D65 Equity Policy

Purpose

District 65 recognizes that excellence requires a commitment to equity and to identifying practices, policies and institutional barriers, including institutional racism and privilege, which perpetuate opportunity and achievement gaps. There are persistent and unacceptable opportunity and achievement gaps for students of color in District 65. The racial predictability of achievement and disciplinary outcomes is attributable to institutional racism, cultural biases and other societal factors. The district recognizes that in order to provide educational opportunities that result in equitable outcomes particularly for Black/Brown students, that it must proactively acknowledge and intentionally address racial and cultural biases, in an effort to eliminate institutional structures and practices that affect student learning and achievement.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for the elimination of bias, particularly racism and cultural bias, as factors affecting student achievement and learning experiences, and to promote learning and working environments that welcome, respect and value diversity. Further, the purpose is to establish particular actions that District 65 shall take to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline, to address disparities in educational opportunity and achievement while understanding the urgency with which we must move to support Black, Latinx and multi-racial students. District 65 is committed to focusing on race as one of the first visible indicators of identity while recognizing that the district's students hold multiple, intersecting identities such as mental or physical ability, sexual orientation including gender identity and/or expression, religion, economic status, national origin and any other personal characteristics.

The concept of educational equity goes beyond the definition of equality – where all students are treated the same – to fostering a barrier free environment where all students' unique needs are addressed and supported by resources which are allocated in a fiscally responsible manner.

Responsibility

The District 65 Board of Education shall:

1. **Engage in equity training**: by having all board members participate in equity training to build a collective capacity to more effectively educate and better serve a racially and ethnically diverse student population, students' families and communities;
2. **Work to increase outreach to and engagement with families that represent the diversity of our students**: by ensuring that Evanston's and Skokie's treasured diversity is not maintained on the backs of Brown, Black, Latinx and multiracial children;
3. **Allocate resources in an intentional and fiscally responsible manner**: by providing every student with equitable access to high quality curricula, culturally competent adults, supports, facilities and other educational resources;
4. **Make decisions with a racial equity lens**: by ensuring that a racial equity lens has been used prior to making significant decisions that impact the school district.

The Superintendent of Schools shall:

1. **Develop procedures to implement this policy**: in alignment with the district's current Strategic Plan and include an action plan with clear accountability and metrics.
2. **Report annually**: to the Board of Education on progress made towards the equity action plan. The report shall be based on the annual goals of the District's Strategic Plan.

Commitment

In order to achieve Racial and Educational Equity and a balanced educational ecosystem for Evanston/Skokie students, District 65 is committed to requiring:

1. **Professional development** specifically designed to strengthen employee's knowledge and skills for eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps between groups of students and that support educational equity, self-awareness, understanding of institutional racism in education and cultural competencies towards social justice.
2. **Development of culturally relevant pedagogy** to connect content with the unique intersecting identities of each individual student;
3. **Development of consistent hiring practices and a process** to actively recruit, employ, support and retain a highly qualified workforce that includes racial, gender, and linguistic diversity, as well as culturally competent administrative, instructional and support personnel with an equity mindset;
4. **Exploration of ways to foster parent/family involvement** thus ensuring that community members are active partners in the education of all students;

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5. **Resource allocation in an intentional and fiscally responsible manner** by providing every student with equitable access to a high quality curriculum, culturally competent staff, supports, facilities and other educational resources;
6. **Improved school climate** by leveraging diversity in its myriad forms to create schools where students, families, community members and employees feel welcomed, valued, supported, and where students and staff can perform to their personal bests without personal compromise.
7. **Exploration of multiple pathways** to success in order to meet the needs of D65's unique school community.
8. **Racial literacy and social identity development** using tools informed by an anti-bias and social justice education framework.
9. **Active engagement with partners** to align and leverage community resources in a collaborative manner.