

Port Townsend Schools Equity Statement

Port Townsend School District acknowledges the harmful impacts of systemic, institutional, and individual racism on past and current generations of our students, families, and staff. It is undeniable that our schools have not always provided a safe, nurturing, and empowering environment for our community members of Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, Asian, and Pacific Islander heritage. We also know there are others of mixed race heritage who have experienced racial harm who might not fit into one of these categories. We understand that eradicating racism in our schools is essential to fostering the intellectual, physical and emotional well-being of every child within our community.

In this work, we will center the experiences of our current students and invite them to co-lead our efforts. We will engage the public in an active dialogue on the change management aspects of all our initiatives, so that we model for our broader community how it can intentionally re-shape itself. We offer this acknowledgment to guide our way forward without any expectation of forgiveness for what has been done. This statement is not a testament to our enlightenment, but merely our commitment to try. It is only a first step on a long journey toward repairing our community.

All students deserve a healthy and caring environment where they feel they belong. We recognize multiple patterns of bias and racism exist in our district, and we will be working toward fostering equity and belonging regardless of factors such as race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, ability, income level, home language, or religion. This acknowledgement marks the early stages of our commitment to dismantle harmful patterns of bias and advocate for equity and belonging in our district. We expect to experience discomfort as our practices and work follow a growth mindset trajectory. We also expect that we will create discomfort for others who are content with the current environment. We are committed to ongoing listening and repairing harm to support the wellness of every community member.

We are developing a scope and sequence which will be available in the near future and will detail our plan for the next three years. This scope and sequence will outline the steps we plan to take as a district to (i) eradicate racism and exclusionary behaviors and language in our school community, (ii) eliminate hierarchies based on racial categories and socio-economic privilege within our education practices and policies, (iii) ensure that schools and classrooms are safe and inclusive for all people, and (iv) create equitable outcomes for all.

Process and Timeline

July 2021

- District partners with the Mandala Center to facilitate a community equity team that will provide suggested areas of focus and provide ongoing feedback on the district's efforts.

September 2021

- Superintendent invites all staff, certificated and classified, to join a district wide equity committee. Participants come from all four schools and all identify as white women.
- Equity committee reads stories of community members of color from Strait Up ([here](#)).

October 2021

- Staff of color begin to meet with the superintendent to provide historical context, identify growth areas, and participate in the equity committee content.
- Equity committee reviews examples below and agrees to draft an acknowledgement of harm.

November 2021

- District equity committee drafts an acknowledgement of harm.
- Staff of color provide revisions.
- Elementary working group "shifting thinking with equity in mind" provide revisions.
- Draft shared with school board directors and community equity team.

December 2021

- Equity committee, including staff of color, join with the community equity team to reflect on the process and content of the current version.
- Students provide feedback.

January 2022

- Staff equity committee processes feedback from BIPOC community members.

February 2022

- Equity committee expands to include staff and community members. Generates a list of strategies for the district to consider to promote equity ([here](#)).
- Student advisory council review acknowledgement of harm and suggest revisions.

March 2022

- Equity committee prioritizes strategies for 2022-23 ([here](#)).
- All staff review the equity statements and priority strategies.

April & May 2022

- Community invited to participate in listening sessions.
- Management team continue to participate in equity training ([here](#)).

August 2022

- Professional Learning designed and delivered.
- School board adopts Equity, Race, & Identity Policy 0100 ([here](#)).