

THE DIVERSITY BARGAIN AND THE DISCOURSE DANCE OF EQUITABLE AND BEST

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Abstract:

Contemporary music education leaders suggest ambiguous definitions of “diversity,” often assuming it both unquestionably good and compatible with equity. The purpose of this inquiry is to explore the assumptions underlying such discourse. First, I use the legal history of diversity in education to examine the American National Association for Music Education’s statements on equity, access, inclusivity, and diversity. Second, drawing on Thomas Green’s educational systems framework, I analyze the political strength of arguments surrounding diversity and equity. Third, considering instances when white parents deem diversity “best” for their children, I investigate the advantages and limitations of what Natasha Warikoo calls the “diversity bargain.” While not condoning unbridled self-interest, I posit how music educators might use parents’ self-interest to support more ethical practices. Designed to benefit all students, diversity initiatives conflict with efforts aimed at equity. Music education diversity and equity rhetoric rely on either a troubling misreading of a politically strong state rationale or on the weak political positions of societal interests or educational goods valuable for their own sake. Rather than focusing on diverse content, teachers and students might experiment with how

artistic expressions enable the exchange of individuals' stories and insights. The music education profession might also provide attention to equity apart from diversity.

Keywords: diversity, equity, policy, politics

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In contemporary American society, the word “diversity” has become increasingly commonplace. Diversity serves as a “guiding principle” of the Black Lives Matter movement¹ and one frequently hears phrases like diverse workforce, diverse students, and diverse audiences. Within the music education profession, leaders released a statement on “Inclusivity and Diversity in Music Education,”² and the call for the 2018 American Music Research and Teacher Education National Conference “encouraged” proposals that “align with the Conference focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access.”³ More broadly, the theme of the 2020 International Society for Music Education World Conference is “Visions of Equity and Diversity.” As sociologist Ellen Berry asks: “Who in the United States”—and I add in academia throughout the globe—“is willing to say that they don’t value diversity?”⁴

Pervasive references to diversity do not necessarily indicate collective understandings about what constitutes diversity. Examining the leaders of prominent organizations who espoused valuing diversity, including the head of undergraduate admissions at the University of Michigan, Berry found that they deployed “diversity” as a “presumptively positive buzzword.”⁵ Moreover, she observed that leaders’ stated commitments to diversity contained no clear prescription for action, summarizing: “The word wears a halo and also a haze.”⁶

Music educators also tend to treat diversity as an unquestionably good yet ill-defined quality. Leaders of the American National Association for Music Education (NAfME) explain “diversity” as “a wide variety of musical styles, cultures, and genres” as well as note the importance of recruiting a diverse teacher workforce.⁷ As rationale for these goals, NAfME leaders assert that incorporating diverse musical styles encourages more parental support and student engagement, presumably from diverse parents and students. By using “diversity” in reference to both different types of musical engagement and individuals with contrasting backgrounds or other characteristics, these authors suggest a broad and ambiguous definition of the term. As indicated by the juxtaposition of diversity and equity at the aforementioned conferences, music education leaders further this lack of clarity by assuming the compatibility of diversity and equity.

Given the ambiguous meaning of “diversity” in contemporary music education rhetoric, the purpose of this inquiry is to explore the assumptions underlying such understandings. First, I use the legal history of diversity in education to examine the NAFME’s statements on equity, access, inclusivity, and diversity. Second, drawing on Thomas Green’s educational systems framework, I analyze the political arguments surrounding diversity and equity.⁸ Third, I investigate the advantages and limitations of what Natasha Warikoo calls the “diversity bargain.”⁹ Finally, I consider implications for practice. Although there may exist parallels with the discourse and action related to diversity in other countries, this examination focuses on American policies and practices.

HISTORY OF DIVERSITY IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

With regard to American education, the term “diversity” has a legal history spanning five decades. Berry dates the word’s legal precedent to the 1978 United States Supreme Court decision that found unconstitutional the admissions practice of setting aside sixteen of one hundred seats for minority students at the University of California-Davis Medical School.¹⁰ Through this decision, the court rejected an action—creating certain targets for admission based on race—perceived as solely benefiting applicants considered racial minorities.

