



Equitable Resource Distribution Guide

Minnesota’s definition of “educational equity” is:

The condition of justice, fairness, and inclusion in our systems of education so that all students have access to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potentials. The pursuit of educational equity recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented opportunity and success in learning for students based on their races, incomes, and other social conditions. **Eliminating those structural and institutional barriers to educational opportunities requires systemic change that allows for distribution of resources, information, and other support** depending on the student’s situation to ensure an equitable outcome. [Emphasis added]

Equity is different from equality. Equity is a principle that is based upon justness and fairness, while equality demands everyone be treated at the same level.

If Minnesota is to achieve the rigorous goals laid out in Minnesota’s World’s Best Workforce¹ (WBWF) plan for all students without exception, stakeholders at all levels of the system will need to work together to make significant changes to education systems and practices. Under the Minnesota’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan and WBWF, one of the systemic changes that must be examined is the equitable distribution of resources. In particular, both laws require that school systems examine the extent to which students of color, American Indian students, and students from low-income families are disproportionately taught by inexperienced, out-of-field, and ineffective teachers; and that school systems implement strategies to create equitable access to teachers.

In a working paper titled [“What is Resource Equity,”](#) Jonathan Travers (2018) writes,

Resource equity refers to the allocation and use of resources (people, time, and money) to create student experiences that enable all children to reach empowering and rigorous learning outcomes—no matter their race or income. When we say “equitable,” we do not mean that all students reach the same mediocre level of learning. Instead, we must provide students the kind of experiences they will need to meet rigorous academic expectations and succeed in the fast-changing information- and technology-based world of the future. This

¹ Minnesota’s World’s Best Workforce law is [Minn. Stat. § 120B.11](#). MDE has [supporting documents on the MDE website](#).

means spending more on students who face greater learning challenges AND organizing all our resources in ways that accelerate learning.
[Emphasis added]

The purpose of this guide is to provide conversation starters, materials, and other resources that begin to position local stakeholders and educators to address the structural and institutional barriers that create resource inequities. It is important to recognize that conversations centering equity and justice are complex, will challenge existing mindsets and beliefs, and will create discomfort. We encourage district and school leaders to regularly come back to three broad principles as they lead conversations in this work.

- 1) Focus your information and data gathering on specific resource inequities.
- 2) Construct spaces where stakeholders who are representative of the community can meaningfully engage in the process.
- 3) Ask equity-centered questions about policy or program decisions and impacts.

These principles will be expanded upon throughout the guide which is divided into two, interrelated sections:

[Equitable Access to Teachers](#)

[Equitable Resource Distribution](#)

While student access to strong teachers is a part of overall resource distribution, the two topics are grouped separately in this document because 1) effective teaching is the primary school-based factor impacting student outcomes and 2) both ESSA and WBWF explicitly name equitable access to teachers as a requirement for districts and charters.

Equitable Access to Teachers

This section provides an example process that local leadership teams may follow in order to increase equitable access to experienced, in-field, and effective teachers for students of color, American Indian students, and students from low-income families. In addition to an outlined process, this section includes tools and links to other readings and resources that may be used to further their efforts to increase equitable access to effective instruction.

MDE also published an [Equitable Access to Excellent Teachers Overview](#) on the [World's Best Workforce webpage](#).

Readers of this section will:

- Explore example processes and procedures to identify equitable access gaps and to select strategies to improve equitable access.
- Review and understand requirements for equitable access to teachers.
- Reference and use common definitions and selected resources

While these resources are crafted for state- and district-level work, it is critical to note that some of the most significant equitable access gaps occur at the school and classroom level. For example:

- Which students are enrolled in remedial courses?
- Which students are enrolled in advanced courses?
- Are students who are enrolled in advanced courses more or less likely than students enrolled in remedial courses to be taught by an experienced and effective teacher?

Too often, students of color, American Indian students, and students from low income families (as well as other marginalized groups) are not yet meeting rigorous standards and are more often than their peers enrolled in remedial courses or pulled out of core instruction. At the same time, some schools have local practices that create conditions where the newest teachers are assigned remedial courses, given more courses for which to prep, or are traveling “on a cart” across multiple classrooms.

Are students receiving equitable access and opportunity to meet all of Minnesota’s academic standards in these settings? Are these courses being taught by the most effective and qualified instructors?

