Including Every Child

A Report on the State of DEI Efforts in Long Island Public Schools

LONG ISLAND
STRONG
SCHOOLS
ALLIANCE

Prepared by Long Island Strong Schools Alliance

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Including Every Child: A report on the state of DEI efforts in Long Island public schools

In 2021, New York State's Board of Regents instituted a policy on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within K-12 school curriculum, culture and hiring practices. This policy follows an increasing body of research detailing why DEI initiatives are beneficial to student learning and for preparation in the workforce. Recently, Attorney General Letitia James and New York State Education Department (NYSED) Commissioner Betty A. Rosa released guidance reminding districts of their obligations under the NYSED policy. Yet the state does not have a system in place to measure compliance or to hold districts accountable if they do not follow the policy.

Using publicly available information, freedom of information requests, and interviews with administrators and other stakeholders, LISSA has gathered data on districts' current efforts in DEI. The data reveal that some districts have embarked on comprehensive DEI initiatives, while the majority of districts have done the bare minimum, and some districts apparently have not yet begun to address the policy. In addition, there are demographic differences in adoption rates among school districts, with smaller districts less likely to have taken action to implement appropriate DEI policies.

We find that, of the 125 public school districts on Long Island, roughly half embed DEI initiatives into their hiring practices, with similar percentages attempting to address DEI in school culture, student curriculum and professional development. In comparison, only 32% have DEI information accessible on their district website, only 29% have a DEI committee that is both active and inclusive of all stakeholders, and only 23% have conducted a DEI climate survey within the last two academic years.

Based on overall response to the policy, each district has been assigned a rating of Poor, Fair, Satisfactory, or Exemplary. More than 18% of districts are rated Poor, with no discernible work to show on improving DEI, while one third of districts have earned a rating of Fair, with limited effort to address DEI in the areas examined. The largest group of school districts (40%) earned a Satisfactory rating, indicating efforts across many areas to address the state policy, while 7% earned an Exemplary rating, indicating a strong commitment to improving the curriculum, hiring, and culture of their schools in a transparent way that involves all stakeholders.

The research reveals the following disparities among districts:

- Districts with more students are much more likely to have active DEI programs. Among districts with fewer than 500 students, almost half are in the Poor category, while more than half of districts with over 3000 students earned a Satisfactory or Exemplary rating.

- Districts with more racially diverse student populations are much more likely to have active DEI programs than those with student bodies that are predominantly white. Among the school districts with fewer than 30% students of color, almost two thirds rate as Poor or Fair in their DEI efforts. Among the districts with the greatest populations of students of color, more than 14% earn an Exemplary rating, and fewer than 4% score as Poor.

- Comparing districts by median income, the picture is more nuanced. The wealthiest districts have the smallest percentage that are rated Poor, but also no districts rated Exemplary. However, among the districts with the lowest median income, more than 23% are rated as Poor, yet more than 11% are rated as Exemplary. These differences likely reflect differences in the racial demographics of the districts, as well as differences in resources available.

Based on our findings, we recommend that the NY State Department of Education put in place a mechanism for collecting information on school district DEI efforts, and for holding districts accountable for their responsiveness to the NYSED DEI policy. We further recommend that each school district examine their own practices and environment, using tools such as annual or biannual climate studies, and make sure that they have an active DEI task force or committee that includes all stakeholders to work toward continual improvement. Community stakeholders, especially parents and students, can help this process by volunteering to serve on the district DEI committee, advocating for strong DEI policies and practices, and asking their district administrators and Board of Education for detailed information on DEI practices in the district.

It is also important to name the contentious political environment that districts and administrators are facing with DEI work. DEI is often lumped in with Critical Race Theory (CRT), which can make parents and community members concerned about what their children are learning in school. Although DEI and CRT are not the same, some district administrations and school boards have come under fire from far-right extremist groups for their efforts to make schools better and more welcoming places to learn, work and live. In the interest of celebrating every child for who they are and fostering learning environments where every child can thrive, this report explains what DEI is, why it is important, New York State's expectations for DEI in schools, and LISSA's research into the DEI efforts of Long Island public school districts. LISSA calls for all districts to be lauded and supported in their ongoing DEI efforts.

This report represents only a first step: DEI work is a journey, not a destination, and compliance with NYSED policy does not ensure that a school district provides a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for students and staff. LISSA also recognizes the importance of measuring the impact DEI initiatives have on the students, school leaders, and community; we hope to collect such data in a subsequent report. Time will ultimately tell how the districts on Long Island will grow and and sustain these DEI efforts, and their commitment to promote the overall well-being and sense of belonging experienced by their entire student body, staff, and community.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The NYS Board of Regents Initiative on DEI emphasizes the importance of students feeling welcomed and supported and giving them opportunities to succeed. An inclusive atmosphere, recognizing different cultures, languages, and experiences, will make all students feel safe, supported, and valued.

The NYS Board of Regents Framework on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (April, 2021) defines these terms as follows:

Diversity

Including but not limited to race, color, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, veteran status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, genetic information, and learning styles.

Equity

The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of all groups.

Inclusion

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power and ensures equal access to opportunities and resources.

Long Island Strong Schools Alliance | Including Every Child

Background

DEI initiatives can have positive impacts for all students, regardless of whether they belong to a marginalized group or not. Studies show that students, including middle-class white students, work better in a diverse environment, enabling them to concentrate and push themselves further when there are people of other backgrounds working alongside them. Diverse learning environments have a direct impact on student performance and encourage problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity. Students in diverse schools have higher average test scores. (Palardy, 2008). Thoughtfully planned curriculum promotes depth of knowledge, and students are better able to foster creativity and participate in collaborative problem-solving. Making diverse learning opportunities a priority helps students academically and socially and better prepares them for life beyond high school.

