State Handbook for Advancing Racial Equity

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Introduction

The State Handbook for Advancing Racial Equity (SHARE) is a state version of the Districts Advancing Racial Equity (DARE) tool. It provides a practical and accessible resource for understanding, assessing, and advancing racial equity in education using state-level strategies.

Purpose of this handbook

The original DARE tool brought together—in a uniquely broad and practical way—what is known about district actions that can support racial equity in education. That tool, developed with the support of the Southern Education Foundation, captured research-informed, high-leverage aspects of schooling for district leaders to consider as they work to create systems that build on the strengths of and respond to the needs of students of color.

Like the original DARE tool, SHARE is not an exhaustive, one-size-fits-all manual for advancing racial equity in education. Rather, it helps conceptualize and organize state-level equity work and provides a guide for state education leaders to review their systems, set equity-oriented goals, and engage in continuous improvement over time.

SHARE offers a framework for state education leaders and staff to understand the complex ecosystem of policies and practices they design, enact, and implement. SHARE also provides considerations for and examples of state policies and practices that could advance outcomes for each and every student.

Why focus on racial equity? Student success should not be predetermined by student race, yet persistent racial disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes have resulted from centuries of discrimination in access to education, employment, housing, and other social supports for Black, Native American, and other marginalized racial and ethnic groups. In school systems across the United States, meaningful efforts to ensure access to effective educational opportunities require policies and practices that not only prevent discrimination but also move beyond simple notions of equality (in which every student gets the same) to equity (in which each and every student gets what they need to develop academically, socially, emotionally, and physically).[1] (See Figure 1.)

While equity may have many definitions and will likely vary based on context, states embarking on this work may want to consider this commonly shared illustration of the difference between equality and equity at a baseball game.[2] Here, equality is depicted as sameness: giving everyone the same size box to stand on to see over the fence and watch the baseball game. But equality only works if everyone starts from the same place—in this example, if everyone is the same height. Equity is depicted as fairness: making sure everyone has access to the same opportunities. Sometimes our differences and/or history can create barriers to participation, so we must first ensure equity (giving boxes of different heights to people based on their needs) before we can get to equality.[3]

Additionally, a focus on racial equity, specifically, is critical. While race and socioeconomic status in the United States are often interrelated—Black, Hispanic, and Native American students, for example, are 2 to 3 times as likely to live in poverty as White and Asian students—and the relationship is complex.[4] Improving racial equity in education may improve education for students from low-income families; however, racial inequalities can persist even when controlling for socioeconomic status, and schools may

exacerbate these inequalities through processes such as racialized tracking and exclusionary discipline.[5] Given the complex relationship between race and socioeconomic status, policy solutions targeted at students living in poverty, while also critical for equity, may not always address the specific challenges faced by students of color.

Figure 1. Equality vs. Equity
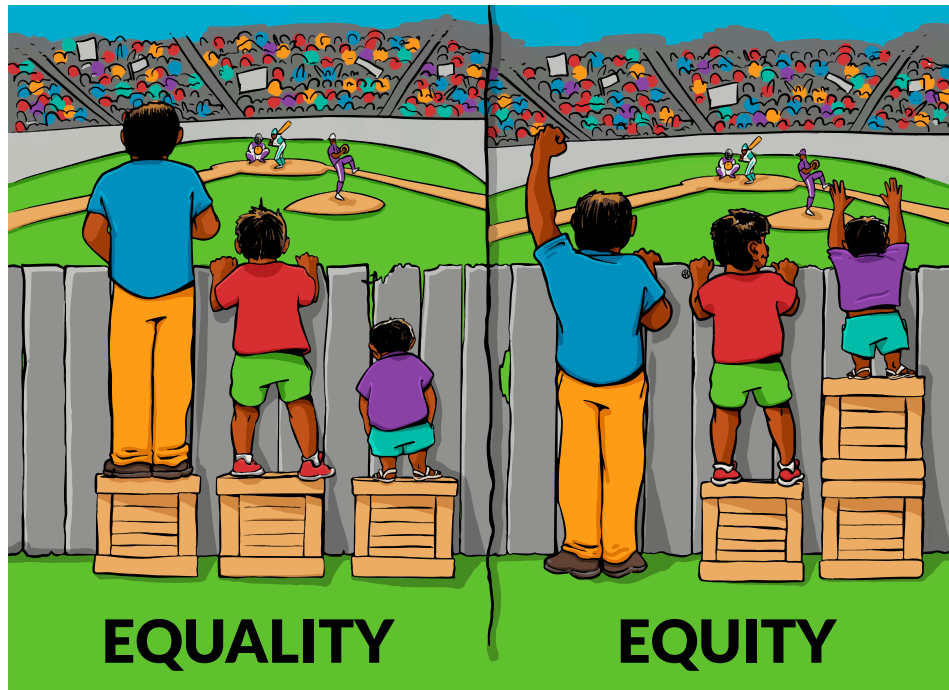
Source: Maguire, A., with Interaction Institute for Social Change and Center for Story-Based Strategy.
http://madewithangus.com/portfolio/equality-vs-equity/

Because education has historically been locally driven and controlled, progress toward racial equity in education will vary by community, district, and state. However, improved racial equity will be evident when student outcomes are not disparate across racial groups. Substantial policy change, rather than quick and easy fixes, may be necessary. As described in the upcoming section "How to Use This Handbook," states and communities are invited to contemplate and develop their own, context-specific definitions of educational equity with concrete indicators of success.

Why a racial equity handbook? The system we need requires educational leaders in every corner of the nation to respond in new ways to the complex challenges they navigate and to pay attention to the social, historical, economic, and political contexts of the communities they serve. This handbook harnesses considerable educational equity research into a holistic framework that can be used to examine state policies and think concretely about steps toward improvement. The handbook aims to leverage what is known about state systems to build on the assets of and respond to the needs of students of color.

Why a state-level handbook? State and local governance must work together symbiotically to create coherent education systems that support each and every student. When misaligned in purposes and roles, state and local education leaders create confusion at best and actively frustrate progress at worst.

