

Policy ACIC: EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Status: DRAFT

Original Adopted Date: Pending

EXPLANATION

This is a NEW policy; entirely district material. The highlight/strikeout reflect changes recommended by MSBA. The district may want to consider adding age to the list of attributes for this DEI policy (first bulleted item and #10). The MSBA legal department recommended adding the reference to policy AC to remind the reader that the two policies must work together.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The district's 2/28/23 changes are also in green highlight.

(Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging)

Purpose

The purpose of the Raytown Schools DEI Policy this policy is to promote equity and inclusion for all students and staff by creating an educational environment in which diversity is valued and honored. As a district, we embrace our rich, diverse community as a strength and envision a district in which we build relationships to create a sense of belonging, as well as celebrate our differences to learn from one another and promote equity and excellence.

DEIB Definitions

- Diversity is the presence of differences in a given setting. In schools, this can mean differences including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender (identity), sexual orientation, language, religion, (dis)ability or socioeconomic status.
- Equity in schools refers to education at policies, practices and resources that are representative of, constructed by, and responsive to all students. Being equitable means acknowledging and addressing structural inequities (historical and current) that advantage some and disadvantage others. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society in order to identify and eliminate inequities and barriers.
- Inclusion is the degree to which diverse individuals are able to participate fully in the processes and opportunities within an organization or group, such as our school district and individual school buildings. An institution can be both diverse and non-inclusive at the same time. Inclusion is the practice of creating an environment that promotes safety and respect, and amplifies the voices of all parties.
- Belonging is the feeling of security and support when there is a sense that everyone is valued as an important member of the community. Belonging represents the affinity and positive relationships that emerge between people of various backgrounds when we actively promote diversity, equity and inclusion within and throughout our district. Creating genuine feelings of belonging for everyone in the organization is a critical factor in improving engagement and performance.

Policy Criteria

The Raytown C2 Schools DEI Policy This policy applies to the following categories. This policy shall be included in staff and student handbooks. District leaders and building administrators will ensure students are made aware of the policy in a developmentally appropriate manner. Board members and district staff will receive professional learning training on this policy annually.

1. School board policies and practices will be evaluated through a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion—and amended as necessary to ensure equity within the school system.
2. District and building leadership will engage in the work of equity across all departments and at all levels. Each school and department will maintain a cultural competency team to ensure rules, procedures and policies reflect the district's focus on equity and inclusion.

3. School/Community relationships will be established with vendors and patrons ~~that~~ who prioritize the work of improving equity and inclusion with the Raytown School District. The district will empower our community to have a voice and participate in our equity work through community forums.
4. Curriculum will be evaluated and amended to ensure culturally responsive, evidenced-based instructional strategies that integrate resources from various cultures and diverse perspectives. It is important for our students to see themselves reflected in positive ways throughout our curriculum.
5. Language and literacy proficiency will be developed while honoring the importance of students' and families' native languages and dialects. Communication is an important foundation for academic success and potential barriers must be addressed to actively engage students as well as their families and caregivers.
6. Student academic and discipline data will be evaluated to address any disparities in disciplinary processes, academic outcomes and extracurricular participation including, but not limited to, discipline data, state test scores, special education, gifted screening, dual credit and AP/enriched classes, career and technical programs, ~~and facilities and access including bathrooms and locker rooms~~. The district will review data annually to identify areas of strength as well as any areas in which bias may prevent student success.
7. Student support services will specifically address issues of equity work to address the diverse, unique and individual social and emotional needs of members of our learning community while utilizing a lens of inclusion and equity.
8. Recruitment and retention will encompass achieving a balanced staff and administrator workforce to reflect the diversity of the student body and the community it serves. The district and schools will seek to recruit, employ, support and retain a workforce that includes racial, gender and linguistic diversity. Employment data will be evaluated annually to address any disparities in staff hiring, retention and promotions.
9. Professional learning will be provided to increase the effectiveness of district leaders, teachers and all staff in creating culturally responsive and equitable learning environments. Training activities will be in person, high quality, evidence-based and ongoing. Workshops will include anti-bias and anti-discrimination training appropriate at all levels in the district. Accountability measures will be monitored as part of the staff evaluation system at all levels.
10. Discrimination, bullying and harassment on the basis of differences including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender (identity), sexual orientation, language, religion, (dis)ability or socioeconomic status is strictly prohibited. Harassment can take the form of language and/or the display of images and symbols ~~which~~ that promote hate, violence or intimidation. It is the responsibility of every district employee to ensure that all students and staff have a safe learning/working environment. This responsibility includes ensuring that any incident of discrimination, harassment or bullying is given immediate attention in the form of incident investigation, age and developmentally appropriate actions, and providing students, educators and staff with appropriate resources and support. (See board policy AC.)

Implementation

In order to facilitate this policy with fidelity, ~~contingent upon budget availability~~, the superintendent ~~shall~~ may create a district office senior-level position for an ~~chief equity officer~~/assistant superintendent for ~~diversity, equity and inclusion~~ access whose primary responsibility ~~will~~ would be focused on implementing, facilitating, monitoring and assessing the equity initiatives laid out in this policy. ~~The assistant superintendent for equity and access would also be responsible for student support and ensuring actions taken to address all students' access to educational opportunities.~~ The district will develop and implement a systemwide equity plan based on survey data and findings of the equity audit to meet the requirements and criteria laid forth in this policy. ~~The equity plan will be aligned to the district's strategic plan.~~ Annual reporting of progress on this plan will be provided to the board, staff, students and community.