

## **RICHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **EQUITY GUIDELINES**

RPS will work to eliminate practices that lead to predictability of over or under representation of any student group compared to peers. RPS will work to embed culturally responsive engagement practices in our work with students, families and our larger community to support a positive and inclusive climate and culture. We will work to ensure that all staff implement these practices in their interactions to support increased levels of academic success, inclusion, and mental and emotional well-being.

#### **I. DEFINITIONS**

Several key terms used in this guideline are defined in Policy 116: Equity. Additional terms are defined here to assist in understanding this guideline:

- A. **BIPOC:** The acronym BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and people of color. This term is useful because it encompasses all non-white individuals, yet also acknowledges the unique experiences of Black and Indigenous communities due to the continuing legacies of slavery, genocide, and oppression in the United States.
- B. **Cultural competency:** Ability to demonstrate awareness of one's own cultural identity and how it has affected their life experiences, as well as understanding that differences in race and cultural background can create implicit bias in interpersonal interactions and can significantly impact individuals' experiences in society.
- C. **Culturally relevant:** A style of pedagogy that uses student cultural and racial knowledge and lived experiences to empower students and make learning more effective.
- D. **Culturally responsive:** An approach that acknowledges that culture is central to how people learn and interact and emphasizes the positive benefits of collaboration amongst people of different cultural backgrounds.
- E. **Scaffolding:** Temporary instructional supports that help students reach proficiency of skills and become gradually more independent in their learning.

## II. PRACTICES RELATED TO ACADEMICS

- A. Staff will ensure all students are working toward proficiency of academic content standards and provide differentiated instruction based on the individual learning needs of students.
- B. Staff will demonstrate a commitment to teaching all students and will convey that all students are capable of doing challenging work.
- C. Staff will recognize, support, and value students' abilities and the assets they bring to the classroom. Staff will specifically acknowledge and value diversity and the strength it brings to our community. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - 1. The different ways in which students demonstrate commitment, perseverance, flexibility, and time management.
  - 2. Students' proficiencies in other languages and dialects beyond the standard American English dialect that is commonly used in school.
  - 3. The breadth of different lived experiences that students are able to share with their peers.
- D. Students will see themselves, their racial identities, and their lived experiences in what is being taught and learned and will be engaged in a culturally and racially informed way.
- E. Staff will communicate the purpose and relevance of daily lessons.
- F. Staff will support peer interaction and elevate student voice in the classroom through culturally relevant practices.
- G. Explicit instruction and guided practice will be included in every lesson; multiple modes of representation and scaffolding will be used to support student learning.
- H. Staff and students will work together to create a safe and supportive learning environment by co-constructing norms and class agreements.
- I. Staff will build and maintain positive relationships with and among students that are characterized by empathy, care, and genuine interest in their lives and identities.
- J. Staff will communicate about academics with individual students and families outside of the classroom, using the methods of communication that are most effective for those individuals to the greatest extent possible.

- K. Multiple modes of assessment and measurement of student knowledge will be used to objectively measure student learning and provide specific and timely feedback to students on their progress toward mastering academic standards.
- L. Staff will deliberately engage multilingual learners using strategies that leverage multilingualism and multiculturalism as strengths. Staff will also positively promote biliteracy for all students as appropriate for the grade level.
- M. Instructional field trips and other specialized academic activities will be planned and executed in a manner that prioritizes equity of access for all students.

### III. PRACTICES RELATED TO CLIMATE & CULTURE

- A. Staff will provide a welcoming environment for all by clearly and openly supporting and celebrating diversity through classroom culture, events, training, hiring practices and academic content.
  - 1. Students will see themselves, their racial identities, and their lived experiences reflected in the classroom and all other school-wide environments.
  - 2. Staff will leverage District social emotional learning (SEL) initiatives to provide culturally responsive spaces for learning and working.
  - 3. Staff will intentionally seek out and include student perspectives in the development and implementation of culturally relevant teaching and engagement practices.
  - 4. Staff will honor student identities by striving to pronounce student names correctly, using correct pronouns, and respecting core beliefs voiced by students. The right of students to be addressed by the pronouns corresponding to their gender identities is enumerated in Policy 548: Gender Inclusion.
  - 5. Staff will teach students how to respect peer identities and encourage students to embrace learning about cultures other than their own.
- B. RPS will meet students' social emotional needs through direct teaching, staff training and, if warranted, increasing dedicated programs or staff members focused on SEL.
- C. RPS will engage students in opportunities that increase school pride, enjoyment of school and dedication to learning.

