



REPORT OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

The Policy Committee met on Friday, August 7, 2020, at 3:30 PM via the Blue Jeans Video Conferencing Tool.

VIRTUAL ATTENDEES

Student Achievement Committee Members

Chairperson Mike Moroski, Pamela Bowers, Ryan Messer

Administration

Daniel Hoying, General Counsel; Justin Leach, Director of Test Administration; Stephanie Scott, Assistant General Counsel; Connie Solano, Director of Performance and Accountability

Continued Discussion: New Policy 5321 - Requirement to Wear Masks to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

The Committee discussed concerns that were presented at the Board's August 3, 2020, Regular Business meeting.

The Committee addressed points about language needed in the policy to determine when, if, and how often students would get breaks in wearing the masks.

A few items expressed included: during the school day, outdoors, playing, running, getting in and out of cars, field trips, off campus when social distancing cannot be maintained, and spectator sports.

General Counsel Hoying will amend the policy to make it broader and specific. He will make the addendums to the following language currently drafted in the policy:

Masks shall be required when students are in the classroom with peers and adults. Masks will be required on any field trip or off-campus experiences. Students and staff shall also be required to wear a mask while riding on CPS-provided transportation – yellow bus, Metro, and vans. Masks shall be required for visitors, including spectators at sporting events where six foot distancing cannot be maintained.

*The District shall also make reasonable efforts to accommodate younger students, **students with sensory sensitivities**, and students with disabilities.*

ACTION: The Committee agreed with the recommended changes and will recommend the new drafted policy for approval at the Board's August 12, 2020, Regular Business meeting.

Continued Discussion: New Policy 5466 – Identification of Students at Risk of not Qualifying for a High School Diploma

The Committee discussed Board Member Bowers’ concern about language regarding the Superintendent developing and implementing procedures to identify students who are at risk of not qualifying for a high school diploma, or being able to provide mental health services.

She also expressed concern about who would have access to the data in student records and if this would be a barrier for students.

Mr. Hoying reported that the District partners would provide mental health services and the Superintendent or designee will identify and implement additional instructional or support services to help students in meeting graduation requirements and plan for those supports within their required Student Success Plans.

Mr. Hoying will amend the language to reference the referral of mental health services.

Mr. Leach reported that there are Administrative Procedures in conjunction with the policy.

ACTION: The Committee agreed with the recommended changes and will recommend the new drafted policy for approval at the Board’s August 12, 2020, Regular Business meeting.

Discussion: Resolution Allowing Students to Graduate from their Home High School if they Choose to Attend Digital Academy for the 2020-2021 School Year

The Committee discussed community concerns about students being able to graduate from their home school if they attend the Cincinnati Digital Academy for one year.

Mr. Hoying reported that he is working with and waiting to hear from the Ohio Department of Education regarding this initiative, as this is being done around the State. He also reported that this is “new ground for the State.”

General Counsel Hoying recommended that the Board move forward in approving a *Resolution Allowing Students to Graduate from their Home High School if they Choose to Attend Digital Academy for the 2020-2021 School Year ODE*, as this will make a strong statement in showing that the CPS Board is “on board” with the program.

ACTION: The Committee agreed with the following Resolution and will recommend the document for approval at the Board’s August 12, 2020, Regular Business meeting.

CINCINNATI PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A RESOLUTION ALLOWING STUDENTS TO GRADUATE FROM THEIR HOME HIGH SCHOOL IF THEY CHOOSE TO ATTEND DIGITAL ACADEMY FOR THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

WHEREAS, in preparation for returning to school, the Board of Education is providing families a temporary opportunity to transfer students to the Digital Academy to receive a remote education during the 2020-21 school year instead of returning to in-person school; and

WHEREAS, the option of receiving remote education at Digital Academy is especially important for students who have a condition that makes them vulnerable to COVID-19 and for students who reside with a person who is elderly or otherwise vulnerable to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education resolved last month that students who choose to attend Digital Academy temporarily during the 2020-21 school year will have the ability to transfer back to their home school without having to reapply in the District's magnet and high school lottery; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education wants to ensure that twelfth grade students who temporarily transfer to Digital Academy during the 2020-21 school year will have the opportunity to graduate from their home high school; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 3319.61, it shall be the responsibility of the Board of Education to confer a diploma to all students who have successfully completed the high school curriculum and met all requirements for graduation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education authorizes and approves that a student who has transferred to Digital Academy for the 2020-21 school year will have the opportunity to graduate from the high school that they were attending at the end of the 2019-20 school year – including participating in all senior events, ceremonies, commemorations, and convocations at their home high school.

Continued Discussion: New Policy 2255 – Anti Racism

The Board at its August 3, 2020, Regular Board meeting discussed a draft of the policy. The Policy Committee discussed a first draft of the document at their July 10, 2020, Policy Committee meeting.