However, with a unified vision and framework, state and local leaders can each use their unique and critical roles to disrupt persistent inequities in our educational systems. The DARE (district) and SHARE (state) frameworks work in concert to support this work. SHARE offers state leaders an avenue to improve racial equity in education at the appropriate grain size and in ways that actively support local systems.

How SHARE was developed

The state edition of the DARE tool is informed significantly by the original DARE tool, which is based on a systematic review of literature and existing instruments for advancing systems-level equity, as well as by a scan of state policies for advancing racial equity. SHARE was designed with state leaders in mind and at the request of state leaders who were seeking a state edition of the DARE tool.

SHARE originates in the work of the Racial Equity Leadership Network (RELN), a leadership development program that brings together local superintendents and other district cabinet-level leaders to strengthen their capacity to advance racial equity in their school systems. The RELN fellows program was launched in 2017 by the Southern Education Foundation, in partnership with the Learning Policy Institute and the National Equity Project. The original DARE tool was developed to support the work of the RELN fellows and staff from other districts interested in leading this work. SHARE is an outgrowth of their foundational work.

The framework

Figure 2 presents the framework for advancing racial equity in education that sits at the heart of this handbook. The framework is based on the supposition that achieving racial equity in education means that student success is not predetermined by student race and that each and every student gets the support and resources they need to develop academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. Student success occurs when students develop competencies for work, life, and civic participation; developmentally appropriate academic knowledge and skills; and the social and emotional skills that undergird healthy self-image and relationships with others and the broader world. The framework also recommends that states set direction and take measurable and timely action in an ongoing cycle of improvement in partnership with districts, local boards, schools, and community members.

Like the DARE tool, this handbook uses a framework that consists of six key domains. To advance racial equity, states may pursue the following interconnected domains:

1. **Vision:** Clear, explicit, and ambitious vision for statewide racial equity
2. **Deeper learning:** Rich, deeper learning and inclusive and affirming curricula and practices
3. **School environments:** Safe, healthy, and inclusive school environments
4. **Resources:** Financial, human, and material resources that are sufficient, appropriate, and equitably allocated
5. **Engagement:** Meaningful engagement with students, families, interest holders, communities, and leaders
6. **Data systems:** Data systems that drive progress toward racial equity

The domains are arranged in a wheel to demonstrate their essential interconnection in a systems approach to racial equity.

Figure 2. Framework for Advancing Racial Equity in Education

To achieve racial equity, state-level education leaders and policymakers and their staffs guide and influence policy and practice in these domains in partnership with schools, districts, and communities.

Data systems that drive progress toward racial equity

Clear, explicit, and ambitious **vision** for statewide racial equity

Meaningful **engagement** with students, families, interest holders, communities, and leaders

Student Success
Academic knowledge and social-emotional skills; preparation for work, life, and civic participation

Rich, **deeper learning** and culturally responsive curricula and practices

Financial, human, and material **resources** that are sufficient, appropriate, and equitably allocated

Safe, healthy, and inclusive **school environments**

Source: Learning Policy Institute. (2023).

The structure of the handbook

The handbook is organized into six key domains that state leaders can influence to advance racial equity. As shown in Figure 3, each domain frames essential questions ("Asks") that break the domain into components for exploration and suggests a set of policy and practice considerations ("Look Fors") to facilitate targeted inquiry into the state's landscape.

Figure 3. Example Domain Table

Domain

This space contains a brief description of the domain.

RUBRIC FOR DOMAIN	
ASK	**LOOK FOR**
Essential questions help guide inquiry in the domain	• Prompts in this section suggest parts of the system that leaders can investigate to answer the essential questions. • Other _____ Each table includes an "other" option to encourage reflection on any additional information needed.

Users

This handbook is designed primarily for use by state-level education leaders and policymakers and their staffs as a resource to help them better understand current conditions for racial equity in education across their state and, ultimately, to guide policy and practice. State leaders can also share key findings from the handbook with local and federal policymakers for feedback and ideas to inform state efforts to advance equity and to leverage federal opportunities to support these state and local efforts.

Additionally, local families and educators can use the handbook to better understand the statewide context in which their students are educated and to advocate for racial equity. Community organizations, business leaders, and advocates can use the handbook to identify areas that need support and determine how they can work in partnership with state leaders to meet student needs and advance racial equity.

The handbook is most powerful when used in collaboration with multiple interest holders, such as students, families and caregivers, educators and unions, school and district leaders, community organizations, business leaders, state policymakers, and others invested in advancing racial equity.

How to use this handbook

This handbook can be used in different ways to address state priorities and processes; users may take a comprehensive approach to learn more about the state landscape or prioritize a specific domain. Regardless of approach, states should spend ample time examining their own data and use conversations with a wide range of interest holders to better understand how to respect and respond to the assets and needs of their communities.

Not all of the look-fors will be applicable to each state context, and each state will need to consider which strategies can be most effective in leveraging progress toward racial equity in education. The goal of SHARE is to offer a menu of options for states to use to better understand the spectrum of possible policy and practice levers to pull at the state level while balancing the state's unique context and needs.

Some of the ways states might use SHARE are:

- **Assessing current conditions.** Use the domain descriptions and essential questions to guide discussions about racial equity assets and opportunities for improvement based on current state policies and practices.

- **Reviewing available state data.** When reviewing look-fors, identify information and data available or needed to set racial equity goals and monitor progress. As appropriate, look-fors should be disaggregated by student race and ethnicity and, as appropriate, by schools with high and low percentages of students of color.

- **Evaluating policies and practices.** Make data-informed decisions for improving state policy and practice in one or more of the domains considered.

- **Monitoring progress.** Continue discussions about racial equity in an ongoing cycle of continuous improvement. Revisit look-fors and report progress toward greater racial equity over time.

