



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Natasha Capers, 347.610.2754, ncapers@nyccej.org

PRESS RELEASE: City's Largest Parent-Led Coalition Calls for Culturally Responsive Curriculum

New York, NY (October 4th, 2018) - The Coalition for Educational Justice (CEJ), New York City's largest public school parent coalition, held a rally with 75 parents, youth, elected officials and advocates to publicly release a new curriculum analysis and call for the creation and adoption of a Culturally Responsive Curriculum in New York City schools.

CEJ's priorities include:

- Ensure that all NYC schools are teaching curriculum that reflects the histories and backgrounds of NYC students, in every course, starting in the earliest grades.
- Require that all schools, pre-K to 12th grade, offer dual language programs or opportunities for students to learn more than one language
- Ensure that school and classroom libraries reflect diverse cultures, languages, abilities, religions and identities
- Develop culturally responsive curriculum with teams of teachers in each subject and grade level, in collaboration with families, students and community

Councilmember Antonio Reynoso: "As a city that prides itself as a beacon of diversity and inclusion, NYC public school students deserve a balanced and realistic portrayal of history that is reflective of our City's rich multiculturalism," said Council Member Antonio Reynoso. "As a young Latino student in the NYC school system, I learned a lot about Christopher Columbus, but never about the rich, pre-Columbian histories of nations like Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Thanks largely to advocacy by the Coalition for Educational Justice, the de Blasio administration has taken a step in the right direction towards culturally responsive education by investing in implicit bias and culturally responsive education training. Now, the de Blasio administration must take the next step by creating and adopting a culturally responsive education curriculum."

Derrick Owens, CEJ and New York Communities for Change parent leader: "I never saw Black people in my curriculum as a child, and had to find out on my own about all the incredible things Black people have done, when I got into my 20s. I don't want the same thing to happen to my daughter, but that's what I still see in her curriculum today. She learns almost nothing about Black writers, inventors, politicians and artists, even during Black History Month. Parents have to plan our own events and do our own projects with our kids outside of school to expose them to their culture and history. When I went to the Pearson ReadyGen curriculum website, I was not surprised that all the authors are White. It's not acceptable that so little has changed in most schools since I was a kid."

Matt Gonzales, New York Appleseed: “New York Appleseed is proud to stand with CEJ in calling for Culturally Responsive Curriculum for every student, in every class, in every grade, every day! New York City schools are most effective when the teaching and learning honors, uplifts, and reflects the diversity of every student. We applaud Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Carranza for the recent announcement of 23 million for teacher training, but urge them to double down and invest in our students and our communities by prioritizing CRE for all New York City schools. CEJ’s curriculum priorities outline the right steps forward.”

Anita Gundanna and Vanessa Leung, Coalition for Asian-American Children and Families: “In New York City, Asian Pacific Americans (APA) are the fastest growing racial community, and speak over 40 languages and dialects from 100 different regions. Still, APAs are often invisible in school curriculum. Influential figures and important historical events related to the APA community are often underrepresented, which devalues APA contributions to social change and perpetuate racial stereotypes that impact the daily lives of APAs. The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF), the nation’s only pan-Asian children’s advocacy organization, believes that the school system should implement an inclusive and diverse curriculum that reflects the diversity of the student population it serves and that school administrators should be fully supported to serve this diverse student population.”

Yenny Cepeda, CEJ and Masa parent leader: “I want my children to get a culturally responsive curriculum so they can learn about their history and ancestry -- not just the food, but also their culture, customs and the heroes from our culture. When students know where they come from, they feel more motivated to achieve. I want this for all children.”

Iman Abdul, IntegrateNYC: “As Malcolm once said, ‘Education is the passport to our future’. But how can we attain this passport if we are not reflected in our educational curriculum? In high school I had an honors Spanish teacher who was Latina and helped me and my friends start the Hispanos Unidos Club to discuss pressing Latinx issues and helped us learn about Puerto Rican history, art and culture. That teacher is the reason I’m studying education in college today, and plan to be an educator. To the current chancellor from your future chancellor, I strongly urge you to invest in culturally responsive education.”