



EQUITY PLAN

ADVANCING JUSTICE TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview of Mason Schools	p. 2
Vision and Core Mission.....	p. 2
Equity Belief Statement/Educational Equity Definition.....	p. 2
School Community	p. 2
Families and Students	p. 2
Teachers and Administrators	p. 3
Student Achievement.....	p. 3
Attendance.....	p. 3
Course Proficiency.....	p. 3
Advanced Course Enrollment.....	p. 4
English Language Arts.....	p. 4
Mathematics.....	p. 4
College Attendance.....	p. 5
Challenges and Opportunities	p. 5
Academic.....	p. 5
Discipline.....	p. 6
Diversity of Work Force.....	p. 6
Culturally Diverse Teaching and Equitable Practice.....	p. 6
Diversity Equity and Inclusion	p. 8
Diversity Committee.....	p. 8
Mission Statement of Committee.....	p. 8
Foundational Statements.....	p. 9
Goals of the Diversity Committee.....	p. 9
Strategic Planning Process	p. 10
Strategic Plan Goals & Intended Outcomes.....	p. 10
Educator and Community Readiness.....	p. 10
Strategic Planning.....	p. 10
Conditions for Teaching and Learning.....	p. 10
District Infrastructure.....	p. 10
Strategies.....	p. 11
Objectives and Activities.....	p. 13
Definition of Terms.....	p. 19



Overview of Mason Public Schools

Vision Statement

Mason Public Schools (MPS) is committed to academic excellence in a safe environment where students develop critical thinking skills, are empowered to succeed, and are encouraged to serve their community.

Core Mission

Mason Public Schools will be an exemplary learning community that enables each student to flourish as a responsible citizen in a complex, changing world.

Equity Belief Statement/Educational Equity Definition

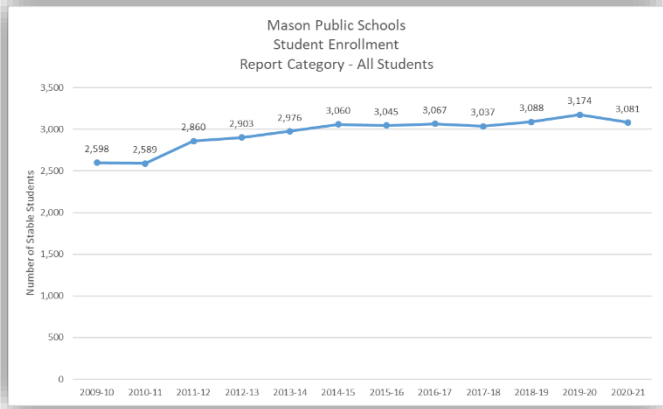
MPS believes that all students can learn and deserve access to an educational experience that understands, appreciates, and responds to the needs of all students. By using a strength-based approach to valuing and integrating the students' lived experiences, we aim to reduce any barriers strategically and intentionally to accessing high-quality education in an environment that is physically, psychologically, and emotionally safe to learn, contribute, and grow.

School Community

Located south of Lansing, Michigan, Mason is a rural, family farm community with over 8,250 residents. As a community, Mason prides itself on its small-town vibe with historic tradition. Over the past decade, Mason has grown in its diversity, welcoming families, and communities from across central Michigan, including contiguous communities such as Holt, Lansing, East Lansing, and Okemos—directly influencing the diversity of the broader community and local school district. It is well-documented that schools are microcosms of society and MPS continues to grow in its representation of diversity with its families, students, and staff.

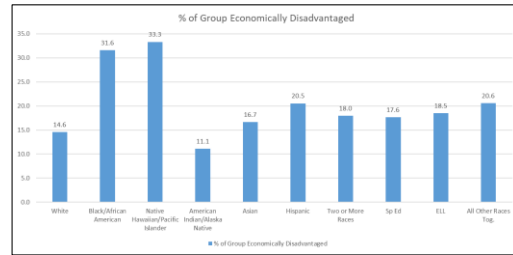
Families and Students





MPS is home to 3,081 students and their families with a stable enrollment over the last decade. MPS invests \$11,927 into each student based on the per-pupil allocation under the State of Michigan—representing the top 10 percentile for student investment across the state. Mason employs approximately 350 staff, most of which are predominately white and female. The district operates one early learning school, three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school.