While all students benefit from learning as part of a diverse student body, a recent study from Stanford's Center for Education Policy Analysis confirmed that school segregation is one of the most significant drivers of the racial achievement gap (Kalogrides, Reardon, & Shores, 2018). In most cases, the racial achievement gap evident in segregated schools can be attributed to the inequities in school funding, where the majority-minority districts receive significantly less funding than predominantly white districts.The gap in SAT scores between black and white students continues to be larger in segregated districts, and one study showed that change from complete segregation to complete integration in a district could reduce as much as one quarter of the current SAT score disparity (Card and Rothstein, 2006). On average, students in socioeconomically and racially diverse schools, regardless of a student's own economic status, have stronger academic outcomes. A study found that students in mixed-income schools showed 30 percent more growth in test scores over their four years in high school than peers with similar socioeconomic backgrounds. (Palardy, 2008).

Researchers have found that children who have friends from diverse groups exhibited healthier emotional reactions and increased recognition of others' attitudes, interests, and perspectives (Brewer and Miller, 1984; Miller, Brewer, and Edwards, 1985; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp,1997). In addition, numerous studies show that practicing a more accepting attitude and empathy towards out-group members allows for the inhibition of biases over time (Batson, Polycarpou, Harmon-Jones, Imhoff, Mitchener, Bednar & Highberger, 1997; Vescio, Sechrist & Paolucci, 2003; Shih, Wang, Trahan Bucher & Stotzer, 2009; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). Furthermore, exposure to diversity in childhood prepares one for a diverse workforce in adulthood, as "96 percent of major employers...say it is vital that employees are able to work with people from diverse backgrounds" (American University, 2019). When students have the opportunity to work in groups with other students of varying identities, talents, experience and perspectives, they are able to be more creative and stronger in their complex critical thinking skills, preparing them to serve as engaged citizens in the workforce (Cox, 1995; McLeod, Lobel, & Cox, 1996). Similarly, students exposed to diversity have more of an advantage when making informed decisions about their political and governmental landscape and taking action to change it (American University, 2019). Consequently, a culture of acceptance is a beneficial experience for our youth, preparing them to become our country's next leaders and participants in democracy.

The lack of diverse representation in curriculum, teachers, and school leaders puts children at a disadvantage and increases the likelihood of bias and discrimination against people from historically underrepresented backgrounds. Research has shown that students who are members of marginalized identity groups are at risk of systemic discrimination and stereotype confirmation, which affects their success and well-being. Marginalized groups are defined as different groups of people within a given culture, context and history at risk of being subjected to multiple discrimination due to the interplay of different personal characteristics or grounds, such as gender, age, ethnicity, religion or belief, health status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, education or income, or living in various geographic localities. People from historically underrepresented or marginalized groups face widespread discrimination. Systemic discrimination is described as "attitudes, policies, or practices that are part of a social or administrative structure, as well as past or concurrent actions in other domains, that create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for certain groups" (Bohren, Hull & Imas, 2022).

Prolonged exposure to systemic discrimination impacts self-esteem, confidence, and social mobility, which is in part due to stereotype confirmation. Stereotype confirmation is described as the "chronic experience of uncertainty and apprehension about appearing to confirm as self-characteristic a stereotype about one's group" (Contrada, Ashmore, Gary, Coups, Egeth, Sewell, Ewell, Goyal, & Chasse, 2001, p. 1778). The American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Educational Disparities (APA Educational Disparities, 2012) found that when students of marginalized groups are in less supportive environments, they are less likely to achieve academically in reading and math, less likely to graduate, less likely to be placed in talented and gifted programs, and less likely to enroll in higher education. At the same time, children that are marginalized due to their identity are more likely to suffer from behavioral issues resulting in suspension and expulsion (APA Educational Disparities, 2012). Pascoe and Smart Richman (2009) have found that even perceiving discrimination towards oneself has negative mental and physical health impacts, whether or not the individual believes the stereotypes regarding their identity.

Each of these negative outcomes can be the result of systematic discrimination and/or stereotype confirmation. In addition, a student feeling discriminated against may dissociate from social situations or separate themselves from their identity; both coping strategies can negatively impact how the student is able to perform in school and in society at large (APA Educational Disparities, 2012). According to the American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Preventing Discrimination and Promoting Diversity (2012), psychological distress acts as a huge burden on people and populations suffering from biases and discrimination, as well as those who are bystanders to discrimination and exclusion. Therefore, supporting and accepting all kinds of human diversity is integral to people's overall well-being. Within a school setting, supporting and accepting diversity means that there is effort from administration and staff to reflect various identity groups in curriculum, school culture, and personnel itself.

NYS DEI Policy

The New York State Board of Regents put forth their DEI policy "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." The purpose for this policy is to help all students "feel that they are welcome, they belong, and they are supported in every school" (NYSED, 2021). Beyond school district DEI initiatives combating discrimination of marginalized groups, the NYSED 2021 policy illustrates that school district DEI work fosters student achievement and interpersonal skills. The 2021 policy lays out specific expectations for school districts to accomplish this goal. The specific expectations are taken verbatim from the policy statement itself:

Governance

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

Teaching & 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 & 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 & Learning Opportunities

- 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, & Wellness

- 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 development pathways.

