

# Equity Framework



# Coeur d'Alene Public Schools

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# INTRODUCTION

## Philosophy of Equity

In Coeur d’Alene Public Schools, each member of our administrative, teaching, and support staff keeps the student experience at school central to our conversations, decisions, and initiatives. We believe each student deserves powerful learning in every subject, at every age, and in every learning environment. Further, we believe that each student can attain high levels of learning, regardless of individual differences, gender, ethnicity, language, ability, or socio-economic status.

The Coeur d’Alene Public Schools Equity Framework outlines the organizational beliefs, values, priorities and practices that contribute to equity and offers direction to the creation and expansion of equity. This framework guides our understanding of where we must continue to grow and where we must embrace change, provide opportunities for reflection, research best practices, and practice collective accountability.

Educational Equity Looks Like:	Educational Equity Feels Like:
Welcoming and safe school environments.	I am respected for who I am, and I feel comfortable and welcomed at school.
High expectations for all students.	I am academically confident and challenged. I have control and input over my education.
Authentic relationships with and among students, staff and families.	I feel cared about, and I care about others.
Remove obstacles to enrollment in advanced courses.	I am seen as a whole person. No single attribute defines my capabilities.
Reflective and adaptive curriculum.	My voice is heard and appreciated.
All students meeting or exceeding grade level and graduation expectations.	I feel prepared for and confident about my future.
Culturally responsive pedagogy, where each student feels represented and understood.	My unique attributes contribute to the greatness of my learning community.
System-wide actions that contribute to a more just world.	I know people believe in me and show a commitment to helping me succeed.
Systems and programs continually measure student engagement and access, ensuring all student voices are heard.	I am empowered to achieve my goals, aspirations, and full potential.

# THE ROLE OF EQUITY IN COEUR D'ALENE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Assessing Equity: Our District Starting Point

Coeur d'Alene Public Schools will collect a range of data from various sources that allows for a holistic perspective on equity strengths and challenges. The process, outlined later in this Framework, provides for the following:

- Consideration of the perspectives of multiple stakeholders
- Development of a common understanding about equity
- Creation of safe spaces for dialogue about data
- Increased capacity to conduct meaningful equity reviews that impact decision making
- Transparent communication

## This Equity Framework Will Be Used By...

- **The School Board** to exercise their authority and decision making capacity to guide the creation and maintenance of educational equity so that every student in Coeur d'Alene Public Schools achieves the Portrait of a Graduate outcomes.
- **District leadership** to plan for, implement, and assess structures and systems that address educational equity across the district and to align decision making with equity values and goals
- **School leaders** to plan for, implement, and assess structures and systems that address educational equity at individual sites (ex: plan professional development, plan family/school partnerships, assess resource allocation decisions, etc.)
- **School staff** to engage with students and families around the district's equity values and goals
- **Teachers** for pedagogical design and reflection that informs teaching and learning and to create individual professional learning plans
- **The community** to understand partnerships and align these partnerships with the expectations of the Portrait of a Graduate outcomes and the accessibility of these outcomes for all students
- **Families** to share with schools, administration, and staff their hopes, aspirations, and needs for their students and to partner with the school district on these outcomes
- **Students** to safely share and advocate for their hopes, aspirations, and needs, as well as those of their peers, within the school and district and then to commit their best efforts to achieve these outcomes

# CONCEPTS THAT GUIDE THE WORK

## Cultural Responsiveness:

Cultural responsiveness is the act of viewing culture as a resource, being aware of and using knowledge and skills to create and maintain effective interactions across differences at the individual, group, and institutional levels. Cultural responsiveness is evident in respectful relationships, inclusive systems, and considerate treatment of all students and staff. Cultural responsiveness includes

- Recognizing the influence of one's own cultural worldview on interactions with others
- Developing an openness towards cultural differences
- Acknowledging different cultural practices and worldviews

"Culture, it turns out, is the way every brain makes sense of the world." Teachers must help students activate their cultural schema to access challenging content.

—Zaretta Hammond

## Why Cultural Responsiveness Matters:

*A person's ability to maintain and promote cultural responsiveness creates a sense of belonging within and among members of the classroom community. No small task, it requires that teachers transcend their own biases and preferences to develop patterns for learning and communicating that sustain student participation and achievement. When classrooms are organized into communities that are designed to encourage academic and cultural excellence, students learn to facilitate their own learning as well as that of their fellow students. This kind of classroom requires careful planning and explicit teaching around social interactions so that students learn to assume leadership for learning, feel comfortable exploring differences of opinion, and accept that they may need help from their classmates in order to be successful.*



*On an even broader scale, systems themselves are most effective when they respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms and values the worth of individuals, families and communities, and protects and preserves the dignity of each.*

**“In diversity there is beauty and there is strength.”**  
--Maya Angelou

### Diversity:

Diversity can be defined as the sum of the ways that people are both alike and different. The dimensions of diversity include not only race, ethnicity, and gender — the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used — but also age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, language, and physical appearance. Diversity also includes different ideas, perspectives, and values.

### *Why Diversity Matters:*

*A growing body of research shows that diversity in schools and communities can be a powerful lever leading to positive outcomes in school and in life. Racial and socioeconomic diversity benefits communities, schools, and children from all backgrounds. More than ever, today's students need to be prepared to succeed with a diverse and global workforce. Demonstrating a recognition and appreciation of difference is an important step in creating supportive and inclusive learning environments, and research has shown that more diverse organizations make better decisions with better results. The effects of socioeconomic diversity can be especially powerful for students from low-income families, who, historically, often have not had equal access to the resources they need to succeed (US Dept of Education, 2017).*

### Educational Equality:

Educational equality provides for a consistent standard of quality and quantity of resources for all students. Equality ensures not only the existence of resources needed but also the equal availability of these resources across schools and classrooms. For example, Coeur d'Alene Public Schools provides meaningful and rigorous curriculum in every content and at every grade level, and every school in the district has all the materials needed to teach the curriculum.



