

CLAIM - Equity and Excellence Work Group
Position Statement – 7/19/2016

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' academic, social and emotional 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 better supported in holding high expectations for all students; and students appreciate and understand the diverse world in which we live.

By including equity and excellence as an overarching theme in its annual goals, District 97 and the Board of Education demonstrate their commitment to creating and maintaining a high quality school system for all students.

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 in conjunction with the work of the CLAIM event committee