



## Equity Plan

Operational Plan  
2016-2019

## Background

In March, 2016 the Okemos Public Schools' Board of Education adopted the Equity Plan (2016-2019). The Equity Plan provides a clear direction for the district's continued work in promoting equity and actions that are free from discrimination. Specifically, four areas of focus were identified: Authentic Selves and Relationships, Cultural Competence, Instruction/Curriculum/Assessments and Policies/Practices/Procedures. Each area of focus has 1 to 3 goals, and each goal has 1 to 5 broad strategies identified to accomplish the specific goal. The next step was to "operationalize" the plan, identifying specific, actionable strategies detailing how to turn the District's vision into a reality.

In May and June of 2016, the Board of Education hosted three community conversations. Parents/Guardians and staff from each of the three levels (elementary, middle and high school), as well as high school students, were invited to interact with Board members and administration for the purpose of brainstorming meaningful, actionable strategies for each goal. Possible strategies were generated for students, staff, parents/guardians and the Board of Education, recognizing that together, we are committed to creating and sustaining an inclusive and safe culture.

The brainstormed actionable strategies were synthesized by a consultant, the central office administrative team and leadership council. Then the following groups were asked to assist in prioritizing the work over the next three years, including the year to initiate the action, as well as identifying "who" would be responsible for the actionable step:

- Leadership Council
- Principal committees – by level
- United in Social Progress (high school students)
- District Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee
- Board of Education
- Parent Council

The District Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee, as well as the Board of Education will receive updates and monitor progress. We will also update the community, staff and students on our efforts.

*Note: The Equity Plan (2016-2019) can be accessed by clicking on the Cultural Diversity tab on the district's website: [www.okemosk12.net](http://www.okemosk12.net)*

## AUTHENTIC SELVES AND RELATIONSHIPS

**GOAL 1:** Create a school environment where students, parents/guardians/families and staff recognize and appreciate the diverse attributes and identities of one another by honoring self-expression and individuality.

### Strategies:

- A. Actively engage students, parents/guardians/families and staff in opportunities to explore, reflect and learn more about themselves, one another and their diverse backgrounds.
- B. Actively engage students, parents/guardians/families and staff in opportunities to examine their conscious and unconscious bias.

Actionable Step	Strategy	2016 -17	2017 -18	2018 -19	Who
Actively engage students, parents/guardians/families and staff in opportunities to explore, reflect and learn more about themselves, one another and their diverse backgrounds.	A	X	X	X	preK-12 and District Staff Students preK-12 Parents/Guardians
Actively engage students, parents/guardians/families and staff in opportunities to examine their conscious and unconscious bias.	B	X	X	X	preK-12 and District Staff Students preK-12 Parents/Guardians
Staff engage in survey/focus groups to identify meaningful and relevant activities to support this goal	Goal 1	X	X		K- 12 and District Staff
Students engage in survey/focus groups to identify meaningful and relevant activities to support this goal	Goal 1	X	X		Students 7-12 Staff
Parents/Guardians engage in survey/focus groups to identify meaningful and relevant activities to support this goal	Goal 1	X	X		Staff Parents/Guardians
Create intentional opportunities to share and appreciate diverse cultures through student projects, songs, traditional clothing, presentations, international celebrations, and within the curriculum as appropriate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intentionally invite parents who are open and available to share about diverse cultures and backgrounds</li> </ul>	A	X	X	X	preK-12 Staff Parents/Guardians
Student leadership teams develop diversity programs and encourage peers to share and celebrate their diversity Examples: United in Social Progress; Goodwill Ambassadors, Diversity team	A	X	X	X	Students 5-12; elementary as appropriate Staff
Integrate and highlight books, materials and resources that promote diverse backgrounds and cultures in schools and LMC (See Goals 3 and 6)	A	X	X	X	Pre K-8 Staff

