



Responsible Office: Office of Chief Ombudsman and Strategies

BOARD POLICY 9210
EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

PURPOSE

The Board of Trustees (Board) recognizes the importance of creating conditions for learning that ensure equity of access to the full range of learning opportunities available for all students in its care. The Board believes appreciating individual human diversity, developing a capacity for the collective pursuit of cultural competence, and committing to day-to-day equity and inclusion will enable the Washoe County School District (District) to fulfill its mission. The District will adopt procedures intended to achieve a diverse and equitable school community inclusive of, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, language, culture, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religious and spiritual beliefs, age, and physical and learning abilities.

POLICY

1. Guiding Principles

- a. The Board recognizes the growing diversity of cultures in the District and commits itself to ensuring that all aspects of policies, regulations, practices, programs, and services promote equity and understanding and appreciation for cultural and ethnic diversity.
- b. District policies, programs, and activities shall foster recognition of and respect for basic human rights, fundamental freedoms, and equitable opportunities and outcomes for all.

2. Guiding Practices

- a. The District, through the Equity and Diversity Department, strives to identify any disparities, discrimination, disproportionality practices, and/or inequities in educational programming and access to that programming by communicating, collaborating, and building supports among all appropriate parties; and will bring resolution to such disparities amongst the District's student population, their families, faculty/staff, and the community.

- b. Shared and Committed Leadership. The District will provide leadership that is committed to identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to learning. The District will establish and maintain collaborative relationships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all District faculty/staff, students and their families are recognized to help meet their needs.
- c. District/School-Community Relationships.
 - i. Collaboration will be based on open dialogue and partnerships with parents/guardians, staff, students, the Board, Superintendent, and other community groups and agencies. The Board will draw upon expertise of partners to explore innovative ways of sharing resources that can help meet the diverse needs of students and provide new and relevant learning opportunities.
 - ii. The District seeks community input to provide an equity lens for policies, programs, and practices. Channels shall be encouraged for exchanging ideas with community members and staff. Through these efforts, the District seeks guidance and input aimed at meeting the needs of the diverse communities within Washoe County.
- d. Inclusive Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Practices.
 - i. The District shall examine and reduce bias of curriculum and instruction and integrate the experiences and contributions of diverse cultures and races. The District will ensure that curriculum with high-yield methods and practice of teaching and resources are culturally responsive, inclusive, and represent the diversity of the school community.
 - ii. The District will provide students and staff with authentic and relevant opportunities to learn about diverse histories, cultures, and perspectives. Students will see themselves represented in the curriculum, programs, culture, and staff of the school. The District will affirm and value students' first languages.
 - iii. The Board is committed to advancing assessment practices that use multiple qualitative and/or quantitative measures that are bias-free and culturally and linguistically appropriate. To inform a strong multi-tiered system of support for the delivery of academic and behavioral success that is not intentionally biased towards students.
- e. Staff Development and Professional Learning. District employees will participate in professional development addressing equity and inclusion, cultural competency, disproportionality, and culturally responsive teaching

and reflective practices, as they pertain to the achievement gap, unconscious bias, and systemic barriers. Professional learning opportunities with District school employees will be ongoing and based on changing needs within the District and community. The District will provide opportunities within its workforce and the Board of Trustees to participate in professional learning and provide information for students and parents/guardians to increase their knowledge and understanding of equity and inclusive education.

- f. **Accountability and Transparency.** The District will provide ongoing and open communication to keep all stakeholders informed of the District's goals and progress as they relate to the principles of equity and inclusive education. Within the context of the Board's strategic plan, School Performance Plans will embed the District's equity and inclusive educational practices. The District's strategic plan will focus on identifying and removing any barriers to student learning in order to reduce gaps in achievement and provide a respectful and culturally responsive school climate and culture.
- g. The Superintendent may develop the administrative regulations, procedures, and/or practices necessary to implement and maintain the provisions of this policy.