Evaluating DEI Efforts in Long Island School Districts

Each of Long Island's 125 distinct school districts has a unique climate and history, as well as a unique set of policies and procedures. DEI initiatives are implemented at the local level, and there are currently no clear mechanisms that allow NYSED to collect or measure data regarding school district progress according to the 2021 DEI policy. To understand whether and how students are being welcomed, accepted, and valued for their various identities, we have examined how each district is responding to the expectations for DEI laid out in the Board of Regents policy. We have collected DEI information for each school district by examining district websites, using the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) process to request documents, corresponding with District Clerks and other administrators, and interviewing district administrators and community members. Before publishing this report, every district was contacted and given the opportunity to provide corrections to information that LISSA had regarding their DEI efforts. Corrections received without any corroborating details have been categorized as "unconfirmed". The data obtained through this careful examination demonstrate that the school districts of Long Island have offered a wide array of responses to the NYS policy, from exemplary efforts that involve all stakeholders and a demonstrated commitment at the highest levels of the school administration to minimal or no documented attention to this important issue.

To help illustrate the range of responses, we have categorized each school district by a color code that indicates whether their efforts thus far are exemplary (blue), satisfactory (green), fair (yellow), or poor (red). Each category has specific criteria, based on the language of the 2021 NYSED policy statement. Compiling this information has allowed us to make observations about Long Island's K-12 public school system as a whole. Twenty-Two districts did not respond to any of LISSA's multiple attempts to gain DEI information. Of those 22 districts, 12 had DEI information available on their district websites (although much of this information was not easily accessible). If a school district failed to communicate with LISSA, and there was no DEI information found on their website, they were included in the poor (red) category. This report card on Long Island's public schools represents a snapshot as of early 2023.

Key Components of District DEI Work

The NY State DEI policy states that school district DEI plans should include the following components, based on established best practices.

DEI Committee

The NYSED 2021 DEI policy looks to school districts to "establish a district Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee that is representative of all stakeholders, including students." Singletary, Royal and Goodridge-Purnell (2021) suggest that DEI committees are important for implementing a culture of inclusivity, but are only effective if they are proactive, created to be compatible with long term goals of the school district and diverse in composition. DEI committees should actively work towards long-term DEI goals, and should have composition reflecting the diversity of the district at large. Here, we have examined whether a district formed a group, committee or taskforce dedicated to implementing and sustaining DEI efforts, and if so, whether the group is active, meeting more than twice in a school year, and whether the group is inclusive of all stakeholders (administration, teachers/staff, and parents). For school districts that contain at least one high school, the DEI committee also should include students. For elementary and middle school districts, we did not consider student participation in evaluating committee inclusivity.

Climate Survey

NYSED (2021) states that districts should "Address the need for inclusive and culturally responsive teaching and learning, including but not limited to... multiple assessment measures." Best practice for assessing the effectiveness and priorities for DEI efforts (Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University, et al., 2021) involves conducting a DEI climate survey, ideally addressed to all stakeholders, asking about their experiences and sense of inclusion within the district community. Such survey results can point to areas of needed improvement and focus DEI efforts where they will have the most positive effect. We therefore examined whether each district has conducted a DEI climate survey within the past two school years.

Curriculum

NYS recommends "Addressing 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... 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" (NYSED, 2021). In 2018, NYSED created the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework (or CR-S Framework), described as a way to "help... educators create student-centered learning environments that affirm racial, linguistic and cultural identities; prepare students for rigor and independent learning; develop students' abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevate historically marginalized voices; and empower students as agents of social change" (NYSED, 2018). The State Senate then introduced Bill S8924, now in committee, that would mandate every public school district in NYS to teach using the CRS Framework (NY State Senate, 2022). The CR-S Framework will likely be put in place in more and more schools in the coming years, but it is not currently mandated. We have examined whether districts have implemented curricula based on the CR-S Framework, or other approaches to improving the DEI content, such as auditing classroom and school libraries to make sure they include stories and authors from diverse backgrounds. State elementary social studies curriculum mandates already include discussion about diverse identities, cultures, and communities, and adherence to this requirement was not considered in evaluating DEI efforts in curriculum.

Hiring

Within the NYSED (2021) policy, it is recommended that school districts "Recruit and retain a diverse workforce in all areas and at all levels, thereby reducing stereotypes and preparing students for an increasingly global society." Examples of hiring with DEI in mind for LISSA's purposes include but are not limited to developing interview questions that reflect DEI efforts, establishing professional relationships with colleges and universities to hire more diverse candidates, regularly taking part in diversity hiring fairs, encouraging bilingual candidates to apply, and developing programs to encourage students of diverse backgrounds to become teachers. It should be noted that the success of such programs depends greatly on how they are implemented, not only whether they exist. Muhofen and Vardi (2002) recommend that efforts to hire and retain diverse staff will be most successful when district administrations practice DEI initiatives in good faith, demonstrate "culturally responsive leadership," work on the organization and culture of the district, and utilize social networks.