### *Why Educational Equality Matters:*

*Equality is a component of equity. A commitment to equality as a baseline ensures that all Coeur d'Alene students have an expectation to develop skills and understandings needed to become successful, productive members of society, and to develop characteristics outlined in the Coeur d'Alene Portrait of a Graduate. In setting high expectations for support and achievement for all students, and in securing excellent resources and access to high quality experiences throughout every classroom, Coeur d'Alene Public Schools sets the stage for learning. It is important*

*to stress that equality, the mere existence of great resources, doesn't ensure that every student will have access, which is why educational equity is a vital component to student success.*

### **Educational Equity:**

Educational equity means that each child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential (National Equity Project). Educational equity charges leaders and staff to collectively remove barriers that prevent anyone from achieving his or her aspirations (ACPS 2025 Equity Work, 2020). In education, barriers could include practices, policies, academic support, curriculum, school resources, and school culture. Achieving equity requires an understanding of the unique challenges and barriers faced by individual students or populations of students and providing ongoing educational and social support to ensure that all students' needs are met.

*"The focus of equity work must be to remove the barriers that limit success for all children"*  
*Pedro Noguera, 2019*

### *Why Educational Equity Matters:*

*Research cites factors such as race, ethnicity or national origin, language, and poverty play a role in disproportionate representation in special education, as well as in specific special education categories, placement in more restrictive learning environments, and in exclusionary and punitive disciplinary actions (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016).*

*Though educational equity does not mean that all students will have the same experiences or the same results, it does mean that the education provided by Coeur d'Alene Public Schools will respond to each student's individual challenges, interests, and abilities, and that each student will be provided with the tools they need to thrive.*

*Through a strong commitment to educational equity, Coeur d'Alene Public Schools strives to improve the educational experience of all our learners. We believe viewing, and re-viewing our systems, programs, departments, initiatives, and interactions through the lens of equity will preserve each individual student's experience as central to every decision we make.*

### **Which is Which?**

*Equity and equality can seem like abstract concepts, and there are nuances and often a subtle relationship between the two notions. Equality means every student and school get the same access and opportunity to reach established goals. Equity recognizes that some students and schools need additional or different supports to help them reach the same benchmarks of success. While equality can be achieved through equity,*



equity *cannot* be achieved through equality. Sounding so similar, it's understandable why the two words are even sometimes used interchangeably in conversations. But there are important differences.

The following table seeks to clarify differences between *equity* and *equality*.

Equality	Equity
<p>Equality refers to equal sharing and division, maintaining everything at the same level</p> <p>E.g.: Everyone at the dinner table receives the same amount of food regardless of the nutritional needs of each individual.</p>	<p>Equity refers to fairness, justice, and impartiality</p> <p>E.g.: Everyone at the dinner table receives servings of food appropriate to their nutritional needs.</p>
<p>Equality is not concerned with barriers or gaps between two or more groups</p> <p>E.g.: When putting away groceries, all children are expected to put the groceries where they belong.</p>	<p>Equity identifies the barriers and tries to reduce the gap between groups</p> <p>E.g.: When putting away groceries, all children are expected to put the groceries where they belong, and they are given stools if they need them to reach the top shelves of the pantry.</p>
<p>Equality is an outcome</p> <p>E.g.: People from all over Coeur d'Alene enjoy a day downtown.</p>	<p>Equity is a process</p> <p>E.g.: To get downtown, some people drive their car, some ride bikes, some take a ride-share, some take the public transportation, and some people live nearby so they walk.</p>
<p>Derived from Edutopia: <a href="https://www.edutopia.org/blog/equity-vs-equality-shane-safir">https://www.edutopia.org/blog/equity-vs-equality-shane-safir</a></p>	

**Inclusion:**

Inclusion encompasses Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), a requirement in federal law that students with disabilities receive their education, “to the maximum extent appropriate, with nondisabled peers” and that special education students are not removed from regular classes “unless, even with supplemental aids and services, education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily” (Sec. 300.114 LRE requirements, 2017).

Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group is welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. According to Villa and Thousand (2005), inclusion “does not require students to possess any particular set of skills or abilities as a prerequisite to belonging.” Appropriate and important at all grade levels, an inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. Through inclusion, students participate as active and vital contributors in their classroom community.

As defined by the 2008 Leadership Development Program Inclusiveness Project Team, [inclusion] is a respectful way of creating value from the differences of all members of our community, in order to leverage talent and foster both individual and organizational excellence.

### *Why Inclusion Matters*

*Inclusion improves learning for all students. A study conducted in Boston Public Schools showed students in inclusive schools outperformed students in non-inclusive schools on the Massachusetts state exams for ELA and Math. 3rd-5th grade students receiving special education scored proficient and above at a rate three times higher than their peers in non-inclusive schools, and 3rd-5th grade students receiving general education services scored proficient and above at a rate 1.5 times higher (ELA) and 1.6 times higher (math) than their peers in non-inclusive schools (Inclusion and Universal Design: Supporting All Students, 2014).*

*Coeur d'Alene Public Schools recognizes that students belong to multiple groups with which they identify and find meaning, be it talents, interests, race or ethnicity, sex, socioeconomic status, faith, home language, disability, or other identifiers (some of which are chosen and some of which are not). Through inclusive practices, children learn to recognize, accept and value individual differences. Students and staff learn from the wide-variety of perspectives, experiences, abilities, and knowledge each student brings to the learning. Through classroom communities, space and a sense of belonging is created for all learners to foster a positive learning culture and develop new friendships among students.*

## PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE FOR ALL STUDENTS

In 2017 the Coeur d'Alene School District began a two year dialogue with the Coeur d'Alene community in order to capture the collective hopes for the future of Coeur d'Alene students. Families, students, community members, and staff shared their insights, priorities, and perspectives during a series of forums and listening sessions.

