

## BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Lola Brooks, President  
Linda P. Cavazos, Vice President  
Danielle Ford, Clerk  
Irene A. Cepeda, Member  
Chris Garvey, Member  
Deanna L. Wright, Member  
Dr. Linda E. Young, Member

Jesus F. Jara, Ed.D., Superintendent

January 13, 2020

Superintendent's Student Equity  
and Access Commission

Dear Commission Members:

As a District, we are committed to action and improving outcomes through several efforts to realize overall equity in the Clark County School District, which include efforts focused on students' experiences with discipline, based on their identity. As we worked to learn more about disproportional discipline in the District and make significant, lasting changes in policy and behavior to decrease incidents of discipline, I could not help but see a connection between that work and our students' daily learning experiences. I believe that if we better understand and make significant efforts to improve access to rigorous academic experiences for all students, we will be addressing the root cause that underlies disproportionate discipline: all students being engaged in rigorous academic programming. I am thankful for the work of the Clark County School Justice Partnership and consider all of the efforts highlighted herein connected to previous reforms already in action. However, academic experiences must be optimized for all of our students.

I realized soon after my arrival, we did not have a dedicated effort to better understand the experiences of our low-income, Hispanic, and African American students in the District. We are one of the most diverse school districts in the country and it did not feel like we were focusing on equity through the lens of race and ethnicity. Frankly, that is not okay. As a K-12 leader, diverse educator, and lifelong learner, I know firsthand how critical it is that we take an honest look at where and how our system is preventing low-income, Hispanic, and African American students from accessing the academic programming to set them up for lifelong success.

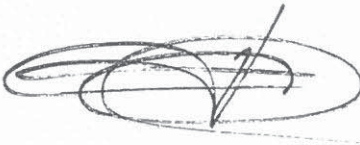
To remedy this gap, I charged *the Superintendent's Student Equity and Access Commission* to review data to determine whether all students in the District have equitable access to programs in the District and what may be impeding students from having access to programs. We will never meet the needs of all our families until we have 100% of our classrooms and schools honor, respect, and celebrate the background of our students. The climate of our classrooms and schools is fundamental to creating the vibrant learning spaces where students feel safe, welcomed, and valued. Additionally, we will not close equity gaps by looking at charts and

having conversations. We need to take action: change policy, reflect on, adjust behavior, and take personal responsibility which will require the commitment of educators and leaders across the entire district. I am relying on the shared efforts of many to make the lasting change. I am not naïve. I know that change is hard, but it is important to me that the community knows my commitment to all our students is real, and I take my role in tackling these challenges seriously. I expect all of our leaders to create a climate and culture of accountability focused on addressing the identified obstacles in this attached publication. As the Superintendent, I am committed to exemplifying accountability in ensuring that the climate and culture for all students are optimized.

I believe that zip code, skin color, first language spoken, indigenous status, and learning differences should not determine whether a student has access to programs designed to advance their learning. I hope you will join me in continuing this action to improve opportunities for students and work together to evolve our systems to better serve all of our future leaders. The findings from the *Superintendent's Student Equity and Access Commission* should lead to several areas of focus and targeted resources deployment in high-leverage areas.

I am thankful for the thoughtful work and extend an opportunity for all stakeholders to get involved to rally around the efforts to create rapid change related to the areas that will assist our students the most.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jesus F. Jara', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Jesus F. Jara  
Superintendent  
Clark County School District

By e-mail