

**SECC/TXCC Regional Institute
Promoting Equitable Access at the State and Local Levels**

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Advancing Research, Improving Education



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The Logic of Inequity

Questions We Cannot Ignore

Handout 1



If ...

We, in the educational community, believe that “[w]hat the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy” (Dewey, 1907, *The School and Society*),

Then ...

What do we as educators want for our own children?

Is what we want for our own children available in the schools we serve?

Who are our community’s children?

What are we, as an educational community, providing them?

Where is love in this equation?

What does the future hold for our democracy?

If ...

Equity is defined as giving each learner access to what he or she needs to thrive academically rather than giving each learner the same thing as every other learner, with the expectation that success will result,

Then ...

What has been guiding our nation’s education practice – equity, equality, or something else?

Do we expect equal inputs to yield equal outputs, or do we expect equitable inputs to yield equal outputs?

How do we explain the persistent achievement gaps between white children and children of color and between children of low-income and high-income households?

How do we account for the tendency to recognize and celebrate schools that have high records of overall achievement but low achievement records for underserved children?

If ...

By government mandate, we have been actively striving toward equitable educational offerings for all of our nation's children since as early as 1965,

Then ...

Why are we faced with persistent achievement and opportunity gaps?

To what extent has the state or state education agency (SEA) accepted responsibility for ensuring that students will encounter the opportunities necessary for their success?

What qualifiers determine who should be counted among our own?

What disqualifies one from membership?

How would you rate our nation according to achievement outcomes? How would you rate your state?

How would you rate our nation according to gap closing? How would you rate your state?

If ...

Taken together, children of color and poverty make up the majority in public school student populations, and if a majority of the nation's children remain underserved and have been historically unsuccessful in mainstream general education (Santamaria, 2009),

Then ...

Of whom is the minority comprised?

Who are the culturally "different" learners in America's classrooms—members of the minority or the majority?

How well will underserved learners serve our nation? How well will over-served learners serve our nation?

From what pool of learners will we draw our future leaders?

Evidentiary Case for Cultural Competence

Considerations to Ponder

Funding, Assessment, Service Delivery, Life Outcomes, and Health and Mortality Gaps

Handout 2



FUNDING

- Funding gaps in our nation contradict our commitment to equality of educational opportunity.
- Approximately 40% of the funding variation in per-pupil spending is at the district level; research suggests it is due largely to a Title I comparability compliance policy called the “comparability loophole” (Spatig-Amerikaner, 2012, pp. 2-3).
- Our country’s highest-poverty districts receive \$1200 less per student in funding than the lowest-poverty districts (Ushomirsky & Williams, 2015).
- Districts serving the most students of color receive 15% less in funding or \$2000 per student less than districts serving the fewest students of color (Ushomirsky & Williams, 2015).

STAFF RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND RETENTION

- “...[L]evels of poverty in schools ... are a stand in for the quality of teaching and restricted learning opportunities” (Lee, 2005, p. 108).
- Some 15% of teachers in schools with the highest African American and Hispanic enrollment were novice (in their 1st or 2nd year), compared to 8% of teachers in schools with the lowest “minority” enrollment (Children’s Defense Fund, April 2012).
- On average, teachers in high-minority elementary schools were paid \$2,251 less annually than their colleagues in low-minority schools within the same district (Children’s Defense Fund, April 2012).
- Based on a 2011-2012 staffing survey, there were approximately 3.3 million public elementary and secondary schools teachers in the U.S.; over 80% of teachers were White, 7% African American, and nearly 10% Hispanic or of other racial/ethnic backgrounds (U.S. Department of Education, 2012); U.S. schools may remain grounded in white, middle-class values despite the vast numbers of diverse learners represented in schools.

ASSESSMENT

- High- and low- /moderately- performing schools perform similarly in their preparation of low-income students and students of color (Ushomirsky & Williams, March 2015).
- Lack of transparency regarding “A” school ratings and what the ratings actually mean for students of color and students from low-income households, limits advocacy for these students (Ushomirsky & Williams, March 2015).
- Accountability systems remain unclear about contributions to gap closing versus achievement gains (Ushomirsky & Williams, March 2015).

SERVICE DELIVERY

- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners have been historically misdiagnosed, misidentified and overrepresented in programs serving students with high-incidence disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities, speech/language impairments; CLD learners are also underrepresented in gifted education and advanced educational programming (Tomlinson, 2003).
- Approximately 60% of 4th and 8th graders are reading or doing math below grade level; some 76% of Black and Hispanic learners in 4th and 8th grade are performing below grade level in reading and math (Children’s Defense Fund, 2012)
- According to the 2009-2010 Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection survey, out-of-school suspension data indicated that students with disabilities were nearly twice as likely to be suspended from school one or more times (Children’s Defense Fund, April 2012).
- Diverse students are disproportionately suspended and expelled; some 1.2 million African American students were suspended from K-12 public schools in one academic year (Smith & Harper, 2015).
- When surveyed, those sentenced to life in prison without parole as juveniles, 84.4% reported being suspended or expelled from school at a point (Children’s Defense Fund, 2012).
- African Americans made up 15% of the nation’s 2013 graduating class but only 9% of those who took AP tests and 5% of those passing the test (Education Trust, June 2014).
- Only 1 in 20 African Americans and 1 in 7 Latinos met all four college-readiness benchmarks (English, reading, math, and science) of the ACT, compared to 1 in 3 white test takers (Education Trust, June 2014).

