<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History of SSD and Equity</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Summer 2020</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Big Picture and Ultimate Goal</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity Statement</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why, What &amp; How</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Essential Questions and the Indicators of Success</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guiding Principles and Action Plans</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies, Guidelines, and Operating Practices</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusivity of Members in School Communities</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum, Learning Materials, and School Practices</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias-Free Student Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equitable Student Programming and Placement</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equitable Support Services</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equitable Professional Learning</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A - Glossary</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HISTORY OF SSD AND EQUITY

Summary of Documents

- SSD Blueprint for Equity—2018
- The Kachris Report—2016
- Special School District of St. Louis County Equity Study—2014

SSD Blueprint for Equity—2018

Initial work on equity began with a Board subcommittee, which later expanded to a task force with a wider range of stakeholders. After identifying several areas of concern, the task force requested the assistance of a consulting firm with educational expertise to provide an unbiased approach to defining and collecting data, and to suggest further action.

The District has developed eight objectives related to equity—four regarding equitable staffing levels and four dealing with equitable access to quality services. The purpose of all the objectives is to improve what we do as a District to support the needs of our students.

To view the report, please see full report on Equity page of SSD Life (https://www.ssdmo.org/equityblueprint).

The Kachris Report—2016

The Kachris Report was written when it was identified that SSD’s long-term goals about equity needed to be embedded into the culture, thus necessitating developing an awareness that focuses specifically at the point of service delivery. The Kachris Report offered recommendations including adopting a formal definition of equity, articulating the Board’s policy, clarifying the role and function of the Area Coordinator, and recognizing the shortcomings of past agreements.

To view the report, please send requests to the SSD Superintendent’s Office.

Special School District of St. Louis County Equity Study—2014

In early 2014, St. Louis-based BAFC Consulting was selected to complete the SSD Equity Study. Over the course of many months, the firm’s team of education experts worked closely with SSD administrators to ensure that the Board of Education had an accurate and comprehensive overview of the district’s operations, viewed through the lens of equity. For the purposes of this study, BAFC Consulting focused its attention on four broad categories:

- Teacher preparation and quality
- Special Education and related services
- Career and technical education
- Equity on contracting and purchasing

To view the report, please see the full report on Equity page of SSD Life (https://www.ssdmo.org/equitystudy).
IN SUMMER 2020

SSD established the position of Director of Equity to work hand-in-hand with all instructional, administrative, and operational staff in the district to ensure high-quality educational opportunities and achieve equity for all students.

The primary goal of this framework is to focus our practices of equity throughout our district, to identify and address the individualized approaches needed for student success.
A system that is equitable is one in which we embrace and value the individual and acknowledge the differences that make them unique. An equitable system provides the structures, environment, and resources each person needs to realize their greatest potential. By providing equitable opportunities and creating equitable environments, we continue to positively transform the climate and culture for all district stakeholders. Ultimately, this system allows for the long-term impact of educating globally skilled and engaged citizens and creating a more just world.
SSD EQUITY STATEMENT

Educational Equity exists when EACH STUDENT has opportunity and access to resources that focus on positive learning outcomes. This is achieved through an intentional focus on purposeful engagement, rigorous and individualized instruction, and relevant experiences.

EQUITY LENS FOR SSD
WHY, WHAT, & HOW

WHY?
Every student deserves access to a high-quality education and post-secondary outcomes, particularly those from historically underrepresented, underserved, and marginalized groups. Students excel through purposeful engagement, rigorous and individualized instruction, and relevant educational experiences. Historically underrepresented, underserved, and marginalized groups include but are not limited to LGBTQIA, people who are homeless, people with disabilities, people with mental illness, religious affiliation, girls/women, racial/cultural minorities, senior citizens, military veterans, felons.

WHAT?
The Equity Framework is designed to establish a foundation for, and commitment to, ensuring equity within Special School District. The framework further provides resources to guide and aid school leaders and educators toward initiating change and maintaining equitable solutions within their school-specific communities. SSD recognizes the importance of partnerships and operational work in supporting these outcomes.

