Equity & Diversity - Terminology

The purpose of this glossary is not to establish definitive or authoritative boundaries for inclusion and diversity terminology. Rather, provide a starting point for dialogue around the issues and establish a framework for questions or contestations. Please feel free to contact Equity & Diversity Director, Sharif Liwaru with any feedback.

(Title IX Terminology in BLUE)

A

Ableism - prejudice and/or discrimination against persons with mental and/or physical disabilities.

Acculturation - the process of learning and incorporating the language, values, beliefs, and behaviors that makes up a distinct culture. This concept is not to be confused with assimilation, where an individual or group may give up certain aspects of its culture in order to adapt to that of the prevailing culture.

Advisors - the individuals who provides the victim/survivor or accused with support and guidance.

ADA - a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public.

Affirmative Action - proactive policies and procedures for remedying the effect of past discrimination and ensuring the implementation of equal employment and educational opportunities, for recruiting, hiring, training and promoting women, minorities, people with disabilities and veterans in compliance with the federal requirements enforced by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP).

African Americans - (also referred to as Black Americans or Afro-Americans) are an ethnic group of Americans with total or partial ancestry from any of the black racial groups of Africa. This term may also be used to include only those individuals who are descended from enslaved Africans.

Ageism - discrimination against individuals because of their age, often based on stereotypes.

Ally - describes someone who supports a group other than one's own (in terms of racial identity, gender, faith identity, sexual orientation, etc.) Allies acknowledge disadvantage and oppression of other groups than their own; take risks and supportive action on their behalf; commit to reducing their own complicity or collusion in oppression of those groups and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.

Americans - citizens of the United States of America. The country is home to people of many different national origins. As a result, many Americans do not equate their nationality with ethnicity, but with citizenship and allegiance. Although citizens make up the majority of Americans, non-citizen residents, dual citizens, and expatriates may also claim an American identity.

Anti-bias - an active commitment to challenging prejudice, stereotyping and all forms of discrimination.
Anti-Oppression - recognizing and deconstructing the systemic, institutional and personal forms of disempowerment used by certain groups over others; actively challenging the different forms of oppression.

Anti-Semitism - Hatred toward Jews; prejudicial belief in the "racial" or religious inferiority of Jews. The term itself was first used in 1879.

Asian Americans - Americans of Asian descent. The term refers to a panethnic group that includes diverse populations, which have ancestral origins in East Asia, Southeast Asia, or South Asia.

Bias - an inclination or preference either for or against an individual, group, or community; which interferes with impartial judgment and can lead to stereotyping.

Bigotry - an unreasonable or irrational attachment to negative stereotypes and prejudices; which glorifies one’s own group and denigrates members of other groups.

Bisexuality - romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of more than one sex and/or gender (Male and Female), not necessarily at the same time, not necessarily in the same way, and not necessarily to the same degree.

Bullying - intimidating, exclusionary, threatening or hostile behavior against an individual.

Bystander - the person who observes a crime, impending crime, conflict, potentially violent or violent behavior, or conduct that is in violation of rules or policies.

Bystander Intervention - the bystander’s safe and positive actions to prevent harm or intervene when there is a risk posed to another person. Bystander intervention includes recognizing situations of potential harm, identifying safe and effective intervention options, and taking action to intervene.

Chicano/a - a term adopted by some Mexican Americans to demonstrate pride in their heritage, born out of the national Chicano Movement that was politically aligned with the Civil Rights movement to end racial oppression and social inequalities of Mexican Americans. Chicano pertains to the particular experience of Mexican-descended individuals living in the US, but not all Mexican Americans identify as Chicano.

Cisgender - a gender identity where an individual’s self-perception of their gender aligns with their perceived sex.

Class - Category of division based on economic status; members of a class are theoretically assumed to possess similar cultural, political and economic characteristics.

Classism - biased attitudes and beliefs that result in, and help to justify, unfair treatment of individuals or groups because of their socioeconomic grouping. Classism can also be expressed as public policies and institutional practices that prevent people from breaking out of poverty rather than ensuring equal economic, social, and educational opportunity.

Citizenship - the position or status of individual recognized under the custom or law as being a legal member of a sovereign state or part of a nation. An individual may have multiple citizenships.
Code of Conduct - the written policies adopted by the District to govern student behavior, rights, and responsibilities while such student is enrolled within Omaha Public Schools.

