

## Policy 832: Educational Equity

### Purpose

The Board adopts this policy to prioritize the principle of educational equity through the fair and just allocation of resources, opportunities, and treatment of students based upon each individual student's needs. The pursuit of educational equity requires the continuous and collaborative effort of identifying various aspects of district programs and operations in which consideration of educational equity shall be analyzed, incorporated, and prioritized.

To facilitate educational equity for all, the district shall be committed to:

1. Promptly identifying and addressing barriers that cultivate achievement and/or opportunity gaps for students.
2. Ensuring that a student's educational achievement is neither predicted nor predetermined by explicit or implicit biases.

### Definitions

**Achievement gaps** shall mean the academic disparities and/or differences between groups of students, as indicated through variances in academic indicators such as test scores, grade point average and graduation rates.

**Barriers** shall mean factors that block or hinder movement or progression. Barriers to educational equity may include, but are not limited to, policies, administrative regulations and practices; explicit and implicit biases; facilities; budgeted funds; curriculum and instruction; personnel; class size; **Discipline Code** and school climate.

**Cultural proficiency** shall mean the level of knowledge-based skills and understanding that is required to successfully teach and interact with students and to work effectively with colleagues, families and communities from other cultures. It requires an ongoing examination and self-reflection to challenge one's own cultural biases and understand the cultural perspectives and experiences of others.

**Culturally responsive** shall mean the inclusion of students' cultural references in aspects of learning, school experiences and student engagement.

**Diversity** all the ways in which people differ.

**Educational equity action plan** shall mean the steps education stakeholders in a district engage in to pursue equity.

**Educational equity audit** shall mean a comprehensive equity and inclusion benchmarking instrument that assesses a district's barriers to opportunity and progress

towards achieving the equity outcomes described in this policy and the district's Educational Equity Action Plan.

**Equity** fair treatment, access, and elimination of barriers

**Equity lens** shall mean an intentional focus on assessing any inequitable impact the execution of a program, practice, operation, decision or action may have on a student or group of students.

**Explicit bias** shall mean the actions, attitudes and beliefs we have about a person or group on a conscious level.

**Gender** for purposes of this policy, shall mean the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity, including a person's gender identity and gender expression which includes a person's internal sense of being male, female, some combination of male and female or neither male nor female.

**Implicit bias** shall mean the actions, attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in a subconscious manner.

**Inclusion** engaging and respecting individuals in all groups so everyone can participate, feel welcomed, and valued.

**Multicultural competency** shall mean an ability to interact effectively with individuals of other cultures.

**Opportunity gaps** shall mean the disparities in the delivery of educational and extracurricular opportunities, funding and other resources between and among different student groups, leading to different academic, extracurricular, social and economic outcomes for students.

**Social Justice** is the protection of the educational rights, opportunities, and well-being of all children. Social justice requires promoting nondiscriminatory practices to create schools, communities, and systems that ensure equity (see definition above) and fairness for all children and staff.

### **Authority**

The Board is committed to the provision of an equitable education system that reflects the principles of fairness and justice for all students regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, English learner status, disability, and other characteristics, as well as the intersection of those characteristics.[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10][11][12][13][14][15][16][17][18][19][20][21][22][23][24][25][26][27][28][29]

## **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Superintendent and/or designee(s) shall use an equity lens and quantitative and qualitative data to assess systematically which students and/or student groups are experiencing the least achievement, determine why, and target resources and efforts to address identified needs and improve overall outcomes.

Each school employee shall be expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the principles of this policy and for fostering a school climate that is equity focused and culturally responsive. Employees shall receive support in the form of training regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## **Educational Equity Audit**

The Superintendent or designee(s) shall periodically conduct an audit to benchmark educational equity in school and district-wide achievement and opportunities.

## **Educational Equity Action Plan**

The Superintendent and designee(s) shall develop and annually update the district's Educational Equity Action Plan with clear accountability goals and metrics to address inequities. The Educational Equity Action Plan shall be reflective of the voices of administrators, teachers, staff, students, families and members of the community.

The Educational Equity Action Plan shall:

1. Embed equity practices throughout the district's educational system and policy adoption and revision processes.
2. Include equity goals and practices in the district's strategic plan.[1]
3. Ensure performance measures encompass consideration of the expectations and goals of this policy.
4. Include periodic guidance and/or input from professionals outside of Pine-Richland School District in a consultative manner.

## **Educational Equity Update**

The Superintendent shall annually provide an educational equity update to the Board that reflects the efforts undertaken and progress made to achieve the goals of this policy and those reflected with the strategic plan.

