826 Boston DEI Statement and Action Plans

At 826 Boston, we honor and actively work toward diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across our organization. We are committed to centering the voices of the students who we serve, to creating inclusive spaces, and to incorporating feedback from our community into our decision-making processes. Our DEI lens is always evolving through the courageous conversations in which we participate and the relationships that we build through our work and service. We strengthen our cultural competency through experience, training, and feedback, which informs the development of all new organizational practices and goals and the evaluation of all existing procedures.

826 Boston is dedicated to providing a platform for student advocacy through writing and publishing opportunities. In our work and mission, we are committed to dismantling white supremacy culture by recognizing that we are complicit in systems of racism and oppression. We will work to hold ourselves accountable in addressing these harmful structures and behaviors.

We would also like to acknowledge that the land where the 826 Boston center, offices, and partner schools are located is on the original homelands of the Massachusett Tribe. We honor and pay our respects to the ancestral bloodline of the Massachusett Tribe and their descendents who are still inhabiting this land on which we work and serve today.

Please read on below to learn how our organization has applied a DEI lens to our work at 826 Boston in the development of team action plans.

826 Boston DEI Action Plans

October 2020

<u>Across All 826 Boston Teams:</u>

1. 826 Boston will take an antiracist/anti-oppressive approach to designing our goals and organizational structures/practices and conducting our work and service by:
   - Acknowledging, appreciating, meaningfully representing, and standing with the people of various marginalized communities we serve, work with, and identify as.
   - Hiring experienced individuals of color, individuals who represent the LGBTQ+ community, individuals from diverse economic backgrounds, and skilled individuals who have experience and/or interest in working with the populations that we serve.
   - Committing ourselves to examining our practices to identify issues and correct them; continuing education and training in anti-racism and anti-oppression; demonstrating this commitment throughout our team action plans.
   - Acknowledging that our goals, as both a team and as individuals, are ones we need to continuously work towards.
   - Aligning 826 Boston's DEI professional development with the DEI work that schools are already doing/intend to do wherever possible as we aim to provide consistent and effective support that addresses the diverse body of students who we serve.
   - Holding ourselves to a standard of transparency.
   - Actively seeking and assessing feedback on how our methods can be continuously improved.

2. 826 Boston will leverage and amplify the expertise within our team, dedicate ourselves to continuous growth, and seek out opportunities for cross-team collaboration in service to our own learning by:
   - Incorporating DEI goal-setting within teams and supporting each other's goals; building and applying the skills we learn from each other and applying them to our own programs and in our individual communities.
   - Ensuring opportunities to observe different programs, teams, and events in action, viewing student work across programs, and demonstrating our support for one another's work and service.
   - Developing and integrating transparent systems for sharing what we are learning across the organization (i.e. from PDs and trainings, including prebriefs and debriefs with volunteers).
   - Integrating trainings that address microaggressions and other breaches and interrupting harm within the 826 network community.

- Creating space for supervisors to propose professional development opportunities and encouraging team members to request and seek out opportunities to grow their skills to better serve students and fulfill their roles.
- Developing opportunities for team members to share their own expertise and lead internal DEI workshops for which they are compensated.

AmeriCorps Program Team

The AmeriCorps Program commits to:

- Recruiting and selecting AmeriCorps members that are reflective of the student population who we serve in terms of race, ethnicity, language, gender identity, sexual identity, and socio-economic status.
- Recruiting and selecting AmeriCorps members from the schools and neighborhoods that we serve.
- Incorporating anti-racist materials, trainings, and activities into onboarding and monthly professional development meetings.
- Centering members' voices and experiences throughout their year of service by collecting and implementing feedback and by providing opportunities for members to lead professional development training sessions for one another.
- Recognizing that members are individuals and their years of service may look different depending on their needs., The AmeriCorps Program commits to providing service members with individualized support to ensure that each member can be successful.

Board of Directors

The 826 Boston Board is dedicated to applying a DEI lens to our current practices and to holding ourselves accountable to the anti-racist and anti-oppression work of our organization. We respect that this ongoing process requires deeper attention, and we are committed to:

Engaging in continuous training and learning by...
- Developing a structure and dedicating funds for DEI workshops for the Board; continuing to support the priority of DEI professional development across the organization.
- Forming a Board DEI Committee that has clear responsibilities and lines of communication that will:
  - Enable it to hold the Board accountable for progress towards the DEI goals that the Board has set for itself.
  - Collaborate with the DEI Committee at the team level to ensure that the Board's DEI workshops reflect the content and focus areas explored by staff and service members.
  - Collaborate with senior management staff to take inventory of programs

that are being named by team members from other 826 chapters for closer examination with a DEI lens, such as the AmeriCorps program and 826 volunteer model.

