

**Operating Policy No. 1010**  
**Foundations and General Commitments**

**RACIAL EQUITY POLICY**

The staff and Board of Directors of Puget Sound Educational Service District have a strong commitment to serve the school districts and ultimately the children in the Puget Sound region. Our mission is to improve the quality, equity, and efficiency of educational programs through partnerships with K-12 education, early learning, higher education, and public and private organizations. We take personal responsibility to do our best work in providing quality education, leadership and service to our partners, motivated by a deep desire to ensure that every child has the opportunity to reach his or her fullest potential. We strive to completely eliminate the opportunity gaps of each of the school districts that we partner with by the year 2020.

These historic and persistent opportunity gaps between different racial and ethnic groups of students are deeply troubling and unacceptable. Achievement data from our district partners mirrors that from other regions of Washington State and the nation, painting a picture of unfulfilled promise that has profound consequences for thousands of students, their families and communities. We recognize the complexity of historic and present-day societal factors that contributes to these disparities, but believe that it is a moral imperative that we provide leadership with our partners to overcome these inequities. Race must cease to be a reliable predictor of student achievement and success.

As a largely intermediary agency that strives to become an Antiracist Multicultural Organization, we recognize that the achievement and opportunity gaps of each of the school districts that we support has a unique racial dimension and that we must be sensitive to, but not deterred by, varying levels of comfort of our partners grappling with this complex challenge. We also know that we must continue to interrogate our belief systems, improve our cultural proficiency and increase our usage of research-based gap closing strategies as we encourage our partners to do the same. Finally we must collaborate with our school district partners as well as other stakeholders, providing leadership and service to assure that all schools in our region realize the vision of educational equity.

PSESD will strive to change its practices to eliminate opportunity gaps and achieve and sustain racial equity in education for each of its partner districts. Educational equity means raising the achievement of all students while decreasing and eliminating the gaps between the highest and lowest performing racial classifications of students. The concept of educational equity includes fostering a barrier-free environment where all students, regardless of race, have the opportunity to benefit equally.

So that we achieve this definition of educational equity, we establish the following goals:

- PSESD will assure the cultural proficiency of all staff. We will strive to deepen the understanding of every staff member of the root causes of achievement and opportunity gaps and provide professional development to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills for eliminating racial disparities in achievement.

- PSESD will eliminate barriers in recruitment, hiring, retention and internal processes that will allow PSESD to serve as the model of a diverse and Antiracist Multicultural Organization that its partners may strive to emulate.
- PSESD will use evidence-based, high leverage best practices in gap-closure in all of the services provided to our partners. Where a research base does not exist, we will employ promising practices that we believe have great potential for sustained gap closure.
- PSESD will provide catalytic leadership for educational and community partners that respectfully but firmly and persistently accelerates their adoption of gap closing policies and practices.
- PSESD will seek out opportunities to build or participate in coalitions who share a commitment to educational equity. We will use racial equity tools and other frameworks to evaluate the success of existing and future collaborations.

The PSESD Board of Directors will hold the Superintendent and Leadership Cabinet accountable for assessing a baseline, developing action plans and reporting measurable progress in meeting each of these goals, annually. Action plans and reports should specify staff leads responsible for key elements of the work, and include how the work will be distributed throughout the agency, as well as any staffing and budgetary adjustments necessary.

ADOPTED: November, 2014