> *Note: Given the cross-state variation in which state entities (e.g., state legislatures) or actors (e.g., chief state school officers) hold authority over the policy areas addressed in this handbook, state entities or actors are not specified throughout the handbook. Instead, when "the state" is referenced, users should think critically about or investigate which entities are the appropriate ones for enacting, supporting, implementing, or enforcing. Examples of state entities or actors include, but are not limited to, the state education agency, state board of education, state educator standards board, state legislature, and governor.*

Domain I: Clear, explicit, and ambitious vision for statewide racial equity

States can demonstrate that racial equity in education is a central commitment and unite interest holders around a common goal by establishing a clear, explicit, and ambitious vision or set of state policy priorities for racial equity in education. When a vision statement is made explicit, it provides the impetus for setting goals; serves as a North Star for the state's initiatives, policies, and norms over time; and enables the state to move forward toward racial equity and better outcomes for every student.[6]

Shared vision

To effectively energize interest holders and impact behavior, the vision should be shared and enacted by a wide range of interest holders statewide. The participation of students, families and caregivers, educators and unions, school and district leaders, community organizations, business leaders, and state policymakers in developing and implementing a statewide vision statement or set of policy priorities can help ensure sustainability and broad buy-in.

A representative and bipartisan approach by state education leaders engaged in the development process can also support long-term sustainability as administrations and leadership changes inevitably occur. In particular, state board of education members and state chiefs, as key decision-makers, need to be aligned to the racial equity vision or set of priorities to build practices and policies that achieve more just and equitable outcomes for students across the state.[7]

A vision that explicitly considers racial equity

Having a racial equity vision or set of policy priorities can be useful because when a racial equity focus is not identified directly, official policies and expected norms may ignore important aspects of students' experiences.[8] In addition to broad equity statements that encompass "all students," the vision or set of policy priorities should explicitly identify racial equity as a goal that attends to the needs of each and every student. A colorblind approach may ignore the very real impact of the historical, social, economic, and political context of the United States and how these issues directly impact the experiences of students of color and their learning both outside and inside of schools.[9] Instead, the vision or priorities may be more efficiently and effectively met by understanding the issues of race in their local, state, and national contexts.

Living and data-driven vision

A vision statement or set of policy priorities should also be a living document that reflects the state's specific and evolving context. It should guide continual deep reflection about racial inequality that permeates society and can affect students and school systems. Given the evolving nature of the education ecosystem (e.g., changes in leadership, shifting racial demographics), interest holders should make a commitment to revisiting and revising their vision for racial equity over time.

Additionally, a vision or set of priorities and the goal-setting that follows should be shaped by the data collection and analysis described in more detail in Domain VI: Data Systems. Understanding state data on a wide variety of student, educator, school, and district metrics can help in both setting appropriate goals with clear indicators of progress and providing a means for course correction and continuous improvement.

Rubric and examples for Domain I: Vision

Racial equity in education is a fundamental value that is clearly articulated and championed by all state leaders and policymakers. All state leaders and policymakers believe that students of color can be successful and that the state, together with students, families and caregivers, educators and unions, school and district leaders, community organizations, and business leaders, will support the conditions to make success for every student a reality.

RUBRIC FOR DOMAIN I: CLEAR, EXPLICIT, AND AMBITIOUS VISION FOR STATEWIDE RACIAL EQUITY	
ASK	**LOOK FOR**
Has the state made a public commitment to equity for each and every student and a plan to achieve it?	• State has a public and easily accessible **vision/equity statement or set of policy priorities** for achieving greater educational equity, including racial equity, and a plan for pursuing it through policy and practice supports. • State **coordination** to achieve the equity vision/priorities occurs: (1) across state education leaders/entities that support children and youth (e.g., state education agencies, state boards of education, early childhood agencies, children's cabinets, higher education, health and human services, labor and workforce development); (2) between state and local education leaders/agencies; and (3) across state, regional, and local/community-based organizations that support children and youth. (See also Domain V: Engagement.) • State has a strategy to ensure that the vision/equity statement or policy priorities are a living document by regularly **revisiting and revising** based on interest holders' feedback and progress toward the vision/priorities. • State has a commission, committee, or council that holds state systems accountable for making progress on equity goals. (See also Domain VI: Data Systems.) • Other _____
Are districts and communities engaged in identifying and implementing the state's equity policy priorities?	• State facilitates **accessible, interactive, and reciprocal participation** of students, families, caregivers, educators, and communities in the development and implementation of the state vision or policy priorities for—and associated indicators of—equity, including racial equity. (See also Domain V: Engagement.) • State provides a state vision–aligned equity **audit/analysis tool to districts**. State may provide districts with data analysis, a template, and ongoing technical support in the audit and planning process. • Other _____

	EXAMPLES FOR DOMAIN I: CLEAR, EXPLICIT, AND AMBITIOUS VISION FOR STATEWIDE RACIAL EQUITY	
ASK	**STATE POLICY OR PROGRAM**	**DESCRIPTION**
Public commitment to and planning for racial equity priorities	Kentucky Department of Education's Equity Playbook and Toolkit	Following a 2020 Kentucky Board of Education resolution affirming its commitment to racial equity in Kentucky public schools, the Kentucky Department of Education worked with an education consultant firm and Kentucky's regional educational cooperatives to develop the Equity Playbook. The playbook supports equitable access and outcomes for all students through a process in which participants work through a problem of practice related to one of the equity pillars. The Department also provides personalized coaching on how to use evidence-based practices to address opportunity gaps.
	Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium's (MAEC) Equity Audit Tool	MAEC's Equity Audit critically examines policies, programs, and practices that directly or indirectly impact students or staff relative to their race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, color, disability, age, sexual orientation, sexual identity, religion, or other socioculturally significant factors. This tool is meant to provide a bird's-eye view of various aspects of equity and highlight many systemic barriers to equity that might exist.
	New Mexico HB 250 – Native American Student Needs Assessments	This bill, enacted in 2019, requires historically defined Indian impacted school districts to conduct a needs assessment to determine what supports are needed in public schools, at home, and in the community to help Indian students succeed in school, graduate with a diploma of excellence, and be prepared to enter postsecondary education or the workplace.

