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The Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining a positive and inclusive learning environment where all students, especially those currently and historically marginalized, feel safe, included, welcomed, accepted, and experience academic success.

**Generally Accepted Beliefs and Agreements**

All children deserve to have equal access to opportunity regardless of the color of their skin, their gender, their sexual orientation, the language they speak or their background. This freedom is fundamental to our K-6 education program and is extended to everyone without exception. In order to truly realize this goal, it is imperative that the Board of Education, its officers, and employees, (1) be fully conversant in the historical injustices and inequalities that have shaped our society and to recognize and eliminate the institutional barriers, including racism, and biases, that contribute to the pervasive, disparate educational outcomes within our schools and (2) recognize that students have been historically marginalized due to inequities associated with aspects of their identities and their contexts, including, but not limited to, race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, socio-economic class; sex; sexual orientation, or gender (including gender identity and expression). Racism, discrimination, and marginalization of any people or groups of people, whether intentional or not, have no place in our schools, the School District or our community. Such actions damage not only those individuals and groups at which they are directed, but also our community as a whole. The School District is committed to addressing these inequities and helping each and every student to equitably access learning opportunities in school to enable them all to thrive and to build a better society.

**Goals**

The School District will provide equitable, inclusive and diverse opportunities for all students to reach their highest potential. To achieve educational equity and inclusive education, the School District will acknowledge the presence of culturally diverse students and the need for students to find relevant connections among themselves and the subject matter and the tasks teachers ask them to perform. The School District will develop the individual and organizational knowledge, attitudes, skills, and practices to create culturally responsive learning and working environments that expect and support high academic achievement for students and employees from all racial groups. Differences will not just be seen as strengths, but they will be nourished, celebrated, and welcomed because they are what make students and families unique.

In order to truly realize this goal, the Board of Education, its officers, and employees will be fully conversant in the historical injustices and inequalities that have shaped our society and to recognize and eliminate the institutional barriers, including racism and biases, that contribute to the pervasive, disparate educational outcomes within our schools. As a K-6 school district, equity and inclusive education aims to understand, identify, address, and eliminate the biases, barriers, and disparities that limit a student's chance to pursue future aspirations and succeed both academically and in life.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee(s) will develop curriculum and instructional

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materials that reflect the Board of Education's commitment to educational equity. Curriculum and instructional materials for all grades shall reflect diversity and include a range of perspectives and experiences, particularly those of historically underrepresented groups. All curriculum materials shall be examined for bias. Class instructional activities and extracurricular programs shall be designed to provide opportunities for cross-cultural and cross-racial interactions that foster respect for diversity.

Equity and inclusive education is an ongoing process that requires shared commitment and leadership if a school district is to meet the ever-evolving society, unique learning needs of all students, and diverse backgrounds of our communities and schools. The Board of Education understands that equity and inclusive education is achieved when each adult collaborates and affirms each student by creating a respectful learning environment inclusive of actual or perceived personal characteristics.

Educational equity is based on the principles of fairness and ensuring that every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, despite any individual's actual or perceived personal characteristics, not to be used interchangeably with principles of equality, treating all students the same.

Inclusive education is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings and the broader environment, in which diversity is honored and all individuals are respected.

Diversity in education means students, staff, families and community are our greatest strength and diversity is viewed as an asset. Diversity means the condition of being different or having differences, including, but not limited to, race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, age, disability, socio-economic class; sex; sexual orientation, health, physical and mental ability, physical size, education level, job and function, personality traits, gender (including gender identity and expression), or other human differences. Embracing these diversities and moving beyond tolerance and celebration to inclusivity and respect will help the School District reach its goal of creating an environment where each and every voice in the School District community is heard and valued.

**Accountability, Transparency and Review**

The Board of Education, its officers and employees, will hold themselves and each other accountable for every student having full access to quality education, qualified teachers, challenging curriculum, full opportunity to learn, and sufficient, individually-tailored support for learning so they can achieve at excellent levels in academic and other student outcomes. The School District also accepts its responsibility for moving forward on this journey and to committing time, energy and resources to develop a more equitable, inclusive, and diverse welcoming environment for all students, parents and staff. To this end, the Superintendent of Schools will establish a School District-wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. The Committee will include representation from staff, administration, Board of Education, students and parents. The School District-wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee will assist the

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administration in developing and implementing specific prevention initiatives, including the implementation of practices designed to promote diversity, prevent discrimination, assure equitable access to high quality curriculum and instruction, and facilities to maximize student achievement for all students.

The Superintendent of Schools, or his/her designee, will adopt goals and corresponding metrics related to this policy. The School District will identify the multiple indicators necessary to monitor student outcomes, engagement, and school climate, and specific data that may be used to ensure accountability for student, school, and School District-wide performance; to reduce variability in outcomes; and to ensure that academic outcomes will not be predictable by actual or perceived personal characteristics and can be assessed and reported transparently to the public. Reporting will include, but is not limited to:

- access to educational opportunities;
- student achievement data at each school, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, English Language Learners, special education, and identified gifted;
- student enrollment at each school, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, English Language Learners, special education, and identified gifted;
- student suspension/ discipline data for each school and student average daily attendance data for each school.

With Committee input, the Superintendent of Schools is authorized to develop and implement a plan for ensuring that equitable educational opportunities are being provided to all students. In addition, the Board of Education directs that training programs be established for students, and annually for employees, to raise awareness of the issues surrounding cultural responsiveness, equity and inclusion and to implement preventative measures to help counteract biases and practices that perpetuate achievement disparities and lead to disproportionate levels of student success. Age-appropriate instructional materials will be incorporated into the curriculum to educate students so that they can learn from a diverse range of experiences and points of view.

#### **Monitoring and Dissemination of Policy**

The Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will monitor and review the School District's metrics and equity activities to determine the extent to which School District schools are complying with this policy, the progress is being made toward attaining the goals of this policy, whether this policy is having a positive effect on improving academic opportunities for all students and increasing family engagement and reducing achievement gaps. The Superintendent of Schools will report to the Board of Education on the progress of the School District's equity, inclusivity, and diversity plan and outcomes. Based on those results, this policy and the specific objectives set to meet its goals may be revised as needed.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will communicate the contents of this policy

# VALLEY STREAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT TWENTY FOUR

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY IN EDUCATION

Policy 0105

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to students, staff, and the community. This policy will be posted on the School District's website, and will also be published in other appropriate school publications.

The Board of Education will annually review the School District's implementation of this policy and take appropriate action to ensure compliance with and enforcement of this policy.

Adoption date: April 20, 2021