

Ensuring Education and Racial Equity Policy No. ____

VISION

It is the right of every student to have an excellent and equitable educational experience.ⁱThe Oak Park Elementary School District 97 Board of Education is committed to racial equity, the success of every student, and to achieving our mission of creating a positive learning environment for all students that is equitable, inclusive and focused on the whole child. We seek to nurture the potential in each student. We are committed to creating and sustaining great schools where every student learns at a high levelⁱⁱ and experiences a sense of belonging with the expectation of excellence.

To accomplish this, District 97 will provide an equitable and inclusive educational environment for all students. District 97 acknowledges that inclusion is not effective if it consists of merely inviting students and families into spaces that already exist but rather requires us to create new spaces that are intentionally founded through the lens of this Policy. The concept of educational equity goes beyond simple equality, where all students are treated the same, to fostering a barrier-free environment in which all students, regardless of their background or personal attributes are extended opportunities and resources required for success. Equity is attained when there is sufficient evidence that each student has a high-quality education experience, and outcomes are not predicted by race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, national origin, foster status, involvement with the juvenile justice system, IEP status, disability, learning difference, immigration status, or language.

As a school district committed to equity, District 97 seeks to disrupt societal and historical inequities and eliminate disparities based on student status so that all our students will benefit and reach their potential. Opportunity gaps between student groups are unacceptable and contradict our belief that all students can learn and achieve their full potentials. The policies, practices, procedures, and programs climate and culture in our District, at each building and in each and every classroom and extracurricular activity must be specifically designed and intentionally operated to ensure equity.

Educational equity benefits all students and our entire community.ⁱⁱⁱ Equity provides all students with what they need to thrive, achieve at the highest possible level, and graduate prepared for college, career, and community success.^{iv} Equity is the systematic fair treatment and full inclusion of all students, especially those who have historically been underserved in public education settings. This applies across race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, national origin, foster status, involvement with the juvenile justice system, IEP status, disability, learning difference, immigration status, or language in order to realize equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. Excellence and equity are both essential to achieving our mission. Thus, equity must be elevated and integrated system-wide, as a core-mission priority in all planning, decision-making, and resource allocation and reinforced every time our students, staff, families and community interact with the District.

District 97 seeks to understand, interrupt and eliminate sources of inequity patterns of institutional bias at all levels of the organization, whether conscious or unconscious. Eliminating individual and institutional biases will increase achievement and graduation rates for all students, while eliminating the opportunity gaps between the highest and lowest performing students and ensuring the culture and climate welcomes and instills in each student and family a sense of belonging in our school community.^v

We are aware that opportunity gaps persist across the country, and that complex societal and historical factors contribute to the inequities our students face. Nonetheless, rather than perpetuating disparities, we must address and overcome inequity and institutional racism, providing all students with the support and opportunity to succeed.^{vi}

NEED

Our data consistently reveals that race is the most persistent predictor of student performance in District 97. This is reflected in the over-application of discipline to students of color and their under-representation among students identified as Gifted and Talented. In addition, our data demonstrates that learning differences, disabilities, IEP status, and socioeconomic status is a predictor of student performance as well, while students may also be experiencing our District inconsistently depending on their ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, national origin, foster status, involvement with the juvenile justice system, , immigration status, or language.

District 97 is committed to explicitly identifying and addressing all disparities in educational outcomes for the purpose of targeting areas for action, intervention, and investment.^{vii} Race shall be addressed *explicitly*, not *exclusively*. Racial disparities are often intertwined with, and compounded by, disparities based on other factors. An intersectional analysis provides a more holistic and complete view. While race is a significant factor in most disparities, it may not always be the most salient factor. Thus an inclusive analysis of all relevant factors, not limited to race, will be considered if it is determined that such an analysis is needed.

District 97 has made efforts to address the inequities in our District and thus far these efforts have been largely unsuccessful. Eliminating the opportunity gap while raising achievement for all students is the top priority of the Board, the Superintendent, and all district staff. Race, disability, and other characteristics must cease to be a reliable predictor of student achievement and success.