Mr. Moroski reported that the Policy will be an ongoing item on the Policy Committee meeting agenda until its completion.

The Board made the following recommendations to the policy:

- Cross reference with the District's Equity and Education Policy;
- Widen the definition of systemic racism;
- Address a lot of reference about racism in terms of kids and systemic racism;
- Talk about rules and practices;
- Shorten to focus on anti-racism;
- Make a stand-alone policy about anti-racism; and
- Allow for more additional discussion about the policy; have learned more about other school districts policies, especially in Canada.

ACTION: Assistant General Counsel Scott reported that she will do a presentation at the October 2, 2020, Policy Committee on data that she collected from the District's online request for feedback page about the Policy. <https://www.cps-k12.org/about-cps/board-of-education/board-initiatives/anti-racism-policy>

The Committee discussed its ACTION item from the July 10, 2020, Policy Committee meeting about putting together a task force/working group of community members to provide input in creating the Anti-Racism Policy.

Ms. Scott inquired about the details in creation of the working group. The Committee discussed, recommended and agreed with the following suggestions:

- Use of Facilitator

- Consist of 21 members
- Include parents, students, staff, various community based groups, NAACP, Urban League, Greater Cincinnati (suggested)
- Community driven
- The working group to do the reporting

The Committee referred the Community Engagement Department and Assistant General Counsel Stephanie Scott to determine how to get diversity on the group, who will direct the plan, and how many members from each organization will make up the 21 group members.

Committee Chair Moroski would like the group to have met before the September 4, 2020, Policy Committee meeting in order for the group to present at that meeting.

Other Business

No items presented.

Hearing of the Public

No speakers during this meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:13 p.m.

Policy Committee

Mike Moroski, Chair
Pamela Bowers
Ryan Messer

Staff Liaisons

Dan Hoying, General Counsel
Paul McDole, Director, Human Resources

DRAFT – Policy Committee 7-10-20 (SS)

Book: Cincinnati City School District Policies
Section: 2000 Programs
Title: Anti-Racism Policy (DRAFT)
Code: 2255.___
Status:
Legal: U.S. Const. amend XIV, § 1 (Equal Protection)
20 U.S.C. § 1703 (Equal Educational Opportunity)
42 U.S.C. § 2000c et seq. (Desegregation)
42 U.S.C § 2000d et seq. (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)
42 U.S.C § 2000e-2 (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)

Adopted:

Last Reviewed:

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The Cincinnati Public Schools Board (“Board”) and the Cincinnati Public Schools (“District”) reject all forms of racism as destructive to the District’s mission, vision, values, and goals. The Board is committed to the following principles:

- Establishing and sustaining a school community that shares the collective responsibility to address, eliminate, and prevent actions, decisions, and outcomes that result from and perpetuate racism.
- Embracing the diversity within our District while actively eliminating practices that perpetuate the disparities among our students so that all students have the opportunity to benefit equally referenced in the District’s Equity and Excellence in Education Policy (2255).
- Respecting and championing the diversity and life experiences of all community members to support the school District’s mission, vision, values, goals, and objectives.
- Acknowledging that racism is often compounded by other forms of discrimination, including, but not limited to, those protective classes referenced in the District’s Non-discrimination and Access to Equal Educational Opportunity Policy (2260).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to eliminate all forms of racism from the District in conjunction with related Board policies.

In this District, there are significant disparities between racial groups in student academic performance, achievement, and participation in academic programs. These include disparities in discipline rates, economic advantages, Students with Disabilities identification, Advanced Placement, gifted and enrichment services, athletics, arts, and extracurricular activities.

These equity gaps exist because of historical inequitable access to opportunities that have significant intergenerational effects and perpetuate economic, social, and educational inequity on certain communities of color. However, racial inequities were created over time and can be eliminated. Similarly, personal prejudice is learned and can be unlearned. Educators play a vital role in reducing racism and inequity by recognizing the manifestations of racism, creating culturally inclusive learning and working environments, and dismantling educational systems that directly or indirectly perpetuate racism and privilege through teaching, policy, and practice.

Anti-Racism Policy Regulations

These regulations are designed to dismantle the individual, institutional, and structural racism that exists in the District. The Board directs the following action:

Policy Communication

Each school shall post a public statement against racism in a location visible to students, staff, and visitors entering the school. The District will also post a public statement in high traffic locations at its main offices and on the District website. The public statement shall read: “Cincinnati Public Schools is committed to establishing and sustaining an equitable community that achieves the District’s equity mission to end the predictive value of race and ensure each individual student’s and staff’s success. The Cincinnati Public Schools Board and District reject all forms of racism as destructive to their mission, vision, values, and goals.” The District’s harassment hotline number (363-0111) should be included along with postings.

