

RACIAL AND ETHNIC EQUITY POLICY

<p>GENERAL BELIEFS</p>	<p>The Providence School Board believes that all students can learn at a high level. This requires all students to have access to a high quality, culturally responsive and sustaining learning environment in which educators <u>value students’ cultural capital and context to engage them in learning. In these environments, educators value, respect and affirm racial and ethnic diversity, recognizing that in doing so, they are creating equitable opportunities for all students to be engaged, global citizens who are positioned to achieve their college and/or career goals.</u> The Board believes equity should be embedded in all educational and workplace policies and practices in the Providence Public School District (“PPSD” or “District”).</p>
<p>PURPOSE AND SCOPE</p>	<p>The purpose of the Racial & Ethnic Equity Policy is to hold the District accountable to a formalized set of expectations that include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eliminating barriers that cause and/or perpetuate disparities 2. Creating systems and structures that support the diversity of our learners 3. Providing the professional learning for all PPSD employees to develop, support and sustain culturally responsive learning environments 4. Creating structures for student voice, empowerment and advocacy 5. Honoring family and community agency 6. Using an equity lens tool for all District and school-based decision making 7. Conducting regular qualitative and quantitative equity audits for schools and central offices and providing a publicly-available, detailed report to the School Board <p>The policy provides the context and framework necessary to define the strategies for PPSD employees to examine how race, language and culture affect district-wide practices and academic achievement, through the use of indicators such as: classroom grades, social-emotional and school culture data, family and community survey data, state and district assessment data, behavioral referrals, graduation rates, advanced course registration and completion, suspension rates, and attendance.</p> <p>The Superintendent and/or the Office of Equity and Belonging, will develop administrative regulations which will provide details for implementation of the Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy.</p>
<p>DEFINITIONS</p>	<p><i>NOTE: Language and definitions evolve over time and words hold varied meanings based on where they are used, how they are used, and by whom they are used. The definitions listed here are intended as an entryway into this policy.</i></p>

Accountability: Accountability is the acceptance of responsibility for an organization's actions. It implies a willingness to be transparent, allowing others to observe and evaluate the organization.

Bias (explicit and implicit): a tendency to believe that some people, ideas, etc., are better than others that usually results in treating some people unfairly.

1. **Explicit bias (or conscious bias):** Refers to the attitudes and beliefs we have about a person or group on a conscious level.
2. **Implicit bias (or unconscious bias):** Describes when we have attitudes towards people or associate stereotypes with them without our conscious knowledge.

Culture: Culture is defined by people and communities and can include all the ways of life including arts, beliefs and institutions of a population that are passed down from generation to generation. Culture has been called "the way of life for an entire society." As such, it includes codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals, and art.

Culturally Responsive Educators: Educators who reflect on how their own identities, experiences and cultural contexts impact their teaching. In culturally responsive learning environments, educators build relationships with students, value their cultural capital, and use students' cultural contexts to engage them in learning relevant to their lives. This helps students become more independent learners. It provides learners with rigorous grade level-appropriate, standards-based learning opportunities that honor their histories, cultures, languages, and unique ways of knowing.

Culturally Responsive Teaching: An instructional approach which recognizes and uses students' cultural schema or funds of knowledge to engage learning and helps give them the "muscles" that they need to carry the cognitive load.

Employee: The term "employee(s)" refers to all employees appointed by the school board, including those covered by an individual employment contract, collective bargaining agreements, and performance contracts.

Equity: Refers to the qualities of justness, fairness and impartiality. Equitable practices take into account individual needs and context to address imbalance or systemic barriers.

Equity Advisory Council (District): A group of stakeholders (students, staff, family, etc.), whose membership shall be reflective of the diverse races and ethnicities within the District. The purpose of this group is to

elevate the voices of our diverse communities by advising District staff, providing input, and helping to prioritize district-wide equity efforts, policies, strategies and investments.

Equity Audit(s): Systematic examinations of available data and expert input on how various groups—especially those facing inequity or disparities— are or likely will be affected by a policy, program, or process. An equity audit is used as a resource to help organizations conduct comprehensive equity reviews. Qualitative and quantitative organizational assessments review practices, and protocols at school and central office levels, by collecting and analyzing information. Extensive district-wide audits should be conducted every four years, district-wide climate and culture audits, every year, and curricula audits, every 3-6 years. These evaluations include multiple data-informed processes, in order to determine the extent to which school districts, like PPSD act justly, equitably, and fairly towards each and every member of its community.

