Defining Equity in Houston ISD

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Introduction

Equity is a concept that is common across many industries and fields of study, promoting fairness and inclusion without boundaries. Similarly, the education community has focused its gaze on equity, with many school districts and educational institutions developing equity statements to demonstrate their commitment to pursue success for all students.

Equity is frequently a topic of conversation in Houston Independent School District (HISD). The Board of Education spends a good deal of time discussing equitable access and outcomes for students, and the District has created the Office of Equity and Outreach to support underserved populations. Equity is even part of HISD's vision statement:

> **Every child shall have equitable opportunities and equal access to an effective and personalized education in a nurturing and safe environment. Our students will graduate as critical thinkers and problem solvers; they will know and understand how to be successful in a global society.[1]**

Despite the pervasiveness of the term 'equity' in HISD and the education community in general, a definition is often elusive. Houstonians for Great Public Schools (Houston GPS) seeks to remedy this deficit.

First, this paper evaluates the need for a formal definition of equity in education. Second, the paper turns to existing literature on equity in the field of education and beyond. Next, the paper explores how other school districts have defined equity. Then, it outlines specific populations and topics that must be covered by a definition of equity, before offering recommended language for a district-wide definition of equity. Finally, the paper concludes by illustrating how a formal definition of equity should guide the HISD Board of Education in policy development.

Why Define Equity?

With all of the literature and conversation surrounding the necessity of equity in education, there is no need to argue why equity is important. That is clear. All students deserve the opportunity to reach their highest potential, and it is essential that our education institutions assist them in achieving this goal, especially if they are members of historically and chronically underserved populations. If this understanding is already in place, it begs the question of why a formal definition of equity is needed for a school district to behave equitably.

At the most basic level, a school district without a definition of equity is unable to ensure that all levels of leadership are envisioning the same thing. A commitment to equity must be a commitment among all members of the district to work toward the same goal. Everyone needs to know what equity looks like. Without a clear definition, school districts also struggle to measure how effective their programming, policy, and resource allocation are on moving the needle to more equitable student outcomes. As admirable as it is that the education community is concerned with equity, throwing the term around without a clear vision of what equity means provides little guidance for a school district.

Having a definition of equity is also not enough; it has to be the right definition, one that will provide a clear pathway for the school district moving forward. The Oxford Dictionary defines equity as "the quality of being fair and impartial."[2] Although this might be a perfectly adequate definition in some contexts, it illustrates the problem with defining equity in education. This definition is too vague to provide direction for a school district. It introduces additional uncertainty (what is considered fair?) and does not specify a population for equitable treatment (who should be treated fairly?). Because having a definition is critical to setting the standard for equity within a school district, it follows that carefully crafting the definition is also an imperative.

What Does Equity Look Like?

In order to reach an appropriate definition of educational equity, Houston GPS reviewed national and state policy, literature from academic institutions and education-focused organizations, and guidelines from other disciplines and industries. Through this research, clear themes emerge to help shape the concept of equity into something concrete.

Legal Policy on Equity in Education

In looking to how a school district should be governed, it is always important to start with established codes and regulations. If educational equity has already been defined on a national or state level, school districts can look to that interpretation for guidance.

On a federal level, there is no codified definition of equity, but there are some requirements for school districts that are related to equity principles. The U.S. Office of Civil Rights' regulations require that school districts provide notice of non-discrimination to the public under Title VI and Title IX of the Constitution, as well as several other statutes.[3] Public school districts are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age.[4] While most would agree that equity dictates that schools do not discriminate against groups of students, this prohibition certainly would not touch on the full scope of equity. The non-discrimination requirement is the absolute minimum that school districts must provide for diverse groups of students.

Federal law, under the Every Student Succeeds Act, requires local education agencies that receive Title I funding develop an equity plan. Equity plans are designed to address how education agencies are working to ensure that traditionally underserved students are not being disproportionately taught by less qualified and effective teachers. Like with nondiscrimination policies, a required equity plan covers only a small portion of what equity is. Teacher quality is highly important to student outcomes, but it is not the only factor that needs to be looked at when considering equity.

Following the example of federal law, the state of Texas provides little insight into the particulars of educational equity. The Texas constitution states:

> **A general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools.[5]**

Article 7 of the constitution has been the subject of litigation related to inter-school district funding equity.[6] This series of litigation has culminated in the recapture system that has been the subject of reasonable criticism. The attention given to funding equity is certainly worthwhile, as equitable resource allocation is key to providing students curricula and supplies that they need to succeed, but again, it does not fully encompass equity.

The Texas State Board of Education (TSBE) has focused more and more on equity. As of November 16, 2018, The TSBE has approved its Long-Range Plan for Public Education. This plan heavily emphasizes equity and explicitly outlines a definition of equity and access: "all children get what they need to learn, thrive, and grow."[7] The TSBE follows this short definition with a more nuanced explanation.

For the state and for school districts, equity and access means an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities based on individual needs such that students and schools who need more support to reach an equitable outcome, compared to their counterparts, receive what they need.[8]

The key takeaway from this view of equity is differentiated support to address different needs that students might have. Although the Long-Range Plan from the TSBE is not a legal mandate, it does provide insight into equity and will be discussed throughout this paper.

Literature on Educational Equity

The education community continues to strive for equity in public schools. Different academic and nonprofit organizations have researched different aspects of equity to further collective understanding of how to achieve equity. In reviewing this research, some overarching themes emerge.

The clearest consensus of the community is the distinction between equity and equality. Instinct might tell us that students should be treated equally, with the same resources and opportunities. But equality does not account for important differences between students in terms of their needs.[9] Not all students start school on equal ground. Some students have special needs, other students do not have exposure to early literacy indicators, and still others are part of a cycle of historic oppression. If all children are treated equally, groups of systemically underserved students will not have outcomes that are proportionately on par with students who did not face such adversity. Equality does not leave room for differentiated support and resources, whereas equity does. Some authors define equity solely in terms of addressing gaps created by systemic disparities, stating, "we define equity as an approach to practice that counters oppressive systems, policies, structures, and practices that create or exacerbate disparities in education for nondominant students."[10]

Figure 1: Equity v. Equality
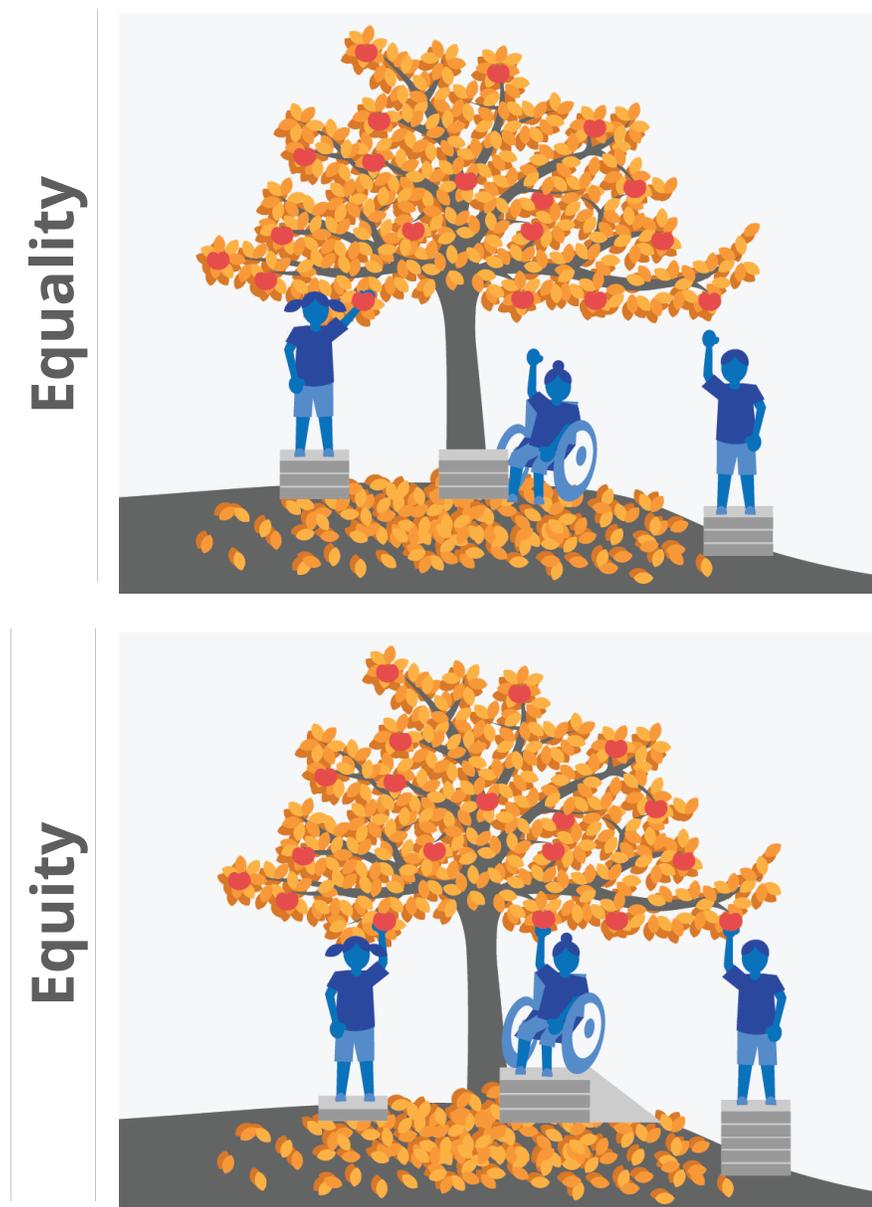
The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) has outlined six goals of educational equity. The purpose of these goals is to help education communities create action plans and measure progress. The goals include:

