

## Tumwater School District Board Policy

### ENSURING EDUCATIONAL AND RACIAL EQUITY

The Tumwater School District is committed to the success of every student in each of our schools and to achieving our mission of continuous student learning in a caring, engaging environment. We are proud of our history of inclusion and expect every student to meet or exceed academic standards be fully prepared to make productive life decisions.

We will significantly change our practices to achieve and maintain racial equity in education. The concept of racial educational equity goes beyond formal equality where all students are treated the same—to fostering a barrier-free environment where all students, regardless of their race, class or other personal characteristics such as creed, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, economic status, gender, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, pregnancy status, marital status, physical appearance, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability, have the opportunity to benefit equally.

This means differentiating resource allocation, within budgetary limitations, to meet the needs of students who need more supports and opportunities to succeed academically.

Each TSD student deserves respectful learning environments in which diversity is valued and contributes to successful academic outcomes. Educational equity benefits all students and our entire community.

#### ***We Believe...***

Every student has a right to an equitable educational experience within the Tumwater School District.

Every student has the potential to achieve and it is our responsibility to give each student the support needed to achieve.

We believe the responsibility for the disparities among our young people rests with adults, not the children.

The responsibility for student success is broadly shared by District staff, administrators, instructors, communities and families.

#### ***Our Catalyst for Change***

In school districts across the state, White students have clearly outperformed Black, Hispanic and Native American students on state assessments in every subject at every grade level. White students consistently graduate at higher percentages than

students of color, while students of color are disciplined far more frequently than White students. These disparities are unacceptable and are directly at odds with our belief that all students can achieve.

We acknowledge that complex societal and historical factors contribute to inequities within our school district. We resolve to address opportunity gaps at every level of our organization through policy, procedure, and practice in order to eliminate persistent achievement gaps.

Race will not be a reliable predictor of student achievement and success.<sup>1</sup>

Closing the achievement gap while raising achievement for all students is the top priority.

Rather than perpetuating disparities, the Tumwater School District will address and overcome this inequity and institutional racism, providing all students with the support and opportunity to succeed.

### **Commitments**

In order to address opportunity and achievement gaps, the Tumwater School District will develop equity tools, procedures, and strategies to eliminate systemic disparities and ensure systemic equity for students, staff, and families. TSD commits to:

#### Eliminate Systemic Disparities

To interrupt systems that perpetuate inequities, TSD will:

- A. Invite and include people from all backgrounds to examine issues and develop solutions that address root causes and systems rather than one-time fixes;
- B. Prepare staff to address the role and presence of bias, prejudice and racism; and,
- C. Eliminate practices that result in predictably lower academic achievement for any student group compared to peers.

#### Ensure Systemic Equity

TSD will lead from a system-wide equity plan that is anchored in three critical areas: Family, Student and Community Engagement; Leadership; and Teaching and Learning.

##### A. Family, Student and Community Engagement

TSD employees will be expected to cultivate and implement equitable practices for and with our students, their families and other community members including:

1. Intentionally seeking and including student perspectives, particularly racial perspectives, in the development and implementation of culturally responsive teaching and learning practices and curriculum;
2. Engaging family and community members in the development and implementation of culturally appropriate and effective partnerships between home and school;
3. Inviting and including community members to bring multiple cultural perspectives to examining and solving issues that arise; and,
4. Ensuring each TSD site is welcoming and inclusive to all members.

**B. Leadership**

TSD leaders will ensure that equity guides employee actions and leads to improved academic results by:

1. Ensuring student voice is routinely valued and incorporated in decision-making;
2. Recruiting, hiring, supporting, retaining and continuously developing a workforce of culturally conscious and responsive administrative, instructional and support personnel;
3. Modeling equity in all practices including decision-making and resource allocation;
4. Replacing inequitable operational practices with systems, policies, procedures and practices that support implementation of this policy; and,
5. Focusing accountability systems and metrics on equitable results with a priority on racial equity.

**C. Teaching and Learning**

TSD employees will work together to increase their individual and collective capacity to effectively teach a diverse and changing student population by:

1. Ensuring a positive and academically rigorous school environment that engages all students and includes multiple pathways for success;
2. Creating and implementing culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum and assessments;
3. Eliminating practices that lead to the over- or underrepresentation of any student group compared to peers.
4. Ensure all students, regardless of race or class, graduate from Tumwater Public Schools ready to succeed in a racially and culturally diverse society.

With these commitments in mind, TSD will:

Raise the achievement of all students while narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students;

Eliminate the racial predictability and disproportionality in all aspects of education and its administration (e.g., the disproportionate over- application of discipline to students of color, their over-representation in special education, and their under-representation in various advanced learning programs);

Ensure all students, regardless of race or class, graduate from Tumwater Public Schools ready to succeed in a racially and culturally diverse society.

