

REGULATION

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: ACA, GMA, JFA, JFA-RA, KLA, KLA-RA

Responsible Office: Deputy Superintendent of Schools

Human Relations

A. PURPOSE

To provide a framework for the establishment, implementation, and maintenance of human relations programs, services, and activities that strengthen human relations practices and cultural competency in MCPS

B. BACKGROUND

The MCPS community reflects the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of a global society. This diversity requires that MCPS prepare all students and employees to understand how to productively and constructively live and work in a multicultural environment. An environment of mutual respect and high expectations must be proactively created and maintained for all without regard to race, color, gender, religion, ancestry, national origin, marital status, age, disability, or sexual orientation. The Board of Education will not condone acts of insensitivity, disrespect, bias, verbal abuse, harassment, bullying, physical violence, or illegal discrimination toward any person. In addition, the Board of Education articulated an expectation that there would be respect for individuals regardless of socio-economic status, intellectual ability, or physical characteristics.

An essential component of an environment infused with respect is the ability to resolve concerns informally where they occur. A climate that supports and promotes informal resolution values the ability of individuals to engage in constructive, collaborative problem solving. However, it is also critically important to have formal processes that ensure the rights of individuals. These processes must address the general area of individual and group dynamics, human relations, as well as specific concerns regarding claims of discrimination.

C. DEFINITIONS

Cultural competence is skill in communicating and interacting effectively with people from diverse cultures, backgrounds, and experiences.

Discrimination is either treating one person unfairly over another, or disparate treatment, based on legally identified factors unrelated to their ability or potential, such as race, color,

gender, religion, ancestry, national origin, marital status, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

Diversity encompasses differences and/or similarities based on, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, language, socio-economics, age, and presence of a disability.

Exemplary human relations are the individual and group dynamics that demonstrate and promote respect for the rights and integrity of each individual and the recognition of the value of each group as an important part of the community.

D. PROCEDURES

1. Create an environment of respect
 - a) Increased awareness
 - (1) The Offices of the Deputy Superintendent of Schools, Deputy Superintendent for Strategic Technologies and Accountability, and the Chief Operating Officer will create a climate which is free of bias and discrimination and ensure that all schools, offices, and work locations under their auspices are provided with the staff development programs and services that foster cultural competence throughout the school system.
 - (2) The Office of School Performance will assist school based staff in creating a climate which is free of bias and discrimination and fosters positive human relations, cultural competence, skill in assessing human relations needs at the school level, and supporting programs and services which advance the goals of Policy ACA, *Human Relations*.
 - (3) The Office of School Performance will assist local schools in identifying and eliminating barriers that limit any student from participating in the full scope of the educational experience.
 - b) Curriculum
 - (1) Through the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, curricula, programs, and instructional materials will be reviewed to

ensure that they accurately portray the history, contributions, and culture of the diverse groups in our society.

- (2) The Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs will ensure that MCPS curricula and instructional materials reflect respect for diversity, including gender equity.
- (3) The Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs will ensure the provision of staff development for curriculum specialists and other Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs staff members on incorporating diversity into the curriculum.

c) Professional Development

All professional development programs and services will be predicated upon the principles that all students can learn and succeed, and diversity is both respected and valued.

Training in sexual harassment and hate/violence will be provided.

The Office of Organizational Development will provide professional development to build the cultural competence of staff to ensure high expectations for all students in our diverse community. Professional Development programs and services will prepare personnel to do the following:

