

# “Equity” in the Kirkwood Schools

## What You Should Know

“Equity” has become a common term in the past few years. Its vagueness evokes different reactions and feelings in every individual. KFEI’s intent with referencing KSD’s approach to Equity is to inform.

As of February 2022, the front page of the [District’s Equity page](#) includes the below statement. As you read this and explore the District’s Equity resources, we encourage you to consider the implications.

The screenshot shows the Kirkwood School District website. The header includes the district logo and navigation links: DISTRICT HOME, SELECT A SCHOOL →, and TRANSLATE →. The main navigation bar contains: Our District, Teaching & Learning, Family Resources, Activities, Community, Equity, and Prop R. A search icon is on the right. The breadcrumb trail reads: Kirkwood School District > Equity > Homepage.

### EQUITY

- Resources
- KTOC Scholarship
- Kirkwood Educational Equity Speaker Series
- KSD Task Force Report
- Task Force Updates
- Equity Calendar
- Equity Task Force Meeting Minutes

“Be the change that you wish to see in the world.” — Mahatma Gandhi

We want to express our sadness and outrage at another wrongful death of yet another unarmed Black man, George Floyd. Our hearts go out to George Floyd’s family and his three children. At this time of turmoil, we must acknowledge that racism exists in our society and join together to take a stand for positive change. My heart is breaking for our children, staff, and families of color who must know that we will not stand by and watch anyone hurt another person simply because of the color of their skin.

We, as adults, must take a stand and work for this change. We must do this work together. Please join us, and KSD’s incoming Superintendent Dr. Ulrich, as we rededicate our commitment to make meaningful change by combating bias and racism within ourselves, our schools, and our community. There is no place for racism in our schools. Our role as educators is to create conversation and listen to the hurt, the confusion, and the pain of our students, families, and staff to promote healing and address the systemic structures within our schools.

There is no one correct way to deal with the fear, anger, and pain that is associated with racism and these feelings should not be ignored. We all process our experiences differently. As an organization, we have a role to play in supporting students, families, and staff in processing the trauma of the past two weeks, but more importantly, of the past 400 years. We will learn from you and with you during this time of grieving so we can be better for our students and staff every day.

June 5, 2020

In reports provided at the [July 2021](#) and [December 2021](#) Board meetings every staff member is identified by a letter that denotes their race. While **hiring and retaining a diverse and qualified staff is important** for any organization, KSD’s focus on race in hiring has become primary. *When did we start looking at our staff in this way?*

The stated objective is to have every category of position, from custodial to administrative levels, at every building reflect “at least” the diversity of Kirkwood. This active goal violates federal and state discrimination laws (see Title VII) as well as KSD policy. *Why is the primary standard and focus for hiring not that KSD hires the most qualified educators and staff members, no matter their race?*

Similarly, the recent introduction of Affinity Groups has set racial requirements on student participation. This also violates Title VI, which protects students from discrimination based on race or national origin. Talk with your kids about these things and be sure to understand how conversations about race and equity are approached in the classroom, through displays in the hallways, etc.

Questions to consider:

- What are the implications of EQUITY as compared to EQUALITY?
- When did we begin categorizing and measuring our staff according to race?
- How is that impacting the quality of their work environment?
- Are our District leaders considering the implications of separating kids by race?

To reiterate, **KFEI aims to inform the public** about what is occurring in KSD, and while this is a delicate subject it is an important one about which every community member deserves to be aware.

Part of an Affinity Group display in the main entrance hallway of a KSD middle school:



Sample page of KSD presentation of all staff broken down by race (other schools & full presentation available [here](#)).



As of December 3, 2021

| Certified Staff   | %GT Count of Race | Race | Count |
|-------------------|-------------------|------|-------|
| Administrator     | 0.73%             | B    | 1     |
| Administrator     | 0.73%             | H    | 1     |
| Administrator     | 4.38%             | W    | 6     |
| Certified Teacher | 0.73%             | A    | 1     |
| Certified Teacher | 5.11%             | B    | 7     |
| Certified Teacher | 0.73%             | H    | 1     |
| Certified Teacher | 0.73%             | P    | 1     |
| Certified Teacher | 81.02%            | W    | 111   |
| Counselor         | 1.46%             | B    | 2     |
| Counselor         | 4.38%             | W    | 6     |

| Support Staff           | %GT Count of Race | Race | Count |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------|-------|
| Assistants              | 5.13%             | B    | 6     |
| Assistants              | 5.98%             | W    | 7     |
| Custodial               | 0.85%             | A    | 1     |
| Custodial               | 4.27%             | B    | 5     |
| Custodial               | 0.85%             | H    | 1     |
| Custodial               | 6.84%             | W    | 8     |
| Instructional           | 0.85%             | H    | 1     |
| Instructional           | 11.97%            | W    | 14    |
| Maintenance             | 0.85%             | B    | 1     |
| Nurses                  | 2.56%             | W    | 3     |
| Office Personnel        | 3.42%             | B    | 4     |
| Office Personnel        | 17.09%            | W    | 20    |
| Other                   | 0.85%             | B    | 1     |
| Sports/Activities Coach | 10.26%            | B    | 12    |
| Sports/Activities Coach | 28.21%            | W    | 33    |