According to data in 2019, approximately 85% of its students are white, 7% Hispanic, 1% African American and Asian, respectively, and 3% are of two or more races. More than 45 students have English as a second language. Over 29% of Mason students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Just over 10% of students have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), otherwise known as qualifying for Special Education Services. The gender ratio of students is comparable. Approximately 15% of males and females are economically disadvantaged, while 14% of white students are economically disadvantaged compared to minority students with an average of 20%. According to student data, 31% of African American students and 33% of Native Hawaiian students are economically disadvantaged, respectively. Notably, students experiencing economic disadvantage are over-represented in chronic absenteeism, especially students experiencing homelessness (62%).



Teachers and Administrators

MPS has a teaching community of approximately 250 educators and over 95% of teachers are white and with a high percentage of female educators. Teachers tend to remain in MPS with the average tenure of 6 years. Leadership positions of the district are generally white male dominated in both central office and school leadership roles, including sports and other extracurricular activities. Teachers provide MPS students with a teacher-student ratio of 1:20 with an average of 18 years of teaching experience for teachers. Ninety-five percent (95%) remain at Mason between academic years and 99% of the teaching staff are qualified teachers. The average salary for teaching and administrator positions are comparable to the higher paying districts in central Michigan and others across the state.

Student Achievement

Attendance: According to MI School Data, Mason students are highly engaged in their school community by attending school—defined by the district attendance rate. Mason maintains an



overall attendance rate of 93%, with the majority of the student population attending school frequently, while 19% of students are chronically absent (missing over 10 days of school according to the Michigan Department of Education definition). Students identified as economically disadvantaged attend school less frequently with an attendance rate of 88% with 35% of the population chronically absent. Such comparative data highlights an important opportunity to investigate and support the engagement of students who are economically disadvantaged.

Course Proficiency: Mason is considered a high-performing district with 53% of students proficient in course requirements in comparison to the state average of 37%.¹ In general, Mason outperforms the state average across all core subjects, including the graduation rate of its students. Based on a 4-year graduation rate as reported on MI School Data², 93% of students graduate from high school and many attend post-secondary educational opportunities within the first year of graduation. In fact, over the last 7 years, Mason's graduation rate has increased from 88%--an increase of 5%. Furthermore, Mason outperforms its peer districts in MEAP and M-STEP proficiency with 52% of students meeting proficiency in comparison to less than 40% for other districts across the state and similar districts to MPS. Many Mason graduates explore careers that directly impact their local community and families.

The student outcomes, academically and behaviorally, are certainly worth noting. Indeed, it is important to celebrate the district's continued stable enrollment, low transiency rates for both students and staff, the economic stability of the district and the size of the investment in students and staff on average. Based on comparative districts, MPS is a destination district. While these factors are evident, it becomes increasingly important to investigate student and staff opportunities through a lens of diversity and equity. The data is compelling and may be an opportunity for continued growth in *how students are educated, the experience of all students and staff in the school environment, and MPS's investment in preparing students to contribute to a diverse world.*

Advanced Course Enrollment. Student enrollment in advanced courses is 49% to 51% male to female, respectively. Eighty-seven (87%) of students enrolled are white, while 1% are Asian, 6% Hispanic, and 3% African American and two or more races, separately. According to organizational process data, the procedure for applying to advanced courses is variable and inconsistent across course subjects. Teachers and schools independently determine the protocol and standards for enrollment of students into advanced courses, which can often give way to implicit bias and subjectivity. Consequently, this suggests an area of focus to reduce inequities for students.

¹ [2019 Dashboard Home \(mischooldata.org\)](https://www.mischooldata.org)

² [Grad/Dropout Rate \(mischooldata.org\)](https://www.mischooldata.org)



English Language Arts. In ELA, 66% of students are course proficient at the high school in comparison to a state average of 48%. While this is notable, there is an area of growth pertaining to the performance of racial minority students within the Mason Community. For example, on average, just 28-29% of white students are at the bottom thirty percentile in proficiency, while 40% of students qualify as *average* and 30% *above average*. In comparison when factoring in race, 60% of African American students and 22% of Hispanic students are at the bottom thirty percentile of proficiency with less than 20% performing above average. Economically disadvantaged students have similar outcomes with 41% in the bottom thirty percentile and just 14% above average. Additionally, 65% of students with an IEP are in the bottom thirty percentile and just 5% perform above average. Eighty-five (85%) of students experiencing homelessness are below average as well. When comparing gender, female students tend to outperform male students in ELA.