- (1) Understand self as a cultural being by recognizing attitudes and patterns of thinking and behaving in one's own culture
- (2) Understand and respect the beliefs, values, and patterns of thinking and behaving in cultures other than one's own
- (3) Recognize and correct stereotyping, discrimination, bias, and prejudice as it impacts teaching and learning
- (4) Foster greater intergroup understanding
- (5) Recognize and foster equitable participation of students in school programs and activities
- (6) Recognize and foster equitable participation of staff in work place programs and activities

d) Resolving Human Relations Disputes

- (1) Every attempt should be made to resolve human relations concerns promptly and informally in the location where the concern arose, unless inappropriate.
- (2) Principals are primarily responsible for addressing human relations concerns that are raised at the local school level. School administrators or the complainant may contact the appropriate community superintendent or the chief school performance officer and request assistance in resolving a complaint.
- (3) Administrators are primarily responsible for addressing human relations concerns that arise in the work setting. Administrators are required to notify their supervisor and/or the Office of Human Resources when the issue is not resolved informally.
- (4) Concerns or complaints by parents or other adults brought on behalf of a student arising from human relations concerns that are not successfully mediated informally should be directed to the formal complaint process outlined in Policy KLA and Regulation KLA-RA, *Responding to Inquiries and Complaints from the Public*.
- (5) Concerns or complaints brought by students arising from human relations concerns should be resolved in accordance with the procedures delineated in Regulation JFA-RA, *Student Rights and Responsibilities*.
- (6) Community members bringing concerns or complaints arising from human relations concerns within MCPS that are not successfully mediated informally should be directed to the formal complaint process outlined in Policy KLA, *Responding to Inquiries and Complaints from the Public*.
- (7) The process detailed in Policy KLA, *Responding to Inquiries and Complaints from the Public*, provides:
 - (a) The Appeals/Transfer team will appoint a hearing officer to direct an investigation of the complaint.

- (b) If requested, a community partnership specialist may assist the hearing officer by completing a detailed investigation.
 - (c) The hearing officer will conduct a hearing with the appropriate participants to receive additional information and allow the complainant due process to express his/her views.
- e) Resolving Disputes Based on Claims of Discrimination
 - 1) All staff will be made aware of the policies and regulations related to creating and maintaining a nondiscriminatory environment.
 - 2) Dispute Resolution of Discrimination Complaints
 - (a) Every attempt should be made to resolve concerns regarding discrimination in the location where the concern arose, unless inappropriate.
 - (b) Principals are primarily responsible for maintaining a nondiscriminatory environment at the local school level. Principals may collaborate with the Office of Human Resources and/or the appropriate community superintendent when needed.
 - (c) Complaints of discrimination between and among employees must be investigated and reported to the Office of Human Resources, and, where appropriate, further investigations will be conducted.
 - (1) If the investigation determines that the claim is not substantiated, the complainant will be notified in writing explaining the findings and appeal rights.
 - (2) If the investigation finds that the claim is substantiated, the Office of Human Resources, in collaboration with the complainant and Association Relations, will develop an acceptable resolution. The resolution will be provided to the complainant in writing.
 - (d) Concerns or complaints of illegal discrimination by parents or other adults brought on behalf of a student that are not

successfully resolved should be directed to the formal complaint process outlined in Policy KLA and Regulation KLA-RA, *Responding to Inquiries and Complaints from the Public*.

- (e) Concerns or complaints of illegal discrimination brought by students should be resolved in accordance with the procedures delineated in Regulation JFA-RA, *Student Rights and Responsibilities*.
 - (f) Community members bringing concerns or complaints of illegal discrimination within MCPS that are not successfully mediated informally should be directed to the formal complaint process outlined in Policy KLA, *Responding to Inquiries and Complaints from the Public*.
 - (g) Complaints of illegal discrimination filed with other local, state, and federal agencies, such as Montgomery County Commission on Human Rights, Office of Civil Rights (OCR), or Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), will be reviewed by the Office of Human Resources, the compliance officer, and legal counsel.
- f) In accordance with federal, state, and local requirements, names of various staff responsible for monitoring the legally mandated requirements of this regulation will be published.
- g) All complaints related to sexual harassment, discrimination, hate-violence, and the Americans with Disabilities Act will be documented. Data will be monitored by the compliance officer in order to identify areas of concern and develop appropriate interventions.

Regulation History: New Regulation July 5, 2005.