

# EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION POLICY



## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework to eliminate any bias, prejudice, or unlawful discrimination that may affect student achievement and learning experiences and to promote learning and working environments that welcome, respect, and value equity, diversity, and inclusion.

### COMMITMENT TO EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

The Richardson Independent School District will actively work to eliminate systems and practices that perpetuate historical inequities and present disparities that could negatively affect the ability of students, families, and staff to participate in diverse and inclusive learning and working environments. The Board believes that embracing individual human diversity, developing a capacity for the collective pursuit of cultural competence, and committing to day-to-day equity and inclusion will enable the District to fulfill its mission. The District will provide opportunities for ALL to connect, learn, grow and succeed through relevant and personalized learning experiences that are distinguished by a welcoming and accepting climate, a safe, innovative, and adaptive environment, and a supportive, collaborative, and invested culture among students, staff, families, and community.

As a community of learners committed to equity and the success of all, the District understands that our students, staff, and stakeholders bring their personal backgrounds into our schools, and each of them reasonably expects to have a nurturing and barrier-free learning environment that counteracts the contemporary and historical effects of bias, prejudice, and unlawful discrimination. RISD will not predicate or determine success on the basis of race, ethnicity, economic status, mobility, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, physical, mental, or emotional disabilities, religion, or any other identity marker. To implement these commitments, the District shall:

1. Continue to comply with all Board policies and guidelines expressing the District's commitment to equal opportunity and nondiscrimination and harassment.
2. Foster recognition of and respect for basic human rights, fundamental freedoms, and equitable opportunities and outcomes for all through the District's policies, programs, and activities. To support this recognition and respect, the District has established the following Guiding Principles and Practices:
  - A. The District has established and will maintain the department of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to serve as a resource to provide an equity lens for District policies, programs, and practices; facilitate implementation of the equity, diversity, and inclusion components of the District's Strategic Action Plan; create opportunities to identify and eliminate any inequitable practices within the District, and work to identify and effectively address internal and external inequities that create barriers to success and achievement for all student groups.
  - B. The District will acknowledge, affirm, and celebrate differences to create a sense of belonging by providing students, staff, and families with authentic and relevant opportunities to learn about diverse histories, cultures, and perspectives.
  - C. The District will follow strategies to ensure students, families, and staff see themselves represented in the curriculum, programs, culture, and staff of the school, including:
    - i. The District will intentionally recruit, hire, and retain qualified and/or experienced staff who reflect student demographics and the community to support a racially diverse and culturally responsive workforce that is present in all schools and at all organizational levels.
    - ii. Each school will promote a culture where students, families, community members, and employees feel welcomed, valued, safe, supported, and where all can perform their personal best without personal compromise.
    - iii. The District will choose and use learning materials that reflect the diversity of students and staff and which foster the understanding and appreciation of culture, class, language, ethnicity, and other differences that exist in our student body and staff. These learning materials also will include social emotional learning resources for all grade levels. Social and emotional resources will support students and staff in attainment of knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, make responsible decisions, and maintain positive relationships.

- D. The District will continually examine its systems and practices to identify factors that may create inequities and disparities and take appropriate steps to implement systems and policies that promote equity, diversity, and inclusion so all students have access and the opportunity to benefit. Such appropriate steps may include, as appropriate:
  - i. Identifying and counteracting practices that could perpetuate bias and disparities that lead to disproportionate levels of student success and achievement.
  - ii. Embracing and celebrating the differences reflected in the District's diverse student and staff communities, such that all who learn and work here will experience acceptance, understanding, and belonging in all areas of the district.
  - iii. Adopting and enforcing procedures intended to achieve a diverse and equitable school community inclusive of, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, economic status, mobility, language, gender, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, disabling conditions, and religion.
  - iv. Exploring potential underlying, unquestioned assumptions that detract from our commitment of inclusiveness, and identifying and removing barriers in current policies, procedures, systems, or practices that limit opportunities for students and families.
- E. The District will equitably distribute resources, opportunities, transportation, facilities, supports, and teachers/staff, to meet the identified needs of a campus, even if carrying out the commitment results in differentiated resource allocations.
- F. The District will facilitate equitable access to co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, programming, social services, tutoring, and enrichment activities.
- G. The District will ensure employees participate in professional development addressing equity, diversity, inclusion, cultural competence, disproportionality, and culturally competent and responsive pedagogy, as they pertain to the achievement gap, implicit and explicit bias, racism, and systemic barriers. Professional learning opportunities will be ongoing and based on changing needs with the District and community.
- H. The District is committed to increasing the diversity of its leadership pipelines by creating and supporting programs and policies that foster leadership that reflects the diversity of the District, our community, and American society. To support this commitment, the District will develop diverse mentoring and coaching programs, a supportive work and educational environment, and student and staff leadership training.
- I. The District will engage, include, and collaborate with families, students, residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to align and leverage community engagement in a collaborative manner to improve the education provided to students.
- J. The District will use disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data to monitor and address practices that could result in disproportionality in student success and achievement, including the use of assessments and assessment data, which could lead to overrepresentation of students of color in areas such as, but not limited to, special education and discipline, and their underrepresentation in programs such as, but not limited to, Gifted and Talented and Advanced Placement.
- K. The District's Student Code of Conduct and Standards of Conduct for Employees will address inappropriate behaviors and conduct associated with behaviors that discriminate, stereotype, intimidate, perpetuate bias-based thinking, and incite physical, mental, or verbal harm based on race, ethnicity, economic status, mobility, language, gender, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or any other identity marker.

## RESPONSIBILITY

The Board of Trustees shall hold itself and the Superintendent accountable for implementation of this policy. The Superintendent shall develop any procedures appropriate to implement the policy and metrics to measure achievement of the policy objectives and shall provide periodic updates to the Board each year.

- Equity** – The condition that would be achieved if one's identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares.
- Diversity** – The acknowledgement and celebration of differences in cultures, traditions, and beliefs within our community.
- Inclusion** – Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that equitably distributes access, resources, and influence.
- Cultural Competence** – The integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used to increase the quality of services; thereby, producing better outcomes.