HOW?
The Equity Framework provides shared language, tools, and accountability of what equity means in SSD; the guidelines that will support embedding equity in our work, and the foundation for understanding and building a district-wide equitable environment.
The SSD Equity Framework holds three essential questions at its core:

- Why do different groups experience varying outcomes of achievement and educational experiences?
- How does each intricate aspect of the organization systematically ensure high-quality equitable programming for each and all?
- How can we provide transparent and consistent metrics that empower staff and district leaders to make decisions, comparisons, and monitor the impact of equity?

Indicators of progress and success for equity:

- Past and current inequities are acknowledged, while providing district members and partners the infrastructure to grow in equitable practices.
- Individuals from groups that have been historically marginalized and underrepresented are part of the decision-making processes.
- Whole child development will be enhanced, including thinking, engagement, and self-regulation.
- The academic achievement gap between groups will decrease.
- Academic achievement will increase for all groups, particularly historically marginalized and underrepresented.
- Benefits are recognized through transparency by all when ensuring a more equitable system.
- Resources are prioritized based on the greatest needs of schools and of student groups in schools in order to eliminate the
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This section provides the principles and action plans that will guide and support the application of equity and inclusion within all aspects of the district. To guide the progress of equity, SSD identified the eight principles below to incorporate into their work.

Each Guiding Principle has an introduction, followed by questions used to sharpen and focus our work while deepening our thinking about diversity, equity, and inclusion. Guiding principles are selected based on their relationship to the division, department, study, project, or need. The action plans will be implemented, reviewed, and revised frequently to reflect our progress and to continue to go deeper into the work of equity and inclusion.

GOAL OF EQUITY WORK: SSD will implement research-based strategies to ensure equity practices in all aspects of the district as measured by the ongoing application of the equity action plans and timelines within.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Special School District:

- is committed to ensuring equity in all policies, processes, procedures, and operating practices.
- is committed to providing leadership, at all levels, which fosters an equitable environment.
- will recognize, intentionally recruit, and engage all members of school communities in order to maintain and embody equitable education practices, and outcomes.
- will advocate for curriculum, learning materials, and school practices that reflects and include the principles of equity.
- will provide appropriate and bias-free assessment, evaluation, and reporting to equitably meet the educational needs and to maximize the learning potential of all students.
- will provide equitable programming (for) and placement (of) its students across the county.
- will provide equitable counseling, related services, and support services that reflect the principles of equity.
- will provide professional learning, resources, and follow-up (high-quality professional learning feedback evaluation) for all district personnel.
Policies, Guidelines, and Operating Practices

Special School District is committed to ensuring equity in all policies, guidelines, and operating practices.

Policies, Guidelines, and Operating Practices are areas where inequities can often be found. Since policies, guidelines, and operating practices steer the work of the district, we must ensure that these foundational, systematic documents are examined through a lens of equity. Special School District of Saint Louis County’s Policies, Guidelines, and Operating Practices will be reviewed by the Director of Equity, who will identify policy recommendations that can support equity in all aspects of planning at local, state, and federal levels. This guide provides some specific, actionable guidance through an equity lens on cross-cutting topics and planning areas. Employment-related decisions, including access to career development, progression, and promotion, consider the quality and impact of the individual’s achievements relative to the opportunities available to them and the effect personal circumstances may have had on those achievements.

While good organizations must have equitable policies, policies alone will not make equitable organizations. The gold standard for an equitable organization lies in the individual’s experience. Therefore, we must look beyond policy to the realms of guidelines (processes and procedures) and how these policies and guidelines are carried out (operating practices) into the individuals’ interactions to determine whether our organization is equitable. This action plan helps us move through each aspect of the policy as we strive to create a more equitable organization, and more importantly, a more equitable experience for those we serve.

Questions to consider:

- What are the concerns for fair treatment and inclusiveness related to this policy issue, guideline, or operating practice? (e.g., accessibility, affordability, safety, culture, gender identity, etc.).

- Are the groups most affected by the policy, guideline, or operating practice consulted from the early stages of the policy development? Who else is impacted by this policy, guideline, or operating practice and have we invited them to be part of this policy development process?

- What human and financial resources are required to address issues related to fairness and inclusion in the implementation of this policy, guideline, or operating practice?
• What are potential unintended consequences in the implementation of this policy/guideline/practice? How do we adjust or monitor for these consequences?

• Are there policies, procedures, practices, and/or attitudes that unintentionally prevent some people from fully engaging in our work, processes, and planning? (e.g., schedule conflicts with religious holidays or family responsibilities; workload distribution) What alternatives are possible?

