

Our Commitment to Equity

Embracing best practices in diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice school-wide, from the boardroom to the classroom.

“Love and Justice are not two. Without inner change, there can be no outer change. Without collective change, no change matters.”

-Rev. angel Kyoto williams

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KINDNESS

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INCLUSION

From the Head of School

At Turning Point, we live by our mission: *We open our doors every day to create a dynamic learning community in which each child grows into their best self.*

Our commitment to foster the development of every child to thrive in a complex and interconnected world guides our actions. We cultivate our dynamic, inclusive community with **belonging** as a prerequisite for thriving.

Belonging is more than participating; it is constructing a place where everyone is deeply accepted for who they are. It means everyone sees themselves reflected in mirrors and learns about others through windows. No one must downplay or renounce parts of themselves in order to feel accepted or to gain access to the full benefits of the community.

Turning Point has made it a strategic priority to create and foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community. We use the lenses of equity, inclusion, antiracism, and anti-bias to approach

teaching and learning, to guide our relationships with each other and our students, and to ensure that our school policies address systems that underlie inequities.

We invite and expect our community members to challenge stereotypes and to create a space where children can become the types of leaders we need in our increasingly interconnected and complex world—those who hold respect, justice, and love at the center of their orientation.

Thank you for your interest in this important work, which we strive to undertake with never-ending curiosity and unflinching self-examination. I look forward to continuing and evolving our collective, continuing journey in the months and years to come.

Warmly,
Laura Konigsberg
Dr. Laura Konigsberg
Head of School

“As children grow, building a positive sense of identity—
informed in part by social categories like race, gender,
religion, social class, and more—is critical to healthy
development, and ultimately, to their life outcomes
and success. Most often, children learn about and
explore their identities through open conversations and
experiences with the nurturing adults in their lives.”

- Sesame Street study



Being a “dynamic learning community” requires Turning Point to do the work necessary to create and maintain an inclusive, equitable space where all members—students, faculty, staff, and families—can show up each day as their authentic selves and experience true belonging.



Defining “The Work”

What does it mean to *do the work*? Working toward inclusion and equity means simultaneously focusing outward on the world and inward on our own selves. Doing “the work” requires us to take a hard look at our blind spots, assumptions, and projections. Contributing to causes that foster equity and justice outside ourselves is critical, and we need to understand the ways in which the biases and prejudices we wish to fight in the world exist in us as well.

It is not unrelated to psychologist Carl Jung’s conception of “the shadow,” which he defined as the “disowned self.”

- When we defend our own self-image from anything painful or unflattering, we **disown** these parts of ourselves in the hopes that they will disappear. However, while burying uncomfortable biases and flaws may keep them out of our consciousness where we cannot access them, they still influence our behaviors and actions; ultimately, they get projected onto others.
- Jung believed when we work to **own** these qualities, we create abundant opportunities for growth—allowing us to integrate how we view ourselves and how we want to behave, which allows us to do so through an authentic, empathetic lens.

“Doing the work” means, in part, exploring the disowned parts of ourselves with curiosity and unflinching examination. At Turning Point, we encourage our faculty, staff, and families to unearth their hidden thoughts and biases in order to see, understand, and transform them.

Our Roadmap

As defined in Turning Point’s [Strategic Priorities](#), “culture and community” comprises one of four main pillars that guide our school’s work and serve as our roadmap for positive, adaptive change.

We ask ourselves: *“How do we continue to foster a highly inclusive, engaged community?”*

We know that a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment improves learning outcomes for all students. By using a lens of equity antiracism and anti-bias to approach teaching and learning, to guide our relationships with each other and with our students, and to inform school policies, we can ensure that every member of our community experiences a true sense of belonging—allowing us all to thrive.

CHANGE
THE
WORLD

Our work is based upon the concepts of diversity, equity, inclusion, & anti-racism:

Diversity | Representation

Each of us brings a unique perspective to the conversation and community, based on our social backgrounds, identities, and experiences. To this end, an individual isn't "diverse"; rather, "diverse" describes a group of people comprised of individuals who differ from each other. When we understand why people from various backgrounds, particularly those who have not been historically represented, should be heard, valued, and represented, we bring a greater number of experiences to the table—which ultimately benefits everyone.

