

SUBJECT: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING IN THE DISTRICT**Overview**

Research shows that all students benefit when schools implement strong diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEI-B) policies and practices. These benefits include academic, cognitive, civic, social-emotional, and economic. This is true regardless of a school's geographic location or the demographic composition of its students and staff.

This policy provides a framework as to how the District will foster DEI-B in its schools. This policy considers the entirety of the educational process by addressing the following essential elements: governance; teaching and learning; family and community engagement; workforce diversity; diverse schools and learning opportunities; and student supports, discipline, and wellness. It is just one component of the District's overall commitment to maintaining a diverse, equitable, and inclusive educational and work environment.

The District may develop a DEI-B plan to manage and coordinate the execution of this policy.

Inquiries about this policy may be directed to the District's DEI Coordinator.

Carolyn Quigley, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Coordinator
cquigley@lew-port.com
High School, Guidance Office
716-286-7261

Defining Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

For purposes of this policy:

- a) "Diversity" includes, but is not limited to: race; color; ethnicity; nationality; religion; socioeconomic status; veteran status; education; marital status; language; age; gender; gender expression; gender identity; sexual orientation; mental or physical ability; genetic information; and learning style.
- b) "Equity" includes, but is not limited to, seeking the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of all groups.
- c) "Inclusion" includes, but is not limited to, authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power and ensures equal access to opportunities and resources.
- d) **"Belonging" includes, but is not limited to, is being a member or part of a group. In schools, belonging is crucial to student's happiness, academic performance, mental and physical health, and can even impact longevity. It gives students a sense of purpose and meaning.**

These descriptions are not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, they are meant to be foundational and provide clarity to the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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SUBJECT: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING IN THE DISTRICT**Governance****DEI Committee**

The District ~~has~~ **will work to** established a **DEI-B** Committee that meets periodically throughout the year. The purpose of the **DEI-B** Committee is to assist the District in creating and implementing plans that advance the District's commitment to maintaining a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment where all individuals feel valued and respected. As needed, the **DEI-B** Committee will also review District policies, practices, and programs and provide suggestions as to how they could potentially be modified to better promote **DEI-B**.

The District will actively seek members for the **DEI-B** Committee through the use of email, newsletters, the District's website, the District's social media page(s), and/or advertisements.

The **DEI-B** Committee will be representative of all stakeholders, and may include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to, representatives from the following groups:

- a) Students;
- b) Parents and persons in parental relation;
- c) District/building administrators;
- d) Teachers, including at least one special education teacher;
- e) Guidance staff, including at least one school psychologist, social worker, or counselor;
- f) Other District staff;
- g) The Board; and
- h) Community members.

DEI-B Coordinator

The Superintendent has designated the following District employee to serve as its **DEI-B** Coordinator:

Carolyn Quigley, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Coordinator
cquigley@lew-port.com
High School, Guidance Office
716-286-7261

The **DEI-B** Coordinator will be a member of the **DEI-B** Committee and convene and coordinate the activities and plans of the **DEI-B** Committee **in conjunction with district administration**.

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SUBJECT: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING IN THE DISTRICT**Teaching and Learning**

The District will strive to advance inclusive and culturally responsive teaching and learning **from multiple perspectives** through, but not limited to, the following means: curricula in all content areas; books and instructional materials; pedagogical practices and professional development; classroom grouping policies and practices; student support systems for all developmental pathways; full and equitable opportunities to learn for all students; and multiple assessment measures. As part of this effort, the District will seek to:

- a) Implement a Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) Education Framework **through the NYSED learning standards** that embeds the ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion by creating student-centered learning environments that:
 1. Affirm cultural identities;
 2. Foster positive academic outcomes;
 3. Develop students' abilities to connect across lines of difference;
 4. Elevate historically marginalized voices, **through the NYSED Learning Standards**;
 5. Empower students as agents of social change; and
 6. Contribute to individual student engagement, learning, growth, and achievement through the cultivation of critical thinking.
- b) Develop curricula that incorporates diverse perspectives, materials, and texts so that students are taught topics not just from one single perspective, but from multiple perspectives.
- c) Offer coherent opportunities for students to actively participate in experiences that prepare them for a lifetime of civic engagement and contributions to social justice, including, for example, completing projects that enable them to apply the learning they have acquired within and across subject areas.
- d) Encourage academic discussions about racism and bigotry, **within the context of the NYSED Learning Standards and the Culturally Response - Sustaining Education Framework.**

