



Pennsylvania School Boards Association

Equity Statement and Beliefs

In an effort to advance the conversation surrounding equity in public education, PSBA's Governing Board has adopted the following Equity Statement.

Purpose of Education

In our ever-changing global society, it is economically and morally vital that the commonwealth prepare all our students to be college- and career-ready, to actively participate in our democracy, and to respect, value and include diverse peoples.

The Call for Equity

Recognizing the critical role of school leaders in the provision of education for Pennsylvania's students, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association calls for equity.

Equity is the just and fair distribution of resources based upon each individual student's needs. Equitable resources include funding, programs, policies, initiatives and supports that target each student's unique background and school context to guarantee that all students have equal access to a high-quality education.

Students in Pennsylvania enter school buildings with their school supplies, ready to learn. Students also bring with them unique gifts, individualized learning styles, skills, experiences and cultural identities. A significant number of our students also carry the weight of poverty, racism, sexism, trauma, and other forms of prejudices and conditions that effect how they perform in school. Achieving equity ensures that students' identities will not predetermine their success in schools.

As school leaders, we have an obligation to ensure that each and every child has the opportunity to fulfill the purpose of education by addressing the individual needs and concerns of students. This is essential in order to eliminate the commonwealth's achievement and opportunity gaps.

The *achievement gap* is the academic disparity or differences between groups of students. Typically, the achievement gap pertains to major differences in academic indicators such as test scores and graduation rates between white students and students of color, economically

advantaged and economically disadvantaged students, male and female students, English proficient and English learner students, and special education and non-special education students.

The *opportunity gap* represents how the education system delivers education to different groups of students. Disparities in educational delivery lead to different academic, social and economic outcomes between students in Pennsylvania due to the inequitable distribution of opportunities, resources and funding.

In the pursuit of equity, school leaders must assess our actions locally to overcome institutional barriers and create opportunities so that each and every child has the tools and supports necessary to achieve his or her highest potential.

The association is dedicated to advancing the conversation and enhancing equity research focused on best practices in shaping equity policy and programming in our schools and communities throughout Pennsylvania.