

We believe that educational equity is a journey and not a destination. It is important for every school and community to be on that journey. There is no community in the United States whose people are not touched by the historical inequities that have been intentionally built into our systems; therefore, if we want our schools to deliver an empowering education to all students, all schools must know how to grapple with the inequities that exist.

How to Use This Tool

The following is a list of actions, attitudes, and strategies (or indicators) that school communities might take when fighting inequity. This is not a comprehensive list; use it to spark and not to limit your thinking. Schools and districts can use this list to determine if they are taking steps that will lead to an equitable system of education. These actions, attitudes, and strategies may be taken by a variety of stakeholders within a school community: from an individual bus driver or a team of teachers to the superintendent of schools, the collective district staff, or various community members.

What is Educational Equity

The Great Schools Partnership definition of educational equity consists of 20 actionable words. If these indicators of educational equity are non-existent in your school, educational equity is, too.

Educational equity means ensuring just outcomes for each student, raising marginalized voices, and challenging the imbalance of power and privilege.

Ensuring Just Outcomes

- All educators speak to students with warmth and caring, ensuring that comments and cues that students receive are free of bias, whether students are in the classroom, in the front office, on the bus, in the gym, in the library, or anywhere else.
- All educators use common standards and common rubrics or scoring criteria to ensure that all students are asked to engage in complex, rigorous work.
- All educators ensure that students feel a sense of belonging and ownership in class, giving students opportunities to connect their work to their own goals, interests, dreams, and lives.
- All educators use asset-based approaches, which means helping students see and build on their own academic and personal strengths.
- The school has support systems that enable teachers to identify when a student is struggling and provide support. The school has designated periods that are set aside for intervention and support.
- The school regularly provides time for the collaborative review of data and student work, as well as action planning to address problems.
- The school's program of studies is designed to ensure that all course pathways will enable students to meet the school's standards, and that students will never be limited to pathways that are dead ends.

- The school's grading system is designed to give feedback to students so they can take charge of their learning and to provide information to all who support these students, not to punish students or sort them into levels.
- Students of color are represented in advanced classes in proportion to their representation in the school as a whole.
- Families and students have online access to performance data and updates about academic progress.
- Each student has many opportunities to meet with an advisor to craft their course selection, design extended learning opportunities, and explore college or post-graduation plans.

Raising Marginalized Voices

- Clubs, publications, and extracurricular activities provide opportunities for students to express their ideas and beliefs, and many students utilize these opportunities. Students are empowered to create new clubs when they see a need.
- A diversity of issues and perspectives are emphasized across all content areas and are embedded in the curriculum and learning materials. Students explore and question their own beliefs about race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability.
- Humanities, history, and social studies courses go beyond flags, fun, food, and festivals to explore the global interconnectedness and interdependence of societies, cultures, and economies.
- Learning opportunities are designed to foster a greater understanding of diverse cultures, including Black, Indigenous and People of Color. The curriculum includes explorations (in many classes, subject areas, and grade levels) of the ways in which systemic racism affects the lives of Americans.
- All educators work to design safe and supportive classrooms by forging relationships, listening to students and families, and employing asset-based approaches to teaching, learning, and discipline. They help students build trusting relationships between all members of the school community, so students feel safe and supported in speaking up.
- The perspectives, experiences, and voices of every demographic represented in the school community are sought out, included, and incorporated in the development and refinement of policies and programs.
- All staff are supported in learning about the lives and cultures of their students and families, as well as the community where they teach; they honor the community's assets and ways of knowing.

Challenging the Imbalances of Power and Privilege

- Members of the school community recognize and interrupt implicit and explicit prejudicial and harmful language or actions such as microaggressions or bullying of individuals and groups.
- People in the school know how to respond and interrupt when implicit and explicit prejudicial and harmful language or actions happen in the classroom, school hallway, lunchroom, library, gym, teacher's room, front office or any other space.
- The curriculum offers opportunities for students to design their own learning experiences, and to participate in setting classroom rules and agreements.
- There is a commitment among educators, regardless of their role in the building, to explore and discuss their own identities and the ways their identities have been impacted by privilege and bias. The school provides time and resources for educators to have conversations about implicit bias, identity, and privilege during planned professional development. Educators are able to discuss these subjects with students.

- Educators work to establish norms and agreements which enable them to have conversations about imbalances of power and privilege.
- The school promotes student leadership by embedding leadership development in the curriculum and providing resources to help staff become youth allies. Marginalized students are represented in leadership structures, decision-making processes, and curriculum development in proportion (equal to or greater than) their representation in the school body as a whole.
- Educators regularly review discipline, attendance, achievement, and other data to ensure that bias is not negatively impacting students.
- Students have opportunities to give teachers feedback on classroom culture, assignments, grading, and other aspects of teaching practice. Structures also exist that enable community members to give feedback to the school and school staff to give feedback to school leaders.
- Staff work to repair relationships and rebuild trust if they find that members of the school community have been impacted by bias.
- The district has worked collaboratively with the school and broader community in developing and implementing an equity statement and policy, as well as systems of accountability.
- The district provides and requires ongoing anti-racism and anti-bias training.
- School hiring and retention practices are deliberately focused on increasing diversity (race, gender, orientation, physical ability, religion, etc.) of the educator and leadership workforce. In order to provide support, connection, and inspiration for teachers of color, the school or district has organized racial affinity groups.
- Students and families participate in and contribute to collaborative planning and decision-making opportunities that are offered by the district.
- The district partners with community organizations to provide opportunities for community-wide discussions of anti-racism and anti-bias.

Definition of Terms

Asset-based approaches	Strategies that help students see and build on their own academic and personal strengths.
Educators	All staff who work in a school, in any role. This includes front office staff, bus drivers, and other staff who may sometimes be seen as educational support staff.
Microaggressions	Microaggressions, as defined by Project Ready, "...are subtle verbal or nonverbal insults or denigrating messages communicated toward a marginalized person, often by someone who may be well-intentioned but unaware of the impact their words or actions have on the target."
Scoring criteria	The descriptions of the quality of work that a teacher expects to see. A set of scoring criteria make a rubric.
Support structure	A support structure is a system that a school has built to see when students are struggling and to help them quickly before they fall too far behind or lose hope. Some common support structures used by schools are response to intervention (RTI) programs, make-up blocks during which students can see teachers for extra help, advisory programs, and systems that allow teams of teachers to meet and discuss students' challenges and needs.