

# Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility (DEIA) Audit

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Educating students to thrive in a world that hasn't been invented yet is hard work. It requires a fundamental belief that we are, in fact, educating our scholars to be the creators of their own future. For that, they will require not only all of the skills and knowledge we can impart but also a self-realization and valuing of their own worth. Their strengths are not merely academic; they are cultural, experience-based, sometimes the result of persistence through hardship, family-driven, and deeply rooted in identity. For generations, the US education system has failed to recognize, embrace, and build upon the personal capital of students like ours— thus missing out on a vital resource and often doing real damage. We can change the course of the US education system. We define our success by our scholars' success, and their success requires each of them to be all in!

This is true for our team, as well. Education, certifications, training, and experience alone do not drive our individual and collective success. We each bring tangible value derived from our cultures, backgrounds, identities, lived experiences, and diversity. As an organization, we can only thrive by leveraging the talents of everyone.

Therefore, at the board's request, we invited the Canizales Group to hold up the mirror for us so that we can take an unflinching look at where we are in our promise to succeed no matter the circumstances. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access work is not about embracing a trend or being "woke." It is about doing what is right with (not for) our students, families, staff, and communities. This is the hard work that is vital to our long-term success. This report identifies some of our real strengths and it also lays bare weaknesses, genuine opportunities, and barriers to achieving our mission. Its conclusions are non-ideological. They are based on concrete data and point the way towards what we must do to ensure our school communities achieve excellence. This work requires humility, courage, grace, and determination. When we see a reflection that makes us uncomfortable, we have to recognize those feelings, reject denial, and do the work.

For us, doing the work means taking concrete actions. We are appointing an internal stakeholder committee to guide the prioritization and implementation of the recommendations—recommendations that must become commitments, actions, and, eventually, achievements and ongoing practices. I know that we will grow and succeed by engaging in this work with open hearts and open minds. The Navigator Schools vision has never been about just replicating a static academic model. It is about developing top-tier teams of educators who continuously improve and innovate schools that deliver phenomenal outcomes for all students, regardless of their circumstances. I am committed to the world we are creating together being exponentially better than the one we inherited and nowhere near as awesome as the one our students will build. We must ALL bring our whole selves to this mission. This is what I mean when I say that I AM ALL IN. I want ALL of us to be ALL IN!

Sincerely,  
Dr. Caprice Young

# Overview of Project

The Navigator Board of Directors approved a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) equity audit and partnered with The Canizales Group on December 12, 2023. The Canizales Group conducted the audit, and its results will shape Navigator Schools' future plans. This summary outlines the audit process and key findings, which included input from senior leadership, staff, principals, vice principals, teachers, families, and students from January to May 2024.

This summary is not an action plan but a transparent update on the data gathered so far. The action plan will be developed by a multi-stakeholder committee representing the Navigator school communities.

## Methodology

The stakeholder engagement process combined data and personal experiences to understand the complexities of the Navigator school communities. Through empathy interviews, school visits, and community focus groups, we gathered a complete view of the community's perspectives. Below is an overview of our mixed-method approach:



**1:1 conversations** were held with close to 20 stakeholders across school sites, including the roles below:

- Board members
- Support Office leadership
- Principals and Vice-Principals
- SPED teachers
- General Ed teachers
- Classified staff



**Focus groups** were held at all 4 school sites with staff, students, and families.



**A thorough analysis of data**, including:

- Student, family and staff surveys
- Student achievement data
- Student discipline data
- Student enrollment data
- Staff demographics data

Strength-based classroom visits were conducted at all 4 sites. Each visit included observing 6 volunteer classrooms, resulting in 20 observations across the Gilroy, Hayward, Hollister, and Watsonville school communities.

# What We Learned

## OUR STRENGTHS

### INCLUSION MODEL

Navi community members highlighted the school's commitment to the inclusion of students with diverse learning needs and 504 plans as a notable strength.

### STRONG STAFF CULTURE

The staff has created a strong peer-to-peer environment with a shared commitment to serving "regardless of circumstances." They foster a culture of continual learning, where team members support each other through coaching, feedback, and opportunities for professional growth to better serve their students.

