

**Dudley Flood Center for
Educational Equity and
Opportunity**

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL FORUM OF NORTH CAROLINA

EQUITY FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The following presentation includes resources and recommendations on what to consider when incorporating the Flood Center's six core competencies. The core competencies are meant to guide the creation of equitable education policies and practices, as well as provide systematic approaches to eradicating systemic inequities.

Flood Center's Equity Definition: Equity reflects a state in which every person's identity, power, opportunity, and potential are fully realized and life outcomes are no longer predicted by characteristics such as race, economics, ethnicity, location, gender, sexuality, nor disability.

* = asterisks will be used throughout the presentation to indicate relationships and intersections between core competencies

- These six core competencies are not isolated. Different approaches to creating educational equity may include a combination of these competencies, and some of these competencies may require the use of another competency (i.e. equitable policies centered on preparing require equitable investing).

Framework for Change

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Modeling

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Modeling

Modeling is the process of learning or acquiring new information, skills, or behavior through observation rather than through direct experience or trial-and-error efforts. Through observing others, we form an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions, this coded information serves as a guide for our action(s). (Salisu & Ransom, 2014) Modeling is a strategy that can be used to instill aspiration through representation and support every student in achieving their full potential, while showing them that they can achieve their goals.

***Related Competencies: Modeling stems into preparing students for success.**

Modeling Strategies

01-Model Cultural Sensitivity and Create Safe Spaces

Modeling cultural sensitivity in the classroom is vital to achieving student success and equitable learning. Educators and school leaders should model cultural sensitivity so that students learn to respect differences in cultures and backgrounds. Teachers, as the primary authority figure in the classroom, are able to set an example of positive behaviors for students to follow. To do this, educators must remain alert to their own cultural biases and how it may impact their teaching (1). Further, school leaders, educators, and staff should strive to listen, self-reflect, and empathize when hearing student experiences (2). Making space for student stories can help create identity safe classrooms where every student, regardless of their background, is able to thrive. Learning in spaces where they "see themselves in the curriculum, feel affirmed by the images that adorn classroom walls, become acquainted with the cultural backgrounds of peers, and believe they matter as individuals in the classroom community" allows students to feel free to be themselves and unlock their full potential (3). Research has found that students in identity-safe classrooms performed better on standardized tests and felt a greater sense of belonging (4). Without cultural sensitivity and other practices to create identity safe classrooms, learning environments may by default isolate some students' identities, holding them down from fully excelling in the classroom.

- <https://theartofeducation.edu/2016/11/5-ways-help-create-culturally-sensitive-classroom/>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrpVBg_Rjfl
- <https://njalternateroute.rutgers.edu/blog/how-teachers-can-reduce-stereotype-threat-classroom>
- <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/identity-safe-classrooms-and-schools#:~:text=Identity-safe%20teaching%20serves%20as%20an%20antidote%20to%20that,of%20social%20identity%20%28age%2C%20race%2C%20gender%2C%20culture%2C%20language%29>

02- Affirm Personal Values

Affirming students' personal values can go a long way in creating identity safe spaces and beginning to model excellence. Modeling is about showing students through representation that they can achieve their goals. Incorporating equity in this aspect means affirming student identities to illustrate greatness for every student and not just those who are members of a particular social group. In order to observe and absorb positive behaviors, skills, and inspiration for success, students must feel their identities affirmed in these spaces. This acknowledgement allows students to let their personal experiences shine in the classroom and cultivates a sense of belonging. Students should be encouraged to share their truth and embrace who they are, rather than be forced to check their identities at the door. Value affirmations can come in the form of draft reflections, reading materials, and other academic projects (1). For example, the story of the **Freedom Writers**--where a young teacher transforms the educational experience of at-risk high school students by encouraging them to write about their struggles--shows the importance of having an educator that acknowledges and understands the systemic challenges marginalized students face on their path to success (2). Affirming personal values can change the course of a student's life, make them feel seen, and open the door to aspirations.

- <https://njalternateroute.rutgers.edu/blog/how-teachers-can-reduce-stereotype-threat-classroom>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDqgogj3-CU>

03- Encourage Student Voices to Lead Learning

By affirming students' personal values, educators and school leaders can encourage students to take charge of their learning. Providing students a platform to voice concerns and address inequities empowers them to enrich their education (1). For example, ethnic studies courses that are tailored to the school's racial and ethnic communities permit students to approach the course from their own personal experience (2). Students can also use what they've learned through modeling cultural sensitivity and other equity-based practices to create their own authentic work. The **Freedom Writers** story demonstrates the power that educators can have by putting faith in the potential of their students and adding topics to the curriculum that students can personally connect with (3). Connecting student experiences through stories like that of Anne Frank helped empower the Freedom Writers and inspired them to take initiative in telling their own stories.

- <https://www.edutopia.org/article/increasing-equity-all-students>
- <https://news.stanford.edu/2021/09/06/research-finds-sustained-impact-ethnic-studies-class/#:~:text=A%20ninth-grade%20ethnic%20studies%20class%20has%20a%20remarkably,at%20the%20San%20Francisco%20Unified%20School%20District%20%28SFUSD%29>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDqgogj3-CU>

Modeling Strategies

04- Recruit, Prepare, and Retain More Educators of Color

Educators of color are essential to modeling equity in the classroom. What children see is what they will become, and if they only see a monochrome vision of their future then it will be difficult for them to aspire to anything else. Even as the nation's student population grows more diverse, teachers of color are underrepresented in the workforce. Nearly 80% of teachers in the country are White, however the majority of students are children of color (1). Having an educator of color is beneficial to every child as it forces classrooms to breakdown racial stereotypes and prepares students to live in a multicultural society by demonstrating that knowledge isn't exclusive to one particular group. Further, having an educator of color can be life-changing for students of color--studies have shown that Black boys from low-income households were 39% less likely to drop out if they had a Black male teacher (2). Seeing their own cultures reflected in the adults responsible for their learning allows students of color to look up to educators of color as role models. Not just that, but Black and brown students are held to higher expectations by teachers of the same race than with educators who don't share the same race (2). While all educators should be equipped with cultural competency, there are some things that only educators of color can understand. As expressed by the organization **Black Men Teach**, "A Black man understands the life of a Black child in a way that another person cannot. And that makes a world of difference in how the Black student sees himself, how he comes to value (or not) education, where he sees himself in the future, and what he does in the future." This sentiment was also shared in a story told by Jinni Forcucci, during a Ted Talk where she spoke of the truths she learned from her students of color. While she, as a White educator, may do her best to listen to her students' struggles, she will never truly understand the hurt they feel (3--[Ashley's story](#), 7:29). The **DRIVE** report recommends a path toward recruiting, preparing, and retaining educators of color in North Carolina through a series of recommendations covering educator preparation programs, teaching standards, and support networks (4).

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfykU65ziS8>
- <https://blackmenteachtc.org/the-need/>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrpVBg_Rjfl
- <https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/HI-DRIVE-Final-Report.pdf>

05- Set Higher Expectations

Negative stereotypes can be disruptive to student learning, especially if students come to believe they are defined by those stereotypes. Modeling helps break out of these molds to instead instill aspiration and representation. Doing this also means believing in students' strengths by setting high expectations. Emphasizing high standards and capabilities pushes back against negative stereotypes that students may have encountered and sets them up for improvement. Framing constructive feedback is one instance where educators and school staff can set high standards while also assuring students that they are capable of reaching those standards (1). Therefore, establishing a growth mindset in the classroom is important in striving for intellectual growth. Not everyone will understand a concept or key topic right away, and that's okay. One's ability to master a subject isn't stagnant and it's important to convey this fact to students who may be struggling to understand an assignment. Educators can combat the enforcement of negative stereotypes by cultivating growth mindset in the classroom.