As district and school leaders make decisions about teacher and principal hiring and assignments, decision-makers must adopt strategies to change policies, practices or programs that are sustaining inequitable impacts on marginalized groups.

Preparation and Materials

To best prepare for this work, district, charter and school leadership teams must

- 1) Understand the requirements and continuous improvement approach.
- 2) Assemble or refine leadership team(s) charged with this initiative.
- 3) Explore existing tools and resources that could guide the local work.

Requirements

Under the WBWF law district/charter plans must include “a system to periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of...students’ access to effective teachers who are members of populations underrepresented among the licensed teachers in the district or school and who reflect the diversity of enrolled students” (subdivision 2, clause 3) and plans must include “a process to examine the equitable distribution of teachers and strategies to ensure low-income and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, ineffective, or out-of-field teachers” (subdivision 2, clause 5).

In plain language, districts and charters must determine if gaps in access to teachers exist and implement strategies to eliminate equitable access gaps. As part of WBWF, family and community stakeholders play a critical role in this process.

At its core, the work to realize equitable access to teachers is a continuous improvement effort. MDE developed a process to encourage districts and schools to look across their programs for focus, coherence and connections using the lens of equity and the [key components of continuous improvement](#). These key components will be identified throughout this guide.

Leadership Team

One of [five key components of continuous improvement](#), leadership teams need to be established to determine who will be involved in the process and how they will be meaningfully engaged.

While individual champions can get this work started, a leadership team—potentially at both the district/charter level and the school level—will need to be involved with each step in the process and take ownership for implementing actions. The following roles should be represented in a core leadership team at the district/charter level.

- District/charter administration, particularly human resources and teaching and learning personnel.
- Principal and Teacher representation—if bargaining units are a part of local context, leadership from those organizations should be present.

- Research or data experts—individuals who have access to district/school level data and have the capacity to share aggregated reports or visuals.

While family and community members must be involved in this work, they may or may not have the availability to participate at the frequency and depth needed to plan the work. Stakeholder voices—particularly from communities historically marginalized by the education system—are critical throughout the process and can be full participants on a core team, as part of stakeholder focus groups, or both. These groups include but are not limited to:

- Students
- Families
- Community based organizations or community members
- Local businesses
- Educators and education support staff
- School and district leadership
- Board members

Districts and charters are encouraged to insist that a diversity of stakeholders (particularly students of color, American Indian students, students from low-income families, or adults who represent the interests of these students) are represented and have a voice throughout the process. One way to organize all of these important voices is for a core group to establish a focus group that provides voice and direction throughout the stages of the project while the core group develops the content between focus group meetings.

In addition to representation, leadership teams should also work to create spaces where meaningful engagement can occur. For more information about creating spaces for diverse stakeholders, see the [Leading the Conversation section](#).

Explore Existing Tools

This Equitable Resource Distribution guide will frequently refer to tools from the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL) as well as Minnesota's [own equitable access work under ESSA](#).

While there is a wealth of exploration work that teams could do, MDE recommends starting with the following resources.

First, the [Center on Great Teachers and Leaders \(GTL\)](#) at the American Institutes for Research has compiled a comprehensive set of tools ([see Equitable Access Supports](#)) to support state and local education agencies in this work. We recommend starting with this [quick start guide from GTL](#), which provides a brief picture of equitable access work and could be a solid starting point for local leadership teams.

Next, it is important for local teams to be aware of efforts at the state level and the state's equitable access plan. Published in 2015, the [State Plan](#) thoroughly describes the process MDE engaged in. Many things have changed since this was first published, including how we define terms, but Pages 4-8 and 21-25 summarize the experience that could be replicated at a local level.

More recently, under our [ESSA Educator Quality Committee](#), state definitions were refined and a series of local strategies were named, both of which districts and charters should use.

[See state definitions for equitable access](#)

[See local equitable access strategies](#)

Finally, the [Strategic Guidance for Districts](#) resource from the [GTL Center](#) would be the final tool the leadership team should explore. This tool—which GTL will share with you in an editable, Microsoft Word version upon request—outlines a process that districts and charters may follow to identify and address gaps in equitable access.

