

## **STUDENT DEMANDS FOR THE ITHACA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

- 1. STOP rehearsals for The Hunchback of Notre Dame.**
- 2. START casting a new show with multiple leads. By doing this the talented students cast in this current show can still shine while also including an equally talented diverse group of actors.**
- 3. STOP hiring adults who have heard complaints from theater professionals, concerned parents of color, and social justice activists time and time again, and have not listened or changed their actions.**
- 4. START better hiring practices.**
  - a. FIRST STEP!: Remove Robert Winans as Director of the Boynton Middle School and High School Musical. We have tried to talk to Mr. Winans. He has not listened. Mr. Brown and Dr Brown... Times Up.**
  - b. SECOND STEP!: Hire a pre-production and production team who have a deep understanding of institutionalized racism. The Director will be hired by a committee comprised by at least 30% socially conscious community theatrical professionals and 30% of people of color who are activists on social justice and inclusion. These 60% should not be employed by the ICSD. We need inclusive theatrical professionals like Godfrey and Sarah Simmons, Cynthia Henderson, Ross Haarstad, Eliza VanCort, Holly Adams and Todd Peterson, to name only a few. They are not hard to find. No more excuses.**
- 5. STOP the racist and openly stated policy of “color blind” casting in the ICSD. Because of institutionalized racism this results in white children being cast in roles written as white parts and also white children being cast in roles that were specifically intended for people of color. Make no mistake, the world is not colorblind. Casting cannot be colorblind. Enough is Enough.**
- 6. START a policy of “inclusive casting” by working to recruit young people of color, particularly those who are not currently involved in any activities in the performance arts within the school system but who have experience singing in other venues, such as church choirs.**
- 7. STOP being satisfied with a system where only some students have access to voice lessons, dance lessons, acting lessons, etc. This favors the privileged few whose parents have the resource of both time and money.**
- 8. START creating opportunities for all students to train to be performance artists. The local theater community and Ithaca College are untapped resources. Many have offered to help and have been ignored. Contact them. Ithaca College students have a service requirement. Ask them to give free voice lessons after**

**school. Find volunteers for free dance lessons. Bring in experts in audition technique, such as staff of The Actor's Workshop, who worked with us on Godfrey Simmons Musical 13 to prepare us to audition. So many community theatre organizations have said publicly they want to help, and yet they have not been asked to help. Why?**

- 9. STOP ignoring and denying that you have created a white centered program run by white adults for the benefit of white children. White children should also be educated about interrupting these practices of White supremacy. Hollow lip service about equality is shameful and the eyes of our concerned community are now focused on you.**
- 10. START following the four core values of IHS you tell us to follow, every day, but don't follow yourselves.**
  - a. Compassion- "The concern for the suffering or misfortune of others." We don't see any concern or you wouldn't be doing this. Please, show us compassion.**
  - b. Responsibility - "The state or fact of having to deal with something or having control over someone." You have the control and you the power, and you have the responsibility to fix this problem. You created it.**
  - c. Ownership - "The act, state, or right of possessing something." We hope you have the courage to own up to this mistake. The blame for entire situation is yours to possess, yours to own. Not ours.**
  - d. Tenacity - "The quality or fact of being very determined. Persistence." If you want to change this, it won't be easy. But nothing worth fighting for is ever easy. And we hope you think all students, not just a privileged few, are worth fighting and persisting for.**

**In the words of MLK Jr, "Later almost always means never." No more waiting. If you don't act now, you send a message to our community that students of color are less valuable.**

**You say you see our value. It's time to show us.  
Please act, and act now, on our behalf.**

**SEE BELOW FOR ACTION ITEMS  
A CALL TO ACTION FOR  
CONCERNED MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY**

**WILL YOU STAND WITH US?**

1. **EDITORIALS:** Put your pen where you beliefs are. Write a letter, and no letter is too short, to any of the papers covering our cause.
  - a. **Tompkins Weekly:** [Jamies@VizellaMedia.com](mailto:Jamies@VizellaMedia.com)
  - b. **Ithaca Journal:** [gtroyano@ithacajournal.com](mailto:gtroyano@ithacajournal.com)
  - c. **Ithaca Times:** [editor@ithacatimes.com](mailto:editor@ithacatimes.com)
  - d. **Ithaca Voice:** [jalmendarez@ithacavoice.com](mailto:jalmendarez@ithacavoice.com)
2. **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Post about this issue. Share links about this issue. Any time you see anything about this issue online, please support it and spread it.
3. **CALL ADMINISTRATORS:** Call Doctor Brown, Mr. Brown, and your school board members. You can call the school district 607.274.2101.
4. **TALK:** Talk about this issue with experts in theater and social justice. Learn what you need to learn to help us spread the word to everyone who will address the issues. Talk to your parents, your children, your friends and your networks about this issue. Engage them!
5. **JOIN US IF WE MUST PROTEST:** If we are not heard and if there is no action, we will not stay silent. Please stand with us.
6. **USE YOUR NETWORK AND COLLABORATE:** This is an opportunity for artists and activists to unite. If you are an activist, please reach out to the following organizations and ask them how they can help. Bolded orgs are already engaged or have recently publicly asked to help, as far as we know:
  - a. **Theater Companies:**  
**Performing Arts for Social Change, The Homecoming Players, Civic Ensemble, Theater Incognita, The Kitchen Theater, The Hangar Theater, Wolfsmouth Theater**
  - b. **Acting Training:**  
**Ithaca College, The Actor's Workshop of Ithaca, Actingoutnewyork**
  - c. **Dance:**  
**Ithaca Ballet, The Next Jennaration, Armstrong School of Dance, local choreographers, such as Harmony Malone and G-Quan Booker**
7. **GRANTS:** If you or someone you know is an experienced grant writer contact us about writing a grant to pay for an after school performing arts training enrichment program taught by theater professionals
8. **GO FUND ME:** Support local theatre companies who tell stories reflecting the rich diversity and experiences of our country. One example is Cynthia Henderson, of Performing Arts for Social Change. She is organizing a play, featuring the words of high school students who struggle for representation. Please contribute to funding this show. GoFundMe link to come. Stay tuned.
9. **ACT NOW!** Please lend your passions & talents now!
10. **ACT LATER!** Please don't tire! Please stand by us!