

# *Oak Park and River Forest High School*

## *District 200*

201 North Scoville Avenue • Oak Park, IL 60302-2296

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Nathaniel L. Rouse

DATE: September 18, 2018

RE: Racial Equity Policy Recommendation

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### **BACKGROUND:**

“Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or fail to eliminate them.”

—*Center for Assessment and Policy Development*

Using the definition above as a guiding principle, our strategic plan's Goal 2: Racial Equity charges us to continuously strive to create an environment where the academic achievement and social and emotional growth of students will no longer be predictable by race, socioeconomic status, or other social factors. The first strategy under this goal specified that by June 2018, the Racial Equity Action Team would identify three proven strategies and/or programs that reduce inequities of opportunity and enable students of color and/or low socioeconomic status to gain greater access to and success in college prep, honors, and AP courses.

### **SUMMARY:**

During the 2017-2018 school year, the Racial Equity Action Team accomplished the following:

- Changed the Strategic Plan Goal 2 from *Equity* to *Racial Equity* to be more thoughtful and intentional about our racial equity work.
- Developed a comprehensive five-year racial equity professional development program that is aligned with Strategic Plan Goal 2: Racial Equity.
- Recommended and received approval for two racial equity coaches grounded in our Beyond Diversity professional development work. The coaches serve as an additional resource for faculty as we continue to deepen our understanding of the importance of race and its impact on the way we teach and what we teach.
- Expanded our Collaborative Action Research for Equity (CARE) professional development programming to further incorporate it into division meetings and teacher collaboration team (TCT) professional development.
- Created a racial equity section on our website to identify our professional development work and inform the community about academic and extra-curricular resources to support our racial equity beliefs.

Although these accomplishments are meaningful, we have not adequately addressed the specifics of Goal 2. As we continue as a district to challenge ourselves to provide a dynamic, supportive learning environment that cultivates knowledge, skills, and character and strives for equity and excellence for all students, we know that race continues to have a significant impact on students' experiences at OPRFHS. We also recognize that historic and persistent opportunity and educational gaps, disproportionality in disciplinary practice, and a lack of support for reaching their full human potential continues to exist for our students of color. These disparities directly conflict with our beliefs that every student can achieve their full human potential.

**Strategic Plan: Goal 2: Racial Equity    Board Goals: 1-3    District Policy: 7:10: Equal Educational Opportunities**

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I believe we need a Board policy and administrative procedures that focus specifically on our commitment to racial equity. Codifying this commitment as policy would further our work to eliminate systemic barriers that maintain the status quo and historical opportunity and access gaps that have existed in our district for decades. The process to develop a policy and procedures would be similar to our recent work to support transgender students. A framework for a racial equity policy is included.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Support the development of a Board policy and administrative procedures that focus specifically on our commitment to racial equity.

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### **District 200 Racial Equity Policy Framework:**

District 200 is committed to creating a racial equity policy would directly confront systemic, institutional racism and inequities within our district, and its systems that perpetuate these disparities. We could then commit to truly fostering an environment where race, class, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics will cease to be a determining factor in the success of any student. This would ensure that we have a keen focus in narrowing disparities that appear in teaching and learning outcomes when we disaggregate our data by race. This Racial Equity Board Policy is intended to directly impact and reduce inequities of opportunity and enable student of color and/or low socioeconomic status to gain greater access to and success in college prep, honors, and AP courses. It would do so by addressing the following areas.

### **The Commitment to Eliminate Systemic Disparities**

To interrupt systems that perpetuate racially biased systemic inequities, we commit to:

- Raise the opportunity and achievement of all students while narrowing the opportunity and access gaps between the highest and lowest achieving students:
- Develop the personal, professional, and organizational skills and knowledge of its employees to enable them to address the role and presence of racism; and
- Eliminate racial disparity and disproportionality in all aspects of the educational and administration systems (e.g. disproportionality in discipline of students of color, their over representations in special education, and under representation in honors and advanced level curriculum).
- Invite and include people from all races and ethnicities to examine issues and find *adaptive solutions*, which address the root causes and systems, rather than *technical solutions*, which provide one-time, situational fixes.

We will accomplish this by an intentional focus in the following areas:

#### Leadership:

- Recruit, employ, support, retain, and continuously develop a work force of racially conscious and culturally responsive administrative, instructional and support personnel;
- Eliminate racial disparity and disproportionality in all aspects of the educational and administration systems (e.g. disproportionality in discipline of student of color, their over representation in special education, and under representation in honors and advanced level curriculum).
- Focus accountability systems and metrics on racially equitable results
- Eliminate systemic disparities by inviting representatives of traditionally underserved populations to join in examining issues and finding adaptive solutions which address the root causes of inequities, rather than technical solutions which provide a one-time fix
- Develop the personal, professional, and organizational skills and knowledge of our employees to better enable them to address the roles and presence of racism.
- Ensure systemic equity that includes the intentional involvement of families, students, and community members that bring multiple perspectives and views for solutions to issues that arise
- Review current district policies procedures, programs, and professional development through the use of a racial equity analysis tool to ensure that the promotion of racial equity exists.
- Provide every student with equitable access to a high quality curriculum, support, facilities, and other educational resources, including differentiating resource allocation.

**Strategic Plan: Goal 2: Racial Equity    Board Goals: 1-3    District Policy: 7:10: Equal Educational Opportunities**

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### Teaching and Learning

- Seek and implement culturally responsive curriculum, teaching, and learning practices reflecting the understanding and appreciation of culture, class, language, ethnicity, and other differences that contribute to the uniqueness of each student and staff member;
- Collaborate between teachers and administrators to create and implement culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum, interventions, and assessments;
- Eliminate practices of identification that lead to the over- or under- representation of any particular student group in intervention or enrichment programs;
- Eliminate disproportionality in the discipline practices of particular student groups; and
- Provide multiple pathways for success in order to meet the diverse needs of our student body and encourage, support, and expect high academic achievement for all students.

The superintendent and/or designees are authorized to develop procedures to implement this policy, including an action plan with clear accountability and metrics. At least quarterly, the school board will be given a report on the progress towards achieving the goals of this policy. The report shall be based on annual goals set by the district equity leadership team, superintendent, and the school board.