Collusion - when people act to perpetuate oppression or prevent others from working to eliminate oppression. Example: able-bodied people who object to strategies for making buildings accessible because of the expense.

Consent to Sexual Activity - consent to sexual activity is knowing and voluntary.
- Someone who is incapacitated cannot consent.
- Silence or absence of resistance does not establish consent.
- Consent to one form of sexual activity does not imply consent to other forms of sexual activity.
- Consent to engage in sexual activity with one person does not imply consent to engage in sexual activity with another.
- Consent must be obtained at the time of the specific activity and can be withdrawn at any time.
- Lack of consent or withdrawal of consent may be communicated by words or non-verbal acts.
- Coercion and force, or threat of either, invalidates consent.

Color - human skin color ranges in variety from the darkest brown to the lightest hues. An individual's skin pigmentation is the result of genetics, being the product of both of the individual's biological parents' genetic makeup. The social significance of differences in skin color has varied across cultures and over time, as demonstrated with regard to social status and discrimination.

Colonialism - some form of invasion, dispossession and subjugation of a people. The invasion need not be military; it can begin or continue as geographical intrusion in the form of agricultural, urban or industrial encroachments. The result of such incursion is the dispossession of vast amounts of lands from the original inhabitants. This is often legalized after the fact. The long-term result of such massive dispossession is institutionalized inequality. The colonizer/colonized relationship is by nature an unequal one that benefits the colonizer at the expense of the colonized.

Colorblind - term used to describe personal, group, and institutional policies or practices which do not consider race or ethnicity as a determining factor. The term "colorblind" de-emphasizes or ignores race and ethnicity as a large part of one's identity.

Cultural Appropriation - theft of cultural elements for one's own use, commodification, or profit: including symbols, art, language, customs, etc., often without understanding, acknowledgement, or respect for its value in the original culture. Results from the assumption of a dominant (i.e. white) culture's right to take other cultural elements.

Cultural Assimilation - an individual, family, or group gives up certain aspects of its culture in order to adapt to the dominant culture.

Cultural Competence - knowledge, awareness and interpersonal skills which allow individuals to increase their understanding, sensitivity, appreciation, and responsiveness to cultural differences and the interactions resulting from them. The particulars of acquiring cultural competency vary among different groups, and they involve ongoing relational process tending to inclusion and trust-building.) The process of learning leads to the ability to effectively respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by the presence of social cultural diversity in a defined social system.
Cultural Diffusion - the spread of objects and ideas from one culture to another.

Cultural Encapsulation - a lack of contact with other cultures.

Cultural Humility - The “ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the person. Cultural humility is different from other culturally-based training ideals because it focuses on self-humility rather than achieving a state of knowledge or awareness.

Cultural Pluralism - recognition of the contribution of each group to a common civilization. It encourages the maintenance and development of different life styles, languages and convictions. It strives to create the conditions of harmony and respect within a culturally diverse society.

Cultural Proficiency - The policies and practices of an organization or the values and behaviors of an individual that enable the organization or person to interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment; reflected in the way an organization treats its employees, its clients and its community; an inside-out approach to issues arising from diversity; a focus on learning about oneself and recognizing how one’s culture and one’s identity may affect others, not on learning about others.

Cultural Racism - refers to representations, messages and stories conveying the idea that behaviors and values associated with white people or “whiteness” are automatically “better” or more “normal” than those associated with other racially defined groups. Cultural racism shows up in advertising, movies, history books, definitions of patriotism, and in policies and laws. Cultural racism is also a powerful force in maintaining systems of internalized supremacy and internalized racism. It does that by influencing collective beliefs about what constitutes appropriate behavior, what is seen as beautiful, and the value placed on various forms of expression. All of these cultural norms and values in the U.S. have explicitly or implicitly racialized ideals and assumptions.

Culturally Relevant/Responsive Teaching - a pedagogy grounded in teachers’ displaying cultural competence: skill at teaching in a cross-cultural or multicultural setting. They enable each student to relate course content to his or her cultural context.

Culture - a social system of meaning and custom of daily life learned consciously and unconsciously by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors, styles of communication, governing practices, arts, customs, holiday celebrations, food, religion, dating rituals, and clothing. Cultures reflect the belief systems and behaviors informed by ethnicity, as well as by other sociological factors such as gender, age, sexual orientation and physical ability. Both individuals and organizations are defined by their cultures. It is possible to belong to more than one cultural group.