- Introducing Lunch and Learn meetings in order to integrate regular opportunities for Board members to connect around shared text, documentaries, current events, and/or student writing.
- Recognizing that we will need to foster a culture in which we agree that we can be transparent and trust each other as we support one another's learning and growth.
- Working alongside the development team to implement community-centric fundraising practices; identifying Board-specific actions, such as opening up discussions with board members at like-minded organizations.
- Updating all onboarding resources for new members of the Board as needed to stay consistent with the organization's journey in DEI.

Reflecting on priorities related to access, representation, and inclusion by...

- Recruiting Board members who reflect the population whom the organization serves and fill industry/skills gaps in our board's composition.
- Cultivating talent pipelines to increase diversity in both Board membership and leadership roles (i.e. officers positions and committee chair positions).
- Continuing to assess points of entry to the 826 Boston board and identifying any potential barriers, e.g. the Give/Get in the board member role description.
- Providing additional seats at fundraisers for community members when the cost of tickets would otherwise be prohibitive; identifying the responsibility of the board to welcome guests and broaden their community circles.
- Ensuring that board members have clear, concise language to describe the DEI work of the board and organization.

Identifying opportunities for board members to get more proximate to the communities with whom we work by...

- Arranging a visit with leadership staff to a Writers' Room or the After-School Program while programming is in action.
- Volunteering to tutor at least once per year in standalone programs such as College Essay Boot Camp or Creative Writing Workshops if tutoring is feasible in schedule.
- Attending at least one neighborhood-based student-centered event per year.
- Activating the board DEI Committee to consult with leadership staff and integrate authentic opportunities to connect with the greater 826 Boston community, i.e. through community events and neighborhood tours.
- Supporting local Black and POC-owned businesses and vendors whenever possible for board-hosted events.
- Utilizing assets-based language (i.e. language that focuses on positive outcomes

and personal strengths, rather than problems and barriers) when speaking about 826 Boston's work and the people who are served by 826 Boston programs.
- Identifying the racist policies that are at the root of the inequality which 826 Boston's programs seek to rectify, and advocating and acting to change them.

Ensuring inclusive board practices by...
- Archiving minutes from all committees and board meetings in one easily accessible location.
- Intentionally inviting any feedback/discussion prior to board meetings to ensure that all voices are heard.
- Ensuring that all board members can sit in on different committee meetings; providing multiple opportunities for individuals to weigh in on decisions across committees and contribute their own unique skills and experiences.
- Gathering feedback from stakeholders who are directly impacted by major decisions of the board, e.g. in the strategic planning process.

Monitoring and evaluating performance by...
- Including a DEI Goal in each Board Member's annual action plan.
- Setting DEI Goals annually for each individual board committee; reporting back to the board as part of committee updates and at the annual retreat.
- Developing a DEI section for anonymous feedback on board practices to include in the annual board self-assessment survey.
- Incorporating DEI goals at the board level to the organization's strategic plan.
- Adding a dedicated component to the annual board retreat that is led by the board DEI Committee and focuses on evaluating progress towards the board's DEI goals.
- Incorporating some reporting on DEI goals from staff at the annual board retreat to reflect the new component of team midyear and end-of-year reporting meetings.

Development and Communications Team

1. The 826 Boston Development and Communications team takes responsibility for honoring students' whole selves in how we represent them and the work of 826 Boston to the public. We commit to ensuring that students have opportunities to willingly and comfortably share their stories. We commit to diversifying the community of collaborators, including vendors and partners, to better reflect the students we serve.

In fundraising events, we commit to:
- Working with students to tell their stories in their own words with minimal editing and with thoughtful support and guidance from our team.

- Ensuring that we have a process in which the diversity of program speakers and/or panels is prioritized.
- Creating a robust logistics check-list and a student contract to ensure staff accountability to students in a systematic and routinized manner.
- Compensating students for their time preparing and presenting their stories.
- Setting clear expectations around the time commitment required and other details at the time when we make the request; seek permission from students to share written versions of their spoken remarks in a formal agreement.
- Ensuring that students can communicate/interact with our team through a trusted individual with whom they feel comfortable voicing preferences and/or concerns.
- Being transparent with students, colleagues, and external stakeholders about why we are selecting certain students for events and/or sharing their writing in written materials.
- Broadening our corporate connections so that we can increase the percentage of BIPOC members in our event committees to 25% by 2021.

