

The New School of San Francisco’s mission and vision is dependent on attracting, engaging, and retaining families through the provision of a world-class, inclusive, and equitable education. NSSF deeply believes that an excellent education, one that is accessible to all children irrespective of their background, is only achieved when a school works in close partnership with families and fosters a strong sense of mutual trust and understanding. NSSF places students and their families at the center of its design and prepares children for success in life, empowers parents as partners in this process, and attends to family-level needs. As a citywide “demonstration school,” our purpose is to continuously innovate and improve, assess our effectiveness, and disseminate our learning.

## **Our Community**

The New School of San Francisco will reflect the city’s diversity and proactively build a racially and socioeconomically inclusive and equitable community. We define community as those who have a direct and meaningful interest or involvement in our school:

- NSSF student body
- NSSF families
- NSSF staff
- Prospective families and their children
- Prospective teachers and staff
- SFUSD leadership
- SFUSD schools co-located with The New School of San Francisco
- NSSF Board members (incl. advisors)
- Program partners
- Funders/supporters

We know that diversity cannot stand alone; we believe both diversity and equity are deeply integral to the success of our students, families, faculty, and school community. The New School of San Francisco puts equity at the forefront of our practice, meaning that every child has what they need to thrive personally and academically.

We are a community that:

- Reflects the city of San Francisco and embraces its rich and multiple cultures, experiences, resources, differences, and history;
- Is oriented towards social justice and puts equity at the forefront of all we do.

## **Our Recruitment & Engagement Objectives**

### **Recruitment:**

1. Families across San Francisco are given an equal opportunity and equitable support to apply.
2. Prospective students and families have access to high-quality information and events, enabling them to make informed decisions around fit with the school’s values, priorities, and educational program.
3. The New School of San Francisco community, from its student population to the Board, reflect the city’s diversity socio-economically, racially, and ethnically.
4. The New School of San Francisco community helps to lead the engagement efforts.

### **Engagement:**

1. Families are able to voice their feedback and contribute meaningfully to the school’s development.
2. Students, families, and staff see their values and cultures reflected in the school and in daily interactions.
3. Families build durable and supportive relationships across the community, where priorities, perspectives, and needs are understood and addressed.
4. Students are engaged as unique learners who bring to school a valuable set of experiences, perspectives, interests, and resources from which their educational goals and experience are defined.

## Our Approach to Recruitment

NSSF is dedicated to serving a diverse population. Research shows that racial and socioeconomic diversity in the classroom can provide students with a range of cognitive and social benefits<sup>55</sup>. Our vision for access and inclusion is that no racial or socio-economic group will make up more than 50 percent of the school's population. This is in line with the District priority for reducing "racial isolation".<sup>56</sup>

Recruiting and retaining a diverse population requires both a structural change to our lottery and equity-based investments in community engagement that make our school the school of choice for low-income families. The New School of San Francisco will broaden access to low-income families through a lottery preference for families that qualify for Free and Reduced Price Lunch. We will also deepen our engagement of low-income families by expanding our recruitment and cultivation teams and their work inside and outside of the school.

Our recruitment strategies outlined below are designed to increase the socio-economic diversity of NSSF:

1. Secure a preference for applicants who qualify for Free and Reduced Price Lunch in re-authorization.
2. Increase staffing focused on recruitment in low-income neighborhoods with a focus on 1:1 and small group recruitment strategies.
3. Increase involvement of diverse teachers and families who volunteer in recruitment, cultivation, and enrollment, via existing recruitment and retention committees and affinity groups. We emphasize multiple, personal touch-points with staff and families that share the background of the communities they are recruiting from.
4. Increase staff PD and family education in culturally responsive practices and DEI. Our intention is to create an inclusive, non-white-dominant school environment that values diverse backgrounds so that prospective families can see themselves reflected within the school.
5. Secure long-term facility (K-8) to increase stability and decrease the risk of dislocation for vulnerable families.

In general, the school's recruitment efforts are focused on ensuring that all interested families are able to access the information they need to learn about NSSF, and be able to make an informed decision for their child and family. However, we recognize that not all families in San Francisco have the same access and, therefore, take an equity-based approach. This means allocating additional time and resources to communities that have the least access.

Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, NSSF will continue the process of recruitment for open spaces, primarily kindergarten and 6th grade. Recruitment for upper grades will mirror our recruitment strategies for incoming kinder students and families with shifts to focus on older students and families.

### Broaden and Deepen our Networks:

1. Further develop a network of community-specific and citywide institutions from which to introduce NSSF and build relationships with prospective parents. Institutions include religious organizations, community centers, community-based organizations, parent advocacy groups, and businesses or business umbrella groups.  
*\*Community-specific and citywide institutions are our focus for our K-8 recruitment, including event co-hosting opportunities from preschool and community networks.*
2. Further develop a network of local preschools from which to introduce NSSF and build relationships with prospective families and students, prioritizing:
  - a. socio-economically diverse set of preschools, from Head Start and subsidized programs, to wholly fee-based;
  - b. preschools that are geographically diverse.
3. Implement a staff-led recruitment team to set-up and coordinate community engagement. Teams are responsible for widening networks, identifying prospective parents, recruiting and coordinating volunteers, and data collection. Team members will reflect the communities from which they recruit.

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<sup>55</sup> source: <https://tcf.org/content/facts/the-benefits-of-socioeconomically-and-racially-integrated-schools-and-classrooms/>

<sup>56</sup> source: <http://www.sfusd.edu/en/enroll-in-sfusd-schools/monitoring-student-assignment/ad-hoc-committee-on-student-assignment.html>

#### Make Communications More Accessible:

1. Produce PR materials in Spanish, Chinese, and English, including brochures, flyers, school website, and family/teacher survey.
2. Given the realities of digital access, we use local print and radio programming, specifically local media in languages that are not English.
3. Establish web presence from which to introduce NSSF, engage prospective parents and teachers, and promote open houses and pop-up school experiences. Channels we use include the NSSF website, parent and school focused blogs, Facebook, and local online news outlets.
4. Distribute PR material via online channels and at local events, preschools, community organizations, and public libraries.

#### Open the School to Prospective Families:

1. Weekend and/or summer events for prospective parents, children, and educators organized by NSSF. Events provide hands-on introduction to the inquiry-based program and school parents, teachers, leadership, and staff. We engage our network of preschool and community organizations to promote the pop-up opportunities and ensure a diverse turnout.
2. Afternoon and evening open houses and family conversations for prospective families, children, and educators organized by NSSF. Family conversations introduce prospective families to the school's educational program and staff, and provide a venue for valuable feedback.

#### Assessment:

NSSF documents its engagement and recruitment efforts to help achieve racial, socio-economic, and geographic balance. We assess data on prospective family demographics and network diversity to refine our outreach efforts.

#### Student Demographics:

- Research shows that racial and socioeconomic diversity in the classroom can provide students with a range of cognitive and social benefits.
- Our preference is that no racial or socio-economic group will make up more than 50 percent of the school's population. This is in line with the district targets for reducing "racial isolation".
- NSSF is requesting the addition of an admission preference for families qualifying for Free and Reduced Price Meals (outlined in Element H). Through this preference, ongoing outreach, and culturally inclusive teaching and learning practices, NSSF expects to recruit and retain a socio-economically balanced student body. Through these efforts, we also expect and welcome further diversification along lines of race, ethnicity, and learning abilities.

<b>Student Group [JMM1]</b>	<b>% of Enrollment (2018-19)</b>	<b>Projected (w/preference) over 3 years</b>
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	11%	35%
English Learners	10%	25%
Students with Disabilities	7 %	12%
Black or African American	5%	7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	1%

Asian	14%	21%
Filipino	1.7%	4%
Hispanic or Latino	21 %	25%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.5 %	2%
White	52%	35%
Two or More Races	3.4%	5%

## Our Approach to Community Engagement

Below are the key elements of our family-focused model. Each element has been implemented since our authorization in March 2015 and is assessed twice-yearly along with families and staff to gauge efficacy and alignment with our mission.

### Family and Community Representation and Voice:

#### *1. Boards, Councils, and Committees*

The New School of San Francisco has established and maintained four bodies, all of which include or are led by families. The purpose of these interrelated bodies will be to increase family involvement and leadership, broaden participation in decision-making, build community, and establish trust, transparency, and accountability. As a whole, these bodies offer tangible ways for families to contribute meaningfully to the development of the school by offering diverse sets of skills, backgrounds, commitments, and life experiences.

