Equity Statement and Resources

Equity Statement

Equity is the just and fair distribution of resources based upon each individual student's needs. (Let's be clear, this is just about "some students' needs, not all students.) Equitable resources include funding, programs, policies, initiatives, and supports that target each student's unique background and **school context** to guarantee that all students **have equal access** (*what is equal access? When you dig deeper you'll see that this requires equal housing, income, healthcare, etc.*) to a **high quality** (*this is an ambiguous term that establishes an elusive goal line – "quality will never be "high" enough*) education.

Guidance for Equity-Focused Positions within Pennsylvania Public Schools

This guidance has been developed as a resource for district leaders to support the work of equity-focused positions in the educational system and has been developed with the feedback and support of current equity-focused personnel throughout Pennsylvania. View the full document under the equity resources tab on myPSBA.org.

Equity Communication Guidance

During this historic time in our nation, **Pennsylvania school board directors and district leaders have looked to engage their communities in more meaningful conversations around critical issues of equity, antiracism, civil rights and social justice.** *(PSBA states openly that equity was about equity in access to education, academic resources, opportunities, disabilities, etc. Specifically they said, "this isn't just a racism issue…" Are critical issues for PA schools equity, antiracism, civil rights and social justice? These are the left's issues and the media's issues, but are they the issues most important to educating our students? This is a platform to keep everyone focused upon their differences and to keep us divided.)* To assist, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association is **providing guidance on communicating about equity and related issues in school communities**. This guidance supplements PSBA's ongoing commitment to provide equity training, tools and support for our member school districts in offering equitable learning environments and opportunities for all students. (*How about engaging communities in more meaningful conversations around curriculum, student needs, parent engagement and student performance?*)

How has COVID-19 IMPACTED Pennsylvania Households and the Total Population of 12,366,049?

CHALLENGES BEFORE THE PANDEMIC ARE NOW CRITICAL VULNERABILITIES

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Where engagement gaps have existed before, disconnects from the school may increase if districts are not intentional in their outreach.

DIGITAL ACCESS & CONNECTIVITY
According to the American Community Survey (2014-2018),10.7% of PA households with residents under 18 years of age, have no internet.

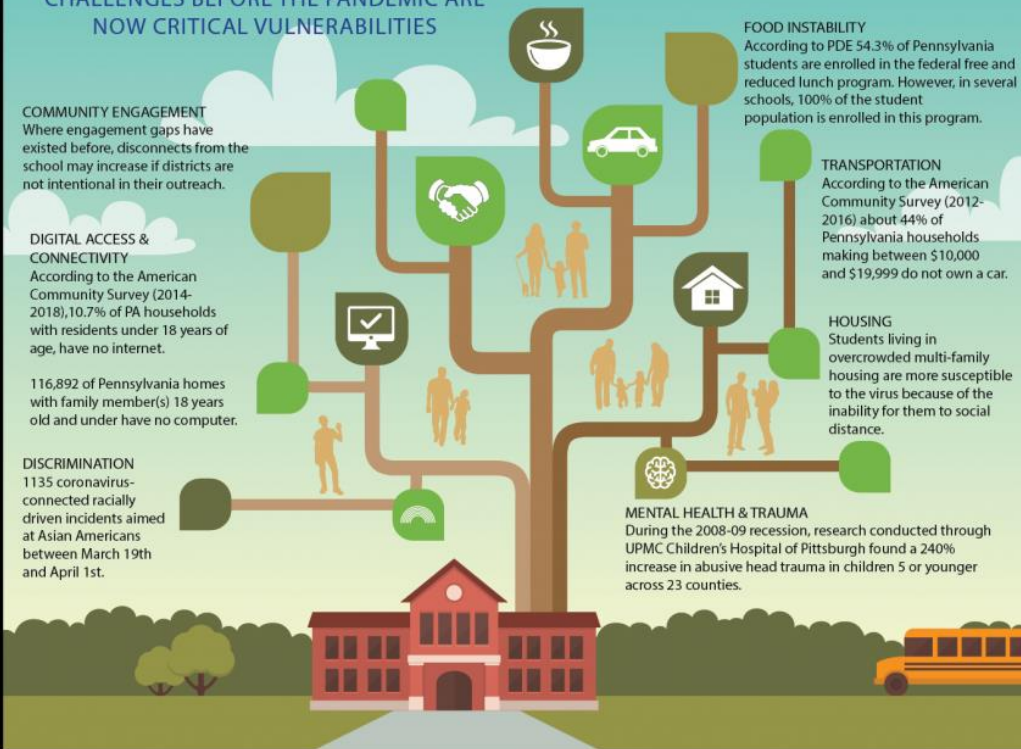116,892 of Pennsylvania homes with family member(s) 18 years old and under have no computer.