Mathematics. In mathematics, 52% of MPS high school students are course proficient in Mason High School when compared to a state average of 35%. Similar to ELA, white students outperform their ethnic counterparts in math proficiency. On average, just 28% of white students are at the bottom thirty percentile, while 40% of students are average and 31% above average. In comparison, 60% of African American students and 66% of Hispanic students are at the bottom thirty percentile with less than 11% performing above average. Economically disadvantaged students have similar outcomes with 52% in the bottom thirty percentile and just 15% above average. Additionally, 70% of students with an IEP are in the bottom thirty percentile and just 5% perform above average. Eighty-five (85%) and 86% of students experiencing homelessness and English language learners, respectively, are below average. Male and female students perform at the same level of proficiency in mathematics.

College Attendance. Research shows the long-term economic and social benefits of attending college. In fact, students who attend college tend to be more upwardly

School Year	College Type	Enrollment within Months of Graduation	Subgroup	Total H.S. Graduates	Total H.S. Graduates Enrolled in College	% of H.S. Graduates Enrolled in College
2019-20	College Type (All)	within 6 Months	All Students	217	122	56.2%
2018-19	College Type (All)	within 6 Months	All Students	210	144	68.6%
2017-18	College Type (All)	within 6 Months	All Students	225	155	68.9%
2016-17	College Type (All)	within 6 Months	All Students	213	150	70.4%
2015-16	College Type (All)	within 6 Months	All Students	216	148	68.5%
2018-19	College Type (All)	within 12 Months	All Students	210	151	71.9%
2017-18	College Type (All)	within 12 Months	All Students	225	162	72.0%

mobile, socially adept, and more well-rounded. However, college attendance is an area worth

exploring for MPS. According to recent data, the college attendance rate of students is approximately 56% of graduates with 45% of male students attending college compared to 67% of female students. Over the last 7 academic years, there has been a steady decline in college attendance rates for Mason students with an overall decline in attendance of 18%—56% compared to 74% in 2016-17. Moreover, economically disadvantaged students attend college at the rate of 35% while only 23% of students



with disabilities attend college. The college attendance culture of MPS is an area of consideration for focus and attention.

Challenges and Opportunities

Academic: The academic achievement of African-American and Hispanic students is consistently below that of their non-Hispanic white peers, regardless of income. African-American, Latino, and other minority students are underrepresented in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and have inequitable access to those courses. Additionally, minority, low-income, English language learners, and students with an IEP generally underperform in ELA and Mathematics in comparison to their non-Hispanic white peers by percentage. While the overall representation of these diverse populations is low by total student number, when looking at the data using a lens of equity, disparity is present.

Moreover, students' attendance at college and the overall college-going culture are notable. The percentage of students attending post-secondary educational opportunities is on a significant decline. This may represent a belief that college is not valuable or useful for long-term impact on the community, broader society, and as a wealth builder.

Discipline: Twelve percent (12%) of students were suspended in the 2020-21 academic year. This represents a trend of declining exclusion from school over the last three academic years from 86 students in 2018-19 to 68 students in 2019-20. Moreover, in more recent years, expulsion has decreased to zero students in the last year. There is an evident intention to reduce time outside of school for behaviors that violate the code of conduct. However, discipline for infractions considered subjective (i.e., insubordination, disrespect, inappropriate behavior, etc.) is important to review and evaluate. Research shows students with IEPs and minority students are inequitably disciplined for behaviors, especially Black boys. This supports an important investigation in culturally responsive training for teachers and leaders.

