



Highline Public Schools Board Action Report

Supports the Strategic Plan

DATE: 10.29.19

FROM: Dr. Susan Enfield, Superintendent

LEAD STAFF: Holly Ferguson, Chief Policy & Strategy Officer, holly.ferguson@highlineschools.org

For Introduction: 11.6.19 For Action: 11.20.19

I. TITLE Revisions to Board Policy 0010, Equity

II. WHY BOARD ACTION IS NECESSARY Revisions to a School Board policy require Board approval.

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This is an extensive revision of the District's equity policy. The policy was last revised in March 2018, after Board approval of the strategic plan. Since that time, the district's work around equity has both expanded and deepened, and these revisions are designed to reflect that.

Over time the district's equity work has coalesced into four main areas: Institutional Practices; Adult Learning on Race & Identity; Cultural Responsive Practices; and Instruction on Race & Identity. Many of the actions in those four areas were captured in the "Opportunities" section of the current (2018) version of the policy. Because work in those areas is increasing we have moved to a new model with a Procedure for each of the four areas. This will allow us to be public-facing in our work, but also allow additional nimbleness should our actions need to change quickly.

Based on extensive feedback, we have also sharpened the language around the vision for the policy, as well as the "Belief" statements.

This policy and procedures have received formal feedback from the Highline Education Association; the Somali Parent Education Board; the Superintendent's Family Action Committee; Leadership Forum (Principals, Assistant Principals, and Central Office leaders); Cabinet; Community Leaders; and staff via a feedback form in the Highline Insider, which goes to all staff.

In order to implement the steps in the policy and procedures we have created the Equity Steering Committee, made up of Central Office leaders, and subcommittees that will include others in the organization. This committee, and the subcommittees, will be looking at accountability measures and what the annual report on the Equity Policy will look like.

This work, as always, is a work in progress, and we look forward to bringing updates and policy revisions forward as necessary.

Please note there is no red-line version of the policy. Revisions were extensive enough that between additions, deletions, and moving things to procedure a red-line version was impossible to create.

IV. RECOMMENDED MOTION

I move that the Highline School Board approve the revisions to Board Policy 0010.

V. FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE

Fiscal impact to this action will be (amount and source including fund Example - \$522,000 from general fund Title 1 revenue).

At this time there has been no newly identified fiscal impact to this policy. Ensuring all staff can attend the equity symposium is now built into the budget. Additional funds may be needed as activities are started throughout the school year, and will be tracked and reported on.

The revenue source for this motion is N/A.

Expenditure: One-time Annual

VI. APPLICABLE POLICY(S)

This action is in compliance with the following:

VII. ALTERNATIVES

The alternative is to not approve these revisions. This is not recommended, as there is significant momentum behind these revisions, with many staff waiting to know when this is finalized.

VIII. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community Engagement Required: Yes No

Engagement listed above, in the Background section.

IX. POLICY MONITORING PLAN

This new or revised policy will be monitored by the School Board:

Quarterly Semi-Annually Annually Not Applicable

The metrics that will be used to monitor this policy include: TBD, but include disaggregated student and hiring data.

X. ATTACHMENTS

Policy 0010 For approval

Procedure 0010 P1 For review

Procedure 0010 P2 For review

Procedure 0010 P3 For review

Procedure 0010 P4 For review

Procedure 0010 P5 For review



Policy 0010 – EQUITY, RACE & IDENTITY

Highline Public Schools is deeply engaged in work around equity, race and identity to better foster and support an environment in which our students, families, and staff grow, thrive, and succeed. This work, and the language used to describe it, is rapidly evolving. This policy will be reviewed at least annually to reflect current practices and language.

Vision

Highline Public Schools' promise is to know every student by name, strength and need so that they graduate prepared for the future they choose. To do this requires knowing our students and their families deeply, honoring their cultures and identities, ensuring materials and instruction are culturally relevant, and being willing to engage with students, families and the community.

Historic decisions and current inequitable practices advantage certain students while disadvantaging others. Students of color; students with disabilities; English language learners; immigrants and refugees; LGBTQ+ students; and Native American and Alaska Native students have all been negatively impacted by the institution of education.

Highline seeks to be a leader in being an anti-racist organization focused on eliminating racism, racial and other identity inequities, and institutional bias. This intentional focus, when implemented well and with fidelity, should result in increased achievement by our students, both in school and after graduation.

