

Team 56 - Equity Action Plan

Bound Brook Robotics

Bound Brook, NJ

| | |
|--|----------|
| FIRST Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion..... | 2 |
| Commitment to Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion..... | 2 |
| Underserved, Underrepresented, and Vulnerable Populations..... | 2 |
| Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement..... | 3 |
| FIRST Reporting Portal..... | 3 |
| Notice of Non-discrimination..... | 4 |
| Cultural Sensitivity Statement..... | 4 |
| Team 56 Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion..... | 5 |
| Equity, Inclusion, & Diversity Statement..... | 5 |
| Equity Commitment..... | 5 |
| Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Goals..... | 7 |
| Community Outreach and Involvement..... | 8 |
| Student Advocacy..... | 8 |
| Professional Development..... | 9 |
| Curriculum..... | 9 |
| Diversity Calendar..... | 9 |
| Supplier Diversity..... | 9 |
| Publication of Our Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Action Plan..... | 10 |
| Policy Review..... | 10 |

FIRST Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion¹

Commitment to Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion

FIRST® is a robotics community that prepares young people for the future. A vital part of our strategic intent is to serve an inclusive and diverse audience, reflecting the population of the communities we serve—and even going beyond through targeted new community outreach.

FIRST understands the broader societal context of economic, educational, and social factors historically leading to disproportionate access and outcomes. Leveraging cross-sector and industry collaborations, *FIRST* is actively engaged in developing and delivering strategies that remove barriers and ensure greater access to *FIRST* programs so that all youth can participate.

Underserved, Underrepresented, and Vulnerable Populations

FIRST has prioritized initiatives, grants, and resources for these underserved, underrepresented, and vulnerable populations:

| Underrepresented Populations | Underserved Populations | Vulnerable Youths |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persons of Latinx Descent• Black/African Americans• Native American, Indigenous Persons, Alaskan Natives• Native Hawaiian, Asian, Pacific Islanders | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economically disadvantaged students• Girls & young women• First generation in college• Disconnected youth• Those living in rural or urban areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LGBTQ+ youth• Runaway and homeless youth• Youth involved in the juvenile justice system• Immigrant youth & emergent bilinguals• Youth with disabilities and/or receiving special education• Youth emancipating from foster care |

* Selected definitions from Committee on STEM Education (2013) and Fernandes-Alacantha (2014).

¹ From *FIRST*® Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion [website](#)

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement

FIRST is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion. We embrace and encourage differences in race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, income, language, learning difference, or any other characteristics that make our adult force and students unique.

Exploring, developing, and implementing strategies to become more inclusive and ensure access to our programs for all students (as well as access to key supports) is critical for *FIRST* to reach its goal and mission. ALL young people should have the opportunity to become science and technology leaders. *FIRST* will remove barriers to program participation for underserved, underrepresented students. Pursuant to that end, *FIRST* Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion is a concerted, organized effort to develop strategies to make its programs more accessible and inclusive.

FIRST Reporting Portal

We encourage anyone participating with *FIRST* or attending *FIRST*-related activities or events to report concerns to *FIRST* Headquarters. Select the [FIRST Reporting Portal](#) link which provides a confidential platform to report youth protection concerns, medical incidents, or other issues. All reports are reviewed by trained staff and reporters will receive a follow-up response if contact information is provided.

Alternatively, reports may also be filed via email at safetyfirst@firstinspires.org or by phone at 603-666-3906 Ext. 250.

Notice of Non-discrimination

For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (*FIRST*®) does not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, age, religion/creed, and military/veteran status in its programs and activities.

The following contact has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Youth Protection Program
200 Bedford Street
Manchester, NH 03101
603-206-2050
safetyfirst@firstinspires.org

Cultural Sensitivity Statement

FIRST is a non-denominational, non-partisan public charity that welcomes all cultures and religions to participate in our programs and activities. We are guided by sensitivity and respect for others, embracing a common goal of inspiring, engaging, and encouraging youth of all backgrounds to be part of the *FIRST* community and embrace the wonders of science and technology.

Team 56 Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion

Equity, Inclusion, & Diversity Statement

Incorporating and expanding on the equity, inclusion, and diversity plan from FIRST, Team 56 is committed to challenging racism, social injustice, and stereotypes in STEAM, not only within our team but also in our school and community. We believe that STEAM is for everyone, but recognize that STEAM is not currently accessible to all. We are devoted to breaking down these barriers to accessibility and aim to do so through our Equity Commitment and Goals.

Equity Commitment

We demonstrate *FIRST's* and our team's commitment to promoting an inclusive environment through the diversity of our members. We believe that one of the best ways to recruit and retain members is through modeling. By having a diverse team, we hope that any student interested in joining *FIRST* can envision themselves on our team because they see others like them already participating.

- This year, 100% of our students belong to one or more of the underserved, underrepresented, and vulnerable populations identified by *FIRST*.
- 55% of our team members are bilingual Spanish speakers, allowing us to better engage members of our community (52% Hispanic population). Much of the content our team creates is available in both English and Spanish. This has also allowed us to recruit English Language Learner (ELL) students to our team and helps us facilitate connections with other FRC teams and people interested in joining *FIRST* in Latin America.
- In addition to Spanish, members of our team can communicate in Hindi and Urdu.

