



Book	Policy Manual
Section	800 Operations
Title	Educational Equity
Code	832
Status	Active

Legal	1. Pol. 100
	2. Pol. 103
	3. Pol. 103.1
	4. Pol. 105
	5. Pol. 112
	6. Pol. 113
	7. Pol. 113.1
	8. Pol. 114
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	10. Pol. 116
	11. Pol. 121
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	17. Pol. 146
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	19. Pol. 217
	20. Pol. 218
	21. Pol. 233
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	23. Pol. 304
	24. Pol. 333
	25. Pol. 602
	26. Pol. 603
	27. Pol. 604
	28. Pol. 917
	29. Pol. 918
	30. Pol. 104
	31. Pol. 249
	32. Pol. 235.1

Commonwealth Education Blueprint

PSBA Equity Tools and Resources

Cross References	36. Pol. 253.1
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Adopted May 20, 2021

The Pennsbury School District is committed to fostering an inclusive educational environment that understands, respects and embraces individual differences as assets that serve to enhance our school

community. Educational equity -- the practice of distributing resources, access and opportunity based on fairness and justice regardless of race, ethnicity, color, age, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, language, disability or socio-economic status -- will serve as the foundation of all decision-making to ensure equitable outcomes for every learner.

### **Purpose**

The Board adopts this policy to prioritize the principle of educational equity through the fair and just allocation of resources, opportunities and treatment of students based upon each individual student's needs. The pursuit of educational equity requires the continuous and collaborative effort of identifying various aspects of district programs and operations in which consideration of educational equity shall be analyzed, incorporated and prioritized.

To facilitate educational equity for all, the district shall be committed to:

1. Promptly identifying and addressing barriers that cultivate achievement, opportunity, discipline and/or experience/sense of belonging gaps for students.
2. Ensuring that a student's educational achievement is neither predicted nor predetermined by explicit or implicit biases.
3. The acknowledgement that potentially unequal learning needs among students require equitable, not equal, distribution of resources.

### **Definitions**

**Achievement gaps** shall mean the academic disparities and/or differences between groups of students, as indicated through variances in academic indicators such as test scores, grade point average and graduation rates.

**Anti-racism** shall mean the work of actively opposing all forms of racism.

**Barriers** shall mean factors that block or hinder movement or progression. Barriers to educational equity may include, but are not limited to, policies, administrative regulations and practices; explicit and implicit biases; facilities; budgeted funds; curriculum and instruction; personnel; class size; Code of Conduct; and school climate.

**Cultural competency** shall mean an ability to interact effectively with individuals of other cultures.

**Cultural proficiency** shall mean the level of knowledge-based skills and understanding that is required to successfully teach and interact with students and to work effectively with colleagues, families and communities from other cultures. It requires an ongoing examination and self-reflection to challenge one's own cultural biases and understand the cultural perspectives and experiences of others.

**Culturally responsive** shall mean the inclusion of students' cultural references in all aspects of learning, school experiences and student engagement.

**Educational equity** shall mean the practice of distributing resources, access and opportunity based on fairness and justice regardless of race, ethnicity, color, age, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, language, disability or socio-economic status.

**Educational equity action plan** shall mean the steps education stakeholders in a district engage in to pursue equity.

**Educational equity audit** shall mean a comprehensive equity and inclusion benchmarking instrument that assesses a district's barriers to opportunity and progress towards achieving the equity outcomes described in this policy and the district's Educational Equity Action Plan.

**Equity lens** shall mean an intentional focus on assessing any inequitable impact the execution of a program, practice, operation, decision or action may have on a student or group of students.

**Experience/sense of belonging gap** shall mean the disparities and/or differences between groups of students, as indicated through perception survey data of school climate and culture.

**Explicit bias** shall mean the actions, attitudes and beliefs we have about a person or group on a conscious level.

**Gender**, for purposes of this policy, shall mean the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity, including a person's gender identity and gender expression which includes a person's internal sense of being male, female, some combination of male and female or neither male nor female.

**Implicit bias** shall mean the actions, attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in a subconscious manner.

**Inclusion** shall mean engaging, valuing and respecting all groups (students, parents/guardians, community members, administrators, instructional and support personnel and other education stakeholders) and including all groups as essential partners in the education process.

**Intersectionality** shall mean the complex and cumulative ways in which different forms of discrimination (racism, classism, sexism and other aspects of identity) combine, overlap and "intersect" with one another, informing the way in which individuals simultaneously experience oppression and privilege in their daily lives interpersonally and systemically.