Clear themes emerged from the community discussions. Coeur d'Alene families, students and educators agreed that ongoing changes in our community, our world and the economy necessitate that administrators and teachers improve the learning experiences of our students. Key shifts toward a more student-centered approach to education are outlined in greater detail in The Instructional Framework (Orozco, 2020). One shift



Providing Equity: Key Shifts in Learning Outlined in the Instructional Framework	
From a standardized approach to learning...	to a personalized approach to learning, recognizing that each student has unique skills and needs.
From teacher-centered, teacher-led instruction...	to learner-centered, teacher-facilitated instruction.
From <i>passive</i> student learning and engagement..	to <i>active</i> student learning and engagement.

calls on Coeur d'Alene Public Schools to move from a standardized approach to learning to a personalized approach to learning, recognizing that each student has unique skills and needs. A second shift calls for the move from teacher-centered, teacher-led instruction to learner-centered, teacher-facilitated instruction. Another shift calls for student learning and engagement to move from passive to active. Each of these shifts speaks to a commitment on behalf of Coeur

d'Alene Public Schools to efforts to provide equity and to elevate the student experience for all learners in our schools.

From the forums and listening sessions emerged a consensus from the Coeur d'Alene community regarding the characteristics most important for Coeur d'Alene graduates. Coeur d'Alene graduates should possess not only strong content mastery, but also critical thinking, communication, collaboration, character and creativity. This collection of skills and dispositions places the student at the heart of educational planning and has been dubbed, "The 6 Cs of our Portrait of a Graduate."

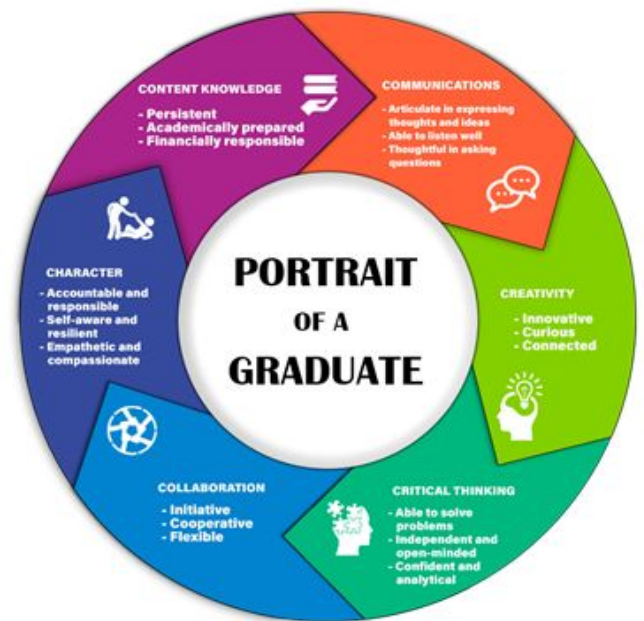
The Portrait of a Graduate work is a continual process, layered and dependent on regular conversations with the Coeur d'Alene community. Students are not a product of this work, they are *partners* in this work. The district's efforts to create and maintain educational equity is in service of providing a path for every student in Coeur d'Alene Public Schools to achieve the Portrait of a Graduate outcomes. Coeur d'Alene Public Schools commits that each student will be prepared to graduate from our schools with the knowledge, dispositions, habits of mind, and skill sets to be successful in 21st century work, post high school education, and active citizenship in our community.

### 6 C's Characteristics of the Portrait of a Graduate

Content Knowledge is the teaching of the learning standards articulated by state and federal documents as well as local curricula. The use of such documents to streamline

instruction ensures that teaching practices deliberately focus on agreed-upon learning targets. Expectations for student learning are mapped out with each prescribed standard.

*Why Content Knowledge Matters:*  
Curricula, learning conditions, and assessment efforts must align to ensure that rigor and support is maintained across student populations. Equity through content knowledge starts with the conviction that all students can attain high levels of learning. Coeur d'Alene Public Schools employees are tasked with meeting each student where they're at, recognizing deficits and strengths in skills, knowledge, and dispositions, and growing them forward in their learning.



**Communication** is the practice of conveying and receiving ideas with clarity. In a world of global and digital communication, it has never been more important for students to learn to communicate with cohesiveness, sophistication, persuasion, and conviction. Students must also develop skills that aid in listening deeply in an environment that is operating at progressively faster speed--skills such as inference, empathy, inquiry, and questioning.

*Why Communication Matters:*  
Communication gives all students a voice and creates space for everyone to participate in our democracy. When teachers and administrators respond to the needs, desires, and strengths of all students, they are more likely to develop a capacity to express and advocate for themselves and others.

**Collaboration** is the practice of working together to achieve a common goal. The Coeur d'Alene community is in agreement that its graduates will need to work with other people for the rest of their lives. Careers and jobs require employees to collaborate to address problems and create solutions. Through collaborative learning experiences, students are provided opportunities to develop leadership skills such as initiative, delegation, and responsibility but also to practice the finer nuances of flexibility, cooperation, and contribution.

*Why Collaboration Matters:*

*Graduates will someday work with colleagues who hold different perspectives, priorities, skill sets, and working styles or come from vastly different backgrounds, life experiences, and paradigms. To develop skills of collaboration, students need ample opportunities to learn with and from each other. Sharing ideas, perspectives, challenges, responsibilities, and discourse with others who are like, and unlike, ourselves strengthens every student's ability to collaborate in school and life.*



**Creativity** is the practice of using imagination and divergent ideas to develop new concepts, solutions, and opinions. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century affords graduates in post-secondary education and the workforce limitless opportunities to innovate, create, and seek new solutions. Creativity is not only about solving

problems, it is about experiencing deep personal growth, wonder, and the aesthetic. Creativity inspires art. Creativity in schools makes these experiences accessible and valuable. Humans are innately driven to create and explore their own ideas, assets and talents.

#### *Why Creativity Matters:*

*Coeur d'Alene Public Schools has an obligation to stretch students beyond conventional knowledge acquisition. Students bring many talents and skills to their learning, and they are capable of developing and refining new talents and skills. Creativity evokes new ideas, thinking, problem solving, and means of sharing what makes each person interesting and unique. We commit to creating conditions where creativity is nurtured in all students and celebrated.*

**Critical Thinking** is the practice of solving problems, finding answers to complex inquiries, and analyzing information. Our graduates must be equipped with the ability to verify the validity of information, find truth in differing claims, discern fact from fiction, and ask questions that lead to sound judgment.

