

3419	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging in the School District
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The Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining a positive and inclusive learning environment where all students, especially those from currently and historically marginalized groups, feel safe, included and accepted, and where they experience a sense of belonging which contributes to their academic success.

Core Beliefs and Agreements

All children deserve to have equal access to opportunity regardless of the color of their skin, their gender, their sexual orientation, the language they speak or their background. This freedom is fundamental to our K-12 education program and is extended to everyone without exception.

The District recognizes that students have historically been marginalized due to inequities associated with aspects of their identities and their contexts, including, but not limited to, race, color, socioeconomic status, appearance, national origin, ethnicity, religion, religious practice, disability, sex; sexual orientation, or gender (including gender identity and expression).

Racism, discrimination, and marginalization of any people or groups of people, whether intentional or not, have no place in our schools, our district or in our community. Such actions damage not only those individuals and groups at which they are directed, but also harm our community as a whole. We are committed to addressing these inequities and helping each and every student access learning opportunities in school to enable them all to thrive and to build a better society.

Defining Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

For purposes of this policy:

- a. "Diversity" - a representation of our uniqueness, cultural and lived experience that make up our community.
- b. "Equity" - equal access to opportunities for all, with the understanding that fair is not always equal and barriers are removed.
- c. "Inclusion" - the practice of valuing differences in order to foster a sense of belonging and empowerment.
- d. "Belonging" - feelings of understanding, respect, connectedness, membership and mattering, such that all individuals in a community know they are valued and add value in turn.

These descriptions are not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, they are meant to be foundational and provide clarity to the concepts of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

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Diverse Schools and Learning Opportunities

The District will work to promote classrooms in which all students have equal access and opportunities to learn and realize their full potential. As part of this effort, the District will seek to:

1. Take steps to raise an accurate and productive awareness of socio-economic and racial diversity within the district.
2. Eliminate the use of terms and phrases within District schools that perpetuate negative stereotypes and minimize student opportunities.
3. Create coursework, programs, and activities that are accessible to all students, regardless of their ability status, native language, income level, or any other basis.

Teaching and Learning

The District will strive to advance inclusive and culturally responsive teaching and learning through, but not limited to, the following means: curricula in all content areas; books and instructional materials; pedagogical practices and professional learning opportunities; classroom procedures; student support systems for all developmental pathways; full and equitable opportunities to learn for all students; and multiple assessment measures.

As part of this effort, the District will seek to implement the recommendations of the NYS Education Department's Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework that embeds the ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion by creating student-centered learning environments that:

- a. Affirm cultural identities;
- b. Foster positive academic outcomes;
- c. Develop students' abilities to connect across lines of difference;
- d. Elevate historically marginalized voices;
- e. Empower students as agents of social change; and
- f. Contribute to individual student engagement, learning, growth, and achievement through the cultivation of critical thinking.

The District will develop and utilize curricula that encourages critical thinking and incorporates diverse perspectives, materials, and texts so that students are taught topics from multiple perspectives.

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Student Supports, Discipline, and Wellness

The District will strive to focus on the well-being of the "whole child." As part of this effort, the District will seek to:

1. Employ programs and practices that constructively and appropriately enhance all students' identities, self-confidence, and self-esteem.
2. Maintain non-discriminatory discipline policies and practices.
3. Consider and address the full range of student developmental pathways.

Family and Community Engagement

The District will strive to foster family and community engagement practices that are based on mutual trust, confidence, and respect. As part of this effort, the District will seek to:

1. Build community conversations by encouraging participation from all stakeholders.
2. Reduce language barriers through various means, including, but not limited to, providing translated communications when appropriate.
3. Leverage partners such as the county government and local community organizations in developing programs and activities for the District.

Workforce Diversity

The District will work to create a workforce that is not only diverse and inclusive, but one that recognizes and values the differences among people. As part of this effort, the District will seek to:

1. Mindfully consider recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce in all areas and at all levels, thereby neutralizing stereotypes and preparing students for an increasingly global society.
2. Provide staff with opportunities for professional learning opportunities on cultural proficiency and awareness.

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Training

The District will include appropriate DEI training. Although specific objectives will vary from training to training, in general, trainings will be designed to:

1. Increase awareness of the content of this policy and/or various DEI issues; and
2. Promote a welcoming and inclusive environment for all District community members.

Adoption Date: 7/10/2024