PURPOSE

The Board has adopted this policy to: (1) eliminate racial inequities and systemic disparities, (2) create and ensure equitable educational opportunities for all students, especially for those who have historically been underserved in District 97 and public education settings, and (3) to support families in navigating the services that are available to them effectively so that they feel a sense of belonging in the District and know that the District will meet their student's and family's particular needs.^{viii} This policy establishes a systematic, proactive, and preventative framework for the elimination of racism and cultural bias, as factors affecting student achievement and learning experiences, and to promote environments that intentionally welcome, respect and value diversity and inclusion. Further the purpose is to establish actions that District 97 shall take to address disparities in educational opportunity and achievement.^{ix} We resolve to eliminate opportunity gaps at every level of our organization through policy, procedure, and practice.^x

SCOPE

This policy is comprehensive and system-wide in scope—addressing all functions, activities, and operations of the district including, but not limited to, curriculum and instruction, special education and

gifted and talented, extra-curricular activities and athletics, discipline, student services, professional development, workforce equity, hiring and retention, staff compensation, budgeting, contracting and procurement, policy development, strategic planning, operations and administration, facilities usage and management,. This comprehensive approach to creating equity reaches beyond simply addressing individual and interpersonal bias it includes change efforts at institutional, structural, and systems levels to ensure equitable policies, practices, procedures, and programs. The process shall include student, family, staff, and community voice, with an explicit focus on the students and families most impacted by historical inequities both within District 97 and throughout society.

This policy requires an inclusive and intersectional framework for addressing equity. While the primary focus of this equity policy is on race and ethnicity, District 97 also acknowledges that learning differences, disabilities, IEP status, and socioeconomic status represent other forms of social inequities and oppression, as do gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, national origin, foster status, involvement with the juvenile justice system, IEP status, disability, learning difference, immigration status, or language. Understanding how these different forms of oppression intersect will be key for creating equity across the District.

IMPLEMENTATION

To achieve equity for our students, District 97 shall take appropriate action in the following areas:

- A. **Equitable Access:** District 97 shall provide every student with equitable access to a high-quality curriculum and high quality instruction culturally relevant curriculum, facilities, and other educational resources. Where necessary to effectuate this policy, this shall include differentiated resource allocation and/or targeted strategies to address inequities and achieve equity;^{xi} Practices, procedures and programs that result in over- or under-representation of any group of students compared to peers shall be subject to close review to assure that such results are due to meeting students' legitimate educational, social, or emotional needs. Practices that do not meet this close review shall be eliminated if an equitable revision is not possible.^{xii}
- B. **Racial Equity Analysis:** District 97 shall review existing policies, programs, professional development, and procedures to ensure the promotion of racial equity and elimination of inequity and contributors thereto. All new policies, practices, procedures, and programs will be developed using a racial equity analysis tool, informed by effective equity tools from other school districts and the equity field.^{xiii} Likewise, where existing policies, practices, procedures, and programs are found to contribute to inequities, the District shall eliminate or reform them, in a transparent and timely manner, so that they are consistent with this Policy. District 97 shall develop and implement a Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) to establish a clear process and set of questions to guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies, practices, procedures, and programs to address the impacts on racial equity. The tool will help decision makers center racial equity in their thinking, choose options that best advance racial equity and remedy inequity, and avoid implicit bias and unintended consequences that can result by ignoring equity. The tool should be developed with meaningful stakeholder support, and shall be applied with stakeholder engagement and effective collection, analysis and use of disaggregated data.
- C. **Stakeholder and Community Engagement:** District 97 cannot achieve equity without effective,

robust stakeholder engagement. District employees will intentionally seek out and include students' multiple racial and ethnic perspectives in the development and implementation of culturally responsive teaching and learning practices and curriculum; valuable partnerships; examination and solutions of issues that arise.^{xiv} Student and family voice, along with teachers, staff, and other community stakeholders shall play a prominent role in implementing this policy. District 97 shall welcome and empower families, including underrepresented families of color (including those whose first language may not be English) and parents of students with disabilities and different learning needs as essential partners in students' education, school planning, and District decision-making. In addition, District 97 will include other partners who have demonstrated culturally-specific expertise in meeting its educational outcomes.^{xv} District 97 will work with community partners and families to provide intentional, targeted, outreach that ensures families and students feel welcome and understand the services available to them and how to access information.

