

CLAIM - Equity and Excellence Work Group
Draft ii. Position Statement – 3/9/2016

Focus/Beliefs: A high quality education is a fundamental right of every child, that all children can learn, and that every student should have the opportunity to succeed. CLAIM believes that quality education is most effective in a diverse setting; that diversity includes socioeconomic status, gender, race/ethnicity, English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and disability. Equity and excellence for all students means all students' needs are met empowering them to work toward and achieve their fullest potential. Some of the benefits of focusing on equity and excellence are as follows: students are better prepared to live and work in an increasingly diverse world; students engage better in class discussions and debates; peers are more likely to provide a positive influence; parents are likely to be more engaged; teachers are more likely to have high expectations for all students; and students appreciate and understand the diverse world in which we live.

District 97 and the Board of Education has demonstrated their commitment to creating and maintaining a high quality school system that provides excellence and equity for all students, by adopting the following four (4) District Goals, of which equity and excellence is the overarching theme:

2015-2016 District Goals
Equity and Excellence for All

1. **Strengthen Teacher and School Leadership Capacity** (strengthen district capacity as leaders to consistently and equitably implement programs that support student learning and improve the quality and consistency of the feedback given to staff)
2. **Build Collaborative Expertise** (promote collaboration and professional growth around a sense of shared responsibility for the achievement of all learners)
3. **Engage with Families and Community** (improve lack of diversity in parent engagement to better engage/develop collaborative partnerships with the entire school community)
4. **Resource Stewardship** (ensure the district has an effective organization as evidenced by appropriate stewardship of finances, human resources, operations, communications and data systems)

Top Equity and Excellence Issues: CLAIM proposes monitoring the following issues in support of equity and excellence:

1. **Early Childhood** - Development, support, and successful implementation of early childhood systems, including high quality early childhood education for all children and families

2. Education Funding - Restructuring of educational financial systems that underlie decisions related to schools and focusing equitable resources and cost-effective use

3. Resources – **Programs and services, funding, and intentional promotion of resources that** provide support for all **children and families**, e.g., discipline; mental health, special education, teaching and learning; homelessness, health/wellness; enrichment

4. Community Engagement/Collaboration – Programs **and services, funding, and intentional promotion of resources that increase family engagement and parent and student education**

Efforts to Achieve the Goal: CLAIM proposes the following to support the District in its efforts realize equity and excellence for all students:

- Monitor legislation and provide feedback to the District/Board of Education as to CLAIM's opinions related to any proposed legislation in which equity and excellence is addressed
- Communicate and connect with local legislators to share ideas and concerns about achieving equity and excellence
- Connect with the community to collect input on equity and excellence for all students