

DOCUMENT FROM EQUITY /INCLUSION SUB-COMMITTEE OF SEAC

Definition of EQUITY

The Strategic Plan's Definition of EQUITY is below

RED = what SEAC would like to have the School Board add to the definition of equity

"EQUITY: Empowering students, families and staff by promoting relationships, nurturing capability and assigning the resources necessary to collectively remove barriers that prevent anyone from achieving their aspirations. (3)

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY: Educational disparities based on race, economics, disability, and other dimensions of difference are reduced and eliminated. The resources necessary to achieving positive school outcomes are distributed equitably and proportionally across all demographic and identity groups. Negative outcomes and disproportionality are reduced for all groups. "

Specific Recommendations

Investments in Equity and Inclusion for students with disabilities in the next Academic Cycle (2022 – 2023)?:

- SEAC recommends that the additions (above) to the ACPS / Strategic Plan equity definition(s) be adopted by the School Board.
- Add the definition of Ableism to ACPS' Glossary – a suggested definition of Ableism below is taken from the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education:

Ableism (<https://rossier.usc.edu/equity-in-education-glossary-a-guide-for-teachers-and-professionals/>)

Ableism is the discrimination against individuals with disabilities. In education, ableism manifests itself in a general lack of acceptance of and support for students with disabilities. Examples of ableism might include schools that prioritize the needs of traditionally abled students over the disabled, or lack staff with sufficient training to engage with disabled students.

- Add a focus on instructional assistants' roles in equity and inclusion discussion.

The Strategic Plan does not mention support staff, who are imperative to inclusion and equity for SPED students. Is there data on IA hiring and retention? What strategies and highlighted actions are being prioritized?

- Create a bank of inclusion resources to assist with inclusion of SWD in general education settings.

The ACPS Strategic Plan lists as a Key Recommendation to include ACPS teachers more directly in the development of curriculum lessons and to provide instructional guidance for students with disabilities. One specific way to accomplish these two goals would be to create a bank of inclusion resources aligned with the ACPS curriculum which have been developed and used by ACPS teachers. Materials would need to be curated and supplemented by ACPS inclusion specialists or by selected teachers. Because the great majority of elementary students with disabilities are included in general education science and social studies classes, these subjects might be the best place to start. Such a resource bank would eliminate repetitive efforts at each elementary school and would also provide a shared set of resources for teachers in and out of city-wide settings. The resource bank could also guide teachers in instructional approaches for less-common disabilities, such as Down syndrome.

- Make training available to ensure Health Equity for SWD.

Regarding School Nurse and Mental Health Providers Professional Development - Have the current nursing staff / mental health providers had coursework or professional development that focuses on delivery of school health/ mental health services to students with disabilities? (a survey/audit? - beyond medication management)

- Develop a schedule of professional development courses for School Nurses to stay current on medical and mental health approaches to school nursing care for students with disabilities
- Develop a schedule of professional development courses for mental health providers to stay current on medical and mental health approaches to mental health care for students with disabilities
- Collect data on the use of mental health counseling services used by students with disabilities (how many SWD used the services and were they accessible) during the pandemic and an audit/survey of the mental health practitioners - is their professional development current?
- Create a group including SEAC inclusion committee and an ACPS budget person to allow the team to come up with a variety of solutions to inclusion issues brought up in this report that could be presented to the board.

Future Considerations

Below are recommended investigations which SEAC feels are needed to achieve Equity for All:

- Staff Training and Retention
 - What percentage of equity professional development is focused on supporting students with disabilities?

- What is the percentage of SPED teachers, specifically, that feel well supported with high quality instructional training and support?
- The Strategic Plan states every school was represented in the “Staff voice” but does not state that SPED/citywide teacher voices were heard or considered. What do citywide classroom teachers have to tell us?
- What are the results of the needs assessment of professional learning?
- City-wide classrooms
 - How are we monitoring progress of reading and math for citywide students or students who may not be able to access the standardized testing?
 - What is the recruitment strategy for city-wide pre-K classes and does this apply to IA staff?
 - How are we determining the efficacy of covid recovery services for these students and what additional interventions might be provided if the current solution is unsuccessful?
 - What data has been collected to show a “results driven” goal for SPED students, specifically those in citywide classes. Is there research available to be viewed?
- Screening tools - consider if social-emotional and mental health screening tools are current and appropriate. Who is administering these evaluations?
- To achieve equity, we must remove barriers. What are the barriers being removed for SWD and how are we specifically helping to solve problems so SWD can thrive?
- What is a case management approach to serving identified groups of students at most risk?
- *Under* identification of SWD is not currently addressed in the Strategic Plan but can also be a barrier to receiving needed services.
- What are the lessons learned from the Pandemic in providing services and are they being incorporated into the strategic plan?
 - processes
 - efficacy of current practices
 - research based strategies
- Consider development of a strategic plan specifically focused on IDEA/SPED students.