Actionable Step	Strategy	2016 -17	2017 -18	2018 -19	Who
Opportunities for staff sharing of ideas/strategies that address strategies to engage students in learning about diversity and bias during professional learning time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide resources and education related to bias during quality PD</li> <li>• More open dialogue and training about socio-economic differences</li> </ul>	A, B		X	X	preK-12 Staff
Provide PD during PTO meetings on self-awareness, diversity and bias similar to staff PD ( Examples: evening break-out sessions, Be Excellent for families)	A,B		X	X	9-12 Staff
Parent groups promote and encourage families to attend international/heritage/cultural events in district and locally (Examples: MSU, Lansing)	A	X	X	X	Parents/Guardians
Facilitate community conversations on equity topics; courageous conversations.	A, B		X	X	Board
Update community on progress of Equity Plan and Goals	Goal 1	X	X	X	Board/Superintendent
Model inclusiveness; responsiveness	Goal 1	X	X	X	preK-12 and District Staff Board

**GOAL 2:** Promote authentic relationships (student to student, student to staff, staff to parent/guardian/families, and staff to staff to name a few) in order to build trust and respect, engage in open and honest communication to establish a collaborative team.

**Strategies:**

- A. Utilize restorative practices to create understanding, teach and build empathy, and heal relationships.
- B. Increase skill sets/tools for effectively working with people from different cultures and backgrounds.
- C. Increase engagement of students, parents/guardians/families and staff in our school community.

Actionable Step	Strategy	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Who
Staff engage in survey/focus groups to describe school culture to inform next steps	Goal 2	X	X		preK-12 and District Staff
Students engage in survey/focus groups to describe school culture and inform next steps	Goal 2	X	X		Students 5-12 Staff
Increase engagement of parents/guardians/families in school community. Parent groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify solutions to provide childcare to support families in conferences, parent council meetings etc. . . increasing parent/guardian engagement. (NHS, ACTION etc. . . )</li> <li>• engage in brainstorming to get ideas for more parent involvement and participation (representative of our diversity)</li> </ul>	C Goal 5		X	X	Parents/Guardians
Utilize restorative practices to create understanding, teach and build empathy, and heal relationships; resolve peer to peer conflict	A	X	X	X	K-12 and District Staff Students K-12
Increase skill sets/tools for effectively working with people from different cultures and backgrounds; diverse attributes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development to continue to recognize, support, and appreciate differences.</li> <li>• Develop and implement ongoing activities and strategies to develop trust and positive relationships with students.</li> <li>• Continue to build language and skills to communicate (verbally and non-verbally with students from a diverse population.</li> </ul>	B	X	X	X	preK-12 and District Staff
Develop opportunities for peer-to-peer tutors across diverse attributes	A		X	X	5-12 Staff
Workshop for parents/guardians on restorative practices	A	X			5-8 Staff
Engage in community building activities between students to build deeper peer relationships/trust/respect.*	Goal 2	X	X	X	Students K-12 Staff
Students within diverse teams/groups develop skills to promote honest and open discussion, collaborate on projects, build trust and respect*	B, C		X	X	Students K-12 Staff

\*age appropriate

## CULTURAL COMPETENCE

**GOAL 3:** Increase cultural competence of **students** to decrease conscious and unconscious bias and its intended and unintended outcomes of discrimination.

### Strategies:

- A. Actively engage in learning activities to foster self-awareness of different perspectives, conscious and unconscious bias, cultural blindness, inherent privileges, etc.
- B. Engage in specific learning opportunities to increase knowledge and understanding of diverse attributes and culture.
- C. Develop skills to become cultural advocates and agents of social justice, to promote an inclusive and safe (emotional and physical) environment, to interact effectively respond to all cultural differences in a knowledgeable, respectful and sensitive manner.

