EQUITY, INCLUSIVITY, AND DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION - *NEW*

The goal of the school district is to provide equitable, inclusive and diverse opportunities for all students to reach their highest potential. 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 accepted, and experience academic success. 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.

All children deserve to have equal access to opportunity regardless of the color of their skin, their gender, their sexual orientation, the language they speak or their background. This freedom is fundamental to our K-12 education program and is extended to everyone without exception.

Equitable and inclusive education is an ongoing process that requires shared commitment and leadership if a district is to meet the ever-evolving societal changes, unique learning needs of all students, and 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 inclusive of actual or perceived personal characteristics.

Educational equity is based on the principles of fairness and ensuring that every student has access to the resources and educational 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 with equity.

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.

The Board believes students, staff, families and community are our greatest strength and we view our diversity as an asset. Diversity means the condition of being different or having differences, including, but not limited to age, class ethnicity, gender, health, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, religion, physical size, education level, job and function, personality traits, and other human differences. Embracing these diversities and moving beyond tolerance and celebration to inclusivity and respect will help the district reach our goal of creating a community that ensures that each and every voice is heard and valued.

Notice

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.

Goals

To achieve educational equity and inclusive education, the Board will commit to:

Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education

- Adopting procedures to ensure an equitable school community inclusive of diversity in any individual's actual or perceived personal characteristics, including race, ethnicity, language, gender cultural values, and family belief systems. Providing students with exposure to teachers and school leaders of color serves an important function of demonstrating from a young age to all students that people of color can and should hold positions of authority in schools, as well as in our society.
- Creating opportunities for all students and families to be empowered as partners in education, planning, and decision-making.
- Ensuring an equity lens is used when evaluating district policies, programs, and practices, so that all students, teachers, and staff learn and work in an environment that is caring, safe, inclusive, and accepting of all.

High expectations and rigorous instruction

- Providing every student, especially historically marginalized students, with equitable access to high quality and culturally relevant instruction, curriculum, support, facilities and other educational resources, even when this means differentiating resources to accomplish this goal.

Inclusive curriculum and assessment

- Creating multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of historically marginalized students, and shall actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement for all students.

Ongoing professional learning

- Providing opportunities for all staff to improve culturally-responsive instructional practices, curriculum, and assessments and improving its cultural competencies in serving racially, culturally and ethnically diverse students, families, and communities.

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 for learning so they can achieve at excellent levels in academic and other student outcomes. The district also accepts its responsibility for moving forward on this journey and to committing time, energy and resources to develop a more equitable, inclusive, and diverse welcoming environment for all students, parents and staff. To this end, the Superintendent will establish a district-wide Equity and Excellence Committee. The Committee will include representation from staff, administration, board of education, students and parents. The district-wide committee will assist the administration in developing and implementing specific initiatives, including the adoption and revision of policies and implementation of practices designed to promote diversity, prevent discrimination, assure equitable access to high quality curriculum and instruction, and facilities to maximize student achievement for all students.

The district will identify the multiple indicators necessary to monitor student outcomes, engagement, and school climate, and specific data that will be used to ensure accountability for student, school, and district-wide performance; to reduce variability in outcomes; 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. The Superintendent of Schools, or designee, will adopt goals and corresponding metrics related to this policy. Reporting will include, but is not limited to the following data:

- access to educational opportunities;
- student achievement data at each school, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, English Language Learners, special education, and identified gifted;
- student enrollment at each school, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, English Language Learners, special education, and identified gifted;
- student suspension/discipline data for each school and student average daily attendance data for each school.

The district will monitor and review the district's metrics and equity activities to determine the extent to which district school 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 and reducing achievement gaps. The Superintendent will regularly report progress on the equity, inclusion diversity plan and outcomes. Based on those results, this policy, and the specific objectives set to meet its goals, may be revised as needed.

With committee input, the Superintendent of Schools is authorized to develop and implement a plan for ensuring that equitable educational opportunities are being 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 achievement 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.

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.

Cross-ref:
4000, Goals for Instructional Programs
9240, Recruiting and Hiring
9700, Professional Development

1st Reading for Adoption: February 23, 2021
2nd Reading & Adoption: March 23, 2021