



Rubric: Becoming an Equity-Minded School Board Member

This rubric is our first attempt to describe the critical difference between being equity-focused and moving towards liberation in a way that we believe will dramatically increase the opportunity for our nation's children of color to thrive and self-actualize. This rubric was created after a year of working with our School Board Partners fellows and mentors in order to understand the current state of our nation's school boards and what is necessary to finally close our country's opportunity gap. We expect this rubric to change and improve over time as we learn alongside you. We plan to supplement it with specific examples, policies and templates as they are created. If you have suggestions or comments on this rubric, please email carrie@schoolboardpartners.org. Thank you for engaging with this concept, and thank you to the SBP fellows and mentors who provided feedback.

In many cases you will not fit perfectly into a level. Each of these areas are complex and nuanced, and this rubric is meant to be illustrative, not comprehensive.

This rubric should be used in conjunction with our [Rubric for becoming an Impactful School Board Member](#)

	Level 1 - Unaware	Level 2 - Towards Equity	Level 3 - Towards Liberation
CHANGING HEARTS AND MINDS			
Board representation	Our board does not reflect our school community. We have not made any effort to recruit or support diverse candidates, nor to set a community goal regarding board diversity.*	Our board reflects the student population and community along some demographic dimensions, but not all. We have not worked to create an active pipeline of Board members who reflect the communities in our district, or put in place meaningful supports for current and prospective board members of color.	Our board is representative of our student body with regards to race/ethnicity.* We have eliminated barriers to serving, including financial and childcare-related. We believe that representation is not a nice-to-have but is critical for the effective functioning of our democracy on behalf of everyone in our community. Our White school board members have committed to being anti-racist allies, and we openly and regularly discuss what that means. We hold information sessions for potential school board candidates with a focus on making them inclusive and accessible to diverse candidates.

Board mindset	<p>Our board has never discussed issues of racism or oppression in our schools. Our board members have not completed individual or group race and equity training. Our board is not able to effectively engage in difficult conversations, especially across racial differences.</p>	<p>Our board has individually or as a group completed race and equity training. However, no follow-up on the training has been conducted to implement a plan, policy, or community engagement to move the district toward a racially equitable District. Our District is gathering data from staff to understand if POC feel like they belong and that our district is inclusive.</p>	<p>Everyone on our board has completed racial equity training and has a deep understanding of the ways our public schools were built on racist and oppressive systems and policies that continue to cause the opportunity gaps we see today. Our board has worked collaboratively towards being able to have effective dialogue about difficult subjects across differences, including across racial differences. All Board Members commit to having our District goals and vision be rooted in an anti-racist and equity lens. We expect the Superintendent and the district-level staff to adopt this mindset across all departments and policy implementation. When creating our meeting agenda, we are thoughtful about the representation of speakers, topics covered, and ways data is presented. Our Board is committed to using our individual and collective political capital to provide political cover for difficult decisions made by the District to implement anti-racist policies.</p>
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<p>Understanding of historic racist policies</p>	<p>Our board has not studied the long history of racist policy in America and how it continues to impact communities of color today.</p>	<p>Some people on our board have studied the history of racist policy-making in America. Very few, if any, school board conversations acknowledge that history and the need for significant investment and focus in order to mitigate centuries of disinvestment and harm.</p>	<p>Our board has committed to studying and understanding the big structural policies that have resulted in cumulative disinvestment and harm to communities of color, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GI Bill implementation - Redlining - Mass incarceration - Segregation by city & neighborhood as well as integration & bussing - School funding based on local property taxes - Parental school choice - Native American boarding schools <p>In addition, we understand the compounding impact of intersectionality with being poor, LGBTQ+, speaking English as a second language or navigating a disability.</p>
<p>Educator mindset</p>	<p>Our district does not offer or encourage racial equity training for educators. Our district does not listen effectively to disenfranchised groups.</p>	<p>Our district offers optional racial equity training for educators, but it is not required and has touched only a fraction of the adults our students come in contact with. In surveys and focus groups, teachers and staff of color report that they do not feel that our district is inclusive. Most of our teachers and staff report that</p>	<p>Every teacher and school staff member has completed racial equity training. We provide ongoing PD and conversation about how teachers and school staff can effectively facilitate discussions about racism and other difficult topics. Our district has acknowledged the history of systematic racism that is still perpetuated in today's systems and all staff are committed to interrupting that reality. Our</p>

