

**Howard County Board of Education**  
**Policy 1080 Educational Equity Public Hearing**

Testimony from Mabelle Liu  
Mount View Middle School

Dear Mr. Superintendent and Board of Education Members,

My name is Mabelle Liu. I'm a rising sixth-grader at Mount View Middle School. I am here to testify in support of Policy 1080 with revisions. The rise of Coronavirus has brought so many adverse effects on our world. We're stuck in quarantine, millions of people are currently unemployed, tens of thousands have died, and the number of racist activities has been on the rise. A person shouldn't be mistreated due to their race or ethnicity, but this precisely is what the societal status quo depicts. I believe adding more diversity to our curriculum will help to cultivate higher sensitivity and respect for others.

First, our curriculum covers little about different cultures. While our school hosts Culture Night, which is a lot of fun to see so many different cultures represented, this event is extracurricular, and we are only exposed to one dimension of culture. Coming to think of it, the only time we *learned* about a culture was through an assignment. We each selected a culture and researched about it, but didn't share or discuss it. Learning about different racial and ethnic groups in a class and engaging in discussions about them can give us a deeper understanding of the different cultures we come from.

Second, ignorance can lead to insensitive behaviors. For instance, last year, there was a girl on my bus that was repeatedly rude to me and others. She would tease me about my culture, and once, she even spat in my face. My sister, who is now going to college, said that when she was my age, kids would make slanted eyes and say Ching Chong to her in a teasing manner. Since the pandemic began, over 2,300 hate incidents targeted at Asian Americans have been reported. A friend of my mom told us that a boy in her son's swim team walked into their locker room and announced that people in China should be gassed because of COVID-19. Such racist remarks are horrible. I attended a virtual seminar that provided training to kids for dealing with bullies and discriminations. But can't we also work on stopping such instances from happening by providing training to everyone at school to fight against racism?

I hope the way we look, our race and ethnicity, is something we are all made proud of, rather than something to be made fun of or ashamed of. I firmly support adding language to Policy 1080 to mandate more diversity in our curriculum so we can learn to respect and value each other's culture and feel school is safe for everyone. Thank you for your consideration.

Hello, members of the BOE. My name is Grace Chen and I am a rising 8th grader at Burleigh Manor Middle School.

As a student of Chinese-American background, I strongly support that more content about Chinese-American contributions to our country should be added to the curriculum. The evidence that I must testify with was something that happened in 7th grade. In Spanish class, the vast majority of the kids were making fun of Asian culture by saying 'I love to eat dogs' in Spanish. This lasted for the same amount of time as we stayed in school and our teacher didn't even stop their behavior from the point that it was racial disturbance, but from a point that it was rude because this one student loved dogs.

My parents moved from Baltimore County to Howard County seven years ago, only to hope for the best: a top-quality school, a great learning environment, and a culture-friendly community. It is sad to say that incidents like this happen, not often, but not occasionally either. These biased opinions that stereotype Asian people don't reflect the truth at all and are very normalized.

As a Chinese-American, I am proud of my background. I have read many books about our culture and the great contributions Chinese Americans have made and are continuing to make in our country. To name a few, we have Dr. Ho Fengshan who helped Jews escape Nazi camp and showed courage and humanity; Maya Lin, the world's most famous architect who designed The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C.

Sad, but true, these are not in our social study textbooks... As the future of this nation, I feel ashamed if none of us knows this well as nobody has taught us. Also, the kids who made those disrespectful statements would never know these.

Again, I am here today because I strongly support that more Chinese-American contributions to our country should be added in our social study courses. And I strongly believe that by becoming more educated in this field, our young generation will respect each other, appreciate each other, reunite and stand strong in the future.

Thank you for your time!

**Dear Board of Education,**

**My name is Alice Chen, I'm a rising 8th grader in Folly Quarter Middle School. Today I am testifying for 1080 education equity policy for Asian American teenagers mental health disparity.**

**Asian American students always find it hard in school times with their stress and identities. As we're Asian Americans, we find it difficult to recognize our identity. We don't feel we're Asian, but we don't feel as if we're American either.**

**This is getting worse with the coronavirus Pandemic. Children staying at home often feel bored, depressed, and lonely. Students also feel the pressure from parents and the stress from school. There has been long-lasting stereotypes against Asian populations. People have high expectations that we are supposed to be extremely smart, even during this pandemic.**

**Hard work is overshadowed by ethnicity. Our parents are worried about the racial quota system that raises the bar of college admission for Asian American students. Even though we are stereotyped that we are supposedly smart and work hard to get where we are, a lot of us don't go up to that "extremely smart" Stereotype. Most of us are just normal regular people!**

**We learned the tragedy that recently a Chinese American student committed suicide from Thomas Jefferson High school. The suicide rate is increasing for Asian American teenagers of age 15 to 24 according to National Center for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDPC)<sup>#1</sup>. The Washington Post has reported that the students in High Achieving schools are now "at risk"<sup>#2</sup>. In Howard County, we have a lot of high achieving schools, so helping and raising attention to students especially Asian American teens mental health will help them feel more safe and more supported. But we found there is a disparity in the school system which lacks attention and support for Asian American teens and parents.**

**We hope the Board of Education will take this into account in the 1080 policy and implement practical actions, such as adding Asian American history into school history curriculum about our cultural origins to help students find their identity in the melting pot of America.**

**Thank you very much for your time and support!**

**Reference:**

**#1. The suicide rate is increasing for Asian American teenagers.**

<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/suicide/index.html>

<https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=4&lvlid=54#1>

<https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/ethnicity-health/asian-american/suicide>

**#2. The Washington Post - Students in High Achieving schools are now named an "at risk" group, Jennifer Breheny Wallace, September 26, 2019.**

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2019/09/26/students-high-achieving-schools-are-now-named-an-at-risk->

[group/?fbclid=IwAR3ma1zKWLLwOjfKZs7Wz2SpyfCIWiQmvRrdakGaFy\\_8W6FO1zDZyA-QsXI](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2019/09/26/students-high-achieving-schools-are-now-named-an-at-risk-group/?fbclid=IwAR3ma1zKWLLwOjfKZs7Wz2SpyfCIWiQmvRrdakGaFy_8W6FO1zDZyA-QsXI)

Dear Board Members,

Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity to testify. My name is Lily Peng and I am a rising freshman at River Hill High School. I am here to testify in support of the Howard County Equity Collaborative Policy recommendations. I am president of the Howard County Chinese School Student Government Association which represents 1700 enrollments.

It cannot be overemphasized how important racial equity is for educational outcome. In fact, according to Cornell University, 43% of the education gap between black and white students is due to racial disparities.

Especially with recent events, racial equity is now more important than ever, and if done right the 1080 plan can make great steps towards improving racial equity.

In order to ensure it is done right, it is especially important to make sure all minorities and all people being discriminated against are included. I say this, because in Section 3 about Standards, you list the need for some culturally responsive and relevant curriculum, and then specify which groups you will include. It is critical that you not only include the groups you mentioned, but also other groups which may face discrimination which is more swept under the rug as well. The standards you give should be incredibly specific, as if you only state that you will represent those that are “underrepresented” it leaves room for question as for what the word underrepresented means and what the threshold of that word means. It is critical to further specify word such as that.

Furthermore, cultural appreciation is vital, and the Equity Policy takes steps towards working for cultural appreciation. Too long have students been criticized for their culture and teased for traditions that they hold dear. In a survey within the Chinese-American community, which represents 1700 registered Chinese School students and their associated families, 92% of people responded that they believe HCPSS should expand its curriculum to enhance Asian American history. Many students, not just limited to Asians, have been targeted for even bringing food from their culture to school, and have felt shame for eating food which they felt was “unconventional” compared to what their peers had for lunch. Educating students about culture as stated in your Section 3 about standards is key towards allowing students to feel comfortable in their own skin.

Equity is key towards ensuring that every student gets an equal chance to thrive and succeed, so on behalf of everyone we represent, we ask that you approve the Howard County Equity Collaborative Policy Recommendations. Thank you.



Testimony provided to the  
Howard County Board of Education on  
Policy 1080

August 18, 2020

Good Evening. I am Joan Driessen, Executive Director, of the Association of Community Services (ACS). We are proud to include the Howard County School System as an ACS Member and proud of the strong partnership that exists between the school system and our other 137 member organizations and 36 community advocates. Working together we can continue to make Howard County a place of opportunity for all residents. Toward this end, ACS has chosen to be an active participant in the Howard County Equity Collaborative.

This community believes in the power of education. Families move here because of our school systems' excellent reputation. The County commits 58% of its General Fund expenditures to HCPSS. Our teachers choose this profession because of the promise it holds to provide all of our children with the opportunity to live full, happy, and productive lives. It is the job of this board and administration to ensure that it is working for all of our children, regardless of their race or ethnicity.

A well-crafted Educational Equity policy has never been more important than now. Systemic racism exists at every level. It is our responsibility to correct it. This policy offers you a powerful opportunity to begin to address it in our school system.

We know there are significant disparities in our school system based on race. One of the most glaring included in the 2018 Making the Case for Equity Report by the Local Children's Board was that Black students in our school system were being suspended at a rate 5.75 times higher than White students. What are the factors that lead to this disparity and how can we address them to ensure that Black/African American students have the same access to opportunity in our school system as White students?

**The Equity Collaborative has outlined in Section IV, the Data Reporting/Accountability section, the data that needs to be collected and how it should be used to identify gaps in educational outcomes, programming, supports, and interventions.** Ensure that this is included in the implementation plan and that it is used to steer this highly respected school system to truly serve the needs of all our children

**Data that is disaggregated by race must be collected, publicly reported, and used responsibly to find the cause of problems and how they can be addressed.** Making this data **easily accessible** to the public will allow us to have well-informed discussions of needed changes and go a long way toward developing trust and confidence.

This data needs to be used at the aggregate level by the administration, but also at the school level by principals, counselors and teachers. There should be a feedback loop developed that monitors this. We teach our children to listen to what the data is telling you and use it to develop your strategy. We need

to model this. School improvement teams should be analyzing why racial disparities exist, honestly addressing how bias contributes to it and developing strategies to address them. **Yearly, achievable equity goals should be established, and progress regularly monitored. These goals should be established by a team that not only consists of school staff, but student representatives of groups that are disproportionately impacted and community leaders who represent their interests.**

Policy and Procedures are only important if you use them to steer you to the desired goal. Policy 1080 is designed to move our school system toward one that provides an equitable education for all children - regardless of the color of their skin. That means that we direct attention and resources to provide the supports needed to ensure that those children who need more support, get it. I am sure you agree, the measure of our success is not how well we do the easy stuff, but how we respond to the challenges

Implement the changes that our Equity Collaborative has so thoughtfully proposed. As they have always done, our ACS Members will continue to work with you to eliminate barriers and to ensure that, regardless of their race or ethnicity, that all children have the opportunities and resources they need to thrive. We look forward to continuing our strong partnership with you toward that goal.

Respectfully,

Joan Driessen  
Executive Director  
Association of Community Services of Howard County



Testimony provided to the Howard County Board of Education on Policy 1080  
August 18, 2020

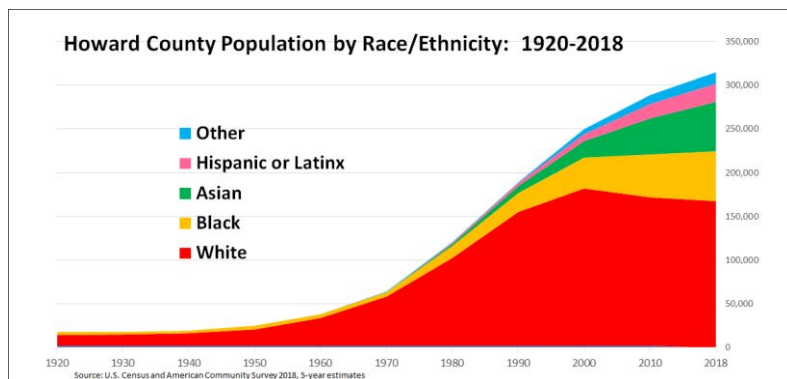
Good evening, my name is Laura Salganik. I am on the Board of Association of Community Services, which as Joan Driessen has explained is an organization of 137 County nonprofits and 36 community advocates. Many of our members work directly with students and their families to help make sure that that when students arrive at school they are prepared to learn. Our members also look to the schools to provide opportunities for the young people and families they work with. Our goals reinforce each other. I am the parent of two graduates of Howard County Schools and a statistician who consulted for many years for the National Center for Education Statistics.

I am here to support the revisions proposed by the Horizon Equity Collaborative, and in particular to speak to the provision in Section IV of the Implementation Procedures that aggregate data broken down by race, ethnicity, gender, grade, and school be presented on the HCPSS website in a searchable and analyzable format.

But first I want to say a few words our experiences at ACS with the value of public data.

For the past several years, I have produced a self-sufficiency indicator report for ACS that includes statistics about finance, housing, food, childcare, and health. This report has become a widely used reference in the County. You can find it at [www.acshoco.org/self-sufficiency-indicators](http://www.acshoco.org/self-sufficiency-indicators). After ACS joined the Howard County Equity Collaborative, we realized that showing indicators separately for different race/ethnicity groups is critically important for understanding what is happening in our County and making good policy decisions. This year, with the support of the Horizon Foundation, we will be adding indicators broken down by race/ethnicity.

In addition, we have just completed a project showing how the race/ethnicity has changed over the years in the County.



During the past year, I shared this chart that shows changes in the County since 1920 with many people. Even they knew the County is changing, there was not one person who failed to say, “Wow” when they saw the chart. Data brought the issue to the forefront, and the picture made an impact. You can find the other charts at [www.acshoco.org/hoco-population-analytics](http://www.acshoco.org/hoco-population-analytics).



Moving back to the schools, I recognize that some of data requested is already available on the HCPSS website, and additional data is available on the Maryland Department of Education website. Some is clearly linked to equity goals and measures. But, to access the data, one often needs to dig, even into lengthy Board reports on the Board documents website or into reports on the Department of Ed website. Board documents include data about race/ethnic breakdown of teachers by school and a very detailed report of discipline actions broken down by race/ethnicity. A Department of Education report provides discipline information for every school in the state, again by race/ethnicity. But this is not what I call accessible. It isn't reasonable to expect parents and others concerned about schools to locate this information in order to engage in the public discussion of it. And many of the items noted by the Equity Collaborative aren't available on the web at all. Some may not even be collected. What we are asking for is additional items to be added and a web interface that makes the data easily findable and accessible for all.

One of the objections I have heard is that more data can't be public because of privacy and confidentiality. I know this is a concern and a serious one. I understand well that there is a great deal of data – including what can be used in the school improvement planning process – that cannot be made public. But this should not be a reason for shutting off discussions. As I've noted, some of the data being requested is already on the web. It is already public. And there is absolutely no reason why additional data could not be made public without violating important privacy protections.

Won't so much public data just undermine confidence in the schools, some might ask. The answer is if data transparency is accompanied by a commitment to continuous improvement, it will grow the public's confidence and we can celebrate achievements and face challenges together. This process will ultimately improve our schools, which is the point of all of this.

I urge the you approach this topic with “with the fierce urgency of now” (to quote the HCPSS website), with a goal of rapidly increasing the amount and transparency of equity-related data on the website, and with a mindset that many new and creative approaches are possible – including adding more graphics that illustrate progress and challenges and create “wows” when people look at them, just as ACS's population chart has.

I would like to close on a different note – not one from statistics. Children learn more than reading, writing, and other subjects at school. School is the first place they go where they learn what the world is like outside of their family, and it is the place outside of their family where they spend the most time. If they learn at school that people treat them better or worse than others, that is a lesson that will affect how they behave for the rest of their lives, just as much as learning to read and write. I recognize that schools often deal with challenges that are created by problems elsewhere, but schools shouldn't be a place adds to those problems. That is the reason I am here this evening. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Laura Salganik  
Board Secretary  
Association of Community Services of Howard County



AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE  
OF HOWARD COUNTY, MD

Madam Chair Ellis, Board Members and Dr. Martirano,

I am Larry Walker, president of the African American Community Roundtable of Howard County. The AACR member organizations represent over 10,000 people. The vast majority are well educated registered voters because we promote the importance of voting and voter education. Given the confluence of events in 2020, coronavirus, murders of innocent black people at the hands of vigilantes and law enforcement the president directing unidentified gestapos to disrupt peaceful protest and promising to undermine the upcoming election we will be actively encouraging our community to get out the vote.

The AACR is part of the Howard County Equity Collaborative and fully participated in crafting and totally support the Collaboratives Policy 1080 recommendations. Personally, my nearly fifty years in Howard County as a student, parent and now community advocate give me a broad perspective from which to speak regarding the urgency of a strong Educational Equity Policy. From the days of Brown vs. Board of Education until now, educational equity has continued to be an elusive experience for African American students in Howard County. The recommendations we are offering will go a long way to finally bringing true equity into our public-school system. These recommendations include but are not limited to:

1. Setting yearly, achievable equity goals and a line-item budget to achieve them. At least one of the goals should be racial equity related.
2. Hire, retain and promote teachers that reflect the racial and ethnic makeup of the county's student population.
3. Implement a culturally relevant curriculum that includes perspectives of marginalized and underrepresented groups and require annual equity training for all teachers.
4. Collect and report relevant data that is disaggregated by race and other factors. And make this data publicly available.

The year 2020 will mark a dramatic turning point in the history of this community and nation, I hope you will be on the right side of that history. The African American Community Roundtable and our 10,000 members urge you to strengthen Policy 1080 with the Howard County Equity Collaborative's suggested changes.

Sincerely,  
Larry Walker

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AFRICAN AMERICAN  
COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE  
OF HOWARD COUNTY, MD

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August 17, 2020

Ms. Mavis Ellis, Chairman  
Howard County Board of Education  
10910 Clarksville Pike  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21042

Good evening,

My name is Tracey L. Williams and I am the First Vice-President of the African American Community Roundtable of Howard County. The African American Community Roundtable is an organization comprised of churches, sororities, fraternities, and community organizations committed to improving the lives of African Americans in Howard County. Our membership of approximately 10,000 people, serves as a unified voice for the African American Community.

The AACR is a part of the Howard County Equity Collaborative which advocates for policies and practices that reduce disparities and promote racial equity and social change.

Outside of my work with the AACR and the Equity Collaborative, I serve as a Pupil Personnel Worker for Howard County Public School System, I am a parent of two successful graduates of Mt. Hebron High School, and I am a community organizer.

I work almost seven days a week with youth and families whose lives will be enriched through the implementation of an Equity Policy within our school system. I am often faced with situations where I must go out of my way as a school system employee to advocate for the needs of students of color, homeless students and students living in poverty. There are often preconceived notions about these children and how they do not fit into the mold of our wealthy County. These students have the same potential to succeed (if given the right supports and encouragement) as other students. A well implemented Equity plan can help our staff learn to provide all students with these supports. To that end, I am asking that the Board of Education accept the changes presented by the Equity Collaborative to make policy 1080 a stronger and more comprehensive policy that will have a greater chance of eliminating inequality and creating a system where all children have an opportunity to succeed.

Sincerely,

Tracey L. Williams

Tracey L. Williams, LCSW-C, PPW

During my senior year of highschool after being referred to as a racial slur, Two teachers chose to make my experience a spectacle. In a situation where adults in custody of a student had an opportunity for a teachable moment, they chose to showcase my experience as a laughable incident

As a young and impressionable student under the care and watch of a school system and it's faculty, my degradation was downplayed. So much so, that I was mocked the remainder of my time there.

There was a missed opportunity to teach right from wrong. That ball was dropped by the teacher and by extension the school. Not only dropped, but utterly mishandled.

A curriculum that ignores social justice, is a flawed curriculum. The educators tasked with teaching it, perpetuate a broken system. If you think that's harsh, do better.

An environment that nurtures or protects racial disparities is tainted and unsatisfactory. The educators tasked with maintaining it, preserve a toxic establishment. If you think that's harsh, do better.

A community that supports oppressive discourse and exploits is imbalanced and prejudiced. The educators tasked with sustaining it, encourage a corrupt institution. If you think that's harsh, do better.

Praxedes A Osong

8/9/2020

## 1080 Educational Equity Policy Testimony

Good evening! My name is Lanlan Xu, a parent of two HCPSS students. I am also a member of Howard County Chinese School, a nonprofit educational organization with 22 years of history and over 1,700 members. I am here to testify in support of the revisions proposed by Howard County Equity Collaborative to the 1080 Educational Equity Policy.

I recently heard a story from a friend: Once upon a time, a man asked God about the difference between heaven and hell. God showed the man two doors. Inside the first one, there was a large round table with a large pot of stew. It smelled delicious, but the people sitting at the table were all skinny and sickly and miserable. They were holding spoons, but because the handles were much longer than their arms, they could not get the food into their mouths. And God said: "You have seen Hell." Behind the 2<sup>nd</sup> door, the setup is exactly the same. But everyone was nourished and plump, laughing and talking. The difference? People in this room were using the long spoons to feed each other. God said: "This is heaven."

The moral of the story is self-explanatory: Only focusing on one's own needs can create an environment that is harmful to all. Collaboration and love and attention to each other's needs makes everyone better off. To create an equitable system where every student has the resources and support to be successful is exactly what 1080 sets out to do. And for that I applaud the school system's efforts.

However, the current policy draft falls short on specifying how to implement a culturally relevant curriculum and increase the diversity of the teaching workforce.

As a Chinese American, I immediately recognized the story line when my friend was telling it. Only in the Chinese version I grew up with chopsticks were used instead of spoons. When I was googling the parable afterwards, I found out that similar stories appear in Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and also different cultures that we are so proud of having right here in Howard County. As our community becomes increasingly diverse, curricula should be updated to be more inclusive so that all students' identities and experiences are represented and affirmed. Concrete procedures need to be put in place to hire, retain and promote teachers that reflect the make-up of the student body.

I urge the BOE to implement the changes suggested by the Howard County Equity Collaborative to eliminate inequities across the system and to foster more inclusive school communities.  
Thank you!

Dear Mr. Superintendent and Board of Education Members:

As a father of three kids in our schools, I am here to testify in support of the Howard County Equity Collaborative policy recommendations. The policy comes timely to address this critical issue in our society. Is it a silver bullet to address everything? No, but it serves as a milestone for how far we have progressed and how much gap between our lofty idea and the complex reality.

Today I am sharing my perspective as an immigrant, a Chinese American. In 2010, I moved to Howard County because of its diversity and quality education and I have experienced little racism among my coworkers, neighbors, and friends. However, I had unpleasant experiences in other places. I was yelled at by a stranger for no reason in an elevator in New York City, the second day after the Virginia Tech shooting tragedy. I am not linked to that event in any way except my Asian face. Quite often I ask myself why there is discrimination, bias, even racism as most people I interact are very nice and considerate. If people see you as an individual and a human being sharing the same basic needs and emotions, they would hardly have biased and racist attitudes. However, people feel threatened by fears and hatred created by some irresponsible media and politicians, some people will take the bait and become biased and racists if he/she belongs to a different race. I have read many news reports and stories that quite often oversimplify, dehumanize, even demonize one group using cherry-picking stories. As a microcosm of society, the school is the place that students build their own moral compass and learn ways to interact with each other as citizens.

I have to admit that my kids do experience microaggression a few times at schools. Sometimes they internalized as if they did something wrong. We do have the responsibility to take down the barriers, promote mutual understanding among all ethnic groups especially in our young generations. The school curriculum must meet this requirement. It is wonderful to have Native American Studies and African American Studies in our high school curriculum catalog. We need to redefine European American contributions and add Asian American Studies, Hispanic American Studies, Muslim American Studies, etc., to the catalog. Equity shall apply to everyone and include everyone.

Recently I have been following Dr. Wu's youtube channel. He interviewed several graduates who shared their first-hand high school experiences. I highly recommend watching these interviews. Multiple interviewees mentioned that the school curriculum is not diverse enough and the World history and European history are almost the same. The curriculum is developed from the Eurocentric view. We shall take concrete actions to hear students' and communities' voices and add ethnic studies to the school catalog as soon as possible.

Every young American, regardless of their race, ethnicity and skin color, can pursue their unbounded dreams without any fear and hesitation. I hope that this policy becomes one step stone to have this dream realized. Thank you!

**AGENCY: EQUITY4HC**  
**Oral Statement for Policy 1080 Public Forum – August 18, 2020**  
**Submitted By: Dawnette Banks, Ph.D.**

Good evening, my name is Dr. Dawnette Banks and I'm representing Equity4HC, based in Columbia, MD. I'd like to first extend a thank you to the HCPSS Board of Education for hosting this public forum, for delaying the vote on Policy 1080 until September 10, 2020, and for incorporating some of Equity4HC's previous recommendations for 1080 into the updated version, dated July 9, 2020. As we continue to put our hands to the plow in moving forward, there are some additional opportunities for improvement that I would like to bring to your attention.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made the deep inequities that have already existed in our education system all the more apparent. Now more than ever, we must ensure that our students and their families remain connected and supported. One of the ways to do that is to make sure that this equity policy is equitably accessible and clearly communicated to families from marginalized backgrounds. This means that this policy and all parts of it should be exhaustively transparent, easily accessible, and easily understood. A couple of barriers to equitable access and clear communication are: 1. Policy 1080 references numerous policies without including embedded hyperlinks, appropriate footnotes, or an appendix directing readers to the referenced policy location and/or content; and 2. The Implementation Procedures section is disjunctive to the organization of the policy section that precedes it. The Implementation Procedures section does not reference the specific sections of the policy document that each of the implementation procedures addresses. These issues create barriers in reader access and full comprehension of Policy 1080, which makes the policy deficient of exhaustive transparency.

Also in the context of exacerbated inequities we are realizing during the COVID-19 pandemic, Policy 1080 seeks to intentionally recruit, employ, promote, support, and retain a diverse workforce of highly qualified educators that reflect the diversity of the student population. However, it is equally important to ensure that this diversified workforce of highly qualified teachers are equitably distributed and represented throughout all levels of the school system. To illustrate, having a diverse workforce that is representative of the student population overall is not the same as having a diverse workforce representative of the student population within each individual school building. These opportunities to strengthen the language, intention, transparency, and implementation of Policy 1080 are further detailed in the Equity4HC written testimony. Thank you.





## **Educational Equity Policy 1080 Public Hearing August 18, 2020**

### **Position: Support with Amendments**

Equity4HC provides support to underserved populations and advances racial equity in the policies, institutions, and culture of Howard County, MD. We are a growing organization that is collaborating with many organizations and individuals to advance our mission. Members of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Board of Education are familiar with our ongoing support of racial and additional forms of equity in public education, which continues today in this public hearing on Educational Equity Policy 1080 (herein referred to as 1080).

First and foremost, we thank you for agreeing to hold a public hearing today and delaying the vote on 1080 until September 10<sup>th</sup> after previously planning to vote on it earlier in the summer. It was important to slow down the passage of 1080 and allow for public input in order to take into account the fact that the world has drastically changed since the COVID-19 pandemic and recent racial justice movements that grew out of the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and so many more people; it would have been disingenuous to put forth any policy on equity without taking the inequities going on in the world into account.

We would also like to thank you for incorporating some of our previous recommendations for 1080 into the current version, dated July 9, 2020. As we progress forward, we must emphasize that there is more work to be done on 1080 to ensure that it is, in fact, an equity policy. In many regards, the foundation of good action in a system lies with the policy, therefore, we need to ensure that 1080 is a solid, well-built foundation that can support the work that will come next. An equity policy that has holes in it or is weakened will cause further harm to the very people it seeks to support and protect. Therefore, we must be deliberate and precise in crafting a strong equity policy that is clear about definitions, terminology, and values, is appropriately funded with line-item allocations, and has mechanisms to ensure accountability in upholding the policy and implementation procedures.

Generally speaking, our recommendations and amendments focus on the framework of 1080, access to important information within the policy, and accurate, equitable language throughout the policy. The following pages of this testimony detail the exact recommendations and amendments we propose based on the July 9, 2020 version of 1080. Individual members of Equity4HC will highlight specific areas of our recommendations and amendments in our individual testimonies during the public hearing to further explain their importance.

Howard County's Strategic Call to Action (SCTA) emphasizes "the fierce urgency of now." Now is exactly the time to take this important step of building and passing a strong 1080 policy that will allow the vision of the SCTA to become a reality. This is the next right thing we need to do to uphold our commitments to making connections that value and empower students, faculty, staff, and communities to achieve the successes we desire. We have a tremendous opportunity to



be a trendsetter with 1080. Very few school systems in this country have educational equity policies, therefore, we have the opportunity to be a model for jurisdictions in Maryland and the rest of the country.

The following pages detail all of our recommendations and amendments to 1080 based on the July 9, 2020 version that has been posted on the HCPSS website.

Thank you for your time and work on 1080. We look forward to assisting in any way we can as we strive for a strong, thorough 1080 policy.

Sincerely,

*Daniel Burns*

Daniel Burns, CEO  
Equity4HC  
<https://equity4hc.com/>

## **Recommendations and Amendments: July 9, 2020 Version of 1080 Educational Equity Policy**

Note: All recommended additions are highlighted in yellow. All recommended deletions are highlighted in teal. Special notes are highlighted in green.

### **1080 Policy**



General Recommendation: The entire document references a plethora of policies without including hyperlinks, appropriate footnotes, or an appendix directing readers to the policy locations and/or content, particularly in the list of references, noted as “VII. References” on page 9 of the policy. This creates a barrier in reader access and full comprehension of Policy 1080, which makes the policy deficient of exhaustive transparency.

### Pg. 1

- Policy Value Statement, Paragraph 1: The Board of Education of Howard County believes that educational equity is an inherent basic human right and must shape all school system policies, procedures, and practices...The Board believes it is the shared responsibility of employees, parents, community stakeholders, and students to work towards educational equity along with us.
- Policy Value Statement, Paragraph 2: The Board acknowledges systemic racism, implicit and explicit bias, institutional barriers, and other discriminatory practices that have caused opportunity gaps, resulting in inequitable outcomes for students and employees. As such, the Board is committed to providing all students with a dynamic and educational program that nurtures their cognitive, social, and emotional social/emotional well-being, and affirms their identity and experience, in order to maximize each student’s individual potential...We mandate addressing eliminating disparities in educational outcomes as a priority in each school, including but not limited to, access to advanced coursework, appropriate course placement, identification for specialized services (including 504/IEP and gifted and talented education), discipline, suspension/expulsion practices, achievement, attendance rates, Grade Point Averages (GPA), and graduation rates between student groups.

### Pg. 2

II. Purpose. The purpose of this policy is to establish an education system that identifies eliminates expectations related to the identification and elimination of disparities for HCPSS students and employees and in education outcomes.

III. A. Access to a multiculturally culturally responsive and relevant curriculum that provides meaningful and dynamic school experiences are essential to postsecondary success.

III.A.1. Promote student voice and provide the necessary resources and information to support youth in becoming active and engaged participants in their academic experience.

III.A.2. Provide multiculturally culturally responsive and relevant curriculum with inclusive of perspectives from Black, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Latinx Latino, LGBTQ+, indigenous peoples, individuals with disabilities, and other additional marginalized groups excluded in the current curriculum. The curriculum will use differentiated approaches and resources to meet the needs of every student in accordance with Policy 8000 Curriculum.

