



Pittsburgh
Public Schools

Students first

Always, in all ways.



EQUITY

Glossary of Terms

2023-2024 EDITION

OVERVIEW: Equity and equality are not the same. Equality is providing all students with the same access to opportunities and resources. Equity recognizes that our students’ experiences are different and require diverse supports, resources, and funding to ensure that all students experience successful academic growth and achievement. This document clearly defines equity terms and creates a solid foundation for the Pittsburgh Public Schools to share, understand, and practice common vocabulary to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations. While the list of terms is carefully researched and is not exhaustive, the glossary was formed by the Office of Equity to help individuals engage in meaningful conversations and actions towards an equitable education for all students.

Ableism	Prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on differences in physical, mental, and/or emotional ability (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Accessibility	The intentional design or redesign of technology, policies, products, and services that increase one's ability to use, access, and obtain the respective item (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Agency	The ability to act independently and make free choices; the ability to make conscious decisions for oneself (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Ally	Someone who possesses power and privilege (based on ethnicity, class, gender, sexual identity, etc.) and stands in solidarity with, and is supportive of, marginalized groups and communities (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Anti-Racism/ Anti-Racist	A conscious and deliberate effort to challenge the impact and perpetuation of institutional White racial power, presence, and privilege (Singleton, G.E., 2022). / One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea (Kendi, I., 2019).
Assimilation	People are required or encouraged to sacrifice their primary culture or relinquish their ethnic traits in exchange for new and different traits (Singleton, G.E., 2023).
Bias	A tendency to believe that some people, ideas, and so forth are better than others, which often results in treating some people unfairly (Chardin & Novak, 2021).
Color-blind	The disregard of racial characteristics; the belief in treating everyone “equally” by treating everyone the same; based on the presumption that differences are bad or problematic, and therefore best ignored (<i>i.e.</i> , “ <i>I don’t see race.</i> ”) (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Color-evasiveness	The intentional avoidance and acknowledgment of racism and its impact by the refusal to engage in any substantive discussion on race (Annamma, 2017).
Critical Race Theory	A framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of society that maintain the subordination and marginalization of People of Color (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).

Cultural Competency	Ability to use critical thinking skills to interpret how cultural values and beliefs influence conscious and unconscious behavior; the understanding of how inequity can be and has been perpetuated through socialized behaviors; and the knowledge and determined disposition to disrupt inequitable practices to achieve greater personal and professional services for self and others (Mayfield, 2020).
Cultural Identity	The identity or feeling of belonging to a group based on nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality, or other types of social groups with their own distinct culture (National Association of Counties, n.d.).
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 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 to create a safe space for learning (Pittsburgh Public Schools Board Policy, #102.5; 2018).
Deficit Thinking	An ideology used within all levels of educational systems to explain academic performance because of deficiencies within an individual and group, discounting the presence of systemic inequalities as the result of race-based processes, practices and policies (Valencia, R., 1997).
Diaspora	A historical dispersion of a group of people deriving from similar origins (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Disparities	The condition of being unequal refers to the difference in outcomes and conditions that exist among specific groups as compared to other groups due to unequal treatment or services (LawInsider, 2023).
Disproportionality	The overrepresentation of a specific race or ethnicity identified in either the (a) identification of a disability in general; (b) identification of a specific race or ethnicity in a specific disability category; (c) discipline; or (d) placement (California Department of Education, n.d.).
Diversity	The wide variety of shared and different personal and group characteristics among human beings. The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Equity	Fairness; giving [everyone] what they need to achieve the [successful] outcome (Pittsburgh Public Schools <i>On Track to Equity</i> , 2019).
Educational Equity	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 (Pittsburgh Public Schools Board Policy, #102.5; 2018).

