

Leadership Academy's Equity Self-Assessment

At the Leadership Academy, we are committed to improving academic success for all students and believe that leadership is a critical lever for improving the conditions necessary for all students to thrive. To help us learn where you are in your efforts to create a more equitable school system and what you see as next steps, we ask that you complete our Equity Self-Assessment. This tool was designed to provide school systems with:

- A means for assessing where they are on their equity journey, and where they want to go;
- Common language that can stimulate internal dialogue regarding what it means to address issues of inequity; and
- Ongoing measures to assess system progress.

Guidance:

There is no one right way to complete the Equity Self-Assessment. Systems may complete the tool differently depending on the time and resources available. We recommend that individuals from multiple levels and areas of the system be involved in the process in some way. While personal experiences of individuals are relevant, it is important to remember that the focus is on the organization as a whole. This will enable a more accurate assessment and ensure a comprehensive picture of the system's equity work. It will also provide an opportunity for staff to enhance their understanding of equitable practice.

How you might complete this:

- Individuals across different roles within the organization respond to components of the tool aligned to their role and then compile their answers together for an overall assessment.
- Key individuals complete the entire tool separately and then come together to discuss similarities and differences in order to come to a consensus.
- A group of key individuals gather to discuss the tool components in detail and then come to a consensus regarding where the system is as a whole.

Instructions:

For each of the organizational components (rows), highlight the stage (column) that best represents the system's current status. Please use the Comments section to record evidence of your rating and any comments you feel are important to capture. Few system's experiences will fit exactly into each stage of the continuum. The descriptions of organizational characteristics at each point along the continuum are intended as guidelines rather than fixed stages. When indicating where you are along the continuum, we encourage you to be candid with yourself, and think about what evidence you might provide for your response. The term "system" refers to whatever system you belong to – this may be a district, school, or some other organization.

Remember that every journey towards educational equity is unique and ongoing.

Vision/Mission

Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary
System leaders do not recognize or indicate equity as relevant to their work	System leaders recognize and indicate the importance of tackling inequities and are contemplating next steps, including soliciting input from stakeholders (staff, students, parents, community members) on a vision/mission for the system	System leaders recognize and indicate the importance of tackling inequities and are in the process of developing a shared and collaborative vision/mission grounded in equity	System leaders have developed a collaborative vision/mission grounded in equity and have cultivated a shared understanding of and commitment to the vision/mission among stakeholders	System leaders have integrated equity in stated mission and vision which are actively being used to guide the system's policies, programs, and decisions

COMMENTS:

Leadership

Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary
System leaders do not openly acknowledge or examine their identity (race, language, ethnicity, ableness, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.), privilege, biases, and assumptions nor how these impact their decisions and actions; System leaders do not openly express a commitment to equity	System leaders are open to the idea of examining their identity, privilege, biases, and assumptions and may do so in an informal or inconsistent manner; System leaders express a limited understanding of equity and/or its importance	System leaders publicly model a consistent examination of their identity, privilege, biases, and assumptions; System leaders explicitly communicate their commitment to equity and willingness to take action in service of a more equitable system	System leaders create opportunities for others to examine their identity, privilege, biases, and assumptions and facilitate conversations about equity within the context of identity; System leaders communicate a unified commitment to creating a more equitable system and encourage others to join in	System leaders consistently provide forums for others to examine and discuss their identity, privilege, biases and assumptions; System leaders have created an environment where others take initiative and action toward a more equitable system

COMMENTS:

School Board/ Governing Body

Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary
School Board members have a limited understanding of equity and do not indicate equity as essential to their work	Very few School Board members have an expansive understanding of equity and/or the importance of addressing inequities through their work as a board	School Board members share an internal understanding of equity but may not advocate for publicly committing to equity as a board	The School Board shares an expansive understanding of equity and its importance, and is beginning to make decisions and take actions which signal a commitment to equity	The School Board consistently and transparently operationalizes its commitment to equity as an essential feature of their work

COMMENTS:

Policies

Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary
System leaders do not express an interest in examining existing policies and practices for inequities and/or in developing new policies/ structures that promote equity	System leaders express an interest in examining existing policies and practices for inequities and/or in developing new policies/structures that promote equity but have no concrete plans to do so	System leaders examine existing policies and practices for inequities and are developing new policies/structures that promote equity but not consistently	System leaders are developing new policies/structures that promote equity but may be unclear about how they are aligned or how they might be operationalized	System leaders have developed formal policies (e.g. allocating funds based on student need) that are integrated, aligned, and support the system's vision/mission; System leaders regularly monitor policies and adjust as necessary