Equity | Eliminating Barriers

Equity is the *proportional* distribution of desirable outcomes across groups so that any individual's identity (such as race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, etc.) does not pre-determine their educational, economic, social, or political opportunities. Sometimes confused with **equality**, which means giving everyone the same resources, **equity** in an educational setting means giving each student access to the resources *they* need to learn and thrive—understanding that each child is different. In other words, **equality** equals *sameness* while **equity** equals *fairness*.

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EQUITY

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ADVOCACY

Inclusion | Belonging

True inclusion promotes broad engagement, shared participation, and advances an authentic sense of belonging through safe, positive, and nurturing environments. To be inclusive is to authentically welcome traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision-making processes in a way that shares power and does not assume assimilation.

Justice | Repair and Restore

Based on principles of equity and inclusion, social justice encompasses a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Participants in social justice have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and toward society as a whole.

Anti-racism | Acting

Being anti-racist is to be critically aware of the existence of racism and to understand how it is systemic. An anti-racist person actively seeks to acknowledge the impacts of racism and how it can intersect with other forms of bias such as sexism, classism, ableism, and genderism (among others). Anti-racism is usually structured around conscious efforts and deliberate actions to provide equitable opportunities for all people on an individual and systemic level.

[These are the Guiding Questions](#) that inform our work in committing to equity.

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GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

MAKE HISTORY

School Culture

Creating a school culture where we all understand and embrace differences requires us to first see and acknowledge differences.

When we nullify differences in favor of likenesses, the “likeness” is often anchored in culturally dominant norms: white, middle class, heteronormative, able-bodied, Christian. Defaulting to these invisible norms invites “color blindness,” a well-meaning gesture that attempts to find commonality among different groups but instead can further divide us through its use of a single lens to view issues and identity.

Work we have done to strengthen our school culture includes:

Professional Development

As professional educators, we have committed ourselves to learn more through books, articles, workshops, speakers, and courses.

The creation and adoption of “[courageous conversations](#)” and “courageous actions” protocol have helped faculty and staff to have more authentic conversations and effective interventions with each other and with students.

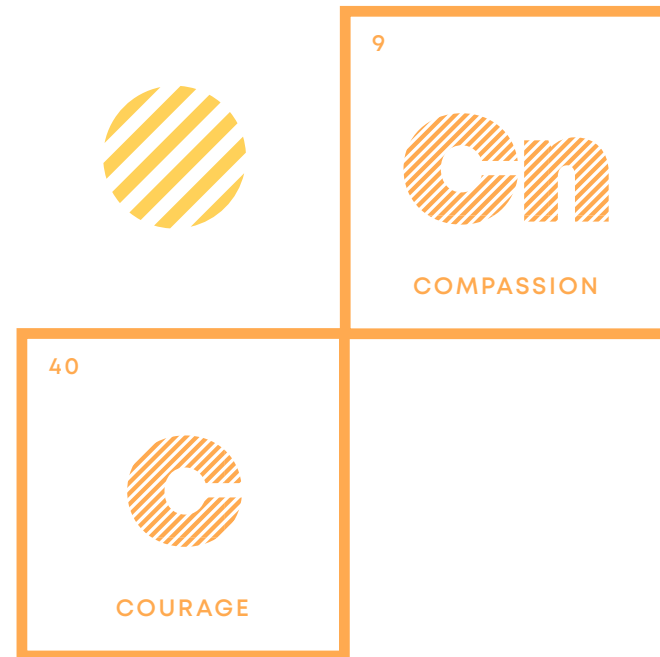
Several all-school reading assignments have equipped our faculty and staff with a deeper understanding of issues and perspectives surrounding race, bias, and equity. Selections have included:

- [So You Want to Talk About Race](#) by Ijeoma Oluo
- [Waking Up White](#) by Debby Irving
- [How to be an Anti-Racist](#) by Ibram X. Kendi (as part of an all-community read with parents)
- [Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City](#) by Matthew Desmond
- [Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People](#) by Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald
- [Under Pressure: Confronting the Epidemic of Stress and Anxiety in Girls](#) by Lisa Damour

Additionally, in 2020, the Board of Trustees implemented a Board committee focused on diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice in support of and in service to the school’s DEIJ initiatives.

