The background of the entire page is a photograph of a diverse group of students in a classroom. A young girl in the center is smiling and has her hand raised. Other students are visible in the background, some with their hands raised. Overlaid on this image are several large, semi-transparent geometric shapes in shades of teal, blue, green, and yellow. A white rectangular frame is positioned around the main title.

MINNESOTA EQUITY IN ACTION FRAME WORK

THE MINNESOTA EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT
EQUITY LEADERSHIP LEARNING COMMUNITY

Acknowledgements

The **Minnesota Equity in Action Framework** is the work of the members of the Minnesota Every Student Succeeds Act Equity Leadership Learning Community. The primary authors are Macarre Traynham, Director of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Center, Minnesota Department of Education, Marquita Stephens, Vice-President, Strategic Engagement and Chief Strategy Officer, Urban League Twin Cities, and Kandace Logan, Executive Director of Equity and Integration, Minneapolis Public Schools. Collectively, the authors bring over 60 years of experience in education as school leaders and classroom teachers, with expertise in policy development, community engagement, coaching and non-profit management. The inclusion of parent/family, student and system voices was critical in the development of this framework and we are grateful for their partnership.

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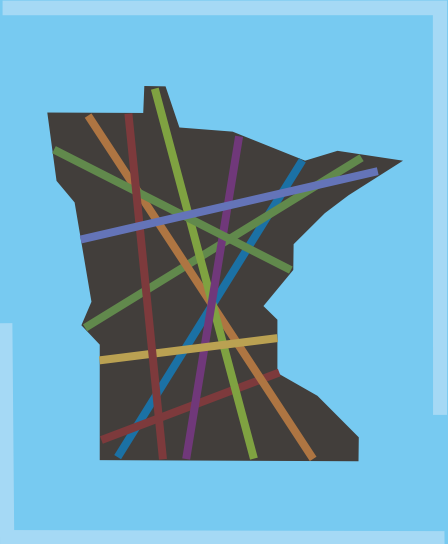
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It is our hope that stronger bonds between schools and communities will be built through shared power and partnership that promote healthy and dynamic outcomes for all our children.

The team also received valuable insight from an advisory team representing Park Rapids School District, Luverne Public Schools, Pine Island Public School District, Montevideo Public Schools, Roseville Area Schools, Duluth Public Schools Independent School District, Wayzata Public Schools, Virginia Public Schools, Bloomington Public Schools, Brooklyn Center Community Schools, New York Mills Independent School District.

Our work to develop the **Minnesota Equity in Action Framework** is part of a national movement of state departments, districts, and local Urban Leagues across the country who have worked to advance equity in education. This project is supported by a joint initiative between the National Urban League, the Council of Great City Schools, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and funded by The Wallace Foundation.

We recognize that there are countless other individuals who contributed their time and talent to this project that are too numerous to mention. We acknowledge their significant contribution in the development of this framework and offer our gratitude for their partnership.



This project is supported by a joint initiative between the National Urban League, the Council of Great City Schools, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and funded by The Wallace Foundation.



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Minnesota Equity in Action Framework

Minnesota Every Student Succeeds Act Equity Leadership Learning Community

Introduction

“Schools
are made for
communities and
not the other way
around.”

-Hal Smith,
Senior Vice President, Education,
Youth Development and Health,
National Urban League



This is the belief that fuels the partnership and the understanding that educating our children is shared work. While schools, districts, communities and parents/families all play different roles and have different responsibilities, we all share in the triumph or failures of an educational system that produces adequately and inadequately prepared children.

This framework centers equal partnerships as the foundation for improving educational outcomes for *All* Minnesota students. We believe that educators, school boards, school and district leaders must work as equal partners with parents/families and communities to identify and address systemic inequities to enable all students to learn and achieve at high levels. School and district leaders, educators, school boards, parents/families, and communities can use this framework to start conversations, build-on shared beliefs, develop action plans, and build an infrastructure of support to ensure student success.

This is not a how-to guidebook. It is not meant to be prescriptive, but rather designed to stimulate the reader’s thinking about how to understand and approach one’s specific context in forging equal partnerships and operationalizing equity in education. It is our hope that stronger bonds between schools and communities will be built through shared power and partnership that promote healthy and dynamic outcomes for all our children.

Beliefs and Principles

Beliefs and Guiding Principles

Students will engage in learning and achieve at high levels when educators, school and district leaders, and school boards work as equal partners with parents/families and communities to create the conditions needed to address inequities.

This belief is central to the Minnesota Equity in Action Framework and drives the work of the Minnesota Equity Leadership Learning Community* to transform education in Minnesota. We are a group of education advocates and leaders from across the state representing community-based organizations, school districts, and the Minnesota Department of Education who are passionate about the power of partnership to improve education in Minnesota.

The Minnesota Equity in Action Framework offers an equity-conscious approach to improving student learning outcomes and school performance in every Minnesota school system. The Equity in Action Framework leverages the power of partnership to achieve results and is centered on the following beliefs and guiding principles.

*Equity Leadership Learning Community refers to the Minnesota Every Student Succeeds Act Leadership Learning Community

Beliefs

We* believe:

- Every Minnesota student deserves equitable access to high quality educational experiences, effective teachers, the rigor and resources they need to reach their full potential and to achieve at high levels regardless of race, disability, language, income or ZIP code.
- An equity-oriented stance is required to build effective school communities and collective efficacy within the larger school community to address and eliminate educational disparities at all levels.

- Ensuring a diverse, culturally responsive educator workforce benefits all students and is essential to preparing all students for success in our global society.
- We must engage the full school community in shared responsibility to eliminate the bias in policies and practices that perpetuate educational and discipline disparities and help students develop the self-efficacy they need to succeed.
- The multiple identities we bring as members of a multi-racial, culturally diverse society are assets that should be acknowledged, celebrated, and built upon to help us better prepare all students for success in this evolving world.
- Authentic engagement and partnership are made possible when parents/families and communities have an active role in co-creating and contributing to the planning and implementation of the work of the school.

Guiding Principles¹

- **Authentic Partnership:** Powerful educational change is possible when meaningful relationships are built between and among families, educators, community groups, school and district leadership, and when all are considered as equal partners in discussion and decision-making to ensure school improvement is done with, and not to, parents/families, and the community.
- **Parents/Families as Experts:** Center parent/family experiences and stories as sources of knowledge, expertise and solutions.
- **Educators as Lifelong Learners:** Position educators as lifelong learners, and facilitators of learning, continually working to improve their practice to achieve desired results for all students.

*We (members of the Minnesota Equity Leadership Learning Community)

Beliefs and Principles

- **Balance Power and Co-create Solutions:** Attend to power imbalances, seek and value the voice, wisdom and perspectives of parents/families and communities who are often, not just underutilized but, excluded and disregarded in decision-making.
- **Parent/Family-driven Goals:** Prioritize the concerns, needs, values and goals of parents/families and their students.
- **Asset-based and Identity Affirming:** Expect that all students can and will master the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college, career, and civic life. Partner with parents/families to co-create an inclusive, identity-affirming school environment that fosters a sense of belonging for all.
- **Build Capacity:** Strengthen the individual and collective capacity of educators, parents/families and community groups that form the larger school community to embrace an equity-stance and to make necessary shifts in mindsets, power dynamics and roles to enable achievement disparities to be eliminated, ensuring all students have what they need to succeed.

Defining Educational Equity

“Educational equity means that each student receives what they need, when they need it, to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.”²

Ensuring equitable access and opportunity to learn not only means access to rigorous instruction, but also to facilities, learning accommodations, resources, programs and services, as well as access to the most effective teachers. Beyond access lies equitable opportunities to participate in programs and services with culturally relevant standards, curricula, instruction, and assessments.³

As partners, working together toward equity, we commit to:

- Promoting just and fair inclusion, and creating the conditions to help each person participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.²
- Removing the predictability of success and failure based on a student's socio-economic status, ethnicity, culture, race, disability or English language proficiency.²
- Interrupting inequitable practices, examining biases, and creating inclusive school environments for each student and their parents/families.²
- Paying attention to the social and historic forces which create and maintain systems in which students are treated differently based on who they are.²

Educational Equity Matters in Minnesota

Receiving a quality education strengthens all Minnesota communities, promotes prosperity, and benefits us all. Equity in schools is the answer to supporting every student, not just those from backgrounds that have been marginalized. When schools provide their students with resources that fit individual circumstances, the entire classroom environment improves. Not only that, but the importance of equity extends to our society as a whole. In equitable communities, everyone has the opportunity to succeed regardless of their original circumstances. Equity is linked to stronger social cohesion, helping individuals connect better with each other and become more compassionate. It also leads to long-term economic growth for all regions in the state. Promoting equity in schools can be one of the best and most effective social investments.⁴ As diversity in Minnesota grows but our ability to meet the needs of our diverse student populations remains stagnant or declines, we limit the opportunity of everyone in Minnesota.

Equity in Action

A Call to Action

For far too long Minnesota's educational disparities have been well known. In 2005, the Brookings Institute published *Mind the Gap: Reducing Disparities to Improve Regional Competitiveness in the Twin Cities*⁵ that highlighted the stark racial disparities that were pervasive throughout Minnesota. Yet in 2019, nearly fifteen years later, data from the Minnesota Department of Education confirms that very little has changed.

Minnesota's achievement disparities have persisted for decades despite numerous efforts to implement policies and programs to promote equal opportunity in education. Minnesota's educational disparities are among the worst in the nation and can be found in every region of the state (urban, suburban, rural) and in all types of schools (public, private and charter schools). Minnesota's educational disparities disproportionately impact students of color, American Indian students, English Language learners, students with disabilities and students from economically disadvantaged communities.

We have an obligation to provide every student, regardless of ZIP code, with an educational experience that values who they are and supports them in reaching their highest potential. Minnesota's history of persistent educational disparities has created an educational debt for many Minnesota students. We must repay this debt through our collective work, as equal partners, in transforming Minnesota's educational system to ensure the quality education that **All** Minnesota children deserve.