- <https://turnaroundusa.org/stereotype-threat-strategies-classroom/>

06- Forewarn about Stereotypes

Modeling representation and achievement for students serves to directly counter stereotypes that students may inadvertently find themselves adhering to. If this occurs, students could find themselves altering their behavior to match the stereotype or expectation others have of them and end up in a self-fulfilling prophecy. Conveying low expectations for students may make them doubt their own abilities and lead them to produce lower academic achievement (1). Stereotypes can also decrease academic performance through stereotype threat--when exposure to a negative stereotype surrounding a task leads to anxiety or fear about confirming the negative stereotype, causing a decrease in actual performance (2). Either through a self-fulfilling prophecy or stereotype threat, stereotypes can thwart a student's potential. Educators can combat this by modeling positive representation, which puts stereotypes into question, and by forewarning students about stereotypes (3). Directly communicating the dangers of stereotype threat to students heightens their awareness of it and can help reduce its influence. Further, it's important to reassure students that confronting difficulties is a normal part of the learning process and does not reflect limitations in their ability (4).

- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1186415.pdf>
- <https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/mcat/individuals-and-society/discrimination/v/stereotypes-stereotype-threat-and-self-fulfilling-prophecy>
- <https://njalternateroute.rutgers.edu/blog/how-teachers-can-reduce-stereotype-threat-classroom>
- <https://turnaroundusa.org/stereotype-threat-strategies-classroom/>

07- Culturally Varied and Relevant Curriculum

School curriculum should be culturally relevant and model representation, especially for groups whose history has been pushed back to the margins of textbooks (1). Every student stands to benefit from a diverse, accurate account of history. Cultural variety in course content prepares students to develop cultural awareness and learn about difference ways of life. Additionally, studies have shown that incorporating more inclusive curriculum models sharpens critical thinking and improves academic engagement since students can identify more with the material (2). A 2021 joint study by Stanford and the San Francisco Unified School District found that ninth grade ethnic studies courses increased attendance among participating students. These students were also more likely to graduate high school, with more than 90 percent within five years compared to 75 percent of their peers, and enroll in college (1). Further, culturally relevant programs act as interventions in that they promote a sense of belonging, affirm personal values, and forewarn about stereotypes (1).

- <https://news.stanford.edu/2021/09/06/research-finds-sustained-impact-ethnic-studies-class/#:~:text=A%20ninth-grade%20ethnic%20studies%20class%20has%20a%20remarkably,at%20the%20San%20Francisco%20Unified%20School%20District%20%28SFUSD%29>
- <https://www.teachforamerica.org/one-day/ideas-and-solutions/how-schools-are-building-a-more-inclusive-curriculum>



Modeling Resource Highlights

[Bridging the Cultural Divide Between Teachers and Students](#)

Education Week video that highlights the efforts of STEP-UP, a Illinois State University summer teacher-training program focused on preparing aspiring educators to teach in urban schools.

[How students of color sharing their truths impacted one educator | Jinni Forcucci](#)

Ted Talk by Jinni Forcucci, an educator who speaks of what she's learned from listening to her students of color and self-reflecting. She talks about the importance of addressing racial barriers and inequities, and making space for students of color to speak their truths.

[How Schools Are Building a More Inclusive Curriculum](#)


Article in Teach For America that recounts the educational landscape of ethnic studies programs. Talks about ethnic studies programs in California and Texas that have seen success in modeling representation and strengthening student engagement.

[DRIVE Task Force Report](#)

Recommendations and strategies presented by the DRIVE Task Force to increase the number of educators of color and create an educator workforce representative of the students they teach. The report also includes performance indicators to measure and evaluate North Carolina's progress in increasing the diversity of its educator workforce.

[Words From Aiden McCollick: How HB 187 will affect Social Studies Classes through a Student's Lens](#)

Video from Education Matters where a high school student discusses their experience taking an African American studies class and how it created a space where students felt comfortable being themselves. The student speaks of how the course offered an open, inviting space to hold thought-provoking discussions about racism and other real-world problems.



Examining

Examining involves collecting, analyzing, desegregating, and communicating data/outcomes. With appropriate data analysis and interpretation, stakeholders can make informed decisions based on students' academic needs. Examining is crucial in incorporating educational equity as it helps set and measure goals, as well as identify opportunity gaps and the factors contributing to these disparities.

Examining Strategies

01- Research Identity

Throughout data analysis, collection, and reporting, it's crucial to take into account one's own identity and the identity of those being represented. Data itself should not be isolated from contextual and cultural factors, otherwise it will lack the holistic approach needed to assess outcomes. According to the **Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy's Data Toolkit**, seeing data as completely neutral from identity markers such as race can cause more harm than good, leading to system-level data usage that replicates structural racism [\(1\)](#). The AISP also discourages using aggregate data to describe individual experiences without analyzing the disparate impact of other intersections of identity. Further, learning more about student identities can also be beneficial for teachers in understanding student needs [\(2\)](#).

- <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aisp-atoolkitforcenteringracialequity-2020.pdf>
- <https://www.edutopia.org/article/6-steps-equitable-data-analysis#:~:text=6%20Steps%20to%20Equitable%20Data%20Analysis%201%201.rules%20for%20looking%20at%20data%3F%20...%20More%20items>

02- Prevent Implicit Bias

According to the **Institute of Education Sciences**, implicit bias is "a form of unconscious fast thinking used to refer to associations, beliefs, or attitudes toward any social group held outside one's conscious awareness" [\(1\)](#). Implicit bias can affect examining in many ways, whether it be through selection bias during data collection or inaccurately interpreting data to better align with one's pre-existing beliefs. Either way, it's important to take the proper measures to prevent implicit bias from leading to conclusions that promote inequalities or incorrectly assess an issue. The **IES** recommends disrupting links of biased thinking when examining data by pausing the process and acknowledging the biases without judgment, while rethinking and questioning these automatic associations [\(1\)](#). Additionally, it's crucial to remain aware of one's own biases, and consider how biases may be present in the policies and procedures being examined.

- https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/regions/northeast/Docs/Tools/REL-NEI_DataCoachingtoExamineInterpretandUseStudentDataEquitably.pdf

03- Disaggregate Data

Data disaggregation by gender, district, race, and other markers can reveal disparities in outcomes and experiences between and within groups. Disaggregating data is imperative to identifying inequities and bringing them to light. Data disaggregation can also begin to look at social and structural determinants such as funding distribution, availability of resources, and the effect of local history of school segregation. However, data disaggregation could also lead to shifting analytical focus onto a subgroup that may already be over-surveilled [\(1\)](#). Data disaggregation could also obscure differences within groups with great ethnic diversity, though oversampling may mitigate this [\(2\)](#). For these reasons, the **AISP** describes the disaggregation of data as a series of tradeoffs [\(1\)](#). It's crucial that decisions on how to disaggregate data are made thoughtfully and with the input from a variety of stakeholders.

- <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aisp-atoolkitforcenteringracialequity-2020.pdf>
- <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/a-guide-to-incorporating-a-racial-and-ethnic-equity-perspective-throughout-the-research-process>

Examining Strategies

04- Consider Analytical Lens

Examining data equitably can be facilitated by intentionally establishing a mindset or lens through which to analyze data. This may include having analysts set intentions before engaging with data to encourage accountability and establish a sense of direction. The **Institute of Education Sciences** recommends using an asset-orientation lens that acknowledges the strengths students bring to a school setting, rather than using a deficit-mindset, which implies students are at fault for poor academic outcomes and assume they cannot succeed [\(1\)](#). The **IES** also suggests entering the discussion with a system-based perspective. Applying this lens means "understanding the systemic structures, norms, and processes that contribute to the problem at hand, and then working to disrupt and dismantle the problematic aspects of the system" [\(1\)](#). This shifts the focus of control from individuals to systems.

- https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/regions/northeast/Docs/Tools/REL-NEI_DataCoachingtoExamineInterpretandUseStudentDataEquitably.pdf

05- Go Above and Beyond Reporting Mandates

According to the Data Quality Campaign, collecting and sharing data above and beyond reporting mandates is an important step to using data to advance equity [\(1\)](#). Taking action above what is required boosts initiative and increases knowledge of the initial indicators being measured, knowledge that might not have been obtained if leaders waited to only collect and report required data. Sharing data and making it more accessible can also help inform stakeholders' decision-making. For example, providing students with information on how post-secondary institutions are preparing students of similar backgrounds for success may help them make informed decisions about which institution to attend. Further, using consistent metrics across districts for mandated indicators can also allow for meaningful comparisons, even if use of the same metrics isn't strictly required [\(2\)](#).