• When we communicate the policy, guideline, or practice, do we reach the full diversity of people impacted by it? Are all board members, leaders, staff, students, and community members aware of policies, guideline, and operating practices that affect them?
  o What communication strategies ensure all groups are heard and reached, especially historically excluded ones? What populations will be missed by only using certain methods of communication?
  o How do the messages we are communicating foster inclusion, respect, and fairness?
  o Are the messages we communicate and the images we use inclusive, respectful, truthful, culturally accessible, and impartial across all audiences?
  o Are policies, guidelines, or operating practices evenly communicated across all staff, students, families, etc.? If not, why not?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>District/School Level</th>
<th>Collective Actions</th>
<th>Stage of Implementation</th>
<th>Implementation Timeframe</th>
<th>Champion</th>
<th>Resources Needed</th>
<th>CSIP Goal Alignment</th>
<th>Measurement/Metric</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special School District is committed to ensuring equity in all policies, processes, procedures, and operating practices.</td>
<td>District Systemic Issues</td>
<td>Equity review of policies and regulations by Dir of Equity. Comments from review forwarded to representatives from the Policy Review Committee. Review new and revised policies as they are brought to the policy committee. Review department processes and procedures for equity. Annual department self-assessment on how well they are implementing processes and procedures in practice.</td>
<td>Planning/Implementation</td>
<td>Fall 2020 – Sept 1, 2021</td>
<td>Dir. of Equity; Chief Human Resource Officer; Policy Review Committee; Department Leaders</td>
<td>Copies of all policies and regulations; Policy Review Committee subgroup; Time</td>
<td>Goal 1: Student Performance 1.3; Goal 2: Workforce Excellence 2.2; Goal 3: Engagement 3.2; Goal 4: Equity 4.1</td>
<td>BOE has reviewed recommended changes from Policy Review Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Sum 2021 → on-going</td>
<td>Department Leaders; Dir. of Equity</td>
<td>Copies of policies and regulations</td>
<td></td>
<td>BOE has reviewed recommended changes from Policy Review Committee</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Spr 2023 - May 30, 2024</td>
<td>Department Leaders; Dir. of Equity</td>
<td>Written copies of department processes and procedures; Clerical support; Time</td>
<td>Goal 2: Workforce Excellence 2.2; Goal 3: Engagement 3.2; Goal 4: Equity 4.1</td>
<td>Revised department processes and procedures</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spr 2024 → on-going</td>
<td>Department Leaders; Dir. of Equity</td>
<td>Written copies of revised department processes and procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Assessment documentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Policies, Guidelines, and Operating Practices
### Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>District/School Level</th>
<th>Collective Actions</th>
<th>Stage of Implementation</th>
<th>Implementation Timeframe</th>
<th>Champion</th>
<th>Resources Needed</th>
<th>CSIP Goal Alignment</th>
<th>Measurement/Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special School District is committed to ensuring equity in all policies, processes, procedures, and operating practices.</td>
<td>Direct Student Impact Level Within School Issues</td>
<td>Complete a school-level equity review of SSD school processes and procedures.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Fall 2024 – July 1, 2025</td>
<td>School leaders; Principals; Equity Teams; Dir. of Equity</td>
<td>School leaders; Principals; Equity Teams; Dir. of Equity</td>
<td>Goal 1 Student Performance 1.3; Goal 2 Workforce Excellence 2.2; Goal 4 Equity 4.1</td>
<td>Revised procedures and processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete a school-level equity review of SSD school handbooks.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Fall 2023 – July 1, 2024</td>
<td>School leaders; Principals; Equity Teams; Dir. of Equity</td>
<td>School handbooks</td>
<td>Goal 1 Student Performance 1.3; Goal 2 Workforce Excellence 2.2; Goal 3 Engagement 3.2; Goal 4 Equity 4.1</td>
<td>Revised handbooks</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Leadership

Special School District is committed to providing leadership at all levels, which fosters an equitable environment.