Equity Leadership Teams (School-Based): A cohesive team of individuals (students, staff, family, etc.) at the school level, whose goal is to build community trust and racial, cultural and ethnic awareness, and create change that positively impacts students and families.

Equity Lens: A process, tool or view for analyzing the impact of the design and implementation of policies and procedures on under-served and marginalized individuals and groups, and to identify and potentially eliminate barriers.

Ethnicity: Someone’s cultural identity, chosen or learned from their culture, family or descent (e.g. One might be Black but identify culturally as Italian).

Language: A system of conventional spoken, manual (signed), or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves. The functions of language include communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression, and emotional release.

People of Color: A way of describing people in the U.S. who are not considered white.

Race: A pervasive and faulty categorizing system that has varied over time and is loosely based on a combination of features that includes skin color and phenotypic features. The following racial categories are used by the US Census Bureau and “...generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. In addition, it is recognized that the

	<p>categories of the race item include racial and national origin or sociocultural groups. People may choose to report more than one race to indicate their racial mixture, such as “American Indian” and “White.” People who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race.”¹</p> <p>American Indian or Alaska Native – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.</p> <p>Asian – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.</p> <p>Black or African American – A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.</p> <p>Hispanic or Latino²– a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.</p> <p>Multiracial– Individuals who self-identify as more than one race.</p> <p>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.</p> <p>White – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.</p> <p>Racial Disparity: This term refers to the imbalances and incongruities between the treatment of racial groups, including economic status, income, housing options, societal treatment, safety, and a myriad of other aspects of life and society.</p> <p>Racial Diversity: A variety of racial identities or characteristics (e.g. African Americans, Native Americans, Latinx). Diversity is a quantitative measure of representation³.</p> <p>Racism (individual, institutional and structural): Historically-rooted systems of power and advantages based on race that can perpetuate the belief that different races possess distinct characteristics, abilities, or</p>
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¹ US Census Bureau, “About the Topic of Race,” <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html>.

² US Census Bureau, “About the Hispanic Population and its Origin,” <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/hispanic-origin/about.html>.

³ Race Forward, “What is Racial Equity?,” <https://www.raceforward.org/about/what-is-racial-equity-key-concepts>.

	<p>qualities, especially so as to distinguish them as inferior or superior to one another. Different levels of racism can be understood in the following framework⁴:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual racism includes internalized and interpersonal racism. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Internalized racism lies <i>within individuals</i>. These are private beliefs and biases about race that reside inside people’s own minds and bodies. b. Interpersonal racism occurs <i>between individuals</i>. Bias, bigotry, and discrimination based on race. When people bring private beliefs about race into their interactions with others, they enter the interpersonal realm. Examples: public expressions of prejudice and hate, microaggressions, bias and bigotry between individuals. 2. Systemic Racism includes institutional and structural racism. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Institutional racism occurs <i>within institutions</i>, and includes unjust policies, practices, procedures, and outcomes [based on race], whether intentional or not. b. Structural racism refers to racial inequities <i>across</i> institutions, policies, social structures, history, and culture. Structural racism highlights how racism operates as a system of power with multiple interconnected, reinforcing, and self-perpetuating components which result in racial inequities across all indicators for success. Structural racism is the racial inequity that is deeply rooted and embedded in our history and culture and our economic, political, and legal systems.
REVISION DATE	March 2023
GUIDELINES	<p>PPSD’s Equity Framework consists of the following categories: Accountability & Transparency, Culture, Climate & Belonging, Family & Community Agency, Student Support & Empowerment, and Culturally Responsive Teaching & Learning. These categories frame PPSD’s Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy guidelines. The Superintendent and/or the Office of Equity and Belonging, will develop administrative regulations which will provide greater details for implementing (and sustaining) the Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy. The regulations must address each of the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transparency & Accountability <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Office of Equity and Belonging will create and convene a PPSD Equity Advisory Council, made up of all

⁴ Race Forward, “What are the different levels of racism?” <https://www.raceforward.org/about/what-is-racial-equity-key-concepts>.

stakeholders (students, staff, family, etc.), whose membership shall be reflective of the diverse races and ethnicities within the District. The purpose of this group is to elevate the voices of our diverse communities by advising District staff, providing input, and helping to prioritize district-wide equity efforts, policies, strategies and investments