Highline students have experienced significant, measurable, system-wide inequities in achievement due to institutional racism and institutional biases, and a failure to address how race; language; disability; socioeconomic status; country of origin; gender; gender identity and sexual orientation; and the intersectionality of those characteristics impact educational outcomes.

The School Board is committed to continuing to examine disaggregated academic achievement, discipline, and other data in order to identify continued disparities and to develop strategies to ensure that all students can succeed in an environment free of racism, discrimination and institutional bias.

Our strategic plan is our equity plan, and calls on us to disrupt institutional biases and end inequitable practices so all students have an equal chance at success.

Foundation

- ***Equity***
 - We will disrupt institutional biases and end inequitable practices so all students have an equal chance at success.
- ***Instruction***
 - We will reduce achievement and opportunity gaps¹ by using culturally responsive, inclusive, standards-based instruction.
- ***Relationships***
 - We will know our students by name, strength and need and have open, two-way communication with students, families, and community partners.
- ***Support***
 - We will increase student success by supporting their social-emotional and academic needs.

Beliefs

Adult mindsets about the abilities and strengths of our students can have positive or negative impacts on student achievement. To ensure that the adults who work for Highline Public Schools have a success oriented mindset, we are dedicated to hiring and retaining staff who are committed to the following beliefs:

- All students have the ability to meet our ambitious expectations for success in school and after graduation.
- Adult actions—or inactions—impact the way students see themselves and whether they perceive school as a positive or negative place.
- Potentially unequal learning needs among students require equitable, not equal, distribution of resources.
- It is our responsibility to identify inequitable or discriminatory practices, including implicit bias and microaggressions, and to speak out or act to end those practices.
- It is imperative that our workforce—our teachers, administrators, and other staff—represent the diversity of our students and families.
- Respecting and recognizing racial, cultural, and identity differences is necessary for students to receive a high quality education.
- Schools and the district overall should actively engage their students, families, and community to correct inequities.

Equity Focus Areas

¹ This is an example of rapidly changing language—in 2017, when the strategic plan was approved, such deficit language was common. When the strategic plan is next updated we will use updated language.

To become an anti-racist organization, eliminate discrimination and disproportionality, and achieve success for each student, the district's equity work is focused in four main areas:

Institutional Practices
Adult Learning on Race and Identity
Culturally Responsive Practices
Instruction on Race and Identity

Accountability Measures

The Superintendent is directed to provide at least an annual report to the public and the School Board on the strategic plan goals, and to ensure that an equity lens is used in each report. When relevant and appropriate, reports will include evaluating our strategies and their effectiveness through providing disaggregated data, information on how funding is differentiated based on student need, and how programs or services are being implemented to ensure equitable access by students.

All staff members are charged with recognizing and speaking out when we are not meeting our vision of being an equity-focused district. Response to allegations of inequities may involve an assessment of district policies, programs, and strategies.

The Superintendent or designee is authorized to develop procedures for implementing this policy.

District Cross Reference:

Nondiscrimination (students) Policy 3210

Workplace Environment and Culture Policy 5000

Nondiscrimination and Equitable Employment Practices (staff) Policy 5010

WSSDA Cross References:

N/A

Legal Reference:

N/A

Highline School District 401

Adopted by the Board: September 2010

Revised by the Board: 12.15, 2.17, 3.18, 11.19

Classification: Discretionary



Superintendent Procedure 0010 P1 – Equity Policy Terms & Phrases Defined

Highline Public Schools is deeply engaged in work around equity, race and identity to better foster and support an environment in which our students, families, and staff grow, thrive, and succeed. This work, and the language used to describe it, is rapidly evolving. This procedure will be reviewed at least annually to reflect current practices and language.

This procedure is designed to define some of the terms or phrases that are used in the equity policy and procedures. Where applicable, the source of the definition has been identified. These definitions are in alphabetical order.

Ableism: Discrimination or prejudice against individuals with disabilities

Anti-Racist: One who supports policies or actions that are aimed at undoing historical and current racist policies or actions.¹

Colorism: Prejudice or discrimination especially within a racial or ethnic group favoring people with lighter skin over those with darker skin.

Cultural differences: References the unique variety of life experiences our students, staff, and broader community bring to Highline School District that takes into account that those with similar life experiences are often grouped together as a culture.

