



# NEWS

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

341 S. Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Pittsburgh Public Schools Unveils New Equity Plan** *Document calls for implementation of strategies designed to improve equity, reduce racial disparities*

(PITTSBURGH, PA) Nov. 6, 2019 — At tonight’s meeting of the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education, Superintendent Dr. Anthony Hamlet presented the next phase in the District’s ongoing efforts to bridge racial equity gaps in the city’s public schools. *On Track to Equity: Integrating Equity Throughout PPS* is a comprehensive implementation plan that seeks to reduce racial disparities throughout the District and elevate the achievement levels of African American students.

The 97-page plan details 27 key action steps the District is taking to achieve items listed in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between PPS and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC), with the goal of reaching the MOU’s desired outcomes for students.

“Recognizing that all students are deserving of a quality, culturally relevant public education, this plan represents the next milestone in our efforts to improve outcomes for all students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools,” Dr. Hamlet said. “We began this journey with the implementation of our strategic plan, *Expect Great Things*. But that was only the beginning — a gap that has been gradually widening across generations cannot be closed without a deliberate, research-based strategic approach. With the finalization of this implementation plan, we have set forth a road map for how we intend to continue on this journey, and we double down on our commitment to ensuring the best possible education for all children.”

### **Historical perspective**

In September 2006, PPS signed an agreement with the Advocates for African-American Students that included 94 action steps to reduce the achievement gap, provide instructional support and create an equitable environment for the District’s African-American and other underserved students. In 2012, the District and PHRC agreed to an additional two years of monitoring. The current MOU, which further solidified the District’s commitment to equity in education, requires PPS to provide a detailed implementation plan.

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*On Track to Equity* is designed to achieve one of the long-term outcomes identified in the District's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, *Expect Great Things*. The plan illustrates the District's commitment to moving beyond compliance with the MOU to demonstrate its commitment to achieving true equity.

### The plan at a glance

The plan is grouped into seven focus areas, each of which includes action steps designed to promote equity within that topic. These focus areas include:

- Board support
- Instructional support
- Equity in discipline
- Reducing the achievement gap
- Equity in Special Education and Special Program access
- Monitoring
- Administrative Support

Some examples of action items include:

- Improved professional development for PPS educators to bridge knowledge to practice, particularly in instructional strategies;
- Creating culturally responsive instructional materials;
- A careful review of curricular materials to ensure all students have access to a rigorous education; and
- Developing culturally responsive practices to healing violence and trauma.

The full report, including all action items, can be accessed [here](#).

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### A city united

The tenets set forth in *On Track to Equity* align with those outlined in the recent Gender Equity Commission report, *Pittsburgh's Inequality Across Gender and Race*, which compared data across cities and helped identify which local innovations are likely to be most effective.

While the PPS efforts to close achievement gaps long predate the commission's report, the District recognizes that it plays a crucial role in achieving the vision of equality for all city residents.

"Education lays the groundwork that will guide our city toward an equitable future," said Dr. Hamlet. "It is our greatest weapon in the fight against poverty, discrimination, ignorance, and other root causes of these disparities. Closing these gaps will not be an easy undertaking — but it is one that we are committed to achieving. Our city's future depends on it."

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