

(Edited July 13,2021)

What is the purpose of Policy 832 in comparison to other existing policies and mandates that intend to ensure that all students receive the education they deserve?

Policy 832 was designed with the intent of defining and prioritizing educational equity under one policy. It was to establish a foundation for fully incorporating equity into the school system by prioritizing equity and setting expectations for closing opportunity and achievement gaps. Policy 832 has no intention of superseding or replacing the many policies, laws, and practices that, collectively implemented, protect the rights of all students, staff, and families in the school district. While we have many obligations to ensure students' needs are met, Policy 832 established a new commitment to viewing educational equity beyond the legal requirements and identifying and eliminating barriers for all students.

Is Policy 832 a reaction to any instances of bias, racism, or violations of other policies in place?

The recommendation and adoption of Policy 832, the Anti-Racist School Climate Resolution, and the Equity Team were not in response to specific acts of bias or racism in our school community. We believe it is our responsibility to prepare students to succeed in a global society. That preparation includes ensuring all students have access to the highest quality education possible. Commitments to equitable access to learning and a school community devoid of racism are a part of global citizenship.

What needs assessments have been used to identify issues related to climate and culture in KASD?

The state of Pennsylvania requires every school district to complete a comprehensive plan every three years. Districts are required to disaggregate achievement and other data by student group. Pennsylvania's accountability system follows this facet of the law to ensure maximum transparency around student group performance. As part of the Comprehensive Plan, student groups that may be underserved, and therefore must consider for equity, are as follows:

- Students that are English Language Learners (English is not their first language)
- Students with Disabilities
- Students considered economically disadvantaged
- Student groups by race/ethnicity

As part of the Comprehensive Planning process, the district is required to disaggregate data of these subgroups and to plan for actions that will support student growth. The new Comprehensive Plan will be available for public viewing and comment during October 2021.

Additional data were collected from the sources below.

- Surveys:

- BrightBytes Modern Learning survey (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021)
- Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium Equity Audit
- Pennsylvania School Climate Survey - PDE (Spring 2020)
- [Kutztown Area School District Data Portfolio](#)

Why was there no community involvement following the adoption of Policy 832?

Plans to include a greater representation of community, organizations, and outside resources were always a part of the Educational Equity Plan for 21-22. The timing of implementation while managing student learning needs during the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the district from expanding the committee. The committee was open to any KASD staff member.

Did Policy 832 lead to the creation of the Equity Team?

No, the growth of the Equity Team occurred as many initiatives and recommendations do in a school community. A few individual teachers contacted the Superintendent indicating a desire to work as a group to explore issues of equity and social justice within the school community. The Superintendent met with the group of volunteers and encouraged them to meet and develop a proposal. With their proposal, the Superintendent shared that it was best to review policy. At the same time, Pennsylvania School Board Association issued a proposed Policy (832) on educational equity and some districts in Pennsylvania adopted a version. Individual members of the School Board Policy Committee, along with the group of teachers and administration, recommend the policy be reviewed by the Board Policy Committee. The Policy Committee recommended a version of the policy to the Board, which the Board adopted.

Does equity refer to equity of opportunity or equity of outcomes?

The Purpose of Policy 832 states:

“The Board adopts this policy to prioritize the principle of educational equity through the fair and just allocation of resources, opportunities and treatment of students based upon each individual student’s needs. The pursuit of educational equity requires the continuous and collaborative effort of identifying various aspects of district programs and operations in which consideration of educational equity shall be analyzed, incorporated and prioritized.”

We believe in, and are mandated to provide equity of opportunities to our students. The outcomes we assess drive the question of whether a student had equitable access to learning.

Even in special education, the most commonly understood component of equity in schools, there is no such thing as guaranteed outcomes. Individualized Educational Program teams are charged with evaluating a student's needs and providing support targeted to mitigate any impact of the disability that prevents him/her from accessing any component of the curriculum or

programs. These supports are tiered based on continuous measures assessing progress towards goals of the student with the selected supports. When the student achieves a current goal, the goal is increased until the team determines that supports are no longer necessary because the disability is not impacting the student's education. There is no guarantee of results, but rather a legal and moral obligation to continue to make efforts to identify supports that prove successful.

Historically, this same level of support has not always been extended to the subgroups contained in the Comprehensive Planning process (students that are English Language Learners, those considered economically disadvantaged, and groups by race/ethnicity).

Forty years ago, special education students were often relegated to isolated classrooms without access to the regular curriculum. Today we can still find places where students are being underserved by our practices.

Equity in education requires dedicating the necessary resources to "identifying and addressing barriers that cultivate achievement and/or opportunity gaps for students" and acting appropriately to eliminate those barriers.

Is the Kutztown Area School District being financially incentivized for, or in any other way financially benefiting from, the creation and implementation of the equity team?

No

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No

Who wrote Policy 832?

Policy 832 is a slightly modified version of the draft policy shared by Pennsylvania School Board Association. All modifications were discussed in public at the Policy Committee meeting on August 10, 2020.