In donor relations we commit to:
- Holding at least one donor education event.
- Creating a formal gift acceptance policy.
- Thanking donors of all levels
    - Revisit the ways that our annual report and website names top donors.
- Seeking to diversify our base of donors through actively connecting to new affinity groups.

In communications we commit to:
- Sourcing 75% of our photography and design vendors for the events in our department (fundraising events, ribbon cutting events, team bio pictures, student showcases, and other development-prompted photography and design needs) from the BIPOC community.
- Revisiting our goals around other vendors (event planning, AV needs, venues) toward supporting more local and BIPOC-owned businesses.
- Ensuring our communications and events are accessible
    - Make sure that all fundraising films and other videos produced from our department are captioned; support other teams with this effort.
    - Utilize larger fonts and contrasting backgrounds to support legibility of materials.
    - Provide transcripts for videos and podcasts.
    - Include image descriptions/alt-text with all images.
- Developing, vetting, and adopting a language guide for the team that codifies our values when writing for external audiences.
- Convening program staff to discuss consent and our policy on using student quotes and photos for communications purposes— including social media (i.e. looking into questions about consent, taking quotes out of the student's original context, and standing behind

instead of with students); answer any questions that arise.

In grants we commit to:
- Creating a case statement that describes the challenges that students face and why these conditions exist. Name the systems of inequality that affect students.
- Evolving our language on "the problem" and "the population" we serve, understanding that language and meaning changes. Revisiting the wording on an annual basis. Adopting the Strategic Planning Committee's revised language for "underserved communities," in our mission statement and existing grant language.

In written fundraising appeals we commit to:
- Connecting the personal stories of students to 826 Boston's impact and why our programming exists in a manner that students endorse.
- Leading with an asset-based approach when describing students and being specific about why inequitable solutions exist for students.
- Auditing written materials, including website, grants, social media and other written communications to reflect on whether we are perpetuating stereotypes and/or using outdated language. If so, suggest revised language and make a plan to implement it.

Within our team we commit to:
- Expressing gratitude to donors who contribute non-monetarily including donating time as volunteers or providing other means of support.
- Having regular department meetings with rotating facilitators and notetakers to not only keep each other up to date on key activities but also to build leadership among team members and make sure we are transparent and aligned on goals.
- Using all-team times throughout the year to promote transparency about development practices, the budget, funding sources, and our roles as a development and communications team.

In our partnerships we commit to:
- Ensuring that at least 25% of our new Corporate Advisory Council members are BIPOC.
- Communicating our values and parameters with external partners who request student participation, and be willing to forgo partnerships that fail to honor our values.
- Creating a checklist or due diligence document that will promote good decision-making surrounding partnerships that feature students and/or their words, images, or intellectual property.

Human Resources & Operations

1. In Human Resources we commit to:
- Increasing the diversity of our team by recruiting from a broad and diverse range of platforms and networks in print, online, and through word of mouth.

- Maximizing fairness and equity in our hiring process by creating systems and practices that are clear, consistent, and that minimize the impacts of conscious and unconscious bias.
- Increasing transparency in our human resources systems, such as hiring, compensation, and discipline, by:
  - responding quickly and fully to team member inquiries
  - increasing the accessibility of information related to these systems
  - increasing the opportunities for team members to collaborate on the development and upkeep of these systems
- Ensuring the equitable treatment of all team members by creating and promoting workplace policies and practices that are clear, simple, fair, and kind.

2. In Operations we commit to:

- Ensuring that our physical spaces are as accessible as possible to people with disabilities and that, when using spaces outside of our own physical spaces, that we make every effort to ensure the accessibility of those spaces.
- Making a serious and thoughtful effort to accommodate the needs of team members, students, families, and community members with disabilities.
- Prioritizing accessibility and centering student use when evaluating options for new or additional physical spaces and in the development and oversight of renovations.
- Using local vendors for operations contracts, wherever possible, by prioritizing vendors from Egleston Square and Roxbury, and then Boston, greater Boston, and beyond.
- Approaching our interactions with the police with a sensitivity to the experiences that our students, families, team members, and neighbors may have had with the police. We understand that members of our community may have reason to feel uncomfortable with police presence, and we will approach our work with the police with an intention to respect the experiences of our community.

