

DRAFT

NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

A Resolution to support

EQUITY IN EDUCATION

from the NC State Board of Education

- WHEREAS,** the North Carolina State Board of Education values the over 1.5 million public school children in its trust as the State's most precious resources, girded by the North Carolina Constitution which declares that the people have a right to the privilege of education, and that it is the duty of the State to guard and maintain that right with Article 9 specifically detailing our legal obligation to ensure equity, demanding "equal opportunities shall be provided for all students;" and
- WHEREAS,** the State Board of Education is charged with providing a sound, basic education for every student, which includes determining and maintaining the broad strategic priorities for the Public School Units (PSUs) in our state; and
- WHEREAS,** the North Carolina Constitution establishes the North Carolina State Board of Education as a body whose duty is to make all needed rules and regulations as it supervises and administers the free public school system, subject to laws enacted by the General Assembly; and
- WHEREAS,** the NC State Board of Education recognizes that historical and ongoing systems of inequitable and inadequate resource allocation, punitive disciplinary practices, lack of access to and supports for teachers of color, unequal access to educational opportunities and supports, implicit and explicit biases, and segregation perpetuate inequity in the outcomes of students; and
- WHEREAS,** the Board acknowledges that equity is the necessary and critical component to education that helps ensure the privilege of a sound basic education for every child; and
- WHEREAS,** in 2019 the Board adopted equity and whole-child as the guiding principles for the strategic plan for our State as essential to ensuring the needs of each and every child are met – defining educational equity for our State as the belief and practice of ensuring that every student is treated in a fair and just manner, providing the necessary allocation of resources for the success of every student, and eliminating discriminatory barriers to full participation and opportunities for every student; and
- WHEREAS,** research shows that the physical, emotional and social health of students is inextricably linked to their academic achievement while barriers to success for many children include systematic racism, poverty, poor health, unsafe environments, nutrition deficiencies, limited access to services and infrastructure needed to support their long-term health and safety that will ensure their access to a quality public education resulting in rigorous academic attainment for every student, and
- WHEREAS,** the Board acknowledges that other State and local agencies, along with educators, parents, and the community are important partners, each having a significant role in meeting the needs of children by eliminating opportunity and access gaps – each sharing a common goal of supporting the health and academic achievement of every student; and
- WHEREAS,** every student requires a safe and nurturing learning environment to be empowered to use their voice, achieve their full potential through participating in a successful academic path designed to produce graduates who pursue a lifelong interest in learning, through an equitable state school system which contributes to helping students develop the mental fortitude to become productive, empathetic citizens impacting world change; and
- WHEREAS,** schools are a part and reflection of the local community; equity considerations focus attention on the PreK - 12 child; emphasizing the relationships between educational attainment and social and emotional learning, by putting the child at the center of a system designed to support both; and
- WHEREAS,** recognizing that race is a determinant of equity, equity is equality of opportunity, and there is an imperative duty to construct anti-racist systems; and
- WHEREAS,** all students thrive when equity is grounded in every aspect of the school environment – including, but not limited to - admittance or exposure to rigorous coursework through advanced placement courses, funding, disaggregated and transparent data, teacher recruitment and retention, school leadership, class content, instructional time, student support, school climate, early learning, facilities, and diverse classrooms & schools; and
- WHEREAS,** an equity framework helps to respond to social and health pandemics as well as natural disasters necessitating that all Local Education Agencies commit to engaging in equitable practices under the federally approved NC Equity Plan and State Board of Education policy and strategic plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT:

- RESOLVED,** that the North Carolina State Board of Education embraces equity as its framework to have the greatest impact on student academic success grounded in appropriate supports for student social and emotional learning and well-being; and
- RESOLVED,** that the Board will review and appropriately revise its policies using an equity lens, committing to work with the Superintendent of Public Instruction to create and maintain an equity officer to ensure consistency and continuity with this essential guiding principle inside and outside the agency; and
- RESOLVED,** that the Board will ensure culturally affirming environments in schools by urging districts to change the racist names of schools, ensure that students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, and desegregate schools wherever possible to create intergroup contact with different racial and ethnic populations; and
- RESOLVED,** that the North Carolina State Board of Education encourages Public School Units to align their strategic goals to the broad goals the Board has established for North Carolina starting with accepting and using equity as the framework to create collaborative school/community relationships to improve students' learning to meet the Constitutional mandate to provide a sound basic education by offering equitable opportunities; and
- RESOLVED,** that the Board members direct the Secretary to the State Board of Education to enter a signed copy of this resolution into the official minutes of the North Carolina State Board of Education.