DEFINITIONS

- 1. **Achievement Gap** - refers to any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students.
- 2. **Educational Equity** – practices that provide all students with the individual support they need to reach and exceed a common standard.
- 3. **Cultural Proficiency** – making the commitment to lifelong learning for the purpose of being increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of cultural groups; holding a vision for the future and committing to culturally competency assessments that serve as benchmarks on the road to student success.
- 4. **Cultural Competence** – the alignment of personal values and behaviors and the school policies and procedures in a manner that is inclusive of all cultures and that enables healthy and productive interactions among individuals. Viewing one's personal and organizational work through a lens of responsibility for fostering an environment that is inclusive of cultures that are different from that of the individual.
 - a. For the student/family – the ability to equitably and sensitively respond to the unique needs that arise from the student/family's culture and to use cultural strengths as tools to assist with the educational process.

- b. For the District – the ability to provide equal and meaningful access to individuals from each cultural population served, and to do so in a manner that is based on an understanding of each population’s distinct needs.
 - c. For staff – Culturally responsive teaching is the ability to use the student/family’s accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills as an asset to the classroom and school experience through rigor, relevancy, relationships, and expectations. It is dependent upon developing our own racial consciousness, identity, and experiences, skills in cross-cultural and culturally specific practices, knowledge of specific cultures and their histories, and the ability to communicate effectively.
- 5. Culture – the totality of ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge, language, and way of life of a group of people who share a certain historical background. Manifestations of culture include art, laws, institutions, morals, and customs. Everything you believe and everything you do that enables you to identify with people who are like you and that distinguishes you from people who differ from you. Both individuals and organizations are defined by their cultures.
 - 6. Disproportionality - the over/under-representation of a group of interest in comparison to their representation in the overall community.
 - 7. Diversity and Inclusion – diversity embodies acceptance and respect for a range of differences among people, cultures, and perspectives Inclusion means that the diverse groups are represented and included in all sectors of the organization and organizational life. Diversity and diverse populations may include but are not limited to: Race and ethnicity; gender; gender identity/expression; sexual orientation; ability/disability status; religion and spirituality; age; education; socio-economic status; language/communication modality; individual experiential backgrounds; lifestyle (interests, hobbies, activities, affiliations); family dynamics; and any other protected class in conformance with federal, state, and local laws.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- 1. As a result of adhering to this policy, strategies will be developed to significantly improve achievement outcomes and reduce achievement gaps for all students.
- 2. The District will recruit, employ, and retain a diverse and culturally competent workforce.
- 3. The District will welcome all families, as essential partners in their student’s education, school planning and District decision-making. The District will include other partners who have demonstrated culturally specific expertise in meeting our educational outcomes.

4. The District shall sustain ongoing culturally responsive practices, education, and professional learning to strengthen employee's knowledge and skills.
5. The District shall utilize qualitative and quantitative data, including assessments, to develop ongoing processes to work toward addressing practices that demonstrate an over and under representation of student of color in areas such as special education, discipline, gifted and talented, and advanced placement.
6. The District will model a culture of respect that actively cultivates and promotes a safe, orderly, and respectful environment to ensure equitable opportunities for all students and employees to learn and work. Structures, systems, policies, and procedures will be based on culturally responsive practices that ensure a safe, orderly, and respectful learning and working environment focused on student achievement.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

1. This policy reflects the goals of WCSD's Strategic Plan and aligns/complies with the governing documents of the District, to include:
 - a. Board Policy 5700, Safe and Respectful Learning Environment
 - b. Board Policy 9200, Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited
2. This policy complies with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC), to include:
 - a. Chapter 388, System of Public Instruction
 - i. NRS 388.121 – 388.139, Provision of Safe and Respectful Learning Environment
 - b. Chapter 613, Employment Practices
 - i. NRS 613.310 – 613.435, Equal Opportunities in Employment
3. This document complies with the following federal laws and regulations:
 - a. Title II, American with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008
 - b. Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000c
 - c. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons
 - d. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - e. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 et seq., and the implementing regulations, 34 C.F.R. Part 106;

- f. Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 6101,
- g. Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- h. Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.;

REVIEW AND REPORTING

- 1. This document shall be reviewed as part of the bi-annual review and reporting process, following each regular session of the Nevada Legislature. The Board shall receive notification of any required changes to the policy.
- 2. Administrative regulations, and/or other associated documents, will be developed as necessary to implement this policy. The Board shall receive notification of the adoption and/or revision of any implementing administrative regulations.

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision	Modification
3/10/2015	1.0	Adopted:
3/12/2019	2.0	Revised: removed mention of Equity Task Force