COMMENTS:

Resources/Infrastructure

Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary
System leaders distribute the same fiscal and material resources to all schools and students, with no evidence that resource management integrates a system-wide value for equity	System leaders have had some internal discussions around equitable allocation of resources but do not currently have concrete plans for how to identify and address resource inequities	System leaders are examining existing resource allocation policies and making decisions about how to redirect resources to support the teaching and learning of students who need support but not consistently and not by engaging other stakeholders	System leaders engage other stakeholders in allocating fiscal, material and human resources equitably to support the teaching and learning of students who need support and have evidence that resources have been more equitably allocated	System leaders have developed formal policies and structures to ensure more equitable resource allocation and have evidence that resources have been more equitably allocated

COMMENTS:

Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary
System stakeholders do not have access to professional development opportunities focused on the knowledge, theories, and strategies	System leaders are currently contemplating how to provide access to professional development focused on the knowledge,	System leaders provide sporadic and disconnected opportunities for professional development focused on the knowledge,	System leaders consistently offer professional development focused on the knowledge, theories, and strategies essential to	System leaders foster ongoing equity-focused training, coaching, and professional development at all levels of the system to

Professional Development

essential to meeting the needs of diverse students and families	theories, and strategies essential to meeting the needs of diverse students	theories, and strategies essential to meeting the needs of diverse students	meeting the needs of diverse students and families to all staff across the system	sustain a culturally relevant school experience for all students and families
Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary
Curriculum across the system (including instructional materials) predominantly centers White or Eurocentric ideas and culture; The curriculum is disconnected from student's lives and provides zero opportunities for teachers to engage cultural responsiveness; There is little to no diversity among curriculum	Curriculum across the system is disconnected from student's lives and provides zero opportunities for teachers to engage cultural responsiveness; There is little to no diversity among curriculum	Curriculum across the system occasionally centers multiple perspectives and is inclusive of some but not all of students' cultural, racial, or linguistic backgrounds; There are a few opportunities for teachers to connect student's learning to real life issues; There is little diversity among curriculum contributors	Curriculum across the system centers diverse perspectives and is inclusive of most students' cultural, racial, or linguistic backgrounds; There are several opportunities for teachers to connect student's learning to real life issues; There is some diversity among curriculum contributors	Curriculum across the system is rich in cultural, racial and linguistic diversity; Multiple, diverse perspectives are integrated throughout instructional materials and resources; There are clear activities and content that connect students' learning to real life issues; The curriculum was co-authored by a diverse group of

COMMENTS:

contributors	curriculum contributors			contributors
Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary

Curriculum
COMMENTS:

Pedagogy/Instruction

Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary
There is no guidance for teachers and leaders on engaging diverse learners or responding to individual learning styles/needs, and cultural, racial, linguistic backgrounds; Teachers are not encouraged to reflect on their worldviews or their practice; Learning is teacher-centered and controlled	There is little guidance for teachers and leaders on engaging diverse learners and responding to individual learning styles/needs, and student’s backgrounds, but it is mostly on a superficial/symbolic level. Teachers are rarely encouraged to reflect on their worldviews or their practice	There is a little guidance for teachers and leaders on engaging diverse learners and responding to individual learning styles/needs, and student’s backgrounds; Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their worldviews or their practice	There is a lot of guidance on engaging diverse learners and responding to individual learning styles/needs, and student’s backgrounds; Teachers are presented with opportunities to reflect on their worldviews and how they see and teach students	There is an abundance of guidance on engaging cultural responsiveness meaningfully throughout instruction; Teachers are presented with multiple and consistent opportunities to reflect on their biases and on their practice

COMMENTS:

System leaders do not collect or track student or school data by historically	System leaders collect and disaggregate student and school data by historically	Individual system leaders consistently collect and disaggregate student and	The system supports all leaders in routinely collecting and disaggregating school	Leaders and staff across all levels of the system routinely collect, disaggregate and
Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary
population (i.e. special education, English as a second language subsidized lunch, race/ethnicity) and do not express any knowledge or value in the importance of doing so	population individually and in an inconsistent manner	marginalized students; Leaders may not share or act on the information	historically marginalized student population; Leaders use the information in planning and decision-making	data and use the information in collaborative planning and decision-making

Data

COMMENTS:

Diverse Staff

COMMENTS:

Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary
There is little to no diversity in staffing across the system; System leaders do not express any knowledge or value in a diverse staff	System leaders have had initial discussions about recruiting a more diverse staff and express value in the idea	System leaders are beginning to diversify staff but may not know how to do so effectively	Recruitment and retention strategies are resulting in growing staff diversity	Recruitment and retention strategies have resulted in a diverse staff reflective of the student and community population

System leaders do not include metrics aligned to the demographic diversity (race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, language, etc.) of system enrollment in programs or in accountability mechanisms and do not express any value in doing so	System leaders indicate knowledge and value in including metrics aligned to the demographic diversity of system enrollment but have not made any plans to do so	System leaders are preparing to include or inconsistently include metrics aligned to the demographic diversity of system enrollment	System leaders have included metrics aligned to the demographic diversity of system enrollment in some of the system’s standard evaluation or accountability mechanisms	System leaders have included metrics aligned to the demographic diversity of system enrollment in all evaluation and accountability mechanisms across the system
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Accountability

COMMENTS:

Community

COMMENTS:

Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary
Leaders and teachers across the system do not express an interest in building stronger relationships with families and the community and may see it as unrealistic or unimportant	Leaders and teachers across the system express value in the idea of building relationships with families and the community, but do not have plans for how to do so in a culturally responsive manner	Leaders and teachers across the system inconsistently build relationships with families and the community but have yet to establish meaningful connections and may approach it in a more symbolic manner such as hosting a parent open house once a year	Leaders and teachers across the system actively work to build relationships with families and the community, working to understand how to provide value and support	Leaders and teachers across the system have strong, mutually beneficial, accountable and equitable relationships with families and the community (i.e. family and community members are partners in decision-making, have formal structures such as networking or advisory committees)

Communication

COMMENTS:

Not Yet Started	Ready to Start	Launched	Well on the Way	Exemplary
<p>Leaders and teachers across the system do not transparently share information with students, families, and/or staff; Communication is typically not provided in language(s) and modes accessible to all stakeholders</p>	<p>Leaders and teachers across the system share specific, sporadic information with students, families and/or staff; Communication is often provided in language(s) and modes which are accessible to only a number/few groups of stakeholders</p>	<p>Leaders and teachers across the system inconsistently share information with students, families, and/or staff; Communication is provided in language(s) and modes which are accessible to all stakeholders</p>	<p>Leaders and teachers across the system consistently and transparently share information with students, families and/or staff and ensure that communication is two-way, and in language(s) and modes accessible to all</p>	<p>System-wide strategies are in place to allow ongoing, two-way communication with students, families and staff in ways that they feel respected and included</p>

APPENDIX A:

About This Tool:

This tool was designed to help systems assess where they are on their equity journey. Equity for us means that **each student and educator has access to the resources and opportunities they need to fulfill their potential, and that their race, culture, and other characteristics of their identity should not stand in the way of that access.** The tool describes organizational components along a continuum including:

1. **Vision/Mission** — The system has a clear mission and vision that promotes the success of all students with attention to race and culture.
2. **Leadership** — System leaders recognize the importance of equity, prioritize resources, and lead the effort.
3. **School Board/Governing Body** — Board members recognize the importance of equity and show their commitment in their decision-making.
4. **Policies and Planning** — The system has specific, measurable, and aligned equity goals and objectives.
5. **Infrastructure/Resources** — The system has committed resources and structures to support equity work.
6. **Professional Development** — The system fosters ongoing equity learning and growth for its staff and stakeholders.
7. **Curriculum** — Curriculum is inclusive of all students' cultural, racial, or linguistic backgrounds.
8. **Pedagogy/Instruction** — Instruction is student-centered.
9. **Diverse Staff** — The system has policies and strategies for recruiting and retaining a diverse staff; staff are representative of the community they serve.
10. **Data** — The system routinely and systematically collects and analyzes disaggregated data and uses the information in planning/decision-making.
11. **Community** — Mutually beneficial, accountable and equitable partnerships exist with students, families, and the community.
12. **Accountability** — The system has developed metrics and mechanisms to create and maintain accountability to its stakeholders.
13. **Communication** — System listens to and communicates with stakeholders, sensitive to different home languages, cultures, and values.

