



# STRATFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION

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## MISSION – GOALS – OBJECTIVES

### ANTI-RACISM (CONFRONTING RACISM IN SCHOOLS) **NEW**

POLICY 0525.1

The **Stratford Board of Education** (Board) rejects all forms of racism as destructive to the Board's mission, vision, values, and goals. The Board is committed to the following principles:

1. Establishing and sustaining a school community that shares the collective responsibility to address, eliminate, and prevent actions, decisions, and outcomes that result from and perpetuate racism.
2. Eliminating inequitable practices and cultivating the unique gifts, talents, and interests of every child to end the predictive value of social or cultural factors, such as race, class, poverty or gender, on student success.
3. Respecting and championing the diversity and life experiences of all community members to support the District's mission, vision, values, goals, and objectives.
4. Acknowledging that racism is often compounded by other forms of discrimination, including, but not limited to, those protective classes referenced in policy 0521, "Nondiscrimination."

### **Purpose**

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

There is evidence of significant disparities between racial groups in student academic performance, achievement, and participation in academic programs. These include disparities in graduation rates, gifted identification, course participation, special education identification, standardized test scores, and suspension and expulsion rates. Disparities also exist between the racial demographics of the students in the District and the staff hired.

These equity gaps exist because of inequitable access to opportunities that have significant intergenerational effects and perpetuate economic, social, and educational inequity. However, racial inequities were created over time and can be eliminated. Similarly, personal prejudice is learned and can be unlearned. Educators play a vital role in reducing racism and inequity by recognizing the manifestations of racism, creating culturally inclusive learning and working environments, and dismantling educational systems that directly or indirectly perpetuate racism and privilege through teaching, policy, and practice.

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

## Definitions

1. **Anti-Racism:** the practice of identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism.
2. **Individual Racism:** pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race. Individual racism includes both privately held beliefs, conscious and unconscious, and external behaviors and actions towards others.
3. **Institutional Racism:** means the collective failure of a public or private organization to provide an appropriate and 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 systemic biases that may be built into institutions. These systemic biases discriminate against and disadvantage people of color through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness or racial stereotyping. [It occurs within institutions and organizations, such as schools, that adopt and maintain policies, practices, and procedures that often unintentionally produce inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people.]
4. **Structural (or systemic) Racism:** encompasses the history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions and society. It refers to the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institutions and policies that perpetuate a system of inequity that is detrimental to communities of color.

(Definitions adapted from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity.)

The intent of this policy is to dismantle the individual, institutional, and structural racism that may exist in the District.

The Board directs the following action:

## Leadership and Administration

The Board shall address systemic racism as follows:

1. Develop and conduct a systemic Equity Needs Assessment for the District to identify processes and practices that cause or contribute to inequitable outcomes. The Assessment shall also include an inventory of what equity-related data is currently collected by the District. Following the assessment, strategies will be developed and implemented to address the identified issues.
2. To address disparities in course participation (including AP/Honors participation):
  - a. All school staff making class recommendations shall provide an explanation for the recommendation to students and/or families.

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

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

1. Curriculum and instructional materials for all grades shall reflect cultural and racial diversity and include a range of perspectives and experiences, particularly those of historically underrepresented groups of color.
2. All curriculum materials shall be examined for racial bias. Where materials reflect racial bias, teachers utilizing the materials will acknowledge the bias and communicate it to students and parents.
3. The Board shall implement an anti-racist curriculum and provide educational resources for students at every grade level.
4. Student in-class and extra-curricular programs and activities shall be designed to provide opportunities for cross-cultural and cross-racial interactions to foster respect for cultural and racial diversity.

### **Training**

1. All staff shall be trained in this anti-racism policy.
2. All teachers and administrators shall be trained in cultural awareness and/or culturally responsive teaching practices. Culturally responsive teaching practices shall be incorporated into Board approved appraisal systems, including the teacher appraisal system and the administrator performance appraisal.
3. All staff shall be trained about racism and about how racism produces inequitable practices and outcomes.

### **Policy Communication**

1. Each school shall post a public statement against racism in a location visible to students, staff, and visitors entering the school. The District will also post a public statement in high traffic locations at its main offices and on the District website.

2. The public statement shall read: "**Stratford Schools** is committed to establishing and sustaining an equitable community that achieves the District's equity mission to end the predictive value of race and ensure each individual students' and staff members' success. The Board of Education rejects all forms of racism as destructive to its mission, vision, values, and goals."
3. The Board shall establish a committee of students to promote equity and diversity and to serve as leaders and spokespersons within their schools.
4. This policy shall be included in student handbooks provided to students and families.
5. This policy shall be posted on the District website and the website of each school.

### **Policy Enforcement**

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

(cf. [0521](#) - Nondiscrimination)

(cf. [0523](#) - Equity and Diversity)

(cf. [0524](#) - Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents in Schools)

(cf. [4111](#) - Recruitment and Selection)

(cf. [4111.1/4211.1](#) - Affirmative Action)

(cf. [4118.11](#) - Nondiscrimination)

(cf. [4118.113/4218.113](#) - Harassment)

(cf. [4118.3](#) - District Minority Recruitment Plan)

(cf. [4131](#) - Staff Development)

(cf. [5131.911](#) - Bullying/Safe School Climate Plans)

(cf. [5144.12](#) - Restorative Justice Approach to Discipline)

(cf. [5144.5](#) - Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Social Behavior)

(cf. [5145.4](#) - Nondiscrimination)

(cf. [5145.5](#) - Sexual Harassment)

(cf. [5145.51](#) - Peer Sexual Harassment)

(cf. [5145.52](#) - Harassment)

(cf. [5145.53](#) - Transgender and Non-Conforming Youth)  
(cf. [5145.54](#) - Civility)  
(cf. [6115](#) - Ceremonies and Observances)  
(cf. [6121](#) - Nondiscrimination)  
(cf. [6121.1](#) - Equal Educational Opportunity)  
(cf. 6141.21 - Religions in the Public Schools)  
(cf. 6141.22 - Religious Accommodations)  
(cf. [6144](#) - Teaching about Controversial Issues)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

[46a](#) 60 Discriminatory employment practices prohibited.

[10-15c](#) Discrimination in public schools prohibited. School attendance by five-year olds.

[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 (a) 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.

Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008.

**Policy adopted: by the Stratford Board of Education on March 22, 2021/TL**