



## **PPS Racial Equity and Social Justice Lens**

*Updated December 2018*

Portland Public Schools is committed to academic excellence and personal success for all students. Central to this commitment is the support of racial equity and social justice. Dedicated policy, people, and practice are necessary to create a culturally responsive organization that ensures the success of students who can navigate and compete in a culturally complex society and global economy.

We must ensure that all students are guaranteed a comprehensive, rigorous, equitable, and inclusive education. Universal access to quality education not only benefits students from all backgrounds, but strengthens our communities and promotes societal prosperity. It is through racial equity and social justice that PPS will become a premiere school district and significantly contribute to Portland becoming a place of economic, technological and cultural innovation.

In 2011, PPS adopted a Racial Educational Equity Policy that called out harmful disparities in our schools and identified the district's role in eliminating them. Since then, PPS embarked on a five-year plan that resulted in several achievements. However, there is collective acknowledgement that there is still much work remaining to ensure all student experience equitable outcomes. Under the leadership of Superintendent Guadalupe Guerrero, PPS has embarked on an inclusive planning process to identify the most urgent areas of opportunity to continue this important work and incorporate our efforts into our five-year road map for Racial Equity and Social Justice.

Our aim is to elevate PPS Equity and Social Justice practices to a comprehensive, defined framework with clear system-wide equity and social justice actions and measurable results.

The primary focus of the Racial Equity and Social Justice lens is on race and ethnicity. While there continues to be a deep commitment to many other areas of the opportunity gap, we know that a focus on race by everyone at PPS allows direct improvements in the other dimensions of diversity. We also know that race and ethnicity continue to compound disparity. We are committed to explicitly identifying disparities in education outcomes for the purpose of targeting areas for action, intervention and investment.

## **Beliefs**

**We believe** the district should adopt a student-centered, racial equity and social justice focused lens in all decisions.

**We believe** all students should have equitable access to enriched opportunities in school.

**We believe** we have a collective responsibility to ensure our schools provide a caring, supportive environment. School communities should support healthy, positive development of students and help them grow their unique gifts and talents.

**We believe** the district must work in aligned and coherent ways and in close partnerships with families and communities. We believe that communities, parents, teachers, and community-based organizations have unique and important solutions to improving outcomes for our students and educational systems. Our work will only be successful if we are able to truly partner with the community, engage with respect, authentically listen -- and have the courage to share decision making, control, and resources.

**We believe** that we are uniquely positioned to effect change broadly across our community because of our role in educating and caring for close to 50,000 Portland children every day. We believe in being courageous and bringing a sense of urgency to this important work.

**We believe** in setting measurable and audacious goals. Embedded in each goal is the provision of a culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, with clearly defined racial equity and social justice based practices and curriculums.

**We believe** in accountability in all areas of school and student performance, including the areas of Racial Equity and Social Justice

**We believe** that speaking a language other than English is an asset and that our education system must celebrate and enhance this ability alongside appropriate and culturally responsive support for English as a second language.

**We believe** students receiving special education services are an integral part of our educational responsibility and we must welcome the opportunity to be inclusive, make appropriate accommodations, and celebrate their assets. We must directly address the over-representation of children of color in special education and the under-representation in "talented and gifted."

## Racial Equity and Social Justice Lens

The PPS RESJ Lens is a critical thinking tool which will be applied to the internal systems, processes, resources and programs of PPS to create increased opportunities for all students by evaluating burdens, benefits and outcomes to underserved communities. Through consistent utilization of the RESJ Lens, we intend to strengthen our strategies and approaches toward more equitable outcomes for every student.

The following questions are a guide and will be considered when making decisions and contemplating our strategies.

1. Describe the proposed action, desired results and outcomes, and connection to PPS' mission: Every student by name prepared for college, career and participation as an active community member, regardless of race, income or zip code.
2. How have you intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by this policy, program, practice or decision?
  - a. Is there stakeholder support or opposition to the proposal? Why?
3. How does the proposed action expand opportunities for racial equity and social justice?
  - a. Who are the demographic groups affected?
  - b. How will each group be impacted/affected by the decision or action?
  - c. Are there any potential unintended consequences for specific groups/populations? Are there strategies in place to mitigate any negative impacts?
4. Does the proposed action address barriers to equitable outcomes?
  - a. How will you track progress toward reducing disparities?
5. What information/data are you basing your decision or action upon?
  - a. What data or metrics will you collect/use to track impacts of the proposed action on the identified populations
6. Describe any changes you have made or will make to the action after applying this lens

## **Definitions**

Diversity- Any and all differences between and among people.

Educational Equity - 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. (from the PPS Racial Equity Policy narrative)

Equity - The state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial and fair. The concept of equity is synonymous with fairness and justice. It is helpful to think of equity as not simply a desired state or lofty value. To be achieved and sustained, equity needs to be thought of as a structural and system concept

Inclusion - The action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure. Inclusion involves authentic and empowered participation and a true sense of belonging.

Social Justice - Elimination of performance variability between student groups and accelerated achievement for underserved populations.

Underserved students: Students whom systems have placed at risk because of their race, ethnicity, English language proficiency, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, differently abled, and geographic location. Many students are not served well in our education system because of the conscious and unconscious bias, stereotyping, and racism that is embedded within our current inequitable education system