

EQUITY, INCLUSIVITY, AND DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION

The Yonkers Board of Education is committed to the success of all District students and to achieving the goal of ensuring that students are ready for college, career, and/or adult life. The Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining a positive and inclusive learning environment where all students, especially those currently and historically marginalized, feel safe, included, welcomed, and accepted, and experience a sense of belonging and academic success.

The District recognizes that students have been historically marginalized due to inequities associated with aspects of their identities and their contexts, including, but not limited to, race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender (including gender identity and expression). It is the District's belief that 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 educational program and is extended to everyone without exception. Racism, discrimination, and marginalization of any people or groups of people, whether intentional or not, have no place in our schools, our District, or our community. Such actions damage not only those individuals and groups at which they are directed, but also our community as a whole. The District is committed to addressing these inequities and helping its students equitably access learning opportunities in school which will enable them to thrive and build a better society.

Goals

With this policy, the Board strives to eliminate practices which may perpetuate disparities among students, schools, and/or programs within the District and foster an environment in which students are not prevented from attaining success due to a lack of resources or opportunities. The District is dedicated to providing equitable, inclusive, and diverse opportunities for all students to reach their highest potential. To achieve educational equity and inclusive education, the District will acknowledge the presence of culturally diverse students and the need for students to find relevant connections among themselves and the subject matter and the tasks teachers ask them to perform. The District will develop the individual and organizational knowledge, attitudes, skills, and practices to create culturally responsive learning and working environments that expect and support high academic achievement for students and employees from all racial and/or identity groups. Differences will not just be seen as strengths, but they will be nourished, celebrated, and welcomed because they are what make students and families unique.

In its commitment to provide equitable, inclusive, and diverse opportunities throughout the District, the Board establishes the following objectives:

1. To raise the achievement of all students.
2. To increasingly and systematically narrow the gap between the lowest and highest performing students.
3. To allocate resources in an effort to meet the needs of students who require more supports to achieve academic success and age-appropriate social development.
4. To allocate resources in an effort to provide students who are ready to complete more challenging work the opportunity to do so.

5. To provide educational environments, curricula, and opportunities that are culturally and linguistically responsive to student needs.
6. To work toward eradicating any racial or other disproportionality that may exist within all aspects of education in the District, including, but not limited to, student discipline, special education, and accelerated learning programs.
7. To ensure that all students, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, socioeconomic status, or other protected personal characteristics, have the opportunities and resources that will provide them a path to succeed in college, career, and/or adult life.

In order to truly realize these goals and objectives, it is imperative that the Board, its officers, and employees, be fully conversant in the historical injustices and inequalities that have shaped our society and to recognize and eliminate the institutional barriers, including racism and biases, that contribute to the pervasive, disparate educational outcomes within our schools. Equity and inclusive education aims to understand, identify, address, and eliminate the biases, barriers, and disparities that limit a student's chance to graduate high school prepared for college, for a career, and for life.

The Superintendent of Schools or designee(s) will ensure that curriculum and instructional materials reflect the Board's commitment to educational equity. Curriculum and instructional materials for all grades shall reflect diversity and include a range of perspectives and experiences, particularly those of historically underrepresented groups. All curriculum materials shall be examined for bias. Class instructional activities and extracurricular programs shall be designed to provide opportunities for cross-cultural and cross-racial interactions that foster respect for diversity.

In allocating resources to individual schools and programs within the District in an effort to provide equitable, inclusive, and diverse opportunities to all students, the Board, under the advisement of the Superintendent, will take into consideration the goals of the Board, the needs of the students within the particular school, and the needs of the District's school system as a whole. The Board recognizes that in striving to achieve equity, it may be required to make difficult decisions and adjustments regarding how funding and/or other resources are allocated among the District's schools and/or programs. Nevertheless, it is the goal of the Board to eliminate disparities, which result in inequities among schools, within the District.

