

2023 Affiliate Advisory Council Annual Report

The current Affiliate Advisory Council was formed in 2016 as a result of the National Dialogue [2010 – 2016] and as part of the recommendations to revisit the affiliate structure, revise the NAEYC mission, and to increase and strengthen member voice to the NAEYC Governing board. These actions transformed the original 62-member Affiliate Council into a 16-member Affiliate Advisory Council open to any member in good-standing with proven affiliate experience and knowledge. The Council continues to be instrumental in modeling and promoting diverse leadership pathways throughout NAEYC.

The Affiliate Advisory Council is composed of diverse volunteer member leaders who devote their time and expertise to NAEYC and the Affiliate Network in support of advancing equity throughout the Association. In 2023 and 2024, the Council has prioritized identifying a range of DEIBJ organizational assessment tools and implementing a series of consultations for Affiliates requesting support.

- › The Council is committed to ensuring diverse leadership pathways are accessible throughout the Association.
- › The Council is intentional in maintaining linkage and continuity with the Affiliate Relations Committee
- › The Council leads by example through their nominations process and through their commitment to build a culture that creates a sense of belonging and respect
- › The Council engages and celebrates multiple perspectives and lived experiences which contribute to the Council's mission and purpose.

The Affiliate Advisory Council



Top row: Amy McGinn (IA), Victoria Roanhorse (NM), Dr. Victoria Long-Coleman (GA), Gina Forbes (ME), Lara Kyriakou (NY), Brigitte Yount Willis (GA), Dr. Jamie Cho (WA)

Bottom row: Dr. Raquel Munarriz Diaz, Past Chair (FL), Crystal Abbe (IA), Zaina Cahill, Chair (PA), Dr. Helene Harte, Chair Elect (OH), Kelly Ramsey, NAEYC Governing Board Vice President and Liaison to the Council (OK), Rebecca Lamar (PA)

Not pictured: Nefertiti Hunter Holbeck (VA), Lucero Irizarry (CA)

Annual Report of the NAEYC Affiliate Advisory Council
January 2023- December 2023

The NAEYC Affiliate Advisory Council is pleased to provide their annual report for consideration by the NAEYC Governing Board and staff.

**The NAEYC Affiliate Advisory Council utilizes DEIBJ (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Justice) throughout this report when discussing efforts related to these concepts, rather than DEIB. The Council believes that Justice is an integral component to the evolution of these initiatives, related to the mission and purpose of our work.*

Mission: The NAEYC Affiliate Advisory Council acts as an advisory body to support the continuing transformation of the NAEYC Affiliate structure into a high-performing, inclusive organization.

Purpose: To advise the NAEYC Governing Board and national staff about all issues related to Affiliates and members, and to identify and develop strong, inclusive leadership.

[Link to 2022 Affiliate Advisory Council Annual Report](#)

Affiliate Advisory Council Members: Zaina Cahill, *Chair* (PA), Dr. Raquel Munarriz Diaz, *Past Chair* (FL), Dr. Helene Harte, *Chair Elect* (OH), Crystal Abbe (IA), Dr. Jamie Cho (WA), Gina Forbes (ME), Nefertiti Hunter-Holbeck (VA), Lucero Irizarry (CA), Lara Kyriakou (NY), Rebecca Lamar (PA), Dr. Victoria Long-Coleman (GA), Amy McGinn (IA), Victoria Roanhorse (NM), Natalie Williams (FL), Brigitte Yount Willis (GA), Kelly Ramsey, *NAEYC Governing Board Vice President and Liaison to the Council*. **NAEYC Staff:** Gwen Simmons & Jordan Christian

Affiliate Advisory Council Member Terms Ended May 2023: Dr. Eric Bucher (AZ), Tara Hurdle (TN), Margarita Marichal (PR), Melanie Felton (IA), Dr. Ashley Simpson (CO)

NAEYC Governing Board Committee Work:

- **Nominating:** Victoria Roanhorse
- **Affiliate Relations:** Raquel Munarriz Diaz
- **Strategy and Innovation:** Gina Forbes
- **Policy and Professional Advancement:** Natalie Williams

The Work of the Council (Council Work Groups)

- **Annual Conference Session:** creates a presentation on the Council's work to share at Annual Conference.
- **Annual Report:** documents the work of the Council, both internally and externally, with the NAEYC Governing Board, the Affiliate Network, and NAEYC staff.
- **Lexicon:** advised NAEYC Publications team on language specific to LGBTQ+. This group intentionally examined, critiqued, and engaged with how we communicate, including verbal and non-verbal language. This group explored how language, in intent and impact, is present at all levels of the Council's work and in relationship to the ongoing needs of members and NAEYC Affiliates, through DEIBJ. This work group is now available on an as-needed, advisory basis.
- **Mentoring and Exit Interviews:** pairs current and incoming Council members to support the onboarding process and conducts interviews with outgoing members of the Council to elicit their

perspectives of the Council's work, processes, successes, and challenges. Interview notes are used as a springboard for potential improvements in the Council's charge, goals, and culture.

