

June 8, 2026

RE: Policy 2,.10.010-P

Delivered via email to schoolboard@pps.net

Dear Board Members at Portland Public Schools,

The PPS Policy Committee held a brief discussion of [Policy 2.10.010-P](#) [Racial Educational Equity Policy] at its most recent meeting and approved the cosmetic changes before you.

The following issues merit further consideration:

The Board's goal of equal outcomes for all students is flawed and unachievable. The District is responsible for providing educational services. It does not control educational outcomes.

Stating that achievement gaps are “unacceptable” ensures that District employees will always be considered failures. That is not a reasonable standard.

Furthermore, no one wants equal outcomes. When it comes to equality, people want an equal opportunity to become unequal.

It doesn't matter whether we are discussing chemistry exams, chess tournaments, basketball playoffs, or school board elections, people don't dream of a tie score. We play to win. Your policies should reflect reality.

The policy asserts that there are longstanding ***“inequities between white students and students of color.”*** Where is the evidence? Disparate outcomes prove nothing.

I submitted a Public Records Request to PPS on this topic several years ago and received only a few references to national publications. No information was provided showing systemic discrimination by race, gender, or any other metric.

Moreover, the District has been operating an ***“Equity Funding Policy”*** for over a decade but has never bothered to evaluate its effectiveness. The [CBRC](#) has called attention to this several times and been ignored.

Equity funding is now the subject of a federal civil rights [lawsuit](#), yet you still can't show that it's worth defending.



The most dangerous part of the Racial Educational Equity Policy is the statement, ***“The responsibility for the disparities among our young people rests with adults, not the children.”***

This is incorrect and unfair to your employees. Student achievement is the result of many factors, most of which the District has little control over. The most important variables are:

- Parental involvement
- Attitude and effort on the part of students
- Peer influence
- Strong classroom teaching
- School culture, including high expectations and classroom discipline

To say that students have no agency is wrong and establishes a destructive culture of victimhood.

I have no comment on the quality of teaching at PPS schools, but it certainly seems like the Restorative Justice approach to discipline and the Equitable Grading policy are both poorly designed and likely to undermine the goal of academic achievement. The Board should eliminate these policies unless empirical evidence shows they are improving academic performance.

The fifth paragraph on page one defines equity to mean ***raising the achievement of all students while narrowing the achievement gap.***

Those two goals are in conflict. If all students are performing better at the same rate, the achievement gap will never be closed.

The purpose of any Board policy should be to provide operational guidance to employees at the classroom level. Policy 2.10.010-P fails to do that. On the contrary, it sets impossible goals and makes life for professional educators more difficult.

I suggest you repeal this policy or send it back to committee for further refinement.

Sincerely,

John A. Charles
Cascade Policy Institute