Leadership Team

The Leadership Team is responsible for overseeing the commitments outlined in this document, including the DEI work occurring across all teams. The Leadership Team commits to:

Prioritizing transparency in organizational practices and strengthening existing systems for accountability/building new ones by...

- Providing transparency in organizational planning processes, such as annual planning, strategic planning, budgeting, and goal setting, so that all team members have opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback; reporting back to the team with progress on leadership team and board activity throughout the year.

- Evaluating, expanding, and overseeing reporting and accountability systems that provide clear and accessible methods to share feedback and report concerns and that establish fair and effective accountability practices.
- Incorporating updates from the senior management team at bi-monthly all-team meetings that focus on the work of the leadership team; clarifying what decisions are being made at what levels, when applicable.
- Increasing the diversity of our team by hiring experienced BIPOC and individuals who represent the LGBTQ+ community across all 826 Boston teams and departments; adding the hiring committee as a working group of the DEI committee to further strengthen alignment of hiring and DEI goals.
- Sharing information with the full team about the purpose and function of the Board of Directors and providing regular updates on the board's progress toward their goals; creating space at the annual retreat for the board to directly report out on progress on board DEI goals; facilitating opportunities for the board and team members to interact.

Assessing the structure of team meetings and training sessions to ensure that they are as inclusive and accessible as possible by...

- Incorporating chat, group breakouts, and anonymous feedback if any of these tools would promote the incorporation of more voices.
- Continuing to provide space for service members to lead and have a voice in team meetings and training sessions.
- Collaborating with the team/DEI committee to create team meeting norms for different types of meetings (e.g. online, in-person, Zoom, Google Hangouts, etc.) that are adopted across the organization.
- Fostering a culture of providing materials to review in advance of meetings, when appropriate.

Leading and modeling an organizational culture that emphasizes individual/team learning and growth by...

- Overseeing a professional development program that invests in team members' personal, professional, and long-term career goals
- Providing trainings that are responsive to the team's desired needs to support their roles
- Inviting experts, professional trainers, and guest speakers who are BIPOC/LGBTQ+; leveraging team members' strengths, expertise, and networks to connect our organization to industry professionals to train our team and/or share best practices.
- Holding supervisors accountable to supporting their direct reports with identifying professional development goals and ensuring that work/service plans include projects that support team members' growth; develop the identified skills/competencies.

- Ensuring that supervisors are supporting service members with their professional plans following their 826 Boston service year(s), including but not limited to making time in schedules for informational/job interviews, connecting members to industry professionals, hosting annual career panels, sharing and updating the Service Member Next Steps Resource Mining document.
- Developing and integrating transparent systems and practices for sharing what we are learning across the organization.

Developing practices for shared learning across the organization and fostering opportunities for teams to collaborate by...

- Scheduling quarterly meetings with development and program team members to address questions and opportunities and to identify areas of collaboration.
- Creating mentoring opportunities/build pipelines for leadership roles on staff; identifying team members who aspire to work in nonprofit management and support them to gain developmental experience at 826 Boston
- Supporting team members to develop competencies and skills that will put them in the position to hold leadership roles at 826 Boston or other organizations.

Building meaningful relationships in the Egleston Square and Greater Roxbury/Dorchester community by...

- Inviting Roxbury community leaders, residents, and 826 Boston families into our space to break bread and have conversations regarding how we can make our organization feel more welcoming to community members.
  - Deepening understanding of where disconnection exists between Roxbury community members and the Greater Boston Bigfoot Research Institute (GBBRI).
  - Providing more consistent and meaningful opportunities to welcome, include, and connect with Roxbury/Egleston residents and visitors in the GBBRI.
- Offering our space free of charge to community members four times out of the year; leverage the center and the store (when we can) to attract and meet people.
- Identifying a list of organizations and individuals we hope to build relationships with; develop practices to keep ongoing communications going.
- Collaborating with other community organizations to provide mutual support; share resources and best practices.
- Committing to purchasing more supplies at local businesses in Egleston Square, which are largely BIPOC-owned; exploring more spending on supplies in Writers' Room neighborhoods as well.
- Increasing visibility in our communities and finding more ways for passersby to engage with students' work (e.g. via designed collateral or organizational participation in community events).