While siding with the majority vote in the case, Justice Lewis Powell wrote an opinion that opened the doorway for universities to consider race as part of their admissions processes. Powell explained: “Diversity that furthers a compelling state interest encompasses a far broader array of qualifications and characteristics, of which racial or ethnic origin is but a single, though important, element.”¹¹ Universities could consider race, but only as one aspect of the larger construct “diversity.” In addition to invoking “state interest” as a rationale for diversity-conscious admissions processes, Powell referenced universities’ educational missions. Because universities necessitate the “robust exchange of ideas,” he deemed selecting students thought to contribute the most towards that aim of “paramount importance.”¹²

More recently, in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, the United States Supreme Court upheld the decision that universities could consider race in admissions processes. Explaining their rationale, Justice Anthony Kennedy invoked the word “diversity” twenty-three times in the accompanying nineteen-page majority opinion.¹³ While the Trump administration has authored guidance discouraging universities from considering race in their admissions policies¹⁴ and has signaled support of a lawsuit alleging that Harvard discriminates against Asian students,¹⁵ Powell’s opinion remains the current legal precedent.

The notion that colleges should consider race because diversity has functional and practical benefits constitutes a key part of Powell's opinion.¹⁶ In other words, *Regents of Univ. of California v. Bakke* created an opening for procedures deemed beneficial to *all* students and linked the word "diversity" with this universal enhancement. While using more cautionary language, Justice Kennedy recently echoed this instrumental argument, writing: "Through regular evaluation of data and consideration of student experience, the University must tailor its approach in light of changing circumstances, ensuring that race plays no greater role than is necessary to meet its *compelling interest*."¹⁷ Considerations of race should not extend beyond a university's mission, which often derives from the interests of majority white university leaders and student bodies.

The legal history of diversity highlights four ideas pertinent for contemporary music education discourse and practice. First, the use of diversity as an admissions criterion can lead to an assumption of similarity amongst students of the same race as well as the conception that their race constitutes their main contribution to the institution. It is troubling when peers and administrators deem the black percussionist and black singer first and foremost black members of the school community. Such labeling recalls Julia Koza's explanation of the "binning" occurring in collegiate music schools' auditions.¹⁸ She argues that through power-laden determinations of criteria, music educators separate physical bodies and forms of music making into discrete categories or bins. This ordering "creates and maintains racial inequity."¹⁹ Likewise, Tara Yosso, Laurence Parker, Daniel Solórzano, and Marvin Lynn explain that using diversity as a legal rationale positions white students as the "standard or normative students."²⁰ Leaders allow diverse students to join the white students who constitute the core of the musical community.

Second, while the decisions in the aforementioned court cases define race as but one aspect of diversity, they only address race. As such, when applied to American educational settings, the term diversity typically connotes racial diversity. In contrast, music educators often use the term "diversity" in reference to diverse musical styles, usually making no mention of race. For example, the "Our Position" portion of the NAFME statement on "Inclusivity and Diversity in Music Education" reads:

A well-rounded and comprehensive music education program, as envisioned in the 2014 National Music Standards, should exist in every American school; should be built on a curricular framework that promotes awareness of, respect for, and responsiveness to the variety and diversity of cultures; and should be delivered by teachers whose culturally responsive pedagogy enable them to successfully design and implement such an inclusive curricular framework.²¹

By twice referencing “curricular framework,” the authors of this statement clearly favor diversity in relation to the content of music classes. Such terminology is problematic because it can cause music educators to celebrate diversifying the content of their classes without questioning what students, parents, and community members they still exclude.

Furthermore, when leaders use the word diversity in reference to everything from content to people, music educators may naturally focus on the types of diversity with which they feel most comfortable while avoiding all others. Given the term’s race-focused legal history, I propose that music educators reserve “diversity” for considerations about underrepresented racial minorities and use words such as “different,” “divergent,” or “various” in reference to musical practices. Such action highlights the importance of attending to race while still acknowledging the need for different types of music-making. I employ this strategy for the remainder of this inquiry.

By using the term diversity solely in reference to race, one problematically omits attention to other individuals, such as those of low socioeconomic status, also underrepresented in elective music classes.²² Additionally, individuals’ unique experiences with discrimination and marginalization derive from the intersectionality of qualities such as race, socioeconomic status, gender, and sexual orientation.²³ However, given the difficulty of investigating these multiple qualities simultaneously and the specifically racist statements that led to the ouster of NAFME’s executive director,²⁴ I argue that music educators should at times focus on race apart from other considerations.

