

Maplewood PCEP Edmonds, WA

Diversity Plan



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Introduction

Maplewood K-8 Parent Cooperative Education Program (PCEP) is a public school within the Edmonds School District (ESD). Families play a much larger role in the education of children at this school than is typical at most public schools. Participating families agree to commit to working three to four hours per week per child, to serve on one classroom committee per child, to attend monthly parent meetings, and to provide transportation for a minimum of two field trips per year per child. In addition, families commit to support the PCEP financially at the rate of \$20 per child per month of the school year (10 months in total), in order to provide funding for a wide variety of educational and extracurricular activities. The Maplewood PCEP program provides great educational benefits to our students that would be impossible without the generous contributions of so many families.

Because Maplewood PCEP requires such a large commitment from parents or caregivers, some potential families do not consider attending because their work schedules preclude them from the partnership. Consequently, Maplewood has a less diverse population than the other elementary and middle schools in the Edmonds School District. This impedes the school's attempt to follow the mission of the school district and Maplewood PCEP to provide the best possible educational environment for all potential Maplewood students.

Therefore, we have prepared this plan to help create a diverse school that better represents the students and families of the Edmonds School District, thus providing better opportunities for our students to become "citizens of the world."

Missions of ESD and PCEP

Edmonds School District Mission and Vision:

To advocate for all students by providing a learning environment which empowers students, staff and the community to maximize their personal, creative and academic potential in order to become life-long learners and responsible world citizens.

Maplewood PCEP:

To provide the best education possible for our children, utilizing the many diverse skills of parents, teachers, and children.

To foster a family-orientated program where children, teachers, and parents are equal participants in an enriched environment that nurtures a life-long love of learning and respects the uniqueness of each individual.

Creating the School We Want to Be

We value diversity, and we believe that differences among people provide a rich and vital context for the effective emotional, intellectual, psychological, and social development of our students. We believe that multiple perspectives and a range of world views enliven learning and stimulate best teaching practices. Diversity benefits both the community – by valuing and drawing from all of its members – and the individual – by recognizing the inherent worth in each person, and by exposing everyone to other cultures, perspectives, and viewpoints.

We therefore want to create a school community that includes, supports and welcomes children and families of all backgrounds and life experiences including but not limited to ability/disability, age, beliefs, cultural and ethnic background, gender, gender identity and expression, learning differences, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic class. We want to be a school in which our programs and interpersonal relationships affirm and respect the dignity and worth of each member of our community.

We want our students to develop the attitudes and skills needed to act with compassion and justice, interact productively with others, and to respect each other. We will continue to address these issues throughout our educational program in age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate ways. Further, we seek to improve cultural competency throughout our entire school community.

Our Goals

Diversity is a primary way to help implement the District mission and PCEP vision. Without diversity we only advocate and empower some, and we do not teach our students to become responsible world citizens. Therefore, Maplewood PCEP has set diversity goals, in alignment with the District mission.

- Create a school atmosphere where people from all backgrounds and life experiences, regardless of ability/disability, age, beliefs, cultural and ethnic background, gender, gender identity and expression, learning differences, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic class or other differences feel included, important, supported and welcomed.
- Use district-adopted instructional and supplemental materials to provide an educational curriculum that complies with all district educational policies and is inclusive and sensitive to differences.
- Use community service activities and other actions to help our students develop the attitudes and skills they need to understand one another and to act with compassion and justice.

- Use instructional technology, literature, multi-media, and peer-group interactions to provide multiple perspectives and a range of worldviews to enliven learning and stimulate best teaching practices.

Plan Initiatives

The purpose of the diversity plan is to build a school culture that includes, supports, and welcomes all members of the school community. The plan will be implemented over time and will focus on the most pressing issues facing our school. The plan addresses three critical areas of school life:

- School Environment
- Outreach and Retention
- Parent Education and Professional Development

The responsibility for this plan will be shared by the PCEP Board and the PCEP diversity committee along with the school leadership team. We expect the entire school community to participate in achieving the goals.

The diversity committee will monitor implementation of this plan and establish a calendar of regular reports regarding progress on each of the initiatives of the plan. The diversity committee will use this information as the basis for annual reports to the full board and to the broader school community.

School Environment

The environment of our school is shaped by the assumptions, behaviors, expectations and norms of all members of our school community. In order to create a climate in which each member of our community feels included, welcome, and well served, we must assure that our school's operations and programs are characterized by clear, consistent, and fair expectations and accountability. Without this institutional foundation, the initiatives outlined in this plan cannot achieve their full effect. This plan addresses school environment in these areas: education, engagement, and enrichment; and welcoming new families.

