

# **Saint Louis Language Immersion School Diversity Survey Report**

**Prepared by:  
Diversity Awareness Partnership  
August 23, 2017**

## Context

Our country is experiencing significant demographic changes regarding race, ethnicity, disability, religion, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, age, and gender identity. As a result of these changes, our workplaces and educational institutions are witnessing new strengths, challenges, uncertainties, and, in some cases, misinformation. Collecting data focused on attitudes, perceptions, observations, and beliefs about diversity and inclusion is essential in assessing where the Saint Louis Language Immersion School requires growth, exposure, and education. The purpose of the survey conducted in July of 2017 was to obtain important information on attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of diversity and inclusion among St. Louis Language Immersion School staff.

## Methods

Diversity Awareness Partnership collected data through an electronic survey sent to employees of Saint Louis Language Immersion School via an e-mail sent by Lilith Werner at [lilith.werner@sllis.org](mailto:lilith.werner@sllis.org).

By August 18 when the survey closed, a total of 68 out of 90 respondents had completed the survey. Respondents were asked to answer a total of 49 questions. These questions focused on both personal and organizational attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions. Response choices were "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Neither Agree nor Disagree," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree." The survey also included two open-ended questions, allowing respondents to share general comments and ideas about how to address issues of diversity, inclusion, and culture within the St. Louis Language Immersion School, in addition to specific examples of discrimination, exclusion, or bias.

## Results

The results presented in this section are only representative of the major data points. A complete set of the quantitative data results will be sent electronically to the Saint Louis Language Immersion School via Lilith Werner at [lilith.werner@sllis.org](mailto:lilith.werner@sllis.org). "Agree" represents the composite of agree and strongly agree, and "Disagree" represents the composite of disagree and strongly disagree. Data are demonstrated as a percentage of total respondents.

## **Diversity Survey for Saint Louis Language Immersion School**

### **Key Quantitative Findings**

#### **Organizational and Individual Climate of Diversity**

##### ***Strengths***

- **81%** agree that they would like to participate in training and education that helped them better understand individuals who are different than them.
- **96%** agree that they have an understanding of the meaning and importance of diversity and inclusion.
- **79%** agree that administration values and accepts cultural differences of all faculty and staff.
- **61%** agree that people who are different are accessed for their different skills or knowledge.
- **87%** agree that they have spent time trying to learn about groups that differ from their own.

##### ***Growth Areas***

- **39%** agree that although people talk about appreciating other cultures, the visible, active support is not there.
- **37%** agree they can feel a difference in the way some students are treated or talked to because they are different.
- **39%** agree that individuals with different backgrounds have a difficult time getting their ideas across.
- **31%** agree that they can feel a difference in the way some faculty and staff are treated or talked to because they are different.

#### **Student Interaction**

##### ***Growth Areas***

- **53%** agree that social interactions with and expectations of students are influenced by the socioeconomic background of the student
- **45%** agree that social interactions with and expectations of students are influenced by their race and/or ethnicity.
- **22%** disagree that students with disabilities receive the accommodations and support they need to be successful at SLLIS.

#### **Race & Ethnicity**

##### ***Strengths***

- 79% agree that interactions among people of different racial/ethnic groups are common at SLLIS.
- 94% agree that they feel comfortable interacting with people of different races in their workplace.

#### ***Growth Areas***

- 32% agree that relationships in the workplace are often formed based on race.

#### **Religion**

##### ***Strengths***

- 76% agree that they know colleagues who practice different faiths than them.

##### ***Growth Areas***

- 42% agree that they are not comfortable with religion being discussed in the workplace.

#### **Gender**

##### ***Strengths***

- 81% agree that men and women are valued equally within SLLIS.
- 79% disagree that expectations/standards at SLLIS are different for men and women.

#### **Disability**

##### ***Strengths***

- 87% disagree that they feel uncomfortable interacting with people with disabilities in the workplace.

#### **Age**

##### ***Strengths***

- 91% disagree that they would not be comfortable working under someone younger than them.
- 78% disagree that their opinions have not been taken seriously within SLLIS because of age.

#### **Sexual Orientation**

##### ***Strengths***

- 90% agree that it does not matter to them whether their co-workers are gay or straight.
- 90% agree that they equally acknowledge the relationships of LGBTQ and heterosexual co-workers.
- 81% disagree that they would feel uncomfortable having an openly gay co-worker.

## Key Qualitative Findings and Themes:

- Question 48: "What could St. Louis Language Immersion School do to improve the climate of diversity?"
  - No Recommendation for Improvement
    - Not sure
    - SLLIS does a good job with diversity
    - Climate of diversity is handled well
  - Education and Training Opportunities
    - Provide training and education on students from impoverished backgrounds
    - Professional development on diversity
    - Opportunities to learn about other cultures
    - Professional development for different teaching styles
    - Provide diversity training
  - Collaboration
    - More interaction between students in the different schools
    - Collaboration for faculty, staff, and students in the different schools
    - More opportunities for faculty and staff to socialize
    - Opportunities to engage in activities with one another
    - School wide events that bring all together
    - More communication between schools
    - Improve teamwork
  - Parent/Teacher Relationships
    - Listen to parent concerns
    - More social activities that include parents
    - More opportunities to get to know the families
  - Other recommendations
    - Hire staff that reflects student body
- Question 49: "Provide any additional comments or relevant experiences."
  - N/A (5)
  - Educate teachers on cultural challenges and how diversity can be celebrated in the education system
  - Interact fairly with parents at all levels
  - Provide resources for lower SES students
  - Language barrier is a big issue at SLLIS
  - IEP's are not carried out for students with disabilities.
  - Educate parents on topics of diversity
  - One particular instance occurred where parent refused a class placement with an openly gay teacher and SLLIS accommodated which allows for discrimination to happen

# Strategies for Moving Forward

## I. More visibility in diversity and inclusion efforts.

**Purpose:** To demonstrate a true dedication to promoting diversity and inclusion. Current and anticipated diversity efforts should be visible to make evident a value of diversity to faculty, staff, student families, and students. Visibility also includes clearly explaining why diversity and inclusion efforts are important and valuable to each individual and St. Louis Language Immersion School.

## II. Provide specialized training and education opportunities.

**Purpose:** The unique makeup of faculty, staff, students at SLLIS likely results in a wide range of background and experience. Providing a range of professional development opportunities including teaching styles but also addressing diversity topics within the education system.

## III. Emphasis on teamwork and unity.

**Purpose:** To provide continued opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to work together. Improved communication between schools and strategies for all units to be viewed as a functioning whole. This includes events, retreat opportunities, professional development opportunities, team building exercises, projects and gatherings/celebrations.