Equity in Action - Partnering for Equity

The focus on ensuring equitable educational outcomes for all students is reflected in the *Minnesota Every Student Succeeds Act Strategic Plan* and impacts all Minnesota districts and schools. Governor Walz's *Due North Plan*⁶ and the *Minnesota Department of Education Strategic Plan* share this focus, as do many other Minnesota schools, districts and community organizations who have begun implementing equity frameworks like *Expanding the Vision of Reimagine Minnesota: A Collective Education Roadmap for Action*. (2019)⁷

Equity in education has been a longstanding priority in Minnesota, and the focus of numerous national and statewide educational reform efforts, yet inequity persists in districts and schools throughout our state. We know the beliefs and values we hold frame, inform and sustain the mental models by which we operate.⁸ As we consider the statewide data, it is clear that we must build equity-oriented mindsets⁹ and support the development of the knowledge, dispositions, skills and practices needed to change the trajectory of student success and the engagement of all involved in the education of Minnesota students.

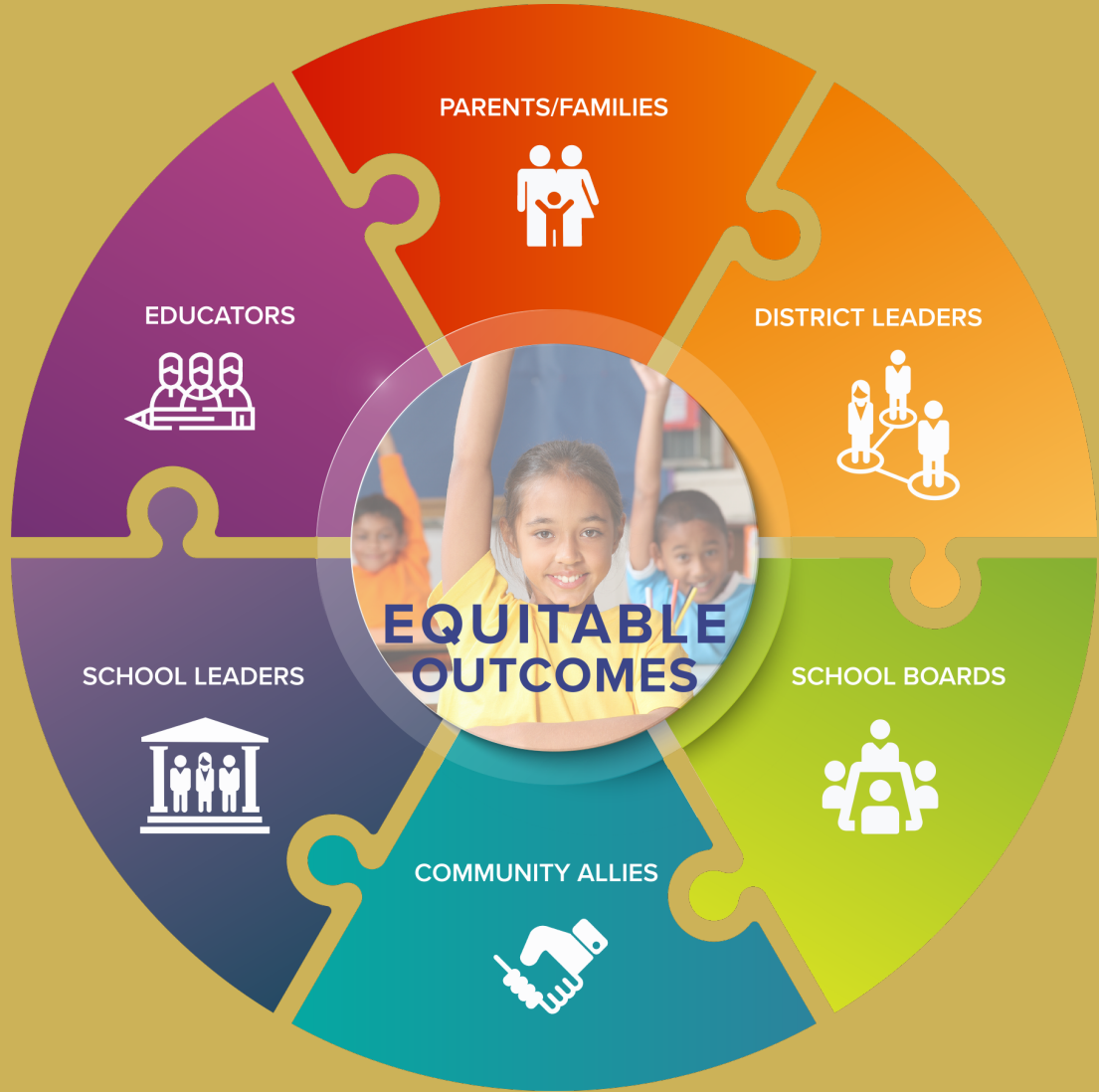
Partnering for Equity Requires Shifts in Mindsets, Power Dynamics, and Roles

Educational equity requires the intentional examination of systemic policies and practices in education that may serve to marginalize some students and perpetuate educational disparities. Working toward equity requires an understanding of historical contexts and active investment in changing systems, structures, policies and practices to ensure students from all communities have the opportunities and support they need to realize their full potential.¹⁰ This work is essential, and it is not easy, but we are motivated to take on this challenge by what is possible through partnership.

Equity in Action Overview

The Minnesota Department of Education, Urban League Twin Cities and the educational partners who created the Minnesota Equity in Action Framework designed it to support the development of transformative partnerships among parents/families, educators, school, district, and community leaders. This framework provides guidance on ways to deepen the equity focus and continuous improvement efforts to ensure all Minnesota students receive the world class education they deserve to reach their highest potential, regardless of race, disability, language, income or ZIP code. Our collective future depends on it.

Minnesota Equity in Action Framework



The power of interconnected community

The Framework

About the Minnesota Equity in Action Framework

The **Minnesota Equity in Action Framework** focuses on the power of partnership, shared responsibility and collective action because we know that meaningful, lasting change in schools and communities requires support from all levels of the education ecosystem. It offers guidance for how to operationalize your existing strategic plans, equity frameworks and school improvement plans, not replace them.

The **Minnesota Equity in Action Framework** focuses on **five key equity priorities** and offers **concrete strategies and recommendations—grounded in authentic partnership**—for strengthening leadership in communities to produce more equitable outcomes for students.

- Equity Priority 1.** Address Access and Resource Inequities
- Equity Priority 2.** Recruit and Retain a Diverse, Culturally Responsive Teaching Force
- Equity Priority 3.** Eliminate Disproportionate Suspension and Expulsion Rates
- Equity Priority 4.** Embed Cultural Competence in Systemwide Educational Practices
- Equity Priority 5.** Engage and Partner with Parents/Families and Community Allies

Partnership Groups and Responsibilities

Each equity priority is accompanied by recommended actions for consideration by six distinct school community groups who, working in partnership, are **‘Responsible for Change’** or **‘Responsible for Influencing Change’** within their local school community. These two designations serve as an organizing structure to help groups understand the mutual benefit of working in partnership and as a means to leverage the leadership potential within each group to drive change within their spheres of influence and control.

The groups designated as **“Responsible for Change”** include educators, school and district leaders who have the formal authority, duty and accountability to ensure the educational system enables all students and families to have equitable experiences. Whereas, the designation of groups **“Responsible for Influencing Change”** is directed towards school boards, parents/families and community allies whose primary responsibilities lie in monitoring, identifying, and amplifying issues, systems and structures that perpetuate educational inequities and impede system-wide educational excellence for all students. These categories are not mutually

exclusive and, at any time, people in one category or group may be both responsible for change and serve as influencer of change at the same time.

Responsible for Change

District Leaders

District leaders are responsible for creating district-wide systems and structures to enable any student to go to any school and have a similar, equitable experience. Listening and responding to what people need, both within and outside the system, is necessary in order to define and provide an equitable educational experience for all families and, in turn, grow their communities. District leaders set the tone, agenda, and culture for the entire system and are accountable for ensuring the work and culture of their respective school district arcs towards equity and justice.

Equity in Action

School Leaders

School leaders are responsible for co-creating a school-wide ecosystem where students and adults feel seen, heard, and empowered. When equity-oriented conditions are established and nurtured, educators are more likely to create the same system within their classroom environments for their students. School leaders are responsible for monitoring and adjusting the systems, structures, supports, culture and climate to ensure a culturally responsive learning environment for both educators and students.

Educators

Educators are responsible for leveraging their sphere of influence with the students and families they serve by co-creating a classroom learning environment that affirms students and families as equal partners. They enable all students to flourish by helping students see themselves not only as learners, but also as contributors to collective knowledge.

Responsible for Influencing Change

School Boards

School Boards serve a dual purpose in the institution of education by being both responsible for change while also influencing change. School Boards have been positioned as influencers of change because they are elected by members of the larger community and tasked with carrying forward the interest and concerns of the community they represent. As such, their work spans in both directions, as a contributor for identifying and promoting needed changes as well as holding district leaders accountable for ensuring educational equity and excellence for all.

Parents/Families

Parents/Families play a critical role to ensure students are successful in school and in life. They are influencers of change because, as one of the strongest voices in the school community, parents/families can advocate for the educational equity that all children deserve. Because parents/families are a child’s first teacher, partnership with them is critical in order to create a welcoming, culturally responsive learning environment in which they and their children feel they belong and are affirmed as vital to the learning environment and school community.

Community Allies

Community allies consist of local agencies and organizations within the school community that have a vested interest in ensuring that schools are places where students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. The students in community schools are the next generation of their future leaders so it is the responsibility of community allies to advocate for and take action with parents/families and other influencers to guarantee that every student has equitable access, opportunity and the support they need to excel.

