

1304

Equity and Diversity

Policy 1304

Original Adoption: 11/25/2003 (as Policy 2215)
Revision Dates: 09/14/2010, 10/08/2013
Review Dates:

Effective Date: 10/09/2013

I. PURPOSE

Every student deserves a respectful learning environment in which their racial and ethnic diversity is valued and contributes to successful academic outcomes. Minneapolis Public Schools is committed to identifying and correcting practices and policies that perpetuate the achievement gap and institutional racism in all forms in order to provide all of its students with the opportunity to succeed. Learning and work environments are enriched and improved by the contributions, perspectives and very presence of diverse participants. Minneapolis Public Schools is committed to the success of every student in each of our schools and to our mission and vision statements.

The Board of Directors believes that the responsibility for student success is broadly shared by District staff, families, our community and our student's own efforts. Achievement gaps between white students and students of color are unacceptable if we are to meet our mission and vision statements and our moral obligations to our students, their families and our community as a whole. These gaps are contrary to our belief that all children can learn and succeed. Adult behaviors must not contribute to achievement gaps or create barriers to success. Adult behaviors must be concentrated on elimination of gaps, particularly those that are predicated on a student's race, ethnicity, home language, personal characteristics or culture and on assurance of educational equity between students. The Board of Directors, Superintendent and staff commit to conducting an Equity and Diversity Impact Assessment on all future policies that have a significant impact on student learning and resource allocation. This commitment also includes conducting assessments on policies that are periodically reviewed and updated through the policy development process that have a significant impact on student learning and resources allocation.

The diversity of our student body, our community and our staff is a strength of this district that should be fostered. Educational equity benefits all students and our entire community.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for the elimination of bias, particularly racism and cultural bias, as factors affecting student achievement and learning experiences, and to promote learning and work environments that welcome, respect and value diversity. Further the purpose is to establish particular actions that the District shall take to address disparities in educational opportunity and achievement.

II. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy the following terms shall have these meanings:

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- A. “diversity” includes characters of persons including, but not limited to:
1. race
 2. culture
 3. color
 4. creed or religion
 5. national origin
 6. gender
 7. mental and physical ability
 8. age
 8. marital status
 9. family structure
 10. citizenship status
 11. sexual orientation or affectional preference
 12. gender identity or expression
 13. economic status
 14. veteran’s status
 15. any other protected class in conformance with federal, state and local laws.
- B. “District staff” includes all employees, consultants and contractors of Minneapolis Public Schools.
- C. “Educational equity” means raising the achievement of all students while
1. narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students, and
 2. eliminating the racial or cultural predictability and disproportionality of which students groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories including rates of graduation.¹
- D. “Institutional racism” means the collective failure of a public or private organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their race, color, culture or ethnic origin which can be seen or detected in practices, processes, systems, attitudes and behavior. It looks beyond individual acts of prejudice to the systemic biases that may be built into institutions. These systemic biases discriminate against and disadvantage people of color through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness or racial stereotyping.

III. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. The District welcomes, respects and values the diversity of its students, parents, staff and the broader community.
- B. The following are established as District values:
1. All students deserve optimal treatment, opportunities and education.
 2. All students and their families have dignity and worth.
 3. All students are equally, while differently, gifted.
 4. Academic and participation outcomes, not intentions, shall be the measure of whether we are successful.
 5. Inclusion of all students and families supports District goals to increase student engagement and academic performance.
 6. Embracing our diversity through inclusion creates an environment that leverages that diversity and creates schools where students, families, community members

and employees feel welcomed, valued, supported, and where students and staff can perform to their personal bests.

- C. The District is committed to advancing optimum participation in, contribution to, benefit from and enjoyment of learning and work experiences by diverse students, parents, staff and community.
- D. The District is committed to promoting and providing equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, facilities and supports, even when this means differentiating resource allocations on the basis of student needs. Resource allocation shall support the definition of educational equity adopted in this policy while complying with state and federal funding mandates.
- E. The District shall employ staffing processes that support and engender racial, gender, and language diversity in its staff through recruitment, employment, training and retention of employees. It is important that children of all races, cultures, and backgrounds are provided with familiar role models in schools. The recruitment of diverse teachers and staff provides all students with a better chance of seeing themselves as part of the education system. Diversity in education provides all children with the opportunity to learn from others with dissimilar backgrounds and recognizes the value of diversity in all learning environments. The District is committed to increasing the recruitment and retention of highly qualified diverse staff. The District is committed to fostering a learning environment where diversity is encouraged and to recruiting and retaining a workforce that reflects the diversity of our students and community. We are committed to hiring the best employees of all racial and ethnic backgrounds who will bring their unique talents and skills into our school system.
- F. The District shall offer opportunities for all staff to improve its cultural competencies in serving our diverse student body and community. The District staff shall work together to increase their individual and collective capacity to effectively teach a racially and ethnically diverse student population and serve racially and ethnically diverse families and communities. The District shall offer opportunities for all staff to improve culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum, and assessments competencies in serving our diverse student body and community to increase individual and collective capacity to effectively teach our diverse student population and serve diverse families. Practices, procedures and programs that result in over or under representation of any group of students compared to peers shall be subject to close review to assure that such results are due to meeting student legitimate educational, social or emotional needs. Practices that do not meet this close review shall be eliminated. Teachers, administrators and district staff shall collaborate to establish and implement culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum and assessments.

