



BASIC BOARD COMMITMENTS: Philosophy

Equity

I. Policy Statement

- A. The Board of Education of Baltimore County (Board) believes that every student in the school system should receive an education that maximizes his/her potential to become a globally competitive graduate. The Board is committed to fostering the success of every student in every school by creating and maintaining environments that are safe, diverse and inclusive. For success to occur for each student in lifelong learning and the world of work, the school system prioritizes educational equity by recognizing and removing institutional barriers and ensuring that social identifiers are not obstacles.
- B. Raising achievement for all students and closing achievement gaps among all students are top priorities of the Board. Achieving equity means implicit biases and students' identities will neither predict nor predetermine their success in school.
- C. Disparities on the basis of race, special education status, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity (including gender expression), English language learner (ELL) status, immigration status or socio-economic status are unacceptable and are directly at odds with the belief that all students can achieve. While complex societal and historical factors contribute to the inequities our students face, rather than perpetuating disparities, the school system must address and overcome inequity by providing all students with the opportunity to succeed.

II. Definitions

- A. *Accountability* – Ensuring processes and procedures do not reproduce inequity opportunities.
- B. *Cultural Responsiveness* – Using asset-based knowledge of various racial/ethnic cultures, views, and experiences and incorporating them into teaching and learning to strengthen and enrich the school system and the community at large.

- C. *Educational Equity* – That every student has access to the opportunities, resources and educational 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.
- D. *Educational Opportunity* – Ensuring all students have access to rigorous, well-rounded academic programs and experiences that enrich their educational career and prepare them for academic and career success.
- E. *Equity* – Providing each student with what is necessary to achieve high academic outcomes.
- F. *Equity Lens* – Evaluating decisions, programs, practices and procedures for its impact on all students, but with a focused analysis on impact of historically marginalized groups.
- G. *Implicit Bias* – The attitudes and stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, may be activated involuntarily and without an individual’s awareness or intentional control.
- H. *Individual Characteristics* – Characteristics of each individual student, which include but are not limited to: ability (cognitive, social/emotional and physical); ethnicity; family structure; gender identity and expression; language; national origin; nationality; race; religion; sex; sexual orientation; and socio-economic status.
- I. *Social Identifiers* – Demographic factors identified as, but not limited to: age; color; ability (cognitive, social/emotional and physical); ethnicity; family structure; gender identify and expression; language; national origin; nationality; race; religion; sex; sexual orientation; and socio-economic status.

### III. Standards

In order to raise educational equity and excellence and to ensure access to rigorous educational opportunities that close achievement gaps among all student groups, the school system will strive to:

- A. Reflect a philosophy that social identifiers are an asset;

- B. Base actions on the goal of providing educational equity for each student regardless of their social identifiers;
- C. Direct the use of resources to provide equitable access to educational opportunities and services, even when this means differentiating resource allocations;
- D. Include in any and all facilities plans for new construction, and in the renovation of existing facilities, considerations of equity in access to twenty-first century learning environments;
- E. Include cultural responsiveness in reviews of curriculum and assessment design;
- F. Require that an equity lens be used in all staff recruiting, hiring, retention and promotion processes to ensure participation of underrepresented groups.
- G. Use disaggregated data in a manner that shows disparities to make decisions about resources to include educational opportunities;
- H. Identify partnerships with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) in implementing this policy;
- I. Provide tailored and differentiated professional development to build capacity for cultural responsiveness to address areas of inequity uncovered by data analysis to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills to eliminate opportunity gaps that lead to disparities in achievement;
- J. Create schools with a welcoming, safe and inclusive culture and environment that reflects and supports the diversity of the student population, their families and their community;
- K. Ensure equitable access to effective teachers for all students;
- L. Provide multiple pathways to success for the diverse student body and actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement for each student;
- M. Provide materials and assessments that reflect the diversity of students and staff and that are geared toward the understanding and appreciating culture,

class, language, ethnicity ability and other differences that contribute to each student and staff member;

- N. Require use of an equity lens to evaluate staff, leader candidates, curriculum, pedagogy, professional learning, instructional materials and assessment design;
- O. Provide the access and opportunity for all students to read successfully on grade level by the end of Grade 2;
- P. Direct that equity be addressed in the implementation of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) consolidated strategic plan;
- Q. Identify the school system's process for analyzing data to develop goals, objectives, strategies and timelines for the implementation of equitable and culturally competent practices in each school;
- R. Identify the method of evaluation to measure the effect of equitable practices in the school system and in schools;
- S. Review existing policies, programs, professional development and procedures for the promotion of educational equity;
- T. Actively work toward a balanced teacher and administrator workforce to reflect the diversity of the student body. The school system will seek to recruit, employ, support and retain a workforce that includes racial, gender and linguistic diversity;
- U. Designate an individual who is responsible for facilitating, monitoring and implementing the system's equity initiatives in the ESSA consolidated strategic plan.

#### IV. Reporting

- A. Annually, the Superintendent shall report to the Board on:
  - 1. The progress made toward increasing student achievement as analyzed through an equity lens;
  - 2. Whether the discipline process has any disproportionate impact on students of color, English language learner status students or a negative impact on special education students;

3. The employment, retention, recruiting and placement of persons from underrepresented groups; and
  4. The progress of the implementation of this policy through its consolidated strategic plan.
- B. All such reports shall be published and made accessible to the public in a manner determined by the Superintendent.
- V. Implementation
- A. In accordance with state regulation (COMAR 13A.01.06.04), the educational equity policy shall be reviewed at least once every three years.
  - B. In support of the goals of this educational equity policy, the Board has established a standing committee on educational equity to implement this policy and to report quarterly to the Board. The Educational Equity Committee will assist the Superintendent in the development of strategies to ensure that equitable educational opportunities are being provided to all the students who attend Baltimore County Public Schools.
  - C. The Board directs the Superintendent to implement this policy.

Legal References: 20 U.S.C. § 6301, *Et seq.*, *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)*, as reauthorized by the *Every Student Succeeds Act*  
*Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article § 4-101, *Control and Promotion of Education*  
*Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article § 7-305, *Suspension and Expulsion*  
COMAR 13A.01.06, *Educational Equity*  
COMAR 13A.08.01.21, *Reducing and Eliminating Disproportionate/Discrepant Impact*

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 0200, *Precepts, Beliefs and Values of the Baltimore County Public Schools*  
Board of Education Policy 0300, *Equal Employment Opportunity*  
Board of Education Policy 4003, *Recruitment and Selection*  
Board of Education Policy 5110, *Positive School Climate*  
Board of Education Policy 5550, *Student Behavior Code*

Board of Education Policy 5600, *Students' Responsibilities and Rights*

Board of Education Policy 6000, *Curriculum and Instruction*

Board of Education Policy 7250, *School Building Design*

Policy

Board of Education of Baltimore County

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