

## ***ATTRIBUTES OF THE SCHOOL EQUITY COORDINATOR***

The School Equity Coordinator accepts the leadership position for ensuring that individual civil rights are protected and equal opportunities are assured, it is helpful to summarize some of the personal attributes expected of the School Based Equity Coordinator.

The Coordinator:

- Exhibits a personal commitment to ensuring equal opportunity and is unwilling to accept excuses for the under-representation or less than quality performance of an individual student or employee on the basis of that individual's race socioeconomic status, gender, parental or marital status, home environment, limited English language skills, etc.
- Is committed to the fact that the superintendent appointed the School Equity Coordinators to ensure equal access/equal opportunity, not simply to fulfill a reporting requirement.
- Understands that to bring about change in knowledge, attitudes, and skills requires time and continued support and that rejection of ideas initially presented should NOT be interpreted as a personal rejection.
- Is committed to providing continued support to colleagues even when met by disagreement or resistance. As a reminder for the Coordinator, the following responses should be avoided when faced with resistance:
  - √ **Defensiveness-** the expression through words or behavior that you feel as if an attack has been made against your personal ability or adequacy. The Coordinator should try to maintain an open attitude and deal with the ideas presented rather than the emotion or feelings the ideas create.
  - √ **Rejection of the group with whom the Equity Coordinator is working-** the categorization of an individual or group as "hopeless." One of the ways some facilitators (the Equity Coordinator often works in the role of a facilitator) may deal with persons who disagree is to reject them. It is important that Coordinators maintain communications with all persons and continue to work through the feelings and ideas presented.
  - √ **Future predictions-** statements to the effect as "I'm sure you'll eventually see it my way." Although it is quite likely, and certainly desirable, that many rejecting ideas presented will change over a period of time, it is not helpful to dismiss the person by future predictions.

√ **Avoidance of the issue-** dropping relevant controversial issues before they have been considered. Avoiding open consideration of possible implications assuring equal opportunity through ignoring comments such as “There’s really no need for changes in our programs” does not contribute to participant learning or problem solving. Coordinators should anticipate some of the controversial questions or concerns and be prepared to deal with them, if only admitting uncertainty and willingness to help obtain assistance from other sources.

- Maintains a nonjudgmental approach toward the expression of feelings or opinions that differ from those being expressed in the workgroup.
- Provides participants with concrete information and materials. Much of the resistance to accepting change occurs when people do not understand the rationale for change and specific steps that must be taken in implementing change. It is essential that people be given opportunity to identify specific directions for change, to develop the necessary skills and to receive support and assistance necessary for ensuring equal opportunity.