The Board shall establish an organization or committee of students in the District to promote equity and diversity and to serve as leaders and spokespersons within their schools and the District.

This policy shall be included in student handbooks provided to students and families.

This policy shall be translated into other languages and be made available for families.

Leadership and Administration

The Board shall address systemic racism as follows:

Develop and conduct a systemic Equity Needs Assessment for the District to identify processes and practices that cause or contribute to inequitable outcomes. The Assessment shall also include an inventory of what equity-related data is currently collected by the District. Following the assessment, strategies will be developed and implemented to address the identified issues.

To address disparities in course participation (including AP/honors participation):

All school staff making class recommendations shall provide a written electronic explanation for the recommendation to students and/or families.

School counselors shall be responsible for educating students and families as equitable partners in the selection process and course sequencing.

Middle and high schools will offer opportunities for supplementary coursework, such as summer bridge programs or tutoring during or after school, to students interested in moving to higher level courses.

The Board shall implement alternative discipline processes, such as restorative practice, to reduce racial disparities in discipline and suspension.

To ensure consistency in student discipline, each school shall collect and, at least annually, report data on all disciplinary actions. The data shall include the student’s race/ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, special education, and English Language Learner status, as well as a written explanation of the behavior leading to discipline and the specific corrective action taken.

When school administrators determine a student has committed a racist act, the student will be provided the opportunity to learn about the impact of their actions on others through such practices as restorative practices, mediation, role play or other explicit policies or training resources.

This policy ensures the understanding that racial misconduct is unacceptable and prohibited. All District staff are encouraged to reflect upon the issue of racial misconduct and how it may impact their professional standing, as racial misconduct directly affects the lives and conducts of others.

Such racial misconduct, on and off school grounds, includes but is not limited to inappropriate racial comments, slurs, jokes, pictures, objects, threats, physical assaults, intimidation, unequal application of policies, and unequal or biased grading. This encompasses offensiveness and misconduct that does not reach the level of racism, and misconduct that is sufficiently severe and pervasive that it rises to the level of racial harassment or discrimination.

Complaints of racial misconduct should be reported and resolved in accordance with the District's Prohibition against Harassment of Students and Staff Policy (2260.02).

Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and instructional materials for all grades shall reflect cultural and racial diversity and include a range of perspectives and experiences, particularly those of historically underrepresented groups of color.

All curriculum materials shall be examined for racial bias by the District's Curriculum Department. Where materials reflect racial bias, teachers utilizing the materials will acknowledge the bias and communicate it to students and parents.

The Board and District shall implement an anti-racist curriculum and provide educational resources for students at every grade level.

Student in-class and extra-curricular programs and activities shall be designed to provide opportunities for cross-cultural and cross-racial interactions to foster respect for cultural and racial diversity. The Board shall support interschool activities that will allow students to experience the diversity within the District.

Training

All Board and District staff shall be trained in this anti-racism policy.

All teachers and administrators shall be trained in cultural awareness and/or culturally responsive teaching practices. Additionally, they will be trained in anti-racist practices; including, but not limited to, recognizing implicit bias. Culturally responsive teaching practices shall be incorporated into Board approved appraisal systems, including the teacher appraisal system and the administrator performance appraisal.

All District staff shall be trained about racism and about how racism produces inequitable practices and outcomes.

Hiring Practices

All candidates being considered for hire within the district will be asked appropriate questions to gauge their understanding of anti-racist practices. Additionally, candidates will be screened for implicit and explicit biases.

Policy Enforcement

Staff shall collect, review, and provide an annual report to the Board on data regarding racial disparities in areas including, but not limited to, student achievement, enrollment, suspension/discipline, graduation rates, and gifted identification. The report shall also include evidence of growth in each area outlined by the anti-racism policy (i.e., communication, leadership and administration, curriculum and instruction). The written reports shall also be made available to the public, to the student diversity committee, and to school equity teams.

The District's administration shall be responsible for implementation and evaluation of District strategies for implementation. Adequate resources shall be appropriated.

The District shall ensure there are various, including anonymous, means for students and staff to report racism and other forms of discrimination.

Definitions - adapted from various sources including the Government Alliance on Race and Equity at www.racialequityalliance.org

- Racism: defined as a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call “race”), that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources. (Dr. Camara Jones)
- Anti-racism: the practice of identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism.
- Individual racism: pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race. Individual racism includes both privately held beliefs, conscious and unconscious, and external behaviors and actions towards others.
- Institutional Racism: occurs within institutions and organizations, such as schools and their districts, that adopt and maintain policies, practices, and procedures that often unintentionally produce inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people.
- Structural (or systemic) racism: encompasses the history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions and society. It refers to the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institutions and policies that perpetuate a system of inequity that is detrimental to communities of color.