

Mission – Goals – Objectives

Equity and Diversity

The Board of Education (Board) is committed to the success of every student in each of our schools and to achieving the mission of ensuring that all students graduate ready for post-secondary education, career and life. The Board believes that the responsibility for student success is broadly shared by District staff, administrators, teachers, community and families. The Board believes that every student has the potential to achieve and it is the responsibility of the District to give each student the opportunity and support to meet their highest potential.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following terms shall have these meanings:

- A. “Diversity”** includes characteristics of persons including, but not limited to race, culture, color, creed or religion, ancestry, national origin, mental and physical ability, age, marital status, physical appearance, family structure, citizenship status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, economic status, veteran’s status, and any other protected class in conformance with federal, state and local laws.
- B. “District staff”** includes all employees, consultants and contractors of the Newtown Public Schools.
- C. “Educational equity”** means raising the achievement of all students while (1) narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students, and (2) eliminating the racial or cultural predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories including rates of graduation.
- D. “Institutional racism”** means the collective failure of a public or private organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their race, color, culture or ethnic origin which can be seen or detected in practices, processes, systems, attitudes and behavior. It looks beyond individual acts of prejudice to the systemic biases that may be built into institutions. These systemic biases discriminate against and disadvantage people of color through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness or racial stereotyping.
- E. “Upstander”** means someone who speaks or acts in support of an individual, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied.

The concept of educational equity extends beyond formal equity, where all students are treated the same, to fostering a barrier-free environment where all students, regardless of their race, class, or other personal characteristics such as creed, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, economic status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, pregnancy status, marital status, physical appearance, or the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, have the opportunity to benefit equally. The District schools will continue to change/improve its practices in order to achieve and maintain racial equity in education.

Equity and Diversity (continued)

The responsibility for the disparities among our youth rests with adults, not the children. The Board is aware that student achievement data from across the country reveal similar patterns and those complex societal and historical factors contribute to the inequities faced by students. Rather than perpetuating such disparities, the Board believes the District must address and overcome this inequity and institutional racism, providing all students with the support and opportunity to succeed. This means differentiating resource allocation, within budgetary limitations, to meet the needs of students who need more supports and opportunities to succeed academically. The district will provide additional and differentiated resources to support the success of all diverse students, including those who are marginalized, disenfranchised, and students of color.

With these commitments in mind, the Newtown Public Schools shall:

- Provide every student with equitable access to high quality and culturally relevant instruction, curriculum, support, facilities and other educational resources, even when this means differentiating resources to accomplish this goal.
- Create multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of its diverse students, and shall actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement from all racial groups, including those who are marginalized, disenfranchised, and students of color.
- Recruit, employ, support and retain a teacher, administrator, instructional and support workforce that is balanced and reflects the diversity of the student body.
- Provide professional development to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills for eliminating cultural, gender, racial and ethnic disparities in achievement.
- Ensure that each school creates a welcoming culture and inclusive environment that reflects and supports the diversity of the District's student population, their families and communities.
- Remedy the practices, including assessment, that lead to the over-representation of students of color in areas such as special education and discipline, and the under representation in programs such as talented and gifted and Advanced Placement.
- Review existing policies, programs, professional development and procedures to ensure the promotion of racial equality, and all applicable new policies, programs and procedures will be developed free of racial disparity.

Include other partners who have demonstrated culturally specific expertise, including families, government agencies, institutions of higher learning, early childhood education organizations, community-based organizations, businesses, and the community in general, in meeting the District's high goals for educational outcomes.

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- Provide, consistent with state regulations and District policy and within budgetary considerations, materials and assessments that reflect the diversity of students and staff, and which are geared towards the understanding and appreciation of culture, class, language, ethnicity and other differences that contribute to the uniqueness of each student and staff member.
- Ensure staff and leaders set goals to promote and monitor the implementation of goals commitments outlined in the Diversity & Equity Resolution.
- Familiarize students and staff with clear expectations for being an “upstander” to maintain a safe, civil and respectful school community.

