HDESD Equity Statement

At High Desert Education Service District, we believe every student, every family and every member of our team deserves to feel empowered to lead a happy, healthy and inclusive life, free from discrimination, violence and hate. Together, we can influence and inspire systemic change and cultivate kinder, safer and more welcoming places to learn, work and thrive.

High Desert Education Service District

We challenge...

- The status quo.
- Structures that reinforce inequity and harm our students, families and educators of color.
- Ourselves to always be better.

We believe...

- Respectful dialogue between people is how a community can come together even with differing opinions, world views and political stances.
- In the power of vulnerability as a pathway to growing together.
- If we are not actively disrupting systems that uphold and secure privilege, then we are upholding those systems that harm.
- There is a critical interplay between our organizational commitment to equity and our personal equity journeys.
- Our individual equity journeys are unique to each of us.
- Recognizing and learning from our mistakes is a critical part of our organizational and individual equity journeys.
- We will be imperfect and will make mistakes along the way.

Equity must live in every fiber of who we are.

Action. Accountability. Solidarity.

We actively...

- Fight against **systemic racism*** by redesigning structures that reinforce inequity and harm our students, families and educators of color.
- Listen deeply and believe each other.
- Honor the diverse lived experience we each bring.
- Lean into and normalize the inherent discomfort that occurs when we are made to see and feel our privilege.
- Show up with humility and courage and keep relationships at the center of all that we do.
- Put children first, take care of each other and work to be innovative and responsive to our partners.
- Own our mistakes and learn from them.
- Acknowledge that the inevitable mistakes made by those in the dominant culture have real and immediate impacts on our colleagues of color.
- Keep learning and changing our words and practices as we work towards a more equitable education system.
- Walk our talk and hold ourselves accountable for our actions.
- Make **allyship**** and **solidarity***** a daily practice.
- Take specific and practical steps that ensure that we each experience belonging and connection.
- Use our HDESD equity policy as a guide for the decisions we make, the way we welcome our new employees and the knowledge, awareness and actions we take in support of our staff, students and families of color.

We have more work to do, always.

***Systemic racism:** A form of racism that is embedded as normal practice within a society or an organization. It can lead to such issues as discrimination in criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power, and education, among other issues. Institutional racism can have harmful effects on people, especially on students in schools where it is prominent.

****Allyship:** A daily practice of respect that is earned through relationship and trust between individual people. Allyship is action that is experienced, not simply a word spoken. An ally listens to and believes other's experience, amplifies other's voice and uses their privilege and social capital to benefit others. An ally understands that people are individuals who bring unique lived experience to every context.

*****Solidarity:** Expressing explicit support by uniting with others toward a common goal or purpose.