Professional Development

The state also expects that administration, teachers, and staff use professional development opportunities to "Address the need for inclusive and culturally responsive teaching and learning" (NYSED, 2021). Dali, Bell, and Valdes (2021) advise that training sessions and workshops focusing not only on making people aware of systemic injustice, but also fostering a sense of self-awareness around the individual part that people play in injustice, are particularly helpful for fostering positive individual changes in staff perceptions and attitudes towards DEI initiatives. Additional examples of DEI efforts in professional development include cultivating learning communities such as book studies and discussion groups, inviting guest speakers to share about DEI topics with staff, and working with an outside organization such as BOCES (Board of Cooperative Education Services) for DEI professional development.
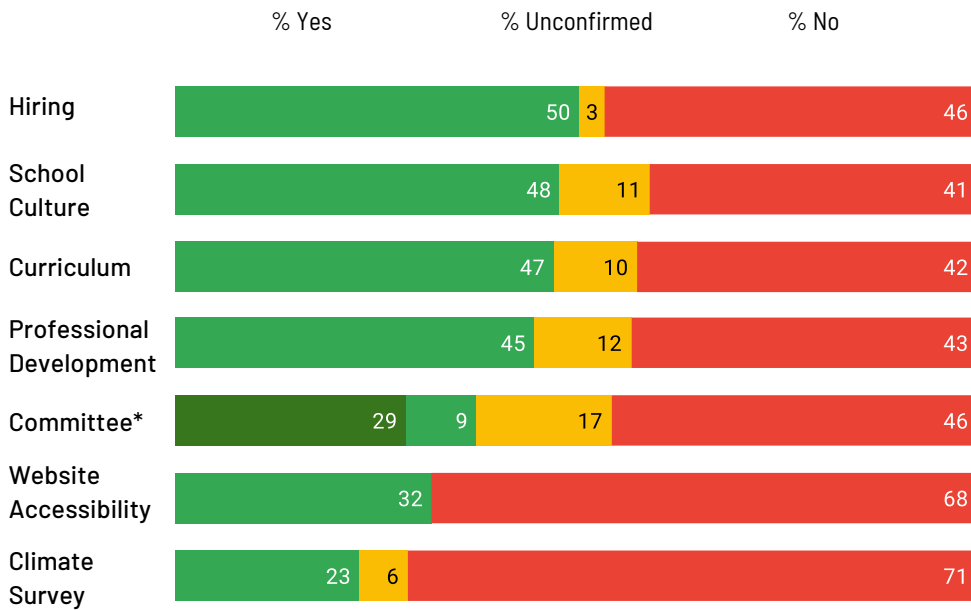
School Culture

NYSED (2021) expects that school districts "Employ programs and practices that enhance all students' self-identity, self-confidence, and self-esteem." To accomplish this goal, school districts must create and sustain a school culture that allows students to feel welcomed and celebrated, regardless of their identity. Some examples of districts integrating DEI into their school culture include inviting guest speakers to present on DEI topics, celebrating a wide range of cultural and religious holidays and history months, creating DEI workshops for students and families, participating in school-wide anti-bias programs or anti-hate initiatives, and supporting multiple student clubs or organizations regarding DEI generally or more specific facets of identity.

Website Accessibility

NYSED (2021) expects school districts to "Ensure that family and community engagement practices are based on mutual trust, confidence, and respect." School district websites are a largely accessible way for all stakeholders to receive information about their district's DEI efforts, as well as to promote transparency and accountability on the part of school districts. In addition, this information should be easily visible for stakeholders who may not know where to look for their district's DEI information. Some school district websites include a separate section specifically describing their DEI efforts, while others describe their DEI work across many different sections. Either way, we have evaluated whether the information is easily accessible for stakeholders, so that any parent, student, staff, or community member can understand the district's DEI program.

Table I:
Prevalence of Individual DEI Program Components

	% Yes	% Unconfirmed	% No
Hiring	50	3	46
School Culture	48	11	41
Curriculum	47	10	42
Professional Development	45	12	43
Committee*	29 / 9	17	46
Website Accessibility	32		68
Climate Survey	23	6	71

38% of schools have an active DEI committee, with 29% including all stakeholders.

Findings

As described above, we have examined how and whether Long Island school districts have incorporated each of the key components of DEI work (Table 1, ordered by decreasing prevalence). We find that for most components, at least a plurality of Long Island school districts have made some progress in recent years. In particular, a majority of districts report DEI in hiring, school culture, curriculum, and professional development. Many school districts report having a committee tasked with improving DEI programs and policies, but not all of these committees are active, and a smaller percentage are fully inclusive of all stakeholders. Relatively few districts (32%) have easily accessible information on their websites about their DEI policies and programs, and only 29% of schools report having conducted a climate study in the past two years. These three components (active and inclusive DEI committee, regular climate studies to assess priorities and progress, and transparent reporting that is accessible to the public) are critical for accountability and assessment of DEI efforts, and we encourage all school districts to work to implement these components moving forward.

Overall DEI Efforts

In addition to examining individual components, we have also looked at the overall quality of DEI efforts in each school district, and have rated each according to the completeness of their DEI work. More than 1 in 6 school districts (18+%) have been designated as Poor (Red), with no work to show on DEI efforts, and roughly half have Fair (Yellow) or Poor (Red) ratings overall. A small but significant number (7%) are doing truly Exemplary work (Blue), with DEI efforts that include each component we examined. Comparing Nassau and Suffolk Counties, there is relatively little difference in the number of districts in each rating category.

School District Ratings

Exemplary: Blue

The district has at least one active committee, task force or group dedicated to promoting DEI in their schools:

- The group meets multiple times per year and is making progress towards creating and implementing DEI initiatives.
- The group involves a broad set of stakeholders, including staff, administrators, parents and high school students (if applicable).

These districts are integrating DEI into all of the following:

- Student curriculum
- Hiring practices for the district
- Professional development
- School culture

These districts also have:

- DEI information is accessible on their district websites
- Conducted a DEI-specific climate survey within the last two years

Satisfactory: Green

The district has at least one ACTIVE committee, task force or group dedicated to promoting DEI in their schools:
- The group meets multiple times per year and is making progress towards creating and implementing DEI initiatives.

