


# Puget Sound Educational Service District - Racial Equity Policy

 A model district policy that makes an explicit commitment to antiracist and multicultural practices that promote racial, cultural, and socioeconomic equity and justice

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## Policy Background

The Puget Sound Educational Service District's [Racial Equity Policy](#) was developed to promote racial, cultural, and socioeconomic equity and social justice in the school system. The policy formalizes the district's commitment to supporting its [partner districts](#) to eliminate opportunity gaps and achieve and sustain racial equity in education.

The Puget Sound Educational Service District is one of nine regional educational agencies serving school districts and state-approved charter and private schools in Washington State. The agency's mission is to promote *success for each child and eliminate the opportunity gap by leading with racial equity*, and it has made an explicit public commitment to become an antiracist multicultural organization, while working to promote quality, equity, and efficiency of educational programs in Washington's King and Pierce counties.

In an effort to ensure that the operation of the agency reflected its commitment to equity, and to best serve—and be an example for—schools in the region, agency leaders developed the racial equity policy to inform its work.

In October of 2014, the Puget Sound Educational Service District's board of directors adopted the policy, which describes the agency's commitment to eliminate opportunity gaps in its partner schools by recognizing "the complexity of historic and present-day white supremacy culture and systemic racism that contributes to these disparities." The policy then states "it is a moral imperative that we provide leadership with our partners to overcome these inequities. Race must cease to be a reliable predictor of student achievement and success."

Since the policy's adoption, the agency has established five "strategic direction action teams." Each team serves as the implementation arm for one of the policy's five enumerated strategies and meets regularly to consider, design, and review agency activities that are in alignment with their strategy of

focus.

Puget Sound Educational Service District's racial equity policy has been revised three times since its adoption—in November 2017, February 2018, and December 2019.

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## Policy Language

### [FULL TEXT]

#### **Operating Policy No. 1010**

#### **Foundations and General Commitments**

#### **RACIAL EQUITY POLICY**

The staff and Board of Directors of Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSED) have a strong commitment to serve the school districts and ultimately the children in the Puget Sound region. Our mission is to deliver equitable outcomes by improvement of quality and effectiveness of educational programs through partnerships with K-12 education, early learning, higher education, and public and private organizations. We take personal responsibility to do our best work in providing quality education, leadership and service to our partners, motivated by a deep desire to ensure that every child has the opportunity to reach their fullest potential. We strive to completely eliminate the opportunity gaps of each of the school districts with whom we partner by leading with racial equity.

These historic and persistent opportunity gaps between different racial and ethnic groups of students are deeply troubling and unacceptable. Student outcomes data from our district partners mirrors that from other regions of Washington State and the nation, painting a picture of unfulfilled promise that has profound consequences for thousands of students, their families and communities. We recognize the complexity of historic and present-day white supremacy culture and systemic racism that contributes to these disparities and believe that it is a moral imperative that we provide leadership with our partners to overcome these inequities. Race must cease to be a reliable predictor of student achievement and success.

PSED is a largely intermediary agency that is striving to become an Antiracist Multicultural Organization. We recognize that the achievement and opportunity gaps of each of the school districts that we support has a unique racial dimension and that we must be sensitive to, but not deterred by, varying levels of comfort of our partners grappling with this complex challenge. We also know that we must continue to interrogate our belief systems, improve our cultural proficiency and increase our

usage of research-based and evidence-gap closing strategies as we encourage our partners to do the same. Finally, we must collaborate with our school district partners as well as those we have transformational relationships providing leadership and service to assure that all schools in our region realize the vision of educational equity.

PSESD will strive to change its policies, procedures, and practices to eliminate opportunity gaps, achieve and sustain racial equity in education for each of its partner districts. Educational equity means raising the achievement of all students while decreasing and eliminating the gaps between the highest and lowest performing racial classifications of students. The concept of educational equity includes fostering a barrier-free environment where all students, regardless of race, have the opportunity to benefit equally.

Established in 2016, the Transformation Team is a collective of PSESD staff, community members, and parents charged with guiding the agency towards becoming an Antiracist Multicultural Organization by overseeing and evaluating the implementation of the Racial Equity Policy No. 1010. This team is integral in assisting the agency in eliminating opportunity gaps.

So that we achieve this definition of educational equity, we establish the following Strategic Directions:

- PSESD will assure the cultural responsiveness and anti-racist leadership knowledge and skills of all staff. We will strive to deepen every staff members' understanding of opportunity gaps and knowledge of gap-closing and gap-perpetuating practices. We will provide staff development to strengthen employees' knowledge and skills for eliminating racial disparities in educational outcomes and becoming anti-racist leaders. We also strive to become an anti-racist, multicultural workplace so that all employees can thrive and support our shared mission.
- PSESD will identify and create opportunities to cultivate a racially diverse and antiracist workplace that allows PSESD to serve as the model of a diverse and Antiracist Multicultural Organization that its partners may strive to emulate.
- PSESD will provide catalytic leadership with educational partners that respectfully but firmly and persistently accelerates the implementation of anti-racist, gap-closing policies and practices.
- PSESD acknowledges power imbalances that perpetuate inequities. We are committed to addressing this by centering power within students, families, and communities. All PSESD relationships and partnerships are rooted in anti-racism practices.
- PSESD commits to developing and implementing structures, functions, and processes to ensure mutual accountability with our transformational relationships.
- PSESD commits to sustain and support the continued development of the Transformation Team for the purpose of achieving full implementation of the racial equity policy and transforming the agency into an Antiracist Multicultural Organization.

The work of becoming an Antiracist Multicultural Organization requires mutual accountability. To that end, the PSESD Board, Superintendent, Executive Leadership Team and Transformation Team are mutually responsible by ensuring adequate resources and executing strategies that support the

recommendations of the Transformation Team.

**Adopted: November 2014**

**Revised: December 2019**

Relevant Board Governance Policies

EL 1: Global Executive Constraint

EL 3: Transformational Relationships

EL 4: Treatment of Staff

Cross References

Operating Policy No. 1000 Nondiscrimination

Operating Policy No. 5010 Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action

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