<u>Out-of-School Time Program Team</u>

1. The OOST team will utilize a student-centered, strengths-based approach by:
   - Incorporating practices to see and get to know students and families as individuals.
   - Being curious about students' interests and collaborating with them to find opportunities for students to use their self-identified and assessment-based strengths in natural and student-chosen ways, in and beyond our programs.
   - Discussing actions as needed, while also reinforcing the separation between mistakes and people, making sure students know we see their worth.
   - Defining a clear path of recourse if a student disagrees with a conversation with or decision made by an adult in our programs.
   - Having a variety of approaches to delivering programs based on the students who arrive for our programs and their needs, including but not limited to: language access, remote learning preferences, and support with student- and family-identified needs.
   - Collaborating with students and families on opportunities to highlight strengths, talents, and interests.

2. The OOST team, in collaboration with families, will accommodate student needs when possible by:
   - Having no automatically eliminating criteria for enrollment (i.e. students on the spectrum) and instead inviting parents, guardians, and students to visit the program and determining together how well it will meet their needs; consulting with teachers when needed and with parent/guardian approval.
   - Looking for opportunities to introduce tools, practices, and programmatic modifications that will set students up for success (i.e. cool-down spaces, sensory cushions, fidgets, modifications to routines).
   - Recognizing ongoing behavior or academic issues as a signal that we need to take a step back from the day-to-day of tutoring, invite students and families to talk about what is happening in students' education and lives at large, and look for areas for collaboration with students and families that will lead to making our systems and others more equitable and effective.

3. The OOST team will be student and family centered by:
   - Clearly articulating and reinforcing students' and families' rights in programming.
   - Reinforcing parent/guardian power and rights in our programs through family communication, wellness checks, opportunities to provide input on program design and feedback, and avenues to seek recourse. Acknowledging and reinforcing parents/guardians as the students' first and most important teachers, and signaling via conversations that the most important decisions are theirs.
   - Expanding Spanish and Somali language access in our resources, events, and published work.
   - Revising the revision process to incorporate more student say and control.

- Preemptively surveying families/students about what they are/aren't comfortable doing in programming.

4. The OOST Team will encourage and conduct equity and inclusivity-promoting conversations by:
- Proactively having conversations about race, gender, and other identity categories and the appertaining -isms; continuously educating ourselves and reflecting as we engage in them.
- Involving families as partners by ensuring they are aware of our intentions to have these conversations and sharing any safety-related concerns that may arise in those conversations .
- Addressing microaggressions and other breaches by:
    - interrupting harm, assessing the level of knowledge of the person(s) responsible, discussing the impact, creating alternatives as appropriate, assessing the needs of the recipient, centering their choice, safety, and comfort in how conversations are approached, and ensuring accountability while promoting repair in a meaningful and restorative way.
    - addressing microaggressions and breaches at both individual and large-group levels, and with students, adults, and our team.
- Creating volunteer-facing resources that support volunteers (if needed) as they participate in conversations about race, gender, and other identity categories and the appertaining -isms while also providing a clear framework for when to elevate conversations to a member of the team.

5. The OOST Team will see and get to know volunteers, partners, and coworkers as individuals. Each person working with and for the students brings a fresh perspective that we hope to continually learn from. We consider our volunteers, partners, and team members as unique and important individuals that help us build our community. We will see everyone as individuals by:
- Placing people in roles that best utilize their strengths, and identifying/facilitating opportunities for tutors to learn from each other.
- Providing assistance where needed to tackle challenges.
- Offering various methods for open feedback where volunteers and team members can share questions, concerns, and input if they choose to while maintaining full responsibility individually and as a team to ensure our programs are as diverse, equitable, and inclusive as possible.
- Promoting open communication by reflecting, responding to, and acting on these communications (where appropriate and with consideration given to the reporter when possible), maintaining confidentiality (also where appropriate, i.e., where confidentiality would not mask or cause harm), and by ensuring the follow-up maintains the safety of the initial reporter.
- Recognizing that individuals may take different approaches to reach the same goal and allow for that.
- Accommodating volunteers as necessary with learning or other needs (i.e. writing in pen).

- Considering accommodations when deciding how to address issues with volunteers, but continuing to center students' needs first and always.

