with possible strategies (e.g., stronger members hold smaller members in arms or on backs, members use each other for balanced by holding shoulders and standing on one foot, etc.)*

FOLLOW-UP

Ask students the following questions:

- What was the most difficult part of this exercise for you?
- What did you have to do to accomplish this task?

- How did it feel to be dependent on a group in order to be balanced?

Have the students form groups (mixed groups) and have them answer the following:

- What are some things you have to balance in your own life?
How do you do this?
- Some people find friendship difficult to balance---particularly if it involves
people from one or more races. How does this play out for you?
- Do you encounter peer pressure from either yours or others races
because of
your own cultural relationships?
- Does gender make a difference?

PREJUDICE CONTINUUM

OBJECTIVES

Students will understand that prejudice is most often based on the situation and is not simply a matter of being a prejudiced person or a non-prejudiced person.

DESCRIPTION

By answering a variety of questions about attitudes toward people, students are able to explore underlying, as well as obvious, biases and prejudices in a safe environment.

MATERIALS

Blackboard or overhead, a copy of “ five Faulty Reasoning Categories” for each student

PROCEDURES

1. Ask the students what image comes to mind when they think of prejudiced person. Most students will first imagine members of extremist groups. Make the point that when we think of prejudiced person, it's this extreme type of person we often think of, one that most of us don't relate to. This often leads us to think, “Well. Since that's not me, I must not be prejudiced.”
2. Write of the following:

Prejudiced
Prejudiced

Not



Explain that prejudiced is not simple. We all have biases that come according to the situation we're in. We all draw our “ Prejudiced/Non-prejudiced” lines differently in different situations. What we must figure out is *where we draw our lines and why.*

3. Read through the “Five Faulty Reasoning Categories” handout with the group. Ask the group to brainstorm about the situation where they see each kind of prejudice at work, using examples from movies, TV shows, or from their own lives.
4. Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students. Assign one of the five categories to each group (it is okay for a category to be assigned to more than one group). Each group must write a short dialogue (1-2 minute) called “The New Kid,” for two or more characters. In the dialogue, students are talking about the “new kid” in school and demonstrating how their category of faulty reasoning reveals prejudices. For example, the “Over generalization” group may write a dialogue in which two students discuss the “new kid” who uses a wheel chair. In their discussion, they assume that the new kid is mentally retarded and will be assigned to special education classes.
5. Have each group perform their skit for the entire class. After each skit, ask students how it reveals prejudice. Then audience members suggest ways that dialogue could be rewritten so that characters do not fall onto prejudiced thinking.

FOLLOW-UP

If the time allows, conduct a follow-up discussion on the skits in their original and rewritten versions. What strategies did students suggest for rewriting their dialogues to overcome prejudiced thinking? For example, an antidote to “Over generalization” could include gathering accurate information about individuals and avoiding making judgments.

None of us are completely free of prejudiced thinking. We can, however, recognize prejudice when it occurs and strive to work past the limitations of prejudiced thinking in their daily interactions and to use “antidotes” to work their way closer to the “not prejudiced” end of the line.

FIVE FAULTY REASONING CATEGORIES

1ST CATEGORY: OVERGENERALIZATION

Definition: Thinking that one or more pieces of evidence can justify making broad conclusion.

Example: “I don’t know him but I know his kind is worthless and lazy.”

2ND CATEGORY: BANDWAGON

Definition: Thinking that the greater number of people who believe something, the greater is the probability that the something is true.

Example: “It must be true about the new student because everyone is talking about it and everyone agrees.”

3RD CATEGORY: PROJECTION

Definition: Transferring blame for one’s own shortcomings, mistakes, and misdeeds to others or attributing to others one’s own unacceptable impulses, thoughts, and desires.

Example: “If we could only stop immigrants from coming over, our economic problems would be solved.”

4TH CATEGORY: EXPERT OPINION

Definition: Thinking that something is true because someone who appears to be an expert says the statement.

Example: “African Americans are better at sports than other racial groups because of their physical construction. That’s what a scientist said.”

5TH CATEGORY: OVERGENERALIZATION

Definition: Thinking something because you are pressured to do so in order to conform or belong to a group.

Example: "I did not want to beat that guy up, but my friends were watching and I had to show them I could handle it."