#### *Why Critical Thinking Matters:*

*Learning communities, therefore, must be designed so that students ask questions, engage in inquiry about their world, debate important topics, think for themselves, and develop purposeful and independent habits of mind. Equity elevates the importance of each student's schema (or experience with, or background knowledge of, a subject) in fostering critical thinking skills and building content knowledge.*



**Character Education** is the teaching of skills and dispositions necessary for being successful citizens, such as caring about others, honesty, positive coping strategies, responsibility, and other important traits. Coeur d'Alene Public Schools is committed to developing the cognitive, emotional, relational and physical aspects of all students.

*Why Character Education Matters:*

*For quality development of character education, each student must have several positive relationships with adults in the school who mentor, keep them feeling connected to the learning community and held to high expectations for what they know, are able to do, and for who they are. All student backgrounds should be valued and considered in character development planning (Boynton & Boynton, 2005).*

## FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Through attentive communication, coordination, and outreach, Coeur d'Alene Public Schools commits to authentically connecting and partnering with the families of our students. Dozens of studies on parental and caregiver engagement find a connection between family involvement and student achievement (Hill and Tyson, 2009). These studies show that the earlier schools engage caregivers, the better the student outcomes (Dearing et al., 2006) including improved student attendance (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002), earning higher grades or test scores (Fan & Chen, 2002), developing self-confidence and motivation in the classroom (Wairimu et al., 2016) and graduating from high school and attending post-secondary education.

A commitment to equity requires that our district and schools regularly engage families in meaningful dialogue about their children, their children's learning experiences, and relevant issues at the school. Because strong family partnerships are vital for student success, Coeur d'Alene Public Schools pledges to increase and sustain participation (through outreach, mode, planning, and considerations of access) of these valued stakeholders.

In addition, this commitment requires continued, strategic opportunities for community members and organizations to contribute to and support the success of our students. The Coeur d'Alene community regularly proves its commitment to Coeur d'Alene Public Schools, not only through consistent support of supplemental levies, but through generous foundations, grants, donations, sponsorship of events, and resources such as meeting spaces, food, clothing, books, school supplies, free screenings of important documentaries, and scholarships. The district recognizes what a unique and special community our schools serve and commit to sustaining and increasing these relationships in the service of our students.

# TEACHING & LEARNING

## Introduction

*“One of the goals of education is not simply to fill students with facts and information but to help them learn how to learn.”*

*--Zaretta L. Hammond*

The most recent authorization of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) gives greater responsibility to states and districts to advance equity at the local level. Specifically, ESSA tasks states and districts to:

- Design standards and assessments that develop and measure higher-order thinking skills for all students
- Use multiple measures to assess student and school performance and progress
- Document resource gaps
- Consider the use of evidence-based interventions and strategies to narrow the achievement gap.

**Evidenced-based practices** are those “effective educational strategies supported by evidence and research” (ESEA, 2002).

When teachers use evidence-based practices with fidelity, they can be confident their teaching is likely to support student learning and achievement.

**Examples include** clearly stated learning targets, checking for understanding, and providing frequent, specific feedback

Every component of teaching and learning is interconnected and interdependent and must address the strengths and needs of each student. With an emphasis on equity, the “why” of teaching and learning becomes more apparent, and the work of teaching and learning points in a clear direction: elevating the student experience and preparing all learners for their futures. District leaders must craft system-wide efforts that address academic expectations, access to learning opportunities, high-quality instruction, resource allocation, and accountability. These are important, long-term initiatives which take time and sustained commitment, effort, and support.

## Curriculum

In Curriculum, providing educational equity means designing curriculum that communicates and supports high expectations and rigor for all while also providing the flexibility and scaffolding to meet individual student needs. To maintain this balance, Coeur d’Alene Public

Schools has identified those curriculum components that are tightly held, or non-negotiable across the district, and those curriculum components that are loosely held, or decided upon at the building or classroom level. These are discussed in more detail within the Curriculum Management Plan (Graupman, 2020).

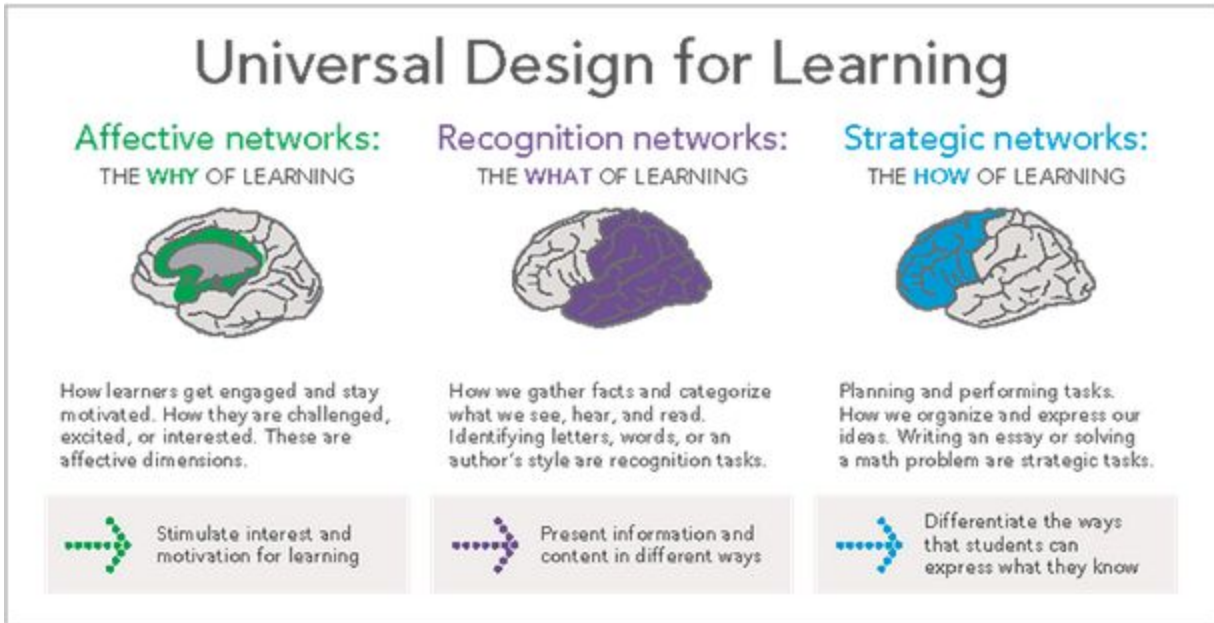
In addition to balancing high expectations with the flexibility to meet individual student needs, designing for equity requires horizontal coordination and vertical alignment. Horizontal coordination occurs when student learning and outcomes in one course mirror student learning and outcomes in that same course across a school or district. When horizontal alignment efforts are coordinated, students experience the same high levels of rigor and learning outcomes regardless of teacher or school (Hanover, 2015).