LIFE OUTCOMES

- The underutilization of human potential, as a result of discrimination, inequitable educational opportunities for individuals or groups, insufficient preparation for the job market, is costly in both monetary and non-monetary terms (Freeman, 2006).
- Black and Hispanic students represented more than 70% of those referred to law enforcement or involved in school-related arrests (Children’s Defense Fund, April 2012).
- In 2010, the U.S. documented 1,000,363 school dropouts; it is estimated that this will cost them and our nation, \$154 billion in additional income during their lifetimes (Children’s Defense Fund, 2012).

LIFE OUTCOMES

- The US expends nearly \$500 billion annually on costs related to childhood poverty (Children's Defense Fund, 2012).
- Poverty is linked to such negative life outcomes as the completion of fewer years of schooling, increased likelihood of reporting poor health; lower wages as adult and fewer working hours as an adult in the workforce (Children's Defense Fund, 2012).

HEALTH AND MORTALITY

- From 2003-2006, direct medical costs linked to health inequities among African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans approached \$230 billion (LaVeist, Gaskin, & Richard (2009).
- When figuring in diminished productivity and lost tax revenue resulting from illness and premature death, the costs exceeded \$1.24 trillion (LaVeist, Gaskin, & Richard (2009).
- In 2010, nearly 7.95 million children (1 in 6 Hispanic; 1 in 9 African American, and 1 in 10 White, non-Hispanic) were without health insurance (Children's Defense Fund, 2012).
- When ranked among industrialized nations, America ranked worst in child poverty and in keeping our youth safe from gun violence (Children's Defense Fund, 2012).

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SEA Strategies for Promoting Equity

The Transformative Role of Cultural Competence and Awareness

Handout 3

STRATEGY #1: Assume an Equity Mindset.

- Further cultural competence and awareness.
- Require educators at every level to reflect upon and work to correct their assumptions/misconceptions and biases relevant to culture, class, ethnicity, race, ability, language, and orientation.
- Recognize education as a political act.
- Advocate for every child through your office.
- Recognize the gravity of educational inequities and work with a sense of urgency and agency toward addressing the problem.
- Develop a platform that involves a range of representative stakeholders in the identification, confrontation, and systematic monitoring of progress toward overcoming difficult equity issues.

STRATEGY #2: Balance Achievement with Opportunity.

- Recognize and address the inequitable provision of education-related opportunities (access to effective school leaders and teachers; provision of the range of courses that serve as pre-requisites to opportunities and achievement; AP placement; participation in gifted and talented programming).
- Identify the range of education-related opportunities available in our nation's schools.
- Conduct an opportunity audit in your state (to determine what opportunities exist, how students and parents come to know about them, and how they are presently distributed).
- Refine the opportunity offerings available in your state to allow for more equitable access.
- Plan strategically for equitable distribution of education-related opportunities.
- Develop a logic model that links opportunities to potential achievement outcomes based on existing data.
- Monitor the state's progress, making adjustments as needed.

STRATEGY #3: Use Assessment to Further Equity.

- Ensure school ratings reflect those schools are serving all groups of students.
- Set gap-closing goals for every group of students based on assessment data.
- Rate schools based on gap-narrowing performance for every group of students.
- Identify opportunities necessary for student success on student growth measures at the time you set or select standards by which student growth will be measured.
- Utilize assessments that address a wide range of talents, a variety of life experiences, and multiple ways of knowing.
- Supplement standardized assessments with a local or school site based system of assessment that allows educators to regularly mine data as a way to inform curriculum, instruction, and education opportunity identification.

STRATEGY #4: Be Strategic.

- Inform teacher and leader preparation by inviting preparation stakeholders to the table.
- Work to ensure that parents and other education stakeholders are meaningfully engaged, understanding the real challenges, and working with educators to overcome those challenges.
- Operate from an assets-based -- rather than deficits-based -- approach to education.
- Use deep inquiry and deliberate action to dismantle inequitable schooling practices (e.g., how effective teachers recruited, distributed, and supported).
- Know your state's gaps intimately.
- Require schools to serve all students -- not just some -- well.
- Distinguish between efforts that improve achievement versus close achievement gaps.
- Work intentionally to close achievement gaps.
- Infuse solutions that call for sustained and school- or system-wide improvement of instruction.
- Monitor how schools are performing for all student groups
- Recognize and learn from schools that are actively narrowing achievement and opportunity gaps.
- Promote action when schools do not satisfy achievement and opportunity expectations for a group of students.

Presenter

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