

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 283

SECTION/FILE 103

DATE OF ADOPTION 2022
REVISED _____

TITLE Racial Equity

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations and accountability measures for the District's work promoting racial equity and developing culturally relevant learning environments in order to create an equitable and anti-racist school system that honors all children, families, and staff.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

St. Louis Park Public Schools is committed to anti-racist learning communities that honor every student, family, and staff's racial and cultural identity. Recognizing that all students have the right to a high-quality education and that the process of dismantling the systems that support racially-predictable disparities in educational outcomes will take time and focused effort, the District will act with urgency to create racially equitable systems.

III. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HISTORICAL RACIALIZED HARM

St. Louis Park School Board acknowledges the historical, generational, and compounding harm of the systems, structures, and practices that have intentionally created and continue to afford advantages to dominant racial groups while perpetuating inequities for others. The District acknowledges and accepts its past and present role in creating and maintaining policies, procedures, and practices that result in predictably lower academic and graduation outcomes and disproportionate disciplinary action for BIPOC students, relative to their White peers.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. Anti-Racism - The active process of identifying and eliminating racism in St. Louis Park Public Schools by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices, and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably and students learn at high levels and have their spirit energized and enhanced. (Source: Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre, St. Louis Park Public Schools Strategic Plan)
- B. "BIPOC" - Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
- C. Culturally Relevant Teaching - The process of using familiar cultural information and processes to scaffold learning. Emphasizes communal orientation. Focused on relationships, cognitive scaffolding, and critical social awareness. (Z. Hammond)
- D. Educational Equity - Educational equity activities promote the real possibility of equality of educational results for each student and between diverse groups

of students. (Source: National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity) Educational equity is when educators provide all students with the high-quality instruction and support they need to reach and exceed a common standard. (Source: The Achievement Network)

- E. Equity - “Equity is defined as “the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial and fair.” The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. It is helpful to think of equity as not simply a desired state of affairs or a lofty value. To be achieved and sustained, equity needs to be thought of as a structural and systemic concept.” (Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation)
- F. Learning Environment - Refers to the diverse physical locations, contexts, and cultures in which students learn. Students may learn in a wide variety of settings, such as outside-of-school locations and outdoor environments. (Source: Great Schools Partnership)
- G. People of Color - Racial justice advocates have been using the term “people of color” (not to be confused with the pejorative “colored people”) since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not White, to address racial inequities. While “people of color” can be a politically useful term, and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, e.g., “non-White”), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate. (Source: Race Forward).
- H. Race - “Race is a socially constructed system of categorizing humans largely based on observable physical features (phenotypes), such as skin color, and on ancestry. There is no scientific basis for or discernible distinction between racial categories. The ideology of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions and culture and is used as a basis for discrimination and domination.” (Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation)
- I. Racial Equity - Acknowledging and accounting for past and current inequities, and providing all stakeholders, particularly those most impacted by racial inequities, the infrastructure needed to thrive.
 - 1. (intentionally) including stakeholders of color in decision-making that impacts their lived experience in St. Louis Park Public Schools;
 - 2. engaging, sustaining and deepening conversations about race;
 - 3. recognizing and valuing the race and culture of all St. Louis Park Public Schools stakeholders under the belief that comes through the diversity and expression of our shared humanity; and
 - 4. creating learning experiences that are culturally and racially relevant and academically rigorous understanding self culturally and racially working towards proficiency in other cultures and races opportunities for critically and racially conscious leadership development (Source: Center for Social Inclusion, National Public Education Support Fund and Courageous Conversations)
- J. Racial Identity - Racial identity is externally imposed: “How do others perceive

me?” Racial identity is also internally constructed: “How do I identify myself?” Understanding how our identities and experiences have been shaped by race is vital. We are all awarded certain privileges and or disadvantages because of our race whether or not we are conscious of it. (Source: Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture)

- K. Racism - The belief that different St. Louis Park Public Schools stakeholders possess distinct characteristics, abilities, or qualities, based on their skin color, especially so as to distinguish them as inferior or superior to one another. (Source: Merriam Webster and Courageous Conversations)
- L. Removal from Learning Environment - Encompass any type of school disciplinary action that removes or excludes a student from the usual instructional setting or learning environment, including in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion.
- M. Restorative Practices - With roots in many Indigenous and People of Color cultures and communities, Restorative Practices seek to prioritize the building of relationships in order to develop healthy communities, decrease unsafe and harmful actions, and restore relationships and repair community harm when necessary. Restorative Practices include social emotional learning lessons for all students, classroom circles and routines to build community and establish relationships, and small circles or formal conferences to navigate conflict or repair harm.

