



PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Date: January 5, 2021
To: School Board
From: Dani Ledezma, Sr. Advisor, RESJ
Subject: Anti-Racist Learning Communities Policy

BACKGROUND

The proposed Anti-Racist Learning Communities policy provides additional guidance, clarity and prohibitions of hate speech and the use of hate symbols in educational settings. This policy is in response to the rule passed by the State Board of Education as well as in alignment with RESJ work at PPS.

In the fall of 2020, the State Board of Education passed the All Students Belong rule which prohibits the use of hate symbols in support of creating healthy and safe learning environments free from discrimination or harassment based on perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin, and without fear or hatred, racism or violence. The rule specifically prohibits the use of the swastika, the Confederate flag and the noose in any school-sponsored activity except where used in teaching curricula that are aligned with the Oregon State Standards.

RELATED POLICIES/BEST PRACTICES

This proposed policy is modeled after the rule passed by the State Board of Education: [581-022-2312 All Students Belong](#). After passing the rule, the Oregon Department of Education issued [guidance](#) for all school districts including comprehensive resources for districts to aid in implementation. These resources complement the work PPS has done to [respond to hate speech](#). PPS' response has been informed by the following:

- Western State Center's [Confronting White Nationalism in Schools Tool Kit](#)
- Teaching Tolerance's [Responding to Hate and Bias at School](#)
- Anti-Defamation League's [Hate on Display Hate Symbols Database](#)
- Portlander's United Against Hate [Report Hate](#)

ANALYSIS OF SITUATION

This proposed policy and accompanying Administrative Directive will strengthen prohibitions of the use of hate speech in alignment with districts across the state and with guidance from the Oregon Department of Education. These prohibitions and resulting consequences can be

aligned with the district's restorative justice approach and Student Conduct and Discipline policy.

FISCAL IMPACT

Adoption and implementation of this policy will have minimum fiscal impact. Implementation and development of the Administrative Directive will codify existing protocols and provide additional support and resources for school sites and administrators.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

Staff engaged with student representatives in the drafting of the policy proposal and will continue to engage with students and culturally specific providers to refine and develop the administrative directive moving forward.

The State Board of Education received broad support from communities directly impacted by hate symbols who testified during the rule's passage that they looked forward to school district's adoption of supporting policies and implementation.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION / EVALUATION

Upon approval from the Board of Education, staff will convene a cross departmental team to develop the accompanying Administrative Directive with hopes of adoption in early spring 2021.

CONNECTION TO BOARD GOALS

This proposed policy recognizes that both a sense of belonging and a positive and affirming school environment is necessary for students to reach their academic and social potential. The proposed policy also recognizes the power of hate speech and symbols to inhibit health and safety. The proposed prohibitions of hate speech and symbols reinforces the district's attainment of the board goals by creating a positive and healthy learning culture conducive to student achievement with specific understanding of the impact on students of color and other impacted student populations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Given the rule adopted by the State Board of Higher Education and the resulting guidance from the Oregon Department of Education, staff recommend the adoption of this policy and resulting administrative directive to support this work.

As a member of the PPS Executive Leadership Team, I have reviewed this staff report.

_____ (Initials)

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Draft Policy