1. **Comparably high academic achievement and other student outcomes**
2. **Equitable access and inclusion**
3. **Equitable treatment**
4. **Equitable opportunity to learn**
5. **Equitable resources**

6. Accountability[11]

These goals are not a definition of equity, but they once again illustrate concepts that must be encompassed by a definition of equity for it to be effective. Another author writing in the IDRA Newsletter looked at equity on a larger scale, defining systemic equity as:

> **The transformed ways in which systems and individuals habitually operate to ensure that every student has the greatest opportunity to learn, enhanced by the resources and supports necessary to achieve competence, excellence, independence, personal and social responsibility, and self-sufficiency for school and for life.[12]**

This approach underscores the importance of making equity a habit, an integral part of serving students. On the other hand, the Organisation (sic) for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) views educational equity from a global perspective. It defines the concept as a combination of fairness and inclusion, making clear that equity umbrellas both of those terms.[13]

One constraint on the way education should conceptualize equity is the avoidance of deficit thinking or viewing inequities in terms of problems inherent within specific populations. Deficit language implies this type of bias by putting the burden on specific groups of students and their "culture" or community to overcome barriers, rather than on the school district and larger society to eliminate the barriers. Language that points to the predictability of some student groups to achieve less than others is deficit language that should be avoided as we think about equity. Some authors also point to language like "disadvantaged" or "achievement gap" as examples of deficit language.[14] Houston GPS respectfully disagrees with this assessment, so long as the education community recognizes that **achievement gaps are not created by underserved populations, but by systemic imbalances beyond their control**. Pointing out inequity is not deficit thinking if there is appropriate context for the source of the disparity and placement of the burden for rectifying the injustice.

Other literature highlights specific areas in education that need to be viewed with equity. Unsurprisingly, high student outcomes, graduation rates, and post-secondary access for groups students are the goals of the education community, but in order to reach these goals, all other areas in education must also be equitable.[15]

Most areas of equity discussed in literature can be viewed in terms of resource allocation. The TSBE finds, "resources can mean different things, including teacher quality, class size, safe and well-maintained school environments with the capacity to accommodate various technology needs, technology, curriculum materials, advanced courses, funding, and differentiated supports for family engagement."[16]

Access to technology has become a major area of inequity in education. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in Texas, 10% of households do not have a computer (not even a smart phone) and 19% do not have access to the internet.[17] Research shows that providing students access to technology is key to bridging gaps in achievement, although merely providing computers is not enough without providing resources to help utilize the technology.[18] Equity would mean ensuring all students had access to both technology and the support necessary to use it.

Another area of importance is access to higher level courses like Advanced Placement (AP), Dual Credit, and International Baccalaureate programs. These classes significantly increase the potential for postsecondary success, yet some schools, often those in disproportionately underserved areas, do not offer as many to students as schools in more affluent areas.[19] Even the course offerings are there, structural barriers like teacher certification and course implementation may vary amongst schools.[20] Further, traditionally underserved students are less likely to take advantage of these courses, whether it is because they are not being recommended at the same rates as other students, or because information about these opportunities are not as well known in their communities.[21] Equity means ensuring that all students have access to and information about high-quality advanced courses.

Athletics and other extracurricular activities play an important role in student development. In many areas, athletic funding disproportionately benefits male students. Meanwhile fine arts programs are often less robust at lower income schools. Equity means providing all students with access to extracurricular activities.

Other areas of equity do not easily fall under the scope of resource allocation. For example, even if a school provides high-quality services for students with special needs, like special education (SPED) and gifted and talented (GT) programs, identification of students for those programs is often disproportionately low amongst minority populations.[22] Disciplinary action is frequently disproportionately high in some populations, specifically African American males.[23] Family voice and engagement is another equitable struggle in traditionally underserved areas.[24] In HISD, transportation has become an issue of equity. As school buses are crowded and late, only students with more means can afford to find other transportation to school. Trustees on the HISD Board of Education have mentioned all of these areas of concern in the past.

How Other Disciplines View Equity

Social justice organizations, health agencies, philanthropies, and socially-conscious corporations have crafted equity policies to ensure that their community members, patients, clients, and stakeholders are treated fairly. The education community can look to these industries for other perspectives on equity.

The Stanford Social Innovation Review (SSIR) echoes the distinction between equity and equality but goes further to differentiate the term from both diversity and inclusion. Diversity is "a numerical representation of different types of people." Representation is not enough if different types of people are still treated unfairly. SSIR borrows a definition of inclusion from the Annie E. Casey Foundation: "the action or state of including or being included within a group or structure ... [Unlike diversity,] inclusion involves an authentic and empowered participation and a true sense of belonging."[25] As mentioned above in the education space, inclusion is a part of equity and a step in the right direction, but not the full idea.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation goes further to define equity in its Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide. It finds that equity is "the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial and fair," and systemic equity is "a complex combination of interrelated elements consciously designed to create, support and sustain social justice."[26] Key concepts that can be teased from these definitions are impartiality and conscious design. Equity is free from bias and pursued with intention.

Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation (ESPA) in the United Kingdom, provides a defines equity through a framework in their efforts to address deforestation and climate change. In this framework, ESPA outlines three dimensions: distributive, procedural, and contextual equity. Distributive equity concerns "the allocation among stakeholders of costs, risks, and benefits" by policymakers. This dimension parallels the previous discussion of resource allocation. Procedural equity "involves representation, recognition/inclusion, voice and participation in decision-making." In the education context, this would be student and family representation and voice. Finally, contextual equity refers to "the pre-existing political, economic and social conditions under which people engage in procedures and benefit distributions – and which limit or enable their capacity to do both." Contextual equity ensures that background and circumstances of affected populations are considered in the process of decision making.[27]

The health sector, especially public health has been working toward defining equity. One paper defines health equity as "the absence of systematic disparities in health (or in the major social determinants of health) between social groups who have different levels of underlying social advantage/disadvantage—that is, different positions in a social hierarchy."[28] Another paper clarifies disparity by separating it from difference.[29] In health, older people having more brittle bones than the younger population is a health difference,

a special need that elderly individuals have by nature of their age. Conversely, people living in low-income neighborhoods being more prone to asthma than others in more affluent communities due to proximity to pollution is a health disparity. This indicates a larger, likely systemic issue that affects an entire population due to social issues like poverty.

