

BOARD FILE: ADB

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

The Douglas County School District Board of Education (“the Board”) commits to establish an inclusive culture to ensure all students, staff, and community members feel safe and valued by increasing and embedding authentic and relevant learning opportunities and experiences involving inclusion, multiple elements of diversity, accessibility, and educational equity, as defined in this policy. In collaboration with community stakeholders, the Douglas County School District (“the District”) is committed to providing educational and working environments that foster systemically aligned practices, opportunities, and experiences which promote the acceptance of all stakeholders, remove and avoid implementing barriers limiting stakeholders’ potential and success, and implement unbiased, culturally relevant, responsive, and sustaining learning environments.

The purpose of this Educational Equity policy is to achieve the following outcomes:

- 1) Ensure inclusive access to District programs, benefits, and postsecondary pathways for all students
 - Consistent with that commitment, the School District shall offer and afford every student and staff member equitable educational opportunities regardless of race, color, ancestry, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, socio-economic status, or eligibility for special education services.
- 2) Provide sufficient support and resourcing to enable each student to reach his or her individual potential, realizing that individual students may require differing amounts and types of support and resources to achieve this goal;
- 3) Empower educators and staff to create a learning environment where all students, staff, and community members feel safe and valued in order to:
 - Promote student academic growth and achievement
 - Assist students to advance in their development of the Colorado Essential Skills – Entrepreneurial Skills, Personal Skills, Civic/Interpersonal Skills, and Professional Skills
 - Increase self-regulating behaviors, help-seeking, resiliency, healthy coping skills, and a sense of belonging
 - Develop student critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are essential for postsecondary success

Pursuit of these outcomes shall guide the Board and District staff in creating policies, crafting procedures, and making decisions related to District facilities, selection of educational materials, equipment, staffing, curriculum, and regulations affecting students and staff. Further, the District will develop and sustain a teaching and learning culture that addresses high expectations and supports for all employees and students while working to eliminate any misaligned and/or inequitable practices and situations. Further, the Board commits to developing and implementing

systems and structures to support the critical evaluation of and, if necessary, restructuring of current curricular and instructional resources and student programming initiatives to ensure representation, accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion within all District-approved curriculum.

The Board believes Educational Equity is achieved, along with other initiatives, through the promotion of collaboration among students, supportive educators/staff, and parents/guardians.

In this model, the student determines and takes ownership of their efforts to pursue selected pathways and is supported by educators/staff and parents/guardians who are in a mutually respectful partnership for the benefit of the student. This acknowledges student agency – an individual’s circumstances should not predetermine their outcomes.

For the purposes of this policy, these terms carry the following meanings:

“Accessibility” refers to the ability of all students, families, and staff to have complete and reasonable opportunities to obtain District programming and benefits regardless of race, color, ancestry, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, socio-economic status, or eligibility for special education services. It also refers to the creation of systems to ensure such reasonable access.

“Belonging” occurs when all students feel appreciated, validated, accepted, and valued as part of an inclusive learning community.

“Diversity” is the presence of difference within a given setting. In this case, schools and the District are the settings. While there many types of diversity (listed below), aspects of an individual’ identity are uniquely subject to state and federal protected class designation as covered in law and other District policies, Differences may refer to:

- **Identity Diversity** – An individual’s identification with races, colors, ancestries, creeds, sexes, genders, sexual orientations, gender expressions, gender identities, religions, national origins, marital status, disabilities, socio-economic statuses, and/or learning abilities of a given setting’s community members
- **Cognitive Diversity** – Differences in information, knowledge, perspectives, representations, mental models, and heuristics used to achieve better outcomes on specific tasks such as problem solving, prediction, and innovation
- **Instrumental Diversity** – Strength in collaboration among individuals possessing different skills, specialties, plans, and techniques to pursue common, agreed upon goals

“Equity” refers to providing all individuals and groups of individuals with fairness and respect in their opportunities to participate in and benefit from the District’s programs, and to ensure that every stakeholder has the opportunity to reach their potential.

“Identity” generally refers to one’s race, color, ancestry, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, socio-economic status, or eligibility for special education services. It also includes one’s lived experiences and self-expression in any given environment.

“Inclusion” refers to valuing and welcoming all individuals and groups of individuals with different identities (as defined above) into the District’s community, honoring them as equal stakeholders, and purposefully incorporating their specific needs into programming, activities, benefits, and opportunities available in the District. Inclusion also refers to the provision of space for all individuals and groups of individuals of diverse identities to act as equal voices in programming and decision-making.

“Representation” means that students, staff, and community members at large see components of their individual and collective identities reflected in curricular and instructional resources with which they engage during the education process, as well as the educational environments they inhabit.

The Board recognizes the need for criteria and indicators to address successful growth toward achieving the equity, inclusion, diversity, and accessibility outcomes specified in this policy.

The Board shall NOT condone, by its staff, students, leadership, or any other community member representing School District interests:

- A) Biased, inequitable, racist, or exclusive practices
- B) Bullying or harassment
- C) Deficit-focused instructional or operational implementation frameworks
- D) Discriminatory behaviors that disproportionately impact any particular group or groups of individuals based on aspect of their collective identity
- E) Lowering standards and expectations for any students, including those in state and federal identified subgroups
- F) Perpetuation of racism or discrimination
- G) Policies and resolutions that support exclusion or intolerance
- H) Practices that promote inequality or inequity
- I) Promotion of specific aspects of identity as superior or inferior to other aspects of identity

The District will create and implement a targeted system to identify any of the above practices, frameworks, systems, behaviors, and/or policies. The District will also develop, in conjunction with school and District leaders, a restorative process to address the identified concern, repair harm to the community, and to eradicate any future inequities.

In order to promote Educational Equity, the Board directs the Superintendent to establish and maintain any related Superintendent council(s) (i.e., Equity Advisory Council), cabinet position(s), and/or other roles or positions to assist in advising on, managing, and implementing initiatives in furtherance of this policy, to include processes to recruit, hire, and retain a diverse pool of District employees.

Nothing in this policy is intended to alter, amend or conflict with the District’s obligations under state or federal law.

Adopted: March 23, 2021

Revised: May 23, 2023

LEGAL REFS.:

20 U.S.C. §1681 (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972)

20 U.S.C. §1701-1758 (Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974)

29 U.S.C. §701 et seq. (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973)

C.R.S. 2-4-401(13.5) (Definition of sexual orientation, which includes transgender)

C.R.S. 22-32-10 (9) (1) (II) (Board duty to adopt written policies prohibiting discrimination)

C.R.S. 22-32-109.1 (2) (Safe school plan to be revised as necessary in response to relevant data collected by the school district)

C.R.S. 24-34-601 (Unlawful discrimination in places of public accommodation)

C.R.S. 24-34-602 (Penalty and civil liability for unlawful discrimination)

CROSS REFS.:

AC, Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity

GBA, Open Hiring/Equal Opportunity Employment

GBAA, Sexual Harassment

JB, Equal Educational Opportunities

JBA, Non-Discrimination/Non-Harassment of Students

JBB, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability

JBC, Sexual Harassment Under Title IX and Other Prohibited Misconduct of a Sexual Nature

JICDE, Bullying Prevention and Education