

INCLUSION DIVERSITY EQUITY & ACTION

2018-2020 Curricular and Instructional Expressions of Learning

THE JOURNEY STARTS FROM HERE...

In 2018, the Mount Vernon School began to have courageous conversations around the most challenging issues of our day, including diversity, equity, and inclusion. The following IDEA Expressions of Learning are not meant to be an exhaustive or even a performative list of activities, experiences, and projects but intentional demonstrations designed to make continual improvements in amplifying inclusion, diversity, equity, and action at Mount Vernon.

- [Courageous Conversations with Rosetta Lee: Addressing Differences with Grace, Honesty, Sensitivity, and Empathy](#)
 - Lower School: Welcoming Differences
 - Middle School: No Joke Zone and Pump Ups
 - Upper School: Implicit and Unconscious Bias
 - Parents: Parenting with Identity in Mind and Parenting with the Teen Brain in Mind
 - Faculty: Inclusion in the Early Years and Talking to Youth about Heated Topics
 - Administrators: From Safe to Brave and Cross Cultural Communication for Leadership
- [Made in MV Podcast: Courageous Conversations](#)

PRESCHOOL

- Over the past few years, the Preschool has committed to anti-bias education. From bringing in one of the nation's foremost experts in Anti-Bias Education in Early Childhood Education, Debbie LeeKeenan, to summer grant work around the development of resources for teachers, to rolling out new ideas around celebrations, we have continued to build our understanding of implicit bias and anti-bias education. By learning about our own individual implicit biases through many resources such as Harvard University's [Project Implicit](#), the Preschool faculty has been able to help each teacher move further in their own personal journey, helping us as a collective faculty better understand our own next steps.
- Utilizing resources like, *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves* and *Leading Anti-Bias Early Childhood Programs: A guide for change*, both authored by Louise Derman-Sparks, we have reshaped the narrative in our classrooms to be more inclusive and celebratory of each child and their family's culture.
- Preschool's accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) includes several facets of utilizing and documenting resources and practices in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Many of these fall under the Curriculum Standard, more specifically in the Curriculum Content Area for Cognitive Development: Social Studies. A few examples of these specific criterion are: "show or describe two ways you help children learn about the diversity of family structure in society", "show or describe two ways you help children learn specific details about the actual community in which they live", and "show or describe two

ways you help children learn about people with differing abilities.” Within the Relationships Standard, there are several more examples of criterion that refer specifically to diversity and inclusion. “Classroom materials show persons of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds engaged in activities that counteract stereotypical limitations”, and “classroom materials show persons with differing abilities engaged in activities that counteract stereotypical limitations,” are some examples of observable classroom criterion.

- The School’s research has shown us that our youngest learners develop their understanding of differences in those around them as early as infancy, therefore it is our responsibility to make sure we are informed, open, and intentional with our learning and our practices. We strive to be open and honest when questions about differences arise. A great example of this happening in the classroom was the PreK 3 Skin Project. After some questions and wonders from children about why their skin looked different when compared to classmates, the teachers used that opportunity to dive into the science behind skin color, the purpose of skin, the differences in skin tone, and conversations about similarities and differences even beyond skin color.
- [Honors Dr. Martin Luther King’s Legacy](#)

LOWER SCHOOL

- [More than Exhibit: Grade 3 Explores Social Justice](#)
- The most systemic experience that Lower School students and teachers have had in this work has centered around the family-style lunch table. Here small groups of mixed-homeroom, mixed grade levels, have explored questions with a teacher like:
 - What does it mean to be inclusive?
 - What do you do when you encounter someone with different abilities than you?
 - What traditions does your family have at this time of year?
 - What does it mean to be empathetic?
 - How is empathy different from sympathy?
 - What is a community?
 - What are the things in a community we need to feel safe?
 - What has been a time you felt included in your community?
 - Has there ever been a time when you felt left out of your community?
 - What does it mean to be a part of a community?
 - How can I be a part of a community and show empathy?
 - How and why is our community special?
- Through the learning outcome essentialism project, Lower School used a social justice lens of anthropology, psychology, economy, history, and religious facets based on resources from Teaching Tolerance. Project-Based Learning Units have been written around kindness, community, “Sneeches,” and social justice, including the Third Grade Social Justice Museum. Expeditions and Field Trips have been taken to Clarkston, Center of Civil and Human Rights, MLKjr House, and the Beltline, “Is it Grafitti or is it Art?”
- [When Inspiration Becomes a Reality in Clarkston](#)
- All K-2 Classrooms experienced lessons on “Love the Skin You’re In” and designed their own Crayola Skin Color.
- Most grade levels participated in the Global Read Aloud for the past two years.

