



Board Policy Equity Lens Tool

Title of board policy being reviewed:

JEC-School Admissions

Describe the purpose of this policy:

The purpose of this policy is to clarify that admission to MESD programs occurs through the admission policies and processes of the student's component school district. It establishes the respective role of MESD and its component districts in determining access to MESD programs.

What is your experience with this policy:

This is a very limited policy that primarily establishes where responsibility for admissions resides. From an equity perspective, its effectiveness depends heavily on the policies and practices of MESD's component districts. Regular review of referral and enrollment patterns across districts would be particularly important for determining whether students have equitable access to MESD programs.

What is the plan to communicate this policy to staff, students, and/or families? What is the plan to communicate this policy to linguistically diverse students and their families?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request, the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Is this policy:

Easy to locate for staff?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request, the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Accessible to students and families?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request, the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Included in onboarding, intake, or other training?

This policy will be available in the Board's online handbook. The policy will also be posted on the district website for easy access.

Clear and easy to understand?

Yes. The policy is brief and clearly states that admissions to MESD programs are handled through component district admission policies.

However, because it provides no additional information about eligibility, referral, or admission procedures, families may need information from their component district to fully understand how a student gains access to an MESD program.

People

How are people affected positively or negatively by the policy? What potential barriers might people encounter? What barriers might be reduced by this policy?

The policy provides a clear point of responsibility by directing admissions through component districts. This can support consistency between a student's home district and MESD services.

Potential barriers may arise if component districts have different admission, referral, or communication practices. Families may also have difficulty understanding how to access MESD programs if the respective responsibilities of MESD and the component district are not clearly communicated.

Can you identify the racial or ethnic groups affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision? Do you know the potential impacts to these populations? If you don't know, how will you find out?

The policy does not identify specific racial or ethnic groups, and the policy text alone does not provide enough information to determine whether particular groups are disproportionately affected.

Equity impacts could be evaluated by reviewing MESD enrollment and referral data by race, ethnicity, home language, disability status, and component district to determine whether students have equitable access to MESD programs.

Were these populations involved in any way, at any point in the development, implementation, and evaluation of this policy? If so, when and how?

The policy does not indicate whether students, families, or communities were involved in its development.

Student and family feedback—particularly from communities whose students participate in MESD programs—could help identify whether the admissions and referral processes are understandable and accessible.

What priorities and commitments are communicated by this policy?

The policy communicates a commitment to coordination with component school districts and establishes clear responsibility for admissions decisions.

Because the policy is limited to this delegation of responsibility, it does not explicitly communicate additional commitments regarding equitable access, nondiscrimination, transparency, or family engagement.

Place

What kind of positive or negative environment are we creating?

What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)

The policy creates a decentralized admissions structure in which component districts serve as the pathway to MESD programs.

Potential barriers to equitable outcomes include differences among component districts in referral practices, family communication, awareness of available programs, and identification of students for services. Language, disability, transportation, and familiarity with educational systems could also affect families' ability to navigate the process.

Power

How is the power of decision-making shared with those it affects?

How have you intentionally involved the communities affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision?

The policy places admissions authority with component districts rather than directly with students or families. The policy itself does not establish a role for student or family participation in admissions decisions.

Power-sharing could be strengthened by ensuring families understand admission and referral criteria, know whom to contact with questions, and have opportunities to participate in decisions regarding appropriate services for their students.

Process

Does the policy, program, or decision improve, worsen, or make no change to existing disparities?

Does it create other unintended consequences?

Based on the policy language alone, it is not possible to determine whether the policy improves or worsens existing disparities. Its equity impact largely depends on the admission and referral practices of individual component districts.

An unintended consequence could be inconsistent access to MESD programs if referral practices, eligibility interpretations, or family outreach vary significantly between component districts.

Plan

How will you reduce the negative impacts and address the barriers?

Potential barriers can be reduced through coordination between MESD and component districts, clear and accessible information for families, consistent referral expectations where appropriate, and monitoring enrollment and referral patterns for disparities.

MESD can also review data across component districts to identify whether similarly situated students have comparable access to MESD programs.