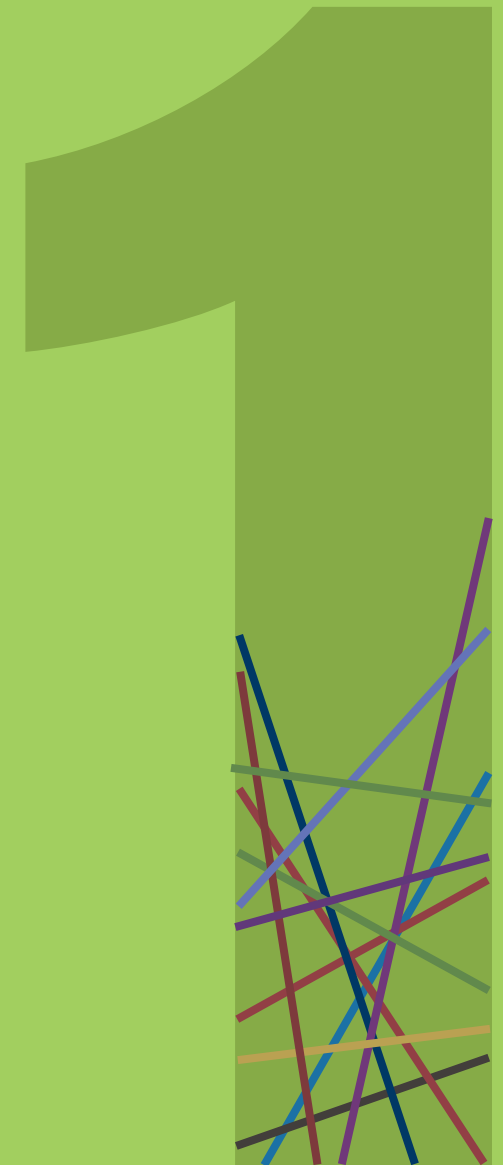
How to Use This Framework

We recognize that the guidance offered in this framework must be considered based upon the unique needs of each school community’s local context and experiences when partnering with parents/families and communities. Soliciting input and exchanging expertise with the parents/families and community groups in your school community will allow you to determine which strategies and action steps to include in the co-creation and development of a plan to meet the educational equity needs of your students and school community.



We believe in the **power of partnership** to improve education for all Minnesota students.

Equity Priority 1: Address Access and Resource Inequities



Ensure equitable access and resources

EQUITY PRIORITY ONE

Address Access and Resource Inequities

Create a pathway to address and eliminate disparities of representation, access, participation and outcomes for students of color, American Indian students, economically-disadvantaged students, English language learners, students with disabilities and other student groups needing support as indicated by data at all levels of the education system.

We Know

When children are provided with rich opportunities to learn, they thrive, and the achievement gaps close. Students of color, economically-disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English language learners are missing out on crucial resources to ensure equity of opportunity to learn.¹¹

Students from historically disadvantaged families have just a 51 percent opportunity to learn when compared to white, non-Latino students. We must commit to eliminating the opportunity gap if we are going to build a stronger, safer and more prosperous nation.¹²

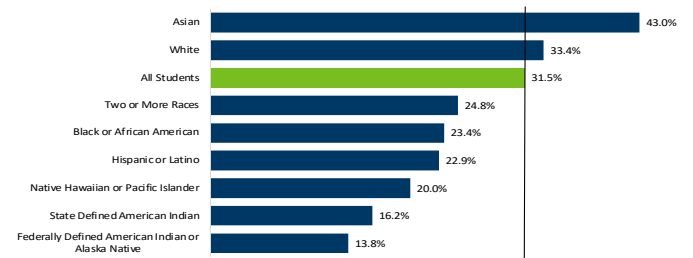
We Believe

An equity-oriented stance is required to build effective school communities and relationships within the larger community to address and eliminate educational disparities at all levels.

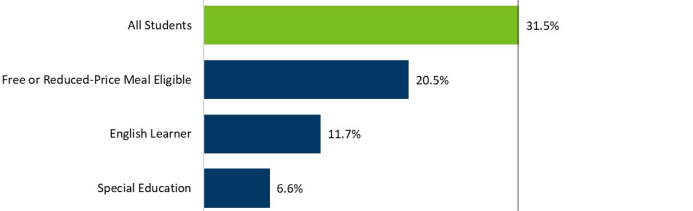
Call to Action

If we are truly intent on addressing the racial educational disparities Minnesota is facing, we need to focus more on how the *systems* that impact children create or exacerbate these gaps. It is not achievement gaps that should be getting the headlines but gaps in *opportunity*.¹³ There's a need to frame the problem in a way that is does not place responsibility on kids for systemic injustices and allows us to hold ourselves accountable for ensuring students are given equitable access to the resources and opportunities they deserve, so all kids can achieve.¹⁴

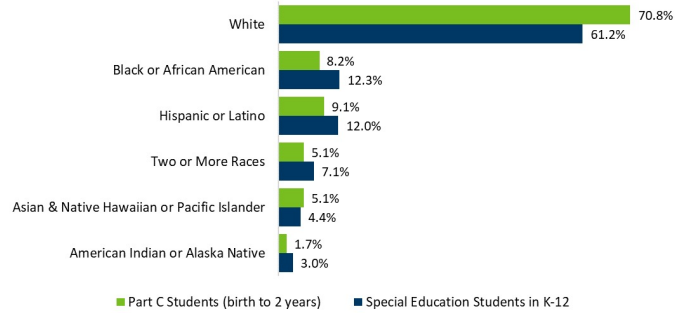
Percent of students enrolled in rigorous courses by student's racial or ethnic group
2019 data. Includes Advance Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Project Lead the Way, Concurrent Enrollment and Post-Secondary Educational Options (PSEO) courses.



Percent of students enrolled in rigorous courses by other student groups
2019 data. Includes Advance Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Project Lead the Way, Concurrent Enrollment and Post-Secondary Educational Options (PSEO) courses.



Graph 3 shows that children of color or American Indian children are less likely to be reached for early intervention services than their peer students in K-12. Generally, white children are more likely to receive the services they need at younger ages.



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

For Addressing Access and Resource Inequities

Responsible for Change

District Leaders

- Conduct a district and school-wide equity review to determine the impact on student outcomes.
- Analyze disaggregated equity review data to identify patterns and practices that perpetuate inequities.
- Use equity review analysis and the data collected from schools to create an equitable resource distribution model and process.
- Engage parents/families and community groups in co-creating a plan of action to address equity review findings.
- Ensure the district's financial data infrastructure can accurately collect, disaggregate, and report financial data needed to surface system inequities (e.g., allocations vs. expenditures, across-schools spending vs. within-school spending).¹⁵
- Build the capacity of district and school leaders to understand what might be driving inequities (e.g., other sources of targeted student funding such as IDEA, teachers' experience levels, size of student body) and how school-level financial data is related to other student data (e.g., number of pupils, student demographics).¹⁵
- Identify and revise district policies that may impede the district's ability to adjust school-level spending to meet student learning needs equitably.¹⁵
- Account for private funds (e.g., PTA fundraising, philanthropic, in-kind donations) that may undermine efforts to ensure spending is equitably distributed to meet the needs of underserved students.¹⁵
- Ensure resources (time, funding, people, programs) are distributed equitably and aligned with student learning needs at school sites¹⁵
- Embrace opportunities to advocate for districtwide resource equity.¹⁵

- Convene a task force comprised of a finance team liaison, project manager and representatives from academics, operations, human resources, school and teacher leaders, parents/families, and community members.¹⁵
- Proactively communicate the district's commitment to equitable funding that justifies use of funds to meet the needs of underserved students.¹⁵

School Leaders

- Create and promote a welcoming, diverse and inclusive school environment to ensure open access to learning and teaching for all student groups.
- Review and analyze disaggregated resource distribution data to identify inequitable trends and underlying practices that may perpetuate inequitable student outcomes. Share this data with a school based group that includes parent/family and community representatives to ask for their analysis and input.
- Use an 'Equity Lens' to examine current practices in administering school and district-wide policies to determine their impact on diverse student populations.
- Prioritize the needs of students and their parents/families by establishing a protocol to ensure school leader and executive team are easily accessible on a daily basis in addition to regularly scheduling opportunities for parent/family engagement.
- Examine entrance/participation criteria for courses (e.g. advanced placement), activities (e.g. activity fees), access to supports (e.g. teachers only available through e-mail) and other areas where the systems prevent access to marginalized communities; work with students, parents/families, community, and other educators to identify and remove barriers to access.
- Ensure equitable resource allocation and redistribution of financial, material, time and human resources to meet the learning needs of historically underserved student groups.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

For Addressing Access and Resource Inequities

Responsible for Change

Educators

- Solicit students, parents/families and community input and recommendations regarding barriers to access and suggestions for improvement.
- Partner with parents/families and community allies to critically examine district, school and classroom policies and practices that create barriers to access and co-create a plan to eliminate access inequities.
- Examine entrance and participation criteria for courses (e.g. advanced placement), activities (e.g. activity fees), access to supports (e.g. teachers only available through email) to ensure consistency in application criteria and removal of barriers to full participation by any student.

Influence Change

Parents/Families

- Participate in equity review process to ensure all experiences and perspectives are represented.
- Advocate for creating intentional space for Parents and Families from minoritized communities to be heard and for their perspectives to become integral to policy formation.
- Help educators identify policies and practices that create barriers for families. Brainstorm alternative solutions.
- Share needs directly with school and district leaders along with the expectation to receive a response that resolves concerns within agreed upon timeframe.

School Boards

- With input and direction from the community, direct the district to conduct an equity review and use equity review results to establish district goals to ensure equitable access to programs, information, opportunities to learn and for eliminating resource inequity throughout the district.

- Establish a public reporting process with the superintendent that updates the Board and the community at large on the district's progress on equitable access and resource equity goals.
- Ensure opportunities for public collaboration on new initiatives, mindful of whose voices are privileged or marginalized throughout the process. Actively change the power dynamic to ensure minoritized voices are heard by intentionally creating a method that balances the voices of minoritized and marginalized groups with additional voices that reflect the district population.
- Engage students, parents/families and the public in the work, policies and decision-making of the district through regularly scheduled collaboration and annual town halls.