D

Dating/Intimate Partner Violence - violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the recipient of the violent behavior.

Disability - an impairment may be physical, cognitive, intellectual, mental, sensory, developmental, or some combination of impairments which results in restrictions on an individual's ability to participate in what is considered "normal" in their everyday society and/or limits one or more major life activities. A disability may be present from birth or occur during a person's lifetime.
Diaspora - refer to voluntary or forcible movement of the population from its original homeland into new regions...a common element in all forms of diaspora; these are people who live outside their natal (or imagined natal) territories and recognize their traditional homelands are reflected deeply in the languages they speak, religions they adopt, and the cultures they produce.

Disadvantaged - a historically oppressed group having less than sufficient resources to fund all of basic needs; without expendable income. A group characterized by disproportionate economic, social, and political disadvantages.

Discrimination - an unequal, unfavorable or unfair decision biased based on a prejudice against an individual or group characterized by race, color, sex, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, status, class, criminal record, veteran, etc. Discrimination is the denial of justice and fair treatment by both individuals and institutions in many arenas, including employment, education, housing, banking and political rights.

Diversity - a diverse environment is one in which a variety of social and cultural characteristics are represented within a prescribed environment, such as a school, university, workplace or public event. This word most commonly refers to differences between cultural groups; although it is also used to describe differences within cultural groups. An emphasis on accepting, valuing, and respecting cultural differences by recognizing no one culture is intrinsically superior to another underlies the current usage of the term; meaning the environment is all-inclusive. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender are the groups; which 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.

Domestic Violence - violent crime committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner; a person sharing a child with the victim; and/or a person cohabitating with or has cohabitated with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner.

Empowerment - when target group members refuse to accept the dominant ideology and take actions to redistribute social power more equitably.

Epistemology - it's what you know when you don't know that that’s what you know. It’s a subconscious set of knowledge and realities exist, so deeply within you that form the basis of how you see the world and the lens through which you view it. You don’t even know you are viewing through a lens or the set of ideas you have obtain over the years.

Equal Employment Opportunity - (EEO) Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibit discrimination in any aspect of employment based on an individual’s race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

Equality - evenly distributed access to resources and opportunity necessary for a safe and healthy life; uniform distribution of access to ensure fairness.

Equity - the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and
fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.

**ESL** - (E)nglish as a (S)econd (L)anguage. A term used to describe language learning programs in the United States for individuals for whom English is not their first or native language.

**Essentialism** - the practice of categorizing an entire group based on assumptions or an artificial social construction on what constitutes the “essence” of that group. Essentialism prevents individuals from remaining open to individual differences within groups.

**Ethnicity** - a social construct assigned to a specific group of people, historically connected by a common national origin or language. Ethnic classification is used for identification rather than differentiation.

**Ethnocentrism** - the practice of unconsciously or consciously evaluating other cultures according to preconceptions originating in the standards and customs of one’s own culture.

**Eurocentrism** - the practice of consciously or unconsciously using Europe and European culture as a frame of reference or standard criteria from which to view the world. Eurocentrism favors European cultural norms and excludes the realities and experiences of other cultural groups.

**European Americans** (or European-Americans), also known as Euro-Americans, are persons of European ancestry who also have citizenship and/or ancestry in the United States.

**F**

**Familial Status** - Civil Rights Act of 1968 Title VIII: Housing cannot discriminate for having children, with an exception for senior housing.

**Feminism** - movement advocating equal rights, status, ability, treatment as well as educational and occupational opportunities of women; based on the belief that women are not in any way inferior to men.

**G**

**Gay** - people of the same sex who are attracted sexually and emotionally to each other. More commonly utilized to describe male attraction to other males.

**Gender** - the complex relationship between physical traits and one’s internal sense of self, typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones. It refers to the socially constructed ideas about behavior, actions, and roles differentiating between masculinity and femininity. Depending on the context, these characteristics may include biological sex, sex-based social structures, or gender identity.

**Gender Identity** - a person’s deeply held sense or psychological internal knowledge, or personal conception of their own gender, regardless of the gender or sex they were assigned at birth. A person may identify as a gender that does or does not appear to correspond to the sex (male or female) assigned to that person at birth, or the person may identify as neither female nor male.

