

Constructing an MCPS Equity Message

Messaging Essentials

1. Speak from your own perspective in your own voice and style.
2. Make clear your interest, e.g., parent, grandparent, member of a community advocating for children.
3. Do not speak for a group unless you have the organization's permission. **Note:** Only the president of the NAACP Branch or designee may speak for the organization.
4. Do not be defensive or argumentative in tone; avoid insults.
5. Be aware other community speakers may have opposite views but avoid going off your message or extemporaneously trying to address their views.
6. Speak in a calm and positive manner.
7. Keep the message simple and clear.
8. Use the equity talking points in your own words. (Choose at least 2; you do not need to use all of them.)
9. Write in support of MCPS commitment to equity, actions taken and/or planned in the MCPS Strategic Plan. Personalize your comments as much as possible. Consider stating your appreciation of the Board's unanimous approval of the Strategic Plan or that you support their unanimous approval.

Equity Talking Points

- Equity is the foundation of positive school climate and culture.
- Equity provides a positive experience with respect and appreciation for ALL students.
- Equity is giving every student the support they need without advancing one student over another.
- Equity enables all students to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, first in classrooms and later in communities and society.

Why Speak in Support of MCPS Commitment to Equity?

- Governor Youngkin's [Executive Order One](#), states that he is taking steps "to end the use of inherently divisive concepts."
- It directed, "the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall immediately review all guidelines, websites, best practices, and other materials produced by the Department of Education to identify those that promote or endorse divisive or inherently racist concepts."
- Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jill Barlow's [30-Day Interim Report to Gov. Youngkin](#) recommended rescinding the following as promoting and endorsing "divisive or inherently racist concepts:"
 - All Resources Included on VDOE's [EdEquityVA](#) Website, Including EdEquityVA Resources, and Resource Repository ii, [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Audit Tool](#)
 - [Navigating EdEquityVA: Virginia's Roadmap to Equity](#)
 - All Resources Included on VDOE's [Culturally Responsive Website](#)
 - ["Teaching 9/11"](#) EdEquityVA Web Series, [VDOE :: Virginia L.E.A.R.N.S.](#)
- The removal of equity resources from the Virginia Department of Education as a "divisive concept" signals a threat to all school divisions' equity work. We want the MCPS School Board to know that we support the focus on equity in the Strategic Plan.

Equity Focus of [MCPS 2021-2026 Strategic Plan](#) (mcps.org→ About Us→ Strategic Plan)

- **Read MCPS 2021-2026 Strategic Plan and View [YouTube Video](#)** Overview of the Plan
- **Strategic Plan Background**
 - Planning Team 151 members: teachers, staff, students, community members, parents; 53 meetings; more than 2,000 hours of work
 - Unanimously Approved by the School Board on December 1, 2020
 - Includes Mission/Beliefs; Objectives/Parameters; Equity Statement/Principles of Equity; and 5 Objective Areas: Instruction, Learning Environment, Poverty, Equity, and Mental Health

Explicit References to Equity in the MCPS Strategic Plan

Mission: We value diversity, and we are committed to equity and inclusion.

Belief 6: All people deserve equitable access to opportunities and resources

Objective 4: Equity Each student will have equitable access to resources, programs, opportunities, and learning experiences regardless of barriers.

Parameters

2. We are committed to equity as a priority in all decisions.
3. We will not tolerate discrimination based on race, culture, gender, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, national origin, disability, or religion.

Equity Statement

MCPS will intentionally address the needs of all individuals so that each person can achieve their maximum potential.

Principles of Equity

- **Impartiality:** Ensure equal treatment of all, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, culture, gender, gender identity, and other protected group status.
- **Opportunity:** Eliminate barriers and obstacles by providing needed resources through planned, systemic strategies that focus on the core of teaching and learning.
- **Access:** Ensure that all individuals have the same rigorous educational standards, quality programs, and tiered supports.
- **Sense of Belonging:** Promote social and emotional well-being and ensure individuals have the ability to self-advocate and influence decisions affecting them.

Equity Objective

Provide each student with equitable access to resources, programs, opportunities, and learning experiences.

Action Plans: Refer to the [Strategic Plan for the Action Steps](#) for each of the following:

- **Cultural Proficiency**
 - Establish a system-wide approach that intentionally embeds cultural proficiency to identify and address biases that are intentional, automatic, unintentional, deeply ingrained, universal, and able to influence behavior.
- **Access to Courses**
 - Develop a means to afford all students access to all courses offered by MCPS.
- **Behavior Management**
 - Partner with community organizations to meet the basic needs of families which are necessary for students to be ready to learn.
 - Partner with local, state, community, and governmental organizations to ensure that all children will start kindergarten ready.
 - Develop a clear and structured plan to manage behavior that is accessible and easily understood by administrators, teachers, students, and parents.
- **Equity Statement**
 - Use and promote an equity statement and principles.

Read Gov. Youngkin's [Executive Order Number One](#) (2022)

Definition of "inherently divisive concepts"

For the purposes of this Executive order "inherently divisive concepts" means advancing any ideas in violation of Title IV and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, including, but not limited to of the following concepts

- one race, skin color, ethnicity, sex, or faith is inherently superior to another race, skin color, ethnicity, sex, or faith;
- (ii) an individual, by virtue of his or her race, skin color, ethnicity, sex or faith, is racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or subconsciously,
- (iii) an individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of his or her race, skin color, ethnicity, sex or faith,
- (iv) members of one race, ethnicity, sex or faith cannot and should not attempt to treat others as individuals without respect to race, sex or faith,
- (v) an individual's moral character is inherently determined by his or her race, skin color, ethnicity, sex, or faith,
- (vi) an individual, by virtue of his or her race, skin color, ethnicity, sex, or faith, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race, ethnicity, sex or faith,
- (vii) meritocracy or traits, such as a hard work ethic, are racist or sexist or were created by a particular race to oppress another race.

Read Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jill Barlow's: [30-Day Interim Report to Gov. Youngkin](#)

The Report was sent on February 23, 2022. It rescinds certain policies, programs, and resources deemed to "promote discriminatory and divisive concepts" and "contains a sampling of critical race-theory materials."

A second Report is due to the Governor 60 days after the Interim Report. It will continue to identify policies, programs, training, or curricula that the Superintendent of Public Instructions deems fall within the definition of "divisive concepts."

Definition of "inherently divisive concepts" includes "Critical Race Theory and its progeny" as well as concepts listed in EO-1 as "advancing any ideas in violation of Title IV and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Resource Articles

- *Richmond Times-Dispatch* (2.25.2022) [Youngkin Administration Scraps Education Policy Materials Deemed "Divisive"](#)
- The Roanoke Times (3.30.2022) [VEA, State NAACP Push Back on Youngkin's Plans to Ax "Divisive" Resources.](#)