Generally, the term leadership immediately suggests who is at the top of the hierarchical ladder. Education has long recognized the limitation of this definition. They see the potential for leadership among all of us and believe that each may be a leader when needed in the situation. So, what is a leader? George Couros’s, author of Innovate Inside the Box, describes an operational definition of leadership to which all associated with education can aspire. In his blog, he describes a leader that inspired him. (Couros, 2021) He states, "She showed me the importance of tapping into someone’s strengths and bringing out more in someone than they believed they could bring out in themselves. I am forever grateful for her guidance and think about her leadership often and hope that I provide just a portion for others through my work, in what she did for me." This definition requires one to help others use their strengths to be more than they thought they could be. Without equity, this type of leadership will not happen. For that reason, leadership and equity must occur at every level of our organization, from the boardroom to the classroom. This action plan interweaves professional development for equity with all members of the organization to become more systemic by growing a leadership cadre with similar goals and language.

The questions for this principle can be used at all levels, from the classroom to the boardroom.

Questions to consider:

- What steps do we take to create a respectful and inclusive environment?
- How can we actively gather input and ideas from diverse perspectives?
- How can we encourage staff to contribute positively toward creating an inclusive and fair workplace?
- What support systems do we use for individuals who have been harassed, treated disrespectfully, or discriminated against by peers, supervisors, or other stakeholders?
- How aware are students, staff, schools, etc., of our commitments to equity and inclusion? How do we ensure that staff is equally informed about how it looks in practice?
## Leadership Action Plan

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<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>District / School Level</th>
<th>Collective Actions</th>
<th>Stage of Implementation</th>
<th>Implementation Timeframe</th>
<th>Champion</th>
<th>Resources Needed</th>
<th>CSIP Goal Alignment</th>
<th>Measurement / Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special School District is committed to providing leadership at all levels, which fosters an equitable environment.</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Continue to develop the school equity team's capacity at each site to support equity efforts at the site level.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Spr 2021 → on-going</td>
<td>School Admin.; School Equity Teams; Dir. of Equity</td>
<td>Training materials; Training opportunities; Clerical support</td>
<td>Goal 1 Student Performance 1.3; Goal 2 Workforce Excellence; Goal 4 Equity 4.1</td>
<td>Equity Quality indicators with action plans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Inclusivity of Members in School Communities**

Special School District will recognize, intentionally recruit, and engage all members of school communities in order to maintain and embody equitable education practices, and outcomes.

Diversity and inclusion are frequently thought of as the same thing, and many organizations stop equity work with diversity efforts. Diversity is important because it gets people with different traits to the "same table," bringing a slightly different perspective based on their diverse characteristics. However, when efforts stop at this point, the diverse group's wealth of resources has been siloed to a few more vocal participants. Inclusion focuses not on the differences among the people but the involvement of people with differences, each contributing to the wealth of information and ideas from multiple perspectives. Inclusion refers to the behavior and social norms that ensure all people feel welcome, respected, and valued for the differences they bring and share. When inclusion happens, we move from a 2-D experience of diversity to a 3-D experience of inclusivity, and together we can be architects of more successful outcomes for our students.

This principle directly aligns with our work with community partnerships, voice of customer, family engagement, and partnerships with partner districts.

**Questions to consider:**

What approaches and outreach will help ensure that those who need to be engaged can participate fully? How can we create opportunities for people least likely to be heard to ensure they share their specific concerns?

Is our group representative of the diversity of the population we are engaging? What steps can we take to ensure we are inclusive of a variety of perspectives?

Is the language we use in our materials and communications easily understood by the diverse audiences for which it is intended?

What steps can we take to remove barriers to our presence where the community gathers for full participation (e.g., dependent care, transportation, safety, language, accessible location, time, multiple formats, avoid religious and cultural holidays, culturally appropriate)?
• Is the environment welcoming to participants who may be reluctant to share their views? If not, what can we do to change this? Does the pace, format, and language of the engagement accommodate everyone, including participants who are least likely to speak up or for whom the information may be new?

• Is there a need for diversity, equity, or inclusion training for groups to work well together and respectful of their differences?

• Are the insights from groups who face systemic barriers and historical unfairness reflected in reports and final products?

