



Diversity Equity Inclusion
Forsyth County Schools

Communication and Actions for DEI

Nouns and Pronouns

The word “men” no longer means both men and women as it did when the U.S. Declaration of Independence was written. Instead use examples such as:

- Man: Person, Individual
- Mankind: People, Human Beings, Humanity
- Chairman: Chair, Chairperson
- Mailman: Mail Carrier
- Policeman: Police Officer
- Congressman: Legislator

When referring to both men and women or when the gender is unknown, instead of “he,” “his,” or “him” use examples such as:

- “he/she,” “his/hers,” “him/her,”
- “they,” “students”

Be aware of the many dimensions of family diversity. Instead of “mom,” “dad”, or “parent” use “parent/guardian” or “families” for events or communication. For example, Mother-Daughter or Father-Son events may unintentionally exclude children who are being raised by grandparents, foster parents, or other family members.

Titles and Names

“Mr.” can refer to any man, regardless of whether he is single or married, but “Miss” and “Mrs.” define women by whether they are married, which means defining women by their relationships with men. It is always recommended to ask a woman what she prefers or address women as “Ms.”, which doesn’t indicate marital status.

Do not make assumptions about a person’s identity, cultural or otherwise, and honor flexibility in an individual’s self-identification. If you are addressing an individual and cannot determine their gender, use their full name with no title.

If you are unsure how to pronounce an individual’s name, do not attempt it. Instead ask the individually for the correct pronunciation.

Appropriate Terms to Use

When describing, speaking or writing about someone with disabilities it is important to put the person first to reflect their individuality, equality or dignity. Examples include:

Terms No Longer in Use	Terms Now Used
the disabled	people with disabilities or disabled people
wheelchair-bound/ confined to a wheelchair	persons who uses a wheelchair/ wheelchair user
cripple, spastic, victim, the handicapped	disabled person, person with a disability
mental handicap/handicapped	intellectual disability/disabled
normal	non-disabled
suffers from (e.g. asthma)	has (e.g. asthma)

Inclusivity and Accessibility for Diverse Needs

Visual challenges, examples such as low vision, color blindness or complete lack of sight.

- Print materials should have font 12pt or higher; use standard font style (Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri).
- Presentation font shall not go below 16pt; limit the lines of text (have two slides instead of one so that all may read/see it). Avoid using dark backgrounds, numerous slide transitions and sound effects.
- Website images must have alternative text; no images of text or blinking images and animations; color choices have proper contrast – black font for text; PDFs must be tagged for accessibility; and links must be descriptive (no click here).

Physical/health challenges, examples such as loss of limb, limited mobility, full paralysis or diminished muscle control. Be mindful that physical/health conditions may not be visually seen.

- Provide seating options for those who may not fit in cookie-cutter size chairs or for people with disabilities.
- Be mindful of access to elevators and parking.
- Be aware of allergies or health conditions when providing food and/or beverages.

Communication challenges, examples such as hearing, sight, language and cultural.

- Always use a microphone when speaking.
- Adapt materials and presentations as needed to accommodate language preferences. Provide interpreters/assistance for English Language Learners or sign language interpreters.
- Avoid educational jargon or acronyms. Keep language simple and direct.
- Know your community's religious and cultural dates; know cultural practices relative to food and/or beverages.
- Be aware of your body language and recognize that nonverbal language differs from culture to culture.

Please note that this is a working list of Communication and Actions for DEI. For additions, contact icaracciolo@forsyth.k12.ga.us.