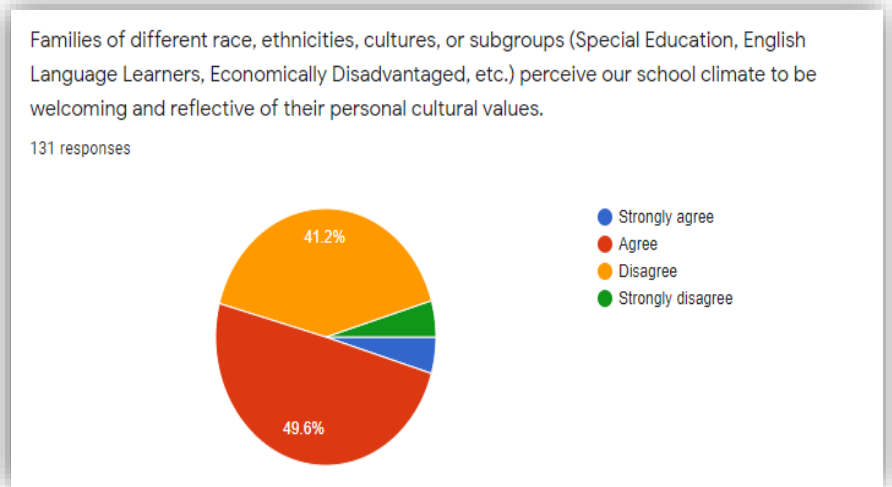
Diversity of Workforce: Currently, over 95% of Mason Public School staff, including teachers, identify as white, while less than 5% of teachers are from minority backgrounds across the district community. Additionally, the economic divide between students of disadvantage and their more privileged counterparts, including teachers who may be middle class and/or live outside the Mason Community, is evident. Furthermore, the racial demographics of the district's teachers and staff does not adequately reflect the racial demographics of students within the district, or in an everchanging community nationally and globally. Together, the economic disparity and the racial difference may lead to a lack of cultural understanding between students, their families, teachers, and staff. This can negatively impact ethnic and economic minority students' sense of belonging in the classroom, especially if intentional work does not occur at the individual, school community, and district levels related to intense



learning on cultural sensitivity, implicit bias, automatic assumptions, culturally responsive pedagogy and social justice.

Culturally Diverse Teaching and Equitable Practice:

During cultural diversity professional learning conducted in 2020-21, teachers expressed their strong interest in additional professional development that would help them more effectively communicate and build stronger relationships with students of economically diverse backgrounds and students of



color, stating these two demographics (race/ethnicity and SES) as the most important areas of focus and growth for the district. Recent survey data (SY2020) suggests over 95% of educators are committed to providing culturally relevant instruction and social justice. However, 47% of teachers believe discussions of equity are missing in professional learning and 49% indicate they are encouraged to think critically about race, diversity, and different related topics as educators. Indeed, over 40% of teachers express *families of different race, ethnicities, cultures, or subgroups (i.e., SE, ELL, economically disadvantaged, or other)* may not perceive the school climate to be welcoming and reflective of their cultural values. This points to an important need to increase student and community voice in the educational experience to better assess the degree to which students and families feel welcomed, especially students and families of diverse backgrounds. Currently, MPS does not regularly assess families through surveys or engagement platforms. This might be an important strategy to develop an action plan for improving in this area.

While most teachers are committed to teaching and supporting all students, especially more diverse populations, many teachers express a need for additional training, resources, and strategies to increase rigor and educational outcomes for all students. Staff also report limited dialogue about race, diversity, and difference among students. Of 131 respondents, 69% of staff suggest students rarely have important conversations about race, diversity, and difference that promotes growth and skill development to contribute to a diverse world. Yet approximately 78% of teachers suggest they have comfort discussing race, difference, and diversity in the



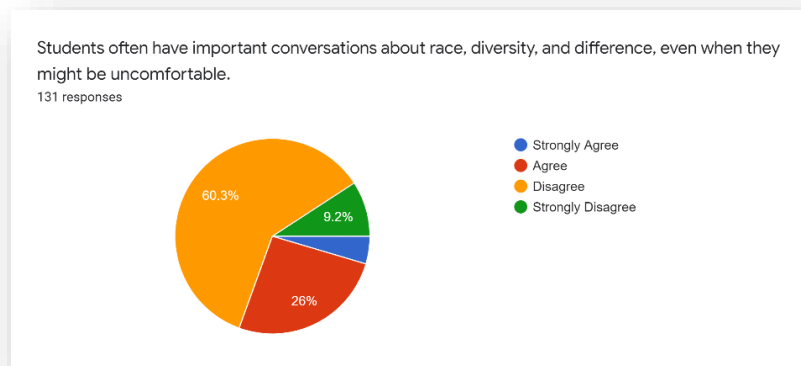
classroom compared to over 33% of teachers who indicate discomfort discussing current events in society that are motivated by difference. This presents a stark contrast in perspective and dissonance between the engagement of critical conversations compared to the comfort level of educators and their preparedness to engage students in learning. Consequently, it is notable that there exists some disparity in outcomes for historically marginalized students and those economically disadvantaged or identified as exceptional learners, especially if critical conversations related to how we teach and support students from diverse backgrounds are absent from the learning experience of students.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity Committee