- D. **Workforce Equity:** District 97 shall recruit, employ, support, and retain racially and linguistically diverse and culturally competent administrative, instructional, and support personnel. District 97 shall provide professional development to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills for eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in achievement. District 97 shall develop a concrete plan to develop a teacher and administrator workforce reflective of the diversity of our student body to provide children of all races, cultures, and backgrounds with familiar role models in schools. All children benefit from seeing teachers and leaders of color in their school.
- E. **Professional Development:** District 97 shall provide professional development to strengthen employees' knowledge of strategies and skills for eliminating bias and other disparities in achievement, including specific training on the use of the Racial Equity Impact Assessment tools and on cultural responsiveness and the historical roots of structural racism. The District 97 workforce shall be informed on and committed to equitable, inclusive and anti-oppressive methods for advancing the District's Vision.
- F. **Welcoming School Environments:** District 97 shall ensure that each school creates a welcoming culture and inclusive environment that reflects and supports the diversity of each school and District 97's student population, their families, and our community.^{xvi} The culture and climate will be intentionally designed and implemented to give each student and family a sense of belonging in each classroom and building.
- G. **Eliminating Discipline Disparities:** District 97 will eliminate disparities in discipline and support students' social, emotional, and cultural needs. the District shall achieve this through measures such as a district-wide emphasis on social-emotional learning; restorative practices that center on student voices; staff and teacher professional development on topics related to equitable discipline practices, including but not limited to implicit bias; staff recruitment and induction processes that emphasize the District's commitment to restorative justice; and culturally responsive teaching pedagogy.^{xvii} Restorative justice will be a priority and the first course of action in response to behavior issues that arise. The goal is to keep our students in the classroom, ensure that they have equal access to instruction and ensure behavior management does not negatively impact how a student sees him or herself and how other students and people in the school community sees that student.
- H. **Recognizing and Valuing Diversity:** District 97 shall incorporate teaching and learning materials

and assessments intentionally designed to reduce bias by being reflective of the diversity of students and staff and geared towards the understanding and appreciation of culture, class, language, ethnicity, and other differences that contribute to the uniqueness of each student and staff member.^{xviii}

- I. Equity Leadership and Infrastructure: The Superintendent shall develop and recommend to the Board, a viable long term plan for funding, staffing, and implementing activities and initiatives to achieve the equity objectives, including necessary leadership team members and infrastructure with updates in conjunction with each budget cycle. A Senior Director of Equity or Assistant Superintendent for Racial Equity shall be part of senior management team and report directly to the Superintendent. And District 97 shall create a diverse and representative team to provide leadership, coordination, and communication.

The Superintendent will establish administrative regulations and procedures to implement this policy, including annual reporting on student disparities with disaggregated data for all key equity and outcome indicators (e.g. graduation rates, discipline rates, drop-out rates; composition of advanced learning classes/programs,) and identification of inequitable impacts and outcomes that need attention and remediation that will be available to the public in a central, easily accessed and user-friendly online space.

The Superintendent will implement programs, practices, and systems that address identified disparities, including an evaluation rubric and accountability standards for measuring success for all schools, departments, and offices as well as an ongoing plan for continuous improvement informed by best practices.^{xix} Equity is a commitment of the school district and each individual school; this equity commitment must inform School Improvement Plans.

The Board will hold the Superintendent accountable for establishing annual goals that prioritize the requirements of this Policy and making measurable progress in meeting those goals. All District employees will be informed of their responsibility for the success and achievement of all students.

