

Making An Impact — Trustees

Parents

Unite

How trustees can approach schools about viewpoint diversity



Questions to consider:

- Does your school consider viewpoint diversity part of its definition of diversity and how is this reflected in the school's mission/vision statement/values? Enrollment contract?
- Is there transparency around ideological "curriculum?"
- How does your school promote and assess viewpoint diversity and how is it prioritized?
- Is there "ideological" balance among faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees?
- Do enrollment contracts clearly articulate how the school supports independent thinkers?



Assessing the Situation

School Questions

- Are there policies/programs that support viewpoint diversity in the classroom?
- What measures exist to ensure viewpoint diversity is respected and encouraged in the classroom?
- How are "consultants" vetted and evaluated?
- What systems and procedures ensure accountability?
- Do guest speakers represent a variety of viewpoints and perspectives?

Head Of School Questions

- Does the Head of School receive any training with respect to viewpoint diversity?
- Are teachers and administrators expected to attend professional development or trainings that support viewpoint diversity?
- How does your hiring process attract and retain diverse thinkers?
- What metrics are in place to ensure teachers encourage and support critical thinking and diverse perspectives?



Actions Trustees Can Take

- Confirm your 3 main goals: Fiduciary duty to the institution, upholding the school's mission, overseeing your one employee, the Head of School.
- Head of School goals should include a measurable commitment to viewpoint diversity.
- Faculty, staff, and administrator reviews should assess their proficiency and promotion of viewpoint diversity.
- Lead by example; do not shy away from difficult conversations.
- Question process i.e how did the school come to decide what to teach and how to teach it? What evidence confirms that their approach works?
- Define the school's vision statement and values beyond the school's mission statement.
- Work with your school to adopt its own version of a University of Chicago "free speech statement:"

"Because "the school" is committed to free and open inquiry in all matters, it guarantees all members of the "school" community the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, and learn...[I]t is not the proper role of the "school" to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive."

— Excerpt from the Chicago Statement



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