In 2019, MPS established the DEI Committee—a committee made of school leaders, teachers, community members, and students. The specific goal of this committee was to develop a mission and vision for MPS. Additionally, the committee aims to develop a strategic plan with a focus on several committee categories to improve student learning and experiences and teaching conditions in MPS. The hope is the focus will have a reverberating influence on the larger community of Mason Community to become more aware and intentionally engaged in creating a diverse community. The district implemented the following subcommittees to support the work:

1. Instructional Practice and Curriculum Design
2. Educator Development and Resources
3. Student Experience
4. District Policies, Guidelines, and Practices
5. Community Educational Resources and Communications
6. Membership (Committee)



Mission Statement of the Committee

Through authentic learning opportunities, MPS is committed to an inclusive environment. Our students, staff, and community respectfully acknowledge and value the diverse cultures, lifestyles, experiences, perspectives, and identities of each other.



Foundational Statements

The Board of Education resolution notes that *“As a school district, MPS places strong importance on creating welcoming conditions for teaching and learning for all students and staff, which is inclusive of a respect for backgrounds, identities, and experiences. This year, the Diversity Committee has established a solid foundation for the work of the District including developing a committee mission, goals, norms as well as the 2020-22 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Implementation Plan. This plan illustrates our focus and commitment to developing an inclusive community where everyone feels safe and supported.”*

MPS defines equity as championing the individual cultures, identities, talents, abilities, languages, and interests of each student by ensuring they receive the necessary opportunities and resources to meet their unique needs and aspirations (adapted from the Chicago Public Schools).³ Achieving equity across the district requires attention from every member of our staff, schools, and the Mason Community.

Goals of the Diversity Committee

Goal 1: Create

Create a climate, culture, and learning environment reflective of a commitment to values related to diversity, equity, and inclusion

Goal 2: Increase

Increase readiness and implementation of initiatives focused on the representation of diverse perspectives for students, staff, and stakeholders

Goal 3: Improve

Improve conditions for culturally responsive teaching, learning, and student experiences

Goal 4: Invest

Invest in sustainable and scalable DEI engagement by improving institutional practices across all stakeholder roles and responsibilities

Goal 5: Growth

Increase equitable social-emotional and educational outcomes for all students

Chicago Public Schools (August, 2020). Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Equity Framework: Creating and Sustaining Equity at the Individual, School and District Level, Chicago, IL



Strategic Planning Process

Through the strategic planning process, the Diversity Committee developed the following 2-year plan for the implementation of initiatives. The overall goal is to *increase equitable social-emotional and educational outcomes for all students, so we are STRONGER. SMARTER. SAFER. TOGETHER.* Below are the specific strategies for the 2-year plan, which informs the district strategic plan articulated within each subcommittee (see pg. 8).

Strategic Plan Goals and Intended Outcomes

I. Educator and Community Readiness

Goal: Increase educator and leadership knowledge, readiness and commitment to diversity, equity & inclusion

Intended Outcome: Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

II. Strategic Planning

Goal: Establish goals and objectives to support the Strategic Plan.

Intended Outcome: Increase Readiness and Implementation of Key Initiatives.

III. Conditions for Teaching and Learning

Goal: Improve instructional strategies for educator and student learning on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Intended Outcome: Improve culturally responsive teaching, learning, and student experiences.

IV. District Infrastructure

Goal: Align infrastructure to address issues of equity district-wide

Intended Outcome: Sustainable, scalable DEI engagement

What follows is an overview of each subcommittee’s strategic focus areas and goals toward the intended outcomes. Noted are specific goals, objectives, and activities to move the district closer to the Diversity Committee’s goals. These goals are aligned to the 2-year strategic plan and will inform the District Strategic Plan.





Strategies

Strategic Focus Area	Instructional Practices and Curriculum Design	Educator Development and Resources	Student Experience	District Policies, Guidelines, and Practices	Community Educational Resources and Communications
Goal 1	Improve and expand resources, pedagogical practices, and protocols/processes to support and achieve educational equity.	Empower educators and staff with <u>ongoing professional learning</u> to increase knowledge, comfortability, and skills to acknowledge, discuss, and address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion ⁴	Provide student experiences including learning and expanding student access to diverse materials, cultures, and communities through learning and exposure opportunities	Establish policies and administrative guidelines that reflect a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion	Develop and sustain community engagement with district initiatives focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. ⁵
Goal 2	Align curricula and instructional practices to advance equity and inclusion	Inspire educators to expand knowledge of diverse populations within the school	Increase access to district personnel to address student and family social, emotional, and basic needs		Provide educational opportunities for the community to bring awareness and increased understanding about

⁴ Hammond, Z., & Jackson, Y. (2015). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin.

