



**MEMO TO:** School Board Members  
**FROM:** Paul Peterson  
**DATE:** July 13, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** MAPS Equity Vision and Framework

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For the past year, Mankato Area Public Schools has worked with the Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP) to develop an equity vision and framework for the school district. This process has been completed, and below is a brief overview of the process and the recommendations that have been crafted by community stakeholders and MAPS staff for your consideration at the July 19 School Board meeting.

You will note one shaded area, under the 'MAPS Values/Commitments' section. Recommendations in this area will be shared in final form once input and feedback are collected from stakeholder groups.

### **The Equity Vision and Framework Process**

In the summer of 2020, Mankato Area Public Schools (MAPS) called upon the expertise of the Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP) for assistance in a formal and collective equity planning process in the school year 2020-2021. MAPS dedicated itself to do a deep evaluation of how the system was centering racial equity in their policies and practices, and the degree to which cultural community groups have provided input on equity, inclusion and school systems change.

The MAPS-MnEEP partnership involved key "learning stops" over the last year: a pre-assessment race equity review (with over 117 stakeholder interviews and/or survey input); a District Leadership Training staff and administrators retreat (with 45 participants); a series of equity committee meetings guiding best approaches to stakeholder engagement (with 12 committee members); guidance to the teaching and learning department; six parent/guardian visioning sessions (with 84 total participants); five youth visioning sessions (with 29 total participants); and a final MAPS stakeholder strategic retreat (with 23 participants in working groups).

Based on the learning stops and community feedback, deep engagement with representatives of the Mankato Latinx, Somali, Sudanese, African American, Asian American and American Indian community and students, MAPS cultural liaisons, administrators and staff, and nonprofit partners, five recommendations have been developed for your consideration.

### **MAPS Mission Statement**

MAPS current mission, *“Assuring learning excellence and readiness for a changing world,”* was reviewed at the strategic retreat for an update with new and refreshed racial equity input. While the statement honors the past, the working groups concluded that a new statement could be more inspirational and reflect the urgency of equity with the community—and impact on an ever-changing global society.

In adopting a more inclusive mission statement, the School Board recognizes its role in embracing each learner and its responsibility to serve them.

**“Mankato Area Public Schools (MAPS) is committed to working together equitably, with families and communities, so that each learner has the knowledge and skills to be successful and contributing citizens in a diverse global society.”**

### **MAPS Vision Statement**

The working groups concluded that the current vision statements do not capture a “future state” that reflects what was heard from parents and students around ideas of inclusion, dignity, equity and what is being committed to for each child. Parent visioning sessions lifted up the reminder that families sending their children to MAPS want an assurance that their children are treated with respect, love, and to know that they are truly heard and valued.

In adopting a new vision statement, the School Board acknowledges the value of each learner and family in the MAPS system.

**“MAPS vision is that every learner will be seen for who they are inclusive of: race, national origin, home language, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, or religion. MAPS learners will experience a school environment that builds their voice and agency. Learners and families will be seen and heard. MAPS will assure that each learner has the skills to enter society with a joy for learning, a positive vision for the future and the ability to navigate the world with hope, dignity and their multiple talents.”**

## **MAPS Values/Commitments**

The working groups discussed that MAPS current values need to be infused with more equitable and inclusive terms, and be more actionable as promises and commitments. It's also important to consider how a set of values will be translated and understood in each cultural context in the community.

### **MAPS actively works to be:**

- **Intentionally Inclusive**
- **Visibly Equitable**
- **Anti-racist**
- **Committed to Excellence**
- **Accountable for Results**

### **MAPS will reach its mission and vision when:**

- **Each student is ready for kindergarten.**
- **Each student is reading well by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.**
- **All achievement gaps are closed.**
- **All students are college and career ready by graduation.**
- **All students graduate.**
- **Each (student, staff, family) feels safe, is welcome and is treated with dignity and respect.**

## **MAPS Race Equity Lens**

A racial equity lens is a vital decision-making tool, at the policy and practices level, because it slows down decisions to consider who has been historically excluded in shaping a specific policy or practice--and yet has experienced disproportionate impact by such decisions. When implemented with fidelity across the system, more inclusive and equitable conclusions can come forth.

By applying an equity lens to its work in policy, finance and governance, the School Board commits itself to examining multiple perspectives to assure decisions are rooted in an equitable mindset.

### **MAPS Racial Equity Lens Guiding Questions**

1. **Who benefits or is advantaged by the current system? What is the impact on this group of people?**
2. **Who is disadvantaged? What is the impact on this group of people?**
3. **How is it a systemic and/or institutional issue?**
4. **Is it out of line with our Equity Vision? How does it represent our Equity Vision?**

5. Why hasn't it been addressed? Or, how has it begun to be addressed?
6. Overall, what are the main concerns, and what are some potential action steps that could be taken to correct them?

### **MAPS Equity Definitions**

A school community is strengthened by clearly defining the use of key terms and concepts included in a racial equity framework. Work groups reviewed terms and definitions presented during the process, including *individual racism*, *institutional racism*, *structural racism*, *racial equity* and *antiracism*. In addition to adopting definitions to this listing, work groups agreed that MAPS would benefit from developing an equity glossary with an expanded listing of concepts and definitions to guide and advance further race equity work in the areas of policy, practice and positive student and community narratives at MAPS.

**Individual Racism:** refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can be deliberate, or the individual may act to perpetuate or support racism without knowing that is what he or she is doing. (Source: [Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building](#). Maggie Potapchuk, Sally Leiderman, Donna Bivens and Barbara Major. 2005).

**Institutional Racism:** refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create disadvantages for people from groups that have been historically oppressed. (Source: Evanston/Skokie Schools).

**Structural Racism:** Structural racism is racial bias across institutions and society. It describes the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors that systemically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color (Source: Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide, Annie E. Casey Foundation).

**Race Equity:** Race equity is a new condition that brings about clear remedies for historic and present day barriers producing racial disparities and disparate impacts. Race equity is not merely a value; it is a systemic and structural shift, and is actualized fairness and justice. (Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation).

**Antiracism:** Antiracism education is the active process of identifying and dismantling racist attitudes, systems, structures, policies, and practices to advance a more racially just future where the humanity of everyone is valued and uplifted. (Source: Ibram X. Kendi)