Like in health, educational achievement gaps can be viewed in terms of differences and disparities. A student with dyslexia might struggle to take standardized tests. This is a difference that needs to be addressed with individualized attention. However, if a specific racial or ethnic group is consistently having trouble with testing, this is a disparity that indicates a larger issue with how these students are being served, or underserved, by the school district. The solution here would not be entirely at the individual level but would also require a shift in policy. Equity means addressing all differences and disparities at the appropriate levels of intervention.

Each of the issues brought forth in law, policy, and research represents a piece of what equity should look like. A functional definition of equity must be broad enough to cover all of these topics.

How Other School Districts Define Equity

With the research background in mind, this paper turns to examples of how other school districts have defined equity. Houston GPS researched neighboring schools in Harris County to see how other local school districts treat equity, then branched out to school districts in large cities in Texas, and finally school districts across the country.

This research found that many school districts do not mention equity, let alone define it. Another group of school districts mistakenly label nondiscrimination clauses as equity statements.[30] A large portion of school districts use the term equity in their vision/mission statements or district beliefs, but do not go as far as providing a definition to guide policy.[31] In Texas, most school boards use the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Policy On Line portal for posting the school board policy.[32] Although each policy is localized, common language exists among Texas school districts, including using the term equity in outlining superintendent qualifications, board training, and educational philosophy. These casual mentions of equity do not provide much insight into how the concept is actually treated within each district. Establishing a working definition of equity would put HISD at the forefront of the movement toward systemic change in the way that we think about education.

Of the school districts that did define equity, many view the idea in terms of race and ethnicity. For example, Dallas ISD has created a Racial Equity Office, stating "ensuring racial, social and educational equity for all students is critical to the district's mission to educate all students for success."[33] While disparities among racial and ethnic groups are a critical

component in equity, these are not the only populations that have been historically underserved. This narrow scope of equity leaves out important populations that need protection and support.

Other school districts define equity in terms of overcoming barriers and reducing predictability of outcomes.[34] Portland Public Schools states, "educational equity means raising the achievement of all students while (1) narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students and (2) eliminating the racial predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories."[35] The problem with definitions like this is that they operate on deficit language. A school district should not attempt to predict academic success based on demographics, even as it is trying to eliminate barriers. Students of all populations have the potential for high achievement. School districts should have high expectations for all children and provide support that is tailored to specific needs to ensure success.

Several school districts across the country do have strong definitions of equity, although they are not necessarily formalized in policy. The table below provides examples of definitions that are closer to the concepts of equity outlined in the previous section.[36] For more examples, visit Appendix A.

School District	Definition of Equity
Austin ISD[37]	Educational equity means that each child receives what he or she needs to develop to his or her full academic and social potential.
Princeton Public Schools	A school that is educationally equitable is one in which we accept and value all individuals for who they are, and provide the structures, relationships, and resources they need to achieve their greatest potential.
Oakland USD	*Equity* means providing each student with the academic, social and emotional supports they need to prepare for college, career, and community success in the future.
Lynwood USD	Providing unfettered, differentiated, support and access to all students; we believe it is our moral obligation to systematically provide opportunities for every student to fearlessly achieve their own personal and professional goals.

Cedar Rapids Community School District	Equity means applying additional or different resources (human, fiscal & intellectual) to ensure all students receive what they need to exceed grade level standards. Educational Equity is the belief that quality instruction for all students will be achieved when the results of deliberate actions to close the racial, income, linguistic, teaching, and learning achievement gap becomes the driving force of the organization; by having unlimited expectations for both the top performing and under-achieving groups. Equitable Practices are systemic practices that deliberately identify and eradicate policies, pedagogies and perceptions that contribute to the mediocre performance of administrators and teachers, which impacts student outcomes.

Some districts have tried to go beyond a definition of equity. Districts like Austin ISD adopted some or all IDRA's six goals of educational equity. Austin ISD used three of these goals as part of a district-wide equity action plan and report. The district researched, monitored, and evaluated progress in terms of comparably high graduation rates and other student outcomes, equitable access and inclusion, and equitable treatment and disciplinary policies and practices.[38] This monitoring process was a great step in the right direction, however, there has not been a comprehensive follow-up report in recent years. If monitoring is undertaken, it should be consistent. A few school boards have formalized equity in a policy that outline specific commitments for the school district. Three of these policies are included in Appendix B. These formal policies make it easier to incorporate all of the nuances of equity that cannot be fully fleshed out in just a definition.

The definitions chosen by other school districts illustrate strong examples of what should and should not be included in a definition of equity.

Defining Equity in HISD

Houston GPS has condensed the foregoing research into tangible recommendations to help guide HISD in defining equity and pursuing a formal equity policy. The following suggestions are meant to ensure that any definition of equity adopted by HISD is broad enough to guarantee that populations and areas of concern do not fall outside the scope, but also specific enough to develop a more directed policy that can be measured for progress toward equity as a goal.

Recommendation 1: Cover All Populations

HISD is the largest school district in Texas, with almost 215,00 students from diverse communities.[39] Any equity definition adopted by the district must be broad enough to protect all demographics of students within HISD. Having a definition that only targets students based on race, culture, and socio-economic status excludes other important populations. Part of equity is ensuring that all students are included and able to meaningfully participate in the learning process, regardless of:

- **Race/ethnicity**
- **Home/First Language**
- **Socio-economic Status**
- **Sex**
- **Gender Identity**
- **Special needs**
- **Religious affiliation**
- **Sexual orientation**
- **Country of origin**

Recommendation 2: Address Disparities and Differences

A definition of equity must be able to drive the allocation of all resources, services, and support that HISD offers to ensure that students have access based on individual needs and are treated fairly. Consideration to differences and disparities must be given in all areas of education, including, but not limited to:

- **Student outcomes**
- **Access to technology**
- **Teacher quality**
- **AP/dual-credit/IB courses**
- **GT identification**
- **Discipline**
- **SPED identification**
- **Access to postsecondary resources**
- **Family engagement/voice**
- **Response to Bullying/Harassment**
- **Athletics and other extracurriculars**

Recommendation 3: Do Not Confuse Terms

Equity is a concept that encompasses many other ideas of justice and fairness. Equity umbrellas nondiscrimination, diversity, and inclusion. Equity is also not the same as equality. Equality might be the correct course of action in some circumstances, but in most, students deserve to have their needs met on their level. A definition of equity must be carefully crafted to not interchange these terms.

Recommendation 4: Avoid Deficit Language

Deficit language shifts the burden of academic success and prosperity from the school district to students, families, and communities. Terms and phrases that imply children of different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds are predictably less successful are damaging to equitable outcomes, even if the intention is to remedy the disparity. A large part of equity is understanding systemic imbalances and recognizing how to address them as a school district.

It is important to note that not all disparities can be tackled at the district level. Social inequity is woven into society. It is the burden of the school district and the Board of Education to recognize what actions are within the scope of their ability, and which fall outside their lane. The school board cannot rectify all societal injustices, but it can own and eliminate those that are within its purview.

Recommended Definition

Equity is the deliberate process of treating all individuals with respect and providing all students with resources, support, and opportunities that are tailored to their individual needs, in order to ensure that every student has the greatest opportunity to learn and the educational foundation necessary to achieve personal success and self-sufficiency for school, for career, and for life.

Allowing Equity to Drive Policy

Equity, as defined, should be used to drive all policy created by the HISD Board of Education. Effective school board governance is the cornerstone of public education, making the school board the necessary driver for educational equity. Houston GPS has further recommendations regarding applying equity to policy.

Recommendation 5: Make Equity a Conscious Process

A definition of equity alone will not hold a school district accountable for all students having the ability to achieve their own personal success. Equity is a deliberate process that requires introspection. When drafting policy and considering agenda items, the board should ask itself:

- **How does this practice impact all learners?**
- **What policies, resources and/or other supports are needed to create equitability across different populations?**

- **What might create a negative or adverse impact on any identifiable population?**
- **How might that adverse impact be avoided?**
- **What precautions should we take as we move forward?**
- **How do we monitor our work to ensure comparable high outcomes for all students?**[40]

These questions will enable the trustees to be continually conscious of equity and to adjust course as needed to meet the district's definition. Looking at equity as a process helps to solidify the role the concept should play in governance. Equity is a lens through which all other decisions should be viewed.

