

This is a new policy.

## I. PURPOSE

To assert and clarify the educational Equity beliefs held by Fairfax County Public Schools. The Equity Policy will define and guide the work in schools and central offices to ensure alignment with our values, vision, and commitment to academic excellence. This policy is a *principle of action* demonstrating our commitment to the diverse FCPS community and the promise of welcoming and culturally responsive school and work environments. This policy will clarify the expectation of Fairfax County Public Schools to ensure access to services, spaces, opportunities, and the diverse array of accommodations to meet the needs of the entire FCPS community.

## II. BELIEFS:

FCPS commits to the thoughtful examination and analysis of evidence and data to understand and demonstrate the state of inequities within our system. We commit to reimagining and developing systems and will actively explore, assess, and address any policies, practices, and beliefs that perpetuate these inequities.

As a reflection of our commitment to developing an equitable division, we believe:

- FCPS must enact policies and practices in response to data that demonstrates disproportionate student outcomes and ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve at their highest potential.
- It is necessary to look at both traditional and non-traditional data sources in order to understand experiences and impact of the system.
- All students can succeed, and no particular identity group is inherently more capable of achievement or more deserving of opportunity than others.
- All FCPS students, staff, families, and community members possess valuable perspectives and experiences and bring with them a wealth of cultural assets.

- It is our collective responsibility to create and foster classrooms, schools, and offices that are supportive and inclusive of those who are marginalized within the FCPS community.
- The recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention of qualified, exceptional employees strengthens our division and should be reflected in a diverse workforce.
- There are multiple pathways to success and as a school division, we must create systems and structures that support students' strengths, talents and interests.
- All students deserve a safe, well-equipped comfortable physical space for learning and innovation.
- Limited access, opportunity, and accommodation impact students' capacity to engage in the learning process and should be considered top academic priorities.

### III. DEFINITIONS

**Access:** Ensures that all students have equitable 'barrier-free' opportunities to engage in high quality learning experiences that support academic, social, and emotional growth.

**Bias:** Values, attitudes, preconceived opinions or beliefs that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions. These may be conscious (explicit) or unconscious (implicit).

**Culture:** A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors and styles of communication.

**Cultural Proficiency:** The knowledge, skills, values, beliefs that enable effective interactions with those who differ from us.

**Cultural Responsiveness:** The ability to learn from and relate respectfully to people from one's own and other cultures and/or identities.

**Diversity:** The variation of different characteristics in a group of people.

**Equality:** The state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities. Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities.

**Equity:** Equity is the work to redress and address the ways in which the system normalizes and perpetuates disproportionate outcomes and exclusion. Equity requires on-going reflection and action to identify and transform policies, programs, and practices which result in predictable outcomes based on identity and/or location.

**Identity:** An individual's sense of self that consists of multiple intersecting factors, including but not limited to, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, class, ability, neurodiversity, and sexual orientation.

**Inclusion:** Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

**Marginalization:** A social process by which individuals or groups are (intentionally or unintentionally) distanced from access, resources, and/or opportunities.

**Neurodiversity:** the range of differences in individual brain function and behavioral traits, regarded as part of normal variation in the human population.

**Opportunity:** Set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something.

**Principle of Action:** a rule, belief, or idea that guides your actions, behaviors, choices, and decisions.

**Underserved:** Those who face barriers to access or are insufficiently provided with service.

#### **IV. PRIORITIES**

The Equity Policy centers those students who data show have been underserved. It is this data that will continue to drive our decision making and goals. This policy applies to all FCPS policies, programs, and practices and prioritizes actions in the following areas:

- a. **Family & Community Partnerships** - Create authentic partnerships with families and community members; affirming strengths and perspectives; and

ensuring the voices and engagement of those most often underrepresented are present in all spaces.

- b. **Student Agency** – Foster coequal learning environments that support student interests, uplift all student learning styles, and allow students direct influence of their learning.
- c. **School Environment** - Foster a culture where the dignity of each individual is honored, everyone feels that they belong, and interactions are free from prejudice or bias.
- d. **School Funding** - Provide differentiated distribution of resources and access to facilities based on students' needs and driven by the elimination of predictability of outcomes.
- e. **Teaching & Learning** - Engage in instructional practices which are inclusive in order to eliminate predictability of outcomes by identity group. Provide all students with relevant and meaningful learning experiences in which they are challenged and supported in a learner-centered and culturally responsive environment.
- f. **Workforce** - Recruit, hire, develop, and retain a diverse team of highly-qualified teachers, administrators, and support professionals.