Third, since “diversity” initiatives in higher education must rely on the instrumental rationale of benefitting “the institution,” they do not solely aid diverse students. In most cases, predominantly white music teaching and learning environments constitute the institution of music education.²⁵ By arguing for diversity-related initiatives in music education based on opening access to “all” students, leaders suggest that those students who previously did not have access serve as the primary beneficiaries. Focusing on how diversity initiatives impact diverse students neglects what other students gain in the process.

Finally, the legal history of diversity involves practices that specifically resist confronting injustice. Diversity initiatives in higher education came about in place of racial quotas, which would have given more equitable access to minority students. While Powell’s opinion provided a legally viable alternative to a conservative desire for color blindness, it also resisted the more progressive goal of remedial racial justice.²⁶ Likewise, in music education, NAFME leaders assert the importance of recruiting a “*more* diverse teacher workforce that *more* closely resembles the diversity of the United States and our school populations.”²⁷ Mirroring Powell’s middle ground approach, music educators attend to race

while resisting making clear goals for processes such as admission into teacher preparation programs or recruitment into elective music classes.

More broadly, given its legal history, the word diversity remains at odds with equity, which necessitates providing each individual the resources needed for success. Berry summarizes: “The trick of the diversity movement is that it is far easier to symbolize inclusion than to socially dismantle inequality.”²⁸ By juxtaposing the words diversity and equity in a call for proposals and treating the ideas of diversity and equity in “companion statements” without further explanation,²⁹ music educators suggest a problematic harmony between these two ideas.

DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

The troubling legal history of the term “diversity” and tension between diversity and equity may seem like good reasons to abandon or minimize an emphasis on diversity in favor of equity. However, Green’s educational systems framework illuminates why focusing on equity rather than diversity may prove politically problematic. While Green’s philosophical project addresses schooling at the administrative level, because implementing diversity and equity initiatives necessitates intersecting efforts from the classroom outward, it is possible at times to extend his arguments to teachers’ endeavors.

Green argues that the “rank order of political arguments that can be mustered in support of the [educational] system . . . [is] roughly as follows”: the fundamental or compelling interests of the state; the aggregate of individual or parental interests; societal interests; and educational goods for their own sake.³⁰ In his estimation, clear stakeholders—the state and parents—constitute the strongest political positions, while societal interests and the intrinsic value of educative endeavors constitute weaker political positions. Working from strongest to weakest, I use each political argument to analyze contemporary music education initiatives.

The state, including both local and national governments, aims for education to cover the minimum that is essential for its own continuation. State actors focus not on the “best” education but on the worst education that society deems “acceptable.”³¹ While an intense societal outcry about the need for diversity and equity initiatives in education could motivate state actors, without such inputs, they have little reason to deviate from existing practices. Given that even large-scale movements such as Black Lives Matter have not led to influential condemnations of current educative practices, it seems unlikely that state actors will play a leading role in initiating diversity- or equity-related changes, at least not in the near future. Moreover, even in the event of significant public pressure, the state would only have an interest in implementing practices that would make education minimally acceptable, not in promoting equity for all.

Utilizing a state rationale, authors of the NafME position statement entitled "Equity and Access in Music Education" write: "*All students deserve access to and equity in the delivery of music education, one of the subjects deemed necessary in federal law for a well-rounded education.*"³² Invoking national policy has what Green would consider strong political potential, but NafME's statement is problematic because it misrepresents the legislation.³³

The list of eighteen "well-rounded subjects" in the *Every Student Succeeds Act* is preceded with the phrase "subjects such as" and followed by the statement "and any other subject, as determined by the State or local educational agency."³⁴ Far from deeming music "necessary," the law exemplifies Green's assertion that the state favors the worst education that society can tolerate; local leaders need only include enough aspects of a well-rounded education to avoid angering their constituents. Rather than focusing on having music listed as one possibility, music educators might advocate that policymakers consider equitable access to music education part of a minimally acceptable education. However, such action may conflict with the interests of another set of strong political actors: parents.

Green notes that parents generally do not want the state to define the "best," since doing so would inhibit advantages they might gain for their own offspring.³⁵ Parents want the best for their children, although not necessarily the best for children as a whole. For this reason, Green argues that parents rarely conceive of equal educational opportunity as an "ultimate goal or interest."³⁶ The elective nature of most secondary music classes and community music groups can serve parental interests, as Green defines them, by distinguishing their children as "better" than those who do not participate. Therefore, although some parents may not choose to act primarily out of self-interest, parents as a whole have little reason to advocate for either increased diversity within such classes or for equitable access to them.