DISCRIMINATION
1135 coronavirus-connected racially driven incidents aimed at Asian Americans between March 19th and April 1st.

FOOD INSTABILITY
According to PDE 54.3% of Pennsylvania students are enrolled in the federal free and reduced lunch program. However, in several schools, 100% of the student population is enrolled in this program.

TRANSPORTATION
According to the American Community Survey (2012-2016) about 44% of Pennsylvania households making between $10,000 and $19,999 do not own a car.

HOUSING
Students living in overcrowded multi-family housing are more susceptible to the virus because of the inability for them to social distance.

MENTAL HEALTH & TRAUMA
During the 2008-09 recession, research conducted through UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh found a 240% increase in abusive head trauma in children 5 or younger across 23 counties.

See the diagram – From the cradle to the grave services, that is how education is evolving. It's not about education it's about indoctrination and hooking everyone onto government services so all are dependent upon government.

Antiracism Board Resolution
School boards are asked to adopt this resolution supporting the development of an anti-racist climate. (*This is already unacceptable conduct in schools, available to disciplinary action. Anytime an individual FEELS oppressed – regardless of the reality, racism exists and action must be taken – this keeps communities and schools divided*) The resolution is a template and may be revised based on **local context** (*there's that word again – so great*) to reflect the needs and commitments of your board and to include action steps taken to support this goal. Once adopted, share your resolution with your local community and submit a copy to PSBA.

Read the article below regarding what took place in OH:

https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/2021/07/14/ohio-anti-racism-resolution-boe-asks-legal-opinion/7940648002/

*Educrats and elected officials pander to woke ideas and terminology respond that resolution contains nothing regarding the 1619 Project or critical race theory, but claim this is merely a resolution to condemn racism, as if the majority of Americans support racism. Worse, the premise is that if we don't take an active role to identify, challenge and remedy racism we're racist! We must strongly oppose with a **resolution for unity**.*

Equity Policy Management Services

Board policy sets a course of action through establishing local legislation by which the school entity is held accountable for measurable outcomes. (*HOW ABOUT HE OUTCOMES OF STUDENT? WHAT ABOUT THOSE OUTCOMES?*)

The Educational Equity Policy management services is for school entities that choose to prioritize equity by systematically embedding equity into the school entity's structure, identity and practices through policy. (*Is your school district's current structure inequitable? Does it purposefully ignore disadvantaged student? I'm confident if it was you would have groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center and the likes, taking the district to court. This is a "feel good" effort to codify woke language and programs to distract from the fact that students continue to fail despite more money and cast the blame for that on "equity, racism, social injustice, etc. etc.*)

To embed equity into reviewing existing policies with an equity lens and/or developing equity focused policies remember these action steps:

Policy 832. Educational Equity Policy Template

The school entity must be a subscriber to the Policy Maintenance Program to access the PNN newsletter. To learn more about gaining access to the PNN newsletter, please contact Policy Services at policyprograms@psba.org.

Reviewing Policies with an Equity Lens

This guidance will help school leaders apply the equity lens approach specifically to policy documents, in order to identify and address gaps and disparities in board policies. View the full document under the equity resources tab on myPSBA.org. (*Yes please: identify the victims, and then use the "victim lens" to group students by color, culture, income, and circumstance so we can sew divide in our schools and community*.)

User Guide for Educational Equity Policy—Leading for Equity

This guide for the Educational Equity Policy (*this isn't educational equity this is social equity with an ever-evolving goal line*.) has been designed to assist users with drafting a customized policy that meets the specific needs and context of their school entity. View the full document under the equity resources tab on myPSBA.org.