- i. The Office of Equity and Belonging in conjunction with the Equity Advisory Council creates an equity framework (informed by school-based Equity Leadership Teams and state and national best practices).
- ii. The Office of Equity and Belonging in conjunction with the Equity Advisory Council will review equity of programs, systems, and procedures, district-wide (policy, programs, curricula and initiatives), using an equity lens tool. The Superintendent will conduct qualitative and quantitative equity audits for schools and central offices. These include:
 1. District-wide climate and culture audit every school year
 2. Curricula audits every 3-6 years
 3. Comprehensive District-wide audits every 4 years
- b. Monitor and assess equity and ethics in all District operational practices, in alignment with the District's [EEO and Affirmative Action Policy and Plan](#), [Title IX](#) policy, [Nondiscrimination Policy for Transgender and Gender Expansive Students](#), [Workplace Gender Transition](#) policy, [Bullying & Harassment](#) policy, [Student Code of Conduct](#) and other related policies
- c. Provide resources and support for employees to develop the professional knowledge, cultural awareness, and continuous expectations to identify and address inequities.
- d. Model equity in professional and operational practices including the development of accountability systems with metrics

2. Culture, Climate & Belonging

- a. Recruit, employ, support, advance, retain and continuously develop a workforce of racially conscious and culturally competent professionals; prioritize professional learning for all PPSD employees to build a positive culture and climate.

- b. Set short- and long-term goals to recruit, employ, support, advance, retain and continuously develop a workforce that reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of the students served by the District
- c. Prioritize efforts to create and maintain supportive, asset-driven learning and working environments in which students, staff, families and caregivers feel accepted and a sense of belonging, affirmed in their identities, and safe, both physically and emotionally
- d. Prioritize cultivating communities that affirm diversity within racial and ethnic identities, including intersectional identities related to color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity or expression, national origin, or disability, through curriculum, programming and support services

3. Family & Community Agency

The Office of Equity and Belonging will partner with the Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) to:

- a. Engage family and community organizations with staff and students through Equity Leadership Teams at the school sites, to develop effective partnerships between home, school and community
- b. Through participation on the District Equity Advisory Council and school-based Equity Leadership Teams, community organizations will provide diverse cultural perspectives to examine and address equity issues as they arise
 - i. Commit District resources to support collaborations between community organizations and families towards ongoing equity efforts
- c. Maintain a central directory of resources and support services to facilitate access for families, both within PPSD and through community organizations
- d. Provide parent/family and District reciprocal Education around specific topics of interest relevant to education and the District's mission
- e. Maintain transparent and accessible communication strategies responsive to individual, stakeholder groups, and wider community needs, in multiple languages and formats

4. Student Support & Empowerment

- a. Seek and empower student voice at the school and District level

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Prioritize equitable access to adequate mental health support c. Ensure that systems are created and maintained that are responsive to behavior needs from both students and adults in order to support healthy student social and emotional development d. Create transparent structures at the district and school level, that provide students with opportunities to engage in community and personal development <p>5. Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Teaching & Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increasing the professional knowledge, skills, and capacity of faculty and staff to effectively teach a racially and ethnically diverse student population b. Intentionally seeking and including diverse racial and ethnic perspectives in the development and implementation of culturally responsive teaching and learning practices and curriculum c. Ensuring a positive and academically rigorous school environment that engages all students d. Collaborating with colleagues to create and implement personalized, culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum, and assessments e. Implementing practices that lead to equitable outcomes among students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds f. Engaging in on-going (define/implement/require) professional development designed to: provide an understanding of how people learn, implicit bias, culturally responsive instructional practices, equity-focused leadership, systemic racism, differentiation and personalized instruction; in order for educators to meet the needs of a diverse student population
<p>IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES</p>	<p>The following implementation strategies reflect PPSD’s Racial and Ethnic Equity Framework. The Superintendent and/or the Office of Equity and Belonging, will develop <u>Administrative Regulations</u>. These regulations will provide greater details for the full implementation of the Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy. The regulations must address each of the following areas:</p> <p>1. Institutional Change PPSD will drive institutional change by normalizing, organizing, and operationalizing racial and ethnic equity.</p>

- a. **Normalize:** PPSD will embed a racial and ethnic framework into all decision-making.
- b. **Organize:** Develop partnerships with institutions and communities and build organizational capacity that empowers all PPSD community members to create change
- c. **Operationalize:** Implement racial equity tools to change policies, programs, and practices throughout the District, in all departments, that create inequity

2. Developing Researched-Based Practices

The Office of Equity and Belonging will use the equity lens tool and multiple forms of data, to develop equitable policies and practices throughout the District. Additionally, the Office will commit to working with key stakeholders (students, families, teachers, staff, community members, etc.) to ensure transparency and accountability and to prevent the disenfranchisement of our community.

