



August, 2024

Dear Fieldston Middle School Community,

As we approach the new school year, I am eager to reconnect with everyone. My name is Angelica Pillier, and I am excited to serve as the Middle School Belonging and Social Impact Lead (BSI). I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself and share some insights into the work we'll be doing in our department.

In my role, I am here to support you on topics related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. Together with the Department of Belonging and Social Impact, we are dedicated to advancing initiatives that promote a more inclusive school environment. This work is guided by collaboration with our principal and involves teams of faculty and administrators committed to equity and inclusion efforts.

This year marks an important milestone as we expand the Community Conversations program to include all grades. Originally piloted in grades 6 and 7 last year, this program serves multiple purposes: fostering identity and vocabulary development, establishing core dialogue practices, and strengthening our sense of community through shared experiences. In their advisory groups, students will build upon CARE group practices and explore new dialogue methods such as [S.E.E.D.](#) practices including cross-talk, serial testimony, and opening and closing circles.

Throughout the year, students will receive communications from me about topic-specific lunches, affinity groups, after-school activities, and conferences focused on social justice and equity. These opportunities are designed to deepen understanding of issues important to our community and empower students to engage constructively with our evolving social and political landscape.

I am committed to cultivating a middle school community where critical discussions about social identity—(e.g. “The Big 8”: age, ability, class/SES, gender, ethnicity, race, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation) are encouraged and valued. I encourage you to reach out with any ideas or suggestions you may have as we work together to enrich our school community.

These are a few of the events and groups FMS students have taken part in the past. While some of the following events may differ from year to year, the opportunities to get involved will continue to be important for you to consider.

- Affinity Groups

Students self identify and can choose to attend the following affinity spaces: LGBTQ+, Black Diaspora, Asian Pacific American, Jewish Heritage, Latine, Muslim Student Association, White Allyship.

- Bridge-to Bridge Mentoring Program for Students of Color

This year-long program involves middle school students of color being mentored by high school students of color. BSI Leads and faculty/staff are also part of this ongoing conversation and support.

Click [here](#) for more information about Affinity Groups and our Bridge-to-Bridge program.

- Haverford Diversity Conference

This annual conference is hosted by The Haverford School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Similar to Hilltop Conference, students gain a better understanding of the value of equity work. There is a selection process associated with this conference and students will need to fill out an online application form. This conference will most likely be held online this year.

- Hilltop Middle School Diversity Conference

This annual conference is hosted by one of the three Hilltop schools on a rotating basis. All middle school students are encouraged to apply for this all-day event which features a keynote speaker and workshops. Students from over 10 public and private schools in our area participate in the conference. This conference will most likely be held online this year.

- “Open Forum” Lunches

These lunch discussions provide an ongoing opportunity for all students to dialogue in response to community events or other current events.

- (Re)defining Power Conference

This is a space for identity exploration and learning best practices as allies for young self-identified white men in grades 6-12 in New York City and beyond. The day will feature activities and opportunities for participants to learn skills geared towards building more inclusive schools. The goal of the conference is to provide young white men with language and understanding to work with their communities in the fight for racial and gender equity and justice. This conference will most likely be held online this year.

- Young Men of Color Symposium

This is a leadership conference for young self-identified men of color in grades 6-12 in NYC and the surrounding area. The day will feature workshops and opportunities for participants to learn skills geared towards self-advocacy and academic achievement. The goal of the event is to create a collaborative community of schools serving young self-identified men of color. This conference will most likely be held online this year.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, ideas, related resources, and opportunities that will support the diversity and equity work in the Middle School. I look forward to a productive partnership with you and your children!

Warm regards,

Angelica Pillier
Middle School Belonging and Social Impact Lead

Dear Families,

I look forward to seeing everyone in a few weeks! My name is Angelica Pillier and I wanted to introduce myself as the Middle School Belonging and Social Impact Lead (BSI) and share some information about the work of our department. I will be one of your resources for topics related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.

As we approach the new school year, I am eager to reconnect with everyone and meet our new Middle School families. My name is Angelica Pillier, and I am excited to serve as the Middle School Belonging and Social Impact Lead (BSI). I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself and share some insights into the work we'll be doing in our department.

Diversity initiatives and activities at Fieldston Middle are supported by the Department Belonging and Social Impact and led by the BSI Lead in consultation with the principal. The BSI Lead works with teams composed of faculty and administrators that are actively involved in equity and inclusion efforts and programs. I work with the division's multicultural programs, consider and respond to student support needs, and facilitate faculty development initiatives.

This year, all students in our Middle School will participate in Community Conversations! Last school year was the inaugural year of the program and only ran in grades 6 and 7. Thankfully we get to expand that to all grades this year. The purpose of Community Conversations is 3 fold: identity and vocabulary development, core practices, and building community through shared experiences. In their advisory groupings, students will get to build off of practices established in CARE groups, while also learning new ways to engage in dialogue by learning S.E.E.D. practices like cross-talk, serial testimony, and opening and closing circles.

Students will receive several emails from me regarding topic-specific lunches, affinity groups, after school activities, and conferences around social justice and equity. These are great opportunities to learn more about issues that are important to members of our Fieldston Middle School community and how to positively engage in our current social and political climate.

It is my hope that I continue to build a middle school community engaged in critical discussions about social identity (e.g. "The Big 8": age, ability, class/SES, gender, ethnicity, race, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation) and other relevant identity-based encounters. Feel free to reach out to me about ideas that you may want to introduce to the community.

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I look forward to a productive partnership with you and your children!

Sincerely,

Angelica Pillier

apillier@ecfs.org

Fieldston Middle School Belonging and Social Impact Lead

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