

5757 ANTI-DISCRIMINATION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING

Mission Statement

Mendham Township Board of Education wholeheartedly embraces the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) as part of the school district's educational mission. The Board's commitment is grounded in anti-racism and anti-discrimination, and guided by the vision of creating a strong, supportive, and nurturing school culture and environment where all students, staff, and families thrive, feel valued, and can authentically be themselves.

Description

This Policy is based on the fact that racism – as used in this policy to include all social identifiers, as defined below – has enduring and compounding consequences for students and families. It is the Board of Education's goal to become an anti-racist, equitable, and inclusive school district. School district officials will work to acknowledge, confront, and ultimately dismantle racism in all its forms through education, dialogue, and a united commitment. The Board's objective in adopting this Policy is that it will lead to impactful, sustainable results in student well-being and achievement.

The Board of Education is committed to fostering the success of each student in schools in the District. The Board aims to recognize and remove institutional barriers and to ensure that social identifiers are not obstacles to educational access. Achieving equity means implicit biases and students' identities will neither predict nor predetermine their success in school.

Definitions:

"Accountability Measures" means indicators in place to guarantee oversight of opportunities, resources, and educational rigor that will lead to achievement for each student.

"Anti-Racist" means someone who supports policies and actions that express the idea that individuals from all social identifiers are equal and eliminate racial inequity.

"Cultural Responsiveness" means valuing racial/ethnic cultures, views, and experiences and incorporating them into teaching and learning and, to strengthen and enrich the school system at large with the presence and contributions of many cultures.

"Educational Equity" means providing access to essential academic, social, emotional, and economic resources, supports, and opportunities to engage each student, throughout their educational career. Educational equity also maximizes academic success for each student through rigorous instruction, with appropriate educational



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resources, to achieve their highest potential, their social/emotional well-being, and to ensure that their social identifiers are valued as an asset.

“Educational Opportunities” means that each student has access to rigorous, well-rounded academic programs and experiences that enrich their educational career.

“Equity Lens” means that for any program, practice, decision, or action, the impact on each student is addressed, with a strategic focus on marginalized student groups.

“Implicit Bias” means the attitudes and stereotypes that affect a person’s understanding, actions, and decisions. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, may be activated involuntarily and without an individual’s awareness or intentional control.

“Institutional Racism” means how institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups and social identifiers.

“Microaggression” means everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

“Social Identifiers” means demographic factors identified as, but not limited to, age, color, ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), ethnicity, family structure, gender identity and expression, language, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economics.

I. Commitment to Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination

1. Dismantling Racism: The Board of Education acknowledges the existence of racism and the pervasive influence of biases in our society. The Board is dedicated to actively dismantling these structures within the district’s educational system, promoting racial equity, and ensuring every student has equitable access to opportunities.
2. Continuous Learning: The Board of Education understands that addressing racism and bias is an ongoing process. The Board commits to providing ongoing training and resources for district staff, students, and families to foster a culture of lifelong learning and growth.
3. Discrimination: Acknowledging that racism is complex and is often compounded by other forms of discrimination, including, but not limited to, discrimination against widely recognized protected classes such as race, color, religion or creed, national origin or ancestry, sex (including gender, sexual orientation and gender identity), age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, genetic information, and



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citizenship, among others so that the District can be fully responsive to student's holistic needs.

II. Equity and Access

1. **Eliminating Disparities:** The Board of Education is unwavering in our commitment to eliminating disparities in educational opportunities, outcomes, and access to resources among our students. This includes addressing disparities related to race, socioeconomic status, gender, and any/all social identifiers.
2. **Resource Allocation:** The Board of Education pledges to allocate resources equitably to ensure all students have the support and tools needed to succeed. This includes distributing funding, technology, and personnel in a manner that addresses the unique needs of each student.
3. **Regular Assessment:** The Board of Education will conduct regular assessments of our policies, practices, and curriculum to identify and rectify any biases or barriers to student success. This process will involve input from students, families, staff, and experts in the field of DEIB.

III. Inclusive Curriculum

1. **Diverse Perspectives:** The Board of Education will actively promote and integrate diverse perspectives and voices into our curriculum. This includes expanding the representation of historically marginalized groups in our textbooks, literature, and learning materials.
2. **Cultural Competency:** The school district's educators will receive professional development opportunities to enhance their cultural competency, ensuring that they are well-equipped to create inclusive classrooms and learning environments that honor and celebrate diversity.

IV. Supportive School Culture

1. **Celebrating Differences:** The school district's staff will foster a school culture that actively celebrates and respects the identities, backgrounds, and experiences of all students, staff, and families. The district will recognize and honor heritage months, cultural celebrations, and events that represent a variety of backgrounds and perspectives.
2. **Social and Emotional Well-being:** Recognizing the importance of social and emotional well-being, the Board of Education will provide comprehensive support services that prioritize the mental health and emotional development of students.



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The Board of Education will also implement programs that help students build empathy and resilience.

3. **Reporting and Accountability:** To maintain a safe and inclusive environment, the Board of Education will establish clear reporting mechanisms for incidents of discrimination, harassment, or bias. The district will respond promptly and appropriately to ensure that all members of the community feel heard and supported. Violations of the code of conduct related to DEIB will be dealt with immediately in accordance with policy 5512 - Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying. When such violations occur, school district staff will intervene immediately and take appropriate action. The district will also institute restorative practices to school discipline, such as behavioral supports to foster healthy relationships and promote a positive climate and culture.

V. Recruitment and Hiring

1. **Diverse Staff:** The Board of Education is committed to actively recruiting a diverse staff. We are dedicated to creating an inclusive and equitable school environment, and although our community may not be very diverse, we are committed to actively seeking and recruiting staff that represents a variety of backgrounds and perspectives.
2. **Inclusive Hiring Practices:** The school district's hiring practices will be inclusive, transparent, and equitable. The Superintendent of Schools will implement strategies to attract, hire, and retain individuals who share a deep commitment to DEIB principles.

VI. Community Engagement

1. **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Collaboration with the community is vital to DEIB efforts. School district staff will engage in open dialogue with students, families, staff, and community members to promote understanding and collaboration. We recognize that DEIB is a shared responsibility and that everyone has a role to play.
3. **Partnerships:** The Board of Education will actively seek partnerships with community organizations, advocacy groups, and experts in the field of DEIB to enhance our capacity and broaden our perspective.

VII. Accountability and Progress

1. **Measurable Goals:** The Superintendent of Schools will establish clear, measurable DEIB goals, and regularly assess progress towards achieving them. Progress reports will be transparently communicated to the Board of Education, staff, students, families, and the broader community.



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2. **Data-Informed Decision-Making:** The Superintendent of Schools will collect and analyze data related to student achievement, school climate, and disciplinary actions to identify areas where disparities persist and take targeted actions to address them.

VIII. Continuous Improvement

1. **Ongoing Commitment:** The Board of Education's commitment to DEIB is ongoing and will evolve in response to emerging issues and best practices to create an inclusive and equitable school environment.
2. **Adaptive Policies:** The Board of Education will adapt our policies and strategies as needed to align with evolving DEIB principles and ensure the district remains at the forefront of fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within our district.

In alignment with the Board of Education's mission, this comprehensive DEIB policy underscores the Board's unwavering dedication to creating a dynamic, diverse, inclusive, and equitable educational community. The Board firmly believes that by working collaboratively, Mendham Township School District will continue to thrive as a place where all students can achieve their fullest potential, regardless of their background or identity. Together, an environment will be built where every student knows they are valued, respected, and supported on their educational journey.

Adopted: 19 March 2024