Moreover, traditional band, choir, and orchestra programs often favor competition and an increased emphasis on diversity or equity will not necessarily improve individual and collective festival ratings. As such, parents already invested in existing music programs are unlikely to advocate for equity initiatives that would not directly benefit and may even inhibit their child's attainment on traditional measures of musical success. Since music educators cannot easily promote diversity and equity through these two strong positions, I now consider the comparatively weaker positions of societal interests and educational goods for their own sake.

Societal interests involve ends that neither the state nor parents have direct motivation to support. Green writes: "If it can be shown that everyone benefits from X, and that X is not a compelling interest of the state, then the promotion of X is a societal interest."³⁷ The assumption that everyone benefits from increased attention to diversity aligns with the way organizations such as NafME

tend to promote diversity initiatives. For example, authors of the rationale section of NafME's position statement on inclusivity and diversity in music education write: "As our country becomes increasingly diverse, it is important for students in every school setting to study a wide variety of musical styles, cultures, and genres."³⁸ In other words, a more diverse society demands more diverse music education practices. Although administrators, policymakers, and community members may agree with this logic, given its diffuse and largely intangible benefits, they likely find little urgency to act upon it.

In relation to equity, authors of NafME's documents suggest the even weaker political position of educational goods as valuable for their own sake. They explain equity as key to "*promoting the understanding and making of music by all*" without further rationale.³⁹ This logic does little to convince those not already in support of universal, equitable music education. Given that current diversity and equity initiatives rely on either a troubling misreading of a strong state rationale or on the weaker political positions of societal interests or educational goods for their own sake, how might music educators proceed?

THE DIVERSITY BARGAIN

A stronger position would be for parents with the available resources to advocate for diversity and equity, but they are only likely to do so if convinced that such action primarily benefits their own offspring or—in the case of older students—benefits themselves. Green notes that societal interests have been pursued within education through the enlistment of parental interests.⁴⁰ This occurs when, while recognizing gains for all students, parents become particularly invested in the benefits for their own children. Addressing instances in which white individuals advocate for racially diverse teaching and learning environments, Warikoo calls this particular use of self-interest to promote societal interests the "diversity bargain."⁴¹

Asking how music educators might leverage parents' own selfishness to promote the societal good of diversity, relies on potentially problematic assumptions. Focusing on outcomes while minimizing attention to process invokes the longstanding ethical quandary: Does the end justify the means? While I have serious reservations about this line of ethical thinking, it is at least worthy of consideration. Moreover, just because parents rely on self-interest does not mean that they ought to rely on self-interest. In asking how educators might utilize parents' self-interest, does not necessarily condone unbridled self-interest. However, if empirical researchers find that self-interest motivates individuals' actions, then in addition to troubling such reasoning, others might ask how they can use it in support of more ethical practices.

Warikoo derived the idea of a "diversity bargain" through her extensive qualitative study of undergraduate students at two elite colleges in the United States.

She describes the diversity bargain as occurring when white students “reluctantly agree with affirmative action insofar as it benefits themselves, most commonly through a diverse learning environment.”⁴² In other words, rather than talking about multiculturalism and learning across racial lines as important for their minority peers, the white students that Warikoo interviewed valued how such practices contributed to their own fulfillment. In this sense, the participants had internalized the legal rationale for diversity initiatives in higher education first proffered by Justice Powell in 1978.

A case study of white parents who purposely enrolled their children in a diverse urban elementary school tells a similar story. Lynn Posey-Maddox details the values that caused the elementary school to grow its white student body from fourteen to twenty-four percent over the course of seven years. She explains, “White parents commonly spoke of diversity in terms of their children’s exposure to those of different racial or cultural backgrounds and the learning that could result from this exposure.”⁴³ Like the elite college students in Warikoo’s study, these white, college-educated parents believed that exposing their young children to diversity would assist them in interfacing with the world at large, a skill they deemed crucial for future economic and social success.

These studies exemplify Green’s assertion that parents seek not equality, but what they believe best for their children. Given that contemporary stakeholders continue to endorse these practices, they also demonstrate the political strength of such positioning. While diversity initiatives may benefit all students, convincing parents about the particular benefits that they provide to their own children may make their support of such societal interests more likely. Acknowledging this line of thinking, Warikoo posits that, despite its limitations, the diversity bargain may be the best hope for maintaining affirmative action policies in elite colleges.⁴⁴ In short, acknowledging *how* diversity may benefit particular students, rather than just assuming it as good in the abstract, may strengthen the political viability of diversity-related initiatives. However, the potential drawbacks of such positioning demand attention.