The Board recognizes that creating a fully equitable District is a long term effort that requires significant work and resources to implement across all schools. Moreover, the Board recognizes that our community broadly includes District 200 and District 90 and while we will not allow District 97's work to be delayed as a result of the other districts in our community choosing different priorities. As such, the Board directs the Superintendent to develop action plans with clear accountability and metrics, and including prioritizing staffing and budget allocations, which will result in measurable results on a yearly basis towards ensuring full compliance with this Policy. These action plans should be consistent with and supportive of the policies and procedures adopted and implemented by District 200 and District 90, to the extent possible. The Superintendent will publicly report on progress toward District goals at least twice a year, and will provide the Board with updated action plans each year.^{xx} The report will also highlight discrepancies between the targets set and actual performance when applicable and provide specific solutions for identifying the root cause of such discrepancies and remedying them.^{xxi} The report will also address the level of usage, and the effectiveness of, equity tools and practices. In addition, all special reports to the Board and other communications regarding new initiatives or providing a status of ongoing initiatives will include a section on Equity and how the particular topic of the report is consistent with this Policy and our annual equity goals.

Engagement of Outside Equity Consultants

As a part of this accountability and transparency framework as well as a commitment to a dedication of resources, the Board may retain a reputable person/firm with significant expertise with educational equity to conduct an evaluation to comprehensively identify policies and practices, at the district and individual school levels, that are contributing to inequity and identify specific policies and practices that can and will advance equity. The Board acknowledges that having independent researchers outside the district's chain of command may be an essential step to getting comprehensive, candid feedback from stakeholders, particularly teachers, administrators and other district staff to advance equity and that an independent evaluator are also more likely to make necessary critiques and recommendations that challenge D97 stakeholders in ways that might be uncomfortable but are ultimately important.

OUTCOMES

With these actions in mind and in committing to provide equitable and inclusive educational opportunities for all students in all of its schools, District 97 establishes the following objectives:

- Create new learning environments that intentionally acknowledge the strengths and need of all of our students rather than merely attempting to bring students who have not historically experienced District 97 in a positive manner into environments that were not created with all students' strengths and needs in mind.
- Eliminate the racial predictability and disproportionality in all aspects of education and its administration (e.g., the disproportionate over-application of discipline to students of color, their over-representation in Special Education, and their under-representation in various Advanced Learning programs).
- Ensure all students regardless of race, class, or other factors graduate ready to succeed in a career or continued learning within a racially and culturally diverse local, national, and global community.
- Establish annual goals for student achievement that include at a minimum raising the achievement of all students and ensuring that students performing below grade level accelerate learning to grade level or at least 1.5 years of growth, while eliminating the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students.
- Reporting that clearly communicates student performance metrics and programming and initiatives designed to ensure compliance with this Policy to students, parents, staff, and the community.
- Allocate resources to meet the aforementioned equity goals, including increased professional development and possibly an independent evaluator.
- Provide culturally responsive education to students and professional development and learning to staff
- Create and maintain a data page on the District website to report publicly and transparently to the community compliance with the requirements set forth in this policy.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy shall become effective immediately upon enactment. Implementation shall begin on August XX, 2019. The Board acknowledges that in order to achieve the objectives contained herein and

implement this policy, resources, including but not limited to, additional teaching and support staff, professional development, and data analysis professionals may be required. The Administration team will also require time to implement the policy and outcomes may not be apparent right away.

The Board recognizes that a more comprehensive strategic planning process with the community may need to be undertaken to fully align the next steps and gather input from stakeholders to establish priorities, milestones and timing so that we are operating with urgency and transparency with the understanding that this is a process that is likely to take multiple years and require the District and all stakeholders to rethink all aspects of policies, practices, procedures, and programs in order to meet the requirements of this Policy. Such a process would be undertaken within the next 6 months and would be done contemporaneously with the implementation of as many components of this policy as possible.