Education, Engagement, and Enrichment

The engagement of current families in the life of the school is critical to creating a welcoming environment. Because the community conversations focus on engendering kindness, respect and relationship building as keys to creating a welcoming school culture, we encourage all members of our school community to participate in these conversations and other related activities, such as speakers and diversity events.

The purpose of these conversations is to provide an atmosphere for school-wide discussions about diversity. These strategies foster self-reflection, dialogue, and ultimately, a shared community-wide commitment to inclusivity. These conversations promote a sense of individual and shared responsibility for welcoming and supporting all members of the school community. Examples of these conversations include:

- Guest speakers
- Cultural Competency trainings
- Planned assemblies such as:
 - MLK Day
 - Black History Month
 - Native American Awareness
 - Latino Heritage
 - Living Voices
- Community building work with our Maplewood Center partners
- International Night as an opportunity to share different cultures
- Decorations and educational material on display throughout the school reflect the school's commitment to diversity

Welcoming and Orienting New Families to the School

The school assesses and changes, as needed, the current program for welcoming and orienting new families to the school in order to create broad support for new families and students. The orientation of new families leads to the development of meaningful relationships between current and new families and key school personnel. We strive to prepare new families to understand the protocols, procedures, and structure of our parent cooperative. The welcoming process should use inclusive language, noting that families of many backgrounds are accommodated and made comfortable at our school. We will strive to utilize Natural Leaders and to provide interpreters to make all members of the Edmonds School District feel welcome at Maplewood K-8 PCEP.

Outreach and Retention

Outreach to Diverse Communities

We are committed to enrolling students from all of the communities represented within the Edmonds School District municipalities of Bothell, Brier, Edmonds, Lynnwood, Mountlake Terrace and Woodway at Maplewood K-8 PCEP. Active participation in the Equity Alliance for Achievement (EAACH)¹ committee, the Natural Leaders² program,

¹ The Equity Alliance for Achievement is a district-wide parent advisory group with a representative from each school. The group strives to increase participation among parents and families not traditionally involved in school activities. Additional information is available at <http://www.edmonds.wednet.edu/19631071414134233/blank/browse.asp?A=383&BMDRN=2000&BCOB=0&C=57086>.

and ongoing work with the community relations department of the Edmonds School District will ensure a global effort to share information about our parent cooperative program with members of the diverse communities represented within the school district. Additionally, information about Maplewood K-8 PCEP will be shared with licensed daycare centers and preschool directors using contacts established through the Gates Early Learning grant.

An ad hoc committee comprised of district and school leaders from Maplewood K-8 PCEP and Madrona Nongraded will meet once or twice a year to review the lottery guidelines (adopted by the Edmonds School Board) and to ensure equitable access to these programs of choice. Equitable access to Maplewood K-8 PCEP and Madrona Nongraded will be made through frequent and ongoing communications from Natural Leaders, EAACH representatives, key communicators with the Gates Early Learning grant, and visible participation in the District Information Fair.

Retention

A false impression exists that most Maplewood families are comprised of one parent working outside the home and the other electing to stay at home. Many of our families seek to balance employment and volunteerism. We recognize the commitments to the Maplewood K-8 PCEP, particularly volunteering three to four hours per week, may be difficult for all families to meet. It is the intent of school and parent leaders to honor the mission of the cooperative to provide support for learners during the school day while providing access for all parents to share their skills and talents with our learning community. Therefore, limited volunteer opportunities may exist at the higher grades before and after school, but not to the exclusion of Maplewood's primary mission of having parents support and enhance the classroom experience.

PARENT EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We are lifelong learners and believe that continuous education is a key to success. Staff and volunteers work together to enhance learning experiences for our students. Professional development goals include best teaching practices in the arts, literacy, mathematics, social studies and the sciences with emphasis on modeling the attitudes, behaviors and skills that enable diverse groups to work together. We are committed to the mission of the Edmonds School District to provide a learning environment which empowers all students, staff and the community to maximize their personal, creative and academic potential in order to become lifelong learners and responsible world citizens.

² The Natural Leaders program is made up of multi-cultural families at schools that are identified as warm, caring, social individuals to serve as a bridge between families/community and schools. These families help isolated families connect to schools and therefore, increase family engagement in their children's education. Additional information is available at <http://www.edmonds.wednet.edu/19631071414134233/blank/browse.asp?A=383&BMDRN=2000&BCOB=0&C=57084>