

Policy IU: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/23/2025 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 07/23/2025

The Holmes County Consolidated School District will avoid taking certain actions and engaging in discriminatory practices regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Decisions involving employment, academic opportunities, and student engagement will be based solely on individual merit, qualifications, and academic performance, without consideration of an individual's race, sex, color, national origin, or expressed opposition to, or refusal to affirm or participate in, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The district will teach and establish policies and curriculum in accordance with the definitions of the terms "female," "male," and "sex" as provided in MS Code 1-3-85 and 41-141-3(a). Nothing in this policy shall be construed to violate current accreditation terms or state or federal law.

The district will not:

1. Establish or maintain a DEI office.
2. Engage in divisive concepts as defined under Mississippi law.
3. Hire or assign employees or contract with a third party to perform the duties of a DEI office.
4. Require, request, or consider DEI criteria in the hiring process, contract renewal process, or promotion process.
5. Give preference based on race, sex, color, or national origin to an applicant for employment, or when awarding a contract in the district.
6. Maintain any programs or courses that promote DEI concepts or concepts that promote transgender ideology, gender-neutral pronouns, deconstruction of heteronormativity, gender theory, sexual privilege, or any related formulation of these concepts.
7. Require, as a condition of continued enrollment, employment, or being awarded a contract with the district, DEI training.
8. Penalize or discriminate against an employee or student on the basis of his or her refusal to support DEI concepts as defined under Mississippi law. AND
9. Require any diversity training or any other policies or procedures that result in any formal or informal education, seminars, workshops, or institutional program that focus on increasing awareness or understanding of issues related to race, sex, color, gender identity, sexual orientation, or national origin as defined under Mississippi law.

FORMAL COMPLAINT

Any employee, faculty member, staff member, contractor, or student who desires to assert a violation of this policy shall file a Formal Complaint with the Holmes County Consolidated School District board clerk within thirty (30) days of the alleged violation with the school board.

A Formal Complaint is not considered to be filed until it is received by the board clerk. The Formal Complaint will be date stamped by the board clerk when received. The date recorded on the stamp shall be the official filing date of the Formal Complaint.

The Formal Complaint must be in writing, signed by the complainant, and shall contain all the following information:

1. The full name, address, and telephone number of the complainant.
2. The name of the Holmes County Consolidated school district in which the complaint is made.
3. Name of potential individuals impacted by the alleged violation.
4. The date and time of the alleged violation.
5. A detailed description of the alleged violation, including which section of the law was violated.
6. A statement explaining how the complainant was harmed by the district's alleged failure to comply with the law
7. Names of potential witnesses.
8. A statement of whether any internal or external grievance, charge, complaint, or civil action has been instituted by the complainant in any other form or forum, based upon the same allegation contained in the Formal Complaint, together with a statement as to the status or disposition of such action.
9. Any other relevant information that would support an investigation.

Within thirty (30) days of the receipt of a complete, timely, and properly filed Formal Complaint, the Board shall take action on the Formal Complaint.

If the Board does not find a violation, they shall provide written notification reflecting that determination. Such final ruling shall be provided to the complainant within the thirty (30) day period.

If the Board determines that a violation has occurred or has likely occurred, they shall provide written notification to the superintendent, with a copy sent to the complainant. The district shall have twenty-five (25) days from the receipt of the formal notification of violation to cure all actions relating to the violation and to provide documentation of the curative actions to the Board. After the twenty-five (25) day period, the Board shall then issue a final ruling to the complainant detailing all violations and the curative response.

APPEAL

Anyone aggrieved by the action or inaction of the Holmes County Consolidated Board is entitled to judicial review in accordance with Mississippi law.

APPLICABLE COMPLAINANTS

A person filing a complaint in the Holmes County Consolidated district is limited to:

1. Students enrolled in the district.
2. Faculty, employees, or staff employed in the district.
3. Contractors with the district.
4. Parents, guardians, or next friend of a minor student who has been harmed by this district.

Any person under 18 years of age may bring an action through a parent, guardian, or next friend. Upon reaching the age of 18, that individual may bring an action in his or her own name.

REPORTING

Beginning in 2026, by July 30 of each year, the superintendent shall submit an annual report to the Board all formal complaints and the dispositions of those investigations and violations. The superintendent shall also provide a written statement explaining any failure to cure formal complaints filed and an explanation of the cause of failure.

The superintendent will also submit the above-mentioned annual report to the Mississippi Department of Education no later than July 30 of each year.

RETALIATION

The district prohibits retaliation against any individual who files a Formal Complaint or cooperates in an investigation under this policy.