Culturally Responsive/Culturally Responsive Practices: Culturally responsive instruction or practices have been defined as a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.² Highline Public Schools is engaged in ongoing work to make meaning of this phrase for our district.

Disaggregated data: Results from taking a closer look into smaller pockets of system-wide data to uncover patterns and trends that may be true for a subset of students, but not for all students across the system. For example, male students of a given race/ethnicity that participate in the Free and Reduced Lunch program may have lower

¹ Adapted from *How To Be An Antiracist*, Ibram X. Kendi (2019)

² Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, *The Dreamkeepers* (1984)

outcomes on standardized tests relative to results for all male students in Highline schools.

Disproportionality: Used when one group's population size too large or too small in comparison with another group. Frequently used to indicate that a policy or action is impacting one group more or less than another.

Equal: Regarding or affecting all people in the same way.

Equitable: With an emphasis on eliminating significant gaps in outcomes throughout Highline School District, equitable practices seek to increase opportunities for achievement among students not performing to their full potential.

Equity: A commitment to educate *each student* in a way that ensures every Highline student is achieving excellence. Whereas *equality* tends to focus primarily on similarity of input, *equity* purposefully focuses on how those inputs impact *outcomes*. We recognize that we will not have equitable outcomes without equitable processes.

Equity lens: A tool for analysis, planning, decision making and evaluation. It can be used to diagnose or analyze the impact of the design and implementation of policies or programs on under-served, marginalized, and diverse individuals and groups and to identify appropriate accommodation to eliminate barriers. The district's equity lens can be found in Procedure P2.

Equity-related learning: A reference to the professional and personal development opportunities to learn about the diverse cultural experiences present throughout the Highline community. Equity-related learning includes and expands on the work of Policy 2133, Cultural Competency.

Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC): Each student has access to effective teachers and access to the same content, knowledge and skills to have the opportunity of success in school. Students also have sufficient time to learn the curriculum.

Implicit bias: The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.³

Inclusion: Inclusive education systems remove the barriers limiting the participation and achievement of all learners; respect diverse needs, abilities and characteristics; and eliminate all forms of discrimination in the learning environment.

Inequity: Situations, actions, or instances that result in a lack of fairness or justice.

Institutional bias: A tendency for the procedures and practices of particular institutions to operate in ways that result in certain social groups being advantaged or favored and others being disadvantaged or devalued. This may not be the result of any conscious

³ Kirwan Institute, kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias

prejudice or discrimination but rather of the majority simply following existing rules or norms.

Institutional racism: A form of racism expressed in the practice of social and political institutions, as distinct from racism by individuals or informal social groups. It is reflected in disparities regarding criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power and education, among other things.

Intersectionality: The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.

LGBTQ+: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (one's sexual or gender identity).

Microaggression: A comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group.

Mindset: a mental attitude or inclination; a fixed state of mind.

Opportunity gap: Refers to the ways in which race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, community wealth, familial situations, or other factors contribute to or perpetuate lower educational aspirations, achievement, and attainment for certain groups of students.⁴

Racism: A belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL): The process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions; set and achieve positive goals; feel and show empathy for others; establish and maintain positive relationships; and make responsible decisions.

Systemic: Refers to that which is present throughout the Highline School District.

System inequities: Lack of fairness or justice resulting from policies, procedures, or ways of doing business in the Highline School District.

White Fragility: Discomfort and defensiveness on the part of a white person when confronted by information about racial inequality and injustice.⁵

⁴ <https://www.edglossary.org/opportunity-gap/>

⁵ Professor Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility* (2018)

White Privilege: Inherent advantages possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice.⁶

⁶ Lexico.com



Superintendent Procedure 0010 P2 – Institutional Practices

Highline Public Schools is deeply engaged in work around equity, race and identity to better foster and support an environment in which our students, families, and staff grow, thrive, and succeed. This work, and the language used to describe it, is rapidly evolving. This procedure will be reviewed at least annually to reflect current practices and language.

Institutional practices are those actions taken by an institution (a school, a department, the school district) that intentionally or unintentionally advantage or disadvantage certain groups. In working to become an anti-racist institution we must actively work to develop and implement practices that are equitable. We must also actively work to dismantle current practices that end with inequitable or discriminatory results.