Emphasizing the political expediency of what some parents deem “best” is clearly unethical if it harms those absent from such politicking. Warikoo found that black and Latino college students also saw themselves as benefiting from their diverse learning environments, explaining how they generally appreciated the forms of difference that many of them were encountering for the first time.⁴⁵ Yet, she noted that conflicts could arise because black and Latino students did not conceive of themselves as having any obligation to fulfill the diversity bargain; they were on campus to learn and to reach their own potential rather than to teach white students.

On the other hand, Warikoo explains that some white students perceived interactions with peers of color as a resource to which they felt entitled.⁴⁶ This

echoes Juliet Hess's assertions about the problems occurring when music educators put people from marginalized groups "in the position of holding up a mirror . . . to teach our field about its own whiteness."⁴⁷ As such, while drawing on parents' personal interests may prove a politically viable way of increasing diversity within music education, it may lead to troubling expectations within daily interactions.

Similarly, Posey-Maddox explained that since the elementary school she studied remained predominantly non-white, the influx of generally more well-off white families enabled children of color to stay surrounded by peers from similar racial backgrounds while benefitting from added resources and educational opportunities.⁴⁸ Since such resources remained uncommon in many of the district's other predominantly black, Latino, and Asian public schools, in comparison, all of the elementary school's children experienced some material benefit.

However, unlike Warikoo's study, Posey-Maddox explains that while the school's predominantly white parent-teacher organization leaders conceived of themselves as working on behalf of all students, the organization's increased professionalism and visibility "exacerbated race and class tensions and status positions among adults in the school community."⁴⁹ The cost of additional resources was a loss of control and cultural identity among long-time community members. As such, Posey-Maddox ultimately argues against relying on parent volunteerism and fundraising as a mechanism for school reform, explaining that such actions privilege middle class norms and absolve the government from its responsibilities to all children.

These empirical studies demonstrate how the diversity bargain can position diversity initiatives within the strong political position of parental interests. Conversely, music educators' typical conceptualizations of diversity and equity as social interests or as educational goods valuable in their own right may undermine or discourage the stronger rationale of parents wanting the best for their own offspring. Warikoo's and Posey-Maddox's research also suggests that, although there exist serious potential pitfalls and limitations, all students who enter educational institutions grounded in a diversity bargain framework may perceive their experiences as beneficial. This raises the question: How might music educators contribute to these benefits?

RECONSIDERING DIVERSITY AND PROMOTING EQUITY

Part of the problem with utilizing ambiguous definitions of diversity is that one can assume a benefit without interrogating the nature of that benefit. Given that music educators frequently use the word diversity in reference to classroom content,⁵⁰ they suggest that students mainly benefit from learning

that information. Even when music educators use diversity in reference to students' or teachers' backgrounds, they often emphasize content acquisition. For instance, the authors of the NAFME statement on "Inclusivity and Diversity in Music Education" reference culturally responsive pedagogy; drawing on Geneva Gay's framework, Vickie Lind and Constance McKoy explain culturally responsive pedagogy as "the ability to affirm diverse cultural characteristics, perspectives, and experiences and to use these multiple perceptions of reality and ways of knowing to form bridges to new learning and ideas."⁵¹ As such, while individuals' unique qualities and experiences hold value in themselves, they also serve curricular goals.

The aims of elective music classes often center on homogeneity. Bands, orchestras, and choirs generally strive for a unified sound and for cohesive musical interpretations. The same often holds true for more participatory ensembles such as ukulele groups or Mariachi bands; it does not matter how a white student versus a Native Hawaiian student interprets the song, only that they make music together.

Alternatively, in Warikoo's study, both white students and students of color conceived of the opportunity to learn from diverse peers as the primary benefit of diversity-conscious admissions practices. Such findings reinforce the legal rationale that universities can consider diversity in their admissions processes because it furthers "the robust exchange of ideas" central to their educational missions.⁵² This suggests that content, even divergent content, may hold less value than the learning resulting from the contrasting perspectives that students bring to their educative interactions.

