NONDISCRIMINATION AND EQUITY

A. NONDISCRIMINATION

The Tacoma School District affirms the inherent dignity and the equal rights of every student. It acknowledges the need to provide for every student a quality education that includes appreciation and respect for human individuality, cultural differences, and similarities that contribute to our democratic nation as a whole. Every student deserves a respectful learning environment in which their racial, ethnic, religious, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability diversity is valued and contributes to successful academic outcomes. Learning and work environments are enriched and improved by the contributions, perspectives and presence of diverse participants. The district is committed to the success of every student in each of our schools.

The district prohibits discrimination and harassment based on race, religion, color, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital or veteran status or disability. Complaints of discrimination or harassment based upon any protected class are to be reported and investigated pursuant to Regulation 5265R – Discrimination Complaint Procedure.

The superintendent will provide for the annual evaluation, periodic surveys, annual notice and complaint procedures as required by law to ensure that there is in fact equal access and opportunity for all students in the district and shall designate a staff member to serve as equity and diversity compliance officer and a staff member to serve as Title IX compliance officer.

B. EQUITY

The following are established as District values:

- Equity
- Quality instruction for everyone
- Cultural understanding
- Rigor and relevance
- Accountability
- Transparency

Beyond equal education access, educational equity is based on the principles of fairness and justice in allocating resources, opportunity, treatment and success for every student. Educational equity programs promote the real possibility of equality of educational results for each student and between diverse groups of students. Equity strategies are planned, systemic and focused on the core of the teaching and learning process.
The Board of Directors believes that the responsibility for student success is broadly shared by our staff, our families/guardians, our community and our student’s own efforts. The district is committed to identifying and correcting practices and policies that perpetuate the achievement gap and institutional racism and gender discrimination in all forms in order to provide all of its students with the opportunity to succeed in a manner compliant with all applicable state and federal laws.

Achievement gaps between students predicated on race, religion, color, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, marital or veteran status or disability status are unacceptable if we are to meet our mission and vision statements and our moral obligations to our students, their families and our community as a whole. These gaps are contrary to our belief that all children can learn and succeed. The district also recognizes that there are additional circumstances beyond membership in a class protected by federal or state law that can significantly impact students, including poverty, housing status/homelessness, involvement in the criminal justice system, and immigration status. To the extent possible, the district will work to mitigate the impact of these barriers on its students. Adult behaviors must not contribute to achievement gaps or create or perpetuate barriers to success and must be concentrated on elimination of such gaps

1. Equity of Resources

The district is committed to advancing optimum participation in, contribution to, benefit from and enjoyment of learning and work experiences by diverse students, parents, staff and community. The district is committed to promoting and providing equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, facilities and supports, even when this means differentiating resource allocations on the basis of student needs that are measured by the Strategic Plan Benchmarks. Resource allocation shall support the definition of educational equity adopted in this policy while complying with state and federal funding mandates.

2. Commitment to Diversity

The diversity of our student body, our community and our staff is a strength that benefits our community and should be celebrated. The district welcomes, respects, and values the diversity of its students, parents, staff and the broader community. The district is committed to fostering a learning environment where diversity is encouraged and to recruiting and retaining a workforce that reflects the diversity of our students and community. The recruitment of diverse teachers and staff provides all students with a better chance of seeing themselves as part of the education system. Diversity in education provides all children with the opportunity to learn from others with dissimilar backgrounds and recognizes the value of diversity in all learning environments. It is important that children of all races, cultures, and backgrounds are provided with familiar role models in schools. We are committed to hiring the best employees of all backgrounds who will bring their unique talents and skills into our school system. The district shall employ staffing processes that support and foster diversity in its staff through recruitment, employment, training and retention of employees.
3. Professional Development Opportunities

The district shall offer opportunities for all staff to improve its cultural competencies in serving our diverse student body and community. The district shall offer opportunities for all staff to improve culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum, and assessments competencies in serving our diverse student body and community to increase individual and collective capacity to effectively teach our diverse student population and serve diverse families. The district staff shall work together to increase their individual and collective capacity to effectively meet the needs of its diverse student population and serve its diverse families and communities.

4. Equity in Practice

Practices, procedures and programs that result in over or under representation of any group of students compared to peers shall be subject to close review to assure that such results are due to meeting student legitimate educational, social or emotional needs. Practices that do not meet such review criteria shall be eliminated. Teachers, administrators and district staff shall collaborate to establish and implement culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum and assessments.

The Board of Directors, Superintendent and staff commit to considering issues of equity in the adoption of all future policies that have a significant impact on student learning and resource allocation. This commitment also includes considering issues of equity in applying existing policies that have a significant impact on student learning and resources allocation, and assessing if such policies need to be reviewed and updated by the Board. The Board of Directors, Superintendent and staff also recognize there may be circumstances where policies that reflect principles of equity and nondiscrimination on their face may result in unintended outcomes that do not promote the District’s values related to equity and nondiscrimination. If such circumstances arise, an analysis of if the policy at issue needs to be reviewed and updated by the Board to address unintended outcomes will be conducted.

The Board of Directors shall consider the values stated in this policy in conducting its business and in exercising its responsibilities to the people of the City of Tacoma. The Superintendent shall establish such Regulations, as may be necessary and appropriate to accomplish the purpose and intent of this Policy. The Board of Directors and Superintendent may also establish specific strategic goals or benchmarks with metrics for evaluation to implement this Policy as permitted by law.

Cross References: Board Policy 2020 Curriculum Adoption 2140 Guidance and Counseling 2150 Co-Curricular Program 5265 Nondiscrimination 5265R Discrimination Complaint Procedure 5266 Sexual Harassment
Legal References:

Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Title IX Educational Amendments of 1972
(IRCA) Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986
The Civil Rights Act of 1991
The American with Disabilities Act of 1990
Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act
34 CFR § 104 Nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap in Programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance
RCW 28A.400.310 Law against discrimination applicable to districts’ employment practices
RCW 28A.640.020 Regulations, guidelines to eliminate discrimination
RCW 28A.642 Discrimination prohibition
RCW 49.60 Discrimination
RCW 49.60.030 Freedom from discrimination
RCW 49.60.180 Unfair practices of employers
RCW 49.60.400 Discrimination, preferential treatment prohibited
RCW 73.16 Employment and Reemployment
WAC 392-190 Equal Education Opportunity
WAC 392-190-0592 Public school employment

Adoption Date: 06/26/14 (replacing the former Policy 3111 and 3210)