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SUBJECT: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING IN THE DISTRICT**Family and Community Engagement**

The District will strive to foster family and community engagement practices that are based on mutual trust, confidence, and respect. As part of this effort, the District will seek to:

- a) Encourage participation from all stakeholders in community building conversations.
- b) Reduce language barriers through various means, including, but not limited to, providing translated communications when appropriate.
- c) Leverage partners such as the county government and local community organizations in developing DEI programs and activities for the District.

Workforce Diversity

The District will strive to create a workforce that is not only diverse and inclusive, but one that recognizes and values the differences among people. As part of this effort, the District will seek to:

- a) Recruit and retain a diverse workforce in all areas and at all levels, thereby reducing stereotypes and preparing students for an increasingly global society.
- b) Provide staff with opportunities for professional development on cultural proficiency.

Diverse Schools and Learning Opportunities

The District will strive to promote diverse, equitable, and inclusive classrooms in which students have equal access and opportunities to learn and realize their full potential. As part of this effort, the District will seek to:

- a) Take creative steps to enhance ~~the level of socioeconomic and racial~~ diversity within District schools.
- b) Eliminate the use of terms and phrases within District schools that perpetuate negative stereotypes and minimize student opportunities.
- c) Create coursework, programs, and activities that are accessible to all students. ~~, regardless of their disability status, native language, income level, or any other basis.~~

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SUBJECT: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING IN THE DISTRICT

Student Supports, Discipline, and Wellness

The District will strive to focus on the well-being of the "whole child." As part of this effort, the District will seek to:

- a) Employ programs and practices that enhance all students' self-identity, self-confidence, and self-esteem.
- b) Maintain non-discriminatory discipline policies and practices.
- c) Consider and address the full range of student developmental pathways.

Training

To foster **DEI-B** in its schools, the District will provide **DEI-B** training to staff and students, as appropriate. This training may be delivered in various forms including, but not limited to: workshops; instructor-led classes; webinars; videos; workbooks; pamphlets; and/or emailed information. Although specific objectives will vary from training to training, in general, trainings will be designed to:

- a) Increase awareness of the content of this policy and/or various **DEI-B** issues; and
- b) Promote a welcoming and inclusive environment for all District community members.

Special trainings may be provided to members of the **DEI-B** Committee.

Notification

The District will share information about this policy via the District website and/or District-wide communications, as appropriate.

Adoption Date:

SUBJECT: STUDENT GENDER IDENTITY

All students need a safe and supportive educational environment to progress academically and developmentally. The District is committed to fostering a safe learning environment for all students, free from discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, gender, gender identity, gender nonconformity, and gender expression. In accordance with applicable law, regulations, and guidelines, the District will ensure that students have equal access to all District programs, facilities, and activities. The District will assess and address the specific needs of each student on a case-by-case basis.

Key Terms

"Assigned sex at birth" means the sex designation, usually male or female, assigned to a person when they are born.

"Cisgender" means a person whose gender identity corresponds to their assigned sex at birth.

"Consistently asserted" means the student's steady and constant assertion over time of their gender identity based upon a sincerely held and internalized sense or psychological knowledge of their own gender.

"Gender" means actual or perceived sex and includes a person's gender identity or expression.

"Gender expression" means the ways in which a person conveys their gender identity to others, such as through behavior, appearance, clothing, hairstyle, activities, voice, and mannerisms.

"Gender identity" means a person's inner sense or psychological knowledge of being male, female, neither, or both.

"Gender nonconforming" (GNC) means someone whose gender identity or gender expression does not conform to social or stereotypical expectations of a person with that gender assigned at birth. This is also referred to as gender variant or gender atypical.