“How do we swim against the tide of a culture that has historically been ineffective at talking about issues related to race and identity?”

-Elizabeth Denevi



Engaging with Consultants (Faculty/Staff and Parents)

Elizabeth Denevi: In 2018, Turning Point worked with [Elizabeth Denevi](#), a consultant who works with schools to increase equity, promote diversity pedagogy, and implement strategic processes for growth and development. Ms. Denevi shared research that demonstrates why diverse and inclusive school communities increase critical thinking and problem-solving skills for all children.

Questions we explored as a community include:

- *How do we swim against the tide of a culture that has historically been ineffective at talking about issues related to race and identity?*
- *How do we make sure children of color do not have to educate us about race, and how race impacts their school experience?*
- *How do we ensure that we do not give rise to another generation of white students who, at best, feel bad about being white, and who, at worst, promote racial stereotypes and prejudice?*

Dr. Derrick Gay: Since 2018, the school has been engaged with Chicago-based consultant [Dr. Derrick Gay](#) to practice and activate diversity, equity, and inclusion conversations into the broader community.

With Dr. Gay’s guidance, we have moved from understanding the skills, mindsets, and cultural competencies our children need to succeed in a multicultural social environment, to how we can have [courageous conversations](#) with our students and with each other about race, to leveraging these skills into action.

Concurrently, parents and caregivers are invited to participate in their own journeys and to commit to a deeper understanding of racism and antiracist mindsets and actions. In an ongoing Parent Speaker Series, Dr. Gay provides parents with insight into the skills they need to navigate these critical conversations with their children and with each other.

In addition to our work with Ms. Denevi and Dr. Gay, Turning Point has welcomed [Michael Thompson, Ph.D.](#), [Susan Landon](#), and [Katie Hurley, LCSW](#), to each speak with adults in the community about raising children with gender in mind.

GROW YOUR SELF

Academics and Curriculum

Key to our work in teaching and engaging students is the development of anti-biased, anti-racist curricula, resources, and multi-modal teaching strategies that focus on the individual and myriad ways children learn and process information. To date, we have engaged in the following work:

DEIJ Scope and Sequence

This document serves as Turning Point's main guide to specific learning outcomes and resources for each grade level, and is organized in three sections: diversity, equity, and identity. Teaching with these outcomes in mind leads to greater inclusion and justice.

[View our DEIJ Scope and Sequence](#)

Tenets of an Antiracist Curriculum

To establish an anti-racist curriculum, it is crucial that lessons revolving around diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and identity are integrated fluidly throughout the curriculum. Under the guidance of Division Heads and the Director of Teaching and Learning, our teachers worked in grade-level teams and departmental-level groups to discuss and brainstorm best practices in:

- Enhancing literature selections, classroom resources, and learning environments with anti-racist pedagogy and practice
- Ways an anti-racist framework can be incorporated beyond core subjects such as Language Arts and Social Studies to include other subjects such as Math and Science

To guide teachers in this planning, we created these [Tenets of an Anti-Racist Curriculum](#)



Essential Questions in Grades 3-8

Each year in Grades 3-8, we create “essential questions” which serve as guides and themes for that year’s literature selections and the ensuing discussions and assignments.

Each essential question aligns with our DEIJ Scope and Sequence, ensuring that students examine history and literature through multiple perspectives and experiences. Linking curriculum to DEIJ-themed essential questions also allows for depth over breadth, which we know is essential for student learning and engagement.

