

**Iowa City Community School District**  
**Comprehensive Diversity, Equity,  
and Inclusion Plan**  
**2019-2022**



Released December 10, 2019

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1

## REDUCE THE OPPORTUNITY GAP FOR STRUCTURALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

- 1A. Increase access to services, supports, and programs for structurally disadvantaged students
- 1B. Increase access in accelerated learning programs, AP courses, and other advanced courses for structurally disadvantaged students
- 1C. Improve access and delivery of core instruction
- 1D. Improve college and career readiness supports

2

## REDUCE DISPROPORTIONALITY IN DISCIPLINE

- 2A. Culturally responsive policies and practices related to student behavior and discipline

3

## CREATE EQUITABLE, INCLUSIVE, AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

- 3A. Equitably promote, develop, and support student mental and emotional well-being
- 3B. Promote, develop, and support positive peer and adult relationships and social well-being
- 3C. Incorporate a more inclusive and representative curriculum
- 3D. Reduce the incidents of bullying and harassment
- 3E. Promoting positive school culture will be supported at all levels of the District, by the District leadership; building level leadership, teachers and staff; and students

4

## ATTAIN DIVERSE AND CULTURALLY PROFICIENT TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND STAFF

- 4A. Recruit underrepresented teachers, admin., & staff
- 4B. Retain and advance underrepresented teachers, admin., & staff
- 4C. Increase teachers, administrators, and staff use of culturally responsive and equity informed practices

5

## INCREASE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT (PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS)

- 5A. Increase representation and engagement from parents, students, and community members from underrepresented groups in district and school activities and decision-making processes
- 5B. Communicate with and listen to parents, students, and community members from underrepresented groups in culturally responsive ways

6

## CREATE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND EQUITY-INFORMED DISTRICT POLICIES AND PRACTICES

- 6A. Develop a shared district and community understanding, definition, and goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion
- 6B. Ensure resources are equitably allocated to align to school and student needs
- 6C. Ensure school assignment policies are transparent and equitable

# ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PLAN

## BACKGROUND

In 2014-2015, the Iowa City Community School District Board of Education tasked the District's Equity Department with creating a comprehensive equity plan. This plan would seek to address the inequities that arise in many different facets of the K-12 system and assign key individuals to identify these issues and address them with proven strategies and methods. The plan was spurred by concerns and complaints by parents and key community stakeholders regarding the disproportionality in discipline and the growing stories by LGBTQ youth regarding the uncomfortable school environment. Based on this information, the Comprehensive Equity Plan (CEP) was created by former Director of Equity, Kingsley Botchway II, in conjunction with other District officials, school board members, and the District's Equity Committee. Once drafted, in collaboration with these stakeholders, the CEP was vetted at different forums throughout the community to elicit discussion and feedback. While feedback of the plan was generally supportive, there were instances of community pushback. Heated debates about meritocracy and hiring of diverse staff were the high profile concerns. This led to slight tweaks in the communication plan for the CEP, but didn't drastically change any of the components.

In August 2015, the Iowa City Community School District approved the Comprehensive Equity Plan that advanced the third stated goal of the ICCSD Strategic Plan into actionable items.

The third goal of the Strategic Plan is to annually improve the educational experiences for all children through culturally inclusive and responsive school environments and classroom instruction, as measured by various students' assessments including the Biennial Youth Survey, with a focus on equitable outcomes for students in protected classes. Given this goal, the Comprehensive Equity Plan specifies four objectives:

1. The District shall increase the composition of underrepresented groups in District administrative, certified and support staff with a particular focus on gender, race, and ethnicity.
2. The District shall increase community engagement and community awareness of District initiatives.
3. The District shall reduce disproportionality in the following areas for protected classes: student discipline, assignment of students to special education, graduation rates, course taking, and student educational achievement.

4. The District shall incorporate a more robust multicultural/ gender fair (MC/GF) curriculum and activities throughout each building.

