

Policy Title: Anti-Racism Policy	Policy ID: C30
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I. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a call to action and a plan to address all forms of racism within the White River Valley Supervisory Union (the “Supervisory Union”) and its member school districts (the “Districts”). The goals of this Anti-Racism Policy include:

1. Promoting the development of *brave spaces* to allow critical thinking and open dialogue regarding the history, contribution, perspectives, and structural barriers experienced by diverse ethnic and racial groups, specifically those traditionally excluded from K-12 education
2. Incorporating classroom content and strategies that enable students to safely explore questions of identity and membership in diverse ethnic groups, race equity and equality, and racism.
3. Creating engagement opportunities that provide families with a welcoming means of raising any concern about their child’s experience as it relates to racial, ethnic, or cultural identity at school.¹
4. Ensuring students graduate from the district with a baseline understanding of the history and power dynamics created by race, racism, and discrimination; acknowledging the role of racism in upholding institutional and systemic barriers which create varying life experiences.
5. Providing those harmed by racism with confidential reporting mechanisms.
6. Recognizing that becoming anti-racist, and the pursuit of anti-racism, requires continuous community support, education, action, and accountability.

II. Policy Scope

This policy applies to the Supervisory Union, its board members, employees, and volunteers, as well as all the Districts, their School Boards, school employees, volunteers, students, and visitors.

III. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Supervisory Union and all school districts within the Supervisory Union to:

1. Provide safe educational spaces of learning for all students in a manner that does not perpetuate racist ideology or imagery.
2. Identify, address, eliminate, and prevent actions, decisions, and outcomes that result from and perpetuate racism.
3. Eliminate inequitable practices that create prejudicial or disparate outcomes for students based on race or ethnicity.

4. Respect and champion the diversity and varied life experiences of all community members.
5. Acknowledge that racism is often compounded by other forms of discrimination.
6. Prohibit retaliation that may arise as a result of an individual's good faith report or participation in processes established under this policy.
7. **Anti-Racist Committee:** The Supervisory Union shall establish an organization or committee of current students, former students, teachers, administrators and community members to promote equity and diversity and to serve as leaders and spokespersons within the District. Current students can include middle school and high school representatives.
 - a. The Superintendent shall appropriate funds annually to ensure committee members receive anti-racism, implicit bias, and cultural awareness training
 - b. The committee shall host and facilitate brave space conversations for students and their families within the district
8. **Anti-Racist Statement:** The Superintendent, in consultation with the Anti-Racist Committee, shall develop and post a statement rejecting racism and demonstrating the Supervisory Union's commitment to the respect of all persons through the careful cultivation of diversity, equity and inclusion, and a greater understanding of implicit bias and systemic racism. The Superintendent, in consultation with the Anti-Racist Committee, will determine where this statement will be displayed.

This statement shall also be included in the student handbooks provided to students and families and shall be translated into other languages and be made available for families with limited English proficiency, if and when needed.
9. **Anti-Racist Hiring Practices:** The District shall proactively seek to recruit and hire diverse faculty and staff to their schools, with a focus on retention.
10. **Climate Assessments:** The District shall develop and conduct periodic climate assessments. Assessments shall include measures of implicit bias and whether all students feel welcome, supported, and respected.

The Supervisory Union, member school boards and school administrators shall develop plans to address findings of climate assessments and implement recommendations, if any, from the assessments.
11. **Alternatives to Discipline:** The Districts shall develop and implement alternative discipline processes, such as peace-making circles and family group conferencing, to reduce racial disparities in discipline and suspension.
12. **Data Collection:** The Districts shall collect data of race related incidents as well as data of the racial and ethnic makeup of students who have been disciplined. This data shall be used to measure frequency of racial incidents as part of the Superintendent report outlined in section 9 of this document. Any reports containing this data shall be compliant with any state and federal education privacy laws.

13. **Responding to Racist Acts:** The Districts must establish a set of guidelines and steps for responding to Racist Acts to ensure transparency, accountability, and adequate follow-up for the students involved and their families.

- a. When school administrators determine a student has committed a Racist Act, the student will be provided the opportunity to learn about the impact of their actions on others through such practices as restorative justice, mediation, role play or other policies or training resources.
- b. The Districts shall develop a support group for victims to cope with race-related stress and disclose their experiences through a safe, non-punitive platform.

14. **Training:**

- a. All employees shall be trained in the Anti-racism policy.
- b. All employees shall be trained in ways to eliminate disparate outcomes in school based on race, including professional development focused on cultural awareness, implicit bias, restorative justice, and dispute resolution.
- c. All employees shall be trained about racism and how racism produces inequitable practices and outcomes in the school system and beyond.
- d. Every year, the Districts shall budget monies towards addressing racism through training and/or activities for employees and students.
- e. All employees must be trained on de-escalation techniques and strategies to immediately respond to racist acts that occur.

