

Guiding Criteria for Equity Action Plan

Identity

We should seek to learn and educate our students' unique and individual identities, and not make assumptions based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual preference, or hair color.

To ensure all students thrive and reach their full potential as lifelong learners and socially responsible contributors to our global society, Westport Public Schools is committed to: creating school communities where all students are affirmed and valued in their identities resulting in a deep sense of belonging; and providing every student access to the compendium of educational programs offered.

Student participation in any educational or extracurricular programming directly or indirectly associated with WPS will not be subject to any hard or soft quotas related to racial or ethnic background.

All equity related initiatives will fully comply with the non-discrimination policy of Westport Public Schools, which remains as follows: **Westport Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, gender, marital status, creed, religion, honorably discharged veteran, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or the use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability, in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.**

Staff members will not solicit preferred pronouns from any student in any grade.

Professional and curriculum development

Vendors engaged for training or events (professional development or student activities) or for recommending or creating resources and reference materials should be ideologically neutral.

Educational strategies and delivery will not be race-based, but should be culturally sensitive.

WPS is committed to academic excellence.

WPS will continue to offer rigorous courses.

WPS will not engage in teacher training or other professional development activities that promote approaches to education or discipline that vary on the basis of the racial or ethnic background of the student.

Viewpoint Diversity

We should ensure that our students are continually exposed to diverse viewpoints and perspectives in all areas, including diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

Staff members will avoid expressions of political bias as they engage in equity-related activities in keeping with existing WPS policies.

No student, educator or WPS community member will be disciplined, censured or otherwise penalized for expressing disagreement with any potential equity initiatives undertaken by WPS in a manner consistent with respectful civil dialogue.

Discussions of race, gender, sex and other identity-related topics that are led by WPS staff members should be respectful of competing perspectives without endorsing any particular theory or interpretation.

Transparency and Oversight

Language matters! Terms used should be clearly and consistently defined for clarity and understanding.

Any proposed changes to curriculum materials stemming from equity-related initiatives will be documented and provided to the Superintendent, who will keep the Board of Education informed of such changes on a bi-annual basis.

Formal reporting procedures and a formal challenge process will be established for students and parents who believe equity-related initiatives or practices have violated the Guiding Criteria.

The administration will deliver on an annual or bi-annual basis a report to the Board of Education to track compliance of equity-related initiatives with the Guiding Criteria and review student outcomes.

Other

We should employ strategies that increase achievement for all students, those that are struggling, those at grade level and those that benefit from more challenge.

Initiatives should work towards equal opportunities and not seek to achieve equal or equitable outcomes.

WPS believes and acts upon the belief that every student can and should succeed.

WPS should have a separate DEI mission statement.