As an equity-based school, there is not a minimum volunteer or participation rate for family involvement or fundraising. However, the school is responsible for creating and maintaining governance, advisory, working-group bodies that ensure 100% of families have access to information, decision-making, and influence over the school's development. The make-up of each body will reflect the diversity of our school.

These bodies will be:

1. Board of Directors
2. Advisory Network
3. Home & School Council
4. Home & School Council Committees
5. Affinity Groups
6. Room Parents

School Body	Purpose & Family Involvement	Meeting Frequency	Leadership
Board of Directors	The Board's primary responsibilities are to create, adopt and monitor a long-term strategic plan and associated budget, and to employ and evaluate the leadership of The New School of San Francisco. While there will not be a Board seat specifically reserved for parents, the Board and the School's leadership will preference suitable board candidates who are also parents. In addition, the Board may invite Home & School Council and Advisory Network	6-8 weeks	Chair of the Board  Managed by: Head of School

	members to join standing and/or ad-hoc committees of the Board of Directors.		
Home & School Council (HSC)	<p>A collaborative body of parents, staff, and school leadership responsible for assessing and assisting the school's development and promoting the educational, socio-emotional, and physical wellbeing of children and their families. The Home &amp; School Council (HSC) focuses on advancing family involvement and services, school improvement, student recruitment, community development and outreach, extracurricular programming, and Home &amp; School communication and coordination. The HSC is the main body for assessing, advising and implementing our Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and community development work, including initiatives to increase effectiveness of parent communications, inclusion, and empowerment.</p> <p>HSC also holds a family education and information series focused on important topics around culture and climate, academic and social-emotional learning, and school development. See full scope and sequence of Family Education Series below.</p>	Monthly (minimum)	Managed by: Leadership Team
HSC Committees	Committees are working groups formed to attend to the school's development and family priorities. Committees include: student enrichment (technology and music); communications; student recruitment; staff retention and recruitment; facilities; fundraising; and health and safety.	Monthly	<p>Headed by Family Co-Chairs</p> <p>Managed by: Leadership Team</p>
Affinity Groups	Affinity groups are comprised of parents, guardians, and staff with a shared identity of their child/children's background, and experience [ <i>race, ethnicity, gender/ orientation, socio-economics, language</i> ]. The New School of San Francisco Affinity Groups come together to support each other and the school in enhancing their family's and child's/children's identity and sense of inclusion at school. The school focuses on creating safe spaces for our children and families that come from historically marginalized communities to make for a more equitable experience.	6-8 weeks	<p>Headed by Family Co-Chairs</p> <p>Managed by: Leadership Team</p>
ELAC	<p>The purpose of the English Language Advisory Council is to assist the Leadership Team and Home and School Council with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing the development of programs and services to support the growth of all English Language Learners</li> <li>Reviewing the school's achievement data specifically as it relates to English Language Learners across all subjects</li> <li>Building out a more culturally responsive learning environment</li> </ul>	Quarterly	Managed by: ELAC Coordinator & Dir of Community
Room Parents	Room Parents are the official liaisons between teachers and families. While each class will have distinct needs, all Room Parents are hands-on, increase collaboration and communication between home and school, and have responsibilities that include: increase and improve communication with parents, including addressing language and technology access; plan and organize class events; foster inclusive cultural events; recruit other parent volunteers; meet with teachers and other Room Parents on a regular basis; organize supply donations; organize appreciations of staff.	Monthly	Managed by: Room Parent Coordinators

## *2. Home & School Communication*

Trust between families and school staff is essential in building and maintaining positive home–school relationships. Communication, both written and in person, is our most valuable tool in establishing trust and creating an open, respectful and collaborative community. Communication between school staff and parents takes on different forms: phone calls, text messages, e-mail, newsletters (hard copy and via the website), social-media, and face-to-face meetings.