Equality	The condition under which every individual is treated in the same way, and is granted the same access, rights, and responsibilities, regardless of their individual differences (University of Washington, n.d.).
Implicit Bias	Attitudes and beliefs (positive or negative) about other people, ideas, issues, or institutions that occur outside of our conscious awareness and control, which affect our opinions and behaviors (Chardin & Novak, 2021).
Inclusion	Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power (Gilson, Gushanas, Yifan, & Foster, 2020).
Injustice	The withholding or denial of justice. Iniquity; wrong; any violation of another's rights, as fraud in contracts, or the withholding of what is due (McCoubrey, & White, 1996).
Intersectionality	The interconnected nature of social identities such as race, class, and gender that creates interdependent systems of privilege and disadvantage; the intersection of race, class, gender, and ability identities within each individual that informs how one views, discusses, and navigates through the world the way each of us views and discusses the world (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Internalized Racism	When individuals from targeted racial groups internalize racist beliefs about themselves or members of their racial group (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Justice	The establishment or determination of rights according to rules of law and standards of equity (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
LGBTQ+	Acronyms that refer to communities of individuals who are not heterosexual and/or cisgender. Individually, the letters stand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer. The plus (+) includes all other expressions of gender identity and sexual orientation and recognizes that definitions may grow and evolve overtime (National Association of Counties, n.d.).
Liberation	The concept of "being set free " or a release from social stereotyping (University of Washington, n.d.).
Microaggressions	Refers to commonplace verbal, behavioral or environmental slights, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes toward stigmatized or culturally marginalized groups (Sue, 2010).
Marginalize / Marginalization	The systematic disempowerment of a person or community by denying access to necessary resources, enforcing prejudice through society's institutions, and/or not allowing for that individual or community's voice, history, and perspective to be heard. / A tactic used to devalue those that vary from the norm of the mainstream, sometimes to the point of denigrating them as deviant and regressive (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Poverty Disciplining	Focuses on changing the behaviors and thinking of individuals from low-income backgrounds so that they adopt behaviors as necessary/required for social mobility (Fergus, 2017).

Prejudice	An opinion, prejudgment or attitude about a group or its individual members. A prejudice can be positive but usually refers to a negative attitude (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Privilege	Benefit, advantage, or favor granted to individuals and communities by unequal social structures and institutions (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Privileged Group Member	A member of an advantaged social group privileged by birth or acquisition (i.e., Whites, men, owning class, upper-middle-class, heterosexuals, gentiles, Christians, non-disabled individuals) (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Race	A socially constructed meaning attached to variety of physical attributes, including but limited to skin and eye color, hair texture, and bone structure of people in the United States and elsewhere (Singleton, G.E., 2022).
Racial and Ethnic Identity	An individual's awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization and personal experience (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Racial Equity	The condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity is no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When this term is used, the term may imply that racial equity is one part of racial justice, and thus also includes work to address the root causes of inequities, not just their manifestations. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Racism	The systematic mistreatment of certain groups of people based on skin color or other physical characteristics (Singleton, G.E, 2022).
Restorative Justice	An alternative approach to school discipline that seeks to address misbehavior by bringing together those who were most closely affected by the incident and working toward an agreement about how to repair harm (Mayworm et al, 2016). [Note: This term was included to provide overall context; however, Restorative Justice is not used in PPS does as it is a part of the criminal justice system. Instead, PPS is a district which enacts restorative practice (see below).]
Restorative Practice	A social science that studies how to improve and repair relationships between people and communities. The purpose is to build healthy communities, increase social capital, decrease crime and antisocial behavior, repair harm and restore relationships (Pittsburgh Public Schools Restorative Practices Guide, 2023).
Self-efficacy	An individual's belief in their capacity to act in the ways necessary to reach specific goals (American Psychological Association, n.d.).
Sexual Orientation	One's natural (not chosen) preference in sexual partners (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Segregationist	Believing that racial differences are fundamental to who a people are and therefore the different races should be kept separate (Klausman, J.,n.d.)
Social Justice	The belief that every person deserves an equal opportunity to succeed; an equitable life (Chardin & Novak, 2021).

Stereotypes	An exaggerated belief, image, or distorted truth about a person or group that is widespread - a generalization that allows for little or no individual differences or social variation; based on images in mass media or representations passed on by parents, peers, and other members of society (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Systemic Equity	Systems and individuals will habitually operate to ensure that every learner—in whatever learning environment that learner is found—has the greatest opportunity to learn, enhanced by the resources and supports necessary to achieve competence, excellence, independence, responsibility, and self-sufficiency for school and for life” (Pittsburgh Public Schools <i>On Track to Equity</i> , 2019).
Tolerance	Acceptance and open-mindedness to different practices, attitudes, and cultures; does not necessarily mean agreement with the differences (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.).
Whiteness	The way that white people, their customs, culture, and beliefs operate as the standard by which all other groups of are compared (NMAAHC, 2023).
White Fragility	The discomfort White people may experience in reaction to discussions about racism (DiAngelo, R., 2018).
White Privilege	The inherent set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white; an exemption of social, political, and/or economic burdens placed on non-white people (National Association of Counties, n.d.).