Northshore
School District

Racial and Educational Justice Checklist

The Racial and Educational Justice Checklist is designed to assist the user to create, review, and address policies, procedures, programs, and practices, where through guiding questions the user can analyze, recognize, and remove barriers and/or inequities by supporting best practices. The tool then navigates the user towards building and creating pathways to advance opportunities that support growth through inclusion and participation to achieve greater equitable outcomes throughout the Northshore School District. The accompanying core belief statements from the Diversity and Equity Policy 0001, together with the glossary of terminology, support the use of this Checklist.

Guiding Beliefs

We believe it is a fundamental right of all students to have an equitable educational experience within Northshore School District programs and services. The responsibility for ensuring student success is held by school board directors, district staff, administrators, educators, communities, students, and our families. We are focused on closing the opportunity and achievement gaps and creating learning communities that provide supportive and enriching experiences for all Northshore students.

We believe equitable access to schools, classrooms, programs, resources, and services provided by the district requires acknowledgment of the impact of institutional inequality as well as diverse learning needs. This means differentiating resource allocation, within budgetary limitations, to meet the needs of students who need more supports and opportunities to succeed academically.

We believe the education of each student requires a respect and appreciation for his or her race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, mental health status, disability, age, sexual orientation, religious status, and/or gender expression. We ensure each student is provided with rigorous culturally relevant curriculum delivered with culturally responsive practices in a learning environment free of barriers to success.

We believe it is the district's responsibility to evaluate and correct policies and practices resulting in unfair, negative educational impacts. All students, staff, families, and community members have a vested interest in, and should work together to, correct systemic inequities.

We believe the employees of the district should reflect the diversity of the community it serves. This is critical to implementing successful policies and practices that close the opportunity and achievement gaps. It is essential that all children are provided with role models from diverse backgrounds representing different roles within our schools and the district. Employees are active participants in fostering culturally inclusive environments where diverse perspectives and experiences are welcomed and valued.

We believe implementing sustainable practices that eliminate the opportunity and achievement gaps requires that staff work together to increase their individual and collective capacity to effectively teach a diverse and changing student population. It is imperative that we provide professional development to teaching staff specifically designed to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills to eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps and to address implicit bias.

Glossary of Terminology

Achievement Gap - The observable, measured difference in performance on educational measures (i.e., standardized test scores, grade point averages, dropout rates, college attainment) by groups of students (i.e., students of a certain race/ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status). Specifically, the achievement gap addresses a concern for underperformance on select educational measures.

Barrier - Anything that restrains or obstructs progress and access.

Culturally Responsive Practices - Culturally responsive practices support the achievement of ALL students by providing effective teaching and learning in a "culturally supported, learner-centered context, whereby the strengths students bring to school are identified, nurtured, and utilized to promote student achievement." Richards, Brown, & Forde, 2006

Diversity - describes the qualities and conditions that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong, yet are present in other individuals and groups. These include but are not limited to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, mental health status, disability, age, sexual orientation, religious status, and/or gender expression.

Equity - A commitment to educate each student in a way that ensures every student is achieving excellence. The focus is on eliminating significant gaps in outcomes throughout the District, while increasing opportunities for achievement among students not performing to their full potential. Whereas equality tends to focus primarily on similarity of input, equity purposefully focuses on how those inputs impact outcomes. With this focus, we understand our part in ensuring that our inputs increase opportunities for "all" to really mean "all" when we say "All students prepared for college, career, and citizenship."

Gender Identity - One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth. Gender Neutral & Gender Non-Conforming - One that identifies as gender neutral/ or non-conforming, nether as one biological gender or the other. Pronouns Commonly Used: she/her, he/him, and they/them.

Implicit Bias - A set of subtle beliefs or judgments, which is relatively inaccessible to conscious awareness or control, about members of a group based on some characteristic.

Inequity - Lack of fairness, justice, or intention in policies, practices, and outcomes that have a negative impact on opportunities and access for an individual or group.

Institutional Bias - A tendency for the procedures and practices of particular institutions to operate in ways that result in certain social groups being advantaged or favored and others being disadvantaged or devalued. This may not be the result of any conscious prejudice or discrimination but rather of the majority simply following existing rules or norms.

Intersectionality - The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, gender, culture, and/or ability as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Inclusivity: An intention or policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who are handicapped or learning-disabled, or racial and sexual minorities.