Actionable Step	Strategy	2016 -17	2017 -18	2018 -19	Who
Provide learning activities that promote open dialogue about diversity through specific programs (Example: Emmett Till) as well as integrate into everyday instruction.	A, B	X	X	X	9-12 Staff 7-12 Students Community organizations
Actively participate in diversity events to share diversity/cultural experience; Parents/Guardians encourage and support student attendance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Days/ Nights- (clothing, food, history, language, art, and family dynamics)</li> <li>• Map- each student puts flag on map and shares/reports something from that area's culture</li> <li>• Sharing family traditions/holidays- discover universals/ similarities</li> <li>• Festival of cultures- performance based on (music/ dance) where each student was born</li> </ul>	B Goal 5	X	X	X	preK-12 Students Parents/Guardians
Parents/guardians share diverse perspective and experiences with students	A, B	X	X	X	Parents/Guardians
Parents/guardians support cultural enrichment homework.	A, B	X	X	X	Parents/Guardians
Provide opportunities for student exchanges with other districts	A, B, C			X	9-12 Staff
Field trips and cultural museums	A, B,		X	X	preK- 12 Staff
Engage diverse community members to share diverse perspectives in a fun, engaging manner during early release activities	A, B		X	X	K-4 Staff, Community Ed.

Actionable Step	Strategy	2016 -17	2017 -18	2018 -19	Who
Provide opportunities/activities for students to take a different perspective Examples: What I think I would take if I had to leave (empathy for refugees) What makes you different? The same?	A, C	X	X	X	K-12 Staff Students 7-12
Integrate authentic, embedded, natural and continuous discussion to enhance cultural competency of students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embed learning experiences within the curriculum</li> <li>Utilize current events to engage in courageous conversations</li> </ul>	A, B		X	X	preK-12 Staff
Locate and showcase diversity within our LMC's (see Goals 1 and 6)	A,B	X	X	X	preK-12 Staff
Provide proactive opportunities for students to interact with various groups of students. Establish and develop norms to engage in courageous conversations	A, B, C		X	X	5-12 Staff Students 5-12
Participate in mentoring programs (Chieftain Champs) to provide positive role models to our younger students	A, B	X	X	X	Students 9-12
Participate in diverse community service volunteering experiences that are inclusive of all groups	A, B		X	X	Students 7-12
Participate in student groups/clubs such as PRISM (GSA), Black Student Union (BSU), United in Social Progress, Chieftain Nation etc. Interaction between clubs	C A,B	X	X	X	Students 7-12
Actively engage in learning activities to self- reflect, raise self-awareness of different perspectives, bias, cultural blindness, inherent privileges, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared vocabulary</li> <li>Recognize diversity is not always visible - engage in activities to offer opportunities to see diversity of each other;</li> <li>Self-assessment tool</li> </ul>	A		X	X	Students 5-12
Actively share their diverse experiences and perspectives (OHS press article, writing, drama, video etc. . .)	C	X	X	X	Students 7-12

**GOAL 4:** Increase cultural competence of **staff** to decrease conscious and unconscious bias and its intended and unintended outcomes of discrimination.

**Strategies:**

- A. Actively engage in professional development to raise self-awareness of different perspectives, bias, cultural blindness, inherent privileges, etc.
- B. Engage in specific learning opportunities to increase knowledge and understanding of diverse attributes and culture.
- C. Develop skills to become cultural advocates, fostering the skills we want to instill in our students and parents/guardians/families.
- D. Develop skills to interact effectively and respond to all cultural differences in a knowledgeable, respectful and sensitive manner.
- E. Develop skills to teach our diverse student population, promoting engagement of all.