15. **Accountability:**

- a. The Superintendent shall be responsible for implementation and evaluation of Districts strategies for actualizing the goals outlined in this Policy.
- b. The Superintendent shall collect, review, and provide a report to the school board regarding racial disparities in areas including, but not limited to, student achievement, enrollment, suspension/discipline, and graduation rates. The report shall also include evidence of growth in each area outlined by the Policy. These written reports shall be published on a two-year cycle and made available to the public.
- c. The administration shall be responsible for establishing a process for students and employees to report racism and other forms of discrimination, and shall include a way for such reports to be submitted anonymously.
- d. Violations of this policy may be cause for discipline for any WRVSU personnel including and not limited to staff, teachers, coaches, volunteers, and administrators.

IV. Definitions

Anti-racism: the active process of identifying, challenging, *then* changing the values, structures and behaviors that perpetuate racism.

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, People of Color. The term intentionally separates Black and Indigenous communities from the term “people of color” to acknowledge the heightened layers of systemic oppression these communities face in this country.

Brave Spaces: a non-physical space within a school or organization designed to help create an environment that allows individuals to engage with one another over controversial issues like race, diversity, and social justice with honesty, sensitivity, and respect. The intention is to help reassure those who feel anxious about sharing their thoughts and feelings regarding these sensitive and controversial issues.

Culture: the values, beliefs, system of language, communication, and practices that people share in common and that can be used to define them as a collective.

Ethnicity: the shared social, cultural, and historical experiences, stemming from common national or regional backgrounds, that make groups within a population different from one another.

Ethnic Group: a non-dominant racial and ethnic groups in the United States, including people who are Abenaki, people from other indigenous groups, people of African, Asian, Pacific Island, Chicano, Latino, or Middle Eastern descent; and groups that have been historically subject to persecution or genocide in the United States.

Explicit Bias: Biases we are aware of on a conscious level. Explicit bias is the traditional conceptualization of bias. Overt racism and racist comments are examples of explicit biases (for example, feeling threatened by another group and delivering hate speech as a result).

Family Group Conferencing: a form of voluntary mediation with the community of people most closely involved in an incident — likely including the offender, the victim, and their families— to discuss levels of harm and how that harm might get repaired. Some of the goals of this method include ensuring that the victim is involved in the discussion and decision-making process for next steps, and allow both victim and offender to reconnect to key community support systems, among others.

Implicit (Or Unconscious) Bias: An unconscious association, belief, or attitude toward any social group.⁶ These biases often arise as a result of trying to find patterns and navigate the overwhelming stimuli in this very complicated world. Culture, media, and upbringing can also contribute to the development of such biases.

Individual Racism: pre-judgment, bias, and/or discrimination by an individual based on race. Individual racism includes both privately held beliefs, conscious and unconscious, and external behaviors and actions towards others. Individual racism can be due to implicit or explicit bias.

Institutional Racism: occurs within institutions and organizations, such as schools, that adopt and maintain policies, practices, and procedures that often unintentionally produce inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The 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.

Race: the socially constructed grouping of humans based on shared hereditary traits and physical qualities-- such as skin color, hair texture, and facial features -- into categories generally viewed as distinct by society. Racial categorization schemes were invented by scientists to support worldviews in which some groups of people were seen as superior and others as inferior.

Racist Act: conduct, whether verbal, physical, or symbolic that demonstrates prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person on the basis of their membership in a particular ethnic or racial group.

Restorative Justice: a practice that allows individuals and communities to be more actively engaged in responding to harm. Restorative justice creates opportunities for people who have experienced harm to have a voice in shaping a response, and for people who caused harm, to make amends and be accountable for their actions. Restorative responses to harm honor the individuals and communities affected and allow for tailored and empowering responses appropriate to those most affected.

POLICY ADOPTED

FIRST BRANCH UNIFIED DISTRICT BOARD - 12/8/2021

GRANVILLE-HANCOCK UNIFIED DISTRICT BOARD - 12/1/2021

ROCHESTER-STOCKBRIDGE UNIFIED DISTRICT BOARD - 12/7/2021

SHARON BOARD - 12/14/2021

STRAFFORD BOARD - 11/23/2021

WHITE RIVER VALLEY UNIFIED DISTRICT BOARD - 11/16/2021

WHITE RIVER VALLEY SUPERVISORY UNION BOARD - 11/8/2021