Time

In [Minnesota's Support and Improvement Timeline](#), MDE estimates that “Conduct resource equity study” may take three months. This is assuming all of the “Preparation and Materials” steps are accomplished before that three month period, so doing this work for the first time should take into account another 1-2 months of start-up time.

Of course, MDE's estimate is could not possibly represent the variety of factors impacting local context including but not limited to:

- Local experience designing and facilitating this conversation
- Unique needs and desires of each local system
- Clarity of vision, purpose, urgency and leadership for this task

To be clear, the estimated time may be enough to work with stakeholders to understand current equitable access gaps, to discuss root causes, to identify strategies/actions to address root causes, and to craft the district or charter's [Local Equitable Access plan](#).

Creating the local equitable access plan is possible in the 3-5 month timeline and is a WBWF requirement. Strategies addressing equitable access might take years to design and implement due to systematic and historical barriers in the organization, as well as the beliefs and dispositions of the adults in the system. This is complex work. Complex work takes time, care, attention, intentionality, and follow through.

Directions Overview

MDE's [Overview: Equitable Access to Excellent Teachers](#) provides a process to support districts in setting forth plans to increase equitable access at the local level. Several of the materials shared earlier describe similar processes that districts could follow.

Districts are encouraged to use any process with local needs, context, and challenges in mind.

Leading the Conversation

As mentioned in the introduction, we encourage teams to operate across three principles as they engage in equitable resource conversations. Though listed sequentially, the principles are more inter-connected and inter-dependent than a step-by-step process implies. In other words, some conversations will touch on each of these principles simultaneously, while other conversations may start reflecting one principal (asking an equity-centered question, for example) only to evolve to the other principles (what data would our stakeholders need in order to advise us in this area?).

1) Focus your information and data gathering on specific resource inequities.

Even though equitable access to teachers is one of several dimensions of resource equity described [in the next section](#), ensuring that students of color, American Indian students and low-income students have equitable access to experienced, in field and effective teachers (who also represent racial/ethnic diversity) is a large concept in and of itself.

The activities in steps 2 and 3 of the [Equitable Access to Excellent Teachers Overview](#) are related to focusing the work (Step 2: Assess Needs and Set Priorities; Step 3: Select Strategies and Create a Plan). Specifically, teams should identify specific equitable access gaps and the root causes that exist in their system and determine which will be prioritized. [Note that identifying gaps and priorities will be impacted by principles 2 and 3 below].

2) Construct spaces where stakeholders who are representative of the community can meaningfully engage in the process.

Far too often, education systems have underutilized student, family and community voices (among other stakeholders) in change efforts. Historically underserved and marginalized communities can provide absent and valuable perspectives.

We offer the following example considerations for constructing spaces for meaningful stakeholder engagement:

- A. Ensure community representation (group should proportionally mirror the community; however historically underserved and marginalized groups may have more representation to balance overall voice).
- B. Intentionally select group members to ensure legitimacy of diverse voices, thoughts, and experiences.
- C. Utilize physical space that's situated within the community.

- D. Accept participant perspectives or narratives as truth and ask questions about what is being said.
- E. Structure meetings that are participant-driven (e.g., world café, small group facilitator, listening and learning session).
- F. Identify a point person to contact as questions, concerns, or desire for one on one talks/sharing emerges.

3) Ask equity-centered questions about policy or program decisions and impacts.

These questions are designed to keep equity as the focal point of discussion when engaging in the continuous improvement process. The purpose of the questions are to illuminate blind spots, whose perspective is represented, whose perspective is left out, and awareness of unintended consequences. The use of these questions is to help elevate the absent narrative, highlight groups who have been the most historically underserved and negatively impacted by inequitable resource distribution. 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.

Example Equity-Centered Questions

- A. Who are the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other marginalized groups that are affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? And what are the potential impacts on these groups?
- B. 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?
- C. How have we intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? Who and what are the perspectives represented? Can we validate your assessments in (A) and (B)?
- D. What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes?
- E. How will you mitigate the negative impacts and address the barriers identified above?
- F. How will you gather input from those affected by this policy, program, practice or decision once it has been implemented? What data or evidence will you gather to determine the effects of this policy, program, practice or decision?

This list is adapted from Portland Public Schools Racial Equity Lens.