Activity 3:13

THE CLASSROOM

A CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISE

OBJECTIVE

Students will examine critical thinking skills; develop awareness of factors that affect value judgments, and understanding how this affects the ability to solve problems.

DESCRIPTION

Students read a short paragraph that is written in an ambiguous way and can therefore be interpreted in many different ways that lead to false conclusions.

MATERIALS

A copy of “The Classroom Worksheet,” pencils

PROCEDURE

1. Divide the class into small groups (3-6 per group)
2. Give the students copies of “The Classroom Worksheet” and pencils.
3. Ask the students to read the “story” on their worksheet and then to mark their responses to the statements that follow.
4. Ask the students to share their responses and their reasons for selecting them. For adolescents, instruct the subgroups to share their response and, as a group, reach consensus on the response for each statement.
5. Share the correct results: The worksheet contains only one “False” statement (#6) and one “True” statement (#3); all the other statements are questionable.
6. Lead a discussion on critical thinking skills and their application in problem solving.

FOLLOW-UP

In summary, make the following points:

- It is important to carefully analyze what you hear, see, and read.
- It is important to study prejudice in an objective way so as not to let our emotions take over.
- Prejudices unchecked are dangerous and can lead to misunderstanding, fear, and hatred.

THE CLASSROOM WORKSHEET

THE STORY

He had just turned off the lights in the classroom when a student appeared and demanded money. The teacher opened a wallet. The contents of the wallet were scooped up, and he sped away. A member of the school administration was notified promptly.

Statements about the Story

For each statement, circle the correct response:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. A student appeared after the teacher had turned off the classroom lights. | T | F |
| 2. The robber was a student. | T | F |
| 3. Someone opened the wallet. | T | F |
| 4. The man who turned off the lights was a teacher. | T | F |
| 5. The teacher scooped up the contents of the wallet and ran away. | T | F |
| 6. The student did not demand money. | T | F |
| 7. After the student who demanded the money scooped up the contents of the wallet, he ran away. | T | F |
| 8. While the wallet contained money, the story did not state how much. | T | F |
| 9. The robber demanded money of the teacher. | T | F |
| 10. The story concerns a series of events in which only three people are referred to: the teacher, a student who demanded money, and a member of the school administration. | T | F |
| 11. The following events in the story are true: someone demanded money, a wallet was opened, its contents were scooped up, and a student dashed out of the classroom. | T | F |

SECTION FIVE

Appendix

Definitions

Assimilation:

The belief, behavior or policy of completely absorbing minority cultural groups into the main cultural body thereby by, over time, erasing the minority cultural groups' collective values, attitudes, customs, history and practices.

Behavior:

Refers to a person's actions, conduct, manners and responses to stimulation and situations.

Culture:

A set of values, attitudes, history, collective wisdom and practices held in common by a group of people, usually identified by ancestry, language and traditions; The pattern of common attitudes and behaviors that are characteristic of a particular group of peoples; the knowledge, values and behaviors shared over time by a society.

Cultural Diversity:

Cultural "otherness," or those human or cultural qualities that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong, yet are present in other individuals and groups.

- Primary dimensions of diversity are the following:
Age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race and sexual orientation.
- Secondary dimensions of diversity are those that CAN be changed, and include, but are not limited to: educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, parental status, religious beliefs, family status, political beliefs; work experiences and life experiences.

Discrimination:

The act or behavior of treating someone unjustly because of the group that one or groups of people are perceived to belong to or affiliate with or do belong to and are affiliated with; The act or behavior of limiting or not giving full access to resources and/or opportunity based on an individual's or a groups' membership and/or affiliation with a minority group; The act of treating an individual or group differently because of race, color, nationality, religion, sex/gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, political beliefs or organizational affiliations; The act, practice or conduct of making a distinction and showing partiality in treatment of individuals or groups, specifically in reference to policies directed against the welfare of minority groups.

Diversity

Differences; A variety of differences.

Ethnicity:

Classifications or affiliations based on customs, language, common history, nationality, and other non-biological characteristics. Not the same as Race.

Ethnocentrism:

An attitude and/or belief that one's own ethnic group, nation or culture is superior to all others.

