

Tool: Equity Magnifier

Introduction and Purpose

The equity magnifier is a resource that is intended to center equity in the decision making process. This resource is designed to be used throughout action-planning, decision making and implementation process. This could occur with a team or one-on-one during formal or informal conversations (anyone, anytime, anywhere).

These questions are designed to keep equity as the focal point of discussion when engaging in any action planning, decision-making and implementation process. The purpose of the questions is to illuminate blind spots, perspectives that are represented, perspectives that are absent or silenced, and awareness of unintended consequences. The use of these questions is to help elevate the absent narrative and highlight groups who have been the most historically underserved and negatively impacted by policies, programs, or decisions.

Equity Magnifier Questions

1. Who are the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and other marginalized groups that are affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? What are the potential impacts on these groups?
2. Does this policy, program, practice or decision ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences? Who does this policy, program, practice or decision benefit?
3. How have your intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities been affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? How have stakeholders and community members validated or invalidated your conclusions to questions 1 and 2?
4. List all the potential barriers (structural, human, financial, community, etc.) to more equitable outcomes related to this policy, program, practice or decision.
5. How will you mitigate the negative impacts and address the barriers identified above?
6. Once the policy, program, practice or decision has been implemented, how will you gather and use the input from those impacted?
7. What qualitative and quantitative evidence will you gather and analyze to determine the effects of this policy, program, practice or decision?

Outcome

Using this tool will support teams or individuals to decenter the dominant perspective, center equity and address unintended consequences. It can also highlight inequities or missing voices that are impacted by the policy, program or decision.

Leading the conversation with equity in mind moves the work between schools and community beyond the invitation to the table and brings legitimacy to processes, programs, practices and decisions.

Preparation and Materials

- Bookmark handout or questions above.
- Chart below as graphic organizer as needed (see next page).

Initiative, Practice, Process, and/or Policy	Intended Outcome	Potential Unintended Consequence and Points for Monitoring	Action Steps to Mitigate (immediate)	Action steps to Eliminate (long-term)
<p>Example: If student doesn't bring a pencil to class, student is removed from class.</p>	<p>To teach students responsibility.</p>	<p>Students miss more class and instruction time. Students feel embarrassment and shame. Creates disengagement and fractures relationships between students and teachers. Students do not feel valued in school and therefore do not want to attend at all.</p>	<p>Provide pencils to students. Use bookmark to explore decisions and classroom policies for inequities</p>	<p>Determine non-punitive ways to support students in learning responsibility. Explore experiences that lead to beliefs around the policy.</p>

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Who Should Be Involved?

- Teams or individuals creating, implementing, or reviewing policy, program or decisions.
- Groups and individuals who will be potentially impacted by the policy, program or decision.

Directions Overview

The bookmark should be available to use at any time. When questions or review processes are in action, the bookmark should be used to lead and inform conversations about policies, programs or decisions. These questions should be used in addition to any other questions or processes that you usually follow.

Leading the Conversation

Ask, answer, and act upon the questions on the equity bookmark during any meeting or conversation. Keep the conversation focused on equity, away from dominant narrative and inclusive of absent and silenced voices and perspectives. If unsure about the impact on absent and silenced voices and perspectives, seek resources to educate yourself and others. One place for resources is the [Racial Equity Tools website](#).

Citation

These questions were adapted and adopted from the Portland Public Schools (Portland, Oregon) Racial Equity Lens by the Regional Center of Excellence and the Minnesota Department of Education, 2019.