"Transgender" means someone whose gender identity is different than their assigned sex at birth.

"Transition" means the process by which a person socially and/or physically aligns their gender expression more closely to their gender identity than their assigned sex at birth.

Records

Following the submission of a name change order or other [government issued document or court issued](#) documentation of a name change for any current or past student, the District will update the student's name on any document or record issued or maintained by the District. [This is not applicable to archival records that cannot be accessed or when modifying archival records is prohibited by law.](#) The District will update any current or past student's gender upon submission of any form of government identification.

For any current or past student who has not officially changed their name or gender, the District will, upon request, update its records to reflect the student's asserted name and/or gender. ~~However, the District will continue to use the student's legal name and gender in certain circumstances such as state~~

SUBJECT: STUDENT GENDER IDENTITY

~~standardized tests, certain reports to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), and when necessary to ensure appropriate and coordinated medical care.~~ However, the District may need to use the student's legal name and gender in certain, limited circumstances. Any student identification cards will be issued with the name reflecting the gender identity the student consistently asserts at school.

The District will maintain the confidentiality of student information and records as required by law. Further, any records with a student's assigned birth name and gender will be maintained in a separate, confidential file.

Names and Pronouns

When apprised of a student's transgender or GNC status, the District will endeavor to engage the student and their parents or guardians, as appropriate, in an effort to agree upon a plan that will accommodate the student's individual needs at school. Transgender and GNC students have the right to discuss and convey their gender identity and expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much to share this confidential information. The plan may therefore include when and how to initiate the student's preferred name and associated pronoun use and if, when, and how this is communicated to others. District staff will use the name and pronoun that corresponds to the gender identity the student consistently asserts at school.

Restrooms and Locker Rooms

The District will allow a transgender or GNC student to use the restroom and locker room that corresponds to the student's consistently expressed gender identity at school. Any student requesting increased privacy or other accommodations when using ~~bathrooms~~ **restrooms** or locker rooms will be provided with a safe and adequate alternative, but they will not be required to use that alternative. Additionally, the District will ensure that all single-occupancy ~~bathroom~~ **restroom** facilities are designated as gender neutral for use by no more than one occupant at a time or for family or assisted use.

Physical Education and Sports

Physical education is a required part of the District's curriculum. Where these classes are sex-segregated, students will be allowed to participate in a manner consistent with their gender identity. Students will likewise be allowed to participate in intramural activities consistent with their gender identity.

Upon written notification that a transgender or GNC student would like an opportunity to participate in the District's interscholastic athletics program consistent with their gender identity, the District will determine their eligibility in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and guidelines.

The District's athletic director will notify opposing team athletic directors or the New York State Public High School Athletic Association if a student needs any accommodations during competitions. Any appeal regarding the District's eligibility decision will be directed to the Commissioner of Education.

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Other Activities

Generally, in other circumstances where students may be sex-segregated, such as overnight field trips, students may be permitted to participate in accordance with the gender identity that the student consistently asserts at school. Student privacy concerns will be addressed individually and on a case-by-case basis in accordance with District policy and applicable law, regulations, and guidelines.

Dress Code and Team Uniforms

Transgender or GNC students may dress in accordance with their gender identity or expression, within the parameters of the District's dress code. The District will not restrict students' clothing or appearance on the basis of gender.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 USC § 1232g
 Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, 20 USC § 1681 et seq.
 34 CFR Parts 99 and 106
 Civil Rights Law §§ 40-c, 64, and 67
 Education Law Article 2 and §§ 2-d, 313, and 3201-a
 New York State Human Rights Law, Executive Law § 290 et seq.
 8 NYCRR § 100.2

NOTE: Refer also to Policies #3410 - Code of Conduct
 #3420 - Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment in the District
 #3421 - Title IX and Sex Discrimination
 #5633 - Gender Neutral Single-Occupancy Bathrooms
 #7550 - Dignity for All Students
 #7551 - Sexual Harassment of Students
 #7553 - Hazing of Students
 #8242 - Civility, Citizenship, and Character Education/Interpersonal
 Violence Prevention Education

Adoption Date