		they are unprepared to lead conversations in their classrooms about difficult subjects including racism, microaggressions and bullying. A focus on equity differs from school to school based on the individual principal and teachers.	district has committed to ensuring that teachers of color feel that they belong, and survey results indicate that POC agree that our district is inclusive. We have a multi-year plan to review and revisit this work since it is not a one-and-done set of activities.
POLICY & PRACTICE CHANGE			
Curriculum	We select curriculum without considering diversity, equity and inclusion.	We select curriculum with more diverse photographs and stories than before, but that is still not anti-racist.	Our school board has acknowledged that historically all curriculum was written through a white lens and has told lies, erased the perspectives of other people, and can cause " curriculum trauma ." Our district has worked to select curriculum that is anti-racist, and where that is unavailable we have built a bank of supplemental resources that teachers can use to ensure their curriculum is representative of traditionally marginalized cultures and perspectives.
Discipline policy	Our discipline policy does not acknowledge or track racial disparities.	We track racial disparities in our discipline rates but have not effectively changed policies to decrease that disparity.	Our discipline policy acknowledges the historical disparities inherent in discipline and the direct contribution to the school-to-prison pipeline. For example, we are committed to tracking discipline by race and have set a goal to have no racial disparities in our discipline data. We consider implementing alternative discipline policies such as restorative

			justice and positive behavioral supports and interventions, as well as reducing the harshness of penalties that disproportionately affects kids of color.
Funding differentiation	All schools receive an equal number of teachers for a given number of students by formula, rather than receiving funding to hire teachers that schools can allocate according to student needs and gaps, resulting in significant disparity in the amount of money spent on schools filled with historically disadvantaged students. This occurs because low income students tend to be taught by less experienced and less expensive teachers while more privileged students tend to be taught by more experienced and more expensive teachers.	Our district has implemented a funding structure in which funding follows students (including accounting for teacher pay), and higher need students are allocated more funding in the funding allocation formula. However, the differentiation is not significant enough to overcome the challenges faced by high-need student populations and specifically the historic and compounding disinvestment in communities of color.	Funding follows the student. Funding is significantly differentiated to acknowledge the long-term historical disinvestment in communities of color and the impact that has on student's readiness for school. Extra funding is invested in research-based and community-supported practices that help level the playing field.
Educator hiring and retention	Our district has not prioritized hiring principals, teachers and staff who are POC, and does not track or report data on the racial diversity of staff.	Our district wants to hire more POC, but we struggle to recruit enough qualified principals and educators who are people of color.	Regardless of perceived obstacles, our Board and Superintendent holds our district accountable for hiring practices that result in leadership, teaching and support staff that reflect the racial demographics of our students. Staff who are people of color feel like they belong in our district according to an annual survey.

			<p>We implement innovative practices to recruit and retain POC, including examples such as a pipeline program to help POC become EAs and teachers; providing bonuses to POC; mentoring teachers of color to become principals, and actively recruiting at universities that prioritize diversity. Incentives are provided to encourage our best teachers to teach at our most historically disadvantaged schools. We regularly analyze our hiring, retention, promotion and compensation data and there are no gaps between teachers based on race.</p>
<p>Data analysis</p>	<p>Data is reviewed a few times a year. We talk mostly about averages across the district or perhaps at the school level. Data is sometimes disaggregated by race and we know we have an achievement gap, but we haven't made it a top priority to close</p>	<p>Certain data is disaggregated by race and other demographics in order to address test scores. Once analyzed, the data is not placed into a plan or policy to address the gaps.</p>	<p>Closing the opportunity gap is our Board's top priority when looking at data. Every single data point we look at is disaggregated by race and other demographics. Overall success is not considered achieved if there is a gap between white students and students of</p>