It is important to note that the process of equity is not enough in and of itself. Without a focus on high student outcomes as a goal for the process, students could be achieving equitably low or average outcomes. It does the district no good if students are not reaching their highest potential, even if it is comparable across all demographics. **Equity is the vehicle for viewing decisions and outcomes are the metric of success.** Good governance utilizes both by seeking comparably high success for all students.

Figure 2: Equity Without Focusing on Outcomes

Recommendation 6: Formalize an Equity Policy

Houston GPS strongly recommends that HISD follow a definition of equity with a formalized equity policy. This policy would outline affirmative steps that HISD is committing to take to ensure that it is engaged in a deliberate process towards equitable outcomes. As mentioned previously, several other school districts have crafted equity policies that can be used as a baseline. These examples are available in Appendix B. Houston GPS has also provided a recommended equity policy, tailored to the definition of equity we suggest below and the specific needs of HISD. In this we recommend adopting IDRA's equity framework and adjusting it to meet the needs of HISD. This recommended policy is available in Appendix C.

Recommendation 7: Listen to Community Voice

As education advocates, the Board of Education and organizations like Houston GPS have our finger on the pulse of the school system. But we are not able to speak for all of the communities within HISD. The equity issues outlined in this paper are only a starting point. Only the families, students, teachers, and administrators in HISD can say what issues are affecting their community, what inequities need to be addressed. A large part of community voice is making sure that school board meetings are accessible to all populations. Trustees should look to the community for guidance as the embrace this commitment to equity.
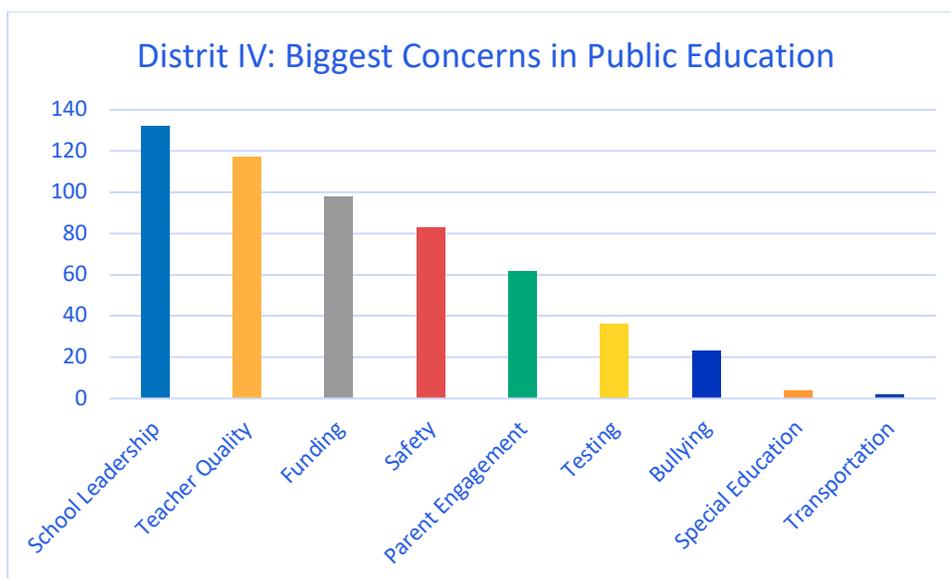
Houston GPS recently engaged portions of the HISD community with a canvassing campaign and survey. As part of this effort, Houston GPS asked parents and other community members about their concerns with HISD. Data from this survey illustrates the necessity of equity in community voice. Different communities within HISD have different concerns and needs. For example, when asked if they were concerned about HISD, respondents as a whole answered 41% in the affirmative. However, 59% of parents of HISD students surveyed indicated they were concerned about the direction of the school district.
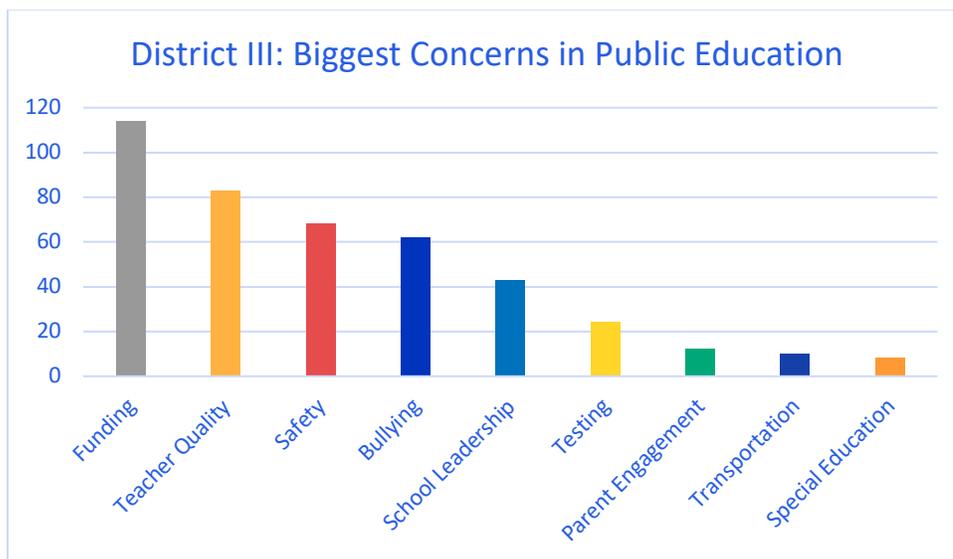
Figure 3: Concern About HISD: Total Population v. Parent Population

All Surveyed

- Yes 41%
- No 44%
- No response 15%

Parents Surveyed

- Yes 59%
- No 37%
- No response 4%
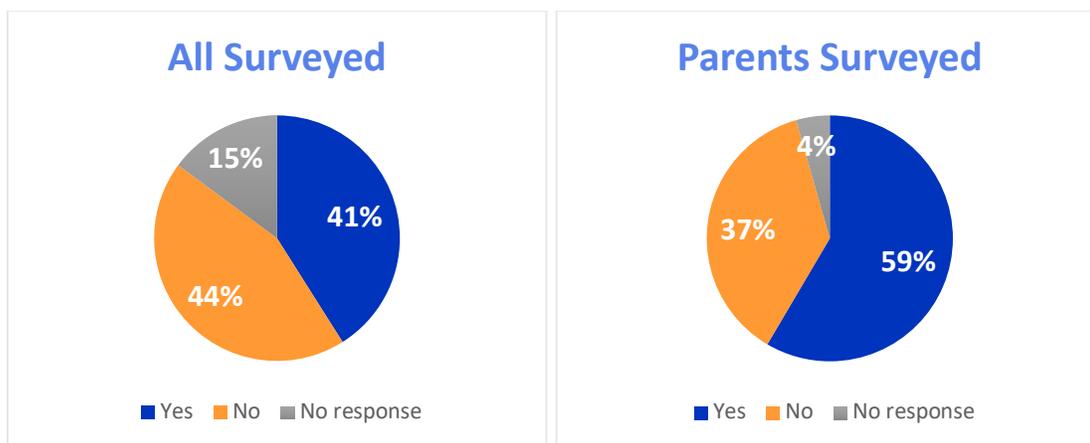
When the data is broken down by area of concern, patterns amount different geographic areas emerge. The survey asked respondents to name their top concern with HISD. In District IV survey responses indicated that the top concern was school leadership, whereas District III data shows funding as the highest priority. District IV ranks parent engagement much higher than District III, while District III prioritizes bullying more than District lV.