Local Actions to Address Equitable Access to Teachers

The following list of strategies and actions is the result of Minnesota stakeholders who contributed to the development of Minnesota's Equitable Access Plan as well as the ESSA Educator Quality Committee. Their original work products are available on the [ESSA Educator Quality Committee webpage](#). The strategies below are adapted from stakeholder work and are amended to reflect new language and new thinking which have evolved through continued study and other stakeholder engagement.

Strategy #1: Create a Local Equity Access Plan as part of World's Best Workforce

Local districts must, as part of World's Best Workforce (WBWF) plans,

- Improve "students' access to effective teachers who are members of populations underrepresented among the licensed teachers in the district or school and who reflect the diversity of enrolled students" (Minn. Stat. § 120B.11, subd. 2, clause (3)), and
- "Establish a process to examine the equitable distribution of teachers and strategies to ensure low-income and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, ineffective, or out-of-field teachers" (Minn. Stat. § 120B.11, subd. 2, clause (5)).

Example actions to support this strategy include:

- A. Engage local stakeholders throughout this process by establishing a district advisory committee(s) to recommend to the school board the means to improve students' equitable access to effective and more diverse teachers.
- B. Define terms (e.g., effective, experienced, low-income) using the [definitions section](#) as a guide.
- C. Use data to identify, document and report district gaps in equitable access to quality and diverse teachers.
- D. Conduct a root-cause analysis to identify why there are gaps in equitable access.
- E. Identify strategies the district will use to impact the root-cause(s) and lesson/eliminate the gaps in equitable access. [Note: Many of these strategies are discussed in [Strategy #2](#) and [Strategy #3](#) below]
 - i. Determine who (e.g., team or individual) is responsible to oversee the implementation of identified strategies.
 - ii. Regularly monitor the implementation of identified strategies.
- F. Align this work to overall WBWF planning which includes:
 - i. Adopt—at a public meeting—a comprehensive, long-term strategic plan to support improve teaching and learning. Included in this plan are systems to examine equitable access to quality and diverse teachers.
 - ii. Report—annually, at a public meeting, and in print—efforts to equitably distribute diverse, effective, experienced, and in field teachers.
 - iii. Transmit an electronic summary of the report to the commissioner of education.
- G. Determine a schedule to revisit and revise the equitable access portion of the WBWF plan over time.

Strategy #2: Recruit, Attract and Assign Teachers

Local districts will implement strategies to recruit, attract and assign effective, experienced, in-field and diverse teachers. Examples include but are not limited to:

- A. Re-examine the recruitment and selection policies to identify institutional barriers to hiring candidates of color and American Indian candidates.
- B. Seek opportunities to increase the candidate pool, including but not limited to
 - i. Grow Your Own initiatives
 - ii. Partnerships with teacher preparation institutions
 - iii. Hiring incentives
- C. Use Title II funds to expand innovative residency programs and diverse teacher preparation programs that place candidates at high-needs schools
- D. Examine district policies and procedures specific to staff assignment within and across buildings in the district that reinforce or perpetuate equitable access gaps. Policies and procedures include:
 - i. Student/Staff assignment (specifically ensuring students are not taught in consecutive years by an “ineffective” teacher).
 - ii. Collective-bargaining agreements.
 - iii. Course assignment procedures in secondary (e.g., are inexperienced teachers assigned to classes with larger populations of low-income students, American Indian students or students of color?)

Strategy #3: Develop and Retain Teachers

Local districts will implement strategies to develop and retain effective, experienced, in-field and diverse teachers. Examples include but are not limited to:

- A. Strengthen new teacher induction and mentoring. For teachers of color or American Indian teachers, create avenues to mentor and support these educators who face unique challenges in the profession.
- B. Study and improve the teaching and learning conditions in schools including but not limited to:
 - i. Supporting effective school leadership, particularly in schools identified as needing improvement under ESSA.
 - ii. Conducting staff surveys specific to teaching and learning conditions; engaging in appropriate action planning based on the data.
- C. Align professional development opportunities to school and district priorities as identified in World’s Best Workforce, School Improvement, Staff Development, and other strategic initiatives to support continuous improvement for educators. Ensure that professional development is selected to help teachers meet the needs of low-income students, American Indian students, and students of color.