V. RESOURCES

Recognizing that students in the dominant racial, cultural, and linguistic group have historically had more access to educational resources than their peers, the District shall provide every student with high-quality and culturally relevant instruction, curriculum, support, and facilities, and shall differentiate resources when necessary to accomplish this goal.

VI. STUDENT BRILLIANCE & HIGH STANDARDS

Recognizing that every student brings unique brilliance and individual hopes and dreams to our schools, the District shall actively encourage, support, and expect students from all racial groups to meet high standards and shall collaborate with students and families to define measures of success.

VII. EMPLOYEES

Recognizing the importance of a learning community in which students see themselves represented and validated by adults, the District shall recruit, employ, support, and retain racially and linguistically diverse, culturally competent, and qualified instructional, support, and administrative staff and shall provide professional learning opportunities to all employees to develop the skill and capacity to eliminate racial, cultural, and linguistic disparities in student achievement.

VIII. RACIALLY INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Recognizing that separation of students for academic interventions, advanced coursework, Gifted and Talented programs, and special education often creates classroom environments in which BIPOC students and English learners are over- or

under-represented throughout their school careers, the District will discontinue practices that result in racially isolated spaces and empower all students with opportunities for enrichment and differentiated learning to ensure readiness for college and career.

IX. DISCIPLINE PRACTICES

Recognizing that practices that remove students from the learning environment, such as suspension, disproportionately deny BIPOC students access to classroom instruction opportunities, the District shall foster safe and nurturing school environments, utilize restorative practices to build and restore community, prioritize relationships, navigate conflict, repair harm, and seek to minimize loss of classroom instruction time due to disciplinary matters.

X. CULTURAL & RACIAL LITERACY

Recognizing the importance of cultural and racial literacy for individual development, college and career success, and democratic citizenship, all staff and students shall be given the opportunity to understand racial identity and the impact of their own racial identity on themselves and others.

XI. FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Recognizing that students and families are essential partners in education at the individual, classroom, school, and district level and that BIPOC families and linguistically diverse families have been underrepresented or excluded from participation in school, the District shall create linguistically- and culturally-relevant opportunities for collaboration and communication and environments that reflect and celebrate the identities of our students, staff, and community.

XII. ACCOUNTABILITY MEASUREMENTS

- A. The Board shall conduct its business in alignment with the mission and core values of the District and goals stated in the policy.
- B. The Superintendent shall establish, in accordance with this policy, such plans and procedures as necessary and appropriate to accomplish its purpose and intent. Plans and procedures shall include clear accountability for actions and oversight, and shall include metrics for evaluation.
- C. Professional Development
 - 1. The District commits to providing annual and ongoing professional development for all St. Louis Park staff members. The professional development should deliver strategies to assist staff in reaching the goals set forth by the District's strategic plan. This will also include an expectation that all staff will have the opportunity to understand racial identity, the impact of their own racial identity on themselves and others, and the provisions of this policy.

2. District staff shall, within the parameters of their assigned duties and responsibilities, comply with and execute such plans as are designed to address the values and goals of this policy. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a) attending and engaging in professional development connected to this policy;
 - b) understanding their own racial identities;
 - c) understanding the impact of their own racial identities on themselves and others; and
 - d) reflection on growth in culturally relevant teaching using evidence-based practices.

D. Review

The Superintendent shall annually report to the Board and community on each policy area including:

1. racially differentiated measurement data and progress towards closing racially predictable opportunity gaps;
2. data that evaluates the effectiveness of our school programming with special attention to traditionally marginalized groups of students: i.e. graduation rates, college entrance exam, discipline referrals, special education referrals;
3. recommendations for adjustments in any programming, curriculum, or policies; and
4. timelines for any follow-up or modifications based on the data presented.