

If you have read the local headlines, it is hard to miss the fact that a great deal of controversy is once again swirling around Hinsdale High School Township District 86. Members of this community, however, have the opportunity—and the ability—to be leaders and to reject the loud and angry voices plaguing many venues of public discourse across the country, including school boardrooms, and to work respectfully together to support the best possible education for all students in the district.

Let's take a minute to acknowledge that the last several years, at a minimum, have been highly stressful, if not outright traumatic for many. As communities, we have faced tremendous and unfamiliar challenges. Yet, at the same time, we have rallied around first responders and front-line health care workers. At this moment, we can also rally around our students, our educators, and one another; we can turn the volume down, and support the District 86 administration and Board of Education in the simple objectives of implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training for our teachers and staff. Why is DEI training standard in workplaces across America? Because employers know it makes their companies better places to work, enabling them to retain the best employees and increase their productivity as well as profits. So, too, for education. Wouldn't it be best if our students were learning in a high-quality, inclusive environment comparable to that found in our leading workplaces?

Education is not a zero-sum game. Why do loving and attentive parents, grandparents, and neighbors want our children to go to the best schools and universities? Certainly, we want them to be surrounded, challenged, and in conversation with outstanding students, teachers, professors, and mentors to promote the greatest opportunity for learning. When all students are flourishing, all students benefit. This is why DEI training for District 86 staff and teachers is, in fact, crucial for improving academic achievement in District 86. When teachers can teach all students effectively, all students will have the opportunity to achieve greater academic excellence.

Hinsdale Township District 86 students, teachers, staff, alumni, and community members have consistently called for the importance of successfully implementing DEI training in our schools. A solid majority of school board members have affirmed publicly their commitment to DEI training. It is time to disassociate this core objective in the district's strategic plan from the many other topics that have been entangled with it; it is time to work together to implement DEI training for the benefit of all students, staff, and our community alike.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians—a community, not unlike ours, in turmoil two thousand years ago—to “encourage one another and build up each other . . .” (1 Thessalonians 5:11). As members of this community working to promote racial justice and fight systemic racism, we join our voices with the many community members calling to implement world-class diversity, equity, and inclusion training in District 86 as soon as effectively possible. We implore you to be included in supporting these D86 strategic goals.

Members of The Amos Group

Community Presbyterian Church of Clarendon Hills