III.A.5. Apply an equity lens during allocation of resources and academic supports for students, families, schools, faculty, staff, and communities to ensure individual student success and growth.

III.A.6. Identify and remove institutional barriers that could prevent students from equitably accessing educational opportunities in all schools. Removal of institutional barriers specifically



includes developing and enforcing accountability measures for individual who operationalize institutional barriers with oversight by an independent entity dedicated to ensuring accountability of educational equity.

### Pg. 3

#### III.B. School Climate and Cultures Affecting School Success

III.B.3. Create and maintain a culture in which students, employees, and families are encouraged to self-reflect on assumptions, biases, and beliefs, in order to promote understanding, respect, dignity, acceptance, and positive interactions among all individuals and groups.

III.B.4. Nurture healthy relationships with staff, faculty, students, and community, through a restorative culture and student-centered resolution practices.

III.B.6. Evaluate and continuously improve course classroom placement practices and student scheduling to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion exists in all learning environments.

III.B.8. Identify and eliminate disparities disproportionality in discipline practices by uplifting and nurturing healthy relationships, creating a just and equitable learning environment, repairing harm, and responding effectively to conflict. Regardless of social identifiers, c Consequences shall be are fair, equitable, consistent, and reflective of a restorative culture, and shall not to be determined based on real or perceived social identifiers.

### Pg. 4

III.C.1. Intentionally recruit, employ, promote, support, and retain a diverse workforce of highly qualified educators that reflect the diversity of the student population and ensure equitable distribution and representation of this diverse workforce throughout all levels of the school system. In accordance with Policy 7000 Workforce Diversity, an innovative recruitment and retention Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Plan for teachers of color and other diverse staff, is a high priority for HCPSS. Recruitment will include an assessment of candidates' biases and a determination of the capacity for self-awareness and ongoing education in areas of bias.

### Pg. 5

III.C.5. Train, and support, and protect school-based Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaisons (DEILs) who will work with school administrators and their teams to support the attainment of school improvement goals. Support and protection measures for DEILs will include accountability for peers who engage in peer bullying and racism as DEILs engage in their trained work.

III.C.6. Work collaboratively with parents, community, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Howard County Executive, the Howard County Council, local law enforcement agencies, and other county agencies, community groups, business organizations, bargaining units, and other additional stakeholders to increase equity and inclusion for students and staff.

IV.A. The Superintendent/designee will oversee the development of a Local Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan. The plan includes a needs assessment that identifies areas of focus, provides equity performance accountability measures, and further outlines implementation strategies that address educational equity. Furthermore, the development



of the strategic plan must begin within 90 days of the passage of this policy and incorporate multiple opportunities for student, faculty, staff, and community input.

IV.B. The Superintendent/designee will provide quarterly reports to update the Board on educational equity progress through information items, memorandums and board reports that include disaggregated student and staffing data. These reports shall be posted on the HCPSS website within five (5) business days after the end of each quarter.

IV.C. The Superintendent/designee will propose an annual budget that allocates resources in a manner that promotes the principles of education equity. The equity information will be part of each program budget where applicable and include an analysis of resources that address the needs of marginalized groups.

IV.D. The Department of Information Technology will collaborate with HCPSS offices to maintain a longitudinal data system that contains disaggregated student data across academics, discipline, and school climate for district, program, and school analysis and evaluation of educational equity, and is accessible to stakeholders.

IV.E. The Department of Curriculum and Instruction will develop a culturally multicultural responsive curriculum that is inclusive and reflective of perspectives which have been excluded, distorted, or minimized historically and currently. Mandatory Professional Learning will be provided to educators to build the capacity to understand and deliver culturally proficient multicultural aware instruction.

## Pg. 6

IV.H. HCPSS principals will include students, parents, families and community members, in decision-making groups that impact school culture, climate, and the academic success of students when possible as often as possible.

VI.I. All employees will engage in and be evaluated on the implementation of self-reflective practices aligned to HCPSS educational equity goals to ensure their effectiveness and positive impact on students and fellow co-workers.

IV.K. The Superintendent/designee will review this policy at least every three years annually through 2025 and every two years thereafter, and recommend it for revision as necessary.

VI.A. ~~Culturally Proficient~~ Multicultural Aware Instruction – An inside out approach to teaching and learning in which educators surface their own assumptions, biases, beliefs, and behaviors, in order to better instruct their students. ~~Culturally proficient~~ Multicultural aware practices are guided by the tools of cultural proficiency humility. [Note: Every use of “Culturally Proficient Instruction” thereafter needs to be amended to “Multicultural Aware Instruction.”]

VI.B. ~~Cultural~~ Multicultural Responsiveness – Pedagogy that values the strengths students’ and educators’ cultural backgrounds, and recognizes the importance of including many cultures in all aspects of learning through equitable and inclusive practices that promote academic excellence and cultural diversity. ~~Cultural~~ Multicultural responsiveness is grounded in relationships and plays an essential role in how individuals communicate and receive information. [Note: Every use of “Cultural Responsiveness” thereafter needs to be amended to “Multicultural Responsiveness.”]

V. The Superintendent will is authorized to develop standard operating appropriate procedures to implement this policy.





**Pg. 7**

VI.D. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaison (DEIL) – A leadership role within a school that facilitates school efforts to support diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. The liaison, is selected by the principal using a standard set of guidelines, receives training, and support, and financial compensation from the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) and participates in a district-wide network of DEILs. The liaison leads their school-wide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Team comprised of administrators, faculty, staff, students, families, and interested community partners that work collaboratively to implement school diversity, equity, and inclusion practices.

VI.F. Equity Lens – The impact on all marginalized students groups is addressed when considering any program, practice, decision, or action, with a strategic focus on marginalized student groups identifying and eliminating potential barriers. Real or perceived differences in race/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion/beliefs, mental and physical ability, age, and national origin do not determine advantage or disadvantage in programs, practices, decisions, and actions. An equity lens includes anti-racism and anti-oppression analyses for ensuring that the aforementioned real or perceived social identifiers do not determine advantage or disadvantage.

VI.J. Inclusion –The process by which a school ensures that all individuals are engaged participants in the learning environment and community. All students, families, faculty, and staff members feel valued, respected, appreciated and involved. Individuals see their unique identities reflected in all facets of education including staffing, curriculum, instruction, and activities, HCPSS media communications, and school learning materials (e.g., textbooks, movies, handouts).

VI.K. Institutional Barriers – The systemic written and unwritten policies, procedures or and practices that deny access to educational opportunities or and systematically disadvantage students, and families and employees based on real or perceived social identifiers.

**Pg. 8**

VI.O. Racism – The belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person's social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics. Racial separatism is the belief, most of the time based on racism, that different races should remain segregated and apart from one another. This includes systemic racism which is the interpersonal expressions of prejudices and discrimination and the systematic distribution of resources, power, and opportunity for the benefit of people who are white to the exclusion of people of color, rooted in specious beliefs that skin color determines certain social, moral, and physical traits of superiority for white people and inferiority for people who are not white.

VI.P. Restorative Culture – An approach that emphasizes building relationships. When there is a need to repair harm caused by conflict and wrongdoing, restorative justice provides an opportunity for everyone impacted by an incident to come together in a safe space trusting, empowered space to address their feelings and needs, take responsibility for actions/words, and reach a mutually agreed upon resolution that heals, promotes accountability, and restores relationships.

**Pg. 9**



VI. R. Student Voice – A belief and a process to listen, learn, and lead with students, in order to increase student agency in their educational experience. The process and instructional approaches/techniques value and incorporate the beliefs, interests, perspectives, cultures, passions, and ambitions of students, and actively engage students who may not regularly participate in processes such as this one.

VI.S. Racial Separatism - Racial separatism is the belief, most of the time based on racism, that different races should remain segregated and apart from one another.

### Implementation Procedures

#### **General Recommendations:**

- The implementation procedures section is disjunctive to the organization of the policy document that precedes it. The implementation procedures should reference the specific sections of the policy document that each of the implementation procedures addresses.
- The entire document references a plethora of policies without including hyperlinks, appropriate footnotes, or an appendix directing readers to the policy locations and/or content, particularly on pages 4 and 5 in sections V.B.1 and V.B.2. This creates a barrier in reader access and full comprehension of Policy 1080, which makes the policy deficient of exhaustive transparency.

#### **Pg. 1**

I.A. The Superintendent/designee will recommend priorities and develop procedures for differentiating intentionally allocating line item school funding to resources for equity.

I.A.2. Mental health and social and emotional supports behavioral needs.

I.B. Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) schools and offices will seek grants and partnerships to supplement funding for innovative programs and supports to decrease opportunity gaps eliminate inequities.

I.E. Principals will utilize data to request and advocate for community and Central Office supports, based on the unique and diverse needs of the school population.

#### **Pg. 2**

II.A. The Division of Academics, in collaboration with the Division of School Management and Instructional Leadership, will develop equitable placement processes that utilize student input, parent input, teacher input and multiple data points to ensure equitable access to advanced coursework. Parents will have the opportunity to examine multiple data points and submit their recommendations for their child to the decision making course placement review team/designee to ensure equitable access for their child. When appropriate, parents and students will have the right to select coursework for placement and enroll without the course placement review team's/designee's approval.

II.B. The Division of Academics will work with school leadership teams and communities to communicate with encourage families about the importance of to engage in early reading and access the programming available to support student success from Birth-Grade 12.



II.D. The Division of Academics and Division of School Management and Instructional Leadership will work collaboratively to examine current supports, and determine innovative resources, and implement new supports for increasing advanced course placement and graduation rates for all students.

III.A. The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) will plan and facilitate training and development related to HCPSS educational equity goals. The professional learning will cover such areas as anti-racism, bias, multicultural proficiency awareness and responsiveness, equity facilitation and leadership, equity-focused leadership for district and site-based leaders, common aggressive incidents, microaggressions, restorative justice practices, trauma-informed/healing-centered practices, student voice, discipline and suspension practices, determinations for advanced course placement, and other additional diversity, equity, and inclusion-related professional development.

III.B. ODEI will consult with HCPSS divisions, and offices, and parents to develop and implement criteria measurements to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of on initiatives and programs that to support HCPSS educational equity goals.

### Pg. 3

IV.A. School Support Team (SST) will establish, implement, and maintain a school improvement planning process that requires district SST school improvement teams to:

IV.A.1.f. Disproportionality in suspensions.

IV.A.1.g. GPA

IV.A. 2. Perform root cause analysis that includes cultural and structural factors, and is careful not to not perpetuate racism/racist ideas.

IV.A. 4. Track targets and milestones to close eliminate inequities equity gaps.

IV.A.5 Modify school improvement plans as needed to support closing eliminating inequitable educational outcomes.

IV.B. School-based leadership teams will perform equity-focused data analysis to identify and eliminate current gaps disparities in educational outcomes, programming, supports, and interventions in order to develop and implement school improvement plans.

IV.C. Annual reporting of staff data to the Board will include staff demographics, recruitment initiatives, successful retention efforts for all teachers, of color disaggregated by race/ethnicity, and additional innovative strategies utilized by the Division of Human Resources and Professional Development to recruit and retain a diverse workforce. Annual reporting must include specific recruitment initiatives and strategies for teachers of color.

IV.E. HCPSS will establish an independent oversight committee comprised of community members, parents, students, alumni, faculty, staff, and additional relevant stakeholders to analyze school site and school system data trends and hold individuals accountable for failure to comply with this policy. The independent oversight committee must be formed within 90 days of the passage of this policy and has the authority to recommend annual equity goals to the Superintendent/designee.

V.A. Individuals who have been subjected to, or observe behaviors that are in violation of this policy, are first encouraged to respectfully share the concern/issue with the person or persons directly involved, in a manner that reflects a restorative approach. If it is physically, socially, and/or emotionally unsafe for the individual to make the first approach, one is encouraged to





seek the assistance of the school's DEIL for assistance in resolving the concern/issue with the person or persons directly involved in the situation(s).

#### Pg. 4

VI.A. **Multicultural Cultural Proficiency Awareness** – The ongoing process of becoming knowledgeable of one's assumptions, biases, values, beliefs, own cultural identities, as well as the cultures of others in order to foster an appreciation, understanding, and respect for varying cultural expressions that exist in the actions and interactions of an organization. **Multicultural Culturally proficient awareness** practices are guided by the tools of cultural **proficiency humility**. [Note: Every use of "Cultural Proficiency" thereafter needs to be amended to "Multicultural Awareness."]

VI.B. **Microaggressions Common Aggressive Incidents** – Everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their **marginalized group membership real or perceived differences**.

VI.C. **Root Cause Analysis** – A process by which an issue is examined by going deeper into why the problem exists, **being careful not perpetuate racism and stereotypes in identifying causes**. Causal factors contributing to the issue are explored to assist with identification of action steps that address the original cause of the issue and not just the symptoms or outcomes.

#### Pg. 5

VI.E. **Trauma-Informed/Healing-Centered Practices** – Practices that reflect an understanding of the basics of how adverse childhood experiences, **common aggressive incidents, and additional traumatic experiences** affect a person throughout their life and focus on collective approaches to healing.



BOARD OF EDUCATION

**POLICY 1080  
EDUCATIONAL EQUITY**

Effective: ~~July 1, 2020~~  
September 10, 2020

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**Policy Outline**

- I. Policy Value Statement
- II. Purpose
- III. Standards
  - A. Academic Achievement and Growth
  - B. School Climate and Culture Affecting School Success
  - C. Staff Capacity for Educational Equity
- IV. Responsibilities
- V. Delegation of Authority
- VI. Definitions
- VII. References
- VIII. History

**I. Policy Value Statement**

The Board of Education of Howard County believes that educational equity is a basic human right and must shape all school system policies, procedures, and practices. The Board prioritizes educational equity by identifying and removing institutional barriers that obstruct access and opportunity to a high quality education for all students. The Board believes it is the shared responsibility of employees, parents, community stakeholders, and students to work towards educational equity.

The Board acknowledges systemic racism, implicit and explicit bias, institutional barriers, and other practices that cause inequitable outcomes for students. **The Board also recognizes that societal factors contribute to disparities in student outcomes and endeavors to provide students with both academic and non-academic supports specific to the student's circumstances so that all students meet their highest academic potential.** As such, the Board is committed to providing all students with a dynamic and educational program that nurtures their social/emotional well-being, and affirms their identity and experience, in order to maximize each student's individual potential. We believe it is our responsibility to advance the skills, talents, abilities, and experiences that make each student unique. The unique characteristics of our students and staff are valued as strengths that contribute to the overall school community. We mandate addressing disparities in educational outcomes **caused by inequitable access to resources and opportunities, implicit and explicit biases, and other discriminatory practices** as a priority in each school, including but not limited to, access to advanced coursework, identification for specialized services, discipline, suspension/expulsion practices, achievement, and graduation rates between student groups.

## II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations related to the identification and elimination of disparities in education outcomes.

## III. Standards

### A. Academic Achievement and Growth

Academic achievement and growth is a high priority for each and every student. Access to a culturally responsive and relevant curriculum that provides meaningful and dynamic school experiences are essential to postsecondary success. In order to actualize this priority, the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) will:

1. Promote student voice and support youth in becoming active and engaged participants in their academic experience.
2. Provide culturally responsive and relevant curriculum with inclusive of, **but not limited to** perspectives from Black, Asian American Pacific Islander, Latino, LGBTQ+, indigenous peoples, individuals with disabilities, and other marginalized groups excluded **or underrepresented** in the current curriculum. The curriculum will **use allow** differentiated approaches and resources to meet the needs of every student in accordance with Policy 8000 Curriculum. **Ethnic studies of major racial and ethnic groups shall be developed and included in the social studies curriculum.**
3. Implement curriculum that teaches students to be global citizens who appreciate and value diverse cultures. As such, the instructional materials used in HCPSS schools reflect **histories**, aspirations, **challenges**, issues, and achievements of persons from diverse social identifiers **and cultural origins**, and incorporate a global perspective in accordance with Policy 8040 Selection of Instructional Materials and Policy 8050 Teaching of Controversial Issues.
4. Provide access and support to dynamic coursework and comparable academic and enrichment programs for all students in order to maximize student learning. A student's English proficiency, disability status, perceived academic ability and/or social identifiers will not limit access and opportunity.
5. Apply an equity lens during allocation of resources and academic supports for students, families, schools, and communities to ensure individual student success and growth.
6. Identify and remove institutional barriers that could prevent students from equitably accessing educational opportunities in all schools.
7. Report academic achievement and growth data disaggregated by available federally accountable student groups to increase transparency and promote access

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and opportunity. All reporting is in compliance with Policy 3060 Student Data Governance and Privacy and Policy 9050 Student Records.

8. Prohibit exclusion from academic programs, extracurricular activities, and services on the basis of a student's social identifiers and address violations through Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination and Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline.

B. School Climate and Culture Affecting School Success

In order for all students to be successful academically, schools must create a safe, welcoming, supportive, and affirming environment. As such, the HCPSS will:

1. Incorporate student voice in school and district level decision making.
2. Build environments that intentionally focus on fostering empathy, developing relationships and upholding dignity for everyone in our schools, offices, and community.
3. Maintain a culture in which students, employees, and families are encouraged to self-reflect on assumptions, biases, and beliefs, in order to promote understanding, respect, dignity, acceptance, and positive interactions among all individuals and groups.
4. Nurture healthy relationships with staff, students, and community, through a restorative culture and student-centered practices.
5. Establish a diverse, equitable, and inclusive student population at all schools. As such, Policy 6010 School Attendance Areas, utilizes demographic data as a factor for setting school attendance areas.
6. Evaluate and continuously improve classroom placement practices and student scheduling to ensure that diversity exists in all learning environments.
7. Maintain a safe and supportive school climate through a multifaceted approach that uplifts positive relationships and culture of belonging, supports mental health needs, and is outlined in accordance with Policy 1040 Safe and Supportive Schools.
8. Identify and eliminate disproportionality in discipline practices by uplifting and nurturing healthy relationships, creating a just and equitable learning environment, repairing harm, and responding effectively to conflict. Regardless of social identifiers, consequences are fair, equitable, consistent, and reflective of a restorative culture.

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9. Leverage the strengths of parents and community partnerships to increase equitable opportunities for students and positively influence the school culture and climate.
10. Provide translation of documents in languages that represent the HCPSS community and sign-language interpretation services to ensure access to information for all families in accordance with Policy 1070 Protections and Supports for Foreign-Born Students and Families and the Americans with Disabilities Act, respectively.
11. Maintain a clean, safe, affirming, and healthy environment at all schools that is conducive to student learning.
12. Report school climate data disaggregated by available federally accountable student groups to track progress towards a healthier and positive climate. All reporting is in compliance with Policy 3060 Student Data Governance and Privacy and Policy 9050 Student Records.
13. Identify patterns of discriminatory practices at all organizational levels. Discriminatory practices are prohibited and addressed through Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination and Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline.

C. Staff Capacity for Educational Equity

A diverse workforce of effective educators is essential to a student's educational experience. All HCPSS employees commit to co-creating a safe and nurturing learning environment and as such, the HCPSS will:

1. Intentionally recruit, employ, promote, support, and retain a diverse workforce of highly qualified educators that reflect the diversity of the student population. In accordance with Policy 7000 Workforce Diversity, an innovative recruitment and retention Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Plan for teachers of color and other diverse staff, is a priority for HCPSS.
2. Identify and remove institutional barriers to recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting a diverse workforce.
3. Prioritize ongoing professional learning experiences focusing on factors influencing educational equity, such as cultural proficiency and responsiveness, implicit bias, explicit bias, and systemic racism.
4. Support educators in building positive cultures, where students and staff feel valued, welcomed, and supported to fulfil their academic and professional potential.

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5. Train and support school-based Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaisons (DEILs) who will work with school administrators and their teams to support the attainment of school improvement goals.
6. Work collaboratively with parents, community, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Howard County Executive, the Howard County Council, law enforcement agencies, and other county agencies, business organizations, bargaining units, and other stakeholders to increase equity and inclusion for students and staff.
7. Prohibit discriminatory employment practices through the implementation of Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination and Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline.

#### IV. Responsibilities

- A. The Superintendent/designee will oversee the development of a Local ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan. The plan includes a needs assessment that identifies areas of focus, provides equity performance accountability measures, and further outlines implementation strategies that address educational equity.
- B. The Superintendent will develop annual, achievable, equity goals. At least one of the goals must be related to advancing racial equity in education.
- C. The Superintendent/designee will propose an annual line-item budget that allocates resources in a manner that promotes the principle of education equity and specifically advances the goals in IV.(B). The equity information will be part of each program budget where applicable and include an analysis of resources that address the needs of marginalized groups.
- D. The Superintendent/designee will update the Board on educational equity progress through information items, memorandums and board reports that include disaggregated student and staffing data.
- E. The Department of Information Technology will collaborate with HCPSS offices to maintain a longitudinal data system that contains disaggregated student data across academics, discipline, and school climate for district, program, and school analysis and evaluation of educational equity.
- F. The Department of Curriculum and Instruction will develop a culturally responsive curriculum that is inclusive and reflective of perspectives which have been excluded or minimized historically and currently. Professional learning will be provided to educators to build the capacity to understand and deliver culturally proficient instruction.

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- G. The Office of Human Resources will develop recruitment, promotion, employment, and retention procedures consistent with the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Plan.
- H. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) will provide training and development aligned to its educational equity goals through district-level and school- based level professional learning opportunities.
- I. HCPSS principals will include students, parents, families and community members, in decision-making groups that impact school culture, climate, and the academic success of students when possible.
- J. All employees will engage in self-reflective practices aligned to HCPSS educational equity goals.
- K. The Superintendent's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group will provide the Superintendent/designee with an assessment of educational equity in HCPSS annually input regarding the creation of educational equity goals, the suggested line-item budget needed to achieve these goals, and an assessment of progress made towards advancing educational equity on an annual basis.
- L. The Superintendent will create an Equity Fund category within the annual HCPSS budget consistent with IV.(C).
- M. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in partnership with the Superintendent/designee will gather public input on the makeup of the Superintendent's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group.
- N. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will gather public input on the development of standards for HCPSS staff equity trainings and associated professional development offerings.
- O. The Superintendent/designee will review this policy at least every three years and recommend it for revision as necessary.

## V. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent is authorized to develop appropriate procedures to implement this policy.

## VI. Definitions

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. Culturally Proficient Instruction - An inside out approach to teaching and learning in which educators surface their assumptions, biases, beliefs, and behaviors, in order to better instruct their students. Culturally proficient practices are guided by the tools of cultural proficiency.

- B. Cultural Responsiveness – Pedagogy that values the strengths students’ and educators’ cultural backgrounds, and recognizes the importance of including culture in all aspects of learning through equitable and inclusive practices. Cultural responsiveness is grounded in relationships and plays an essential role in how individuals communicate and receive information.
- C. Diversity – Recognizing, accepting and respecting that individuals come from many different life experiences with various frames of reference and perspectives. While diversity values unique perspectives and individual differences, it also values the commonalities we all share. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, race/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion/ beliefs, mental and physical ability, age and national origin.
- D. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaison (DEIL) - A leadership role within a school that facilitates school efforts to support diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. The liaison is selected by the principal, receives training and support from ODEI and participates in a district-wide network of DEILs.
- E. Educational Equity – Every student has access and support to the opportunities, resources, and educational rigor they need throughout their educational career to maximize academic success and social/emotional well-being and to view each student’s individual characteristics as valuable.
- F. Equity Lens - The impact on all marginalized students groups is addressed when considering any program, practice, decision, or action, with a strategic focus on marginalized student groups identifying and eliminating potential barriers.
- G. Explicit Bias – Attitudes, beliefs, and actions that are on a conscious level and enacted with negative intent.
- H. Federally Accountable Student Group – Categories of students that are recognized in school, district, and state performance reporting.
- I. Implicit Bias - 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.
- J. Inclusion –The process by which a school ensures that all individuals are engaged participants in the learning environment and community. All students, families and staff members feel valued, respected, appreciated, and involved. Individuals see their unique identities reflected in all facets of education including staffing, curriculum, instruction, and activities.
- K. Institutional Barriers – The policies, procedures or practices that deny access to educational opportunities or systematically disadvantage students and families based on social identifiers.



- L. Longitudinal Data System – Database of student information that is capable of maintaining records over multiple years in multiple schools.
- M. Marginalized Groups - Groups and communities that experience discrimination and exclusion (social, political and economic) because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social and cultural dimensions. (National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health 2020)
- N. Parent – Any one of the following recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the student:
  - 1. Biological Parent - A natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.
  - 2. Adoptive Parent - A person who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.
  - 3. Custodian - A person or an agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
  - 4. Guardian - A person who has been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
  - 5. Caregiver - An adult resident of Howard County who exercises care, custody, or control over the student but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian as long as the person satisfies the requirements of the Education Article, §7-101 (c) (Informal Kinship Care) or has been issued a U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Verification of Release form entering into a custodial arrangement with the federal government.
  - 6. Foster Parent - An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in the home by a state agency or a licensed child placement as provided by the Family Law Article, §5-507.
- O. Racial Equity – When a person’s race or ethnicity no longer predicts advantage or disadvantage.
- P. Racism – The belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person’s social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics. Racial separatism is the belief, most of the time based on racism, that different races should remain segregated and apart from one another. This includes systemic racism which is the systematic distribution of resources, power and opportunity in our society to the benefit of people who are white and the exclusion of people of color.
- Q. Restorative Culture – An approach that emphasizes building relationships. When there is a need to repair harm caused by conflict and wrongdoing, restorative justice provides an opportunity for everyone impacted by an incident to come together in a safe space to address their feelings and needs, and reach a resolution that heals and restores relationships.
- R. Social Identifiers – The characteristics of each individual which include but are not limited to: ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), ethnicity, family structure, gender identity and expression, language, national origin, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, skin color, and socio-economic status.

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S. Student Voice – A belief and a process to listen, learn, and lead with students, in order to increase student agency in their educational experience.

T. **References**

A. Legal.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Public Law 101-336, July 26, 1990  
Code of Maryland Regulations, 13A.01.06.00 Educational Equity Authority  
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. 1400-1487

B. Other Board Policies

Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination

Policy 1040 Safe and Supportive Schools

Policy 1070 Protections and Supports for Foreign-Born Students and Families

Policy 3060 Student Data Governance and Privacy

Policy 7000 Workforce Diversity and Inclusion

Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline

Policy 8000 Curriculum

Policy 8040 Selection of Instructional Materials

Policy 8050 Teaching of Controversial Issues

Policy 9050 Student Records

Policy 9060 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Compliance: Section 504

Policy 10000 Student, Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

C. Relevant Data Sources

D. Other

E. History<sup>1</sup>

ADOPTED: September 10, 2020

REVIEWED:

MODIFIED:

REVISED:

EFFECTIVE: ~~July 1, 2020~~  
September 10, 2020

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<sup>1</sup>Key: **Adopted**-Original date the Board took action to approve a policy; **Reviewed**-The date the status of a policy was assessed by the Superintendent's Standing Policy Group; **Modified**-The date the Board took action to alter a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee did not require a comprehensive examination; **Revised**-The date the Board took action on a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee needed a comprehensive examination; **Effective**-The date a policy is implemented throughout the HCPSS, typically July 1 following Board action.



**POLICY 1080-IP  
IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES**

**EDUCATIONAL EQUITY**

Effective: ~~July 1, 2020~~  
September 10, 2020

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**I. Funding and Allocation of Resources**

- A. The Superintendent/designee will recommend priorities and develop procedures for differentiating school funding, The District Level School Support Team (SST) will identify and allocate resources based on, but not limited to:
  - 1. Academic outcomes aligned with the federally accountable student groups.
  - 2. Mental health and behavioral needs.
- B. Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) schools and offices will seek grants and partnerships to supplement funding for innovative programs and supports to decrease opportunity gaps.
- C. HCPSS offices will seek local, state, and federal funding to supplement the support educational equity.
- D. The Division of Operations will provide equitable services at each individual school to ensure all school facilities are safe, healthy, efficient and conducive to student learning.
- E. Principals will utilize data to request and advocate for community and Central Office supports, based on the unique needs of the school population.
- F. The Offices of Budget and Finance, in compliance with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), will report expenditures by school to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for comparing per-pupil spending between schools.
- G. The Superintendent's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group will be responsible for conducting an annual public hearing to get input on the annual educational equity goals and related equity budget prior to the Superintendent's submission of these items to the Board of Education.

## II. Access and Opportunity<sup>1</sup>

- A. The Division of Academics, in collaboration with the Division of School Management and Instructional Leadership, will develop equitable placement processes that utilize student input, parent/guardian input, teacher input and multiple data points to ensure equitable access to advanced coursework. Parents will have the opportunity to examine the multiple data points and submit their recommendation for their child to the decision making team to ensure equitable access for their child.
- B. The Division of Academics will work with school leadership teams and communities to communicate with families about the importance of early reading and the programming available to support student success from Birth-Grade 12.
- C. The Early Childhood Office will work with childcare providers, families, and pre-K programs to support student readiness for kindergarten.
- D. The Division of Academics and Division of School Management and Instructional Leadership will work to examine current supports and determine innovative resources and supports for increasing graduation rates for all students.
- E. The Division of Academics will partner with postsecondary institutions to expand innovative pathways, such as dual enrollment options and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to ensure postsecondary success for all students.
- F. The Division of Human Resources and Professional Development will identify partners and strategies to recruit and retain a diverse workforce, which includes, but is not limited to, racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity.

## III. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Supports

- A. The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) will develop a comprehensive plan and facilitate training and development related to HCPSS educational equity goals. The professional learning will cover such areas as anti-racism, bias, cultural proficiency and responsiveness, equity facilitation and leadership, equity focused leadership for district and site-based leaders, microaggressions, restorative justice practices, trauma-informed/healing-centered practices, student voice, and other diversity, equity, and inclusion-related professional development. All HCPSS staff will be required to participate in annual equity training and are encouraged to seek additional professional learnings as a supplemental resource.
- B. ODEI will consult with HCPSS divisions and offices on initiatives and programs to support HCPSS educational equity goals.

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<sup>1</sup> See June 5, 2019 Board Report, *Equity: Responding to Performance and Opportunity Gaps in HCPSS*, for a detailed examination of instructional strategies and interventions supporting access and opportunity.

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- C. ODEI will work collaboratively with HCPSS offices to intentionally uplift diverse role models, so that all students see themselves and the global society represented.
- D. ODEI will collaborate partner with parent and community groups and government agencies to support mutual equity goals.
- E. ODEI will partner with parent and community organizations and government agencies to support mutual equity goals.
- F. Principals will designate a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaison to lead school- based professional learning, support school improvement planning, and work with the ODEI on district-level initiatives.

#### **IV. Data Reporting/Accountability**

- A. SST will establish/maintain a school improvement planning process that requires school improvement teams to:
  - 1. Analyze trends within disaggregated student data, which may include (but not be limited to):
    - a. Gap analysis to identify and address any emergent inequitable educational outcomes.
    - b. Disproportionality in discipline practices.
    - c. Under representation in advanced course enrollment.
    - d. Progress towards increasing graduation rates for all students.
    - e. Disproportionality in special education identification rates.
    - f. Staff professional development needs.
  - 2. Perform root cause analysis that includes cultural and structural factors.
  - 3. Strategize solutions that focus on educational equity.
  - 4. Track targets and milestones to close equity gaps.
  - 5. Modify school improve plans as needed to support closing inequitable educational outcomes.
- B. School-based leadership teams will perform equity-focused data analysis to identify current gaps in educational outcomes, programming, supports, and interventions in order to develop and implement school improvement plans.
- C. Annual reporting of staff data to the Board will include teacher and staff demographics reported separately, recruitment initiatives, successful retention efforts for teachers of color, and additional innovative strategies utilized by the Division of Human Resources and Professional Development to recruit, hire, and retain, and promote a diverse workforce that reflects the system-wide, racial/ethnic makeup of the student population.

