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## Statement on Diversity and Inclusion

From its founding, diversity and access have been critical core values at the Urban School. As stated in the Strategic Plan of 2001, we believe that the best education occurs in a school made up of students, teachers, and families drawn from many different socioeconomic backgrounds, cultures, races, religions, and sexual orientations. The school has a larger public purpose to educate students who have been historically under-represented in independent schools. This commitment to a diverse school community was re-emphasized in the most recent statement of Core Values, approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2006. Specifically, the third Core Value states:

We honor **the uniqueness of each individual** and embrace diverse backgrounds, values, and points of view to build a **strong, inclusive community** and to prepare students for lives in a multicultural society.

Diversity alone is not enough. While the work of diversity and community have always been a part of the mission of Urban, we seek to build on this commitment, and by so doing, create a truly inclusive school – one where students and adults are welcomed and supported, and where their faces, voices, and experiences are reflected and valued. We believe that the work of inclusion is a responsibility held by all and done for all, person to person.

The following Practices articulate how we as individuals and a school act and evolve in living out this vision of a diverse and inclusive community:

1. **Equity in the School's Programs and Practices:** We provide equitable access to all school services and programs for every student.
2. **Valuing Personal Expression and Experience:** The school affirms the uniqueness of each individual and values individual ways of being in the world. We are committed to

understanding how personal, cultural, and historic aspects of identity contribute to and enrich our school community.

3. **Self-Reflection and Awareness:** We teach individuals to question their cultural viewpoints and assumptions and to modify and change them when appropriate. Institutionally, we are committed to exploring the shape of Urban's unique school culture to better understand the experiences of students and adults from diverse backgrounds as well as to challenge our own practices.
4. **Meaningful Interaction and Dialogue:** The school challenges each individual to interact meaningfully with other members of the community from different backgrounds and disparate life experiences. We provide a safe environment that encourages expression of our differences in ways that invite dialogue and education rather than in ways that alienate. We encourage curiosity and inquiry in order to believe in and learn from a diverse range of experiences and points of view.
5. **Inclusive Teaching and Learning:** We examine and revise our curriculum and pedagogy as necessary to ensure that we are effective in reaching every student. We train our teachers to recognize and understand the range of needs among our students in order to develop their skills in building and sustaining an inclusive classroom.
6. **Community Involvement and Service:** Both in and out of the classroom, locally and globally, we use the practices above to instill a consciousness of social justice, an ethic of citizenship, and a commitment to service. We teach and practice responsibility towards and engagement in our school, larger community, and world.