In tandem with recruiting more diverse students into their courses and community groups, music educators might make more time for peer-to-peer sharing and collaboration, including exploring individuals' divergent musical interpretations, choices, and creative projects. When teachers encourage students to express themselves through thoughtfully-facilitated artistic endeavors, they have the opportunity to highlight what makes them unique. In such instances, an improvisation or solo composition becomes not a marker of race but of an individual's current identity and future visions.⁵³

Although still uncommon in many music education settings, none of these ideas is particularly new and practices such as creating music and making individual interpretive decisions align with the 2014 American National Music Standards.⁵⁴ However, authors of contemporary standards documents tend to treat those creations and expressive decisions as ends in themselves rather than as starting points for peer-to-peer dialogue and musical exchanges. Imagine instead if music educators and students foregrounded their expressive interactions, if at

times the process of learning from and about each other took precedence over learning musical content.

This is not to say that considerations of content should play no role in diversity initiatives. As Hess warns, incorporating diverse individuals into existing Eurocentric music education practices may cause feelings of marginalization.⁵⁵ Moreover, Warikoo explains arts experiences as an “appealing venue for white students because they are not forced to directly confront social disparities and their own racial privilege.”⁵⁶ Absent content and pedagogy that fosters critical analysis, teaching white students about different musical practices can leave their own privilege unacknowledged.⁵⁷ Teaching and learning undertaken with an awareness of the diversity bargain might complement the judicious selection of content and culturally relevant pedagogy with added attention to the unique interpersonal exchanges that diverse voices enable.

Yet, musical exchanges are no panacea, in part because white students and students of color likely enter them with divergent aims. Warikoo writes that the white students she interviewed understood dialogue as providing an individual benefit through their exposure to new experiences.⁵⁸ Barbara Applebaum offers a more troubling interpretation of this desire. She argues that white students need students of color not so much to learn from them but to redeem themselves from any implication of racism; wanting to know the Other functions “as a demonstration of white anti-racist goodness.”⁵⁹ Alternatively, students of color often seek group benefits by using dialogue “to influence their peers to become more sympathetic to minority concerns—a group benefit.”⁶⁰ In other words, even though all students might perceive dialogue as beneficial, the opposition between diversity and equity remains: white students may seek dialogue primarily because it is best for them individually, while students of color may desire it in service of group equity.

This tension between the diversity that some parents deem “best” for their offspring and an education equitable for all children also plays out in terms of relative value. Even if parents value diversity, do they value it more than, or at least equal to, the individual and collective competition ratings that have traditionally served as markers of musical achievement? While all students are of course capable of meeting high music performance standards, given the strong correlation between poverty and race,⁶¹ diverse students often lack resources such as private lessons and high-quality instruments that facilitate group success at these events. In order to support diversity initiatives in music education, parents need to deem the resultant gains more valuable for their children than those that might accrue otherwise.

Parents and teachers who equally value diversity and music festival ratings may invest in resources designated for low income students. Yet, the music education

profession continues to funnel significant time and monetary resources into local and state-wide festivals. This incentivizes parents to understand the “best” for their offspring in terms of trophies rather than in terms of learnings made possible through exchanges with diverse peers. As such, NAFME’s stated desire for more diversity in music education works at cross purposes with the everyday activities of their affiliated state-level organizations.

Even if parents come to value diversity in music education, Green’s theory explains why they likely still resist equity. While I previously explained the problems of NAFME’s promotion of equity as an educational good valuable for its own sake, this inquiry has not uncovered a more viable option. Despite this politically weak positioning, music educators, profession leaders, and other stakeholders driven by their own ethics may choose to promote equity. The tension between equity and diversity has two implications for those engaging in such action.

First, since many music education classes, after school groups, and community groups are elective, focusing on equity might involve setting the explicit goal of having participants parallel the local population’s racial makeup. The NAFME statement on equity focuses almost exclusively on the role of access, implying that a lack of access is the primary barrier to an equitable music education.⁶² While important, access is far from sufficient for equity. All students theoretically have the same access to college, but they do not have an equitable chance at gaining admission. Teachers cannot legally set quotas that exclude white or Asian students from participating in music instruction. However, given that music classes and groups often have an unlimited enrollment or can split into additional sections, music educators can aim for proportionate racial representation. The same goes for music teacher education programs. Beginning with these goals, music educators can then consider what recruiting practices, content, pedagogy, and added resources might enable their attainment.