- D. The Superintendent/designee will develop a Local ESSA Consolidated Plan that will utilize disaggregated student data to determine school system needs, identify areas of focus, and track progress towards equity goals.
- E. The following data will be collected and presented in the aggregate by race, ethnicity, gender, grade and school. The data in the report will be presented in a searchable and analyzable format that will be available on the HCPSS website.
1. Staff demographics
  2. Staff in leadership
  3. Staff recruitment, hiring, retention, promotion
  4. Teacher demographics
  5. Teacher recruitment, hiring, retention, promotion
  6. School disciplinary practices, suspensions, expulsions, arrests, interaction with law enforcement, referrals to law enforcement
  7. Office referrals
  8. Course placement
  9. GPA
  10. Attendance
  11. Drop out rates
  12. Disability
  13. Gender identity

**V. Addressing Concerns and Non-Compliance**

- A. Individuals who have been subjected to, or observe behaviors that are violation of this policy, are first encouraged to respectfully share the concern/issue with the person or persons directly involved, in a manner that reflects a restorative approach.
- B. If implementing the procedure noted above in Section V.A. is unsuccessful, individuals should refer to HCPSS policies and procedures, including the following:
1. Policies
    - Policy 1000 Civility
    - Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination Policy 1020 Sexual Discrimination
    - Policy 1040 Safe and Supportive Schools
    - Policy 1060 Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation
    - Policy 2030 Ombudsman
    - Policy 2070 Ethics
    - Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline
    - Policy 9020 Students' Rights and Responsibilities
    - Policy 9200 Student Discipline
  2. Other
    - Formal Parent Concern Form
    - HCPSS Student Code of Conduct
    - Student and Parent Handbook

## VI. Definitions

Within the context of these implementation procedures, the following definitions apply:

- A. Cultural Proficiency – The ongoing process of becoming knowledgeable of one’s assumptions, biases, values, beliefs, own cultural identities, as well as the cultures of others in order to foster an appreciation, understanding, and respect for varying cultural expressions that exist in the actions and interactions of an organization. Culturally proficient practices are guided by the tools of cultural proficiency.
- B. Microaggressions – Everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.
- C. Root Cause Analysis – A process by which an issue is examined by going deeper into why the problem exists. Causal factors contributing to the issue are explored to assist with identification of action steps that address the original cause of the issue and not just the symptoms or outcomes.
- D. District Level School Support Team (SST) – A cross-divisional team with representation from various offices within the HCPSS that are tasked with overseeing school improvement plans and developing supports for schools.
- E. Trauma-Informed/Healing-Centered Practices - Practices that reflect an understanding of the basics of how adverse childhood experiences affect a person throughout their life and focus on collective approaches to healing.

## VI. History<sup>2</sup>

ADOPTED: September 10, 2020

REVIEWED:

MODIFIED:

REVISED:

EFFECTIVE: September 10, 2020

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<sup>2</sup> Key: **Adopted**-Original date the Board took action to approve a policy; **Reviewed**-The date the status of a policy was assessed by the Superintendent’s Standing Policy Group; **Modified**-The date the Board took action to alter a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee did not require a comprehensive examination; **Revised**-The date the Board took action on a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee needed a comprehensive examination; **Effective**-The date a policy is implemented throughout the HCPSS, typically July 1 following Board action.



**EQUITY4HC**



August 18, 2020

Howard County Public School System  
10910 Clarksville Pike  
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Policy 1080 Educational Equity  
Position: Support with Amendments

Dear Board of Education Members,

We, the undersigned organizations, believe that all children should thrive both inside and outside the classroom and be able to access the necessary resources and opportunities in school they need to achieve their goals. However, significant racial/ethnic disparities persist in achievement, discipline, teacher diversity and more, and these disparities represent barriers for students of color to achieve their full potential. These challenging times continue to expose the racial inequities in our country and community. Now more than ever, we need an equity policy that will eliminate barriers that prevent children of color from achieving good health, opportunity and other determinants of wellbeing.

In 2018, we established the Howard County Equity Collaborative to increase our capacity to apply a racial equity and systems lens to our work, organize and advocate for equitable change in Howard County as well as form strong partnerships and coalitions. Collectively, the Howard County Equity Collaborative suggests the following key changes to strengthen Policy 1080 (please see the attached document for more detailed amendment language):

1. Set yearly, achievable equity goals and a line-item budget to achieve them. At least one of the goals should be racial equity-related.
2. Use a transparent process to gain public input on goal setting and to measure annual progress towards achieving them.
3. Hire, retain and promote teachers that reflect the racial/ethnic makeup of the student population.
4. Implement a culturally relevant curriculum that includes perspectives of marginalized and underrepresented groups and require annual equity training for all teachers.
5. Collect and report relevant data that is disaggregated by race and other factors.



We urge you to strengthen Policy 1080 with our suggested changes. Doing so will better eliminate racial inequities across HCPSS and foster more inclusive school communities. Together, we can help ensure that Howard County remains a top school district and position ourselves to be a leader in educational equity in Maryland and the rest of the country.

Thank you for your consideration.

Larry Walker  
President  
African American Community Roundtable

Joan Driessen  
Executive Director  
Association of Community Services of Howard County

Daniel Burns  
Executive Director  
Equity4HC

Nikki Highsmith Vernick  
President & CEO  
Horizon Foundation of Howard County

Ming Li, Ph.D.  
Chair, Board of Directors  
Howard County Chinese School

Good evening, my name is Ming Li. I am the Board of Directors Chair of the Howard County Chinese School, also a parent of two HCPSS students. The Chinese School has been serving the local community in Howard County for over 22 years, with over 1700 students and their parents, most of whom are registered voters. The majority of Chinese School students are also public school students. On behalf of the Chinese School community I am expressing our support for Policy 1080 with revisions.

The Chinese School Board of Directors realized that this policy would deeply impact the Chinese School community and conducted a poll to solicit opinions on this policy from the community, including both students and parents. Results of this poll showed that the vast majority of the Chinese School community supports this policy with revisions. I have sent our proposed revisions to you along with this testimony via email.

Results of this poll show that:

1. Over 20% of the respondents reported that they are victims of racism, ranging from biased in-school treatments, to verbal racism attacks, and to racial bullying incidents.
2. Over 90% of the respondents believe that Asian Americans are underrepresented in HCPSS teachers and administrative staff, 95% believe that Asian-American are underrepresented in the HCPSS leadership team, and over 92% of the respondents believe that the School System should expand its curriculum to promote Asian American history and their contributions to the United States.
3. Over 91% of the respondents support that HCPSS should close educational gaps with equity considerations for all students.
4. Over 80% of the respondents believe that HCPSS should leverage more resources to address most vulnerable students' mental health issues.

The Howard County Chinese School urges BOE and HCPSS to take accountable and practical actions to address the above equity issues.

On behalf of the over 1700 students and their families, the Chinese School believes that it is an imperative that the Howard County Board of Education adopts a strong policy to codify the moral imperative of equity into our school system. We call for enhanced language necessary to accurately reflect a clear movement toward long-term changes in educational disparity. The Chinese School is willing to work with other communities in the county to ensure that equity considerations are addressed for every student in the Howard County Public School System.

Thank you.

Missy Kum

Racism.

The one word that everyone is afraid of. And why is that? Are they afraid of being seen as a racist? Do conversations surrounding this topic make them uncomfortable? Why is it that talking about racism is so taboo, yet thousands of students and alumni, including me, have felt the repercussions of it throughout our time in HCPSS. If no one wants to discuss racism, how can we fix it? Well, I am here today representing Antiracist HOCO and sharing my personal experiences of what it was like to be Black in Howard County.

Hello, everyone, my name is Missy and I am a graduate from River Hill High School and a rising senior at the University of Maryland. Growing up Black in a predominantly white area, meant constantly feeling the need to change who I was to fit an image that was expected of me. It meant growing accustomed to believing and acting like the stereotypes I now try to avoid. I was the loud, “ratchet”, token Black girl because that is how I thought people viewed me and that is how I thought others viewed Black people. I had no representation of what a strong, independent, and successful Black woman looked like. I was never taught about it and I was never introduced to it. I was so ashamed of being Black that I let other students allude to me being a monkey and refer to me as the n-word.

Howard County Public School System has failed me as a Black woman and has failed other students of color as well. Not only did it take 18 years until I finally embraced my Blackness, but it took me going to college and CHOOSING to learn about the Black experience before I understood the many microaggressions and racism that I felt during my time in HCPSS. I was never taught Black joy, Black love, Black appreciation, or ANYTHING about my history or culture outside of the white-washed history of slavery and the civil rights movement. I never

learned about the achievements of Black Americans in my history class. I had no one, outside of my mother, to look up to because I was taught to think Black people can never achieve the same successes as our white counterparts.

I am disgusted by the way HCPSS has handled racial issues in the past and I am afraid for the future generations; I am afraid that they have to grow up in a school system that would rather please white parents then give justice to students who were and are still deeply affected and scarred from racial events that have happened at their schools. I refuse to let HCPSS continue to make students of color feel as though they have no voice, no place, and no support in this school system.

Racism in Howard County is not new and if nothing changes it will continue to grow bigger. Howard County cannot continue to ignore the issue of racism, especially when it is something that occurs every day and affects millions of people. We live in a county that takes pride in our diversity and equality yet every day many people fight to be seen as equal in their career and peer groups. How can Howard County Public School Systems stand for diversity if you do not even bother teaching the bare minimum?

While I appreciate and am thankful for the education I got from HCPSS, there is always more you can do because right now, what I am seeing, is not enough. I will not rest until the students of color in this school system feel safe in their schools and represented in the lessons that are taught. So please, consider revising policy 1080 to include an anti-racist curriculum and an updated diversity, equity, and inclusion training for its staff. Thank you.

# Oral Testimony to the Howard County Board of Education in regards to Policy 1080

As a person who has attended Howard County schools for their entire life and academic career I have seen the damage that discrimination, both social and economic, as well as implicit bias and prejudice can inflict on a young student. I have seen my personal friends as well as my peers be marginalized, discouraged, and intern conditioned to strive for mediocrity by the teachers and administrators that claim to have their best interest. The prejudice that exists within Howard County (as well as its subsequent disparities) is no secret, so much so that the words “Howard County” are oftentimes associated with the words privilege and bigotry. How in a county where more than half of it’s 320,000 residents are minorities, minorities are not even offered the option of learning their history in a holistic and historically accurate way. Howard County's minority population has grown by more than 30% in the past 10 years (which more than doubles the US average and Maryland average) but the needs of minority students remain an afterthought in the minds of this county's teachers, executives, and administrators. Majority minority schools are oftentimes labeled as low performing and their students incapable but nobody cares to consider why. Is it because they receive less funding than schools who are majority white such as River Hill and Glenelg? Is it because black and brown students are by default considered incapable of academic success, or is it simply that while Howard County preaches diversity and inclusion, it only does so to maintain plausible deniability while it revels in its self righteous hypocrisy. If HCPSS truly values it’s BIPOC population that make it such a cultural melting pot and a “model county”, Policy 1080 will look to re-distribute funds in higher income areas of Howard County in order to provide equity to all students (regardless of race and socioeconomic status), redesign Howard County’s curriculum in order to provide a more holistic and inclusive learning experience for BIPOC and LGBTQ students by incorporating (but not limited to) extensions to the length and depth of African-American and Women’s studies courses, as well as offering/including courses on/about LGBTQ history. Requiring that all HCPSS staff members are required to complete implicit bias trainings (in order to foster a safe and equitable learning environment for all students), as well as developing school sponsored groups/clubs and fellowships within Howard County schools (across grade levels) that encourage BIPOC and LGBTQ students to become involved in their school communities as well as pursue

leadership roles within those communities, subsequently supporting their growth as students and individuals. The prejudices and disparities that Howard County minority students have faced have gone on far too long, and it's time that we stop trying to have "discussions" and "conversations" and take action to foster real positive change within our community and the Howard County public school system. Thank you for your time.

Good evening everyone. My name is Tolu Faderin, I graduated from River Hill High School in 2017 and am a rising 4th year student at Northeastern University. I'm here speaking on behalf of the organization Anti-racist HOCO, although today I'll be sharing my personal testimony.

I attended Howard county schools my entire life- through elementary middle and high school I had been so focused on my goal of graduating and getting into a good university, that I became so immune to the fact that I was walking through a tunnel surrounded by thorns. And it's only now after reaching the end of that tunnel, I realize that I am covered in cuts and bruises, and with scars that may never fully heal.

I'd like you all to take a moment and imagine being a young girl, going to school. What would you say if someone said to you, "You're like an oreo, Black on the outside but white on the inside- that's why we can be friends". What do you do when the guidance counselor calls you out of class to tell you to pull up your shirt despite the fact that your white counterparts are wearing much less and openly bragging about it? What do you do when you proudly announce your acceptance into the honors program of your dream university, and people say "it's because you're black" As if you didn't spend sleepless nights ensuring you would have a good GPA and an outstanding resume. How do you comfortably make friends when the same people that laugh with you and sit at your lunch table are the same people caught on video saying racial slurs and laughing about it. What about if in 12 years of schooling, you had only ever personally had 3 Black female teachers, no Black male teachers, and that the only other teachers of color you'd encountered were your Spanish teachers.

Howard county has severely failed it's BIPOC student population. For the most part prejudice and ignorance isn't taught in the classroom, (and I say for the most part because Howard County has had it's history of prejudiced faculty and staff). But as an educational system it is your duty to unteach and to break down those prejudices, to be actively anti-racist. BIPOC students must be able to see themselves and their accomplishments in the curriculum that you teach. The achievements of Black people in America need to be discussed outside of Black history month. Student's are not too young to discuss topics like red lining, or the tuskegee syphilis experiments. There is no reason why the civil rights movement is presented as a moment in history as if we are not very much still living in that reality. Apart from slavery, everything I know about Black American history- which let me remind you is still American History, were things I learned in electives I've taken in college or better yet, that I've learned on social media.

And while we tackle the issue of the curriculum, we also need to focus on including BIPOC students in all spaces that Howard county has to offer. Student's need to have access to representative mental health resources, they need to feel encouraged in their classrooms by teachers who undergo regular diversity, equity and inclusion training. They need to have spaces where their differences and their cultures are represented and celebrated.

I'm proud of where I am today, I'm proud of the education I received in Howard County, but I am 20 years old and I am exhausted, because I had to work so much harder and push through so much more to end up where I am, not knowing how much further I could be, had I been given equitable opportunities and attention. It's not a complement when I am labeled as "strong". Students don't want to have to be strong, we just want the same opportunities to be successful. I'm truly humbled to be here and excited at the prospect of charging forward with real change in the school system starting with policy 1080.

Thank you for your time.





**Testimony  
Concerns and suggestions to Policy 1080**

**On Behalf of  
Chinese American Parent Association of Howard County**

**Before the HCPSS Board of Education**

**About CAPA-HC**

**Vision**

For every resident in Howard County and every family in Howard County public schools to be equally represented in the community and to have equitable access to services and resources.

**Mission**

To advance, empower and unite the Chinese and other immigrants in Howard County by advocating for the underrepresented, leading in civic activities, promoting greater community engagement, and supporting integration into the larger community.

## Policy 1080 CAPA Testimony

Dear BOE members,

My name is Ming Du, Chair of the CAPA-HC board. I'm testifying on behalf of CAPA-HC.

It is plausible that Policy 1080 was created in compliance with COMAR 13A.01.06 to address the educational equity in Howard County. CAPA sincerely share the same beliefs defined in the state code that 1. EVERY student should have equitable access to the educational rigor, resources, and supports that are designed to MAXIMIZE the student's academic success and social/emotional well-being; 2. our school system should ensure that there are no obstacles to accessing educational opportunities for ANY student; and finally achievement gaps should be eliminated. We strongly support these goals and acknowledge the good intention of Policy 1080 of maximizing each student's individual potentials.

However, CAPA sees three areas where the Policy 1080 needs to be improved in order to become an effective and beneficial policy for all students: 1. deviation from the scope of the Educational Equity in the State Code; 2. problematic execution of some action items; and 3. Lacking of performance measurement and no accountability of the policy execution.

State code sees that educational outcome is affected by many factors, including all eleven defined in the term of Individual Characteristics. The goal is to optimize educational outcomes for each individual regardless of the student's characteristics. On the contrast, Policy 1080 tends to evaluate educational outcomes by student groups. This approach will hide unique individual characteristics within groups.

In addition, CAPA would like to remind BOE of the danger of creating new institutional barriers by some of the action items in Policy 1080. While these items are intended to remove the institutional barriers for some students, they will inevitably become new barriers for other students.

Further, CAPA also urges BOE to clearly define the execution plan and performance measurement, and be held accountable in case of failed policy execution. This Policy deals with human beings. It is not a game where you can practice trial and error, and simply restart in case of failure. It brings real consequences and has potential to change every student's future. CAPA urges BOE to keep the public informed throughout the execution of the policy and keep community involved.

To address the issues in this three areas, CAPA drafted a revision proposal. It has already been submitted to the BOE and posted it on social media.

Thank you for your time!

# Suggested revision to Policy 1080

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submitted by **Chinese American Parent Association of Howard County**

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## 1. Introduction

The Chinese American Parent Association of Howard County (CAPA) has been committed to improving educational equity in Howard County since its establishment. We consider Policy 1080 to be an essential step towards implementing the goal of educational equity and support BOE's leadership in drafting and improving this policy.

State regulation "Code of Maryland Regulations, Chapter 13A.01.06. Educational Equity" requires each school district to create an educational equity policy. As the regulation stated:

*The purpose of this chapter is to establish as a matter of policy and priority that: A. Each Maryland public school will provide every student equitable access to the educational rigor, resources, and supports that are designed to maximize the student's academic success and social/emotional well-being; B. Each local school system's procedures and practices provide for educational equity and ensure that there are no obstacles to accessing educational opportunities for any student; and C. Achievement will improve for all Maryland students and achievement gaps will be eliminated*

CAPA believes that each individual should be provided with equitable access to resources, services, and opportunities; and should be treated equally and fairly regardless of individual characteristics. Evaluating educational statistics by student groups may hide unique individual characteristics within groups. We believe that the state regulation mandates the school systems to ensure educational equity for EACH individual regardless of the group and academic spectrum he/she belongs to. The proposed HCPSS Policy 1080 should be consistent with the state policy.

To help improve Policy 1080 so that it will provide guidance and clarification to HCPSS practices, and to ensure that Policy 1080 is aligned with state regulations, we respectfully submit the following recommendation on revision.

The following revisions are based on the current BOE draft dated July 9, 2020.

## 2. Revisions

- Section I second paragraph
  - 1) The Board acknowledges ~~systemic racism, implicit and explicit bias, institutional barriers, and other discriminatory practices that~~ **multiple factors including individual characteristics contribute to disparities in educational outcomes** ~~cause inequitable outcomes~~ for students.
    - Proposed changes: delete the stricken-through text and add the highlighted text.
    - Justification: In compliance with the state regulation Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.01.06. "Each Maryland public school will provide educational equity to ensure that there are no obstacles to accessing educational opportunities for any student. Achievement will improve for all Maryland students and achievement gaps will be eliminated." In order to effectively improve achievement for all Maryland students, we need to find the true obstacles for all students. The original sentence focuses on only one aspect and does not take all individual characteristics listed in the state regulation into consideration . .
  - 2) "As such, the Board is committed to providing all students with a dynamic and relevant educational program that nurtures their social/emotional well-being, and affirms their identity and experience, in order to maximize each student's individual potential."

- Proposed changes: change the sentence to “As such, the Board is committed to providing every student with equitable access to the educational rigor, resources, and supports that are designed to maximize the student’s academic success and social/emotional well-being and to view each student’s individual characteristics as valuable.”
  - Justification: align with the language in the state regulation Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.01.06.
- 3) “We mandate addressing disparities in educational outcomes as a priority in each school, including but not limited to, **access to leadership positions, sports teams,** advanced coursework, identification for specialized services, discipline, suspension/expulsion practices, achievement, and graduation rates **due to individual characteristics** ~~between student groups.~~”
- Proposed changes: delete the stricken-through text and add the highlighted text.
  - Justification: Use “individual characteristics” instead of “student groups” to align with the language in the state regulation Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.01.06, which gives a clear definition of the term. The definition of “educational outcome” needs to be broader and more inclusive.

- Section II

The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations ~~related to the identification and elimination of disparities in education outcomes.~~ **and strategies for the achievement improvement for all students and to eliminate achievement gaps.**

- Proposed change: delete the stricken-through text and add the highlighted text.
- Justification: a) add “strategies.” This policy is more than expectations. b) Use the term “achievement gaps” instead of “disparities in education outcomes” to align with the state regulation Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.01.06.

- Section III

Section III.A.2 ~~“This curriculum will use differentiated approaches and resources to meet the needs of every student in accordance with Policy 8000 Curriculum.”~~

- Proposed change: Delete this sentence.
- Justification: the term “differentiated approaches” was not defined in this policy. It was mentioned but not defined in Policy 8000. If this sentence is important enough to be included, we need to specify what the “approach” candidates are and how these approaches are chosen. For example, are we talking about providing different cultural contents based on the students’ cultural backgrounds? Or are we talking about providing a different amount of cultural curriculum depending on students’ course load?

Section III.A.4 ~~“A student’s English proficiency, disability status, perceived academic ability and/or social identifiers will not limit access and opportunity.”~~

- Proposed change: delete the stricken-through text
- Justification: this term is too open for interpretation. To include this term, a precise definition of “perceived academic ability” should be given, and an alternative “real academic ability” should be provided. We suggest leaving this issue for further study.

Section III.B.5: Establish a diverse, equitable, and inclusive student population at all schools. As such, Policy 6010 School Attendance Areas, utilizes demographic data as a factor for setting school attendance areas, **given that such implementation does not impede any student's ability to acquire educational equity as defined in the Code of Maryland Regulations, Chapter 13A.01.06.**

- Proposed change: add the highlighted text.
- Justification: Make sure that this implementation aligns with the state's regulations.

Section III.B.6 "Evaluate and continuously improve classroom placement practices and student scheduling to ensure that ~~diversity exists~~ **individual characteristics are fairly reflected, and equitable educational opportunities are provided to every student** ~~in all learning environments."~~

- Proposed changes: delete the stricken-through text and add the highlighted text.
- Justification: align with the language in the Code of Maryland Regulations, Chapter 13A.01.06. Also, the term "learning environments" is not defined in this policy. For example, does "diversity exists in all learning environments" mean that each class, club, or sports team needs to have a certain proportion of students with each social identifier? On the other hand, educational opportunities are well defined in the state regulation and reflect the same principle as the original statement.

Section III.B.8 Identify and eliminate disproportionality in discipline practices by uplifting and nurturing healthy relationships, creating a just and equitable learning environment, repairing harm, and responding effectively to conflict. Regardless of social identifiers, consequences are fair, equitable, consistent, and reflective of a restorative culture.

- Proposed change: Evaluate current discipline practices to ensure every student is treated fairly with no explicit and implicit bias. The schools should uplift and nurture healthy relationships, create a just and equitable learning environment, repair harm, and respond effectively to conflict. Regardless of social identifiers, consequences are fair, equitable, consistent, and reflective of a restorative culture."
- Justification: align with the language in the Code of Maryland Regulations, Chapter 13A.01.06.

Section III.C.1 "Intentionally recruit, employ, promote, support, and retain a diverse workforce of highly qualified educators **and leadership teams** that reflect the diversity of the student population. In accordance with Policy 7000 Workforce Diversity, an innovative recruitment and retention Workforce Diversity and Inclusion plan for **highly qualified** teachers **and members of the leadership teams** of color and other diverse staff, is a priority for HCPSS. "

- Proposed change: add the highlighted text.
- Justification: diversity in the leadership team is essential to provide mentoring and advocacy for a diverse workforce. It also helps to attract a diverse recruit pool. The current HCPSS leadership diversity has significant rooms for improvement. The term "highly qualified" is worth reporting, to ensure that the teacher's qualifications and credentials should be equally considered and should not be undermined in recruitment, promotion, and retention.

Section III C 3 "Prioritize ongoing professional learning experiences focusing on **individual characteristics** factors influencing educational equity, ~~such as cultural proficiency and responsiveness, implicit bias, explicit bias, and systemic racism.~~ "

- Proposed change: delete the stricken-through text and add the highlighted text.
- Justification: In compliance with the state regulation Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.01.06. "Each Maryland public school will provide educational equity to ensure that there are no

obstacles to accessing educational opportunities for any student. Achievement will improve for all Maryland students and achievement gaps will be eliminated.” All listed individual characteristics should be taken into consideration.

- Section IV

Add a section: The Board of Education will set up a citizen’s committee on educational equality, to consist of representatives from the various community groups and HCPSS. This committee will advise the Board on the practices and implementations of this Policy by HCPSS and the actions that the Board can take to advance the goal of educational equity.

- Proposed change: Add a section that reads: “The Board of Education will set up a citizen’s committee on educational equality, to consist of representatives from the various community groups and HCPSS. This committee will advise the Board on the practices and implementations of this Policy by HCPSS and the actions that the Board can take to advance the goal of educational equity.”
- Justification: while Policy 1080 sets up a framework for educational equity, much work is needed in implementation to ensure our goal is realized. Citizen involvement in the process is critical. The Board and the proposed citizen’s committee provides a conduit for the Howard community to help and monitor the process.

Section IV.G “The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) will provide training and development aligned to its educational equity goals through district-level and school-based level professional learning opportunities. The cost of these training activities will be reflected in the annual budget equity allocation described in Section IV.C”

- Proposed change: add the highlighted sentence
- Justification: We should identify equity-related training in the pool of professional training expenses for better accountability.

- Section VI

Section VI C

Diversity – Recognizing, accepting, and respecting that individuals come from many different life experiences with various frames of reference and perspectives. While diversity values unique perspectives and individual differences, it also values the commonalities we all share. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, (a) Ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical); (b) Ethnicity; (c) Family structure; (d) Gender identity and expression; (e) Language; (f) National origin; (g) Nationality; (h) Race; (i) Religion; (j) Sexual orientation; and (k) Socio-economic status. ~~race/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion/ beliefs, mental and physical ability, age and national origin.~~

- Proposed changes: delete the stricken-through text and add the highlighted text.
- Justification: In compliance with the state regulation Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.01.06.

Section VI:

- Proposed change: Add definition of individual characteristics:
  - “Individual characteristics” means the characteristics of each individual student, which include but are not limited to: (a) Ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical); (b) Ethnicity; (c) Family structure; (d) Gender identity and expression; (e) Language; (f)

National origin; (g) Nationality; (h) Race; (i) Religion; (j) Sexual orientation; and (k) Socio-economic status.

- Justification: this is the term used and defined in the state regulation Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.01.06.

#### Section VI:

- Proposed change: add definition: “Educational opportunities - all students have access to rigorous, well-rounded academic programs and experiences that enrich their educational career and prepare them for academic and career success.”
- Justification: this is the language from the state regulation Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.01.06. The term “educational opportunities” was used in Sections III.A.6 and VI.K.

- Implementation, Section III.A

#### Implementation Section III.A, see below

- Proposed change: Add the following text: “The HCPSS annual budget will report the cost and key performance indicators (KPI) of these training efforts.”
- Justification: we need to ensure that these training efforts are effective in promoting and improving equity.

Implementation, Section III.C “ODEI will work collaboratively with HCPSS offices to intentionally uplift diverse role models, so that all students see themselves and the global society represented to foster a diverse workforce so that it can serve as role models to all students.”

- Proposed change: delete the stricken-through text and add the highlighted one.
- Justification: the original statement is confusing. The proposed change represents our understanding of the intention. Also, “work collaboratively with HCPSS offices” is not appropriate because ODEI is also an HCPSS office. And the necessity of collaboration is obvious.

Implementation, Section III.D “ODEI will partner with parent and community groups organizations and government agencies to support mutual equity goals equity goals through regular meetings, town halls, and other communication channels.”

- Proposed change: delete the stricken-through text and add the highlighted ones.
- Justification: the meaning of “mutual equity goal” is not clear. We also need to codify the partnership with tangible mechanisms.

- Implementation Section IV

#### Implementation Section V.A, see blow

- Proposed change: add the following items:
  - Refine the set of metrics listed in 1 above to reflect educational opportunities and excellence available to students.
  - Collect equity measures beyond educational outcome, including but not limited to: student experience with school culture, student access to instructional help, resources, and guidance from HCPSS outside of classrooms, social services, internship, and other learning opportunities, etc. These measures can be collected through informal ways such as surveys and interviews.
  - The root cause analysis described in point 2 above will include a broad set of sociological factors that a student faces, both inside and outside of the school.

- Justification: how we measure educational equity is critical to how the values and strategies stated in Policy 1080 will become a reality. Therefore, it is worth investing resources in the data collection and research to provide insights into the current situation and the best way forward.

Implementation Section V.C “Annual reporting of leadership and staff data to the Board will include staff demographics...”

- Proposed changes: add the highlighted text.
- Justification: diversity of the district and school leadership teams is of critical importance to educational equity.

- Implementation Section V

Implementation Section V.C, see below

- Proposed change: add a section: “All studies, analyses, and plans described in the above subsections will be shared with the Board of Education and made public through the latter.”
- Justification: This is a part of public accountability. Since Policy 1080 is new and is (perhaps justifiably) vague in many provisions, the public needs to be informed about the implementation plan and supporting data.



Good Evening. My name is Pravin Ponnuri, and I reside in Ellicott City MD. I am here today representing Indian Origin Network of Howard County (IONHoCo) an organization that works very closely with the Asian Indian community in Howard County.

IONHoCo would like to thank the Board of Education, and the Howard County School System's leadership for reviewing Policy 1080 a.k.a Equity Policy.

We firmly believe that the state regulation in regard to this policy mandates the school systems to ensure education equity for each individual student regardless of the group or academic spectrum he / she belongs to. We strongly recommend that this policy not constraint itself with just the race of the student. We believe that each individual should be provided with equitable access to resources, services, and opportunities, and should be treated equally and fairly regardless of individual characteristics, off which race is just one of the factors.

We strongly recommend that students should NOT be grouped into statistical buckets based on race, religion or any other characteristics to avoid one group competing against the other for resources.

In order for each student to reach his / her maximum potential we should work on finding the true obstacles for all students, rather than putting them into statistical buckets.

We also need to define the term "educational outcome" to be broader and more inclusive to go beyond statistical buckets.

Furthermore, we should strive to foster a diverse workforce that will serve as a role model for all students.

Finally, to ensure complete transparency, all studies, analysis and plans should be shared with the Board of Education and made public through the Board.

August 17, 2020

To: HCPSS Board of Education  
RE: Educational Equity Policy 1080

The Special Education Citizen's Advisory Committee (SECAC) is writing to provide stakeholder recommendations to the Educational Equity Policy 1080.