**Gender Expression/Presentation** - the manner in which a person presents themselves: female, male, androgynous, or as another gender; often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice, and/or
mannerisms, that are associated with gender in a particular cultural context, specifically with the categories of femininity or masculinity.

**Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act** - an act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of genetic information with respect to health insurance and employment.

**Glass Ceiling** - an unofficially acknowledged barrier to advancement in a profession, especially affecting women and members of minorities, regardless of their qualifications or achievements.

**Global Environmental Racism** - race is a potent factor in sorting people into their physical environment and explaining social inequality, political exploitation, social isolation, and quality of life. Racism influences land use, industrial facility siting, housing patterns, infrastructure development, and “who gets what, where, and how much.” Environmental racism refers to any policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color.

**Good** - The thing for which all other things are done. A way to see through behavior to each student’s deeper motivation.

**Handicap** - (see Disability)

**Harassment** - unwelcome, intimidating, exclusionary, threatening or hostile behavior against an individual that is based on a category protected by law.

**Hate Crime** - an act or attempted act by any person against the person or property of another individual or group which in any way constitutes an expression of hostility toward the victim because of his/her race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, gender, or ethnicity.

**Hate Incident** - behavior which constitutes an expression of hostility against the person or property of another because of his/her difference. Such incidents include actions motivated by bias, but do not meet the necessary elements required to prove a crime.

**Hazing** - verbal and physical testing, often of newcomers into a society or group, that may range from practical joking to tests of physical and mental endurance.

**Heterosexism** - social structures and practices which serve to elevate and enforce heterosexuality while subordinating or suppressing other forms of sexuality.

**Heterosexual** - pertaining to individuals attracted to the opposite sex.

**Hispanic** - the U.S. Census Bureau defines Hispanic as people who classified themselves as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino categories, which also included the subgroups Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican or Cuban.

**Homophobia** – an irrational fear of individuals who are not heterosexual. Often results in hostile, offensive, or discriminatory action against a person because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer identified, or because they are perceived to be. These actions may be verbal or physical and can include insulting or degrading comments; taunts or ‘jokes’; and excluding or refusing to cooperate with others because of their sexuality.
**Homosexual** - individuals attracted to members of one’s own sex.

**Hot Buttons** - language which triggers negative reactions from people, who view it as insulting and derogatory.

**Human Rights** - the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled, often held to include the right to life and liberty, freedom of though and expression, and equality before the law.

**Identity Group** - a particular group, culture, or community with which an individual identifies or shares a sense of belonging. Individual agency is crucial for identity development; no person should be pressured to identify with any existing group, but instead the freedom to self-identify on their own terms.

**Immigrant** - a person who resides in a nation, country, or region other than that of his/her origin. Also known as nonnative, outlander, outsider, alien, etc.

**Implicit Bias** - Also known as unconscious or hidden bias, implicit biases are negative associations, people unknowingly hold. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness. Many studies have indicated, implicit biases affect individuals’ attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware those biases exist within themselves. Notably, implicit biases have been shown to trump individuals’ stated commitments to equality and fairness, thereby producing behavior that diverges from the explicit attitudes many people profess. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is often used to measure implicit biases with regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and other topics.

**Inclusive Language** - words of phrases that include all potential audiences from any identity group. Inclusive language does not assume or connote the absence of any group. An example of gender inclusive language is using “police officers” instead of “policemen”.

**Inclusion** - the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people.

**Indigeneity** - Indigenous populations are composed of the existing descendants of the peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country wholly or partially at the time when persons of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived there from other parts of the world, overcame them, by conquest, settlement or other means and reduced them to a non-dominant or colonial condition; who today live more in conformity with their particular social, economic and cultural customs and traditions than with the institutions of the country of which they now form part, under a state structure which incorporates mainly national, social and cultural characteristics of other segments of the population which are predominant.

**Indigenous** - originating from a culture with ancient ties to the land in which a group resides.

**Individual Racism** - the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism; can occur at both a conscious and unconscious level, and can be active or passive. Examples include telling a racist joke, using a racial epithet, or believing in the inherent superiority of Whites.

**Institutional Racism** - refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group,
but their effect is to create advantages for Whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as People of Color or non-white. It is reflected in disparities regarding criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power and education, among other things.