Community Allies

- Work with students, parents/families, particularly those from minoritized communities, to prepare and support them as they interact with an education system that historically hasn't been successful in listening or taking action to address their concerns regarding equitable access , resources and opportunity to learn.
- Participate in district-wide and school-based activities and committees that support the aims of a comprehensive education.
- Advocate for equitable allocation of resources.
- Monitor the equitable distribution of resources to ensure resources are aligned to meet the needs of the district's most underserved student populations.
- Provide additional material resource support to schools.
- Partner with the district to co-market and co-create, when applicable, opportunities for public engagement.

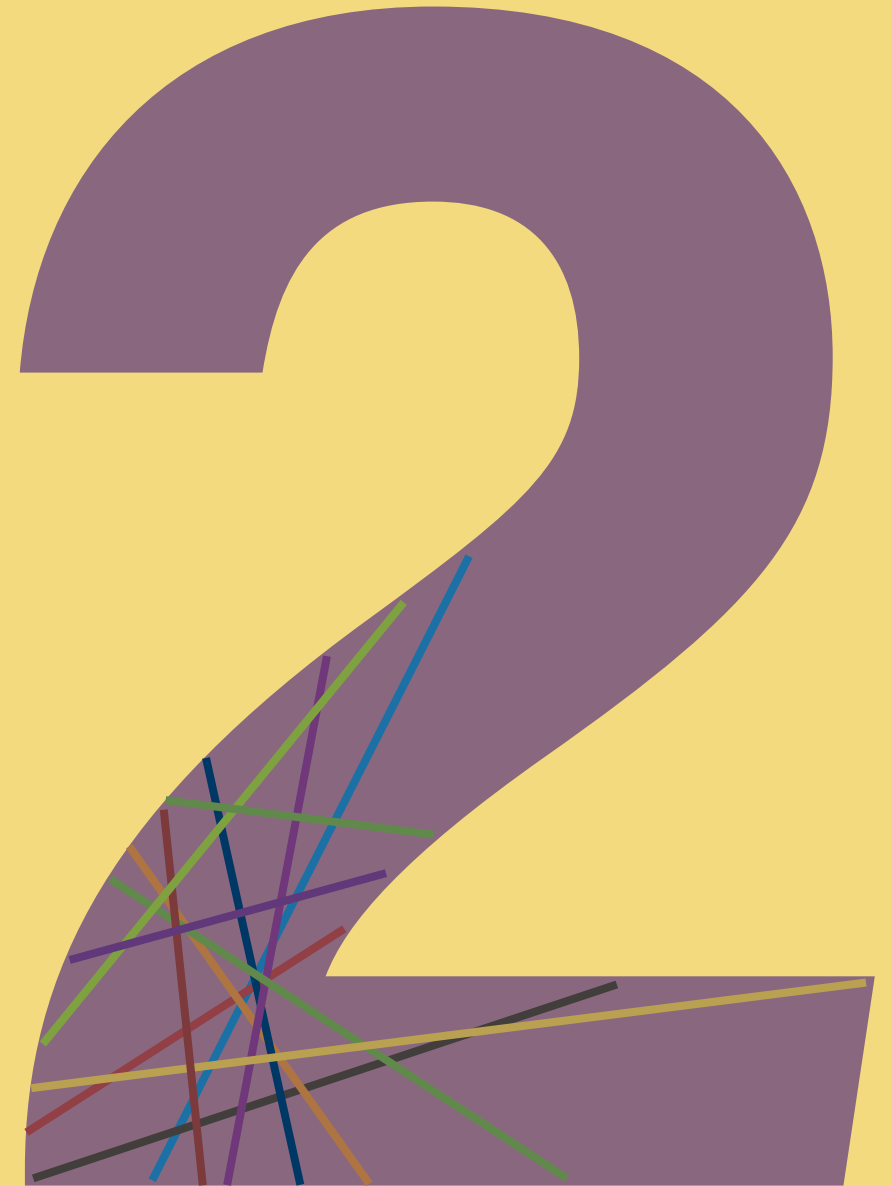
Supporting Resources

- **Alliance for Resource Equity Toolkit**
<https://www.educationresourceequity.org/toolkit>
- **Educational Opportunity Audit and Blueprint for Action - Education Trust-West**
<https://west.edtrust.org/diploma-matters-educational-opportunity-audit-blueprint-for-action-resources/>
- **Equity-Oriented Policy Review Process Guide. Great Lakes Equity Center. March 2016.**
https://greatlakesequity.org/sites/default/files/20160103556_equity_tool.pdf
- **Equity Audit**
<https://usm.maine.edu/eems/equity-audit>
- **Criteria for an Equitable School – Equity Audit. Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium. 2016.**
<https://maec.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Criteria-for-an-Equitable-School.pdf>

Students from historically disadvantaged families have just a 51 percent opportunity to learn when compared to white, non-Latino students.

51%

Equity Priority 2: Recruit and Retain a Diverse and Culturally Responsive Teaching Force



Ensure a culturally responsive workforce

EQUITY PRIORITY TWO

Recruit and Retain a Diverse, Culturally Responsive Teaching Force

Be deliberate and strategic in efforts to recruit and retain a diverse, culturally responsive teaching force.

We Know

All students benefit from having a diverse group of teachers that come from a variety of backgrounds¹⁶ as evidenced by improved cognitive skills, increased critical thinking and expanded problem solving.¹⁷ Students of color taught by teachers of color are more likely to have positive gains in test scores, less likely to be disciplined or expelled, and more likely to be identified appropriately for gifted programs, when they are disproportionately under-identified today.¹⁸

While 35 percent of all students in Minnesota are students of color or American Indian students, only 4 percent of teachers represent the state's diverse communities. We need to have a continuous pipeline of diverse, anti-racist education professionals, who are reflective of our diverse families and who are prepared for students on day one and throughout their careers.⁷

We Believe

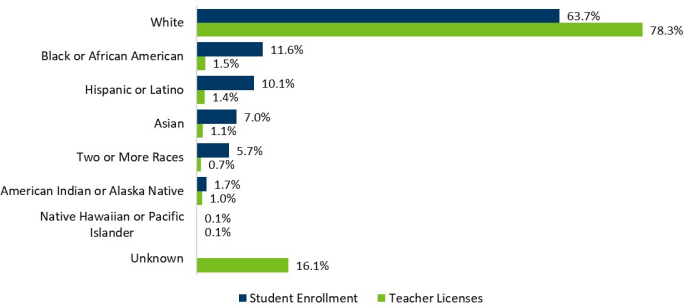
Ensuring a diverse, culturally responsive educator workforce benefits all students and is essential to preparing all Minnesota students for success in our global society.

Call to Action

The lack of a racially diverse teacher workforce is one of the most critical equity issues of our time. If we are to ensure every student, across every race, ethnicity, language, disability, family background, and/or family income, has access to the educational resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education, we must meaningfully and significantly increase racial diversity in the teacher workforce.¹⁹

Graph 4 (below) shows that the demographics of the students statewide are not reflected in the teacher force statewide. The data source for this graph is the 2021 Teacher Supply and Demand report.

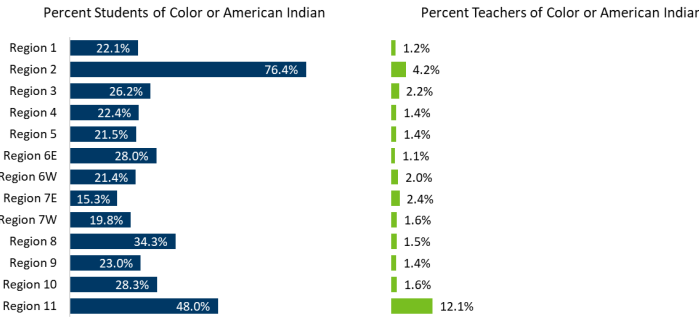
Comparison between student enrollment and teacher licenses in Minnesota's public schools
2020 student enrollment and Professional Educators Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) data.



Source: https://mn.gov/pelsb/assets/Supply%20and%20Demand%202021_Final_tcm1113-463801.pdf

Graph 5 (below) shows that across all regions there is a lack of racial and ethnic diversity of Minnesota's teaching force. However, in some parts of the state the differences between the student population and the teaching force is even starker. The data source for this graph is the 2021 Teacher Supply and Demand report.

Percent of students and teachers of color or American Indian by Minnesota Economic Development Region
2020 student enrollment data PELSB data.



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

For Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse, Culturally Responsive Teaching Force

Responsible for Change

District Leaders

- Review and analyze multi-year trend data on district-wide human capital distribution.
- Partner with parents/families and community members to develop a plan to recruit and retain a highly skilled, culturally responsive teaching force.
- Include the use of recruitment and retention data along with annual school data as a part of evaluation conferences with school administrators and to inform school improvement plans.
- Ensure all school leaders and interview team members have had training on bias reduction, use of skill demonstrations and evidenced-based practices in the interview process.
- Partner with community organizations to provide ongoing cultural proficiency training and support for educators to increase effectiveness in educating diverse student populations.
- Examine promotion practices and eliminate barriers to ensure teachers of color are being developed and considered for leadership opportunities.
- Embed the use of a cultural proficiency aptitude screener into the Human Resources hiring process.
- Provide differentiated supports for new teachers, racially and ethnically diverse teachers, and teachers who are struggling that includes mentors and/or coaches to help them be successful.
- Partner with universities to develop a more diverse pool of future teachers.
- Ensure that the Department of Teaching and Learning, and other relevant departments, have embedded culturally responsive educational practices into all aspects of their work.

School Leaders

- Utilize the school community and community at large to create a more diverse pool of applicants for anticipated openings.
- Create a supportive environment that prioritizes belonging, supports educators and respects multiple voices and perspectives.
- Conduct annual review and trend data analysis to ensure staff reflects the diversity of our changing world.
- Collaborate with teachers to ensure equity of assignment, prioritizing the needs of the student matched with the experience and skill of the teacher.
- Assume personal and professional responsibility for ensuring growth in culturally responsive educational practices and for creating an affirming educational environment for all.
- Create an environment of collective responsibility with, and among, school staff to ensure educational equity and excellence for all students.

