

EQUITY AND EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

PURPOSE

Rochester City School District (RCSD) students, staff and stakeholders bring their personal backgrounds into our schools and the RCSD is richer for it. Each of them has a legitimate expectation to have a barrier-free learning environment counteracting the contemporary and historical impact of bias, prejudice and discrimination which for generations has produced a predictability of learning outcomes based on race, class, socioeconomics, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, cognitive/physical ability, diverse language fluency, and religion.

Our students deserve respectful learning environments in which their racial and ethnic diversity is valued and contributes to successful academic outcomes. We believe that the responsibility for student success is broadly shared by RCSD staff, administrators, teachers, communities and families.

It is the obligation of the RCSD to embrace the diversity within our District while actively eliminating practices that perpetuate the disparities among our students so that all students have the opportunity to benefit equally. These disparities are unacceptable.

We must directly confront institutional racism that results in predictably lower academic achievement for students of color than their white peers. Eliminating any vestige of bigotry and racism in our District will increase achievement, including on-time graduation, for *all* students, while narrowing the gaps between the highest-and lowest-performing students.

The concept of educational equity goes beyond formal equality – where all students are treated the same. Instead, true educational equity fosters a barrier-free environment where all students have the opportunity to benefit equally, regardless of their race, class or other personal characteristics such as creed, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, economic status, gender, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, pregnancy status, marital status, physical appearance, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability.

RCSD acknowledges that complex societal and historical factors contribute to the inequity within our School District. Nonetheless, rather than perpetuating the resulting disparities, we must address and overcome this inequity, providing all students with targeted supports and thus equal opportunities to succeed.

True equity involves differentiating resource allocation based on students' needs, providing specific targeted supports, a curriculum reflective and appreciative of the rich cultural heritage of District students, and investment in restorative justice implementation and practice rather than in school law enforcement. A student whose history and heritage are appreciated and

celebrated will learn better and be more successful than a student who is forced to overcome cultural barriers.

In order to secure this vision, the RCSD will focus on the individual and unique needs of each student, and foster the universal values of diversity, equity, inclusion and excellence in education without bias, prejudice, or discrimination.

ELIMINATE SYSTEMIC DISPARITIES

To interrupt systems that perpetuate inequities, the RCSD will:

- A. Invite and include people from all protected classes to examine issues and find adaptive solutions, which address the root causes and systems, rather than technical solutions, which provide one-time situational solutions;
- B. Develop the personal, professional and organizational skills and knowledge of its employees to enable them to address the role and presence of racism both in its implicit and explicit forms; and
- C. Eliminate the racial predictability and disproportionality in all aspects of education and its administration (e.g., the disproportionate over-application of discipline to students of color, their over-representation in Special Education, and their under-representation in various Advanced Learning programs.
- D. Commit to ensuring that fairness, equity and inclusion are essential principles of our school system fully integrating these principles into all of our policies, programs, operations and practices.

ENSURE SYSTEMIC EQUITY

The RCSD will implement and lead from a system-wide equity plan that stands on three critical pillars: Family, Student and Community Engagement; Leadership; and Teaching and Learning.

A. Family, Student and Community Engagement

RCSD employees will develop and implement equitable practices for and with our students, their families and other community members including:

- 1. Intentionally seeking and including students' multiple perspectives in the development and implementation of culturally responsive teaching and learning practices and curriculum;

2. Engaging family and community members with staff and students, District-wide and at school and program sites, in the development and implementation of culturally appropriate and effective partnerships between home and school;
3. Inviting and including community members to bring multiple cultural perspectives to examining and solving issues that arise;
4. Engaging, including and collaborating with our families, students, residents, communities, and stakeholders as this Board recognizes that their active involvement is essential to the Board's own responsibility for effective and equitable governance.

B. Leadership

RCSD leaders will ensure that equity guides employee actions and leads to improved academic results by:

1. Recruiting, employing, supporting, retaining and continuously developing a balanced workforce that reflects the diversity of the student body. The RCSD will recruit racially conscious and culturally competent administrative, instructional and support personnel;
2. Providing cultural competency training for all its personnel;
3. Modeling racial equity by what is said, what is written and what is done in conducting the business of the RCSD;
4. Replacing inequitable operational practices with systems that support implementation of this Policy;
5. Focusing accountability systems and metrics on racially equitable results;
6. Allocating annually the RCSD's many financial, capital and human resources equitably; and
7. Facilitating equitable access to co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, social services, tutoring, and enrichment opportunities.

C. Teaching and Learning

RCSD employees will work together to increase their individual and collective capacity to effectively teach a diverse and changing student population by:

1. Ensuring a positive and academically rigorous school environment that engages all students;

2. Collaborating as teachers and administrators to create and implement culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum and assessments;
3. Eliminating practices that lead to the over-or under-representation of any student group compared to peers, particularly by focusing on reducing the disproportionate use of exclusionary discipline practices with black and brown students in the District;
4. Creating multiple learning pathways that widen access to educational opportunities and lifelong success;
5. Providing high quality, culturally relevant and responsive curricula, including African and Latinx studies for all students and teachers, regardless of learning styles; and
6. Identifying, developing and applying best instructional practices that have demonstrably made a positive difference for students and groups of students in order to reduce prevalent and persistent learning outcome gaps.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The Board directs the Superintendent to develop and implement a system-wide equity plan that will result in measurable academic improvements for *all* RCSD students. The Superintendent shall annually report progress on the plan and its outcomes.

LEGAL REFERENCES

U.S. Constitution Amendment XIV, §1 (Equal Protection)
20 U.S.C. §1703 (Equal Educational Opportunity)
25U.S.C. §452, et seq. (Johnson-O'Malley Act)
42 U.S.C. §2000c, et seq. (Desegregation)
42 U.S.C. §2000d, et seq. (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)
42 U.S.C. §2000e-2 (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)

CROSS REFERENCE

0100 Prohibiting Discrimination or Harassment of Students or Employees

Adopted March 29, 2018 pursuant to Resolution No. 2017-18: 555.