- <https://dataqualitycampaign.org/our-work/policy-areas/data-for-equity/>
- <https://edtrust.org/resource/5-things-to-advance-equity-in-state-funding-systems/>
- Additional Resources
 - <https://soeonline.american.edu/blog/data-driven-decision-making-in-education/>
 - https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/03/pdf/school_budget.pdf?_ga=2.206696208.2081980808.1687224465-1609200981.1685898278

06- Employ a Variety of Data Tools

Using a variety of technologies and other tools can facilitate the organization and calculation of data. It can also help mitigate reliance on a single statistical model or algorithm that may perpetuate stereotypes and biases. According to **AISP's Data Toolkit**, AI systems and algorithms reflect the biases of those who created them, therefore there is no such thing as a race-neutral algorithm [\(1\)](#). For this reason, bias in automated decision-making should be evaluated and transparently communicated. Taking full advantage of a variety of data tools is also helpful in revealing patterns or trends not previously observed by other methods.

- <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aisp-atoolkitforcenteringracialequity-2020.pdf>
- Additional Resources:
 - <https://news.stanford.edu/2018/04/03/algorithms-reveal-changes-stereotypes/>
 - <https://soeonline.american.edu/blog/data-driven-decision-making-in-education/>

Examining Strategies

07- Understand a Data Set's Limitations

Calling on data to support a policy or practice means accurately interpreting the data and understanding under which conditions its results can be applied. This involves knowing what can or cannot be interpreted by a data set. It's also important to note how findings from a data set can be applied and when it may not be suitable to so. A slight change in conditions could render a practice ineffective. For example, a ninth grade English teacher may think to implement a new peer-editing method that previously improved essay scores for 10th grade students [\(1\)](#). However, any number of factors could affect how these results are replicated, from class size to differences in grade and subject matter, which could limit the peer-editing method's effectiveness. Furthermore, drawing relationships and conclusions not supported by the data could misdiagnose what problems need to be addressed.

- <https://soeonline.american.edu/blog/data-driven-decision-making-in-education/>

08- Embed Questions of Racial Equity Throughout the Data Life Cycle

Discussion of racial equity should be embedded at each stage of the data life cycle to cease reinforcing legacies of racist policies and inequitable resource allocation. **The University of Pennsylvania's Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy** has created an extensive toolkit for centering racial equity throughout data integration [\(1\)](#). The toolkit details appropriate practices in planning, data collection, data access, algorithm/statistical tool use, data analysis, and reporting and dissemination. For example, positive practices listed under data planning include engaging diverse perspectives on planning committees and building community collaboration for agenda-setting. Problematic practices under data planning that are contradictory to incorporating racial equity include using only token representation in agenda-setting and avoiding authentic community engagement.

- <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aisp-atoolkitforcenteringracialequity-2020.pdf>

09- Use Multiple Sources of Data

Examining data from multiple sources can piece together several angles of a story to form a full picture. This is crucial to exploring potential root causes and solutions. As stated by the **Data Quality Campaign**, "a single indicator uncovers one facet of the problem, but using additional data points places that indicator in context, uncovering areas for improvement, persistent challenges, and even success stories" [\(1\)](#). Reliance on just one data source, especially one rooted in inequities, could exacerbate harm and disparities. For example, only relying on standardized tests to assess student achievement may overlook other academic strengths and potential for growth.

- <https://dataqualitycampaign.org/our-work/policy-areas/data-for-equity/>
- Additional Resources:
 - <https://www.edutopia.org/article/6-steps-equitable-data-analysis>
 - <https://soeonline.american.edu/blog/data-driven-decision-making-in-education/>



Examining Resource Highlights

[Operationalizing Racial Equity & Inclusion: Contextualizing Systems, Data, and Place](#)

Helpful recommendations on how to approach data and operationalization through a racial equity and inclusion lens.

[AISP's Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration](#)

Walks through each phase of the data life cycle and describes methods or potential challenges to incorporating equity. Provides multiple frameworks and programmatic examples of how to embed racial equity in data use.

[Ensuring Students' Equitable Access to Qualified and Effective Teachers](#)

Policy brief by the National Council on Teacher Quality. Indicates challenges in collecting and analyzing data to accurately assess the state of teacher distribution within and across states. Among these challenges were a lack of consistency, meaningful context, and sufficient disaggregation of data.

[6 Steps to Equitable Data Analysis](#)

Article on Edutopia that describes how educators can best assess student data in a way that is culturally relevant and is receptive to student identities.

[Data Equity Walk Toolkit](#)

Provides a toolkit + templates for organizations to create their very own data equity walks. This activity can spur dialogue and interaction with data that illustrates educational outcomes and opportunity gaps.



Researching

Researching increases knowledge and understanding of historical awareness, context, current trends, and strategies employed to better serve every student. Whereas examining emphasizes attention to data use, researching focuses on setting data and information within consideration of larger social and historical contexts. Research aims to implement findings equitably and understand community needs.

***Related Competencies: Overlap between examining and researching naturally exists, as data analysis is part of what informs research.**

Convening is also important toward gaining community input in research.

Researching Strategies

01- Know the Context

For research to be conducted it's imperative to know the history and values of the community being researched. History shapes present conditions and reflecting on history adds to the advancement of knowledge. Therefore, any data or information collected cannot be used without determining how past events have led to those outcomes. Knowing the cultural and political context surrounding the issue being researched enables the research process to be receptive to these conditions during the study and allows for better recommendations afterward. As stated by **Child Trends**, learning about the context surrounding the research issue is necessary in determining the preferred method of inquiry and balancing power differences within the study [\(1\)](#). Paying close attention to the circumstances of race, power, language, and privilege, and engaging community input, will lead to research questions "that can better assess the impact of social investments and produce more valid findings and better-tailored recommendations" [\(1\)](#).

- <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/a-guide-to-incorporating-a-racial-and-ethnic-equity-perspective-throughout-the-research-process>

02-Normalize, Organize, Operationalize

Research should apply an equity and antiracism framework to inform research decisions and policy implementation. If racial equity is not intentionally integrated in policy and program decision-making then racial inequities are able to cycle through unhampered. One framework focuses on how to normalize, organize, and operationalize racial equity. Normalizing conversations around race and racial equity is the first step. **According to the AISP**, in these conversations it's crucial to clearly name the systems perpetuating racial inequities, as well as provide easily understood shared definitions [\(1\)](#). Organizing refers to building organizational capacity and partnering with other institutions and community organizations to act on these conversations. Operationalizing indicates implementing sustainable, measurable solutions toward advancing racial equity [\(2\)](#).

- <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aisp-atoolkitforcenteringracialequity-2020.pdf>
- <https://www.nlc.org/article/2021/05/27/pursuing-racial-equity-through-intentional-community-engagement/>
- Additional Resources
 - <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/07/22/schools-anti-racism-curriculum>
 - illustrates normalizing conversations around racial equity in schools
 - https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf

03-Reflect on Persons Involved

Reflecting on who is involved within the research process helps determine possible biases and influences. It's important to think through who is harmed by the issue being researched, who are the participants, who are the researchers, etc [\(1\)](#). According to the **Data Quality Campaign**, leaders should work to engage diverse and representative populations of different professions, ages, and ethnicities to gather feedback on data use [\(2\)](#). Especially important is to ensure the team of researchers are representative of the community being served and are in positions to intercede on wrongful study methods. **Child Trends'** guide to incorporating a racial and ethnic equity perspective in research discusses how a diverse research team can contribute a variety of perspectives [\(3\)](#). On the other hand, a homogeneous team may tend to have similar styles of thinking, reinforcing group think and narrowing the range of options. The guide also details how the research team should discuss the power differential caused by differences between some researchers' backgrounds and that of the community being served.

