



Statement from the NAACP Culpeper Branch on Upholding the Principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in our Public Schools

Contact: Kaleb J. Hackley, NAACP Culpeper President, admin@naacpculpeper.org

CULPEPER, VA (4.30.25) — The NAACP Culpeper Branch continues to be a strong advocate for the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in public school education. We applaud recent court decisions that uphold these principles, reaffirming fundamental values of fairness, access, and opportunity for all.

Unfortunately, misinformation regarding DEIA measures and goals continues to divide communities, with students serving as pawns in a destructive political game. Anti-DEIA bias and distortion undermine progress toward equity and inclusion in our schools—progress that allows every child an opportunity to succeed.

In America, “opportunity” has many gatekeepers. DEIA statements within school systems reflect not a commitment to discriminate unfairly, but rather a commitment to leadership and decision-making that recognizes that all students shall be viewed as having potential, that there are many different skills needed in a diverse society, and that personal biases – even on the part of educated decision makers – deserve to be held up to the light of examination.

Equity in education removes predictable barriers to success through data analysis, research, and implementation of best practices in teaching; by creating inclusive environments for adults and children; and by discovering and cultivating the unique gifts, talents, and interests of all students.

Our schools flourish and our students thrive and succeed when DEIA policies and practices are integral to the educational environment. Too often, misinformation suggests that DEIA places certain students at an advantage at the expense of others. Nothing could be further from the truth. DEIA removes barriers by positioning *every* child for success.

We see DEIA practices at work in our local schools, benefitting students daily. For example,

- The Madison County Public Schools has partnered with local health organizations to bring sports physicals on site at the high school, removing barriers for many students and allowing more to take part in school sports.
- Accommodations for students with disabilities, special needs, or Individualized Education Program (IEP) plans are all important forms of DEIA.

- Enabling students who are homeschooled to take public school classes or participate in extracurricular activities at public schools is a form of DEIA.
- DEIA recognizes that some families are food-insecure or have other basic needs, and helps to address those needs so that children are better able to learn.
- Encouraging donations from local communities to help equip students with the tools they need is a form of DEIA.
- Teachers have also been encouraged to practice culturally responsive teaching, which recognizes that some teaching styles may be more effective than others in working with children from diverse backgrounds.
- DEIA principles set high expectations and standards for all students and without making assumptions about potential based on race, gender, financial status, cultural or family background, or whether the student chooses to go to college.
- DEIA encourages strong school-family relationships that focus on supporting student success and recognize diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Efforts to minimize bullying and aggressive behavior, including toward minority or marginalized students, is an important form of DEIA. All students deserve to learn in an inclusive, safe, and respectful environment.
- Research is unequivocally clear that when students from all backgrounds are known, valued, and understood, educational outcomes are improved.
- Diversity initiatives in teacher recruiting are aimed at removing barriers to merit-based applicants of all backgrounds. It does not mean hiring less-qualified staff.

Put simply, DEIA embraces differences and acknowledges the benefit of multiple perspectives, encourages treating students fairly and positioning them for success, and creates an environment where all can thrive and reach their potential. These are fundamental principles that should guide our academic institutions, and never be downplayed or eradicated.