Figure 4: Biggest Concerns in Public Education: District III v. District IV

Distrit IV: Biggest Concerns in Public Education

District III: Biggest Concerns in Public Education

[Bar chart with y-axis from 0 to 120 in increments of 20. Categories: Funding (~115), Teacher Quality (~83), Safety (~68), Bullying (~62), School Leadership (~43), Testing (~24), Parent Engagement (~12), Transportation (~10), Special Education (~8)]

The differences between these two districts shows that when HISD seeks community input, it needs to engage not just the whole district, but individual communities within the district as well. Data needs to be looked at across communities and demographic groups to fully capture what the district needs. Furthermore, district-wide online surveys are not enough. Some communities do not have access to the internet, others do not always receive notifications of the surveys. The best way to engage with the HISD community is to meet them where they are, not to make them come to you.

Recommendation 8: Monitor Progress

The HISD Board of Education receives regular updates on board goals, Achieve 180 school progress, and other student outcomes. Many of these updates certainly touch on equity, but categorizing data based on equity goals would provide the district a better idea of progress towards eliminating disparities and supporting differences in learning. Houston GPS recommends that HISD regularly receive reports on equity progress measures, using its previously discussed equity policy commitments as goals.[41]

Conclusion

Equity in education can look different from different perspectives. Houston GPS endeavored to explore different views of equity to provide a clearer vision of how to best define equity to serve the HISD community. Through research from policymakers, education advocates, scholars, diverse disciplines, and other school districts Houston GPS was able to provide specific recommendations to help guide a workable definition of equity, along with suggestions for following up in policy. The school board is responsible for setting the tone

and direction of the district to drive student achievement. Houston GPS firmly believes that the recommendations outlined in this paper will best serve the diverse HISD community.

HISD can demonstrate its commitment to its students and to equity by adopting a well-reasoned definition of equity, along with a formal policy reflecting affirmative actions that will be taken by the district to ensure equitable outcomes. The Board of Education should follow this policy with diligent monitoring, continued community input, and equity-conscious decision-making moving forward. These steps will put the district at the front of the equity movement and provide all students with equitable opportunities to succeed.

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Appendix A: Definitions of Equity

School District	Definition of Equity
Austin ISD	Educational equity means that each child receives what he or she needs to develop to his or her full academic and social potential.
Eagle Mountain ISD	Equity is defined as "the state, action, or principle of treating people in accordance with differential needs."
Princeton Public Schools	A school that is educationally equitable is one in which we accept and value all individuals for who they are, and provide the structures, relationships, and resources they need to achieve their greatest potential.
Oakland USD	*Equity* means providing each student with the academic, social and emotional supports they need to prepare for college, career, and community success in the future.
Lynwood USD	Providing unfettered, differentiated, support and access to all students; we believe it is our moral obligation to systematically provide opportunities for every student to fearlessly achieve their own personal and professional goals.

Cedar Rapids Community School District	Equity means applying additional or different resources (human, fiscal & intellectual) to ensure all students receive what they need to exceed grade level standards. Educational Equity is the belief that quality instruction for all students will be achieved when the results of deliberate actions to close the racial, income, linguistic, teaching, and learning achievement gap becomes the driving force of the organization; by having unlimited expectations for both the top performing and under-achieving groups. Equitable Practices are systemic practices that deliberately identify and eradicate policies, pedagogies and perceptions that contribute to the mediocre performance of administrators and teachers, which impacts student outcomes.
Washoe County School District	Equity means that every student is provided the support and resources they individually need to accomplish the same end goal: graduation and college- and career-readiness. The end-goal for all students is the same, but the process to get there differs.

Fayette County Public Schools	Educational equity focuses on: Inclusion: All learners are welcomed, accepted, and protected against harassment or discrimination in our schools as we celebrate the diversity of our students, staff, families, and community and teach our students to understand and effectively engage with people of different backgrounds. Access: All learners shall have an equal opportunity to actively engage in all academic and extracurricular opportunities. Process: All learners shall receive fair and just but not identical treatment and supports, including high-quality coursework that reflects the diversity of our students and highly qualified teachers who are prepared and supported to meet student needs. Outcome: All learners shall have educational experiences that ensure achievement of high academic and social expectations. To ensure that all students demonstrate growth and achievement, we must take timely, deliberate, and unified action to eliminate exclusionary practices and address historical and social barriers that prevent our students from reaching their highest potential.
Bloomington Public Schools	Equity is ensuring that opportunities, resources, services, etc. are distributed to students based on individual needs. Students must be supported in ways that maximize individual potential.
Elk Grove USD	Educational Equity ensures the decisions, policies, and practices in our learning system are culturally sensitive and provide all students with access, opportunity, support and resources enabling us to: • Meet students' individual needs to learn, grow and develop in a safe, healthy environment with high expectations; • Support all stakeholders in advocating for fairness; • Ensure the ultimate outcome of all students becoming college, career and life ready

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Appendix B: Equity Policies

In the following pages are examples of equity policies from other school districts. Each of these policies provide a different perspective on equity and can be used as a reference when crafting a similar policy for HISD. Houston GPS does not recommend all of the language in these policies, and would encourage the reader to keep the recommendations outlined in the paper in mind. To find language that Houston GPS does recommend, visit Appendix C.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY   AE
                                                          (LOCAL)

Mission Statement   Preparing all students for success in college, career, and community leadership.

District Racial and Ethnic Equity Policy   The District recognizes that major historical and societal factors in our nation impact the inequity that exists within public schools. Purposeful action can be taken to identify, acknowledge, and overcome racial and ethnic disparities between students. The responsibility for addressing these disparities among students rests with the adults, not with the students.

District students deserve a safe and respectful learning environment in which all students shall receive an education that maximizes their potential for success in college, a career, and community leadership. The District shall focus on improving its practices in order to ensure equity in education. Any achievement gap between white students and students of color (historically defined as black or African Americans, Africans, American Indians or Alaska natives, Asians, Latinos, native Hawaiian, or Pacific islanders) is unacceptable.

In order to advance racial and ethnic equity and improve student achievement for all students in District schools, the Board establishes the following goals:

1.   The District shall provide every student with equitable access to high quality, culturally and personally relevant instruction, curricula, support, facilities, and other educational resources, even when this means differentiating resources to accomplish this goal.

2.   The District shall actively monitor practices, including assessment practices, in special education. The District shall analyze and present annually the data regarding the representation and achievement of all students receiving special education services, regardless of race or ethnicity.

3.   In order to ensure equitable practices regardless of race or ethnicity, the District shall actively monitor and work to eliminate the loss of instructional time due to disciplinary referrals. The District shall analyze and present annually the data regarding the number of students who lose instructional time due to disciplinary referrals.

4.   The District shall actively work to encourage advanced academic opportunities. The District shall examine enrollment process and data annually to ensure no inequitable impact on students of color.

5.   All employees and all students shall be given the opportunity to develop critical racial, ethnic, and cultural competence so

that they may understand the contexts in which they teach, work, and learn.

6.   The District shall create opportunities for all students and families—including families of students of color and those whose first language may not be English—for leadership development and empowerment as partners in education, planning, and decision-making.

7.   The District shall create welcoming environments that reflect support for racial and ethnic diversity.

8.   The District shall include partners who have demonstrated culturally specific expertise in meeting educational outcomes.

9.   The District shall develop employees' personal, professional, and organizational skills and knowledge in order to empower employees to address racial and ethnic disparities.

10. The District shall not tolerate lower academic achievement for any student racial or ethnic group compared to peers.

11. The District shall model racial and ethnic equity in business and operational practices.

12. The District shall include cultural responsiveness in reviews of the curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment design.

13. The District shall report annually on the recruiting, employment, placement, and retention of persons from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups at all organizational levels.

The Board shall hold the Superintendent, central staff, campus staff, and Board members accountable for implementation of this policy. The Superintendent shall develop procedures to implement this policy and metrics to measure achievement of the stated goals and shall report on progress at the beginning, middle, and end of each academic year.

Lone Star Governance

Board's Role

The Board shall:

1.   Ensure creation of a shared mission that promotes improved student outcomes. The Board shall accomplish this by incorporating the District's mission into student outcome goals, Superintendent's constraints, and Board constraints.