And: the district is working to integrate DEI initiatives in at least two of the following areas:

- Student curriculum
- Hiring practices for the district
- Professional development
- School culture

Fair: Yellow

The district has made some attempt(s) towards implementing DEI policies in schools congruent with the NYS DEI policy, including at least one of the following:
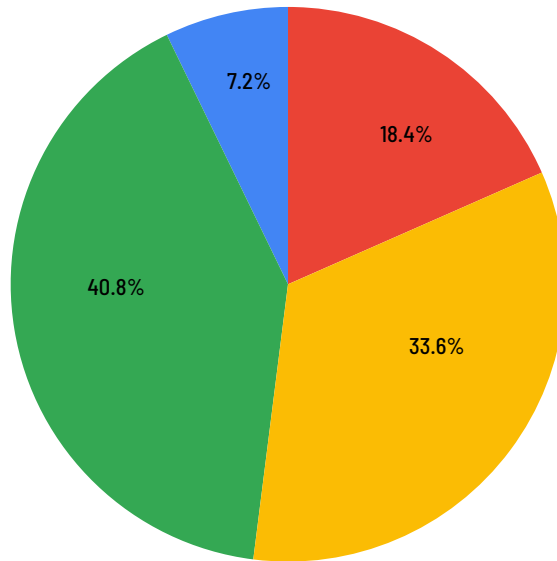
- Creating a DEI committee, task force, or other group focused on district DEI initiatives
- Integrating DEI policies in student curriculum
- Integrating DEI policies into hiring practices for the district
- Integrating DEI policies into professional development practices
- Integrating DEI into the culture of their schools
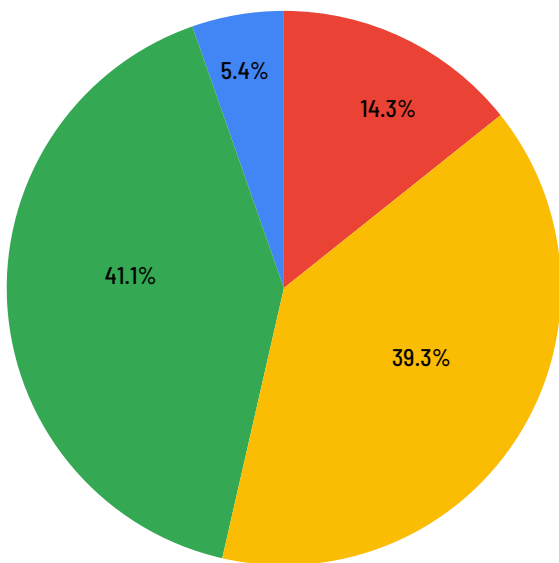
Poor: Red

There is no indication of progress on DEI initiatives, based on examination of the district's website, responses to FOIL requests, and additional correspondence with the district.
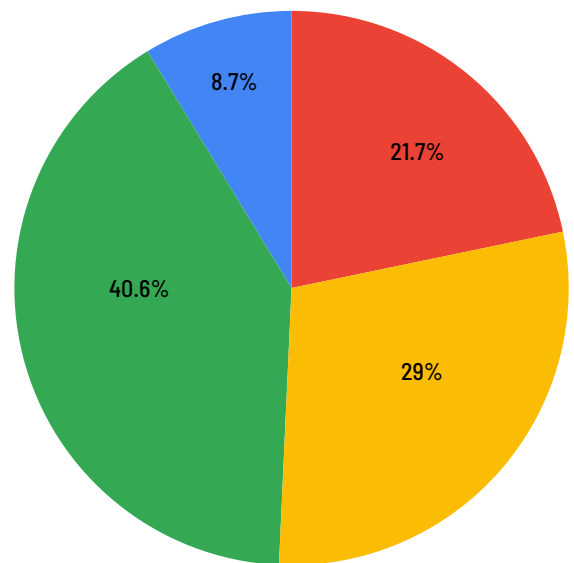
Legend

Exemplary — ■ (blue) Satisfactory — ■ (green) Fair — ■ (yellow) Poor — ■ (red)

School Districts on Long Island

- 7.2% (Exemplary)
- 18.4% (Poor)
- 33.6% (Fair)
- 40.8% (Satisfactory)

School Districts in Nassau County

- 5.4% (Exemplary)
- 14.3% (Poor)
- 39.3% (Fair)
- 41.1% (Satisfactory)

School Districts in Suffolk County

- 8.7% (Exemplary)
- 21.7% (Poor)
- 29% (Fair)
- 40.6% (Satisfactory)

13

Size of District

We compared districts by size, and found that districts with more students are much more likely to have active DEI programs. Among districts with fewer than 500 students, almost half were not responsive or reported no work in any of the DEI categories examined. In contrast, among districts with more than 3000 students, more than half earned a Satisfactory (Green) or Exemplary (Blue) rating, and only 7% were rated as Poor (Red).
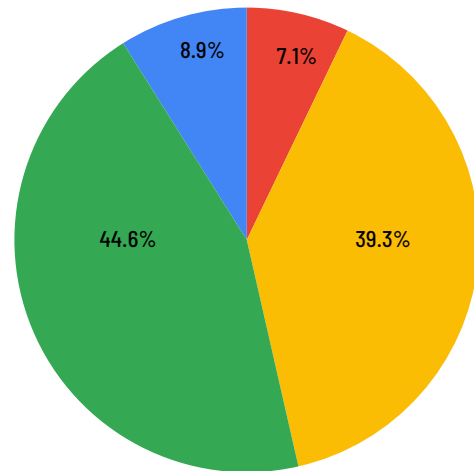
Exemplary Satisfactory Fair Poor

