



## **Educational Equity Policy 1080 Public Hearing August 18, 2020**

### **Position: Support with Amendments**

Equity4HC provides support to underserved populations and advances racial equity in the policies, institutions, and culture of Howard County, MD. We are a growing organization that is collaborating with many organizations and individuals to advance our mission. Members of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Board of Education are familiar with our ongoing support of racial and additional forms of equity in public education, which continues today in this public hearing on Educational Equity Policy 1080 (herein referred to as 1080).

First and foremost, we thank you for agreeing to hold a public hearing today and delaying the vote on 1080 until September 10<sup>th</sup> after previously planning to vote on it earlier in the summer. It was important to slow down the passage of 1080 and allow for public input in order to take into account the fact that the world has drastically changed since the COVID-19 pandemic and recent racial justice movements that grew out of the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and so many more people; it would have been disingenuous to put forth any policy on equity without taking the inequities going on in the world into account.

We would also like to thank you for incorporating some of our previous recommendations for 1080 into the current version, dated July 9, 2020. As we progress forward, we must emphasize that there is more work to be done on 1080 to ensure that it is, in fact, an equity policy. In many regards, the foundation of good action in a system lies with the policy, therefore, we need to ensure that 1080 is a solid, well-built foundation that can support the work that will come next. An equity policy that has holes in it or is weakened will cause further harm to the very people it seeks to support and protect. Therefore, we must be deliberate and precise in crafting a strong equity policy that is clear about definitions, terminology, and values, is appropriately funded with line-item allocations, and has mechanisms to ensure accountability in upholding the policy and implementation procedures.

Generally speaking, our recommendations and amendments focus on the framework of 1080, access to important information within the policy, and accurate, equitable language throughout the policy. The following pages of this testimony detail the exact recommendations and amendments we propose based on the July 9, 2020 version of 1080. Individual members of Equity4HC will highlight specific areas of our recommendations and amendments in our individual testimonies during the public hearing to further explain their importance.

Howard County's Strategic Call to Action (SCTA) emphasizes "the fierce urgency of now." Now is exactly the time to take this important step of building and passing a strong 1080 policy that will allow the vision of the SCTA to become a reality. This is the next right thing we need to do to uphold our commitments to making connections that value and empower students, faculty, staff, and communities to achieve the successes we desire. We have a tremendous opportunity to



be a trendsetter with 1080. Very few school systems in this country have educational equity policies, therefore, we have the opportunity to be a model for jurisdictions in Maryland and the rest of the country.

The following pages detail all of our recommendations and amendments to 1080 based on the July 9, 2020 version that has been posted on the HCPSS website.

Thank you for your time and work on 1080. We look forward to assisting in any way we can as we strive for a strong, thorough 1080 policy.

Sincerely,

*Daniel Burns*

Daniel Burns, CEO  
Equity4HC  
<https://equity4hc.com/>

## **Recommendations and Amendments: July 9, 2020 Version of 1080 Educational Equity Policy**

Note: All recommended additions are highlighted in yellow. All recommended deletions are highlighted in teal. Special notes are highlighted in green.

### **1080 Policy**



General Recommendation: The entire document references a plethora of policies without including hyperlinks, appropriate footnotes, or an appendix directing readers to the policy locations and/or content, particularly in the list of references, noted as “VII. References” on page 9 of the policy. This creates a barrier in reader access and full comprehension of Policy 1080, which makes the policy deficient of exhaustive transparency.

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- Policy Value Statement, Paragraph 1: The Board of Education of Howard County believes that educational equity is an inherent basic human right and must shape all school system policies, procedures, and practices...The Board believes it is the shared responsibility of employees, parents, community stakeholders, and students to work towards educational equity along with us.
- Policy Value Statement, Paragraph 2: The Board acknowledges systemic racism, implicit and explicit bias, institutional barriers, and other discriminatory practices that have caused opportunity gaps, resulting in inequitable outcomes for students and employees. As such, the Board is committed to providing all students with a dynamic and educational program that nurtures their cognitive, social, and emotional social/emotional well-being, and affirms their identity and experience, in order to maximize each student’s individual potential...We mandate addressing eliminating disparities in educational outcomes as a priority in each school, including but not limited to, access to advanced coursework, appropriate course placement, identification for specialized services (including 504/IEP and gifted and talented education), discipline, suspension/expulsion practices, achievement, attendance rates, Grade Point Averages (GPA), and graduation rates between student groups.

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II. Purpose. The purpose of this policy is to establish an education system that identifies eliminates expectations related to the identification and elimination of disparities for HCPSS students and employees and in education outcomes.