2.   Measure and communicate how well the mission is being accomplished. The Board shall accomplish this by collectively ensuring accountability through monthly monitoring of school

Our students, staff and stakeholders bring their personal backgrounds into our schools and the District is richer for it. Each of them has a legitimate expectation to have a barrier-free learning environment counteracting the contemporary and historical impact of bias, prejudice and discrimination which for generations has produced a predictability of learning outcomes based on race, class, socioeconomics, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, cognitive/physical ability, diverse language fluency, and religion.

It is the obligation of the District to embrace 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. These disparities are unacceptable and are directly at odds with the Board's Vision that Cincinnati Public Schools "is a community that ensures equitable access to a world class education unleashing the potential of every student."

In order to secure this vision, the District will focus on the individual and unique needs of each student. Therefore, the Board established the following course of action:

- Foster the universal values as expressed and adopted in the attached *Board Resolution – Adopting Working Definitions for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Excellence in Education* so that these values are shared across the District by a wide range of students, staff and stakeholders who are committed to act on these values without bias, prejudice, or discrimination.

- Commit to ensuring that fairness, equity and inclusion are essential principles of our school system fully integrating these principles into all of our policies, programs, operations and practices.

- Adopt a teaching and learning culture that includes high expectations of students and staff, varied teaching and learning styles, and individualized as well as systemic supports for teachers and students.

- Create multiple learning pathways that widen access to educational opportunities and lifelong success.

- Provide high quality, culturally relevant and responsive curricula for all students and teachers regardless of learning sites.

- Eliminate District policies, structures, and practices that perpetuate inequities and contribute to disproportionality of access and outcomes.

- Identify, develop and apply best instructional practices that have demonstrably made a positive difference for students and groups of students in order to reduce prevalent and persistent learning outcome gaps.

- Allocate annually the District's many financial, capital and human resources equitably.

- Facilitate equitable access to co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, social services, tutoring, and enrichment opportunities.

- Engage, include and collaborate with our families, students, residents, communities, and stakeholders as this Board recognizes that their active involvement is essential to the Board's own responsibility for effective and equitable governance.

To that end, the Board holds itself and all District and school site decision makers, faculty, support staff and participants accountable for building a District-wide culture of equity.

The Board directs the Superintendent and Treasurer together to develop a plan with clear and measurable accountability standards and procedures that can be assessed and reported transparently to the public. The Cincinnati Public Schools Equity Plan will be submitted annually to the Board for approval and its subsequent implementation by all departments and school sites will be reviewed by the Board at least semi-annually.

Reviewed: 2-27-2017
Adopted: 4-11-16
Reviewed date: 3-29-16

CINCINNATI PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING WORKING DEFINITIONS FOR
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

WHEREAS, the Cincinnati Board of Education is steadfast in its duty to develop educational programs that can transform lives and communities; and

WHEREAS, in order to ensure every child succeeds, we must understand how race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and cognitive/physical ability impact the educational process; and

WHEREAS, the Cincinnati Board of Education will adopt the following working definitions for diversity, equity, inclusion, and excellence in education:

Diversity in Education
Requires that we see, value, and embrace the differences that make each of us unique. It demands:
⇒ Leveraging our differences to make us stronger
⇒ Recognizing that understanding our biases and working to embrace diversity is a lifelong journey
⇒ Believing a diverse educational community creates the most powerful and effective learning environment

Equity in Education
Requires that we, as a community, share responsibility for addressing the opportunity gaps that exist within our society and impact our students' ability to reach their full potential. It demands:
⇒ Creating solutions that level the playing field while concurrently raising the bar across all schools
⇒ Providing each student appropriate resources he/she needs to achieve success
⇒ Providing safe school environments for all students in collaboration with surrounding communities

Inclusion in Education
Requires that our district choose to be a welcoming environment that reflects our whole community as we seek to positively support and advance the educational and developmental needs of our children. It demands:
⇒ Accepting, valuing, and learning from each other's strengths and differences
⇒ Listening to all the voices in our community, looking for the talents each individual possesses, and celebrating the diversity of backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences in our community
⇒ Considering and embracing different points of view, teaching us to empathize with and understand perspectives and experiences unlike our own

Excellence in Education

Requires a collaborative effort among all educational stakeholders—students, families, educators, community members—to seek out, create, and broaden opportunities and experiences that help our children excel as citizens of the world. It demands:

⇒ Committing to high expectations and academic success for all students, and supporting our students in achieving their aspirations and highest potential

⇒ Understanding that the talent, expertise, and awareness of our staff members is critical to our children's success

⇒ Believing in the power and value of transformative relationships and experiences both inside and outside the classroom

⇒ Appreciating and modeling lifelong learning

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Cincinnati Board of Education as part of the Cincinnati Public Schools community commits to using these working definitions to develop engaged citizens who are prepared for life.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, The appropriate Board Committee(s) and Administration will hereby work with the greater school community to examine, review, develop/refine, and implement policies to comport with this resolution and the Strategic Goals previously enumerated by the Board.

Alexander P. Kuhns, President
Ericka Copeland-Dansby, Vice President
Melanie Bates
Eve Bolton
Elisa Hoffman
Daniel Minera
Chris A. Nelms

Saucon Valley School District Equity Plan

The Saucon Valley School District began purposeful planning work around educational equity during the 2015-2016 school year. SVSD joined with ten other Greater Lehigh Valley School Districts to form the Greater Lehigh Valley Consortium for Equity and Excellence. This consortium was established through the support of Lehigh University's Superintendents Study Council and the expertise of Dr. Robert Jarvis from the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Jarvis co-founded the Delaware Valley Consortium for Equity and Excellence (formerly the Delaware Valley Minority Student Achievement Consortium) in 2001. Since then, he has worked to establish similar groups of equity-minded school districts throughout the United States. Prior to its inaugural year of GLVCEE, the following mission statement and goals for the work were developed:

Greater Lehigh Valley Consortium for Equity and Excellence Mission

The mission of the GLVCEE is to ensure equity and access to educational services to transform the lives of all students, especially diverse and disadvantaged students who have historically been underserved in educational institutions. We are partners and a strong collective voice committed to creating and sustaining meaningful educational change through a focus on: establishing common vocabulary and beliefs toward equity, conducting data-informed inquiry into equity, and employing a process to address equity issues.

Greater Lehigh Valley Consortium for Equity and Excellence Goals
(Bradley Scott, 2008)

Goal 1: *Comparably High Academic Achievement and Other Student Outcomes*
As data on academic achievement and other student outcomes are disaggregated and analyzed, one sees high comparable performance for all identifiable groups of learners and achievement, attainment and performance gaps are virtually non-existent.

Goal 2: *Equitable Access and Inclusion*
There exists unobstructed entrance into, involvement of, and full participation of all learners in programs and activities within our schools.

Goal 3: *Equitable Treatment Patterns*
Interactions between individuals and within our school environments are characterized by acceptance, valuing, respect, support, safety, and security such that all students feel challenged to become invested in the pursuits of learning and excellence without fear of threat, humiliation, danger, or disregard.

Goal 4: *Equitable Opportunity to Learn*
The creation of learning opportunities so that every child, regardless of characteristics and identified needs, is presented with the challenge to reach high standards and are given the requisite pedagogical, social, emotional, and psychological supports to achieve the high standards of excellence that are established.

Goal 5: *Equitable Resources Funding*
Staffing, and other resources for equity-based excellence that are manifested in the existence of equitably assigned qualified staff, appropriate facilities, other environmental learning spaces, instructional hardware and software, instructional materials and equipment, and all other instructional supports, are distributed in an equitable and fair manner such that the notion that all diverse learners must achieve high academic standards and other school outcomes become possible.

Goal 6: *Equitable Shared Accountability*
The assurance that all educational stakeholders accept responsibility and hold themselves and each other responsible for every learner having full access to quality education, qualified teachers, challenging curriculum, full opportunity to learn, and appropriate, sufficient support for learning so they can achieve at excellent levels in academic and other student outcomes.

Recognizing that district level leadership is paramount in promoting meaningful change and improvement, the focus of GLVCEE's work during the 2015-2016 school year, was on developing the cultural competencies of senior leaders and the analysis of district data to inform change in the pursuit of excellence and equity. District office administration and the high school principal attended a series of six workshops and work sessions together with district leaders from across the Lehigh Valley.

