As we discover how to better teach and apply the principal of equity in our schools, we are placing increasing emphasis on cultural pluralism. This means moving away from the "melting pot" philosophy, in which it was thought desirable for different people to give up their differences in order to blend together.

It means a move toward what has been called the "salad bowl" philosophy, in which differences are preserved and contribute to the desirability of the whole. This "salad bowl" philosophy incorporates the belief that the diversity of race, custom, color, religion, age, physical appearance, gender, gender expression and identity, and sexual orientation is a positive and essential characteristic of our nation and its heritage. It makes room for all.

The schools, of course play a highly significant role in promoting or negating this constructive view. The curriculum by which students learn shares this role with the teacher and other school staff. Attitudes expressed or modeled in materials, as well as by people, work against the development of culturally pluralistic education if they relegate groups of people to secondary or inferior status. A curriculum may perpetuate these attitudes and the behaviors they cause (including hate violence), if it omits the history, contributions and lives of a group, if it demeanes a group by using patronizing or clinically distancing language, or if it portrays agroup in stereotyped roles with less than a full range of human interests, traits and capabilities.

* Stereotypes with which this document concerns itself are those associated with:
  - Ethnicity
  - Gender
  - Sexual Orientation
  - Religion
  - Socioeconomic Status
  - Gender Expression & Identity
  - Physical Disabilities
  - Age
  - Family Structure
  - Native Language
  - Occupation
  - Body Shape/Size

Terminology for various identity groups varies. We are aware of that variance. We have listened to our colleagues who belong to various groups about their personal preferences for referring to their own people. We realize that those preferences may differ from the reader's and may change over time. We have used the terms Black and African-American interchangeably; we've used Latino and/or specific countries of origin; we've used Native American and/or identified people as belonging to specific tribes; we've used Gay primarily to refer only to men so that Lesbians would not be rendered invisible; we have used Asian and Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander, rather than lumping people together, when a country of origin couldn’t be specified.

The following examples may help identify bias in these areas. No attempt has been made to prepare an exhaustive list of indicators of bias. We offer this as a starting point.

* Adapted, with permission by Beth Reis for the Safe Schools Coalition from "Washington Models for the Evaluation of Bias Content in Instructional Materials" originally published in 1992 by OSPI, the Office of the [Washington State] Superintendent of Public Instruction.
STEREOTYPES

Example
Members of each identity group are presumed to share a particular "lifestyle" which does not include such mundane acts as doing the laundry, watching TV, or going to work.

Alternative
All identity groups are depicted in diverse contexts reflective of their internal diversity, as well as their everyday lives.

Example
African Americans are depicted as violent; living only in ghettos; employed only as singers, servants or athletes; often only as unemployed.

Alternative
All identity groups are portrayed as equally independent/dependent, leaders/subordinates, peak/millionaire, open/private, thoughtful/impulsive, etc.

Example
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender people are portrayed only as angry protestors; only in March and type sexually provocative parade costumes; or only in the context of HIV/AIDS.

Alternative
Native Americans are depicted as people of the past; as savages; or only in the context of alcoholism or fetal alcohol syndrome.

Example
Latinos are depicted only as sleeping or in the context of migrant farmwork.

Alternative
People of both genders are depicted in traditional as well as non-traditional gender roles in the family, at work and at play, both as capable of taking sexual responsibility, both as having sexual desires.

Example
Only nuclear families with heterosexual parents and two or four children are portrayed. Couples are always portrayed as young, able-bodied, heterosexual and parenting.

Alternative
In addition to the traditional nuclear family, families are depicted in which there are single parents, foster children, step-parents, same-sex parents, and/or relatives living with the family.

Example
Some non-English phrases are mistranslated. The term macho is misguided to designate chauvinism. The term siesta is distorted to mean a noon break in tropical climates, after which work is resumed into the cooler evening.

Alternative
The Mexican word machismo or macho is properly used to mean masculine pride, bravery and responsibility. The term siesta is properly identified as a time of leisure during a normal work day.

Example
Materials encourage majority students to help non-majority people, who are spoken of as less fortunate, needy, disadvantaged, and victimized — all terms which are patronizing and depict non-majority people in terms of the ways in which they may have less than majority people, with the implication that perhaps they are to be pitied.

Alternative
Non-majority people are spoken of as having equal worth to majority people, as having points of view which are of equal value and right to society's benefits, and, when appropriate, as being acknowledged, the right to protest injustice is honored.

Example
He is no longer assumed to be generic. There are several widely used generic forms; his, his or her, his/her. Their may be used when grammatically correct, and is often used in conversation even when not traditionally correct. Changing to plurals often helps. ("All those wishing ... their student body cards.")

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Example
When non-majority and women's contributions to humankind are included, they are segregated into special chapters or boxed areas.

Alternative
The contributions of women and non-majority persons are interwoven with the rest of the text, as they are in life.

Example
An author or other historical figure's hidden disability, gender orientation, and/or religion is identified, as a natural part of describing his or her life (e.g., "James Baldwin, American author of many works, including Native Son and Another Country, lived from 1924 to 1987. He was a vocal participants in both the Black and Gay civil rights movements.")

Alternative
Materials and educators acknowledge the existence of homosexual feelings and relationships and of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people. At a minimum, they avoid excluding them. The puberty list either says "more crates on people of one sex or the other or both sexes" or, at least, drops the phrase "on the opposite sex.

Example
People are called women or young women or teenaged women, unless they are listed and the list includes "more crates and attractions on the opposite sex.

Alternative
Includes "more crates and attractions on the opposite sex.

Example
When included, these contributions are either not identified as having been made by women or non-majority individuals (i.e., the author, or student or statesperson is not identified as Jewish or epileptic or Gay, so that the child who may be one of these is effectively denied a hero or role model), or the way in which they are identified implies that the person's non-majority status, rather than his/her achievement, is his/her primary claim to fame (e.g., "James Baldwin, Black, Gay author").

Alternative
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Example
All illustrations and photos are of young, able-bodied, thin, traditionally-attractive individuals.

Alternative
Examples of all different ages and body types are visible, including people of size, white people with crookes and wheel chairs, and people with birth marks and other physical "differences.

Example
It is not safe to assume that everyone is able-bodied. The alternative is to always indicate how helpful, if any, a person is when they use a cane or wheelchair.

Alternative
People and their contributions are reflected in the curriculum, on classroom walls, and in classroom discussion.

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