

Lower Merion School District

Policy No.:	101
Section:	PROGRAMS
Title:	EQUITY
Date Adopted:	6/14/21
Date Last Revised:	11/18/24; 9/16/24

101 EQUITY

Purpose

The Lower Merion School District is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment for all people. The District is also dedicated to ensuring that all students and employees have equitable access to the District's educational programs and activities.

All bolded words are defined in the accompanying [Administrative Regulation 101](#).

Practicing equity in this District means understanding the needs of individuals and positioning resources – including funding, programs, policies, initiatives, and supports – to target people's unique experiences and to provide for individual needs so that **achievement** and **opportunity gaps** are eliminated on individual and systemic levels.

Equity is distinct from equality. While equality entitles that everyone gets the same, equity requires that individuals get what they need. The value of equity is that the entire community benefits when individuals get what they need. This policy reflects the Board's support in ensuring equity for all individuals in the District.

This policy reflects the District's commitment to reduce and, where possible, eliminate barriers on behalf of students, employees, or families who may have historically experienced opportunity or achievement gaps due to factors such as **race**, color, **ethnicity**, national origin, language, immigration status, socioeconomic status, sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, creed, or religion. In light of social and historical context, and within what the law permits, the Board authorizes the Superintendent or their designee to develop and promulgate regulations designed to ensure that structural impediments are reviewed and reformed in service of meeting the needs of those historically marginalized individuals.

The Board's equity statement (highlighted above) shall serve as the foundational structure upon which all aspects of the District's educational system are built and maintained. To this end, the Board is committed to ensuring that every student has access to an equitable experience within the District by adopting policies, procedures and practices to (1) dismantle **institutional barriers** that perpetuate inequitable outcomes, and (2) promote access and opportunities that benefit every student.

The Board is committed to using quantitative and qualitative disaggregated District, building-level, and individual student data to:

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1. Direct the Superintendent and/or designee to identify and remove institutional barriers that result in **achievement** and/or **opportunity gaps** for students; and
2. Implement policies, practices and procedures that ensure a student's educational success is neither predetermined or predicated by factors such as a student's **race, ethnicity**, gender, sexual orientation, student with identified disabilities, individual learning needs, social or economic status, or other identity related factors.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent and/or their designee(s) shall use disaggregated District, building-level, and individual student data to systematically assess which students and/or student groups are experiencing the least success, determine why, and target resources and efforts to address identified needs and improve overall educational outcomes.

The Superintendent and/or their designee(s) shall identify and remove barriers that prevent students from equitably accessing educational opportunities.

Each District employee shall be responsible for fostering a school environment that promotes equity and for conducting themselves in a culturally competent manner, consistent with the practices communicated at required in-service and professional development seminars sponsored by the District.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and disseminate Administrative Regulations implementing this Policy, consistent with the general guidelines outlined below and in accordance with applicable law, to promote equity in all District schools, programs, and services. The Administrative Regulations shall, at a minimum, address the following topics:

1. The maintenance of high academic standards and expectations for every student, and the provision of multiple pathways to success in order to support the achievement of every student based on their individual needs.
2. Ensuring equitable access to academic programs, rigorous coursework options, and athletic, extracurricular, and co-curricular offerings to every student, especially the most historically underperforming and challenged learners such as students of color, students with disabilities, students with limited English language proficiency, and economically disadvantaged students.

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3. The provision of resources, materials, and assessments that reflect the diversity of the District's students and which are geared toward the understanding and appreciation of individual cultural uniqueness and differences.
4. The equitable administration of school-based discipline at all District schools based on a model of restorative practices rather than punitive measures, when appropriate.
5. The promotion and maintenance of welcoming and inclusive school environments.
6. Meaningfully engaging and empowering students, their families, and members of the Lower Merion and Narberth communities to be partners in the District's efforts to provide an equitable experience for every student. This shall include, among other methods, periodically soliciting feedback from: (1) a cross-section of District students regarding their experiences, sense of inclusion, and how their needs are being met; and (2) other members of the Lower Merion and Narberth communities.
7. Recruiting, employing, supporting, and retaining a workforce that is **culturally responsive** and reflective of the diversity of the Lower Merion and Narberth communities.
8. The provision of meaningful professional development for District employees, Board members, and, where possible, independent contractors, to strengthen their knowledge and skills in areas such as **cultural proficiency**, equity, inclusion, **implicit and explicit bias** awareness, and social justice. Such professional development sessions should offer opportunities for self-reflection and the receipt of feedback on how to improve upon carrying out the Board's equity statement and supporting the success of every student.
9. Ongoing review, evaluation, and modification of policies and practices that perpetuate inequitable outcomes for students based on an annual review of District qualitative and quantitative data.
10. Periodic reporting to the Board and community stakeholders on the success of the District's equity initiatives, progress towards achieving the goals of this Policy, and emerging needs.

Related Policies:

Policy/AR 006 (Civility)

Policy/AR 103 (Equal Opportunity Program for School and Classroom Practices)

Policy/AR 301 (Equal Opportunity Program for Employment Practices)

Policy/AR 114 (Individualized Student Supports and Services)

Policy 119 (Controversial and Value Issues in the Curriculum)

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Policy/AR 130 (Guidelines Concerning Religion)

Policy/AR 151 (Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Opportunities)

Policy/AR 152 (Participation in Curricular Programs and Activities by Economically Disadvantaged Students)

Policy/AR 235 (Student Rights and Responsibilities)

Policy/AR 259 (Transgender and Gender Diverse Students: Ensuring Equity and Nondiscrimination)

Policy/AR 302 (Standards of Conduct)