DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING

Saga's Strategic Plan – 2022-2025

Saga EDUCATION

COMMUNICATION + COMMUNITY + CULTIVATION + CULTURE = DEIB

Message from the CEO, Alan Safran

Saga stands for the acceleration of educational equity across our nation's public schools. That's why AJ and I co-founded Saga in 2014. At our core, we believe that all students can learn to high levels; that education is broken for students experiencing poverty, who are disproportionately Black and Latinx; and that tutoring can and should be the great equalizer if it is done well, and within our public schools.

AJ authentically comes to this work–he was in the first class of students in a public school in the US to have tutoring built into the regular school day; I was the Executive Director of that school. It was there that we coined the phrase "high dosage tutoring." While I do not have the same educational upbringing as AJ, I have had a core value throughout my life–probably instilled by my parents, who were both public school teachers–that we all must fight together for justice. For me, justice is a crucial area for us as individuals and as a nation to focus on.

AJ and I formed Saga to work on issues of justice, of educational equity. At Saga, we are committed to key strategies to help us be authentic in this work and to emphasize that we are focused on serving our communities.

First, we are committed to working in schools that serve a high proportion of students who are experiencing poverty, and who are disproportionately Black and Latinx.

Second, we are committed to the premise that our workforce–especially but not only those who are on our front lines, serving students in schools–should represent our focus students.

Third, we are committed to forging a sense of belonging not only for the students we serve but for our fellows and staff and the organization that serves them.

Fourth, we believe in diversity and inclusion, meaning we value differences, we value collaboration, we value the input and are hungry for feedback.

Fifth, accelerating the movement toward equity in education is what wakes us up each morning, and what we dream of at night.

Now, all that said–we want and need your input in our strategic plan for DEIB work. Please, let us walk by each other's side as we continue to make strides as an organization.

Message from the CPCO, Tiffani Bibb

It is our pleasure to share our first organizational Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging strategic plan. While DEIB has long been an integral part of the mission and vision of Saga Education, this plan takes a holistic approach to how we will serve our communities, our team members, and engage our partners. As we work to increase equity in public education, we know that diversity and inclusion in teams are essential to how we will reach our goals.

This three-year plan will provide over-arching guidance in which we will work together for one purpose.

Saga Education will accelerate educational equity through the proven power of high-impact tutoring.

We will do this by:

▶ Ensuring various voices and perspectives are considered, COMMUNICATION.

▶ Sharing our proven strategies and partnering with those committed to improving public education, COMMUNITY.

▶ Developing our team members to reach their highest professional potential, CULTIVATION.

▶ Becoming intentional about embedding DEIB practices into our systems, structures, and operations, CULTURE.

This strategic plan will allow Saga Education to bring the best out of each individual that contributes to our vision and see the direct results it has on our students and communities. We encourage all stakeholders to embrace this plan and to do their part to maximize diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in this body of work.

> **Inclusion is not a matter of political correctness. It is the key to growth."**
>
> — Jesse Jackson

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Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Mission - Vision - Value Statements

DEI Mission
To remain at the cutting edge of educational innovation and impact, we celebrate and leverage our diversity in all of its intersectional identities and nurture a sense of belonging at all levels of the organization. We welcome ideas and perspectives from all employees to fulfill the full promise of our mission.

DEI Vision
Our workforce is talented, diverse, and inclusive which sustains our ability to be a national leader in high-impact tutoring. DEI Values

The following Saga values hold true to our vision, shape how we carry out our mission and guide how we are expected to treat one another.

- **We commit** to eradicating educational inequities and empowering the academic, social, and emotional growth of young people who are historically underserved and systemically excluded from high-quality educational opportunities.
- **We encourage** our employees, from all walks of life, to reach their full potential which fuels innovation and connection, where employees feel valued, respected, and engaged.
- **We require** diverse and innovative teams to ensure a positive impact on our services, solutions, and products, which enhance the quality of services for our students and communities.
- **We expect** the incorporation of diversity, equity, and inclusion in our daily work.
- **We pledge** to continuously educate ourselves on DEIB best practices.
- **We will** foster a workplace built on mutual trust, respect, and integrity.