- <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/heq.2022.0042>
- <https://dataqualitycampaign.org/our-work/policy-areas/data-for-equity/>
- <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/a-guide-to-incorporating-a-racial-and-ethnic-equity-perspective-throughout-the-research-process>

Researching Strategies

04- Participation & Accessibility

Promoting equity in research also means promoting inclusivity in research participation, rather than only including participants who--by means of location, time, or resources--naturally have greater access to participate in the research study. Diverse perspectives should be represented in research, therefore access to participation should not disproportionately benefit only a few. The "What," "When," and "Where" of the **5Ws of Racial Equity in Research Framework** highlights how to expand access [1](https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/heq.2022.0042). When conducting research, the "What" refers to the circumstances and extent of the research activities. Some questions may include: What languages are materials offered in? What resources and accommodations are needed to minimize burden and maximize benefit for the participants? The "When" refers to how participants' time is respected. Is there time being prioritized or is everything going at the researcher's pace? Finally, "Where" entails the physical location where research activities will be conducted. Will it require transportation? Will it be in a community-trusted setting? These are all questions to consider when thinking about who is or is not included in research participation.

- <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/heq.2022.0042>

05-Clearly Define Purpose

The "Why" behind the research process is incredibly important as it outlines the purpose of researching a topic in the first place. In the **5Ws of Racial Equity in Research Framework**, the "Why" speaks to researchers' intentionality [1](https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/heq.2022.0042). To center equity in research it must first be ingrained into the research's core purpose. Is the purpose of the study or the study's approach rooted in racial equity? There have been many examples of research topics and approaches that were influenced by structural racism. To combat this, it is necessary to reflect on the nature of the question the research intends to answer, as well as envision how the findings will be used in the future. Further, equitable research questions should reflect the community's values and aim to give back to the community [2](https://www.childtrends.org/publications/a-guide-to-incorporating-a-racial-and-ethnic-equity-perspective-throughout-the-research-process).

- <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/heq.2022.0042>
- <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/a-guide-to-incorporating-a-racial-and-ethnic-equity-perspective-throughout-the-research-process>

06-Untangle Factors in Opportunity Gaps

To tackle issues of equity, an investigation must occur to untangle the different factors that lead to opportunity gaps, while still considering their intersected effect. According to the **Urban Center on Education Data and Policy**, one way research can drive racial equity is by distinguishing how much different factors contribute to widening opportunity gaps [1](https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/four-ways-research-can-drive-racial-equity-education-2020-and-beyond). While these factors may be interrelated, untangling them can help identify specifically where change needs to occur. The example given by the Urban Institute article questions how much an opportunity gap may be caused by underinvestment in undergraduate students of color and how much of that gap is due to underinvestment in K-12 schools. Additionally, in untangling these factors it's important to distinguish causal factors from root causes. According to **Child Trends**, causal factors are "conditions that allow the identified issue or concern to occur and persist" [2](https://www.childtrends.org/publications/a-guide-to-incorporating-a-racial-and-ethnic-equity-perspective-throughout-the-research-process). Identifying these factors allows researchers to uncover a root cause or "a factor that prevents a negative outcome from occurring when taken away" [2](https://www.childtrends.org/publications/a-guide-to-incorporating-a-racial-and-ethnic-equity-perspective-throughout-the-research-process). Removing a causal factor may mitigate an issue, but won't stop it.

- <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/four-ways-research-can-drive-racial-equity-education-2020-and-beyond>
- <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/a-guide-to-incorporating-a-racial-and-ethnic-equity-perspective-throughout-the-research-process>

Researching Strategies

07- Examine Biases

As with examining, research requires confronting one's own background and biases. Researchers should engage in ongoing self-reflection and ask themselves questions to identify personal areas of implicit bias. This will help researchers understand how their implicit biases may influence how they conduct or interpret research and what situations most trigger their biases [\(1\)](#). Some strategies to mitigate the impact of implicit bias include promoting anti-racist practices, attending trainings, educating oneself on implicit biases, practicing emotional regulation, considering alternative perspectives, and constantly reflecting on how to minimize the impact of one's biases [\(2\)](#).

- <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/a-guide-to-incorporating-a-racial-and-ethnic-equity-perspective-throughout-the-research-process>
- <https://www.iths.org/wp-content/uploads/Equitable-research-best-practices-12.20.2021.pdf>

08-Prioritize Community Involvement

Community engagement in the research process acknowledges the impact research has on communities and seeks to ensure that the research reciprocally benefits those same communities. This requires developing authentic relationships with communities and involving them as partners in the research process [\(1\)](#). Community input should also be used to comprehensively examine the research question and ensure it is defined appropriately for that community. Community involvement is also vital in structuring a research design based on respect for the community's values and fostering trust. Further recommendations by **Child Trends** include considering how information would best be shared and collected within the community, and calling on ways to meaningfully incorporate community input in data interpretation [\(2\)](#). This could include facilitating focus groups or data literacy workshops for community members. This is important since communities are not just research subjects, and their perspective can be used to complement and supplement research data [\(2\)](#).

- <https://www.iths.org/wp-content/uploads/Equitable-research-best-practices-12.20.2021.pdf>
- <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/a-guide-to-incorporating-a-racial-and-ethnic-equity-perspective-throughout-the-research-process>

09- Dissemination

Researchers should collaborate with communities when disseminating and presenting findings to ensure that messaging is framed appropriately. Messaging should be framed according to what audiences will receive it. What information is most useful for each audience? What are the best ways to reach these audiences? The medium used to disseminate findings should be most suited for each audience's needs. This could take the form of presentations at community events, data walkthroughs, infographics, and forums [\(1\)](#). Researchers should ensure that research participants and community members understand the research findings that they contributed to. Finally, to solidify equitable researching, findings should be accompanied by recommendations to encourage action and sustainable solutions. Change doesn't happen overnight so it's important to prioritize both short-term solutions and long-term change [\(2\)](#).

- <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/a-guide-to-incorporating-a-racial-and-ethnic-equity-perspective-throughout-the-research-process>
- <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/four-ways-research-can-drive-racial-equity-education-2020-and-beyond>



Researching Resource Highlights

[How to Embed a Racial and Ethnic Equity Perspective in Research](#)

Report by Child Trends that provides guiding principles intended to help researchers think critically about how to embed racial and ethnic equity throughout each stage of the research process. The report also presents recommendations on how to best apply these principles and describes practices researchers can take to ensure equity.

[Four Ways Research Can Drive Racial Equity in Education in 2020 and Beyond](#)

Article from the Urban Institute presenting the themes and key talking points that emerged from discussions among a group of changemakers. The conversation was centered around how research can drive racial equity and close gaps in the education system.

[Best Practices for Equitable Research at Each Step of the Research Process](#)

Document containing strategies and best practices for engaging underrepresented research populations. The document is broken down by general tips and recommendation for specific research stages. It touches upon implicit bias, using an anti-racist framework, and meaningfully involving communities impacted by the research.

[The 5Ws of Racial Equity in Research](#)

Article outlining a racial equity framework based on a research design's Who, What, When, Where, and Why. Considering these questions can expose potential racial inequities present in a research study and allow for proactive planning.

[Advancing or Inhibiting Equity: The Role of Racism in the Implementation of a Community Engagement Policy](#)

Research article that explores how race and racism has shaped district practices under a statewide community engagement plan. Demonstrates why it's important to contextualize and evaluate data under a social and historical lens, especially in research that could go on to inform future policies. Without this diligence, policies may further perpetuate inequities in practice.

Investing

Investing refers to how educational leaders intentionally and effectively distribute resources across the district to ensure that every student has access to the educational opportunities that meet their individual needs. Resource allocation is not simply the amount of money invested but it is how these resources are implemented.

Examples would be investing in professional development opportunities for educators, distribution of qualified educators in high-need areas, and providing access to challenging curricula.

***Related Competencies: Evidence and findings from examining and researching should be used to inform funding decisions**

Investing Strategies

01- Provide Funding According to Student Need

School funding must strive to better support students with the most need. Among the students who will need additional resources are those from low-income families, English learners, and students with disabilities (1). Allocating additional resources for schools and districts to meet the specific needs of these students is a matter of equity, without which may lead to more children falling through the gaps of the education system. Further, states who saw substantial improvement in learning opportunities undertook funding differentiation based on student need as one of its strategies (2). According to the **Alliance for Resource Equity**, decision-makers can better distribute resources by adopting a funding model with weights that are significant enough to meet student needs and by testing the funding formula regularly to monitor any unintended effects (3). While many states already invest in additional funding for students with greater need, these weights are rarely substantial (1).