We understand that the policy cites references to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to set legal parameters in which students with disabilities as a marginalized population are included in the equity lens to the fullest extent as permitted by federal law. As such, this equity policy recognizes the plight of students with disabilities as inequitable and will take proactive steps to mitigate the harm being done to this specific population.

Under the law, Congress defined disabilities as, “a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our *national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity*, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.”<sup>1</sup> It is important to understand the foundation of how disability culture is embedded within equity.

The policy standards indicate that, “HCPSS will provide culturally responsive and relevant curriculum with inclusive of perspectives from Black, Asian American Pacific Islander, Latino, LGBTQ+, indigenous peoples, *individuals with disabilities*, and other marginalized groups excluded in the current curriculum.” This testimony is intended to bring attention to some student examples who have been marginalized. Using an equity lens and the remarks from the policy itself, we look at parent participation and professional development as areas of improvement within the policy document.

The policy clarifies that HCPSS will provide access and support to maximize student learning and that a “student’s English proficiency, *disability status*, perceived academic ability and/or social identifiers will not limit access and opportunity.” Parents shared experiences of HCPSS schools failing to follow the ADA guidelines. One parent suggested ADA discrimination for a child who was not allowed a service dog on school campus to assist with needs because this child needed adult support to handle the service animal. This parent proved that other counties in the state allowed a school adult support to handle the service animal, yet HCPSS would not allow this. ADA does not prohibit nor deny a school to provide this service. The consequences for this child included elopement and loss of instructional time due to being denied the right to have an adult support handle a service animal in school.

Another example includes being denied access and participation in Gifted-and-Talented classes because students “have an IEP” regardless of the student’s cognitive ability. This practice has denied students the access to more rigorous coursework and the experiences needed for post-secondary success; instead misplacing them in classes below their educational ability thus

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<sup>1</sup> IDEA, 2004. Retrieved from <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/about-idea/>

impacting their self-image and emotional well-being. Several students with above average intellect and multiple language disabilities (dyslexia and dysgraphia) were denied an IEP because the students were performing at current grade level which according to the school team was their only responsibility thus denying the student the opportunity to take advanced coursework.

Another example relates to HB1061 in 2017 which recognized a significant lack of equity for students, staff and visitors in school buildings who may need assistance with evacuations at the time of an emergency. Emergency evacuation access must be successfully planned for all students and staff. No student should be left behind in an emergency in a stairwell landing, as it has been done before.

When you consider the equity lens and the impact on marginalized student groups, how will this equity policy identify and eliminate potential barriers to access of a free, appropriate public education? Students who are targets for bullying behavior have a host of characteristics that lead to low academic achievement and social emotional problems (OSERS 8/20/13 Dear Colleague Letter; Bullying Students with Disabilities).<sup>2</sup> Students with disabilities are disproportionately affected by bullying behavior. Students with learning disabilities, ADHD, and Autism are more likely to be targets of bullying behavior than their peers. Physical characteristics, slower processing speed, and intolerant school environments can increase the risk of students with disabilities becoming victims. Also the characteristics or symptoms of the student's disability may not allow them to understand that the bullying behavior is harmful, nor report the incidents to an adult in a timely manner. The current practice has been to remove the victimized student from their Least Restrictive Environment. As outlined in the OSERS Dear Colleague Letter, schools should convene IEP teams to determine if the student's needs have changed as a result of the bullying and "exercise caution" when determining a change of placement. How will the equity policy eliminate bullying of students with disabilities so that they continue to receive meaningful benefit from their IEPs?

The policy details that "HCPSS will work collaboratively with parents, community, ... and other stakeholders to increase equity and inclusion for students and staff." It also states under School Climate and Culture Affecting School Success to: "Leverage the strengths of parents and community partnerships to increase equitable opportunities for students and positively influence the school culture and climate." As IDEA states, "Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by... strengthening the role and responsibility of parents and ensuring that families ... have meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children at school and at home."<sup>3</sup> In order to accomplish this, parent voice should be made critical in individualized meetings and stakeholder groups. Therefore, we recommend that parents of students with disabilities be considered an equal voice at the table.

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<sup>2</sup> Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/bullyingdcl-8-20-13.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> IDEA ,2004. Retrieved from <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/statute-chapter-33/subchapter-i/1400/c/5>

The policy details under Staff Capacity, The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) “will plan and facilitate training and development related to HCPSS educational equity goals. The professional learning will cover such areas as anti-racism, bias, cultural proficiency and responsiveness, equity facilitation and leadership, equity focused leadership for district and site-based leaders, microaggressions, restorative justice practices, trauma- informed /healing-centered practices, student voice, and other diversity, equity, and inclusion-related professional development.” Nowhere does it mention professional development in disability awareness and culture. PD around disability awareness should be mandatory for all staff in school buildings and be an integral part of the “culturally responsive and relevant curriculum” for all students grades K-12 in order to create a safe and supportive school climate. Parents have raised concerns that their children have been told they are “just lazy, not attentive enough” or “should just try harder” and they would be successful in school. Parents have also raised concerns about non-disabled peers calling their child “stupid” or being told their disability didn’t exist and they were just dumb. We recommend additional language throughout this policy particularly in the areas of professional learning and development to include mandatory training in disability awareness and culture.

Equity, and access has been the forefront of special education since individuals with disabilities were granted a free and appropriate public education in public schools since 1975 with the passage of The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, which became later known as IDEA. When educational systems create an equitable climate for special education students, all children will benefit from this deed. Just as creating a ramp for wheelchair accessibility, all students can utilize the ramp to get here and there, not just the ones with disabilities.

SECAC thanks you for taking the time to hear our concerns. We hope to continue to work with you to foster a learning environment that includes equitable education for all children.

Respectfully,

Howard County SECAC  
Mai Hall, Co-Chair  
Stephanie Carr, Co-Chair

**Written Testimony of Families for Education Improvement by Indira Sharma**  
**In Support of Policy 1080 on Educational Equity with Revisions**

Before the Board of Education for Howard County Public School Systems

August 18, 2020

My name is Indira Sharma and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Families for Education Improvement, known as FEI, in support of Policy 1080 on Educational Equity with revisions that will better conform with the State law and that will provide for necessary oversight of the implementation of the policy to ensure effectiveness and accountability. A redline document of proposed changes from FEI is attached hereto as **Exhibit 1**.

FEI is a nonprofit that advocates for an outstanding education for every child in Howard County and through its Foundation engages in charitable work, including the operation of its weekly food pantry during the pandemic, providing school supplies to students in need and paying off student lunch debt. By way of personal background, I have three children in the school system. In my professional life, I am a partner at a large law firm in Baltimore City where I have been practicing law for 14 years and for that entire time I have worked as a diversity and inclusion advocate and leader in the legal profession including at my law firm where I chair our Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

**I. Acknowledge that Individual Circumstances Also Create Inequities, in Addition to Systemic Racism, Bias and Institutional Barriers, to Ensure Equal Focus on the Individual Child.**

The current draft of the policy correctly recognizes in its Policy Statement set forth in Section I that systemic racism, implicit bias, explicit bias and institutional barriers create inequities in our schools but it does not acknowledge the other half of the equity challenge which is the root cause that exists for some students based on their individual circumstances such as adverse childhood experiences (or ACEs), poverty, etc. If we want to be successful in our equity initiatives, we have to give equal attention to addressing the root causes as well. The Maryland Educational Equity Guidebook – *A Guide to Educational Equity in Maryland* - that was prepared by the State for local school systems to use in developing their equity plans makes clear in several places that “root cause analysis” is critical to developing appropriate action items. A copy of the handbook is attached hereto as **Exhibit 2**. See Ex. 2, Handbook at pages 4, 6, 7 and 13 setting forth as an action item the identification of root causes and actionable steps to address them. The State’s Educational Equity Guidebook also suggests actions centered on addressing mental health and trauma which are unique to each individual child’s circumstances. See Ex. 2, Handbook at page 15. While Policy 1080 references these individual issues in some places, the focus on the individual child is somewhat lost and it is completely absent from the initial Policy Statement framing the purpose of the policy.

The language of the State law is very focused on *each* child succeeding, valuing each child’s individual characteristics, which is expressly part of the State’s definition of “educational equity,” and the stated purpose of the law in the Code of Maryland Regulations (“COMAR”)

13A.01.06.01 is to provide every student with access to the educational rigor, resources and supports designed to maximize each child’s academic success and social/emotional well-being. A copy of the applicable COMAR provisions and statutory authority in the Maryland Education Article 2-205 is attached hereto as **Exhibit 3**. Accordingly, there needs to be a more prominent focus on the unique characteristics and circumstances of each individual child in this equity plan in addition to the systemic racism and institutional barriers in the school system that create inequities. To that end, we propose adding to Section I of the Policy Statement that individual circumstances also create barriers to educational equity so that we can all be squarely focused on addressing these barriers as well.

**II. Strike Reference to Policy 6010 on School Attendance as a Mechanism for Establishing Diverse Populations at All Schools on Grounds that (a) There is No Authority in the State Law or Equity Handbook for this Action, (b) Other Maryland Jurisdictions Complying with the State Law Have Not Made School Assignment a Part of Their Equity Plans, (c) It is Illegal to Make School Assignments Based on Race, and (d) Policy 6010 is Not Currently Drafted to Serve the Purpose of Diversifying Student Populations at All Schools.**

Section III(B)(5) of the draft of Policy 1080 includes a concerning directive to use Policy 6010 on School Attendance Areas as a mechanism to “establish a diverse, equitable and inclusive student population at all schools.” This reference to Policy 6010 is problematic because there is no legal authority in the State law for using school assignment to establish diversity. Further, the very detailed 21 page *Guide to Educational Equity in Maryland* handbook prepared by the State for local school systems to use in developing their equity plans does not reference anywhere using school assignment as an equity tool. Instead, the State handbook provides a lot of other evidenced-based solutions for equity that are included in the draft Policy 1080, which FEI fully supports, but school assignment is not one of them. Further, the State’s handbook emphasizes the importance of using evidenced-based strategies for achieving equity. *See* Ex 2, Handbook at pages 8, 13 and 15. FEI maintains that school assignment is not an evidenced-based strategy for achieving equity and this is supported by the fact that the National Education Association does not include school assignment as one of its many action items for achieving equity in education.

It is quite clear that the State’s equity plan does not mandate or even suggest school assignment as a tool for equity. Perhaps this is so because the Supreme Court has held that it is illegal to assign students to schools based on race. *See Parents Involved v. Seattle*, 551 U.S. 701 (2007). Here, Policy 1080 clearly defines diversity to include many race related factors such as race, ethnicity and national origin. Therefore, the Policy cannot legally “establish” diverse student populations under this definition “at all schools” through school assignment.

Further, Policy 6010 is not currently drafted to function as a tool for diversifying student populations through school assignment. Policy 6010 for school attendance area adjustments is triggered only under a limited set of circumstances such as the construction of a new school or a capacity problem at an existing school. As drafted, Policy 6010 cannot be applied for the purpose

of diversifying populations at all schools. Demographics is just one of the three main factors of consideration only after the policy has been triggered by a lawful purpose, with facility utilization and community stability being other key factors of consideration.

It is noteworthy that other jurisdictions that have developed equity plans in compliance with the State law, such as Montgomery County and Carroll County, do not include school assignment as an equity action.

FEI advocates for an equity policy that focuses on the root causes of the inequities and the systemic issues, bias and institutional barriers in the school system, as the majority of this draft Policy 1080 does. Accordingly, FEI urges the Board to strike the reference to Policy 6010 on school assignment.

### **III. Appoint an Educational Equity Committee to Oversee the Superintendent's Implementation of the Policy to Ensure Effectiveness and Accountability.**

The current draft of Policy 1080 delegates authority for implementation solely to the Superintendent which gives an exorbitant amount of unfettered discretion to one person. Because there are some ambiguities in the current draft policy related to its application, it is essential to have the voices and experiences of stakeholder involved in effectively implementing the policy. By way of example, there are words used in the policy that have no definition such as “differentiated approaches” when referring to development of a culturally responsive curriculum. In addition, there are equity actions described without parameters, such as translating documents into different languages, with no limitation on which languages will be given preference and which languages will excluded. Because Policy 1080 currently lacks the requisite level of specificity, FEI urges this Board to adopt an Educational Equity Committee comprised of parents, students, principals, community stakeholders and diversity, inclusion and equity professionals to oversee the Superintendent's implementation of this policy.

We believe that the Educational Equity Committee's oversight is a reasonable compromise for those concerned that Policy 1080 is not fully developed and ready for adoption. The Educational Equity Committee would also assist the Superintendent with the annual budget that allocates resources and provide insight to the Department of Curriculum and Instruction related to the culturally responsive curriculum. As it stands, there are ambiguities related to the culturally responsive curriculum such as which cultures may be included or excluded. The involvement of an Educational Equity Committee would ensure that the policy is most effective, fairly applied and it would provide an added layer of accountability for the success of this policy.

FEI does not want an equity plan on paper. FEI wants an equity plan that will actually work. Accordingly, consistent with everyone's conviction that diversity yields creative solutions and the very best thinking around a complex issue, we need a group of diverse minds, experiences and perspectives from those who are stakeholders to ensure the success of the equity policy. The implementation and success of this important equity policy cannot be totally delegated to any one person. None of us are as smart as all of us. – *Japanese Proverb*



BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HOWARD COUNTY
MEETING AGENDA ITEM

PUBLIC HEARING
(Same documents as Report)

TITLE: Policy 1080 Educational Equity (working title/new) DATE: August 18, 2020

PRESENTER(S): Razia Kosi, Facilitator, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Timothy Guy, Director, Assessments and Reporting

Strategic Call to Action Alignment: Inclusive Relationships - All students see diversity and inclusion reflected in the curriculum and respect the contributions of all populations.

OVERVIEW:

Policy 1080 was reviewed under the guidelines for policy development and adoption. A committee of stakeholders, chaired by Razia Kosi, Facilitator, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Timothy Guy, Director, Assessments and Reporting, was convened to make recommendations for revisions to the policy. The committee was charged with the following tasks:

- Review all parts of the policy to update legal references as needed and to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory mandates, in particular the Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §2-205(c) and (h) and Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.01.06.
Review the policy for consistency with other school system policies, with particular attention to those developed or revised since the last revision of this policy.
Make recommendations in accordance with current best practices such as the HCPSS Strategic Call to Action.
Recommend language as needed to address policy standards outlined in Policy 2020 Policy Development and Adoption.
Utilize relevant data sources to inform the effectiveness of the policy, if applicable.
Note any implications or follow-up actions that may be necessary as a result of the committee's recommendations.

Attached are highlights of updates to the new policy and the proposed policy and implementation procedures. The charter for the committee was presented to the Board on February 12, 2019; an update report was delivered to the Board on September 5, 2019; the committee's recommendation was submitted to the Superintendent's Cabinet on February 24, 2020; a report was delivered to the Board on May 28, 2020; a public hearing was held on June 11, 2020; and an additional update report was presented to the Board on July 9, 2020.

RECOMMENDATION/FUTURE DIRECTION:

The Board will take action to adopt new Policy 1080 Educational Equity on September 10, 2020. The new policy will become effective immediately.

SUBMITTED BY: Razia Kosi, Facilitator Diversity, Equity and Inclusion APPROVAL/CONCURRENCE: Michael J. Martirano, Ed.D. Superintendent

Timothy Guy, Director Assessments and Reporting Karalee Turner-Little Deputy Superintendent

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Deleted: SUBMITTED BY: APPROVAL/CONCURRENCE: Razia Kosi, Facilitator Diversity, Equity and Inclusion ¶
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David Larner  
Chief Human Resources and Professional Development Officer

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### Policy 1080 Educational Equity Highlights of Update Report Proposal

#### Policy

- Updates the Policy Value Statement.
- Updates the Purpose.
- Clarifies access to a culturally responsive and relevant curriculum that provides meaningful and dynamic school experiences are essential to postsecondary success.
- Specifies HCPSS will provide culturally responsive and relevant curriculum with inclusive of perspectives from Black, Asian American Pacific Islander, Latino, LGBTQ+, indigenous peoples, individuals with disabilities, and others who are excluded in the current curriculum. The curriculum will use differentiated approaches and resources to meet the needs of every student in accordance with Policy 8000 Curriculum.
- Clarifies HCPSS will provide access and support to dynamic coursework and comparable academic and enrichment programs for all students in order to maximize student learning. A student's English proficiency, disability status, perceived academic ability and/or social identifiers will not limit access and opportunity.
- Includes the HCPSS will maintain a safe and supportive school climate through a multifaceted approach that uplifts positive relationships and culture of belonging, supports mental health needs, and is in accordance with Policy 1040 Safe and Supportive Schools.
- Specifies HCPSS will intentionally recruit, employ, promote, support, and retain a diverse workforce of highly qualified educators that reflect the diversity of the student population. In accordance with Policy 7000 Workforce Diversity, an innovative recruitment and retention Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Plan for teachers of color and other diverse staff, is a priority for HCPSS.
- Clarifies HCPSS will prioritize ongoing professional learning experiences focusing on factors influencing educational equity, such as cultural proficiency and responsiveness, implicit bias, explicit bias, and systemic racism.
- Includes HCPSS will work collaboratively with parents, community, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Howard County Executive, the Howard County Council and county agencies, business organizations, bargaining units, and other stakeholders to increase equity and inclusion for students and staff.
- Updates the Responsibilities section.
- Adds the Superintendent/designee will propose an annual budget that allocates resources in a manner that promotes the principle of education equity. The equity information will be part of each program budget where applicable and include an analysis of resources that address the needs of marginalized groups.

**Commented [MLS1]:** Per HCPSS Policy 2020 -Policy Development and Adoption, this section is to be called the "1. Policy Statement" not a Policy Value statement.

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BOE Meeting of July 9, 2020

- Includes new responsibilities for the Department of Curriculum and Instruction; the Office of Human Resources; the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and HCPSS principals.
- Includes the Superintendent’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group will provide the Superintendent/designee with an assessment of educational equity in HCPSS annually.
- Adds definitions for Culturally Proficient Instruction and Parent.
- Updates the definitions for Cultural Responsiveness; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Educational Equity; Equity Lens; Inclusion; and Restorative Culture.
- Updates the References section.

**Implementation Procedures**

- Includes parents will have the opportunity to examine the multiple data points and submit their recommendation for their child to the decision making team to ensure equitable access for their child.
- Specifies The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) will plan and facilitate training and development related to HCPSS educational equity goals. The professional learning will cover such areas as anti-racism, bias, cultural proficiency and responsiveness, equity facilitation and leadership, equity focused leadership for district and site-based leaders, microaggressions, restorative justice practices, trauma-informed /healing-centered practices, student voice, and other diversity, equity, and inclusion-related professional development.
- Clarifies ODEI will partner with parent and community organizations and government agencies to support mutual equity goals.
- Includes a section for addressing concerns of violations and non-compliance of this policy.
- Updates the definitions for Cultural Proficiency and Trauma-Informed/Healing-Centered Practices.

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**Committee for the Development of  
Policy 1080 Educational Equity (working title)**

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Timothy Guy\*, Director, Assessments and Reporting  
Razia Kosi\*, Facilitator, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Maha Abdelkadar, Coordinator, ESOL  
Jyoti Bhambra, Kaur Foundation (alternate)  
Towanda Brown, The Council of Elders (TCOE)  
Marcia Morales Butler, Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC)  
Erika Strauss Chavarria, Equity4HC  
Megan, Chrobak, Principal, Oakland Mills Middle School  
Christy Conklin, Howard County Administrators Association (HCAA)  
Candace Dodson-Reed, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DEIAC)  
Jacqueline Douge, Howard County Health Department  
Joshua Drasin, Howard County Association of Student Councils (HCASC)  
Linda Earle-Hill, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)  
Lisa Gray, Collaborative for Inclusive Communities  
Tina Horn, PATH  
Jumel Howard, PFLAG  
Sandy Keaton, Instructional Facilitator  
Veronica Kim, Howard County Association of Student Councils (HCASC)  
Rick Kohn, General Citizens  
Nigel LaRoche, Principal, Dayton Oaks Elementary School  
Jennifer Lastova, Community Advisory Council (CAC)  
Jennie Lee-Kim, General Citizens  
Pratima Lele, Attorney  
Ying Matties, Chinese American Network for Diversity and Opportunity (CAN-DO)  
Rosimar Melendez, The Horizon Foundation  
Kelli Midgley, Teacher, Wilde Lake High School  
Thais Moreira, Latin American Council  
Colleen Morris, Howard County Education Association (HCEA)  
Robert Motley, Principal, Atholton High School

*All stakeholders listed in Policy 2020 Policy Development and Adoption were invited to have representation on the committee.*

Ayman Nassar, Islamic Leadership Institute of America

Bruce Nelson, Alpha Phi Alpha

Jennifer Novak, Director, Curricular Program Kym

Nwosu, Early Childhood Resource Teacher

Michael Parker, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

Mirin Phool, Kaur Foundation

Pravin Ponnuri, Indian Origin Network of Howard County

Beth Raboin-Gettleman, PTA Council of Howard County (PTACHC)

David Rodriguez, Conexiones

Anne Roy, Title IX Coordinator

Jackie Scott, Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services

Nancy Shih, Chinese American Parent Association of Howard County, (CAPA)

Q. Elijah Smith-Green, Administrative Intern, Patuxent Valley Middle School

Yale Stenzler, Jewish Federation of Howard County

Genee Varlack, Principal, Forest Ridge Elementary School Matthew

Vaughn-Smith, Teacher, Forest Ridge Elementary School Sandra

Vecera, Facilitator, Leadership Development

Eva Yiu, Coordinator, Research and Evaluation

Nooreen Zaidi, Howard County Muslim Council

\* Committee Chair

BOE Meeting of July 9, 2020

POLICY 1080  
EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Effective: July 1, 2020  
September 10, 2020

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Policy Outline

- I. Policy Statement
- II. Purpose
- III. Standards
  - A. Academic Achievement and Growth
  - B. School Climate and Culture Affecting School Success
  - C. Staff Capacity for Educational Equity
- IV. Responsibilities
- V. Delegation of Authority
- VI. Definitions
- VII. References
- VIII. History

I. Policy Statement

The Board of Education of Howard County believes that educational equity is a basic human right and must shape all school system policies, procedures, and practices. The Board prioritizes educational equity by identifying and removing institutional barriers and root causes including individual circumstances that obstruct access and opportunity to a high quality education for all students. The Board believes it is the shared responsibility of employees, parents, community stakeholders, and students to work towards educational equity.

The Board acknowledges systemic racism, implicit and explicit bias, institutional barriers, and individual circumstances that have caused opportunity gaps, resulting in inequitable outcomes for students. As such, the Board is committed to providing all students with equitable access to the educational rigor, resources and supports that are designed to maximize the student's academic success and social/emotional well-being. We believe it is our responsibility to advance the skills, talents, abilities, and experiences that make each student unique. The unique characteristics of our students and staff are valued as strengths that contribute to the overall school community. We mandate addressing disparities in educational outcomes as a priority in each school, including but not limited to, access to advanced coursework, identification for specialized services, discipline, suspension/expulsion practices, achievement, and graduation rates between diverse student groups.

Commented [MLS2]: Policy 2020 has delineated the elements to be included in HCPSS Policies: 1. Policy Statement, 2. Purpose, 3. Definitions, 4. Standards, 6. Responsibilities, 6. Delegation of Authority, 7. References, and 8. History." This policy should be re-ordered in order to provide consistency with previously promulgated policies. But for ease of reading, we have left the order as is.

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Commented [MLS3]: While laudable, this could be construed to be outside the scope of HCPSS policy (to include adult learners, for example)

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Commented [SIK4]: To achieve equity in our schools, you must also examine the root causes which include individual circumstances such as poverty or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the school system has to strive to address those individual circumstances as well. The State law and Guide to Equity Handbook contemplate addresses to root causes also. Institutional barriers within the school system are only half of the problem.

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Commented [SIK5]: "Other discriminatory practices" are institutional barriers. Therefore, this language is redundant

Commented [MLS6]: Educational outcomes should never be predictable by any individual student's actual or perceived

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Commented [SIK7]: This revision is the stated purpose in the State regulation and the definition of educational equity

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Commented [MLS8]: See previous comment; working to identify and remove structural and institutional barriers to

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II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations ~~and procedures related~~ to the identification and elimination of achievement gaps.

VI. Standards

A. Academic Achievement and Growth

Academic achievement and growth is a high priority for each and every student. Access to a culturally responsive and relevant curriculum that provides meaningful and dynamic school experiences are essential to postsecondary success. In order to actualize this priority, the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) will:

- ~~Engage~~ Promote student voice and support youth in becoming active and engaged participants in their academic experience.
- Strive to provide culturally responsive and relevant curriculum with inclusive perspectives from Black, Asian American Pacific Islander, Latino, LGBTQ+, indigenous peoples, individuals with disabilities, women, and other underrepresented groups in the current curriculum. HCPSS will strive to ensure equal representation of diverse cultures and groups in the curriculum. The curriculum will be made in accordance with Policy 8000 Curriculum.
- Implement curriculum that teaches students to be global citizens who appreciate and value diverse cultures. As such, the instructional materials used in HCPSS schools reflect aspirations, issues, and achievements of persons from diverse social identifiers, and incorporate a global perspective in accordance with Policy 8040 Selection of Instructional Materials and Policy 8050 Teaching of Controversial Issues.
- Provide access and support to dynamic coursework and comparable academic and enrichment programs for all students in order to maximize student learning. A student's English proficiency, disability status, perceived academic ability and/or social identifiers do will not limit access and opportunity.
- Allocate resources and academic supports for students, families, schools, and communities to ensure individual student success and growth. promote a culture of high expectations for all students and staff performance, and intentionally allocate additional funding to students in greater need as well as to schools that serve larger numbers of students in need, and report metrics thereon to the Board and wider community.
- Identify and remove institutional barriers that could prevent students from

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Commented [SIK9]: The State regulation refers to eliminating achievement gaps not "disparities in education outcomes" which may or may not be the same. It's ambiguous so HCPSS should use the State's language for consistency. See COMAR 13A.01.06.01(C)

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Commented [MLS10]: There is no reference to "global perspective" in policy 8040, but there is a call for Selection Criterial to be "representative and respectful of the pluralistic nature and diversity of the global society." Global perspectives are also not included in Policy 8050.

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Commented [MLS11]: Does this mean that we are prepared to provide bilingual GT education or disability

Commented [MLS12]: Allocating resources to the students in greater need, as well as schools that serve large

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equitably accessing educational opportunities in all schools.

- 7. Report academic achievement and growth data disaggregated by available federally accountable student groups to increase transparency and promote access

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and opportunity. All reporting is in compliance with Policy 3060 Student Data Governance and Privacy and Policy 9050 Student Records.

- 8. Prohibit exclusion from academic programs, extracurricular activities, and services on the basis of a student’s social identifiers and address violations through Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination and Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline.

B. School Climate and Culture Affecting School Success

In order for all students to be successful academically, schools must create a safe, welcoming, supportive, and affirming environment. As such, the HCPSS will:

- 1. Incorporate student voice in school and district level decision making.
- 2. Build environments that intentionally focus on fostering empathy, developing relationships and upholding dignity for everyone in our schools, offices, and community.
- 3. Maintain a culture in which students, employees, and families are encouraged to self-reflect on assumptions, biases, and beliefs, in order to promote understanding, respect, dignity, acceptance, and positive interactions among all individuals and groups.
- 4. Nurture healthy relationships with staff, students, and community, through a restorative culture and student-centered practices.

Promote a diverse, equitable, and inclusive student population at all schools.

- 5. Evaluate and continuously improve classroom placement practices and student scheduling to ensure that diversity exists in all learning environments.
- 6. Maintain a safe and supportive school climate through a multifaceted approach that uplifts positive relationships and culture of belonging, supports mental health needs, and is outlined in accordance with Policy 1040 Safe and Supportive Schools.
- 7. Identify and eliminate disproportionality in discipline practices by uplifting and nurturing healthy relationships, creating a just and equitable learning environment, repairing harm, and responding effectively to conflict. Regardless of social identifiers, consequences are fair, equitable, consistent, and reflective of a restorative culture.

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Commented [SIK13]: The State law says nothing about using school assignments as a mechanism for achieving educational equity. The State’s 21 page handbook A Guide for Educational Equity in Maryland Schools sets forth specific actions for the local school systems to consider in developing their equity plans and school assignment is not one of them. Other school systems in Maryland have not included school assignment in their equity plans. There is no authority for using school assignment to achieve equity because it is actually not an evidenced based solution and has no relation to equity. See fuller explanation in written testimony. Further, the case law would suggest that school assignment policies grounded in race are not legal. As it currently stands, Policy 6010 does not use demographic data as primary consideration for school attendance. It is a fact...

Commented [MLS14]: It is outside the purview of the school system to establish diverse student populations using demographic data, and is probably illegal under current US...

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Commented [MLS15]: This could also be misconstrued to be creating a quota system for classroom placements. Instead, HCPSS ought to provide access to rigorous

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- 8. Leverage the strengths of parents and community partnerships to increase equitable opportunities for students and positively influence the school culture and climate.
- 9. Provide translation of documents in languages that represent largest diverse groups within the HCPSS community and sign-language interpretation services to ensure access to information for all families in accordance with Policy 1070 Protections and Supports for Foreign-Born Students and Families and the Americans with Disabilities Act, respectively.
- 10. Maintain a clean, safe, affirming, and healthy environment at all schools that is conducive to student learning.
- 11. Report school climate data disaggregated by available federally accountable student groups to track progress towards a healthier and positive climate. All reporting is in compliance with Policy 3060 Student Data Governance and Privacy and Policy 9050 Student Records.
- 12. Identify patterns of discriminatory practices at all organizational levels. Discriminatory practices are prohibited and addressed through Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination and Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline.

C. Staff Capacity for Educational Equity

A diverse workforce of effective educators and leaders within the school system is essential to a student’s educational experience. All HCPSS employees commit to co-creating a safe and nurturing learning environment and as such, the HCPSS will:

- 1. Intentionally recruit, employ, promote, support, and retain a diverse workforce of highly qualified educators and leaders within the school system. In accordance with Policy 7000 Workforce Diversity, an innovative recruitment and retention Workforce Diversity and Inclusion pPlan for teachers of color and other diverse staff, is a priority for HCPSS.
- 2. Identify and remove institutional barriers to recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting a diverse workforce.
- 3. Prioritize ongoing professional learning experiences focusing on factors influencing educational equity, such as disabilities, English language learners, cultural proficiency and responsiveness, implicit bias, explicit bias, and systemic racism.
- 4. Support educators in building positive cultures, where students and staff feel valued, welcomed, and supported to fulfil their academic and professional potential.

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**Commented [SIK16]:** You can't translate in every language. What are the limitations? What documents will be translated exactly?

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**Commented [MLS17]:** As demonstrated by the disparities of discipline for students with disabilities, it is imperative for HCPSS to address these disparities through professional training.

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- 5. Train and support school-based Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaisons (DEILs) who will work with school administrators and their teams to support the attainment of school improvement goals.
- 6. Work collaboratively with parents, community, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Howard County Executive, the Howard County Council, local law enforcement agencies, and other county agencies, community groups, business organizations, bargaining units, and other stakeholders to increase equity and inclusion for students and staff.
- 7. Prohibit discriminatory employment practices through the implementation of Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination and Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline.

