



EQUITY AUDIT: HIDDEN CURRICULUM

Use the criteria below to assess the hidden curriculum and school culture in your building. Hidden curricula are the implicit messages that are not explicitly taught and often unintentionally communicate the norms, assumptions, values, and culture at school.

Setting Observed: _____

Date of Observation: _____ Observer(s): _____

1. PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Are all spaces ADA compliant? B. Can people of all ability levels access the space? C. Are there systems in place to regularly evaluate spaces for accessibility that include input from those who use the space? D. Are frequent/regular adjustments needed for certain people, or is the space intentionally designed with accessibility in mind (Universal Design)? E. Do all adults who manage the space know how to assist people with accessibility needs? F. Is there ongoing monitoring of the space to ensure design integrity is maintained? Does the space get reconfigured in ways that impede accessibility? 	<p>Findings:</p>
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2. INCLUSIVE & AFFIRMING REPRESENTATION

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Look for images that are representative of diverse identities in ways that are empowering, affirming, and asset-based. B. Who are the main characters? Whose perspectives are centered and valued? Who is ancillary, ornamental, or a 'sidekick'? C. Are people represented in accurate and affirming ways? Check historical, temporal, cultural, religious, tribal, and ethnic nuances for accuracy, reductionism, and stereotypes. D. Look for imitations of accents, 'costume-izing' culture, and cultural appropriation. E. Are characters reduced to stereotypes? Who is helping, saving, and fixing, and who is in need? 	<p>Findings:</p>
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<p>Who is proud, and who is pitied?</p> <p>F. Look for patterns based on race, gender, socio-economics, linguistics, age, ability, body type, health status, geography, etc.</p> <p>G. Do school leaders, faculty, and instructional staff reflect the student demographics?</p>	
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3. RELEVANCE

<p>A. Are there relevant entry points into the learning and opportunities for personal connections for all students?</p> <p>B. Do students see themselves reflected in visual displays in the classroom, common spaces and across curricula? Are these depictions affirming?</p> <p>C. Are different cultural references and funds of knowledge included and valued?</p> <p>D. Look for implicit messages that communicate a sense of 'normal' and 'other,' or otherwise positions dominant identities as superior.</p> <p>E. Look for assumed universal experiences vs. shared experiences and accessible entry points.</p> <p>F. Is everything displayed purposeful, related to learning objectives, schoolwide expectations, mission, or values?</p> <p>G. Look for student work vs. store bought decorations; students' own photos or images on the walls; student-created visuals; inclusion of families (see more below); students' personal passions, interests, learning goals, group memberships (sports, clubs etc.).</p>	<p>Findings:</p>
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4. GENDER INCLUSION

<p>A. Does the language, signage, student groupings and imagery validate a range of genders beyond the binary of male and female?</p> <p>B. Are gender stereotypes present in physical space, language, groupings, literature, and imagery?</p> <p>C. Look for gender binary language (boys and girls, ladies and gentlemen, his or her, guys)</p>	<p>Findings:</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D. Look for gender binary messages or practices (colors, clothing, activities, interests, events, PBIS celebrations, choice options, roles, personal attributes/descriptors). E. Look for inclusion or exclusion of non-binary gender identities (gender-specific activities and opportunities, images, signage, gender-specific spaces). F. Look for representation or omission/erasure of LGBTQIA+ across curricula, in fiction, and in informational texts. 	
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5. FAMILIES