It was the intention of the SVSD Superintendent to align with GLVCEE plans and use the 2016-2017 to begin to involve building level leadership in the planned workshops in order to build capacity at this level. An eventual goal would be the establishment of district and building level equity committees. Our work as a district was hastened by a racial incident at our high school in October of 2016, that raised tension and awareness and demanded an acceleration of our plan.

The first meeting of the SVSD Inclusion/Equity Committee took place on December 13, 2016. The committee identified our district's strengths and areas of needed improvement. Action plans have been drafted to address priority areas and can be found later in this document.

At the third meeting of the committee, the need for a strong statement of our core beliefs around equity and inclusiveness was discussed. A review of the SVSD Mission, Vision and Shared Values, which are a part of the district's comprehensive plan, reveals that Saucon Valley has, for many years, envisioned an inclusive and supportive district and claimed a set of shared values that affirm the worth and dignity of students and families from varied cultural, ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds.

<div align="center">**SVSD Mission**</div>

To ensure learning and inspire students to succeed in life and contribute to society.

Vision

We envision a Saucon Valley School District in which students, staff and community:

- Are committed to life-long learning;

- Use research best practices to make decisions;

- Gather and apply data from multiple sources to make informed choices;

- Have established strong partnerships;

- Have fostered mutual respect;

- Are committed to continuous improvement;

- Employ information and communication technologies to enhance learning;

- Engender a sense of diversity, tolerance, mutual support and self worth;

- Are committed to a safe, positive, and orderly environment;

- Mutually support programs and services of the school district;

- Are self directed, creative, and responsible citizens who flourish in a global context.

Shared Values

- The school community values individuals from a variety of cultural and family backgrounds.

- All students can achieve their potential when provided with opportunities and resources that target their individual learning needs.

- All students and staff are entitled to a safe, positive, and orderly school environment.

- All students and staff work with a relevant curriculum and adaptable instructional program.

- Successful curricular and extra-curricular experiences promote positive self-concept and contribute to improved individual performances.

- Student success is dependent on the partnership between families and the school community.

- All members of the school community will be accountable for attaining academic and behavioral standards.

- Each individual needs knowledge and skills to function effectively in a rapidly changing society.

- Each individual is unique and deserves respect.

- The district campus serves as a resource for the community.

Shared Values and Beliefs on Inclusion and Equity

The Inclusion / Equity Committee members propose that additional language be incorporated into the language of our shared values statement as part of a district equity plan. It is the intention of the committee that this plan will become part of the district's next comprehensive plan. With the district's shared values as a starting place, the committee recommends the following additional statements:

- The school community values individuals from a variety of cultural and family backgrounds.

To this end, we will strive to create a context for learning that purposefully includes and welcomes all of the cultures, backgrounds, religions, identities, and other diversities represented in our student body.

- All students can achieve their potential when provided with opportunities and resources that target their individual learning needs.

To achieve this, we will advocate for equitable resource distribution that will prioritize access to education and services to meet the varied needs of all students in our schools.

- All students and staff are entitled to a safe, positive, and orderly school environment.

We therefore expect that the actions, words and other forms of expression used by all members of our school community are respectful and demonstrate recognition of the dignity of all members of our learning community. Students and families will feel secure in knowing that faculty and administration will intervene in a timely manner to ensure dignity and respect for all.

- All students and staff work with a relevant curriculum and adaptable instructional program.

We will attend to our curricular resources and literature, our celebrations, our concerts and holiday observances, the language we use and the symbols we display to ensure inclusivity and balance.

- Successful curricular and extra-curricular experiences promote positive self-concept and contribute to improved individual performances.

One strategy to promote positive self-concept is to strive to ensure that students of all races, ethnicities, identities and abilities can find role models among our faculty, staff, coaches and other adults that work in our schools.

- Each individual is unique and deserves respect.

It is incumbent upon each member of our school district community to speak up when respect for any individual is threatened. We therefore expect the actions, words and other forms of expression used by all members of our school community to be respectful and demonstrate recognition of the dignity and diversity of all members of our learning community. It is incumbent upon each member of our school district community to speak up when respect for any individual is threatened. Students and families must feel secure in knowing that faculty and administration will intervene in a timely and appropriate manner to ensure dignity and respect for all.

- The district campus serves as a resource for the community.

As a community resource, all members of our community should feel welcomed and thus we will, as a school district community, be mindful of ensuring that we promote activities and events that welcome all and we will refrain from allowing the display of signs and symbols that could create an unwelcoming environment.

In order to begin to move toward a more equitable and inclusive education experience for our students, the following action plans have been drafted:

Action #1 Awareness-Building and Examination of Attitudes, Values, and Beliefs

1. Ensure that the SVSD Equity/Inclusion Committee continues to meet at least quarterly to review district progress in achieving equity goals.

2. Establish an Inclusion/Equity Committee at each building for the purpose of examining practices and programs to ensure inclusiveness and to build awareness of the positive contribution recognition of diversity brings to learning.

3. Include the additions to the district mission, vision and shared values, equity goals and action plans in the next district Comprehensive Plan which is to be completed by November of 2018.

Action #2 Teacher/Staff Preparation and Professional Development

1. Teachers (new and veteran) will become knowledgeable and skilled in multiple pedagogies and a variety of instructional practices.

2. Teachers, new and veteran, will be trained in effective use and application of student achievement data.

3. Teacher/staff preparation and professional development will address instructional strategies which provide equitable outcomes for all learners.

4. Teacher/staff preparation and professional development will address how to create a culturally inclusive classroom environment.

5. Teacher preparation and professional development will provide inquiry-based opportunity for building capacity to work with under-served students.

6. Teacher/staff preparation and professional development will address the impact of holding high expectations for all students.

7. New teacher training, mentoring, and beginning teacher support (TV- TIP) will integrate new staff into the ongoing equity, diversity, and anti-bias teacher practices.

8. Grade level teachers and/or departments will meet with each other to facilitate development of curriculum and instruction using an "equity lens."

Action #3 Review bullying, harassment and discrimination policies with focus on results and consequences

1. Review and revise district policies relating to bullying, harassment, discrimination and student expression.

2. Develop examples of conduct that may constitute "harassment" related to race, ethnicity, origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and ability

3. Add language barring symbols related to discrimination, intimidation, exclusion, hostility, etc.

4. Align student handbook with procedures and policies

5. Develop policy statements for character education

Action #4 Diversity of Adult Role Models in the Schools

1. Review and revise hiring policies and strategies leading to a more diverse professional staff.

2. Actively seek out parent and community volunteers who represent the racial, ethnic, religious and gender diversity of the Saucon Valley School District Community.

3. Investigate possible mentoring programs with area college and university in order to make more diverse role models available to our students.

Action #5 Innovative and Inclusive Practices in Teaching and Learning

1. As part of the curriculum renewal cycle, institute a process that will:

2. Ensure classroom content is fair, accurate and inclusive

3. Includes positive representations of diverse cultures

   o Includes a variety of perspectives and multiple voices and provides practice in this skill
   o Discusses social contexts and social issues
   o Includes activities that foster critical thinking
   o Ponders ideas of how to be an active citizen
   o Explores how discrimination and prejudice negatively affect a democratic society
   o Promotes sensitivity and respect of an for societal differences

4. Explore the role of music through history to tell a story, express emotion, offer opinion, and as a source of pride

5. Include a communications course at the secondary level

6. Incorporate programming that directly targets students and aims to develop understanding and skills which will foster a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Programs to be considered include:

   o Character Education,
   o Positive Behavior Support,
   o Mentoring
   o Peer Mediation

AE(LOCAL) - EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Vision

Crowley ISD will provide all students with a world-class, high-quality education by which students are inspired to succeed in the global community.

Mission

Crowley ISD provides our students with excellence in education so that all students achieve their full potential.

Values

We value high academic achievement.

All students can learn through a variety of instructional methods and opportunities that meet their individual needs.

Learning is enhanced through social interaction in a diverse setting.

We value a safe and secure learning environment.