**IV. Responsibilities**

- A. The Board of Education shall convene an Educational Equity Committee comprised of parents, students, teachers, principals, diversity, inclusion and equity professionals and community stakeholders to advise the Superintendent regarding implementation of this policy.
- A. The Superintendent/designee will oversee the development of a Local ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan. The plan includes a needs assessment that identifies areas of focus, provides equity performance accountability measures, and further outlines implementation strategies that address educational equity.
- ~~B.~~ The Superintendent/designee will updates the Board on educational equity progress through information items, memorandums and board reports that include disaggregated student and staffing data.
- B. ~~The Superintendent/designee proposes an annual budget that reflects educational equity throughout offices and programs. The budget funds the established ODEL.~~
- C. In consultation with the Educational Equity Committee, t Superintendent/designee will propose an annual budget that allocates resources in a manner that is intentional in providing additional funding to students in greater needs, as well as to schools that serve larger numbers of students in need, to include, and not be limited to, students with disabilities. ... Further, the Superintendent/designee will disclose budget allocations by school.
- ~~ED.~~ The Department of Information Technology will collaborate with HCPSS offices to maintain a longitudinal data system that contains disaggregated student data across academics, discipline, and school climate for district, program, and school analysis and evaluation of educational equity.
- E. The Department of Curriculum and Instruction in consultations with the Educational Equity Committee will develop a culturally responsive curriculum that promotes equity, respect, and civility amongst our diverse community, is inclusive and

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**Commented [MLS18]:** the SRO program has been successful in HCPSS and per the civil rights data reported to MSDE, referrals to the criminal justice system are low. Despite the adverse national media attention on law enforcement, HCPSS should remain committed to student safety through an active educational partnership with local authorities.

**Commented [MLS19]:** We want more community involvement, not less

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**Commented [SIK20]:** Perhaps the Superintendent's DEIL Advisory Group could serve in this role assuming the Advisory Group is representative of the community.

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**Commented [MLS21]:** The lack of specificity of this is problematic. What are these? Does it deviate from national ESSA statistics?

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**Commented [MLS22]:** This allocation of funding to "marginalized groups" is not adequate; rather, the commitment should be intentional to provide funding to students in greater need, as well as to schools that serve larger numbers of students in need. (rather than looking at this as a competition of resources between marginalized groups)

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**Commented [MLS23]:** what does this mean? how is this to be reported? Is it outcome based? improvement scores? ...

reflective of perspectives which have been excluded or minimized historically and currently, and includes respect and understanding for students with disabilities. Professional learning will be provided to educators to build the capacity to understand and deliver culturally proficient instruction. Instructional materials used in HCPSS schools will reflect the diversity of the global community, the aspirations, issues and achievements of women, persons with disabilities, and persons from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

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F. The Office of Human Resources will develop recruitment, promotion, employment, and retention procedures consistent with the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

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G. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) will provide training and development aligned to its educational equity goals through district-level and school-based level professional learning opportunities.

H. HCPSS principals will include students, parents, families and community members, in decision-making groups that impact school culture, climate, and the academic success of students when possible.

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I. All employees will engage in self-reflective practices ~~to ensure their effectiveness with every student~~ aligned to HCPSS educational equity goals.

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J. The Superintendent's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Group will provide the Superintendent/designee with an assessment of educational equity in HCPSS annually.

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K. The Superintendent/designee will review this policy at least every three years and recommend it for revision as necessary.

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VI. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent is authorized to develop appropriate procedures to implement this policy, in consultation with the Educational Equity Committee and with the approval of the Board of Education

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Commented [SIK24]: The Superintendent cannot be granted unfettered discretion to implement this policy as it not specific enough and there is plenty of room for interpretation.

IV

Commented [MLS25]: Per Policy 2020, this is to be Section 3

V. Definitions

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

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A. Culturally Proficient Instruction ~~Curriculum should enable staff to model and students to develop the following attitudes, skills, and behaviors:~~

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- Value one's heritage and the heritage of others;
- Respect, value, and celebrate diversity as an essential component of a healthy and thriving community;
- Value the richness of cultural pluralism and commonality;
- develop and promote inclusive relationships and work effectively in cross-cultural environments; and

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Deleted: in order to better instruct their students. Culturally proficient practices are guided by the tools

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- confront and eliminate stereotypes related to individuals' actual or perceived personal characteristics.
- 

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**AB.** Cultural Responsiveness – Pedagogy that values the strengths students' and educators' cultural backgrounds, and recognizes the importance of including culture in all aspects of learning through equitable and inclusive practices. Cultural responsiveness is grounded in relationships and plays an essential role in how individuals communicate and receive information.

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**BC.** Diversity – Recognizing, accepting, and respecting that individuals come from many different life experiences with various frames of reference and perspectives. While diversity values unique perspectives and individual differences, it also values the commonalities we all share. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, race/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, disability/ability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion/ beliefs, mental and physical ability, age and national origin.

**CD.** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaison (DEIL) – A leadership role within a school that facilitates school efforts to support diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. The liaison, is selected by the principal, receives training and support from the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) and participates in a district-wide network of DEILs.

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Commented [MLS26]: What are the measures of success in this position? How often are these trainings? What is their deliverable? How do we know it is working?

Discrimination - Actions that are motivated by an invidious intent to target individuals based on their actual or perceived personal characteristics, as well as acts of hate, violence, insensitivity, disrespect, or retaliation – such as verbal abuse, harassment, bullying, slurs, threats, physical violence, vandalism, or destruction of property – that impede or affect the learning or work environment. Discrimination also includes conduct or practices that may be facially neutral but that have an unjustified disparate impact based on individuals' actual or perceived personal characteristics. Discrimination encompasses racism, sexism, and other forms of institutional prejudice in all their manifestations.

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**E.** Educational Equity – Every student has access and support to the opportunities, resources, and educational rigor they need throughout their educational career to maximize academic success and social/emotional well-being and to view each student's individual characteristics as valuable.

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**EEF.** Equity - [This Equity Lens definition is problematic.] The proactive steps to identify and redress implicit biases and structural and often have resulted in identifiable groups of students and staff being unjustifiably or disproportionately excluded from or underrepresented in key educational program areas and sectors of the workforce, as well as over-identified in student discipline actions. Continued vigilance is necessary to end identified inequities that student and staff experience because of their actual or perceived personal characteristics.

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**FG.** Explicit Bias – Attitudes, beliefs, and actions that are on a conscious level and enacted with negative intent.

- GH.** Federally Accountable Student Group – Categories of students that are recognized in school, district, and state performance reporting.
- HI.** Implicit Bias – 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.
- IJ.** Inclusion – To make sure, all individuals are engaged participants in the learning environment and community. All students, families and staff members feel valued, respected, appreciated and involved. Individuals see their unique identities reflected in all facets of education including staffing, curriculum, instruction, and activities.
- JK.** Institutional Barriers – The policies, procedures or practices that deny access to educational opportunities or systematically disadvantage students and families based on social identifiers.
- KL.** Longitudinal Data System – Database of student information that is capable of maintaining records over multiple years in multiple schools.

**Deleted:** The process by which a school ensures that

**M.** Parent – Any one of the following recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the student:

1. Biological Parent – A natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.
2. Adoptive Parent – A person who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.
3. Custodian – A person or an agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
4. Guardian – A person who has been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities.
5. Caregiver – An adult resident of Howard County who exercises care, custody, or control over the student but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian as long as the person satisfies the requirements of the Education Article, §7-101 (c) (Informal Kinship Care) or has been issued a U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Verification of Release form entering into a custodial arrangement with the federal government.
6. Foster Parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in the home by a state agency or a licensed child placement as provided by the Family Law Article, §5-507.

**Commented [MLS27]:** We should not be using an outside, Candian group for this definition.

**Deleted:** <#>Marginalized Groups – Groups and communities that experience discrimination and exclusion (social, political and economic) because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social and cultural dimensions. (National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health 2020)  
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**N.** Personal Characteristics - Characteristics including race, ethnicity, color, ancestry.

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national origin, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family/personal status, marital status, age, physical or mental disability, poverty and socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations.

**LO.** Racism – The belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person’s social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics. Racial separatism is the belief, most of the time based on racism, that different races should remain segregated and apart from one another. This includes systemic racism which is the systematic distribution of resources, power and opportunity in our society to the benefit of people who are white and the exclusion of people of color.

**MP.** Restorative Culture – An philosophy approach that emphasizes building relationships. When there is a need to repair harm caused by conflict and wrongdoing, restorative justice provides an opportunity for everyone impacted by an incident to come together in a safe space to address their feelings and needs, and reach a resolution that heals and restores relationships.

**NO.** Social Identifiers – The characteristics of each individual which include but are not limited to: ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), ethnicity, family structure, gender identity and expression, language, national origin, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, skin color, and socio-economic status.

**OR.** Student Voice – A belief and a process to listen, learn, and lead with students, in order to increase student agency in their educational experience.

**VI. References**

**A.** Legal  
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Public Law 101-336, July 26, 1990  
Code of Maryland Regulations, 13A.01.06.00 Educational Equity Authority  
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. 1400-1487

**B.** Other Board Policies  
Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination  
Policy 1040 Safe and Supportive Schools  
Policy 1070 Protections and Supports for Foreign-Born Students and Families  
Policy 3060 Student Data Governance and Privacy  
Policy 7000 Workforce Diversity and Inclusion  
Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline  
Policy 8000 Curriculum  
Policy 8040 Selection of Instructional Materials  
Policy 8050 Teaching of Controversial Issues  
Policy 9050 Student Records  
Policy 9060 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Compliance: Section 504  
Policy 10000 Student, Parent, Family, and Community Engagement

**C.** Relevant Data Sources

**Commented [MLS28]:** HCPSS should be very careful here about the Restorative Cultural piece since it can serve to reinforce unequal power dynamics in abusive situations, especially in situations involving sexism. Students who are bullied or harassed should not be pressured to "come together" with any bully or abuser.

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D. Other

**VII. History<sup>1</sup>**

ADOPTED: September 10, 2020

REVIEWED:

MODIFIED:

REVISED:

EFFECTIVE: ~~July 1, 2020~~

September 10, 2020

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<sup>1</sup> Key: **Adopted**-Original date the Board took action to approve a policy; **Reviewed**-The date the status of a policy was assessed by the Superintendent's Standing Policy Group; **Modified**-The date the Board took action to alter a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee did not require a comprehensive examination; **Revised**-The date the Board took action on a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee needed a comprehensive examination; **Effective**-The date a policy is implemented throughout the HCPSS, typically July 1 following Board action.

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**POLICY 1080-IP  
IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES**

**EDUCATIONAL EQUITY**

Effective: ~~July 1, 2020~~  
September 10, 2020

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**II. Funding and Allocation of Resources**

- A. The Superintendent/designee will recommend priorities and develop procedures for differentiating school funding in consultation with the Educational Equity Committee. The District Level School Support Team (SST) will identify and allocate resources based on, but not limited to:
  - 1. Academic outcomes aligned with the federally accountable student groups.
  - 2. Mental health and behavioral needs.
- B. Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) schools and offices will seek grants and partnerships to supplement funding for innovative programs and supports to decrease opportunity gaps.
- C. HCPSS offices will seek local, state, and federal funding to supplement the support educational equity.
- D. The Division of Operations will provide equitable funding and services at each individual school to ensure all school facilities are safe, healthy, efficient and conducive to student learning.
- E. Principals will utilize data to request and advocate for community and eCentral Office supports, based on the unique needs of the school population.
- F. The Offices of Budget and Finance, in compliance with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), will report expenditures by school to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for comparing per-pupil spending between schools.

**III. Access and Opportunity<sup>1</sup>**

To increase access and opportunity the following steps will be taken:

- A. The Division of Academics, in collaboration with the Division of School Management and Instructional Leadership, will develop equitable placement processes that utilize student input, parent/guardian input, teacher input and

<sup>1</sup> See June 5, 2019 Board Report, *Equity: Responding to Performance and Opportunity Gaps in HCPSS*, for a detailed examination of instructional strategies and interventions supporting access and opportunity.

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multiple data points to ensure equitable access to advanced coursework. Parents will have the opportunity to examine the multiple data points and submit their recommendation for their child to the decision making team to ensure equitable access for their child.

- B. The Division of Academics will work with school leadership teams and communityies to communicate with families about the importance of early reading, ~~readiness~~ and ~~the~~ programming available to support student success from Birth-Grade 12.
- C. The Early Childhood Office will ~~collaborate with~~ childcare providers, families, and pre-K programs to support student readiness for kindergarten.
- D. The Division of Academics and Division of School Management and Instructional Leadership will work ~~collaboratively to increase graduation rates for all students~~ by ~~to~~ ~~examine~~ ~~ing~~ current supports and ~~then~~ ~~determine~~ ~~ing~~ innovative resources and supports for increasing graduation rates for all students.
- E. The Division of Academics will ~~partner with~~ local postsecondary institutions to expand innovative pathways, such as dual enrollment options and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to ensure postsecondary success for all students.
- F. The Division of Human Resources and Professional Development will identify partners and strategies to recruit and retain a diverse workforce, which includes, but is not limited to, racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity.

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**VI— Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Supports**

- A. The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) will plan and facilitate training and development related to HCPSS educational equity goals. The professional learning will cover such areas as anti-racism, bias, cultural proficiency and responsiveness, equity facilitation and leadership, equity focused leadership for district and site-based leaders, microaggressions, restorative justice practices, trauma-informed /healing-centered practices, student voice, equity-focused leadership for district and site based leaders, restorative justice practices, and other diversity, equity, and inclusion-related professional development.
- B. ODEI will ~~consult with~~ HCPSS divisions and offices on initiatives and programs to support HCPSS educational equity goals.
- C. ODEI will work collaboratively with HCPSS offices to intentionally uplift diverse role models, so that all students see themselves and the global society represented.
- D. ODEI will ~~partner with~~ parent and community groups and ~~organizations~~ government agencies to support mutual equity goals.

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- E. Principals will designate a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaison to lead school-based professional learning, support school improvement planning, and work with the ODEI on district-level initiatives.

**IV. Data Reporting/Accountability**

- A. SST will establish/maintain a school improvement planning process that requires district SST school improvement teams to:
  1. Analyze trends within disaggregated student data, which may include (but not be limited to):
    - a. Gap analysis to identify and address any emergent achievement gaps.
    - b. Disproportionality in discipline practices.
    - c. Under representation in advanced course enrollment.
    - d. Progress towards increasing graduation rates for all students.
    - d. Disproportionality in special education identification rates.
    - e. Staff professional development needs.
  2. Perform root cause analysis that includes cultural and structural factors.
  3. Strategize solutions that focus on educational equity.
  4. Track targets and milestones to close equity gaps.
  5. Modify school improve plans as needed to support closing achievement gaps.
- B. School-based leadership teams will perform equity-focused data analysis to identify current gaps in educational outcomes, programming, supports, and interventions in order to develop and implement school improvement plans.
- C. Annual reporting of staff data to the Board will include staff demographics, recruitment initiatives, successful retention efforts for teachers of color, and additional innovative strategies utilized by the Division of Human Resources and Professional Development to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.
- D. The Superintendent/designee will develop a Local ESSA Consolidated Plan that will utilize disaggregated student data to determine school system needs, identify areas of focus, and track progress towards equity goals.

**V. Addressing Concerns and Non-Compliance**

- A. Individuals who have been subjected to, or observe behaviors that are violation of this policy, are first encouraged to respectfully share the concern/issue with the person or persons directly involved, in a manner that reflects a restorative approach.

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B. If implementing the procedure noted above in Section V.A. is unsuccessful, individuals should refer to HCPSS policies and procedures, including the following:

1. Policies

- Policy 1000 Civility
- Policy 1010 Anti-Discrimination
- Policy 1020 Sexual Discrimination
- Policy 1040 Safe and Supportive Schools
- Policy 1060 Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, or Intimidation
- Policy 2030 Ombudsman
- Policy 2070 Ethics
- Policy 7030 Employee Conduct and Discipline
- Policy 9020 Students' Rights and Responsibilities
- Policy 9200 Student Discipline

2. Other

- Formal Parent Concern Form
- HCPSS Student Code of Conduct
- Student and Parent Handbook

**VI. Definitions**

Within the context of these implementation procedures, the following definitions apply:

- A. Cultural Proficiency – The ongoing process of becoming knowledgeable of one’s assumptions, biases, values, beliefs, own cultural identities, as well as the cultures of others in order to foster an appreciation, understanding, and respect for varying cultural expressions that exist in the actions and interactions of an organization. Culturally proficient practices are guided by the tools of cultural proficiency.
- B. Microaggressions – Everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their Personal Characteristics.
- C. Root Cause Analysis – A process by which an issue is examined by going deeper into why the problem exists. Causal factors contributing to the issue are explored to assist with identification of action steps that address the original cause of the issue and not just the symptoms or outcomes.
- D. District Level School Support Team (SST) – A cross-divisional team with representation from various offices within the Howard County Public School

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Deleted: marginalized group membership

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THIS IS AN UNOFFICIAL DOCUMENT PROVIDED AS A TOOL FOR STUDYING PROPOSED CHANGE

~~System (HCPSS) who~~ that are tasked with overseeing school improvement plans and developing supports for schools.

- E. Trauma-Informed/Healing-Centered Practices – ~~Practices that reflect an understanding of~~ the basics of how adverse childhood experiences affect a person throughout their life and focus on collective approaches to healing.

**VII. History<sup>2</sup>**

ADOPTED: September 10, 2020  
 REVIEWED:  
 MODIFIED:  
 REVISED:  
 EFFECTIVE: ~~July 1, 2020~~  
September 10, 2020

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<sup>2</sup> Key: **Adopted**-Original date the Board took action to approve a policy; **Reviewed**-The date the status of a policy was assessed by the Superintendent’s Standing Policy Group; **Modified**-The date the Board took action to alter a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee did not require a comprehensive examination; **Revised**-The date the Board took action on a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee needed a comprehensive examination; **Effective**-The date a policy is implemented throughout the HCPSS, typically July 1 following Board action.



# EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

A Guide to Educational Equity in Maryland



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Dear Maryland Leaders:

I believe that educational equity is a critical priority for Maryland, as well as a cornerstone in my work as Maryland State Superintendent of Schools. Although we have seen some progress in our State indicators, achievement and opportunity gaps still persist at all levels of our education system. I believe very strongly that all students deserve an education that prepares them for life long learning, success when they enter the workforce and participation in our representative government. There are many students who are not receiving the high-quality educational experiences that are needed to reach these goals. Yes, we have admired the problem very frequently, but now it is time to work actively towards resolving it.

We must approach equity with urgency so that all children can realize the promise of public education. The importance of educational equity and its relationship to educational excellence is highlighted in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) logo, but more importantly, it is, and must continue to be, evident in our work.

The work of MSDE staff and the State Board over the last three years has focused on greater understanding of our diverse students' needs. What we have not grappled with is recognizing the importance of diversity and viewing it as an asset. Through MSDE's Network for Equity and Excellence in Education, we invited representatives from all 24 local school systems (LSSs) to work with us to develop focus areas and strategies to improve the achievement of all students in the State.

This *Guide to Equity and Excellence in Maryland* will serve as a road map to educators on how to apply an equity lens to all aspects of their work and will be a valuable resource as LSSs develop and implement their own educational equity policies. The *Guide* should be used as a practical tool for developing goals in each school system's Local Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated Strategic Plan. Those goals and strategies are intended to increase equitable opportunities for all of our students.

Best regards,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

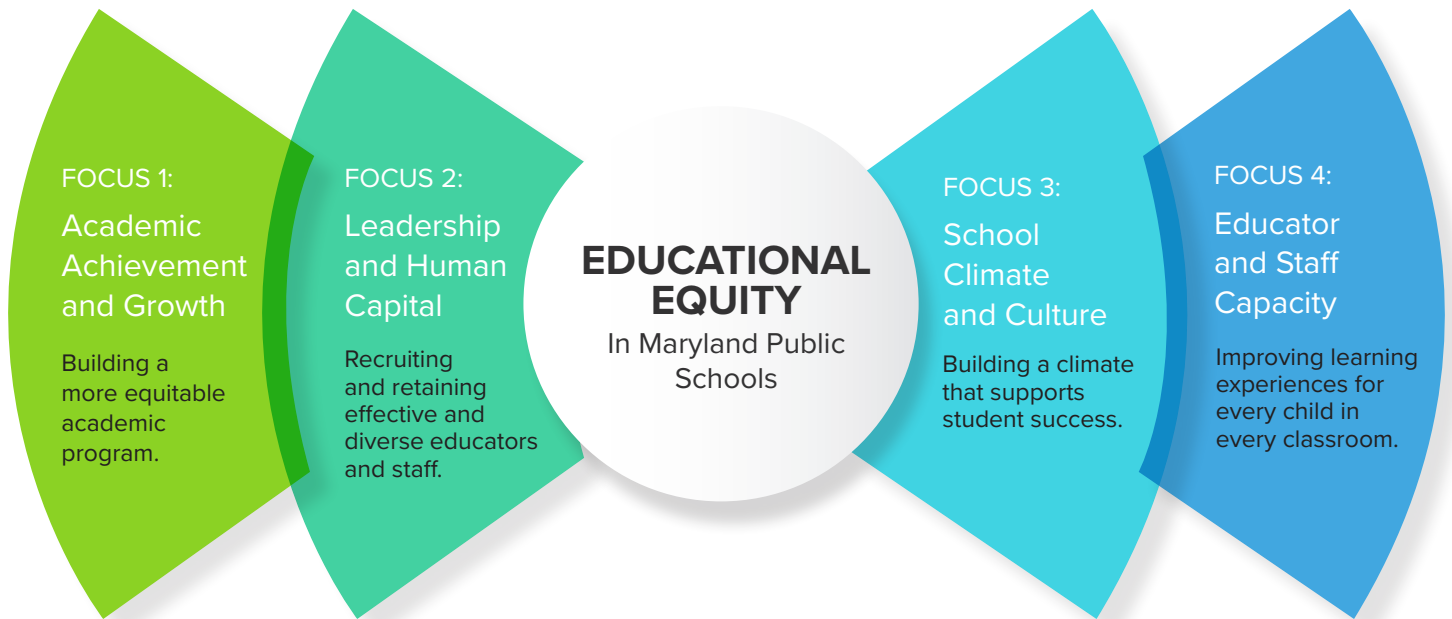
**Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.**

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS



## What are Maryland's equity focus areas?

Four focus areas will guide the creation of a more equitable education system in Maryland.



## How to use the Equity Guide

This Guide was developed to assist Local School Systems (LSSs) and schools in strategic planning and implementation of equitable practices and structures for all students.

For each of the equity focus areas, the Guide includes:

### Why?

A snapshot of Maryland data that illustrates the need to improve educational equity in the focus area.

### How?

Guidance on examining the focus area through an equity lens.

### What?

A menu of actions for LSSs and schools to implement based upon local needs assessments and data.

## Why does Maryland focus on equity in education?

One of the fundamental requisites of Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.01.06, Educational Equity, is that local school systems (LSSs) develop policies and regulations that reflect the requirements laid out in the State Board regulations. This Guide includes educational equity focus areas and actions that will assist in creating or revising local policies and regulations. Stakeholder input is critical during the development and implementation of the policies and regulations. LSSs should use their local policy format to develop a policy that is customized for their communities. Policies may include purpose statement(s), definitions, goals and outcomes, and procedures for evaluation and reporting. Tools for policy development include the needs assessment aligned to the Local ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan and disaggregated state and local data. COMAR requires review of the LSS policy every three years.

### The following are additional requirements included in COMAR for local educational equity policies:

1. Be designed to create and maintain environments that are fair, safe, diverse, and inclusive.
2. Be based on the goal of providing educational equity for all students.
3. Direct the identification and utilization of resources to provide equitable access to educational opportunities and services by, among other steps, the use of disaggregated student data to analyze and identify gaps and equitable solutions.
4. Identify partnerships with the Maryland State Department of Education, local government agencies, and stakeholders to support educational equity.
5. Provide tailored and differentiated professional learning to build capacity for cultural responsiveness to address areas of inequity identified by the school system.
6. Ensure equitable access to effective teachers for all students.
7. Require that an equity lens be used in all staff recruiting, hiring, retention, and promotion decisions.
8. Require that an equity lens be used in reviews of all staff, curriculum, pedagogy, professional learning, instructional materials, and assessment design.
9. Provide the access and opportunity for all students to successfully read on-level by the end of Grade 2.
10. Direct that equity be addressed in the Local Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated Strategic Plan.
11. Identify the school system's process for analyzing data to develop goals, objectives, strategies, and timelines for the implementation of equitable and culturally competent practices in each school.
12. Identify the method of evaluation to measure the effect of equitable practices in the school system and schools.
13. Designate an individual responsible for the facilitation, monitoring, and implementation of the system equity initiatives within the Local ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan.



# Focus 1: Academic Achievement and Growth

Building a more equitable academic program.

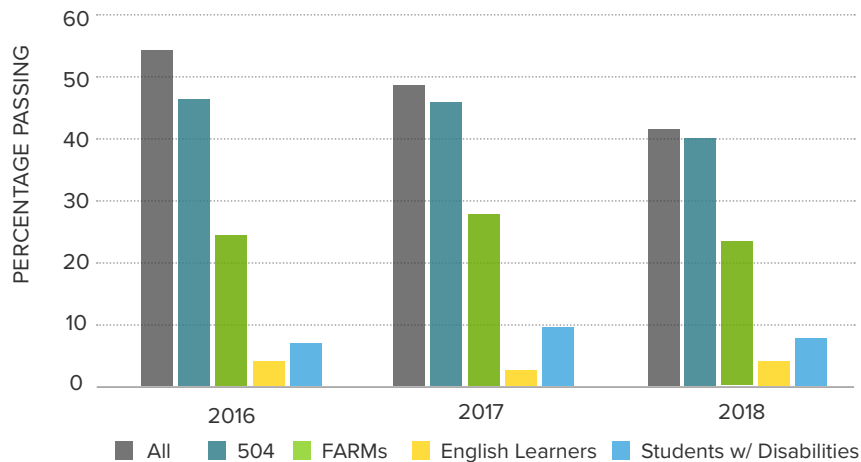
## Why Academic Achievement and Growth?



Review of two assessments required for graduation shows that when looking at student groups, English Learners and Students with Disabilities perform at a lower rate than other student groups on Algebra I and ELA 10 state assessments. When disaggregating by race/ethnicity, African American and Hispanic students perform lowest on the same state assessments.

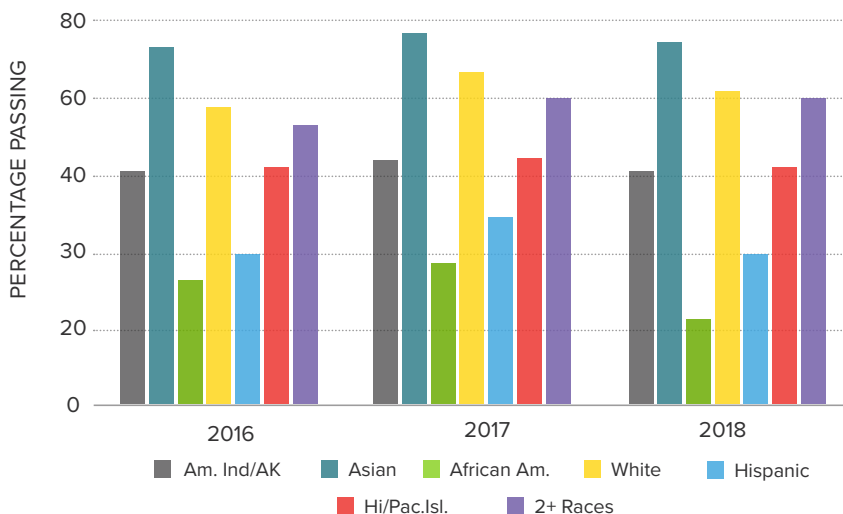
### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) ASSESSMENT

ELA 10 BY STUDENT GROUPS



The performance of English language learners and students with disabilities is lower than other student categories on the ELA 10 assessment. Students with 504 designation and FARMs (Free and Reduced Meals) students perform higher.

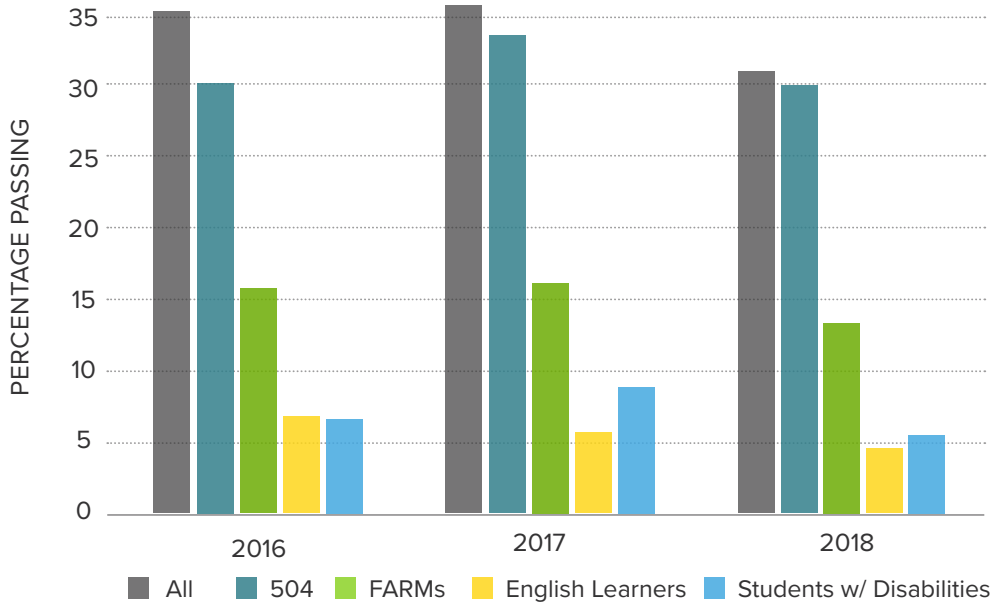
ELA 10 BY RACE/ETHNICITY



Data on race/ethnicity shows that African American and Hispanic students have the lowest scores; Asian students, followed by white students, have the highest scores. The Guide provides recommendations for reviewing student data, root cause analysis, and goal setting to address these discrepancies.

