

MEMORANDUM

To: Utah State Board of Education
From: Advisory Committee on Equity of Educational Services for Students (ACEESS)
Subject: Supporting underrepresented, historically marginalized, and underserved students
Date: September 9, 2020

In our role as a USBE equity advisory committee, we would like to provide input and recommendations to the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) as it pertains to the current climate in our state and schools for our marginalized students. We are collectively concerned about our students who are witnessing and navigating the ongoing social unrest caused by the increase in racialized and xenophobic public discourse, the disturbing images of the killing of unarmed Black citizens by the police, and the numerous protests the Black Lives Matter movement has organized across the nation in response to these unsettling realities. Both children and adults are trying to make context of our new world. Many of our students have experienced and will continue to experience marginalization resulting from deficit thinking about their racial and ethnic cultures, xenophobia, continued overrepresentation in behavioral referrals, and underrepresentation in advanced classes.

Considering the complex lived experience of our diverse community, we must seek to understand our students and strive to intentionally engage in anti-racist practices to ensure students feel safe and welcomed at school. We wish to advise USBE to consider the following recommendations.

1. The USBE adopts a resolution denouncing racism and racial inequalities in our Utah schools.
2. Educators and administrators are provided anti-racist, bias/equity literacy professional learning, as well as opportunities to learn about themselves and minoritized groups to raise awareness and promote change within our educational system.
3. Educators are provided with professional learning opportunities to conquer the digital divide, so ALL students have access to learning if school districts must rely on digital learning or use a hybrid model for students.
4. Families who experience difficulties with technology and academic language are provided with support to navigate digital content and help their students.
5. Relevant and inclusive curricula, academic content, and resources are provided to reflect the experiences of minoritized groups.

Thank you for your time and consideration in reviewing these recommendations. We, as a committee, appreciate all your efforts to support our underrepresented, historically marginalized, and underserved students throughout the State of Utah.