

Regulation

Equity, Inclusivity, and Diversity in Education

The following outlines the process for achieving educational equity and the elimination of barriers and bias, particularly institutionalized racism and cultural biases, and disparities that limit a student's chance to graduate high school prepared for college, for a career, and for life.

Educational equity means differentiating resource allocation, within budgetary limitations, to meet the needs of students who need more supports and opportunities to succeed academically. Resource allocation will support the definition of educational equity adopted in this regulation and board policy while complying with state and federal funding requirements.

Educational equity ensures that all students have equal access to courses, teachers, school environments, regardless of students' race or ethnicity, socio-economic status, or language.

A. Eliminate and Disrupt Systemic Inequalities

Eastern Suffolk BOCES believes that all students can learn and that every student has a right to an equitable educational experience and a sense of belonging at school. Therefore, the Board and ESBOCES officers will intentionally act to reduce achievement gaps and to establish a climate of high expectations for all learners, regardless of the color of their skin, their gender, their sexual orientation, the language they speak, or their background. To achieve high levels of achievement and eliminate and disrupt systemic inequities, the Board and ESBOCES leadership will:

1. lead and inspire by example by examining personal biases and the way we may be privileged or unaware, building empathy and respect for others, becoming comfortable with vulnerability, and creating a culture of deliberate inclusion and diversity;
2. acknowledge historical institutions, such as racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism and other forms of oppression or "isms," that has systematically limited the educational and societal advancement of marginalized groups;
3. promote and publicly announce actions that address systemic inequities at both the building and ESBOCES levels;
4. develop and support effective equity and inclusive leadership at the program and ESBOCES levels;
5. develop a shared ESBOCES and community understanding and definition of equity, inclusion and, diversity;
6. invite and include people from diverse backgrounds to examine issues and develop solutions that address root causes and systems rather than one-time fixes;

7. address opportunity and achievement gaps at every level of ESBOCES through review of policies, procedures, and practices necessary to ensure success for every student;
8. eliminate practices, including policies and procedures, that result in predictably lower academic achievement for any student group, especially those historically marginalized groups, compared to other students or groups;
9. model racial and ethnic equity, inclusion, and diversity in business and operational practices;
10. develop reporting, investigation, communication, and accountability processes related to actions of racism and occurrences;
11. provide professional development to address the role and presence of bias, prejudice, and racism, which will:
 - address the impact on historically marginalized learners;
 - address the causes of distrust/mistrust in marginalized communities; and
 - dismantle narratives and structures that promote discrimination and problematize students, especially students of color.

B. Aim to Ensure Systemic Equity

To aim to ensure educational equity for all, ESBOCES will develop the individual and organizational knowledge, attitudes, skills, and practices to create culturally responsive learning and working environments that expect and support high academic achievement for students and employees from all student subgroups. Differences will not just be seen as strengths, but they will be nourished, celebrated, and welcomed because they are what make students and families unique. ESBOCES will:

1. intentionally seek and include voices (e.g., student government) and experiences of students who have historically been excluded from leadership roles;
2. encourage staff to be actively engaged in the development and implementation of culturally responsive teaching and learning practices and curriculum;
3. engage family and community members in the development and implementation of culturally appropriate and effective partnerships between home and school;
4. aim to ensure each program is welcoming and inclusive to all who enter;
5. establish, support, and sustain building-level and ESBOCES-wide equity and inclusion leadership groups consisting of varied stakeholders, including students, parents/persons in parental relation, staff, and administrators to strengthen community dialogue regarding equity, inclusion and, diversity initiatives;

6. review existing policies, programs, professional development, and procedures to aim to ensure the promotion of equity, and all applicable new policies, programs, and procedures will be developed using an equity lens;
7. remedy the practices, including assessment, that may lead to the over-representation of student groups in areas such as special education and discipline, and the under-representation of groups in programs such as talented and gifted and Advanced Placement;
8. provide every student, regardless of the color of their skin, their gender, their sexual orientation, their ability, the language they speak or their background, with equitable access to high quality and relevant instruction, curriculum, support, facilities, and other educational resources, even when this means differentiating resources to accomplish this goal;
9. be intentional about attracting, retaining, and supporting a workforce that reflects the diversity of our student body;
10. aim to ensure a positive, supportive, and academically rigorous school environment that engages all students and includes multiple pathways for success;
11. create and implement culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum and assessments;
12. recruit, employ, support, and retain racially and linguistically diverse and culturally competent administrative, instructional, and support personnel;
13. create multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of students, and will actively encourage, support, and expect high academic achievement for students from all student groups. ESBOCES will not let implicit or explicit biases prevent every student from graduating ready to succeed in a diverse society;
14. provide materials and assessments that reflect the diversity of students and staff, and which are geared towards the understanding and appreciation of culture, class, language, ethnicity, and other differences that contribute to the uniqueness of each student and staff member.

C. Implement an Equity Lens

The purpose of an equity lens is to be intentionally inclusive as ESBOCES makes decisions. It poses questions that help the decision-makers focus on equity in both the process and outcomes. These questions are designed to create a more inclusive perspective, drawing attention to how the decision holds the potential to affect marginalized groups. By applying an equity lens, ESBOCES intends to:

1. identify clear goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes;
2. provide a common vocabulary and protocol for evaluating policies, programs, practices, and decisions for racial equity; and

3. produce policies, programs, practices, and decisions which result in more equitable outcomes.

ESBOCES will apply an equity lens when making any decisions that will have an impact on students by answering the following questions:

1. What is the action or policy in question?
2. What does the data show about the impact of the action on student achievement, opportunity, and climate?
3. If there are disparity gaps between groups, why do they exist?
4. Which individuals are missing in the discussion to address disparities?
5. How will ESBOCES mitigate the disparities?

D. Monitoring and review

The District Superintendent and Chief Operating Officer or their designee, in consultation with the Board, will monitor our effectiveness, and report, at least once annually, on the progress of ESBOCES equity goals outlined in this plan, as well as Policy 5124 (*Equity, Inclusivity, and Diversity in Education*), and on ESBOCES overall progress in removing barriers and effectively serving all students. To facilitate this review, ESBOCES will conduct the following activities:

- Annual updates to the related Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity activities in the Agency-Wide Strategic Plan
- Reports to our Agency Strategic Planning Council
- Posting of the Agency-Wide Strategic Plan
- Reporting to the Board of Education and stakeholder groups at Agency-sponsored meetings
- Reporting at the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Parent-Family Advisory Council

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