We strive to make participation on our team possible for all students, especially those who are economically disadvantaged.

- Approximately 57% of Bound Brook High School (BBHS) students come from low-income households.²
- Approximately 67% of BBHS students qualify for free or reduced lunch.³
- Students who join our FRC Team do not have to pay to participate. The program aims to bear the majority of the financial burden for students who participate, as students raise funds through sponsorships that cover competition fees, transportation, meals during meetings, accommodations when the team travels, etc.
- <Add additional bullet points for FLL participation and summer camp participation if these are provided for free/reduced cost>

We believe that female representation is important and powerful. Empowering our female and femme members to take on leadership roles not only challenges gender stereotypes but also allows our members to gain fundamental skills and lay the foundation for future opportunities. We believe that diversity in leadership brings a greater depth of experience, as well as new perspectives and creativity, to tackle the problems we face in the world today and will face in the future. Our young people are the leaders of tomorrow.

- This year, 58% of our membership is female (a 17% increase since 2021).
- Our student leadership positions (President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Parliamentarian) are currently held by four young women.
- 9 of our 11 subteam leaders are currently young women.

² Statistics provided by the [U.S. News & World Report Best High School Rankings](#) and based on the 2021-2022, 2020-2021 and 2019-2020 academic years

³ Statistics provided by the U.S. Department of Education - Institute of Education Sciences - [National Center for Education Statistics](#) and based on the 2022 - 2023 academic year

We understand that a critical step towards creating a welcoming environment for all requires us to identify and address our implicit biases. Once we are aware of these implicit biases, we can work towards overcoming them through self-reflection—thinking critically about our biases and challenging them—and engaging with and learning from people who are different from ourselves. By addressing our implicit biases, we help prevent exclusion and restricting opportunities and instead promote collaboration, teamwork, respect, and empathy.

- 21 out of 25 (84%) FRC Team 56 student team members completed *FIRST's* Inspiring Success Training for mentors and volunteers during the 2023-2024 school year
- 8 out of 13 (61.5%) FRC Team 56 mentors completed *FIRST's* Inspiring Success Training for mentors and volunteers during 2023-2024.

As a result of these trainings, Team 56 members and mentors can state examples of cultural stereotypes and biases and explain how they affect equitable participant engagement within Team 56 and *FIRST* Robotics. This leads to being able to identify similarities and differences between the demographics of Team 56, the demographics of the Bound Brook community, and the demographics of *FIRST* Robotics. Now that students and mentors have a greater understanding of equity, inclusion, and diversity, students can collaborate with mentors to utilize various strategies to recruit participants from underserved, underrepresented, and vulnerable populations.

- Describe how micromessages can affect participation in *FIRST* activities.
- Apply strategies for providing micro-affirmations.
- Select strategies to support high self-efficacy in participants.

Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Goals

Our Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Action Plan consists of short- and long-term goals and acknowledges that this work is ongoing and never finished. This plan and

progress in addressing the goals of this plan will be regularly updated and communicated to the team and community and made available on the Team 56 website.

Community Outreach and Involvement

Team 56 will:

- Actively engage with individuals who belong to underserved, underrepresented, and vulnerable populations, not just on our team, but in our school and community.
- Continue to host food and clothing drives to help families in need and participate in local community service events.
- Expand efforts to translate important documents or information into the primary languages spoken in the homes of our students.
- Increase the accessibility of our website and social media by:
 - Adding captions/transcripts to all videos.
 - Adding alt text to our photos.
 - Improving the formatting of our website to be more compatible with screen readers.

Student Advocacy

Members of Team 56 will advocate for the right of all students to feel safe and respected for who they are. The consequences for bullying or harassment will be taken extremely seriously and escalated accordingly. Mentors and team members will immediately address incidences of bullying and harassment and report them appropriately. Instances of bullying and harassment can be reported through the [FIRST Reporting Portal](#), Bound Brook School District's [Harassment, Intimidation, & Bullying \(HIB\) Portal](#), or to a Bound Brook School District [Anti-Bullying Specialist](#).

Team 56 student leaders will check in with team members and other members of the student body regularly regarding inequitable student and staff behaviors, disciplinary actions, and other injustices, and make an effort to address identified inequities with the support of team mentors and advisors.

Professional Development

Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion training and workshops covering topics such as racial diversity, equity, and power of speech will be held and attended by mentors and our team members. A portion of weekly meetings will be dedicated to informing our team about the importance of inclusivity and acceptance.

Curriculum

All students deserve to see positive representations of themselves as well as others in what they observe. Curricular activities will represent the diversity of our team and school community. Students will increase their understanding of cultural values and their differences.

Diversity Calendar

Schools celebrate diversity through programming, presentations, and visual displays. Team 56 will also recognize and celebrate ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity through team presentations and celebrations. In addition, team presentations will feature topics such as inequity, racism, and social injustice.

Supplier Diversity

We aim to purchase more of our materials from small, minority, women, disabled, LGBT+ and veteran-owned businesses when possible. We will support local businesses in order to strengthen our community's economy and reduce our environmental impact.

Publication of Our Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Action Plan

In addition to being available on our team website, Team 56 will post its Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Action Plan on the Bound Brook School District website.

Policy Review

Our Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Action Plan is a living document. As we reach and reevaluate our goals, this document will be reviewed and revised on at least a yearly basis.