Communications Support: Educational Equity Policy- Leading for Equity

In the adoption of an equity policy, it is essential to communicate clearly to stakeholders the components of the policy and why the board is taking this action. This document provides **sample messages** to help communicate with students, parents/guardians, staff members and community members **about** the development and the **need for an Educational Equity Policy**. View the full document under the equity resources tab on myPSBA.org. (I ==would like to see the language used to explain the "need" for an educational equity policy. I'd like to see an academic outcomes policy==.)

Equity Toolkit

PSBA equity toolkit is a set of frameworks that demonstrates how districts can practice equity and incorporate it systemically. The toolkit serves as resource for district leaders intended to guide them in the following:

- Acknowledge and understand their district's current place along the equity system continuum (==*"continuum", validating my point that this effort is ever-evolving with no goal line – make it as you go or as another victim is created*==)
- Analyze district policies, programs and practices with an equity lens
- Identify action steps necessary to build a foundation for equity in their schools.

Equity Action Plan

Pursuing and Achieving Equity

Action Steps to Build a Foundation for Equity in Your Schools

The Pennsylvania School Boards Association (2018) defines **Equity** as the just and fair distribution of resources based upon each individual student's needs. Equitable resources include funding, programs, policies, initiatives and supports that target each student's unique background and school context to guarantee that all students have equal access to a high-quality education.

Pursuing Equity requires that schools assess actions locally to overcome institutional barriers and create opportunities so that each and every child has the tools and supports necessary to achieve their highest potential. **Achieving Equity** ensures that students' identities will not predetermine their success in schools (See PSBA Equity Statement, 2018).

The Equity Action Plan was developed by the Pennsylvania School Boards Association to assist school entities to build a foundation for equity in school practice and structure.

The Action Plan includes **7 steps** which school leaders can use to pursue equity. **Grounding each step, school leaders must include and affirm the voices of students, families and communities.** These steps can be approached non-sequentially, except for the last step.

+Include and affirm the voices of students, families, and communities
Identify and understand your district's demographics

*Analyze the data

*Define equity for your district and community
Equity and equality are not synonymous. Equality is treating all students the same, where students receive the same access to opportunities and resources. Equity recognizes that our students' experiences are different and require different supports, resources and funding to ensure that all students demonstrate academic growth and achievement. Having a clear definition of equity that is shared, understood, and practiced by members of your community sets the foundation for the comprehensive and consistent practice of equity. (*So if no additional resources are allocated, this is supporting some students "deemed to be victims" at the expense of "non-victim" student*)

*Embed educational equity training into all levels of professional development
 for administration, staff, and board

*Pursue and practice **cultural awareness and competence**
For school practices to be effective, systems must acknowledge and affirm the experiences and values of diverse cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnicities, religions and other factors (Arizona School Boards Association, 2017). Equity requires leaders to recognize and address their own biases and stereotypes about their students to create a positive and inclusive educational environment.

*Analyze policies and practices with an equity lens
Equity lens is a decision-making approach that ensures district leaders are not creating or exacerbating barriers to opportunity. Education leaders should be trained and practice an equity lens to develop more equitable policies and programs.

Opportunity gaps among students lead to divergent academic outcomes. Opportunity gaps can be attributed to barriers created by district policies, practices and procedures that create inequitable access to educational opportunities. "Nondiscriminatory" policies and practices are different from equity, both in legal application and practical implementation. Policies and practices that do not explicitly target groups of students may still disadvantage them.

For example, creating a Saturday school program to support students in math achievement does not appear to discriminate. However, students who do not have access to cars or reliable public transportation on the weekends face barriers to participate, and this could disparately impact low-income students. It is important to analyze policies and practices with an equity lens as this approach may surface previously unacknowledged barriers to opportunities and engagement. (*See* PSBA Equity Lens Approach).

*Develop an action plan and/or policy to incorporate equity into your district structure

Before school entities begin the process of developing an equity policy (specifically), we suggest that school leaders dig in, work through, and incorporate the other steps into practice. For an equity policy to be effective, equity needs to be understood, acknowledged, shared and practiced consistently throughout the school community. These steps help to **build capacity** in the pursuit and achievement of equity.

