

Mission – Goals – Objectives

Equity and Diversity

Purpose of Policy

The Canton Board of Education expects all children to find school a safe and welcoming place, where each and every student is ensured access to pathways to success. It is not possible to achieve this if any child or member of the school community faces prejudice or hostility because of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religion, or physical and mental ability. The Canton Board of Education is committed to identifying and correcting practices and policies that perpetuate institutional racism and other forms of discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or physical or mental ability in order for all students to succeed. Learning and work environments are enriched and improved by the contributions, perspectives, and very presence of diverse participants. Therefore, the Canton Board of Education believes that it is important to have in place an **Equity and Diversity Policy** to clarify its expectations to ensure equity for all children.

In the Canton Public Schools Community, we believe equity is recognizing and valuing each and every individual, removing systemic barriers to well-being, committing to sustainable action, and ensuring access to pathways of success for all.

By having this policy, the Canton Board of Education gives a clear message to all in the community that discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or physical and mental ability will not be tolerated in any form in the Canton Public Schools.

In the Canton Public Schools, we strive to:

1. Promote critical thinking regarding the history, contribution, and perspectives of diverse racial, ethnic, and social groups.
2. Provide every student with equitable access to high quality, culturally and personally relevant instruction, curricula, support, facilities, and other educational resources.
3. Work actively to encourage advanced academic opportunities for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or physical and mental ability.
4. Recruit, employ, support, and retain a teacher(s), administrator(s), instructional, and support workforce that reflects the diversity of the student body.
5. Provide professional development to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills for eliminating cultural, racial, gender, and ethnic disparities in achievement.
6. Ensure that each school creates a welcoming culture and inclusive environment that reflects and supports the diversity of the student population, their families and communities.
7. Remedy the practices, including assessment, that lead to the over-representation of any one group of students (e.g. based on color, gender, etc.) in areas such as special education and discipline, and under representation in programs, such as gifted and talented, honors classes and advanced placement.
8. Review existing policies, programs, curricula, professional development and procedures to ensure the promotion of equity for all students, and that all new policies, programs, and procedures will be developed with an equity approach.

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Purpose of Policy (continued)

9. Create multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of diverse students, and actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement from all racial, ethnic and gender groups.
10. Commit to a collective responsibility within the district to address, eliminate, and prevent actions, decisions, and outcomes that result from and perpetuate racism and all other forms of discrimination.

Definitions

Diversity includes characteristics of persons including, but not limited to, race, culture, color, creed or religion, national origin, gender, mental and physical ability, age, marital status, family structure, citizenship status, sexual orientation, sexual expression or identity, economic status, veteran's status, and any other protected class in conformance with federal, state and local laws.

Educational Equity is access to resources, opportunities, and processes that unleash the potential and enhance success and prosperity for each and every student. Equity does NOT mean sameness. Equity recognizes and responds to the gifts and needs of each individual in each community.

Racism is pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race. Individual racism includes implicit bias, conscious and unconscious, and external behaviors, and actions towards others.

Institutional racism is the collective failure of a public or private organization to provide an appropriate or professional service to people because of their race, color, culture, or ethnic origin which can be seen or detected in practices, processes, systems, attitudes, and behavior. It looks beyond individual acts of prejudice to the systematic biases that may be built into institutions. These systematic biases discriminate against and disadvantage people of color through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, or racial stereotyping.

Ethnicity means the social characteristics that people may have in common, such as language, religion, regional background, culture, foods, etc. Ethnicity is revealed by the traditions one follows, such as a person's language.

Implementation and Responsibilities

1. The Superintendent shall establish in accordance with this policy such plans and procedures as may be necessary and appropriate to accomplish its purpose and intent.

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Plans and procedures established shall include clear accountability for actions and oversight.

2. The Superintendent and/or designee shall collect, review and provide to the Board a quarterly report on data regarding racial or gender disparities in areas including, but not limited to, student achievement, enrollment, suspension/discipline, graduation rates, participation in honors and advanced placement participation. The report shall identify areas of disparity, areas of growth and targeted goals for the following year.
3. The Superintendent and/or designee shall ensure that there are various means for students, staff, and parents to report incidents of racism and other forms of discrimination.
4. The District will employ staffing processes that support and engender racial and gender diversity in its staff. The superintendent shall provide annually to the Board a report on staffing and efforts made to ensure that the staff represents the diversity in the student body and the community.
5. The District shall provide professional development to its staff to improve its cultural competencies and anti-bias training in serving a diverse student body and community. The district shall offer opportunities for all staff to improve culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum, and assessments.
6. Administrators, teachers, and all staff are expected to address any incidents of racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination. No member of the staff should ignore any form of this type of behavior anywhere in the school. Staff members should immediately explain why this type of behavior is unacceptable. All violations shall be reported to the school administration as they will become part of the superintendent's quarterly reports to the Board.
7. In addition to normal disciplinary consequences, the district will ensure that counseling, restorative practices, and the like, are part of discipline practices that relate to student violations of regulations that are part of the implementation of this policy in schools.
8. All students will be educated about the implications of this policy throughout the school year.

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Purpose of Policy (continued)

9. The district shall establish an organization or committee of students to promote equity and diversity and to serve as leaders and spokespersons within the schools and the district.
10. This policy shall be included in all students' handbooks provided to students and families. This policy will be posted to the District website.
11. The Board shall direct the superintendent to develop and conduct a systematic Equity Needs Assessment for the district to identify processes and practices that may need to be revised in light of this policy.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 46a-60 Discriminatory employment practices prohibited.
 10-15c Discrimination in public schools prohibited. School attendance by five-year olds. (Amended by P.A. 97-247 to include "sexual orientation" and P.A. 11-55 to include "gender identity or expression")
 10-153 Discrimination on account of marital status.
 17a-101 Protection of children from abuse.
 Connecticut State Board of Education "Position Statement on Culturally Responsive Education," adopted May 4, 2011
 Title VII, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C. 2000e, et seq.
 29 CFR 1604.11, EEOC Guidelines on Sex Discrimination.
 Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.
 34 CFR Section 106.8(b), OCR Guidelines for Title IX.
 Definitions, OCR Guidelines on Sexual Harassment, Fed. Reg. Vol 62, #49, 29 CFR Sec. 1606.8 (a0 62 Fed Reg. 12033 (March 13, 1997) and 66 Fed. Reg. 5512 (January 19, 2001)
 Section 8525, ESEA as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act
Meritor Savings Bank. FSB v. Vinson, 477 U.S. 57 (1986)
Faragher v. City of Boca Raton, No. 97-282 (U.S. Supreme Court, June 26,1998)
Gebbs v. Lago Vista Indiana School District, No. 99-1866, (U.S. Supreme Court, June 26,1998)
Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education, No. 97-843, (U.S. Supreme Court, May 24, 1999.)
 The Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Act of 1974, as amended, 38 U.S.C. §4212

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Legal Reference: (continued)

Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008

The Americans with Disabilities Act as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008

Public Law 111-256

Meacham v. Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory 128 S.Ct. 2395, 76 U.S.L.W. 4488 (2008)

Federal Express Corporation v. Holowecki 128 S.Ct. 1147, 76 U.S.L.W. 4110 (2008)

Kentucky Retirement Systems v. EEOC 128 S.Ct. 2361, 76 U.S.L.W. 4503 (2008)

Sprint/United Management Co. v. Mendelsohn 128 S.Ct. 1140, 76 U.S.L.W. 4107 (2008)

Policy Adopted: June 8, 2021

CANTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Canton, Connecticut