• How will we demonstrate accountability and commit to reporting back the findings to the full diversity of people involved in the engagement activity?
# Inclusivity of Members in School Communities

## Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>District/School Level</th>
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<th>Implementation Timeframe</th>
<th>Champion</th>
<th>Resources Needed</th>
<th>CSIP Goal Alignment</th>
<th>Measurement / Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special School District will recognize, intentionally recruit, and engage all members of school communities in order to maintain and embody equitable education practices, and outcomes.</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Collaborate on equity strategies to recruit and retain more diverse staff.</td>
<td>Implementing</td>
<td>Fall 2022 – Sept 1, 2023</td>
<td>Chief HR Officer; Dir. of HR; Dir. of Equity</td>
<td>Strategies from research for recruiting and retaining staff</td>
<td>Goal 1: Student Performance 1.3; Goal 2: Workforce Excellence 2.1 &amp; 2.2; Goal 4: Equity 4.1</td>
<td>Increase of 2% by job type in diversity among staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborate on equity strategies to include more diverse communities and families in decision-making activities.</td>
<td>Implementing</td>
<td>Spr 2021 → ongoing</td>
<td>Family Engagement; Instructional Administrators; PEDA; District Leadership Team; Dir. of Equity</td>
<td>Strategies for engagement; Opportunities for decision making activities</td>
<td>Goal 1: Student Performance 1.3; Goal 3: Engagement; Goal 4: Equity 4.1</td>
<td>Number of community and family members on decision-making committees</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Curriculum, Learning Materials, and School Practices

Special School District will advocate for curriculum, learning materials, and school practices that reflect and include the principles of equity.

Research has shown that many school-based events and materials shape the learner by communicating messages that are not intended and of which the educator may not even be aware. Using research regarding the types of unintended messages students are often receiving in their work will help educators note those messages more easily and make wiser decisions on curriculum, learning materials, and school practices. Thus, allowing educators to be more aware of unintended messages and ways to modify or adapt them. This principle's action plan prepares educators to make long-term decisions related to curriculum, learning materials, and school practices while sharpening their "eye" for unintended messages.

Questions to consider:

- Are curriculum, the learning materials, and the school practices inclusive, respectful, truthful, objective, and impartial across diverse audiences? How do we know?

- How do the messages we are communicating through the curriculum, learning materials, and school practices foster inclusion, respect, and fairness?

- What curriculum review tools are available and used across the district? Do they include opportunities for considering representation, multiple representations, inclusiveness, the language of inclusiveness, accessibility, adaptability, accommodations, and student interest?

- Is the language used in the curriculum, materials, and classroom, bias-free and culturally respectful? Are there concepts or terms that may be culturally specific and need to be changed to make them more accessible?

- Do images represent the full diversity of the learning community?

- Do images capture the diversity within the specific group with whom they will be used?

- Will the people portrayed in the images relate to and feel included in the way they are represented?
### Curriculum, Learning Materials, and School Practices

#### Action Plan

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<tr>
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<th>Resources Needed</th>
<th>CSIP Goal Alignment</th>
<th>Measurement/Metric</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special School District is committed to providing leadership at all levels, which fosters an equitable environment.</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Review and assess existing curriculum for bias-free, culturally relevant concepts and content.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Fall 2023 – Aug 1, 2024</td>
<td>Curriculum coordinators; Dir. of Equity</td>
<td>Copies of the curriculum; Time for review; Clerical support</td>
<td>Goal 1: Student Performance; Goal 4: Equity 4.1</td>
<td>Review process completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review and assess existing curriculum for the variety of methods and measures by which students can demonstrate knowledge, skills, and learning.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Fall 2024 – June 30, 2025</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review process completed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Special School District will provide appropriate and bias-free assessment, evaluation, and reporting to equitably meet the educational needs and to maximize the learning potential of all students.

Special School District of St. Louis has the responsibility and honor of helping individuals with disabilities receive the support they specifically need. This process begins with the area of evaluation in which measures, including rating scales, achievement assessments, a measure of I.Q., and observations, are used to determine the strengths of the individual, the areas of need, and the amount of need. Because of the desire to provide the most strategic support possible, the assessments must be the best ones for learning about each child. Different assessments and modes of assessment have different strengths and weaknesses. The examiner must know the assessments and their strengths and weaknesses to match the assessment to the child. The greater the match, the greater the likelihood that the data provided will accurately reflect the child and his/her capabilities and needs. The action plan for this principle focuses on an in-depth analysis of the assessment tools and protocols. It uses an outcomes-based inquiry process to determine bias trends that need to be addressed. The work of the school psychologists in their investigation of inequities in diagnosis aligns with this principle. Future studies of data and/or file review will help us investigate other trends in bias.