[View our Essential Questions](#)

Literature Diversity Audit

This audit system, run in collaboration with the Library, ensures we are monitoring diverse and inclusive representation in our core literature and book club programs, not just in individual grade levels but over the duration of a student’s time at Turning Point. This system tracks not only whom we are representing, but also how.

Implementation of Anti-Bias Focus and Lessons in our Early Childhood Division

Based on the DEI Scope and Sequence, we also created Developmental Milestones for Diversity, Equity, and Identity for our Early Childhood Division (Preschool and Pre-K), with goals centered around identity, diversity, justice, and activism.

[Early Childhood Goals for Identity, Diversity, Justice, and Activism](#)

YOU ME EVERY ONE

Student Well-Being

At Turning Point School, the concept of “well-being” sits at the foundation of everything we do. We are committed to supporting a 360-degree view of our students—intellectually, socially, physically, ethically, and emotionally. We are equally committed to caring for the well-being of our wider community, including faculty/staff, parents, and other caregivers.

While well-being is woven into the fabric of our school, specific initiatives include:

Restorative Justice

In 2018, Turning Point implemented a [restorative justice approach](#) to discipline for students in upper elementary/middle school grades which capitalizes on the impromptu “teachable moments” that invariably arise. Students are empowered to “repair the harm” when they have broken community agreements or when their intention does not match their impact.

Family Groups and Mentoring Programs

Turning Point multi-age [Family Groups](#) and other mentoring opportunities allow younger children to see “mirrors and windows” in older peers.

Learning Support

At Turning Point, we know that each student has a unique [positive equation for achievement](#) that encompasses fundamental intellectual, social, physical, ethical, and emotional elements. As such, every student at Turning Point has an individualized learning plan which allows teachers and specialists to ensure each child has access to the tools they need to learn optimally.

Additionally, a full-time, in-house Student Learning Support Coordinator supports teachers in incorporating multimodal teaching strategies and scaffolds work with small groups of students when needed.



The Road Ahead

As we continue our planning and implementation of DEIJ work at Turning Point School, the following action steps will guide our progress:

Institutional/Administrative

- Creation of a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice vision statement
- Human Resources
- Continue to review our hiring practices to mitigate bias
- Nurture more pipelines for underrepresented candidates
- Engage in additional Human Resource professional development to ensure we are disrupting processes and practices that perpetuate bias in the workplace
- Deepen the training for members of our governance and leadership teams to better understand and fully embrace their roles in diversity, equity, and inclusion work
- Further review of school policies and procedures to ensure our impact as an institution matches our intention
- Specific ongoing training in DEIJ practices for our administrative team, including the ability to recognize and mitigate characteristics of systemic racism that can show up in workplaces and schools

Community

- Dissemination of a school-wide Climate Survey
- Continued partnerships with community organizations that work to support, protect, and elevate the experience of Black and other BIPOC students in independent schools, such as [Private School Village](#) and [Private School Axis](#).
- The launch of affinity groups (for faculty/staff, parents, and older students) that reflect how the school’s mission, vision, and values intersect with diversity, equity, and inclusion

Curricular

- Extension of our [Restorative Justice](#) practices to all grade levels
- Continued implementation of antiracist curricula and pedagogy, and ongoing training for faculty and staff
- Revision of faculty and staff assessments to include cultural competency metrics

Governance

- Continued DEIJ training for our Board of Trustees, under the guidance and leadership of the DEIJ Board committee.

Resources

We are proud of how our community continues to engage in these important conversations as we strive to seek diversity and value equity at all levels of our school. Below are a few specific resources that have guided us in our ongoing work. Certainly, there are many more organizations, thought leaders, and resources that offer expertise, so we encourage you to do your own exploring as you join us in your own commitment to equity.

