

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY
EDUCATIONAL EQUITY POLICY

AEA
(LOCAL)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance, establish a framework, and direct action to affect change within the Leander Independent School District; to eradicate racism, intolerance, bigotry, and prejudice; and to promote an environment that welcomes and respects each community member while appreciating our differences.

This policy, and the guidance herein, do not supersede or revoke any other legal policy contained in the Leander ISD board policy manual. Where this policy conflicts with legal requirements, this policy is without effect. Unless specifically mentioned, this policy advocates for both students and staff.

Definitions

Equity: “an approach that ensures that all people have the opportunity to grow, contribute, and develop regardless of their identity.” (Board Training, Jan 2021). Differs from equality.

Access: “giving equitable access to everyone regardless of human ability and experience.” (Board Training, Jan 2021).

Diversity: “the presence of multiple groups and perspectives within a given setting.” (Board Training, Jan 2021).

Inclusion: “intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that diverse people with different identities and abilities are able to fully participate.” (Board Training, Jan 2021).

**Commitment to
Educational Equity**

The District shall actively work to change its practices to eliminate inequities that lead to identity-predictable disparities in outcomes. The Board understands that our teachers and staff deserve a non-hostile work environment; and commits to implementing a policy that creates a barrier-free learning place where, regardless of, but not limited to, race, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, economic status, disability, or body type/size or other self-reported identities benefits all of our community. Identity-predictable disparities between student groups in Leander ISD is unacceptable.

**Acknowledgment of
Historical
Inequities**

Leander ISD acknowledges and takes ownership of the past and present inequities that exist in our system. These inequities have resulted in disparities in the educational and societal advancement of all our students. The District recognizes that continuing the status quo will only perpetuate the inequity within our public schools. The Board understands the need for purposeful action and is committed to identify, acknowledge, and overcome identity-predictable disparities between our students. The responsibility for addressing these disparities rests with our leadership, staff, and teachers.

**Leander Independent
School District Office of
Diversity, Equity and
Inclusion (ODEI)**

The District shall establish and maintain the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI). This office shall serve to manage the execution of the District's strategic action plan on issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion; identify opportunities to eliminate inequitable practices within the District; and work to effectively address internal and external inequities that create barriers to success and negatively impact achievement for all students.

The ODEI allows for a single district entity that oversees the implementation of District equity strategies. The office will be led by an administrator, who reports directly to the superintendent and whose primary purpose is to manage the ODEI. This office will be regularly expanded to meet the requirements of this policy and strategic plan.

Among the primary functions of the ODEI, the office is charged to review current data and conduct root causes analysis of outcomes related to equity; develop strategies and plan for implementation of policies; and monitor progress and fidelity of equity strategy implementation. The ODEI shall report on progress at the beginning, middle, and end of each academic year.

**Statement of
Strategic
Objectives**

In order to achieve equitable academic outcomes for all students, the Board establishes the following Statement of Strategic Objectives for the Leander Independent School District:

Objective 1: Policy and Practice

- 1) The District shall disaggregate qualitative and quantitative data to monitor and address practices resulting in disproportionality in student success and achievement. This data will indicate the representation of predictable identifiable groups in areas such as, but not limited to:
 - a) Early childhood,
 - b) Special education,
 - c) Dyslexia,
 - d) Gifted and Talented,
 - e) Dual Language,
 - f) Advanced Placement and IB programs, and
 - g) English language learner programs

The District shall identify and analyze key indicators to ensure equitable access and practices in such programs. The District will facilitate equitable access to co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, programming, tutoring, and enrichment activities. The ODEI shall present the data regarding the representation and achievement of applicable student demographics at the beginning, middle, and end of each academic year.

- 2) In order to ensure equitable practices regardless of demographics, the District shall actively monitor and work to eliminate the disparity of disciplinary referrals between demographic groups, to include students in special programs. The District shall identify and analyze key indicators of disciplinary practices and annually present the disaggregated data regarding the number of students who lose time, both instructional and non-instructional (e.g., recess, advisory period) due to disciplinary referrals.
- 3) The District will distribute resources, opportunities, transportation, facilities, supports, and teachers/staff, to meet the identified needs of a campus, even if carrying out the commitment results in differentiated resource allocations.

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- 4) The District will intentionally commit to recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified and experienced staff who reflect the diversity of our American society to support a culturally responsive workforce at all organizational levels. The District shall report annually on the recruiting, employment, placement, and retention of persons, including underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.
- 5) The District shall effectively enforce a formal and informal reporting process for those that have experienced discrimination and ensure the reporting process is understood at every level. These processes must adhere to requirements found in DGBA, DIA, FFG, FFH, FFI, FNG, and GF where applicable. The ODEI shall facilitate the utilization of representatives that will focus on helping victims of discrimination navigate these multiple processes.
- 6) The District shall choose a wide range of learning materials that reflect the diversity of our American society and foster the understanding and appreciation of culture, class, language, ethnicity, and other differences with a variety of points of view. These learning materials are intended to empower staff to foster students' critical thinking skills. Learning materials will support the whole child, including social-emotional learning resources at all grade levels. These resources will support students and staff in attaining knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, make responsible decisions, and maintain positive relationships.
- 7) The District shall strengthen the emphasis in the District's Student Code of Conduct and Standards of Conduct for Employees in addressing inappropriate behaviors for hate speech, racial slurs, or acts against individuals/groups based on race, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, economic status, disability, or body type/size or other self-reported identities.

Objective 2: Professional Learning

- 8) The District will provide employees with professional learning opportunities pertaining to the achievement gap in issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, cultural competency, racism, and barriers to access. Professional learning opportunities will be ongoing and based on the changing

needs of the District and community.

- 9) The District is committed to increasing its diversity in leadership by creating, supporting, and fostering programs that reflect our American society. To support this commitment, the District will develop diverse mentoring, coaching, and staff leadership training programs.

Objective 3: Community Collaboration

- 10) The District shall maintain open channels of communication to promote a diverse exchange of thought and consider the voices of all demographic groups. The District shall create opportunities for all students and families—including the families of color and those whose first language may not be English—for empowerment as partners in education, planning, and decision-making.
- 11) The District shall model diversity and inclusion by advancing racial, socio-economic, and educational equity in business and operational practices. The District shall create greater public awareness surrounding its work on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Responsibility

The Board shall hold the Superintendent and staff accountable for the implementation of this policy. Staff at all levels are responsible for sustaining a positive and equitable climate in the district. In accordance with this policy, the Superintendent of Schools may establish such regulations, plans, and procedures as may be necessary and appropriate to accomplish this policy's purpose and intent. The Superintendent, or their designee, shall develop procedures to measure achievement of the stated objectives and shall report on progress at the beginning, middle, and end of each academic year.