Questions to consider:

- Do we consider fair-mindedness, reasonableness, and objectivity in our assessment measures? What checks and balances do we have in place to counter unconscious or undisclosed prejudices in assessment?

- Are the assessment tools that are being used designed for the population being assessed? What groups were in the norming population? What are the known limitations of the instrument? What alternative more closely matches the unique characteristics of the individual being assessed? (i.e., Are we using the best assessment currently for this specific child?)

- What multiple assessment tools and collections were used in decision-making?

- How do we assess, evaluate, and report our findings in the language in which the people are most comfortable, or do we need a cultural interpreter available (i.e., spoken language, braille, sign language)?
• Do the assessment and evaluation allow for consideration of the experiences or lack of the experiences of the individual?

• How can we ensure that all stakeholders’ voices relevant to the evaluation are present and their perspectives are heard and included?

• Is our language culturally sensitive to the diversity of perspectives among the evaluation group?
# Bias-Free Student Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting

## Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
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<th>Implementation Timeframe</th>
<th>Champion</th>
<th>Resources Needed</th>
<th>CSIP Goal Alignment</th>
<th>Measurement/Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special School District will provide appropriate and bias-free assessment, evaluation, and reporting to equitably meet the educational needs and to maximize the learning potential of all students.</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Develop a list of topics (e.g., diagnosis) that could be areas of potential bias in assessment, evaluation, and/or reporting.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Fall 2023</td>
<td>School Psychs; Dir. of Equity; DRMS</td>
<td>Compilation of topics from School Psychs, Representatives from DRMS, and others.</td>
<td>Goal 1 Student Performance, 1.3</td>
<td>Completed review by topic with recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate inequities from the topic list through data and file review.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Planning/Implementation</td>
<td>Spr 2023 – Fall 2024; Repeat with a new topic</td>
<td>School Psychs; EPS; Dir. of Equity</td>
<td>Access to data and files; Person to conduct and interpret the analysis</td>
<td>Goal 4 Equity, 4.1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Examine assessment tools used by SSD for bias and provide recommendations for tools found to be the least biased.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Sum 2024 – May 30, 2025</td>
<td>School Psychs; EPS; Dir. of Equity</td>
<td>Assessments and research review</td>
<td>Goal 1 Student Performance, 1.3 Goal 4 Equity, 4.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Equitable Student Programming and Placement

Special School District will provide equitable programming (for) and placement (of) its students across the county.

While SSD is fortunate to service such a broad, diverse community, it brings a strong obligation for us to ensure that our work provides equitable access to learning for all situations. Having multiple sites, multiple programs, and individual learning plans, makes this a considerable challenge. It would be easy to do the same thing for everyone in every site and all programs, but not everyone needs the same things. So, we must ever strive to modify our environments and actions so that the student can be his or her best self. Equity across sites and programs requires the professionals’ diligence to scrutinize their beliefs, words, and actions intensely. The focus of the action plan in this area is around the deep study of topics across sites and programs to check for inequities, to plan actions, and to use data from our students to illuminate the success of decreasing inequities.

Questions to consider:

- What assumptions are we making about the program/placement that we need to verify or unpack?

- How well does staff reflect the diversity of the community we serve?

- To what extent does programming reflect the diverse needs of our students, community, and businesses? What knowledge, skills, experience, and diversity would enhance our capacity to be more relevant and ensure our students are post-secondary ready?

- What bias-free and inclusive criteria are we using when determining placement and programming decisions?

- To what extent are we consistently using our current tools: the change of placement process, Intervention Selection Process Map, and others?

- What artifacts and data are we using to support our decisions?
## Equitable Student Programming and Placement
### Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>District /School Level</th>
<th>Collective Actions</th>
<th>Stage of Implementation</th>
<th>Implementation Timeframe</th>
<th>Champion</th>
<th>Resources Needed</th>
<th>CSIP Goal Alignment</th>
<th>Measurement / Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special School District will provide equitable programming (for) and placement (of) its students across the county.</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Complete the revision to the processes for change of placement. Demonstrate consistent use through file review.</td>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Fall 2022 – Aug 1, 2023</td>
<td>Exec. Dir. of Schools; School Psych.; Dir. of Equity</td>
<td>Copy of original process Committee/group</td>
<td>Goal 1 Student Performance 1.3 &amp; 1.4; Goal 4 Equity 4.1</td>
<td>Process revision is completed. File review indicates the process has been used in at least 80% of student change of placement decisions.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Equitable Support Services

Special School District will provide equitable counseling, related services, and support services that reflect the principles of equity.

