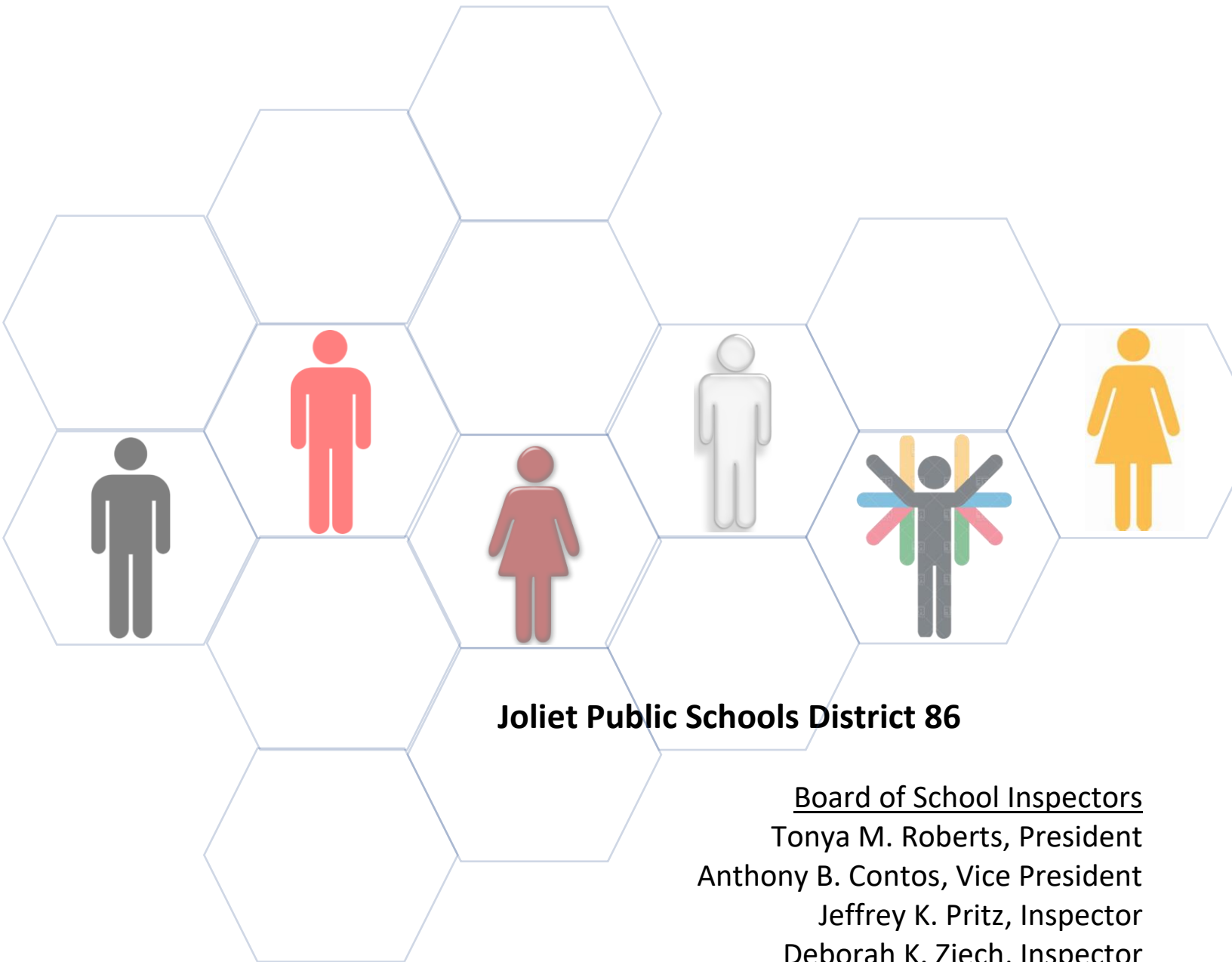


Equity Blueprint for Action

Adopted June 12, 2019



Joliet Public Schools District 86

Board of School Inspectors

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Education Equity Blueprint for Action Joliet Public Schools District 86

“The achievement gap will be closed when the equity gap is closed. Closing the gap is important work requiring system leadership to set clear direction, ensure the engagement of all stakeholders, establish clear and measurable goals, implementation plans and expectations. All of which are a part of the accountability measures that ensure Equity and Inclusive education demonstrate evidence of impact.”

