

Equity Policy in Kent, WA

Purpose and Background

The Kent School District values its rich, diverse schools and communities and is committed to our mission of "successfully preparing all students for their futures." To achieve this, the Kent School District will identify and correct practices and policies that perpetuate both the achievement and opportunity gaps and institutional bias.

In the United States, there has been a long history of legal and de facto discrimination that has led to institutional, structural, and individual racism and bias inconsistent with the Kent School District's mission, vision, and core values. These disparities are unacceptable and contradict the Kent School District's belief that all students can achieve.

In the Kent School District, we acknowledge racial disparities exist because of inequitable historical access to educational opportunities that have profound intergenerational impacts and perpetuate economic, social, and educational inequity in communities of color. As a District, we believe these disparities are unacceptable and contradict the Kent School District's belief that all students can achieve. Racial inequities have been created and perpetuated over time and can be eliminated. Similarly, personal prejudice is learned and can be unlearned. Creating, ignoring, or perpetuating these and other such inequities that impact students and staff is racial misconduct. By way of this policy and procedure, the Kent School Board and the district are committed to understanding and interrupting institutional racism and bias patterns at all levels of the organization, whether conscious or unconscious, that result in predictably lower academic achievement, most notably for students of color. Through the adoption of this board policy, racial misconduct in Kent School District is unacceptable and prohibited.

While the primary focus of our race and equity policy is on race and ethnicity, our District acknowledges forms of social inequalities and oppression, including gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, national origin, linguistic ability, physical ability, and learning differences, and how forms of oppression intersect. Kent School District is committed to explicitly identifying and addressing all disparities in educational outcomes to target areas for intervention to improve academic opportunities for all students.

The Board of Directors will hold the Superintendent accountable for making measurable progress in moving this work forward as outlined in the policy and procedure. The Board recognizes this work is ongoing and requires equitable resource allocation annually to meet each student's needs.

District Beliefs and Commitments

We believe when Kent School District provides equitable allocation of resources, and when high-quality learning opportunities are afforded to each and every student regardless of race, ethnicity, learning difference, linguistic ability, or zip code, and when family and community members serve as partners in education and agents for their children, then Kent School District will fulfill its mission of successfully preparing all students for their futures.

We believe it is the right of all students to receive a high-quality, equitable education and have a safe social experience in school.

We believe effective KSD schools and classrooms are welcoming to all students, with caring teachers, joy, engagement in learning, and students working to their potential.

We believe a diverse, inclusive, and culturally responsive workforce is built by eliminating barriers to growth and opportunity and allowing each employee to contribute to their full measure. In doing so, the District is committed to cultivating talent and building capacity to deliver innovative, effective, and culturally relevant instruction and services to our students and families.

We believe every KSD student, family, and staff member deserves a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive learning environment where their diversity is recognized, valued, and contributes to their success.

The Kent School District is committed to creating and sustaining learning and working environments enriched and improved by the contributions, perspectives, and presence of our diverse student body, families, staff, and community.

With the implementation of this policy, all members of the Kent School District shall:

- Change structural systems that eliminate barriers and improve access for students.
- Raise the achievement of all students while eliminating gaps between the highest and lowest-performing students.
- Decrease the over-representation of students of color in inclusive education.
- Decrease the disproportionality in school discipline, specifically out-of-school suspensions and expulsions.
- Incorporate student voice as a critical part of school and district decision-making and culture- building.

- Access essential supports provided to support diversity, equity, and inclusion to bolster engagement and student learning.
- Engage in district-provided diversity, equity, and inclusion-related professional learning, including implicit bias and gender inclusivity, to eliminate systemic, measurable inequities in our education system.

Agreements

To ensure educational equity and achieve our mission of successfully preparing all students for their future, the Board holds itself and all central office and school-based decision-makers, teachers, support staff, and employees accountable for building a District-wide culture of respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion, which is free of racism.

The School Board acknowledges that historical and ongoing institutional racism and institutional biases have resulted in significant, measurable, systemwide inequities in access and achievement for Kent School District students. Every Kent School District employee is responsible for the success and achievement of each and every student.

To achieve educational equity for our students, the district shall:

- Provide district-approved annual and ongoing antiracist multicultural professional development to strengthen employee knowledge and skills to eliminate disparities in achievement, course and program placement, and discipline.
- Create an environment where all students, families, staff, and community members know they are safe, respected, and valued for their diverse life experiences, language, culture, values, and beliefs.
- Develop and maintain culturally responsive curriculum and courses for students and staff that are both flexible and incorporate the contributions of diverse cultural groups.
- Provide every student universal access to a high-quality, culturally responsive curriculum by targeting the needs of each individual student to ensure learning outcomes are within reach of all learners.
- Welcome and empower all families regardless of race, economic status, ethnicity, religion, culture, or first language as essential partners in their student's education, school planning, and District decision-making.
- Create welcoming school and facility environments that reflect and support the diversity of the student population and community and include partners who have demonstrated culturally specific expertise -- including government agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and the community in general -- in meeting our educational outcomes.
- Identify, implement and allocate equitable resources for supports needed to address racial disparities to provide all students a successful education experience.
- Commit to whole student development by including social-emotional development for all students equitably.
- Encourage, support, and expect high achievement, leading to multiple opportunities and options for College and Career readiness.
- Track and report disaggregated data sets in determining student representation and success.
- The district shall review existing policies, programs, professional development, and procedures annually to ensure the promotion of racial equity and all new policies, programs, and procedures will be developed using a racial equity analysis tool.

