



Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Dear Members,

It is with a heavy heart that we write you today to address recent concerns in New York and Texas related to Access, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) initiatives in the music education ecosystem. We are disheartened that in New York, a hurtful session title that perpetuated harmful racial stereotypes was published in the New York State School Music Association's conference booklet. We are also disheartened to hear about events unfolding in Texas that have led to two gifted and highly-qualified Black Women making the very difficult decision to decline the opportunity to serve as a clinician for the Texas Choral Directors Association's honor choir. In both of these cases, these organizations have not exemplified their stated organizational values and commitments to ADEI practices. How do we know? Because we've been there too.

While ACDA does not govern these sibling organizations, we are alarmed at these trends and stand willing and ready to share the hard lessons in accountability and responsibility that we are learning—and *continue* to learn—through our own ADEI journey. While we are grateful to see our sibling organizations beginning the process of moving forward through public apologies, we also encourage these organizations to consider the ways in which reparation and healing may take a deeper foothold to bring long-term awareness and change to be more welcoming and inclusive organizations. We have learned and continue to learn that the work of inclusion requires a change of heart, a change of mind, and a change of direction.

We want Alysia Lee, Coty Raven Morris, and our colleagues in New York and Texas to know that the American Choral Directors Association supports and amplifies their voices in challenging systemic injustices that must be addressed. We remain committed to our own learning journey and resolve to engage, listen to, and learn from those who are marginalized in order to create a more inclusive choral community. And, in the inevitable instances when we miss the mark, we welcome the continued engagement of our members to hold us accountable and ensure that we acknowledge, address, and redress our harms and shortcomings.

Yours Truly,

Robyn Hilger,
ACDA Executive Director

David Fryling,
ACDA President

Arreon A. Harley-Emerson,
ACDA Diversity Initiatives Chair