Daniel R. Moirao, Ed.D.

The Board of Inspectors of Joliet Public Schools District 86 believes and is committed to all students deserving and having every opportunity to reach their full potential and succeed personally and academically. To accomplish that goal, students will have access to rich learning experiences that provide a strong foundation of confidence that continues throughout their lives. District 86 schools will be safe and welcoming havens where all students have the tools they need to achieve success, including skills to be socio-emotionally able to follow their chosen pathways in life after graduation including work, college, apprenticeship or university.

The Board further believes that ensuring equity is essential for improving student achievement and promoting student and staff well-being. This is why Joliet Public Schools District 86’s Equity Action Plan is critical to the future of the students we serve.

The District 86 Education Equity Plan is intended to be a clear and robust blueprint that outlines how individual schools and communities within the school district will identify and eliminate persistent inequities in the educational system. As a community of learners, with our renewed focus on achievement and well-being, Joliet’s publicly funded educational system will be fairer and more inclusive for all students, educators and staff regardless of ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation or identity, size, gender or any other factor related to individual identity.

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To guide the implementation of these opportunities the Joliet Board of Inspectors have developed the following Vision and Mission statements:

Vision Statement

In partnership with the community, Joliet Public Schools District 86 is committed to continuously improving our educational system by recognizing, respecting, valuing, and responding to the diverse needs of all.

Mission Statement

To persevere in providing an equitable and rigorous foundation for students to succeed.

With students as the center of our focus, the following four foundational pillars form the basis for improvement efforts in important areas of the district's operations:

A Culturally Responsive Organization: Our diversity is a strength and an asset. We are committed to equity, excellent service for all, and continuous improvement.

Equitable Access to Rigorous, Standards-Based Instruction: High-quality instruction for all students.

Results Focused Professional Learning and Collaboration: Investing in our staff so they continuously fine-tune their craft and grow in their profession.

Strong Partnerships with Families and Community: Schools cannot do it alone. We are better when students, families, community, and educators work hand-in-hand.

To bring these pillars to actions, the following strategic goals are intended to direct the development of school site equity plans:

Strategic Goals

Cultural Proficiency: All District 86 Members will engage in training and support in the development and implementation of an equity framework supporting the increase of cultural proficiency to ensure all students are successful.

Early Literacy: All District 86 Primary Students will be provided with the instruction and support needed to achieve academic success of at least 90% mastery of grade level targets.

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Mastery by Grade Three: All District 86 Students will be provided the necessary instruction, support, and enrichment to ensure at least 95% of students are at mastery of grade level content by the end of the school year.

Mastery by Grade Eight: All District 86 Students will be provided the necessary instruction, support, and enrichment to ensure at least 95% of students are at mastery of grade level content by the end of the school year in preparation for success in high school.

Digital Citizenship: All District 86 Staff and Students will be provided the necessary instruction, support, and enrichment to increase their knowledge and skills in the utilization of digital tools and resources.

While important in and of itself, equity is also necessary to realizing all other elements of our renewed vision, mission and goals from achieving excellence, to promoting well-being, and enhancing public confidence in our educational system. The District 86 Education Equity Blueprint for Action is the district's roadmap to identifying and eliminating discriminatory practices, systemic barriers, and biases from schools and classrooms to support the potential of all students to succeed. This means working together with students, parents, educators, principals, board members, and community leaders to bring the blueprint to life. As a public-school system, we will create a learning environment that inspires every child and student to reach their full potential and to become personally successful, economically productive and actively engaged citizens.

