

Working Towards Equity at BPS

Equity is when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential. We have a shared fate as individuals within a community and communities within society. All communities need the ability to shape their own present and future.

To move towards this vision of equity, BPS is striving to become an anti-racist, multicultural organization. Below is a more detailed framework for how we think about equity.

Making Equity Real. We make the promise of opportunity real when:

- All Portlanders have access to high-quality education, living wage jobs, safe neighborhoods, basic services, a healthy natural environment, efficient public transit, parks and greenspaces, decent housing and healthy food.
- The benefits of growth and change are equitably shared across our communities. No one community is overly burdened by the region's growth.
- All Portlanders and communities fully participate in and influence public decision-making.
- Portland is a place where your future is not limited by your race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, income, where you were born or where you live.
- Underrepresented communities are engaged partners in policy decisions.

Centering Equity - BPS strives towards equity in all our work

We do this because:

- We believe in racial and social justice.
- We care about **interconnectedness and responsibility to future generations** – We want a city where we are better on a good day, so we can bounce back from a bad day. It requires that everyone thrive and participate.
- We are **pragmatic** – Equity is about minimizing opportunity costs of lost human potential.
- We know that doing so influences both our **process and product** – We are committed to changing “business as usual” for City government. We are committed to changing how we interact with the public by seeking out those impacted but under-represented.

Our equity and environmental justice goals include:

- Reducing disparities.
- Minimizing burdens.
- Extending community benefits.
- Increasing the amount of affordable housing.
- Affirmatively furthering fair housing.
- Proactively fighting displacement, both residential and commercial; economic and cultural.
- Improving socio-economic opportunities for under-served and under-represented populations.

We implement equity by:

- Leading with race. This means centering the needs of communities of color in our work and questioning the implications of our work on communities of color first.
- Intentionally engaging under-served and under-represented populations in decisions that affect them.
- Working towards collaborative governance. This means co-creation of our plans, policies and programs with communities who are most impacted. This requires relationship building and front-loading community engagement, rather than asking for feedback and consultation after decisions have already been made. Specifically recognizing, addressing and preventing repetition of the injustices suffered by communities of color throughout Portland's history.
- Making infrastructure decisions that advance equity.
- Investing to reduce disparities.
- Equitably distributing costs and benefits.
- Creating opportunities for community wealth building.
- Reviewing policy decisions for their impact on different communities.
- Identifying ways to mitigate potential harm and maximize opportunity for groups that are underserved and underrepresented.
- Using an equity lens to build accountability and responsiveness with the broader community, ultimately improving the performance of government for everyone.

We also consider:

- **Process Equity:** Is the decision process inclusive, fair, and open? Does it consider how different impacted communities can influence process? (Who is included, does the process shift the power dynamic.)
- **Distributional Equity:** Is there fair and just distribution of benefits and burdens to all residents in the community? (Where are the resources? Where are we putting investments?)
- **Intergenerational Equity:** How does local history impact the current context? Do the decisions and actions today break the cycle of disparities so there is equity for future generations? (Sustaining change over time, correcting past harms.)