2 Lee, J. & Bowen, N. (2006). Parent Involvement, Cultural Capital, and the Achievement Gap Among Elementary School Children. American Educational Research 43, 193-218; Belfeld, C. R. and H.M. Levin, H.M. (2007). The Price We Pay: Economic and Social Consequences of Inadequate Education. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press; Sheldon, S. B., & Jung, S. B. (2015). The Family Engagement Partnership Student Outcome Evaluation. Johns Hopkins University, School of Education; Jeynes, W. H. (2012). A meta-analysis of the efficacy of different types of parental involvement programs for urban students. Urban Education, 47, 706-742.

3 Willms, J. D., Friesen, S., Milton, P. (2009). What did you do in school today? Transforming Classrooms through social, academic, and intellectual engagement. (First National Report). Canadian Education Association; Willms, J. D. (2001). Student Engagement at School: A Sense of Belonging and Participation, Results from PISA 2000. Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development; Mitra, D. (2008). Student Voice in School Reform. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Equity System Continuum

How equity is acknowledged, understood and incorporated into an entity's school structures has an impact on the success of equitable practices and programs as well as on student opportunity and achievement.

PSBA's Equity Continuum Assessment (ECA) is a new tool on our MetricsEd platform that can assist school leaders to identify where they fit along the Equity System Continuum – a framework provided in PSBA's Equity Toolkit. The assessment can help school leaders determine progress in equity and areas for growth, for the benefit of all students.

Where does your district or school entity exist on the continuum?

- The first three system approaches understand equity as an emerging need and challenge. The fourth approach acknowledges equity as a necessity to eliminate barriers to opportunities for students to learn.
- The first three system approaches may include only the voices of a few. The fourth approach intentionally includes the voices of all, specifically the voices of those who have been disadvantaged, ignored or marginalized.
- The first three system approaches begin to recognize and identify the need for systemic change. The fourth approach acknowledges that the current system is not working for all children, therefore requiring systemic re-evaluation and transformation.

Approach One: Equity as a misunderstanding

In this approach, equity is not yet defined, understood, or shared by most school leaders. School leaders often confuse equity with equality or equity with nondiscrimination. There are distinct differences among these terms. **Equality** is treating all students the same and giving them the same supports. Nondiscrimination promotes equal opportunity and treatment for all students and staff based on local, state or national identifiers such as race, color, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin or handicap/disability. However, **equity** is the just and fair distribution of resources based on each student's needs. (*So, who gets to determine what is "Just and Fair"?*) A focus on equality alone does not address the different and often **inequitable experiences** and opportunities of students in classrooms and schools. (*does an actual abused student -white male, middle income family- get to be defined as a "victim" given his "inequitable experience?*) Equity is often discussed in compliance to state and national laws and policies that mention equity, but equity is not yet an integral part of the entity's conversation or practice throughout.

For example, districts or other school entities implement practices and programs focusing on compliance with nondiscrimination, and civil rights, state and federal laws, and guidance documents (i.e., IDEA, ESSA, Title I, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act). Because of these laws, districts are starting to identify the needs of students, the barriers students face, and the academic and opportunity disparities between students.

Although compliance with nondiscrimination and government legislation prompts some conversation among administration or community groups, school directors as well as district professional and support staff may not be included in these equity-focused conversations. Adequately defining equity through an inclusive conversation among all stakeholders is the next **step beyond basic nondiscrimination compliance**.
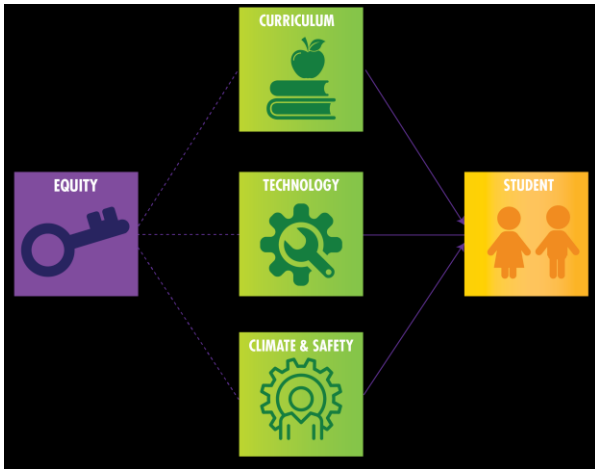