Actionable Step	Strategy	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Who
Actively engage in professional development to raise self-awareness of different perspectives, bias, cultural blindness, inherent privileges, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared vocabulary</li> <li>• Recognize diversity is not always visible - engage in activities to offer opportunities to see diversity of each other;</li> <li>• Self-assessment tool</li> </ul>	A	X	X	X	preK-12; District Staff
Engage in specific learning opportunities to increase knowledge and understanding of diverse attributes and culture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize diversity is not always visible</li> <li>• Understand culturally responsive behavior expectations; incorporate into lessons</li> </ul>	B D	X	X	X	preK-12; District Staff
Ensure new staff, as well as interns are aware of the Equity Plan and our efforts	A, B	X	X	X	preK-12, District Staff
Work with staff to develop relationships that model cultural competence; enhance their knowledge and build empathy; facilitate development of staff skills (Example: workshops)	A, B, D		X	X	Parents/Guardians
Students engage in open, honest communication with staff * <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Experiences</li> <li>• Concerns</li> <li>• Insights and perspectives</li> </ul>	A, B, D	X	X	X	Students K-12

\*age appropriate

**GOAL 5:** Increase cultural competence of **parents/guardians/families** to decrease conscious and unconscious bias and its intended and unintended outcomes of discrimination.

**Strategies:**

- A. Utilize teachable moments (providing information within the context of real-life scenarios) and effectively respond to cultural differences.
- B. Engage the community in conversations on the topic of cultural competence, increasing knowledge and understanding of diverse attributes and culture.
- C. Engage the community in conversations to raise self-awareness of different perspectives, bias, cultural blindness, inherent privileges etc.
- D. Engage in ongoing communication regarding relevant diversity topics, implementation of strategies, activities and opportunities.

Actionable Step	Strategy	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Who
Utilize teachable moments (providing information within the context of real-life scenarios) and effectively respond to cultural differences.	A	X	X	X	preK-12 and District Staff
Engage the community in conversations on the topic of cultural competence, increasing knowledge and understanding of diverse attributes and culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide continued opportunities for dialogue, input etc.</li> <li>• PTOs/Family Council meetings to share information or have “safe” discussions about parent perspectives.</li> </ul>	B	X	X	X	preK-12 and District Staff Board/Supt Speakers Parents/Guardians
Engage the community in conversations to raise self-awareness of different perspectives, bias, cultural blindness, inherent privileges etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PTOs/Family Council meetings to share information or have “safe” discussions about parent perspectives.</li> </ul>	C		X	X	preK-12 and District Staff Parents/Guardians Board
Engage in ongoing communication regarding relevant diversity topics, implementation of strategies, activities and opportunities.	D	X	X	X	preK-12 and District Staff Board
Opportunities to invite parents/guardians into school community to experience, observe and share our diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish diversity events to share student/families diversity/cultural experiences</li> <li>• Parent groups sponsor diversity celebrations and cultural events</li> </ul>	A, B, C, D Goal 6	X	X	X	preK-8 Staff Parents/Guardians

Actionable Steps	Strategy	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Who
Regular educational presentations for community (Example: Emmett Till) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize local resources like MSU for presentations</li> </ul>	B, C, D	X	X	X	5-12 and District Staff
Establish interactive, intentional opportunities to establish rapport with ALL parents/guardians to enhance comfort level for parents/guardians. (See Goal 2)	Goal 5	X	X	X	preK-12 staff
Share with parents/guardians what is happening in school/classrooms regarding cultural competence (newsletters, email, website etc. . .)	D	X	X	X	preK-12 and District Staff
Make high school flex videos (produced by students) available to parents/guardians and staff	B, C, D	X	X	X	K-4 Staff
Students actively share with parents/guardians what they learn at school about language and culture.*	B, C, D	X	X	X	K-12 Students
Clubs/groups/students can generate materials to share with parents/guardians*	B, C, D		X	X	K-12 Students
Share cultural enrichment activities (homework) with family*	D		X	X	K-12 Students
Attend international day events; cultural activities <i>Note: Calendar of events from each school</i>	Goal 5	X	X	X	Board/Supt

## ***INSTRUCTION/CURRICULUM/ASSESSMENT***

**GOAL 6:** Ensure instruction, curriculum and assessment practices are inclusive of diverse perspectives, cultures and our global world.