While many indicators of success for students have improved over the last few years and the professional staff have recognized intentionality for success, these improvements have not provided for equitable outcomes for all students. Not only do persistent achievement gaps continue to exist, but even academically successful students do not always feel included in their school community or proud of who they are as individuals. The results can have long-term negative impacts in other areas, such as health, well-being, economic self-sufficiency and participation in society. The consequences are wide-ranging, affect individual families and communities, and can be seen across generations.

Joliet Schools are to be places where students not only learn about diversity but also experience it. Students should see themselves and their classmates reflected in their studies. Students and families should expect their interactions with their school community to leave

them feeling accepted for who they are. All students should believe in their potential and know that they will be supported along the way from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 8 and beyond, no matter what pathway they choose. The vision of equity and inclusion for all must be extended to our teachers, principals, and education workers who, together, anchor the broader school community.

“Inclusive education is central to the achievement of high-quality education for all learners and the development of more inclusive societies. Inclusion is still thought of in some countries as an approach to serving children with disabilities within general educational settings. Internationally, however, it is increasingly seen more broadly as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners.”
UNESCO, 2008, p. 5

As a result, there are three core priorities:

1. High levels of student achievement amongst all subgroups,
2. Reduced gaps in student achievement, and
3. Increased public confidence in publicly funded education.

The core priorities will be addressed through:

1. School and Classroom Practices,
2. Leadership, Governance and Human Resource Practices,
3. Data Collection, Integration and Reporting, and
4. Organizational Culture Change.

School and Classroom Practices

A key aspect of removing systemic barriers is to ensure that school and classroom practices reflect and respond to the diversity of students and staff.

Existing structures, policies, programs and practice may unintentionally disadvantage certain student populations including: racialized students, students experiencing poverty, indigenous students, newcomers, students who identify with genders similar or other than their own, youth in foster care, homeless, religious minorities, students with disabilities and students with special education needs. The goal of Joliet Public Schools District 86 is to identify and remove existing systemic barriers and guard against such barriers when new policies and programs are developed.

Students must also experience teaching and learning that is reflective of their needs and of their identity. In order to ensure that all students feel safe, accepted and inspired to succeed, schools and classrooms must be responsive to culture broadly defined. Culturally responsive pedagogy recognizes that all students learn in ways that are connected to background, language, family structure and social or cultural identity. It goes beyond recognizing uniqueness to intentionally nurturing it in order to create and facilitate effective conditions for learning. School and classroom practices must be reflective of, and responsive to, the diversity of students and staff.

It is also an essential need to take a critical look at student discipline because racialized students, students with disabilities, and students with special education needs are overrepresented in the data on suspensions and expulsions. It is expected that administration and staff will work together with students, parents and educational partners, to develop interventions, preventive approaches and programs to address this issue and assess the results of these efforts to institute best practices throughout the district.

Leadership, Governance and Human Resource Practices

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping the environment for both student and staff in the educational system. The diversity of the students in the school district is to be reflected in the diversity of their educational service providers, teachers, school and system leaders. Strengthening diversity, in leadership and in the classroom, helps not only to promote a sense of belonging among students, but also helps to bolster innovation and creativity in the school environment.

To create safe, inclusive and engaging learning and work environments, educational leaders must be committed to equity and inclusion for all students and to upholding and promoting human rights. A necessary and foundational step to creating such learning and work environments is to ensure accountability at all levels for equity, inclusion, and human rights.

Data Collection, Integration and Reporting

A critical step on the road to ensuring equity is to gain a clear understanding of who our students are and of their school experience. Enhanced data collection and outcome measurement will support evidence-based decision making at the local level. Data gathering will be tailored to meet the needs of the school community.

A consistent process for collecting, analyzing and publicly reporting on disaggregated identity-based data will be implemented. This analysis will help change recruitment, hiring, promotion and professional development strategies. How this data is used and mobilized to close equity gaps will vary across the district. However, a consistent approach to collecting and analyzing data will help the entire district identify where systemic barriers exist and will help determine how to eliminate discriminatory biases in order to support equity, student achievement and well-being through training and targeted programs and supports.

Organizational Culture Change

By applying an equity lens to the internal structures, policies, programs, and practice, we will work to ensure an authentic and vibrant organizational culture. The shift in culture will be a model of diversity, equity, inclusion, and commitment to upholding and promoting human rights.

