

Policy 1705

ANTI-RACISM and INCLUSION POLICY

The Thomasville City School Board (“Board”) and the Thomasville City Schools (“District”) reject all forms of racism as destructive to the District’s mission, vision, values, and goals.

The Board is committed to the following principles:

1. Establishing and sustaining a school community that shares the collective responsibility to address, eliminate, and prevent actions, decisions, and outcomes that criticizes, ridicules, or otherwise disparages another person based on that person’s race, color, creed, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, or handicapping condition.
2. Thomasville City Schools has made diversity and inclusion a priority and will not tolerate language and/or actions that disparage individuals. We will enforce our policy to maintain an inclusive environment for our students, staff, and community.
3. Eliminating inequitable practices and cultivating the unique gifts, talents, and interests of every child to end the predictive value of social or cultural factors, such as race, class, gender, age, religion, handicapping condition, identity or other factor on student success
4. Respecting and championing the diversity and life experiences of all community members to support the school District’s mission, vision, values, goals, and objectives.
5. Acknowledging that racism is often compounded by other forms of discrimination, including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, identity, class, religion, age, handicapping condition, etc.

Purpose

Personal and institutional racism have historically existed and continue to exist in the District. Combating racism in our schools is a legal and moral imperative.

In this District, there are disparities between racial groups in student academic performance, achievement, and participation in academic programs. These include disparities in graduation rates, gifted identification, course participation, special education identification, standardized test

scores, and suspension rates. Disparities also exist between the racial demographics of the students in the District and the staff the District hires.

These equity gaps exist because of inequitable access to opportunities that have significant intergenerational effects and perpetuate economic, social, and educational inequity.

However, racial inequities were created over time and can be eliminated. Similarly, personal prejudice is learned and can be unlearned. Educators play a vital role in reducing racism and inequity by recognizing the manifestations of racism, creating culturally inclusive learning and working environments, and dismantling educational systems that directly or indirectly perpetuate racism and privilege through teaching, policy, and practice.

The purpose of this policy is to eliminate all forms of racism from the District in conjunction with related Board policies.

Definitions adapted from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity at www.racialequityalliance.org

Anti-racism: the practice of identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism.

Individual racism: pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race. Individual racism includes both privately held beliefs, conscious and unconscious, and external behaviors and actions towards others.

Institutional racism: occurs within institutions and organizations, such as schools, that adopt and maintain policies, practices, and procedures that often unintentionally produce inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people.

Structural (or systemic) racism: encompasses the history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions and society. It refers to the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institutions and policies that perpetuate a system of inequity that is detrimental to communities of color.

ANTI-RACISM POLICY REGULATIONS

These regulations are designed to dismantle the individual, institutional, and structural racism that exists in the District. The Board directs the following action:

Policy Communication

1. Each school shall post a public statement against racism in a location visible to students, staff, and visitors entering the school. The public statement shall read: "Thomasville City Schools is committed to establishing and sustaining an equitable community that achieves the School District's equity mission to end the predictive value of race and ensure each individual student's and staff's success. The Thomasville City School Board and School District reject all forms of racism as destructive to their mission, vision, values, and goals."
2. The Board shall direct the superintendent to establish an organization or committees of students and staff in the District to promote equity and diversity and to serve as leaders and spokespersons within their schools and the District.
3. This policy shall be included in student handbooks provided to students and families.
4. This policy shall be translated into other languages and be made available for families.

Leadership and Administration

The Board shall address systemic racism as follows:

1. Develop and conduct a systemic Equity Needs Assessment for the District to identify processes and practices that cause or contribute to inequitable outcomes. The Assessment shall also include an inventory of what equity-related data is currently collected by the District. Following the assessment, strategies will be developed and implemented to address the identified issues.
2. To address disparities in course participation (including AP/honors participation):
 - Course catalogs will outline prerequisites for all courses including AP/honors. Teacher recommendation will be used to include, not exclude students from participation in these courses.

- School counselors shall be responsible for educating students and families as equitable partners in the selection process and course sequencing.
 - Middle and high schools will offer opportunities for supplementary coursework, such as summer bridge programs or tutoring during or after school, to students interested in moving to higher level courses.
3. The Board shall implement alternative discipline processes, such as restorative justice, to reduce racial disparities in discipline and suspension.
- To ensure consistency in student discipline, each school shall collect and, at least annually, report data on all disciplinary actions. The data shall include the student's race/ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, special education, and English Language Learner status, as well as a written explanation of the behavior leading to discipline and the specific corrective action taken.
 - When school administrators determine a student has committed a racist act, the student will be provided the opportunity to learn about the impact of their actions on others through such practices as restorative justice, mediation, role play or other explicit policies or training resources.

Curriculum and Instruction

1. Curriculum and instructional materials for all grades shall reflect cultural and racial diversity and include a range of perspectives and experiences, particularly those of historically underrepresented groups.
2. All curriculum materials shall be examined for racial bias by representatives of the District's Curriculum and Instruction Team as well as School and District level Media Review committees . Where materials reflect racial bias, teachers utilizing the materials will acknowledge the bias and communicate it to students and parents.
3. The Board and District shall implement a curriculum focused on anti-racism, inclusiveness and equity to provide educational resources for students at every grade level.
4. Student in-class and extra-curricular programs and activities shall be designed to provide opportunities for cross-cultural and cross-racial interactions to foster respect for cultural

and racial diversity. The Board shall support activities that will allow students to experience the diversity within the District.

Training

1. All Board and District staff shall be trained in this policy.
2. All teachers and administrators shall be trained in cultural awareness and/or culturally responsive teaching practices. Culturally responsive teaching practices shall be incorporated into Board approved appraisal systems, including the teacher appraisal system and the administrator performance appraisal.
3. All District staff shall be trained about racism and about how racism produces inequitable practices and outcomes. Core training will be implemented and completed for all staff within two years of the creation of this policy and will be part of all new employee orientation. Annual updates and refresher courses will also be part of staff development plans

Policy Enforcement

1. Staff shall collect, review, and provide an annual report to the School Board on data regarding racial disparities in areas including, but not limited to, student achievement, enrollment, suspension/discipline, graduation rates, and gifted identification. The report shall also include evidence of growth in each area outlined by the anti-racism policy (i.e., communication, leadership and administration, curriculum and instruction). The written reports shall also be made available to the public, to the student and staff diversity committees, and to school equity teams.
2. The district Equity and Inclusion Coordinator/Officer shall be responsible for implementation and evaluation of District strategies for implementation. Adequate resources shall be appropriated.
3. The District shall ensure there are various, including anonymous, means for students and staff to report racism and other forms of discrimination.