

**NORTHERN  
WESTMORELAND  
CAREER AND  
TECHNOLOGY  
CENTER**

No. 832

SECTION: OPERATIONS  
TITLE: EDUCATIONAL EQUITY  
ADOPTED: September 17, 2020  
REVISED:

832. EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

**Purpose**

The Joint Operating Committee adopts this policy to prioritize the principle of educational equity through the fair and just allocation of resources, opportunities and treatment of students based up each individual student's needs. The pursuit of educational equity requires the continuous and collaborative effort of identifying various aspects of center programs and operating in which consideration of educational equity shall be analyzed, incorporated and prioritized.

To facilitate education equity for all, the center shall be committed to:

1. Promptly identifying and addressing barriers that cultivate achievement and/or opportunity gaps for students.
2. Ensuring that a student's educational achievement is neither predicted nor predetermined by explicit or implicit biases.

**Definitions**

Achievement gaps shall mean the academic disparities and/or differences between groups of students, as indicated through variances in academic indicators such as test scores, grade point average and graduation rates.

Barriers shall mean factors that block or hinder movement or progression. Barriers to educational equity may include, but not limited to, policies, administrative regulations and practices; explicit and implicit biases; facilities; budgeted funds; curriculum and instruction; personnel; class size; Code of Student Conduct and school climate.

Cultural competency shall mean to interact effectively with individuals of other cultures.

Cultural proficiency shall mean the level of knowledge-based skills and understanding that is required to successfully teach and interact with students and to work effectively with colleagues, families and communities from other cultures. It requires an ongoing examination and self-reflection to challenge one's own cultural biases and understand the cultural perspectives and experiences of others.

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Cultural responsive shall mean the inclusion of students' cultural references in all aspects of learning, school experiences and student engagement.

Educational equity action plan shall mean the steps education stakeholders engage in to pursue equity.

Educational equity audit shall mean a comprehensive equity and inclusion benchmarking instrument that assesses barriers to opportunity and progress towards achieving the equity outcomes described in this policy and the center's Educational Equity Action Plan.

Equity lens shall mean an intentional focus on assessing any inequitable impact the execution of a program, practice, operation, decision or action may have on a student or group of students.

Explicit bias shall mean the actions, attitudes and beliefs we have about a person or group on a conscious level.

Gender, for purposes of this policy, shall mean the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity, including a person's gender identity and gender expression which includes a person's internal sense of being male, female, some combination of male and female or neither male nor female.

Implicit bias shall mean the actions, attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in a subconscious manner.

Inclusion shall mean engaging, valuing and respecting all groups (students, parents/guardians, community members, administrators, instructional and support personnel and other education stakeholders) and including all groups as essential partners in the education process.

Opportunity gaps shall mean the disparities in the delivery of educational and extracurricular opportunities, funding and other resources between and amount different student groups, leading to different academic, extracurricular, social and economic outcomes for students.

### **Authority**

The Joint Operating Committee is committed to the provision of an equitable education system that reflects the principles of fairness and justice for all students regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, English learner status, disability, and other characteristics, as well as the intersection of those characteristics.

### **Delegation or Responsibility**

The Administrative Director and/or designee(s) shall use an equity lens and quantitative and qualitative data to assess systematically which students and/or student groups are experiencing the least achievement, determine why, and target resources and efforts to address identified needs and improve overall outcomes.

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Each employee shall be expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the principles of this policy and for fostering a school climate that is equity focused and culturally responsive. Employees shall receive supports in the form of training regarding cultural competency, cultural proficiency, cultural responsiveness, implicit bias, explicit bias, diversity and inclusion.

### Educational Equity Audit

The Administrative Director or designee(s) shall periodically conduct an audit to benchmark educational equity in programs and school-wide achievement and opportunities.

### Educational Equity Action Plan

The Administrative Director and designee(s) shall develop and periodically update the center's Educational Equity Action Plan with clear accountability goals and metrics to address inequities. The Educational Equity Action Plan shall be reflective of the voices of administrators, teachers, staff, students, families and members of the community.

The Educational Action Plan shall:

1. Embed equity practices throughout the center's educational system.
2. Include equity goals and practices in the center's comprehensive planning strategies.
3. Ensure performance observations encompass consideration of the expectations and goals of this policy.

### Educational Equity Update

The Administrative Director shall periodically provide an educational equity update to the Joint Operating Committee that reflects the efforts undertaken and progress made to achieve the goals of this policy.