**Intent vs. Impact** - this distinction is an integral part of inclusive environments; intent is what a person meant to do and impact is the effect it had on someone else. Regardless of intent, it is imperative to recognize how behaviors, language, actions, etc. affect or influence other people. An examination of what was said or done and how it was received is the focus, not necessarily what was intended.

**Internalized Racism** - occurs in a racist system when a racial group oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group by maintaining or participating in the set of attitudes, behaviors, social structures and ideologies that undergird the dominating group’s power.

**Intersectionality** - the ways in which oppressive institutions (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another.

**Invisible Disability** - a physical, mental or neurological condition that limits a person’s movements, senses, or activities that is invisible to the onlooker.

“-isms” - a way of describing any attitude, action or institutional structure that subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of their target group. A variety of isms exist each focusing on a different dimension of diversity: race (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), age (ageism), religion, sexual orientation, language, etc.

**L**

**Latino/a** - individual living in the United States originating from, or having a heritage relating to Latin America.

**Lesbian** - a woman whose primary sexual attraction is to other women.

**LGBTQ (QIA)** - acronym for “Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer (Questioning Intersex Allies).” The description of the movement expanded from gay and lesbian to LGBTQ and some include questioning, intersex, allies, same-gender-loving, asexual, pansexual, and polyamorous.

**Linguicism** - discrimination based on language.

**Linguistic Diversity** - the many languages spoken in the United States and throughout the world.

**M**

**Marginalization** - the placement of minority groups and cultures outside mainstream society. All that varies from the norm of the dominant culture is devalued and at times perceived as deviant and regressive.

**Microaggression** - the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.
Minority - Term used to describe a group that represents a relatively smaller percentage of the overall population of a nation/state/continent etc.

Multicultural - of or pertaining to more than one culture. The United States is multicultural because its population consists of people from many different cultures.

Multicultural Competency - a process of learning about and becoming allies with people from other cultures, thereby broadening our own understanding and ability to participate in a multicultural process. 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.

Multiculturalism - the practice of acknowledging and respecting the various cultures, religions, races, ethnicities, attitudes, and opinions within an environment. The preservation of different cultures or cultural identities within a society or nation, holding each equally valuable to and influential on the members of the society. The educational term multicultural refers to teaching about different cultures. Multiculturalism differs from cultural proficiency in that it reflects a state of being, whereas cultural proficiency is a process. The theory and practice promotes peaceful coexistence of all identities and people.

National Origin - system of classification based on nation from which a person originates, regardless of the nation in which he/she currently resides.

Native-American - refers to the descendants of the various indigenous populations that occupied the land now designated America.

Neo-Colonization - term for contemporary policies adopted by international and western “1st world” nations and organizations that exert regulation, power and control over “3rd world” nations disguised as humanitarian help or aid. These policies are distinct but related to the “original” period of colonization of Africa, Asia, and the Americas by European nations.

Non-binary gender identity - individuals who do not identify strictly as a male or female, they could identify as both or neither.

Norm - an ideal standard binding upon the members of a group and serving to guide, control, or regulate power and acceptable behavior.

Oppression - the systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression signifies a hierarchical relationship in which dominant or privilege groups benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted groups. It fuses institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry and social prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures that saturate most aspects of life in our society. Oppression denotes structural and material constraints significantly shape a person’s life chances and sense of possibility.
Oriental - relating to or deriving from the language, traditions, or cultures of the peoples of Asian nations in the region designated as "the Orient," or "the East," by Europeans. This term is conspicuously euro-centric as "the East" is constructed as being opposed to a fixed reference point, "the West," or Western Europe.

Pan-Africanism - describes the theory relating to the desire to educate all peoples of the African diaspora of their common plight and the connections between them. Some theorists promote linking all African countries across the continent through a common government, language, ideology, or belief.

Pansexuality - a term reflective of those who feel they are sexually, emotionally, and spiritually capable of falling in love with all genders.

People/Person of Color - is not a term that refers to real biological or scientific distinction between people, but used to describe all non-white racial or ethnic group, who commonly experience of being targeted and oppressed by racism. While each oppressed group is affected by racism differently and each group maintains its own unique identity and culture, there is also the recognition that racism has the potential to unite oppressed people in a collective of resistance. For this reason, many individuals who identify as members of racially oppressed groups also claim the political identity of being People of Color. This in no way diminishes their specific cultural or racial identity; rather it is an affirmation of the multiple layers of identity of every individual.

