

Lake Washington School District PTSA
Defining Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
6/4/2025

Diversity: Socially, it refers to the wide range of identities. It broadly includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, veteran status, physical appearance, etc. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, values, and needs.

Equity: The fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent the full participation of marginalized groups in school systems. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically and currently underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is necessary to provide equal opportunities to all groups.

Inclusion: The act of creating an environment in which any individual or group will be invited, welcomed, respected, supported and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces participation and respects cultural differences.

Belonging is both a feeling and a practice—something we experience personally and something we create collectively.

It happens in structures when all social groups are included in the critical institutions and communities that shape their lives, recognized and made visible within these spaces, empowered to have a real voice in shaping these spaces, and able to report a sense of emotional, physical, and psychological safety. Many people feel pressure to assimilate and hide a part of themselves to *fit in* at school. This is not belonging.

At its heart, belonging can be seen as an ever-expanding circle of connection, one that keeps growing to share power and recognize the dignity and humanity of all people.

Definitions of DEI adapted from the University of Washington, Belonging adapted from the Othring and Belonging Institute