⁵ Barnes, Melody and Schmitz, Paul (2016) Community Engagement Matters (Now More Than Ever). Stanford Social Innovation Review.



		community through independent learning ⁶			issues of diversity in our region ⁷
Goal 3		Identify areas of educator development needs through regular assessment ⁸			Serve as a community sounding board for providing information and facilitating communication of DEI resources for the community of Mason ⁹
Goal 4		State clear DEI messaging for all current and future Mason employees ¹⁰			

⁶ Tatum, B. D. (2017). *"Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?": And other conversations about race*. Basic Books.

⁷ Ben Cavanaugh (2015) What Works to Reduce Prejudice and Discrimination? A Review of the Evidence. Section 4: Prejudice-Reduction Interventions. www.gov.scot

⁸ Mancinelli, D. (2020). 6 Things to Consider When Planning Professional Development. Edutopia.

⁹ Jackson, K., Burgess, S., Toms, F., Cuthbertson, E. (2018) Community Engagement: Using Feedback Loops to Empower Residents and Influence Systemic CHange in Culturally Diverse Communities. Global Journal of Psychology Practice Vol 9 Issue 2.

¹⁰ Markowitz, N. L., & Bouffard, S. M. (2020). *Teaching with a Social, Emotional, and Cultural Lens: A Framework for Educators and Teacher Educators*. Harvard Education Press.



Instructional Practices and Curriculum Design

All students, staff, and community members will have an increased awareness of issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion and have developed knowledge and comfortability with the topic

	Objective	Activity
Objective 1	Increase resources for educators to supplement learning materials corresponding to content area and grade level ⁱⁱⁱ	Develop a resource platform for educators focused on DEI
Objective 2	Integrate DEI professional developments to support and guide peers through implementation of DEI pedagogical practices to build the capacity of Mason teachers ⁱⁱⁱ	Present at faculty meetings, modeling for peers
Objective 3	Align DEI work to current teaching standards. Connect how curriculum committee members are thinking about and implementing DEI instruction in curriculum ^{iv}	After DEI professional developments provide/offer specific follow up, resources, and support. ^v
Objective 4	Develop protocols/processes for a DEI lens, feedback and revisions of teaching methodologies	Identify supplemental educational materials and reflection tools for educators to engage in self-evaluation and development Develop or invest in equity and diversity focused training modules for newly hired staff
Objective 5	Bring light to equity in systematic processes in instructional practices and curriculum design. For example, in scheduling and curriculums	Identify/design measurement tools for teachers to gauge a change in student understanding and student comfort level for DEI



Educator Development and Resources

Educators feel confident in their ability to instruct, facilitate, and develop knowledge of students related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to ultimately create independent learners

	Objective	Activity
Objective 1	Build capacity in school leaders to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion within their school communities ¹¹	<p>Provide district-led professional learning experiences for educators focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.</p> <p>Require all staff and administrators to annually complete anti-bias, diversity, and educational equity training</p>
Objective 2	Develop regular teacher training and dialogues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion ¹²	<p>Identify and develop a resource hub for educators and staff to learn more about diversity, equity, and inclusion</p> <p>Include a monthly focus on educational equity and student outcomes including a focus on race, economic and educational disparities</p>
Objective 3	Establish an onboarding process for training new hires on diversity, equity, and inclusion ¹³	<p>Develop a DEI terms reference guide</p> <p>Connect DEI learning opportunities to incentives for educators (i.e., additional pay or align to annual evaluation)</p>

¹¹ Hammond, Z., & Jackson, Y. (2015). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin.

¹² Markowitz, N. L., & Bouffard, S. M. (2020). *Teaching with a Social, Emotional, and Cultural Lens: A Framework for Educators and Teacher Educators*. Harvard Education Press.

¹³ Mancinelli, D. (2020). 6 Things to Consider When Planning Professional Development. Edutopia.



