

POLICY #8140

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSIVITY IN EDUCATION

The Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining a positive and inclusive learning environment where all students, especially those currently and historically marginalized, feel safe, included, welcomed, and valued, experience a sense of belonging and academic success.

Generally Accepted Beliefs and Agreements

All children deserve to have equal access to educational opportunities regardless of the color of their skin, their gender, their sexual orientation, the language they speak, economic status, or ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic status background. This freedom is fundamental to our K-12 education program and is extended to everyone without exception. An education that acknowledges that students have been historically marginalized due to inequities associated with aspects of their identities and their intersectionality, including, but not limited to, race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, immigration status, disability, sex; sexual orientation, or gender (including gender identity and expression), racism, discrimination, and marginalization of any people or groups of people, whether intentional or not, have no place in our schools, our district or our community. Such actions damage not only those individuals and groups at which they are directed, but also our community as a whole. We are committed to addressing these inequities and helping each and every student to equitably access learning opportunities in school to enable all students to thrive and to build a better society.

Goals

The goal of the school district is to provide equitable, inclusive and diverse opportunities for all students to reach their highest potential. To achieve educational equity that is also inclusive, the district acknowledges the presence of culturally diverse students and the need for students to find meaningful, relevant connections among themselves and the subject matter and the tasks teachers ask them to perform. The district will develop the individual and organizational knowledge, attitudes, skills, and practices to create culturally responsive and inclusive working environments that support high academic achievement for students and high expectations for employees from all backgrounds. Differences will not just be seen as strengths, but they will be valued, celebrated, and welcomed because they are what make students and families unique.

In order to truly realize this goal, it is imperative that the Board, its officers, and employees, be fully conversant in the historical injustices and inequalities that have shaped our society and to recognize and eliminate the institutional barriers, including racism and biases, that contribute to the pervasive, disparate educational outcomes within our schools. Equity and inclusive education aims to understand, identify, address, and eliminate the biases, barriers, and

disparities that limit a student's chance to graduate high school prepared for college, for a career, and for life.

The Superintendent or designee(s) will ensure that curriculum and instructional materials reflect the Board's commitment to educational equity. Curriculum and instructional materials for all grades shall reflect diversity and include a range of perspectives and experiences, particularly those of historically underserved, underrepresented groups. All curriculum materials shall be examined for bias. Class instructional activities and extracurricular programs shall be designed to provide opportunities for cross-curricular, cross-cultural interactions that foster respect for diversity.

Providing education that is both equitable and inclusive Equity is an ongoing process that requires a shared commitment and strong leadership in order to meet the challenges of an ever-evolving society, the unique learning needs of all students, and the diverse backgrounds of our communities and schools. The Board understands that equitable and inclusive education is achieved when each adult collaborates and affirms each student by creating a respectful learning environment.

Educational equity is based on the principles of fairness and ensuring that every student has access to the resources and academic rigor they need at the right moment in their education, despite any individual's actual or perceived personal characteristics, not to be used interchangeably with principles of equality, treating all students the same.

Inclusive education is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings and the broader environment, in which diversity is honored and all individuals are respected.

Diversity in education means students, staff, families and community are our greatest strength and diversity is viewed as an asset. Diversity means the condition of being different or having differences, including, but not limited to, sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, age, socioeconomic class, religion, ability, and other human differences. Embracing these differences and moving beyond tolerance and celebration to inclusivity and mutual respect will help the district reach our goal of creating a community that ensures that each and every voice is heard and valued.

Accountability, Transparency and Review

The Board, its officers and employees, accepts responsibility and will hold themselves and each other accountable for every student having full access to quality education, qualified teachers, challenging curriculum, full opportunity to learn, and sufficient, individually-tailored support(s) for learning so they can achieve at high levels academically, socially, and personally. The district also accepts its responsibility for moving forward on this journey and committing time, energy and resources to develop a more welcoming environment for all students, parents and staff. To this end, the Superintendent will establish a district-wide Anti-Racism Task Force. This committee will include representation from staff, administration, students and parents. The

district-wide task force will assist the administration in developing and implementing specific prevention initiatives, including the adoption and revision of policies and implementation of practices designed to create spaces where students can thrive as well as prevent discrimination, assure equitable access to high quality educational staff, facilities and materials, and to maximize student achievement for all students.

The Superintendent of Schools, or designee, will adopt goals and corresponding metrics related to this policy. The district will identify the multiple indicators necessary to monitor student outcomes, engagement, school climate, and the specific data that will be used to ensure accountability for student, school, and district-wide performance; to reduce variability in outcomes specifically as it relates to students that we have historically failed, like students who are Black and Brown; and to ensure that academic outcomes will not be predictable by actual or perceived personal characteristics and can be assessed and reported transparently to the public. Reporting may include, but is not limited to, detentions, referrals, suspension and expulsion reports; the percentage of students placed in Bilingual or English as a New Language (ENL), Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Smart Scholars, remedial classes and referrals to Special Education; as well as employee, parent and student perceptions about school.

With committee input, the Superintendent of Schools is directed to develop and implement a plan for ensuring that equitable educational opportunities are provided to all students. In addition, the Board directs that training programs be established for students, and annually for employees, to raise awareness of the issues surrounding cultural responsiveness, equity and inclusion and to implement preventative measures to help counteract biases and practices that perpetuate disparities and lead to disproportionate levels of student success. Age-appropriate instructional materials will be incorporated into the curriculum to educate students so that they can learn from a diverse range of experiences and points of view. Curricular materials and staffing decisions will support these efforts.

The Board of Education and the district Superintendent will monitor and review the district's metrics and equity activities to determine the extent to which district schools are complying with this policy, the progress made toward attaining the goals of this policy, whether this policy is having a positive effect on improving academic opportunities for all students and increasing family engagement, as well as closing achievement gaps. The Superintendent will regularly report progress on the equity, inclusivity, and diversity plan and outcomes. Based on those results, this policy, and the specific objectives set to meet its goals, may be revised as needed.

Equity Policy Communication

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the school community are aware of this policy, its purpose, procedures and the district's commitment to equity and inclusion by fostering a positive learning environment that embraces all diverse, unique and individual differences.

The Superintendent, or designee(s), is directed to ensure that this policy is communicated to students, staff, and the community. This policy will be posted on the district's website, and will also be published in student registration materials, student, parent and employee handbooks, and other appropriate school publications.

Policy Enforcement

The Board directs the Superintendent or designee(s) to enforce this policy and create regulations and practices to implement this policy. The Board will annually review the district's implementation of this policy and take appropriate action to ensure compliance with and enforcement of this policy.