

Pittsburgh Public Schools

Equity in Learning- A Framework to Address Race-based Academic Disparities

November 21, 2009

“Equity can be achieved only if the design features strategies that disproportionately advantage students on the wrong side of the achievement gap.” Closing the Achievement Gaps: Lessons from the Last 15 Years, Joseph Murphy, Kappan, November 2009

Goal One: Policies, Administrative Regulations and Practices Promote Closing Race- based Academic Disparities and High Levels of Proficiency for African American Students

Objective 1.1 Develop and seek approval for a Board Policy promoting Equity in Learning

Objective 1.2 Provide Communication and Training regarding that policy and create a culture focused on explicit efforts to reduce race-based academic disparities.

Goal Two: Employ a Diverse Culturally Competent Leadership and Staff District-wide

Objective 2.1 Support District Administration in leading the work of significantly increasing the achievement of African American students

Objective 2.2 Recruit, select, develop, and retain staff members who demonstrate commitment and effectiveness in promoting learning for African American students.

Objective 2.3 Conduct program evaluation and provide evidence of the results of these efforts annually to the Board and the Community.

Goal Three: Develop Learning Environments that Promote a “College-readiness” Culture

Objective 3.1 Engage Parents, Students, Staff and Community to promote a positive, safe and respectful climate for learning for all students regardless of race, gender, disability or area of residence. Use non-traditional methods to engage previously disengaged parents. Create venues for staff and parents to interact regarding this goal.

Objective 3.2 Provide opportunities for students to provide leadership and input to inform this work.

Objective 3.3 Regularly engage community partners to share information on progress and maintain focus on the learning environment goal. Evaluate the strategies employed by partners to identify most effective strategies.

Goal Four: Employ Teaching and Learning Practices which advance the achievement of African American Students

Objective 4.1 Equip educators with a variety of instructional strategies to address the range of achievement levels, communication styles, and learning styles of African American students in Pittsburgh Public Schools, as well as students of other races and ethnicities.

Objective 4.2 Insure that the core and the elective curriculum are rigorous and employ examples which reflect the culture of all Pittsburgh Public School students.

Objective 4.3 Provide evidence that culturally relevant practice, content, and relationship building is embedded in teacher training and student teacher preparation, including that of the PPS/PFT Teacher Academy.

Objective 4.4 Train school staff about the challenges of crossing racial and SES barriers in their work with students, and how to address those challenges.

Goal Five: Assessment and Accountability for Performance

Objective 5.1 Use data and assessment information to measure progress on these goals as well as the institutionalization of successful practices.

Objective 5.2 Establish clear performance standards for staff and programs related to eliminating race-based academic disparities. Hold staff accountable through performance appraisal and programs through program evaluation.