- D. Provide high-needs schools with additional support personnel including: literacy and content specialists, highly-effective mentor teachers, and restorative justice coordinators.
- E. Continuously improve local teacher development and evaluation (TDE) systems and Q Comp systems (where they exist)
- F. Engage teachers in teacher leadership opportunities to increase the retention of excellent educators and to support the growth of all teachers.
- G. Provide additional trainings for teachers working in high-needs schools to improve their craft. Trainings should be targeted to meet the needs of the particular school. For example, provide training for non-EL teachers who work in schools with large EL populations.
- H. Create incentives for high-quality principals to move to (and stay in) high-needs schools
- I. Explore systems to incentivize (monetary and nonmonetary) excellent teachers to add additional licensure areas or to seek assignments in hard-to-fill positions or hard-to-staff schools. Incentives include
 - i. Alternative/additional compensation models (e.g., Q Comp)
 - ii. Unique school government/leadership models (e.g., teacher-governed schools)
 - iii. Reimbursements or matching systems for coursework towards additional licensure areas.

Equitable Resource Distribution

This section provides an example process that local leadership teams may follow in order to conduct a resource equity study. In addition to an outlined process, this section includes tools and links to other readings and resources that may be used to further local efforts to more equitably resource their education systems.

MDE also published an Equitable Resource Distribution Overview on the [Resources for Identified Schools webpage](#).

Travers (2018) writes, “Resource equity refers to the allocation and use of resources (people, time, and money) to create student experiences that enable all children to reach empowering and rigorous learning outcomes—no matter their race or income.” In the spirit of all children, we would also add other student groups that have not been equitably served by the education system including students with disabilities and English language learners among other historically marginalized groups.

Like equitable access to teachers, resource equity calls attention to practices that have historically advantaged some groups over others, which has had a compounding effect on students. This system plays out at multiple levels from classrooms, grade levels/subject areas, and schools to district offices, states and the nation. No matter the level, there is a recognition that resources are limited, so decisions need to be made that reflect the priorities at each level of administration and the communities served.

So how are we allocating the resources we have? What is our intent behind resource allocation decisions and what are the impacts?

Local leadership teams will be able to:

- Review and understand requirements for equitable resource distribution.
- Explore example processes and procedures to explore the current state of resource distribution and leverage strategies to more equitably distribute those resources.
- Reference and use common definitions and selected resources.

Preparation and Materials

To best prepare for equitable resource distribution, district, charter and school leadership teams must

- 1) Understand the requirements.
- 2) Assemble or refine leadership team(s) charged with this initiative.
- 3) Explore existing tools and resources that could guide the local work.

Requirements

Districts and charters with schools prioritized for support under ESSA (also known as “Targeted” or “Comprehensive Support and Improvement” Schools) have received [a checklist](#) which details the requirements that districts and charters are responsible to lead. Under the section labelled “Reviewed district- and school-level resource among and within schools with respect to” MDE lists specific areas of resource equity. These should be reviewed by the leadership team and established as goals to be achieved.

At its core, the work to realize equitable resource distribution is a continuous improvement effort. MDE developed a process to encourage districts and schools to look across their programs for focus, coherence and connections using the lens of equity and the [key components of continuous improvement](#). These key components will be called out throughout this guide.

Leadership Team

One of [five key components of continuous improvement](#), leadership teams need to be established to determine who will be involved in the process and how they will be meaningfully engaged.

While individual champions can get this work started, a leadership team—potentially at both the district/charter level and the school level—will need to be involved with each step in the process and take ownership for implementing actions. The following roles should be represented in a core leadership team at the district/charter level.

- District/charter administration, particularly teaching and learning staff and principal supervisors
- Principal and Teacher representation—if bargaining units are a part of local context, leadership from those organizations should be present.
- Fiscal or operations staff—individuals who have access to financial reports
- Research or data experts—individuals who have access to district/school level data and have the capacity to share aggregated reports or visuals.

While family and community members must be involved in this work, they may or may not have the availability to participate at the frequency and depth needed to implement the plan. Stakeholder voices—particularly from communities that have been historically marginalized by the education system—are critical throughout the process and can be full participants on a core team, as part of stakeholder focus groups, or both. These groups include but not limited to:

- Students
- Families
- Community based organizations or community members
- Local businesses
- Educators and education support staff

- School and district leadership
- Board members

Districts and charters should insist that a diversity of stakeholders (particularly students of color, American Indian students, low-income students, or adults who represent the interests of these students) are represented and have a voice throughout the process.

