




TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents
FROM: Chancellor Lester W. Young, Jr. 
SUBJECT: The New York State Board of Regents Policy Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in New York State Schools

DATE: May 6, 2021

AUTHORIZATION(S):

SUMMARY

Issue for Action

At the Board of Regents meeting in April 2021, the Board discussed a framework on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for New York State Schools which served as the basis for adopting a policy statement. At the May 2021 meeting of the Board, they will discuss and act on the proposed policy statement. The policy of the NYS Board of Regents is to encourage and support efforts at the State and local level to create within every school an ecosystem of success that is built upon a foundation of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, opportunity, innovation, confidence, trust, respect, caring, and relationship-building. All students must feel that they are welcome, they belong, and they are supported in every school.

The Board of Regents recognizes that much of this work is already happening in districts all across the State. School and district leaders, teachers, staff, students, and parents are working to create school communities that are more diverse, more equitable, and more inclusive than ever before. Many of New York's education stakeholders and their organizations have prioritized this issue, and their efforts must be recognized and applauded. But more work remains, and the Board of Regents and the State Education Department are committed to supporting schools and districts in their efforts to lift up all students.

Reason(s) for Consideration

For action.

Proposed Handling

The policy statement will come before the Full Board for decision at the May 2021 meeting.

Related Regent's Items

April 2021: [The NYS Board of Regents Framework on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in New York's Schools: A Call to Action - DRAFT](https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/421brd1.pdf)
(<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/421brd1.pdf>)

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents approve the policy statement that will advance diversity, equity and inclusion in New York schools.

VOTED, that The New York State Board of Regents Policy Statement on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in New York Schools be approved.

Timetable for Implementation

Effective May 10, 2021.

The New York State Board of Regents Policy on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

May 2021



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The New York State Board of Regents Policy Statement on **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in New York State Schools**

The New York State Constitution authorizes the Board of Regents to oversee the general supervision of all educational activities within the State. The Regents exercise their authority in various ways, including by promulgating rules and regulations, adopting student learning standards, establishing academic and graduation requirements, and providing guidance and best practices to the field to ensure academic excellence for all students. The Board may also exercise its authority by adopting policy positions on significant educational and social issues. It is important for the Board of Regents to establish and communicate to all New Yorkers its beliefs and expectations for all schools and students – especially at those pivotal moments in history that we are currently experiencing.

A growing body of research finds that *all* students benefit when their schools implement strong Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policies and practices – including academic, cognitive, civic, social-emotional, and economic benefits. Strong DEI policies, in partnership with parents and families, empower students from all backgrounds to visualize successful futures for themselves and provide them with a sense of belonging and self-worth. These benefits can lead to improved student achievement, which in turn can lead to better outcomes in other areas of their lives, including work and civic engagement. This is true regardless of a school’s geographic location or the demographic composition of its students and faculty.

We recognize that the decision to adopt a DEI policy, as well as the contents of such a policy, are ultimately matters of local discretion. However, the Regents believe strongly that there is a moral and an economic imperative to remove the inequities that stand in the way of success for whole segments of New York’s student population. *Accordingly, the Board expects that all school districts and institutions of higher education will develop and implement policies and practices that advance diversity, equity and inclusion – and that they will implement such policies and practices with fidelity and urgency.*

It shall therefore be the policy of the NYS Board of Regents to encourage and support efforts at the State and local level to create within every school an ecosystem of success that is built upon a foundation of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, opportunity, innovation, confidence, trust, respect, caring, and relationship-building. All students must feel that they are welcome, they belong, and they are supported in every school.

The Board of Regents believes that effective DEI policies must consider the entirety of the schooling process and expects districts to include the following elements in their policies:

- **Governance:** Establish a district Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee that is representative of all stakeholders, including students.

- **Teaching and Learning:** Address the need for *inclusive and culturally responsive teaching and learning*, including but not limited to curricula in all content areas; books and instructional materials; pedagogical practices and professional development; classroom grouping policies and practices; student support systems for all developmental pathways; full and equitable opportunities to learn for all students; and multiple assessment measures.

As part of this work, districts should consider:

- Specifically *acknowledging the role that racism and bigotry have played, and continue to play, in the American story.*
 - Adopting a [Culturally Responsive-Sustaining \(CR-S\) Framework](#) that specifically embeds the ideals of diversity, equity and inclusion by creating student-centered learning environments that affirm cultural identities; foster positive academic outcomes; develop students’ abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevate historically marginalized voices; empower students as agents of social change; and contribute to individual student engagement, learning, growth, and achievement through the cultivation of critical thinking.
 - Actively avoiding the “danger of the single story.” When one story is the only story, it becomes the definitive story; when that happens in school, students are deprived of the opportunity of seeing themselves as part of the American story. This is not about eliminating or minimizing any of America’s history; it is simply about ensuring that the contributions of *all groups* are included in the telling of the American story.
 - Ensuring coherent opportunities for students to actively participate in experiences that prepare them for a lifetime of civic engagement and contributions to social justice, including, for example, completing projects that enable students to apply the learning they have acquired within and across subject areas.
- **Family and Community Engagement:** Ensure that family and community engagement practices are based on mutual trust, confidence, and respect. Encourage participation in community building conversations, reducing language barriers, and fostering inclusivity through translated communications from our schools.
 - **Workforce Diversity:** Recruit and retain a diverse workforce in all areas and at all levels, thereby reducing stereotypes and preparing students for an increasingly global society.

- **Diverse Schools and Learning Opportunities:** Districts should –
 - Take creative steps to enhance the level of socioeconomic and racial diversity within district schools (even if the district’s student population is relatively homogeneous).
 - Examine the use of language which prevents some students from accessing and fully participating in the district’s classes, programs, and offerings. Language matters, and it is therefore critical that districts eliminate the use of terms and phrases that perpetuate negative stereotypes and minimize student opportunities.
 - Ensure that coursework, programs, and activities are accessible to all students, regardless of their disability status, native language, income level, or any other basis.

- **Student Supports, Discipline, and Wellness:** Districts should –
 - Employ programs and practices that enhance *all* students’ self-identity, self-confidence, and self-esteem.
 - Implement non-discriminatory discipline policies and practices.
 - Focus on the well-being of the “whole child” by always considering and addressing the full range of student developmental pathways.

The Board of Regents acknowledges that much of this work is already happening in districts all across the State. School and district leaders, teachers, staff, students, and parents are working to create school communities that are more diverse, more equitable, and more inclusive than ever before. Many of New York’s education stakeholders and their organizations have prioritized this issue, and their efforts must be recognized and applauded. But more work remains, and the Board of Regents and the State Education Department are committed to supporting schools and districts in their efforts to lift up all students.