Based on the equity goals and activities set by the center, the educational equity update may include data on:

Students –

The following student-related data shall be disaggregated and intersected by gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, English learner status and disability whenever possible:

1. Enrollment of each program
2. Achievement indicators
3. Attendance and behavior indicators. Such indicators may include data regarding excused and unexcused absences, out-of-school suspension, in-school suspension, the Office for Safe School reports, expulsion and other school discipline factors.
4. Opportunity indicators. Such indicators may include participation in cooperative education, clubs and other extracurricular programs and activities.

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Administrators, Teachers and Staff –

1. The race, ethnicity, gender and years of experience of support staff, teachers and administrators.
2. Efforts to recruit and select personnel
3. The amount of teacher turnover by program and by the center.
4. The ways in which professional development is delivered through an equity lens.
5. Efforts to embed cultural responsiveness into the curriculum

Resource Allocation –

1. Fiscal – locally controlled budgetary considerations.
2. Operational – programs, services and personnel considerations.
3. Structural – facility and organizational considerations.

Annually, at the beginning of each budget process, the Joint Operating Committee shall review the most recent equity update in conjunction with the current Educational Equity Action Plan to consider resource allocations in support of the center's commitment to educational equity.

### Guidelines

Educational equity shall serve as the foundational structure upon which all aspects of the center's educational system are built and maintained. An equity-focused structure is essential to grow knowledge and skills, provide necessary resources, include diverse voices, promote accountability, implement effective practices, produce partnerships and address barriers to learning and participation. In the pursuit of educational equity for all students, center programs, operations and functions shall be structured to prioritize the following principles:

### Multiple Pathways to Success/High Expectations

The center shall provide multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of the diverse student body and shall actively encourage, support and expect high achievement and excellence from each student.

All students shall be encouraged and provided opportunities to:

1. Pursue their goals and interests without regard to biases and other barriers.
2. Enroll in challenging programs.
3. Participate in center activities.

### Access to Equitable Resources

Each student shall be provided equitable access to instructional materials, assessments, curriculum, support, facilities, teaching practices and other educational resources and services that reflect an appreciation for the diverse cultural perspectives, identities and needs of students and their families by strategically differentiating allocations as necessary to remove barriers and improve outcomes.

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### Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

The center shall strive to create a welcoming, inclusive and bias-free culture and environment that values, reflects and is responsive to the diversity of the students, their families and the community.

Respectful and civil discourse and interactions among all center leaders, staff, students, families and community members shall be expected at all times.

### Partnerships and Inclusion

The center shall welcome and empower students and families, including but not limited to families of color, low-income families, individuals with disabilities, individuals whose first language may not be English and other underrepresented groups, as essential partners in their student's educational experiences, school planning and decision-making. The center shall provide multiple and flexible opportunities for dialogue and engagement with families and communities.

In addition, the center shall include other partners who have modeled culturally proficient practices, such as government agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, institutions of higher learning and the general community in meeting equitable educational outcomes.

### Data Focused

To make informed decisions in the pursuit of educational equity, the center shall systematically use quantitative and qualitative data. Such data may include anecdotal information from teachers and staff, as well as formally collected and reported data. Data shall be disaggregated and intersected, where feasible, based on available demographics.

### Equity Lens

The center shall, as a continuous practice, review current and newly developed policies, administrative regulations, practices, programs, procedures, professional development and locally controlled budget allocations with an equity lens.

The center shall be aided in this process through the use of educational equity analysis and auditing tools.

### Cultural Proficiency

The center shall provide instructional materials and assessments and promote teaching practices, that reflect and are responsive to the diverse cultural perspectives and identities of students and their families.

The center's curriculum and programs shall:

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- promote equity and respect;
- reflect the distinctive contributions of a diverse society;
- embed culturally responsive teaching and practices;
- provide opportunities for staff and students to develop and model cultural proficiency.

### Workforce Diversity

The center recognizes the benefits of a highly effective workforce that reflects racial, gender and linguistic diversity.

In the promotion of workplace diversity, the center shall strive to:

1. Maintain an employment process that is free of discrimination and bias.
2. Identify and address barriers to the recruitment, hiring, retention, development and promotion of employees from diverse backgrounds.
3. Actively recruit and/or promote highly qualified candidates who are committed to educational equity.

### Professional Development

The center shall ensure the provision of professional development opportunities for advancement of employees' understanding and skill sets relative to addressing barriers to students' opportunities. An equity lens shall be embedded in all professional development.

Professional development shall foster the skills, knowledge and beliefs to cultivate equity, including cultural proficiency, social-emotional learning and mental health to create a learning environment that is student-centered and meets the individual and diverse needs of students.

### Legal

Pol. 100

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Pol.103.1

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Commonwealth Education Blueprint

PSBA Equity Tools and Resources

Pol. 220

Pol. 251

Pol. 913