Publishing and Programs Team

1. The Publishing and Programs team commits to honoring our students' experiences and amplifying their voices through both the publication process and final printed product by:
- Ensuring that authentic student voice is prioritized, regardless and in defiance of historically oppressive writing conventions.
- Meeting with the classroom teachers to set DEI-informed expectations for the 826 Boston team and volunteers' presence in the classrooms.
- Leading pre-brief and debrief discussions with volunteers that are informed by DEI best practices; sharing back helpful insights with the broader team.
- Ensuring that our publication design, especially cover illustrations, are representative of student experience undertaken with student input in mind.
- Engaging illustrators and book designers who hold the same identities as the students we publish.
- Prioritizing partnerships with BIPOC-owned bookstores to ensure that students of color can benefit from reading narratives by and about their peers.
- Ensuring that book release parties remain student-centered by fostering student leadership and engagement and consciously recognizing students' priorities over those of partners and/or funders.

2. The Publishing and Programs team commits to honoring our students' experiences and amplifying their voices through our college essay programming by:
- Creating spaces for open feedback where everyone feels free to express themselves and has the confidentiality they need to bring all topics to our attention.
- Acknowledging our differences head-on, which includes our commitment to having "brave" and "courageous" conversations with all stakeholders, including students, volunteers, teachers, and corporate partners, and interrupting bias when necessary.
- Foregrounding a trauma-informed and asset-based perspective in our college essay volunteer training to better equip volunteers to understand the social-emotional impact of their interactions with students.

3. The Publishing and Programs team commits to supporting our students' needs and amplifying their voices during creative writing workshop programming by:
- Seeking student input about workshop offerings to ensure that their needs and interests come first.
- Tailoring registration and interest forms to foreground questions about accessibility to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all participants. This includes access to technology, materials, and communications in preferred languages.

- Setting goals that will support the evolution of workshop programming, including but not limited to partnerships with bilingual/BIPOC facilitators.
- Ensuring that workshops are open to all BPS students. Participation will not be limited to families who are able to submit a deposit or donation.
- Exploring a model in which families of means submit donations to the program which in turn will support providing stipends for a more diverse cohort of workshop leaders.
- Partnering with community organizations in an effort to provide additional resources to participating students.
- Working with the Volunteer Team to develop partnerships with volunteers who can support student needs, i.e. language skills, learning abilities, etc.
- Creating a space for pre-briefs and debriefs to go over expectations, equip facilitators with the appropriate tools, hear their experiences, and address concerns.
- Being open to constructive criticism by distributing surveys to workshop leaders, volunteers, families, and students. The Publishing and Programs team will also regularly review survey results and plan to incorporate feedback.

4. The Publishing and Program team commits to providing culturally responsive STEM programming by:
- Identifying communities' science-related values, sense-making practices, and historical relationships with local education institutions to deliver culturally responsive STEM programming.
- Integrating relatable topics with the studied subject matter.
- Empowering students to conduct scientific investigations on topics of their own choice.
- Identifying, supporting, and encouraging discourse practices (i.e. how people talk about and make sense of information) that are relevant to the students' cultures.
- Exposing students to a diverse group of STEM professionals who reflect the students we serve.
- Supporting multiple modes of expression and recognizing that there are many ways a student can develop and demonstrate understanding.

<u>Volunteer Management Team</u>

The Volunteer Team will…

1. Center students' unique and diverse voices in every aspect of the volunteer program by:
- Creating a process for ongoing student feedback and input for tutors to help shape recruiting, training, and coaching.
- Cultivating within volunteers an understanding of the rich and dynamic populations that participate in our programs.
- Developing training sessions to accommodate the communities we serve and to prepare our tutors to serve those communities, e.g. trauma-informed tutor training activities, working with ELL students, etc. We will invest in tutors' professional development so that the quality of their service is ever-growing.

- Providing continuous training and coaching to volunteers about...
  - Building rapport with students
  - Trauma-informed approach to working with students
  - The strengths-based approach to working with students
  - Uplifting students' unique voices in their work
  - Any other topics as they surface as a priority
- Building a culture with volunteers that balances the priority of developing student relationships and honoring identities with meeting expectations of students' assignments/completing the work.

2. Diversify our volunteer network, with the intention of recruiting tutors and facilitators that are reflective of the students we serve, by:
- Identifying gaps in our current volunteer network and setting specific goals for recruiting BIPOC, gender-diverse, LGBTQ+, and younger volunteers with a diversity of skills and expertise.
- Collaborating with the communities our programs are located in and supporting local organizations and artists around a united goal of helping to empower students.
- Prioritizing corporate volunteer partners who have a strong DEI culture and are committed to recruiting BIPOC staff for volunteer events.
- Supporting the expansion of peer tutors across programs.
- Seeking paid opportunities for the people serving the students where possible (e.g. work study partnerships, intern stipend opportunities funded by grants, etc.).

