RESOLUTION NO. 2020/21-22

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE SANTA BARBARA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT AFFIRMING THE DISTRICT’S COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE THROUGH EQUITY DRIVEN POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PRACTICES

We believe that all students can achieve at high levels and that equitable classrooms are critical to their success. Eliminating disparities in educational opportunities is fundamental to the nature of public education. The District is committed to overcoming barriers to learning that have been identified through educational research.

We will put the Equity Commitments in action and live by them through equity driven policies, procedures, and practice. Every District employee is accountable for applying these commitments in all decisions, use of resources, and management of talent.

WHEREAS, we understand the significant difference between equity and equality. Every student deserves to receive what he/she/they need(s) to succeed (equity), not that every student receives the same amount of resources, instruction, attention, etc. (equality); and

WHEREAS, we live in a society that provides some groups more or fewer opportunities based solely on factors that they do not control. Additionally, the dual pandemic has exposed and exacerbated many of the inequities in schools and school systems across our country, not only creating temporary changes to education, but launching us into a new paradigm of education that ensures a more equitable and just educational community for all students, especially those furthest from educational justice; and

WHEREAS, the State Superintendent of Education, Tony Thurmond, has called on districts to address educational opportunity gaps, now exacerbated, using guidance presented in various educational policies, guidelines, and through equity standards for both educators and administrators; and

WHEREAS, we believe that it is the right of every student to have an equitable educational experience that is consistent with state and federal law, and that the responsibility for student success is shared broadly by District staff, administrators, instructors, communities, and families; and

WHEREAS, we recognize historic and persistent disparities in student outcomes when comparing Black, Latinx and other students of color with White students; and

WHEREAS, the concept of educational equity goes beyond formal equality - where all students are treated the same - to providing a nurturing, barrier-free environment where all students, regardless of their race, social class, geographic location or other personal characteristics such as creed, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, economic status, gender, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, have the opportunity to benefit equally; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Barbara Unified Board of Trustees in Resolution 2019/20-27 in support of Black Lives Matter endorsed and encouraged its staff and students to engage in the practice of equity in order to denounce racism, build understanding, and actively engage in creating pathways to freedom and justice for all people at all times; and

WHEREAS, the intent of this resolution is to publicly commit to accelerate our efforts around diversity, inclusion, and racial equity through equity-driven allocation of resources; safe, rigorous, and
affirming learning environments and supplemental instructional programs; and building the capacity of diverse teams that are more reflective of our students, including, increased workforce diversity; and

WHEREAS, the School Board and the Administration are committed to self-evaluations/analysis and to constantly examining the District’s policies, procedures, and practices in order to remove obstacles and barriers that may contribute to systemic inequities; and

WHEREAS, in the Santa Barbara Unified School District, students of color represent 64% of the student body, while only 28% of educators are teachers of color, and research points to the benefits to all students in improved problem-solving, critical thinking and creativity when they have diverse teachers; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Barbara Unified School District designates its Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) funds and federal funds, which are intended to be targeted to the District’s highest-need students (Socio-economically disadvantaged, English Learner, and Foster Youth), the District must take advantage of the opportunity to operationalize equity through the 2021-2024 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) in a way that truly reflects the spirit and intent of LCFF by ensuring that funding targets its highest and high needs schools first, using the state data dashboard, and local academic indicators along with health and safety variables to rigorously and comprehensively assess student needs; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Santa Barbara Unified School District Board of Trustees reaffirms our commitment to equity and educational justice, and will seek to address the equity issues impacting our schools and the entire Santa Barbara community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we commit to ensuring that student achievement will not fall into predictable patterns identified by culture, race, or ethnicity, and to ensuring that each student will have access to personalized learning opportunities that honor the student’s unique background and culture to promote a sense of belonging, and the District’s professional learning program will support teachers in implementing practices that will disrupt the predictable patterns of student achievement identified by culture, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. The professional development program will include content, resources, and pedagogical practices that are reflective of and sustaining to our student population; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we will seek to amplify diverse perspectives in support of students of color, their families, and educators, by ensuring proper recruitment and equitable representation in stakeholder meeting where we will not only listen to their concerns and aspirations, but also pledge to leverage those concerns and aspirations to inform our decisions, and the District will increase its outreach efforts to families traditionally underrepresented, including and not limited to going beyond traditional meeting formats and outreach in Spanish; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, beginning with the 2021-22 budget and moving forward, the District will use an equity-based funding model to allocate funds first to all high and highest-need preschools, elementary schools, including high and highest-need junior high and high schools; and explore and implement learning and enrichment opportunities for students that need additional instructional support to move them closer to be at grade level; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the District will provide local school leadership with strategic guidance and support on school site investments that have demonstrated to be effective for strong student outcomes, including:

1) Providing every student with equitable access to high quality and culturally relevant and sustaining instruction, curriculum, educational resources, and supports, and identifying instructional practices that lead to academic achievement for historically underserved students.

2) Data driven and research-proven programs that lead to high academic achievement for all students, and especially historically underserved students (i.e., expanding PEAC, AVID-like strategies);

3) Remedying any policies, procedures, and practices that lead to over-representation of students of color in special education and student discipline (i.e., implementation of MTSS);

4) Intentional early outreach to actively inform and provide support to students and families (i.e., support from site administrators to form a partnership with feeder schools to inform and support students to have access to these programs) as well as implement policies, procedures, and practices that lead to inclusion, support and greater representation of students of color in programs such as Gifted and Talented Education, academics, and advanced placement courses;

5) Welcoming, empowering and recognizing students and families of all racial and ethnic backgrounds as essential partners in their student’s education, school planning and informing District decision-making; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we authorize the Superintendent to advance equity through a re-alignment of its current staffing (e.g., revision of job descriptions, roles and responsibilities) and implementation of revised procedures for hiring, mentorship, and retention of a more diverse workforce; and establish an evaluation system to hold district employees accountable for applying equity commitments in all decisions, use of resources, and management of talent.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we direct the Superintendent to create and implement a process that integrates equity into all district decision-making, school board policy review and adoption processes that allocates financial and human resources in a manner that provides all students with equitable access to district programs, support services, and opportunities for success and promotes equity and inclusion in the district. Such resources include access to high-quality administrators, teachers, and other school personnel; funding; technology, equipment, textbooks, and other instructional materials; facilities; and community resources or partnerships. We are committed to providing an environment for all students where dreams and goals are nurtured, history and cultural heritage are celebrated, love of learning is fostered and educational, physical, emotional and social needs are met.
PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Education of the Santa Barbara Unified School District this 26th day of January, 2021, by the following vote:

AYES: 5

NOES: 0

ABSENT: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

By: [Signature]
President of the Board of Education
Santa Barbara Unified School District

ATTEST:

By: [Signature]
Secretary to the Board of Education
Santa Barbara Unified School District