Prejudice:

An emotional commitment to ignorance or a belief where by one judges whole peoples, groups of people, or individuals before one has all the information and insight of the targeted group or targeted one being judged; An attitude, opinion or feeling formed without adequate prior knowledge, thought or reason; Pre-judging for or against any person, group, gender or object; Race prejudice involves positive attitudes towards one's own race and negative attitudes towards other races; Implies a preconceived and unreasonable judgment or opinion, usually an unfavorable one marked by suspicion, fear, intolerance or hatred.

Power:

The ability of the dominant group to encode prejudice about other groups (ethnic, gender, disability, sexual orientation, etc.) into the economic, political and social institutions and systems of a nation; Control over the economic, political and social institutions of a country.

Race:

Socio-economic, political construct that has no scientific foundation or meaning; Refers to physical and biological characteristics, i.e., color of hair, eyes, body stature and proportions, which distinguish different varieties of human beings.

Racism:

Racial Prejudice + Power; a system of values, beliefs and practices which assumes the superiority of inferiority of whole peoples based on race, ethnic identification or culture. In practice, it operates through institutional structures

and individual actions to deny racial minorities of human and legal rights, political power, social, educational and economic opportunities and resources.

Stereotype:

A standardized mental picture or belief that is held in common by members of a group about other groups. Stereotypes are used to describe the personality or behavior pattern of an entire social group in all situations. The term originally comes from a printing term referring to the plate from which copies are made.

Culture Awareness Indicator

Please Check

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

Please rank the following questions using the following scale.

1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly disagree

1. The general school campus climate is welcoming for all groups.

1 2 3 4

2. My interactions with faculty and administrators are encouraged.

1 2 3 4

3. Racial/ethnic interactions on campus are promoted.

1 2 3 4

4. Our school promotes an adequate social/interpersonal climate.

1 2 3 4

5. General diversity at our school is encouraged.

1 2 3 4

6. The curriculum is reflective of a diverse global community.

1 2 3 4

7. I feel comfortable to address insensitive/negative comments or experiences with faculty and administrators.

1 2 3 4

8. I feel there is a lack of freedom to voice opinions.

1 2 3 4

9. I believe and/or have witnessed unfair treatment based on personal characteristics.

1 2 3 4

10. The services and programs that support student cultural development are adequate.

1 2 3 4

DIVERSITY To-Do-List

1. Openly disagree with prejudice/discrimination/racial comments, jokes or actions among those around me.
2. Contribute time to a program(s) that actively confronts the problems of prejudice, discrimination/racism.
3. Be certain that organizations, clubs or other groups in which you hold membership have non-discriminatory policies for membership, and actively recruit members from all groups represented in the school. Initiate corrective action if they do not.
4. Make your school a target for your educational efforts in responding to prejudice/discrimination/racism.
5. Set positive examples for your friends/parents/teachers/administrators by what you say and do on a daily basis.
6. Write letters to the editors and management of all newspapers and television and radio stations expressing support for efforts to reduce prejudice/discrimination/racism.
7. Get to know people of different racial, ethnic, religious, gender, cultural and economic groups.
8. Attend, plan, promote and request social activities in which all people are able to participate.
9. Intervene when someone disrespects or demeans another individual because of their race, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, economic status, etc.
10. Acknowledge and emphasize the fact that not everyone has to act or look the same in order to be a positive contributor to the school climate.
11. Actively help new people in my organization, including women and people of different cultures, races, ages, economic groups and religions to feel welcomed and accepted.
12. Become more aware of the richness of other races, cultures and religions and demonstrate respect for their holidays, traditions and events.
13. Participate in volunteer or community activities that honor diversity.
14. Get others to take the Diversity Pledge.
15. Pass this Diversity To-Do-List to parents, students, teachers, and administrators.

SECTION SIX

Resources

**Building Cultural Bridges
National Educational Service
1252 Loesch Road
P. O. Box 8
Bloomington, IN 47402
(800) 733-6786 Fax (812) 336-7790**

**Teaching Tolerance
Order Department
400 Washington Avenue
Montgomery, Alabama 36104
(334) 956-8200 Fax (334) 956-8486**

**Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission
500 West Markham
Suite 220W
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 244-5483 Fax (501) 244-5467**