Based on the equity goals and activities set by the district, the educational equity update may include data on:

### *Students -*

The following student-related data shall be disaggregated and intersected by gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, English learner status and disability whenever possible:

1. Enrollment of each school.
2. Achievement indicators.
3. Attendance and behavior indicators. Such indicators may include data regarding excused and unexcused absences, out-of-school suspension, in-school suspension, alternative education enrollment, the Office for Safe Schools reports, expulsion and other school discipline factors.
4. Opportunity indicators. Such indicators may include enrollment in gifted programs, advanced placement classes, honors classes, career and technical education and participation in extracurricular programs and athletics.
5. Perception indicators. Such indicators may include student, parent, and/or staff engagement surveys, focus groups, and/or committees.

### *Administrators, Teachers and Staff -*

1. Race, ethnicity, gender and years of experience of support staff, teachers, building administrators and district administration.
2. Efforts to recruit and select diverse personnel.
3. Amount of teacher turnover by district and school.
4. Ways in which professional development at each school is delivered through an equity lens.
5. Efforts to embed cultural responsiveness into the curriculum.

### *Resource Allocation -*

1. Fiscal – locally controlled budgetary considerations.
2. Operational – programs, services and personnel considerations.
3. Structural – facility and organizational considerations.

Annually, at the beginning of the budget process, the Board shall review the most recent educational equity update in conjunction with the current Educational Equity Action Plan to consider resource allocations in support of the district's commitment to educational equity.

## **Guidelines**

Educational equity shall serve as the foundational structure upon which all aspects of the district's educational system are built and maintained. An equity-focused structure is essential to grow knowledge and skills, provide necessary resources, include diverse voices, promote accountability, implement effective practices, produce partnerships and address barriers to learning and participation. In the pursuit of educational equity for all students, district programs, operations and functions shall be structured to prioritize the following guiding principles:

### Multiple Pathways to Success/High Expectations [19]

The district shall 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 and excellence from each student.

All students shall be encouraged and provided opportunities to:[3][8][9][12][13][14]

1. Pursue their goals and interests without regard to biases and other barriers.
2. Enroll in challenging programs.
3. Participate in school activities and interscholastic athletics.

### Access to Equitable Resources

Each student shall be provided equitable access to instructional materials, assessments, curriculum, support, facilities, teaching practices and other educational resources and services that reflect an appreciation for the diverse cultural perspectives, identities and needs of students and their families by strategically differentiating allocations as necessary to remove barriers and improve outcomes.[1][2][3][4][5][6][8][9][10][11][14][15][16][17][18][22][23][24][25][26][27]

### Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

The district shall strive to create a welcoming, inclusive culture and environment that values, reflects and is responsive to the diversity of the students, their families and the community.[2][3][18][28][29][30][31]

Respectful and civil discourse and interactions among all district leaders, staff, students, families and community members shall be expected at all times.

### Partnerships and Inclusion

The district shall welcome and empower students and families, including but not limited to, families of color, low-income families, individuals with disabilities, individuals whose first language may not be English and other underrepresented groups, as essential partners in their student's educational experiences, school planning and district decision-making. The district shall provide multiple and flexible opportunities for dialogue and engagement with families and communities.[28][29]

In addition, the district shall include other partners who have modeled best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, such as government agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, institutions of higher learning and the general community in meeting equitable educational outcomes.

### Data Focused

To make informed decisions in the pursuit of educational equity, the district shall systematically use quantitative and qualitative district-wide and school-level data. Such data may include anecdotal information from teachers and staff, as well as formally collected and reported data. Data shall be disaggregated and intersected, where feasible, based on available demographics.[32]

### Equity Lens

The district shall, as a continuous practice, review current and newly developed policies, administrative regulations, practices, programs, procedures, professional development and locally controlled budget allocations with an equity lens.

The district shall be aided in this process through the use of educational equity analysis and auditing tools.

### Cultural Proficiency

The district shall provide instructional materials and assessments, and promote teaching practices that reflect and are responsive to the diverse cultural perspectives and identities of students and their families.

The district's curriculum shall:

1. Promote equity, inclusion, and respect.
2. Reflect and celebrate the distinctive contributions and perspectives of a diverse society.
3. Embed culturally responsive teaching and practices.
4. Provide opportunities for staff and students to develop and model multicultural proficiency.

### Workforce Diversity

The district recognizes the benefits of a highly effective workforce that reflects racial, gender and linguistic diversity.

In the promotion of workplace diversity, the district shall strive to:[23]

1. Maintain an employment process that is free of discrimination and bias.[23][30]
2. Identify and address barriers to the recruitment, hiring, retention, development and promotion of district employees from diverse backgrounds.
3. Actively recruit and/or promote highly qualified candidates who are committed to educational equity.

### Professional Development

The district shall ensure the provision of professional development opportunities for advancement of employees' understanding and skill sets relative to addressing barriers to students' opportunities. An equity lens shall be embedded in all professional development.[24]

Professional development shall foster the skills, knowledge and beliefs to cultivate diversity, equity, and inclusion, social-emotional learning and mental health to create a learning environment that is student-centered and meets the individual and diverse needs of students.

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