

Educational Equity

A. Purpose

The School Board values the diversity in our community and staff. The School Board believes that all students, staff, and community members, regardless of backgrounds, deserve a rigorous and respectful learning and work environment where diversity is valued and used toward achieving positive academic and social outcomes. The School Board and the School Division are committed to developing a capacity for cultural competence and a commitment to equity and inclusion to enable the fulfilment of its core values and life-long learning competencies. This Policy defines expectations for consideration of racial and social equity, including meaningful stakeholder involvement in planning, developing, and implementing policies, practices and initiatives as well as review by the School Board of the School Division's efforts to address issues of educational equity. It provides a framework to advance educational equity in alignment with the School Board and the School Division's visions and priorities.

B. Generally accepted beliefs

1. The School Board acknowledges that complex societal and historical factors have contributed to educational inequities within the School Division.
2. The School Board will be intentional in its efforts to replace factors that may lead to inequities, including racism, discrimination, harassment and prejudice with attitudes and behaviors that reflect acceptance, belonging, compassion, integrity, understanding, fairness, cooperation and respect.
3. The School Board understands that the concept of educational equity is not the same as equality. Equity refers to fostering a barrier-free environment whereby by all students, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation/gender identity, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, disability, or genetic information, have the opportunity to

benefit from the establishment of high standards and the provision of access, support, effective and inclusive learning environments and resources required for a high-quality education. Strict equality of opportunity and resources between students may not result in educational equity. Therefore, review and deliberative decision making regarding equitable practices and allocation of resources may be needed to achieve the School Board's and the School Division's goals for educational equity.

4. Race means a socially constructed category of identification based on physical characteristics, ancestry, historical affiliation, or shared culture.
5. Racial equity means the absence of institutional and structural barriers experienced by people based on race or colors, that have impeded access opportunities, and results.
6. Social equity means the absence of institutional and structural barriers experienced by people that impede opportunities and results based on other societal factors such as: age; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity; religion; national origin; ethnicity; marital status; pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions; disability; socio-economic status; neighborhood of residence; and other related factors.
7. Equity gaps means the disparity in a metric in achievement, opportunity, or treatment that can be reasonably be correlated to racial or social inequity practice.

C. Educational Equity Assessment, Plan for Equity Priorities and Practices, and Review

The School Board and the School Division will assess the educational equity issues of the School Division and then create an Equity Plan to identify priorities, correct and address the inequities, and review and monitor such efforts.

1. The School Board directs the Superintendent to assess and identify inequitable practices and procedures within the School Division that have historically or are currently resulting in inequities of opportunity for students and staff.

2. The Superintendent is authorized to employ personnel or retain outside services to assist in the assessment, review and ongoing implementation of educational equity practices.
3. The Superintendent or designee(s) will report such assessments as well as recommended changes to practices, procedures, policies and/or regulations to the School Board. The written report shall also be made available to the public and the School Division's Equity Council.
4. The Superintendent and the School Board may begin incorporating changes based on assessments and review prior to such reports.
5. The Superintendent and the School Board will determine the goals and priorities for the School Division's equity programs and practices and how the Superintendent or designees will report assessment efforts to the School Board. The Superintendent or designee(s) will then create an Equity Plan for the School Division.
6. The School Board shall no less than annually review data from the Superintendent or designee(s) regarding the goals and priorities of the School Division's Equity Plan.
7. The Equity Plan reports and data provided to the School Board will include but not be limited to equity gaps in: student achievement; identification and enrollment in gifted education; enrollment in academies and advanced courses; student discipline rates; graduation rates; and alternative program enrollment. The reports shall also include evidence of growth in each identified equity gap.
8. The Superintendent, through the Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, shall be responsible for implementation and evaluation of School Division strategies for implementation.

9. Adequate resources, both human and financial, shall be reasonably allocated to achieve these goals.

D. School Board commitments

The School Board will commit to the following:

1. Supporting the Superintendent in identifying processes and practices that cause or contribute to inequitable outcomes.
2. Respecting and championing the diversity and life experiences of all community members to support the School Division's core values and strategic goals.
3. Adopting processes, practices, and initiatives to ensure an equitable school community inclusive of diversity, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation/gender identity, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, disability, or genetic information.
4. Identifying and acknowledging where lack of access and opportunity may exist in the School Division and may have compounded educational inequities.
5. Supporting development of processes, practices, and initiatives that will foster equity of opportunity and equity of access to programs, services, and resources.
6. Requiring mandatory training for all School Board Members and staff regarding: implicit bias and how it produces inequitable practices and outcomes; cultural awareness and culturally responsive teaching and educational practices; improve culturally responsive practices in order to serve the School Division's diverse students and communities.
7. Supporting a culturally responsive curriculum and assessments for all students.
8. Increasing equity, diversity, and inclusion in the School Division by addressing identified practices, where they may exist, that contribute to discrepancies in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices.
9. Requiring that administrator and teacher personnel evaluation systems incorporate culturally responsive teaching practices.

E. Equity Policy Communication

The Superintendent or designee(s) is directed to ensure that this Equity Policy is communicated to students, staff, and the community as set forth below.

1. Each school shall post the following public statement:

“Virginia Beach City Public Schools is committed to establishing and sustaining an equitable community that exemplifies the School Division’s core values and equity mission to end the predictive value of race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation/gender identity, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, age, marital status, disability and to ensure each member of the school community’s success. The School Board and the School Division reject all forms of unlawful discrimination and harassment as destructive to their core values and strategic goals.” The School Division will post this statement on the School Division website and social media sites.

2. This Policy shall be available to families and translated into other languages to ensure accessibility.

3. The School Division shall ensure that the public is aware of this Policy and the means for students, families, and staff to report inequities and other forms of alleged discrimination and harassment.

F. Curriculum and Instruction

The Superintendent or designee(s) will ensure that curriculum and instructional materials reflect the School Board’s commitment to educational equity.

1. Curriculum and instructional materials for all grades shall reflect diversity and include a range of perspectives and experiences, particularly those of historically underrepresented groups.

2. All curriculum materials shall be examined for bias by the Department of Teaching and Learning. Where materials reflect bias, teachers utilizing the materials will acknowledge and seek to understand the bias and communicate this important context to students and parents/legal guardians prior to instruction.

3. The School Division shall develop, support, and implement curriculum and instruction as well as educational resources that have been reviewed and determined not to promote bias
4. Class instructional activities and extracurricular programs shall be designed to provide opportunities for cross-cultural and cross-racial interactions that foster respect for diversity. The School Board supports interschool activities that will allow students to experience the diversity within their schools and the School Division.
5. To address disparities in course participation (i.e. academies and AP/honors participation), middle and high schools will offer opportunities for supplementary coursework, such as summer bridge programs, study skills, or tutoring during or after school, to students interested in moving to higher level courses. This information will be made available to students and families through school counselors, school bulletins and webpages.

G. Policy Enforcement

The School Board directs the Superintendent or designee(s) to enforce this Policy and create regulations and practices to implement this Policy. The School Board will annually review School Division's implementation of this Policy and take appropriate action to ensure compliance with and enforcement of this Policy.

Adopted by the School Board: 2020

APPROVED AS TO
LEGAL SUFFICIENCY

Kamala H. Lencioni