### **Sstrategies:**

- A. Create and promote opportunities to include perspectives that are not represented in textbooks and state approved standards.
  1. *Include literature (text, international film, media, current events, etc.) that is reflective of diverse authors, backgrounds and perspectives in all of our classrooms.*
  2. *Create safe, brave and inclusive environments for perspectives to be shared.*
- B. Teach students to think critically about concepts/issues that include diverse perspectives and experiences through project based learning and real world applications.
- C. Create and evaluate assessments that are free of unintentional bias and allow students of different backgrounds to demonstrate what they have learned.
- D. Increase student engagement by providing opportunities to share diverse backgrounds and learn from one another.
- E. Utilize assessment practices to ensure students have the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge in a variety of ways.

<b>Actionable Step</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>2016 -17</b>	<b>2017 -18</b>	<b>2018 -19</b>	<b>Who</b>
Include literature (text, international film, media, current events, etc.) that is reflective of diverse authors, backgrounds and perspectives in all of our classrooms.	A	X	X	X	preK-12 and District Staff
Create safe, brave and inclusive environments for perspectives to be shared.	A	X	X	X	preK-12 Staff Students
Create and evaluate assessments that are free of unintentional bias and allow students of different backgrounds to demonstrate what they have learned. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use diversity lens to evaluate assessments</li> </ul>	C	X	X	X	preK- 12 and District Staff
Utilize assessment practices to ensure students have the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge in a variety of ways.	E	X	X	X	K-12 Staff
Utilize technology to gain experiences, make authentic connections, virtual tours	B, D	X	X	X	K-12 Staff

Actionable Step	Strategy	2016 -17	2017 -18	2018 -19	Who
Showcase cultures at school events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create video/audio clips that represent our linguistic, cultural, religious diversity</li> <li>• Encourage students to bring something traditional (global and American)</li> <li>• Utilize art pieces</li> </ul>	A, D Goal 3	X	X	X	preK-12 Staff  Students preK-12
Develop protocol for examining textbooks, materials and classroom instructional tools for equity and inclusiveness; utilize a diversity lens	A, D		X	X	preK-12 and District Staff
Review/adjust/differentiate homework practices; remove barriers to allow equal access	E		X	X	K-12 Staff
Increase library collections that include diversity, languages, and culturally inclusive topics ( <i>See Goals 1 and 3</i> )	A	X	X	X	Pre K-12 Staff
Ensure visuals within instructional materials represent diversity (Note: See Goal 8)	A	X	X	X	preK-12 and District Staff
Examine how to diversify curricular offerings; expand curricular experiences to include broader cultural impact and contributions (classes/electives)	A, B		X	X	5-12 and District Staff
Provide writing opportunities for diverse perspective/voice/empathy/knowledge (from another's point of view or perspective)	B	X	X	X	5-12 Staff

**GOAL 7:** Analyze assessment data, specifically demographic data and develop strategies to close the achievement gap and increase the academic proficiency of all students.

**Strategies:**

- A. Utilize district and school “data days” and PLCs to review data for individual and/or groups of students to plan for interventions and progress monitoring.

Actionable Step	Strategy	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Who
Make learning targets, success criteria and student data more visible to the students.  Students review personal achievement data, learning targets and assume ownership: self-advocacy, identify what does/doesn't work	A		X	X	K-12 and District Staff  Students K-12
Develop a plan to address and monitor instruction and interventions/strategies using lens of cultural competency to address individual and group needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine demographic data</li> <li>• Differentiate interventions through lens of cultural competency; focus instruction and materials to address student's interests and needs</li> <li>• Utilize multiple testing and alternative assessment tools to allow for different learners to demonstrate what they know in unique ways (Ex: portfolios, projects)</li> </ul>	A	X	X	X	preK-12 and District Staff
Utilize relationship with student/parent as data to identify unique needs; potential life challenges that are impacting performance; dialogue about methodology matches for children	A	X	X	X	preK-12 Staff Parents/Guardians
Parents brainstorm strategies and actively offer input to increase purposeful conversations with students about progress/data/learning (PT conferences/PTO meetings)	A		X	X	Parents/Guardians
Re-think “achievement” to be more inclusive of diverse life and career pathways	A	X	X	X	Parents/Guardians
Provide professional development on data collection, analysis, interventions and unbiased assessment strategies	A		X	X	preK-12 and District Staff
Provide targeted materials for parents/guardians to utilize with students to promote learning at home	A		X	X	preK-12 Staff

