

Executive Summary

In June 2017, as part of the Equity and Excellence for All: Diversity in New York City Public Schools plan, the DOE established a School Diversity Advisory Group (SDAG) to make formal policy recommendations to the Mayor and Chancellor.

The report named three Co-chairs - José Calderón, President of the Hispanic Federation, Hazel Dukes, President of the NAACP New York State Conference and Maya Wiley, Senior Vice President for Social Justice and Henry Cohen Professor of Urban Policy and Management at the New School. The three co-chairs and two additional members - Amy Hsin, Associate Professor of Sociology at Queens College and Richard Kahlenberg, Senior Fellow at The Century Foundation - make up the group's Executive Committee.

The broader SDAG includes over 40 members, who bring a range of personal and professional perspectives to the group. Members include city government stakeholders, local and national experts on school diversity, parents, teachers, advocates, students, and other community leaders. The SDAG members were identified by the City and the Executive Committee and began meeting in December 2017.

The SDAG met as a full group and in sub-committees to advance discussions and also engaged in public sessions in every borough. From December 2017, through the publication of this report, the SDAG and its subcommittees have collectively held nearly 40 meetings, including one day-long retreat, to facilitate research and discussion of a number of key policy areas related to diversity.

Upon its formation, the SDAG defined a set of shared principles to govern its work. These principles serve as the lens through which all recommendations, current and future, are filtered:

- Diversity means something different in each community and recommendations should speak to that broad definition.
- The Advisory group operates with respect, transparency and an inclusive process.
- Advisory group recommendations will: increase equity, be based on research-supported approaches, seek to understand unintended consequences, and be based on what DOE can implement in the short-term, with some longer-term recommendations.

Decades of research has taught us that diverse, integrated schools offer academic and social benefits for all students. Researchers have identified three major advantages to integrated schools: (1) all students benefit when they can learn from classmates who have different life experiences to share,

evidenced by higher academic outcomes, stronger critical thinking skills, and increased creativity; (2) all students benefit from reductions in prejudices and implicit biases and improved social-emotional well-being; and (3) all students benefit from experiences that prepare them for an increasingly diverse society.

The SDAG's recommendations first discuss DOE's existing diversity plan and are then organized using the framework developed by students of IntegrateNYC, a youth-led organization that stands for integration and equity, called the 5Rs of Real Integration. The 5Rs is a collective impact framework to address the manifestations of segregation in public schools which speaks to a broader set of questions we need to ask ourselves when we look at whether our schools are diverse, equitable, and integrated. The 5Rs are: Race and Enrollment, Resources, Relationships, Restorative Justice & Practices, and Representation.

Between now and the end of the school year, the SDAG will continue to meet to explore further recommendations based on community input and engagement, and continued analysis and research. We commit to releasing a subsequent report with additional recommendations on school screens, gifted and talented (G&T) programs, and school resources by the end of this school year.

Recommendations

Goals, Metrics, & Accountability

We recommend that DOE be more aggressive and more realistic. This means, in the short-term, setting racial and socio-economic diversity goals by considering neighborhood opportunities, in the medium-term looking at borough averages, and in the long-term looking at the city as a whole.

- Short-term and Medium-term: Elementary and middle schools should be measured against their district's racial, economic, Multilingual Learner (MLL), and Students with Disabilities (SWD) percentages. Upon hitting these targets, individual schools should work towards reaching their borough percentages in the mid-term.
- Long-term: DOE should aim for all schools to look more like the city. This will encourage the DOE to challenge the neighborhood segregation that exists and support schools in further diversifying their populations.
- Racial representation should consider all races.
- Socioeconomic integration should incorporate research-backed goals.
- MLL and SWD targets should also be narrowed.
- Adjust goals for schools located in areas with concentrated vulnerability.
- Track and publish a single set of metrics.

- Create a Chief Integration Officer position.
- Create mechanisms for students to hold the system accountable.
- Add metrics to School Quality Report related to Diversity and Integration.
- Consider incentives to secure charter school commitments to diversity and integration.

Race, Socioeconomic Status & Enrollment

The School Diversity Advisory Group supports a more equitable set of admissions processes that will help ensure quality learning environments for our children by supporting more schools and classrooms that reflect the city's diversity.

- Require all nine districts with sufficient demographic diversity of population to develop diversity and integration plans (Districts 1, 2, 3, 13, 15, 22, 27, 28, 31).
- Require that districts analyze controlled choice, screens, gifted and talented and other admissions policies and programs in terms of improving or perpetuating racially schools that are isolated based on race or other factors.

Accessibility and integration of students with disabilities

- All admissions fairs and events should be held in fully accessible buildings.
- School staff should be trained to welcome and accommodate students and family members with disabilities as well as immigrant families, and students and families who need interpreters on tours and school visits, as well as at school fairs.
- All Family Welcome Center staff should be trained to support students with disabilities and should be prepared to help students consider all school options within their community.
- As the City moves more of its admissions processes online, all applications should utilize the Universal Design for Learning Framework for presenting information and increasing accessibility.

Resources

This report broadens the definition of resources beyond dollars to the efforts funded. The DOE must address funding formulas that lead to uneven distribution of money and, therefore, inequitable opportunity in schools for programs, staff and facilities.

School Diversity Grant Program

- Make resources available for any district to receive support for planning diversity, if it receives more applications than the \$2 million can support.
- Permit districts to apply jointly.
- Consider a separate pot of funds for districts that have not yet begun conversations about integration.
- Consult the SDAG on the roll-out of the grant program.