The removal of systemic barriers calls for a systemic culture change driven by our core values and respect for principles of equity and inclusion. An equitable and inclusive educational system is a necessary condition to enable all students to feel included, respected and able to succeed.

Applying an equity, inclusion and human rights perspective to internal organizational structures, policies, programs and practices will help identify, model, and frame discussions

about the work to support an inclusive and diverse educational sector. This blueprint will facilitate the organizational change and support the shift in culture.

Blueprint to Action

As a result of this Blueprint, each school site will develop its own action plan to bring these ideas and goals to action. The action plan is based on the Equity Framework and loosely based on the work of Curtis Linton and Bonnie M. Davis in their publication, “Equity 101: Culture.” The ultimate goal is to have schools and a school district that are culturally proficient.

“Educational Equity occurs when educators provide all students with the individual support they need to reach and exceed a common standard. When equity occurs, each and every student receives individualized teaching and focused support based on the student’s own readiness level and learning needs.”

Linton and Davis (pg. 19)

Equity Framework

Creating an equitable academic culture is both complex and delicate as personal beliefs, biases, and understandings are examined to insure an inclusive, equitable education for all students and the community served. The realization of an inclusive and equitable academic culture requires the successful confluence of many factors: the personal optimism and belief in students embraced by the educators and service providers; the standard of excellence held by the academic institution; and the professional skills exhibited daily by the adults who serve students, by adults to adults and students to adults. Creating this equitable culture requires the deliberate execution of a positive learning environment coupled with the cultural competency of all members of the community and most especially that of the educators.

To effect academic success for all students, equitable *culture* sets the stage for engagement and learning while working in trifecta with focused instructional *leadership* and effective teaching *practice (teaching and learning)*. Combined together, equitable leadership,

culture, and practice (teaching and learning) can create a powerful school environment focused on high achievement for all students. (Linton, pg. 18).

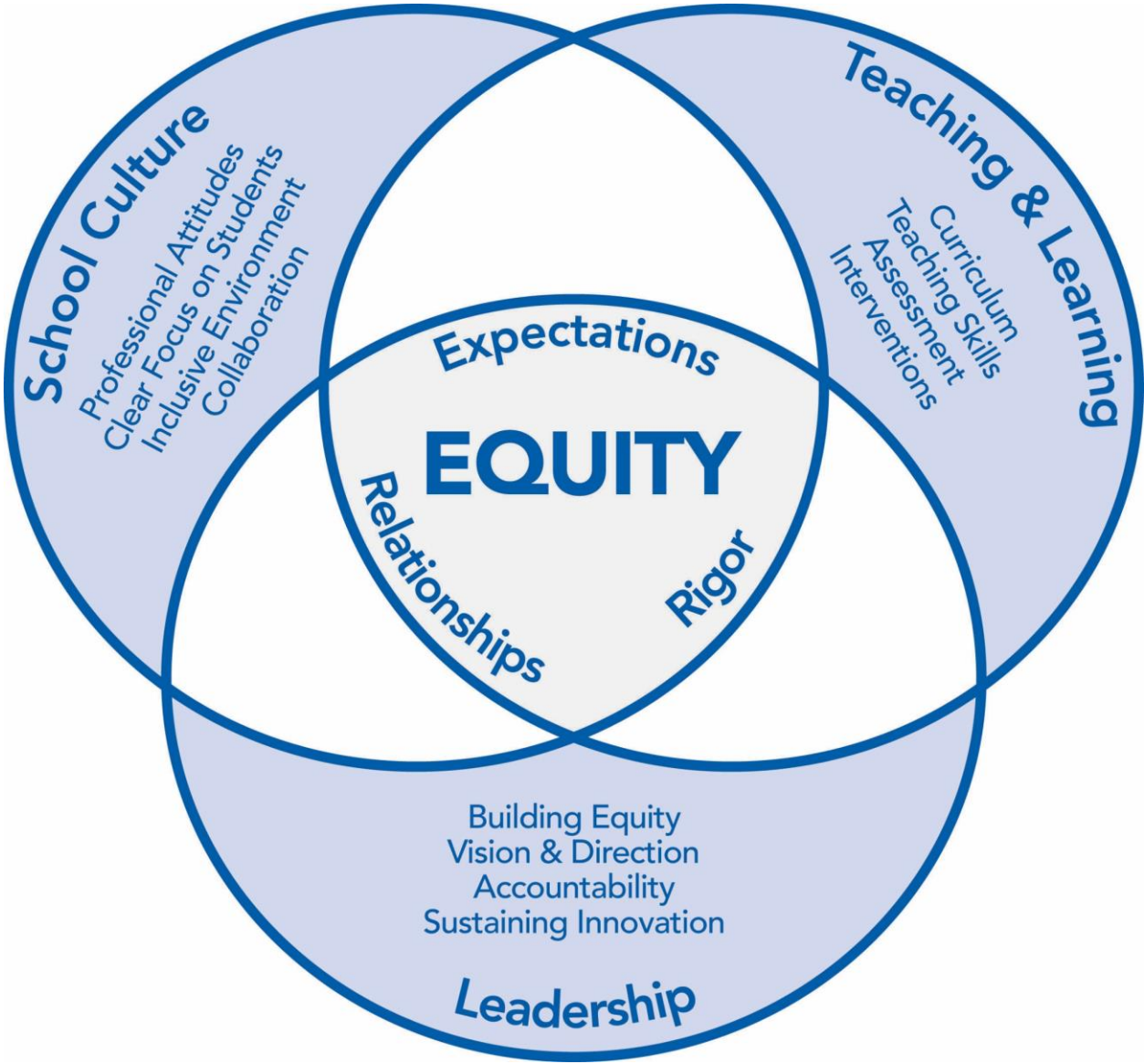
The basis for the Equity Framework is four common characteristics of equity:

