

# Equity Action Plan

## Division of Long-range Planning



January 17, 2014

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The Division of Long-range Planning supports the Organizational Culture of Respect compact and the need to promote equitable practices in the work place. The Division recognizes that in a culture of respect individuals are aware and understand the impact of their behavior and decisions on others, and have an awareness, understanding, and acceptance of others' interests, viewpoints, culture, and background.

The Division of Long-range Planning's strategic plan has a number of elements that address the culture of respect and equity in the work place. These are listed below as excerpts of from the Division strategic plan.

### Mission

The mission of the Division of Long-range Planning is to inform and prepare decision makers and the community to address changes in enrollment and instructional programs through development of high quality data analysis, planning strategies, and long-range facility plans.

### Core Value

The Division of Long-range Planning states five core values in its strategic plan; (1) learning, (2) relationships, (3) respect, (4) excellence, and (5) equity.

In regard to equity, the core value is described as follows:

#### **Equity:**

We believe school system plans need to be developed in consideration of our diverse student body and workforce. Plans must promote equity among all race/ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Similarly, division operations must reflect the high value we place on the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of our staff.

Equity also is reflected in a number of the Division's strategic plan goals, including the following:

# Equity Goals

## **C. Customer Focus**

4. Division planning activities are conducted in an open manner that enables customers and stakeholders to access planning information and become involved.

## **E. Workforce Focus**

3. Division work is distributed equitably, utilizing the strengths of staff members, in an environment characterized by teamwork and commitment.
4. The division recruits, hires, and retains the highest quality employees who work in a collaborative manner that fosters team spirit and a culture of respect
5. The division promotes the social emotional and physical well-being of staff, resulting in high staff morale.

In addition to the goals addressing equity, a number of Division strategic plan strategies promote equitable practices, including the following:

# Equity Strategies

## Strategy 4

Foster an environment where staff is empowered to exercise personal leadership, teamwork is encouraged, and contributions recognized.

## Strategy 5

Promote staff development and the use of new technologies to address the dynamic planning environment.

## Strategy 7

Promote equitable practices in the workplace and when staff interacts with the community.

# Action Plan

In order to implement equitable practices the following action steps have been identified and will be pursued in the coming year.

### Develop cultural competence

Awareness and appreciation of differences among staff and customers is critical to avoiding bias and prejudice. Opportunities to learn about different cultures, race, and ethnic groups will be provided to staff. Activities include the formal Study Circle process, readings, videos, and simple conversations about personal experiences among staff.

Activities that celebrate diversity will be held, such as recognition of important holidays in other cultures, will be held. For example, recognition activities may include lunches with the food of the culture being celebrated.

To further promote cultural competence in the division, staff will be directed to include diversity topics in their professional development plans, and to find new and different ways to learn more about different cultures and race and ethnic groups.

### Maximize performance through diversity

The Division recognizes that diverse opinions, perspectives, experiences and backgrounds contribute greatly to the quality of work we do. Activities to take advantage of diversity within the division include exchanging information on work assignments to gain new perspectives.

In regard to external customers and stakeholders, efforts to broaden the input received in planning work to include non White race and ethnic groups—that currently are the predominant voice of the community—will be made. This will include efforts to reach typically underrepresented groups during school boundary studies and roundtable discussion processes.

### Communication

The division will develop methods to communicate the diversity of the county, for the benefit of staff as well as MCPS leadership. In particular, presentation of demographic information is helpful in portraying the make-up of the county and the changes over time. Broader state and national trends in diversity will be communicated as well as more localized trends.

In working with external customers and stakeholders, the division will provide translators for public meetings, and to provide planning materials in languages present in the communities that are being studied. Efforts to lower language barriers—that commonly reduce the diversity on community input—will be made.

### Hiring and orientation of staff

At times when positions open up in the division, efforts to expand the pool of candidates will be made so that a diverse group may be interviewed for positions. Once a candidate is hired, orientation activities will focus on high expectations, that include appreciation of diversity and pursuit of equitable practices.

## Leadership

Division leadership will model behaviors that demonstrate respect for differences and appreciation for the benefits of diversity in the workplace, and in the make-up of the customer and stakeholder planning committees that are integral to the division's work. Leadership also will promote opportunities to celebrate diversity in the division.