After the needs assessment, the school districts must: (1) meet with local tribes to prioritize the needs to be addressed, (2) make closing the achievement gaps a priority in the district's budget, and (3) develop and publish a systematic framework for improving educational outcomes for Indian students. |

EXAMPLES FOR DOMAIN I: CLEAR, EXPLICIT, AND AMBITIOUS VISION FOR STATEWIDE RACIAL EQUITY		
ASK	STATE POLICY OR PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
Public commitment to and planning for racial equity priorities *(continued)*	New York State's Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) Education Framework	The state's CR-S framework helps educators create student-centered learning environments that affirm racial, linguistic, and cultural identities; prepare students for rigor and independent learning; develop students' abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevate historically marginalized voices; and empower students as agents of social change.
	Pennsylvania School Boards Association's (PSBA) Equity Toolkit	The PSBA's Equity Toolkit is a set of frameworks (action plan, equity lens, equity system continuum) that demonstrate how districts can practice equity and incorporate it systemically. While designed for district leaders, the toolkit exemplifies a research-based approach to analyzing current policies, programs, and practices that may create barriers to equity and building plans for removing those barriers.
	Portland Public Schools' (PPS) Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Lens	The PPS RESJ Lens is a critical-thinking tool that can be applied to the internal systems, processes, resources, and programs of PPS to create increased opportunities for all students by evaluating burdens, benefits, and outcomes to underserved communities.
Engaging districts and communities on state equity policy priorities	Illinois State Education Equity Committee	Through HB 3114 (2021), the Illinois General Assembly created the State Education Equity Committee within the state board of education. The purpose of the committee is to ensure equity in education for all children from birth through grade 12. The committee, which includes student, educator, and superintendent representation, reports to the legislature and state board of education annually.
	Utah State Board of Education's Student Advisory Council	The Utah State Board of Education Student Advisory Council advises the Utah State Board of Education on issues relevant to high school students throughout the state. Board policy specifies that the committee's 15 student members include a diverse representation based on geography, academic achievement, school educational model, extracurricular involvement, and exposure to educational barriers.

Domain II: Rich, deeper learning and inclusive and affirming curricula and practices

Deeper learning

Deeper learning is rooted in the findings of research on learning over the past century and incorporates the newest research in the science of learning and development, with the goal of meeting the needs of 21st-century students.[10] Deeper learning pairs challenging academic content with engaging and hands-on learning experiences. Such learning experiences equip students with the skills to find, analyze, and apply knowledge in new and emerging contexts; prepare them for college, work, and civic participation in a democratic society; and encourage lifelong learning in a fast-changing and information-rich world.[11] Especially important for the future economy and democracy is a focus on ensuring all students have deeper learning opportunities—particularly students of color, who have often been denied such deeper learning in systems that reserved these opportunities for a small percentage of students in advanced learning tracks or honors courses.

Deeper learning practices go beyond "sit and get" instructional delivery to inquiry- and project-based instruction in which authentic performance assessments and portfolios that assemble rich evidence of learning are the norm. Expectations of students are high, and personalized support and enrichment are available to each and every student, including students of color, to ensure they are appropriately challenged and are meeting or exceeding learning goals.[12]

Inclusive and affirming curricula and practices

Inclusive and affirming curricula and practices build on and validate students' diverse experiences and culture to support learning, engagement, and identity development. Educational researcher Gloria Ladson-Billings describes culture as "an amalgamation of human activity, production, thought, and belief systems." A person's cultural experiences draw from their family; community; region of the country; national origin; language; religion; affinity groups; activities shared within groups, ranging from sports to chess or gaming; and other associations, which are often associated with, but not bounded by, race and ethnicity.

Thus, culture—and therefore, culturally relevant pedagogy—is dynamic and fluid; while culture is often ascribed to "recognizable categories," such as ethnicity or religion, it should not reduce the individual to a single trait or characteristic.[13] Moreover, to pursue true racial equity, it is important to approach each student as an individual and with the understanding that not all members of a racial or ethnic group share the same culture.

As culturally responsive, sustaining, and affirming pedagogical approaches center and celebrate diversity, they further students' sense of belonging and inclusion[14] and positively affect educational outcomes, including engagement in learning, identity development, and academic achievement.[15] Furthermore, students from all backgrounds benefit from inclusive learning environments that honor and celebrate diversity. These settings can not only help all young people learn and embrace the diverse backgrounds and cultures that make up the fabric of U.S. democracy, but also cultivate their awareness and orientation toward issues of fairness and justice.

Schools that offer rich learning experiences incorporate instructional strategies that utilize students' experiences, identities, and cultures and affirm students' cultural and linguistic histories as they connect new learning to prior knowledge.[16] Culturally responsive pedagogy is critical because "the brain uses cultural information to turn everyday happenings into meaningful events."[17] Every child brings their experiences from multiple cultural settings with them into the classroom. These may be reflected through concrete elements, such as food, holidays, dress, music, and language, as well as through less observable, collectively held beliefs and norms. Bringing students' cultural contexts into schools and classrooms supports an approach to education that recognizes how learning builds on experience and how all experiences are valuable. Respecting cultural contexts and incorporating them into instruction reinforces the value and potential all students bring to the classroom and celebrates the unique identities of all students while building on their diverse experiences to support rich and inclusive learning.[18]

What students need to learn and excel

To ensure students of color experience deeper learning and culturally responsive curricula and teaching practices, schools need to be staffed with leaders and teachers equipped to create, develop, and support these types of opportunities.[19] (See Domain IV: Resources.) Schools and classrooms should be resourced and organized so that each and every student experiences courses, curricula, and well-prepared teachers that emphasize deeper learning and culturally responsive pedagogy.