For each of these objectives, the Equity Plan describes a series of action plans, expected results, a timeline, and key personnel that are responsible for achieving the objective and carrying out the action plans, and evidence of success

While the plan had unanimous approval from the Board and moderate support from key stakeholders in the community and staff, the plan was not fully implemented or followed due to a lack of accountability, and inconsistent use of data to evaluate the progress. However, the plan did provide the foundation necessary to begin identifying key areas of focus and motivated a great deal of positive work in the District.

## **PROCESS FOR UPDATING THE COMPREHENSIVE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PLAN**

In 2018-19, the ICCSD engaged in a strategic planning process to update the Comprehensive Equity Plan. The process was facilitated by the Equity Implemented Partnership using guiding principles and a development process that is modeled after the process the University of Iowa engaged in over the past year to create the University of Iowa's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan which was completed in April 2019.

The guiding principles for this work are:

- Alignment and integration with the District Strategic Plan, Comprehensive School Improvement Planning, SIAC, and other District initiatives and programming and goals;
- Strengthen and augment existing accountability structures to include metrics/indicators to track progress, timelines, and responsibilities for various positions/roles
- Informed by District-specific data and K-12 research on implementing district-wide equity reforms; and
- Inclusive representation of diverse stakeholders in the decision-making process.

As part of this process, a Comprehensive Equity Plan Development Group was selected to assist in the development of the ICCSD's 2019-2022 Comprehensive Equity Plan. To guide this work, the group reviewed existing District goals and data, and reviewed information, themes, and suggestions that emerge from strategic interviews conducted with the ICCSD Executive Committee and Cabinet, listening sessions convened with key stakeholder groups, and public input received through two open community forums and

survey responses. The membership of the Development Group included representatives from key stakeholder groups including the Board of Education, Cabinet, Department of Equity, ESC administration, elementary and secondary principals, teachers/ICEA, parents, students, the Equity Advisory Committee, and community members. Approximate membership was 40 people (see acknowledgements).

The process also included listening sessions with key stakeholders within the District (Admin Council, Cabinet, ICEA Representative Council, Board, Cultural Proficiency Team, Multi-cultural and Gender Fair Curriculum Committee, and the Development Group), open public forums, and an online survey for teachers, parents, students, and community members to provide input regarding what they think are the most important equity concerns the District should be working to address as well as provide suggestions for how the District could go about addressing these concerns.

Finally, the process included a co-construction phase with ESC Administration Leaders and coordinated work by the ICCSD Executive Committee and Cabinet members to identify existing programs and areas of focus of all core areas of ICCSD, identification of areas of opportunity for building on existing strengths and for embedding equity considerations in current programming, and identification of current evaluation and assessment practices (including data sources and methods currently used).

## **ORGANIZATION OF COMPREHENSIVE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PLAN**

The Comprehensive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan is organized by goals, strategies, and critical tasks. There are six goals which represent the major areas of focus that emerged from listening sessions, public listening sessions, and development group meetings. For each goal, there are baseline and outcomes measures that describe the status of the goal. These outcome measures will be used to assess progress on each goal. In order to achieve these goals, the CEP details strategies that describe specific approaches to achieving the goal. For each strategy there are critical tasks and action steps that provide a concrete roadmap to accomplish each strategy step-by-step. To ensure accountability for the Plan, there are timelines which specify the expected timeframe for completion of each action step along with identification of the lead person and partners responsible for ensuring its completion. Finally, the Plan also includes metrics to indicate the progress and successes for each action step. An important aspect of the Plan is the continual collection and monitoring of data to assess each strategy and goal.