III. A. Access to a multiculturally culturally responsive and relevant curriculum that provides meaningful and dynamic school experiences are essential to postsecondary success.

III.A.1. Promote student voice and provide the necessary resources and information to support youth in becoming active and engaged participants in their academic experience.

III.A.2. Provide multiculturally culturally responsive and relevant curriculum with inclusive of perspectives from Black, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Latinx Latino, LGBTQ+, indigenous peoples, individuals with disabilities, and other additional marginalized groups excluded in the current curriculum. The curriculum will use differentiated approaches and resources to meet the needs of every student in accordance with Policy 8000 Curriculum.

III.A.5. Apply an equity lens during allocation of resources and academic supports for students, families, schools, faculty, staff, and communities to ensure individual student success and growth.

III.A.6. Identify and remove institutional barriers that could prevent students from equitably accessing educational opportunities in all schools. Removal of institutional barriers specifically



includes developing and enforcing accountability measures for individual who operationalize institutional barriers with oversight by an independent entity dedicated to ensuring accountability of educational equity.

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#### III.B. School Climate and Cultures Affecting School Success

III.B.3. Create and maintain a culture in which students, employees, and families are encouraged to self-reflect on assumptions, biases, and beliefs, in order to promote understanding, respect, dignity, acceptance, and positive interactions among all individuals and groups.

III.B.4. Nurture healthy relationships with staff, faculty, students, and community, through a restorative culture and student-centered resolution practices.

III.B.6. Evaluate and continuously improve course classroom placement practices and student scheduling to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion exists in all learning environments.

III.B.8. Identify and eliminate disparities disproportionality in discipline practices by uplifting and nurturing healthy relationships, creating a just and equitable learning environment, repairing harm, and responding effectively to conflict. Regardless of social identifiers, c Consequences shall be are fair, equitable, consistent, and reflective of a restorative culture, and shall not to be determined based on real or perceived social identifiers.

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III.C.1. Intentionally recruit, employ, promote, support, and retain a diverse workforce of highly qualified educators that reflect the diversity of the student population and ensure equitable distribution and representation of this diverse workforce throughout all levels of the school system. In accordance with Policy 7000 Workforce Diversity, an innovative recruitment and retention Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Plan for teachers of color and other diverse staff, is a high priority for HCPSS. Recruitment will include an assessment of candidates' biases and a determination of the capacity for self-awareness and ongoing education in areas of bias.

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III.C.5. Train, and support, and protect school-based Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaisons (DEILs) who will work with school administrators and their teams to support the attainment of school improvement goals. Support and protection measures for DEILs will include accountability for peers who engage in peer bullying and racism as DEILs engage in their trained work.

III.C.6. Work collaboratively with parents, community, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Howard County Executive, the Howard County Council, local law enforcement agencies, and other county agencies, community groups, business organizations, bargaining units, and other additional stakeholders to increase equity and inclusion for students and staff.

IV.A. The Superintendent/designee will oversee the development of a Local Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) ESSA Consolidated Strategic Plan. The plan includes a needs assessment that identifies areas of focus, provides equity performance accountability measures, and further outlines implementation strategies that address educational equity. Furthermore, the development



of the strategic plan must begin within 90 days of the passage of this policy and incorporate multiple opportunities for student, faculty, staff, and community input.

IV.B. The Superintendent/designee will provide quarterly reports to update the Board on educational equity progress through information items, memorandums and board reports that include disaggregated student and staffing data. These reports shall be posted on the HCPSS website within five (5) business days after the end of each quarter.

IV.C. The Superintendent/designee will propose an annual budget that allocates resources in a manner that promotes the principles of education equity. The equity information will be part of each program budget where applicable and include an analysis of resources that address the needs of marginalized groups.

IV.D. The Department of Information Technology will collaborate with HCPSS offices to maintain a longitudinal data system that contains disaggregated student data across academics, discipline, and school climate for district, program, and school analysis and evaluation of educational equity, and is accessible to stakeholders.

IV.E. The Department of Curriculum and Instruction will develop a culturally multicultural responsive curriculum that is inclusive and reflective of perspectives which have been excluded, distorted, or minimized historically and currently. Mandatory professional learning will be provided to educators to build the capacity to understand and deliver culturally proficient multicultural aware instruction.

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IV.H. HCPSS principals will include students, parents, families and community members, in decision-making groups that impact school culture, climate, and the academic success of students when possible as often as possible.

VI.I. All employees will engage in and be evaluated on the implementation of self-reflective practices aligned to HCPSS educational equity goals to ensure their effectiveness and positive impact on students and fellow co-workers.

IV.K. The Superintendent/designee will review this policy at least every three years annually through 2025 and every two years thereafter, and recommend it for revision as necessary.

