

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, diversity, equity, and accessibility. In collaboration with community stakeholders, the School 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 the Douglas County School District (“District”) Educational Equity policy is to:

- 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 move beyond accommodation 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:
 - Maximize student academic growth and achievement
 - Bolster student mental wellness by increasing 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 School District facilities, selection of educational materials, equipment, staffing, curriculum, and regulations affecting students and staff. Further, the School 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 of Education 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 School District-approved curriculum.

The Board believes the best means to achieve Educational Equity is through the promotion of collaboration among dedicated students, supportive educators/staff, and engaged 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 – while circumstances do impact and shape a person, they are not the sole determining factor in their life.

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 School 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.

“Diversity” is the presence of difference within a given setting. In this case, schools and the School District are the settings, and the differences may refer to:

- **Personality Diversity** – The whole collection of individual emotions and behavior that make one person different from others
- **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
- **Thought 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 of Education recognizes the need for criteria and indicators to address successful growth toward achieving the outcomes specified in this policy.

The Board of Education 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) Discriminatory behaviors that disproportionately impact any particular group or groups of individuals based on aspect of their collective identity
- C) Practices that promote inequality or inequity
- D) Deficit-focused instructional or operational implementation frameworks
- E) Perpetuation of racism or discrimination
- F) Policies and resolutions that support exclusion or intolerance

The School District will create and implement a targeted system to identify any of the above practices, frameworks, systems, behaviors, and/or policies. The School District will also develop, in conjunction with school and School 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 as they see fit 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 School District’s obligations under state or federal law.

Adopted: March 23, 2021

Revised: TBD

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
JICB, Prevention of Bullying

First Reading