

East Lansing Public Schools

RESOLUTION PROHIBITING HAIRSTYLE BASED RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

WHEREAS, the East Lansing Public Schools Board of Education is committed to ensuring equal opportunity and equal access to all educational services to all students and staff in the East Lansing School District and other members of the public; and

WHEREAS, the East Lansing Public Schools Board of Education approved Policy 2450 Non-Discrimination and Complaint Procedure (Staff) on March 14, 2011 and Policy 8015 Non-Discrimination and Complaint Procedure (Students) on November 24, 2014; and

WHEREAS, the approved the Non-Discrimination and Complaint Procedure (Staff) sets forth that “The District will not discriminate against any person based on sex, race, color, national origin, religion, height, weight, marital status, handicap, age, sexual orientation, political beliefs or disability” for staff, and “the District will not discriminate against any person based on race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion political beliefs, age marital status, disability socio-economic status, physical characteristics, gender identification and expression” for students”; and

WHEREAS, the East Lansing Public Schools Board of Education recognize that people of color have historically been subjected to and continue to be subjected to discrimination based on hair texture and protective hairstyles; and

WHEREAS, the East Lansing Public Schools Board of Education recognizes that a recent study found that Black women face the highest instances of hair discrimination, are more likely to be sent home from the workplace because of their hair, and that 80 percent of Black women felt they needed to switch their hairstyle to align with more conservative standards in order to fit in at work; and Black students continue to face disciplinary action because of their hair texture and protective hairstyles; and

WHEREAS, beginning in California in July 2019, The CROWN Act (“Creating a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural Hair”) has now been adopted in at least seven states and legislation is under consideration in more than twenty other states, as well as in the United States Congress; and

WHEREAS, in Michigan, State Representative Sarah Anthony of Lansing introduced House Bill 4275 in February 2021 to amend Michigan’s Elliott Larsen Civil Rights Act (“ELCRA”), MCL 37.2101 et seq., to include the definition of “race” as “inclusive of traits historically associated with race, including . . . hair texture and protective hairstyles . . .”; and

WHEREAS, the East Lansing Public Schools Board of Education recognizes that discrimination based on hair texture and protective hairstyles is a form of racial discrimination and social injustice and inconsistent with the East Lansing Public Schools Board of Education’s dedication to equal opportunity and equal access to educational services to all students, teachers and staff in East Lansing Public Schools, East Lansing, Michigan.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the East Lansing Public Schools Board of Education hereby declare that the term “Race” or “race” as used in the revised Non-Discrimination and Complaint Procedures for Staff (2450) and Students (8015) shall be defined as being inclusive of traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles. For purposes of this definition, "protective hairstyles" includes, but is not limited to, such hairstyles as braids, locks, and twists.