	the gap.		color. We relentlessly analyze Data at the district, school and student level and we take ownership for helping every single individual student achieve their highest potential. We review data at the school and class level to ensure there are no racial disparities in access and outcomes for special programs, including AP and IB classes, CTE classes, extracurriculars and sports. (i.e. tracking by race) If there are racial disparities we hold school and district level staff accountable for figuring out why and addressing those underlying issues, and we follow up regularly. We have taken steps to ensure that schools are not grading students of color at <u>lower standards</u> than their white peers.
Parent choice and boundaries	Our district is made up of primarily neighborhood schools, where students are zoned to attend the school in their neighborhood. We have some choice schools but the make-up of their student body does not reflect the demographics of our district at large. Fundraising done by each PTAs stays at that school.	Our district has an open enrollment system where many students can apply to attend schools outside their neighborhood, with preference given to students who live in the attendance zone. We do not provide transportation to schools outside a student's attendance zone. The demographics at our magnet and choice schools do not reflect the make-up of our overall student body and students of color do not regularly access our highest performing	Our board is committed to ensuring that historic housing policy and neighborhood segregation does not continue to impact parent choice or the quality of school options available to students in each neighborhood. We have an open enrollment system that includes all district, charter and magnet schools and is weighted to ensure balanced demographics across all schools. Transportation and before & after school care are provided for all schools so that all families can exercise their option to attend any school. Fundraising done by PTAs is pooled across the district and

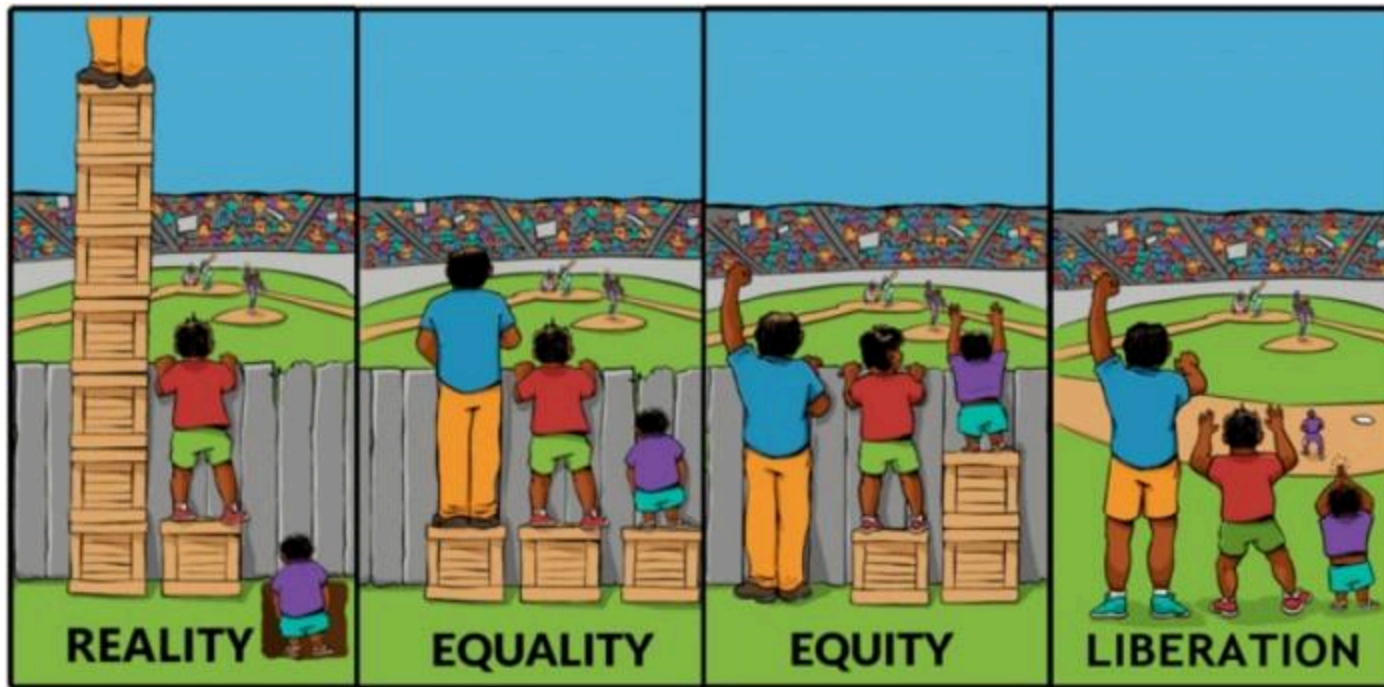
		<p>schools. We are aware that housing policy and historic segregation impacts attendance zones, but have not taken steps to counteract it. 50% of fundraising by each PTA stays at the school, and 50% goes into a pool that is distributed equally across schools.</p>	<p>redistributed using an equity formula.</p>
<p>Wrap around services & preschool</p>	<p>Our district does not provide wrap-around services or free public preschool.</p>	<p>Our district occasionally offers wrap-around services and preschool on site, but usually relies on partners and does not ensure that all students, with a particular focus on students of color, are receiving needed services.</p>	<p>Our district acknowledges that the health and wellbeing of our students impacts their ability to learn, and that historical and compounding disparities persist between black-white health outcomes, family incomes, etc. We take responsibility for ensuring that every student has access to free public preschool, food, health & dental services and mental health services. We partner whenever possible, but where partners don't exist, we provide the services ourselves and make the necessary tradeoffs in order to do so. We use our power as an elected official to advocate and influence city-wide policy and partnerships across entities to ensure our student's needs are met.</p>
<p>Economic Impact</p>	<p>Our district does not take location or ownership into consideration when making purchasing or partner selections.</p>	<p>Our district prioritizes locally-owned companies and vendors when possible.</p>	<p>Our board and district acknowledges that we have a large economic impact as one of the biggest purchasers in our community. We understand that systemic policies have made it more difficult for people of color to</p>

