



## Farragut Middle School

27 Farragut Avenue  
Hastings-on-Hudson, New York 10706  
Phone – 914-478-6230  
Fax – 914-478-6314  
<http://www.hohschools.org>

### *A National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence*

---

Jennifer Spirelli  
Principal

Kamillah Dawkins  
Assistant Principal

October 21, 2022

Dear FMS Families,

Farragut Middle School will once again host affinity groups for students who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color (BIPOC). This will be our fourth year of offering this opportunity for our students, and FMS looks forward to connecting with the high school and elementary school affinity groups.

Affinity group members meet monthly in a safe space to discuss their experiences in middle school and to design learning experiences to help inform and educate other students about social justice issues. In our first three years, all FMS students were invited to participate in activities organized by the Affinity Club, such as the mural project and movie and pizza nights. Ms. Erica Williams is the teacher advisor.

Farragut Middle School will also continue our No Place For Hate (NPFH) club from last year, which is open to all students. This national organization utilizes an Anti-Bias Framework that includes exploring identity, interpreting differences, challenging biases, and championing justice. Dr. Jenice Mateo-Toledo is the teacher advisor.

### **Why do we have clubs like NPFH and Affinity Group?**

According to Teaching for Justice, “students need to be able to be themselves at school—and that’s where affinity groups come in. A group of students who share an identity are going to relate to each other in ways they can’t with peers who can’t or don’t understand their experience. It’s about safety and, in some cases, about fundamental issues of injustice.”

Simply defined, an affinity group is a group of individuals linked by a shared interest, experience, social identifier, purpose, or goal. These groups can be formal or informal. Affinity groups strengthen our community by providing support, connection and affirmation to our students whose racial, ethnic, or other identities may differ from the majority population and culture at Farragut Middle School. They help students feel more visible and more included in our community.

Affinity groups are aligned with the NYS Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education (CR-SE) Framework. The framework helps educators design and implement student-centered learning environments that affirm racial and cultural identities; foster positive academic outcomes; develop students' abilities to connect across cultures; empower students as agents of social change; and contribute to an individual's engagement, learning, growth, and achievement through the cultivation of critical thinking (p.11).

This year our BIPOC affinity group will meet on the third Thursday of every month. The NPFH club will meet on the second Thursday of every month. Please encourage your child to join us. If you have any questions about the groups, feel free to contact Ms. Williams ([WilliamsE@hohschools.org](mailto:WilliamsE@hohschools.org)), Dr. Mateo-Toledo ([mateotoj@hohschools.org](mailto:mateotoj@hohschools.org)), or Ms. Spirelli ([SpirelliJ1@hohschools.org](mailto:SpirelliJ1@hohschools.org))

Sincerely,

Jennifer Spirelli, Principal  
Jenice Mateo-Toledo, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator  
Melissa Szymanski, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction  
Erica Williams, ELA Teacher, FMS Affinity Group Advisor

Resources:

[List of Extracurricular Activities at FMS](#)

[NYS Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework](#)

[Learning for Justice: Making Space](#)

[No Place For Hate](#)

[The Enterprise: School Mural Embeds Diversity Message](#)