Politically Correct - a term used to describe language or behavior that reflects sensitivity to the diversity of a group. People can act as if they are culturally proficient by using politically correct language. A culturally proficient person may be perceived as politically correct, but in reality that person is culturally correct.

Polyamory - the practice or acceptance of having more than one intimate relationship at a time with the consent of all involved.

Prejudice - a pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude towards another group and its members. Such Conscious or unconscious preference are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the rights of individual members of certain groups.

Privilege - power and advantages benefiting a group derived from the historical oppression and exploitation of other groups. Privilege exists when one group has something of value that is denied to others simply because of the groups they belong to rather than because of anything they have done or failed to do.

Protected Class - a characteristic of a person which cannot be targeted for discrimination. The following characteristics are considered "Protected Classes" by Federal law: Race, Color, Religion, National origin, Age (40 and over), Sex (including gender presentation and sexual orientation by EEOC), Pregnancy, Citizenship, Familial status, Disability status, Veteran status, and Genetic information.

Queer - term used to refer to people or culture of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender community. A term once perceived as derogatory is now embraced by some members of the LGBTQ community.
Race - classification of humans based on genetic characteristics, which artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period of time.

Racial and Ethnic Identity - an individual’s awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and ethnic categories an individual chooses to describe him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience.

Racial Equity - the condition that would be achieved if one’s racial identity no longer influenced how one fares. Racial equity is one part of racial justice and must be addressed at the root causes and not just the manifestations. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.

Racial Justice - the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.

Racial Reconciliation - Reconciliation involves three ideas. First, it recognizes racism in America is both systemic and institutionalized, with far reaching effects on both political engagement and economic opportunities for minorities. Second, reconciliation is engendered by empowering local communities through relationship-building and truth-telling. Lastly, justice is the essential component of the conciliatory process justice that is best termed as restorative rather than retributive, while still maintaining its vital punitive character.

Racism - individual and institutional practices and policies based on the belief that a particular race is superior to others. This often results in depriving certain individuals and groups of civil liberties, rights, and other resources, hindering opportunities for social, educational, and political advancement.

Rape - a form of sexual assault is defined as any non-consensual sexual intercourse committed by coercion, intimidation, threat or physical force, either actual or implied. Rape includes sexual assault, committed by an acquaintance as well as a stranger.

Religion - an organized belief system based on certain tenets of faith. Religion is a belief in a supreme supernatural force or god(s).

Retaliation - adverse action against another person for reporting a violation or for participating in the investigation process. Retaliation includes harassment and intimidation, including but not limited to violence, threats of violence, property destruction, adverse educational or employment consequences, and bullying.

Reverse Discrimination - unfair treatment of members of a dominant or majority group. This term is often used by opponents of affirmative action who believe that these policies are causing members of traditionally dominant groups to be discriminated against. The Supreme Court considers it to be illegal to consider race and other demographic categories in hiring and other employment related decisions.
Safe Space - a space in which an individual or group may remain free of blame, ridicule and persecution, and are in no danger of coming to mental or physical harm.

Scapegoating - the action of blaming an individual or group for something when, in reality, there is no one person or group responsible for the problem. It targets another person or group as responsible for problems in society because of that person's group identity.

Section 504 - a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination based upon disability. It refers to anti-discrimination, civil rights statute that requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the non-disabled are met.

Sex - assignment given at birth based on external anatomy. It refers to a system of classification based on biological and physical differences, such as primary and secondary sexual characteristics. Differentiated from gender, which is based on the social construction and expectations of the categories “men” and “women.”

Sex Discrimination - occurs when a person has been treated inequitably based on sex, gender identity, or gender expression. Omaha Public Schools prohibits the following forms of sex discrimination: sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, stalking and dating/intimate partner violence.

Sexism - prejudice and/or discrimination based on gender.

Sexual Assault - physical sexual act or acts committed against another person without consent. Sexual assault is an extreme form of sexual harassment. Sexual assault includes: rape, date rape, acquaintance rape, fondling, statutory rape and incest. For statutory rape, the age of consent is 17 years old in Nebraska. However, in certain circumstances, a person who is 16 or older can consent to sex with a person who is no more than 2 years older.