Educators

- Create and support a welcoming, inclusive learning environment that promotes belonging and amplifies the voices and perspectives of all students, especially those who have been most marginalized or underserved.
- Embrace personal and collective responsibility for creating and sustaining an affirming, inclusive work environment.
- Assume personal and professional responsibility for developing the knowledge and skill to effectively implement culturally responsive instructional practices to meet the needs of your students and enable all students to achieve at high levels.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

For Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse, Culturally Responsive Teaching Force

Influence Change

Parents/Families

- Share your unique perspectives and expertise by serving on district and school committees.
- Support classroom learning by volunteering to provide content expertise.
- Advocate to help shape the change that is needed to ensure all students receive equitable access to diverse, culturally proficient educators.
- Build relationships with school leaders to better understand the educational vision and help guide systemic change through your participation.

School Boards

- Ensure the district has a board-approved equity statement that communicates the values, beliefs and expectations for addressing educational inequities.
- Maintain open communication and active engagement with the teacher's union regarding the district plan to recruit and retain a culturally responsive teaching force.
- Ensure that all voices, especially those most marginalized, are included in the process of recommending and developing policy changes.
- Conduct an impact analysis of all policies and revise, as needed, to ensure a culturally responsive workforce that is committed to ensuring educational equity and excellence for all.
- School board members must strive to balance the interests of their constituents with the welfare of all students and the needs of the most underserved students to ensure all students in the district receive a world class education.
- Establish district-wide goal and benchmarks to monitor progress in recruiting and retaining a diverse, culturally responsive educator workforce.

Community Allies

- Introduce and support legislative changes in teacher licensure to open the teaching pipeline to those holding a teaching license and/or graduating from colleges outside of Minnesota (particularly Historically Black Colleges and Universities) to ensure a diverse, culturally responsive educator workforce.
- Share perspectives and expertise with district and school leaders, school board members, teachers and parents/families to ensure public education adequately prepares all children for success.
- Provide professional support to teachers of color that includes community and social networks that celebrate and support them.
- Partner with university educator preparation programs on improving culturally responsive teacher preparation programs, curriculum development, coaching, and consultation related to educational equity and culturally responsive practices.
- Participate in district-wide and school-based activities and committees that support the aims of a comprehensive education.



Supporting Resources

- **A Vision and Guidance for a Diverse and Learner-Ready Teacher Workforce**
<https://ccsso.org/resource-library/vision-and-guidance-diverse-and-learner-ready-teacher-workforce>
- **Creating a District Plan to Increase the Racial, Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity of Your Educator Workforce: A Guidebook for Hiring and Selection**
https://portal.ct.gov//media/SDE/Talent_Office/HiringAndSelectionGuidebook.pdf
- **Building a Strong and Diverse Teacher and Principal Recruitment Pipeline. Coalition for Teaching Quality. (2016).**
http://coalitionforteachingquality.org/images/upload/201606_Recruitment.pdf

While 35 percent of all students in Minnesota are students of color or American Indian students, only 4 percent of teachers represent the state's diverse communities.

4%

Equity Priority 3: Eliminate Disproportionate Suspension and Expulsion Rates



Maintain **transparent** discipline data systems

EQUITY PRIORITY THREE

Eliminate Disproportionate Suspension and Expulsion Rates

Eliminate exclusionary and inconsistent disciplinary methods and bias in policies and practices that perpetuate inequitable outcomes for students.

We Know

While there is no evidence that racial differences in discipline are due to differences in rates or types of misbehavior by students of different races, Black students are **three times** more likely than their white peers to be suspended. Students with disabilities are twice as likely to be suspended than their non-disabled peers.²⁰ The consequences for students who are subject to exclusionary discipline practices are devastating—lower academic achievement, higher truancy, higher dropout, higher contact with the juvenile justice system, and lower local and state economic growth.²¹

We Believe

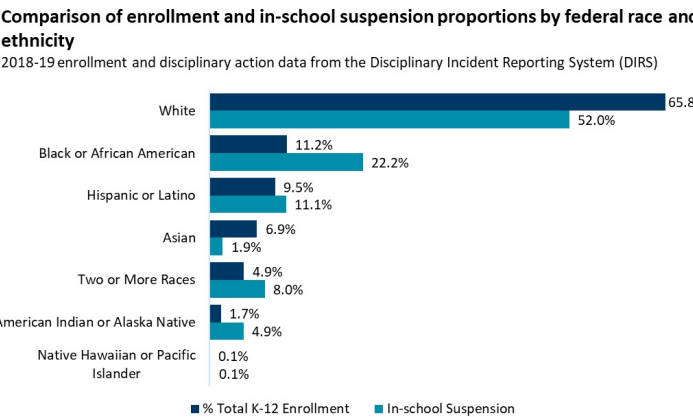
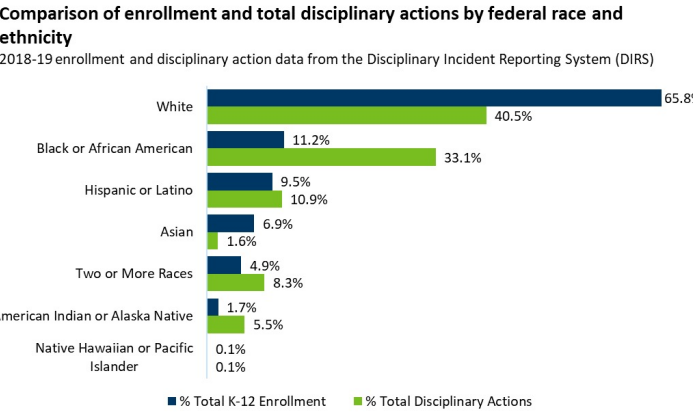
Excellence in education is possible only when we address and eliminate bias in policies and practices that perpetuate inequitable outcomes for students and engage the full school community in shared responsibility for fostering learning so students develop the knowledge, skills and self-efficacy they need to succeed.

Call to Action

Research shows that Black, Native American, Latinx students and students with disabilities are disproportionately disciplined through exclusionary practices that denies them access to instruction, school-based supports and exacerbates systemic inequities.²²

Strong relationships and connectedness lie at the heart of equity work. In fact, equity cannot be achieved without building systems that allow for authentic human connection. Without a foundation of solid relationships, physical and emotional safety and the cultivation of a positive school environment cannot be accomplished.²

Graphs 6-7 (below) Students in the Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, two or more races, and American Indian or Alaska Native students have disproportionately higher discipline rates than enrollment rates.



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

To Eliminate Disproportionate Suspension and Expulsion

Responsible for Change

District Leaders

- Implement a district-wide, culturally responsive school climate framework to reduce disproportionate suspensions and expulsions.
- Provide resources and training to ensure all schools implement school climate framework with fidelity.
- Establish a cross-functional team charged with ongoing, regular review and analysis of disaggregated student behavioral data to identify trends, patterns and equity impact on student populations and enable early system intervention to mitigate discipline disproportionality. Ensure student privacy is protected in these discussions.
- Institute annual review of discipline policies, practices, and procedures, with meaningful input from families and community, to identify issues and revise as needed.
- Ensure procedural discipline guidance operationalizes a restorative, supportive, and accountable discipline framework.
- Maintain transparent discipline data systems that include uniform records and detailed documentation for all exclusionary practices.
- Regularly administer a validated school climate survey to students, staff and parents/families to monitor school climate in all schools.
- Ensure school climate and behavior data are disaggregated by student demographic categories and publicly report results in an accessible format to ensure information is available to all school community members.
- Use existing accountability structures and principal evaluation process to monitor progress in reducing discipline disparities in each school.
- Include student engagement, school climate and reducing discipline disparity goals in *World's Best Workforce Plan* and require schools to address these goals in school improvement plans as well as in *Minnesota Achievement and Integration Plans*.

School Leaders

- Lead implementation of transformative, school climate framework. Provide necessary supports to enable all staff to implement practices with fidelity.
- Support school staff in developing social-emotional skills and the equity mindset they need to eliminate bias-based beliefs that perpetuate education and discipline disparities.
- Ensure data integrity of discipline records, due process documentation, and school climate assessments.
- Ensure school leaders regularly review disaggregated discipline data on a regular basis to identify patterns, trends, and disproportionality in student discipline.
- Establish a team, including external community voices, to review all instances of exclusionary discipline to determine if referral was appropriate, nondiscriminatory, and aligned with district policies. Charge this team with responsibility for reporting inappropriate discipline referrals to school leaders for prompt action. Ensure student data privacy is protected throughout this process.
- Engage parents/families as partners in all aspects of the discipline process whenever a student is excluded from the learning environment. This includes timely notification, providing relevant information and support, and developing of a plan for a restorative reentry.
- Elevate the practices of teachers who are effective in managing student discipline at the classroom level. Leverage their expertise by encouraging them to lead efforts in training, coaching, or mentoring others in positive behavior strategies.

Educators

- Explore and address bias-based beliefs and the impact they have on instruction and classroom engagement practices. Be mindful of prioritizing the safety, support and security of the students in your classroom over your own.
- Strengthen social-emotional skills and model them for students and colleagues.
- Create a positive classroom climate that is identity affirming, promotes belonging, student agency and positive behavior.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

To Eliminate Disproportionate Suspension and Expulsion

Educators (continued)

- Develop the agency of students by engaging them in defining and implementing positive behavior expectations in the classroom and the school community.
- Provide students with high levels of differentiated instruction and commensurate support to enable them to achieve their academic potential.
- Use culturally responsive curriculum, materials and resources that reflect the students in your classroom and school community.
- Implement classroom engagement practices that support students to explore, express and celebrate their multiple identities.
- Center parents/families as leaders of their child's education. Build authentic relationships with them to foster active participation in their child's learning process, and solicit their input on disciplinary decisions.
- Use a restorative disciplinary approach that names and collectively addresses harm that occurs within the school community.
- Assist students and adults in developing a plan to repair, rebuild and affirm the school community through restorative justice practices.
- Refrain from excluding students from instruction for non-violent behavior concerns by practicing self-awareness and developing culturally responsive instructional strategies that more effectively engage students in their learning and mitigate behavioral concerns.
- Provides students with alternative access to instruction and meaningful opportunities for support and grant full credit for work completed during an exclusion.