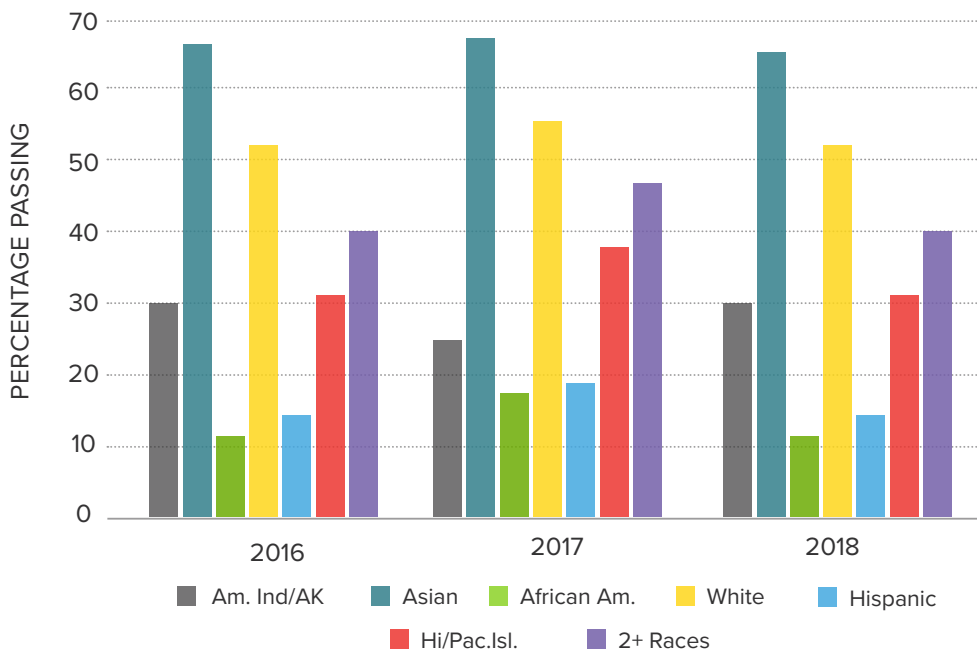
## ALGEBRA I ASSESSMENT

### ALGEBRA I BY STUDENT GROUPS



When examining the performance of student groups, English learners and students with disabilities have the lowest performance. Overall, there is a significant gap between low-performing students and high-performing students that has persisted over the three years highlighted on the graphs. The Equity Guide provides systematic steps to analyze and identify goals to reduce these inequities.

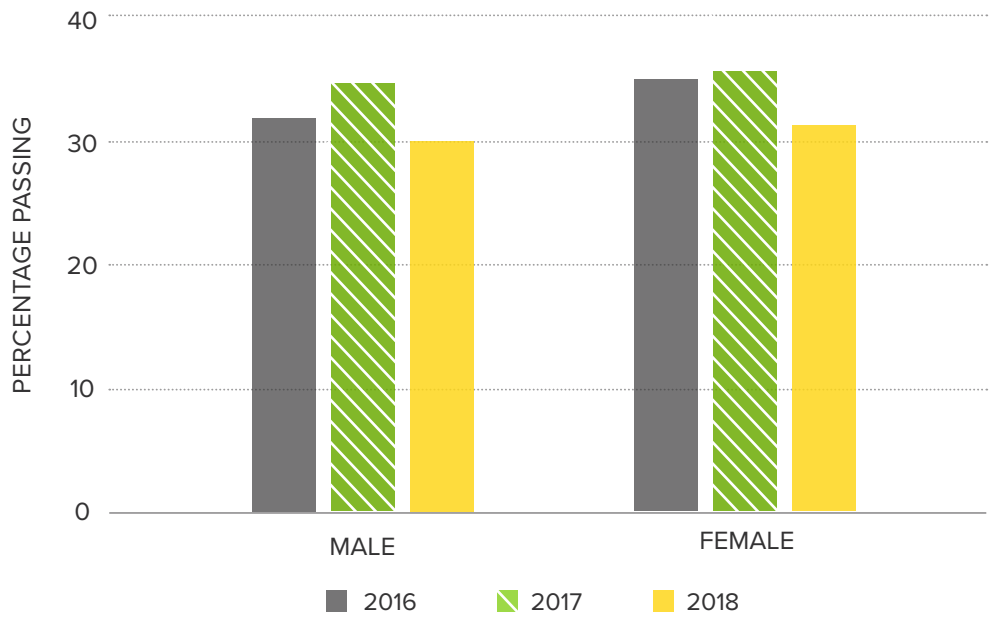
### ALGEBRA I BY RACE/ETHNICITY



The assessment outcomes of African American students and Hispanic students are lower than students of other races/ethnicities on the Algebra I assessment. White students' outcomes show higher scores than other racial/ethnic groups, with the exception of Asian students. Native American and Hawaii/Pacific Islander students perform higher than African American students and Hispanic students but significantly lower than Asian and white students on the Algebra I assessment.

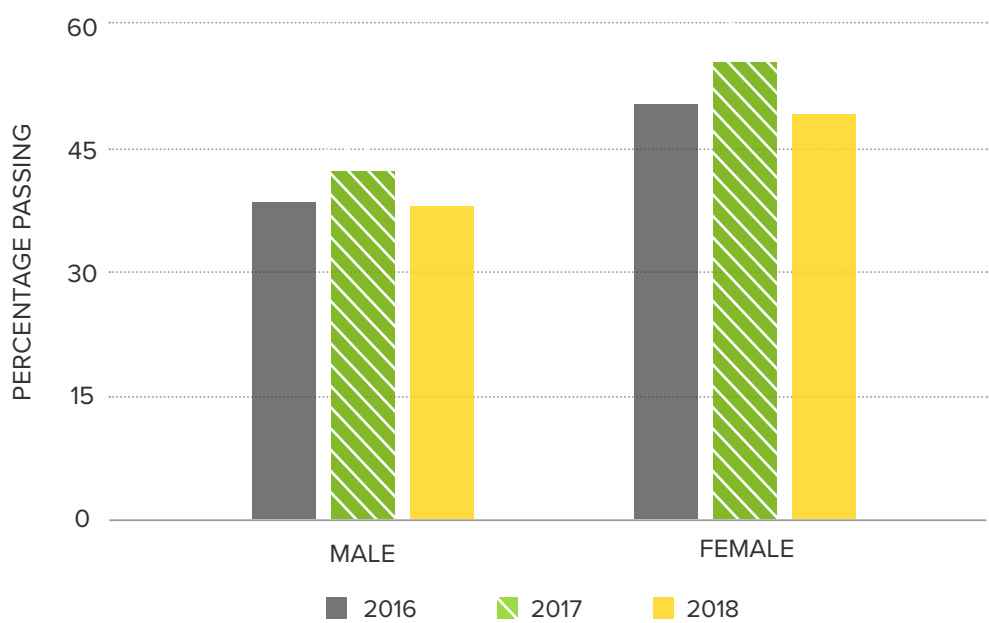
## ASSESSMENTS BY GENDER

### ALGEBRA I BY GENDER



Female students have consistently performed higher than male students during the testing cycles of 2016-2018. Disaggregating this data by race/ethnicity and student groups will allow LSSs and schools to develop goals and action steps to addressing the academic needs of students.

### ELA 10 BY GENDER



Female students perform more than 10 points higher than male students. Using tools such as root-cause analysis can assist in revealing solutions that can be translated into action steps to support equitable instructional practices.



## How to apply the Equity Lens

In Maryland, we believe that all students are capable of reaching their full potential and succeeding in school, regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, or other individual characteristics. As such, when there are gaps in achievement and growth based on these characteristics, we must take a close and critical look at the systems that govern schools and LSSs. Next we must make the changes necessary so that all students are able to reach their potential at the schools that they attend. We will continue to look critically at every aspect of our educational system until all academic and growth gaps are closed.

## Actions

### Identify and address structural and institutional barriers that prevent students from equitably accessing educational opportunities in all schools.

#### LSS Level :

- Develop educational equity policy and regulations as required in COMAR 13A.01.06 Educational Equity.
- Clearly articulate goals in the Local Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated Strategic Plan.
- Determine where the gaps are in academic achievement in your LSS, e.g.:
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Socioeconomic status
  - Disability status
  - School-based
  - Student-level
  - Gender
- Evaluate curriculum for alignment to standards.
- Determine the programming that is offered at each school in academic and non-academic areas and who has access to/is enrolled in these programs, e.g.:
  - Early literacy programming
  - Rigorous standards-based English, math, social studies, and science pathways
  - Postsecondary opportunities, e.g., dual-enrollment college tours/programming, AP, and IB courses
  - Career and Technical Education programs of study
  - Extracurricular activities
  - College/career counselor
  - Well-rounded coursework
  - STEM
  - Other instructional supports
- Determine funding gaps:
  - By school
  - Per-pupil expenditures (e.g., staffing, books, technology, buildings)
- Determine the schools and classrooms that have the smallest gaps in achievement and resource allocation and find trends and best practices to emulate and share widely.

#### School Level :

- Clearly articulate the school's commitment to provide equity for all students, regardless of individual characteristics.
- Using the data from the LSS analysis, identify existing gaps and determine a plan for how to address those gaps (use root cause analysis to identify barriers).
- Assess implementation of vetted/standards-aligned curriculum for bias, inadequate examination of perspectives, e.g. social justice standards or anti-bias framework.
- Ensure access to a vetted/standards-aligned curriculum for all students, including English learners and students with disabilities.
- Use formative assessment to adjust teaching and learning practices based on the progress of individual students.
- Identify the key community partners that can support students and families and engage with those partners to develop a school-level strategic vision and planning efforts.
- Offer training to develop parent knowledge and leadership skills that enable them to become integral partners and advocates for their children's education.

## Strengthen students' readiness for postsecondary entry and success.

### LSS Level :

- Provide data systems and/or dashboards to school leaders that are clear and inform them of student potential and current gaps in access to postsecondary opportunities in their schools.
- Allocate resources and provide professional learning to school leaders and staff to ensure proper student coursework and advisement aligned to specific postsecondary programming.
- Work with local postsecondary institutions to establish articulation agreements for programming for students.
- Expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs of study offerings in high-needs schools.
- Provide incentives and access to opportunities for school staff to acquire proper credentials to lead Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate (AP/IB) and dual-enrollment programming.

### School Level :

- Use data from the earlier analyses, determine where gaps are found, and create a plan for how to fill gaps.
- Ensure that all students have access to course sequences aligned to postsecondary preparation and are properly advised on postsecondary opportunities and how to access them.
- Ensure that the school curriculum includes opportunities for AP/IB and dual-credit courses that fulfill graduation requirements.

## Increase access to early learning opportunities. Provide access and opportunities for all students to successfully read on grade level by the end of Grade 2.

### LSS Level :

- Communicate to schools and families about the importance of early reading and the programming available to support achievement from Birth–Grade 12.
- Develop a plan for comprehensive literacy instruction that includes foundational reading skills.
- Ensure that all students have access to high-quality early learning opportunities regardless of disability, race, or socioeconomic status, and create a plan for ways to address those gaps where they exist.
- Provide data systems and training for school leaders that clearly inform them of current gaps in achievement, programming, supports, or interventions, as well as evidence-based interventions that are available at their schools.
- Prioritize access to high-quality early learning opportunities aligned to standards.
- Provide incentives and access to opportunities for school staff to acquire proper credentials to lead early reading strategies and interventions.

### School Level :

- Determine where gaps exist in achievement, access to programming, supports, and funding, and create a plan for how to address them.
- Set high expectations and provide supports for educators and staff in the explicit and systematic instruction of foundational reading skills in order for teachers to successfully teach early reading and track student progress and growth towards goals.
- Adjust curriculum and available programming to ensure that students have multiple opportunities to read and get feedback about their progress towards goals.
- Provide opportunities for support and interventions as needed to ensure academic achievement for all students.

## Focus 2 : Leadership and Human Capital

Recruiting and retaining effective and diverse educators and staff.

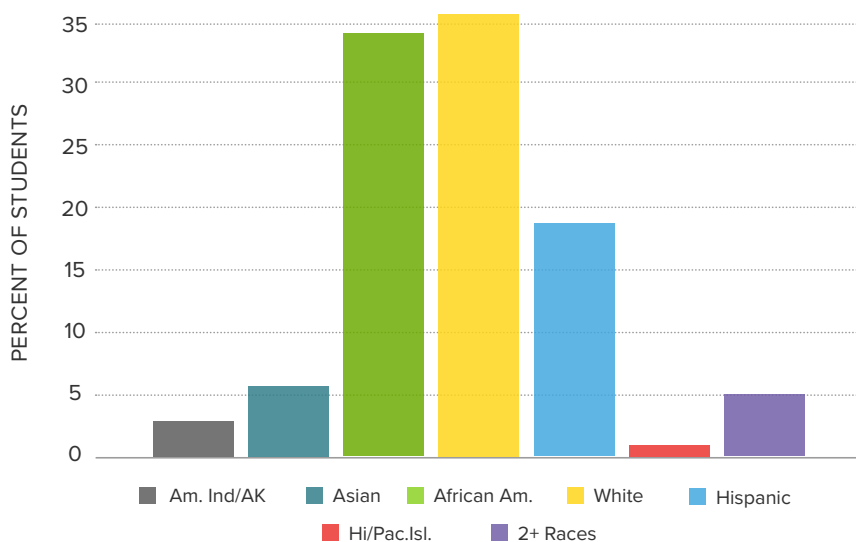
### Why Leadership and Human Capital?



Students who interact with a culturally diverse population of teachers and leaders in a school are more likely to build strong relationships with adults, feel safe in the school environment, and be engaged in learning that sets the conditions for higher outcomes. The charts below show a significant difference between the diversity in professional staff and the diversity of Maryland’s student body.

ENROLLMENT IN MD PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY RACE/ETHNICITY

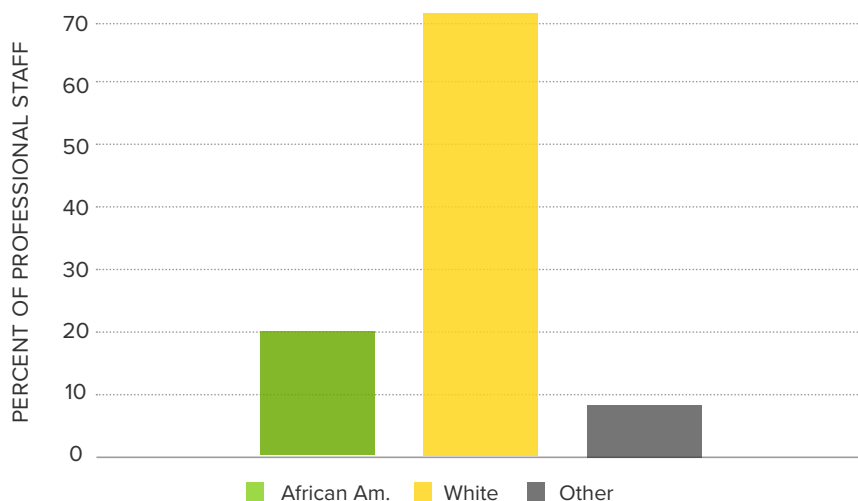
SEPTEMBER 2018



This chart shows that Maryland schools are diverse. The largest number of students are White (36.5%) and African American (33.6%), and Hispanic (18%). All other racial/ethnic groups represent an additional 10.6% of the student population. Research makes a strong correlation between the race/ethnicity of the student and that of the teacher. Use of an equity lens will assist school systems and schools to disaggregate the data on student enrollment and professional staff and develop long-term plans to bring these groups into better alignment.

PERCENT OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF BY RACE/ETHNICITY

OCTOBER 2018



The graph shows that professional staff falls in two major categories, White at 70% and African American at 20%. All other race/ethnic categories of professional staff combined are 8.6%. These percentages do not represent an equitable professional staff. Suggested actions provided in the Guide will assist local school systems and schools in developing strategies to overcome barriers to hiring and retaining a more diverse faculty and staff.





## How to apply the Equity Lens

As leaders in Maryland, we know that based on our history and current societal dynamics, we have a responsibility to work often outside of our comfort zones to ensure that all students have access to a quality education and feel safe and included in their school environments. Part of that work is to ensure that all students, particularly students of color, students with disabilities, and students who have been traditionally underrepresented and not afforded equal opportunities, have access to effective, diverse, and supportive teachers and leaders throughout their school experiences.

## Actions

### Provide equitable access to effective teachers.

#### LSS Level :

- Using the data provided at the state level through the ESSA accountability system, ensure that the students with the lowest performance outcomes have equitable access to highly effective teachers.
- Identify the barriers to attracting and retaining a diverse workforce of highly effective teachers and develop a plan to address those barriers.
- Train those involved in the hiring process to recruit and identify staff that will be successful working in high-needs schools.
- Engage with institutes of higher education (IHEs) to support retention of teachers.

#### School Level :

- Using data compiled and analyzed at the LSS level, develop school-based strategies to recruit and place highly effective teachers in high-need areas.
- Create professional learning experiences for all staff to increase culturally responsive practices.
- Develop supports (i.e. teacher-mentor or coaching) and programming to provide induction and incentives to prepare and retain teachers in high-needs schools and classrooms.
- Create school clubs and Grow Your Own initiatives to develop a self-sustaining pipeline of diverse pool teaching candidates.

### Recruit, hire, and retain a diverse and effective staff of highly qualified educators.

#### LSS Level :

- Set system-wide goals related to closing equity gaps, i.e., ensuring that all students are taught by at least one teacher of color and all students of color are taught by a teacher of color.
- Analyze hiring, recruitment, and retention efforts and determine where teachers of color are being lost in the pipeline.
- Provide training support for school leaders and hiring staff in their selection and hiring processes to reduce implicit biases and prioritize hiring to close racial gaps.
- Engage with IHEs and preparation programs that have diverse student populations and work to build a pipeline to schools that need more teachers of color.
- Create a rigorous and innovative retention plan for teachers of color.

#### School Level :

- Determine gaps by race at the school level.
- Collect information on staff satisfaction from teachers each year and review data to determine strengths and weaknesses in the professional, instructional, and social climate of the school in order to promote strengths and remedy weaknesses.
- Analyze data from teachers who leave the school, along with their reasons for exiting.
- Identify potential teacher candidates of color outside of the traditional routes to recruit into educator preparation programs.
- Provide induction, mentoring support, and access to school leadership opportunities for new and current teachers of color.

# Focus 3 : School Climate and Culture Affecting School Success

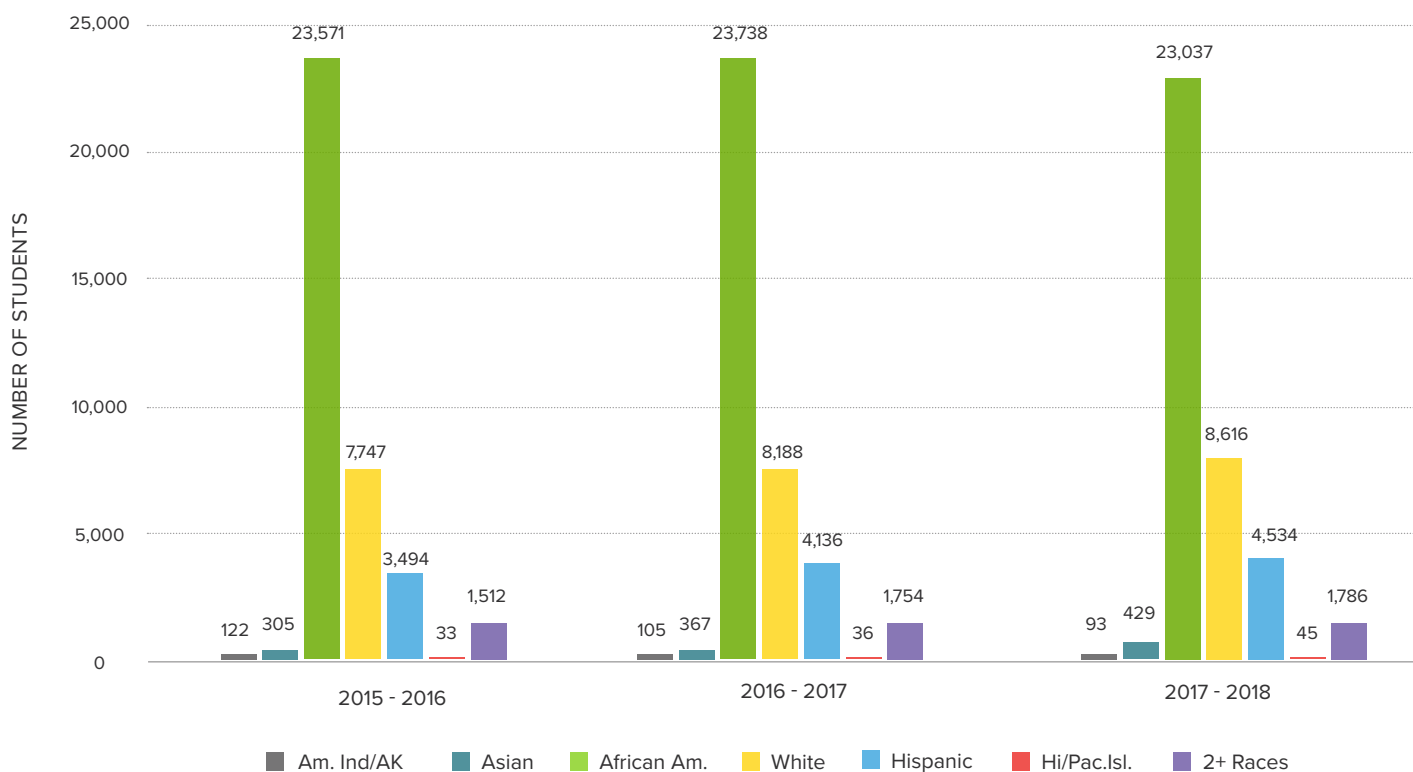
Creating a climate that supports student success.

## Why School Climate and Culture Affecting School Success?



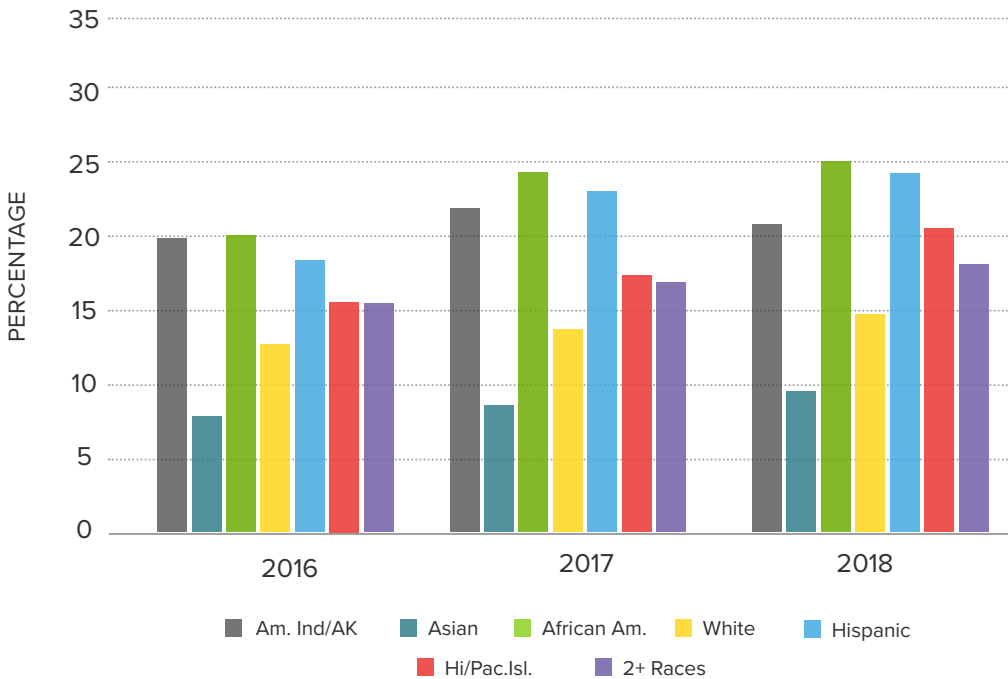
In Maryland schools, students of color experience higher rates of suspensions and expulsions. This phenomenon has continued over several school years. Even with a greater emphasis placed on suspension/expulsion data starting in 2016, this discrepancy has continued. Students of color and students with disabilities also experience high rates of chronic absenteeism.

### Students Suspended or Expelled from Maryland Public Schools by Race/Ethnicity



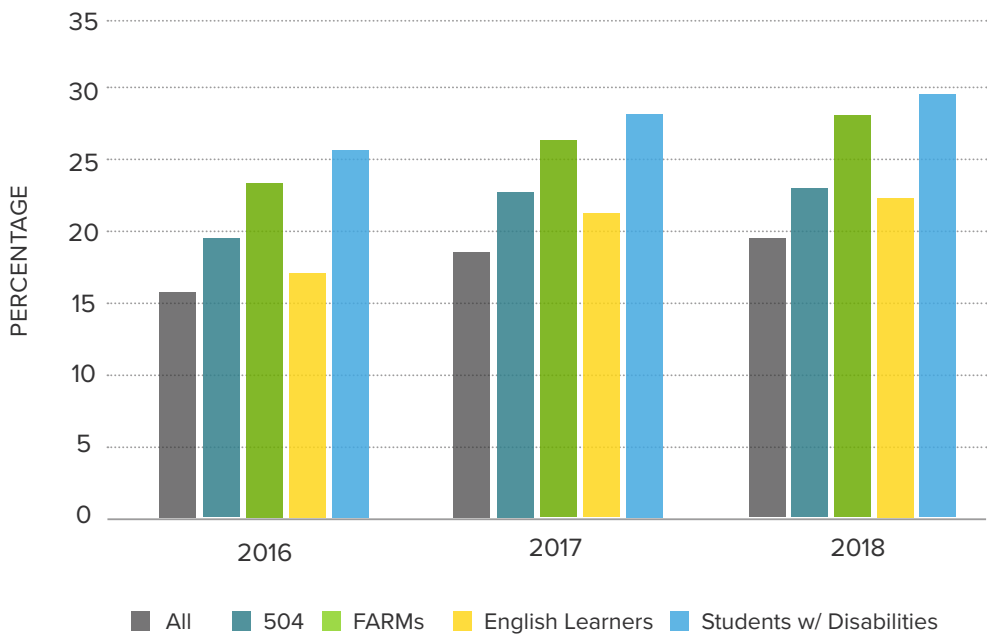
African American students are disproportionately suspended or expelled from Maryland Public Schools than any other student group when suspension/expulsion data is disaggregated by race/ethnicity. White and Hispanic students are the second and third highest groups with Native American students suspended/expelled at the lowest rate.

### CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM BY RACE/ETHNICITY



Students of color have higher rates of chronic absenteeism than all students except white and Asian students. Asian Students have the lowest rate of chronic absenteeism. Using this Guide and an equity lens will position local school systems and schools to reduce the rates of chronic absenteeism for students of color.

### CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM BY STUDENT GROUPS



Student groups on this chart have higher rates of chronic absenteeism than the All Students category. Maryland’s most vulnerable students are experiencing higher rates of chronic absenteeism than their classmates. The Educational Equity regulation and this Guide provide the framework for local school systems and schools to develop plans to address chronic absenteeism and increase student attendance.



## How to apply the Equity Lens

In order for all students to be successful academically, schools must be warm, welcoming, and supportive environments. A positive culture gives students the opportunity to take chances and allows them to feel safe to make mistakes and productively learn from them. When leaders create welcoming school environments with the appropriate rigor and support, all students can succeed academically and socially and reach their full potential, regardless of race or socioeconomic background.

## Actions

### Identify areas of disproportionality, and identify root causes and actionable steps to address them.

#### LSS Level :

- Articulate a vision and mission to promote a culturally responsive LSS community in the Local ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan.
- Review data on chronic absenteeism at the school and student level and share annually with school leaders in the LSS.
- Review data related to discipline referral rates for all subgroups at the school and student level and share annually with school leaders in the LSS.
- Develop a strategy on evidence-based methods of positive school discipline and train school leaders on implementing new practices.
- Review the LSS curriculum to ensure that social-emotional learning strategies and culturally relevant instruction are integrated for students and staff to promote positive learning environments.

#### School Level :

- Articulate a vision and mission to promote a culturally responsive school community that aligns with the LSS's educational equity policy and the Local ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan.
- Create a plan to share data, policies, and practices with families each year and ensure that faculty and staff understand the school discipline policies.
- Train educators on restorative justice and practices and align school policies to improve school climate.
- Provide support to educators on social-emotional learning models and incorporate them into existing school practices.

### Reduce chronic absenteeism at the school and LSS Levels.

#### LSS Level :

- Create partnerships with educator preparation providers to ensure that teacher candidates learn strategies for reducing truancy and chronic absenteeism and develop skills to engage with families to support student attendance.
- Review LSS-wide attendance data and target support to schools with high rates of absenteeism.
- Provide training to school leaders and staff to develop effective monitoring systems and strategies to intervene where necessary to support attendance for families in the school community.
- Allocate the necessary resources and personnel for wraparound supports at schools where absenteeism is highest over an extended period of time.

#### School Level :

- Create a plan to partner with families and communities to create solutions to alleviate attendance barriers.
- Train educators and staff on the barriers to attendance and ensure that they are equipped with the tools necessary to support students and families with prolonged absences.
- Ensure that school policies, practices, and environments create an inclusive school culture that supports the attendance of all students and families.
- Identify partners in the community to provide non-instructional supports for families, e.g., access to laundry facilities, clothing, and transportation.

## Focus 4 : Educator and Staff Capacity

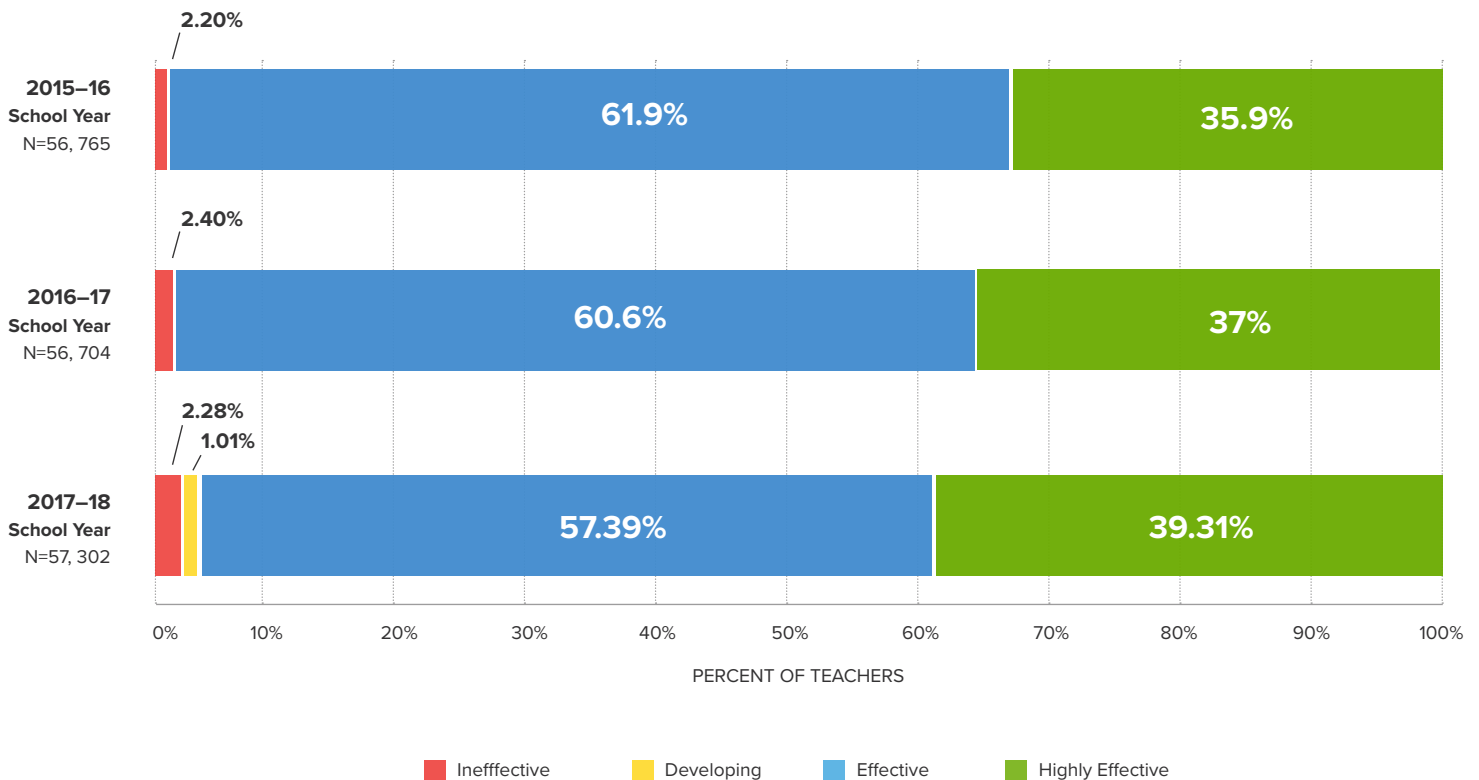
Improving learning experiences for every child in every classroom.

