Introduction

A. What We Do & What We Believe

Our Mission Statement:
At All Means All, our mission is to partner with school leaders and teams to eliminate the growth gap for students traditionally marginalized in schools, even by the most equity-centered systems. This starts with a focus on students with disabilities whose assets and needs leverage and test the boundaries of a school, because the skills and systems developed with this focus on addressing racism and ableism together can create the foundation to impact all marginalized populations.

Our Values:
- We are Co-Creators
- We Honor Hard Truths
- We Show Up When It’s Hard
- We Express Gratitude for Growth
- We Ask What’s Ideal, Then Why Not?

What We Believe
Core to our mission and values, we are committed to developing and co-creating with leaders and their teams to build schools and communities of acceptance, belonging and high expectations for every single student. Even where schools and organizations have made commitments to equity, there are still too many adults and students left at the margins - often those with disabilities, multilingual learners, justice-involved, and those students more than two years behind grade level. Equity, then, risks becoming a siloed endeavor that does not address the intersectionality and compounding effects for students with multiple identity markers marginalized by systemic inequity, racism, ableism and oppression.

We start with a focus on students with disabilities in this work because it is often where there are the most challenging, misguided or fixed mindsets, where the default assumption is that it’s solely a matter of technical skills/training needed, and where compliance often trumps or drives the work. It is also often an area schools are motivated to change due to the compliance/legal implications and thus serves somewhat as a “trojan horse” or gateway to shifting the culture and identity of the school to truly serve all. The foundational work in our program is focused on creating the adult cultures and radical problem solving systems necessary and applicable to build this identity and pride in serving any student who comes to the school and teaching leaders how to apply that to technical changes they need to make.
All Means All Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Commitments

Based on our mission and values, we believe this specifically means we as an organization must embody, model, and be a movement steeped in diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) in which we, and others, become “The World We Want to See.” This includes:

- Being the work environment we believe our students should have as employers
- Creating the learning and development spaces for the leaders we most need doing this work to thrive (who are often marginalized themselves by systemic and radical inequity)
- Fostering economic growth of businesses who employ, are led by, or support marginalized communities, particularly those who support people with disabilities (for whom employment statistics are lowest)

B. Why We Prioritize This & What We Want to Be True

Why We Prioritize This Work
As a minimum starting point, we prioritize a commitment to DEIA work because we believe in the fundamental humanity of every person, rooted in an awareness of how the impacts of systemic racism, ableism and oppression have run counter to this humanity. We know we must actively prioritize this work and integrate it into the fiber of everything we do. In addition, research has proven repeatedly that more diverse, equitable and inclusive teams have better outcomes, higher satisfaction, and higher quality ideas. Not only is this work core to our very mission and purpose, but it is core to our success and sustainability in meeting that mission. In short, it is fundamentally right, just, and smart. However, we prioritize this work beyond these foundational reasons.

First, we prioritize this work because of the communities in which we partner. We believe that part of changing the narrative for our students is to do the work ourselves to be a workplace and learning environment where our students could thrive as adults, and to ensure the diversity of voices, ideas and talents exist for our organization, leaders and partners to do the best work possible.

Second, because of our work with students with disabilities, we are further primed to impact our community to be an ecosystem that operates beyond pity/sympathy for those so often marginalized to one of empathy. It is uniquely aligned to our mission to help contribute to growing employment and economic opportunities for these individuals.
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This work is urgent and important. According to the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) Forward Together Report¹, the impacts of this marginalization are devastating - for example, students with disabilities are suspended twice as often as their peers, are three times more likely to drop out than their peers, enroll in college at half the rate of their peers, have a 1 in 2 chance of involvement in the justice system, and have an employment rate of 17.9%².

These life-long effects are more pronounced for people from historically marginalized backgrounds who have to navigate systemic racism and classism as well. Students of color are identified for special education and placed outside of general education classrooms at a higher rate than their White peers. Just 33% of Black students with disabilities spend more than 80% of their day in general education compared to 55% of White students with disabilities³. They are disciplined at a higher rate than their White peers, with Black males from low-income backgrounds receiving SPED services, suspended, and restrained, at the highest rates.⁴

Moreover, the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights stated that “COVID-19’s impacts have fallen unevenly and preliminary data indicate that they appear to be deepening disparities in educational opportunity and achievement, many of them generations in the making.”⁵

What We Want to Be True

We know that this is a journey and we will make a lot of mistakes. One of our core habits of mind is “Slopes Over Points” which means we are committed to making consistent growth despite any setbacks or challenges. In this spirit, we are therefore committed to seeking regular, transparent feedback and gathering data, and to creating the safe spaces to have honest conversations in service of the virtuous growth cycle.