VI.A. ~~Culturally Proficient~~ Multicultural Aware Instruction – An inside out approach to teaching and learning in which educators surface their own assumptions, biases, beliefs, and behaviors, in order to better instruct their students. ~~Culturally proficient~~ Multicultural aware practices are guided by the tools of cultural ~~proficiency~~ humility. [Note: Every use of “Culturally Proficient Instruction” thereafter needs to be amended to “Multicultural Aware Instruction.”]

VI.B. ~~Cultural~~ Multicultural Responsiveness – Pedagogy that values the strengths students’ and educators’ cultural backgrounds, and recognizes the importance of including many cultures in all aspects of learning through equitable and inclusive practices that promote academic excellence and cultural diversity. ~~Cultural~~ Multicultural responsiveness is grounded in relationships and plays an essential role in how individuals communicate and receive information. [Note: Every use of “Cultural Responsiveness” thereafter needs to be amended to “Multicultural Responsiveness.”]

V. The Superintendent will ~~is authorized to~~ develop standard operating ~~appropriate~~ procedures to implement this policy.



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VI.D. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Liaison (DEIL) – A leadership role within a school that facilitates school efforts to support diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. The liaison, is selected by the principal using a standard set of guidelines, receives training, and support, and financial compensation from the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) and participates in a district-wide network of DEILs. The liaison leads their school-wide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Team comprised of administrators, faculty, staff, students, families, and interested community partners that work collaboratively to implement school diversity, equity, and inclusion practices.

VI.F. Equity Lens – The impact on all marginalized students groups is addressed when considering any program, practice, decision, or action, with a strategic focus on marginalized student groups identifying and eliminating potential barriers. Real or perceived differences in race/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion/beliefs, mental and physical ability, age, and national origin do not determine advantage or disadvantage in programs, practices, decisions, and actions. An equity lens includes anti-racism and anti-oppression analyses for ensuring that the aforementioned real or perceived social identifiers do not determine advantage or disadvantage.

VI.J. Inclusion –The process by which a school ensures that all individuals are engaged participants in the learning environment and community. All students, families, faculty, and staff members feel valued, respected, appreciated and involved. Individuals see their unique identities reflected in all facets of education including staffing, curriculum, instruction, and activities, HCPSS media communications, and school learning materials (e.g., textbooks, movies, handouts).

VI.K. Institutional Barriers – The systemic written and unwritten policies, procedures or and practices that deny access to educational opportunities or and systematically disadvantage students, and families and employees based on real or perceived social identifiers.

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VI.O. Racism – The belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person's social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics. Racial separatism is the belief, most of the time based on racism, that different races should remain segregated and apart from one another. This includes systemic racism which is the interpersonal expressions of prejudices and discrimination and the systematic distribution of resources, power, and opportunity for the benefit of people who are white to the exclusion of people of color, rooted in specious beliefs that skin color determines certain social, moral, and physical traits of superiority for white people and inferiority for people who are not white.

VI.P. Restorative Culture – An approach that emphasizes building relationships. When there is a need to repair harm caused by conflict and wrongdoing, restorative justice provides an opportunity for everyone impacted by an incident to come together in a safe space trusting, empowered space to address their feelings and needs, take responsibility for actions/words, and reach a mutually agreed upon resolution that heals, promotes accountability, and restores relationships.

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VI. R. Student Voice – A belief and a process to listen, learn, and lead with students, in order to increase student agency in their educational experience. The process and instructional approaches/techniques value and incorporate the beliefs, interests, perspectives, cultures, passions, and ambitions of students, and actively engage students who may not regularly participate in processes such as this one.

VI.S. Racial Separatism - Racial separatism is the belief, most of the time based on racism, that different races should remain segregated and apart from one another.

### Implementation Procedures

#### **General Recommendations:**

- The implementation procedures section is disjunctive to the organization of the policy document that precedes it. The implementation procedures should reference the specific sections of the policy document that each of the implementation procedures addresses.
- The entire document references a plethora of policies without including hyperlinks, appropriate footnotes, or an appendix directing readers to the policy locations and/or content, particularly on pages 4 and 5 in sections V.B.1 and V.B.2. This creates a barrier in reader access and full comprehension of Policy 1080, which makes the policy deficient of exhaustive transparency.

#### **Pg. 1**

I.A. The Superintendent/designee will recommend priorities and develop procedures for differentiating intentionally allocating line item school funding to resources for equity.

I.A.2. Mental health and social and emotional supports behavioral needs.

I.B. Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) schools and offices will seek grants and partnerships to supplement funding for innovative programs and supports to decrease opportunity gaps eliminate inequities.

