

Purpose

To foster the success of each student in our schools. For that success to occur for each student in lifelong learning and the world of work, the Board of Education of Allegany County prioritizes educational equity by recognizing and removing institutional barriers and ensuring that social identifiers are not obstacles to accessing educational opportunities and supports that benefit each student. Achieving equity means implicit biases and students' identities will neither predict nor predetermine their success in school. Educational equity should be a lens through which all policies, procedures, and practices are viewed and decided.

Definitions

Educational Equity means providing access to essential academic, social, emotional, and economic resources, supports, and opportunities; in order to engage each student, throughout their educational career. Educational Equity also maximizes academic success for each student through rigorous instruction, with appropriate educational resources, to achieve their highest potential, their social/emotional well-being, and to ensure that their social identifiers are valued as an asset.

Social Identifiers mean demographic factors identified as, but not limited to, age, color, ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), ethnicity, family structure, gender identity and expression, language, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economics.

Cultural Responsiveness means valuing racial/ethnic cultures, views, and experiences and incorporating them into teaching and learning; and, to strengthen and enrich the school system and the community at large with the presence and contributions of many cultures.

Implicit Bias means the attitudes and stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, may be activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control.

Accountability measures mean those Maryland accountability framework indicators in place to guarantee oversight of opportunities, resources, and educational rigor that will lead to achievement for each student.

Educational opportunities mean each student has access to rigorous well-rounded academic programs and experiences that enrich their educational career.

Equity lens means that for any program, practice, decision, or action, the impact on each student is addressed, with strategic focus on marginalized student groups.

Policy Statement

Realizing that educational equity and educational equality are not the same, ACPS shall strive to achieve educational equity through:

- Reflecting a philosophy that social identifiers are a valued asset.
- Basing actions on the goal of providing educational equity for each student no matter their social identifiers.
- Directing the use of resources to provide equitable access to educational opportunities and services, even when this means differentiating resource allocation.
- Identifying partnerships with the Maryland State Department of Education, other agencies,

and stakeholders, to provide tailored and differentiated professional learning designed to build capacity for cultural responsiveness to address areas of inequality identified by the school system.

- Requiring that an equity lens be used in reviews of staff, including administrators, teacher and instructional leader candidates, curriculum, pedagogy, professional learning, instructional materials, and assessment design.
- Ensuring equitable access to effective teachers for each student.
- Providing the access and opportunity for all students to successfully read on grade level by the end of grade 2.
- Directing that equity be addressed in the Local Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated Plan/Master Plan.
- Designating an individual responsible for the facilitation, monitoring, and implementation of the school system equity initiatives within the Local ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan.
- Identifying the school system's process for developing goals, objectives, strategies, and timelines for implementation of equitable practices in each school and the methods for measuring the effect of equitable practices in local schools.
- Reviewing existing policies, programs, professional development, and procedures for the promotion of educational equity, and all applicable new policies, programs, and procedures will be developed using an educational equity lens tool and with educational equity as a priority.
- Actively working toward a balanced teacher and administrator workforce to reflect the diversity of the student body. The district seeks to recruit, employ, support, and retain a workforce that includes racial, gender, and linguistic diversity.
- Providing professional development to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills for eliminating opportunity gaps that lead to disparities in achievement.
- Creating schools with a welcoming, inclusive culture and environment that reflects and supports the diversity of the student population, their families, and their community.
- Including partners who have demonstrated culturally specific expertise, in meeting our high goals for educational outcomes. The district shall involve students, staff, families, and community members that reflect district demographics to inform decisions regarding the narrowing of the achievement and other opportunity gaps.
- Providing multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of the diverse student body and actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement for each student.
- Providing materials and assessments that reflect the diversity of students and staff and are geared toward the understanding and appreciation of culture, class, language, ethnicity, poverty, ability, and other differences that contribute to the uniqueness of each student and staff member.
- Including in all plans for new construction and/or renovation of existing facilities, consideration of equitable access to twenty-first century learning environments.

Review and Reporting

In order to achieve educational equity for each and every student:

The superintendent shall develop procedures and develop an action plan to implement this policy. In the spirit of continuous improvement, the superintendent will report annually to the Board the progress of the implementation of this policy and the action plan.

In support of the goals of this Educational Equity policy, the Board establishes an Equity Advisory Committee to work with the superintendent to assist in the development of the action plan to implement this policy and advise the superintendent on educational equity issues within the school system. The

Equity Advisory Committee also shall assist the superintendent in developing strategies to ensure that equitable educational opportunities are being provided to all of the students who attend our schools.

Legal Reference			
Policy History	Adopted – April 23, 2019	Reviewed – May 7, 2024	Revised – June 25, 2018, 1 st Reading July 2018 (Tabled) April 9, 2019, 1 st Reading April 23, 2019, 2 nd Reading