



Dr. Juliette Pennyman, Superintendent of Schools

**Congratulations to our new Hudson City School District
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness Community Team Members!
March 7, 2024**

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Diversity has long been a deeply treasured asset to the Hudson City School District. That's why the District is embarking on a journey this school year to reimagine and rejuvenate its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. The goal is clear, which is to promote a respectful and dignified environment that celebrates our diverse student population -- and provides a safe space for embracing our District's unique backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives.

A new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Community Team will be at the forefront of this new initiative. We're proud to introduce these vital stakeholders and thought partners, who represent a variety of voices and roles in all Hudson schools:

- Samantha Anderson, Art Teacher, Montgomery C. Smith Elementary School
- Florence Berth, Educational Aide, Hudson Junior High School
- April Carrasco, Secretary/Clerk/Typist, Montgomery C. Smith Elementary School
- Victor Carrasco, Custodian, Hudson City School District
- Daren Collins, Attendance Professional, Hudson Senior High School
- Thomas Giosa, Band Teacher, Hudson City School District
- Darnell Harris, Blue Hawk Hall Monitor, Hudson City School District
- Alicia McCagg, Special Education Teacher, Hudson Junior High School
- Carrie Patch, Associate Principal, Montgomery C. Smith Elementary School
- Cheryl Rabinowitz, Manager of Instructional Technology, Hudson City School District
- Scott Vorwald, Music Director, Hudson City School District
- Larry Walker, Blue Hawk Restorative Practices Professional, Hudson City School District
- Mary White-Schlenker, Speech Pathologist, Hudson Junior High School

We are thankful that this diverse group of caring professionals, each of whom will serve for one year, stepped forward to apply for this important initiative. Their interviews demonstrated a passion for supporting students and enhancing the Hudson City School District as a caring, supportive environment for every student, staff member, and family.

Specifically, the Team will help formulate and implement strategies, training, and programs in their schools and departments. Work is well underway, and a full schedule is planned through June. Highlights of our Action Plan include:

- The Team will build trust and respect by utilizing a clear mission, meeting times, and a defined timeline for action steps ranging from training to programming. The Team will also be guided by the New York State Education Department's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy and Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework, which promotes equitable opportunities for every student regardless of their demographic markers.
- Transparency will encourage accountability and inspire insightful, broad-based feedback. The public is able to view the [Hudson City School District's DEI Strategic Plan II](#) to see the current and future implementation of the DEI framework.
- External partners, such as parents, businesses, and civic organizations, are integral to each student's success. Both external and internal DEI Community Team members will meet monthly to share feedback, apprise each other of initiatives, review data, and develop action steps. Collaboration will cultivate trust and respect.
- Work has already begun, including the New York State United Teachers Implicit Bias Training Part I for all DEI Community Team members and Hudson City School District leadership. The New York State United Teachers Implicit Bias Training Part II is scheduled for the next DEI Community Team meeting on March 25, 2024. Also, the Team is engaged in reading and discussing chapters one through four of Zaretta L. Hammond's book, [Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students](#).
- Progress and success will be measured via evaluations, feedback surveys, and qualitative and quantitative metrics. This month, students, staff, and families will receive a link to complete a Panorama Climate and Culture Survey. The data will assist us in identifying strengths and developing action steps to address our district's needs.
- Pronunciation of Students' Names: On March 14, 2024, and March 28, 2024, our Student Information System will be turned on for pre-kindergarten through grade 12 faculty to record the preferred first and last name of each student in the District. This effort supports our diverse student body, provides the Hudson City School District with a current record of students' names, and encourages all faculty, staff, and administrators to pronounce each student's name with fidelity. Recognizing each student by their reported name creates an environment where students feel safe, included, welcomed, and affirmed. Members of the Team, led by Dr. Pressey, will provide the phonetic spelling to guarantee the correct pronunciation of each student's name. New students who register in the Hudson City School District will be asked to record their names in our Student Information System.



We welcome your support to create an environment where each student's dignity is protected, their voice is heard, their individualism is respected, their talents are nurtured, and their empowerment is encouraged. Thank you for helping us congratulate our new DEI Team!

Please visit the [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion page](#) on the Hudson City School District's webpage to learn more. You may also view [this video](#) created by Lance Wheeler and Hudson Senior High School Audio/Video Club students Lance Hopwood and Oscar Giovannucci, which introduces the DEI Community Team members and their reasons for joining.

We will continue to provide updates about this important work.

Sincerely,

Dr. Juliette Pennyman, Superintendent

Dr. Tia L. Pressey, Manager of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

#HudsonTogetherWeCan