Fewer Than 500 Students

6.7%
20%
26.7%
46.7%
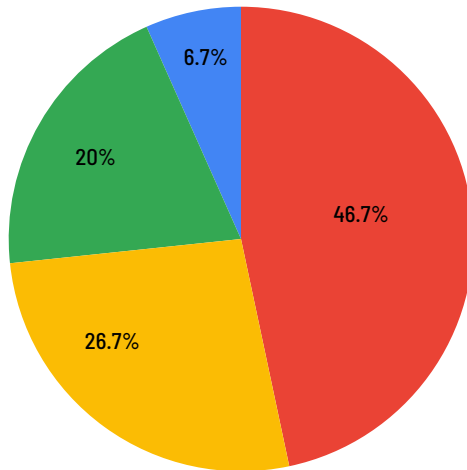
Between 500-3000 Students

5.6%
42.6%
29.6%
22.2%

More Than 3000 Students
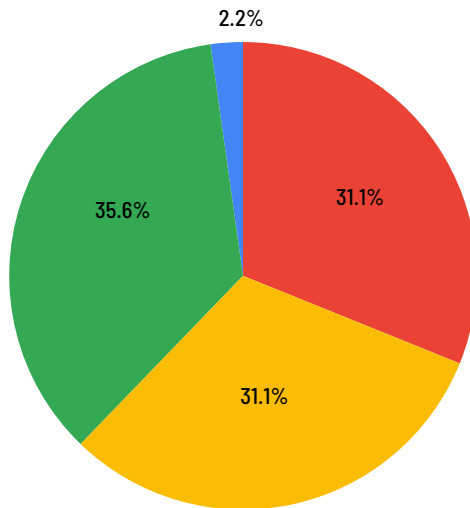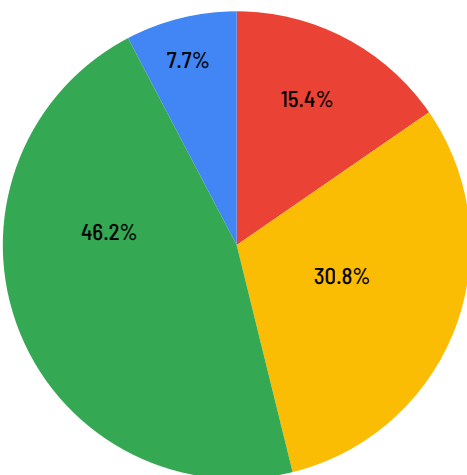

8.9%
7.1%
44.6%
39.3%
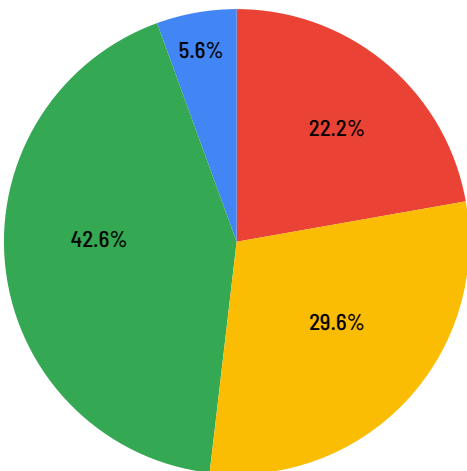
Racial Diversity

To examine any differences between districts of different racial makeup, we divided the school districts by percent of students of color. Districts with large nonwhite student populations are much more likely to have active DEI programs than those with student bodies that are mostly white. Among the school districts with fewer than 30% students of color, almost two thirds rate as Poor (Red) or Fair (Yellow) in their DEI effort, and only 2% are Exemplary (Blue). In contrast, among the districts with the greatest populations of students of color , more than 14% earn an Exemplary rating, and fewer than 4% score as Poor (Red).

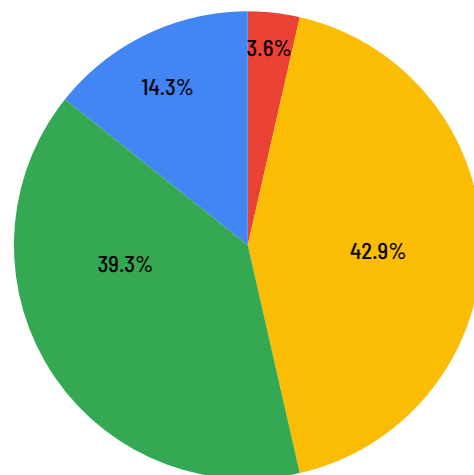**Exemplary** ▮ (blue) **Satisfactory** ▮ (green) **Fair** ▮ (yellow) **Poor** ▮ (red)

Fewer Than 30% Students of Color

- 2.2%
- 31.1% (red)
- 31.1% (yellow)
- 35.6% (green)

30-70% Students of Color

- 7.7%
- 15.4%
- 30.8%
- 46.2%

More Than 70% Students of Color


- 3.6%
- 14.3%
- 42.9%
- 39.3%

District Median Income

Comparing districts by median income, the picture is more nuanced. The wealthiest districts have the smallest percentage that are rated Poor (Red), but also no districts rated as Exemplary (Blue). Among the districts with the lowest median income, in contrast, more than 23% are rated as Poor (Red), but also more than 11% are rated as Exemplary (Blue).
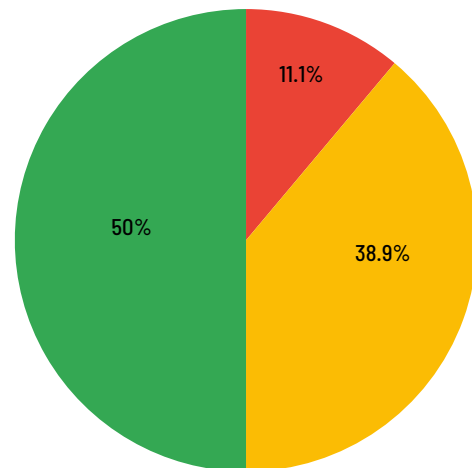
Exemplary   Satisfactory   Fair   Poor