College- and career-oriented instruction and support

A large body of research has shown that students often have differential access to college preparatory curricula and to high-quality career and technical education programs that can lead to skilled employment in the modern economy. For example, schools with high proportions of students of color are much less likely to offer advanced courses such as calculus, and, across schools, students of color are under-represented in Advanced Placement courses and Gifted and Talented programs—the kinds of settings in which higher-order skills are most purposefully developed. Research has also found that schools serving students of color—African American, Asian, Latino/a, and Native American students—are "bottom heavy"; that is, they offer fewer academic courses or high-end career and technical education options and more remedial and vocational courses training for low-status occupations.[20]

Ensuring college- and career-oriented instruction and support is particularly vital for students of color, who often either are tracked into low-level courses focused on rote tasks and skills or attend under-resourced schools that do not offer many higher-level courses, such as honors, Advanced Placement, World and Dual Language, or International Baccalaureate programs.[21] Students of color, when given the access and opportunity to engage in deeper learning experiences, are able to thrive and achieve at high levels.[22]

Inclusive classrooms

To acquire deeper learning skills while developing a strong academic identity and experiencing a sense of belonging, young people need a rich curriculum delivered through inclusive learning experiences that are intentionally built to reduce segregation and increase community. This can be done by avoiding early-grade (PreK–8) tracking of students or pull-out forms of remediation that regularly remove students from their classrooms in ways that can exacerbate racial and socioeconomic inequities and place students at risk for disengagement and dropping out.

Instead, deeper learning is enhanced by well-designed collaborative learning in heterogenous classrooms.[23] This approach aligns with research, which shows that ability is not fixed and can be developed in rich learning environments. For example, educators can individualize instruction by creating temporary small groups or tutoring opportunities for targeted instructional support when needed and adapting lessons to meet each and every student at their own academic level.[24]

Despite evidence of the benefits of heterogeneous grouping, tracking remains widespread in U.S. schools, from segregation of "gifted and talented" classes as early as kindergarten to the creation of academic tracks, lanes, or streams in middle school and high school for students perceived to be following different paths to their futures.[25]

Expanded and enriched learning time

High-quality expanded learning time should be readily available and easily accessible to help address students' academic and nonacademic needs. Large disparities exist in the amount of exposure to learning opportunities between students from low-income families and students from more affluent families, including before and after school and during school breaks. For example, research has found that students from middle- and upper-income families typically spend 6,000 more hours in educational activities than students from low-income families by the time they reach 6th grade.[26] Research shows that Black and Latino/a students, who are far more likely to live in poverty and attend poorer schools, typically experience greater summer learning loss; however, when studies control for income, Black and Latino/a students learn at the same rates as their White peers over the summer.[27]

Rubric and examples for Domain II: Deeper learning

Each and every student, including students of color, engages in deeper learning, characterized by higher-order thinking skills and a culturally affirming approach to learning. Curricula, instruction, and assessment support students' development of skills required for 21st-century life and learning (e.g., collaboration, communication, mastery of content knowledge for transfer and application, and creative problem-solving). Students are provided the supports they need to be successful.

RUBRIC FOR DOMAIN II: RICH, DEEPER LEARNING AND INCLUSIVE AND AFFIRMING CURRICULA AND PRACTICES	
ASK	**LOOK FOR**
Do state standards and aligned instructional materials and assessments promote each and every student's access to rigorous, authentic, well-rounded, and inclusive instruction?	• **State standards** reflect deeper learning skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving skills, effective communication, the ability to work together, and self-directedness. • State supports standards-aligned, high-quality, **culturally responsive, and racially diverse and inclusive curricula and instructional materials** across all subject areas. • All schools and districts are supported/appropriately resourced to provide a **well-rounded education** (i.e., science, history, social studies, writing, music, physical education, arts, foreign languages, reading, and math) to each and every student, supported by sufficient course offerings that are appropriate to the school context. • State systems for educator preparation and ongoing development, such as teacher and school leader licensure and preparation program approval standards, ensure that **educators are prepared to teach and lead for deeper learning**. (See Domain IV: Resources.) • State assessment systems support the use of **multiple measures of student learning**, including performance assessments or other curriculum-embedded tasks that measure higher-order thinking and deeper learning in ways that are authentic and culturally sustaining. • State minimizes or eliminates policies and practices that encourage the use of assessment results as **barriers to opportunity**, such as early tracking of students into pathways that differentiate curriculum, or denying access to high-quality programs, curricula, or school settings. • Other _____

RUBRIC FOR DOMAIN II: RICH, DEEPER LEARNING AND INCLUSIVE AND AFFIRMING CURRICULA AND PRACTICES

ASK	LOOK FOR
Does the state ensure that each and every student has college- and career-oriented instruction and support?	• State collects and publishes **data**, by school/district and race, on participation and completion rates for **college- and career-readiness opportunities**—such as college preparatory, dual credit, or career and technical education course sequences; work-based learning opportunities; and the availability of college and career counselors—and uses the data to ensure each and every student is accessing these opportunities. (See Domain IV: Resources.) • Where a state provides for multiple pathways to a **high school diploma**, state ensures that all pathways support meaningful credentials, equal access to authentic learning opportunities, and rigorous expectations. • State ensures that each and every student is **supported in gaining entry to and persisting in postsecondary learning opportunities** by facilitating coordination and alignment between state PreK–12 education policies and state postsecondary and financial aid policies. • Other _____
Do state policies support access for every student to the academic and other supports they need to learn and excel academically?	• State uses **multiple measures** of student learning, including state assessment results, course pass rates, graduation rates, enrollment and completion in advanced courses (by district, by school, and by student race and ethnicity) for **continuous school and district improvement**. (See Domain VI: Data Systems.) • State incentivizes and supports innovative school models and approaches that prioritize **differentiated instruction, personalized learning** (e.g., project-based learning, service learning, competency/proficiency-based learning), and **applied learning** (e.g., internships, career shadowing, career and technical education courses, independent studies, community service projects). • State minimizes policies and practices that promote tracking and pushes districts to examine whether any segregated **ability groupings** (for example, of students with disabilities, gifted students, emerging multilingual students) have had a disproportionate impact on students by race and ethnicity. • State ensures sufficient resources and supports for free access to expanded and enriched learning time (e.g., tutoring, extended day, or summer programs) for each and every student. • Other _____