One way to organize all of these important voices is for a core group to establish a focus group that provides voice and direction throughout the stages of the project while the core group develops the content between focus group meetings.

A focus group for equitable access to teachers could also include equitable resource distribution. In fact, MDE has convened two such focus groups for the state equitable access plan, and each stakeholder group expressed a desire to have a broader conversation about equity in the school system than what we put forth in the original committee's charge. Community members expressed their frustration with that limited scope MDE brought to them. Consequently, one way to collaborate with public stakeholders would be to allow them to select the priority areas of equitable resource distribution to address (e.g., 1-2 areas of the [Dimensions of Resource Equity](#)).

Explore Existing Tools

Jonathan Travers' (2018) working paper titled "[What is Resource Equity?](#)" has shaped MDE's early thinking in this area. In particular, Travers provides:

- A clear definition for "resource equity."
- Several dimensions of resource equity which are worth exploring in his paper and which we adapt in the [resource below](#). While these are not intended to be comprehensive, the dimensions provide a strong starting point for conversations that lead to actions.
- Advice for how system leaders can use the dimensions.

Travers' working paper closes with information about the host organization ERS Strategies. MDE does not endorse service providers unless there has been a thorough vetting process; consequently, MDE offers no opinion about the organization hosting this working paper.

Time

In [Minnesota's Support and Improvement Timeline](#), MDE estimates that to conduct a resource equity study might take three months. This is assuming all of the "Preparation and Materials" steps are accomplished before that three month period, so an additional 1-2 months of preparation work should be included.

Of course, MDE's estimate is could not possibly represent the variety of factors impacting local context including but not limited to:

- Local experience designing and facilitating this conversation
- Unique needs and desires of each local system
- Clarity of vision, purpose, urgency and leadership for this task

To be clear, the estimated time may be enough to work with stakeholders to understand current resource inequities, to discuss root causes, to identify strategies/actions to address root causes, and to communicate the district or charter's plan to address resource inequities.

Strategies addressing equitable resource distribution might take years to design and implement due to systematic and historical barriers in the organization, as well as the beliefs and dispositions of the adults in the system. This is complex work. Complex work takes time, care, attention, intentionality, and follow through.

Directions Overview

MDE's [Overview: Equitable Resource Distribution](#) provides a process to support districts in setting forth plans to increase equitable access at the local level.

Districts are encouraged to use any process with local needs, context, and challenges in mind.

Leading the Conversation

As mentioned in the introduction, we encourage teams to operate across three principles as they engage in equitable resource conversations. Though listed sequentially, the principles are more inter-connected and inter-dependent than a step-by-step process implies. In other words, some conversations will touch on each of these principles simultaneously, while other conversations may start reflecting one principal (asking an equity-centered question, for example) only to evolve to the other principles (what data would our stakeholders need in order to advise us in this area?).

1) Focus your information and data gathering on specific resource inequities.

By using the [Dimensions of Resource Equity tool](#) below, leadership teams (informed, guided or directed by community voice) are applying a focus to this charge. Despite our shared urgency for equitable resource distribution, it is not possible to tackle every dimension of resource equity in one sitting; instead, prioritizing one to two areas (perhaps considering which areas may be quick wins and which may represent long-term investments) that are achievable and may contribute positively to other areas is suggested.

2) Construct spaces where stakeholders who are representative of the community can meaningfully engage in the process.

Generally, in both intentional and unintentional ways, education systems have underutilized student, family and community voices (among other stakeholders) in change efforts. Since historically underserved and marginalized communities are also experiencing inequitable access, opportunities, and results from our education system, they can provide absent and valuable perspectives.

We offer the following example considerations for constructing spaces for meaningful stakeholder engagement:

- A. Ensure community representation (group should proportionally mirror the community; however historically underserved and marginalized groups may have more representation to balance overall voice).
- B. Intentionally select group members to ensure legitimacy of diverse voices, thoughts, and experiences.
- C. Utilize physical space that is situated within the community.
- D. Accept participant perspectives or narratives as truth and ask questions about what is being said.
- E. Structure meetings that are participant-driven; e.g. world café, small group facilitator, listening and learning session, etc.
- F. Identify a point person to contact as questions, concerns, or desire for one on one talks/sharing emerges.