The Equity Advisory Committee will lead a community-engaged process to establish definitions of key terms in the Plan, including structurally disadvantaged, underrepresented, opportunity gap, culturally responsive, cultural competence, equity mindset, disproportionality, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## DISTRICT STATEMENTS AND POLICIES

Board Equity Statement: The Iowa City Community School District believes that all students can achieve at high levels and that equitable classrooms are essential to their success. Eliminating disparities in educational opportunities is fundamental to the nature of public education. The District is committed to overcoming barriers to learning that have been identified through educational research. The District is particularly focused on student experiences and outcomes related to socioeconomic learner status (identified as low SES students in the district's student data management system), special education learner status, English language learner status, race, creed, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, or disability.  
Approved: 7/28/15

Board Statement of LGBTQ+ Inclusion: The Iowa City Community School District is committed to creating a safe and inclusive school environment for all students free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation. School climate is an important predictor of student success for all students, however, schools can be especially unwelcoming for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ+) youth. Research shows that LGBTQ+ students, nationally, and in Iowa, experience discrimination, harassment, and violence more frequently than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. Data from the District's 2017 School Climate Report reveals that students who identify as LGBTQ+ are significantly less likely to report that they feel they belong in school, that school staff is supportive of them, and that they feel that their contributions are valued in the classroom. The District is devoted to addressing the needs and inequities that LGBTQ+ youth face in our schools. This commitment to inclusion of our LGBTQ+ students builds on existing Iowa law and current District policies. Incorporating an inclusive atmosphere free from discrimination is identified in Title IX, the Iowa Code, the District's non-discrimination policy, and the District's mission statement. It is our shared responsibility to ensure every member of our school community is valued and respected regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation. We are actively working to create more inclusive policies and practices that support and affirm the identities of LGBTQ+ students. We believe that learning about the diversity of humankind is an essential part of education in a democratic society. We encourage our students, staff, and members of the community to celebrate the inclusiveness and diversity that contributes to growth, success, safety, and quality of life for everyone at the Iowa City Community School District. Approved: 4/24/2018

Non-Discrimination Policy: It is the policy of the Iowa City Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status in its educational programs, activities, or employment practices.

# Comprehensive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan - Goals | Strategies | Critical Tasks

**1**

**GOAL ONE:**

**Reduce the Opportunity Gap for Structurally Disadvantaged Students**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Baseline Measures</b> | Current achievement gap; graduation gap, AP gap         |
| <b>Outcome Measures</b>  | Decrease in achievement gap; graduation gap; and AP gap |

**STRATEGY 1A:** Increase access to services, supports, and programs for structurally disadvantaged students.

**CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Create a more equitable screening, identification, and placement process
2. Continue AVID
3. Improve MTSS effectiveness
4. Provide academic supports
5. Continue to provide pre-kindergarten
6. Improve academic instruction and support for ELL students

**STRATEGY 1B:** Increase access in accelerated learning programs, AP courses, and other advanced courses for structurally disadvantaged students.

**CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Create a more equitable screening, identification, and placement process
2. Continue Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS)
3. Explore opportunities for summer enrichment

**STRATEGY 1C:** Improve access and delivery of core instruction.

**CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Improve access to grade-level core content and standards
2. Improve delivery of grade-level core content and standards
3. Provide supports for implementation

**STRATEGY 1D:** Improve college and career readiness supports.

**CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Increase advising and support for college
2. Increase access to career and technical education and pathways

# 2

## GOAL TWO: **Reduce Disproportionality in Discipline**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Baseline Measures</b> | Current discipline gap (referrals/suspensions) |
| <b>Outcome Measures</b>  | Reduce discipline gap (referrals/suspensions)  |

**STRATEGY 2A:** Culturally responsive policies and practices related to student behavior and discipline.

### **CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Evaluate current policies (DPP) and practices
2. Increase fidelity of implementation of PBIS in all buildings
3. Increase the use of restorative practices

# 3

## GOAL THREE:

### **Create Equitable, Inclusive, and Supportive School Environments**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Baseline Measures</b> | Current climate gap (school climate survey indicators) |
| <b>Outcome Measures</b>  | Reduce climate gap (school climate survey indicators)  |

