

Nondiscrimination and Equity

The district will provide equal educational opportunity and treatment for all students in all aspects of the academic and activities program without discrimination based on race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, honorably-discharged veteran or military status, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, marital status, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. The district will provide equal access to school facilities to the Boy Scouts of America and all other designated youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code as a patriotic society. District programs will be free from sexual harassment. Auxiliary aids and services will be provided upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Conduct against any student that is based on one of the categories listed above that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive as to limit or deny the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the district's course offerings; educational programming or any activity will not be tolerated. When a district employee knows, or reasonably should know, that such discriminatory harassment is occurring or has occurred, the district will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, prevent its recurrence and remedy its effects.

The district's nondiscrimination statement will be included in all written announcements, notices, recruitment materials, employment applications, and other publications made available to all students, parents, or employees. The statement will include: 1) notice that the district will not discriminate in any programs or activities on the basis of any of the above-listed categories; 2) the name and contact information of the district's compliance officer designated to ensure compliance with this policy; and 3) the names and contact information of the district's Section 504 and Title IX compliance officers.

The district will annually publish notice reasonably calculated to inform students, students' parents/guardians (in a language that they can understand, which may require language assistance), and employees of the district's discrimination complaint procedure.

The superintendent will designate a staff member to serve as the compliance officer for this policy. The compliance officer will be responsible for investigating any discrimination complaints communicated to the district.

The district will provide training to administrators and certificated and classroom personnel regarding their responsibilities under this policy and to raise awareness of and eliminate bias and discrimination based on the protected classes identified in this policy.

EQUITY

The following are established as District values:

- Belonging
- Communication
- Support
- Wellness
- Learning

Beyond equal education access, educational equity is based on the principles of fairness and justice in allocating resources, opportunity, treatment, and success for every student. Educational equity programs promote the real possibility of equality of educational results for each student and between diverse groups of students. Equity strategies are planned, systemic and focused on the core of the teaching and learning process.

The Board of Directors believes that the responsibility for student success is broadly shared by our staff, our families/guardians, our community, and our student's own efforts. The district is committed to identifying and correcting practices and policies that perpetuate the achievement gap and institutional racism and gender discrimination in all forms in order to provide all of its students with the opportunity to succeed in a manner compliant with all applicable state and federal laws.

Achievement gaps between students predicated on race, religion, color, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital or veteran status or disability status are unacceptable if we are to meet our mission and vision statements and our moral obligations to our students, their families, and our community as a whole. These gaps are contrary to our belief that all children can learn and succeed. The district also recognizes that there are additional circumstances beyond membership in a class protected by federal or state law that can significantly impact students, including poverty, housing status/homelessness, involvement in the criminal justice system, and immigration status. We will work to mitigate the impact of these barriers on our students. Adult behaviors must not contribute to achievement gaps or create or perpetuate barriers to success and must be concentrated on elimination of such gaps.

Equity of Resources

The district acknowledges that opportunity gaps exist within our educational system such as racism, disparate educational opportunities, and different treatment experienced by students of color including the unequal or inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities. The district is committed to advancing optimum participation in, contribution to benefit from and enjoyment of learning and work experiences by diverse students, parents, staff, and community. The district is committed to promoting and providing equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, facilities and supports, even when this means differentiating resource allocations on the basis of student needs that are measured by the Strategic Plan Benchmarks. Resource allocation shall support the definition of educational equity adopted in this policy while complying with state and federal funding mandates.

Equity in Practice

Practices, procedures, and programs that result in over or under-representation of any group of students compared to peers shall be subject to close review to assure that such results are due to meeting student legitimate educational, social or emotional needs. Practices that do not meet such review criteria shall be eliminated. Teachers, administrators and district staff shall collaborate to establish and implement culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum, and assessments.

Belonging

The diversity of our student body, our community, and our staff is a strength that benefits our community and shall be celebrated. The district welcomes, respects, and values the diversity free from judgement, of its students, parents, staff, and the broader community.

Commitment to Diversity

The district is committed to fostering a learning environment where diversity is encouraged and to recruiting and retaining a workforce that reflects the diversity of our students and community. The recruitment of diverse teachers and staff provides all students with a better chance of seeing themselves as part of the education system. Diversity in education provides all children with the opportunity to learn from others with dissimilar backgrounds and recognizes the value of diversity in all learning environments. It is important that children of all races, cultures, and backgrounds are provided with familiar role models in schools. We are committed to hiring the best employees of all backgrounds who will bring their unique talents and skills into our school system. The district shall employ staffing processes that support and foster diversity in its staff through recruitment, employment, training, and retention of employees.

Professional Development Opportunities

The district shall offer opportunities for all staff to improve its cultural competencies in serving our diverse student body and community. The district shall offer opportunities for all staff to improve culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum, and assessment competencies in serving our student body and community to increase individual and collective capacity to effectively teach our student population and serve families. The district staff shall work together to increase their individual and collective capacity to effectively meet the needs of its student population and serve its families and communities.

The Board of Directors, Superintendent and staff commit to considering issues of equity in the adoption of all future policies that have a significant impact on student learning and resource allocation. This commitment also includes considering issues of equity in applying existing policies, and assessing if such policies need to be reviewed and updated by the Board. The Board of Directors, Superintendent and staff also recognize there may be circumstances where policies that reflect principles of equity and nondiscrimination on their face may result in unintended outcomes that do not promote the district's values related to equity and nondiscrimination. If such circumstances arise, an analysis of if the policy at issue needs to be reviewed and updated by the Board to address unintended outcomes will be conducted.

The Board of Directors shall consider the values stated in this policy in conducting its business and in exercising its responsibilities to the people of the Meridian community. The Superintendent shall establish such regulations, as may be necessary and appropriate to accomplish the purpose and intent of this Policy. The Board of Directors and Superintendent may also establish specific strategic goals or benchmarks with metrics for evaluation to implement this Policy as permitted by law.

Cross References:

- 4217 - Effective Communication
- 4260 - Use of School Facilities
- 3211 - Transgender Students
- 2151 - Interscholastic Activities
- 2150 - Co-Curricular Program
- 2140 - Guidance and Counseling
- 2030 - Service Animals in Schools
- 2020 - Course Design, Selection and Adoption of Instructional Materials

Legal References:

- Chapter 28A.640 RCW Sexual equality
- Chapter 28A.642 RCW Discrimination prohibition
- Chapter 49.60 RCW Discrimination — Human rights commission
- WAC 392-190-020 Training—Staff responsibilities—Bias awareness
- WAC 392-190-060 Compliance – School district designation of responsible employee - Notification
- WAC 392-400-215 Student rights
- 20 U.S.C. 7905 Boy Scouts of American Equal Access Act
- 42 U.S.C. 12101-12213 Americans with Disabilities Act

Management 2016 – March Issue
Resources: 2014 - December Issue
 2013 - April Issue
 2012 - December Issue
 2011 - June Issue
 Policy News, August 2007 Washington’s Law Against Discrimination

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