Attending to vertical alignment helps address issues of equity by eliminating gaps or redundancies in student learning across grade levels or courses and by allowing students to access future learning experiences. Curriculum is vertically aligned when learning in one lesson, course, or grade level prepares students for the next lesson, course, or grade level. Curriculum must be purposefully sequenced to enable students to advance in fields of study. When curriculum is vertically aligned, students are prepared to tackle progressive courses and grade levels (Hanover 2015).

## Removing Barriers

Through Universal Design for Learning, curriculum provides students multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation, and multiple means of action and expression.



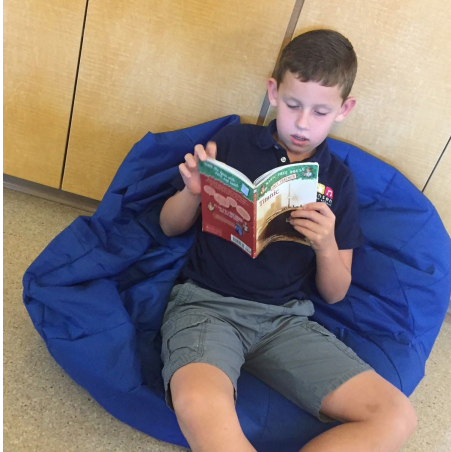


*(graphic from National Center for Universal Design for Learning)*

Equitable curriculum must also allow for multiple entry points to enable all students to access the curriculum. To accomplish this, the curriculum in Coeur d'Alene Public Schools embraces Universal Design for Learning. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework to “improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn” (cast.org, 2020). Sidewalks with curb cuts, ramps to buildings, and automatic doors are examples of universal design in the physical environment. They benefit a variety of people — people with disabilities as well as people with bikes, suitcases and strollers, delivery workers, production and building crews and so on. In a learning environment, universal design means providing participants with multiple means of representation, engagement and means of expression throughout the learning process (Rukkel, 2019). The purpose of Universal Design for Learning is to provide multiple pathways for students to have their needs met on their journey to becoming expert learners.

Most importantly, though, equitable curriculum must be representative, respectful, and reflective of students' lives. In “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors” (2015), Rudine Sims Bishop offers a metaphor for literature, which could just as easily apply to curriculum. She writes:

*“Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human*



*experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books."*

Students must also be able to find mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors within the curriculum. Curriculum must offer students the opportunity to explore and

become parts of the world they never knew before. Curriculum must also provide students the opportunity to see themselves reflected in respectful and positive ways. Sims continues: *When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part. Our classrooms need to be places where all the children from all the cultures that make up the salad bowl of American society can find their mirrors.*

Transformative education, purposeful education, equitable education, the kind of education that results in the District's Portrait of a Graduate, requires providing curricula that gives students both windows and mirrors and to "celebrate both our differences and our similarities, because together they are what make us all human." District curriculum templates have been designed to encompass these important aspects of entry points, representation, and opportunities for rigor in order to encourage students to become fully engaged, fully themselves, and fully the embodiment of the Portrait of a Graduate (Graupman, 2020).

### *An Equitable Curriculum offers...*

- Horizontal and Vertical alignment
- Rigorous learning opportunities and consistent learning outcomes across classrooms
- Multiple entry points for learners
- Students learn more about themselves, each other, and the world
- Students become fully engaged, fully themselves, and fully the embodiment of the Portrait of a Graduate

## Instruction

If one thinks of curriculum work as primarily the "behind the scenes" preparation for learning experiences, instruction is the shared work of learning between and among students and teachers. Coeur d'Alene Public Schools is committed to purposeful,

engaging, robust learning experiences for all students. To fulfill this promise, administrative and teacher leaders must actively examine equity in relation to the diversity of students we serve, and the relationships created and maintained with each student. Knowing and understanding students well is foundational to the ability to customize learning experiences for students who come to school with a variety of learning strengths, needs, and styles (Tomlinson & Allan, 2006).

When effectively implemented, inclusive practices should be virtually invisible, which is to say physically safe and emotionally accessible to most users most of the time, with a potential for adjustment to meet varied personal requirements. Accordingly, when thinking about instructional planning and delivery, addressing the following questions promotes an inclusive classroom:

1. How might our design and delivery of instruction take into account the broadest possible spectrum of student abilities and encourage an integrated approach rather than multiple separate solutions?
2. How can we continually affirm and acknowledge that “disability” is part of the human condition, so that people with disabilities are participants in (rather than only recipients of) learning design and delivery efforts?
3. How can we best work toward the kind of inclusivity that eliminates acute focus on “special” features or separate physical spaces that may hold stigma or embarrassment for being “different?” (Ruukel, 2019)



With a priority on improving learning outcomes for all students, especially those who have been historically underserved, ESSA (2015) suggests that schools and districts implement a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for social, emotional, and academic needs, and allows states flexibility in developing their MTSS model to meet those needs.