Equitable services are the heart of the Special School District's purpose and encapsulated in the child's educational plan, the IEP. SSD provides a wealth of support services, which are different for each child. While each of these is available to be placed in the child's program at any time, it is the nuanced evaluation and planning that creates the successful program of academic and other supports to address the individual child's needs. Support services include but are not limited to occupational therapy, physical therapy, physical assistance, work with counselors or social workers, school psychologist, speech therapist, language therapist, etc. This group also includes those who support students daily in the classroom, paraprofessionals, and those who support the operational side of the district. In a process related to need, systemic attention must be given to processes for assuring all services needed are provided.

Questions to consider:

- To what extent do related services providers, operational staff, support staff, and paraprofessionals have the knowledge and skills to work sensitively and effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds?

- How well do related services providers, operational staff, support staff, and paraprofessionals represent the diversity of the population we are engaging? What steps can we take to ensure that we are inclusive of a wide diversity of perspectives?

- How do we utilize support systems for individuals who have experienced trauma?

- Have we considered ways to reduce barriers in the support process to make it more welcoming and friendly (i.e., physically accessible, tone of location, anonymity, confidentiality, scheduling)?
## Equitable Support Services
### Action Plan

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special School District will provide equitable counseling, related services, and support services that reflect the principles of equity.</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Review processes for identifying and providing support for individuals who require support services.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Fall 2023 - May 30, 2024</td>
<td>Exec. Dir. of Schools; School Psych.; EPS staff, Dir. of Equity</td>
<td>Process documents for identifying and providing support services</td>
<td>Goal 1: Student Performance 1.3; Goal 4: Equity 4.1</td>
<td>Analyze the utilization of related services across the county.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Equitable Professional Learning

Special School District will provide professional learning, resources, and follow-up (high-quality professional learning feedback evaluation) for all district personnel.

Three components are critical to our ability to grow in our understanding of equity and to take action to create more equitable environments and learning opportunities. These components—diversity, assumption, and inclusion—focus our initial learning that will be used throughout our equity work. Professional learning opportunities, follow-up coaching, and partnering will help participants explore these concepts in relation to themselves and how they view the world. As their world view becomes more nuanced, participants are better at seeing unconscious and unintended inequities and can plan how to address them so that all students are successful. Special School District will provide professional learning, resources, and follow-up (high-quality professional learning feedback evaluation) for all district personnel in the area of equity.

Questions to consider:

