

QuickPoint! PPS' Failed Equity Policy: No Evidence, No Results

By Naomi Inman | Testimony by John A. Charles, Jr.

Portland Public Schools briefly revisited its Racial Educational Equity Policy ([Policy 2.10.010-P](#)) at the June 9 board [meeting](#) — and the contradictions are hard to ignore, as Cascade president John Charles underscored in his [letter](#) to board.

Despite more than a decade of implementation, the District's Equity Funding Policy (which Cascade has [analyzed](#) extensively) has never been evaluated for improving student achievement. Yet, the Board continues to insist on “equal outcomes” for all students, a goal no school district can deliver because the premise itself is flawed.

No parent can guarantee *identical outcomes* for their own children. Good parents—like good teachers—provide equal opportunities and support so each child can reach his or her unique potential. The same should hold true for PPS. They control instruction, not the innumerable variables that shape achievement. Declaring achievement gaps “unacceptable” simply guarantees that staff will always be branded as failures for an impossible metric.

What is worse, the policy treats unequal outcomes as proof of discrimination without providing evidence. When asked for documentation of systemic bias, PPS produced nothing beyond generic national reports from activist organizations. Meanwhile, the District has operated an Equity Funding Policy for more than a decade without evaluating real outcomes, even as they face a federal civil-rights [lawsuit](#).

Most troubling, the policy claims that adults are at fault for all disparities, not students. This erases student agency and ignores the factors that matter most such as [family structure](#), student effort, strong teaching, and disciplined classrooms. The District's own initiatives — from Restorative Justice discipline to Equitable Grading — have never been shown to improve academic performance.

Finally, the policy demands that PPS “raise achievement for all students” while also narrowing achievement gaps. Those objectives cannot be met at the same time.

When a policy cannot be implemented, cannot be measured, and cannot be defended, it should be repealed or rewritten.

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