***Racial Equity Goals***

In order to achieve racial equity for our students, the Board establishes the following goals:

- A. **Equitable Access**-The District shall provide every student with equitable access to high quality and culturally relevant instruction, curriculum, support, facilities and other educational resources, even when this means differentiating

resources to accomplish this goal.

- B. Racial Equity Analysis-The District shall review existing policies, programs, professional development and procedures to ensure the promotion of racial equity, and all applicable new policies, programs and procedures will be developed using racial equity analysis tools. The District shall remedy the practices, including assessment, that lead to the over-representation of students of color in areas such as special education and discipline, and the under-representation in programs such as talented and gifted and Advanced Placement.
- C. Workforce Equity-The District shall be intentional about attaining and maintaining workforce equity, workforce that reflects the diversity of our student body. The District shall recruit, employ, support and retain racially and linguistically diverse and culturally competent administrative, instructional and support personnel.
- D. Professional Development- The District shall provide culturally relevant professional development to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills for eliminating opportunity gaps and racial and ethnic disparities in achievement.
- E. Welcoming School Environments- The District shall welcome and embrace families, including families of color (including those whose first language may not be English) as essential partners in student education, school planning and District decision- making. The District shall create welcoming environments that reflect and support the racial and ethnic diversity of the student population and community. In addition, the District will include other partners who have demonstrated culturally- specific expertise -- including government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses, and the community in general in meeting educational outcomes.
- F. Multiple Pathways to Success-The District shall create multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of our diverse students, and shall actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement for students from all racial groups.
- G. Recognizing Diversity-The district shall provide materials and assessments that reflect the diversity of students and staff, and which are geared towards the understanding and appreciation of culture, class, language, ethnicity and other differences that contribute to the uniqueness of each student and staff member. All staff and students shall be given the opportunity to understand racial identity, and the impact of their own racial identity on themselves and others.

### ***Responsibility & Accountability***

Every Tumwater School District employee is responsible for the success and achievement of all students.

The Board will hold the Superintendent and central and school leadership staff accountable for making measurable progress in meeting the goals.

### ***Implementation, Monitoring & Reporting***

The Board recognizes that these are long-term goals that require significant work and resources to implement across all schools. As such, the Superintendent will develop and implement a system-wide racial equity plan within the district's strategic plan with clear accountability and metrics, which will result in measurable academic

improvements for TSD students. The Superintendent shall regularly report progress on the plan and outcomes to the TSD Board of Directors and community. The annual goals adopted in the strategic plan will support this policy.

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this policy, “race” is defined as “A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups.” Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, editors. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*. (2007).

**Glossary:**

Achievement Gap	Observed, persistent disparity in measures of educational performance among groups of US students defined by socioeconomic status (SES), race/ethnicity and gender.
Bias	Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.
Culturally Responsive Teaching	A student-centered approach to teaching where the students' cultural strengths are identified and nurtured to promote student achievement and a sense of well-being about the student's cultural identity.
Educational Equity	Personal or social circumstances (such as gender, ethnic origin or family background) are not obstacles to achieving educational potential (definition of fairness) and all individuals reach at least a basic minimum level of skill (definition of inclusion).
Equity	Everyone receives the resources, attention and supports he/she/they need.
Institutional Bias	A tendency for the procedures and practices of particular institutions to operate in ways which result in certain social groups being advantaged or favored and others being disadvantaged or devalued.
Institutional Racism	Refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as people of color.
Opportunity Gap	The ways in which race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, community wealth, familial situations, or other factors contribute to or perpetuate lower educational aspirations, achievement, and attainment for certain groups of students causing disparity in access to quality schools and the resources needed for all children to be academically successful.
Prejudice	An unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought, or reason.
Race	A political construction created to concentrate power with white

	people and legitimize dominance over non-white people.
Racial and Educational Equity	Providing equitable access to opportunities, resources and support for every student by intentionally recognizing and eliminating historical barriers, as well as the predictability of personal and academic success based on race, background and/or circumstance.
Racial Equity	The condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares.
Racism	A complex system of beliefs and behaviors, grounded in a presumed superiority of the white race. These beliefs and behaviors are conscious and unconscious; personal and institutional; and result in the oppression of people of color and benefit the dominant group, whites. A simpler definition is racial prejudice + power = racism.
Systemic Equity	The transformed ways in which systems and individuals habitually operate to ensure that every learner has the greatest opportunity to learn enhanced by the resources and supports necessary to achieve competence, excellence, independence, responsibility and self-sufficiency for school and for life.

**ADOPTED:**  
**REVISED:**