Equity-based MTSS is an inclusive structure that brings together educator knowledge of context, science, and systems, resulting in positive benefits for all students. “[Equity-based MTSS] is an organizing framework that uses specific data sources to inform decisions coordinating diverse academic, behavioral, and social resources to meet the needs of each and every student in a dynamic and timely fashion” (McCart & Miller, 2020). To that end, administrators in Coeur d’Alene Public Schools have a responsibility to actively guide the MTSS process as instructional leaders preparing and supporting teachers in making shifts toward best practices. These best practices include utilizing Tier I engaging instructional strategies, and emphasizing

**MTSS at the school level could include:**

- Teachers giving short assessments to determine which students need more support or to find out whether the support they get is working.
- Small, flexible groupings of students working on the same skill together.
- Teams of teachers meeting to review student data to discuss the best way to support a student

differentiation, as well as interventions to meet student learning and social and emotional needs.

An equity-based MTSS process aids teachers and administrators in evaluating the schoolwide effectiveness of instructional practices, differentiation, and interventions in relationship to each child's experience at school. Effective Tier I instruction is engaging, effective, efficient, and dynamic, and serves to give all students equal access to rigorous learning. Tier I supports are categorized as "universal," since they are

schoolwide and impact all learners. Tier II supports are categorized as "targeted interventions and supports." MTSS teams utilize data to identify which students would benefit from additional appropriate supports, and when and how those supports will be implemented. The goal of Tier II interventions and supports is to improve skills and understanding through smaller, flexible groupings so that students are able to proceed with their learning successfully. Tier III supports are categorized as "individualized interventions and supports." Tiers II and III employ progress-monitoring of learning to help teachers and teams determine the effectiveness of interventions and student understanding. Like Tier II, the goal of Tier III intensive interventions and supports is to improve skills and understanding. Tier III is reserved for the small population of students who *may* qualify for special education services. Tier III supports are likely provided at the individual level.

When Tier 1 best- practices are successfully executed within a solid, dependable MTSS process, students are not referred for Tier II or Tier III interventions unnecessarily. Teachers are expected to differentiate instruction to meet student needs within an inclusive classroom, which strengthens community. MTSS is a lever to ensure equity in meeting students' social, emotional, and academic needs.

Coeur d'Alene Public Schools created the Instructional Framework (2020) with the goal of articulating a model of Tier I instructional practices designed to increase the quality of student experiences through improved teaching and learning. That Framework illuminates the fact that "both minor and major adjustments in lesson design and learning environments can significantly elevate students' opportunities to learn. It provides educators with a launching point for planning meaningful and engaging instruction for learners." As Tier I instruction continues to improve, far fewer students are recommended for Tier II and Tier II interventions.

Coeur d'Alene Public Schools believes that fostering the conditions, culture, and competencies necessary to engage students and significantly increase student agency is not only possible, but vital in supporting the progress of learners toward the attainment of qualities outlined in the Portrait of a Graduate.

## Assessment

Coeur d'Alene Public Schools maintains that assessments are the essential window into the quality of instruction and educational programs, and it is impossible to determine growth towards equitable instructional practices without reliable data. Further, data without context is benign, agnostic to equity, but we understand that data within context tells a story. The story of data is built around questions including:

- What practices and beliefs do we share that are resulting in the success of *few* students, *some* students, *all* students?
- How do these beliefs manifest in the data?
- What needs to be closely examined?
- What needs to change, and how can we support that change successfully?
- What evidence do we need to consider to accurately and meaningfully understand a student's growth in skills, knowledge, and dispositions?
- What patterns emerge?
- Who is missing?

Effective differentiation for students is *only* possible when informed by frequent formative assessments that include qualitative as well as quantitative data. Assessment *as* learning and *for* learning are equally important to assessment *of* learning when it comes to equity. Assessment *as* learning involves student reflection, peer feedback, and metacognition. Assessment *for* learning is useful in teacher planning for interventions, extensions, and gauging student strengths and needs. Assessment *of* learning helps teachers and students evaluate mastery of standards and learning outcomes. Information gleaned through all three types of assessments become especially integral to MTSS conversations, curricula evaluation, and student and teacher goal setting.

Assessments themselves must also be regularly assessed to determine their reliability and validity, and report cards must align with formative and summative assessments in the singular purpose of reporting student progress toward mastery. The school principal, as an instructional leader, is charged with understanding the assessment data of the building and guiding teachers' understanding of their instructional response to data.

## Creating a Culturally-Responsive Environment



Commonly referred to as the “written, taught, and tested” areas of teaching and learning, curriculum, instruction, and assessment are key to providing authentic, relevant, and meaningful academic growth of students. Additionally, in also fostering a culturally-responsive environment, educators are provided the flexibility to respond to the very real learners in front of them. Coeur d’Alene Public Schools recognizes three distinct levels of a culturally-responsive environment, each of which plays a unique and valuable role in promoting student equity, and each of which is necessary to improve learning outcomes among all students:

1. At the institutional level, this includes ensuring appropriate policies and values are advocated across the district and school administration.
2. At the instructional level, this encompasses the design and use of materials, activities, and teaching strategies that represent a variety of backgrounds and cultural experiences.
3. At the personal level, this involves critically reflecting on one’s attitudes and beliefs about oneself and others to uncover biases.

## Social and Emotional Learning

In further commitment to students, Coeur d’ Alene Public Schools understands that school is a place to nurture and grow cognitive, emotional, relational and physical beings, regardless of history, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation or socio-economic status. These beliefs are realized through a focus on social and emotional learning (SEL) and educational equity, as the two exist in a mutually beneficial relationship, one supporting the other in the pursuit of empowering students, families and staff to reach their highest potential.

### SEL Core Competencies

- **Self-Awareness** is foundational to equity. The capacity of students and staff to understand and become aware of their personal and socio-cultural identities and what it means to belong to a group or community can strengthen intrapersonal wellbeing and compassion (Jagers, Rivas-Drake, & Borowski, 2018).
- **Self-Management** can promote equity by enhancing coping skills to manage the stress of adapting to school culture, coping with discrimination and prejudice and developing a sense of agency to pursue solutions to adaptive challenges.
  - **Social Awareness** involves the ability to consider alternative perspectives of those from similar and different backgrounds. Social awareness supports students in recognizing the many factors influencing equity in the social context including power dynamics, cultural demands, race, and privilege.



chools Equity Framework

- **Relationship Skills** guide students to develop culturally responsive skills when building relationships with individuals from diverse backgrounds, navigating cultural differences and collaboratively problem solving across race, culture, gender and social roles.
- **Responsible Decision-Making** engages students in co-creating solutions that are inclusive, equitable and supportive. Students understand systemic or structural explanations for different outcomes and assess personal beliefs and biases. Students are encouraged to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse settings (Equity Connections to SEL Competencies, 2020).

