

2021-2023

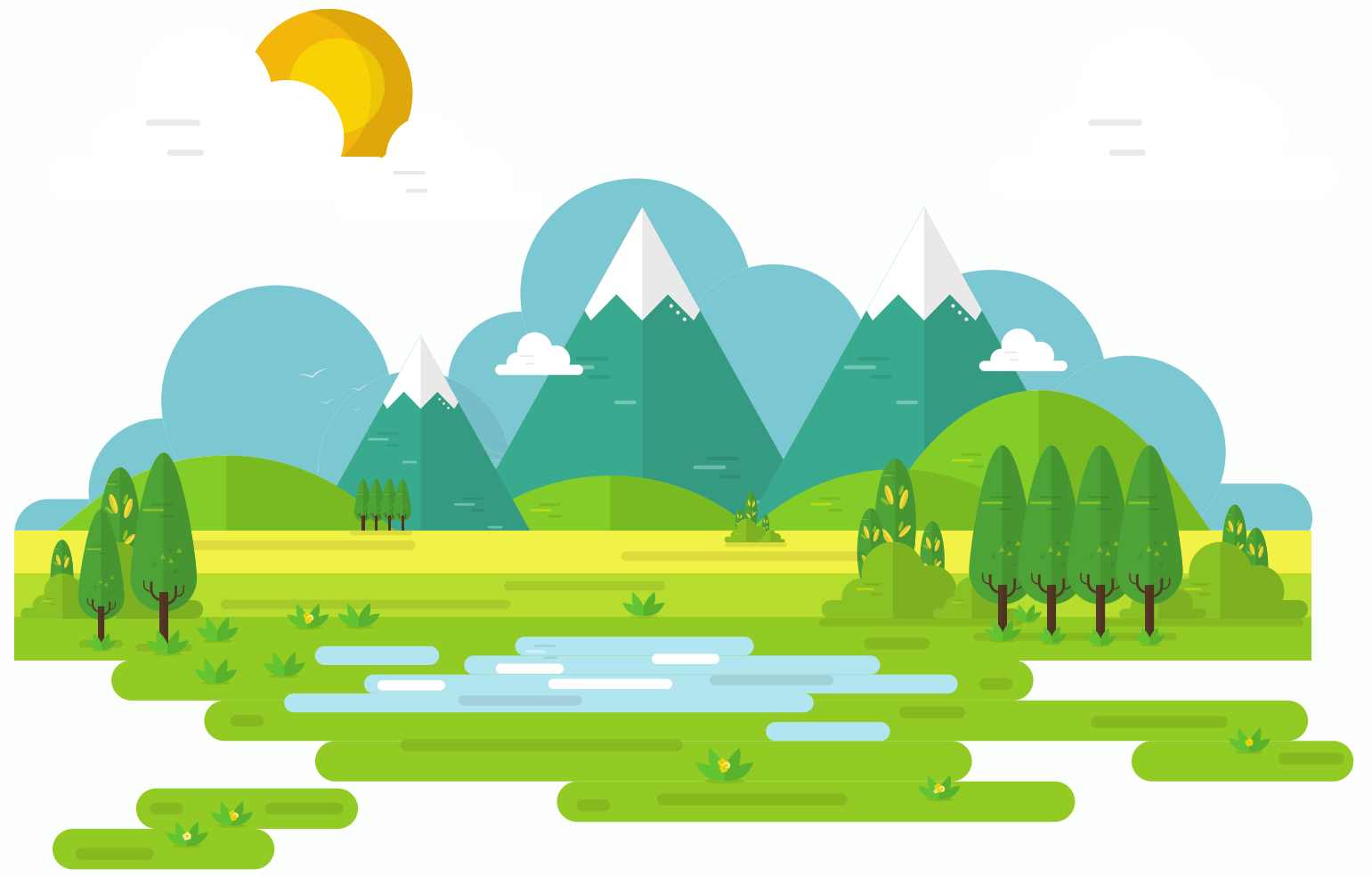


THE COTTONWOOD SCHOOL
— OF CIVICS AND SCIENCE —

DEI WORK PLAN

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
THECOTTONWOODSCHOOL.ORG





DEI LEADERSHIP 2021-2023

Mission: The Cottonwood School believes that the full education of a student depends and relies upon a diverse, equitable and inclusive school environment. We value different lived experiences and integrate the voices of our school-community members, while also inviting insight from our larger community. We apply a culturally responsive approach to our teaching and our decision-making. We incorporate the histories, perspectives, and experiences of different groups of people who are traditionally left out of school curricula.

