

Equity in Education

Purposes

The Yakima School District recognizes and respects the uniqueness of each student, staff member and citizen within the community. Teaming together, the school community creates a learning environment that fosters fair treatment and access to educational resources and programs for all students. The American democratic system depends on equal access to the opportunities for and benefits of public education for all young people: our future leaders, voters, taxpayers, workers, parents and adult citizens.

Students have a legal and moral right to equal educational access. Equal educational opportunities shall be available for all students without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, language barrier, religious beliefs, politics, physical and mental handicap or disability, economic and social conditions, or actual or potential marital or parental status.

The purpose of the Yakima School District's equity operational procedure is to affirm the district's belief that equitable educational access will strengthen individuals, our schools, our community, and our preparedness for a shared future. The district unequivocally asserts that prejudice and discrimination of any kind are intolerable and that the attainment of academic excellence for all students is dependent on principles of equity.

1. Statement of Policy

Students have the right to an equitable public education system. Educational equity is defined as fair treatment and access to educational resources and programs for all students.

Equitable education will take place in classroom instruction, school administration, student activities, and district programs and processes which are free of institutional and personal prejudice. Therefore, it is the Yakima School District's responsibility to manage its operational procedures, curriculum and instruction, and budget in a manner which ensures that all students receive fair treatment and fair access to educational resources and programs. It is the responsibility of all students and families to fully participate in the educational process. As a result, educational equity is a shared responsibility of schools, students and families.

Further, the Yakima School District believes that, in order to achieve educational equity, the educational environment must maximize the potential for all students to be successful learners, and the school district must actively seek and reinforce parental involvement in the educational process. Educators have an obligation to identify and remedy conditions within the educational environment which contribute to inequities in academic achievement, discipline, and opportunities for student placement in and accessibility to district programs.

To ensure the humanity, dignity and equal rights of every student, parent and staff member, the Yakima School District has adopted the following equity goals which require that the district:

1. eliminate prejudice, bigotry and discrimination from the educational process;
2. improve achievement for all students based on equitable access to educational opportunities, experiences and expectations, including consistent and high standards for all;

3. promote and support the involvement of all parents, as defined in OP 2180, in their students' education;
4. train all staff to be competent in the education of a culturally diverse student body;
5. teach and model respect for cultural diversity and individual differences;
6. employ a diverse staff which serves as a role model by reflecting the ethnic and cultural composition of the district's student body;
7. achieve balance by meeting federal and state-mandated guidelines related to the correction of racial imbalance and by providing meaningful educational options within the district;
8. provide the opportunity for English language proficiency for all limited or non-English speaking students; and
9. distribute resources equitably to meet student needs and to better ensure academic success for all students.

The superintendent and his/her designated staff, including the district equity officer, are committed to accomplishing the direction of this operational procedure. The superintendent and building principals shall use reasonable measures to inform staff members, parents and students of this procedure and its grievance procedure; see 3210.1X.

2. Nine Equity Goals

The following nine educational equity goals have been developed by the Multicultural Competence Committee and have been adopted by the Yakima School District Board of Directors:

- 2.1 Eliminate prejudice, bigotry and discrimination from the educational process.
All languages and all cultures shall be valued and respected. Students shall have equal access to education without regard to race, creed, color, political and religious beliefs, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, socio-economic status, health status, or the presence of any physical, sensory or mental disability. The Yakima School District shall seek to maximize achievement for all students and access to academic and school programs for all students. Discipline will be administered equitably among all student groups.

Each year the Yakima School District ~~Evaluation~~ Academic Assessment Department shall collect, sort, analyze and summarize data pertaining to the following categories of district operation and educational equity issues:

- 2.1.1 student achievement by grade level, ethnic and gender groups;
- 2.1.2 ethnic and gender enrollment patterns in specialized programs and classes, grades K-12;
- 2.1.3 ethnic, grade level and gender patterns pertaining to K-12 student discipline records; and
- 2.1.4 student disciplinary actions by grade level, ethnic and gender groups.

The express purpose of such efforts shall be to identify areas of inequitable treatment of students or inequitable student access to district programs and resources.

- 2.2 **Improve achievement for all students** based on equitable access to educational opportunities, experiences and expectations, including consistent and high standards for all.

The Yakima School District shall expect all students to achieve at their highest potential and will commit itself to the assistance needed to achieve this goal.

2.2.1 The process of evaluation is detailed above in section 1.

- 2.3 **Support parents' involvement in their students' education**, without regard to race, creed, color, political and religious beliefs, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, socio-economic status, health status, or the presence of any physical, sensory or mental disability.

Through district policies and practices, the Yakima School District shall encourage, inform and empower parent(s)/guardian(s) or extended family members to help their students succeed in school. See operational procedures 2180, 2421 and 3210. These policies and procedures assist families in their partnership roles with the schools.

- 2.4 **Train all staff to be competent** in the education of a culturally diverse student body.

The Yakima School District shall provide continuous staff development to school staff so that they will be better prepared to meet the learning needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

2.4.1 Adopt, modify and implement staff and student multicultural training programs.

2.4.2 Require all staff to attend orientation and staff development on racism, cultural sensitivity, socio-economic bias, gender bias, and handicapping conditions.