[Dr. Derrick Gay](#)
(Diversity and Inclusion Strategist)

[Learning for Justice](#)
(formerly Teaching Tolerance)

[Facing History & Ourselves](#)

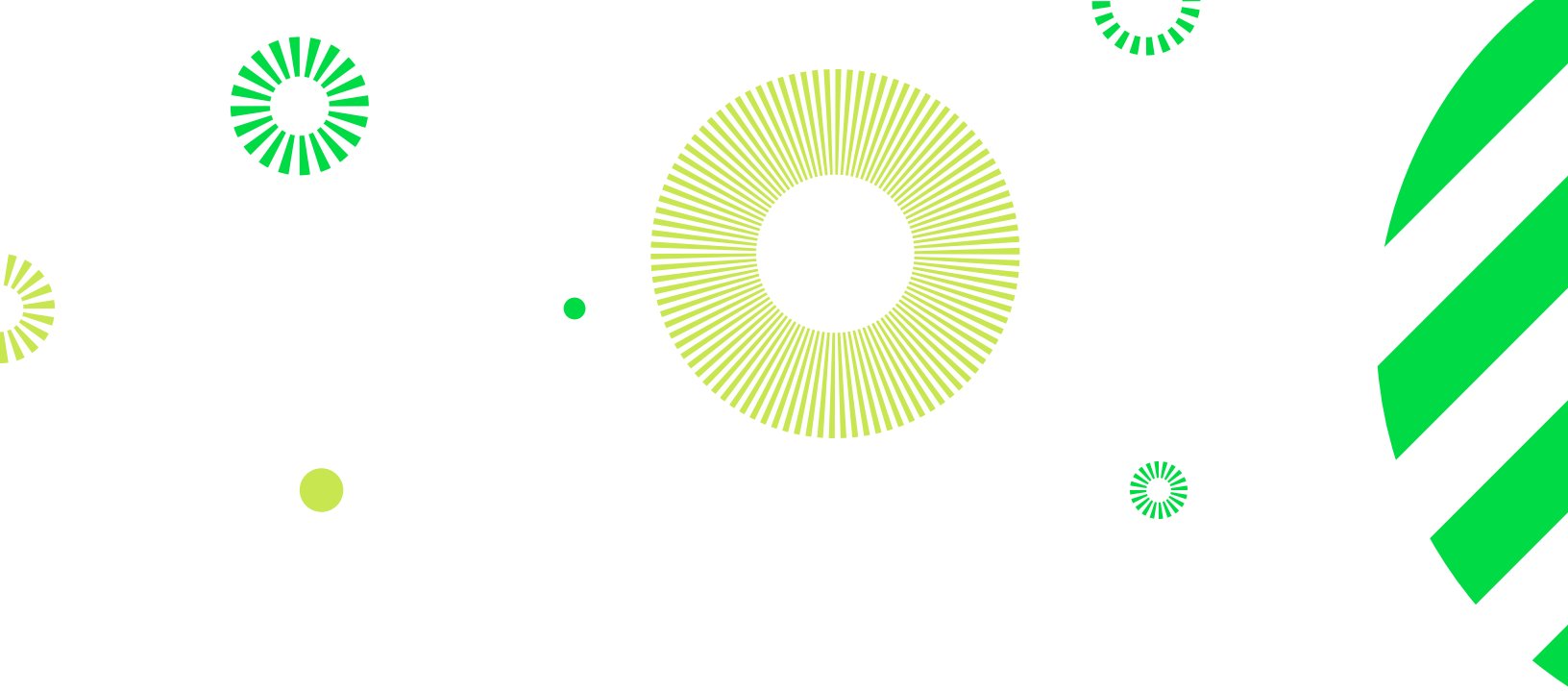
[Restorative Justice Educator Toolkit](#)
(Restorative Resources)

[Anti-Bias Education Resources](#)
(Anti-Defamation League)

[Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture](#) (by Tema Okun, [dRworks](#))

[Teaching for Change](#)

Please visit turningpointschool.org/deij for a complete list of links and resources that demonstrate how this important work translates into action.



“We open our doors **every day to create a **dynamic learning community** in which **each child** grows into their best self.”**

About Turning Point: Located in iconic Culver City, California, Turning Point School serves approximately 300 students in Preschool-Grade 8.

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