Student Experiences

Positive school culture and climate for students and staff

	Objective	Activity
Objective 1	Provide supplemental learning materials for students to expose themselves to other communities (Academic Based)	Utilize a Social Justice or DEI curriculum to provide students opportunities to engage in diverse lessons teaching people from all different races and ethnicities
Objective 2	Implement benchmarking experiences at grade levels to increase awareness and exposure to global communities	Provide educators with curriculum/lessons to teach required age and grade appropriate lessons utilizing key events, vocabulary, and/or people
Objective 3	Create real world engagement opportunities with students from other diverse communities	Supply educators with a list of opportunities for cross-community or cross-cultural engagement opportunities for students to engage
Objective 4	Provide a single point of contact through which students and families can address concerns and needs	Identify and implement a system for receiving parent and student issues and concerns Train a staff member, leadership team, or designee to address student and family concerns and increase student voice
Objective 5	Expand student experiences related to diversity, equity, and inclusion through programming, practices, and policies (Interpersonal or experience-based)	Develop social programs for students to learn about diversity, equity, and inclusion Develop protocols for increasing student voice in the learning environment in policy and practice
Objective 6	Identify district personnel who are available to support student and family needs and concerns related to DEI.	Establish a protocol for accessing the system for students and parents



Policies and Procedures

Protocols, policies, and practices will be reflective of a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion for all students, staff, and community members.

	Objective	Activity
Objective 1	Establish a regular review process for all policies and administrative guidelines on an annual basis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Review and revise existing language in policies, administrative guidelines, and district procedures to reflect the mission and vision of the diversity committee and MPS 2) Recommend policy and administrative guideline adoptions reflective of diversity, equity, and inclusion 3) Include anti bias, anti-discriminatory language in the student handbook to reinforce board policy 4) Develop an <i>Equity Review Process Tool</i> to influence and review all decision-making
Objective 2	Establish hiring and training practices that are institutional and consistently reflective of the type of diverse representation of the student population by percentage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Include a commitment statement and requirement in all hiring materials for district positions 2) Recruit and retain a diverse work force, especially teachers and administrators 3) Develop a talent pipeline for teachers and leaders of color for leadership positions 4) Include questions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in interview questions
Objective 3	Establish programs to recruit, retain, and support educators of minority communities	Include interview questions for prospective staff related to their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
Objective 4	Develop protocols and programs to develop and train future leaders of diverse backgrounds	



Community Educational Resources and Communications

Diversity and understanding will be celebrated within our community and seen as a strength and natural way for our community to engage in a global society, and Mason Community members will have a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion where our community will be appreciative and celebratory of all diverse communities, perspectives, religious beliefs, ethnicities, and identities.

	Objective	Activity
Objective 1	Establish partnerships with local government, businesses, and volunteer organizations to promote DEI education.	Establish and promote learning opportunities (speakers, performers, festivals, etc.) that would coincide with other community events or business happenings focused on celebrating diversity in students and families.
Objective 2	Develop regular communication strategies and tactics for internal and external updates to increase awareness, sustain momentum, and share ideas	Provide the district with diverse resources to share on social media and the district website as well as monthly communications from building administrators with all MPS families.
Objective 3	Provide parent voice opportunities	Develop a Parent Survey to identify baseline knowledge and interest in diversity, equity and inclusion as well as to share concerns.
Objective 4	Provide student voice opportunities ¹⁴	Assist the Student Experiences sub-committee in the development of a student club at the high school to facilitate learning, strengthening, leadership and voicing opportunities. Provide ongoing support and coordinate community learning and service opportunities. ¹⁵
Objective 5	Develop regular community conversations related to diversity, equity and inclusion.	Establish quarterly “Mason Moves Forward” conversations related to diversity, equity and inclusion and family engagement.

ⁱ <https://www.edutopia.org/article/preparing-staff-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-initiatives>

¹⁴ Shafer, Leah (2016) Giving Students a Voice. Harvard Graduate School of Education.

¹⁵ National Federation of State High School Associations (2015) The Case for High School Activities. www.nfhs.org



ii <https://www.learningforjustice.org/professional-development>

iii <https://www.edutopia.org/article/9-ways-promote-equity-our-schools>

iv https://provost.wayne.edu/pdf/dei_rubric_20190409.pdf

v <https://www.common sense.org/education/top-picks/diversity-equity-and-inclusivity-resources-for-classrooms>



Definition of Terms

Educational Equity—Educational equity is a K-12 term referring to federal and state policies and requirements. Specifically, the term is closely associated with "No Child Left Behind" legislation led by former President George W. Bush and signed into law in 2002. This watershed moment in U.S. education policy established clear requirements for school districts to disaggregate achievement data by student groups to address and close achievement gaps.