- 2.5 **Teach and model respect for individuals**, regardless of race, creed, color, political and religious beliefs, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, socio-economic status, health status, or the presence of any physical, sensory or mental disability.

The Yakima School District shall provide educational experiences which reflect respect for racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity. Programs shall be aimed at preparing students for an increasingly diverse society in which intergroup relations and understandings are vitally important.

2.5.1 Provide programs to strengthen and enhance cultural understanding for all groups K-12 who are involved in the district, such as students, families, teachers, and administrators.

2.5.2 Evaluate curriculum to identify accuracy and fairness in reflecting ethnic and gender contributions and to begin a process to correct deficiencies so that a more inclusive curriculum is made available as part of the K-12 Yakima School District basic instructional program. Curriculum is adopted according to policies and procedures 2310 and 2311.

2.5.3 Provide educational experiences which reflect respect for racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity.

- 2.6 **Employ a diverse staff** which serves as a role model by reflecting the ethnic and cultural composition of the district's student body.

The Yakima School District shall recruit, employ and maintain the best qualified staff, reflective of its diverse student body and historically under-represented groups.

2.6.1 The Yakima School District shall comply with all federal and state rules and regulations and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, political and religious beliefs,

national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, socio-economic status, health status, or the presence of any physical, sensory or mental disability.

- 2.6.2 The Yakima School District shall have a comprehensive staff affirmative action plan that shall be updated as needed. The plan shall include a review of programs, the setting of goals, and the implementation of corrective employment procedures to increase the number of disabled, ethnic and racial minorities and women who are under-represented in district staff classifications. It shall also include recruitment, selection, training and education programs.
- 2.6.3 The Yakima School District shall cooperate with area colleges and universities in the development and training of a certified teaching staff which is proficient in the education of a culturally diverse student body.

- 2.7 **Achieve balance** by meeting federal- and state-mandated guidelines related to the correction of racial imbalance and by providing meaningful educational choices within the district.

The Yakima School District shall achieve racial integration of schools by enriching the ethnic mix of students in all district schools. The district will comply with federal and state guidelines governing racial balance. Policy and procedure 3131 guide student balance in the Yakima School District. Elements of that policy and procedure include student placement, program, class size, and boundary guidelines.

- 2.8 **Provide the opportunity for English language proficiency** for all limited or non- English speaking students.

The Yakima School District shall provide full, appropriate educational services for limited- or non-English speaking students. The primary goal of these services is to ensure that district student learning outcomes are attained, and that there is timely transition to full use of the English language for learning and communication. Students with limited English proficiency shall be supported where appropriate and possible in their primary language as they are developing competence in English.

- 2.9 **Distribute resources** equitably to meet student needs and to better ensure academic success for all students.

The Yakima School District shall identify factors leading to academic under-achievement by students. Resources shall then be distributed appropriately and equitably to optimize student achievement.

Each year the Academic Assessment Department shall collect, sort, analyze and summarize data pertaining to district operation and educational equity issues.

The express purpose of such evaluation efforts shall be to identify key factors which currently result in student under-achievement or teaching practices which facilitate high achievement. Site specific and districtwide programs shall be adjusted and resources expended on the basis of the evaluation data, to correct the areas of deficiencies or to expand effective teaching strategies to

districtwide level use. An annual school board review of these assessments and program adjustments shall be accomplished before the start of the succeeding year.

Cross References:

(cf.: 2121 – Curriculum Adoption)
(cf.: 2150 – Co-curricular and Non-curricular Activity Program)
(cf.: 2160 – Special Instructional Programs)
(cf.: 2161 – Education of Students with Disabilities)
(cf.: 2162 – Magnet Programs)
(cf.: 2164 – Vocational Education)
(cf.: 2165 – Home and Hospital Instruction)
(cf.: 2168 – Categorical Programs)
(cf.: 2169 – HIV/AIDS Prevention Education)
(cf.: 2170 – Alternative Schools/Enrichment Programs)
(cf.: 2180 – Parent, Family and Community Involvement)
(cf.: 3131 – District Enrollment and Effects)
(cf.: 3200 – Students Rights and Responsibilities)
(cf.: 3201 – Student Rules, Regulations and Conduct)
(cf.: 3210 – Nondiscrimination)
(cf.: 3215 – Harassment)
(cf.: 3216 – Sexual Harassment)

Legal References:

RCW 9A.36.080 Malicious Harassment
RCW 46.60 Law against Discrimination Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended in 1972 and 1991
RCW 49.74.005 Legislative findings - Purpose

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended in 1972 and 1991

Sec. 703, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended in 1972 and 1991, 29 CFR 1604.11

Federal Register Vol. 59, No. 47, Thursday, March 10, 1994, Racial Incidents and Harassment Against Students at Educational Institutions; Investigative Guidance
Civil Rights Act of 1964

Management Resources:

Yakima School District Board Resolution 13.90.91 of 1990 (Adoption of a Comprehensive Magnet School Program Design)
Yakima School District Affirmative Action Plan 1999-2004
Yakima School District Strategic Plan of 1998
Equity in Education Joint Policy, State Board of Education, May 1994
Yakima School District Educational Equity/Desegregation Plan of 2000

Adoption Date:

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