



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement & Goals

Dancing with Class strives to provide programs that are inclusive of all students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic status, nationality, religion, belief systems, language, or learning styles.

Our focus on social dance provides a unique opportunity for students to work in partnership and build relationships across the gender spectrum. Unlike many youth sports teams and other school-based activities, which are often divided by gender, we strive to maintain a program in which all genders are represented and celebrated.

For classes and workshops, our Teaching Artists are trained to create flexible learning environments where students of all gender expressions (cis, trans, nonbinary, etc.) feel safe and supported. When teaching social dance, our instructors will honor students' gender expression and pronouns and can provide gender neutral terminology for learning the different roles that are part of social/partner dancing.

If a student's religion prohibits them from dancing with people of another gender, our teaching artists will work with that student to include them in all aspects of our program as much as their restrictions allow.

Additionally, diverse learners and students with physical disabilities are welcomed into our programs and supported with accommodations to ensure they are able to participate.

Anti-Racism Statement

Dancing with Class is wholly committed to operating as an anti-racist organization, seeking to resist and dismantle systemic racism by training our team to identify and question personal biases and take active steps to challenge oppressive mindsets and teaching practices. We strive to provide a culturally responsive curriculum through which students explore the intersections of their personal and socio-cultural identities. Internally, we engage in a continuous process of reflection and evolution to ensure we stay aligned and committed to our mission, core values and diversity, equity and inclusion goals.



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Goals

1. **Create an inclusive and equitable work culture for our team.** We strive to build a supportive, flexible, and welcoming work culture that values every voice. We aspire to achieve this through an intentionally flat organizational hierarchy and frequent check-ins with all team members to ensure we are aligned in our mission while empowering team members to use their own natural strengths to do work in pursuit of the mission. Training is provided both internally and through outside organizations to focus on identifying personal biases and how to mitigate the impact of these biases.

Action Steps:

- Anti-Racism and bias training workshops for all team members
- Formative and summative team feedback opportunities (surveys and one-on-one conversations) throughout the year.

2. **Recruit, retain and develop a diverse team.** We believe it is critical that our team reflects the diversity of the students and schools we serve. While our administrative/leadership team is still quite small and does not currently reflect the kind of diversity we aspire to, our network of Teaching Artists is made up of greater than 50% BIPOC and we place a high priority on including these artists in strategic planning, program development and key decision-making. As our leadership team grows, we intend to prioritize the recruitment and retention of an increasingly diverse leadership team that is aligned with the racial/ethnic makeup of our artist network and schools we serve.

Action Steps:

- Continue to track the racial/ethnic identity of our team and prioritize recruitment of BIPOC candidates with a goal of a team whose diversity reflects that of the schools we serve.

3. **Design and deliver equity-minded programs that are culturally responsive and meet the needs of our diverse profile of school partners.** Diversity, equity and inclusion lie at the heart of our mission and core values and are deeply embedded in our curriculum and program experience. We are engaging deeply in conversations and research around what equitable programming looks like and are committed to continuous improvement of our curriculum to ensure we are meeting the needs of all learners, especially those in historically marginalized groups.



DEI Goals – Continued:

Action Steps:

- In our recent work in developing a new SEL curriculum for middle and high school, we engaged a diverse group of artists, youth, and program specialists in the process of curriculum design, including one of the authors of CASEL's framework brief entitled "Equity & Social and Emotional Learning: A Cultural Analysis." We will continue work with this researcher to further examine our equity-centered curriculum.
- Ongoing data collection and research to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs with equitable SEL as a focus of the curriculum and research.

4. **Enhance accountability, effectiveness, and collaboration through strategic use of DEI-related data in planning and assessment.** We continuously track DEI-related data for both the schools and students we serve as well as our team. Additionally, our leadership team is engaged with the Illinois Arts Alliance Anti-Racism Learning Group, an affiliation we believe will provide us with mechanisms to track accountability and effectiveness of our DEI strategic goals.

Action Steps:

- Annual review of DEI-related data points
- Participation in Illinois Arts Alliance Anti-Racism Learning Group