- a. Seek and include diverse racial and ethnic perspectives in all policy-development steps
- b. Seek evidence based practices and existing models
- c. Make deliberate assessment plans for accountability at all levels (district, department, school, and individual)
- d. Communicate and implement vetted practices that lead to equitable outcomes among students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds
- e. Create feedback opportunities for community members
- f. Include community stakeholders with diverse cultural perspectives to identify potential issues as they arise

3. Talking About Race

PPSD will develop and share tools to talk about race and ethnicity. These tools will recognize the historical, institutional, systemic and interpersonal influences that have marginalized people based on race and ethnicity.

- a. Building a coalition of families, students, employees and community stakeholders to develop broad-based support for honest and open dialogue that engages and facilitates understanding regarding matters related to racial and ethnic equity
- b. Seeking and including diverse racial and ethnic perspectives in the development and implementation of culturally responsive teaching and learning practices and curriculum

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Engaging family and community stakeholders with staff and students at the school sites in the development of effective partnerships between home, school, and community d. Developing training to empower administrative staff at all levels to use their voice to influence racial and ethnic equity e. Disaggregating data and how we collect student, family and staff information to affirm the racial and ethnic diversity in PPSD.⁵ <p>4. Building Capacity</p> <p>PPSD will build leadership capacity through diverse coalitions, leadership development, and professional learning to ensure a positive and academically rigorous school environment that engages <i>each</i> student. This will include, but is not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recruiting, employing, onboarding, supporting, advancing, retaining and continuously developing a workforce of diverse, racially conscious and culturally competent professionals b. Setting short- and long-term goals to recruit, employ, support, advance, retain and continuously develop a workforce that reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of the students served by the District c. Collaborating with colleagues to create and implement personalized, culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum, and assessments d. Empowering students and families with leadership and engagement opportunities e. Establishing Equity Leadership Teams in every school building throughout the district
TRAINING, OVERSIGHT, AND COMMUNICATION	The Superintendent and/or the Office of Equity and Belonging, is responsible for developing and implementing a District-wide Racial and Ethnic Equity plan, with clear accountability metrics, that measure equitable outcomes for all PPSD students. The Superintendent and/or the Office of Equity and Belonging will report on the equity plan and outcomes to the Providence School Board and the community, at the end of every school year.
COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS,	The Superintendent will ensure that all PPSD personnel and all PPSD contractors comply fully with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, and with all Board Policies. In the event any part of any Policy is unlawful,

⁵ Cross-reference “All Students Count Act (ASCA),” [RI General Assembly](#), 2017.

<p>CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIREMENTS</p>	<p>the Superintendent will report such event to the Board as soon as practicable and request of the Board a modification of this Policy.</p>
<p>CROSS REFERENCE</p>	<p>Providence Males of Color Initiative</p> <p>EEO and Affirmative Action Policy and Plan</p> <p>Title IX policy,</p> <p>Nondiscrimination Policy for Transgender and Gender Expansive Students,</p> <p>Workplace Gender Transition policy,</p> <p>Bullying & Harassment policy,</p> <p>Student Code of Conduct</p> <p>PPSD Grading Policy</p> <p>Building for equity framework and drivers. (2023). (CCE) Center for Collaborative Education. https://www.cce.org/equityguide/building-for-equity/evaluation-scaling-for-equitable-outcomes</p> <p>Equitable learning environments / equity excellence engagement. (2023). https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/Page/http%3A%2F%2Fwww.atlantapublicschools.us%2Fsite%2Fdefault.aspx%3FPageID%3D66012</p> <p>Equity. (2023). https://www.cps.edu/sites/equity/</p> <p>Framework—Farmington public schools. (2022) https://www.fpsct.org/departments/curriculum-instruction/equity-old/framework</p> <p>Race forward.(2023). https://www.raceforward.org/</p>
<p>HISTORY</p>	<p><i>Policy Committee Review: May 1, 2017; June 19, 2017 Approved by Board: August 2, 2017</i></p>

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