

# IAC in Action

by Beth Nash

Last year, the BOCES 2 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee changed their name to the Inclusivity Action Community (IAC) to better describe what they do. Through the initial work of forming and getting the committee running, members learned from DEI Strategist Arthur Chan that “diversity is a fact, equity is a choice, inclusion is an action and belonging is an outcome.” Since the committee was tasked with creating a culture of inclusion, seven sub-committees were created to get the work done. The committees are assessing the current state of BOCES 2, and using that data to figure out how to make the organization more inclusive for students, staff and families.

The sub-committees are:

- Academic Data
- Climate and Culture Survey
- Discipline/Suspension Data
- Interview and Implicit Bias
- Professional Learning
- Gender Policy
- Family and Community Engagement

BOCES 2 staff and students in grades 6-12 are being surveyed this spring from the Climate and Culture sub-committee. The data collected from this survey will form a baseline for future surveys to be measured against. During the 2024-25 school year, BOCES 2 parents and caregivers will be sent a separate survey. After some time has elapsed, another survey will be sent to all stakeholders to determine what progress has been made. The surveys will be sent out from a company called Panorama Education, and the questions are based on what has been asked nationally regarding DEI policies and practices.



The Professional Learning sub-committee rolled out “SafeZone” and “The Power of Pronouns (and Names) on Identity, Acceptance and Inclusion” trainings BOCES-wide beginning in 2023. Additional sessions are offered this spring. This committee is also hosting an online book study beginning in April, where interested staff will read “How to be an Inclusive Leader” by Jennifer Brown and discuss the book in weekly Zoom meetings. Beginning this spring, BOCES 2 staff will also receive training from department leaders on using inclusive language and creating affirming spaces for LGBTQIA+ youth and staff. “The goal is for everyone to feel welcome and to be themselves at BOCES 2,” said Staff Developer Lorena Stabins. “We don’t want anyone to be unfairly treated because of any part of their identity.”

The Academic and Discipline/Suspension Data sub-committees are exploring ways to better organize this data by student demographics so BOCES 2 students can be assessed more accurately on how they are progressing, not just in their home districts, but in BOCES 2 programs.

The Interview and Implicit Bias sub-committee is revising the questions that are asked of potential job candidates. This committee is also looking at ways to recruit and retain employees, creating a more diverse workforce.

The Gender Policy sub-committee is reviewing other BOCES gender policies before creating the BOCES 2 policy.

The Family and Community Engagement sub-committee is reviewing another district’s parent survey to determine how families and community members can be engaged in ways that are based on mutual trust, confidence and respect.

The IAC is also going to be adding more information to both the internal ([www.monroe2boces.org/IAC](http://www.monroe2boces.org/IAC)) and external ([www.monroe2boces.org/dei](http://www.monroe2boces.org/dei)) DEI pages on the BOCES 2 website.

There is a form on the internal site that staff can complete if they are interested in joining the IAC. IAC team members are tasked with keeping their departments updated on the activities of the IAC. They are also tasked with keeping the IAC updated on any DEI initiatives their departments are executing to share information on successes and challenges.

A group of BOCES 2 staff has formed the “Pride Coalition,” focused on intentionally building LGBTQIA+ inclusive spaces, connections and community. They have organized “Sip & Share” gatherings at Equal = Grounds Coffee Shop a few times a year. The next one is scheduled for May 18 at 11 a.m. at 750 South Avenue in Rochester. Anyone who is interested is welcome to join these sessions. This group also participates in the Rochester Pride Parade & Festival, which will take place on July 20 this year.

“DEI work is happening at BOCES 2, but we have room to grow,” said Stabins. Pay attention to the website and information that IAC members share in department meetings to learn more about the latest developments as the IAC works through their action plans.



You're invited to a

## Sip & Share

Sat., May 18, at 11 a.m.

**Equal=Grounds Coffee House**  
750 South Ave., Rochester, NY

This is a casual gathering initiated by a small group of BOCES 2 employees who want to build intentionally LGBTQIA+ inclusive spaces, connections and community.