- *expectations,*
- *rigor (vigor),*
- *relevancy; and*
- *relationships.*

As equity characteristics they encircle equity, symbolizing that without these four present for *all* students, no matter their diversity, other school improvement efforts may struggle to succeed. These four characteristics are key to accomplishing equity – and all define the impact a school’s equitable culture will have on students.

- *Expectations* set the bar for high achievement.
- *Rigor* provides the skills and learning the student needs to succeed.
- *Relevancy* directs the teacher in providing instruction and curriculum that relates to and connects with the learner.
- *Relationships* help the student believe the teacher’s high expectations, engage with the rigorous (vigorous) curriculum, and respond to the relevancy of learning.

When these four primary elements are found in an equitable, inclusive, and culturally competent school culture, then the adults and the students feel socially accepted and valued. Addressing school culture focuses on creating spaces where every individual’s voice is valued and respected and the collective team of staff, students, and families work together toward a common vision.



School Culture:

Personal Strategies

- What does it mean to be of color in this society?
- Analyze one's self in terms of diversity that surrounds me as a professional.

Institutional Strategies

- Create a collaborative environment where all voices are valued and supported.
- Develop institutionalized safety and respect for all our differences.

Professional Strategies

- Engage in regular conversations with people different from myself in order to build understanding.
- Represent diversity in all our work.

Teaching and Learning

Personal Strategies

- Challenge privileges provided to some but not others.
- Minimize myths of the dominant culture.

Institutional Strategies

- Incorporate standards and practices that value diversity.
- Support development of excellence throughout the organization.

Professional Strategies

- Differentiate support based upon needs and talents of people throughout the organization.
- Measure the impact of equity efforts as diligently as other data analysis.

Leadership

Personal Strategies

- Engage with mentors and allies to guide my work toward equity.
- Study the work and writings of educators and other leaders who have worked to build equity in education and society.

Institutional Strategies

- Lead in equitizing the work environment for all staff.
- Diversify the workforce and provide opportunities for growth and success.

Professional Strategies

- Align all professional efforts so that they support the building of equity in our schools.
- Engage all opportunities that provide a forum to disseminate equity principles.

