

The Affirming Racial Equity Tool

Attribution

The original JCPS ARE Tool was curated by former DEP Resource Teachers including: Rachel Klein, Donna Lawson, Shashray McCormack, LaManda Moore Rodriguez, and Kadia Turner. Their work was adapted from the [Equity Framework](#) developed by Karla E. Vigil and inspired by James A. Banks, author of *Cultural Diversity and Education: Foundations, Curriculum, and Teaching*. This iteration of the ARE Tool was curated by DEP Anti-Racist Specialists LaManda Moore Rodriguez, Rachel Klein, and Aven Cook to better align to current challenges to racial equity work being done in JCPS and to other DEP anchor documents that work to fortify anti-biased, anti-racist, and racially equitable pedagogy and practices for all students every day.

Expectations for Use

The [JCPS Racial Equity Policy](#) acknowledges that:

- ❖ Persistent gaps in achievement, learning, expectations, opportunities, and disciplinary outcomes [exist] among student groups based on race and ethnicity.
- ❖ Students of Color have been disadvantaged by long-standing inequities in our society, the causes of which are multi-faceted, and reflect historical, social, and institutional factors.
- ❖ The District must take a systemic approach to ensure that Students of Color have equitable learning opportunities, experiences, and outcomes.

For these reasons, all schools are expected to utilize the ARE Tool in regular lesson and unit planning as well as in administrative coaching and observation cycles. Prior to implementation, the [ARE Tool Guidebook](#) should be reviewed by teachers, AICs, APs, counselors, resource teachers, and all school principals. As the ARE Tool is folded into the weekly planning done by teachers and teams of teachers in PLCs, it is also essential to review [The ARE Tool & PLC Framework Alignment Document](#).

While the JCPS Racial Equity Policy places many burdens of achieving racial equity on Central Office personnel and support staff, school expectations exist that all teachers must remain aware of, regardless of the curricular frameworks, materials, or resources that they choose to utilize in their classrooms. Those are detailed below to reinforce the purpose of the regular use of the ARE Tool in planning.

- ❖ Diversity in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
 - Racial Equity Policy Expectation #1: Curriculum materials accurately reflect the contributions and history of non-White cultures in 80 percent of the school.
 - Racial Equity Policy Expectation #2: The school has identified and is implementing instructional practices that have shown to improve learning outcomes for students of color, to close the achievement gap.
 - Racial Equity Policy Expectation #3: Multiple forms of assessment are used. Assessment strategies are not finite in that they allow for feedback and revisions until mastery is achieved.

Content Integration

Teachers regularly utilize examples from a wide variety of cultures and groups in lessons and units.

| Lesson Descriptors | Lesson/Unit Plans for Implementation |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| The lesson's materials reflect diverse cultures and identities. | |
| The lesson's tasks reflect diverse cultures and identities. | |
| The lesson's secondary resources reflect diverse cultures and identities. | |
| The lesson's materials/tasks/secondary resources reflect the students in the class. (Mirrors) | |
| The lesson's materials/tasks/secondary resources allow students to explore/understand others' experiences. (Windows) | |
| The content within the lessons is validating to individuals/groups that are typically underrepresented. | |

Notes on Use

For the purposes of this component, “diverse” will be defined as pertaining to any and all cultures that are NOT heterosexual, male-centered, white, Western, and/or Christian. When considering identity and intersectionality in a text, keep in mind that marginalization can exist across “minority” groups in reference to age, ability, class, gender, education, ethnicity, language, location, nationality, race, religion, and/or sexuality. Allow for intersectionality within lessons and units and know that this is not an exhaustive list of identities to consider.

Resources

[The ARE Tool in PLCs: Component Deep-Dive \(Content Integration\)](#)

[Affirming Racial Equity Across Content Areas](#)

[Black Experience Teacher Institute \(BETI\) Lessons](#)

[SIMPLE Pantry](#)

[Team of Teachers for Equity \(TOTE\) Lessons](#)

Knowledge Construction

Teachers intentionally plan lessons to ensure students understand how oppression and systemic racism influence knowledge and perceptions of knowledge.

| Lesson Descriptors | Lesson/Unit Plans for Implementation |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Teacher provides all students with the necessary background and historical context regarding bias, oppression, privilege, and/or systemic racism to purposefully engage in lessons. | |
| The lesson's materials and tasks develop students' academic skill sets through analysis, creative thinking, critical thinking, information literacy, inquiry, problem solving, quantitative literacy, reading, research skills, teamwork, and written and oral communication skills. | |
| The lesson's materials allow students to position themselves within the content to affirm their racial identities. | |
| The lesson's tasks allow students to assess, critique, and discuss the assumptions, values, and word choices represented in the lesson's materials. | |
| The lesson's tasks/secondary resources allow students to acknowledge and analyze oppression, power relationships, and privilege in the lesson's materials. | |
| The lesson's materials/tasks/secondary resources allow students to analyze the ways in which bias and cultural beliefs impact widely available information and "truthful" information. | |

Resources

[The ARE Tool in PLCs: Component Deep-Dive \(Knowledge Construction\)](#)

[Affirming Racial Equity Across Content Areas](#)