- **Nominations:** seeks to recruit and select candidates to join the Council annually. This group is comprised of 3 at-large Affiliate board members, a past or former Governing Board member, and Council members.
- **DEIBJ Assessment Tools:** works to identify effective organizational assessment tools focused on DEIBJ
- **Affiliate Consultation:** offers support, as requested, to Affiliates; 11 Affiliates requested a consultation with the Council (per the 2023 Affiliate Annual Report)- COAEYC, NMAEYC, MaineAEYC, NYAEYC, MDAEYC, NevAEYC, LAAEYC, DCAEYC, SWOAEYC, PRAEYC, SDAEYC.

Affiliate Stories to Inform the Work of the Council

Council members read Affiliate Stories from the 2022 Annual Report, detailing Affiliate DEIBJ successes and challenges. By listening to and acknowledging Affiliate voices directly, the Council identified common threads to strategically tailor the work of the Council resulting in two new workgroups; Affiliate Consultations and DEIBJ Assessment Tools.

Affiliate Consultation

This past year, the Council moved from a readiness concept into broader implementation with Affiliates. Moving from our past work on the DEIBJ consultation graphic ([in English](#) and [Spanish](#)), the Council is now engaged in developing a sustainable consultation process for any and all Affiliates who want to participate. Initial meet and greets and listening sessions occurred at the annual conference in Nashville. The workgroup is exploring building Communities of Practice (CoP) that connect Affiliates to serve as thought partners and collaborators.

DEIBJ Assessment Tools

This workgroup is conducting a literature review of available organizational assessment tools focused on DEIBJ. Informed by the ongoing work of the 5-Year Review Steering Committee, members will ultimately recommend a range of tools (taking into account the capacity, resources, and time commitment Affiliates have available). Thirty-three Affiliates have requested additional information on this topic (per the 2023 Affiliate Annual Report).

DEIBJ Learning Series

This series, continued from 2022 and ending in March of 2023, funded by the Dodge Family Foundation, was facilitated by Dr. Patricia Morgan, of the Executive Learning Lab, Inc. Council members participated in this series, alongside Affiliate leadership, to work toward developing shared language and tools to advance equity, access, and participation.

March Retreat

In addition to regular monthly meetings, the Affiliate Advisory Council convened an additional Saturday virtual retreat. Past Council members joined us to reflect on the evolution of the Council and to share leadership experience and guidance for future work. Council members reflected on the stories of Affiliates and began to prioritize their work to meet Affiliate needs. Furthermore, the Council met with Mark Day, NAEYC Chief of Staff, to define the Council's role as distinct from the Affiliate Relations Committee.

The Council, DAP, and Alabama

In April of 2023, NAEYC Governing Board member, and Alabama Director of Early Childhood Education, Barbara Cooper was forced out of her position by Alabama Governor, Kay Ivey. This action was taken as a result of Cooper's distribution of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice (4th Ed.)* to state-run Pre-K programs, as a resource for educators. Ivey denounced the book, stating that it taught "woke concepts", due to language around inclusion and structural racism present in the text. NAEYC immediately shared a response in support of Cooper and of *DAP*, and created a sign-on letter echoing this stance. To support these efforts, the Council unanimously agreed to sign on to the letter as a group; many Council members signed on individually as well. In addition, the Council utilized the Hello platform to open up dialogue in the Affiliate Resource Center, in response to Affiliates' request for support navigating NAEYC's statement and *DAP* in local contexts.

2023 Council Nominations Process:

In January 2023, the Council put out a call for applicants to join the NAEYC Affiliate Advisory Council. In 2023, applications in both Spanish and English were created and shared with members and Affiliates. The application process closed in February and the Nominations Committee met to identify the top candidates from an applicant pool of 17, based on their written responses and references. The top 6 applicants were then interviewed by Nominations Committee members and volunteers from the Council. In May, the top 5 candidates were presented to the Council for recommendation, approved, and an alternate was selected. These new Council members, Nefertiti Hunter-Holbeck (MD), Lucero Irizarry (CA), Amy McGinn (IA), Brigitte Yount Willis (GA), and Crystal Abbe (IA), began their term on June 1, 2023. This year, the Council noted a lack of gender diversity within the nominations pool and the Council plans to address this lack of male and non-binary/third gender applicants in the upcoming year. In addition, the Nominations Committee, along with the Council, is in discussion about ways to make the application process as inclusive and accessible to all, including exploring alternatives to written applications.

