

DRAFT
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT
EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE IN NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC EDUCATION

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education (“State Board”) values the over 1.5 million public school children in its trust as one of the State’s most precious resources, girded by North Carolina’s Constitution declaration that the people have a right to the privilege of education, and that it is the duty of the Board to guard and maintain that right; and

WHEREAS, in addition to guarding, maintaining and forever encouraging education, the North Carolina Constitution commands that “equal opportunities shall be provided for all students” to pursue and fully participate in the free public school system; and

WHEREAS, the State Board acknowledges that equity is a necessary and critical component to education that helps ensure the privilege of a sound basic education for every child; and

WHEREAS, in 2019 the State Board adopted equity and a whole-child orientation as the guiding principles for the strategic plan for North Carolina as essential to ensuring the needs of each and every child are met – defining educational equity for our State as the belief and practice of ensuring that every student is treated in a fair and just manner, providing the necessary allocation of resources for the success of every student, and eliminating discriminatory barriers to full participation and opportunities for every student; and

WHEREAS, the State Board is charged with providing a sound, basic education for every student, including determining and maintaining the broad strategic priorities for the Public School Units (PSUs) in our North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Constitution directs the State Board of Education to make all needed rules and regulations to supervise and administer the free public school system, subject to laws enacted by the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the State Board recognizes that historical and current systems of inequitable and inadequate resource allocation, disproportionate suspensions and expulsions, lack of access to and supports for teachers of color, unequal access to educational opportunities and supports, implicit and explicit biases, and segregation perpetuate inequity in the outcomes of students; and

WHEREAS, research shows that the physical, emotional and social health of students is inextricably linked to their academic achievement while barriers to success for many children include student opportunity disparities within aspects of the educational system based on race, family structure, systemic racism, poverty, poor health, unsafe environments, nutrition deficiencies, limited access to services and infrastructure needed to support their long-term health and safety that will ensure their access to a quality public education resulting in rigorous academic attainment for every student, and

WHEREAS, the State Board acknowledges that other State and local agencies, along with parents, educators and the community are important partners, each having a significant role in meeting the needs of children by eliminating opportunity and access gaps – each sharing a common goal of supporting the health and academic achievement of every student; and

WHEREAS, every student requires a safe and nurturing learning environment to grow, flourish, use their voice, pursue their dreams, and achieve their full potential through pursuing a successful academic path designed to produce graduates who cherish a lifelong interest in learning, through an equitable state school system which contributes to helping students develop the intellectual and moral fortitude to become productive, thoughtful, and empathetic citizens who contribute to human flourishing impacting world change; and

WHEREAS, schools are both a part of and a reflection of the local community; and equity enhances the relationship between educational attainment and social and emotional learning, placing the child’s interest and progress at the center of a system designed to support both; and

WHEREAS, race is a determinant of equity, and equity is equality of opportunity achieved by unequal and differentiated inputs and we have an imperative duty to construct educational systems that eradicate racism to support students of all races; and

WHEREAS, gender is a determinant of equity, and we have an imperative duty to construct educational systems to eradicate gender biases to support students of all genders; and

WHEREAS, all students thrive when equity is applied in every aspect of the school environment – including, but not limited to - admittance or exposure to rigorous coursework through advanced placement courses, funding, disaggregated and transparent data, teacher recruitment and retention, school leadership, class content, instructional time, student support, school climate, early learning, facilities, and diverse classrooms and schools; and

WHEREAS, an equity framework helps to respond to social and health pandemics as well as natural disasters necessitating that all Public School Units commit to engaging in equitable practices pursuant to the federally approved NC Equity Plan and State Board Policy and its Strategic Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT:

RESOLVED, that the State Board of Education embraces equity as a framework to promote student academic success grounded in appropriate supports for student academic, social and emotional learning and well-being; and

RESOLVED, that the State Board, its leadership, members, and advisors, join every educator, parent and advocate in North Carolina with a solemn commitment to eliminate every equity barrier and opportunity gap in our great state such that no North Carolina public school student has to overcome such inequities on his or her own.

RESOLVED, that the State Board will review and appropriately revise its policies through an equity lens and commit to work with the Superintendent and the Department of Public Instruction to create and maintain an equity officer to ensure consistency and continuity with this essential guiding principle inside and outside the agency; and

RESOLVED, that the State Board, through its oversight of the Department of Public Instruction, commits to using its policy and strategy to provide equitable opportunities for every student within the North Carolina system of public education;

RESOLVED, that the State Board will provide resources such that students see themselves reflected in the curriculum to support culturally affirming environments in schools; and

RESOLVED, that the State Board supports districts in changing school names that reasonably are perceived as highly offensive to a significant portion of the local community and supports districts pursuing reasonable, feasible and strategic opportunities to desegregate to create intergroup contact with different racial and ethnic populations; and

RESOLVED, that the State Board expects Public School Units to align their strategic goals to the broad goals the State Board has established for North Carolina guided by equity to create collaborative school/community relationships to improve students' learning, offering equitable opportunities to meet the Constitutional mandate to provide a sound basic education by "providing equal opportunities...for all students" throughout North Carolina; and

RESOLVED, that the State Board members direct the Secretary to the State Board to enter a signed copy of this resolution into the official minutes of the North Carolina State Board of Education.

September 3, 2020
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