ASK	STATE POLICY OR PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
Access to rigorous, authentic, well-rounded, and inclusive instruction	Louisiana Department of Education's High-Quality Instructional Materials Process	The Louisiana Department of Education uses a rigorous vetting process to designate "Tier 1" instructional materials designed for state standards. By partnering in the development of OpenSciEd—high-quality and deeper learning–oriented instructional materials—Louisiana was able to inform the development of science materials that would meet its expectations for high-quality instructional materials. These materials can then reliably be used as a foundation for statewide professional learning and assessment design.
	New York State's Performance Standards Consortium	Created in 1998, the New York Performance Standards Consortium (NYPSC), a group of 38 public, non-charter high schools, has been successfully using performance assessments and graduation portfolios for more than 2 decades. A college admissions pilot between the NYPSC and the City University of New York (CUNY) has opened an institution-wide conversation about admissions criteria, racial and economic equity, and academic success in one of the largest urban systems of higher education in the country—one with more than 100,000 applicants per year. Early evidence from the pilot finds that the authentic learning and assessment practices of Consortium schools contribute to enhanced academic progress for students and narrowing of achievement gaps: Consortium students graduate, enter college, persist in college, and gain credits at higher rates—and sustain higher first-semester college GPAs—than their peers.
	Washington HB 1599 (Part I, Sec. 103) – Automatic Enrollment in Advanced Coursework	Passed in 2019 in an effort to ensure equitable participation in advanced coursework, this bill requires districts to automatically enroll any student who meets or exceeds the state standard on the 8th-grade or high school English language arts, math, or science statewide assessment in the next most-rigorous level of advanced course the high school offers, in alignment with their postsecondary goals as outlined in students' High School and Beyond Plan. Automatic enrollment extends to advanced coursework in humanities and social studies, in addition to English courses, for students meeting eligibility criteria on English language arts assessments.

	STATE POLICY OR PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
EXAMPLES FOR DOMAIN II: RICH, DEEPER LEARNING AND INCLUSIVE AND AFFIRMING CURRICULA AND PRACTICES		
ASK		
Access to college- and career-oriented instruction and support	Colorado's School Counselor Corps Grant Program	Colorado's School Counselor Corps Grant Program was created through legislation in 2008 to increase the availability of effective school-based counseling within secondary schools. Grant funding is awarded to eligible districts to increase the level of school counseling services provided to improve the graduation rate and postsecondary education opportunities.
	Texas HB 3 (Sec. 28.0256) - Financial Aid Application Requirement for High School Graduation	Texas legislation requires high school students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as a condition of graduation. This and similar practices have increased FAFSA completion rates in Louisiana and Tennessee, two states with completion rates significantly higher than across the country. States are still early in the implementation of this approach, so it will be important to follow the long-term effects on enrollment, persistence, and completion and additional supports.
Access to academic and other supports needed to learn and excel academically	Indiana Code 20-33-1-3(c) - Segregation prohibited; student tracking practices review	Indiana's anti-segregation statute requires districts to review their programs to determine if district practices of separating students by ability, placing students into educational tracks, and using test results to screen students have the effect of systematically separating students by race, color, creed, national origin, or socioeconomic class.
	Tennessee's Summer Learning Programs	The Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act requires all school districts to offer a variety of in-person summer learning acceleration programs specifically for at-risk or other priority students. The state Department of Education provides funding, high-quality English language arts and math curriculum, and training for aspiring educators who teach in a summer learning program. Although the state originally developed the program in response to COVID-19 learning needs, it plans to continue funding this program.

EXAMPLES FOR DOMAIN II: RICH, DEEPER LEARNING AND INCLUSIVE AND AFFIRMING CURRICULA AND PRACTICES		
ASK	**STATE POLICY OR PROGRAM**	**DESCRIPTION**
Access to academic and other supports needed to learn and excel academically *(continued)*	Vermont's Personalized Learning Plans	Both Vermont's Flexible Pathways Initiative bill and its Education Quality Standards require schools to ensure all students in grades 7–12 have a Personalized Learning Plan. The legislation requires districts to create a personalized plan that identifies a student's emerging abilities, aptitudes, and dispositions and guides decisions regarding course offerings and other educational experiences, such as student portfolios and student-designed learning projects. According to Vermont's Education Quality Standards, schools must "ensure students are able to access academic and experiential learning opportunities that reflect their emerging abilities, interests and aspirations."

Domain III: Safe, healthy, and inclusive school environments

Study after study has shown that a positive school climate—one in which each and every student feels understood and respected—is critical to students' academic, social, and emotional development.[28] States can promote empowering and inclusive learning environments by creating or supporting systems and structures for the many aspects of schooling that affect students' development, including the classroom environment, discipline, students' physical and mental health, and meaningful relationships.

Schools that honor cultural assets, including racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity, contribute to positive school climate and positive perceptions of students of color. These schools promote positive cross-racial interactions and learning about other cultures, and they help sustain the unique cultural identities of students. In these environments, students develop feelings of connectedness and find school inherently more safe and enjoyable.[29]

Restorative and integrated environments

Research shows that exclusionary practices, such as suspensions and expulsions, promote disengaged behaviors, such as truancy, chronic absenteeism, and antisocial behavior, which exacerbate a widening opportunity gap, and these practices are ineffective at improving outcomes for students and improving school climate.[30] Disproportionalities in suspension and expulsion rates between students of color and their White peers appear as early as preschool and continue throughout K–12.[31] These punitive, exclusionary punishments are particularly inflicted on Black youth, who often receive harsher punishments for minor offenses and are more than twice as likely as White students to receive a referral to law enforcement or be subject to a school-related arrest.[32]

States can foster safe, inclusive environments by adopting policies and developing guidance for restorative disciplinary practices in place of exclusionary ones. Restorative practices are designed to build a strong sense of community in schools, to teach interpersonal skills and conflict resolution strategies, to repair harm when conflict occurs, and to proactively meet students' needs—including those that result from trauma in or outside of school—so misbehavior is less common. Instead of punishment, restorative practices address school discipline by focusing on developing communication strategies and building relationships. Restorative practices include daily classroom meetings, community-building circles, and conflict resolution strategies that all adults and students use.[33]