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Look at the way families are depicted in visuals, curricula, and through language. Is there an implied <i>normal, ideal, traditional, or alternative</i>? B. Look for inclusive and affirming representation of diverse families? C. Look for language and imagery limited to “mom and dad,” biological children/parents, or other assumed norms about family structure. D. Look for representation of families who are BIPOC, multicultural, multiracial, multigenerational, single-parent, divorced, unmarried, childless, adoptive, foster, blended, surrogate, military, etc. E. Look for representation of families who have same sex parents, split or shared custody, a primary caretaker other than a parent, non-binary or LGBTQIA+ family members, diverse abilities, diverse body types, someone incarcerated or with otherwise limited access to family, family members of diverse ages, and families living in different types of homes. 	<p>Findings:</p>
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6. MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Look for “single stories” that reinforce stereotypes, or rely on stereotypes to present an essentialized narrative about a group of people. B. Whose perspectives are prioritized and valued? Whose are missing, dismissed, diminished, or presented in a negative light? C. Look for diverse historical and political perspectives (eg. Columbus Day/Indigenous 	<p>Findings:</p>
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<p>People’s Day; patriotism as a universal value; Black Lives Matter movement)</p> <p>D. Look for diverse and dominant religious perspectives (Christmas as a default; just Christmas and Hanukkah); Check your school calendar for religious holidays.</p> <p>E. Look for socially dominant narratives and <i>us and them</i> framing.</p> <p>F. Look for diverse concepts of success and happiness (college as the goal for everyone; importance of acquiring wealth; marriage and having kids as a norm, etc.).</p> <p>G. Look for ‘beneath the surface’ cultural diversity like relationships to animals, relationships to nature, standards of beauty, “favorites” (foods, sports, interests, places, etc.), “classics” (books, movies, media), values (individualism vs. collectivism).</p> <p>H. Consider: Do you make space for harmful or hateful perspectives? Why or why not, and what is the impact on your classroom/school culture? Which perspectives do we affirm, and which do we denounce? How do we address issues of free speech? Where is the ‘line in the sand,’ and is it clear to all? Is it consistent across spaces?</p>	
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7. RULES & EXPECTATIONS

<p>A. Look for rules stated in kid-friendly language and images paired with text to support student understanding.</p> <p>B. Look for clear examples of desired behaviors across settings.</p> <p>C. Look for assumptions about common knowledge present in language or imagery and consider different interpretations.</p> <p>D. Are there consistent understandings of different levels of behavior (mean/unkind, bullying, discrimination, harassment, exclusion, hate speech, harm speech, racism) among all staff members?</p> <p>E. What warrants an exception to the rules? Who knows? Who doesn’t?</p> <p>F. Are adult responses to bias, hate, and harm consistent? Are expectations clear for students as well as adults?</p>	<p>Findings:</p>
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<p>G. Are there clear expectations for how to respond when students who ‘aren’t yours’ cause harm?</p> <p>H. Consider: what warrants intervention, and what is considered lower level or ‘just a joke’? Who knows? Is this consistent? What warrants calling out vs. calling in?</p>	
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8. NORMS, VALUES, & ACCOUNTABILITY

<p>A. Look for evidence of your school mission statement and shared core values.</p> <p>B. What social norms are communicated by the rules, policies, and common practices?</p> <p>C. To what extent are anti-bias, antiracist values and practices embraced in your school?</p> <p>D. How do staff members react when others cause harm? What will happen when someone gets called out or called in?</p> <p>E. Are there strong professional relationships and high levels of trust among colleagues? How do you know?</p> <p>F. Is affirming use of language and terminology consistent? (students who qualify for FRL, students who receive services, students who have experienced trauma, etc.).</p> <p>G. What is the climate and culture of your school, and how do you know? Who decides?</p> <p>H. Do all staff feel safe, valued, included, and respected? How do you know?</p>	<p>Findings:</p>
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9. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

<p>A. Is essential information readily accessible to all students, family, and staff?</p> <p>B. Look for information presented through multi-sensory or interactive modalities; audibility (door buzzer, intercom, bell, announcements, directions); translations (Braille, sign language, languages spoken by students, accessibility for those with color vision deficiency, etc.</p> <p>C. Look for different modes of communication with families and staff (paper, email, website, phone,</p>	<p>Findings:</p>
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<p>text, video call, in-person, other).</p> <p>D. Are certain things assumed to be common knowledge?</p> <p>E. What supports are in place to ensure folks feel comfortable approaching others to ask for help?</p> <p>F. Consider: when a parent or community member who is unfamiliar with the school enters the building, what is their experience like?</p> <p>G. Look for pictures and names of all school employees in a prominent place in the building (inclusive of instructional support staff, part-time staff, food service workers, custodians, bus drivers, crossing guards, and other relevant adults; current and regularly updated).</p> <p>H. Look for information intended for students hung at eye level, in kid-friendly language. Look for acronyms, jargon, or exclusive language.</p>	
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10. OTHER

<p>Criteria:</p>	<p>Findings:</p>
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This tool draws upon the work of:

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Teaching Tolerance www.teachingtolerance.org

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