

Resolution Supporting the Development of an Antiracist School Climate by the Board of Directors of the School District of Haverford Township (SDHT)

WHEREAS, we are deeply saddened and outraged by the recent killing of George Floyd and violence against Black men, women and youth. The subsequent protests have shined a spotlight on the harmful effects of racism and inequality. Furthermore, the public response has highlighted the racial trauma that our Black students, families, staff, and communities have not only endured for centuries but continue to experience today.

WHEREAS, we must recognize that racism and hate have no place in our schools and society. However, we must understand that racism is systemic, and it is unconsciously and consciously rooted into our institutions, policies, and practices. Consequently, we acknowledge that we must examine our own school policies and practices through antiracist and equity lenses to address the racism and inequity that exist within our own school community and system and to actively oppose racism in all of its forms.

WHEREAS, we must center the voices of staff, students, families, and communities who have historically endured discrimination and marginalization. Their lived experiences and stories require attention, respect, empathy, and most importantly action. Therefore, it is essential that we establish an expectation that a diversity of students, families, and community members, specifically those that have been ignored, discriminated against, and marginalized, are heard and included on substantive school and district issues. We must build an inclusive school culture that invites and values the contribution and participation of all people, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students, families, staff, and community members.

WHEREAS, we must better educate ourselves and seek to educate the community on the historical and current impact of racism and discrimination on our students, families, and communities, as well as understand our role in perpetuating such inequity. Through ongoing professional development and opportunities for honest dialogue and listening sessions, we seek to build partnerships in the community focused on overcoming racism and other barriers to student success. By doing so, we will support the cultivation of a school climate that ensures that each child has the tools and supports needed to thrive and that students' identities do not predetermine their success in schools.

WHEREAS, we must advocate to advance civil rights and cultivate an anti-racist school climate necessary to meet the needs of ALL students in our care. Our students, no matter their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language ability, disability, and other identities, deserve to feel and be safe, seen, and affirmed.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the directors of SDHT, unequivocally stand firm in our collective responsibility to foster an equitable, inclusive and antiracist school climate for every student, staff member, parent, and community member. We commit to use our role as school board directors to recognize, respond, and speak out against racial injustice and inequity in our school community. In support of this goal, the SDHT board of directors commits to the following action steps:

Develop a Concrete Action Plan Aligned to Support the Strategic Goal on Diversity and Inclusion. SDHT is committed to establishing a culturally diverse and inclusive educational experience that develops socio-cultural proficiency. The strategic goal will have 4 focus areas:

curriculum, diversity of staff, professional development, and analyzing data through antiracist and equity lenses.

Develop SDHT District-Wide Antiracism and Equity Leadership Teams. SDHT Antiracism and Equity Leadership Teams will be responsible for developing ideas and strategies to submit to SDHT administration and board of directors around antiracism and equity. The Antiracism and Equity Leadership Teams would place focus on examining student data and opportunity indicators (e.g., achievement, attendance, discipline) and valuing diversity and practicing cultural awareness in all school settings.

Develop a SDHT District-Wide Parent and Guardian Antiracism and Equity Team. This Antiracism and Equity Team will be comprised of volunteer parents/guardians of children in our schools who share a commitment to creating an equitable, inclusive and antiracist educational environment for all students and families and developing an antiracist school climate. This Antiracism and Equity Team will allow parents/guardians to provide feedback and ideas on ways to build upon current SDHT strengths while providing feedback and input for areas of improvement.

Engage in Board Training on Cultivating an Antiracist School Climate. Board training will enhance the directors' awareness of issues of racism within our schools and ability to analyze SDHT policies and practices through antiracist and equity lenses. With training, the directors will acquire tools necessary to ensure antiracism and equity are at the forefront of SDHT policies and practices.

Adopted this 6th day of August, 2020.

Signed,

Board President

Board Secretary

Definition of Terms

Antiracism includes beliefs, actions, movements, and policies adopted or developed to oppose racism.

Racism can be defined as the oppression of a racialized group at interpersonal, institutional, and cultural levels. Being antiracist requires an active stance to oppose these many expressions of racism (Helms, 2017; Kendi, 2019; Tatum, 2017).

Antiracist Pedagogy: An approach to teaching that acknowledges the many forces of racism, while acknowledging the contributions and needs of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and is grounded in **cultural competence**. Cultural competence includes incorporating knowledge, skills, and practices that help students recognize and appreciate their culture of origin while also learning to develop fluency in at least one other culture (Ladson-Billings, 2017, pp. 144-145).

Equity: Fair treatment of everyone that addresses specific needs, barriers and accommodations to ensure all have equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of society and its benefits. The creation of opportunities for historically underserved populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs that are capable of closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion.

References

Helms, J. E. (2017). The challenge of making whiteness visible: Reactions to four whiteness articles. *The Counseling Psychologist, 45*(5), 717-726.

Kendi, I. X. (2019). *How to be an antiracist*. One World.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2017). "Makes me wanna holler": Refuting the "culture of poverty" discourse in urban schooling. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 673*(1), 80-90.

Tatum, B. D. (2017). *Why are all the Black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?: And other conversations about race* (3rd ed.). Basic Books.