



## Riverbend Environmental Education Center Diversity Equity and Inclusion Plan 2022 - 2024

# Introduction



## **Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee of the Board, July 2021 - December 2022:**

Jon Stump, Committee Chairperson  
Bryan Franey, Board of Directors Chairperson  
Erin Reilly, Executive Director  
Julia Boyer  
Jill Shashaty  
Erin McCool  
K'ya Jackson

## **Riverbend DEI Statement**

Riverbend Environmental Education Center – located near the remnants of a Civil War encampment and occupying shores that were once a summer fishing site of the Lenape tribe – inherits the complex, painful legacies of racism, genocide, and violence against the environment. Today, while acknowledging this past, we simultaneously recognize the ongoing effects of these legacies as our society continues to suffer from white supremacy, violence against women and LGBTQIA communities, the marginalization of indigenous peoples and disregard for their sovereignty, and the degradation of the ecosystems that sustain us all.

It is with mindfulness of these profound challenges that we take up our mission to connect people to nature, equitably advancing environmental literacy through outdoor STEM education and free play in nature, while empowering children and adults to take action to conserve Earth's resources.

As environmental educators, we know that natural environments with greater biodiversity are stronger and more resilient. In turn, we aspire to be an ever more diverse, inclusive, and equitable organization. We commit to building a community where both our staff members and the students, educators, and families we serve, feel valued, respected, and engaged.

While we understand that this work of anti-racism, decolonization, and environmental justice will always be unfinished and often challenging, we dedicate ourselves to ongoing institutional transformation, transparency, reflection, and dialogue with the communities we serve.

– Board and Staff of Riverbend Environmental Education Center,  
December 2022

# Goal #1: Internal Practices

- Promote and celebrate diversity, equity, inclusion within Riverbend
- Foster respectful, inclusive, and equitable communication practices throughout all levels of the organization

## Action

1.1 Secure a board commitment to formalize an ongoing financial commitment to DE&I efforts.

1.3 Incorporate equity language into mission, vision, values of Riverbend or contemplate adopting a DEI statement and supporting values. Ensure that the scope of equity incorporates concepts of race, gender, sexuality, and class.

1.5 Involve the board in understanding the DEI action plan and ensure they continue to understand why we are prioritizing efforts to advance race equity and how that work connects to the organization's mission, vision, and values. Continue to present DEI updates at upcoming meetings.

1.7 Evaluate hiring policies and incorporate practices that promote inclusivity (ie, posting salary ranges, etc.)

## Timing

1.2 December 2022, Owner: DEI Committee

1.4 December 2022, Owner: DEI Committee

1.6 Quarterly, Owner: DEI Committee

1.8 Quarterly at Staff meeting, Owner: Executive Director

# Goal #1: Internal Practices Continued

- Promote and celebrate diversity, equity, inclusion within Riverbend
- Foster respectful, inclusive, and equitable communication practices throughout all levels of the organization

## Action

1.9 Look at policies in general and ensure that expectations around tolerance and inclusiveness are incorporated.

1.11 Incorporate any considerations around access and accommodation when hosting events or having children/guests on the property.

1.13 Generate a baseline understanding of cultural norms of a more dominant/individualistic culture vs a more open and inclusive one.

Work to identify any organizational practices that can be addressed to transform to a more inclusive perspective.

1.15 Look into options for storing, managing, and sharing DEI resources to promote continuous learning vs one off training

## Timing

1.10 2023, Owner: Executive Director

1.12 2024, Owner: DEI Committee

1.14 Quarterly, at Staff Meeting, Owner: Executive Director

1.16 2023, Owner: DEI Committee

# Goal #2: Resource Management

- Have hiring practices of both staff and Board that represent a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion
- Have a performance management process that incorporates DE&I considerations

## Action

2.1 Look to purposely incorporate a focus on diverse board candidates.

Establish a metric for ensuring that the board composition is reflective of the communities that Riverbend serves.

2.3 Evaluate performance management practices and incorporate expectations around equity and inclusion.

Work to document and plan for leadership development opportunities for staff and ensure equitable access to any opportunities provided

## Timing

2.2 2023, Owner: Board Governance Committee

2.4 2023, Owner: DEI Committee



# Goal #3: Learning and Development

- Provide access to tools and resources to learn about, discuss, and ask questions about issues and topics related to DE&I

## Action

3.1 Take an approach of having a rotating member of staff share on topics/ideas/observations in the DEI space on a monthly basis.

3.3 Review staff training to ensure educators have an understanding of culturally responsive teaching

## Timing

3.2 Monthly, Owner: Executive Director

3.4 Completed at staff training in September 2022, annually thereafter. Owner: Education Operations Manager



# Goal #4: Connecting Externally

- Promote Riverbend’s diversity, equity, inclusion commitment and efforts externally
- Ensure our processes of connecting with stakeholder outside the organization incorporate DE&I considerations

## Action

4.1 Develop key messages associated with DEI work (ie, enhancements to mission/vision/values, community engagement efforts, educational program work, etc.). Define a communications plan to incorporate key messages into branding and promotional materials.

4.3 Co-design process and community building: What is our process for co-design of programs with communities and building ongoing relationships in the schools which we partner?

4.5 Incorporate a physical market/totem on the property to recognize and share in the history of the indigenous Lenape community whose land Riverbend once was.

4.7 Ensure there is an approach for generating involvement and engagement of the community/donors that are diverse and reflect the communities most impacted by Riverbend's work.

## Timing

4.2 2023, Owner: Communications Manager

4.4 2023, Owner: Education Operations Manager

4.6 Longer term. Suggestion to postpone until decolonization Steps 1,2,3 are complete

4.8 2023, Owner: Executive Director

# Goal #5: Educational Programs

- Ensure Riverbend's educational programs are reflective of DE&I considerations

## Action

5.1 Create surveys for selected educational programs to test keywords in our lesson plans, build DEI questions into our surveys, incorporate reflective questions into EE's post-class surveys

5.3 Evaluate any opportunity to extend our relationship with PAEE

5.5 Investigate how might honor indigenous ways of knowing to inform/reshape/contextualize the Western science tools we use and teach.

5.7 Incorporate environmental justice considerations into educational programming

## Timing

5.2 Survey one program in 22/23 school year, using UD as a template. Review results as a team, or at staff meeting as a weekly topic. Launch reflective questions in spring '23, Owner: Education Operations Manager

5.4 2023, Owner: Education Operations Manager

5.6 2023, Owner: DEI Committee

5.8 2023, Owner: DEI Committee



# Goal #5: Educational Programs Continued

- Ensure Riverbend's educational programs are reflective of DE&I considerations

## Action

5.9 Review curriculum resources to ensure it incorporates a diversity and inclusion perspective

## Timing

5.10 2023, Owner: Education Operations Manager





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