Council's Article in Young Children-

Council members collaborated on an [article](#) for the Winter 2023 issue of *Young Children*, explaining to readers the work of the Council, and highlighting some of the work done over the past year. The article also invited readers to consider applying for a leadership role within NAEYC, and outlined the process to apply for a Council position. This article was in support of Governing Board President Natalie Vega-O'Neil's column, "Dynamic, Action-Oriented, and Impactful: Leadership as Exemplified by NAEYC's Affiliate Advisory Council".

Affiliate Leadership Day at PLI in June 2023 and Annual Conference in November 2023

Affiliate leadership convened at PLI in Portland in June 2023, and also at the Annual Conference in Nashville in November 2023, for Affiliate Leadership Day. With 20 Affiliates represented at PLI, Affiliate Leadership Day focused on growing and sustaining Affiliates post-pandemic and offered space for attendees to share challenges, innovations, and solutions with Jim White, Executive Director, Nonprofit Association of Oregon providing the keynote address. At the Annual Conference, leadership from 39 Affiliates gathered together. Dr. Patricia Morgan facilitated "Empowering Our Leaders: Cultivating DEIBJ Through ABC's- Advocacy, Belonging, and Community". Dr. Morgan led Affiliate leaders in thinking and discussing how to advocate and work toward belonging and community as part of DEIBJ efforts. The afternoon involved breakout group discussions focused on gathering input about developing a new NAEYC membership structure, addressing legal issues in the nonprofit world, sharing tips on state advocacy of federal funding, and discussing changes to the accreditation process.

Council PD Session at Annual Conference

The Affiliate Advisory Council's session at the NAEYC Annual Conference in November 2023 in Nashville, TN was called *Leading with Intent: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Justice as a Lens for Nonprofit Boards*. Council members utilized research from the *Leading with Intent* research done by BoardSource on the state of nonprofit boards related to board diversity and equity. With approximately 60 participants, Council members shared strategic solutions, used by our own Affiliate Advisory Council, to support board members in taking their intentions into actions aimed at creating high functioning, diverse, equitable nonprofit boards.

Recommendations to the NAEYC Governing Board:

This year, the council recommends the following priorities as the Governing Board engaged in organizational planning to benefit NAEYC members and Affiliates, in addition to the council.

1. In 2022, The Council opted to revisit the recommendations from its 2021 Annual Report- offering grace to shifts that NAEYC experienced at an organizational level, including staffing structure and governing board changes. Now, in order to deepen the relationship between the Council and the NAEYC Governing Board and staff, the Council believes that strengthening the communication between the two groups would help them to align their work with the Board's strategic plan. As such, the Council is requesting both:
 - a. An initial response from the Board as it relates to these, and future, recommendations
 - b. Quarterly follow-up on progress and planning toward implementing the Council's recommendations

As the Council seeks to lift the voices of NAEYC Affiliates and members, this would lift the voices of the Affiliate Advisory Council to the NAEYC Governing Board. Responses could be offered through the Board's Vice President, the Board's current liaison to the Council. In addition, the Affiliate Relations Committee of the Governing Board could create a protocol to be used in discussions of this report and its recommendations, as well as future iterations.

2. Following Alabama Governor Jill Ivey's denouncement of *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* in April of this year, many Affiliates and members expressed concern of backlash in their states, should they sign on to NAEYC's letter of support. Echoing the Council's 2022 call for NAEYC to be innovative and equitable in its membership engagement, the Council encourages the NAEYC Governing Board and staff to identify specific ways to support the endorsement of *DAP* in these states.
3. As the Governing Board seeks to engage in an assessment of DEIBJ practices within the organization, so too, the Council is seeking to support Affiliates in this process. As such, the Council recommends that NAEYC staff with the support of the Governing Board, seek grant funding for DEIBJ efforts within the Affiliate network, especially related to acquiring and appropriately using DEIBJ assessment tools

Appendix A- 2023- Year in Review

January- March

Council members gathered stories of Affiliates' strengths and challenges, especially related to DEIBJ, starting with Affiliates' 2022 Annual Reports, and utilized these stories to restructure the work of the Council to strategically support Affiliates and membership; held the Council's annual retreat (virtually); Council members and Affiliate leadership completed the DEIBJ Learning Series with Dr. Patricia Morgan; Helene Harte selected as chair-elect.

April- June

Welcomed new members Lucerro Irizarry (CA), Amy McGinn (IA), Nefertiti Hunter-Holbekc (MD), Crystal Abbe (IA), Brigitte Yount Willis (GA); NAEYC Affiliate Leadership Day at PLI, focused on supporting Affiliates in the post-pandemic climate.

