

## Equity and Accountability

All students have an inherent right to an equitable, accessible, inclusive, and culturally responsive learning environment. The District values students' diverse ideas and contributions, and believes that students' identities and backgrounds should actively contribute to their successful academic outcomes and that of their peers. Diversity is a core strength of our District and requires that we work systemically to eliminate racial inequalities and inequities for all marginalized students.

### I. Commitments

#### The Board commits to:

- A. Provide system-wide direction, support, oversight, and shared accountability to advance equity and eliminate inequities in our Bellevue School District community.
- B. Affirm, inspire and serve each and every student in our diverse population, especially students who have been marginalized through race or other means, and students who face significant barriers.
- C. Create opportunities and remove barriers to identify and nurture strengths in each and every student and to ensure our community can in turn be strengthened by each and every student.
- D. Provide ongoing Board development and learning opportunities about inequities and biases that impact students, staff, and families in our community, and about effective strategies for addressing them.
- E. Address inequities and biases that create feelings of fear, lack of belonging, and academic and psychological barriers for students, all of which can contribute to reduced academic participation and performance.
- F. Work with the District to develop, maintain, and apply a consistent collection of Critical Criteria, approved by the Board and specified in an accompanying procedure, to the creation and review of all District policies and any Board approvals of District plans, budgets, and curriculum materials.
- G. Ensure our policies directly address racism and occurrences of racial tension in ways that both provide positive guidelines and expectations, and that direct development of robust reporting and investigation processes.
- H. Review and update policies regularly to ensure they proactively advance an equitable and exceptional education for all students. The Board shall conduct an initial prioritized review of its policies within five years of the implementation of this policy and should conduct subsequent prioritized reviews every five to seven years thereafter. The Board shall work with staff to create and maintain a procedure to guide this process.

#### This policy establishes that our District shall:

- A.** Adopt curriculum, and teaching and learning strategies, that leverage, reflect, and affirm the unique experiences and social, racial, cultural, linguistic, and familial backgrounds of our Bellevue School District community.
- B.** Ensure that all students have equitable access to and provision of resources based on their unique needs, including but not limited to, English language learning, advanced learning, free and reduced-price lunches, special education, and homelessness supports.
- C.** Ensure that all students have equitable access to all District programs including but not limited to all District choice schools, college and career readiness and counseling, sports and activities, and Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate coursework.
- D.** Provide concerted universal instructional efforts and extensive and varied intervention opportunities to support all students, including those who face barriers and inequities, to meet key milestones for student growth and achievement, and their own personal growth and learning goals.
- E.** Ensure disciplinary actions are undertaken without bias and/or disproportionality.
- F.** Work with the employee groups and staff to ensure that, at least once every three years, and within the first year for all newly hired staff, every staff member participates in professional development that addresses implicit bias, anti-discrimination, cultural responsiveness, and inclusion. For those staff who work directly with the instruction of students and for those who support such staff, the professional development will include training on culturally responsive instruction and inclusive practices. The Superintendent will ensure professional development in these instructional practices is ongoing and will provide job-embedded opportunities for collaborative learning and application of these practices with respect to other instructional priorities.
- G.** Implement hiring processes that proactively support the District's commitment to hiring, recruitment, and retention of highly qualified staff of color and that promote and honor other aspects of a diverse workforce.
- H.** Apply a consistent collection of Critical Criteria, approved by the Board and specified in an accompanying procedure, to the creation and review of all District procedures, the selection of curriculum materials, and the construction of District-wide and program-specific plans and budgets.
- I.** Develop reporting, investigation, communication and accountability processes, particularly related to actions of racism and occurrences of racial tension or other discriminatory actions. Ensure these processes
  - 1. Identify expected behaviors and behaviors we cannot accept.
  - 2. Provide clear responsibilities for staff who observe such behaviors, including any required reporting or other actions.
  - 3. Include guidelines for how staff and volunteers should address racial and other discriminatory tensions that arise in classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, buses, and any other school environments.

4. Account for power differences among those reporting, those to whom they report, and those who may be enacting or enabling racism or discrimination.
  5. Include clear expectations for follow-up with all relevant parties (including those the actions impact, those reporting, and those alleged to be enacting unwelcome behaviors).
- J.** Foster strong partnerships with diverse groups of parents and stakeholders and increase direct family engagement, especially with families whose students may be marginalized or face barriers.

The Superintendent or designee shall create and maintain procedures, associated with this policy and other relevant policies (cross-referenced in the procedure associated with this policy) as appropriate, to guide how each of the above District commitments will be implemented. The procedure associated with this policy should document and maintain clear measures of success related to each District commitment.

## **II. Context and Need for Equity and Accountability Policy**

Equity is rooted in the values of our District and we must intentionally and continually work to achieve it. We can only serve each and every student if we live our District values, including showing respect and compassion for each other. Racism, discrimination, and marginalization of any people or groups of people, whether intentional or not, have no place in our community. Such actions damage not only those individuals and groups at which they are directed, but also our community as a whole.

We acknowledge the inequities that many of our students face and that we are challenged to address. District data confirm what broader research shows: many factors impact a student's performance, including but not limited to race, income level, disability, gender, country of origin, mobility, and English proficiency. While these factors may be related to one another, each can independently impact students; and students who experience multiple factors can experience greater barriers.

We recognize that students face inequities that are associated with aspects of their identities and their contexts, including race, ethnicity, culture, disability and learning differences, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, and when they are acquiring English, or are experiencing homelessness or low-income. We are committed to addressing these inequities and helping each and every student to equitably access learning opportunities in our District to enable them all to thrive.