- <https://edtrust.org/resource/5-things-to-advance-equity-in-state-funding-systems/>
- <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/investing-student-success-school-finance-reforms-report>
- https://educationresourceequity.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/dimensions/dimension-1_school-funding.pdf

02- Provide More Funding to Districts with Low Property Wealth

Investing in equitable learning outcomes for every student calls for a school finance reform that will mitigate the persistent effects of discriminatory housing policies. Due to the geographic concentration of poverty and race, low-income communities who would most benefit from additional support aren't able to generate enough revenue to afford it (1). Since a good portion of school funding is dependent on local revenue, districts who aren't able to raise adequate funding are left having to do more with less. Districts that receive significantly less funding are disproportionately nonwhite, marking racial lines in community wealth gaps (2). Despite less affluent districts taxing themselves at higher rates, the **Public School Forum** reports that the gap between more and less wealthy districts has continued to widen (3). For this reason, **EdTrust recommends** providing low-wealth districts enough funding to make up for the difference between what the district needs in order to offer students a high-quality education and the funding the district can reasonably raise (4). Additionally, it's important to prevent investing into policies that could exacerbate funding inequities, such as school vouchers which wrongfully allocate resources to those who need it the least (5).

- <https://ednote.ecs.org/cracking-the-code-on-funding-schools-equitably/>
- <https://edbuild.org/content/23-billion>
- <https://www.ednc.org/how-do-nc-districts-compare-on-their-ability-to-fund-schools/>
- <https://edtrust.org/resource/5-things-to-advance-equity-in-state-funding-systems/>
- <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/school-vouchers-and-rural-schools>

03- Transparency

Funding formulas and plans used by school districts should be transparent to the public, since transparency "allows advocates and other stakeholders to engage in conversations about how the state's funding system reflects the state's values" (1). Decision-makers can promote transparency by making information on funding designs publicly accessible, straightforward, and easily understood in clear, plain language. By looking through this information, school leaders and community members should be able to pinpoint which resources are allocated to which schools and why, so that they can best interact and act on this information (2). The published funding information should also illustrate spending comparisons to identify any potential inequities and be updated as necessary.

- <https://edtrust.org/resource/5-things-to-advance-equity-in-state-funding-systems/>
- https://educationresourceequity.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/dimensions/dimension-1_school-funding.pdf
- Additional Resources
 - <https://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/3412-from-financial-transparency-to-equity-part-1-chiefs-for-change-paper.pdf>
 - <https://west.edtrust.org/issue/adequate-and-equitable-funding/>

Investing Strategies

04- Report Opportunity Indicators

Looking at the money trail may not be enough to advance equity without taking into account other opportunity indicators. As stated in a brief by the **Chiefs for Change** and **Education Resources Strategies**, higher spending does not mean that a school is providing better services to students (1). Variation in spending could be due to structural reasons such as school population size, the grades it teaches, and differing student population characteristics. States and districts should determine how much of funding variation is due to structural reasons and how much is due to other causes. Since looking at financial factors alone may be misleading, the **Learning Policy Institute** recommends reporting and acting on "opportunity indicators" such as the availability of well-qualified teachers, strong curriculum, and access to adequate materials (2). The **Chiefs for Change** and **ERS** brief also makes the recommendation to integrate non-financial indicators such as course rigor and exclusionary disciplinary rates to illustrate what per pupil data highlights and what it glosses over. Further, a **Stanford** policy brief recommends requiring states to meet federal standards along these opportunity indicators for schools classified as failing (3). Reporting opportunity indicators can also reveal inequities and propel solutions. For example, closing discipline disparities depends on accurate reporting of student discipline records and discipline data disaggregation.

- <https://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/3412>
- <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/investing-student-success-school-finance-reforms-report>
- <https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/addressing-inequitable-distribution-teachers-what-it-will-take-get-qualified-effective-teachers-all-1.pdf>
- Additional Resources
 - <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tvi-student-discipline-resource-202305.pdf>

05- Strategic Spending

Equity in investing isn't just about how resources are distributed, but also how those resources are being used. As expressed in the **Chiefs for Change** and **ERS'** brief, "equity and excellence aren't just about how much – but how well. What schools do with the resources they have – and the type of resources they have – matters even more than a school's level of funding" (1). For this reason, it's crucial to evaluate how resources are distributed equitably and how they are strategically used to maximize the most positive impact. The **Alliance for Resource Equity** recommends strengthening strategic spending practices by performing a diagnostic to understand current spending, investigating and shifting away from sources of significant inefficient spending, making deliberate tradeoffs, seeking out and incorporating input from multiple perspectives, and increasing transparency and accountability (2). Districts can also use data on opportunity indicators to identify which areas need the most investment. Additionally, an important aspect of strategic spending is being able to hold districts accountable for how funding is spent. These accountability measures could include requiring districts to invest additional funds to serve targeted student needs and publish a funding plan tailored for local contexts (3).

- <https://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/3412-from-financial-transparency-to-equity-part-1-chiefs-for-change-paper.pdf>
- https://educationresourceequity.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/dimensions/dimension-1_school-funding.pdf
- <https://edtrust.org/resource/5-things-to-advance-equity-in-state-funding-systems/>

06- Flexibility

Incorporating equity in investing calls for a degree of flexibility over the organization of resources. It may not be possible to foresee all distinct school and student needs, which is why a reliable funding base with flexibility can help school leaders tailor the best response to local student needs. The **Alliance for Resource Equity** recommends defining a clear vision for school-level flexibility, determine specific flexibilities granted to schools, develop resource and planning management training for school staff, and create accountability structures to ensure funds are still being used effectively (1). In establishing accountability structures, there is the possibility of prescriptive practices, or strict measures, that could rigidly prevent funds from being invested to meet certain student needs. To avoid this, **EdTrust** recommends finding a balance between maximizing flexibility and enforcing requirements on schools and districts not yet meeting standards of equity access (2).

- https://educationresourceequity.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/dimensions/dimension-1_school-funding.pdf
- <https://edtrust.org/resource/5-things-to-advance-equity-in-state-funding-systems/>
- Additional Resources
 - <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/investing-student-success-school-finance-reforms-report>

Investing Strategies

07- Invest in Developing the Expertise of School Staff

Investing in equity means equipping those working closest to students with the knowledge and expertise necessary to build a safe, nurturing learning environment. This is especially true for educators in high-need schools who may need additional knowledge to address social and emotional needs related to out-of-school factors that may not be as prevalent in low-need schools. Further, as expressed by the **National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality**, district leaders should ensure that teachers in high-need settings have access to training and support "specifically related to working with students from diverse cultural backgrounds and students from families of low socioeconomic status" (1). Investing in professional development opportunities for educators and other school staff helps improve the quality of teaching. Specific training may also be necessary to close opportunity gaps such as that of discipline disparities. Many plans to mitigate disparities in student discipline include training school staff and educators on non-discrimination, classroom management, de-escalation techniques, and implicit bias (2). Schools can further support capacity and expertise by hiring additional support staff, if possible, and restructuring school roles to free up time for educators to focus on lesson planning and providing student-centered supports (3) (4).

- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520725.pdf>
- <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tvi-student-discipline-resource-202305.pdf>
- https://educationresourceequity.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/dimensions/dimension-7_student-supports-intervention.pdf
- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520725.pdf>

08- Invest in Access to Quality Early Childhood Education

Another aspect along which to target equity investment is toward quality early childhood education for every student. Among the **Learning Policy Institute's** recommendations to improve schools and student learning is ensuring "high-quality preschool for children who may have fewer learning opportunities or greater learning needs before they enter school" (1). Expanding these opportunities can help close educational gaps before they have the chance to progress. The **Alliance for Resource Equity** identifies funding, program availability, preschool leadership quality and diversity, and instructional times as presenting potential challenges in offering high-quality, accessible early education programs (2).

