Leading for Equity Workbook

Readying Yourself for Discussion and Action
Cultivating excellence in locally-governed school districts

Our Core Beliefs

- The basic life needs of children must be met for them to succeed.
- Meeting the unique educational needs of all students must be the foundation of our school systems.
- The governance of publicly-funded schools must lie with locally-elected and publicly-accountable governing boards.
- The responsibility for student success is shared by students, parents, governing board, district staff and the community.
- Public education funding must be broad-based, stable and at a level that assures all students are successful.
- Knowledgeable and professionally trained governing board members are fundamental for ensuring student success.
- Closing the opportunity and achievement gap is a moral and economic imperative that must be addressed to ensure all Arizona’s students.
- Systemic inequities must be removed so every student achieves their fullest potential.

www.azsba.org/equity
# Table of Contents

**Introduction** ................................................................. 1

**Getting Ready for the Work**

Your Why ................................................................. 2

What Is Equity? .................................................... 3-4

Equity: The Essential Work of School Boards ......................... 5

Foundational Premises of Educational Equity ......................... 6

Preparing for the Work ............................................... 7-8

Creating a Learning Space ........................................... 9-10

Five Essential Components of Equity .................................. 11-12

**Exploring the Leading for Equity Framework**

Define Equity within Your Community .................................. 14

Dig Into Data .......................................................... 17

Practice Cultural Awareness, Humility and Agility ..................... 23

Embed Equity System-Wide ........................................... 29

Demonstrate Your Commitment ......................................... 34

**Contact Us and Acknowledgments** .................................... 38
Introduction

This workbook is designed to assist school district governing boards in their pursuit of greater equity through use of “Leading for Equity: A Practical Framework for Board Discussion and Action.” Designed by the Arizona School Boards Association, the framework stimulates discussion and action among public education leaders with the ultimate goal of ensuring personal or social circumstances of students, such as race, gender, ability, ethnic origin, economic circumstances or family background are not obstacles to them when it comes to achieving their educational potential. It is intended to ensure school systems work for the communities they serve, not against them.

Leading for equity starts with a first step and continues forward, one step after another. The Leading for Equity Framework provides districts multiple pathways to begin or move forward with their equity journey. The pathways within the framework can be approached non-sequentially and are intended to provide opportunities that enable boards to enter and engage in leadership for equity based on local needs and readiness. Once visited, these pathways can be revisited again and again to assess for “backslide,” bring new people up to speed or “press restart” if needed should internal or external factors require a system reboot.

Each element in the framework includes a “Getting Started” and “Digging Deeper” section that allows for districts to begin or deepen their equity work. These sections include key questions to consider and guided discussion topics (“Think About”), as well as a call to consider the role of individual board members and the full board in ensuring that greater equity is achieved.

Personal reflection and building of knowledge and understanding is an important part of preparing for board equity work, and this is addressed in the workbook. As such, the workbook and related training is valuable for an individual board member who wants to explore the topic. However, while the workbook can be used by individuals, the Leading for Equity Framework is best used in a board study or work session, digging into one element at a time, or a facilitated board retreat, during which the district leadership team can work through the full framework or several selected areas.

We hope you will find this workbook to be a valuable resource as you use the framework to move towards building a more inclusive and equitable school system.