### **A. Racial Equity**

We are working to ensure that all students, regardless of race, experience a supportive and barrier free learning environment. The District acknowledges the historic existence of institutionalized racism which has systematically limited the educational and societal advancement of people of color, including Black, Hispanic/LatinX, Native American, Asian, and Pacific Islander. The specific barriers of students and families of color exist within a larger, racial context. Historic and contemporary BSD data measuring student

achievement, performance, and well-being demonstrate an obvious and predictable gap in outcomes, opportunities, and sense of belonging for students of color, most notably Black/African American and Hispanic/LatinX students, and also Native American, Pacific Islander, and Southeast Asian students.

District and other data sources show that there are many ways that students of color experience school differently. In particular, students of color experience forms of racism and unconscious bias that impact all aspects of their educational experience and that impede and limit how successful students of color can be. Additionally, when students are marginalized from participating fully with peers, *all* students lose valuable contributions to their learning. This policy aims to pro-actively promote a culture that supports students of all races and backgrounds, and to address both institutional practices and the behaviors of any individuals in the system that perpetuate any sort of biased actions or ambivalence that allows biased actions to inhibit students of color from accessing the opportunities of our District.

### **B. Inclusion and Full Engagement**

We are working to achieve inclusion in our schools such that all students and families have safe and equitable access, feel a deep sense of belonging, and experience a welcoming classroom and school community where instruction is strengths-based, aligned to or exceeds grade-level and subject standards, and to the maximum extent possible, takes place with all grade-level or subject peers. While this goal extends to all our students, it is especially relevant for students with disabilities and students acquiring English.

The District recognizes that students with disabilities can be marginalized and often separated from their peer community. We also recognize that these students face additional barriers when they come from other marginalized groups, particularly students of color. The District is committed to addressing inequities and biases towards students and families whose voice or access has been marginalized in conjunction with their disabilities, and the District is committed to minimizing situations that separate students from their peers and peer learning environments.

### **C. Approach to Address Inequities**

District efforts to bridge inequities will include a combination of programmatic, cultural and systemic efforts. We recognize that each group faces different barriers, challenges and needs, and that the experiences of different groups of students cannot all be addressed in the same ways. While the District may focus particular efforts to address specific inequities, the District will implement such efforts in a way that allows them to serve any students who need such supports.

### III. Accountability

To ensure that we are truly serving each and every student, especially those who have been marginalized and those who experience barriers, we will monitor our effectiveness, report, analyze, and adjust our related practices in the following contexts:

- Regular reporting and program planning
- Annual report, including follow up plans, on equity and accountability
- Consistent application of the Critical Criteria

#### A. Annual Equity & Accountability Reporting & Recommendations

The Superintendent or designee, in consultation with the Board, will monitor and report, at least once annually, on the progress of the specific commitments identified in the Commitments section of this policy and on the District's overall progress in removing barriers and effectively serving each and every student. This equity and accountability focused report will identify where success was reached both in terms of the commitments established in this policy and the related outcomes. Specifically, this equity and accountability report will include, though is not limited to, the following:

1. Evaluation of each commitment listed in the commitments section of this policy.
2. Evaluation, with particular attention to those groups of students who have been marginalized and who experience barriers, of multiple relevant measures including, but not limited to:
  - Graduation rates
  - Discipline referrals
  - Referrals for special education services
  - Student sense of belonging
  - College entrance exam [e.g., ACT/SAT] performance
  - State test passing rate
  - D and F rates in secondary core content areas
  - Post-secondary plans

The District should consider other relevant, research, and data-supported measures (qualitative or quantitative) that may be closer to classroom teaching and learning, and should include those as they are identified.

3. Information about, and recommended adjustments the District will make, to programs, initiatives, and resources implemented to remove related barriers, provide needed supports, and increase access and opportunities for students.
4. Any recommendations, if applicable, about relevant changes to District policies, procedures, plans and programs.
5. Updated measures of success for the commitments and initiatives related to this policy.

6. A timeline for any follow-up actions and modifications

This reporting will be in addition to any separate program, school, or departmental reports that may also examine overlapping data sets.

The Superintendent or designee, in consultation with the Board, will create and maintain a procedure to identify relevant measures, associated success metrics, and an appropriate monitoring and reviewing schedule. [should also be consistent with Policy 0300]. The associated procedure should be updated as needed each year within three months of the final equity and accountability report.

**B. Regular Ongoing Equity & Accountability Reporting**

In all reports to the Board and in all District direction-setting reports, outcomes for students who have been marginalized or who experience barriers should be monitored and considered.

Within the context of its strategic and annual planning process, the District will identify and monitor select key milestones for student growth and achievement. Such milestones should hold equitably high expectations for all students and should appropriately account for the personal growth and learning goals of each and every student.

The Superintendent or designee, in collaboration with the Board, will develop reporting procedures [including procedure 0300P] that ensure progress monitoring for outcomes for marginalized groups.

**C. Critical Criteria Documentation**

Application of the Critical Criteria must be documented for each of the following:

1. Policies brought to the Board for first reading.
2. All District plans, budgets and curriculum materials presented to the Board for approval.
3. Changes to District procedures, school handbooks, program and departmental plans, and any other relevant direction-setting documents.

The Superintendent or designee, in collaboration with the Board, will develop and maintain tools to support, and a process to monitor, use of the Critical Criteria, and will document these in an accompanying procedure.

Cross References:

Policy 3205

Prohibition of Sexual  
Harassment

Policy 3210

Nondiscrimination

**Legal References:**

WA Administrative Code  
Chapter 392-190

Equal educational  
opportunity-Unlawful  
Discrimination Prohibited

Title 28A.640 RCW

Sexual Equality

Title 28A.642 RCW

Discrimination Prohibition

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