DEFINITIONS

Bias means prejudice toward a group and its members relative to another group.

Demographic group generally refers to any group of students who share similar characteristics, such as gender identification, racial or ethnic identification, socioeconomic status, physical or learning disabilities, language abilities, or school-assigned classifications.

Disaggregated data results from examining system-wide data through the lens of student demographic groups to uncover patterns and trends that may be true for some student groups, but not all students in the system.

Disproportionality means that there are more (or fewer) children from a particular group who are experiencing a given situation than we would expect, based on the group's representation in the general population.

Diversity means variety; different types of people.

Equity means a system of fairness in both opportunities and outcomes. Equitable systems provide access, opportunities, and resources required for students to learn at high levels. Whereas *equality* tends to center on similarity of input, *equity* centers on how those inputs impact *outcomes*. With a focus on how our inputs are increasing opportunities for *all* students to achieve at high levels, with particular and prioritized attention to meeting the needs of those most disenfranchised.

Implicit Bias means biases people are usually unaware of and that operate at the subconscious level. Implicit bias is usually expressed indirectly.

Inclusion means full access, authentic representation, empowered participation, with a true sense of belonging and agency.

Institutional Bias refers to the treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit.

Institutional Racism means policies, practices, procedures, and programs that work better for white people than for people of color, often unintentionally.

Racial Equity means the systematic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. Racial inequities and disparities are eliminated, race is no longer a predictor of outcomes, and outcomes for all groups are improved.

Racism refers to a complex system of beliefs and behaviors, grounded in a presumed superiority of the white race. These beliefs and behaviors are conscious and unconscious; personal and institutional; and result in the oppression of people of color and benefit the dominant group, whites.

ⁱ Ensuring Educational and Racial Equity, Seattle Public Schools

ⁱⁱ Race and Equity, Policy: 0600, Edmonds School District

ⁱⁱⁱ Race and Equity, Policy: 0600, Edmonds School District

^{iv} Oakland Unified School District Board Policy, Students BP 5032 Equity Policy

<https://agi.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/Alliance-docs/ousd%20equity%20policy.pdf>

^v Oakland Unified School District Board Policy, Students BP 5032 Equity Policy

^{vi} Portland Public Schools Racial Educational Equity Policy

<http://www.pps.k12.or.us/depts/communications/docs/PPS-Equity-Policy.pdf>

^{vii} Oakland Unified School District Board Policy, Students BP 5032 Equity Policy

^{viii} Racial Equity, Saint Paul Public Schools Policy 100.01: <https://www.spps.org/Page/5996>

^{ix} Special School District No. 1 Policy 1304 Minneapolis Public Schools <http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us>

^x Race and Equity, Policy: 0600, Edmonds School District:

https://www.edmonds.wednet.edu/UserFiles/Servers/Server_306670/File/About%20Us/School%20Board%20Policies%20&%20Procedures/Section%200000/0600%20-%20Race%20and%20Equity%20FINAL%2010.24.17.p

^{xi} Racial Equity Analysis Tool: Seattle Public School

^{xii} Policy 1304, Minneapolis Public Schools

^{xiii} Racial Equity Analysis Tool: Seattle Public School

https://www.seattleschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_543/File/District/Departments/DREA/racial_equity_analysis_tool.pdf

^{xiv} Race and Equity, Policy: 0600, Edmonds School District

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- ^{xv} Portland Public Schools Racial Educational Equity Policy
 - ^{xvi} Ensuring Educational and Racial Equity, Seattle Public Schools
 - ^{xvii} Oakland Unified School District Board Policy, Students BP 5032 Equity Policy
 - ^{xviii} Ensuring Educational and Racial Equity, Seattle Public Schools
 - ^{xix} Oakland Unified School District Board Policy, Students BP 5032 Equity Policy
 - ^{xx} Portland Public Schools Racial Educational Equity Policy
 - ^{xxi} Policy 1304, Minneapolis Public Schools