- How will participants develop competency and skills to work sensitively and effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds?
- Are barriers addressed, such as safety, language, accessible location, time, religious observances, culturally appropriateness, and accommodations?
- Have we integrated the diverse perspectives of people who have specific equity concerns or needs, even if they may not be obvious (e.g., LGBTTQIAAP identities, dietary, auditory, language needs or preferences, accommodations, and abilities)?
- Is the content sensitive to the participants who may experience systemic barriers or injustices?
- Does the content include the perspectives of participants, stakeholders, or staff who will be learning and using the professional development learning objectives in their work?
- Are all personnel provided opportunities for meaningful discussion around the professional development topic or resource?
- In the evaluation of the training, do we ask if there were any barriers to participation or whether they found the facilitator to be inclusive of the diversity of participants?
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special School District will provide professional learning, resources, and follow-up (high-quality professional learning feedback evaluation) for all district personnel</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Develop a conceptual framework of equity that is agreed upon by the district.</td>
<td>Implementing</td>
<td>Current to Apr 30, 2021</td>
<td>Dir. of Equity; District Leaders; CSIP 4.1 Committee</td>
<td>Equity Committee; Clerical Support</td>
<td>Goal 1: Student Performance 1.3; Goal 2: Workforce Excellence; Goal 4: Equity 4.1</td>
<td>Adoption of the Equity Framework by the Board of Education.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop/identify a series of training modules to increase understanding of equity.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Sum 2021</td>
<td>Dir. of Equity; CSIP 4.1 Committee; PL Staff</td>
<td>Approved framework; Materials, financial support, and staff support to plan and prepare for PL</td>
<td></td>
<td>Modules, modules protocol, and PL sessions developed.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Provide an introduction to equity work and the equity model by providing a PL opportunity, &quot;Framing the Framework.&quot;</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Sum 2021 – Sept 15, 2021</td>
<td>Dir. of Equity; CSIP 4.1 Committee; PL Staff</td>
<td>Content modules Materials, financial support, and staff support to plan and prepare for PL; Time for PL sessions for all staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td>List of staff who completed framework PD opportunity.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide District Leaders and School equity teams with PL opportunities in how to use the Framework documents in their work.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Sum 2021</td>
<td>Dir. of Equity; CSIP 4.1 Committee; PL Staff</td>
<td>Building Equity Teams Materials, financial support, and staff support to plan and prepare for PL; Time for PL sessions for all staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td>List of Leaders and equity team members who completed modules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special School District will provide professional learning, resources, and follow-up (high-quality professional learning feedback evaluation) for all district personnel</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Provide PL opportunities for operation staff on the &quot;Basics of Equity.&quot;</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Fall 2021 → on-going</td>
<td>Dir. of Equity; CSIP 4.1 Committee; PL Staff</td>
<td>Operation Staff Materials, financial support, and staff support to plan and prepare for PL; Time for PL sessions for all staff.</td>
<td>Goal 1: Student Performance 1.3; Goal 2: Workforce Excellence; Goal 4: Equity 4.1</td>
<td>List of operation staff who completed the &quot;Basics of Equity&quot; PL opportunities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide PL opportunities for operation staff who work with families or students that focus on the basics of equity and &quot;Understanding Cultural Differences.&quot;</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Fall 2021 – Apr 30, 2022 → on-going</td>
<td>Dir. of Equity; CSIP 4.1 Committee; PL Staff</td>
<td>Operation Staff that work with families or students; Materials, financial support, and staff support to plan and prepare for PL; Time for PL sessions for all staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td>List of operation staff who completed the &quot;Understanding Cultural Differences&quot; PL opportunities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide PL opportunities for school and classroom staff in diversity, equity, inclusion, and application to the classroom.</td>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Group A: Fall 2021 – Spring 2022 → on-going Group B: Fall 2021 – Spring 2022; Summer 2022 → on-going</td>
<td>Dir. of Equity; CSIP 4.1 Committee; PL Staff</td>
<td>Time / Personnel to develop training; Time to train groups; Clerical support; Technology support; An online repository accessible by all staff for resource sharing</td>
<td></td>
<td>List of who has completed school and classroom PL Opportunities by group (A or B).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


Couros, G., (2021). *5 crucial quotes on leadership and why they are important*. George Couros [Blog post]. https://georgecouros.ca/blog/archives/8277


*MPS Executive Summary*. Equity at MPS. https://equity.mpls.k12.mn.us/equity_at_mps.


Appendix A
Glossary of Equity Terms Used in the SSD Equity Framework

Discrimination: unfavorable or unfair treatment towards an individual or group based on their race, ethnicity, color, national origin or ancestry, religion, socioeconomic status, education, sex, marital status, parental status, veteran’s status, political affiliation, language, age, gender, physical or mental abilities, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Diversity: psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals; including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and learning styles. A diverse group, community, or organization is one in which a variety of social and cultural characteristics exist.

Marginalized Groups: the social revolution of the 1970s coined the word “marginalized” to describe the experiences of those who live on the fringe of mainstream America. Such persons are systemically excluded from full participation in the American dream and consequently lack the self-efficacy to improve their life situation. In the end, society pays the costs when people encounter barriers to achieving their potential. The term marginalized has expanded from originally referring to minorities and persons from poverty, to include a long list of cultures and populations.

Equity: the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.

Underrepresented: an underrepresented group refers to a subset of a population with a smaller percentage than the general population, e.g., women, people of color, or indigenous people.

Underserved: students who have not been afforded the same educational opportunities and equitable resources as some of their peers or as other students in the academic pipeline. This group of students includes low-income, minoritized, disabled, and first-generation students.