At Saga, we are a national leader in eradicating educational inequities and empowering the academic, social, and emotional growth of young people who are historically underserved and systemically excluded from high-quality educational opportunities. To remain at the cutting edge of educational innovation and impact, we celebrate and leverage our diversity in all of its intersectional identities and nurture a sense of belonging at all levels of the organization. We welcome ideas and perspectives from all employees to fulfill the full promise of our mission. Our diversity is our strength.

History of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging at Saga

- Since Saga's founding, we have made diversity a core value. In order to ensure a diverse team, we worked to ensure a diverse pool of candidates.
- In 2017, we adopted the practice of sharing preferred pronouns to ensure we were respecting the diversity of identity within the organization.
- In 2017, we sought a partnership with an outside vendor who worked with both our Executive Leadership team and our full staff on a sequence of engagements throughout the course of two fiscal years. In that body of work, we were working on the three stages of development, starting with the Inner, moving to the Interpersonal, and then onto the Institutional.

In those years, we began the process of creating safe and brave spaces for people to begin the process of sharing their experiences within our community. This is where we began to learn more about our intent vs. our impact. It was at this time that we began maturing as an organization and developing more structured teams and workflows.

- As part of the body of work with the partner organization, our Fellows also received training centered on understanding the experience of marginalized communities living in the context of structural racism and hierarchies of privilege.
- In 2019, we began a body of work with another organization that continued where we left off and the interpersonal. During this time we continued the process of creating spaces where people could effectively express themselves without the fear of reprisal or judgment. They worked with our Executive Leadership Team and with our entire staff, and they also helped train our Fellows in the foundations of community work.
- In 2020, like many organizations, we were shaken by the pandemic and racial injustice on public display. We increased our DEIB efforts by challenging our people practices and established a DEIB committee.

Executive Summary

Saga Education's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Strategy

Goal 1. Communication – Communication is a key component of ensuring the equity and inclusion of voices and perspectives. We aim to create systemic changes in the organization to open lines of communication and increase representation. We will share information using a mode that all Saga team members can access. We will create opportunities for multi-directional dialogue that encourage all team members to share feedback, comments, and concerns.

Goal 2. Community – An aspect of our DEIB strategy is to encourage and extend our practices outside of Saga. We are committed to fostering inclusion in all aspects of our partnerships and ensuring that all of our business activities are in alignment with our DEIB values. We will seek to expand our partnerships with school districts and non-profit organizations and provide resources to help them effectively and sustainably deliver tutoring to underserved communities. We will advocate with local and national policy leaders to provide funding to close the education equity gap.

Goal 3. Cultivation – The development of Saga team members is a priority to increase the mobility of all groups of people that we hire. The talent of our team members is the single biggest asset to reaching the number of students we want to serve. We are committed to continuing to develop our team members to reach their highest career potential with Saga and sure equitable opportunities for growth. We will provide resources and training for all levels of the organization to ensure everyone is held accountable for upholding our DEIB values.

Goal 4. Culture – DEIB is most effective when embedded in the culture of the organization. Saga intends to become intentional about its cultural norms and organizational systems that influence its culture as it relates to DEIB. We are committed to partnering with team members to create the organization's cultural norms and expectations that align with our values. We will hold ourselves accountable by providing regular key performance indicators to measure Saga's DEIB performance.

> **Every individual matters. Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference.**
>
> — Jane Goodall

Goal 1. Communication

To offer a safe space where Saga team members have opportunities for feedback and dialogue to foster innovation for our services, solutions, and products. To establish consistent communication with external stakeholders on our DEIB values and commitments.