DEI TEAM

Like the planting of a seed that grows, the DEI team seeks to germinate a sense of belonging at CSCS. The DEI team is comprised of staff, parents/guardians, and community members who strive to increase inclusion and equitable outcomes. The role of the DEI team is to maintain this work plan, monitor progress of goals within the plan, and continue to seek out areas for improvement to ensure our school, teachers, students, staff, and administration reflect the diversity of our larger community.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CSCS has a 5-9 member Board comprised of both parents and community members. Board members bring a wide range of experience and skills to aid in the governance of the school, including education, legal, business, engineering, web development, publishing, real estate and finance backgrounds. The Board works in partnership with the DEI team and administrators to promote DEI practices and school improvement. The CSCS board values input and support from the community, please consider attending any of the monthly meetings or email us at board@thecottonwoodschool.org

CSCS STAFF

Teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and instructional assistants are active participants in learning culturally responsive teaching practices. Throughout the school year, staff is provided training, coaching, and support to develop inclusive curricula and anti-racist academic and behavioral interventions. Through this development, staff has opportunity to review and revise practices to ensure inclusion and access to learning.



Work plan

This work plan is intended to describe the set of strategic DEI initiatives occurring between spring 2022 and fall 2023. The work plan outcomes are based on feedback from the culturally responsive survey conducted with staff, the DEI team, and board members.

2021-2023 Initiatives

- **Addressing barriers to access that are tied to race, culture, neighborhood, and language.**

Outreach efforts will prioritize neighborhoods with a high population of racially and linguistically diverse students. In order to achieve this, CSCS will revise the lottery system to apply preferences for historically underserved communities. Building partnership relationships with organizations serving historically underserved populations will ensure adequate support is embedded throughout our programs as the school diversifies. Proactive inclusion measures also include signage and promotional materials offered in multiple languages, assurance that translation services are available without additional cost to families, and artwork and curriculum that reflect student culture and racial identity.

Anticipated start date: Spring 2022



- **Ensuring academic and behavioral interventions provided are culturally responsive.**

When we make a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, we make a commitment to meeting students where they are. CSCS faculty and staff will respond to student needs with culturally relevant interventions and support. Students and families will provide feedback to the school through surveys, small group discussions, and other methods that are collected regularly and used for staff planning and training. The school will also formalize a restorative justice approach to resolving behavioral incidents, which prioritizes building intercultural relationships. The success of interventions will be reviewed by the board on an annual basis as part of the annual report.

Anticipated start date: Spring 2022

- **Ensuring a safe and healthy workplace.**

As we continue to ensure the diversity of our students is reflected in our teaching staff, human resources and administrators will continue to develop retention practices. A grievance process for staff members will be written into policy and address issues of discrimination, microaggressions, and patterns of exclusion. This information will be reviewed annually by the DEI Team for the identification of trends that may lead to future goal setting. Hiring committees for new administrators and executive positions will include community leaders of color to ensure BIPOC priorities are reflected in hiring decisions.

Anticipated start date: Summer 2022

Work plan



- **Faculty, Staff, and Administrator retention and recruitment.**

Supporting faculty and staff of color is also a priority, and as the workforce gains diversity, staff will be supported in creating affinity groups for BIPOC and historically marginalized community members. Hiring committees for all staff will include anti-bias and EOE training, interview questions will be updated to reflect DEI core values, and new administrator and executive positions will include community leaders of color to ensure BIPOC priorities are reflected in hiring decisions.

Anticipated start date: Summer 2022

- **Improving access to communications and reports.**

The school will improve upon the inclusivity, consistency, and timeliness of communications through a new Diversity Advocate position. Equity goals and reports will be publicly available to staff, students, and families, and progress will be communicated. Staff, students, and families will be surveyed annually to assess their sense of belonging, communications, and program evaluations. Alumni and community partners are invited to participate in upcoming listening sessions and focus groups. Annual reports will include progress monitoring of our DEI goals, community demographic data, and partnering organizations that formally serve students of color.