Less Than $100K

11.5%
23.1%
30.8%
34.6%

Between $100-150k

7.5%
18.8%
41.3%
32.5%

Greater Than $150K

11.1%
50%
38.9%
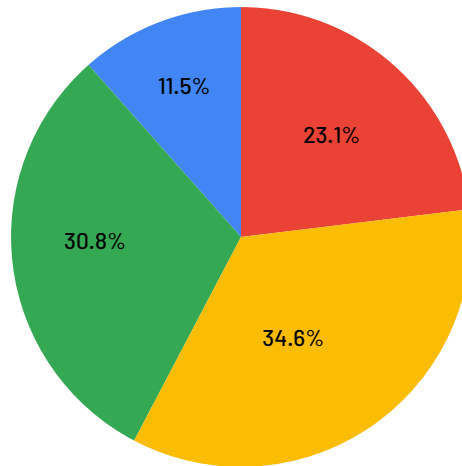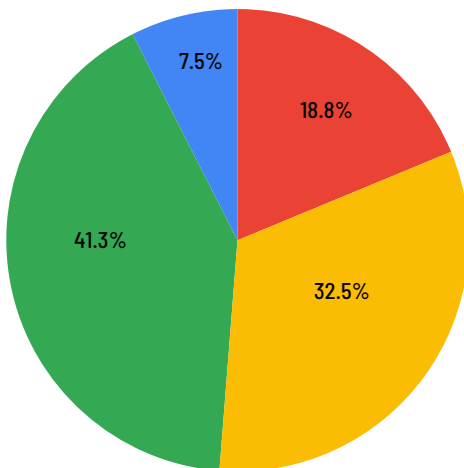
Recommendations

Based on the above data, we recommend the following actions to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in Long Island schools.

New York State Board of Regents

- Develop a plan to measure progress and impact according to the guidelines in the state policy on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

- Implement a system to hold districts accountable if they do not comply with the NYSED policy on DEI.

School District Adminstrators

- Create a DEI committee that is diverse in composition, inclusive of all stakeholders (administrators, school board members, teachers/staff, parents, students and community members) and is actively setting and working toward DEI goals.

- Conduct regular DEI climate surveys at least every two years to identify concerns in the community that need addressing.

- Make DEI information easily accessible on the school district website, including what DEI efforts are currently under way, how stakeholders can join the district DEI committee, how DEI committee members are chosen, and how recommendations from the DEI committee are implemented into the policies and culture of the district.

- Implement the CR-S Framework for curriculum and develop a process to audit the curriculum regularly for diverse, equitable, and inclusive content.

- Implement some or all of the following hiring practices to recruit and retain diverse teaching, staff, and administration candidates: develop interview questions that reflect DEI efforts, establish professional relationships with colleges and universities to hire more diverse candidates, regularly take part in diversity hiring fairs (such as those run by BOCES), encourage bilingual candidates to apply, and develop programs to encourage students of diverse backgrounds to become teachers.

- Implement some or all of the following professional development practices for teachers, staff, and administration: create learning communities such as book studies and discussion groups, invite guest speakers to share about DEI topics, and work with an outside organization such as BOCES for DEI professional development and workshops.

- If smaller districts lack the staff resources on their own to implement a full DEI plan, they should join together to work cooperatively and/or partner with their local BOCES to put DEI efforts in place.

School Boards

- Review district policies to encourage and integrate the CR-S Framework into student curriculum and teaching practices.

- Set an expectation of regular DEI climate surveys and review the results of these surveys to identify areas of strength and weakness, then maintain DEI policies that are effective and create or bolster DEI policies to address points of weakness.

- Approve district budgets that provide adequate funding for initiatives to meet DEI policy goals.

Community Members, Students, Parents & Teachers Staff

- Join the district's DEI committee. Advocate for an active and inclusive DEI committee.

- Ask how the district is implementing the NYSED DEI policy with regard to curriculum, hiring, professional development, and culture.

- Advocate to the school board and district administrators for regular DEI climate studies to assess strengths and weaknesses in the district's policies and practices.

- Examine the district's website to see if it accurately reflects DEI policies and practices for the district. Advocate for transparency and strong welcoming messages to make sure all students feel a sense of belonging.

Conclusion

The New York State's Board of Regents policy on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within K-12 school curriculum, culture and hiring practices is a necessary and timely framework. However, two years after its implementation there are no accountability measures in place. The state, district leaders, and the community need a system to report, measure, and check the status of DEI efforts. Our report is a step in that direction, but we recommend the Board of Regents develop a plan to measure progress and impact according to the guidelines in the framework. We also recommend implementing a system to hold districts accountable if they do not comply.

This first snapshot of progress on Long Island in implementing NY State's DEI initiative indicates that many Long Island school districts take DEI work seriously and are making good-faith efforts to face the DEI issues affecting their community. We recognize that our research does not yet measure the effectiveness of these efforts, but reporting on the implementation of the policy components are important for improving the climate, culture, and teaching in our public schools. In particular, districts that have created active, inclusive DEI committees and conduct regular climate surveys can assess where to focus their efforts and how to move forward with DEI work for themselves. We hope that future snapshots will indicate a significant increase in districts embracing these vital programs for improving diversity, equity, and inclusion in their schools.