We enter this work with the aspirations and intentions that the following will be true:

- **Our commitments are clear and authentic:** All stakeholders know what we mean and can easily see our progress in meeting our commitments.
- **We push beyond intention:** As we collectively push for a more inclusive and just world, we understand that partners, prospective employees, funders and others will consider our actions, transparency and outcomes in determining their engagement in and support of our work. We understand we must go beyond intentions to action and outcomes.

³ National Center for Learning Disabilities. (2020, October 19) *Significant Disproportionality in Special Education.*
⁴ National Center for Learning Disabilities. (2020, October 19) *Significant Disproportionality in Special Education.*
All Means All Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Commitments

- **It is integrated throughout our design**: Our commitments serve as ‘rumble’ strips of clarity for the processes we design, the systems we build, the content we share, and the work we do.
- **We link our commitments to outcomes**: Our commitments to DEIA are clear and purposeful to our core work, and directly aligned to student outcomes. They are not “added on”.
- **We create the standard**: We want to walk the walk in going beyond surface-level statements to be a model of workplace and school-based standards.
- **We create the flywheel**: By starting with the intersectionality of ableism and racism, we hope to create the momentum within our schools, and our organization, of actively working to eliminate these together

**How we define DEIA**

We use the following definitions throughout our work:

- We define **diversity** as the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin and political beliefs.\(^6\)
- We define **equity** as each person receiving what they need to develop to their full academic, professional and social potential – removing the predictability of success or failure that currently correlates with any social or cultural factor.\(^7\)
- We define **inclusion** as the practice of including all people, especially those who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized on the basis of their race, culture, background, class, sexuality, disability and more. Inclusion is involvement and empowerment, where the inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized.\(^8\)
- We define **accessibility** as affording a person with a disability the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.\(^9\)

(For future iterations, we will consider the use of the term “JEDI” to include justice, but feel that accessibility is important in draft 1 given our work with disabilities)

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\(^6\) Source: Ferris State University  
\(^7\) Source: The National Equity Project  
\(^8\) Source: Whiteness at Work, Adaway Group  
\(^9\) Source: Office of Civil Rights
## C. Our Key Stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Why they matter to this work</th>
<th>What they care about/ how this work impacts</th>
<th>How they need to be involved/have voice in this</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>They are the ultimate focus of our work - how we talk about them, and model in our program becomes how they are seen/impacted</td>
<td>We want students to feel the impact of the changes/shifts we support leaders and schools to make. How we carry ourselves in conversations with students in site visits, and what we encourage our leaders to learn from them is a reflection of our commitment.</td>
<td>Continue to inform our DEIA commitments based on our empathy interviews on school visits.</td>
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<td>AMA Fellows</td>
<td>They are the primary lever of focus in who we support.</td>
<td>Leaders need to trust our intent and commitment, and our alignment with their own DEIA work - and it needs to translate to how they feel as adult learners. Leaders would like support to have space to process these topics and conversations.</td>
<td>Provide feedback on our commitments to co-create (opt-in), Leverage alumni. Share data with our leaders on our goals, progress and actions.</td>
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<td>Sponsoring Networks</td>
<td>They are key decision makers/ budget drivers for leaders to participate &amp; org to commit</td>
<td>Many have their own DEIA priorities and want an aligned partner, so need to trust we will support all leaders equitably.</td>
<td>Use their feedback each year to measure to refine and shape.</td>
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<td>Faculty/ Consultants</td>
<td>Faculty represent an extension of our organization.</td>
<td>We want diverse, high quality faculty to choose us - and they need to believe our commitment is authentic and be aligned.</td>
<td>At kickoff, engage them in our vision, and get feedback as we pilot.</td>
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<td>Partners/ Vendors</td>
<td>Partners add diversity to our</td>
<td>Some will care deeply that we are authentically committed.</td>
<td>Use their feedback each year to</td>
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### D. How We Co-Created These Commitments & Our Overarching Priorities

