

# Intermediate District 287

RESPONSIVE. INNOVATIVE. SOLUTIONS.

## DISTRICT POLICY

**POLICY SERIES:** Equity & Nondiscrimination  
**SUBJECT:** Equity  
**BOARD APPROVED:** November 2008  
**BOARD REVIEWED DATE:** October 2012, May 2017  
**REVISION DATE:** January 2020

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### **END140**                      **Equity**

#### **I. PURPOSE**

Intermediate District 287 is committed to the success of each and every student. Each student and staff person is entitled to a welcoming, respectful, equitable, and supportive learning and working environment in which their racial identity is valued and contributes to successful academic and employment outcomes.

Intermediate District 287 acknowledges the historical, generational and compounding reality of the systems, structures, and practices that have intentionally created and continue to afford advantages to dominant racial groups while perpetuating inequities for others. The District owns its role in creating, maintaining, and implementing policies, procedures, and practices that result in predictably lower academic and graduation outcomes and disproportionate disciplinary action for Students of Color and American Indian/Indigenous and/or Native students, than their White peers. These disparities contradict the beliefs and values we hold about what students can achieve and the role of adults in ensuring conditions for success.

We believe that:

- Each person has intrinsic value.
- Each person has the capacity to contribute to society.
- When people with varying perspectives collaborate, the impossible becomes possible.
- Learning unlocks human potential.
- Integrity is essential for sustaining effective relationships.
- Respect for each person and the diversity of ideas enriches the individual and strengthens society.
- Responsiveness and innovation are key to thriving in a changing world.
- Each person performs best when engaged, connected and supported.

In addition, we believe that every student has the potential to achieve and to enrich our learning environment and it is the responsibility of our District to give each student the opportunity and support to reach their highest potential.

The responsibility for the educational disparities among our students rests with adults, not students. The unintentional and intentional neglect adults have upheld around their own

racial consciousness and racial identity development has enabled perpetual opportunity gaps for Students of Color and Native American/Indigenous and/or Native students.

We are aware that student achievement data from school districts across the State and around the country reveal similar patterns, and that complex societal and historical factors, including generational and race-related trauma, contribute to the inequities our students face. Nonetheless, rather than perpetuating inequities, Intermediate District 287 must address and overcome this inequity and institutional racism, providing all students with the support and opportunity to succeed.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework grounded in Critical Race Theory for the elimination of bias, particularly racism, bigotry, and cultural bias, as factors affecting student achievement and learning experiences, and to promote learning and work environments that welcome, respect, and value diversity. Our framework must examine the Permanence of Racism, how Whiteness as Property manifests, and Critique Liberalism; in addition, our practices must be informed by Counter-Storytelling and utilize Interest Convergence.

This policy embodies the Board's commitment that all staff, administrators, and Board members will be accountable for building a District-wide culture of equity with fidelity, consistency, passion, and coherence.

## **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

It is the District's policy to provide equitable educational and employment opportunities to all students, employees, and applicants for employment. The District shall not unlawfully discriminate in its educational and employment decisions on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender, familial or marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, age, immigration status, status with regard to public assistance, and membership or activity in a local commission.

This policy applies to all areas of District educational programs and services including academics, coursework, activities, facilities, and other rights and privileges of enrollment.

This policy applies to all areas of District employment including hiring, tenure, compensation, terms, upgrading, conditions, facilities, and privileges of employment.

Our students, staff, families and communities are our greatest strength and we view our diversity as an asset. We will create and maintain an equitable, inclusive, and diverse community that ensures that each and every voice is heard and valued.

## **III. DEFINITIONS**

"Critical Race Theory" or "CRT" focuses directly on the effects of race and racism, while simultaneously addressing the hegemonic system of White supremacy on the "meritocracy." There are five tenets:

- Counter-Storytelling (aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted views or myths, especially ones held by the majority/dominant culture);
- Permanence of Racism (the concept that racist hierarchical structures govern all political, economic and social domains, including education);
- Whiteness as Property (speaks to the dominant cultures perceived and policy/legislative-supported right to possess, right to use, and right to disposition);

- Interest Convergence (points out that civil rights gains for People of Color were offered to the extent that they were not seen as (or did exact) a major disruption to a “normal” way of life for the majority of Whites; civil rights for Whites were basic tenets of U.S. democracy); and the
- Critique of Liberalism (a critique of “colorblindness,” the “neutrality” of the law, and the notion of those in power that gains must be had by incremental changes).