			<p>start and scale businesses. We prioritize vendors and businesses that are local and are minority or women owned businesses. We have a DBE policy and meet or exceed the policy's DBE participation numbers.</p>
COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT & SUSTAINING THE CHANGE			
Community engagement	Our board does not officially engage with the community outside of school board meetings.	Our board engages with the community on a limited basis once a year on predetermined topics to hear their input. Our board does not offer space to hear from the community on issues of their concern and we do not have a plan to address the concerns of the community (as opposed to our own priorities).	Our board and/or individual board members actively engage constituents, which could include: newsletters, social media, office hours, advisory committees, neighborhood association meetings, churches, town halls, etc. Engagement and communication is provided in multiple languages and takes place at a variety of locations and times that are welcoming to diverse constituents. The strategic direction of our district is shaped with direct participation from the community.
Community participation	We have not done anything to remove barriers to participation.	We have taken some steps to increase participation in school board meetings.	We have worked hard to include everyone in our community and to remove barriers to participation. That might include providing child care and food at school board meetings, holding school board meetings in community gathering places where people already are, providing translation services, livestreaming on Facebook and/or TV, etc. We arrange our agendas so that topics that involve the community are at the beginning. Feedback is regularly requested from constituents

			and is collected using best practices, such as affinity-based focus groups, trained facilitators, and surveys with statistically valid participation and responses disaggregated across demographics.
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^Equity is not the same as Equality. Check out [this link](#) for a quick explanation of why they should not be used interchangeably. At School Board Partners, we are working towards the liberation of black and brown children and families. This is a useful graphic representation of what that means:

**Please note that this rubric is focused specifically on work around racial equity. It does not discuss the work needed to address the needs of students who identify as low-income, have special needs, are English Language learners, experience a disability, or identify as LGBTQ+ - not because they aren't also important, but because being an anti-racist school board member requires an additional set of considerations to interrupt our nation's 250 years of systemic racism and oppression based on skin color. In some but not all cases, you could substitute "race" with "class" or "gender" or "sexual orientation" or "disability." We also believe that any action a school board takes to be anti-racist will likely benefit all students, especially those traditionally marginalized by our country's institutions.*



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Partial reading list to learn more about white privilege and how to be anti-racist:

- [White Supremacy Culture by Tema Okun](#)
- *White fragility* - Robin DiAngelo
- *How to be an antiracist* - Ibram X Kendi
- [The Invisible Knapsack](#) by Peggy McIntire
- *The person you mean to be* - Dolly Chugh
- *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love and Liberation* - Rev angel Kyodo Williams, Lama Rod Owens
- [Blog post](#) from Laura Brewer (facilitator of Holding Whiteness Responsibly)
- [Seeing White Podcast](#) - Scene on Radio