- Some Lower School Teachers have participated in the Courageous Conversations RDI team and Summer+ Learning, attended Teaching Tolerance Workshops, POCC, and Rosetta Lee's workshops. Monthly, during faculty meetings, new courageous conversations topics are announced and books are shared. Teachers have been challenged by the windows, mirrors, doors mindset as they design their classroom learning environment to ensure all learners can see out into the global world, see themselves reflected in the space, and have a chance to experience people, cultures, and ideas different from their own.
- Facilitated developmentally appropriate conversations and activities that teach students to be accepting and tolerant of differences, utilizing Todd Parr's *It's Okay to be Different* and *The Skin You Live In* by Michael Tyler.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- [MS Students Perform Box & Labeled, Humanities Identity Boxes](#)
- A child's growing sense and clarity of identity -- as well as comfort in being one's authentic self -- was a major theme in Middle School. Community was the primary mechanism for this focus, with the goal of supporting and building student health and well-being. Social-emotional learning, cultural responsiveness, courageous conversations, and character education lessons.
- Weekly chapel lessons have focused on spiritual focal points of God's love for each distinctly unique child, love thy neighbor, Jesus' teachings, and the idea of "better together." These messages were reinforced and enhanced through reflective discussions in Community as well as weekly in Physical Education.
- In grade 6, students explored themes like identity, the hero's journey, and innovation by analyzing the development and evolution of civilizations. Moreover, students began to view themselves as part of a greater story and question how their own identity, innovation, and legacy will impact their world. One example includes a "Your Family/Your History" unit where students explored their ethnic identities to gain insights on Humanities. A personal connection to their family history provided a foundation of understanding of 'story' - where does history come from and whose story is being told. In addition, students have read *The Outsiders*, a story of a boy who finds himself on the outskirts of regular society and builds his own sense of identity.
- Students in grade 7 Humanities investigated the human story through the lens of freedom, the individual and collective struggle to find one's voice, identity, and impact. They explored how the choices and decisions that we make both shape who we are as individuals and affect our society as a whole. Through the study of a variety of historical and contemporary experiences like the Civil Rights Movement, immigration, and the Industrial Revolution, students sought to understand multiple perspectives and develop empathy for others, recognizing that the strength of our country lies in both our unity and diversity. One example includes a unit, "My Moral Compass: How Choices, Ethics, and Beliefs Shape Our Identity," where students explore the power of ethical decision-making and the impact our choices have on society as we read *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Students researched past and present civil rights and human activists as inspiration for their design thinking challenge.
- Students explored World Wars I and II, the impact of colonialism, the Cold War, ideological and economic struggles, peace treaties, and ethnic and social clashes. One example is a unit focusing on xenophobia (domestically and globally) and its effects on civil rights. Excerpts from *The Help* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* were used to show the emotional toll of civil rights violations and

inequality in the pre-Civil Rights Movement era and during the Civil Rights Movement, with emphasis on the march in Selma and voting rights in Mississippi.