Students in restorative environments have higher levels of self-understanding, commitment, performance, and belongingness and fewer disciplinary experiences.[34] They also experience stronger achievement and fewer mental health challenges. These practices are in stark contrast with punitive or exclusionary disciplinary policies that can magnify stress and disproportionately affect students of color.[35]

Additionally, states can contribute to more inclusive school environments through policies that foster integrated classrooms and schools. While studies have found strong relationships between racial segregation and racial achievement gaps, even after accounting for socioeconomic status, racially integrated learning environments have positive impacts on the academic achievement of students of all races.[36] Strategies for fostering integration must carefully consider the burden placed on students of color,

appropriateness and feasibility given the community composition (e.g., rural or urban, majority-minority), and current legal limitations. However, in appropriate contexts and with thoughtful design, strategies such as magnet schools can have positive effects on student outcomes.[37]

Social and emotional learning

To ensure students have the opportunity to learn and practice cognitive, social, and emotional skills, schools need to be supported in dedicating consistent time—either within a given curriculum or in the school day—to the development of those skills. Studies show that students who engage in social and emotional learning (SEL) programs demonstrate improvements in their social-emotional skills; attitudes about themselves, others, and school; social and classroom behavior; and outcome measures like test scores and school grades.[38] A meta-analysis of more than 200 studies found that students in SEL programs experienced reductions in misbehavior, aggression, stress, and depression and significant increases in achievement.[39] A second meta-analysis found that these benefits were sustained in the long term, showing how learned attitudes, skills, and behaviors can endure over time.[40] SEL programming has also been found to have an 11-to-1 return on investment.[41]

Mental and physical health

Supportive learning environments also attend to students' physical and emotional health and welfare. There is a direct connection between learning and students' physical and mental health.[42] Schools that meet students' basic needs for food and health care can improve academic achievement overall and reduce the negative effects of adverse childhood experiences (e.g., exposure to violence, trauma, homelessness, and food insecurity).[43] When all students are in supportive learning environments that attend to their physical, emotional, and relational needs, each and every student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Partnerships with community-based organizations can also support students' healthy development, and states can bolster partnerships by providing funding and a strong vision. These partnerships bring a range of services into schools for students and their families, such as health care and mental health services, child nutrition and food assistance programs, before- and after-school care, and job training and housing assistance for parents.[44] Community-based partnerships can help provide supports that are needed for children's healthy development and to address barriers to learning. Research indicates that school models, such as community schools, that integrate student services while enriching and expanding learning opportunities can have positive effects on student progress in school, attendance, academic achievement, and overall grade point average; such models also decrease grade retention, dropout rates, and absenteeism.[45]

Rubric and examples for Domain III: School environments

The state supports school environments that engage in inclusive practices so that students, staff, and other community members of color feel safe, valued, heard, and respected. State policies, programs, and investments ensure that districts and schools are aware of and help meet students' physical, emotional, and mental health needs.

RUBRIC FOR DOMAIN III: SAFE, HEALTHY, AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS	
ASK	**LOOK FOR**
Does the state ensure that each and every student learns in safe, inclusive, and caring environments?	• State provides schools and districts with one or more valid and reliable **school culture/climate surveys** that provide data, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, that are useful to school staff and state leaders for continuous improvement of school culture and environments. • State policies promote **racially integrated classrooms** through approaches such as whole school high-quality curriculum, educator development in effective teaching in heterogeneous classrooms, as-needed student support services, and **racially integrated schools** through approaches such as magnet schools, choice and open enrollment systems, student assignment/feeder plans, strategic siting decisions and attendance boundaries within districts, and resources set aside for transportation for these programs. • State **supports and values multilingualism** by, for example: (1) ensuring that teachers have preparation to teach students in ways that respect native language resources while developing proficiency in English, (2) ensuring that students of all language backgrounds have full and equal access to academic coursework, (3) recognizing linguistic accomplishments through means such as a state seal of biliteracy, and (4) translating communications to families into native languages. • State minimizes zero-tolerance and exclusionary discipline policies and provides guidance and funding for implementing evidence-based **restorative approaches** that support young people in learning key skills and developing responsibility for themselves and their community. • State prohibits discipline **based on customs** (such as hairstyles or mode of dress) historically associated with race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion. • See also Domain VI: Data Systems. • Other _____

RUBRIC FOR DOMAIN III: SAFE, HEALTHY, AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS	
ASK	**LOOK FOR**
Does the state support each and every student's social, emotional, mental, and physical well-being?	• State has developed **standards for social and emotional competencies and learning**, supported by: (1) state or regional technical assistance, (2) state guidance and resources, and (3) teacher training and professional development. • State invests in critical **mental and behavioral health services**, social-emotional supports, and needed social services and staff (e.g., counselors, social workers, school psychologists, mentors). • State supports increased student access to **meals** by, for example, prohibiting public identification of students for unpaid meal charges and/or supporting school-based food pantries. • State supports the establishment of community schools that incorporate key practices grounded in research, including: (1) integrated systems of support; (2) expanded and enriched learning opportunities; (3) powerful student and family engagement; (4) collaborative leadership and shared power and voice; (5) rigorous, community-connected classroom instruction; and (6) a culture of belonging, safety, and care. • State provides districts and regional service organizations with guidance, technical assistance, resources, and tools to coordinate and ensure student access to integrated student supports (e.g., housing, nutrition, mental health). • Other _____

