



# Belonging, Equity, Diversity, Representation - BEDR

*On Wednesday, December 1, 2021 the NYSSMA® Executive Council adopted the following DEI statement*

Districts in New York State are focused on the work of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) for all stakeholders in their school community. NYSSMA® is substituting the word "representation" for inclusion and adding the word "belonging" to focus on the foundation of strong relationships as a critical element in this work.

## ***Belonging, Equity, Diversity, Representation - BEDR***

**NYSSMA® Will Support:** A sustained and robust process that reflects, analyzes, and enhances the various systems of the organization through a representative lens for the benefit of the populations we serve.

Goals will include:

- Creating a community of **BELONGING** which empowers all members and students to feel respected, valued, and equally included as they engage with the ongoing work of NYSSMA®.
- **EQUITY** in all aspects of the organization through reflection on shortcomings, reevaluation of traditions, and growth in accountability, transparency, and access.
- **DIVERSIFIED** curricular and pedagogical practice that is responsive to the teacher and student population in all areas of the state.
- Improved **REPRESENTATION** in all areas inclusive of new ideas for classroom experiences, NYSSMA® leadership, festivals, and publications.

Following the adoption of the new NYSSMA® BEDR statement, the NYSSMA® Executive Council, under the guidance of committee chair Adele Bovard, participated in an activity that was intended to focus attention on how NYSSMA® will apply this statement to all aspects of the association. Working in small breakout groups, council members were first asked to create a headline to describe how these changes will impact our future work. There was a great deal of enthusiasm for the next steps, and much of this was reflected in these headlines:

***NYSSMA® taking on the challenges of making difficult and bold changes!***

***NYSSMA® with No Boundaries!***

***NYSSMA® Moves to New Traditions!***

***Accessibility in Music, You Bet!***

***The New NYSSMA®***

***Bringing Music to All Children in NYS Member Schools!***

***NYSSMA®: A Brighter Renewal!***

***NYSSMA®, putting the ALL in All State!***

# NYSSMA® EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ACTION

Next, the breakout groups were asked to pose questions which need to be addressed for NYSSMA® to move toward the goal of incorporating the BEDR statement into all aspects of our association. These are just some of the questions that they posed:

- How will NYSSMA® guarantee that ALL stakeholders are included?
- What supports, and resources will NYSSMA® make available?
- Can NYSSMA® do something that is genuinely new and different?
- How will we measure and evaluate our progress?
- How will NYSSMA® cultivate future leadership that will be representative of diverse background and experiences?
- How can we represent non-traditional/emerging/all types of ensembles?
- How do we reach more underrepresented students and create more opportunities?
- What barriers need to be removed to increase accessibility to NYSSMA® events?
- How do we unify membership regardless of discipline specialty?
- How do we include students in our BEDR vision decision making?
- How can higher education and teacher preparation help with this goal?
- How will we embrace BEDR with our classroom music teachers and curriculum writers?
- How can BEDR impact improved membership and recruitment?
- Will NYSSMA® provide easily accessible cultural resources to all music educators?
- Can we unite and collaborate our BEDR goals with our affiliates?

Your NYSSMA® leadership realizes that there are more questions than answers, but we are excited about this work and its potential to move our organization toward the goal of a more welcoming and representative NYSSMA® in which all music teachers find a true sense of belonging. Past President David Brown and President Russ Faunce have charged the DEI Committee to lead the work of taking on these challenging questions. In the process, the committee will focus on creating opportunities for two-way discussions with NYSSMA® members, non-members, and students.

The NYSSMA® DEI Committee welcomes your thoughts through President Faunce via e-mail at: [president@nyssma.org](mailto:president@nyssma.org)

NYSSMA® wishes to thank these members of the DEI Committee for their work in creating the BEDR statement:

Shelly Bauer – Zone 12

Adele Bovard - NYSSMA® Advisor & DEI Committee Chair

Dr. David Brown – Immediate Past President

Meagan Dissinger – Zone 13

Russ Faunce - President

Shavon Lloyd – Zone 5

Michael Salzman – NYSSMA® Past President