- D. RPS families will be provided with opportunities for community involvement, input into District policies and practices, and events that celebrate and value differences in all forms. This includes:
  - 1. Participation, particularly from students and families of color, in the development and implementation of culturally appropriate and effective partnerships between home and school, as well as responsive teaching and learning practices, curriculum and engagement strategies.
  - 2. Valuing the identities, cultures, and race of families as important resources relied upon to inform school and District policies and practices.
  - 3. Participation in district-wide events to celebrate cultures and bring together community organizations and families from different backgrounds.
- E. Staff will engage in active listening with any student or family disclosure of discrimination or harassment and ensure support and action to address the incident. This includes adherence to the RPS reporting procedures related to harassment and bullying, as outlined in Policy 103: Harassment Prohibition and Policy 113: Bullying Prohibition, along with each policy's respective administrative guidelines.
- F. Staff will engage in regular professional development related to parent and student engagement, culturally responsive practices, and social emotional learning.

#### IV. PRACTICES RELATED TO ACTIVITIES

- A. RPS will strive to make all activities as accessible as possible to all RPS students and community members regardless of ability to pay. This is accomplished through an equitable fee scale for middle and high school athletics and activities participation with a lower fee for students who are eligible for reduced-price meals and even lower fees for students who are eligible for free meals. Additionally, scholarships for participation in middle and high school activities as well as community education programs will be made available to the greatest extent possible.
- B. RPS will strive to make athletics and activities accessible to all RPS students by providing additional opportunities for eligible students to obtain the required physicals through our Richfield Health Resource Center.

- C. RPS will continue to offer adaptive sports as part of our selection of student activities, and will strive to provide accommodations and modifications to all activities to make them accessible to all students. This may include hiring paraprofessionals to support students during activities, providing training to activity leaders, collaborating with families to creatively support student needs, and additional strategies.
- D. RPS theatre, band, and choir teachers will seek out student input as part of the selection process for which theatrical productions and musical pieces to perform with their groups. Performances will provide opportunities for exploration of student identity and culture.
- E. RPS staff members will collaborate with RPS families and community members to determine how to best serve student and family needs in order to make activities more accessible. This may include providing activity transportation and/or childcare when possible, adapting the timing of activities, creating opportunities for community members to lead activities, and other strategies.

V. PRACTICES RELATED TO OPERATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS

- A. RPS will maintain and improve hiring practices that further the equity goals of the District.
  - 1. Leaders will continue to seek out candidates who reflect the racial identities and lived experiences of the student population for all positions in the District.
  - 2. Leaders will use strategic interview questions to ensure that staff members hired for all roles in the District are able to demonstrate skills and a commitment to cultural competency.
- B. RPS will increase retention and promotion of BIPOC and bilingual staff members. Strategies may include:
  - 1. Creating staff affinity groups and mentorships specifically tailored to BIPOC staff members, bilingual staff members, and other staff members who identify as belonging to marginalized groups,
  - 2. Expanding District systems and practices to better accommodate the needs of BIPOC staff members and provide greater accessibility for staff members of all abilities.

3. Other strategies informed by input from BIPOC and bilingual staff members.
- C. RPS will provide equity-related professional development for all staff members that is dynamic, collaborative, and relevant to their specific job roles. This may include adding professional development opportunities for regular substitute teachers and non-licensed staff members.
  - D. RPS leaders will build their skills and confidence at addressing equity-related concerns, conflicts, and performance issues with the staff members they supervise.
  - E. RPS will continue to align District financial resources to prioritize the equity goals of the District.
  - F. RPS will maintain and improve practices of providing resources to families in multiple languages to the greatest extent possible. This may include translated transportation information, online registration materials in multiple languages, and greater access to bilingual staff members at all interactions between families and schools.
  - G. To the extent possible, RPS student information systems will be adapted to be more inclusive of student gender identities and preferred terms for student racial identities.
  - H. All RPS operations teams will strive to keep the focus of their work student-centered.
    1. Staff members who regularly interact with students, such as facilities, transportation, and nutrition services staff members will provide a clean and welcoming environment to all students while they are outside of the classroom.
    2. District communications will showcase student strengths and voices.
    3. Staff members who do not regularly interact with students, such as finance, human resources, and student information staff members will intentionally steer their work toward excellent outcomes for students as the ultimate goal.

## VI. ACCOUNTABILITY

The ultimate measures of success for this policy and guideline are excellent outcomes for all students. However, additional strategies will be used to ensure accountability to the processes and requirements set in place by this policy and guideline.

- A. All processes used to evaluate staff member performance will include equity-driven goals and measurements of success. The aspects of staff evaluations that pertain to student outcomes will always include data that is disaggregated by race and other demographic categories.
- B. RPS administrators will provide regular data reports on equity-related goals and progress to the school board in a manner that is accessible to the public.
- C. School-wide behavior expectations for all students will include respecting peer identities. Behavior violations will be addressed in a culturally responsive manner that also provides support for students who have been harmed by other students. Detailed procedures for addressing student behavior violations are enumerated in Policy 541: Student Behavior and Administrative Guideline 541.1.
- D. School and district administrators will complete regular walkthroughs of classrooms to assess the extent to which the aspects of this policy and guideline related to classroom environments, pedagogy and student-teacher relationships are being successfully implemented across all schools. This data will be used to allocate additional support and training for staff as needed.

Dated: May 16, 2022