**STRATEGY 3A:** Equitably promote, develop, and support student mental and emotional well-being.

#### **CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Increase social-emotional learning opportunities
2. Assess current mental and emotional services and support

**STRATEGY 3B:** Promote, develop, and support positive peer and adult relationships and social well-being.

#### **CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Provide mentorship to all students

**STRATEGY 3C:** Incorporate a more inclusive and representative curriculum.

#### **CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Incorporate cultural responsiveness/ representation in curriculum review process
2. Audit of current library and classroom resources
3. Review current curricular and course offerings related to social issues such as social justice and ethnic studies
4. Build capacity and support for MCGF Committee

**STRATEGY 3D:** Reduce the incidents of bullying and harassment on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, immigrant status, religious affiliation, appearance, class, or disability.

**CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Increase responsiveness
2. Increase student voice
3. Increase prevention efforts and awareness of complaint process
4. Increase use of data to understand prevalence and target areas for focus

**STRATEGY 3E:** Promoting positive school culture will be supported at all levels of the District, by the District leadership; building level leadership, teachers and staff; and students.

**CRITICAL TASKS**

1. District leadership role; building leadership role; teacher and staff role; student role

# 4

## GOAL FOUR:

### **Diverse and Culturally Proficient Teachers, Administrators, and Staff**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Baseline Measures</b> | Percent of diverse teachers, administrators, and staff; school climate survey data          |
| <b>Outcome Measures</b>  | Increase percent of diverse teachers, administrators, and staff; school climate survey data |

**STRATEGY 4A:** Increase the recruitment of underrepresented teachers, administrators, and staff.

#### **CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Establish “Grow Your Own” program with current staff and students
2. Expand relationships with universities, colleges, search firms, and other educational programs within the state and nation
3. Expand advertisement protocol for positions
4. Maintain diverse recruitment team
5. Embed equity in the hiring process

**STRATEGY 4B:** Increase the retention and advancement of underrepresented teachers, administrators, and staff.

#### **CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Collect data to inform policies and practices
2. Provide greater support and mentorship

**STRATEGY 4C:** Increase teachers, administrators, and staff use of culturally responsive and equity informed practices.

#### **CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Provide differentiated professional development
2. Provide supports for implementation
3. Provide equity training for leadership

# 5

## GOAL FIVE:

### **Increase Stakeholder Engagement (Parents, Students, and Community Members)**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Baseline Measures</b> | Parent and student survey, track efforts to engage community in multiple forms, track representation on District committees |
| <b>Outcome Measures</b>  | Parent and student survey, track efforts to engage community in multiple forms, track representation on District committees |

**STRATEGY 5A:** Increase representation and engagement from parents, students, and community members from underrepresented groups in district and school activities and decision-making processes.

#### **CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Identify most effective ways to engage community stakeholders

**STRATEGY 5B:** Communicate with and listen to parents, students, and community members from underrepresented groups in culturally responsive ways.

#### **CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Develop effective communication with families
2. Improve interpretation and translation services
3. Expand home visit program
4. Provide quarterly updates regarding DEI
5. Increase District presence at community events/programs

# 6

## GOAL SIX:

### **Culturally Responsive and Equity-Informed District Policies and Practices**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Baseline Measures</b> | Policy incorporation, WRAM implementation, definition and goals communicated to stakeholders |
| <b>Outcome Measures</b>  | Policy incorporation, WRAM implementation, definition and goals communicated to stakeholders |

**STRATEGY 6A:** Develop a shared district and community understanding, definition, and goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

#### **CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Publish and communicate CEP
2. Implement an accountability system for continued implementation of the CEP at district, building, and classroom levels (i.e. CSIP, etc.)

**STRATEGY 6B:** Resources are equitably allocated to align to school and student needs.

#### **CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Implement WRAM

**STRATEGY 6C:** School assignment policies are transparent and equitable.

#### **CRITICAL TASKS**

1. Evaluate school boundary changes