Sexual Exploitation - occurs when one person takes nonconsensual or abusive sexual advantage of another person for his/her own advantage or benefit or for the advantage or benefit of anyone other than the person being exploited and which behavior does not constitute any other form of sexual misconduct. Examples of sexual exploitation include, but are not limited to, the following activities done without the consent of all participants:

- Invasion of sexual privacy
- Prostituting another person
- Taping or recording of sexual activity
- Going beyond the boundaries of consent to sexual activity (letting your friends hide to watch you engaging in sexual activity)
- Engaging in voyeurism
- Knowingly transmitting an STI, STD, venereal disease or HIV to another person
- Inducing another to expose their genitals

Sexual Harassment - Unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual activity by a person or persons in a position of power or authority to another person; or other unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a person to another person, when submission to or rejection of such conduct is used explicitly or implicitly as a condition for academic or employment decisions; or such conduct creates a hostile environment by being sufficiently severe or pervasive and objectively offensive that it interferes with,
limits or denies the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from educational programs or activities or employment access, benefits or opportunities.

**Sexual Orientation** - the direction of one’s sexual attraction toward the same gender, opposite gender, or other genders. It is on a continuum and not necessarily a set of absolute categories.

**Sexual Violence** - physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person’s will or perpetrated where a person is incapable of giving consent. A number of different acts fall into the category of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual abuse, and sexual coercion.

**Social Constructionism** - a perception of an individual, group, or idea that is "constructed" through cultural and social practice, but appears to be "natural," or "the way things are." For example, the idea that women "naturally" like to do housework is a social construction because this idea appears "natural" due to its historical repetition, rather than it being "true" in any essential sense.

**Social Distance** - a concept created by scientist Emory Bogardus, refers to the degree to which we are willing to interact and develop relationships with certain racial and ethnic groups.

**Social Justice** - a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole.

**Social Power** - access to resources that enhance chances of getting what one needs or influencing others in order to lead a safe, productive, and fulfilling life.

**Sociocultural Theory** - a perspective that focuses on the social and cultural context of ones’ thoughts and actions.

**Stalking** - Following or engaging in a course of conduct (two or more acts by which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates about a person or interferes with his or her property); is directed at a specific person; and causes a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others or causes that person to be frightened, intimidated or suffer substantial emotional distressed.

**Stereotype** - to categorize people based on an artificial construction of a certain group designed to impart the "essence" of that group, which homogenizes the group, effacing individuality and difference, which is based on a positive or negative set of beliefs.

**Stereotype Vulnerability** - the danger of not performing up to our ability because of our anxieties and fears about perpetuating a stereotype.

**Title VI** - prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives Federal funds or other Federal financial assistance.

**Title VII** - prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin.
**Title IX** - No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

**Tolerance** - enduring the presence of people who differ from you, or ideas that conflict with yours. Tolerance is the first in a progression of steps that may lead to valuing diversity. Teaching tolerance is a more positive approach to diversity than is genocide or cultural destructiveness, but it is only the beginning of a process that moves toward valuing differences creating acceptance and open-mindedness to different practices, attitudes, and cultures; does not necessarily mean agreement with the differences.

**Transculturation** - the process by which a person adjusts to another cultural environment without sacrificing his or her own cultural identity.

**Transgender** - an individual whose gender identity differs from the societal expectations of their physical sex. Transgender or "trans" does not imply any form of sexual orientation.

**Transition(ing)** - the process in which a person goes from living and/or identifying as one gender to living and/or identifying as another. This may or may not include gender reassignment surgery and/or hormone therapy. This can include but is not limited to; change of name, pronouns, clothing, gender expression, etc.

**V**

**Veteran Status** - a person who has served or is serving in the armed forces. Those veterans that have had direct exposure to acts of military conflict may also be referred to as war veterans (although not all military conflicts, or areas in which armed combat takes place, are necessarily referred to as wars).

**W**

**White Fragility** - Robin DiAngelo, professor of multicultural education at Westfield State University, has noted that "white privilege can be thought of as unstable racial equilibrium". When this equilibrium is challenged, the resulting racial stress can become intolerable and trigger a range of defensive moves. DiAngelo defines these behaviors as "White Fragility."

**White Privilege** - refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are White. White people who experience such privilege may or may not be conscious of it.