3. Create an experience that is inclusive for all volunteers by:
- Addressing the tension in communicating our programs to different audiences by cultivating an asset-based approach to describing our programs and volunteer roles that highlights students' stories, creativity, and genius.
- Making volunteering more accessible and inclusive, keeping in mind language, skills, and areas of study/expertise. We will work to our best ability to remove barriers to volunteering in our programs.
- Providing accurate and up-to-date information about the accessibility of spaces in which we work.
- Encouraging and conducting brave conversations with volunteers that will combat the "White Savior Complex" of volunteerism.

Writers' Room Team

1. The 826 Boston Writers' Room team commits to amplifying student voices by:
- Seeking student input by ensuring they inform the look and feel of Writers' Room spaces to ensure they have a stake into shaping the space within each school.
- Providing and connecting students to leadership opportunities in-school and out-of-school, including but not limited to: serving on student editorial boards,

participating in speaking engagements in the community, and participating in after-school clubs and writing workshops.

- Empowering students to "preserve their singularity"—to craft their distinctive writing voices as part of our community of writers and artists. We commit to amplifying student voices by providing and finding forums for sharing and celebrating their work.

2. The 826 Boston Writers' Room team commits to creating inclusive spaces by:

- Featuring visual indicators of an inclusive community, demonstrated by flags, student artwork, posters, books, etc.
- Fostering comfortable spaces for students to spark creativity and build community with each other.
- Encouraging students to use the Writers' Room during and after school as a resource for a range of needs, including relaxation, arts-making, academics, and support.
- Training our team of staff, service members, and volunteers to connect with and mentor students through positive relationships and actively seeking staff/service members/volunteers who share identities with our students, while also training all team members to be able to build positive relationships with students across difference.
- Collaborating with the Volunteer Team to continuously develop and lead tutoring pre-briefs and debriefs informed by our team's DEI growth and learning.
- Working with volunteers in a way that supports their personal and professional growth while ultimately centering student learning and well-being as a shared goal. If we see a volunteer interacting with a student in a way that is racist, sexist, or homophobic, or isn't in line with our values, we commit to following up with both the volunteer to provide constructive feedback and the student to check-in to ensure they were not hurt or offended by the interaction, find a way to improve the dynamic, and repair the relationship.
- Ensuring that 50% of the individuals we bring into our spaces as guest speakers and workshop leaders reflect the populations that we serve. Some practices that support this goal are: cultivating a database of local artists we engage for speaking and teaching opportunities and including cultural awareness and community building as competencies; resuming research into offering stipends to workshop leaders, when financially feasible to do so.
- Continuously assessing if there are any areas of our work in which we are not differentiating academic and social-emotional resources and educational materials for students to ensure accessibility, and developing modifications where needed.
- Recognizing and adapting to the language needs of our communities, through communications about upcoming opportunities, tutoring trainings and shifts, materials, resources, decorations, etc.
- Acknowledging that every student who comes into our room has a full life outside of school by making space to talk with students about issues that matter to them (or making time to have those conversations after work has been finished if needed), and by training our volunteers, staff, and service members to do the same.

3. The 826 Boston Writers' Room team commits to incorporating an inclusive feedback method in our decision-making processes that seeks and utilizes input on our programming.
- Team members will have regular meetings with teammates and supervisors, and have opportunities to give and receive feedback.
- Teachers and students will receive surveys before and after projects, seeking constructive feedback regarding their experience in the Writers' Room space. Surveys will explore how the Writers' Room enhanced teachers' lessons, if students felt supported, and students' interactions with volunteers and staff.
  - Team members will regularly review feedback to determine how best to incorporate into Writers' Room programming.
- Because we are growing rapidly, these processes are essential as we reflect, evaluate, and adapt our programs to the needs and preferences of our entire community.

4. The 826 Boston Writers' Room Team acknowledges that we want to expand our knowledge and grow in many ways, including but not limited to:
- Supporting students with disabilities.
- Providing trauma-informed support to students.
- Supporting students who are affected by the US immigration system.
- Working with the Volunteer Team to prioritize diverse, equitable, and inclusive partnerships.
- Equipping volunteers with various resources to be successful with students and allowing new volunteers space to inform us on best practices to strengthen those relationships.