

# St. Paul Academy and Summit School Diversity Action Plan 2011-2012

## *Educating our children to be culturally competent in a global community*

In 2001, the Independent School Association of the Central States (ISACS) looked at the diversity in our community during their regular accreditation visit. While the organization commended us for making diversity a high priority, they also recommended that we “revisit the diversity policy and establish a task force...to develop a strategic plan that can be implemented in a timely way.” SPA therefore convened a Diversity Steering Committee, and after consulting and planning with faculty, staff, and parents, the committee composed a Diversity Action Plan.

This document reflects the areas in which the school feels necessary to continually evaluate, based on the board resolution of February 2006 which lists the five key components to a diverse school community. The Diversity Dean will provide the leadership for the Diversity Action Plan. The Dean will also monitor and assess the work.

### **Section I: The school will seek to achieve a diverse population.**

The school will seek to achieve a diverse population, both of students and adults, to the end that each learns from the other and the aggregate gains from the whole. A more inclusive school will generally better prepare all students for the social, intellectual and spiritual challenges they will face as they become productive members and leaders in society.

The school will continue to work to make newcomers welcome especially in the admission process and in the opening weeks of each year and semester, since the start of any process of change usually requires special attention.

#### **Initiatives:**

Continue to increase diversity by recruiting and graduating larger numbers of diverse students.

Continue to provide additional financial support for students.

Develop new strategies to support new students with diverse backgrounds.

## **Section II: The school is committed to employing a diverse and highly qualified faculty and staff.**

The school is committed to employing a diverse and highly qualified faculty and will comply with all applicable equal employment opportunity laws and regulations in making its employment-related decisions.

### **Initiatives:**

Continue to increase diversity in the adult community. Determine strategies to hire and support more faculty and staff of color with a goal that each child has at least one teacher of color. All adults are to be child-focused and culturally competent.

Seek to provide mentors for new teachers.

Promote life-long learning opportunities for all faculty and staff that support the diversity mission of the school.

Gather and evaluate information about departures to assess the community for supporting a diverse faculty.

## **Section III: The climate and culture of the school are key ingredients to success.**

The climate and culture of the school are key ingredients to success as a diverse and welcoming place. SPA will be a community of learners who want to learn from each other and who, through the exercise of shared values and expectations, work to make the school's environment one of inclusiveness, of active learning, and of friendship.

It is important that attention be paid to the tenor and tone of interactions in school settings, both formal and informal. Accordingly, kindness, compassion, and respect are key values and lead to sensitive communication in a good school.

### **Initiatives:**

Plan to broaden and enrich faculty and staff experience with all students and with each other. Support opportunities for professional and social interactions outside of the classroom.

Take a proactive approach to identifying the need for and providing support.

Further develop support for students to be and feel successful at SPA.

Provide a more welcoming atmosphere for parents and students with diverse backgrounds.

Continue student/faculty community forums to discuss diversity issues.

## **Section IV: The courses offered by the school should reflect a commitment to multi-cultural and multi-ethnic learning.**

The courses offered by the school should reflect a commitment to multi-cultural and multi-ethnic learning. This is generally demonstrated within a course by the choice of texts and topic, and among the courses by the topics and content. Teaching approaches should also reflect a knowledge and understanding of the varying backgrounds and experiences of our school community, as well as out state, our nation, and our world.

### **Initiatives:**

Integrate diverse and multicultural topics and perspectives in the curriculum to ensure a commitment to a multi-faceted learning experience for all students.

Create a means by which teachers can periodically share diversity lessons/units in their classrooms with the broader community.

Regularly evaluate the progress of incorporating diversity in the K-12 curriculum.

## **Section V: The activities and extra-curricular programs of the school should encourage inclusiveness.**

The activities and extra-curricular programs of the school should encourage inclusiveness. School social events should be crafted to appeal to all.

### **Initiatives:**

Strengthen co-curricular programs/activities to reflect a commitment to multi-cultural and multi-ethnic learning.

Plan activities that are financially accessible to all students.

Provide opportunities for new ways of self-expression for students (e.g., poetry slams, affinity groups, etc.).

Create opportunities to allow individual students to work with adults on issues of diversity.