3) Ask equity-centered questions about policy or program decisions and impacts.

These questions are designed to keep equity as the focal point of discussion when engaging in the continuous improvement process. The purpose of the questions are to illuminate blind spots, whose perspective is represented, whose perspective is left out, and awareness of unintended consequences. The use of these questions is to help elevate the absent narrative, highlight groups who have been the most historically underserved and negatively impacted by inequitable resource distribution. Leading the conversation with equity in mind moves the work between schools and community beyond the invitation to the table and brings more legitimacy to processes, programs, practices and decisions.

Example Equity-Centered Questions

- A. Who are the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other marginalized groups that are affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? And what are the potential impacts on these groups?
- B. 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?
- C. How have we intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? Who and what are the perspectives represented? Can we validate our assessments in (A) and (B)?
- D. What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes?
- E. How will we mitigate the negative impacts and address the barriers identified above?
- F. How will we gather input from those affected by this policy, program, practice or decision once it has been implemented? What data or evidence will we gather to determine the effects of this policy, program, practice or decision?

Adapted from Portland Public Schools Racial Equity Lens.

Dimensions of Resource Equity: Policies, Practices and Procedures

The major question associated with the Dimensions of Resource Equity is “how are we allocating resources?” The answer to this question address the intent you have in where and how resources are being distributed and for what purpose. It identifies how resources are being categorized and quantified. It also gives a picture of how you operate in making decisions and implementing policies, practices and procedures. The table below is designed to be used with the principles described in [Leading the Conversation](#).

Dimensions of Resource Equity	Example Diagnostic Questions District and/or School Level	Possible Evidence/Data Sources
School Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the system allocate resources based on need? How is need defined? How much extra do we invest in high need students? • Do schools with higher need levels spend more on a per-pupil basis? If so, how much more? • How are the drivers of higher spending in higher needs schools linked to greater resource equity? To what extent is the extra spending invested in creating student experiences aligned with need? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial reports • Program costs
Teacher Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the system have a reliable way to measure teacher effectiveness? If so, how are highly effective teachers distributed across schools and students of different need levels? Is access to excellent teaching constrained across the system, or just to students in a subset of schools? • How are novice teachers distributed across schools and students of different need levels? • What additional resources do schools with high concentrations of novice teachers receive? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher licensure, experience, evaluation ratings related to placement. • Student academic evidence/data by teacher
School Leadership Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the system have a reliable way to measure school leader effectiveness? If so, how are highly effective school leaders distributed across schools and students of different need levels? How many different Principals have high-need schools had over the past five years compared with lower-need schools? • How are central supports allocated across schools and students of different need levels (e.g., principal development and support structures)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 360 evaluation results • Satisfaction surveys • Leader licensure • Leader experience

Dimensions of Resource Equity	Example Diagnostic Questions District and/or School Level	Possible Evidence/Data Sources
Academic Rigor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are student assignments in equivalent courses equally challenging across high- and low-need schools? Do teachers use equally rigorous questioning and engagement practices across higher- and lower-need student populations? • Do the relationships between student grades and state assessment outcomes indicate that all students are held to a high standard? • Do schools with higher-need students offer AP or advanced coursework at similar levels as schools with lower-need students? Do students with similar performance levels within and across schools get placed into advanced or AP classes at the same rates regardless of race or income? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction and assessment alignment to standards, benchmarks, and levels of difficulty. • PLC data on student work and assessment, alignment of instruction. • Course/class by student group
Instructional Time and Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do students who have greater needs spend more time in school than students with lower needs? Does this vary across schools or across students within schools? What type of targeted instructional time do schools give their struggling students in areas where they are behind? Do schools spend more instructional time in areas of high priority? • Are students' class schedules fully utilized? How much of their schedule is inefficient time? Does this vary across schools or across students within schools? • To what extent do schools differentiate class and student group sizes and instructional support specialists to provide greater individual attention to students with greater needs in academic areas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course/class schedules • Course/class sizes • Academic vs non-academic time during school day (passing, transition time) • Instructional time as part of multi-tiered supports
Early Learning and Early Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What percentage of kindergarten students in high-needs schools attended high-quality pre-K programs, as compared to kindergartners in low-need schools? • What percentage of students in high-need schools who fall behind academically have access to RTI and other intervention supports (without having to rely on referral to special education as the means to provide supplemental support), as compared to students in low-need schools? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohort Pre-K/K enrollment data linked to academic data • Instructional time as part of multi-tiered supports