Influence Change

Parents/Families

- Share wisdom with school staff about how best they can support children and the community.
- Provide feedback for improving policies and practices that support the holistic development of your child.

- Partner with school staff to address behavior concerns and advocate for the use of restorative practices that involve families, when necessary, to address harm that occurs in the school community.
- Document concerns if a child receives disciplinary actions believed to be too harsh or discriminatory and report concerns to the teacher, principal, superintendent or school board.
- Advocate for the provision of parent-friendly, language-accessible communication regarding behavior expectations and discipline procedures.
- Help children understand and learn how to meet behavior expectations and advocate for change in policies that may be racist, oppressive or impede the well-being of students.
- Invite the collective wisdom of the community into the discipline process. Work with other families to help all students grow and learn when mistakes happen.

School Boards

- Conduct a comprehensive review of discipline policies and procedures to assess effectiveness. Make necessary changes to policies implemented inequitably.
- Ensure the district conducts an annual review of student disciplinary procedures, with meaningful input from the community to make changes when necessary and publicly reports annual discipline review process and results.
- Publish student discipline data for each school, and the district overall, that includes disaggregated data by types of misconduct, duration of discipline, involvement of law enforcement and student demographic categories.
- Require district to report on all exclusionary discipline practices, including those when parents/families agree to move their child to avoid official exclusion or expulsion procedures to ensure that accurate and proper data is reported to the state.
- Ensure a complaint process is publicly communicated, and easily accessible, so that students, parents/families and staff can report when they suspect discrimination or are unsatisfied with administration of discipline.

Community Allies

- Partner with neighborhood schools and families to ensure parents/families know their rights and responsibilities.
- Advocate for continued education regarding restorative justice, mental health, disability accommodations and social-emotional learning.
- Participate in district/school professional development and staff trainings open to community members.
- Partner with local schools to ensure transparency in discipline data monitoring and reporting so that relevant information is made accessible to community allies for quality analysis and supportive action.
- Partner with parents/families and schools to create and support an identity-affirming school climate and doing the work required to transform marginalizing school cultures.

Supporting Resources

- **Culturally Responsive Positive Behavioral Support Matters**
https://www.academia.edu/23832277/Culturally_Responsive_Positive_Behavioral_Support_Matters
- **Edutopia Restorative Justice Resources**
<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/restorative-justice-resources-matt-davis>
- **School Discipline Data Indicators: A Guide for Districts and Schools**
https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2017240.pdf
- **Analyzing Student-Level Disciplinary Data: A Guide for Districts**
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED573337.pdf>
- **Key Elements of Policies to Address Discipline Disproportionality: A Guide for District and School Teams**
<https://www.pbis.org/resource/key-elements-of-policies-to-address-discipline-disproportionality-a-guide-for-district-and-school-teams>
- **Policy Equity Analysis Tool - Great Lakes Equity Center,**
<https://greatlakesequity.org/resource/policy-equity-analysis-tool>

Black students are three times more likely than their white peers to be suspended. Students with disabilities are twice as likely to be suspended.

3x

Equity Priority 4: Ensure System- wide Culturally Responsive Educational Practices



Create culturally responsive environment

EQUITY PRIORITY FOUR

Ensure System-wide Culturally Responsive Educational Practices

Create and sustain system-wide, culturally responsive educational practices in a welcoming and inclusive learning environment where students and their parents/families see themselves reflected in the curriculum and feel valued as vital partners in their child’s education.

We Know

Racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students and parents/families experience school differently, making it essential to examine the norms and interactions around race, ethnicity, and diversity within the school environment.²³

There are important *educational benefits*—cognitive, social, and emotional—for all students who interact with classmates and teachers from different backgrounds, cultures, and orientations to the world. As the nation becomes more racially and ethnically complex, our schools should reflect that diversity and tap into the benefits of these more diverse schools to better educate all our students for the twenty-first century.²⁴

We Believe

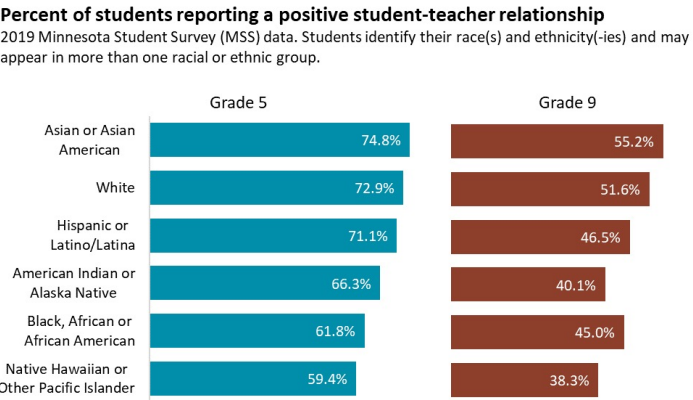
The multiple identities that a multi-racial, culturally diverse society brings are assets that should be acknowledged, celebrated, and built upon to help us better prepare all students for success in this evolving world.

Call to Action

Students must experience academic success, have their culture used as a vehicle for learning and engage in critical consciousness to critique the cultural norms, values, mores and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities (Ladson-Billings, 1995).²⁵ For teachers to effectively teach diverse students, they must be conscious of their positionality, aware of their identities and the unintentional biases they hold and recognize how these factors show up in the classroom.²⁶ We need to ensure that students find relevance and representation in the curriculum, their teachers and their overall educational experience resulting in equitable outcomes.⁷



Graph 8 (below) shows that generally, students of color and American Indian report lower rates of positive student-teacher relationships. Additionally, generally, younger children report having a positive student-teacher relationship at higher rates than older students.



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

For Embedding Culturally Responsive Educational Practices System-wide

Responsible for Change

District Leaders

- Ensure the district has a board-approved equity statement that communicates the district’s commitment to addressing inequities and ensuring educational equity and excellence.
- Revise district strategic plan to include a system-wide definition of equity, theory of action, and equity goals with specific milestones and benchmarks for embedding culturally responsive educational practices in schools, curriculum, and human capital management.
- Allocate funding to provide training and ongoing support in cultural responsiveness for all educators and leaders to improve their effectiveness in working with and teaching diverse student populations. Prioritize the use of community resources and networks to provide the training, whenever possible.
- Create high-quality, culturally responsive curricula that includes high-level reading, writing, math, and the opportunity for students to see themselves and other cultures in the curricula.
- Conduct an equity review of school and classroom culture and instructional strategies and use audit results to determine strategic priorities and set goals.
- Ensure appropriate funding to support at least one full time English language teacher in schools and districts serving high English language learner populations.

School Leaders

- Ensure culturally responsive practices are embedded into the curriculum and instructional process.
- Provide ongoing professional development designed to help educators and staff build cultural responsiveness skills and embed culture, ethnicity and respect of difference into their daily practice.
- Develop and sustain an equity-embedded professional learning community that provides educators with structured opportunities for continuous dialogue and opportunities to improve their culturally responsive practice.

- Be mindful of the diversity and culture of students and address the absent narratives in the school environment and programming to meet students’ educational, social, and emotional needs.
- Partner and consult with parents/families, communities and local agencies in developing and restructuring school practices, curriculum and instruction, and cultural practices to ensure equity perspectives have been taken into consideration.
- Value parents/families, communities, and agencies as partners in the education of all students.
- Implement an equity-embedded continuous improvement and evaluation process.

Educators

- Develop increasing consciousness of the ways in which learning, experiences and consciousness of racial and cultural identities impact and influence planning, curricula and delivery of instruction.
- Implement instructional strategies that avoid use of bias, stereotypes and generalizations.
- Leverage and use the diverse identities, backgrounds and experiences that each student brings to your classroom as assets to inform planning, curriculum choices, teaching practices and instructional strategies.
- Provide opportunities for students to see and reflect on their own cultural experiences and perspectives in curricula, literature, and in leadership.
- Use accurate, up-to-date curriculum, ensuring multiple perspectives are represented and contribute to subject matter to strengthen the totality of the student’s understanding.
- Learn and integrate the role of social and emotional learning and child/ adolescent development in the planning and delivery of instruction as well as in your interactions with students to better meet their developmental and educational needs.
- Engage parents/families in conversation about their children and exchange expectations for ensuring their child achieves their highest potential.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

For Embedding Culturally Responsive Educational Practices System-wide

Influence Change

Parents/Families

- Use the power and influence of lived experiences and cultural background to bring voice and authenticity to the learning process.
- Use the multiple perspectives of the parental community to connect school learning to students' lives.
- Advocate for school and district meetings to be held at community locations rather than at the school or district.
- Talk with students and teachers to determine the cultural relevancy of curriculum choices and the structure of their school environment and use this information to work with school leaders on making needed changes that reflect your child's contemporary cultural reality.
- Contextualize the educational experiences for children through the cultural variations in family life, beliefs, values, and approaches to work and careers.

School Boards

- Approve and implement a district-wide equity statement and plan of action to eliminate achievement disparities that includes evaluation measures and progress benchmarks during implementation to ensure collective accountability for achieving desired results.
- Ensure school board members participate in annual professional development to build cultural proficiency and illuminate the impact of achievement disparities and opportunity gaps on student groups throughout the district.
- Build a shared language and collective awareness of issues facing students in your district.
- Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment that includes student and community surveys prior to the development or update of the district's strategic plan.

- Ensure the process for evaluating the strategic plan includes meaningful input and feedback from students, parents/families and community members, especially those least served and most impacted by educational disparities.
- Publicize the main elements of the strategic plan and invite feedback through multiple modes of communication to ensure information is accessible to all members of your school community.
- Encourage school board members to join or participate in community groups and forums as a means to engage with the community to better understand the needs and experiences of students and their parents/families.
- Be mindful of responsibility to ensure that the tenets of the district's equity statement and action plan are lived and implemented with fidelity.