In recent years, the terms equity work or diversity, equity and inclusion have become commonplace in K12 education, as many districts revisit and renew their local efforts to close achievement gaps as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act. When signed into law in 2015, ESSA further advanced equity by upholding protections outlined in NCLB.

Simply put, pursuing educational equity is being intentional about identifying issues that are preventing students from fully engaging in their education and then providing targeted solutions or resources to address them. It is not a one-time program or event, but an educational framework of operating that requires ongoing evaluation of data and delivery adjustment.

Approaches to educational equity will be different in every district, but the goal is the same—excellent outcomes for all students.

Diversity—Describes the differences within a given setting, collective or group based on multiple factors, including race and ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability status, age, educational status, religion, geography, primary language, culture, and other characteristics and experiences.

Equity—Includes developing, strengthening and supporting procedural and outcome fairness in systems, procedures and resource distribution mechanisms to create equitable opportunities for all individuals, and also includes eliminating barriers that prevent the full participation of individuals and groups.

Students come to our schools from various backgrounds, with different strengths and at varying degrees of readiness. What works for one student or in one school may not work for another. Indeed, because of the vast diversity within Michigan, what works for one district may not work for another. That is why local control of education is critically important.

Inclusion—Describes intentional efforts and consistent sets of actions to create and sustain a sense of respect, belonging, safety and attention to individual needs and identities that ensure full access to engagement and participation in available activities and opportunities. When inclusion occurs for all identities, then assimilative processes are negated.

Social-Emotional Learning—A comprehensive systems approach that supports children, youth and adults in developing skills for school and life. SEL reaches beyond the classroom to all aspects of life. The five SEL competencies identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, Emotional Learning teach the skills we need to successfully manage life tasks such as learning, developing relationships, solving everyday problems and operating in the workplace.



Cultural Competence—Includes knowledge of student cultural histories and contexts, as well as family norms and values in different cultures; knowledge and skills in accessing community resources and community and parent outreach; and skills in adapting instruction to students' experiences and identifying cultural contexts for individual students. Culturally Competent education leaders have a mindset and behaviors that enable them to foster policies and practices that provide the opportunity to effectively engage with and serve diverse students, educators and community members.

Critical Race Theory—A framework and analytical tool primarily and historically used in university-level courses. Originating in the 1970s, CRT was first used to help law students think critically about the impact of historical and present-day racism in the legal system. In the 1990s, some colleges of education also started incorporating CRT into their coursework to help aspiring school administrators and teachers better understand inequities in the context of education.

CRT and educational equity are not the same and shouldn't be used interchangeably. The term "Critical Race Theory" is being inaccurately used by some to encompass a wide range of topics, including educational equity, social-emotional learning, cultural awareness and restorative practices. It is also being used to describe discussions of racism in classroom instruction.

CRT is not being taught at Mason Public Schools.

Trauma-Informed Schools—Educators have a legal and moral responsibility to provide equitable educational opportunities for all students. This requires access to a school environment equipped for safe and stimulating learning opportunities, resources for social and emotional growth, and excellent educators who are able to support students in getting and remaining on track to graduate from high school ready for college or careers. With high rates of trauma in our schools and communities, if it is not addressed in our schools, it can become a barrier to students. Trauma-informed school practices and strategies use strengths already present in our students and families to encourage lifelong learning and success.

School Climate—The experience you have when you are in a school—that feeling you have—safe or unsafe, connected or isolated, the way you know if the school is welcoming for you and your family. Feeling safe, connected and welcomed starts with relationships that extend well beyond the brick and mortar of a school building and include our connections, partnerships and the conditions for learning. Measuring and strengthening school climate, in person or virtually, can impact students' academic, social, behavioral and physical outcomes.

***Terms and definitions supported and approved by the following organizations



Michigan Association of Superintendents & Administrators





Resources

1. <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources>
2. <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/a-new-contract-with-the-middle-class-introduction/>
3. [https://www.nameorg.org/learn/relevant in an all-white schoo.php](https://www.nameorg.org/learn/relevant_in_an_all-white_schoo.php)
4. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/03/should-black-lives-matter-agenda-be-taught-school/618277/>