



# Board Policy Equity Lens Tool

**Title of board policy being reviewed:**

IIA-Instructional Materials

**Describe the purpose of this policy:**

This policy ensures that MESD selects and provides high-quality, inclusive instructional and resource materials for its classrooms. Materials must be age-appropriate, accessible, free from bias, and reflective of diverse identities and experiences. The superintendent is responsible for creating procedures to regularly review materials, address challenges, and ensure all students, including those with print disabilities, have equitable access.

**What is your experience with this policy:**

MESD's experience with this policy includes regularly selecting and reviewing instructional materials to ensure they are inclusive, current, and accessible. It has led to more thoughtful material selection that reflects diverse student needs and identities. When challenges arise, the policy's reconsideration process helps maintain transparency and fairness, though it may occasionally generate community debate or highlight areas where more stakeholder input is needed.



**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? 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?

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Included in onboarding, intake, or other training?

This policy should be included in onboarding, intake, and staff training—especially for educators, curriculum specialists, and administrators. Including it helps ensure staff understand:

- How instructional materials are selected
- The importance of equity and inclusion in content
- How to handle material challenges appropriately
- Their role in creating a respectful, representative learning environment

Clear and easy to understand?

The policy is generally clear in its intent and values—promoting equity, quality, and inclusion in instructional materials.



## 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?

### Positive effects:

- Students gain access to inclusive, age-appropriate, and diverse learning materials.
- Educators are supported with high-quality resources aligned to modern standards.
- Communities see values of equity and representation reflected in classrooms.

### Negative effects:

- Some may feel excluded if their viewpoints aren't reflected or if reconsideration processes seem unclear or slow.
- Updating materials regularly may strain staff or budgets.

### Potential barriers:

- Limited access to online formats for students with print disabilities.
- Lack of clarity or transparency in how materials are reviewed or challenged.

### Barriers reduced by the policy:

- Bias and discrimination in instructional content.
- Gaps in accessibility for students with disabilities.
- Underrepresentation of diverse identities and perspectives.



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?

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

This policy affects all racial and ethnic groups, especially those historically underrepresented or misrepresented in educational materials.

Potential impacts:

- Positive: It promotes accurate, respectful representation and inclusion, helping students of all backgrounds feel seen and valued.
- Negative: If implementation lacks community input, some groups may still feel excluded or overlooked.

How to find out:

MESD can gather input through student, family, and educator surveys, equity audits, and advisory groups representing diverse racial and ethnic communities.

What priorities and commitments are communicated by this policy?

This policy communicates MESD's commitment to:

- Equity and inclusion in education
- Providing high-quality, age-appropriate, and diverse instructional materials
- Eliminating bias based on race, gender, ability, or identity
- Ensuring accessibility for students with print disabilities
- Transparency and fairness in selecting and reviewing materials



## 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)

### Environment created:

The policy supports a positive, inclusive, and respectful learning environment by ensuring materials reflect diverse identities and are accessible to all students.

### Barriers to more equitable outcomes:

- Mandated/political: Disputes over content deemed controversial by some groups.
- Emotional: Resistance to change or discomfort with new, inclusive materials.
- Financial: Limited funding for regular updates or accessible formats.
- Programmatic/managerial: Inconsistent implementation or lack of staff training on equity in materials selection.

## 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?

### **Decision-making power sharing:**

The superintendent oversees implementation, but the policy allows for community input through a reconsideration process, giving families and educators a voice when concerns arise.

### **Community involvement:**

Intentional involvement may include inviting feedback from students, families, and educators during material selection and review.



## Process

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

Does it create other unintended consequences?

Impact on disparities:

The policy aims to improve existing disparities by promoting inclusive, bias-free instructional materials that represent all students and identities.

Unintended consequences:

It may unintentionally create tension or controversy if materials are challenged by those who feel excluded or disagree with inclusive content. Without clear communication or community involvement, this could lead to mistrust or resistance.

## Plan

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

To reduce negative impacts and address barriers, MESD can:

- Engage communities early through advisory groups and open feedback channels.
- Clearly communicate the purpose and process of material selection and reconsideration.
- Provide staff training on equity and inclusive practices.
- Secure funding for accessible materials and regular updates.
- Monitor implementation to ensure consistency and responsiveness across programs.