**Multi-tiered systems of support ("MTSS")** shall mean the standards-aligned, comprehensive school improvement framework used to provide targeted support for all learners. It is rooted in supporting the "whole child", whether an advanced or struggling learner, through academic, behavioral, social and emotional services.

**Opportunity gaps** shall mean the disparities in the delivery of educational and extracurricular opportunities, funding and other resources between and among different student groups, leading to different academic, extracurricular, social and economic outcomes for students.

**Racism** shall mean the systems of advantage based on race and supported by institutions, policies and practices that benefit dominant groups and disadvantage subordinate groups.

**School climate** shall mean the quality and character of school life based on patterns of students', parents'/guardians' and school personnel's experience; it also reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structures.

**Universal design for learning** shall mean the educational framework utilized to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. The framework guides the development of firm instructional goals and flexible instructional practices that accommodate individual learning differences.

## **Authority**

The Board is committed to the provision of an equitable education system that reflects the principles of fairness and justice for all students regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, English learner status, disability and other characteristics, as well as the intersection of those characteristics.[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10][11][12][13][14][15][16][17][18][19][20][21][22][23][24][25][26][27][28][29]

## **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Superintendent shall designate a district equity administrator to oversee the implementation of this policy. The superintendent and/or designee(s) shall use an equity lens and quantitative and qualitative data to assess systematically which students and/or student groups are experiencing the least achievement, determine why, and target resources and efforts to address identified needs and improve overall outcomes.

Each school employee shall be expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the principles of this policy and for fostering a school climate that is equity focused and culturally responsive. Employees shall receive support in the form of training regarding cultural competency, cultural proficiency, cultural responsiveness, implicit bias, explicit bias, anti-racism, diversity and inclusion.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish administrative regulations to ensure consistent implementation of this policy and equitable student outcomes.

#### Educational Equity Audit

The Superintendent or designee(s) shall conduct an audit at least every three (3) years to benchmark educational equity in school and district-wide achievement and opportunities and inform the development of the district's comprehensive planning. The Educational Equity Audit shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Equity Trends: an examination of district data across schools, programs and groups to understand patterns of and differences in student equity.
2. Perception Survey Data: a series of surveys to stakeholders about climate, culture, engagement and other school-related practices.
3. Policy and Procedure Analysis: a critical analysis of policies, procedures and processes that may contribute to disproportionality.
4. Culturally Responsive Curriculum, Pedagogy and Leadership: an examination of curriculum, instruction, and leadership practices.

#### Educational Equity Action Plan

The Superintendent and designee(s) shall develop and update the district's Educational Equity Action Plan every three (3) years with clear accountability goals and metrics to address inequities. The Educational Equity Action Plan shall be reflective of the voices of administrators, teachers, staff, students, families and members of the community.

The Educational Equity Action Plan shall:

1. Embed equity practices throughout the district's educational system.
2. Include equity goals and practices embedded in the district's comprehensive planning strategies.  
[1]
3. Ensure personnel performance observations encompass consideration of the expectations and goals of this policy.
4. Include action steps and accountability measures to raise the achievement of all students while minimizing the gaps for historically disadvantaged student groups.

#### Educational Equity Update

The Superintendent or designee(s) shall annually provide an educational equity update to the Board that reflects the efforts undertaken and progress made to achieve the goals of this policy. Based on the equity goals and activities set by the district, the educational equity update may include data on:

*Students -*

The following student-related data shall be disaggregated and intersected by gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, English learner status and disability whenever possible:

1. Enrollment of each school.
2. Achievement indicators.
3. Attendance and behavior indicators - such indicators may include data regarding excused and unexcused absences, out-of-school suspension, in-school suspension, alternative education enrollment, the Office for Safe Schools Reports, expulsion and other school discipline factors.
4. Opportunity indicators - such indicators may include enrollment in gifted programs, advanced placement classes, honors classes, career and technical education and participation in extracurricular programs and activities.
5. Experience and sense of belonging indicators - such indicators may include school climate and culture surveys and/or other experience indicators.

*Administrators, Teachers and Staff -*

1. The race, ethnicity, gender and years of experience of support staff, teachers, building administrators and district administration.
2. Efforts to recruit, hire and retain personnel.
3. The ways in which professional development at each school is delivered through an equity lens.
4. Efforts to embed cultural responsiveness into the curriculum.
5. Efforts to implement multi-tiered systems of support and universally designed learning practices.
6. The ways in which district resource allocations reflect the district's commitment to educational equity. Including but not limited to curriculum and instruction, personnel and staffing, facilities, and budgeting.