## Discipline

Coeur d'Alene Public Schools embraces a philosophy of discipline reflective of our aim to help students convey their needs in positive and adaptive ways and to build cultures of safety where students can be nurtured with guidance and support. This amounts to the way we shape, teach, and increase positive behavior.

Two decades of research on discipline revealed out-of-school suspensions and zero-tolerance policies do not reduce or prevent misbehavior. Rather, these policies actually correlate with lower student achievement. Students that are suspended or expelled are more likely to be held back a grade, drop out and/or be involved in the Juvenile Justice System (Hannigan & Hannigan, 2017). Conversely, targeted interventions focused on prevention and early intervention show greater success, decreased suspensions and greater academic performance (Disciplinary Alternative to Suspension, 2014).

In line with research and a national trend in educational best-practice, Coeur d'Alene Public schools will transition to proactive and restorative behavior management and adopt the model of Prepare, Respond and Restore. This approach to discipline does not negate consequences, but it does work to better align consequences with the actions that necessitate them, with an emphasis on restoring the relationships that may have been strained and restoring the student to the classroom community.

### Etymology of Discipline

There are several derivations of the word "discipline" when used as a noun or a verb. In some examples, we see *disciplinen*, "to correct, chastise, punish" or "penitential chastisement; punishment for the sake of correction."

Other examples take the root *disciple* directly from Latin *disciplina*, "instruction given, teaching, learning, knowledge;" also "object of instruction, to educate or train;"

and from *discipulus*, "pupil, student, follower."

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & STAFF

## Professional Development

Educators understand the demands of the profession are layered, dynamic, and ever-evolving in response to student needs. District and building leadership cannot responsibly present important initiatives and belief systems without targeted and sustained professional development built on foundations of trust, transparency, and partnership with staff. Coeur d'Alene Public Schools commits to develop, implement and



require ongoing professional development focused on equity for all District staff in the service of:

- Recognizing the relationship between equity and rigor. Ensuring all of our students understand they are known as valued, capable scholars through both actions and words.
- Developing a coherent approach to delivering high-quality instruction.
- Matching ongoing development of professional capacity of faculty, ensuring educator skills match the needs of students.
- Creating student-centered learning environments.
- Recognizing and addressing implicit and explicit bias.
- Providing access to curriculum and resources.
- Bolstering the morale of staff, reinforcing core values, and establishing norms and rituals that reinforce the mission of teaching and learning.
- Embracing shared leadership to drive change: supporting courageous leadership, buy-in, and a deliberative process where concerns of staff are heard and treated as essential.

## Staff

Coeur d'Alene Public Schools employees embody competencies of the Portrait of a Graduate. They are resourceful, flexible, and creative. They value collaboration and teamwork. Throughout the district, staff are empowered to be educational leaders. District office personnel understand their role is to serve buildings and ensure there



are no barriers between the central office and school sites in order to create an effective flow of services and support. Effective practices are shared, replicated, and made systemic. Coeur d'Alene Public Schools believes every child deserves excellent teachers, and we invest heavily to ensure these conditions are consistent across every school and subject area in the district. To this end, and to continually review equity in staffing, Coeur d'Alene Public Schools commits to:

- Hiring skilled professionals for our most vulnerable students, ensuring all students have fair access to excellent teachers
- Evaluating qualifications of our teaching staff to assess strengths/needs and consider placement within contents and across buildings to ensure equitable distribution of talent
- Incentivizing teaching excellence in service of students most in need

### Recruit

On behalf of every school in the district, Coeur d'Alene Public Schools devotes time and resources to the aggressive recruitment of top talent reflective of the diversity of our community and student populations. We engage with pre-service teacher programs from nearby universities, attend job fairs across the country, host local job fairs, and continually prioritize pay, benefits, and incentives. Further, Coeur d'Alene Public Schools goes to great lengths to promote the innovation of our programs, values and vision of our district, and welcoming sense of community among our staff.

### Retain

On behalf of every school in the district, Coeur d'Alene Public Schools is committed to retaining high quality staff, both classified and certified. We offer competitive pay and excellent benefits, consistent, relevant and engaging professional development, and opportunities for growth and advancement within the district. Additionally, school leaders cultivate safe and welcoming communities within their buildings to ensure staff feels respected and valued. Coeur d'Alene Public Schools provides mentors and professional development for new teachers and leverages teacher leaders as lab hosts and collaborative partners. We offer instructional coaches to support technology integration, Special Education programs, and instructional improvement.. We celebrate staff through recognition at various levels, including nominating and awarding certified and classified staff for monthly and yearly awards both locally and at the state level.

## PERFORMANCE

### System and Program Evaluation

In April 2019 auditors from Curriculum Management Solutions (CMSi) presented the Coeur d'Alene School District with a summary of their audit of the "written, taught, and tested" curriculum of District #271 (CMSi Audit Report; April 2019). This audit, and subsequent reviews of district performance data, show that students experiencing poverty or homelessness, as well as those identified for special education supports or English language acquisition are consistently underrepresented in measures of academic belonging and achievement. Further, practices and potential biases within the education system create an overrepresentation of these same students in measures of academic disengagement and struggle.

Coeur d'Alene Public Schools commits to providing transparent and consistent metrics that empower staff and district leaders to make informed decisions and commit to the success of those decisions, to monitor the impact and effectiveness of decisions, and to make adjustments when needed to improve the educational outcomes and experiences of students. Through reflective analysis of data, district and building leaders can best determine which practices to start, which to stop, and which to continue.