Equity and inclusive education is an ongoing process. For the District to meet the needs of our ever-evolving society, the unique learning qualities of all students, and the diverse backgrounds of our students, it requires shared commitment and leadership from our communities and schools. The Board understands that equity and inclusive education is achieved when each adult collaborates and affirms each student by creating a respectful learning environment inclusive of actual or perceived personal characteristics.

Educational equity is based on the principles of fairness and ensuring that every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, despite any individual's actual or perceived personal characteristics. Educational equity is not

interchangeable with the principles of equality and does not mean that we treat all students the same.

Inclusive education is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students should see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings and the broader environment, in which diversity is honored and all individuals are respected.

Diversity in education means students, staff, families, and community are our greatest strength and diversity is viewed as an asset. Diversity means the condition of being different or having differences, including, but not limited to, sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, age, socioeconomic class, religion, ability, and other human differences. Embracing these diversities and moving beyond tolerance and celebration to inclusivity and respect will help the District reach our goal of creating a community that ensures each and every voice is heard and valued.

Accountability, Transparency, and Review

The Board, its officers, and employees, accepts responsibility and will hold themselves and each other accountable for every student having access to quality education, qualified teachers, challenging curriculum, opportunities to learn, and sufficient supports so they can achieve academically as well as in other student outcomes. The District is committed to allocating time, energy, and resources to developing a more equitable, inclusive, diverse, and welcoming environment for all students, parents, and staff.

With stakeholder input, the Superintendent or designee(s) shall develop and implement an Equity, Inclusivity, and Diversity plan with clear accountability measures for ensuring that equitable educational opportunities are being provided to all students. The plan will identify the multiple indicators necessary to monitor student outcomes, engagement, and school climate, and specific data that will be used to ensure accountability for student, school, and District-wide performance; to reduce variability in outcomes; and to ensure that academic outcomes will not be predictable by actual or perceived personal characteristics and can be assessed and reported transparently to the public. Reporting may include, but is not limited to, standardized test scores, referrals, suspension and expulsion reports, the percentage of students placed in Bilingual, English as a New Language (ENL), Advanced Placement, and remedial classes, and employee, parent, and student perceptions about school.

Training and/or programing will be provided to both students and staff to raise awareness of the issues surrounding cultural responsiveness, equity, and inclusion, and to implement preventative measures to help counteract biases and practices that perpetuate achievement disparities and lead to disproportionate levels of student success. Age-appropriate instructional materials will be incorporated into the curriculum to educate students so that they can learn from a diverse range of experiences and points of view. Curricular materials and staffing decisions will support these efforts.

The Board and the Superintendent will monitor and review the District's equity activities, including the Equity, Inclusivity, and Diversity plan, to determine the extent to which District

schools are complying with this policy, the progress made toward attaining the goals of this policy, whether this policy is having a positive effect on improving academic opportunities for all students and increasing family engagement and reducing achievement gaps. Further, the Superintendent shall, at least annually, provide the Board with a report on the District's Equity, Inclusivity, and Diversity plan. Based on those results, this policy, and the specific objectives set to meet its goals, may be revised as needed.

Equity Policy Communication

To be successful in achieving educational equity and inclusive education, it is imperative that all members of the school community are aware of this policy and its purpose as well as the District's commitment to equity and inclusion by fostering a positive learning environment that embraces all diverse, unique, and individual differences. The Superintendent or designee(s) is directed to ensure that this policy is communicated to students, staff, and the community. This policy will be posted on the District's website.

Policy Enforcement

The Superintendent shall develop regulations, procedures, and/or protocols necessary to implement this policy. The Board shall review this policy as necessary based on the Superintendent's reporting on the District's Equity, Inclusivity, and Diversity plan.

Cross-ref: 4000, Goals for Instructional Programs
4510, Instructional Materials
4511, Textbook Selection and Adoption
9240, Recruiting and Hiring
9700, Professional Development

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