- <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/investing-student-success-school-finance-reforms-report>
- https://educationresourceequity.org/wp-content/uploads/documents/dimensions/dimension-8_high-quality-early-learning.pdf

09- Invest in Improving Quality Teacher Distribution

Inequities in school funding also reflect inequities in teacher distribution, with highly qualified teachers going to more affluent districts and schools that can afford to pay higher salaries. Thus, schools serving predominantly students of color and students from low-income families are taught at greater rates by less experienced educators who aren't as qualified to meet the needs of these students. These disparities have a significant impact on academic success as research has shown that teachers with stronger qualifications produce greater student achievement (1). As it stands, educators working in impoverished areas are tasked with poorer working conditions, more demanding student social and emotional needs, and comparatively less pay. There are various approaches to mitigate this, one being monetary incentives for educators working in high-need schools. The **American Federation of Teachers** suggests implementing an incentive policy, similar to pay differentials in other sectors where more intensive tasks warrant greater monetary compensation (2). However, higher pay alone may not be enough if there are no signs of improvement in social conditions or school environment. Attracting educators to high-need schools therefore also becomes a matter of increasing professional development and support networks, improving working conditions, and creating a safe, collaborative school environment (3).

- <https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/addressing-inequitable-distribution-teachers-what-it-will-take-get-qualified-effective-teachers-all-1.pdf>
- <https://www.aft.org/periodical/american-educator/winter-2002/attracting-well-qualified-teachers-struggling#:~:text=Yet%20novice%20teachers%20with%20three%20years%20of%20classroom.achieving%20at%20satisfactory%20levels%20on%20state%20achievement%20tests>
- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520725.pdf>



Investing Resource Highlights

Alliance For Resource Equity

Partnership formed between Education Resource Strategies and The Education Trust with the goal of bringing stakeholders together around a framework for equity. The Alliance For Resource Equity organized educational resources along 10 dimensions of equity. These dimensions embody the different educational equity fields in which stakeholders can invest. Investing into these dimensions requires intentional planning, as shown by the guidebooks that accompany each dimension.

The State of Funding Equity Data Tool

Equity data tool created by The Education Trust that captures how much funding each state provides to students of color, English Learners, and students in poverty. This tool can be used to understand the condition of funding equity across the nation and within each state.

EdBuild \$23 Billion Report

Report by EdBuild that breaks the down national and state-level inequities in funding between predominantly nonwhite and white school districts. Exposes the flaws in basing the educational funding system so heavily on community wealth and how this structure only serves to preserve wealth gaps.

Resource on Confronting Racial Discrimination in Student Discipline

Resource from the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice on investigations involving student disciplinary incidents that violated nondiscrimination laws and regulations. The document cites the facts of the investigation and the actions the district has committed to take to resolve for the student disciplinary discrimination. Many of these actions include investing in additional staff training, strategies for classroom management, and other support plans. Demonstrates how resources are being invested to address discipline disparities.

Ensuring the Equitable Distribution of Teachers: Strategies for School, District, and State Leaders

Policy brief by the National Comprehensive Center For Teacher Quality. Discusses why it's crucial for highly qualified teachers to be distributed equitably across schools. Presents explanations for inequitable teacher distribution and strategies decision-makers can take within their respective roles to mitigate this inequity.

Preparing

Preparing refers to how districts prepare every student for post-secondary success, whether attending a four-year institution or going directly to the workforce. This entails providing multiple pathways to eliminate barriers to success. Schools should aim to prepare every student by providing them with sufficient resources, such as certified teachers and challenging curriculum.

***Related Competencies: The level of preparation with which schools equip students depends on investing. Preparing students also entails convening family and community resources together for additional support.**

Preparing Strategies

01-Expand Access

Preparing every student for success requires expanding access to opportunities for students of marginalized backgrounds. However, there are existing racial disparities in gifted, advanced coursework, and CTE programs. According to the **Center for American Progress**, Black and Indigenous students are more likely to enroll in schools with fewer AP course offerings [\(1\)](#). The Center also illustrated the existence of racial gaps even within schools offering more AP courses--Black, Indigenous, and Latinx students are less likely to enroll in an AP course. Further a **Hechinger Report/Associated Press** study found that Black and Latinx students were less likely to enroll in STEM CTE courses than their white peers, pointing to a larger pattern of these populations being shut out of high-paying professions [\(2\)](#). Recommendations to increase access to advanced courses include mitigating the subjectivity in teacher-and-counselor referrals by automatically enrolling students into advanced courses based on data, opening up more slots by optimizing schoolwide schedules, and leveraging technology through virtual learning and course offerings [\(1\)](#). This also includes expanding eligibility and course seats [\(3\)](#).

- <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/closing-advanced-coursework-equity-gaps-students/>
- <https://hechingerreport.org/how-career-and-technical-education-shuts-out-black-and-latino-students-from-high-paying-professions/>
- <https://edtrust.org/resource/5-things-to-advance-equity-in-access-to-and-success-in-advanced-coursework/>
- Additional Resources
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxdNnQAWBGU>
 - https://unevoc.unesco.org/pub/tvet_for_disadvantaged_youth.pdf
 - <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/advancing-racial-equity-career-technical-education-enrollment/>

02-Identify the Needs of Underrepresented Groups

Crucial to launching equitable preparation programs is evaluating the specific needs of the particular community that will be served. For example, the University of North Carolina's C-STEP program prepares community college students to transfer to and graduate from UNC. The program works to remove barriers that underrepresented and underserved student populations face. In this case, these populations were found to "undermatch" when deciding where to transfer, whether because of factors such as proximity to home, fear of the unknown, etc [\(1\)](#). The C-STEP program directly confronts and addresses these challenges. Further, it's imperative to ensure that the program remains accessible toward those who need it the most. In the case of Dual Language Immersion programs, these are primarily intended to help English Learners reach English proficiency, however the **Century Foundation** found that these programs have become exceedingly popular with privileged, English-dominant families, cutting accessibility and DLI seats for English Learners [\(2\)](#). Wealthy English-dominant families who wish for their children to learn another language have the ability to use their wealth to purchase housing closer to DLI programs or use their social capital to game enrollment. Due to this, it's important to keep an eye on demographic, integration, and gentrification trends to ensure equity-based programs continue to aid those who need them the most.

- <https://www.unc.edu/posts/2022/09/11/c-step-q-a/>
- <https://tcf.org/content/report/ensuring-equitable-access-to-dual-language-immersion-programs-supporting-english-learners-emerging-bilingualism/>

03-Identify Barriers to Access

Preparing students for post-secondary success requires identifying the barriers imposed on students from excelling. Key to identifying these barriers is collecting and examining data. According to an article published by the **National Association of State Boards of Education** on CTE equity, "there is no more powerful tool than a state's data system to reveal discrepancies in access and success" [\(1\)](#). This requires data collection on these issues, detailed data disaggregation, and transparent accessible data. To identify barriers that prevent students of color and students from low-income backgrounds from enrolling in advanced coursework, **The Education Trust** recommends examining representation in these courses and publishing this data annually for each district and school by student group, and creating a publicly available list of districts that either don't offer advanced courses or don't offer enough seats [\(2\)](#).

- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1229646.pdf>
- <https://edtrust.org/resource/5-things-to-advance-equity-in-access-to-and-success-in-advanced-coursework/>
- Additional Resources
 - <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/closing-advanced-coursework-equity-gaps-students/>

Preparing Strategies

04-Remove Barriers

After identifying root causes and barriers to preparing students for success, solutions should be created to reduce and overcome these barriers. Reducing barriers may take the form of creating additional pathways, expanding access to opportunities, ensuring high-quality programs, providing additional support, and communicating messaging effectively. Dual enrollment programs, like NC's Career and College Promise, help overcome the financial barrier for students, by allowing them to earn tuition-free college credits during high school [\(1\)](#). This reduces the cost burden of pursuing a higher education. In addressing barriers for a high-quality CTE education--such as inadequate advising and entrance requirements--state boards could pass regulations to encourage early career exploration, while examining which eligibility requirements are actually predictive of success [\(2\)](#). Implementing practices, programs, and policies to reduce barriers should be informed by what is best for the students in most need.