Objective: By using an *Equity Lens* Highline Public Schools aims to reduce inequities within the institution, including disproportionality in student outcomes. This *Lens* is intended to help implement the vision outlined in the District's equity policy and the strategic plan, which is our equity plan. This *Lens* will also develop a common vocabulary and protocol for developing and evaluating policies, programs, practices, and decisions to result in more equitable outcomes.

Recognizing that applying the *Equity Lens* might look different at the school, department, or district level, the *Equity Lens* should be considered in decisions such as staffing; budgeting; initiating, developing, or ending programs or procedures/processes; developing design specifications; allocating resources and opportunities; and purchase or implementation of instructional materials.

We acknowledge that the use of the equity lens can result in different decisions depending on the data set used and the people involved in the decision making. While reasonable people can disagree, decisions do need to be made and the lens should not be used to paralyze administrative action. To truly apply an equity lens to our work it is important that decision makers be involved in the broader Highline community to ensure an understanding of our students, families and staff.

Process: When using the *Equity Lens*, consider the following questions and consider the impacts on historically marginalized groups and communities:

1. Who are the groups affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? What are the potential impacts on these groups?

2. Does this policy, program, practice or decision have unintended consequences, such as ignoring or worsening existing disparities?
3. How have we intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities impacted by this policy, program, practice or decision? Can the stakeholders validate your assessments in questions 1 and 2?
4. What are the barriers to a more equitable implementation of your policy, program, practice or decision? (Consider mandates, politics, emotions, finances, or programs.)
5. How will you mitigate any negative impacts and address any barriers that you have identified?

In addition to using the *Equity Lens*, we will:

- Implement a proactive strategy to recruit, employ, support, retain, and continuously develop a workforce of racially and culturally competent administrative, instructional, and support staff that increases the diversity and inclusiveness of the Highline work environment and reflects the Highline Promise.
- Distribute Highline resources in a way that considers equity in a student centered mindset to eliminate or significantly reduce systemic, measurable inequities in achievement.
- Continuously and comprehensively review disaggregated district-, school-, and student-level data to identify areas of disproportionality and identify strategies to eliminate achievement gaps.
- Assure that all students have access to the same rigorous, culturally relevant, standards-based materials and instruction while ensuring the creative use of culturally-relevant supplemental materials that engage our community of diverse learners.
- Incorporate student voice as a critical part of decision-making.
- Implement and monitor culturally-responsive, anti-racist and gender affirming practices throughout the district and in each school. This can be accomplished through the development of equity teams and the creation of norms and protocols to support these conversations.

- Foster a work environment that provides a safe environment for staff of color that includes accountability of professional and respectful behaviors.
- Hold each other accountable for our individual and collective responsibility to intervene when they see instances of inequity, racism, and institutional bias.

Accountability

At least annually the Superintendent will issue a report updating each area of work, including progress made and areas for improvement, as well as areas that will be changing for the upcoming year. The report should include both qualitative and quantitative data and may result in recommendations to change policies, procedures, or practices throughout the district.



Superintendent Procedure 0010 P3 – Adult Learning on Race & Identity

Highline Public Schools is deeply engaged in work around equity, race and identity to better foster and support an environment in which our students, families, and staff grow, thrive, and succeed. This work, and the language used to describe it, is rapidly evolving. This procedure will be reviewed at least annually to reflect current practices and language.

Adult learning is a practice in which adults engage in systematic and sustained self-educating activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values. Adult learning can be designed to foster growth in both professional and personal life.

Objective: While the majority of our goals are student focused, we know that the adults who work with and surround students—employees, parents, community members—need support as they learn more about equity, including race and identity. In order to support our adults we will:

- Provide differentiated equity-related learning for district staff, parents, community partners and Board members that enhances our effectiveness at eliminating or significantly reducing systemic, measurable inequities in achievement.
- Engage all staff in the annual Equity Symposium, a day-long event featuring speakers and workshops on equity-related topics, and in ongoing professional development in equity work.
- Ensure that the district's focus on equity is visible in all recruitment efforts to ensure that new staff come to the district ready for and committed to this work.
- Infuse equity and learning on equity, race, identity, and cultural responsiveness into induction processes for all staff.
- Ensure that schools and departments have equity, race, identity, and cultural responsiveness, including accountability measures, as prominent elements in annual plans and goals.
- Ensure that all professional development, provided by district staff or others, reflects and integrates the district's focus on equity; exit tickets should include

questions to assess the degree to which equity was a focus of the professional development.