References

The development of this tool was informed by the following:

- Bryan-Gooden, J., Hester, M., & Peoples, L. Q. (2019). Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard. New York: Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, New York University.
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2012). Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation. Part III: Guide to Rubrics and Model Rubrics for Superintendent, Administrator, and Teacher.
- Meyer Memorial Trust. (2018). The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Spectrum Tool. <https://mmt.org/news/understanding-meyers-dei-spectrum-tool>
- National Institute for Urban School Improvement. (2006). Systemic Change Framework Rubrics Assessment Handbook. Rubrics for Urban Schools: Assessing Education for All. Tempe, Arizona: Arizona State University.
- New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE). (2016). The Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education.
- O'Hara, N., Munk, T. E., Reedy, K., and D'Agord, C. (2016, May). Equity, Inclusion, and Opportunity: Addressing Success Gaps White Paper (Version 3.0). IDEA Data Center. Rockville, MD: Westat.

Appendix B:

As additional guidance, the following pages offer supporting research and examples of indicators of success for each of the organizational components included in the Leadership Academy's Equity Self-Assessment.

Vision/Mission

Setting a vision and direction has been cited by education leaders around the world as one of the biggest contributors to improvement.¹ To promote equity, a strong vision communicates an explicit commitment to the high achievement of all children and communicates that by working together, everyone's performance can improve.²

Possible Indicators:

- A mission/vision that clearly articulates the system's belief and commitment to providing equity for all students is visible around the community and present in conversations and decisions.
- A broad representation of stakeholders are involved in the development of the system's mission/vision.
- All stakeholders can talk about the mission/vision and hold a sense of ownership and commitment to it.

Leadership

Our identity, attitudes, and beliefs directly impact our actions and decisions. Given the influence that leaders have on staff practice and system policy, it is critical that they examine their own identity and beliefs and how these affect his or her professional practice, and guide others in doing the same.³ Such critical self-reflection can bring awareness to the role of cultural influences and biases in perpetuating inequitable practices that lead to gaps in educational opportunity.⁴

Possible Indicators:

- Stakeholders recognize how identity, biases, and positional/racial privilege shapes behaviors and decisions.
- Stakeholders publicly discuss how they are working toward becoming more aware of their identity, privilege and biases.
- Stakeholders recognize how institution racism and other biases serve as barriers to achievement for students of color.
- Stakeholders feel safe in having open conversations about race and address hard-to-discuss topics.

¹ Mourshed, M., Chijioke, C., & Barber, M. (2010). *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better*. New York, NY: McKinsey & Company.

² National Association of Elementary School Principals (2008). *Leading learning communities: Standards for what principals should know and be able to do*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

³ Khalifa, M. A., Gooden, M. A., & Davis, J. E. (2016). Culturally responsive school leadership: A synthesis of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 86*(4), 1272-1311.

⁴ Kemp-Graham, K. Y. (2015). Missed opportunities: Preparing aspiring school leaders for bold social justice school leadership needed for 21st century schools. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, 10*(21), 99.

School Board/Governing Body

Improving student achievement requires strong and effective leadership at every level of the system, including the governing body or school board. School boards are in the unique position as elected officials to work with the community to highlight equity as a core belief of the school system and develop and define strategic goals focused on improving student achievement.⁵ Research has shown that districts with higher levels of student achievement show clear alignment of board, district, and school efforts in support of goals and initiatives focused on student learning.⁶

Possible Indicators:

- School Board members recognize how racism and other marginalizing practices affect access, opportunities, and outcomes.
- The School Board has and supports an equity-based vision and policies that provide a framework for the work of the system.
- The School Board invests in building community support and co-ownership of an equity-based vision and policies.
- The School Board priorities and resource allocation is aligned to student need.

Policy

Through policy and funding, education is intended to provide equal educational opportunities to all students. However, disproportionate outcomes across diverse backgrounds signals that students do not have equal access to the same opportunities. Therefore, to raise the achievement of all students and eliminate disproportionality between student groups, systems must remove structural barriers to learning and develop policies which provide access to the academic, social and emotional supports that every student needs to succeed.⁷

Possible Indicators:

- Schools have equity plans of action aligned to the system vision/mission and based on an analysis of current data.
- Leaders, teachers and staff are empowered to name and address practices and interactions that impede access and achievement for all students.
- Leaders, teachers, and staff utilize processes and structures designed to examine existing policies and practices for potential bias.
- Each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success.

⁵ Washington State School Directors' Association. (2011). *The Role of School Boards in Improving Student Achievement: Guiding Principles from WSSDA*. Olympia, WA: Author.

⁶ Waters, T., Marzano, R. J., and McNulty, B. (2006). *School district leadership that works: The effect of superintendent leadership on student achievement*. Aurora, CO: McREL.

⁷ Shevlin-Woodcock, C. N. (2017). Leadership for educational equity: Seek understanding beyond the words and beneath the practices. *Culminating Projects in Education Administration and Leadership*, 29.