July- September

Members voted to meet in person at the NAEYC Annual Conference in Nashville, TN; updated Council work groups to include two groups focused on direct Affiliate support- the Affiliate Consultation work group and the DEIBJ Assessment tool work group; Council members collaborated on an article for the December issue of *Young Children*, "Dynamic, Action-Oriented, and Impactful: Leadership as Exemplified by NAEYC's Affiliate Advisory Council" in support of Governing Board President Natalie Vega-O'Neil's column on leadership, and specifically, on leadership opportunities within NAEYC.

October- December

Met in person at the NAEYC Annual Conference in Nashville, TN; supported the facilitation of Affiliate Leadership Day; Affiliate Consultation Work Group offered its first meeting session over Leadership Day breakfast; presented a session on *Leading with Intent: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Justice as a Lens for Nonprofit Boards*

Appendix B- Affiliate Connections articles authored by Council Members-

January 2023: Dreams by Victoria Long-Coleman

Friday, April 5, 1968, Westwood Elementary School, 7th grade, Ms. Berens Class.

As I walked into class, I noticed the television had been brought into the room. It was going to be a fun day! Growing up, having the television brought in your classroom was considered a special treat. As we excitedly waited for our teacher, Ms. Berens, to turn on the TV, it was then that I noticed that she had been crying. Ms. Berens announced that something terrible had happened. I did not know why, but I could feel myself starting to cry. Ms. Berens announced, "Reverend Martin Luther King is dead." While watching the newsreel, in my heart, I knew this was one of those moments I would never forget. But I wondered, "Who is Reverend King?" Raised in a close knit Black middle-class community, my parents sheltered my sister and me from the ugliness occurring in the world. The death of Dr. King catapulted me out of our own little bubble into the harshness of reality.

Each year, the third Monday in January begins a time of remembrance and reflection. America and the world is reminded that there was once a man who did not want his assignment, but was obedient and committed to his journey eventually understanding that his obedience would lead to his death. I celebrate Dr. King and his lessons, not only because we share the same birthdate, but because his message was clear: dreams are powerful, but they are only meaningful if we act. Dr. King was a tool put forth as another symbol of humanity combating racial inequality through nonviolent resistance. King (1963) asserted that, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that." Sometimes I wonder the inner strength and faith it must have taken to realize that any day could have been his last day, but he persevered to realize his dream. And now Dr. King is passed on along with many others who walked alongside him during the Civil Rights movement. February is upon us as the month to celebrate love. Does Dr. King's message and the Civil Rights movement still resonate?

Recently, I participated in a breakout session in a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) learning series (Morgan, 2022). As my group read excerpts on advancing equity and the interconnectedness of humanity, a colleague commented that she did not see the leaders we used to have. That no one steps up to lead. My response to her was that Dr. King and persons of the Civil Right Movement were our models. Dr. King dreamed, told us his dream, and proceeded to act to realize his dream. Each of us has the power and obligation to lead in our respective communities. In my career as an early childhood educator in my community, I have prepared and led hundreds of young children and ECE teachers to pursue their dreams. As a NAEYC Affiliate Advisory Council member, participation in Council work gives me the opportunity to live my dream to restructure systems that give each one of us a voice. Now it's your turn. What is your dream and what are you doing about it?

References

King, M. L., Jr. (1963, August 28). I Have a Dream.

King, M.L., (1963/1981). Strength to Love. Augsburg Fortress Publishing.

Morgan, P. (2020). The Executive Learning Lab. www.TheExecutiveLearningLab.com

November 2023: Advancing Justice through Race-Based Caucusing by Jamie Cho, Ph.D.

As educators, we bring our whole selves into our classrooms. We use our own personal stories to build rapport and connection, and to reinforce that learning is not isolated to books or inside classroom walls. We show up in our full and authentic selves. Our identities matter. And yet, we often don't have the space or time to closely interrogate our complicity in systems of oppression, or as people of color, have the communities we need to process the interactions, practices, and rules that continue to perpetuate whiteness in early care and education.

Race-based caucuses create space to explore these possibilities. These groups hold us and others accountable to be better and do better in service of ourselves and the communities we work and live in. Finding a community to be vulnerable and share how our biases may impact our actions is challenging and difficult, and also rewarding. As we engage in this process of looking critically at ourselves and pushing each other to look even deeper, we consequently build the types of communities that care for each other and create sustained change.

The work of social justice involves outward action in challenging and changing inequitable systems. It also requires that each and every one of us do our internal work of challenging the socialized and learned narratives about ourselves and others that uphold a system of white supremacy. To do the work of race-based caucusing is to confront in ourselves and in our communities the continued and lifelong growth that needs to be done to envision and enact a free and just world. Thus, I extend an invitation to folks to find a group, engage in race-based caucusing, and embrace this type of discomfort so that our collective children can be more comfortable in their own identities and experiences.