



The President's Equity Challenge

Define Equity within Your Community	
Equity and equality are often used interchangeably, but they're actually distinct ideas. Equality means every student and school gets the same access and opportunity to reach set goals. Equity recognizes that some students and schools need additional supports to help them reach the same benchmarks of success.	
Think About	
Does our district leadership team (board and superintendent) understand the difference between equity and equality?	
Do teachers and other district staff?	
Does the community?	
Is equity a part of our district's vision and mission, either implicitly or explicitly?	
Is financial equity being discussed at our board table?	
I Can...	The Board Can...
<i>Example: Suggest a study session to discuss equity versus equality and how it relates to our vision and mission.</i>	<i>Example: Request a survey of staff to determine the level of understanding of equity in education.</i>



Get Familiar with Your Demographics

Understanding the different groups your district serves and in what proportion is foundational knowledge for equity-focused discussion and decision-making.

Think About

Our students...

- How many students live in poverty?
- How many qualify for free or reduced price lunch?
- What is the breakdown of racial and ethnic backgrounds of our students?
- How many are in special education programs?
- How many are classified as English Language Learners?
- How many are homeless?
- What are the differences in demographics by school?

Our teachers...

- What is the breakdown of racial and ethnic backgrounds of our teachers? Is it different by school?
- Does the level and teacher experience and quality differ by school?
- What is the breakdown of your teaching staff by age?

Our community...

- How different are the demographics of the over 18 population of our community from the under-18 population?
- How about between our students' parents and community members with no children in our schools?

I Can...

Example: Request data from the superintendent on the number of students living in poverty and ask to observe school-based programs in place to help ensure students' basic life needs are being met.

The Board Can...

Example: Request an annual overview about student subgroups districtwide and by school.



<p>Dig into Your Data and Identify Opportunities for Improvement</p>	
<p>Think about the goals you have set for your district’s students and how you’ll be measuring their success. Look at your current data to see how you’re doing by these measures up across the board. Then begin looking at student subgroups to identify focused efforts and additional, targeted supports that will be needed to “move the needle” past your current baseline.</p>	
<p>Think About</p>	
<p>How are students within various subgroups doing when it comes to proficiency in reading and math?</p> <p>How about by GPA and SAT and ACT scores?</p> <p>What about graduation rate?</p> <p>Are the students taking AP and dual-enrollment classes representative of their school and our district?</p> <p>How about the students participating in extracurricular activities?</p> <p>Are certain student subgroups frequently absent or tardy?</p> <p>What are our district’s discipline patterns by subgroups?</p> <p>Do we have policies that are barriers to students’ success?</p>	
<p>I Can...</p>	<p>The Board Can...</p>
<p><i>Example: Learn more about how our discipline policies are applied and research alternatives like restorative justice.</i></p>	<p><i>Example: Have a study session to review trends by student subgroups, such as special education, ELL and/or race/ethnicity, in levels and frequency of discipline and the potential impact on student achievement.</i></p>



<p>Practice Cultural Awareness, Agility & Competence</p>	
<p>Systems are most effective when they respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms and values the worth of individuals, families and communities, and protects and preserves the dignity of each. Public schools and districts are no exception.</p>	
<p>Think About</p>	
<p>Are our school environments welcoming to and respectful of students and families from all the populations we serve, including LGBTQ students?</p> <p>Are our curriculum materials culturally relevant to our students?</p> <p>Does our teaching staff reflect the cultures and backgrounds of the students and families we serve?</p> <p>Is professional development about the cultures and backgrounds of students we serve a priority for teaching and non-teaching staff?</p> <p>Are district-level community committees reflective of the diversity of our community?</p> <p>Is our school board reflective of the diversity of our community?</p>	
<p>I Can...</p>	<p>The Board Can...</p>
<p><i>Example: Encourage and invite diverse members of the community to participate in district-level committees and attend board meetings.</i></p>	<p><i>Example: Ensure culture relevancy is included in any discussion of curricular materials, including their adoption.</i></p>



<p>Make Sure the Student Voice Is Heard</p>	
<p>Student achievement and engagement increase when students have more ownership of their school community and their own learning. Tapping their expertise and knowledge can bring relevance and authenticity to the board’s and district’s change and improvement efforts. Students benefit from opportunities to practice problem solving, leadership and creative thinking as part of a decision-making school and district community.</p>	
<p>Think About</p>	
<p>Are students partners in establishing school norms and practices?</p> <p>Are students comfortable sharing their opinions in multigenerational environments?</p> <p>Do students from all subgroups have leadership opportunities?</p> <p>Is a diversity of student opinion not just tolerated, but sought out?</p> <p>Do students have opportunities for their differences in culture and viewpoint to be cherished and appreciated, rather judged and feared?</p> <p>Have we asked our students how we can serve them better?</p>	
<p>I Can...</p>	<p>The Board Can...</p>
<p><i>Example: Visit schools and attend student events, asking them about their experience and how it can be improved.</i></p>	<p><i>Example: Set an expectation that a diversity of students is included in decision-making on substantive school and district issues.</i></p>



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