

Diversity and Equity Resolution – May 2017

Diversity has been a stated core value of the Birmingham Public Schools for some time. We embrace the special qualities each person contributes to our school community. This benefits the individual and it benefits the whole. Diversity is an asset for our district. We value diversity and benefit from our differences.

Educational equity is the essential complement to diversity. Meeting the needs of a diverse student population so that each and every student achieves their very best outcomes is central to our mission. Educational equity speaks to:

- high expectations for all and a commitment to high achievement and sound character outcomes for all students;
- equitable access to learning resources;
- high quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices; and
- board and superintendent accountability.

This dual thrust of diversity and educational equity is an ongoing journey and we must remain on a path towards a more accessible, just, trusting community of learners and it is important to commit to the important work that lies ahead.

There is much to do in this area today. Nothing stated here should diminish the current efforts of any single individual or group of individuals at the building or district level. But as an institution we should, we can and we must do better.

- The school board must do their part by undertaking a thorough review of all existing and proposed policy that touch on diversity and equity issues to be sure they are clear, relevant and impactful.
- The Superintendent and district and building leadership must do their part by affirming and supporting our students, staff and instructional leaders with appropriate guidelines, programs and systems that support our policies.
- The district's students, families and the community at large must do their part by adding their voices in constructive dialog as we work together to shape the best possible learning environment for each student.

We believe the following are some of the essential elements going forward:

- We are not a school district that is satisfied with overall averages, or with the idea that it is good enough for the majority of our children to prosper and learn well. We are a school district that strives each day to make sure that all learners are positioned to achieve their best potential.
- Every parent and guardian has high expectations for what their child can and will achieve. And they are passionate about ensuring that their child meets these expectations. It is important that we listen to these expectations so that we share the same vision for each and every child.
- Our curriculum, instruction and assessment practices shape children's view of the world. We need to be sure that we are culturally rich and diverse in these practices.

- Instructional and support staff is at the epicenter of daily interactions where we shape children – academically and as individuals. In everything we do in this area, we need to affirm and support our staff as they go about this challenging and difficult work.
- We need to implement consistent, age appropriate consequences for behaviors that violate our policies, but also implement positive disciplinary programs, such as restorative justice practices.
- Together, we must regularly review our collective progress in this area within our board governance structure and report annually to the community as part of the state of the schools update.

Together we are unified in our desire to provide every child a safe, caring environment in which they will maximize their learning and personal growth. Striving for educational equity can and must complement our goal of educational excellence.

We take pride in our collective efforts to date in each and every building. We are grateful for our talented instructional and support staff and leaders and commit to providing them the necessary resources needed, as they are on the front line of these interactions each day.

We understand that this is difficult and challenging work. We appreciate that our staff is placed squarely in the middle of this challenging work. In any school district, it starts with the school board.

The Birmingham Board of Education recommits today and everyday to the important work around diversity and educational equity with the goal of ensuring high academic achievement and sound character outcomes for all of our students.

Motion amended by Trustee Rothschild; seconded by Trustee Thomas

Amended Motion approved unanimously (7-0)