### Why Educator and Staff Capacity?



All Maryland teachers are evaluated annually. Between school years 2015 and 2018, nearly 97 percent of Maryland's teachers were rated as highly effective or effective. Disparities between student groups on performance outcome measures, however, have remained largely unchanged. Focusing on creating more equitable school systems will create an environment in which Maryland students can be successful.

### 97% of Teachers are Rated Highly Effective or Effective



The overwhelming majority of Maryland teachers are rated as highly effective or effective. This raises questions when contrasted with the student achievement gap as measured by state assessments. This Guide provides recommended action steps for local school systems and schools to address the discordance between teacher ratings and student performance.



## How to apply the Equity Lens

In order to ensure that all students feel welcome and valued at school, educators and staff must work to dismantle the barriers that have traditionally interfered with students' ability to reach their potential. Part of that work includes examining implicit biases that have the potential to harm students, incorporating social-emotional academic development (SEAD) strategies, evidence-based instructional strategies, and professional learning (PL) opportunities to master the skills and strategies that have successfully promoted growth and achievement of students from all backgrounds.

## Actions

### Promote positive student outcomes through the integration of cultural responsiveness and social, emotional, and academic development (SEAD).

#### LSS Level :

- Incorporate tenets of social-emotional learning into academic instruction.
  - Create a model for social-emotional implementation that includes trauma-informed/healing-centered strategies.
  - Develop high-quality curriculum that is aligned to standards and inclusive of students' backgrounds and cultures.
- Provide tailored and differentiated Professional Learning (PL) to build capacity for cultural responsiveness and working with diverse student populations.
  - Provide PL on social-emotional learning, mental health, and trauma.
  - Prioritize equity-focused training for all staff that addresses implicit bias and privilege.
- Align inclusive pedagogy and positive behavior support with the evaluation of teachers.
  - Train leaders to provide high-quality feedback and differentiated PL.
  - Coach teachers to evaluate their effectiveness with every student.

#### School Level :

- Incorporate student voices into PL to support cultural responsiveness of school staff.
  - Use LSS or school climate survey data to examine student perceptions of cultural responsiveness.
  - Create avenues for student input on policy development.
  - Add diverse student representation to leadership and school improvement teams.
- Provide training and support for teachers working with high-needs classrooms.
  - Create structures/systems to support new teachers so that they acculturate to the school's climate.
  - Utilize teacher mentors and communities of practice to support educator development.
  - Incorporate learning walks as a strategy to observe instruction, provide feedback, and support teachers in adjusting practice.
  - Connect family, community and culture into student learning.

# Key Terms

## Accountability measures

Maryland accountability framework indicators in place to guarantee oversight of opportunities, resources, and educational rigor that will lead to achievement for all students.

## Cultural responsiveness

Pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including culture in all aspects of learning through equitable and inclusive practices that promote high expectations.

## Educational equity

Granting every student access to the opportunities, resources, and educational rigor they need throughout their educational career to maximize academic success and social and emotional well-being, and viewing each student's individual characteristics as valuable.

## Educational opportunities

Those Maryland accountability framework indicators in place to guarantee oversight of opportunities, resources, and educational rigor that will lead to achievement for all students.

## Grow Your Own programs

A teacher recruitment program that starts at the secondary level or earlier in order to foster interest in teaching as a profession. These programs may also recruit from professional ranks. Models are varied but are usually a partnership between local school systems, teacher preparation programs, and state education agencies.

## Equity Lens

For any program, practice, decision, or action, the impact on all students is addressed, with strategic focus on marginalized student groups. Individual characteristics include:

- Ability (cognitive, social/ emotional, and physical)
- Ethnicity
- Family structure
- Gender identity and expression
- Language
- National origin
- Nationality
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Socioeconomic Status

## Social and emotional well-being

The ability to be resilient and generate the emotions that lead to good feelings including the ability to communicate and develop meaningful relationships with others.

## Trauma-informed/healing centered training

Professional learning that equips educators with the skills to be able to identify and support students who are experiencing trauma. Healing centered strategies use a holistic approach to restore and build resilience.



Resources and models for implementation to support each of the focus areas can be found here:

<http://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/EEE/index.aspx>

# Maryland Network for Equity and Excellence in Education 2018-19

## LEADERSHIP

### Razia Kosi, Co-Chair

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REV 2/22/17



The contents of this guidebook were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Code of Maryland Regulations  
Title 13a. State Board of Education  
Subtitle 01. State School Administration  
Chapter 06. Educational Equity

COMAR T. 13A, Subt. 01, Ch. 06, Refs & Annos  
[Currentness](#)

**Editors' Notes**

Authority: [Education Article, §2-205\(c\) and \(h\)](#), Annotated Code of Maryland

Complete through Maryland Register Volume 47, Issue 14, July 6, 2020.

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Code of Maryland Regulations  
Title 13a. State Board of Education  
Subtitle 01. State School Administration  
Chapter 06. Educational Equity (Refs & Annos)

COMAR 13A.01.06.01

.01 Purpose.

Currentness

The purpose of this chapter is to establish as a matter of policy and priority that:

- A. Each Maryland public school will provide every student equitable access to the educational rigor, resources, and supports that are designed to maximize the student's academic success and social/emotional well-being;
- B. Each local school system's procedures and practices provide for educational equity and ensure that there are no obstacles to accessing educational opportunities for any student; and
- C. Achievement will improve for all Maryland students and achievement gaps will be eliminated.

**Credits**

Adopted Nov. 18, 2019.

Complete through Maryland Register Volume 47, Issue 14, July 6, 2020.

COMAR 13A.01.06.01, MD ADC 13A.01.06.01

Code of Maryland Regulations  
Title 13a. State Board of Education  
Subtitle 01. State School Administration  
Chapter 06. Educational Equity (Refs & Annos)

COMAR 13A.01.06.02

.02 Scope.

**Currentness**

This chapter applies to all local school systems, the Maryland State Department of Education, and entities that provide educational services to children birth--age 21, including licensed childcare facilities and programs.

**Credits**

Adopted Nov. 18, 2019.

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COMAR 13A.01.06.02, MD ADC 13A.01.06.02

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COMAR 13A.01.06.03

.03 Definitions.

Currentness

A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

B. Terms Defined.

(1) “Accountability measures” means those Maryland accountability framework indicators in place to guarantee oversight of opportunities, resources, and educational rigor that will lead to achievement for all students.

(2) “Educational equity” means that every student has access to the opportunities, resources, and educational rigor they need throughout their educational career to maximize academic success and social/emotional well-being and to view each student's individual characteristics as valuable.

(3) “Educational opportunities” means all students have access to rigorous, well-rounded academic programs and experiences that enrich their educational career and prepare them for academic and career success.

(4) “Equity lens” means that for any program, practice, decision, or action, the impact on all students is addressed, with strategic focus on marginalized student groups.

(5) “Individual characteristics” means the characteristics of each individual student, which include but are not limited to:

(a) Ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical);

(b) Ethnicity;

(c) Family structure;

(d) Gender identity and expression;

(e) Language;

(f) National origin;

(g) Nationality;

(h) Race;

(i) Religion;

(j) Sexual orientation; and

(k) Socio-economic status.

**Credits**

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COMAR 13A.01.06.03, MD ADC 13A.01.06.03

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Code of Maryland Regulations  
Title 13a. State Board of Education  
Subtitle 01. State School Administration  
Chapter 06. Educational Equity (Refs & Annos)

COMAR 13A.01.06.04

.04 Requirements -- Educational Equity in Maryland.

Currentness

A. The Maryland State Department of Education shall establish systems of structure and support for school systems, students, teachers, and other stakeholders that ensure educational equity and excellence.

B. Each local school system shall develop an educational equity policy and regulations, to be reviewed every 3 years, with the goal of providing educational equity to all students.

C. The policy and regulations shall:

- (1) Be designed to create and maintain environments that are equitable, fair, safe, diverse, and inclusive;
- (2) Be based on the goal of providing educational equity for all students;
- (3) Direct the identification and utilization of resources to provide equitable access to educational opportunities and services, by among other steps, the use of disaggregated student data to analyze trends and identify gaps and equitable solutions;
- (4) Identify partnerships with the Maryland State Department of Education, local government agencies, and stakeholders to support educational equity;
- (5) Provide tailored and differentiated professional learning to build capacity for cultural responsiveness to address areas of inequity identified by the school system;
- (6) Ensure equitable access to effective teachers for all students;
- (7) Require that an equity lens be used in all staff recruiting, hiring, retention, and promotion processes;
- (8) Require that an equity lens be used in reviews of staff, curriculum, pedagogy, professional learning, instructional materials, and assessment design;



- (9) Provide the access and opportunity for all students to successfully read on level by the end of grade 2;
- (10) Direct that equity be addressed in the Local Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated Strategic Plan;
- (11) Identify the school system's process for analyzing data to develop goals, objectives, strategies, and timelines for the implementation of equitable and culturally competent practices in each school;
- (12) Identify the method of evaluation to measure the effect of equitable practices in the school system and schools; and
- (13) Designate an individual responsible for the facilitation, monitoring, and implementation of the system equity initiatives within the Local ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan.

**Credits**

Adopted Nov. 18, 2019.

Complete through Maryland Register Volume 47, Issue 14, July 6, 2020.

COMAR 13A.01.06.04, MD ADC 13A.01.06.04

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Title 13a. State Board of Education  
Subtitle 01. State School Administration  
Chapter 06. Educational Equity (Refs & Annos)

COMAR 13A.01.06.05

.05 Monitoring and Reporting.

Currentness

A. Each local school system shall:

- (1) Address implementation of the equity policy through its Local ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan;
- (2) Beginning September 1, 2019, include its equity initiatives as an integrated component of its Local ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan; and
- (3) Beginning September 1, 2020, and every 3 years thereafter, in its Local ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan, submit to the State Superintendent an analysis of the results of the accountability measures related to data collected on achieving equity goals and objectives that will be published and made accessible to the public.

B. The Maryland State Department of Education shall:

- (1) Conduct needs assessments for the Department and local school systems;
- (2) Convene the Network for Equity and Excellence in Education with representation from each local school system and other stakeholders to review Statewide progress and to develop implementation and peer review guidelines for this chapter;
- (3) Develop a guide for implementation of equity initiatives at the local level which includes sample components of high-quality equity policies, guidance around how to apply an equity lens within priority birth--age 21 focus areas as defined by the Department, and strategies on how to measure and evaluate the application of an equity lens; and
- (4) Review and assess progress of the Department and local school systems on implementing the requirements of this chapter.

C. Beginning December 1, 2020, and every 3 years thereafter, the State Superintendent shall report progress on the implementation of this chapter to the State Board, publish the data, and make it easily accessible for public viewing.

D. Beginning in 2020 and annually thereafter, the State Board of Education and the Superintendent will recognize schools, school staff, and local school systems that demonstrate the most significant advances in promoting equity and excellence.

**Credits**

Adopted Nov. 18, 2019.

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COMAR 13A.01.06.05, MD ADC 13A.01.06.05

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COMAR 13A.01.06.9999

.9999. Administrative History

[Currentness](#)

**Credits**

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West's Annotated Code of Maryland  
Education (Refs & Annos)  
Division II. Elementary and Secondary Education [Titles 2-9.5] (Refs & Annos)  
Title 2. State Department of Education (Refs & Annos)  
Subtitle 2. State Board of Education (Refs & Annos)

MD Code, Education, § 2-205

## § 2-205. Powers and duties of Board

Effective: July 1, 2010

[Currentness](#)

### **In general**

(a) In addition to the other powers granted and duties imposed under this article, the State Board has the powers and duties set forth in this section.

### **Elementary and secondary educational policies of State**

(b) The State Board shall:

- (1) Determine the elementary and secondary educational policies of this State; and
- (2) Cause to be carried out those provisions of this article that are within its jurisdiction.

### **Bylaws, rules, and regulations for administration of public schools**

(c)(1) The State Board shall adopt bylaws, rules, and regulations for the administration of the public schools.

(2) These bylaws, rules, and regulations have the force of law when adopted and published.

(3) The bylaws, rules, and regulations apply to each county. However, they do not apply to Baltimore City to the extent that they relate to matters that are the subject of other provisions of this article that do not apply to Baltimore City.

### **Legal proceedings to enforce article, bylaws, rules, and regulations**

(d) The State Board may institute legal proceedings to enforce:

- (1) The provisions of this article that are within its jurisdiction; and

(2) The bylaws, rules, and regulations adopted by the Board.

**Intent and meaning of article, bylaws, rules, and regulations**

(e)(1) Without charge and with the advice of the Attorney General, the State Board shall explain the true intent and meaning of the provisions of:

(i) This article that are within its jurisdiction; and

(ii) The bylaws, rules, and regulations adopted by the Board.

(2) Except as provided in paragraph (4) of this subsection and in Title 6, Subtitles 4 and 5 of this article, the Board shall decide all controversies and disputes under these provisions.

(3) The decision of the Board is final.

(4)(i) The Public School Labor Relations Board shall decide any controversy or dispute arising under Title 6, Subtitle 4 or Subtitle 5 of this article.

(ii) A decision of the Public School Labor Relations Board is final.

**Oaths**

(f) As Secretary to the State Board, the State Superintendent may administer oaths to witnesses in any matter before the Board.

**General control and supervision over public schools and educational interests of State**

(g)(1) This subsection does not apply to Baltimore City to the extent that it relates to matters that are the subject of other provisions of this article that do not apply to Baltimore City.

(2) Through the State Superintendent, the State Board shall exercise general control and supervision over the public schools and educational interests of this State.

(3) Through the State Superintendent, the Board shall consult with and advise county boards, county superintendents and their staffs, principals, teachers, and interested citizens.

(4) The Board shall seek in every way to direct and develop public sentiment in support of public education.

**Basic policy and guidelines for program of instruction**

(h)(1) With the advice of the State Superintendent, the State Board shall establish basic policy and guidelines for the program of instruction for the public schools.

(2) The policy and guidelines shall be printed in sufficient quantities to provide copies to:

(i) Public school officials and teachers;

(ii) Private schools; and

(iii) Interested citizens of this State.

(3) The State Board of Education shall require the establishment of criteria in each county for the selection of applicants for enrollment in public secondary school career and technology education programs. Enrollment criteria developed for this purpose shall ensure equal access to programs.

#### **Investigations by Board**

(i)(1) With the advice of the State Superintendent, the State Board shall investigate:

(i) The educational needs of this State; and

(ii) Methods to improve educational conditions.

(2) If necessary, the Board may employ additional expert assistance for these investigations.

#### **Annual State public school budget**

(j)(1) The State Board shall send the Governor an annual State public school budget including, subject to the Maryland Constitution and existing laws, the appropriation for:

(i) The Department; and

(ii) State aid to the counties for current expenses, for student transportation and for the construction of school buildings.

(2) The budget shall be certified by the State Superintendent before it is sent to the Governor.

#### **Advice relating to legislation**

(k) The State Board shall:

- (1) Consider the educational needs of this State; and
- (2) With the advice of the State Superintendent, recommend to the Governor and the General Assembly any legislation that it considers necessary.

#### **Standards and guides for school building projects**

- (l)(1) On the recommendation of the State Superintendent, the State Board shall establish standards and guides for planning and constructing school building projects.
  - (2) These standards and guides shall be used as the basis for reviewing plans and specifications submitted to the State Superintendent for approval.
  - (3) The State Board shall maintain a school construction planning service to:
    - (i) Assist in the development and review of preliminary and final plans and specifications for any public school building project and the educational program that it is designed to house; and
    - (ii) Advise county boards as to the suitability of these construction plans on the basis of educational effectiveness, construction, and reasonable economy of costs.
  - (4) The State Board shall collect, publish, and distribute to the county boards information on school construction procedures, methods, and materials.

#### **Professional employees**

- (m)(1) In this subsection, “professional employee” means an employee:
  - (i) For whom a certificate has been issued by the State Superintendent; and
  - (ii) For whom a salary scale has been established by law for the position or who meets or exceeds the qualifications required for an established salary scale.
- (2) From time to time, the State Board shall adopt bylaws, rules, and regulations that establish a minimum ratio of professional employees to students enrolled in the public schools or any combination of grades in these schools.
- (3) The ratio established by the State Board for the total number of professional employees for each county, calculated to the nearest whole position on a pro rata basis, may not be more than:
  - (i) 46 for each 1,000 of the first 5,000 students enrolled as of September 30 of each year; and



(ii) 45 for each additional 1,000 students.

(4) A county may employ more professional employees than the number permitted in this subsection as it considers necessary.

(5) At least 95 percent of the permitted number of professional employees shall be assigned to public schools.

#### **Reporting requirements for private educational associations, corporations, and institutions**

(n) With the advice of the State Superintendent, the State Board shall require each private educational association, corporation, and institution to report annually, on or before August 31, its enrollment and courses of study on the forms that the Board provides.

#### **Recorded information kept by county boards, school officials, and teachers**

(o)(1) With the advice of the State Superintendent, the State Board shall specify the information each county board, school official, and teacher is to record and shall require the following information to be recorded:

(i) All financial accounts, including the annual budget; and

(ii) All educational records.

(2) The reports containing this information shall be made on the form that the State Board, with the advice of the State Superintendent, requires.

(3) If the State Superintendent agrees, the required information may be sent in automatic data processing, machine-usable form.

#### **Annual reports submitted to Governor**

(p)(1) The State Board shall submit an annual report to the Governor on:

(i) All operations of the Department;

(ii) The support, conditions, progress, and needs of elementary and secondary education in this State; and

(iii) The overall plan for elementary and secondary education in this State.

(2) This annual report shall be printed in sufficient quantities for general distribution in this State.

**Growth and development of elementary and secondary education in State**

(q)(1) The State Board shall coordinate the overall growth and development of elementary and secondary education in this State.

(2) In consultation with the State Superintendent, the State Board shall develop and periodically update an overall plan consistent with the bylaws that shall identify:

(i) The present and future needs of elementary and secondary education throughout the State, including a discussion of the demographic composition of the elementary and secondary population;

(ii) The present and future capabilities of the public elementary and secondary education system in this State;

(iii) The short-range and long-range objectives and priorities for elementary and secondary education and methods and timelines for achieving and maintaining them;

(iv) Whether current programs adequately prepare graduates for employment opportunities in this State, or postsecondary education opportunities;

(v) The status and needs of the career and technology education program, the vocational rehabilitation program, and the library system of these programs;

(vi) The technological advancements that would enhance elementary and secondary education throughout the State;

(vii) Methods to upgrade and improve teacher education and teacher certification programs;

(viii) The school systems that have dropped below the statewide test averages and shall assess the options available to improve the test averages of these school systems;

(ix) The methods to improve the diagnosis of basic reading skill deficiencies of elementary and secondary school students and to improve the literacy rates of these students;

(x) The methods to increase the rate of retention and graduation of secondary school students;

(xi) The short-range and long-range objectives for the resolution of the problem of substance abuse by elementary and secondary school students; and

(xii) The short-range and long-range objectives for the resolution of the problems of youth and teenage pregnancy.

**Credits**

Added by Acts 1978, c. 22, § 2, eff. July 1, 1978. Amended by Acts 1978, c. 967; Acts 1981, c. 236, § 2; Acts 1981, c. 507; Acts 1988, c. 764; Acts 1989, c. 95; Acts 1990, c. 6, § 11; Acts 1991, c. 662, §§ 1, 2; Acts 1996, c. 77, § 1, eff. Oct. 1, 1996; Acts 1997, c. 105, § 1, eff. June 1, 1997; Acts 1998, c. 21, § 1, eff. April 14, 1998; Acts 2006, c. 59, § 1, eff. June 1, 2006; Acts 2008, c. 36, § 1, eff. April 8, 2008; Acts 2010, c. 324, § 1, eff. July 1, 2010; Acts 2010, c. 325, § 1, eff. July 1, 2010.

**Formerly** Art. 77, §§ 6 to 10, 14 to 17, 19 to 21, 68.

MD Code, Education, § 2-205, MD EDUC § 2-205

Current through legislation effective July 1, 2020, from the 2020 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

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Good evening, my name is Marybeth Steil and am an attorney and company owner here in Howard County. I am a member of the HoCo Families for Education Improvement (referred to here as "FEI") . My testimony today is on behalf of FEI.

FEI welcomes the opportunity to testify on the adoption of Policy 1080 Educational Equity. We believe strongly in the steps taken by the Maryland State Board of Education in its implementation of the COMAR regulations to "provide every student equitable access to the educational rigor, resources, and supports that are designed to maximize the student's academic success and social/emotional well-being."

FEI was established last year to zealously advocate for strong schools for ALL Howard County students. We are acutely aware that there are students and schools within our HCPSS system that are not having their resource needs met. However, we believe Policy 1080 does not go far enough to demand metrics and accountability in resource allocation across Howard County schools.

We have provided a draft markup of Policy 1080 for the Board's review. We believe Policy 1080 should be amended and improved to provide stronger supports to vulnerable student populations: particularly girls in STEM classes and exceptional students from historically underrepresented groups.

HCPSS needs to emphasize inclusion and the removal of barriers of participation for all students, so that each Howard County school student can reach his or her full potential.

We know that women and girls are particularly underrepresented in STEM fields -- the fastest growing sectors of our economy. We must continue to encourage girls to pursue learning in fields like animal science, biology, chemistry, math, engineering, and computer science. We must invest more time and resources into education in digital tools and technology for all Howard County students, but especially girls. Unfortunately, too many girls may start in these classes, but lose interest by graduation and do not continue them in college or graduate school. Policy 1080 simply does not go far enough to demand active investment of HCPSS resources and efforts to support and encourage our girls to take vigorous STEM classes, continue in them, and prepare for STEM careers.

As currently drafted, Policy 1080 also does not go far enough to identify exceptional, high achieving students from the student populations that have been historically underrepresented. Especially under our current circumstances, it is increasingly clear that to compete in the world economy, Howard County should be taking proactive steps to identify and recruit talented students into challenging classes. Our investments in talent identification and accelerated classwork, as well as holistic student support, should be growing. HCPSS also needs to teach the tools necessary for all of our growing students to successfully navigate priorities and manage stress. Once prioritized, FEI is confident that Howard County schools can successfully identify and nurture talented students from underrepresented student population and equip them with the tools necessary to excel.

Please consider strengthening Policy 1080.

Public Hearing Testimony  
Policy 1080

My name is Richard Butler

I am a two time resident of Howard County. Currently 23 for the years with my wife and two daughters.

Prior to that I grew up here from age 8 till graduating from Oakland Mills.

It was 1970. My parents moved us to this strange place where we lived in diverse community. Where my neighbor tried teaching me her native language, Korean and ping pong.....the ping pong lessons worked.

Howard County was the land of inclusion. Mixed race couples were everywhere and education was paramount. They world took notice.

It was a bold experiment that worked.

Some things change. That was then, its a different time

In my previous position as Vice President of CCG, an organization providing hiring solutions for top technology companies looking to hire and retain quality minority talent....I remember the driving task, urging us to prepare for a global competition for talent.

Lets fill that STEM Pipeline. Every brain matters we all chanted!!

At the same time, No child left behind....didn't apply to a majority of minority children. Many are still being left behind.

Students are forced to learn from cookie cutter strategies, designed from minuscule budgets in an effort to reverse years of neglect.

Most Educators do the best they can.

Its different now....Right!!

Brookings: Unequal Opportunity: Race and Education.

The presumption that guides much of the conversation is that equal opportunity now exists; therefore, continued low levels of achievement on the part of minority students must be a function of genes, culture, or a lack of effort and will.

In an effort to impact the number of students interested in STEM I started the Howard County NSBE Jr, (National Society of Black Engineers) chapter supporter all students of Howard County regardless of race, ethnicity or religion.

My students, your students, your children competed and won second and third place in the the NSBE National Math Competition. They were not happy with 2nd and 3rd.

Because of Covid-19 students were unable to compete for that first place trophy.

Change is happening all around and change is difficult.

We know that Brookings Report has never been true.....we know things were not and are not equal.

This is an impassioned plea, to begin healing this broken system by first accepting the recommendations to Policy 1080 suggested by the Howard County Equity Collaborative.

Policy 1080 in its current form falls short on the promise of eliminating racial disparities in education so I urge the Howard County Board of Education to accept and implement the proposed changes.

Remember....it IS different now.....the world is watching.

Lets be bold, like we once were!

1080 policy testimony

Dear Board Member,

My name is Kimbol Zhang and I live in Howard county. My son is going to start his kindergarten this September in Pointer Run Elementary School and today I'm testifying for 1080 education equity policy for bullying on Asian-American students because of racial profiling.

We don't live in a perfect world and there is always room for improvement. This is even true for our public school system, in this country, in this state and in our county, our neighborhood.

Although Asian-American made up only 5.5% of total population, more Asian-American victims of bullying said that they were bullied because of their race than did with other races. According to American Psychological Association(APA), 11.1% of Asian-American bullying were because of their race, compared with just 2.8% for White victims and 7.1% for African-American victims and 6.2% for Latino victims.

Being brought up in an Asian family and country, I understand that Asians are normally unwilling to speak up about their unfair treatment by others, unlike kids grown up in traditional western culture who will speak up their being bullied open-mindedly. According to the research by National Institute of Health(NIH) in 2017, Asian-Americans in distress had relatively lower intentions to seek help compared to White Americans, another study in 2010 by NIH also concluded that Asian-Americans drop out of mental health treatment at a higher rate.

These striking statistics indicates that Asian-American students are facing much more pressure in schools and the actual numbers could be far more than what we have seen today.

I believe our board will be working towards the best of the interest of the students and parents and hope the board will put this factor into consideration and implementation of the policy. I hope schools mental health provider can have a routine one-on-one meeting with each student to detect any indication of bullying proactively. I hope our public schools can employ adequate staffs with sufficient understanding of Asian culture to better help with Asian American students.

I also hope that during the pandemic situation like now, schools could prioritize mental health help outreach to students from minority groups who are unwilling to seek mental help proactively, according to CDC recommendation.



Thank you very much for your continuous effort in making our community better by giving the best to our kids.

## Reference

### 1. Bullying & Victimization and Asian-American Students

<https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/ethnicity-health/asian-american/bullying-and-victimization>

### 2. Therapist Multicultural Competence, Asian American Participants' Cultural Values, and Counseling Process

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3073307/>

### 3. Help-Seeking Intentions among Asian American and White American Students in Psychological Distress: Application of the Health Belief Model

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4688246/>

### 4. Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, June 24–30, 2020

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/pdfs/mm6932a1-H.pdf>

Hello, everyone. I'm Yang Yu, a Howard County parent. My two children both attended schools in Howard County. Professionally I'm currently the Sr. Health Planner in Behavioral Health & Crisis Services at Montgomery County Health and Human Services. I have been working in the mental health field for over 20 yrs. Today I'm here to talk about mental health disparities for Asian students.

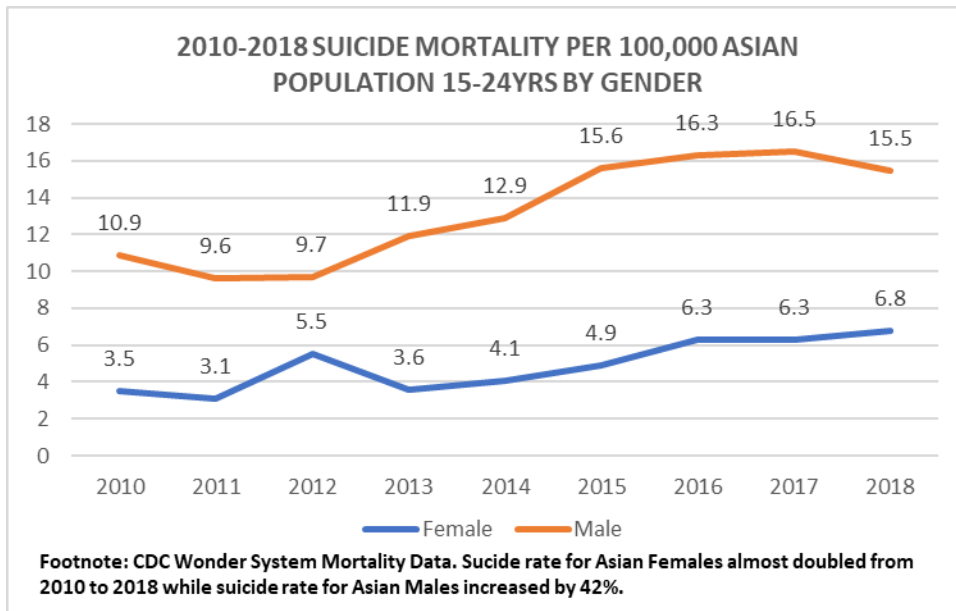
Asian Americans are often viewed as the "Model Minority", but the hidden health disparities in mental health for Asian Americans are often overlooked. Asian teens, especially girls, are experiencing high incidents of mood disorders. Suicide is the leading cause of deaths for Asian teens. According to CDC mortality data, suicide mortality rate almost doubled since 2010 for Asian females 15-24 yrs and increased 40% for Asian males. What makes it even worse is that Asian community has a high level of stigma towards mental illness and mental health treatment. I saw Asian patients rarely accessing mental health services and those who finally seeking help were often in crisis situation. We often heard tragic incidents about very successful Asian students who suddenly ended their life, not just in Maryland also across the country, like Luke in the documentary "Looking for Luke".

Faced with one tragedy after another like this, our community is taking action: last year sponsored by the Horizon Foundation, Howard County Chinese School started a health equity program to break the silence in mental illness. As parents, we urge schools to step up the mental health supportive services for our kids, possible measures including promoting mental health education programs for students and parents, to improve awareness and to reduce stigma, hiring more bilingual psychologists to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health services to our kids, and establishing close collaboration with crisis center for school referrals and crisis stabilization services for Asian families in need.

Thank you

## Appendix:

### 1. CDC 2010-2018 Suicide Mortality Rate for Asian Population 15-25 yrs old



### 2. Looking for Luke Documentary, <http://lookingforlukefilm.com/>

I attended Howard County Public Schools from kindergarten through 12th grade. I always took great pride in the amount of exposure to diversity in the county, and felt grateful to have such a privilege. I know Howard County Public Schools are actively trying to be more inclusive and in tune with social and political advancements, and speaking to you all now is a privilege itself.

