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*The Journal of the Secondary School Writing Centers Association*

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## SSWCA Inclusivity, Equity, and Accessibility Statement for Secondary School Writing and Peer Tutoring Centers

*Approved by the SSWCA Board April 17, 2021.1.1*

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## **SSWCA Inclusivity, Equity, and Accessibility Statement for Secondary School Writing and Peer Tutoring Centers**

Providing equal access to student-centered opportunities in all schools is the foundation of secondary school writing centers and peer tutoring centers. As an organization, the Secondary School Writing Centers Association (SSWCA) values antibias and anti-racist practices in our organization and in our affiliated centers. We believe that all centers should be welcoming, inclusive, and accessible spaces for all students and staff, including, but not limited to, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC); LGBTQ+ people; people with disabilities; people of all religious beliefs; and historically underserved and underrepresented people.

By issuing this position statement, SSWCA seeks to encourage secondary school writing and peer tutoring centers to reflect upon their existing practices and amend them as necessary. The work done by secondary school writing and peer tutoring centers is social justice work. We invite all stakeholders to consider the ways in which our centers can do the important work of building inclusive communities of learners and to enact positive changes in our scholastic, local, regional, and national communities.

This is a living statement that will be updated and revised as our understanding grows. As we identify resources to help centers learn about inclusivity, equity, and accessibility, we will make them available. We invite feedback [here](#) for improving this statement.

### **Secondary school writing and peer tutoring centers should strive to uphold the following core practices:**

- Directors and tutors should empower and uphold the agency of the students that the center serves. Directors and tutors should be cognizant of and respectful of each student's unique background, including their race, gender expression, culture, religion, and language practices.
- Directors should consider their center's operating hours, their physical or virtual locations and set up, and the ways in which students are able to access time with tutors.
- Tutoring staff should represent the student body they serve.
- Directors should develop and enact tutor recruitment processes that identify and invite tutors from a range of backgrounds and experiences—including those from underrepresented populations. Directors must challenge inherent biases that may emerge in the tutor recommendation and selection process.
- Tutors and directors should be familiar with and, when possible, trained in anti-racist and antibias pedagogy and practices.
- As an equal-opportunity organization, SSWCA exercises the right to honor personal-pronoun preference in our compositions and publications to avoid gender-biased and exclusive language. This includes a student's right to their personal pronoun preferences (e.g., she/her, he/his, ze/zir, they/their).

### **Secondary school writing and peer tutoring centers should ask themselves the following questions for reflection:**

- Whom does our center serve? Does our center serve our entire student body, or do we primarily serve certain groups of students?

- How do students access help from our center? Do our hours of availability make the center accessible to all students? How might we diversify our tutoring methods to include alternatives to in-person tutoring, including asynchronous digital feedback and/or virtual face-to-face conferencing, so that all students have the opportunity to work with a tutor?
- If centers offer specialized workshops, which student groups do those workshops support? Are workshops advertised and conducted using language that is inclusive? Does the content of the workshops imply a “correct” approach to writing that marginalizes certain student populations?
- Does our tutoring staff reflect our student body? What assumptions are made about certain populations within our school, and how do those assumptions impact the presence of certain populations on our tutoring staff?
- How are our tutors recruited? If we require applications, is the application process accessible, equitable, and fair to all students in our school? How might inherent biases impact the application process?
- What role do teachers play in the recruitment process? How do teachers’ ideas of what makes a student a “good tutor” align with or conflict with students’ and tutors’ ideas of what makes a student a “good tutor”?
- How are tutors trained? Is there an implied “correct” approach to writing that marginalizes certain student populations? Are tutors being explicitly taught anti-racist and antibias pedagogy?
- Does our center’s internally recognized mission align with our school’s administrative mission for our center? Did the school intend to create a center for remediation or a center for enrichment in establishing our center? Does our center foster equity in the whole school? When advocating and supporting our center, do school leaders and other stakeholders acknowledge the need for equitably supporting all learners?
- What role does our center play in our community? How can our center be an advocate for equitably implementing writing and peer tutoring centers at other secondary schools?
- How does our center establish itself as a welcoming and safe space for all members of our school community? Do tutors and clients have rights to their pronoun preferences on items such as sign-up forms, name tags, etc.? Is our center’s space physically accessible to all students, including students with disabilities?

Approved by the Secondary School Writing Centers Association Board on April 17, 2021