Internal Transparency in Communication

▶ Host quarterly Town Halls with all Saga Staff

▶ Implement monthly all-staff meetings to share departmental updates on goal progress

▶ Share quarterly DEIB Key Performance Indicators

▶ Redevelop our intranet to enhance the organization's internal communication

External Branding

▶ Update external website to illustrate our commitment to DEIB (work-life balance, diverse workforce, inclusive benefits)

▶ Develop and implement a social media and marketing campaign to engage a diverse talent pool and communicate key initiatives and programs

▶ Create an annual report that communicates the effectiveness of our DEIB efforts and accomplishments in the communities we serve

> "A diverse mix of voices leads to better discussions, decisions, and outcomes for everyone."
>
> — Sundar Pichai

Goal 2. Community

Encourage our DEIB best practices outside of Saga, foster inclusion in all aspects of our partnerships, and ensure all business activities are in alignment with our values.

Economic Opportunity

▶ Identify barriers that keep school districts from implementing Saga's High Impact Tutoring (HIT) and seek ways to reduce or eliminate these obstacles.

▶ Advocate with local and national policy leaders to provide funding and resources that enable districts to implement HIT and other programs that are proven methods of accelerating educational equity across our nation's public schools.

▶ Seek to expand our partnerships with school districts and non-profit organizations in order to provide tools and resources that enable them to effectively and sustainably deliver HIT to underserved students.

Tools and Resources

▶ Continue to invest in **Saga Curriculum** as a best-in-class resource for grade 8-12 math tutoring.

▶ Continue to invest in **Saga Coach** as a best-in-class, resource for tutor training. Expand capabilities to better support school districts implementing HIT independently with administrative support and support for curriculum training and site director training.

"Creating and managing a diverse workforce is a process, not a destination."

— R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr.

Goal 3. Cultivation

To attract and hire talent committed to the organization and its goals. We will provide tools and resources for diverse teams to grow and thrive. We will create an environment where all team members have equitable opportunities for career development.

Talent Acquisition

▶ Identify and use best practices for attracting diverse talent

▶ Review candidate-facing materials to eliminate barriers or bias against diverse candidates

▶ Provide training to all people managers on interview best practices to codify equity and diversity in hiring

Growth & Development

▶ Provide continuous training to managers to assess team members' strengths and areas of development

▶ Maintain a diverse leadership pipeline including a framework for holding managers accountable for actively promoting career development and advancement opportunities for their employees

▶ Establish a policy that outlines the organization's commitment to consistency in promoting team members

▶ Ensure we have DEIB training and resources available for all team members

> **"When we're talking about diversity, it's not a box to check. It is a reality that should be deeply felt and held and valued by all of us."**
>
> — Ava DuVernay

Goal 4. Culture

To foster a work environment where all employees feel welcomed, valued, respected, and engaged. We will intentionally create an environment where all team members know they belong and can come as their full professional selves.

Define Ideal Culture

▶ Participate in culture study analysis to define Saga's ideal culture

▶ Identify the steps needed to move in the direction of the ideal culture

▶ Identify opportunities to strengthen engagement with diverse groups through Affinity or Employee Resource Groups

Consistency

▶ Provide training opportunities for team members and managers in DEIB areas

▶ Hold all team members accountable to the norms and behaviors necessary for team members to be respected and valued

▶ Increase opportunities for employees to be engaged in achieving DEI goals

DEIB Committee

▶ Ensure the committee is composed of diverse team members and perspectives

▶ Re-launch the committee to identify opportunities to support, educate, and celebrate the diversity within the organization

▶ Serve as a liaison between the leadership team and the organization

"We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now."

— Martin Luther King, Jr

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Accountability Plan

Representation
We will review Saga's organizational diversity at all levels to ensure we maintain and make progress on representation

Growth
We will move past the first stage of recruiting diverse talent and ensure talent has a path to growth and development. We will monitor and review team members that grow throughout the organization

Development
We will ensure we offer opportunities for growth and development job-related and professional development to members of the team to ensure equitable opportunities for promotion.

Retention
We will monitor employee retention and turnover. We will keep a keen eye on team members that are leaving the organization and diligently learn why team members have chosen to leave the organization through exit interview surveys.

Inclusion and Belonging
We will offer team members opportunities to share their experiences at Saga. Each year we will extend an engagement survey as well as a DEIB survey. We will also give team members opportunities year-round to share feedback through pulse surveys. We will provide feedback and training to team members and managers based on these results.