The Board recognizes that these are long-term goals that require significant work and resources to implement in all schools. All District employees are responsible for the success and achievement of all students. The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures to implement this policy, including an action plan with clear responsibility. Annually, the Superintendent shall report to the Board on the progress towards achieving the goals outlined in this policy.

(cf. 0521 – Nondiscrimination)
(cf. 1110.1 – Parental Involvement)
(cf. 1110.3 – School Governance Council)
(cf. 1210 – Community Associations)
(cf. 1212 – Volunteers)
(cf. 1330 or 3515 – Use of School Facilities)
(cf. 1205 – Participation by the Public)
(cf. 4111 – Recruitment and Selection)
(cf. 4111.1/4211.1 – Affirmative Action)
(cf. 4118.11 – Nondiscrimination)
(cf. 4118.113/4218.113 – Harassment)
(cf. 4118.3 – District Minority Recruitment Plan)
(cf. 4131 – Staff Development)
(cf. 5118.1 – Homeless Students)
(cf. 5131.911 – Bullying/Safe School Climate Plans)
(cf. 5145.4 – Nondiscrimination)
(cf. 5145.5 – Sexual Harassment)
(cf. 5145.51 – Peer Sexual Harassment)
(cf. 5145.52 – Harassment)
(cf. 5145.53 – Transgender and Non-Conforming Youth)
(cf. 5145.6 – Student Grievance Procedure)
(cf. 6115 – Ceremonies and Observances)
(cf. 6121 – Nondiscrimination)
(cf. 6121.1 – Equal Educational Opportunity)

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(cf. 6141.21 – Religions in the Public Schools)
(cf. 6141.22 – Religious Accommodations)
(cf. 6141.311 – Programs for limited English Proficient Students)
(cf. 6171 – Special Education)
(cf. 9133 – Board of Education Advisory Committees)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
46a-60 Discriminatory employment practices prohibited.
10-15c Discrimination in public schools prohibited. School attendance by five-year olds. (Amended by P.A. 97-247 to include “sexual orientation” and P.A. 11-55 to include “gender identity or expression”)
10-153 Discrimination on account of marital status.
17a-101 Protection of children from abuse.
Connecticut State Board of Education, “Position Statement on Culturally Responsive Education,” adopted May 4, 2011
Title VII, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 2000e, et seq.
29 CFR 1604.11, EEOC Guidelines on Sex Discrimination.
Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.
34 CFR Section 106.8(b), OCR Guidelines for Title IX.
Definitions, OCR Guidelines on Sexual Harassment, Fed. Reg. Vol 62, #49, 29 CFR Sec. 1606.8 (a) 62 Fed Reg. 12033 (March 13, 1997) and 66 Fed. Reg. 5512 (January 19, 2001)
Section 8525, ESEA as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act
Meritor Savings Bank. FSB v. Vinson, 477 U.S. 57 (1986)

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Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes (continued)
Faragher v. City of Boca Raton, No. 97-282 (U.S. Supreme Court, June 26, 1998)
Gebbser v. Lago Vista Indiana School District, No. 99-1866, (U.S. Supreme Court, June 26, 1998)
Davis v. Monro County Board of Education, No. 97-843, (U.S. Supreme Court, May 24, 1999.)
The Vietnam Era Veterans’ Readjustment Act of 1974, as amended, 38U.S.C. §4212
Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008
The Americans with Disabilities Act as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008
Public Law 111-256
Meacham v. Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory 128 S.Ct. 2395, 76 U.S.L.W. 4488 (2008)
Federal Express Corporation v. Holowecki 128 S.Ct. 1147, 76 U.S.L.W. 4110 (2008)
Kentucky Retirement Systems v. EEOC 128 S.Ct. 2361, 76 U.S.L.W. 4503 (2008)
Sprint/United Management Co. v. Mendelsohn 128 S.Ct. 1140, 76 U.S.L.W. 4107 (2008)