

CULTURAL PLURALISM

The San Mateo-Foster City School District adopts the policy of incorporating in the instructional process the concept of Cultural Pluralism, and its purposes and applications as given below. A definition of Cultural Pluralism is included to provide the parameters within which the concept should operate within the District. It is affirmed here that this definition is consistent with our country's Constitution as well as with our District's Philosophy of Education.

Definition: The concept of Cultural Pluralism in this District recognizes the fact that there are many cultures, value systems, and life styles which should be accepted as long as they do not encroach upon the rights of others. It stresses respect for diversity. Various ethnic groups, according to this concept, have the right to preserve their respective cultural heritages without at the same time interfering with the carrying out of their responsibilities to the general society. People do not have to lose their cultures, value systems, life styles, and identities in order to become worthy, acceptable, and valuable individuals within this society. Every individual should feel free to pursue one's own culture, value system, and life style as long as these practices do not disrupt the normal functioning of the society at large, or interfere with the rights of other individuals. People have a right to remain or not to remain identified with their own racial, religious, or ethnic group values, language, culture, home, and community.

Purposes: Cultural Pluralism has three basic purposes:

1. To assist individual children to develop a sense of self-worth and self-respect, to help them understand their own values, and to develop appreciation for cultural and value differences while communicating with others.
2. To utilize the diversity that exists in this society to help children develop a respect for individuals and appreciation of different cultures, value systems and life styles.
3. To help an individual belonging to an ethnic or another minority group develop the ability to function as a minority, if he/she so chooses, in the mainstream culture, while recognizing that there are more similarities among human beings than differences.

Applications: The purposes given above can be achieved by developing and implementing activities around the following themes:

1. The meaning and need for cooperation in a complex society.
2. Functioning effectively in a society with differing cultures, value systems, and life styles.
3. Handling conflicts due to differences in race, cultures, value systems, and life styles.
4. Exploring many acceptable cultures, value systems, and life styles.
5. Experiencing unity in diversity.

Policy SAN MATEO-FOSTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Adopted: February 4, 1975 Foster City, California