Resources/Infrastructure

Research studies have found that the level and allocation of resources affect educational outcomes. Equal is not the same as equitable. Students of color and students from low-income families continue to face substantial systemic barriers today and need additional supports and resources to overcome those barriers. Therefore, school systems need to consider the allocation and application of resources, particularly one based on student need, as one way to enhance and support student success.

Possible Indicators:

- Leaders, teachers and staff monitor use of school and system resources to identify areas where resources can be more effectively allocated as well as where additional resources are needed.
- The system invests in programming known to intentionally create more diverse learning communities.
- Data systems are set up to track spending and analyze the effectiveness of spending tied to educational programs, staffing considerations, and other improvement strategies in creating more equitable learning environments.

Professional Development

As schools become more diverse, those responsible for educating children must be comfortable with and understanding of racial and cultural differences, and the role of racism in the marginalization of students who are racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse. While these conversations are difficult to participate in, educators are at risk of unknowingly reinforcing historical inequities without this understanding. Therefore, educators need exposure to and practice in the knowledge, theories, and strategies essential to meeting the needs of diverse students.⁸

Possible Indicators:

- Funding is allocated to train and provide ongoing support of leaders, teachers, and staff in cultural competence and working with diverse student populations.
- Leaders, teachers, and staff know where or how to access professional development opportunities aligned to cultural competence.
- Leaders, teachers, and staff have the time and opportunity to participate in ongoing dialogue and practice in cultural awareness building.
- Leaders and teachers work together and know how to implement strategic initiatives that focus on closing gaps in access and achievement.

⁸ Costa, J. (2014). Preparing school leaders to advocate for social justice: A case analysis of social justice tenets in a leadership preparation program. Doctoral dissertation, Old Dominion University.

Curriculum

Research suggests that schools better engage students when they support students' cultural capital⁹ and when they personalize learning experiences for students by connecting them to students' prior knowledge and experiences.¹⁰ When students' background and cultural heritages are appreciated, they are more likely to take risks in the classroom and gain a deeper grasp of the curriculum.¹¹ Research has also found that when students learn about a diversity of cultures and perspectives as part of an integrated curriculum, their negative attitudes about people of different races and backgrounds tend to diminish.¹²

Possible Indicators:

- All students have access to curriculum, textbooks and materials that reflect diverse background and cultures.
- All students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate learning through a variety of assessments.
- Curriculum includes differentiation tools to meet the needs of students from varying backgrounds.
- Curriculum, assessments, and intervention strategies are monitored and adjusted in response to student data.

Pedagogy/Instruction

Culturally relevant pedagogy seeks to support students academically while affirming and valuing the experiences, cultures and values of students.¹³ By embracing students' cultural and racial heritages, educators will be able to establish learning environments in which teachers and staff are encouraged to respect students' individual backgrounds and to make relevant decisions rather than fall victim to stereotypes.¹⁴

Possible Indicators:

- All stakeholders know the system's definition of culturally relevant education and how it informs policy and practice.
- Teachers and leaders recognize, respect and employ each student's strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning.
- Learning environments promote a culture where staff, students, and parents are co-responsible and accountable for student success.
- Monitoring systems are developed to examine school and classroom culture and instructional strategies for cultural responsiveness.

⁹ Byrd, C.M. (2016). Does culturally relevant teaching work? An examination from student perspectives. *SAGE Open*, 6(3).

¹⁰ Friedlander, D. & Darling-Hammond, L. et al (2007). *High Schools for Equity Policy Supports for Student Learning in Communities of Color*. Stanford, CA: School Redesign Network at Stanford University.

¹¹ Murakami, E. (2009). Educational leaders' challenges in creating equitable opportunities for English language learners. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning*, 13(3).

¹² Okoye-Johnson, O. (2011). Does multicultural education improve students' racial attitudes? Implications for closing the achievement gap. *Journal of Black Studies*, 42(8), 1252-1274.

¹³ Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

¹⁴ Murakami, E. (2009). Educational leaders' challenges in creating equitable opportunities for English language learners. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning*, 13(3).

Data

Data-driven decision-making has been linked to organizational learning and continuous improvement.¹⁵ Data can make school and student inequities clearly visible to stakeholders and provide a blame-free starting point from which to develop new strategies and practices.

Possible Indicators:

- Leaders, teachers, and staff frequently collect, disaggregate, and analyze school and student data with specific attention to systems, structures, and mental models that underlie patterns of disproportionality (i.e. an over-representation of African American boys in special education classes).
- Stakeholders have access to, and can easily make meaning of, school and student data.
- Policy, program, and instructional decisions are based on school and student data.

