Board Policy Equity Lens Tool

Title of board policy being reviewed:

AC-Non-Discrimination and Civil Rights

Describe the purpose of this policy:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students, staff, and community members are treated fairly and protected from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. It establishes MESD's commitment to civil rights, equal opportunity, and accessible complaint procedures in accordance with state and federal law.

What is your experience with this policy:

This is a procedural fiscal governance policy that establishes the Board's responsibility for adopting the budget and determining property tax amounts or rates. Its primary equity consideration is ensuring that public participation is meaningful and that budget decisions are informed by the needs of all students and communities served by MESD. Transparent communication and consideration of equity impacts can help support responsible and equitable fiscal decision-making.

Superintendent Dr. Paul Coakley

Board of Directors Renee Anderson • Jessica Arzate • Kristin Cornuelle • Katrina Doughty • Dr. Samuel Henry • Denyse Peterson • Helen Ying

What is the plan to communicate this policy to staff, students, and/or families? What is the plan to communicate this policy to linguistically diverse students and their families?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request, the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Is this policy:

Easy to locate for staff?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request, the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Accessible to students and families?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request, the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Included in onboarding, intake, or other training?

This policy will be available in the Board's online handbook. The policy will also be posted on the district website for easy access.

Clear and easy to understand?

Overall, yes. The policy clearly identifies protected characteristics, prohibits discrimination and retaliation, and provides contact information for designated civil rights coordinators.

However, the extensive list of protected characteristics and legal references may be difficult for some individuals to navigate. Plain-language explanations and accessible complaint procedures can help ensure everyone understands their rights.

People

How are people affected positively or negatively by the policy? What potential barriers might people encounter? What barriers might be reduced by this policy?

The policy positively affects students, staff, and community members by establishing protections against discrimination and harassment in educational programs, employment, discipline, and access to facilities.

Potential barriers include language differences, fear of retaliation, lack of awareness of complaint procedures, and mistrust of institutional processes. The policy reduces barriers by establishing clear protections, prohibiting retaliation, and identifying individuals responsible for addressing civil rights concerns.

Can you identify the racial or ethnic groups affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision? Do you know the potential impacts to these populations? If you don't know, how will you find out?

The policy protects individuals of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, with particular significance for historically marginalized communities, including Black, Latino/a/x, Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and immigrant communities.

The policy has the potential to reduce discriminatory practices and improve access to educational and employment opportunities. Monitoring complaints, disciplinary outcomes, hiring practices, and access to services can help identify whether disparities persist.

Were these populations involved in any way, at any point in the development, implementation, and evaluation of this policy? If so, when and how?

The policy does not specifically indicate whether historically marginalized populations were involved in its development. However, it encourages improved human relations and establishes channels for community members to communicate concerns to MESD administration and the Board.

Ongoing implementation and evaluation can include feedback from students, families, staff, and community partners to ensure the policy remains responsive to those most affected by discrimination.

What priorities and commitments are communicated by this policy?

The policy communicates strong commitments to equity, inclusion, nondiscrimination, civil rights, accountability, and respectful treatment of all individuals.

It reinforces MESD's responsibility to provide equitable educational and employment opportunities, prevent harassment and retaliation, and ensure accessible processes for addressing concerns.

Place

What kind of positive or negative environment are we creating?

What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)

The policy promotes a safe, inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environment where individuals are protected from discrimination and encouraged to raise concerns.

Barriers to equitable outcomes may include implicit bias, systemic discrimination, language and accessibility challenges, fear of retaliation, inconsistent enforcement, and limited awareness of civil rights protections. Addressing these barriers requires ongoing education, accountability, and consistent implementation.

Power

How is the power of decision-making shared with those it affects?

How have you intentionally involved the communities affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision?

The policy provides individuals with opportunities to report discrimination, access designated civil rights coordinators, and utilize formal complaint procedures. It also encourages communication between community members, administration, and the Board.

Power-sharing can be strengthened by involving students, families, staff, and historically underserved communities in evaluating complaint procedures and identifying barriers to equitable participation.

Process

Does the policy, program, or decision improve, worsen, or make no change to existing disparities?

Does it create other unintended consequences?

The policy is designed to improve existing disparities by explicitly prohibiting discrimination and harassment across educational, employment, and organizational practices.

However, disparities may persist if individuals do not feel safe reporting concerns or if complaint procedures are not consistently implemented. An unintended consequence could be underreporting if individuals fear retaliation or lack confidence that their concerns will be addressed.

Plan

How will you reduce the negative impacts and address the barriers?

Negative impacts can be reduced through regular civil rights and anti-discrimination training, accessible and multilingual communication, consistent complaint procedures, and strong protections against retaliation.

MESD can also review complaint trends and organizational data for disparities, seek feedback from affected communities, and ensure that designated coordinators have the resources necessary to respond promptly and equitably.