Note: Federal funds are intended to be supplemental and may not supplant state and local resources. The use of federal funds should not limit the ability of districts to distribute resources to achieve equitable students outcomes.

## **Guidelines**

Educational equity shall serve as the foundational structure upon which all aspects of the district's educational systems are built and maintained. An equity-focused structure is essential to grow knowledge and skills, provide necessary resources, include diverse voices, promote accountability, implement effective practices, produce partnerships and address barriers to learning and participation. In the pursuit of educational equity for all students, district programs, operations and functions shall be structured to prioritize the following guiding principles:

### Multiple Pathways to Success/High Expectations

The district shall provide multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of the diverse student body and shall actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement and excellence from each student.[19]

All students shall be encouraged and provided opportunities to:[3][8][9][12][13][14]

1. Pursue their goals and interests without regard to biases and other barriers.
2. Enroll in challenging programs.
3. Participate in school activities and interscholastic athletics.

### Access to Equitable Resources

Each student shall be provided equitable access to instructional materials, assessments, curriculum, support, facilities, highly qualified staff, teaching practices and other educational resources and services that reflect an appreciation for the diverse cultural perspectives, identities and needs of students and their families by strategically differentiating allocations as necessary to remove barriers and improve outcomes.[1][2][3][4][5][6][8][9][10][11][14][15][16][17][18][22][23][24][25][26][27]

### Inclusive Environment and School Climate

The district shall strive to create a sense of belonging and a welcoming, inclusive and bias-free school climate that values, reflects and is responsive to the diversity of the students, their families and the community.[2][3][18][28][29][30][31]

Respectful and civil discourse and interactions among all district leaders, staff, students, families and community members shall be expected at all times.

### Partnerships and Inclusion

The district shall welcome and empower students and families, including but not limited to, families of color, low-income families, individuals with disabilities, individuals whose first language may not be English and other underrepresented groups, as essential partners in their student's educational experiences, school planning and district decision-making. The district shall provide multiple and flexible opportunities for dialogue and engagement with families and communities.[28][29]

In addition, the district shall include other partners who have modeled culturally proficient practices, such as government agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, institutions of higher learning and the general community in meeting equitable educational outcomes.

### Data Focused

To make informed decisions in the pursuit of educational equity, the district shall systematically and strategically use multiple measures of quantitative and qualitative district-wide and school-level data. Such data may include anecdotal information from teachers and staff, as well as formally collected and reported data. Data shall be disaggregated and intersected, where feasible, based on available demographics.[32]

In addition, the district shall use multiple measures of quantitative and qualitative district-wide and school-level data as the basis for equitable decision-making and continuous improvement.

### Equity Lens

The district shall, as a continuous practice, review current and newly developed policies, administrative regulations, practices, programs, procedures, professional development and locally controlled budget allocations with an equity lens. The district shall be aided in this process through the use of district-established educational equity analysis and auditing tools.

### Cultural Proficiency

The district shall provide instructional materials and assessments, and promote teaching practices that reflect and are responsive to the diverse cultural perspectives and identities of students and their families.

The district's curriculum shall:

1. Promote equity and respect.
2. Reflect the distinctive contributions and perspectives of a diverse society.
3. Embed culturally responsive and universally designed teaching practices.

4. Provide opportunities for staff and students to develop and model cultural proficiency.

#### Workforce Diversity

The district recognizes the benefits of a highly effective workforce that reflects racial, gender and linguistic diversity. In the promotion of workplace diversity, the district shall strive to:[23]

1. Maintain an employment process that is free of discrimination and bias.[23][30]
2. Identify and address barriers to the recruitment, hiring, retention, development and promotion of district employees from diverse backgrounds.
3. Actively recruit and/or promote highly qualified candidates who are committed to culturally proficiency and educational equity.

#### Professional Development

The district shall ensure the provision of professional development opportunities for advancement of employees' understanding and skill sets relative to addressing barriers to students' opportunities and access. An equity lens shall be embedded in all professional development.[24]

Professional development shall be ongoing, mandatory and foster the skills, knowledge and beliefs to cultivate equity, including cultural proficiency, social-emotional learning and mental health to create a learning environment that is student-centered and meets the individual and diverse needs of students.