Community Allies

- Use the expertise of non-profit organizations to provide source data for culturally relevant curriculum.
- Encourage community allies, particularly those who are bilingual and bi-cultural, to participate in and be represented at all levels of the educational structure.
- Use influence to bring forth the silenced voices and undervalued narratives of the underrepresented.
- Assist student groups in schools to create narratives, and presentations on curricular and nationally themed events and monthly observations.
- Participation from community allies in parent/family days and events should be evident in all parental and community functions.
- Participate in and provide educators with opportunities for professional learning in the areas of equity, anti-bias, multicultural and culturally responsive pedagogies.

Supporting Resources

- **Equity and Social Emotional Learning**
<https://measuringsel.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Frameworks-Equity.pdf>
- **CASEL:** Why We Can't Have Social and Emotional Learning Without Equity
 - Equity & Social and Emotional Learning: A Cultural Analysis
- **National Equity Project:** Social & Emotional Learning and Equity
- **Aspen Institute:** Pursuing Social and Emotional Development Through a Racial Equity Lens: 5 Strategies for System Leaders to Take Action
- **Applying an Equity Lens to Social, Emotional and Academic Development**
<https://www.prevention.psu.edu/uploads/files/rwjf446338-EquityLens.pdf>

As the nation becomes more racially and ethnically complex, our schools should reflect that diversity and tap into the benefits of more diverse schools to better educate all our students for the twenty-first century.

Equity Priority 5: Engage Parents/ Families and Community Allies as Partners



Create authentic partnerships

EQUITY PRIORITY FIVE

Engage Parents/Families and Community Allies as Partners

Create authentic partnerships with parents/families and community allies to continuously improve school practices, environment and curriculum to ensure relevancy in meeting the learning needs of all students and the changing demands of a global society.

We Know

Parents of all races and economic backgrounds care deeply about their children's education and want to become more informed and engaged in their children's learning but traditional parent involvement efforts often lack cultural relevance and thus, limit the participation of non-dominant parents and parents/families.²⁷

School, family and community partnerships that engage parents/families as educational leaders, focus on shared systemic goals, strategically build capacity and relationships, and address educational change collaboratively enable parents/families and community members to contribute critical resources, intellectual capital and new perspectives so districts and schools can educate all students more equitably.²⁸

We Believe

Authentic engagement and partnership are made possible when parents/families and communities have an active role in co-creating and contributing to the planning and implementation of the work of the school, curricular and co-curricular activities and the infusion of culture. This is the mark of authentic engagement and partnership.

Call to Action

The important shift is in moving away from family engagement practices that educators think parents/families need and want to those based on what parents/families desire, value and co-create with educators. Authentic partnership and collaboration between parents/families and educators leads to higher participation rates, more meaningful engagement, differentiated services and more positive student learning outcomes.²⁹



“We need to mobilize all of us —not just teachers and students—to nurture assets and dismantle barriers so every student and their family has all Minnesotans supporting their academic and personal growth. It is critical for the broader community to partner with schools and take an all-hands-on-deck approach to ensuring every student reaches their highest potential.”

Governor’s Education Roundtable: *A Roadmap for Transformational Change in Minnesota Education* (2020)

The Minnesota Department of Education does not currently collect or disaggregate parent/family engagement data. However, all Minnesota schools and districts have the opportunity to partner with the parents/families in collecting and analyzing meaningful data that will help them realize the power and promise of authentic partnership to improve educational outcomes for all Minnesota students.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

To Engage Parents/Families and Community Allies as Partners

Responsible for Change

District Leaders

- Be intentional in getting to know and understand the entire community (e.g., community leaders, important spaces, demographic patterns) and build connections with the community that are reflective of the census demographics.
- Clearly articulate the district’s belief and commitment to ensure educational equity and excellence for all students to internal as well as external audiences.
- Equitably distribute resources and access to community learning opportunities to support the success of all students.
- Engage community groups in identifying community partners and resources that can assist the district to meet student needs.
- Engage parents/families and community allies in co-developing mutually beneficial goals, in the alignment of roles, defining the scope of responsibilities and use of shared resources.
- Anticipate and plan for resistance that may arise when the district’s equity commitment and agenda are implemented.
- Proactively partner with community allies to communicate the district’s equity commitment, agenda and key initiatives to increase understanding, buy-in and support within the community.
- Ensure all district communication is easily accessible and readable to parents/families, including translations and accommodations for those with disabilities.
- Gather family and community feedback on district-wide policies before implementation and provide transparent updates during and after implementation.

School Leaders

- Know and understand the entire school community. Be intentional about building connections within the communities that reflect the students.
- Clearly articulate the district and school’s commitment to ensuring equity in access, opportunities and equitable supports for all students.
- Anticipate and proactively plan to address the concerns and resistance that will arise when an equity commitment and agenda are implemented at the school level.

- Partner with community allies in communicating your school’s equity commitment and agenda to increase understanding and generate support within the school community.
- Partner with parents/families, community allies, and local organizations in the development of equity-conscious school improvement plans.
- Ensure that the educators and staff in your school provide culturally responsive and engaging learning experiences that are relevant and connected to the local community context.
- Build partnerships with local non-profits, agencies, and businesses to leverage opportunities for civic and service learning projects.
- Provide interpretation services and appropriate accommodations that may be needed at family meetings to ensure meaningful two-way communication.
- Create and sustain a culture of professional learning that includes ongoing professional development on best practices in parent/family engagement.

Educators

- Engage with parents in a meaningful and culturally responsive way within the first month of school to learn about their student.
- Collaborate with parents/families and community members in developing a variety of meaningful opportunities to volunteer, help or contribute to the classroom and school.
- Engage educators, parents/families and community members in developing a resource list of community content experts willing to share their expertise and experience.
- Acknowledge, affirm, and use the contemporary, cultural, lived experiences of students, parents/families and community by incorporating them into the learning process.
- Ask parents/families to share their concerns and their wisdom and insight about ways to help their children achieve their highest potential.
- Develop relationships with students, parents/families and the community outside of the classroom setting by attending or volunteering at community events.
- Embrace the perspective that teaching and learning is a shared experience.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

To Engage Parents/Families and Community Allies as Partners

Influence Change

Parents/Families

- Be proactive in establishing communication with teachers and others at school.
- Work with schools to co-create opportunities to volunteer and ways to contribute to the classroom, school and district.
- Support school and district outreach efforts and advocate for the inclusion of parent/ family viewpoints.
- Use the power and authenticity of parent/family and community voice to influence school improvement efforts and to inform district initiatives.
- Participate in decision-making on programs, policies, and learning activities that impact the school community.
- Create a strong community of support by connecting with other parents/families and building a common understanding of school and district objectives.
- Use parent-teacher conferences as opportunities to share insight and expertise about students' strengths and vocalize expectations of the teacher.
- Advocate for the right to receive communication in the language and format that works best.
- Share expertise, traditions and cultural assets with teachers to support the integration of these values within curriculum.

School Boards

- Articulate and publicize the school board's commitment to ensuring equity in access, opportunities and supports for all students.
- Ensure that parents/families and community groups who reflect the diversity of the student body are engaged in the strategic planning process and are able to share their input and perspectives through a variety of accessible feedback mechanisms.
- Develop a comprehensive, inclusive, two-way communication process that is meaningful, accessible, and engages all community groups in your district.

- Conduct an equity impact analysis of all district policies.
- Provide annual professional development to school board members that focuses on building cultural proficiency and illuminating the impact of educational disparities and opportunity gaps on student groups.

Community Allies

- Articulate your expectations for the district and schools to ensure equitable opportunities for all students, providing ongoing feedback to help them improve.
- Partner with school board, district and school leaders, educators and parents/families in the development of a joint plan for ensuring equity for all.
- Support students and parents/families from minoritized communities to persist and prevail in their interactions with educational systems that have historically marginalized their voices and educational experiences.
- Work with educators to identify and change educational practices that create barriers to meaningful parent/family participation in the education of their children.



Supporting Resources

- **Engage for Education Equity Toolkit**, <http://dignityinschools.org/resources/engageforequity/>
- **Handbook on Family and Community Engagement. (2011).** <http://families-schools.org/downloads/FACEHandbook.pdf>
- **Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Families and The Community as Partners in Education** <https://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/resources.html>

**Authentic partnership
and collaboration
between parents/
families and educators
leads to higher
participation rates,
more meaningful
engagement,
differentiated services
and more positive
student learning
outcomes.**



Conclusion

The **Minnesota Equity in Action Framework** confirms the need for and a path toward educational equity and excellence for all students. The health of a community reflects the educational theory practiced, the processes used and the educational outcomes achieved. To change the trajectory of student success in Minnesota schools requires transforming the engagement of all involved in their education.

The **Minnesota Equity in Action Framework** leverages the power of authentic partnership to achieve results and focuses on the role each partner plays in the process of ensuring fairness, equity and educational excellence for all Minnesota students. This framework embraces the community, often overlooked, as a full partner in the collective work of ensuring all Minnesota students receive the education they need to reach their highest potential, regardless of race, disability, language, gender, family circumstance, income or ZIP code.

Educational Equity Matters in Minnesota. Now is the time to unlock the power of authentic partnership, to embrace an equity-stance and make the necessary shifts in mindsets, power dynamics and roles to ensure students from all communities have what they need to succeed. Our collective future depends on it.



Minnesota Equity in Action Framework

“We are intertwined.

That indisputable fact is our greatest opportunity and challenge.

To elevate one at the expense of the other, or ignore the decline of one for the advantage of another, is fruitless folly.

The only path forward is together—

leveraging, lifting, and loosening each part of the entanglement so all advance and none are neglected.”