Over the course of our first cohort (2021-2022), we worked to develop and pilot a set of intentions and commitments. This included prioritizing DEIA in our selection of leaders for the program, conducting a program content audit, incorporating DEIA content into our program and periodic surveying of our fellows to get feedback. As our program looked to grow beyond the first cohort, we worked with our current cohort to co-create this commitment document. We developed a draft based on feedback and data and then conducted both feedback surveys and small group discussions with current fellows and external partners to continue to refine and shape our focus and priorities. We have also leveraged Zaretta Hammond’s [Ready for Rigor](https://www.zarettahammer.com/index.php/products/ready-for-rigor) framework as a core text and tool in refining our commitments and program experience. Specifically:

- “Awareness” is brought into our Leadership work in how we build our understanding and learning
- “Learning Partnerships” are embedded into coach training and cohort sessions

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<th><strong>thinking, and are an opportunity to support aligned organizations</strong></th>
<th><strong>to DEIA. If we add commitments to our contract we will need partners willing to align.</strong></th>
<th><strong>measure to refine and shape</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Funders</strong></td>
<td><strong>Will care about our commitment to DEIA, and may care about diversity of leadership</strong></td>
<td><strong>Many funders have their own DEIA commitments and priorities.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Use their feedback each year to measure to refine and shape</strong></td>
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<td><strong>(Seek new funding to get additional support for these commitments)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Larger Ed/ Disability Field &amp; Partners</strong></td>
<td><strong>We have the opportunity to join a larger movement and influence this movement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Organizations will want to believe in our authentic commitment in referring our program to leaders and/or referring talent, leadership, etc.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Ask critical friends and partners for feedback</strong></td>
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“Information Processing” integrates our learning to apply to our spring/summer and working group sessions

“Community of Learning” guides our regular survey questions and quarterly experience survey to ensure our intentions create a cohesive, integrated experience

In the first year of our program, leaders named an appreciation for artifacts used in the program that were explicitly anti-ableist, and for naming this intersectionality in sessions. In particular, they appreciated being pushed to use data-based decision making in a way that now has their teams looking at sub-populations within their school in a new way. Multiple leaders named the diversity of our cohort as a strength, and encouraged us to continue to keep and grow that diversity. They encouraged us as we build into future years to continue to create spaces within the program for even more explicit conversations about anti-racism and anti-ableism, to continue to push them to analyze where they are falling short on these goals within their organizations, and to continue to support them in addressing mindsets and bias within their staff.

Out of this co-creation and learning process, we identified the following overarching priorities and outcomes as the most important focus:

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<th>DAILY OPERATIONS:</th>
<th>PROGRAM EXPERIENCE:</th>
<th>OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>People + Funds</em>:</td>
<td>Ensure a diverse group of leaders experience an accessible, culturally relevant, and universally designed program throughout every interaction with diverse representation of exemplars and opportunities for choice. In every moment we own, identify, name and address bias.</td>
<td>Measure and hold ourselves accountable to accelerating growth for sub-populations of students through processes like the staff survey for mindsets, mid-winter break win and the case study process. Recognize our DEIA work is in service of this ultimate outcome.</td>
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<td>Increase the % of our staff, faculty, partners and consultants who identify as BIPOC</td>
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<td>Increase the % of our funds that go to partners, consultants and vendors who are BIPOC-owned, disability-owned or BIPOC/disability supporting organizations</td>
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<td><strong>HONEST CONVERSATIONS:</strong></td>
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<td>Underlying and integrated into these three priorities is the commitment to learning, modeling, practicing and teaching how to have the honest conversations that need to be had to move this work forward - specifically with a lens to the current bias, disproportionality, and fear/mindsets that exist for Black and Latino students with disabilities.</td>
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All Means All Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Commitments

We are currently in progress co-creating with our second cohort to continue to refine these commitments and will do so each year with our leadership cohort.

For a detailed copy of our specific commitments, goals, and metrics aligned to the four priorities above identified above, please contact us at info@amaleaders.org.