Second, music educators serious about promoting equity might consider when to separate equity work from diversity initiatives. Applebaum explains the need for listening in which white projects and interests are not at the forefront of concern and in which white students “are able to hear anger and criticism.”⁶³ Drawing on these ideas, the music education profession and its stakeholders might consider holding conferences and other events devoted solely to equity. Likewise, might music educators reimagine the diversity-focused exchanges described above as spaces that foster equity by centering the telling and hearing of hardships? Music educators’ associations and other institutions could also afford more resources and recognition to teachers improving equitable access to music education than to those focused primarily on musical achievements. While much more research and creative visioning is needed on this topic, a clear distinction between diversity and equity lays the foundation for such action.

In summary, rather than treating diversity and equity as compatible, our profession might acknowledge their conflicting nature. To advocate for diversity absent equity or to say “equity and diversity” in a single breath undermines the important tension between them. While remaining aware of how diversity can undermine equity, music educators and other stakeholders might question *when*, if ever, they find it prudent to advocate based on the strong political position of diversity as best for individual students, including white ones, and *when* they might take the politically weaker although arguably more ethical position of equity for students of color or other disadvantaged populations.

Within classrooms, teachers and students might experiment with how artistic expressions enable the exchange of individuals’ stories and insights. They might also provide added attention to equity apart from diversity. By reflectively enacting a politically savvy dance amongst equitable and best, our profession might move closer to the equity society so desperately needs.

NOTES

¹See <https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/what-we-believe/>. Accessed July 2, 2019

²National Association for Music Education, “Inclusivity and Diversity in Music Education,” 2018, <https://nafme.org/about/position-statements/inclusivity-diversity/>.

³National Association for Music Education, “Call for Proposals: 2018 Music Research and Teacher Education National Conference,” 2017, 1.

⁴Ellen Berry, *The Enigma of Diversity: The Language of Race and the Limits of Racial Justice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 26.

⁵*Ibid.*, 42.

⁶*Ibid.*, 26.

⁷National Association for Music Education, “Inclusivity and Diversity in Music Education,” para. 1. In referencing this statement, both here and later in the piece, I do not mean to single out NAFME’s position on diversity as substantially more problematic than that of other institutions and individuals. NAFME’s rhetoric serves as but one example of ideas currently pervasive throughout the music education profession. It is also worth noting that NAFME asked the profession for input on this statement before its release; since I chose not to contribute, I am in part responsible for the document’s content.

⁸Thomas Green, *Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980).

⁹Natasha Warikoo, *The Diversity Bargain and Other Dilemmas of Race, Admissions, and Meritocracy at Elite Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

¹⁰Berry, *The Enigma of Diversity*, 32.

¹¹Regents of Univ. of California v. Bakke, 438 U.S. 265 (1978), 315.

¹²*Ibid.*, 438.

¹³*Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, 579 U. S. (2016).

¹⁴United States Department of Education, "Dear Colleague Letter," July 3, 2018, http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2018/07/trump_to_withdraw_obama_era_gu.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news1-rm&M=58540677&U=1750970.

¹⁵Jaweed Kaleem and Teresa Watanabe, "Trump Administration Backs Asian Americans Suing Harvard Over its Affirmative Action Admissions Policy," *Los Angeles Times*, August 30, 2018, <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-harvard-race-admissions-20180830-story.html#>, Accessed July 2, 2019.

¹⁶Berry, *The Enigma of Diversity*, 31.

¹⁷*Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, italics mine.

¹⁸Julia Koza, "Listening for Whiteness: Hearing Racial Politics in Undergraduate Music School," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 16, no. 2 (2008): 145-155.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 151.

²⁰Tara J. Yosso, Laurence Parker, Daniel G. Solórzano, and Marvin Lynn, "From Jim Crow to Affirmative Action and Back Again: A Critical Race Discussion of Racialized Rationales and Access to Higher Education," *Review of Research in Education* 28 (2004): 14.

²¹National Association for Music Education, "Inclusivity and Diversity in Music Education," para. 3.

²²Kenneth Elpus and Carlos Abril, "High School Music Ensemble Students in the United States: A Demographic Profile," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 59, no. 2 (2011): 128-145. doi: 10.1177/0022429411405207.

