

Education to Promote Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency

Watertown Public Schools shall design its educational facilities, programs and activities from an equity-based perspective, to meet the varying needs of all students. In order to ensure that all individuals have access to an education that is free of racism, bias, and other forms of discrimination and bigotry, and to support the intellectual development and growth of students of all ages, WPS will teach and actively identify and challenge individual or systemic acts of racism and other forms of discrimination. Further, WPS will express strong declarations of solidarity with people of diverse human and cultural backgrounds to eradicate forms of racism, bias, discrimination and prejudice in spaces of teaching and learning, not only promoting cultural diversity and expanding linguistic knowledge, but explicitly pushing for anti-racism by participating in ongoing professional development for educators to succeed in countering racism and other forms of bias, discrimination and bigotry.

PURPOSE

- To affirm the Watertown Public School's desire to create an educational community guided by its three core values— Excellence, Equity, and Community.
- To affirm WPS's deep commitment to providing every student equitable access to the educational opportunities, rigor, resources, and supports that are designed to maximize the student's academic success and physical, psychological, and social/emotional well-being, and ensuring all staff are empowered to do their best work.
- To assert WPS's belief that each and every student matters, each student's individual characteristics are valuable, and in particular, that educational outcomes should never be predictable by any individual's actual or perceived personal characteristics, and that equity demands intensive focus and attention to eliminate all gaps in student achievement.
- To establish and promote a framework that prepares all students to live and work in a globally-minded society; fosters a positive learning environment that embraces all unique and individual differences; and, uses an equity lens to consider the impact of any program, practice, decision, or action on all student groups with a strategic focus on marginalized student groups.
- To affirm WPS's unwavering commitment that all staff will be culturally proficient, and demonstrate mutual respect without regard to any individual's actual or perceived personal characteristics
- To acknowledge and provide space for questioning.....
- To uphold WPS's core values, and ensure compliance with all federal, state, and local nondiscrimination laws.

Cross references:

[AC](#) - Nondiscrimination

[ACA](#) - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex

[ACAB](#)- Sexual Harassment

[ACE](#)- Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability

IMB-

[JBB](#) - Transgender and Gender Non-conforming Students

[JB](#)- Equal Educational Opportunities

Guidelines and Definitions

Definitions pursuant to this policy:

“Gender-based harassment” is unwelcome conduct of a nonsexual nature based on a student’s actual or perceived sex, including conduct based on gender identity, gender expression, and nonconformity with gender stereotypes.

“Harassment” is conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s educational opportunity or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment because of his or her race, national origin, creed, color, religion, gender, age, economic status, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy status, genetic information, gender identity or expression, and/or disability.

Examples of conduct that can contribute to a hostile environment include vulgar and/or abusive comments and jokes, comments, and stories relating to an individual’s race, national origin, creed, color, religion, gender, age, economic status, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, gender identity or expression, and/or disability.

“Harassment and Discrimination Based on Disability” – For an otherwise qualified person with a disability (as defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and its implementing regulations and American with Disabilities Act), exclusion from participation in, denial of benefits of, or otherwise subjection to discrimination under any program or activity which receives or benefits from federal assistance on the basis of the disability.

“School Administrator” is the building principal or program administrator, or designee if the principal/program administrator is not available.

“Sex-based harassment” includes sexual harassment and gender-based harassment.

“Sexual Harassment” – One form of sex-based discrimination, this includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature as well as harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity or non-conformity to gender stereotypes that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's educational opportunity or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive learning environment.

Sexual harassment includes conduct that may also be criminal in nature such as rape, sexual assault, stalking, and similar offenses. Examples include: groping, innuendo, graffiti and notes of a sexual nature, unwanted caress, name calling, touch, staring, requests for sexual favors, propositioning, personal remarks, invading space, gestures, dirty jokes, online rumors, whistling, mocking, sexting, sexual violence, and stalking. In certain circumstances, a single severe episode can constitute harassment.

“Hostile Environment” - Hostile environment harassment occurs when verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct on the basis of any legally protected characteristic by another student, a school employee, or a third party is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity or to create a hostile or abusive educational environment.