Transparency
We will share the outcomes of the results mentioned above and create transparent action plans with internal and external stakeholders.

DEIB Key Terms and Definitions

The dialogue around diversity, equity, and inclusion is broad and growing. This introduces the need for common vocabulary to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Words often have different meanings; depending on lived experiences words might hold different meanings for different people. The purpose of this list is to promote dialogue around equity and inclusion. The key terms and definitions listed are not meant to be exhaustive, since language is continuously evolving. The main goal is to provide a basic framework for this conversation.

Affinity Bias
▶ The tendency people have to connect with others who share similar interests, experiences, and backgrounds
▶ Actively take note of the similarities you share with others so that you can differentiate between attributes that may cloud your judgment and the concrete skills, experiences, and unique qualities that would contribute to your team as a 'culture add' rather than a 'culture fit'

Affinity Group
▶ An affinity group or employee resource group (ERG) is a collection of individuals who share a common identity characteristic, which can be a wide range of things. The unifying characteristic is usually something that's traditionally underrepresented and can make the people in that group feel isolated. Some examples include:
   ▶ Gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, religion, family structure, physical and mental ability

Ally
▶ Someone who supports a group other than one's own (in terms of multiple identities such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc.). An ally acknowledges oppression and actively commits to reducing their own complicity, investing in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression

Anti-racism
▶ The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts

Attribute
▶ The individual traits that combine to make individuals unique, like gender, hair color, and ethnicity

Authentic Self
▶ Who an individual is as a person, demonstrating different experiences, perspectives, cultures, history, etc., without being forced to conform to the majority culture in the workplace. The work culture must value a wide range of talents, skills, and experiences to create a sense of belonging for everyone without causing harm to others

Belonging
▶ The sense that one can be themself and feel like part of a community and valued
▶ Being able to bring one's full self and that their unique insights, experiences, and perspectives matter

Bias
▶ Prejudice in favor or against something or someone when compared to another; an inclination to think one way about a group of people or individual

Cisgender
▶ A term for people whose gender identity, expression, or behavior aligns with those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth

Colorism
▶ The favorability and better treatment of those with lighter skin than those with darker skin

Confirmation Bias
▶ Seeking out evidence that confirms our initial perceptions, ignoring contrary information

Cultural Appropriation
▶ The non-consensual/misappropriate use of cultural elements for commodification or profit purposes – including symbols, art, language, customs, etc. – often without understanding, acknowledgment, or respect for its value in the context of its original culture

Cultural Competency
▶ The ability to understand, accept, and interact with individuals of different backgrounds and cultures

Disability
▶ A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities

Discrimination
▶ The unequal treatment of members of various groups, based on conscious or unconscious prejudice, which favors one group over others on differences in race, gender, economic class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, language, age, national identity, religion, and other categories

Diversity
▶ All the ways in which people differ, and encompass all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender—the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used—but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values. *Doesn't equate with the inclusion
    ▶ Neurodiversity
    ▶ Ethnic diversity
    ▶ Gender/Sexual diversity

Equality
▶ When every individual, or group of people, is given the same resources or opportunities, regardless of their individual needs or circumstances

Equity
▶ Taking steps to assess and meet people's unique needs
▶ Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.
    ▶ Taking the step of finding out how someone wants to be addressed before addressing them is part of meeting someone's unique needs and providing equity.

Gender Identity
▶ One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves
▶ One's gender identity can be the same or different from the sex assigned at birth

Gender Non-conforming
▶ An individual whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender

Groupthink
▶ When the desire for harmony or conformity in the group results in incorrect decision-making

Halo Effect
▶ The tendency to think everything about a person is good because our first impression of them was good

Human Right
▶ A right that is believed to belong justifiably to every person

Impostor Syndrome/ Experience
▶ The idea that one's success is only due to luck, and not because of talent or qualifications

Implicit Bias
▶ Negative associations expressed automatically that people unknowingly hold and that that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions; also known as unconscious or hidden bias

Inclusion
▶ Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policymaking in a way that shares power
▶ Taking specific steps to listen to people and their needs, and see that they are given a place at the table and *included* in conversations and decision making

