

1452.01 - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Definitions

Bias – A human trait resulting from our tendency and need to classify individuals into categories as we strive to quickly process information and make sense of the world. To a large extent, these processes occur below the level of consciousness. This “unconscious” classification of people occurs through schemas, or “mental maps,” developed from life experiences to aid in “automatic processing.” Automatic processing occurs with tasks that are very well practiced; very few mental resources and little conscious thought are involved during automatic processing, allowing numerous tasks to be carried out simultaneously.

Explicit Bias – The traditional conceptualization of bias, when individuals are aware of their prejudices and attitudes toward certain groups. Positive or Negative preferences for a particular group are conscious.

Implicit Bias – This involves all of the subconscious feelings, perceptions, attitudes, and stereotypes that have developed as a result of prior influences and imprints. It is an automatic positive or negative preference for a group, based on one’s subconscious thoughts. However, implicit bias does not require animus; it only requires knowledge of a stereotype to produce discriminatory actions.

Discrimination – In the context of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Education, the unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, religion, ancestry, socioeconomic status, cognitive/physical ability, and veteran status.

Diversity – All the ways in which people differ. It encompasses all the different characteristics, experiences, ideas, perspectives, and values that make one individual or group different from another.

Equity – The intentional allocation of resources, instruction, and opportunities according to need, requiring that discriminatory practices, prejudices, and beliefs be identified and eradicated.

Inclusion – Authentically bringing together traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups to ensure the sharing of power and leveraging of diverse perspectives and experiences in decision-making processes.

Privilege – The systemic advantage a person has by being a member of the dominant group in a given environment.

Racism – Racial prejudice towards a marginalized individual and/or community by people with social and institutional power. Racism manifest through individuals, institutions, and social structures.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Education

Diversity in Education requires that the District see, value, and embrace the differences that make each of us unique, including:

- Leveraging our differences to make us stronger;
- Recognizing that understanding our biases and working to embrace diversity is a lifelong journey; and
- Believing a diverse educational community creates the most powerful and effective learning environment.

Equity in Education requires that we, the District, Board of Education, and resident of our community, share responsibility for addressing the opportunity gaps that exist within our society and impact our students' ability to reach their full potential, including:

- Creating solutions that level the playing field while concurrently raising the bar across all schools;
- Providing each student appropriate resources; and
- Providing safe school environments for all students in collaboration with surrounding communities.

Inclusion in Education requires that our District be a welcoming environment for all, that reflects our whole community as we seek to positively support and advance the educational and developmental needs of our students, including:

- Accepting, valuing, and learning from each other's strengths and differences;
- Listening to all the voices in our community, looking for the talents each individual possesses, and celebrating the diversity of backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences in our community; and
- Considering and embracing different points of view, teaching us to empathize with and understand perspectives and experiences unlike our own.

General Policy Statement

In alignment with the District's mission and vision, the Board of Education is committed to providing all students with the opportunity to succeed, and educating and empowering students to think critically, independently, and creatively. The Board is committed to promoting learning and working environments that respect and value Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in order to create a culture of acceptance, as well as celebration and empowerment of differences.

The Board is committed to identifying and correcting practices and policies that result in a lack of equity and perpetuate gaps due to Discrimination, Racism, Bias and/or Privilege, to act on a plan that mitigates those disparities, and to foster a culture that addresses the root causes and improves the experience for students, families, and employees.

The Board acknowledges the value and necessity of intentionally engaging other perspectives and voices to create this cultural change. This work is to be shared by the District, Board, and residents of the community

The Board acknowledges the history and impacts of racism, discrimination, and privilege both locally and nationally.

Purpose

The Board of Education directs the Superintendent to identify and remedy the effects and outcomes resulting from bias, systemic racism, or inequity. These directives, in conjunction with related Board policies, are designed to eliminate discriminatory and inequitable District practices.

The Board directs the Superintendent to lead the District in the following actions:

Organizational Structure

- A designated member of administration shall have oversight to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts and accountability. This oversight and these efforts may also include an ongoing school site committees or building representative(s).
- The District shall identify and establish key benchmarks that demonstrate growth in each area outlined in this policy and to develop a plan with clear, measurable accountability standard and procedures that can be assessed and reported transparently to the public
- A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan shall be reviewed annually with the Board and the Board shall receive periodic updates during the year regarding the District's efforts.
- Staff, students, and families shall be surveyed to gather information regarding inclusion and to evaluate the success of this policy.

Leadership and Administration

- The District shall periodically conduct an equity audit, or similar evaluation, to identify processes and practices, and their root causes, that result in discriminatory or inequitable practices. Practices shall be adjusted to remedy these outcomes.
- Financial and human resources should be appropriated as available to implement this policy.

Curriculum and Instruction

- Curriculum for all grades shall be relevant, represent global diversity, and include a comprehensive range of perspectives and experiences, particularly of historically underrepresented groups in a manner that is age appropriate.
- Curriculum materials shall be examined for bias and addressed appropriately, with a focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Education.

Training and Professional Development

- District staff shall be informed of, and acknowledge receipt of, this policy.
- Training on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Education shall be provided within the first year of being hired by the District and on an ongoing basis as appropriate.

Recruiting & Retention Practices

- The District's recruitment and retention practices shall strive to create diversity among staff that mirrors the District's student population.
- District recruiting shall include the opportunity to share information with applicants regarding the District's commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Education.
- Hiring data shall be aggregated by demographics to identify areas of improvement, strengths and weaknesses as related to the potential biases in the hiring process. This data should be reported by school and level and be shared with the Board of Education annually.
- Recruitment practices and data shall be reviewed to revise and improve the diversity, equity and inclusion practices in recruitment and determine the needed benchmarks.

Policy Enforcement

- District students and families shall be informed of this policy.
- To ensure consistency in student discipline, each school shall collect and report data on all disciplinary actions. Schools shall review data regularly, with the goal of reducing discipline disparities and reducing severity of corrective action.
- Violations of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy shall be reported and resolved in accordance with district policy.
- When it is determined that a student has violated the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy, the student may be provided the opportunity to learn about the impact of their actions on others through such practices as restorative practices, mediation, role play or other explicit policies or training resources.
- When it is determined that a staff member has violated the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy, the person may be provided the opportunity to learn about the impact of their actions on others through such practices as restorative practices, mediation, role play or other explicit policies or training resources.
- The District shall ensure there are various means for students and staff to report racism, inequities and other forms of discrimination.