

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The district shall provide equal and bias-free access for all pupils to all school facilities, courses, programs, activities and services and give them maximum opportunity to achieve their potential regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, affectional or sexual orientation, marital status, liability for service in the Armed Forces of the United States, nationality, place of residence within the district, socioeconomic status, or disability. Enforcement of other district affirmative action/equity policies (2224,4111.1,4211.1 and 6121 continue to this legally required equality of educational opportunity.

Staff members shall maintain professional relationships with pupils at all times and develop wholesome and constructive relationships with them. Staff members shall be expected to regard each pupil as an individual and to accord each pupil the rights and respect that are his/her due.

Staff members shall promote a learning environment that encourages fulfillment of each pupil's potential in regard to his/her program, consistent with district goals and with optimal opportunities for pupils. This goal may be reached by adapting instruction to individual needs, by:

- A. Insisting on reasonable standards of scholastic accomplishment for all pupils;
- B. Creating a positive atmosphere in and out of the classroom;
- C. Extending the same courtesy and respect that is expected of pupils;
- D. Treating all pupils with consistent fairness.

The board of education guarantees all pupils equal access to all academic programs within the learning environment.

Pupils shall respect the rights of other pupils to receive an education in an environment that is conducive to learning and personal growth. No pupil shall have the right to abridge another pupil's right to privacy or right to hold personal beliefs which are different from those of the mainstream.

The district's affirmative action program is part of each academic program regarding all pupils. No one including pupils, staff members, vendors, volunteers, or visitor-shall commit an act of harassment/discriminations of any kind against any member of the school community on any of the grounds prohibited by law.

Harassment is defined as any gesture that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by an actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender identify and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic; that will have the effect (actual or perceived) of harming a student or damaging the student's property. Harassment also includes any gesture that demeans or insults a student or group of students in such a way to cause substantial disruption in or interference with the orderly operation of the school.

Harassment may be claimed by a third party. That is, individuals who are not directly involved in the behavior may experience a hostile environment. They shall have the same legal rights to act under this policy as those directly victimized.

Any member of the student body may file a formal grievance related to harassment. The affirmative action officer will receive all complaints and initiate a thorough investigation and will protect

the rights of both the pupil making the complaint and the alleged harasser. Filing of a grievance or otherwise reporting harassment of any kind will not reflect upon the pupil's status nor affect future grades or class assignments.

The administration will inform all pupils that sexual harassment is prohibited in the educational setting. Specifically, no person employed by the district or by a vendor, or acting in voluntary capacity, shall threaten to insinuate, either directly or indirectly, that pupil's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the pupils standing in the school setting. Pupils are forbidden to harass other pupils or staff members or vendors or volunteers through conduct communications of a sexual nature within the school setting.

Findings of discrimination in the form of harassment will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Equity in School

The board of education shall maintain an academic environment that is free from harassment and provide equal and bias free access for all students to all school facilities, courses, programs activities and services, regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, religion, disability or socioeconomic status. The board shall ensure that:

- A. Barrier free access for students
- B. The district curriculum will be aligned with the State's Core Curriculum Content Standards and address the elimination of discrimination by narrowing the achievement gap"

- C. All students have access to counseling services;
- D. Physical education program is equitable and co-Educational.
- E. Attention will be directed at attaining minority representation within each school that approximates the district's overall minority representation;

Procedures shall be made available for pupils and/or parents/guardians who wish to file a grievance protesting alleged discriminatory or sexually (or other) harassing action. An immediate report of the allegation should be made to the affirmative action officer or chief administrator. Violations of this policy or its related procedures shall be cause for appropriate disciplinary action.

Hate Crimes/Bias Incidents

An employee of the board who becomes aware in the course of his/her employment that a student or other staff person has committed a hate crime or is about to commit one shall immediately inform the building principal and chief school administrator. All incidents of hate/bias shall be reported whether they occur during school hours on school grounds or otherwise.

Implementation

The chief school administrator shall direct development of procedures regarding the implementation of this policy to include sanctions, protection of individual rights to confidentiality and due process, and notification procedures. The chief school administrator shall ensure that, annually, all staff and all pupils (in means and terms that are age-appropriate) be thoroughly

informed of this policy their right to file grievances under this policy and the law and the procedures relative to filing. Further, all staff and pupils shall be informed annually of the identify of the district's affirmative action officer and how he/she may be contacted.

The chief school administrator shall also ensure that staff and pupils participate in educational programs relating to this policy and the maintenance of a safe and nurturing educational environment.

The chief school administrator shall use all customary methods of information dissemination to ensure that the community is informed of its policies on educational equity.

Date:

Revised: January 12,1995

Revised: March 13,1995

Revised: May 16,2007

Legal References:

<u>N.J.S.A. 2C:16-1</u>	Bias Intimidation
<u>N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.</u>	Law Against Discrimination
<u>N.J.S.A. 18A:36-20</u>	Discrimination; prohibition
<u>N.J.S.A. 18A:38-5.1</u>	No child to be excluded from school because of race, etc.
<u>N.J.A.C. 6A:7-1.1 et seq.</u>	Managing for Equality and Equity in Education

See particularly:

N.J.A.C. 6A:7-1.4,-1.7

N.J.A.C. 6A:16-6.3(e) Reporting students or staff members to law enforcement Authorities

N.J.A.C. 6a:17-1.1 et seq. Students At-Risk of Not Receiving a Public Education

N.J.A.C. 6A:30-1.1 et seq. Evaluation of the Performance of
School Districts
N.J.A.C. 6A:32-12.1 Reporting requirements
N.J.A.C. 6A:32-14.1 Review of mandated programs and
Services

Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education, 526 U.S. 629(1999)

State v. Mortimer, 135 N.J. 517 (1994)

20 U.S.C.A. 1681-Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

20 U.S.C.A. 794 et seq.- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of
1973

20 U.S.C.A. 1400 et seq.- Individuals with Disabilities Education
Act (formerly Education for All
Handicapped Children Act)—Part B

42 U.S.C.A. 12101 et seq.-Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement
Amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-297)

Saxe v. State College Area School Dist., 240 F.3d 200 (3d Cir.2001)

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub.L.107-110,20 U.S.C.A.
6301 et seq.

L.W v. Toms River Regional Schools Board of Education, N.J.,
No. A-111-05 (Feb. 22,2007), 2007 N.J. LEXIS 184. The New
Jersey Supreme Court ruled that school district may be held
liable under the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD),
N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 to -49, when students harass another student

because of his perceived sexual orientation. A district school will be liable for such harassment if it knew or should have known of the harassment if it knew or should have known of the harassment but failed to take reasonable remedial actions. The matter was remanded to the Director of the Division of Civil Rights.

Manual for the Evaluation of Local School Districts

Comprehensive Equity Plan, New Jersey State Department of Education

Possible Cross

<u>References:</u>	* 2224	Nondiscrimination/affirmative action
	*4111.1	Nondiscrimination/affirmative action
	*4211.1	Nondiscrimination/affirmative action
	*5134	Married/pregnant pupils
	*6121	Nondiscrimination/affirmative action
	*6141	Curriculum design/development
	*6161.1	Guidelines for evaluation and selection of instructional materials
	*6171.4	Special education

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.