Institutional Racism
▶ Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes and opportunities for different groups based on racial discrimination

Intersectionality

▶ The relationship/overlap between different identities

▶ Exposing [one's] multiple identities can help clarify the ways in which a person can simultaneously experience privilege and oppression

▶ The interactive effects of various forms of discrimination and disempowerment. It looks at the way that racism, many times, interacts with patriarchy, heterosexism, classism, and xenophobia — seeing that the overlapping vulnerabilities created by these systems actually create specific kinds of challenges

"Isms"

▶ A way of describing any attitude, action, or institutional structure that oppresses a person or group because of their target group. For example, race (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), older age (ageism), religion (e.g., anti-Semitism), sexual orientation (heterosexism), language/immigrant status (xenophobism), etc.

Justice

▶ Reimagining and co-creating a just and liberated world includes: understanding the history of oppression and addressing past harms, working in the right relationship and accountability in an ecosystem for collective change, and implementing interventions that use an intersectional analysis and that impact multiple systems to resist the status quo

LGTBQIA+

▶ An inclusive term for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual

Microaggression

▶ The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership

Multicultural Competency

▶ A process of embracing diversity and learning about people from other cultural backgrounds. The key element to becoming more culturally competent is respect for the ways that others live in and organize the world and an openness to learn from them

Nationality

▶ The status of belonging to a particular nation

▶ An ethnic group forming part of one or more political nations

Oppression

▶ The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality is woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression fuses institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry, and social prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures

Perception Bias

▶ The tendency to form stereotypes and assumptions about certain groups makes it difficult to make an objective judgment about individual members of those groups

Positionality

▶ How differences in social position and power shape identities and access in society

▶ Being aware of your personal identities and how they shape your worldview

Prejudice

▶ A preconceived judgment or preference, especially one that interferes with impartial judgment and can be rooted in stereotypes, denies the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized

Privilege

▶ Exclusive access or access to material and immaterial resources based on the membership in a dominant social group

Pronouns

▶ A word that is used instead of a noun or a noun phrase to refer to individuals

▶ Gendered pronouns specifically reference someone's gender: he/him/his or she/her/hers

▶ Non-gendered or nonbinary pronouns are not gender-specific and are most often used by people who identify outside of a gender binary

▶ Other approaches to pronouns may include going simply by one's name, not having a preference, or wanting to avoid pronouns altogether

Race
- A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly race), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time

Restorative Justice
- A theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by crime and conflict by placing decisions in the hands of those who have been most affected by wrongdoing and gives equal concern to the victim, the offender, and the surrounding community
- Restorative responses are meant to repair harm, heal broken relationships, and address the underlying reasons for the offense --emphasizing individual and collective accountability

Safe Space
- Refers to an environment in which everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating fully, without fear of attack, ridicule, or denial of experience

Sexual Orientation
- An individual's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay, or bisexual

Social Justice
- Constitutes a form of activism, based on principles of equity and inclusion that encompasses a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure.
- Involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others

Stereotype
- A form of generalization rooted in blanket beliefs and false assumptions, a product of processes of categorization that can result in a prejudiced attitude, critical judgment, and intentional or unintentional discrimination.
- Typically negative, based on little information, and does not recognize individualism and personal agency

Structural Inequality
- Systemic disadvantage(s) of one social group compared to other groups, are rooted and perpetuated through discriminatory practices (conscious or unconscious) that are reinforced through institutions, ideologies, representations, policies/laws, and practices. When this kind of inequality is related to racial/ethnic discrimination, it is referred to as systemic or structural racism

Unconscious Bias
- The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our views, our actions, and our decision-making ability; are an automatically-activated brain process that affects how people think
- Also known as implicit or hidden bias. These are negative associations that people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness
- Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals' stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes that many people profess

Underserved Communities
- Populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as a geographic community, have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civil life

Unseen Diversity Characteristic
- Non-visible personal characteristics such as background, culture, and personality, as well as protected classes such as disability, sexual orientation, and religion and belief