

Book

Policy Manual

Section

100 Programs

Title

Equity and Excellence in Education (NEW POLICY)

Number

102.5

Status

Workshop

Proposed: September/October 2018

### **Purpose**

The Board of Education of the School District of Pittsburgh is committed to the success of every student in each of our schools and to achieving our mission of ensuring that all students graduate ready for college, career and life.

The concept of educational equity goes beyond formal equality—where all students are treated the same—to fostering a barrier-free environment where all students, regardless of their race, class or other personal characteristics such as creed, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, economic status, gender (including gender identity or expression), sexual orientation, pregnancy status, marital status, physical appearance, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability, have the opportunity to benefit equally.

The responsibility for student success is broadly shared by the Board of Directors, District staff, administrators, instructors, communities and families.

### **Authority**

It is the right of every student to have an equitable educational experience within the School District of Pittsburgh. This policy will ensure that, in accordance with District policy<sup>12</sup> and state<sup>345</sup> and federal laws<sup>6789</sup>, the District is focused on closing the opportunity gap by providing historically underserved students with equitable access to

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<sup>1</sup> Pol. 102.1

<sup>2</sup> Pol. 102.3

<sup>3</sup> Pa. Const. art. I, §§26, 28

<sup>4</sup> 22 Pa. Code 4.4(c)

<sup>5</sup> 22 Pa. Code 4.11

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Const. amend XIV, §1 (Equal Protection)

<sup>7</sup> 20 U.S.C. §1703 (Equal Educational Opportunity)

<sup>8</sup> 42 U.S.C. §2000c et seq. (Desegregation)

<sup>9</sup> 42 U.S.C. §2000d et seq. (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)

programming and support resources and eliminating policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce individual and institutional bias and create disparate outcomes. This policy emphasizes the most historically persistent achievement gap, that between white students and students of color such that race must cease to be a predictor of student achievement and success.

### **Definitions**

**Educational equity** means raising the achievement of all students while (1) narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students and (2) eliminating the racial predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories.<sup>10</sup>

**Culturally Responsive Teaching** - An educator's ability to recognize students' cultural displays of learning and meaning making and respond positively and constructively with teaching moves that use cultural knowledge as a scaffold to connect what the student knows to new concepts and content in order to promote effective information processing. All the while, the educator understands the importance of being in relationship and having a social-emotional connection to the student in order to create a safe space for learning.<sup>11</sup>

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Superintendent or designee shall develop procedures to implement this policy, including an action plan and timeline with clear accountability and metrics. The District shall assign administrative support whose duties shall include coordinating all of the educational equity initiatives in order to provide an equal educational opportunity irrespective of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, language, disability, sex, gender (including gender identity or expression) or national origin. The District shall maintain a data evaluator knowledgeable about equity and the District's equity initiatives whose duties shall include compiling and reporting disparity data.

At least annually the Superintendent or designee shall report to the Board on the progress towards achieving the goals outlined in this policy and set in partnership with the District's Equity Advisory Panel and Equity Office.

The Superintendent or designee must use due diligence and cultural responsiveness when hiring educational consultants, creating and revising school curriculum, creating discipline policies or practices, creating or revising selections processes for special education, gifted and talented programs, advanced placement classes, selecting and developing and evaluating teachers, principals, paraprofessionals and other school personnel, designating criteria for setting performance increments, and achievement bonuses for staff, involving parents/guardians, and creating plans for facilities use to analyze the potential effects of each act on equity in learning.

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<sup>10</sup> Glenn Singleton and Curtis Linton, *Courageous Conversations About Race*, p. 46 (2006).

<sup>11</sup> Zaretta Hammond, *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*, p. 15 (2015)

## **Guidelines**

The District shall work to:

- Raise the achievement of all students while narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students;
- Eliminate the racial predictability and disproportionality in all aspects of education and its administration (e.g., the disproportionate over-application of discipline to students of color, their over-representation in special education, and their under-representation in various advanced learning programs);
- Ensure all students regardless of race or class graduate from the District ready to succeed in a racially and culturally diverse local, national, and global community.

In order to achieve educational equity for our students, the District shall:

- Provide every student with equitable access to a high quality curriculum, support, facilities and other educational resources, even when this means differentiating resource allocation;
- Review existing policies, programs, professional development and procedures to ensure the promotion of racial equity, and all applicable new policies, programs and procedures will be developed using a racial equity analysis tool;
- Actively work to have the teacher and administrator workforce be balanced and reflect the diversity of the student body, specifically targeting African American educators. The district shall recruit, employ, support and retain a workforce that includes racial, gender, and linguistic diversity, as well as culturally competent administrative, instructional and support personnel;
- Implement culturally responsive professional development to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills for eliminating opportunity gaps and other disparities in achievement;
- Ensure that each school creates a welcoming culture and inclusive environment that reflects and supports the diversity of the School District's student population, their families, and communities;
- Provide multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of the diverse student body, and shall actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement for all students;
- Provide materials and assessments, consistent with state regulations and District policy and within budgetary considerations, that reflect the diversity of students and staff, and which are geared towards the understanding and appreciation of culture, class, language, ethnicity and other differences that contribute to the uniqueness of each student and staff member.
- Facilitate equitable access to co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, social services, tutoring, and enrichment opportunities.
- Ensure resource distribution to District schools that is responsive to individual school needs in furtherance of equity goals, while maintaining compliance with laws, regulations and Board Policy. Citation: 20 U.S.C. 6321; Policy 123.

### Programming and Service Delivery

All programs, services, and staff will affirm and be representative of diversity at all levels: the racial, ethnic and cultural groups, various socioeconomic levels, language, ability, and gender backgrounds. Special attention will be given to ensure that racial and ethnic diversity is a primary consideration in the School District. Racial and ethnic diversity and cultural responsiveness must apply to the staffing of individual schools as well as to the staffing patterns within the District as a whole including third-party consultants and auxiliary support entities. Whenever possible, no school staff or organizational unit should be overwhelmingly from a single racial or ethnic group.

Teachers will practice equity in their classrooms by providing whatever supports and accommodations are necessary to ensure students get access to the same opportunities regardless of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, language, disability, sex, gender (including gender identity or expression) or national origin.

### Curriculum and Instructional Materials

The curricular materials used by the District must be free of all racial, ethnic, and cultural biases and include realistic and respectful portrayals of the members of various racial, ethnic, and cultural groups that reflect balanced representation. Within curricular materials, students and staff must be afforded a wide range of culturally responsive experiences and opportunities to broaden their bases of understanding.

Textbooks and other instructional materials will be selected on the basis of their adherence to the District's equity in learning goals.

### Grouping Practices

The heterogeneous grouping of students shall be regarded as the accepted grouping practice. Fixed, homogeneous (with respect to manifest performance in one or more content areas) grouping arrangements that persist across the school day and school year with no changes in class assignment based on student performance are prohibited. However, in exceptional instances where heterogeneous classes are not meeting the academic needs of an identifiable group of students in a particular school, the principal of that school may propose an alternate grouping strategy or an alternative educational program for such students that allows all students to access the same high-quality education regardless of prior achievement, race, class or other personal characteristics and that does not result in tracking (i.e., assigning students to different levels of the same course or to a course with a different curriculum that is either more or less rigorous). Such modifications should be considered as exceptions rather than the rule and are subject to the approval of the appropriate Assistant Superintendent, the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Directors.