- Develop a lending library of resources that staff can check out or otherwise access.

Accountability

At least annually, the Superintendent will issue a report updating each area of work, including progress made and areas for improvement, as well as areas that will be changing for the upcoming year. The report should include both qualitative and quantitative data and may result in recommendations to change policies, procedures, or practices throughout the district.



Superintendent Procedure 0010 P4 – Culturally Responsive Practices

Highline Public Schools is deeply engaged in work around equity, race and identity to better foster and support an environment in which our students, families, and staff grow, thrive, and succeed. This work, and the language used to describe it, is rapidly evolving. This procedure will be reviewed at least annually to reflect current practices and language.

Culturally responsive instruction or practices have been defined as those actions that empower students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. (Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, *The Dreamkeepers* [1984]) Highline Public Schools is engaged in ongoing work to make meaning of this phrase for our district.

Objective: Embedding culturally responsive practices in our work, and ensuring that all staff use these practices in their interactions with students, families, staff, and the community, will result in increased levels of success and satisfaction. Proactively engaging our families and community in identifying these practices and educating our staff in how best to use them will ensure a robust array of practices. To that end, we will:

- Engage our staff, students, families and community members in the development and implementation of culturally appropriate and effective partnerships between home and school.
- Use culturally responsive practices that effectively engage individual students, staff and community.
- Intentionally seek out and include the student and family perspective, particularly racial perspectives, in the development and implementation of culturally responsive teaching and learning practices and curriculum.
- Celebrate families' heritage and culture and consider families as funds of knowledge to inform school and district practices.
- Leverage our social emotional learning (SEL) work to provide culturally responsive spaces for learning and working.

- Support home language learning through enrichment programs, heritage language classes and community learning opportunities.
- Ensure that the implementation of a guaranteed and viable curriculum (GVC) has culturally responsive practices at the core.
- Culturally responsive teaching practices include (Dr. Ladson-Billings, *The Dreamkeepers*):
 - Positive perspectives on parents and families
 - Communication of high expectations
 - Learning within the context of culture
 - Student-centered instruction
 - Culturally mediated instruction
 - Reshaping the curriculum
 - Teacher as facilitator

Accountability

At least annually, the Superintendent will issue a report updating each area of work, including progress made and areas for improvement, as well as areas that will be changing for the upcoming year. The report should include both qualitative and quantitative data and may result in recommendations to change policies, procedures, or practices throughout the district.



Superintendent Procedure 0010 P5 – Instruction on Race & Identity

Highline Public Schools is deeply engaged in work around equity, race and identity to better foster and support an environment in which our students, families, and staff grow, thrive, and succeed. This work, and the language used to describe it, is rapidly evolving. This procedure will be reviewed at least annually to reflect current practices and language.

Instruction on race and identity ensures students learn about how race and other elements of identity function in society. From grades K through 12, students learn key ideas from a variety of perspectives to understand the why and how race and identity play a role in shaping our society. At the same time, students learn about how they can actively respond to and shape the evolving role of race and identity. This instruction is anti-racist in nature and engages family and community in its development and implementation.

Objective: Highline Public Schools is committed to working directly with students on topics of race and identity. This includes engaging with families to identify tools and metrics that are culturally relevant to teach this content. To do this we will:

- Use the *Social Justice Standards* created by Teaching Tolerance in this work. These standards provide a clear and well-designed trajectory to engage students in learning about race and identity, among other critical components. The standards are broad enough to respond to evolving political and social situations, yet specific enough to support well-sequenced instruction. This strong set of standards aligns with Highline's approach to standards-based instruction by providing clarity to students and support to guide teachers and other staff who regularly interact with students.
- Develop a phase-in implementation plan for teaching this content that uses a phase-in structure, with all schools at full implementation by fall 2023.
- Develop system-wide frameworks for each grade level, aligned with existing instruction, to guide a minimum of 10 hours of direct instruction on this content at each grade level.

- Identify a community advisory council to convene regularly to provide guidance and consultation for professional learning, instructional design, and implementation.

Accountability

At least annually, the Superintendent will issue a report updating each area of work, including progress made and areas for improvement, as well as areas that will be changing for the upcoming year. The report should include both qualitative and quantitative data and may result in recommendations to change policies, procedures, or practices throughout the district.