- Examples of student experiences focusing on IDEA include the Center for Civil and Human Rights, and interview with a Holocaust survivor, and the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C.
- Recognizing that Middle School students are learning about best practices in interacting with each other, particularly those who are different from us, leaders have placed a stronger emphasis on expectations of civil discourse. A program of a cultural competency was instituted for students using racially insensitive language or behaviors that exhibit racism or prejudice.
- [Expeditions Bring Learning to Life](#)

UPPER SCHOOL

- Class "From Confederate to United Avenue" asked How might we address now, in this moment, the enduring and persistent legacies of slavery? This question served as the backdrop of their explorations into existing Confederate monuments or street signs that require a fuller and more honest accounting of the south's history and its legacy of slavery and racism.
- MLK Jr Day-students attended the No Place for Hate Summit.
- Hosted an external expert to talk about the impact of hip hop on his life for her "Of Thee I Sing" course. He wove in stories from his personal life as a Black male.
- Author Nic Stone (Dear Martin) visited 'And Justice for All' class. Nic also hosted an optional (and open to all) lunch conversation about race, which was highly attended by both students and faculty.
- Hosted Jerushia Graham, visiting artist and speaker, who partnered with Harlem Renaissance class to facilitate students in their exploration and creation of art inspired by African American artist Aaron Douglas.
- Harlem Renaissance classes hosted a migration simulation learning exhibition during Black History Month. It was incredibly powerful, where students stanchioned off the entire 3rd district and took museum goers literally from north to south to explore the nuances and progress across racial divides.
- Algebra II, and two Humanities classes took an expedition to MODA's Design of Dissent exhibit. Teaches collaborated to have the students work to create their own exhibitions depicting injustices that still exist today.
- [iD Students Create Virtual Reality Exhibit for the Center for Civil and Human Rights](#)
- Completed an audit prior to the 2019-2020 school year to ensure the curriculum represents a variety of regions and there is a balance of classes that lean toward social justice and action.
- [Taking Justice Personally](#)
- Multiple classes expanded beyond traditional "American" and "World" for Humanities. Examples include (since 2018):

- Race, Class and Gender
- And Justice for All
- From Confederate to United Avenue
- Is the Middle East Really that Far?
- Women Writers
- Power Standards and Learning Outcomes added in Humanities 2020:
 - Power standard section titled “Engage as a Global Citizen” added for the 2019-202 school year.
 - The student can demonstrate empathy through examining the rights and responsibilities of the individual, in relation to a larger social group.
 - The student can explore how time and place influence our understanding of human beings and their world view and apply that empathy to inform decisions and actions on public issues. The student can evaluate the tensions between the wants and needs of individuals and groups and concepts such as fairness, equity, and justice.
- [We Rise by Lifting Others](#)
- [The Joy of the Journey in Morocco](#)
- Text choices expanded beyond primarily white, male authors intentionally to decolonize the Humanities curriculum, this included the following texts/authors (these ones are only the ones added since 2018)
 - Dear Martin*, Nic Stone
 - Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison
 - Kindred*, Octavia Butler
 - Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison
 - The Hate U Give*, Angie Thomas
 - Never Let Me Go*, Kazuo Ishiguro
 - The Joy Luck Club*, Amy Tan
 - Americanah*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
 - I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou
- Creation of self audit and reflection tools for teachers to use as a way to check their own curricular choices and biases.
- 2019-2020 school year reads for faculty included resources from Teaching Tolerance, equityxdesign, Getting Smart.
- [Innovation Diploma Consults at Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota](#)
- US Theatre Program premiered an original piece focused on the immigrant, refugee, foreigner experience. The piece was based on the graphic novel *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan and produced with special agreement from the publisher.
- In the spring of 2018, after a 1-year process of developing an innovative framework for arts education, the Arts Department proposed 7 new buckets for arts education. There were the purposes/reasons that could be applied to disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary arts experiences with diversity, inclusion, and social justice woven throughout.
 - Creating as play (creating for fun)
 - Creating for beauty (creating what you and others find aesthetically pleasing)
 - Creating with others (creating to build community/collaborate)

- Creating for others (art for social change/social justice)
- Creating to make sense of things (processing/therapy)
- Creating for living/building (architecture)
- Creating to illuminate diverse narratives (perspective/give context)