Approach Two: Equity as a topic

In this approach, equity is identified as an important aspect of the school system. Educational leaders know the difference between equity and equality. Yet, equity is a distinct topic within the education system, like curriculum, teacher preparation, transportation and school discipline. Educational stakeholders may understand the importance of equity, but they approach equity as separate from other aspects of their education system. The district may explicitly state a focus on equity as it intersects with a limited range of topics or see equity as important to a limited set of students – usually centered on a particular race or socioeconomic condition.

For example, districts or other school entities identify digital equity, teacher equity and inequitable funding as equity. This is an important step in moving forward on the continuum and creating an equitable system. The next step should be to recognize the impact of equity on other aspects of the education system that may not have seemed immediately apparent.

Approach Three: Equity as a recommendation

In this approach, equity influences several aspects of the education system but is not yet incorporated into the structure of the education system. Equity serves as a recommendation for school leaders and begins to inform decision-making and practices for those who choose to focus on equity principles, like cultural proficiency for district professional and support staff. But an equitable lens is not yet infused into the foundation of the system.
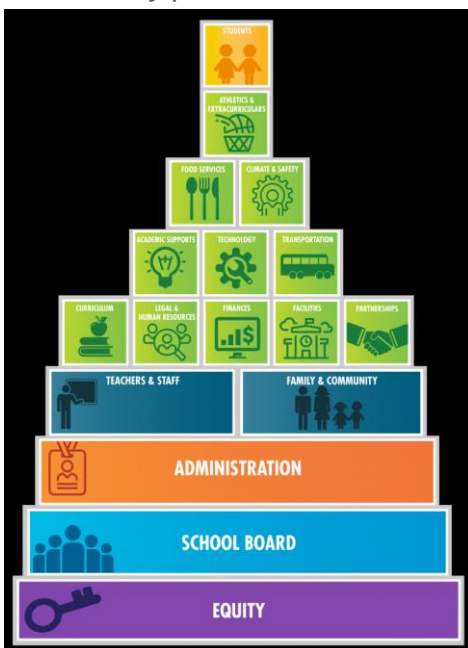
For example, districts or other school entities may develop an equity group, or hire an equity director to address inequity in school discipline practices, curriculum development or school programs. However, the appointed equity group or equity director are not empowered to make substantive changes to the education system. Equity groups and/or directors are seen as advisors rather than decision-makers. The next important step will be to empower groups or individuals to make decisions.

Approach Four: Equity as the foundation

In this approach, equity is the foundation that frames every aspect of the educational system from curriculum adoption to professional development. An equity lens informs family and community engagement efforts, and is considered an important approach to school climate. The practice of equity is shared across education stakeholders. School leaders approach every decision, practice and policy with an equity lens.

For example, districts or other school entities incorporate equity into the school structure through action plans and policies that set a collective direction for district and school leaders. These policies and procedures hold decision-makers accountable for closing opportunity gaps and prioritizing equity across the system. Districts are in constant pursuit of equity. They seek to grow knowledge, build capacity, train school leaders and staff, implement best practices, include diverse voices, and produce community partners to eliminate barriers and create opportunities for students to learn.

Learn more

The ECA can be used by the following teams:

- Team of 10 (school board directors and superintendent)
- Administrative leadership team
- Districtwide equity committee/taskforce

The assessment measures each participant's perception of the equity work in the district. After completing the digital assessment, you will receive a ECA report acknowledging current equity work and gaps in equity practice, and providing clarity on steps for moving forward.

Equity Advisory Committee

Equity Taskforce

Listen to public school leaders as they describe why Equity is important and how it impacts their school districts. Then, explore the practices being utilized to move equity forward in their school districts. Use these testimonials to discover how Equity can support you in an effort to create a just and fair distribution of resources for all your student's needs.