

District 97 Educational Equity Policy-DRAFT

VISION

The Oak Park Elementary School District 97 Board of Education is committed to our vision of creating a positive learning environment for all students that is equitable, inclusive and focused on the whole child. To accomplish this the district will provide an equitable and inclusive educational environment for all students.

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, gender, socioeconomic status, IEP status, or learning English as a second language.

As a school district committed to equity, District 97 seeks to disrupt societal and historical inequities and eliminate disparities based on student status (e.g. race, socioeconomic) so that all our students will benefit and reach their potential. Attainment and opportunity gaps between student groups, especially between white students and students of color, are unacceptable if we are to meet our district vision and our obligations to our students, our families, and our community. These gaps contradict our belief that all students can learn.

PURPOSE

The Board of Education has adopted this policy to ensure equitable and fair educational opportunities for all students, especially for those who have historically been underserved in public education settings. This policy establishes a framework for the elimination of bias, particularly racism and cultural bias, as factors impacting student achievement and learning opportunities, and to promote learning and work environments that welcome, respect and value diversity.

OPPORTUNITIES

The Board of Education understands that while not all inequities have been targeted for measurement, those that have been measured require targeted strategies to ensure access to opportunities for rigorous learning opportunities so that all students are prepared for high school, college, and career.

The Board of Education is committed to examining disaggregated academic attainment, growth, discipline, and other data in order to identify disparities and to develop strategies to ensure that all students can reach their potential in an environment free of discrimination and institutional bias, especially in relation to racism.

To reach our goal of creating a learning environment in which all students will achieve at high levels, actions the district will take include:

- Review data, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, language, special education, gender, and socioeconomic background to inform district-decision making and determining strategies to support all students learning at high levels;
- Recruiting, hiring, retaining, and developing a workforce of culturally competent administrative, instructional, and support staff;
- Providing students with equitable access to a high quality curriculum, effective teachers and principals, support, facilities, and sufficient support services, even when this requires differentiating resource allocation;
- Providing equity-related learning for district staff, families, community partners, and board members that supports our work to eliminate or significantly reduce systemic, measurable inequities in academic growth, attainment, and discipline;
- Approaching school-based programs and opportunities through the lens of targeted universalism, whereas they must be accessible to all students, but can, and in some cases should, be targeted to the students who are in need of more support.

OUTCOMES

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

- *To raise the achievement of all students and focus our efforts on all students meeting our excellence targets.*
- *To ensure that students performing below grade level accelerate learning to grade level or at least 1.5 years of growth.*
- *To allocate resources to meet the needs of students who require more supports to achieve academic success.*
- *To allocate resources to accelerate student learning to grade-level and beyond.*
- *To provide culturally responsive education to students and professional learning to staff*
- *To significantly reduce the racial disproportionality within all aspects of education, including student discipline, special education and advanced learning programs.*
- *To ensure all students, regardless of race, socioeconomic class, and other factors have the opportunity and resources to succeed, in a career or in continued learning.*

DEFINITIONS

- **Equity** means providing 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.

- **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.
- **Discrimination** refers to the unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and other categories.¹
- **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.²
- **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.
- **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.³
- **Targeted universalism** refers to identifying a problem, particularly one that impacts those students whom are school dependent, proposing a solution, and then broadening its scope to support as many students as possible.⁴

In addition, the board seeks to eliminate any practices in the district that perpetuate disparities among our students so that no student is prevented from achieving their full potential.

¹ Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder's Tool Kit

² Oswald, D.P. & Coutinbo, M.J. (2006). *What is disproportionate representation?*
<https://www.calstat.org/publications/pdfs/06fallE.pdf>

³ *National Conference for Community and Justice — St. Louis Region. Unpublished handout used in the Dismantling Racism Institute program.*

⁴ Powell, J.(2009). *The importance of targeted universalism.* Poverty and Race.
http://www.prrac.org/full_text.php?item_id=11577&newsletter_id=104&kc=1

The Superintendent of Schools is authorized to develop regulations to implement this policy, including an action plan with clear accountability. The Superintendent of Schools will report to the Board at least annually on progress toward equity in the district.