[Stages of Racial Identity Development from Racial Equity Tools](#)

[Seven Forms of Bias in Instructional Materials](#)

Prejudice Elimination

Teachers intentionally plan lessons to build understanding and foster intergroup relations.

| Lesson Descriptors | Lesson/Unit Plans for Implementation |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Teachers are aware of their own internal biases and how those biases impact students' achievement and engagement in their classroom. | |
| Teachers have created and implemented a plan to engage in active bias-checking alongside their colleagues, especially within departments and PLCs. | |
| Teachers are aware of materials and tasks that may be considered controversial, demeaning, emotionally charged, inflammatory, or offensive to underrepresented groups. | |
| Teachers build lessons/units that encourage students' cultural humility by developing a sense of pride and value in their own culture and others through extensive learning. | |
| Lessons/units allow students to understand the impact of bias and stereotypes through varied materials/tasks/secondary resources. | |
| Lessons/units allow students to see underrepresented people in a range of traditional and nontraditional roles. | |

Resources

[The ARE Tool in PLCs: Component Deep-Dive \(Prejudice Elimination\)](#)

[Examples of Microaggressions in the Classroom](#)

[Let's Talk](#) from Learning for Justice

Equitable Pedagogy

Teachers modify methods, resources, and strategies to facilitate academic achievement of underrepresented societal groups.

| Lesson Descriptors | Lesson/Unit Plans for Implementation |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Teachers create a community of learners through intentional use of cooperative learning strategies, shared responsibility, and teamwork. | |
| Teachers develop a tool box of instructional examples, methods, and practices that are culturally familiar to underrepresented students. | |
| Teachers utilize varied instructional methods to match students' learning preferences, to maintain students' attention, and to increase student interest in learning. | |
| Teachers ensure all students acquire necessary academic language to perform at high levels. | |
| Teachers hold all students to high academic expectations, providing the same rigorous academic content to all students through differentiation and scaffolding. | |
| Teachers present students with content that contextualizes real world situations, allowing students to address societal issues, not excluding controversial topics. | |

Resources

[The ARE Tool in PLCs: Component Deep-Dive \(Equitable Pedagogy\)](#)

[10 Ways Educators Can Take Action in Pursuit of Equity](#)

[What is Equity?](#)

Empowering Classroom Culture

Teachers recognize the value of culture and race in relationship building with both students and families, so teachers build positive relationships that are the foundation for a healthy, inclusive, and safe learning environment.

| Lesson Descriptors | Lesson/Unit Plans for Implementation |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Teachers are affirming of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, class, gender, and sexual orientation when interacting with students and their families. | |
| Teachers establish a classroom culture that rejects educational traditions that work to harm students in underrepresented groups and maintain the status quo. | |
| Classrooms acknowledge and affirm the strengths of students' diverse heritage and identities through positive, supportive, and welcoming interactions. | |
| Classroom expectations, routines, and rules are affirming and equitable, providing student feedback and voice regularly. | |
| Established communication systems are inclusive, translated as needed, and varied, ensuring that all caregivers and families have equal access to necessary information. | |
| Caregivers are regularly invited to contribute to students' learning, participate in ongoing classroom conversations, and share their expertise. | |

Resources

[The ARE Tool in PLCs: Component Deep-Dive \(Empowering Classroom Culture\)](#)

[5 Ways to Empower Students](#)

[Leading Together / Retraining the Brain](#)

[Speak Up!](#) from Learning for Justice

A.R.E. Through Assessment

Teachers intentionally plan assessments that allow students to showcase their knowledge and mastery through cross-curriculum skill sets with an embedded and purposeful feedback cycle.

| Lesson Descriptors | Lesson/Unit Plans for Implementation |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Assessments and feedback exist in continuous cycles, allowing students to set goals, interact with curriculum, create an artifact of their learning, receive coaching, and revise their work until mastery is achieved. | |
| Feedback on all major assessments is actionable, specific, timely, and goal-oriented. | |
| Rubrics are co-created whenever possible and utilized throughout all feedback cycles to ensure clear communication and strong collaboration between students and teachers. | |
| Assessments allow students to demonstrate their growth in a wide variety of ways, such as: demonstration, essay, multiple choice, performance, portfolios, presentation, and/or self-assessment. | |
| Assessments balance intellectual and practical skill sets through the Backpack of Success Skills and, wherever possible, are interdisciplinary in nature. | |
| PLCs disaggregate academic and behavioral data to examine achievement disparities by race and gender using their school's Equity ScoreCard. | |

Resources

[The ARE Tool in PLCs: Component Deep-Dive \(A.R.E. Through Assessment\)](#)

[Affirming Racial Equity Across Content Areas](#)

[Backpack of Success Skills](#) Website

[Backpack-Worthy Artifacts](#)

[Equity ScoreCard](#)

[Performance-Based Assessment: Reviewing the Basics](#)

Performance Outcomes for [5th Grade](#), [8th Grade](#), & [12th Grade](#)

[Resources for Assessment in Project-Based Learning](#)

[Equity in Grading Self-Assessment](#)

 Instructional Equity Tool: Assessment Analysis in PLCs