Dimensions of Resource Equity	Example Diagnostic Questions District and/or School Level	Possible Evidence/Data Sources
Whole Child Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do higher-need students have access to meaningful relationships with adults who know them and to whom they feel accountable? As compared to lower-need students? To what extent do higher-need students have access to targeted social and emotional services, programs, and resources? (e.g., counselors, social workers, or other mental health resources) Do students and schools with higher needs have access to a consistent and fair disciplinary process and healthy school cultures? How does this access compare to that of lower-need students? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception data from students Service time to higher-needs students School culture surveys Disciplinary evidence data disaggregated by student group
Diverse and Inclusive Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What percentage of economically disadvantaged students attend schools or classes with non-disadvantaged students? Do individual classes represent the racial make-up of the community, or are certain races segregated due to tracking or other systems? Do the instructional materials include representations of the student population? What percentage of low-performing elementary students attend middle schools with higher-performing classmates? How does this compare to the experience of high-performing elementary students? How does this compare to the transition from middle to high school for both groups? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollment reports at school, grade and course/class level Cohort enrollment evidence/data linked to academic evidence/data and disaggregated by student groups
Family Academic Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the district and its schools engage parents/guardians in their students' learning goals? What percentage of parents/guardians receive student progress reports in their native language or can otherwise communicate with teachers through interpreters? What percentage of parents report feeling welcome at their child's school? Do they report being consulted and informed about the academic lives of their children? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family satisfaction surveys Survey of programs and activities to engage families Engagement between teacher-families evidence/data District/school communication, policies, etc. available in all languages represented by students/families

Framework adapted from Jonathan Travers' 2018 work titled, "[What Is Resource Equity? A working paper that explores the many components of resource equity that support academic excellence.](https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/what_is_resource_equity)" Downloaded from [Education Resource Strategies](https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/what_is_resource_equity) (https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/what_is_resource_equity) on August 17, 2018.

Definitions

Educational equity: Educational equity is the condition of justice, fairness, and inclusion in our systems of education so that all students have access to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potentials. The pursuit of educational equity recognizes the historical conditions and barriers that have prevented opportunity and success in learning for students based on their races, incomes, and other social conditions. Eliminating those structural and institutional barriers to educational opportunities requires systemic change that allows for distribution of resources, information, and other support depending on the student's situation to ensure an equitable outcome.

Equity is different from equality. Equity is a principle that is based upon justness and fairness, while equality demands everyone be treated at the same level.

Equitable Access: When low-income students, students of color or American Indian students are educated by effective, experienced and in-field teachers at rates that are *at least equal to* the rates at which other students are educated by effective, experienced and in-field teachers. Equitable access requires all students have just, fair, and inclusive access to the educators who would best meet their needs.

Equitable Access Gap: The difference between the rate at which low-income students, students of color or American Indian students are educated by effective, experienced and in-field teachers and the rate at which other students are educated by effective, experienced, and in-field teachers.

Ineffective teacher: a teacher who is not meeting professional teaching standards as defined in local teacher development and evaluation (TDE) systems.

Inexperienced Teacher: a licensed teacher who has been employed for three years or less.

Low-income Student: a student who qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch.

Out-of-field Teacher: a licensed teacher who is providing instruction in an area which he/she is not licensed.

Student of Color or American Indian student: a student who belongs to a racial/ethnic group—excluding white—as defined under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as most recently authorized. Student of color refers to Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or two or more races. American Indians are the indigenous peoples of this continent and citizens of sovereign nations, an important difference from other people of color in the United States. They may have characteristics of persons of color or of ethnic or racial peoples, but American Indians' primary characteristic is political. Consequently, this document refers to students of color and American Indian students as unique identifiers.

Citations

Center for Great Teachers and Leaders. [Equitable Access Supports](https://www.gtlcenter.org/learning-hub/equitable-access-supports). Downloaded from [Center for Great Teachers and Leaders](https://www.gtlcenter.org/learning-hub/equitable-access-supports) (https://www.gtlcenter.org/learning-hub/equitable-access-supports) on August 17, 2018.

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