Bibliography

American Psychological Association, Presidential Task Force on Preventing Discrimination and
    Promoting Diversity. Dual pathways to a better America: Preventing discrimination and promoting
    diversity. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Retrieved from
    http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/ promoting-diversity.aspx

American Psychological Association, Presidential Task Force on Educational Disparities. (2012).
    Ethnic and racial disparities in education: Psychology's contributions to understanding and reducing
    disparities. Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/ed/resources/racial-disparities.aspx

Batson, C. D., Polycarpou, M. P., Harmon-Jones, E., Imhoff, H. J., Mitchener, E. C., Bednar, L. L.,
    Highberger, L. (1997). Empathy and attitudes: Can feeling for a member of a stigmatized group improve
    feelings toward the group? Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72, 105–118.

Bohren, A., Hull, P., & Imas, A. (2022). Systemic discrimination: Theory and measurement. BFI. Retrieved August 29,
    2023, from https://bfi.uchicago.edu/insight/finding/systemic-discrimination-theory-and-measurement.

Brewer, M. B., & Miller, N. (1984). Beyond the contact hypothesis: Theoretical perspectives on desegregation.
    In N. Miller & M. B. Brewer (Eds.), *Groups in contact: The psychology of desegregation* (pp. 281–302).
    Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Card, D., & Rothstein, J. (2006). Racial Segregation and the Black-White Test Score Gap (Working Paper No. w12078).
    The National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved August 29, 2023, from
    https://www.nber.org/papers/w12078.pdf.

Contrada RJ, Ashmore RD, Gary ML, Coups E, Egeth JD, Sewell A, Ewell K, Goyal T.M. (2001). Measures of
    ethnicity-related stress: Psychometric Properties, ethnic group differences, and associations with well-being.
    Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 31:1775–1820.

Cox, T. (1995). The complexity of diversity: Challenges and directions for future research. In S. E. Jackson &
    M. N. Ruderman (Eds.), Diversity in work teams: Research paradigms for a changing workplace (pp. 235–246).
    Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Dali, K., Bell, N., & Valdes, Z. (2021, September 22). Learning and change through diversity, equity, and inclusion
    Professional Development: Academic Librarians' perspectives. The Journal of Academic Librarianship,
    47, 102448

Galinsky, A. D., & Moskowitz, G. B. (2000). Perspective taking: Decreasing stereotype expression, stereotype accessibility, and in-group favoritism. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78, 708–724.

Kalogrides, D., Reardon, S., & Shores, K. (2018, May). The Geography of Racial/Ethnic Test Score Gaps (CEPA Working Paper No. 16-10).

McLeod, P. L., Lobel, S. A., & Cox, T. H. (1996). Ethnic diversity and creativity in small groups. Small Group Research, 27, 248–264.

Miller, N., Brewer, M. B., & Edwards, K. (1985). Cooperative interaction in desegregated settings: A laboratory analog. Journal of Social Issues, 41, 63–75.

Munhofen, N. B., & Vardi, L. B. (2020). The recruitment and retention of teachers of color in Nais Independent Schools. Institutional Repository Home. Retrieved November 16, 2022, from https://ir.vanderbilt.edu/handle/1803/15603

NAEP Data Explorer. (2017). National Assessment for Educational Progress. Charter, private, public schools and academic achievement: New evidence from NAEP mathematics data. National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education, Teachers College, Columbia University. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/

NY State Board of Regents Initiative on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. New York State Education Department (n.d.). Retrieved November 8, 2022, from http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/diversity-equity-inclusion/dei-overview.pdf

NY State Senate Bill S8924. NY State Senate. (2022, May 16). Retrieved January 25, 2023, from https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/S8924

NY State Department of Education, Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework (2018). Retrieved August 29, 2023, from http://www.nysed.gov/crs/framework.

NY State Department of Education. (2021, April). The NYS Board of Regents Framework on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in New York's Schools: A Call to Action - DRAFT. The NYS Board of Regents

NY State Department of Education (2021). New York State Board of Regents Policy Statement on Diversity, Equity, and, Inclusion in New York State Schools, Retrieved August 29, 2023, from https://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/521bra7.pdf

NY State Department of Education, NYSED DEI Policy Guidance, Retrieved August 29, 2023 from https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/programs/diversity-equity-inclusion/oag-nysed-dei-guidance.pdf

Palardy, G. (2008). Differential school effects among low, middle, and high social class composition schools. School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 19, 37.

Pascoe, E. A., & Smart Richman, L. (2009). Perceived discrimination and health: A meta-analytic review. Psychological Bulletin, 135, 531–554.

Shih, M., Wang, E., Trahan Bucher, A., & Stotzer, R. (2009). Perspective taking: Reducing prejudice towards general outgroups and specific individuals. Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 12, 565–577.

Singletary, G., Royal, K., & Goodridge-Purnell, K. (2021, October 27). Diversity committees during the era of Social Justice: Where do we go from here? The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion (IJIDI). Retrieved November 15, 2022, from https://doi.org/10.33137/ijidi.v5i5.37145

The Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University, Bell, J., Bhati, C., Bond, R., Chambers, K., Edwards, D., Jamerson, M., & Nelson, B. (2021). Use of a climate and culture survey to assess diversity, equity, and Inclusion Initiatives at the VCU School of Social Work. Virginia Commonwealth University. Retrieved November 15, 2022 from https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1074

Vescio, T. K., Sechrist, G. B., & Paolucci, M. P. (2003). Perspective taking and prejudice reduction: The mediational role of empathy arousal and situational attributions. European Journal of Social Psychology, 33, 455–472.

Wright, S. C., Aron, A., McLaughlin-Volpe, T., & Ropp, S. A. (1997). The extended contact effect: Knowledge of cross-group friendships and prejudice. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 73, 73–90.