- G. The District shall promote the diversification of its vendor and supplier corps in accordance with law and district policy.
- H. The District shall provide professional development to teaching staff specifically designed to strengthen employee's knowledge and skills for eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps between groups of students.
- I. The District shall seek partnerships with outside agencies, organizations and persons who have demonstrated culturally specific expertise to assist the District in meeting its equitable education and business goals, including, but not limited to:
 - 1. government agencies,
 - 2. non-profit organizations,
 - 3. businesses;
 - 4. other community groups that support educational equity and cultural competencies.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The Board of Directors shall consider the values stated in this policy in conducting its business and in exercising its responsibilities to the people of the City of Minneapolis.
- B. The Superintendent shall establish in accordance with this policy such plans and procedures as may be necessary and appropriate to accomplish its purpose and intent. Plans and procedures established shall include clear accountability for actions and oversight, and shall include metrics for evaluation.
- C. The Superintendent may promulgate regulations for the implementation of this policy.
- D. The Board of Directors and Superintendent may establish specific goals to implement this policy as permitted by law.
- E. The Superintendent shall annually report to the Board of Directors and the community regarding District Performance Goals on Academic Achievement contained in the Strategic Plan and progress toward meeting these goals and closing the achievement gap. The report will also highlight discrepancies between the targets set and actual performance when applicable. This annual public report shall include an Equity and Diversity Impact Assessment that demonstrates policies with the least disparate impact have been adopted by the district.
- F. District staff shall within the parameters of their various duties and responsibilities comply with and execute such plans as are designed to address the values and

directions included in this policy. District staff is further responsible to make such suggestions to the appropriate authority to improve the ability of the district to reduce the achievement and opportunity gaps that exist.

- G. Families are partners with the District in its effort to address achievement and opportunity gaps.
- H. Students are partners in their academic achievement. School attendance and engagement are essential to reduce achievement and opportunity gaps that exist.
- I. MPS Board of Directors, Superintendent and employees will work with students and families to identify barriers to achievement and opportunities for academic success

Cross References:

MPS Policy 1300 (Participation by the Public)
MPS Policy 1301 (Community Partners)
MPS Policy 1310 (Parent-Teacher Association, Parent-Teacher-Student Association and other School-Community Organizations)
MPS Policy 1320 (Board of Directors Advisory Committees)
MPS Policy 1450 (Volunteers)
MPS Policy 1600 (Community Use of School Facilities)
MPS Policy 1692 (Shared Leadership for Continuous Improvement)
MPS Policy 2250 (Administrative Advisories)
MPS Policy 3310 (Business Partner Diversity)
MPS Policy 4000 (Equal Employment Opportunity)
MPS Policy 4001 (Disability Non-Discrimination)
MPS Policy 4002 (Harassment and Violence Prohibition)
MPS Policy 4100 (Staff Development)
MPS Policy 5000 (Equal Education Opportunity)
MPS Policy 5050 (Title IX Compliance)
MPS Policy 5261 (Desegregation)
MPS Policy 5291 (Education of Homeless Children)
MPS Policy 5491 (Equal Access to Facilities)
MPS Policy 5700 (Special Education)
MPS Policy 5750 (Disability Nondiscrimination – Section 504)
MPS Policy 5800 (Family Engagement)
MPS Policy 6136 (Released Time for Religious Instruction)
MPS Policy 6137 (Ceremonies and Observances)
MPS Policy 6138 (Religious Observances)
MPS Policy 6280 (Bilingual Student Education)
MPS Policy 6411 (Learning Materials)
MPS Policy 6800 (Naming of School Symbols, Teams and Mascots)

Publications

MPS Strategic Plan 2007-2014

MPS District Performance Goals 2012

ⁱ definition adapted from *Courageous Conversations About Race* (2006), Singleton, Glenn and Linton, Curtis

MPS acknowledges the contribution of the Portland Public Schools Policy 2.10.010-P *Racial Educational Equity* (6/13/2011) and the Seattle Public Schools Policy 0030, *Ensuring Educational and Racial Equity* (8/15/2012) to the development of this policy.