²³See, for example, Bruce Carter, "'Nothing Better or Worse than Being Black, Gay, and in the Band': A Qualitative Examination of Gay Undergraduates Participating in Historically Black College or University Marching Bands," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 61, no. 1 (2013): 26-43. doi: 10.1177/0022429412474470

²⁴Jackie Zubrzycki, "Music Education Leader is Out after Race-related Comments," *Education Week*, May 11, 2016, http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2016/05/comments_on_race_lead_to_music.html

²⁵Elpus and Abril, "High School Music Ensemble Students in the United States;" Kenneth Elpus, "Music Teacher Licensure Candidates in the United States: A Demographic Profile and Analysis of Licensure Examination Scores," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 63, no. 3 (2015): 314-335. doi: 10.1177/0022429415602470

²⁶Berry, *The Enigma of Diversity*, 32.

²⁷National Association for Music Education, "Inclusivity and Diversity in Music Education," para. 1, italics added.

²⁸Berry, *The Enigma of Diversity*, 273.

²⁹National Association for Music Education, "Equity and Access in Music Education," 2018, <https://nafme.org/about/position-statements/equity-access/>; National Association for Music Education, "Inclusivity and Diversity in Music Education."

³⁰Green, *Predicting the Behavior*, 149.

³¹*Ibid.*, 31.

³²National Association for Music Education, "Equity and Access in Music Education," para. 3.

³³As a member of the NAFME President's Task Force for the Broader Minded Advocacy Campaign from 2015-2016, I drew NAFME leaders' attention to the disconnection between their rhetoric and the language within ESSA. They did not act on my input.

³⁴S. 1177, 114th Cong. (2015), 298.

³⁵Green, *Predicting the Behavior*, 35.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 25.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 26.

³⁸National Association for Music Education, "Inclusivity and Diversity in Music Education," para. 1.

³⁹National Association for Music Education, "Equity and Access in Music Education," para. 3.

⁴⁰Green, *Predicting the Behavior*, 28.

⁴¹Warikoo, *The Diversity Bargain*. This parallels what Bell explains in the legal system as "interest convergence," in which "the interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites." Derrick A. Bell, "Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma," *Harvard Law Review* 93, no. 3 (1980): 523. doi: 10.2307/1340546

⁴²Warikoo, *The Diversity Bargain*, 37. Warikoo is using the term "affirmative action" in reference not to a specific policy, but to the general practice of promoting the education of individuals from historically disadvantaged groups.

⁴³Lynn Posey-Maddox, *When Middle-class Parents Choose Urban Schools: Class, Race and the Challenge of Equity in Public Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 79.

⁴⁴Warikoo, *The Diversity Bargain*, 111.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 186.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 104.

⁴⁷Juliet Hess, "Equity and Music Education: Euphemisms, Terminal Naivety, and Whiteness," *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 16, no. 3 (2017): 24. <http://act.maydaygroup.org/volume-16-issue-3/act-16-3-15-47/>

⁴⁸Posey-Maddox, *When Middle-class Parents Choose Urban Schools*, 81.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 147.

⁵⁰See, for example, National Association for Music Education, "Inclusivity and Diversity in Music Education."

⁵¹Vicki Lind and Constance McKoy, *Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 17.

⁵²Regents of Univ. of California v. Bakke, 438.

⁵³For additional explanation about what such individual contributions might entail, see Lauren Kapalka Richerme, "Fostering Freedom: Troubling Relevance and Individualism," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* 220 (2019): 7-20. doi: 10.5406/bulcouresmusedu.220.0007

⁵⁴State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education, "National Core Arts Standards," 2014, <https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>, Accessed July 2, 2019.

⁵⁵Hess, "Equity and Music Education," 20.

⁵⁶Warikoo, *The Diversity Bargain*, 81.

⁵⁷Deborah Bradley, "Music Education, Multiculturalism, and Anti-racism—Can we Talk?" *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 5, no. 2 (2006): 1-30; Charlene Morton, Boom Diddy Boom Boom: Critical Multiculturalism and Music Education, *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 9, no. 1 (2001): 32-41.

⁵⁸Ibid., 107.

⁵⁹Barbara Applebaum, *Being White, Being Good: White Complicity, White Moral Responsibility, and Social Justice Pedagogy* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016), 194.

⁶⁰Warikoo, *The Diversity Bargain*, 132.

⁶¹Kayle Fontenot, Jessica Semega, and Melissa Kollar, *Income and Poverty in the United States: 2017, 2018*, <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2018/demo/p60-263.html>. Accessed July 2, 2019.

⁶²National Association for Music Education, "Equity and Access in Music Education."

⁶³Applebaum, *Being White*, 195.

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