“Diversity” includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. It includes race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity/expression, immigration status, age, national origin, creed, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, familial/marital status, language, status with regard to public assistance, and culture. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

“Equity” exists when as much advantage, consideration, and flexibility as needed is provided to ensure meaningful individualized opportunity and success, taking into account current and historical conditions, including generational and race-related trauma. Equity is not synonymous with equality.

“Educational equity” means that each student has access to the opportunities, resources, and academic rigor they need throughout their educational career to maximize academic success and social emotional well-being and to view each student’s individual characteristics as valuable. It means raising the achievement of all students while:

- narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students; and
- eliminating the racial predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories, including credit attainment and rates of graduation.

“Racial equity” is the result achieved when one cannot predict advantage or disadvantage by race. Racial equity is one part of racial justice so it includes work to address the root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This involves the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.

"[Person of Color](#)" or “Staff of Color” or “Student of Color” is a political designation, first adopted by Women of Color, and used to describe any person who is “minoritized.” The term emphasizes the common experience of individual bias and systemic racism experienced by people not considered to be White.

#### **IV. RACIAL EQUITY VISION**

In order to fulfill the Board’s vision for racial equity, the District will focus on the individual and unique needs of each student. The Board has established the following goals for this work:

- A. Invite and include people from all races and ethnicities to examine issues and find adaptive solutions, which address the root causes and systems, rather than technical solutions, which provide one-time situational fixes.
- B. Adopt a teaching and learning culture that includes high expectations of students and staff, varied teaching and learning styles, and individualized as well as systemic

- supports for teachers and students.
- C. Create multiple learning pathways to success tailored to the assets of our students 'racial identities and realities in order to meet the needs of our diverse students, and actively encourage, support and expect high achievement for students from all racial groups.
  - D. Ensure that the District's communications strategy facilitates interactions where students, families, and staff feel welcomed, empowered, and treated as authentic thought partners in the educational process.
  - E. Use a set of questions for decision-making that facilitates ways of thinking and problem solving through an equity framework.
  - F. Eliminate District policies, structures, and practices that perpetuate inequities and contribute to disproportionality of access and outcomes.
  - G. Identify, develop, and apply best instructional practices, including culturally inclusive curriculum and instructional practice that demonstrably have made a positive difference for students and groups of students in order to reduce prevalent and persistent learning outcome gaps.
  - H. Provide each student with equitable access to high quality and racially and culturally responsive instruction, curriculum (which must honor the experience, culture, and humanity of students), support, facilities and human resources, even when this means differentiating resources to accomplish this goal.
  - I. Recruit, employ, support and retain high quality, racially and linguistically diverse and racially conscious and culturally competent administrative, instructional and support employees whose culture and experiences are reflective of the student population, and provide professional development to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills for eliminating racial disparities in achievement.
  - J. Ensure that the social and emotional learning needs of students and families guide the selection, implementation, and monitoring of solutions to create safe, inclusive school environments to include, but not limited to, Restorative and Trauma-Informed Practices, De-escalation strategies, etc.
  - K. Use disaggregated data to analyze trends, identify gaps, and develop racial equity priorities.
  - L. Engage, include, and collaborate with families, students, residents, communities, member districts and other stakeholders as this Board recognizes that their active involvement is essential to the Board's own responsibility for effective and equitable governance.

The Board holds itself and all District administrators, instructional staff, and support staff accountable for building a District-wide culture of equity. District leaders have a special responsibility to develop their own racial consciousness and identity, at the same time that this is an expectation of all employees. Every District 287 employee is responsible for the success and achievement of all students.

The Board understands that the above are long-term goals and feels the urgency to continue this work as quickly as possible.