

Background and Overview

When considering how to best serve all students, districts should consider current and historic performance levels on various academic metrics such as standardized tests, course grades, graduation rates, and participation in advanced and remedial coursework. In particular, districts should examine these data to determine whether there are gaps between different sub-populations (e.g., students of different races, students with and without disabilities). Identifying such gaps will allow for more equitable distribution of resources and services to support the needs of the most disadvantaged students.

This workbook will guide educators in evaluating different academic data points and how performance on these data points may differ by student sub-groups. Specifically, the workbook provides explanations of key concepts, placeholders to record data, and guiding questions to support discussion.

Reflection Questions: Defining Equity

Before reviewing any academic outcome data, take approximately ten minutes in small groups to reflect on the following questions:

1. How would you define **equity** in your own words?

2. In considering this definition, how would you describe the **current state of equity in your district or school?**

Reflection Questions: Defining Equity (continued)

Before reviewing any academic outcome data, take approximately ten minutes in small groups to reflect on the following questions:

3. What do you believe is the **greatest source of educational inequity** throughout your district or school?

What does equity look like in an education setting?

Equity is a process or set of strategies and supports to help students achieve equal outcomes. Achieving equal outcomes and implementing equitable practices are complex problems impacted by many interconnected school- and community-based factors. In K-12 education settings, the following gaps often demonstrate results of inequities throughout a district.

Achievement Gaps	Persistent unequal academic and educational outcomes among student groups in one or more areas
Opportunity Gaps	Differences in access to educational resources, programs, and supports among student groups
Excellence Gaps	Differences in advanced academic performance or “high-level” outcomes among student groups
Discipline Gaps	Differences in behavioral outcomes and types of disciplinary resolutions among student groups
Attendance Gaps	Differences in school attendance rates and chronic absenteeism among student groups.

What evidence of any of these gaps do we observe in the data?

What further exploration should we consider in assessing the extent of these gaps?



What sources contribute to disproportionate outcomes?

Inequities and disproportionalities in various student outcomes can stem from a variety of school-based and external sources. These sources of inequity may compound for some students and may not greatly impact others. A systemic, data-driven approach to addressing the results of inequity requires districts to examine the sources of inequity that impact their own, unique student populations.

Outside of School	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socioeconomics • Societal influences • Family structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture • Language

How may these external sources impact students differently?

How do different students' needs change based on these external sources?

School-Based	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction • Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources • Programming

How can we adapt our practices and procedures to meet students where they are?



What root causes contribute to equity gaps?

Educators can consider inequities and disparities in outcomes as a symptom of a variety of root causes. Thus, they should seek to identify the factors driving specific gaps in services or unequal outcomes. This process of root cause analysis supports districts in directly addressing the underlying causes of the gaps, rather than focusing only on the results that emerge in the data. Educators and administrators can use the ERASE framework to guide work around investigating and addressing unequal outcomes, systemic inequities, and root causes.

E	Examine Data	Start with available data around student opportunities and outcomes and disaggregate these along demographic lines. Produce data sets and visual representations (e.g., infographics) of data that can generate rich discussion.
R	Raise Questions	Begin with open questions of stakeholders around what they notice and why they think disparities in outcomes exist. Allow for questioning of deeply held beliefs or assumptions to bring different perspectives and experiences into the dialogue.
A	Ascertain Solutions for Root Causes	This can be one of the most difficult steps as it moves from identifying red flag areas to diagnosing problems and identifying meaningful solutions. Look systemically at available research and best practices targeted at the root causes identified through this analysis to ensure that the scope of possibilities is known and discussed.
S	Select Strategic Solutions	At this point, it is important to prioritize both short- and long-term strategies. These may include: additional training or hiring staff; alteration of policies or procedures or development of new policies; identification of new data to collect; development of new programs for students; or revisiting of strategic plans.
E	Evaluate Progress	Reexamining data periodically and making adjustments to policy and practices are necessary to ensure that the issues identified through data-driven conversations are addressed. It is also important to celebrate even the smallest of successes.

Root Cause Analysis (1 of 3)

Using the spaces below as a guide, record two to three findings of inequity or unequal outcomes that stood out to you and your peers related to **standardized test scores** and **graduation rates**. Then, as a group, try to reach a consensus on the root causes for each.

Findings of Inequity or Unequal Outcomes	Potential Causes of Identified Inequity/Unequal Outcomes
1.	
2.	
3.	

Root Cause Analysis (2 of 3)

Using the spaces below as a guide, record two to three findings of inequity or unequal outcomes that stood out to you and your peers related to **participation rates in advanced courses** and **course grades**. Then, as a group, try to reach a consensus on the root causes for each.

Findings of Inequity or Unequal Outcomes	Potential Causes of Identified Inequity/Unequal Outcomes
1.	
2.	
3.	

Root Cause Analysis (3 of 3)

Using the spaces below as a guide, record two to three findings of inequity or unequal outcomes that stood out to you and your peers related to any additional data measures included on the previous page. Then, as a group, try to reach a consensus on the root causes for each.

Findings of Inequity or Unequal Outcomes	Potential Causes of Identified Inequity/Unequal Outcomes
1.	
2.	
3.	

Reflection Questions: Next Steps

After reviewing your academic outcome data, take approximately 15-20 minutes in small groups to reflect on the following questions:

1. Overall, which findings surprise you most? With which findings were you already familiar?

2. What data points or trends stand out as areas of high priority to address?

Reflection Questions: Next Steps (continued)

Before reviewing any academic outcome data, take approximately 15-20 minutes in small groups to reflect on the following questions:

3. What elements of equity are not captured in these data that may require further explanation?

4. What immediate and long-term steps should your district or school take to address the identified inequities?