Definitions

Achievement Gap: any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students. (<https://www.greatschoolspartnership.org>)

Anti-Bias: An active commitment to challenging prejudice, stereotyping, and all forms of discrimination. (Anti-Defamation League, <https://www.adl.org>)

Anti-Racist: An anti-racist is someone who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing antiracist ideas. This includes the expression of ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity. (Ibram X. Kendi, [How To Be An Antiracist](#), Random House, 2019).

Cultural Competency: Cultural competence is having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families. It is the ability to understand the within-group differences that make each student unique while celebrating the between-group variations that make our country a tapestry. (<https://www.nea.org>)

Culturally Responsive: Cultural responsiveness refers to the ability to learn from and relate respectfully to people from your own and other cultures. (National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems, <https://www.nccrest.org>)

Disaggregated Data: Disaggregating data means breaking down information into smaller groups. For instance, breaking data down into grade level within school-aged students, country of origin within racial/ethnic categories, or gender among student populations are all ways of disaggregating data. Disaggregating student data into smaller groups can help schools and communities plan appropriate programs, decide which evidence-based interventions to select (i.e., have they been evaluated with the target population), use limited resources where they are needed most, and see important trends in behavior and achievement. (National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, April 2012).

Discrimination: The denial of justice and fair treatment by both individuals and institutions in many arenas, including employment, education, housing, banking, and political rights. Discrimination is an action that can follow prejudicial thinking. (Anti-Defamation League, [adl.org](http://www.adl.org))

Disproportionality: the "overrepresentation" and "under-representation" of a particular population or demographic group relative to the overall student population (National Association for Bilingual Education, 2002).

Diversity: All the dimensions of diversity listed below may not have correlation data due to privacy laws. The following list, if not all-inclusive, and the policy, call for annual updates.

Age	Citizenship Status
Color	Creed or Religion
Culture	Economic Status
Family Structure	Gender Identity or Expression
Language Accessibility	Marital/Relationship Status
Mental and Physical Ability	National Origin
Pregnancy	Race
Sex	Sexual Orientation
Veteran Status	
Any other protected class identified in Federal, State, or local laws.	

Educational Equity: Public schools should provide equitable access and ensure that all students have the knowledge and skills to succeed as contributing members of a rapidly changing, global society, regardless of factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, English proficiency, immigration status, socioeconomic status, or disability. (NSBA Beliefs and Policies, <https://www.nsba.org>)

Equality: Equality in education is achieved when students are all treated the same and have access to similar resources. (<https://www.nsba.org/Services/Center-for-Public-Education>)

Equity: Equity in education is achieved when all students receive the resources they need, so they graduate prepared for success after high school. (<https://www.nsba.org/Services/Center-for-Public-Education>)

Growth Mindset: "In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment." (Dweck, 2015)

Individual Racism: Individual racism refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can be deliberate, or the individual may act to perpetuate or support racism without knowing that is what he or she is doing. *Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building* by Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens, and Barbara Major (2005).

Implicit Bias: The unconscious attitudes, stereotypes, and unintentional actions (positive or negative) towards members of a group merely because of their membership in that group. These associations develop over the course of a lifetime, beginning at a very early age through exposure to direct and indirect messages. When people are acting out of their implicit bias, they are not even aware that their actions are biased. In fact, those biases may be in direct conflict with a person's explicit beliefs and values. (Anti-Defamation League, www.adl.org)

Institutional Racism: Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for Whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as People of Color. (Source: www.racialequitytools.org)

Interpersonal Racism: Interpersonal racism occurs between individuals. Once we bring our private beliefs into our interaction with others, racism is now in the interpersonal realm. *Chronic Disparity: Strong and Pervasive Evidence of Racial Inequalities* by Keith Lawrence and Terry Keleher (2004).

Opportunity Gap: Opportunity gaps occur because students of color and low-income children often have fewer opportunities to prepare and develop as young learners due to reduced access to high-quality childcare, pre-K, afterschool, and extracurricular activities. These gaps generally persist into their K-12 education, creating achievement gaps, a decades-old issue facing every state. (National Conference of State Legislatures, <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/equity-and-the-opportunity-gap.aspx>).

Race: A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups. (Source: Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge.)

Racism: Is a system of advantage based on race and supported by institutions, policies, and practices that benefit dominant groups and disadvantage subdominant groups. Racism is a social expression of power and privilege. (www.nea.org)

Structural Racism: Structural Racism includes the aspects of our history and culture that have allowed the privilege associated with 'whiteness' and the disadvantage of 'color' to endure and adapt over time. It points out the ways in which public policies and institutional practices contribute to inequitable racial outcomes. It lays out assumptions and stereotypes that are embedded in our culture that, in effect, legitimize racial disparities, and it illuminates the ways in which progress toward racial equity is undermined. *Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building* by Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens, and Barbara Major (2005).

Targeted Universalism: Targeted universalism means setting universal goals pursued by targeted processes to achieve those goals. Within a targeted universalism framework, universal goals are established for all groups concerned. The strategies developed to achieve those goals are targeted based upon how different groups are situated within structures, culture, and across geographies to obtain the universal goal. Targeted universalism is goal-oriented, and the processes are directed in service of the explicit, universal goal. (*Targeted Universalism: Policy & Practice Primer* by John. A Powell, Stephen Menendian, Wendy Ake. May 2019.)

White Privilege: White privilege is an institutional (rather than personal) set of benefits granted to those who, by race, resemble the people who dominate the powerful positions in our institutions. One of the primary privileges is that of having greater access to power and resources than people of color do; in other words, purely on the basis of white skin color, doors are open to those that are not open to other people. (*Understanding White Privilege*, Francis E. Kendall, Ph.D., 2002).