I.E. Principals will utilize data to request and advocate for community and Central Office supports, based on the unique and diverse needs of the school population.

#### **Pg. 2**

II.A. The Division of Academics, in collaboration with the Division of School Management and Instructional Leadership, will develop equitable placement processes that utilize student input, parent input, teacher input and multiple data points to ensure equitable access to advanced coursework. Parents will have the opportunity to examine multiple data points and submit their recommendations for their child to the decision making course placement review team/designee to ensure equitable access for their child. When appropriate, parents and students will have the right to select coursework for placement and enroll without the course placement review team's/designee's approval.

II.B. The Division of Academics will work with school leadership teams and communities to communicate with encourage families about the importance of to engage in early reading and access the programming available to support student success from Birth-Grade 12.



II.D. The Division of Academics and Division of School Management and Instructional Leadership will work collaboratively to examine current supports, and determine innovative resources, and implement new supports for increasing advanced course placement and graduation rates for all students.

III.A. The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) will plan and facilitate training and development related to HCPSS educational equity goals. The professional learning will cover such areas as anti-racism, bias, multicultural proficiency awareness and responsiveness, equity facilitation and leadership, equity-focused leadership for district and site-based leaders, common aggressive incidents, microaggressions, restorative justice practices, trauma-informed/healing-centered practices, student voice, discipline and suspension practices, determinations for advanced course placement, and other additional diversity, equity, and inclusion-related professional development.

III.B. ODEI will consult with HCPSS divisions, and offices, and parents to develop and implement criteria measurements to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of on initiatives and programs that to support HCPSS educational equity goals.

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IV.A. School Support Team (SST) will establish, implement, and maintain a school improvement planning process that requires district SST school improvement teams to:

IV.A.1.f. Disproportionality in suspensions.

IV.A.1.g. GPA

IV.A. 2. Perform root cause analysis that includes cultural and structural factors, and is careful not to not perpetuate racism/racist ideas.

IV.A. 4. Track targets and milestones to close eliminate inequities equity gaps.

IV.A.5 Modify school improvement plans as needed to support closing eliminating inequitable educational outcomes.

IV.B. School-based leadership teams will perform equity-focused data analysis to identify and eliminate current gaps disparities in educational outcomes, programming, supports, and interventions in order to develop and implement school improvement plans.

IV.C. Annual reporting of staff data to the Board will include staff demographics, recruitment initiatives, successful retention efforts for all teachers, of color disaggregated by race/ethnicity, and additional innovative strategies utilized by the Division of Human Resources and Professional Development to recruit and retain a diverse workforce. Annual reporting must include specific recruitment initiatives and strategies for teachers of color.

IV.E. HCPSS will establish an independent oversight committee comprised of community members, parents, students, alumni, faculty, staff, and additional relevant stakeholders to analyze school site and school system data trends and hold individuals accountable for failure to comply with this policy. The independent oversight committee must be formed within 90 days of the passage of this policy and has the authority to recommend annual equity goals to the Superintendent/designee.

V.A. Individuals who have been subjected to, or observe behaviors that are in violation of this policy, are first encouraged to respectfully share the concern/issue with the person or persons directly involved, in a manner that reflects a restorative approach. If it is physically, socially, and/or emotionally unsafe for the individual to make the first approach, one is encouraged to



seek the assistance of the school's DEIL for assistance in resolving the concern/issue with the person or persons directly involved in the situation(s).

#### Pg. 4

VI.A. **Multicultural Cultural Proficiency Awareness** – The ongoing process of becoming knowledgeable of one's assumptions, biases, values, beliefs, own cultural identities, as well as the cultures of others in order to foster an appreciation, understanding, and respect for varying cultural expressions that exist in the actions and interactions of an organization. **Multicultural Culturally proficient awareness** practices are guided by the tools of cultural **proficiency humility**. [Note: Every use of "Cultural Proficiency" thereafter needs to be amended to "Multicultural Awareness."]

VI.B. **Microaggressions Common Aggressive Incidents** – Everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their **marginalized group membership real or perceived differences**.

VI.C. **Root Cause Analysis** – A process by which an issue is examined by going deeper into why the problem exists, **being careful not perpetuate racism and stereotypes in identifying causes**. Causal factors contributing to the issue are explored to assist with identification of action steps that address the original cause of the issue and not just the symptoms or outcomes.

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VI.E. **Trauma-Informed/Healing-Centered Practices** – Practices that reflect an understanding of the basics of how adverse childhood experiences, **common aggressive incidents, and additional traumatic experiences** affect a person throughout their life and focus on collective approaches to healing.