

5440 - Culturally Proficient Schools and Administration Offices

The Wauwatosa School Board is committed to promoting and sustaining excellent schools, administration offices, and school community support systems in order to foster conditions that reduce disproportionality in student achievement and school discipline. It is the intent of the School Board that the staff and students throughout the Wauwatosa School District work and interact in schools and classrooms that affirm diverse backgrounds, acknowledge the disparity of opportunities for poor and more affluent students and promote equity in achievement, discipline, and performance. It is the belief of the School Board that closing the achievement gap is not just about instruction; it is the way that we think about, understand, and believe in the potential and capabilities of our students and effectively interact with them. The School Board further affirms the right of ALL students to have “equitable access” to a quality education that promotes college and career readiness. Equity means providing appropriate educational experiences for all students in order to close the gaps in the highest and lowest performing students and raise achievement levels.

Closing the achievement gap, while raising standards for all students, is the top priority of the School Board, the Superintendent, and all District staff. The consistent patterns of disparity among graduation and achievement rates across all student groups and subgroups are contrary to our beliefs. In order to attain the goals of closing the achievement gap, reducing the rate of disproportional suspension of students of color, and increasing the number of students who successfully graduate from our schools, the Board encourages staff to engage in professional development on strategies to close achievement gaps for low performing and underserved groups to meet the needs of students from multiple cultural and linguistic backgrounds and their diverse learning styles.

The goals of educational equity are as follows:

1. Equitable opportunities for high academic achievements;
2. Equitable access and inclusion by providing inclusive opportunities in schools, programs and activities;
3. Equitable treatment of students by valuing all students and respecting their differences;
4. Equitable opportunities for students to engage in a rigorous course of study;
5. Equitable distribution of resources to all schools and programs to support teaching and learning; and
6. Shared accountability for all educational stakeholders responsible for every learner having full access to quality education, qualified teachers, challenging curriculum and appropriate and sufficient support for learning so that ALL students can achieve.

The Board recognizes that these are long term goals. As a result, to track the progression of achievement of these goals, the Superintendent is responsible for reporting progress towards meeting the goals to the Board on an annual basis.

Furthermore, in order to implement educationally equitable practices for students within culturally relevant response settings, the Board establishes the following strategies for the District:

1. The District shall foster welcoming environments in all of the schools and administration offices that reflect and support the racial and ethnic diversity of the student populations served;
2. The District shall foster learning environments where diverse cultures and experiences will be acknowledged, valued and affirmed;
3. The District shall welcome and empower ALL families to engage in their child’s education;
4. The District shall endeavor to recruit, hire, support and retain racially and linguistically diverse and culturally responsive administrative, instructional and support personnel and shall provide professional development to strengthen their knowledge, proficiency and skills for eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in learning;
5. The District shall provide every student with equitable access to high quality, culturally responsive instruction, curriculum, support and other educational resources;

6. The District shall actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement for students from all racial and ethnic groups;
7. The District shall review policies, procedures and practices that may impede equitable access of students to fair discipline, gifted and talented, Advanced Placement and specialty programs; and
8. The District affirms the racial, ethnic, gender, religious, cultural, linguistic, sexual orientation, special needs and economic diversity of students and staff.

The School Board directs the Superintendent to develop administrative procedures to implement the goals and strategies of this policy.

Proposed: July 27, 2015

Approved/Adopted: August 10, 2015