Coeur d'Alene Public Schools utilizes data to identify strengths and opportunities in the pursuit of creating excellent classrooms, schools and educational outcomes for all of our students. This commitment to educational excellence across every school ensures all students, regardless of program, the support and conditions necessary to develop the skills and understandings needed to become successful, productive members of society as outlined in the Coeur d'Alene Portrait of a Graduate.

### Student Achievement Data Collected and Analyzed

- Monitored Student Outcome Goals (eg: IEP, IRI goals, etc)
- End of Course Assessments (EOCA) Results
- ALP and Advanced Placement Participation & Exam Scores
- Out-of-School Suspensions and other Discipline/Redirection data (restraints, safe room, ISS, sensory breaks, refocus forms, etc)
- IRI, ISAT, SAT and other standardized testing data; and
- Graduation rate, among others

### Other Data Collected and Analyzed

- Parent surveys, specifically measuring reporting of "I feel welcome at my child's school," and "I understand the different ways I can be involved in my child's school"
- Community surveys

#### *Importantly...*

Educational programs that support underrepresented students have positive educational impacts for all students.

"Researchers have documented that students' exposure to other students who are different from themselves and the novel ideas and challenges that such exposure brings leads to improved cognitive skills, including critical thinking and problem solving."

*--The Century Foundation*

- Student surveys
- Progress monitoring assessments (formative or interim, for example)

## Funding

In consideration of system and program evaluation, performance-based budgeting, and the obligation to maximize each dollar, Coeur d'Alene Public Schools recognizes that "the budget is a moral document." Planning for budget allocation begins first with values, then priorities, then dollars. At each step along the way, stakeholders are encouraged to reflect, assess, and recalibrate as necessary, asking, "Is this aligned with what we believe?" Coeur d'Alene Public Schools establishes mechanisms for leveraging funds from appropriate budgets to best serve the needs of our students through sufficient allocation toward

- Creating rigorous, cohesive instructional design, delivery, and assessment. Ensure resources and access.
- Addressing barriers to family and community in public participation (staff availability at family- and community-friendly times, transportation, food, necessary interpreters and translation, child care, etc).
- Providing equity-focused professional development for school administrators.
- Providing equity-focused professional development for teachers and staff.
- Addressing needs of vulnerable populations within schools and across the district.
- Addressing short and long-term maintenance needs for each school to establish funding strategies to tend to those needs.

Regular, purposeful evaluation of data and regular, purposeful conversations around strengths and needs will contribute to performance-based budgetary decisions that support student learning.

## Facilities & Operations

Coeur d'Alene Public Schools utilizes data, technology, and diverse stakeholder input to regularly assess, reflect upon, and improve operations, practices, and conditions within the district. On-going efforts to create and maintain a physical environment that supports the needs of the academic program, staff, students, other users, and visitors who use the campus requires equitable allocation of facilities and operations resources.

Additionally, we recognize the importance of nurturing strong community partnerships in order to meet the needs of our students. In service of these efforts, Coeur d'Alene Public Schools commits to regular examination of data, strengths and needs in several goals, including:

- Regular, critical review of current resources and processes

- Develop metrics within the capital improvement plan to measure and ensure equitable distribution of funds system wide, including deferred maintenance planning
- Evaluate transportation services to reduce costs, increase flexibility, minimize student commute time, and better meet the scheduling needs of school communities
- Reduce food and basic necessities insecurities of students
- Address open enrollment, transfer, and magnet policies and procedures to support equity across the district
- Train and coach staff on the use of continuous improvement practices such as project planning and management, change management, process improvement, and data based decision-making
- Organizational and professional development for operational staff

## Long Range Planning Process

Appropriate facilities, learning spaces, instructional hardware and software, materials, equipment and all other instructional supports are distributed in an equitable and fair manner such that all learners can access academic standards, rigorous learning environments, caring school communities, and other school outcomes become possible.

- Maintain a 10 year plan that is reviewed and updated on an annual basis
- Maintain adequate capacities balanced across all schools
- Move toward elimination of portable classrooms, avoid situations that create a need for portable classrooms
- Develop and maintain strategies for land acquisition and future construction

## PROJECT PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING

Coeur d’Alene Public Schools leaders will consider these questions for all policies, practices, programs or procedures that have a significant impact on student learning and resource allocation. An intentional pause is required in the decision-making process and practices of district staff and leadership to put



equity front and center. Internal and external collaboration as well as representative participation from our families and community should be reflected in our work and decisions. Exercising the following questions ensure better outcomes:

- What is being planned?
- Who will it impact and how is it known? What type and level of public participation is needed?
- What are the perceived and known negative impacts?
- How will funds and plans ensure the mitigation of negative impacts?
- What and how is this being communicated internally with staff, families, and community, and with what type of frequency?
- What is the short-term timeline? What is the long-term timeline?
- What is the plan for continuous evaluation and improvements?
- How has this process impacted day-to-day staff decision making and practices?
- Who is missing? What stakeholder stories have we yet to consider?

"People and systems enter into the work of equity at different times and for different reasons. Sometimes it is a personal 'self-check.' Sometimes it comes from humility, trying to correct a course of actions that negatively affected groups of students, with or without the actors' knowledge or intent. For others it is an invigorating dialogue that creates a different future for how we understand each other and create different learning places and spaces."  
  
(McCart & Miller, 2020)

## AN INVITATION

We recognize the invaluable support, dedication, and passion this wonderful community extends toward Coeur d'Alene Public Schools students, and we could not do this important work alone. Thanks to these partnerships, dedicated and talented staff, and invested families and students, Coeur d'Alene Public Schools provides a high quality education to all of our students. A commitment to regular conversations with diverse and representative groups of stakeholders is key in the district's pursuit of continuous improvement on behalf of our students.

Just as our District has engaged the Coeur d'Alene community, its families, students, and stakeholders in developing and enacting the Portrait of a Graduate, the Coeur d'Alene Equity Framework serves as an invitation to all stakeholders to join the conversation. On behalf of all students, we are committed to the creation and perpetuation of excellent schools. This framework articulates a starting point and communicates our firm belief that each and every student, regardless of circumstance, can thrive within Coeur d'Alene Public Schools and trust that our collective efforts will prepare them for success in life.

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