



# High School Survival Guide: United In Diversity

*Vanessa P. Girard*

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### United in Diversity

A transition guide to prepare students socially and culturally for the high school experience. Individual chapters provide insights and exercises to help students cope with diversity and its inherent themes of self-esteem/identity, stereotyping, perception and oppression.

Truancy is a major challenge with middle and high school students. This challenge is secondary to growing attitudes of apathy and nihilism, which may be a direct result of feelings of being unprepared and culturally incompetent. This book is designed to address these challenges by helping students to build healthy self-esteem through identifying similarities and respecting differences across cultures (cliques, high school vs middle school, ethnic, etc.) and to develop a sense of purpose. A confident student with a purpose is more likely to attend class and apply him or herself. Additionally, this book is designed to support the teacher, promote education, define and build self-esteem, discourage stereotyping, and teach students to investigate the big picture before drawing conclusions or forming an opinion through awareness of the complexities of perception. It is a tool that promotes a positive outlook while sneaking in learning in the process.

"At my school we... are reading... about your life and you talk about our future. I am really happy to be learning about you and your accomplishments; what you have accomplished makes me want to do the best I can do in school, life, and my future.... I just wanted to let you know that I am truly impressed and inspired by what you've said in this book... you have said things in your book that most parents and/or adults don't even remember or understand; it's like you still know how hard it is to be a kid/teen. And with other things that are going on these days you even understand more.... You taught me and my classmates the meaning of enjoying what I have right now before it all passes you by, but [to] be careful of [our] decisions." —Michelle Mercado, 13-year-old student, Chandler, AZ

"I believe the information provided in this book to be of value for every student and teacher of any ethnicity or demographic. At a time when our schools are suffering increases in truancy and dropout rates, this book offers a much needed resource to assist students... it is sincere and bolsters positive outlooks and behaviors." — Rep. Ben Miranda, AZ House of Representatives

"Skyline has been really happy to present this author's views in our school. She speaks the language that students need to hear and in the way they want to listen to." — Ronda Owens, M.Ed., Superintendent, Skyline K-12 Schools, AZ

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