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New York State Board of Regents Launches an Initiative to Advance Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in New York Schools

Board Releases Draft Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework and Call to Action
for Schools

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Workgroup to be Formed

Culturally Responsive & Sustaining Education Resources to be Released

The Board of Regents today launched an initiative to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in schools across the New York State, Chancellor Lester W. Young, Jr. announced. As the first step in the initiative, the Board released a draft framework and call to action for all schools in New York State to develop policies that advance diversity, equity and inclusion as a priority in their schools.

The Board's initiative comes during a pivotal moment in the nation's history, when the country appears ready to address its long history of racism and bigotry, and the corrosive impact they have had. The framework recognizes there is no single, isolated answer that will solve these pervasive problems; rather, the approach must be holistic and inclusive – and the Board of Regents, State Education Department and New York's schools will be an integral part of the solution.

"After a year of turmoil and heartbreak, it is natural to wish for a 'return to normal,' but for far too many New Yorkers, the old normal is a place where people are traumatized daily by events, circumstances and the chronic lack of opportunities," said Chancellor Lester W. Young, Jr. "I recognize that the scope of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework is daunting, but we cannot allow this opportunity for change to pass us by. We must seize this moment to redefine what is normal and possible for our students. I thank all of our educators in advance for their commitment to this critical endeavor."

"The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated long-standing inequities that exist throughout every facet of our society. People of color, economically disadvantaged people and especially women have been impacted hardest of all," said Commissioner Betty A. Rosa. "When it comes to creating a more equitable education system for all New Yorkers, I'm confident our educators and school leaders will answer this call to action and set the tone for sustainable change."

The framework outlines a comprehensive approach to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in New York's school including highlighting:

- the dangers in teaching courses of study through only one perspective;
- the impact of systemic racism on students and society;
- the importance of looking beyond the data to discover and address the root causes of societal issues;

- the myriad benefits that accrue from providing students with school environments that are diverse, equitable, and inclusive;
- the role of the Board of Regents, the Department, and local schools and districts in promoting greater diversity, equity and inclusion; and
- the suggested elements of a district's diversity, equity and inclusion policy.

Through this framework, the Board of Regents is expressing its expectation that all school districts will develop policies that advance diversity, equity and inclusion – and that they implement such policies with fidelity and urgency.

Specifically, the framework suggests that schools adopt and implement policies that take a comprehensive approach and considers the entirety of the schooling process, from Governance, Teaching and Learning and Family and Community Engagement to Workforce Diversity (including practices and policies to recruit and retain a diverse workforce in all areas and levels), Diverse Schools and Learning Opportunities (even where the district's student population is relatively homogeneous) and Student Supports, Discipline and Wellness.

As part of this work, schools may consider:

- Specifically acknowledging the role that racism and bigotry have played, and continue to play, in the American story;
- Adopting a Culturally Responsive and Sustaining (CR-S) Framework that embeds the ideals of diversity, equity and inclusion by creating student-centered learning environments that affirm cultural identities; fosters positive academic outcomes; develops students' abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevates historically marginalized voices; empowers students as agents of social change; and contributes to individual student engagement, learning, growth and achievement through the cultivation of critical thinking; and
- Ensuring coherent opportunities for students to actively participate in experiences that prepare them for a lifetime of civic engagement and social justice activism, including, for example, completing capstone projects.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative Next Steps

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiative is a multi-faceted and comprehensive approach to create an ecosystem of success built upon a foundation of diversity,

equity, inclusion, access, opportunity, innovation, trust, respect, caring, relationship-building, and so much more. Through this work, the Board, Department and schools will examine and address the root causes of the persistent disparities that impact student and life outcomes. Further, the initiative aims to promote and perpetuate cultures, languages and ways of knowing that have been devalued, suppressed, and imperiled by years of educational, social, political, economic neglect and other forms of oppression.

As part of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiative, the Board and Department will:

- **Adopt a policy statement on diversity, equity and inclusion based on the principles detailed in the framework;**
- **Establish a Workgroup on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to provide policy direction and recommendations to the full Board on matters related to diversity, equity and inclusion within the Department. The Workgroup will be representative of SED and the University of the State of New York (USNY); and**
- **Provide resources for educators to adopt Culturally Responsive and Sustaining education practices in their schools.**

The full text of the Board's [Framework for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in New York Schools](#) is available on the Department's website.

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