

1560 EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY

Preamble: Aims of the Excellence and Equity Policy

Red Bank Regional High School is a unique school whose students come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. As a learning community, we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all students and fostering an environment that promotes inclusion and celebrates diversity. Red Bank Regional High School's mission statement proclaims the following:

*To ensure the academic success and personal growth of **all students** while developing a passion in them for learning.*

To accomplish this mission, the school community must commit itself to achieving excellence and equity for all students. For this Policy, *excellence* is defined as ensuring that educational programs and options are in place to foster an environment where all students can thrive, fully develop their capabilities, and pursue their aspirations. We define the pursuit of *equity* as the ongoing effort to identify and eliminate barriers that hinder access to those opportunities, diminish achievement, and foster a sense of belonging for all.

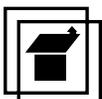
In fulfilling its core mission, the Red Bank Regional community acknowledges that historical patterns of segregation, economic inequality, and discrimination exist and continue to impact education to the present day. Therefore, we believe that without a commitment to *both excellence and equity*, equal opportunity is an empty promise.

As inclusion is a foundational component of excellence and equity, the district will accept a broad definition of inclusion that encompasses socioeconomic background, ethnicity, race, religious beliefs, immigration status, gender identity, sexual orientation, or special education needs. We regard our diversity as our greatest asset. This Policy allows us to build on that strength.

We also acknowledge that achieving excellence and equity involves all stakeholders—staff, students, families, and the larger community. Like any ecosystem, diversity helps an environment thrive. This is true in education as well. Everyone has a role to perform and the opportunity to contribute to this work.

Promoting Understanding, Strengthening Student Voice, and Sharing Concerns

This Policy commits this district to listen to all voices, especially students. To further this objective, the Superintendent shall establish a district *Equity Team*, including an *Equity Coordinator*, to aid in Policy execution. The *Equity Team* will help develop an annual



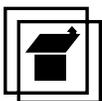
timeline and participate in evaluating successes and shortcomings in meeting the aims of this Policy. Activities will include the following:

1. The *Equity Team* will create and implement a survey for students, staff, and community to identify ways in which we are and are not meeting our students' needs. Based on this survey, The *Equity Team* will meet with focus groups of students and other stakeholders to review the survey results, identify areas for improvement, and develop action plans to address concerns. The *Equity Team* will report their findings to the BOE.
2. Each year the principal will form a working group to meet with students and other stakeholders to review the student handbook and code of conduct to recommend revisions and changes.

Enriching Curriculum and Strengthening Instruction

This Policy commits the district to design programs and offerings that cultivate the strengths of our diverse and talented student body. A school culture that prioritizes inclusion and encouragement will ensure that all learners will achieve to the fullest of their potential. To uphold this commitment, the district will take action to:

1. Ensure that curriculum and instructional materials across all content areas reflect student voice, cultural and racial diversity, and a wide range of perspectives and experiences.
2. Eliminate systemic, organizational, and other barriers that prevent students from participating in higher-level coursework.
3. Strengthen instructional practices to ensure they foster achievement and are responsive to the cultural, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds of the school community.
4. Ensure that teachers, as the facilitators of student self discovery and learning, are continually engaged in professional development and growth.
5. Recruit and retain a diverse staff that mirrors the diversity of our student body; and
6. Allocate resources and form partnerships that support programs that prepare students for success in a range of postsecondary pursuits including college, pathways toward earning industry-valued credentials/certifications and apprenticeships, as well as engagement in national and community service.



Establishing an Action Cycle for Learning and Growth

Like any Policy, this document will only have an enduring impact if sustained efforts are undertaken and clear supporting goals are established.

The following statements and accompanying supportive actions embody our commitment to fostering a cycle of learning and growth to drive this work forward:

#1. The district will develop equity goals to address emerging issues and challenges to promote a more inclusive, fair, and democratic school environment.

Supporting Actions:

- The Superintendent will work with the Board, *Equity Team*, and staff to develop, monitor, and communicate progress toward specific and measurable equity goals each year to ensure that equal opportunity is a reality and not an empty slogan.
- The Superintendent and *Equity Team* will conduct as needed an equity audit and survey as needed on progress in achieving equity and excellence goals including those that address access, achievement, and belonging. The findings will be reported to the BOE.
- The Equity Team will regularly review the equity audit and areas of focus, making necessary modifications to ensure our ongoing progress towards success.

#2. The district will continue efforts to identify and eliminate organizational, systemic, and other barriers that discourage students from fully engaging in programs.

Supporting Actions:

- The *Equity Team* will work in conjunction with school staff to analyze participation rates in academic programs, coursework, extracurricular programs, and athletics, identifying gaps and areas requiring attention.
- The *Equity Team* will facilitate efforts to establish annual objectives and regularly assess progress in narrowing participation and achievement disparities among students.

#3. The district will continue to develop its curricular, extracurricular, and athletics programs with equity and excellence in mind to promote success for all our students.

Supporting Actions:

- The *Equity Team* will collaborate with the Board of Education Curriculum Committee, the superintendent, and staff to establish a schedule for reviewing



curriculum and supporting materials, ensuring they encompass the diversity and interests of our students.

- The Equity Team, as needed, will evaluate the existing extracurricular and athletic programs to provide recommendations for improvement. These recommendations will create structures, options, and resources to maximize student participation and to ensure that programs reflect the diversity and interests of our students.

#4. The District will continue to grow our capacity to fight bias and promote understanding of the benefits of diversity. This will empower our students to excel in and contribute to a democratic and inclusive society.

Supporting Actions

- The Board, Superintendent, *Equity Team*, and School Community will engage with centers of excellence and innovation in professional learning, data analysis, and school climate assessment.
- The *Equity Team* will work with existing community and school organizations to plan learning experiences, activities, and celebrations each year that promote cross cultural engagement and foster understanding and appreciation for diversity and inclusion.

Conclusion and Enduring Commitments

This Policy commits the district, at all levels, to ensure that all voices are not only heard, but actively included, within our school community.

This Policy commits the district to growing our capacity to identify and fight against bias, discrimination, and indifference in our school community.

This Policy commits the district to building sustainable structures for students, staff members, and the community to identify areas needing improvement and communicate successes as they relate to excellence and equity.

This Policy commits the district to the dismantling of any barriers that stand in the way of all students taking advantage of opportunities, pursuing their aspirations, and participating fully in the life of the school.

This Policy commits the district to provide adequate resources to promote the advancement and implementation of this Policy.