- <https://www.ednc.org/how-n-c-s-dual-enrollment-program-elevates-students-families-and-the-state/>
- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1229646.pdf>
- Additional Resources
 - <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/closing-advanced-coursework-equity-gaps-students/>

05-Provide Support

Providing additional support is vital to leveling the playing field, especially for students who engage in opportunities they did not have prior access to. Expanding access and eligibility to advanced courses is a definite step forward, however students from marginalized backgrounds may need additional help after enrolling in these courses. **The Education Trust** recommends doing this by supporting teachers through professional development and providing additional advanced coursework preparation like free after-school and summer school preparation programs [\(1\)](#). **The Center for American Progress** recommends providing support by developing state-level partnerships and creating supplemental opportunities for students to learn from their peers and teachers [\(2\)](#). Providing support could also mean reaching out to families and making sure they have information regarding advanced course registration, fee waivers, and curriculum in their home language. Furthermore, college access programs like AVID, GEAR UP, and GRAD have seen incredible results in increasing college enrollment due to their extensive support system that includes services like tutoring, counseling, organizational and study skill development, and connections to community resources [\(3\)](#). Through these programs, students receive both academic and social support.

- <https://edtrust.org/resource/5-things-to-advance-equity-in-access-to-and-success-in-advanced-coursework/>
- <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/closing-advanced-coursework-equity-gaps-students/>
- <https://www.adlit.org/topics/college-readiness/introduction-college-access-programs>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxdNnQAWBGU>

06-Create an Inclusive School Culture

Implementation of preparation programs should occur within a school culture that will allow those programs to thrive. This school culture should be one that sets high expectations in preparing students for success and prioritizes a safe, inclusive learning environment. Practices to foster an inclusive school culture include using inclusive language in all forms of communication, hosting accessible events/activities that appeal to a diverse group of students and families, creating a supportive peer culture, and embracing a community approach [\(1\)](#) [\(2\)](#). Encouraging participation in extra-curricular activities has also been shown to promote inclusivity and belonging [\(3\)](#). School culture should also be reflective of what the programs need to grow. For example, schools with dual language programs should nurture and demonstrate respect for the partner language, by including it in school-wide communications such as school signage, hallway student work, and announcements [\(4\)](#). These details elevate multiculturalism in DL schools.

- <https://inclusiveschoolcommunities.org.au/resources/toolkit/inclusive-school-culture>
- <https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2017/11/15/create-inclusive-classroom-environment/#:~:text=5%20inclusivity%20practises%20to%20consider%201%20Create%20a,a%20%E2%80%98community%E2%80%99%20approach%20to%20learning%20and%20teaching.%20>
- <https://reachinghighernh.org/2018/07/18/tips-inclusive-school-culture/>
- <https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/Dual%20Language%20Leadership%20Toolbox%20Handout.pdf>

Preparing Strategies

07-Ensure High-Quality, Rigorous Programs

On top of expanding opportunities, districts need to ensure the quality of these preparation programs. While programs may exist on paper, they won't be helpful if they aren't providing students with a high-quality, rigorous education. Twentieth-century vocational programs are an example of this, as low-income and students of color were tracked into this educational pathway of low-skill job training and poor-quality academics. Students enrolled in these programs were less likely to complete high school [\(1\)](#). However, CTE curriculums have evolved into providing high-skill job training that sets students up for high school graduation and high-wage employment. However, within this transformation, high-quality CTE programs are more likely to reside in areas of concentrated wealth that can afford new equipment and attract teachers with higher salaries [\(1\)](#). High-quality CTE programs can make a difference in credential-earning and economic mobility. Therefore, to ensure a high-quality CTE education, these programs should align with local labor-market demands, pair technical programs with rigorous coursework, encourage CTE concentration, and set high standards so that students aren't pipelined into low-wage jobs [\(2\)](#)[\(3\)](#). In a similar vein regarding program quality, **The Century Foundation** also noted that it is not uncommon for districts to hastily roll out dual language programs for the sake of appearances, compromising planning, resources, and thus quality [\(4\)](#). Therefore, future research concerning equitable access should consider quality and rigor.

- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1229646.pdf>
- <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/advancing-racial-equity-career-technical-education-enrollment/>
- <https://www.ascd.org/eL/articles/cte-in-high-school-does-it-improve-student-outcomes>
- <https://tcf.org/content/report/ensuring-equitable-access-to-dual-language-immersion-programs-supporting-english-learners-emerging-bilingualism/>

08-Effective Engagement and Messaging

Information on educational initiatives and programs should be effectively communicated to families and other stakeholders. If information about these opportunities is not accessible, then word of these opportunities may not reach the students and families who need it the most. Additionally, the more that families know about how their students are being prepared for success, the more they can do to support them. Effective messaging of initiatives is also necessary to encourage participation. For example, effective messaging on the value of CTE and vocational education can help reduce the notion many have about post-secondary success being solely dependent on a four-year degree [\(1\)](#). Amending this mindset can open up CTE as a viable option for students who may otherwise drop out or not enroll into college. Many high-demand occupations with family-sustaining wages can be earned through vocational training. Communicating this opens up doors and dismantles barriers. Other equity-based preparation programs can also benefit from marketing and outreach to encourage enrollment from marginalized populations.

- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1229646.pdf>
- Additional Resources
 - https://cte.careertech.org/sites/default/files/Dos_and_Donts_for_Engaging_Families_and_Learners_2021.pdf
 - <https://www.ascd.org/eL/articles/cte-in-high-school-does-it-improve-student-outcomes>



Preparing Resource Highlights

[Closing Advanced Coursework Equity Gaps for All Students](#)

Report by the Center for American Progress that examines AP participation and performance equity gaps. The report breaks down these gaps through a funnel that evaluates AP course availability, AP course enrollment, the rate at which students take AP exams, and the rate at which students pass those exams. Presents advanced coursework distribution and disparities across racial and ethnic groups. Also offers an interactive data tool that illustrates national and state-level progression throughout the AP funnel.

[High-quality CTE: Access and Equity](#)

Webpage from the Association for Career & Technical Education that presents resources to achieve access and equity in CTE. The webpage includes dozens of research reports, equity frameworks, guides, toolkits, books, and more all centered around ways to increase CTE access to underrepresented communities.

[The Power of Dual Enrollment: The Equitable Expansion of College Access and Success](#)

Post from the Official Blog of the U.S. Department of Education. Describes the significance of dual enrollment and how it benefits students pursuing a higher education. While dual enrollment programs are growing across the country, this growth is unequal--dual enrollment is often less accessible at schools serving predominantly students of color and students from low-income families. Lists key strategies to expanding access and unlocking the potential of dual enrollment.

[Black and Latino Students Shut Out of Advanced Coursework Opportunities](#)

Article from The Education Trust that presents findings from a report illustrating how Black and Latinx students are shut out of opportunities throughout elementary, middle, and high school. The report also identifies the barriers that block these students from enrolling in advanced coursework, while also giving recommendations on how to advance equity and access in advanced coursework.

[Bridging the Skills Gap: Career and Technical Education in High School](#)

Data from the U.S. Department of Education that displays access and participation in CTE high school programs. The data also shows outcomes for CTE participants and CTE concentrators, highlighting the significance of CTE toward achievement and attainment.



Convening

Convening means creating an ongoing, two-way process of building relationships and working collaboratively to support every student. Research shows that students learn better when their families and local community organizations engage in school. This requires engaging a diverse and representative stakeholder group. Strong family and community engagement can help students solve local problems, contribute to civic life, and respond to a changing economy.

Convening Strategies

01-Making Connections to Learning

Strengthening community and family engagement to student learning can start in the classroom. Community and family wisdom can be shared through family interviews, guest speakers, and community research [\(1\)](#). This allows students to make personal connections to historical and sociological material, while opening the door to family and community involvement in schools. Classroom lessons can also draw upon community resources like neighborhood explorations, local history and landmarks, cultural events, museums, businesses, local experts, organizations, or the experiences of everyday people [\(1\)](#). In addition, a community action project could be a powerful learning experience for students as they explore and develop an awareness toward the issues affecting their communities. All of this can help students enhance their learning by linking curriculum to real world issues.

- <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/critical-practices-for-antibias-education/family-and-community-engagement>
 - <https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/LFJ-Critical-Practices-for-Social-Justice-Education-July-2023-07272023.pdf>
- Additional Resources
 - <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/school-community-collaboration-brendan-okeefe#:~:text=Share%20your%20dreams%20for%20enhanced%20community-school%20partnerships%2C%20ask,experience%2C%20skills%20and%20time%20to%20make%20a%20difference>

02- School Leadership

Building school, community, and family relationships requires initiative by school leadership. School leaders who recognize the importance of community and family engagement in meeting student needs are pivotal to forming these partnerships. According to a study on school-community partnerships published by the **School Community Journal**, having a vision-oriented principal who could motivate teachers and staff to collaborate with community organizations was essential to nurturing trust and respect in the partnership [\(1\)](#). The level of commitment by school leaders in collaborating with community partners will impact the partnership's trajectory and what it will be able to accomplish.

- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1085646.pdf>
- Additional Resources
 - <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED593295.pdf>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GX7FrwRG4is>

03- Set Shared Goals and Aim for Student Wellness

It's essential to keep in mind and prioritize shared goals when forming any kind of partnership. Shared goals are what lead the partnership's direction and give it purpose. In this case, school, community, and family partnerships should be grounded in the shared vision of advancing the student's physical, social, and emotional well-being. One group alone can't meet all of student needs, however collaboration between schools, communities, and families can widen the scope of support. Partnerships can coordinate needed services by leveraging combined resources and knowledge [\(1\)](#). Further, emphasizing shared goals helps partners avoid situations where they could potentially be working against each other [\(2\)](#).

- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED593295.pdf>
- <https://www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds/article/school-community-learning-partnerships-essential-expanded-learning-success>
- Additional Resources
 - <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1085646.pdf>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45F5WfCqD08>

Convening Strategies

04- Clear Communication

Clear communication is the foundation for creating strong partnerships. Suitable communication channels should be used to reach out to underserved communities and families, according to these families' communication needs. Depending on what works best, this could entail phone calls, messaging groups like WhatsApp, social media platforms, etc (1). Just as important is having open and honest conversations about student learning, with educators clearly and coherently communicating classroom standards. Nurturing good communication on the school's part means listening to parents, showing them respect, and using the right tone (1). Communication is best when it practices cultural sensitivity, uses inclusive terminology, is specific, and is not based on assumptions. Especially when speaking with families, educators shouldn't be vague about curriculum or classroom details or assume the family member(s) already know this information when that may not be the case. Families who don't speak English or are unfamiliar with the American school system will need additional support in becoming involved in their children's education (2). This includes use of home languages, bilingual staff, programs to guide parents on how to support their children's education, and parent liaisons who can connect schools and incoming parents culturally and linguistically (3). Clear communication is also necessary in community partnerships to coordinate services, share knowledge, and discuss challenges and areas for improvement.

- <https://www.unicef.org/romania/stories/tips-schools-how-strengthen-communication-parentscaregivers>
- <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/training-technical-assistance/education-level/early-learning/family-school-community-partnerships>
- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED593295.pdf>
- Additional Resources
 - <https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/LFJ-Critical-Practices-for-Social-Justice-Education-July-2023-07272023.pdf>
 - <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/critical-practices-for-antibias-education/family-and-community-engagement>

05- Building Relationships

Building relationships and reaching out to communities and families means meeting them where they're at. Locationwise, community walks with school staff to local businesses, parks, or community centers can go a long way to speaking with community members in spaces where they're most comfortable. These community walks would also be a good opportunity to ask community members what matters to them and share how they could become more involved in student learning (1). Building relationships of trust also requires assessing what barriers may deter family involvement, such as poor communication, differing expectations of parent-teacher roles, negative past experiences, etc (2). Laying the foundation to forge past these barriers means actively welcoming families and finding ways for parents to easily communicate back with schools rather than continue with the one-sided school letters sent home. Further, to make school involvement accessible it's important to provide parents, especially those from underrepresented communities, with opportunities to become involved since they may feel as if they have no place within the school bureaucratic structure (2). Schools should also celebrate student accomplishments and build relationships through positive interactions, rather than solely contact parents regarding poor grades or disciplinary issues. Local school board meetings can also help build trust by establishing dialogue between board members and community members. A study conducted by an assistant professor at Brown University found that school board meetings consisting of two-way conversation, or of comments from the public and immediate direct replies from the board members, could attract greater and more diverse participation (3).

- <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/school-community-collaboration-brendan-okeefe#:~:text=Share%20your%20dreams%20for%20enhanced%20community-school%20partnerships%2C%20ask,experience%2C%20skills%20and%20time%20to%20make%20a%20difference>
- <https://www.adlit.org/topics/families-schools/building-trust-schools-and-diverse-families#in-context-family-involvement-and-no-child-left-behind>
- <https://phys.org/news/2021-05-school-board-diverse-audiences-boost.html#:~:text=The%20answer%2C%20according%20to%20his,latest%20study%2C%20might%20be%20>
- Additional Resources
 - <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/8-ways-encourage-family-engagement-secondary-schools-heather-wolpert-gawron>

06- Facilitating Collaboration

Maintaining partnerships requires sorting out logistical issues to pave a smoother path toward collaboration. One recommendation to facilitate collaboration is to assign a staff whose sole responsibility is to establish and maintain school-community partnerships. Assigning a coordinator or liaison increases "efficiency, quality, and alignment of school-community partnerships" (1). Schools can also facilitate collaboration with community organizations by establishing an inviting school culture through an "open door policy" where community partners feel welcome to participate in school projects and initiatives (2). The partnership also needs to include clear data and information sharing agreements and collective professional training, so that all parties involved learn the same vocabulary, content, and best practices around school-community partnerships (1). Reciprocity and mutual benefit are also important to consider in partnerships. Within common goals, what else can also be achieved? Community partners can benefit by learning more about the group(s) they serve and educational factors related to that population. **The Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project** also recommends facilitating healthy partnerships by intentionally blending staff who are familiar with the partner's work and connecting with a diverse set of partner staff at multiple levels (3).

- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED593295.pdf>
- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1085646.pdf>
- <https://www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds/article/school-community-learning-partnerships-essential-expanded-learning-success>

07- Track Progress

Forming school, community, and family partnerships signifies a commitment to collaborate for the sake of supporting every student. To follow through with this commitment, partnerships must continue to assess their plans and track progress toward achieving their goals. The beginning of the partnership can begin with an assets and needs assessment to determine what issues of student wellness need to be addressed, and what resources are available to do so (1). This assessment should also identify where gaps in service exist. Afterwards, partnerships should develop a results framework with input from all relevant stakeholders to guide and measure progress. Plans may need to be adapted according to how well student needs are being met, always aiming toward continuous improvement. This improvement is pushed forward by regularly reviewing the effectiveness of partner initiatives.

- <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED593295.pdf>
- Additional Resources
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gx7FrwRG4is>



Convening Resource Highlights

[Nine Elements of Effective School Community Partnerships to Address Student Mental Health, Physical Health, and Overall Wellness](#)

Guide by the Institute of Educational Leadership, Coalition for Community Schools, and the National Association of School Psychologists. Outlines nine elements necessary to forming strong school-community partnerships that will enhance student wellness. The guide covers the importance of school-community partnerships and best practices to facilitate partnership collaboration.

[Strong School-Community Partnerships in Inclusive Schools Are “Part of the Fabric of the School... We Count on Them”](#)

- Study that conducted focus groups with the community partners of five schools. This study sought to better understand what nurtures strong school-community partnerships and presents its findings through four factors that community partners cited as having contributed to successful partnerships with schools. These factors include strong school leadership, an inviting school culture, teacher commitment to student success, and collaboration and communication.

[Building Trust with Schools and Diverse Families](#)

Report by AdLit that walks through obstacles to and ways to increase family involvement in student learning. The report lists benefits of family involvement to a student's education and describes how to lay the foundation for family-school relationships built on trust and respect, all while overcoming barriers to encourage engagement from underrepresented families.

[How school board meetings could attract more diverse audiences and boost public trust](#)

Article that describes a research study's findings on a potential way to increase diverse participation at local school board meetings. The findings indicate that school board meetings where board members directly reply to public comments and engage in further dialogue, could potentially increase attendance from marginalized communities to these meetings. This two-way conversation between community members and the local school board allows community members to feel seen and heard.

[Family-school-community partnerships](#)

Webpage from the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. Provides an introduction on family-school-community partnerships and a few recommendations on what to consider when implementing these partnerships. The website also provides additional resources and handbooks to read up on these partnerships.