Each plan will address the Essential Elements of a Culturally Proficient community.

Essential Elements
<p>Assessing Culture <i>Naming the Differences</i> Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the unwritten rules in your school?• How do you describe your own culture?• How does your school provide for a variety of learning styles?
<p>Valuing Diversity <i>Claiming the Differences</i> Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How would you describe the diversity in your current professional setting?• How do you react to the term <i>valuing diversity</i>?• How do you and your colleagues frame conversations about the learners?
<p>Managing the Dynamics of Difference <i>Reframing the Differences</i> Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you handle conflict in the classroom?• What skills do you possess to handle conflict?• Describe situations of cross-cultural conflict that may be based on historic distrust.
<p>Adapting to Diversity <i>Changing for the Differences</i> Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How have you recently adapted to the needs of a new member?• How has your organization recently adapted to the needs of new members?• Describe examples of inclusive language and of inclusive materials.• How do you teach your clients about the organization's need to adapt to cultures?
<p>Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge <i>Training About Differences</i> Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do you currently know about the cultural groups in your organization and among your clients?• What more would you like to know about those cultures?• How do you and your colleagues learn about these cultural groups?

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

CULTURAL PROFICIENCY: Are the values, beliefs, behaviors, policies, and practices that enable an individual and an organization to interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment. It is holding esteem for cultures similar and different than one's own and knowing how to learn about cultures.

CULTURALLY PROFICIENT SCHOOL: Is a school that embraces its diversity through the five essential elements of cultural proficiency opening doors to all of its students, closing doors on tokenism, suppression and oppression of the non-dominant culture while confidently delivering programs and services to maximize opportunities for all students.

DIVERSITY: The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

DOMINANT CULTURE: Is the established and most accepted group sharing a common language, religion, behavior, values, rituals, and/or social customs. These traits are often the norm for the organization, community and/or society as a whole. The dominant culture is usually, but not always, in the majority and achieves its dominance by controlling social institutions such as communication, educational institutions, artistic expression, law, political processes, and business.

EQUITY: Providing all students with the individual support needed to reach and exceed common standards in collaboration with strong community partnerships that recognize, respect, and respond to the diverse needs of all stakeholders. *(This definition of Equity was established by the Board of School Inspectors of Joliet Public Schools District 86 on January 18, 2018.)*

IMPLICIT BIAS: Is any unconsciously-held set of associations about a social group which can result in the attribution of particular qualities to all individuals from that group, also known as stereotyping. Implicit biases are the product of learned associations and social conditioning, most often individuals are unaware that they hold them.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honored and all individuals are respected.

INSTITUTIONALIZE SAFETY AND RESPECT: An organization or setting where respect implies a courteous, decorous, civil, or deferential attitude where individuals and groups feel the experience of *being taken seriously*. Respectful schools are, by definition, democratically informed learning environments where people feel safe, supported, engaged, and helpfully challenged.

PRIVILEGES: Advantages and/or benefits that are unearned and granted to people in the dominant ethnic, social, religious, gender, economic groups whether individuals in those groups want those privileges or not, and regardless of their stated intent. Privilege operates on personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels and gives advantages, favors, and benefits to members of dominant groups at the expense of members of less dominant groups. In the United States, privilege is granted to people who have membership in one or more of these social identity groups:

- White people;
- Able-bodied people;
- Heterosexuals;
- Males;
- Christians;
- Middle or owning class people;

- Middle-aged people;
- English-speaking people

Privilege is characteristically invisible to people who have it. People in dominant groups often believe that they have earned the privileges that they enjoy or that everyone could have access to these privileges if only they worked to earn them.

“No school can guarantee that all students will succeed in life, but all schools can guarantee that every student is prepared at high school graduation with the necessary skills and knowledge sets to enter college or advanced career training, ready to succeed. An institutionalized academic goal of college and career readiness provides all students with the choice to do whatever they want in life – the student gets to choose for him-or herself and does not face limited options due to inadequate preparation by the academic institution.”

Curtis Linton and Bonnie M. Davis (pg. 19)

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