The following are currently a core part of our school communications:

- Bi-weekly All-School Family Digest
- Monthly classroom newsletters
- Daily teacher and family posts on school-tailored social-media platform
- Parent Portal
- Tri-annual family-teacher conferences (5<sup>th</sup> grade and up will be student-led, with intention to extend this into lower elementary as appropriate)
- Individual Learning Plans for each student, developed and reviewed thrice annually with families, including intake conferences at beginning of the year to collaboratively set goals
- Four grade-level Expositions
- Weekly All School Meetings (ASMs) in which families are welcome
- 6-weekly Home & School Council meetings
- Family education series: 9 Deep Dives and 6 leadership Coffee Chats

We prioritize quality, frequency, and accessibility of communications. The school’s communications is assessed by the schools families, staff, and leadership and assessed annually. We allow ourselves the ability to modify the frequency, medium, and content of our communication based on this assessment and whether it meets family and school needs.

Issues around equity are assessed regularly to ensure our communications are accessible to all and of comparable quality across our diverse families. We tailor written and in-person communications to meet the needs of individual families (e.g., providing translation and interpretation, balancing the use of technology, scheduling in-person communications around working family schedules). Communications are in Spanish and English. We will include Cantonese and/or other languages as need arises.

### Supportive Family-School Community

Our school model is designed to provide families, students, and teachers with much needed quality, stability, and continuity. This commitment to each family provides the opportunity to understand and address each student’s and families’ needs as well as build durable and supportive relationships.

#### *1. Family Education Series*

In collaboration with our institutional partners and the Home and School Council, we have developed a family-community education program to raise awareness around key issues related to children’s wellbeing, our school’s development, and community needs. This includes workshops, presentations, and discussion sessions on subjects including curricular areas, personalization and differentiation, child development, Equity, Data and Assessment, and SEL.

#### *2. Out of School Time*

We have an equitable and inclusive extended schedule to support working families with affordable and high quality before and after-school options. Our in-house Exploremos program allows us to have a cohesive and continuous approach to students and families from 7:45 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Toward this end, our Exploremos team is trained alongside of our school-day educators on key areas of school climate and culture (RP, PBIS, classroom management) and has opportunities to learn from and be coached by classroom teachers. The program is open to all and fees are based on a sliding scale.

#### *3. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*

As a diverse-by-design school, we are proactively working to create and foster an equity-centered community that celebrates its diversity, confronts inequities, and builds relationships and alliances across differences to transform systems, practice, and

perspectives. In partnership with SF-CESS, we have committed to long-term professional and community development work to deepen staff, family, and student's content knowledge, and developing a toolbox for individualized, equity-centered learning in our collaborations and classrooms. This work has started with staff to build the school's leadership capacity and will extend in our affinity groups and education series for families and identity, SEL, and equity work with students.

### Holistic and Equitable Learning and Instruction:

Our constructivist, experiential-based educational model sees every student as a unique learner who brings to school a valuable set of experiences, perspectives, interests, and resources from which to define his or her educational goals and the path towards those goals. This approach requires an in-depth knowledge of each student's family and background and a high degree of personalization and differentiation with regards to instruction.

#### *1. Integrated Social-Emotional Development*

In attending to the whole child, we incorporate social-emotional development into all aspects of teaching and learning. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is based on the understanding that the best learning emerges in the context of supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging, and meaningful. Through SEL, we focus on developing students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Restorative Practices (RP) and Positive Based Interventions and Supports (PBIS) have been adopted and implemented schoolwide. In support of families, we offer forums and workshops in important areas like PBIS, Restorative Practices, Kimochis, RULER, and Tribes so that they are informed of our priorities and educational approach and can positively reinforce them at home, if appropriate.

#### *2. Individual Learning Plans*

Each child develops an Individual Learning Plan along with his or her teacher and family that maps out academic, socio-emotional, and inquiry learning goals, charts progress towards those goals, and determines what resources, experiences, and supports will be needed. The evolving plans provide families a way to remain updated on their child's development, collaborate with teachers, and support student learning. The Individual Learning Plan also serves as a touchstone for teacher-family check-ins and conferences. As and when needed, Coordination of Services Team (COST) brings together families and school staff and services to develop and monitor interventions to address specific concerns. The COST focuses on referred students to promote their academic and social-emotional success.

#### *3. Identity Development*

Identity development is a critical component of the school's commitment to diversity and equity. Recognizing that each student and family has their own identity, culture, background, and strengths, NSSF deliberately cultivates a sense of self in each student in order to celebrate our diversity, enable cross-cultural understanding and empathy amongst children and families, and cultivate students' agency. We also believe identity development at school offers rich opportunities for family involvement as students explore the school community's diversity.