We value a positive workplace in which each employee is appreciated and is provided opportunities for professional growth.

We respect and value the opinions of all students, employees, and community members.

We encourage open, effective, and timely communication with District stakeholders.

We support effective stewardship of public resources.

Equity

The District recognizes that major historical and societal factors in our nation impact the inequity that exists within public schools. Purposeful action can be taken to identify, acknowledge, and overcome disparities between students. The responsibility for addressing these disparities among students rests with the adults, not with the students.

District students deserve a safe and respectful learning environment in which all students shall receive an education that maximizes their potential for success in college, a career, and community leadership. The District shall focus on improving its practices in order to ensure equity in education. Any achievement gap between students is unacceptable.

In order to advance equity and improve student achievement for all students in District schools, the Board establishes the following goals, each of which will allow departments and schools to create and implement equitable outcomes that are sustainable:

1. The District shall provide every student with equitable access to high-quality, culturally and personally relevant

instruction, curricula, support, facilities, and other educational resources, even when this means differentiating resources to accomplish this goal.

2. The District shall actively monitor practices in all specialized student populations by implementing a triangulation model: GAP analysis, equity report, and equity self-assessment. The rubric model should produce achievement data, perceived barriers to equitable student outcomes, and actions for equitable student outcomes. The District shall analyze and present annually the data regarding the representation and achievement of all students receiving specialized services, regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic status.

3. In order to ensure equitable practices regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic status, the District shall actively monitor and work to eliminate the loss of instructional time due to disciplinary referrals.

4. The District shall analyze and present annually the data regarding the number of students who lose instructional time due to disciplinary referrals.

5. The District shall actively work to encourage advanced academic opportunities. The District shall examine enrollment processes and data annually to ensure no inequitable impact.

6. All employees and all students shall be given the opportunity to develop critical racial, ethnic, and cultural competence so they understand the community and philosophical contexts in which they teach, work, and learn.

7. The District shall create opportunities for all students and families for leadership development and empowerment as partners in education, planning, and decision-making.

8. The District shall create welcoming environments that reflect support for diversity.

9. The District shall include partners who have demonstrated culturally specific expertise in meeting educational outcomes.

10. The District shall develop employees' personal, professional, and organizational skills and knowledge in order to empower employees to address disparities.

11. The District shall include cultural responsiveness in reviews of the curriculum, instructional practices, and assessment design.

12. The District shall report annually on the recruiting, employment, placement, and retention of persons from under-represented groups at all organizational levels.

The Board shall hold the Superintendent, central staff, campus staff, and Board members accountable for implementation of this policy. The Superintendent shall develop procedures to implement this policy and metrics to measure achievement of the stated goals and shall report on progress annually.

Crowley ISD
AE(LOCAL)-X
LDU 2017.04
DATE ISSUED: 12/19/2017

District Equity Policy

As each student enters a North Clackamas school, dreams are nurtured, history and cultural heritage are celebrated, love of learning is fostered, educational, physical, emotional and social needs are supported.

The North Clackamas School District is a community of learners committed to equity and the success of each student. This commitment means that student success will not be predicted nor predetermined by race, ethnicity, family economics, mobility, language, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, initial proficiencies or religion.

The principle of equity goes beyond formal equality where all persons are treated the same. Instead, equity fosters an inclusive and barrier-free environment in which everyone will fully benefit. The district will apply this principle of equity to all policies, programs, operations, practices and resource allocations. All students will have access and opportunity to a high-quality education.

The North Clackamas School District is committed to the following foundational beliefs:

1. Each student can learn with adequate support at the highest levels when all staff provide equitable access and opportunity for learning, and hold each student to high expectations;

2. Maximizing the academic achievement of every child requires allocating resources equitably, not necessarily equally;

3. Everyone in the district will act to eliminate disparities to prepare all students for college and career and;

4. An inclusive and welcoming environment plays a critical role in supporting a child's educational goals.

To realize our beliefs the North Clackamas School District will:

1. Systematically use districtwide and individual school level data, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, language, special education, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background and mobility to inform district decision-making;

2. Provide students with equitable access to high quality curriculum, programs, teachers and administrators, extracurricular activities and support services, even when this means differentiating resource allocation;

3. Affirm the identity of each student, acknowledge and celebrate differences to create a sense of belonging for each student;

4.   Incorporate the voice, culture and perspectives of students, staff, families and communities that reflect student demographics to support and enhance student success;

5.   Identify and counteract biased practices that perpetuate achievement disparities and lead to disproportionate levels of student success;

6.   Provide multiple and varied opportunities in order to meet the needs of the diverse student body;

7.   Actively recruit, hire, and retain staff that reflect student demographics at all organizational levels and support employees to engage in culturally responsive practices and delivery of quality instruction and service; and

8.   Ensure that the North Clackamas District Strategic Plan embraces the principle of equity as a key feature and presents measurable outcomes to prepare all students for college, career and life.

END OF POLICY

Legal Reference(s):

ORS 332.107

Appendix C: Recommended Equity Policy

Houston ISD represents a diverse group of students, families, employees, and community members who are all invested in education. HISD recognizes its obligation to serve this community with equity by celebrating and supporting differences, while working diligently to reduce disparities. HISD understands that through equity, students are able to learn, thrive, and grow to reach their full potential.

HISD defines equity as **the deliberate process of treating all individuals with respect and providing all students with resources, support, and opportunities that are tailored to their individual needs, in order to ensure that every student has the greatest opportunity to learn and the educational foundation necessary to achieve personal success and self-sufficiency for school, for career, and for life.**

As part of its commitment to equity, HISD will pursue the following: *

1: Comparably high academic achievement and other student outcomes
As data on academic achievement and other student outcomes are disaggregated and analyzed, HISD commits to pursuing high comparable performance for all identifiable groups of learners, such that achievement and performance gaps are virtually non-existent.

2: Equitable access and inclusion
The voices of all stakeholders in HISD, including students, families, employees, and community members, are important. HISD commits to make sure that all necessary information is reasonably accessible to the diverse HISD community and that all stakeholders have an opportunity to have their voices heard. HISD is also responsible for ensuring that all students, regardless of circumstance, have equitable access to, involvement in, and full participation in schools, programs and activities within those schools.

3: Equitable treatment
All stakeholders in HISD deserve acceptance, value, respect, support, safety and security. HISD is responsible for providing an environment in which students feel challenged to become invested in the pursuits of learning and excellence without fear of threat, humiliation, danger, or disregard. HISD commits to ensuring that no groups of students are disproportionately affected by the policies or practice of the district.

4: Equitable opportunity to learn
HISD commits to creating learning opportunities so that every child, regardless of characteristics and identified needs, is presented with the challenge to reach high standards and are given the requisite pedagogical, social, emotional and

psychological supports to achieve the high standards of excellence that are established.

5: Equitable resources
HISD recognizes that it must provide resources that are tailored to the needs of each student in order to address differences in learning and systemic disparities. HISD commits to provide equitably assigned qualified staff, appropriate facilities, other environmental learning spaces, instructional hardware and software, culturally appropriate instructional materials and equipment, and all other instructional supports, are distributed in an equitable and fair manner such that the notion that all diverse students must achieve high academic standards and other school outcomes become possible.

6: Accountability
HISD recognizes that systemic and historic inequities have led to disparities in public education and understands that it is the responsibility of the district to address these. All district policymakers, faculty, staff, and administrators accept responsibility and hold themselves and each other accountable for every student having full access to quality education, qualified teachers, challenging curriculum, full opportunity to learn, and sufficient, individually-tailored support for learning so they can achieve at excellent levels in academic and other student outcomes. HISD commits to monitor its impact on equity within the district.

* Adapted from: Intercultural Development Research Association. (2006, March 31). *Six goals of education*. Retrieved from https://www.idra.org/equity-assistance-center/six-goals-of-education-equity/.

The Board shall hold the Superintendent, central staff, campus staff, and Board members accountable for implementation of this policy. The Superintendent shall develop procedures to implement this policy and metrics to measure achievement of the stated goals and shall report on progress at the beginning, middle, and end of each academic year.