Diverse Staff

Greater diversity in the educator workforce has been shown to have significant benefits for students' educational experiences and outcomes, particularly students of color. Research demonstrates that students' exposure to people who are different from themselves leads to improved cognitive skills, including critical thinking, problem solving, and perspective-taking.¹⁶ Similarly, a more diverse workforce may help adults in the system develop cross-cultural competencies.¹⁷

Possible Indicators:

- Recruitment strategies are data and research-driven and aim to attract candidates that reflect the diversity of the student body.
- Interview teams and hiring committees employ selection and hiring practices aimed at reducing unconscious bias and prioritizing hiring a workforce that resembles the student body.
- Recruitment, hiring, and promotion practices are monitored and adjusted to ensure staff reflect the diversity of the student body at all levels of the system.

¹⁵ Marsh, J. A., J. F. Pane, & L. S. Hamilton. (2006). *Making sense of data-driven decision making in education: Evidence from recent RAND research*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

¹⁶ Wells, A. S., Fox, L. & Cordova-Cobo, D. (2016). *How racially diverse schools and classrooms can benefit all students*. New York, NY: The Century Foundation.

¹⁷ Chiefs for Change. (2016). *Diversity to the forefront. Why it matters + recommendations for system-leaders*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

Accountability

Effective school systems set a clear vision and develop strategic plans and processes to ensure that the priorities and goals of their vision are realized. High-quality plans are meaningless however, unless they are implemented effectively. Thus, successful systems set clear metrics and develop systems that allow for monitoring the impact and effectiveness of new strategies, and use that information to make improvements or changes to achieve stated goals.¹⁸ To promote equity, these plans include diversity metrics aimed at tracking progress toward reducing gaps among student subgroups.¹⁹

Possible Indicators:

- Stakeholders participate in setting system goals, reviewing metrics and data, and deciding how the information will inform decision making and continuous improvement.
- Stakeholders routinely set, monitor, and report out on diversity metrics aligned to system policies (e.g. admissions, enrollment, staffing, behavior) to measure the system's progress toward equitable access and achievement for all students.
- School and student data are regularly re-examined to ensure adjustments to policy and practice are successfully addressing identified areas of disproportionality.

Community

Research shows that strong family and community relationships result in significant gains in student learning, better parent-child relations and lower drop-out rates.²⁰ By engaging families, parents and teachers can connect student skills and interests to instructional approaches, academic support strategies, and learning experiences. Research has identified successful family-school system partnerships as those that employ multiple strategies, focus on increasing family engagement, and account for different cultures.

Possible Indicators:

- Stakeholders across the learning community have open and ongoing opportunities to provide input and feedback that guide planning and decision-making.
- Family and community stakeholders are familiar with and have relationships with system and school leaders and staff.
- Families meet with teachers to jointly review and discuss their student's learning and progress.

¹⁸ Ikemoto, G., Taliaferro, L., & Fenton, B. (2014). *Great principals at scale: Creating district conditions that enable all principals to be effective*. Dallas, Texas: George W. Bush Institute.

¹⁹ Ross, J. A., & Berger, M. J. (2009). Equity and leadership: Research-based strategies for school leaders. *School Leadership and Management*, 29(5), 463–476.

²⁰ Saifer, S., Edwards, K., Ellis, D., Ko, L., & Stuczynski, A. (2011). *Culturally responsive: standards-based teaching: Classroom to community and back* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Education Northwest and Corwin Press.

Communication

Increased communication efforts with families can have a positive impact on school success and student outcomes. By maintaining ongoing communication with parents and families, and including them in the decision-making process, it can help build a deeper understanding of the diversity of beliefs and values in the community.²¹

Possible Indicators:

- All stakeholders have equal access to information and have a voice in the community, despite language or other communication barriers.
- Communication plans include multiple forms of communication (e.g., oral, written, and digital) strategies for reaching a variety of stakeholder communities.

Additional Resources

- Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). (2015). *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL)*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Jobs for the Future & the Council of Chief State School Officers. (2017). *Leadership Competencies for Learner-Centered, Personalized Education*. Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future.
- Equity and Excellence Commission. (2013). *For Each and Every Child - A Strategy for Education Equity and Excellence*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

²¹ Ishimaru, A., & Galloway, M. (2014). Beyond Individual Effectiveness: Conceptualizing Organizational Leadership for Equity. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 93-146.