## Polices/Practices/Procedures

**GOAL 8:** To ensure policies, practices and procedures are equitable and free from discrimination.

### Strategies:

- A. Review, revise and implement incident reporting mechanisms (students, staff and parents/guardians/families) in an open and safe environment.
- B. Review, revise and implement hiring practices for recruiting and retaining a diverse staff.
- C. Review, revise and implement policies, practices and procedures to ensure they are “user friendly” and accessible.
- D. Create and evaluate assessments that are free of unintentional bias and allow students of different backgrounds to demonstrate what they have learned.
- E. Increase student engagement by providing opportunities to share diverse backgrounds and learn from one another.

Actionable Step	Strategy	2016 -17	2017 -18	2018 -19	Who
Review, revise and implement incident reporting mechanisms (students, staff and parents/guardians/families) in an open and safe environment.	A	X			preK-12 and District Staff
Review, revise and implement hiring practices for recruiting and retaining a diverse staff. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use diversity as a lens to select hiring committee members; include diverse perspectives</li> <li>• Review questions, practices, interview team for unconscious bias</li> <li>• Review hiring practices, employment postings to develop a more diverse candidate pool</li> <li>• Review assignments and placements to reduce unintended messages (Example: women in science; men in elementary classrooms)</li> <li>• Continue to monitor “demographics” and use a diversity lens</li> </ul>	B	X	X	X	preK-12 and District Staff
Educate Board on demographic data to enhance understanding	Goal 8	X	X	X	District staff
Diverse student leadership committee to review building practices/policies (Note: involve both formal and informal leaders to ensure all voices are heard.	E		X	X	7- 12 and District Staff  Students 7-12

Actionable Step	Strategy	2016 -17	2017 -18	2018 -19	Who
Create surveys/focus groups to gather student perceptual data regarding discipline, curriculum, etc. Determine next steps	A, C, E	X	X		8-12 Staff
Review student placement policies for curricular offerings; inclusive (Examples: AP, special education, gifted and talented etc. . . .)	D		X	X	5-12 and District Staff
Use a diverse “stakeholder” committee to ensure student/parent handbooks are user friendly	C	X			preK-12 Staff Students 7-12 Parents/Guardians
Involve diverse parents/guardians : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assist with translating materials to make more accessible to all groups</li> <li>review materials for bias</li> <li>proactively share diverse perspectives, experiences and insights in a healthy, productive manner.</li> </ul>	C Goal 8	X	X	X	Parents/Guardians
Explore technology to provide equal access (translations; disabilities Etc.)	C	X			District Staff
Review practices, forms and communication channels through diversity lens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Including but not limited to socio economic status and financial assistance</li> </ul>	Goal 8	X	X	X	preK-12 and District Staff
Review website and other district media to ensure images/pictures illustrate our diversity ( <i>see Goal 6</i> )	Goal 8	X	X	X	preK-12 and District Staff
Increase student engagement by providing opportunities to share diverse backgrounds and learn from one another.	E	X	X	X	K-12 and District Staff
Create a protocol (set of questions) to guide policy/decisions	Goal 8	X			Policy Committee Board
Review board policies for non-discrimination; prioritize review and create timeline	Goal 8	X	X		Policy Committee Board
Use the “lens” of cultural competence in decision making such as, but not limited to: textbooks, course/program adoptions, student handbooks, budget priorities ( <i>reductions, programming/staffing, revenue, expenditures</i> )	Goal 8	X	X	X	Board
Create interest and promote inclusion among cultural groups to serve on the Board that is reflective of the community (Goal 8)	Goal 8	As needed			Board