My focus today is on the exclusion of minorities in social studies classes. Students who do not have accurate and frequent exposure to the contributions of minorities in history will have a distorted and biased perception of reality. Even though the classes are ‘offered’ on the course lists, classes like African American studies aren’t offered regularly, and when they are, the students in the classes are mostly black or latino. As important as it is for minorities to learn about their history, it’s just as crucial for white students to learn, too.

There is a reason there are no ‘caucasian history’ classes— because the default US/ world history classes are focused on the white historical figures. If we educate students with the notion that white history is the dominant focus of the subject, it will perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and encourage white supremacy. If a white student only learns about black people in the context of slavery, or one of the three black historical figures we learn about repeatedly, they will think in modern day, black people have not contributed to society the way white people have, thus not able to hold the same positions or deserve the same opportunities— because white history is emphasized so strongly in social studies classes.

The most efficient way to combat ignorance is with education. It wasn’t until junior year of highschool that I learned about Claudette Colvin— the FIRST girl to boycott the Montgomery busses. She was not the face of the movement because she was young, angry, pregnant, and dark skinned. The NAACP executed the same demonstration using a lighter, more polite black woman, Rosa Parks— who gets all the credit for the protests even today. I did not learn this in school, and learning about that story just opened my eyes to how much black history I didn’t know— and because I’ve gone out of my way to learn about it, how much the average student doesn’t know if they see it as optional. If we said, “it is required to take multiple classes about dogs, and a class about cats is offered occasionally and optionally”— it would inherently teach students dogs are superior to cats, encouraging discrimination and belittlement towards cats.

Offering Black or Latin history classes isn’t enough to label the curriculum ‘inclusive’. Take the phrase, ‘a seat at the table’, now imagine instead of a seat at the table, they just give you a new table for people like you and say ‘see you get a whole table to yourself’, even though the decisions and power still lies with the original table. Only when there are minorities at the ‘real’ table having their voices amplified, or we get rid of the table hierarchy entirely, will we be truly inclusive. I look forward to continuing these conversations, and all the progress to come for what has the potential to be an incredible learning environment.

Vicki Howard

To: Superintendent Dr. Michael Martirano

Chairman of the Board Ms. Mavis Ellis and board members

Good Evening

I am a long-time resident of Howard County where my husband and I raised three children all of whom attended and graduated from the Howard County Public Schools; as well as a grandparent to nine children who also attend/attended Howard County Public Schools.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to visit and volunteer at several of the Howard County schools and have noted discrepancies in faculty, staff, programs and equipment. As a former teacher, guidance counselor and pupil personnel worker, I am keenly aware of the needs of all students academically, socially and emotionally.

It is imperative that the board strengthen the existing Education Policy 1080 by implementing the suggestions offered by the Howard County Equity Collaborative for eliminating racial inequities in the system enabling all students to excel and thrive in all the schools.

Let us not leave any child/student behind.

Gladys Cecilia McCullough

**Educational Equity Policy 1080  
Hearing, August 18, 2020, 7:00 pm  
Position: Support with Amendments**

**Statement Submitted by: Felicia West**

Good evening Chair and Members of the Board of Education:

I am Felicia West. Thank you for continuing the hearing in this matter so that members of the community may provide comments on this very important policy – HCPSS Policy 1080. I am a parent of two kids, a rising 5<sup>th</sup> grader and a rising 7<sup>th</sup> grader, in Howard County Public Schools. My testimony is to emphasize one area of the Policy 1080 amendments raised by Equity4HC’s testimony – access to advanced course placement. Equity4HC’s testimony references page two of Implementation Procedures, section II.A., new language to specify the decision-making body and the parents’ and students’ ability to select their coursework.

As it stands now, the process of accessing GT math and additional advanced courses is limited to a small set of data points determined in elementary school, which effectively serves as a gatekeeper for establishing whether or not students can access advanced courses throughout their academic careers. There are many issues with this approach, namely that this gatekeeping approach places many barriers to accessing advanced courses later in a student’s education.

My children both successfully completed their first year of GT math in 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades, respectively, but it took a significant effort to get them into these courses. Both of my children were denied GT placement for math in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade based on the CogAT (GT Placement) test. Based on the test results, I was advised that my son and daughter did not meet the threshold score and consequently, they would not be enrolled in GT math. I appealed both decisions. In the case of my daughter, my appeal was denied. However, my son’s appeal was granted. In HCPSS, if you fail to achieve the minimum score for GT math, you automatically get a denial letter

without any consideration to other data points, such as tests, homework, classwork, ability to comprehend, motivation, and the like. I note that at Gorman Crossing Elementary School, math teachers are not allowed to provide letters of recommendation for the student because all math teachers are on the appeal committee. Your child's math teacher is a critical part of building a successful appeal, yet the teacher cannot comment on your child's performance. Therefore, during my appeal, I had to quickly connect with other teachers to get recommendations. This poses another significant procedural hurdle for accessing advanced courses.

The revised policy commits to consider other data points which is helpful, and the amendment demonstrates a critical piece that needs adding – that parents and students should ultimately be able to decide if a student will enroll in a course. My daughter's 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher did not recommend her for GT math and admonished me for not consulting with her (the teacher) before enrolling my daughter in GT math for 6<sup>th</sup> grade. While parents do have more discretion for GT course placement for middle school, it is not without struggles. Even as an attorney, it was no small feat for me to appeal the results of the GT math placement.

At the end of the day, our current gatekeeping mechanisms are serving as barriers to accessing advanced placement coursework. Research suggests that a student's rank among peers at a young age has long-lasting impacts on a student's performance on tests, progress through toward graduation, and mental health and self-esteem. Further, studies also demonstrate that if a child is not placed in GT math early on (4<sup>th</sup> grade for Howard County), the child is less likely to enter GT math in middle or high school. Many students change interests and/or bloom a little later than other students and, and it's not equitable to have these barriers in place, and deny a student the opportunity to enroll in advanced courses. No one's abilities and potential are fully determined by one or two data points in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Parents and students need the discretion

and authority to exercise what is in their best interests for course placement. I urge the Board to adopt Equity4HC's recommendation to Implementation Procedures, Section II.A. – giving parents and students the keys to navigate their educational journey.

I welcome the opportunity to work with the Board of Education, HCPSS administration and other stakeholders in finalizing and implementing this policy. Thank you and this concludes my testimony.

***Special note: Prior to the submission of this testimony, I requested the following information from Ms. Danielle Lueking, MPIA Representative:***

- 1. What is the percent of African American students enrolled in GT math in HCPSS?***
- 2. What is the percent African American students enrolled in GT math for elementary schools in HCPSS?***
- 3. Is there a report released by the GT Education Program?***



Kayla Smith Board of Ed testimony :

Let me set the scene for you. It is a beautiful spring day and I am an eager, outgoing and curious 2nd grader attending Elkridge elementary school. Since I was young, I have always been excited about meeting new people and making new friendships no matter what they look like. As I approach a group of girls in my grade, one girl who stops and tells me I can't play with them because I am "too dark." Little did I know, this would be the first of many times that I would be isolated because of the color of my skin both inside and outside of the classroom.

Twice the effort, half the credit. As a black student, this is the mentality that I and the other members of my community have adopted into our everyday lives. Now, we are no longer choosing to accept this narrative anymore. I embrace the memories I've made, the accomplishments I've achieved, the relationships I've gained through my matriculation in the Howard County Public School System. . However, as a black student I am forced to embrace the discrimination, set backs, harassment, and isolation that I and other BIPOC students have experienced in the county that we are supposed to call home. This is why I am here today, to demand that you implement measures beyond blanket statements and unfulfilled promises to improve the narrative for Howard County's minority students and community.

To do so, we must learn how to understand instead of assume, how to remain open-minded instead of ignorant, and how to truly foster inclusivity within our schools instead of fabricating an optional assembly which only superficially explores the concept of diversity. Students, teachers, AND administrators need to be held accountable. Teachers hold more power than often understood. Like many black students in Howard county, I went into class most times with a teacher before me who looked nothing like me that I hoped and prayed would see me for my mind rather than the color of my skin. This is the sad reality that my community experiences regularly.

My family has been a part of this community since the inception of Howard County. My grandmother and grandfather attended Harriet Tubman High, a once segregated school in Howard County, cannot and should not be the only community members informing me of our county's Black history especially the rich history of their alma mater. There needs to be as much attention devoted to schools in high minority areas of Howard county as there is in the richest parts of our county, expanding more equitable opportunities for success. which will provide equal opportunity for not only some, but all. Black should not automatically mean failure and struggle and white should not automatically mean passing with ease. Despite my struggles, I prevail. I use my experiences to motivate me, instead of hold me back. I use my experiences to create a better future for other little black girls like myself, long ago on that one bright and sunny day in 2nd grade. I use my experiences to defy the odds and surpass society's prescription for me.

We must invest more in implementing after school programs to ensure that students who may not have access to other mentorship and tutoring resources have the same opportunity to succeed as their wealthy counterparts, especially in lower income areas of Howard County. When speaking with other current and graduated minority students of Howard County, it became clear that many of us share these same experiences. There should be no reason I have endured some of the same racial abuse as my mother, who graduated from Atholton High

school in 1987. Where is the change? Where is the accountability? Where is the sense of community and diversity that is so publicly advertised when others are looking to make Howard county their home?

By creating more interactive and engaging lesson plans for discussing topics such as Black history diversity, equity, and inclusion locally and nationally, we must simultaneously value and elevate the voices of our BIPOC students, rather than negate these students experiences, as is frequently the case.

Fast forward from that day in second grade to my entire three years in attending Lime Kiln Middle School still as an HCPSS student. The isolation continued and even escalated to what some may call harassment, but what is arguably worse than all of the racist remarks, constant privilege being thrown in my face, and weekly identity crises, is the fact that the administration that was supposed to create an inclusive learning environment, was the same administration that was also invalidating my story. Three years. Three years I faced numerous days where I had no motivation to walk through the doors of my middle school, and when I finally got the chance to speak up, my concerns were severely minimized. Luckily, my parents, who have always been my number one supporters, would not allow my story and trauma, that I still carry with me to this day, to be thrown into a file and forgotten about. However, not every student has a support system like the one I was blessed with and this is where I am asking you to intervene. It is important that as a school system, you advocate for the ENTIRE student body, not just the majority. As a Black student, I have witnessed fellow BIPOC students endure more abrasive punishment's for the same transgression performed by white students. As a black student I have watched minority students' education hampered by teachers' implicit and explicit biases. As a black student, I have heard the voices of minority students silenced to maintain Howard County's image. As a black student, I demand change in our schools and I demand it now.

Jing Leng <lengjj@yahoo.com>

Tue 8/18/2020 6:15 PM

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**! CAUTION: This email originated from outside of HCPSS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.**

Hello Everyone,

This is Jing, a mom of two and a resident in Howard County for more than 10 years. I was a math teacher when I was in China. That's why I'd like to share some of my thoughts tonight.

Equity

*Harrison Bergeron* is one of the short stories of the collection of *Welcome to the Monkey House* by Kurt Vonnegut. In the story, in the year 2081, the 211<sup>th</sup>, 212<sup>th</sup> and 213<sup>th</sup> amendments to the Constitution dictate that all Americans are fully equal and not allowed to be smarter, better-looking, taller or more physically able than anyone else. To enforce the equality laws, the government agents force citizens to wear "handicaps" to disrupt intelligent people's thoughts, to mask beautiful people's faces, and to add heavy weights to athletic people to limit their movements. Is that really the right direction we are going toward?

Educational Goals

One of the educational purposes of public schools is to provide every student equitable access to educational resources and supports that are designed to maximize the student's academic success and social well-being.

Students have their unique characters and personal preferences. Instead of telling students you don't have to learn math if you don't like it; you don't have to study history if you aren't interested, the positive way to support them to solve their problems is to help them understand the concepts and practice more. One goal of education should always be to respect individuals and to raise responsible, kind, qualified and educated students.

Race

Dividing our students into racial groups by skin colors or religions is unlawful.

Thank you.

Testimony from Xi Chen

8/18/2020

I have carefully read the Policy 1080 draft, and believe it's set out to achieve a noble cause. However, I believe some of its provisions should be improved. Given the limited time that is given, I want to just talk about two points.

Point 1.

In Section III, part B8, the draft asks to "identify and eliminate disproportionality in discipline practice" in the school system. I take it as saying that because discipline actions received by one or two groups of students is much higher than the other groups of students, then the reason **must be** that such group of students are targeted unfairly, and therefore, such disproportionality in discipline practice must be corrected. This is a faulty logic. Instead unfair targeting, there could be many other reasons that may cause the relatively high discipline practice incidents within these one or two groups. If disproportionality in discipline practice is caused by the disparity in student's behaviors, not to punish bad behavior will prevent our school from functioning normally. For example, statistics shows that more young people commit violent crimes than old people. It's not because the system is biased against young people, it's because young people have higher hormone levels. I guess nobody will agree to hold young people less accountable just for the sake of eliminating disparity. Thus, Eliminating disproportionality among different groups is a false goal. I propose that when it comes to discipline practices, everybody is to be held against the **same** standard, instead of chasing after the same outcome.

Point 2.

In Section 1, Policy Value Statement, para 2, it is said that "the Board acknowledges systemic racism, implicit and explicit bias etc that cause inequitable outcome for students". I fully agree that there are racism from individuals, probably quite some individuals. But I'm not sure this is the proof of systemic discrimination, or discrimination from the system. More relevant in here, Does this systemic racism exist in Howard county school system? For example, Is there a force, or a powerful group of people, who distribute resources, opportunity and power selectively to the benefit of white people but to exclude the people of color, as defined in the draft under the term "systemic racism". Is there any data which supports this allegation, i.e., systemic racism exists in the school system? If there is no supporting data, then this is an unsupported allegation. Then, why so prominently include this unsupported allegation in the Value statement? Doesn't it sound irresponsible to use such unsupported allegation to describe our school system?

That's end of my testimony thank you for your time.

Chairwoman Ellis, the Board, Superintendent Martirano, thank you for your public service.

My children attend Clarksville Elementary and we applaud the staff and community volunteerism here. I was disappointed however, with the divisive tactics used to redistrict my neighborhood and misrepresent it over the past year. I was also disappointed to learn that River Hill is a former plantation<sup>i</sup>, so that we are left grappling with the legacy of slavery, which taints too many spheres of American life with racism, more than 150 years later.

In mainstream society, many categorize me as Asian American, neither white or black. At work, I am a surgeon because of my academic credentials. Regardless, I view myself as a Christian first and I refer us to the spiritual wisdom of Galatians 5:14-15:

Love your neighbor as yourself. If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

It seems we are casting aspersions at each other locally and on the national stage, when we could be working to build each other up instead.

In this setting, I humbly submit one of my major concerns with Policy 1080--Section 3.B.5:

I am sure you are well aware of this country's odious history of sorting schoolchildren by race. I understand that using race to set school attendance areas is currently unconstitutional.<sup>ii</sup>

That said, looking over Dr. Martirano's report, dated 8/20/19, there is a clear correlation with high FARM rates and test scores below 65%. Ideally, struggling students would receive tutoring and other academic support to help overcome the burden of current and inter-generational poverty, if that is the case. However, if redistricting aims to disperse high FARM rates across the county, it shouldn't be that some schools experience a tripling of the rate while others are untouched, or that some individual students are forced from an environment of negligible poverty to over 40%. The challenges of reducing high poverty environments known to be detrimental to academic outcomes should not make a scapegoat of a few individuals or schools. This policy encourages "Not in my backyard" competition amongst neighborhoods, as we have seen. We can do better.

Ideally, voluntary means, like magnet schools would promote willing and rapid integration of the classes. I credit my magnet public high school in NYC for opening doors to positions my non-English speaking working-class immigrant parents could never have imagined for me. Students on free lunch mingled joyfully with the offspring of Park Avenue magnates, and teachers upped their game.

So I recommend we delete 3B5. But, to diminish the deleterious effects of poverty, we might replace it with voluntary means, such as academic supports for struggling students and magnet programs to enable meaningful social mobility.

To live in harmony, Philippians 2:3-5 urges that with humility, let each of you look not only to their own interests, but also to the interests of others. In this way, I hope we are able to rebuild unity and repair our county's reputation for excellent public education for all.

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<sup>i</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River\\_Hill,\\_Columbia,\\_Maryland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Hill,_Columbia,_Maryland)

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parents\\_Involved\\_in\\_Community\\_Schools\\_v.\\_Seattle\\_School\\_District\\_No.  
\\_1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parents_Involved_in_Community_Schools_v._Seattle_School_District_No._1)

*The Serio-West Family*  
*5900 Great Star Drive, Unit 202.*  
*Clarksville, MD 21029*

August 18, 2020

Howard County Board of Education  
10910 Clarksville Pike  
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Re: Policy 1080 Testimony

Dear Members of the Howard County Board of Education,

I am testifying before you today in regards to the new Policy 1080: Educational Equity that is up for discussion before you. My concern comes not only as a mother of a Howard County student with Autism but as a former special educator and active community member. My concern as always with Howard County Public Schools is that special education is often left out and forgotten about in regards to equity and opportunity. The language as written does not directly address the massive inequity of special education in HCPSS that needs to be addressed. If this is supposed to be a true policy for educational equity, special education cannot be set aside and ignore as it has been historically in HCPSS schools.

The policy as written has lots of current buzz words that sound amazing on paper or in a press release, but the problems of true equity are not addressed and there is no methodology set forward to address the achievement gap and lack of opportunity for all of the students that Howard County services including those with disabilities. The policy specifically states words like systematic racism, discriminatory practices, implicit bias, and socio-economic barriers but nothing regarding physical or mental barriers or those with cognitive disabilities or disabilities at all. The wording of the policy as written appears to be a policy directed at race and minorities alone and not true equity for all of Howard County's students.

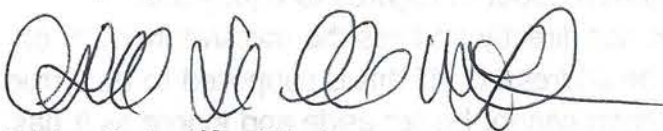
I know many on this Board believe that Special Education and students with disabilities already have their own policies so they do not need to be included in the Policy for equity. Let me ask you, are these existing policies working? Just looking at surface level reality and data it is clear it is not. Nothing has made this clearer than the lack of equity in HCPSS's virtual learning during COVID-19 and lack of services available during



this time to see the inequity of those students with special needs. Even in the Pre-COVID world families with children who have special needs have had to fight, hire lawyers, sue, and provide out of pocket for the services entitled to them by HCPSS to receive a free and appropriate education. Services are consistently cut due to budget short falls due to money being taken out of special education for other projects. Schools fight families to get necessary services in order to please Central Office. Central office is currently targeting families of those students with special needs by trolling Facebook and other social media to decide whether or not their child deserves the services provided to them by HCPSS. This is disgusting, unfair, and the opposite of equity.

HCPSS needs to stop focusing on buzz words and politics and get back to the business of educating children. All children regardless of race, religion, cognitive ability, physical or mental disability, gender, sexual orientation, and parental activity is entitled to a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment possible as required under the law. HCPSS is not meeting this mandate. It is time for HCPSS to "man-up" and take care of their students with disabilities. Stop ignoring us. We are not going away. We demand to be heard. We demand equity too and we demand to be included in Policy 1080.

Thank you,



Ashley Serio Alfeo West  
5900 Great Star Drive, Unit 202,  
Clarksville, MD 21029



## HCPSS BOE Testimony - Policy 1080 Educational Equity - Daniel Newberger

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Good evening, my name is Daniel Newberger. Tonight's conversation about how the Howard County Public School System can achieve educational equity is playing out against the backdrop of a national reckoning with racism and injustice. This reckoning, tragically overdue, challenges the moral pandemic of white supremacy and systemic racism that has plagued America since before Maryland was even a colony, poisoning and distorting the lofty ideals for which this nation stands.

Just as too many Americans across the national conversation refuse to acknowledge our shameful legacy of hate and injustice, so too some Howard County residents either don't understand or choose to deny the systemic racism, implicit and explicit bias, institutional barriers, and other discriminatory practices that harm our Black students and students of other marginalized groups, leading to unacceptable inequitable outcomes. To these fellow residents, all I can say is: Please do the work to better educate yourselves. The district's children need you to do, and to be, better.

Policy 1080 is an important step towards advancing educational equity. It acknowledges the need for a culturally responsive, relevant, inclusive curriculum. It calls for an equity lens for allocating resources and academic supports. It emphasizes the collection and analysis of academic achievement and growth data. It calls out the need for a safe and supportive school climate. It speaks to the elimination of disproportionality in discipline practices. And it recognizes the critical need for a diverse workforce of highly qualified educators that reflects the diversity of our student population. This is an educational equity policy that any public school district would be proud of.

## HCPSS BOE Testimony - Policy 1080 Educational Equity - Daniel Newberger

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However, we are not just “any public school district.” We are Howard County, Maryland, and we pride ourselves on being one of the top districts in the state if not the nation. More importantly, we are home to Jim Rouse’s Columbia, and equity is a cherished value here. So as good as this current iteration of Policy 1080 is, we should not be satisfied, particularly with its implementation procedures. School-based Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaisons need to be empowered so that their voices are not lost in the daily bustle of school life. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion needs to be charged with evaluating the state of equity in every school, every year, and principals need to be held responsible for improving their schools’ scores. The superintendent needs to bring in outside experts to conduct educational equity audits on the district every three years. The district needs to set specific targets for improving inequity, and it needs to hold itself accountable. All of this will require political will from the Board, to prioritize equity initiatives in the budget cycle and to hold our administrators to the highest standards.

I would like to thank Dr. Martirano and Dr. Gilbert for leading the charge for equity, and also thank the members of the Policy 1080 Development Committee who worked so diligently to craft this policy. I would like to especially thank the educators and staff who work so hard every day to help our schools become better, more equitable places. Howard County is lucky to have all of you doing what you do. To the members of the Board of Education: it’s time to do your part. Adopt Policy 1080, provide the resources necessary for its full implementation, and let’s all work together—Board members, Central Office staff, principals, educators, parents, community stakeholders, and students—to identify and eliminate disparities in education outcomes for all the children of Howard County.

Matthew Molyett

# Policy 1080 Educational Equity

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. As drafted there is a definition of “Racism – The belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person’s social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics.”

This definition is useless for a governing body, as a belief is unable to be observed, documented, tracked, or improved. Even if this belief were a useful metric or descriptor, it makes racism an intent based label: this definition means that no action or inaction lacking the underlying belief can be a practice of racism. This belief, and the sister belief of “racial separatism”, as written provide cover for abuses rather than providing direction for improvement.

Racism is a thing that happens, it is observable, and it is measurable. It has been performed on this continent for centuries. It is enshrined in the text of the Constitution when it starts out “We the People of the United States ... secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves” but then upholds racial based enslavement in Article 6 Section 2. Perpetuating this history of abuse does not require any active belief. Racist ideas are an integral part of our history, one could say they have been stamped from the beginning.

I urge you to instead adopt the definitions offered by Dr Kendi in his explorations of the history of racist ideas.

Racist Idea - Any idea that suggests one racial group is inferior or superior to another racial group in any way.

Racist Policy - Any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups.

As a school district that desires to embrace our diversity, to be inclusive, and to achieve equity, we cannot punish or marginalize students, educators, or the community for their beliefs. We also cannot accept racism from our students, educators, or the community. These need not be a paradoxical assertion. Racism is not a belief, racism is an action. Thus I offer one more definition:

Racism - The act of supporting a racist policy through action or inaction or expressing a racist idea.

Please use Policy 1080 to position the HCPSS as a bastion against racism. We should not denigrate beliefs, but we should be intolerant of racism. We can do a whole lot of harm without holding the belief of racism while doing a lot of racism. Our school district and each of us individually should strive instead to be antiracist. Racism is not a belief, it is a behavior.

Good evening Board members and fellow county residents. My name is Kui Zhao residing in Ellicott City.

I express commendations to the Board of Education's principle that "Educational equity is a basic human right". The Policy stresses that all students see diversity and inclusion reflected in the curriculum, which aims to create a safe, welcoming, and supportive school environment in schools through a multifaceted approach that uplifts positive relationships and cultural of belonging. This can be achieved via leveraging the strengths of parents and community partners who are committed in excellence in public education.

I concur to the majority of proposed policy items and respectfully put forward several views.

With regard to enhancing school workforce diversity, the Board may refer to the diversity report completed in 2018 by the County Human Rights Commission per Council Resolution 180.

The value statement writes, "The Board acknowledges systemic racism" and is committed to providing all students with a dynamic and educational program to nurture their well-being and maximize their potential. I believe the school system ought to do so regardless of existence of any societal adversity.

The Board "mandates addressing disparities in educational outcomes as a priority". I fully agree and believe that among fundamental factors for a student achievement, there also are parental commitment and student's self-motivation.

As for "Establish a diverse, equitable, and inclusive student population at all schools and utilize demographic data as a factor for setting school attendance areas". I support diversity promotion and believe that there are thoughtful ways to "decrease opportunity gaps" rather moving children afar from their neighborhood schools.

Both the federal Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 and state Educational Equity Guide of 2017 require that all students or each student be taught to high academic standards preparing them to succeed in college and careers with access to the opportunities and resources. They echo the Educational Equity definition in this Policy and Assistant Attorney General Dreiband's comments in August 2020, "It is past time for American institutions to recognize that all people should be treated with decency and respect."

## Trudy M. Grantham

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**From:** Thomas Liu <jtliu\_99@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 17, 2020 6:48 PM  
**To:** BoE Email  
**Subject:** [External] Policy 1080 Testimony

! CAUTION: This email originated from outside of HCPSS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Howard County Board of Education Members,

My name is Thomas Liu. I am a parent and a resident of River Hill Village.

While acknowledging the good intentions of the proposed Policy 1080, Educational Equity, I found some areas perplexing and concerning, and inconsistent with the guidelines provided by Maryland State Board of Education, Title 13A, Subtitle 01, Chapter 06, Educational Equity. Therefore, I would like to suggest the following changes.

Article II, Purpose – The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations related to the identification and elimination of disparities in education outcomes.

Suggested Change: The purpose of this policy is to establish expectations related to the identification and elimination of obstacles or barriers to educational equity that lead to disparities in education outcomes.

Reason: The Purpose Statement of Chapter 06, Educational Equity clearly specifies that the focus is on providing every student equitable access to the educational rigor, resources, and supports that are designed to maximize the student's academic success and social/ emotional well-being and ensuring that there are no obstacles to accessing educational opportunities for any student. Disparities in education outcome are a result of many factors that may go beyond the boundaries of the school system. The focus should be on eliminating any barriers inside the school system that contribute to educational equity.

Article III, Standards, B. 5. – Establish a diverse, equitable, and inclusive student population at all schools. As such, Policy 6010 School Attendance Areas, utilizes demographic data as a factor for setting school attendance areas.

Suggested Change: Establish and maintain a diverse, equitable, and inclusive student population at all schools. As such, Policy 6010 School Attendance Areas, considers demographic data as one of the several factors outlined in Policy 6010 for setting school attendance areas.

Reason: Policy 6010 School Attendance Areas has multiple criteria in setting school attendance areas, which include efficient use of space, minimum school busing or shorter commute distance, community stability, etc. in addition to demographic balance. Singling out demographic data for setting school attendance areas is inconsistent with Policy 6010.

Article III, Standards, B.6. – Evaluate and continuously improve classroom placement practices and student scheduling to ensure that diversity exists in all learning environment.

Suggested Change: Evaluate and continuously improve classroom placement practices and student scheduling to ensure that diversity exists in all learning environment and that quality of learnings is maintained to maximize every student's academic success and social/ emotional well-being.

Reason: Maximizing each student's academic success and social/ emotional well-being is articulated, in the Purpose Statement of Chapter 06, as the goal to provide every student equitable access. Diversity and inclusion must be considered in classroom placement, including advanced coursework such as Gift and Talented Programs, Advanced Placement courses without compromising the quality of learning that each student receives.

Article III, Standards, B.8. – Identify and eliminate disproportionality in discipline practices by uplifting and nurturing healthy relationships, creating a just and equitable learning environment, repairing harm, and responding effectively to conflict. Regardless of social identifiers, consequences are fair, equitable, consistent, and reflective of a restorative culture.

Suggested Change: Identify and eliminate unfair, unjust, excessive and discriminative discipline practices by uplifting and nurturing healthy relationships, creating a just and equitable learning environment, repairing harm, and responding effectively to conflict, regardless of social identifiers of any students.

Reason: Discipline practices should be restrained and aimed at uplifting and nurturing healthy relationships among students and teachers, and for the positive developments of the students, but how can discipline practices be proportional? And proportional to what metrics? The statement is not well defined that makes future interpretation or implementation difficult.

Respectively,

Thomas Liu



**Testimony: Educational Equity Policy 1080  
August 18, 2020**

Good evening. My name is Dana Davenport. My testimony is representing the Howard County Equity Collaborative's recommendations for changes to the Educational Equity Policy 1080. I am the Policy Associate for the Association of Community Services of Howard County, which represents 137 member organizations and 36 community advocates. Additionally, I am an alum of Howard County public schools, the daughter of a Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) teacher, and a relative of students presently in HCPSS schools.

As you listen to testimony tonight, work on Policy 1080, and prepare to vote on it on September 10<sup>th</sup>, I encourage you keep your eyes on the goal of transforming our educational system – particularly when it is hard and uncomfortable. It is imperative to specifically prioritize racial equity in every educational equity effort because statistics show that disaggregating data by race/ethnicity gives the most accurate picture of how things really are for everyone. If we do not focus on race/ethnicity, we are using incomplete information to make decisions and assess outcomes that end up yielding more inequities in additional areas.

I am personally familiar with racial inequity in HCPSS. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, for example, my twin sister and I had the same Algebra 2 teacher at different times of day who had a habit of biased grading and teaching. My class, which had more white and Asian students in it, was graded with greater leniency and received fuller lessons than my sister's class, which had more African American students in it. For example, when my sister and I made the same errors on our tests (taken separately at two different times of the day), the teacher would consistently subtract 2 points for each error on my test and 3 points for each error on her test. When comparing class notes, we discovered that this teacher would give my twin sister's class incomplete lessons daily, so she and I had to start doing the extra work of going through our class notes together just to do homework and study for tests. This only stopped when our parents advocated for us and my mom used the weight of being a HCPSS teacher to add pressure to the situation. Experiences like that should not happen in the first place and when they do, there must be honesty, transparency, accountability, and improvements – regardless of whether a student's parent works for HCPSS or not.

An education system is designed to teach students about the world and provide the knowledge and skills they need to engage in civic life once they leave the education system. While Policy 1080 may seem like a high-level exercise in equity, it is actually a critical piece of infrastructure in changing our education system that will have very concrete short-term and long-term impacts on everyone in our community. I ask that you pass a Policy 1080 that incorporates our revisions because, at the end of the day, it is not about being on the right side of history; it is about being answering the calls of racial equity and justice to be on the right side of the present time.

Respectfully,  
Dana Davenport  
Policy Associate, Association of Community Services