### DEEP RELATIONSHIPS

Navigators students, families, leaders, and staff value the community's ability to create a family-like atmosphere where meaningful relationships flourish among everyone involved.

*"I get to meet a lot of different people that I like, school is inclusive and all get to participate and be a part of the learning and conversation."*

*-Student*

### HOLISTIC SUPPORT FOR THE WHOLE CHILD/FAMILY

Navi community members praised Navigator's skill in handling crises by making sure families and students get their basic needs met as much as possible.

### STRONG TEACHER REPRESENTATION

Navigator's classroom staff includes many bilingual and Latino members, reflecting the community they serve.

### EXEMPLARY ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Stakeholders trust Navigator Schools to consistently achieve excellent results in English language arts (ELA) and math. Families especially know that their school has a great reputation for doing better academically than nearby schools.

### CONFIDENCE IN NEW LEADERSHIP

Navi staff are excited about Navigator's future because they have confidence in the new leadership, especially the CEO.

*"I love Navigator because we get live and team coaching, the admin and lead teachers trust us to co-teach or lead teach, we try our hardest and we are in it together."*

*-Teacher*

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## AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

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### NEED FOR MORE CULTURALLY REPRESENTATIVE CURRICULUM

Navi community members are concerned that the school's curriculum does not yet fully support identity development of its students. Some teachers try to supplement it, but they need more direction, time and resources to make these improvements in an intentional and united way.

### MULTILINGUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Families, students, and staff want Navigator to go beyond excellence in English and math. They advocate for a more holistic approach, with more electives and support for maintaining and improving heritage or home language skills through multilingual opportunities.

### INCREASING DIVERSE LEADERSHIP

Staff noted a lack of diversity among leaders at both the site and support office levels. They stressed the need for more diverse leadership to ensure varied perspectives in guiding systems and initiatives.

### ENHANCEMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER SERVICES

Staff and data highlight the urgent need to improve services and training for English Language Learner (ELL) students. They see a need for a clear strategy and aligned programs specifically for ELL students.

*"We need more newcomer services, especially for families coming in through asylum. I wonder how we will change to adapt to their needs?"*

*-Parent*

### GREATER INCLUSION NEEDED FOR LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

Navi community members emphasized the need for more awareness, education, and intentional efforts, including using inclusive language and policies, to support LGBTQ+ individuals.

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## OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER

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### BILINGUAL PROGRAMMING

With many Latino/x and bilingual staff, there's potential for a dual language pilot program, especially in early grades, since 50% of students already speak another language at home. Additionally, offering Spanish as an elective for all elementary students and a native speaker track in middle school could be explored. The strong bilingual talent and stakeholder support for a multilingual program make this a promising opportunity.

### PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

Building on its strong foundation in ELA and math, Navigator can meet the community's call for more rigor by introducing project-based learning. This approach connects to the community and instills a deep sense of purpose, promoting deeper engagement and understanding among students beyond just mastering knowledge and skills.

## **FAMILY LEADERSHIP**

Navigator has a group of eager families ready to get involved. They want deeper connections with other families and administrators, and they're interested in opportunities to collaborate and take on leadership roles within the school community.

## **VALOR CIRCLES**

Introducing Valor circles among students offers a chance to create a Tier 1 Restorative Justice program. These circles can help with identity development, but it's important to ensure emotional safety. Changes should prioritize student feedback and opportunities for student-led community circles.

## **SQUAD MODEL**

Students see the SQUAD model as a good chance for collaboration, and they also have ideas on how to make it a better experience. Students worry that it may create a culture of labeling intelligence and puts pressure on "advanced" students. Student voices should be explored and incorporated in any changes/adaptations.

## **ALIGNING VALUES AND PRACTICES**

It's necessary to reassess Navigator's values and practices, which have changed since its founding. For example, classroom practices like co-created agreements don't align with some of the universal school rules.

*"Maybe we can learn a unit about making a difference, units that are stretched out and harder to accomplish."*

*-Student*