## V. ACCOUNTABILITY

In order to ensure FCPS' policies, programs, practices, and facilities align with the division's core beliefs, we commit to accountability through:

- Engaging in iterative practices based in continuous analysis of data.
- Ensuring the design and implementation of systems, programs, and practices are focused on addressing the needs of underserved communities
- Requiring all stakeholders and practitioners within the system to uphold and maintain reflective practice and continuous professional learning.
- Designing and monitoring a system to report and address incidents of bias and discrimination.
- Recognizing that this policy will guide the language and intent of all other policies within FCPS.
- Ensuring stakeholder feedback is central to all decision-making processes.

## **VI. MEASUREMENT**

FCPS will address and respond to negative patterns and disproportionality by developing procedures to evaluate systems, measure progress, allow for course correction, and promote continuous improvement in areas including but not limited to:

- Academic outcomes
- Access to academic and extra-curricular programming and resources
- Student social-emotional learning and well-being
- Disciplinary outcomes
- Hiring, evaluation, promotion, and retention practices
- Resource allocation and distribution
- Capital improvement and accessibility

FCPS staff will provide annual reports to the School Board on progress and practices for each priority outlined by this Equity Policy. The Equity Dashboard will be revised accordingly and updated regularly.

## **VI. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Student success is a shared responsibility of the FCPS School Board, staff, families, students and community stakeholders.

- a. The FCPS School Board will use both qualitative and quantitative data to create and revise policies to ensure access, opportunity, inclusion, and the elimination of factors that undermine the success of marginalized groups of students. To inform their decision-making, members will commit to being present in schools and engaging with all facets of the school community.
- b. The Superintendent/Designee will oversee system-wide objectives, activities, and track and share progress towards measurable targets to achieve goals of the strategic plan. Will be present and engaged in the schools and work to find multiple paths to advocate for students' diverse and changing needs.
- c. The Office of the Chief of Staff will provide a highly qualified and diverse workforce. In addition to ensuring that the strategic plan is implemented to support all students, the office will develop systems to nurture professional development and provide growth producing learning opportunities for all staff.
- d. The Chief Equity Office will design and execute an Equity plan - with an accompanying framework - to build capacity in the skills and dispositions of

cultural proficiency which are necessary to create and nurture equitable educational and work environments. Will be present and engaged in schools, with the purpose of partnering with school staff, supporting progress and sharing data with all stakeholders.

- e. The Chief Academic Office will prioritize inclusivity, diverse representation, and the development of all students as critical thinkers and independent learners in all academic and social-emotional learning curricula, professional learning, and resources. Ensuring that teachers and school leaders consider equitable access and culturally responsive practice when provisioning learning and engagement opportunities.
- f. The Chief Operations Office will guarantee safe and well equipped facilities, safe and efficient transportation, and nutritious meals for all students and staff while also fostering a culturally responsive working environment that offers continuous opportunities for growth and development.
- g. The Chief Financial Office will ensure equitable distribution of resources. Student and community needs and systems of marginalization will be a driving force for equitable resource allocation in all facets of the division decision-making.
- h. The Chief Information and Technology Office will ensure technology and connectivity is available to ensure all staff and students have equitable access to digital tools to support learning, enhance communication, and guide decision-making.
- i. The Chief Experience and Engagement Office will ensure that our families and communities experience engagement that honors the dignity and strengths of each individual. They will develop systems to ensure information and messaging are consistent, widely accessible, and support participation and engagement across all facets of our families and community.
- j. Chief of Schools/Regional Assistant Superintendents/Executive Principals will set expectations and monitor data to ensure equitable access to opportunities across school buildings. Will offer and engage in coaching, training, and support, to ensure that school leadership teams create and maintain systems and structures that promote safe, productive, and culturally responsive environments for every student, family, and staff member.
- k. School-Based Administrators will lead by developing and nurturing a school culture that is safe, supportive, affirming, and conducive to student learning. The school improvement planning and monitoring process will intentionally erect

structures and systems that eliminate institutional and historical barriers to opportunities and achievement.

- l. Employees will engage with students, families and colleagues in ways that are affirming, culturally responsive, and indicative of a shared commitment to equity and inclusion. Will participate in professional learning that expands their understanding of equitable practices and cultural proficiency.
- m. Families and Community Stakeholders will be invited to engage in authentic partnerships supportive of affirming, inclusive, culturally responsive experiences that focus on success for all students.
- n. Students will act in support of their school environment by honoring the identities of all members of their community, investing in their learning, empathizing with a broad array of experiences and, recognizing and appreciating all perspectives.

Legal Reference:

**Related Policies:**

One Fairfax

NonDiscrimination (Policy 1450)

Trust Policy (Policy 1445)

Controversial Issues (Policy 3280)

Family Engagement (Policy 1455)

Workforce Diversity (4920)

**Proposed Policies & Regulations to be created or revised will consider the priorities and responsibilities in this policy.** Examples of such might include, but are not limited to:

School Fees (5810, 3860, 5920)

Discipline (2602, 2603, 2606, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2616, 2620)