

Racial and Language Justice in Hudson City School District!



Columbia County Sanctuary Movement (CCSM) is a non-profit organization based in Hudson, NY, organizing with immigrants and allies to collectively support, empower, and defend our communities.

While navigating various institutions, our members frequently face barriers with interpretation and translation. In recognition of these barriers, CCSM administered a short survey to parents, guardians, alumni, and students in Hudson City School District (HCSD) about their experiences with language justice.

We found that 96% of participants had never received communications from the district in their preferred language (Spanish, Bengali, Haitian-Creole, Arabic). The majority of surveyed participants could not participate in parent/teacher conferences due to a lack of interpretation. Some parents/guardians indicated that when interpretation or translation was provided, it was by their child, which is unfairly burdensome and unethical.

After presenting our findings to district leadership, CCSM was invited to collaboratively create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy. We focused on including language equity and organizing members to participate in the policy process. The policy received a unanimous vote of support from the BOE on April 26, 2022.



Over 85 community members wrote letters supporting the policy, testified at multiple Board of Education (BOE) meetings, and showed up for the final vote.

What is Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)?

The DEI policy will improve outcomes for all students by providing equal opportunities to all students regardless of their race, ethnicity, nationality, perceived or actual immigration status, language preference, religion, sexual orientation, gender, economic class, or disability. An “equity lens” will guide decision-makers and stakeholders.”

Key aspects of the policy include:

Address systemic inequities

- Commit to an equitable multilingual communication strategy;
- Address the presence of bias, prejudice, and racism in the district;
- Educate students, parents, faculty, and the community on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and;
- Review of curriculum and instructional materials to remove bias and ensure they reflect a diverse range of perspectives and experiences, especially those of the most marginalized.

Strive for systemic equity

- Build culturally appropriate and effective partnerships between home and school, intentionally engaging historically marginalized families and stakeholders in the development and implementation processes;
- Add “guardians” language to all mentions of “parents” to support unaccompanied minors who reside with guardians;

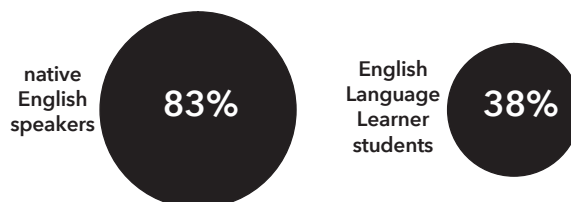
- Ensure each school building is welcoming and inclusive to all who enter;
- Recruit, employ, support, and retain racially and linguistically diverse and culturally competent administrative, instructional, and support personnel, and;
- Create and implement culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum, and assessments.

Use data and metrics

- Gather data based on primary and secondary languages spoken by the students’ parents/guardians;
- Analyze the commitment of school resources to ensure high quality and equitable education, and;
- Allocate and utilize multilingual teachers and staff.

Our children deserve better.

Percentage of students that graduated from the district, by English proficiency, in the 2020–2021 school year.



SOURCE: <https://data.nysed.gov>

Implementation and Accountability Process

The DEI policy establishes a Committee for Equity and Inclusion to lead the development, implementation, and accountability processes. This is a powerful opportunity for our members and allied stakeholders to contribute their voices, experiences, and solutions. The policy also establishes an annual review process to engage community stakeholders in evaluating the district's progress. In addition to the policy, the district is hiring a DEI manager to support stakeholder engagement in developing and implementing the policy.

The process intentionally creates space for community solutions and does not provide all of the specifics of how the district will achieve the goals of the policy. To ensure racial and language justice to the fullest extent possible, we must actively engage in the implementation and accountability processes.



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Call to Action

The unanimous vote for the DEI policy was a pivotal first step made possible because people like you courageously shared your stories of injustice and took action to demand what you deserve. Throughout the process, you've shared what equity means to you with the BOE: translation of report cards and communications sent home, interpretation at meetings, parent/teacher conferences and events, welcoming and supportive extra-curricular activities, and more. The implementation process is an opportunity for us to continue to attain our goal of educational equity and put all of our hopes and dreams into practice.

CCSM is forming an educational equity committee of Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and Immigrant communities throughout the district to guide and strengthen our engagement with the formal implementation process. We are coming together to identify barriers we are experiencing to find creative solutions to bring to the district.

To join the fight for equity in our schools, contact:



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