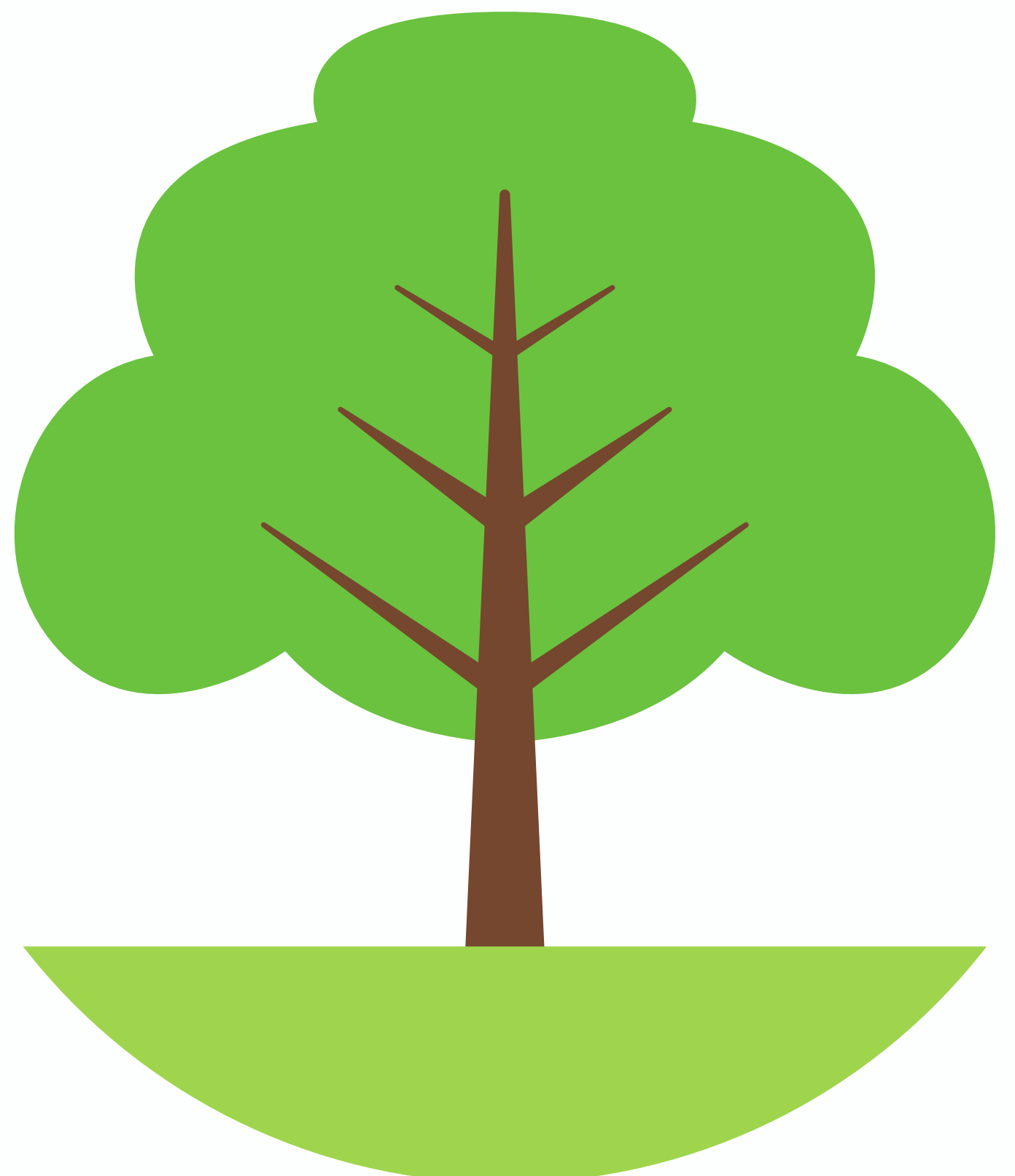
Anticipated start date: Winter 2022

2021-2023 Initiatives

- **Building culturally responsive practices and programs.**

The use of a CSCS Equity lens will be formalized by the board, DEI team, and staff in decision making. Ongoing professional practice is embedded into regular staff meetings to adapt curriculum and instruction as our students and the world change and evolve. The curriculum is assessed for cultural responsiveness and administrative support is provided to staff in need of diversifying instructional materials. Staff will enhance collective cultural competency each year as they get to know their students' backgrounds, cultures, and identities and develop a curriculum that reflects this diversity. Training and coaching to identify and unlearn implicit and affinity bias will consistently be embedded into regular staff meetings as we develop more tools for discussing identities and cultures. Respectful recognition of students and community members will be written into job descriptions and expected to be reinforced in performance evaluations.

Anticipated start date: Spring 2022



"Our equity work helps us to build and support healthy, diverse communities- in our classrooms, in our school, and in our city."

Sarah Anderson (she/her)
Fieldwork and Place-based
Education Coordinator

"DEI training is important to me through a teacher's lens because it allows me the space to challenge my own thoughts and actions and the support and accountability protocol to plan and implement new practices."

Sara Miller (she/her)
1st and 2nd Grade Teacher



Outcomes

This is where anticipated results of doing this work are listed below. As a result of these initiatives, it is anticipated that CSCS will attain the following outcomes.

Addressing barriers to access

- BIPOC students and families will have more opportunities to connect with CSCS as a K-8 option as a result of the weighted lottery
- Identifying potential exclusive practices prior to outreach promotes a proactive inclusion model to drive retention
- Translation services and materials are accessible in multiple languages

Culturally Responsive Interventions

- Race is not a predictor of academic success at CSCS
- Relationship building is the core of our community through Restorative Justice
- Students build trusting relationships with faculty, staff, and administrators
- Utilization of an equity lens becomes habit of mind

Safe and Healthy Workplace

- Staff concerns are addressed with transparency and interventions are communicated
- All staff feel valued and supported in the CSCS community
- The Board and DEI team are activated in new staff recruitment
- Increased retention of all staff

Culturally Responsive Classroom

- Faculty is supported to expand curricular resources
- Data gathering will help to inform the cultural responsiveness of the material
- BIPOC and historically underserved students will feel a sense of belonging as cultures are represented in the classroom
- Create new and deepen current partnerships with culturally specific organizations
- Expand upon place-based learning through spaces that are BIPOC owned and operated

Staff Retention and Recruitment

- Through hiring processes, our workforce will increasingly reflect the diversity of the students and families we serve
- Staff who feel valued and supported

Communications and Reports

- Addition of a Diversity Advocate who will enhance communications
- All members of the school community are able to access reports with predictability and ease
- Internal school communication systems are improved and utilize technology more efficiently
- Communication is accessible in multiple languages