-Steven Belton, President & CEO, Urban League Twin Cities

The power of interconnected community

GLOSSARY of Working Definitions

Achievement Gap Closely related to learning gap and opportunity gap, the term achievement gap refers to any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students who differ from one another in terms of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental abilities, and income. Generally speaking, achievement gap refers to outputs—the unequal or inequitable distribution of educational results and benefits—while opportunity gap refers to inputs—the unequal or inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities. Learning gap refers to relative performance of individual students—i.e., the disparity between what students have actually learned and what they were expected to learn at a particular age or grade level. Source: <https://www.edglossary.org/achievement-gap/>

Bias Bias is sometimes used interchangeably with implicit (unconscious) bias and refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Implicit bias is unconscious, but it still affects our judgement of others based on factors (i.e. race, disability, gender, culture, language). There are ways to increase consciousness and mitigate negative effects of bias that improves with practice. Source: National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University

Culturally Responsive Educational Practice Culturally responsive educational practice requires that educators build an understanding of culture and how it shapes their own lives and the lives of students and their families. It requires educators to continuously engage in their own self work to identify and eliminate bias and co-create learning environments that value, reflect and integrate the various cultures of the students within them.

There are three specific components of culturally responsive practice:

- **Tenet 1: Culturally responsive practice focuses on academic success.** Educators center student learning and academic rigor in their classrooms. They hold consistently high expectations for all learners, know where each individual student is in relation to those expectations, and use what they know about the individual learner to ensure they have the support they need to meet those expectations.
- **Tenet 2: Culturally responsive practice requires culturally competent educators.** Educators affirm the cultures of their students through the learning opportunities they provide, the materials they use, the environment they build, and their skill in using students’ cultural ways of knowing to help them learn new things. They build authentic relationships with students and guide students in doing the same with one another.
- **Tenet 3: Culturally responsive practice develops students’ socio-political consciousness.** Educators purposefully build students’ ability to question and critique social norms, values, practices, and systems that produce and maintain inequity. They talk with students about culture and identity and find opportunities within the curriculum for students to look for the causes of inequity and see themselves as agents of change in response to injustice. Source: The Leadership Academy, <https://www.leadershipacademy.org>

Disaggregated Student Data Disaggregation of student data refers to breaking down data about a student population into smaller groupings, based on qualities or characteristics such as gender, racial/ethnic group, disability or family income. Disaggregating student data into demographic groups can help schools and communities plan appropriate programs; decide which interventions to implement; target limited resources; and recognize trends in educational participation, outcomes, and achievement. Source: <https://www.edglossary.org/disaggregated-data/>

Disparity The unequal outcomes of one demographic group of students (i.e. racial, ethnicity, disability or economic status) as compared to outcomes for another student demographic group.

Disproportionality Disproportionality refers to a group's representation in a particular category that exceeds expectations for that group, or differs substantially from the representation of others in that category. Disproportionality also refers to the underrepresentation or overrepresentation of a student demographic group (racial or ethnic group compared to its percentage in the total population. Source: National Association of School Psychologists

Educational Equality Educational equality assumes that all students' educational needs are the same regardless of background, and that all students should have access to the exact same opportunities. Source: <https://holdsworthcenter.org/blog/equity-isnt-just-a-slogan/>

Educational Equity Educational equity means that each child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential. Source: National Equity Project, <https://www.nationalequityproject.org>

Equity Review An equity review (sometimes referred to as equity audit) is a leadership tool used to collect the data that informs the process of removing programmatic barriers that impede full participation, access, and opportunity for all students to receive an equitable and excellent education. With this process, leaders can assess the extent to which equity is present in such areas as teacher quality, the overall instructional setting, and student achievement and attainment. Source: Sparks, S. D. (2015, September 17). How does an equity audit work? Retrieved from http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/inside-school-research/2015/09/how_does_an_equity_audit_work.html

Equity Lens An Equity and Inclusion Lens is like a pair of glasses. It helps you see things from a new perspective. It helps you be more effective in your everyday work by getting a clearer focus and a more complete view. In turn, the full inclusion and participation of community members and employees contributes to a vibrant society where everyone benefits. Source: <https://nonprofitoregon.org/sites/default/files/NAO-Equity-Lens-Guide-2019.pdf>

Equity-mindedness The term “Equity-Mindedness” refers to the perspective or mode of thinking exhibited by practitioners who call attention to patterns of inequity in student outcomes. These practitioners are willing to take personal and institutional responsibility for the success of their students, and critically reassess their own practices. It also requires that practitioners are race-conscious and aware of the social and historical context of exclusionary practices in American education. Source: Center for Urban Education <https://cue.usc.edu/about/equity/equity-mindedness/>

Education Equity Stance An education equity stance in education is the equitable implementation of policy, practices, procedures, and legislation that translates into resource allocation, education rigor, and opportunities for historically and currently marginalized youth, students, and families, including civil rights protected classes. This means the restructuring and dismantling of systems and institutions that create the dichotomy of beneficiaries and the oppressed and marginalized. Source:<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-andfamily/equity/Pages/default.aspx>

Ethnicity While related to race, ethnicity refers not to physical characteristics but to social traits that are shared by a human population. Some of the social traits often used for ethnic classification include: nationality; tribe; religious faith; shared language; and shared culture and/or traditions. Unlike race, ethnicity is not usually externally assigned by others. The term ethnicity focuses more upon a group’s connection to a perceived shared past and culture. Source: Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza, Paolo Menozzi, and Alberto Piazza. The History and Geography of Human Genes. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996

Exclusionary Discipline Exclusionary discipline describes any type of school disciplinary action that removes or excludes a student from his or her usual educational setting. Two of the most common exclusionary discipline practices at schools include suspension and expulsion. Source: Supportive School Discipline Initiative <https://supportiveschooldiscipline.org/exclusionary-discipline>

Expulsion Expulsion refers to a permanent removal of a student from his or her regular educational setting due to a violation of serious school rules or policies. The length and reason for expulsion vary by state and school district. Before a student can be expelled, a school board will hold a hearing to decide whether a student should be expelled for their violation. Each school board can decide its own process, but must provide the student and their family with a copy of the procedures and information on the process.
Source: Supportive School Discipline Initiative <https://supportiveschooldiscipline.org/exclusionary-discipline>

Marginalized A marginalized population is a group of people that is excluded from full participation in society and marginalization may include the withholding of political rights, economic opportunity and social integration.
Source: Reference.com

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is an integrated, comprehensive framework that focuses on core instruction, differentiated learning, student-centered learning, individualized student needs, and the alignment of systems necessary for all students’ academic, behavioral, and social success.
Source: California Department of Education, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/mtsscompri2.asp>

Opportunity Gap The opportunity gap refers to the fact that the arbitrary circumstances in which people are born—such as their race, ethnicity, ZIP code, and socioeconomic status—determine their opportunities in the educational system and life more broadly, rather than all people having the chance to achieve to the best of their potential. The opportunity gap is the disparity in access to quality schools and the resources needed for all children to be academically successful.
Source: Schott Foundation.org, <http://schottfoundation.org/issues/opportunity-gap/talking-points>, TopHat.com

Opportunity to Learn Opportunity to Learn (OTL) is a way of measuring and reporting whether students and teachers have access to the different ingredients that make up quality schools. The more OTL ingredients that are present in an individual school, school district, or even in schools across the state, the more opportunities students have to benefit from a high quality education. Source: UCLA’s Institute for Democracy, Education, & Access <https://idea.gseis.ucla.edu/resources/documents/OTL-English.pdf>

Parents/Families The term parents/families are used in this document to refer to the primary adults who are responsible for raising a child, such as parents, grandparents, caregiver, foster parents. or anyone with a consistent presence in a child’s life.

Race A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly skin color), cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period of time. There are no distinctive genetic characteristics that truly distinguish between groups of people. Created by Europeans (Whites), race presumes human worth and social status for the purpose of establishing and maintaining privilege and power. Race is independent of ethnicity.
Source: University of Washington, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Glossary of Terms

Restorative Discipline Practices Restorative practices are processes that proactively build healthy relationships and a sense of community to prevent and address conflict and wrongdoing. Restorative Discipline practices focus on the importance of ensuring that members of the school community are heard, reflect on the impact of their actions on others, taking responsibility for their actions and making amends as needed. Source: International Institute for Restorative Practices, <https://www.iirp.edu>

Social Emotional Learning Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.
Source: Casel.org, <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>

Student Demographic Groups In education, a student demographic group generally refers to any group of students who share similar characteristics, such as gender identification, racial or ethnic identification, socioeconomic status, physical or learning disabilities, language abilities, or school-assigned classifications (e.g. special-education students). The most common federally defined student demographic groups for which public-education data are collected and reported by schools, districts, and state education agencies include:

- **Gender:** The two gender groups widely used in public education are *male* and *female*. While historically these student groups have not been controversial, growing awareness of and sensitivity to students identifying as transgender poses potential complications for this approach to student demographic group classification.

- **Racial and Ethnic:**
 - Hispanic/Latino of any race
 - For individuals who are Non-Hispanic/Latino
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Two or more races

- **Students with Disabilities:** Any student with an Individualized Education Program, as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, is reported in the “students with disabilities” demographic group.

- **Students with Limited English Proficiency:** Students who are classified by their school as “limited English proficient,” often abbreviated as LEP, or as English Language Learners (ELL) are reported in this demographic group.

- **Economically Disadvantaged:** Historically, schools, districts, and governmental agencies have defined students as “economically disadvantaged” based on their eligibility to receive free or reduced-price lunch.

- **Migrant:** Students are assigned “migrant status” when a parent or guardian’s principal means of livelihood is migratory work, typically in the agricultural or fishing industries.

Source: The Glossary of Education Reform

Suspension from School A suspension from school refers to the temporary removal of a student from his or her regular education setting due to a violation of school policies or rules. During suspension, a student is not allowed to attend school or school activities for a set length of time.
Source: Supportive School Discipline Initiative. <https://supportiveschooldiscipline.org/exclusionary-discipline>

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Minnesota Equity in Action Framework

Minnesota Every Student Succeeds Act Equity Leadership Learning Community