System-wide recommendations

- Support efforts in Albany to collect all Campaign for Fiscal Equity funding owed to the City's schools.
- Launch a Task Force to recommend equitable PTA fundraising strategies.
- Examine Title 1 and its relationship to integration.
- Gather information from schools to determine what resources and changes in policies they feel they need to create greater diversity in their communities.
- Develop and invest in accelerated enrichment programs in elementary schools.
- Invest in programming that intentionally creates diverse populations.
- Invest in programs and offerings that will attract more diverse families to schools they might not have considered before.
- Invest in program offerings to ensure high poverty schools have the same curricular, extra-curricular and after school opportunities as schools in more affluent communities.
- Invest in college and career prep resources.
- Invest in growing and strengthening high-performing schools outside of Manhattan.

Relationships

Diversity, as students have demanded, includes how students' unique backgrounds and experiences are valued and how they are supported in developing relationships. Relationships between students, parents, teachers, guidance counselors, parent coordinators, and other school staff play an important role in supporting student success and creating environments where all students feel supported and empowered and learn from each other.

Student Empowerment

- Every school should have the resources for a high-quality student council.
- Borough Student Advisory Councils should be expanded to include seats for student council representatives from every high school.

- A General Assembly should be created with representatives from every high school to develop a citywide student agenda and vote on key issues.
- The Chancellor’s Student Advisory Committee should be transformed into a leadership body that utilizes youth-adult committees to promote authentic partnership.
- Create a Student Leadership Team, comprised of one student from each BSAC to meet monthly with the Chancellor.
- Create a new leadership position within the central DOE office to focus on student voice.
- Create a standing committee on high school admissions to advise the Chancellor in decision-making.

Pedagogy & Curriculum

- Provide culturally responsive pedagogical practices at all schools and for all students.
- Adopt a common definition of Culturally Relevant Education (CRE) that will inform and shape work across the DOE.
- Create partnerships with institutions of higher education to ensure CRE is an essential component of all pre-service teacher training efforts.
- Collaborate with the New York State Education Department and Alternative Certification Programs (i.e. NYCTF/Americorps/Teach for America/NYC Men Teach) to utilize CRE principles as part of teaching certification.
- Work with NYSED, under the state’s [ESSA plan](#), to secure additional funding to train and support teachers and staff in culturally responsive instruction.
- Implement ethnic and culturally responsive courses for all students that include religious literacy and disability studies.
- Utilize trauma-informed research to guide the development and implementation of curricula.
- Seek partnerships with qualified vendors who supply Culturally Responsive instructional materials, training, and resources.

School Climate

- Assess the roles and responsibilities of School Safety Agents in school communities.
- Analyze the benefits and drawbacks of moving School Safety Agents to DOE supervision from NYPD supervision.
- Train School Safety Agents, and Family Welcome Center, DOE central-, field- and school-based staff in CRE.
- Bolster school-based equity teams and ensure they include parent and student reps to advance welcoming school climates.
- Require all schools to monitor student discipline practices and develop a plan to reduce disparities in how students are disciplined.

- Expand community schools initiative and other models that connect schools to community based organizations.
- Include metrics for accountability related to school climate directly on Quality Review/School-wide Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) Goals.

Parent & Teacher Empowerment

- Utilize varied outreach efforts to meaningfully engage parents in school decision-making processes with the goal of including families that have not participated in prior activities. These may include altering the time, location, setting, or language of the gathering to reflect family needs.
- Ensure families are meaningfully engaged in decisions about changes to admissions policies and procedures in their native language.
- Ensure families without internet access or a computer at home are able to utilize all tools related to application and enrollment.
- Consider cultural relevance or acceptance of new tools for families and students (e.g., online application and enrollment) before release and establish supports for families who will likely not utilize new tools.
- Ensure that Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are translated and provide interpretation and translation support for IEP-related meetings.
- Support current efforts to share best practices between teachers, administrators and parents on CRE, school climate, and parent empowerment.
- Collaborate with the Division of Teaching and Learning alongside the UFT so that School Based Mentors, Teacher Leaders, Chapter Leaders/ Delegates, and Instructional Coaches can participate in the sharing of best practices citywide.

Restorative Justice & Practices

In 2015, the Mayor, in partnership with the DOE, the Police Department, and the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, convened the Mayor’s Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline. This working group ultimately made a set of recommendations, which are included in this report at a summary level. The SDAG endorses these recommendations and calls upon the DOE and its partner agencies to provide an update on the implementation of these recommendations.

We urge you to read their full reports: [Safety with Dignity](#) and [Maintaining the Momentum: A Plan for Safety and Fairness In Schools](#).

Representation

We encourage the DOE to further its efforts to create a diverse workforce—including principals, teachers, paraprofessionals, and all other school staff—and expand its definition of that diversity to include all race and ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, gender identities, languages, and abilities.

- Report diversity of staff by position (e.g., teacher, administrator, para, other staff) as part of the school quality report.
- Study the impact of current initiatives and make targeted investments to expand them.
- Monitor diversity of workforce, to the extent possible, based on race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, and sexual orientation.
- Explore career pipeline opportunities for parent coordinators within the school system.
- Explore opportunities to build an educator career pipeline for high school students.
- Launch a task force to investigate the current state of the DOE’s workforce in greater detail and make recommendations about best practices learned from existing efforts. This task force should also look at examples of success from other school districts and sectors.