Institutional Racism - A form of racism expressed in the practice of social and political institutions, as distinct from racism by individuals or informal social groups. It is reflected in disparities regarding criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power and education, creating different outcomes for different racial groups. Institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites, and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.

Opportunity Gap - When institutionalized structures, systems and practices result in barriers to educational access, success and limitations in outcomes for traditionally underrepresented and/or underperforming individuals or groups.. These disparities are often perpetuated by factors related to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, mental health status, disability, age, sexual orientation, religious status, and/or gender expression.

Practices -The customary, habitual, or expected procedure of something. These might be hiring**,** instructional or operational in nature.

Privilege - The systemic benefit and/ or advantage, favoring, valuing or validating certain racial, social-economic, cultural, religious, or gender identities over others. Individuals cannot "opt out" of systems of privilege; rather these systems are inherent to the society in which we live.

Program - A set of related measures, events, or activities with a particular short- or long-term aim.

Questions

Policies, procedures, programs, and practices will employ the equity best practices criteria as described in the questions below. Use these questions to guide your reflections, review, and revisions:

Inclusivity

- ❏ How are subgroups (by gender, race, religion, sexual-orientation, culture and ability, etc.) affected by the policy, procedure, program, or practice involved in its development, implementation, and evaluation?
- ❏ How does the policy, procedure, program, or practice foster greater engagement in the Northshore community from diverse perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds?
    - ❏ How might the policy, procedure, program, or practice unintentionally exclude or limit minoritized persons or communities?
        - ❏ *What elements could be revised to eliminate these inequities ?*
    - ❏ *What, if any, additional wording or guidance needs to be provided for greater clarity?*

Opportunity

- ❏ How does the policy, procedure, program, or practice reinforce practices within the organization that eliminate institutional inequities?
- ❏ How are issues of institutional racial and cultural oppression, bias, and privilege acknowledged and addressed? ❏ *How will we ensure participation and accountability?*
    - ❏ How does the policy, procedure, program, or practice increase opportunity and/or access for historically excluded communities? ❏ *Who benefits from and/or who is harmed by the program, practice, policy or procedure?*
- ❏ How do the academic policies, procedures, programs and practices specify ways in which they are tied to culturally relevant practices and/or offer or promote differentiated pathways for students'

success?

Equity

❏ How does the policy, procedure, program or practice reduce achievement gaps, eliminate disproportionality, and/or ensure supports based on ability and/or need? What evidence or data supports this?

❏ How does the policy, procedure, program or practice offer access through differentiation of resources, monetary or human, pending budget capacity where possible?

❏ How does the policy, procedure, program or practice indicate /outline adequate staffing allocations or plans to support it? ❏ How does the policy, procedure, program or practice ensure that resources – people, time, money – are allocated equitably, in line with the needs of our students and schools, and the priorities established by our community in our Strategic Action Plan?

Cultural Relevance

❏ How does the policy, procedure, program or practice focus on or support, rather than hinder, access to academic, social, emotional and behavioral growth?

❏ How does the policy, procedure, program, or practice support equitable access to materials for students with impairments that traditionally limit access to content/curriculum?

❏ How are professional learning opportunities provided to staff to implement and maintain the policy, procedure, program, or practice? ❏ How does the policy, procedure, program or practice aim to challenge students to be independent and collaborative learners who experience rigorous content regardless of their level of "standardized" performance?

Sensitivity

❏ How does the document and any related forms use pronouns that reflect all genders and gender identities?

❏ How does the policy, procedure, program or practice support persons with disabilities by mindful inclusion and reasonable requirements for accessibility and/or accommodation?

❏ How does this policy, procedure, program or practice impact or effect, include/or not include family partnerships, student groups, community partners and/or stakeholders?

❏ How are the elements of the policy, procedure, program, or practice communicated to stakeholders in a variety of languages and methods?

❏ *How is related documentation presented in a way that allows for accessibility tools to convey the content (contrast, expandable fonts, etc) in an inclusive way?*

Obligations

❏ How does the policy, procedure, program, or practice support or correlate to other policies, procedures, programs, or practices?

❏ How does the policy, procedure, program or practice meet safety and security obligations?

❏ How has the policy, procedure, program, or practice been reviewed to ensure that it doesn't unintentionally contradict other policies, procedures, programs, or practices?

❏ How does the policy, procedure, program or practice meet legal obligations (RCWs, WACs)?