EXAMPLES FOR DOMAIN III: SAFE, HEALTHY, AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS		
ASK	**STATE POLICY OR PROGRAM**	**DESCRIPTION**
Safe, inclusive, and caring environments	Colorado HB 20-1048 – Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act	Enacted in 2020, HB 20-1048 provides that—for purposes of antidiscrimination laws in the context of public education, employment practices, housing, public accommodations, and advertising—protections against discrimination on the basis of one's race include hair texture, hair type, or a protective hairstyle commonly or historically associated with race, such as braids, locs, twists, tight coils or curls, cornrows, Bantu knots, Afros, and headwraps.
	Iowa Department of Education's Conditions for Learning Survey	Iowa measures school climate through the Iowa Conditions for Learning survey, which asks students in grades 3–12 about their practices and perceptions of school climate in three domains: safety, engagement, and environment. While all public schools with students in grades 3–12 administer the online survey annually each spring, only surveys from students in grades 6–12 are included in schools' accountability scores. Anonymous, aggregated survey data for all relevant grades (3–12) are available in the state report card's in-depth view for each school. Data may be used by schools to "identify strengths and weaknesses" and provide a "foundation on which to build an action plan for improving the learning environment for all students."
	San Antonio Independent School District's Diversity by Design Program	This "diversity by design" program provides a wide range of education options, such as Montessori, college preparatory, and Expeditionary Learning schools, combining parental preference with data to ensure school diversity is achieved. The program: (1) reserves half the seats in in-district charter schools for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and leaves the other half open to students from all income levels, and (2) prioritizes seats for students from specific geographic areas (within "priority radii") to ensure socioeconomic diversity. It also chooses school locations from which middle-class and historically disadvantaged families can be drawn, designs schools to meet the interests of diverse families, and ensures that families from disadvantaged communities can secure transportation to their chosen school.

EXAMPLES FOR DOMAIN III: SAFE, HEALTHY, AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS		
ASK	**STATE POLICY OR PROGRAM**	**DESCRIPTION**
Students' social, emotional, mental, and physical well-being	Georgia Department of Education's Whole Child Toolkit	The Georgia Department of Education has created a Whole Child Toolkit—an interactive website to help districts and schools understand federal programs, access guidance on taking a whole child approach to education, and implement a community schools strategy. The toolkit serves as a one-stop location to support statewide efforts to ensure students are: (1) healthy, (2) safe, (3) engaged, (4) supported, and (5) challenged.
	Montana HB 671 - Section 2 – Funding for school-based medical services	In 2021, Montana passed HB 671, which requires the state's Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) to collaborate so that districts can be reimbursed for eligible mental health and other school-based services under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program. Both OPI and DPHHS are tasked with providing technical support to make the reimbursement process easier on districts.
	West Virginia's Building Community and School Partnerships for Student Success Guide	In 2014, West Virginia's State Board of Education passed Policy 2425, which provides guidelines for supporting schools in developing and operating community schools. Building on this policy, in 2015 the state's Department of Education published a resource guide on how to build community and school partnerships. The Building Community and School Partnerships for Student Success Guide includes a description of the evidence behind community schools and the levels of community school development. Plus, the resources help schools implement different aspects of community schools, such as expanded learning opportunities and family engagement.

Domain IV: Financial, human, and material resources that are sufficient, appropriate, and equitably allocated

Persistent inequities in educational outcomes are often rooted in opportunity gaps—systemic disparities in the resources that each and every student needs to reach their potential.[46] Economic disparities have meant that students of color are less likely to experience high-quality early education.[47] Residential discrimination and divestment in communities of color have meant that Black and Latino/a students are more likely to attend high-poverty schools,[48] which often receive inadequate funding under flat or regressive state school finance models.[49] Adequate and stable funding sources can be especially important for providing the predictability that school and district leaders need to plan for effectively addressing student needs and retaining highly qualified staff.[50]

Substantial research shows that sustained, equitable investments can lead to greater educational opportunities and lifetime outcomes, particularly for students of color.[51] Yet, while some states have focused on greater equity in school funding, most states spend less on the education of students of color and others who live in high-need communities.[52] One promising practice to advance fiscal equity is to fund schools based on equal dollars per student adjusted or weighted for specific student needs, such as poverty, limited English proficiency, foster care or homeless status, and special education status, and further adjusted for geographic cost differentials of various kinds—rather than based on staff placement or property wealth.[53] In systems that staff schools by number of positions rather than equitable dollars, there are often inequities in instructional quality when more experienced teachers are concentrated in more advantaged schools; in essence, these schools receive more dollars per pupil than those serving less advantaged students. Weighted pupil formulas ensure that high-poverty schools receive the dollars generated by their pupil needs and can use them to improve staffing, mentoring and coaching, professional learning, and more.[54]

In addition, states can enact their vision for racial equity through resource allocation that ensures students of color have appropriate, sufficient, and up-to-date resources that support their growth and well-being. For example, every student needs equipment and supplies for deeper learning instruction, which include high-speed connectivity and digital devices. Additionally, universal high-quality early learning can help overcome disparities in academic readiness between high- and low-income households.[55]

Investing in a high-quality, diverse educator workforce

Research shows that a strong connection exists between teacher and principal quality and student success[56] and that investments in educator quality and stability are demonstrably effective in raising student achievement.[57] Additionally, studies show that schools with high percentages of students of color are most likely to have a revolving door of inexperienced and uncredentialed teachers,[58] who also have high rates of turnover, which further depresses achievement.[59]

Teacher qualifications—including comprehensive preparation, National Board certification, and years of experience—matter for teaching quality and student achievement, yet highly qualified teachers are inequitably distributed across schools.[60] For example, a large-scale study in North Carolina found that

students' achievement growth was significantly higher for those taught by a teacher who was certified in their teaching field, fully prepared upon entry (rather than entering through the state's alternative "lateral entry" route), had higher scores on the teacher licensing test, graduated from a competitive college, had taught for more than 2 years, or was National Board Certified. Highly qualified teachers were inequitably distributed, and the researchers found that the combined influence on achievement growth of having a teacher with most of these qualifications as compared to one with few of them was larger than the effects of race and parent education combined.[61]

Furthermore, a growing body of research shows that students of color benefit from having teachers of color, a relationship that is especially strong and consistent for Black students with Black teachers.[62] Recruiting and retaining a diverse group of high-quality, credentialed teachers and leaders contributes to academic and social benefits for all students—and can reduce the achievement gap for students of color in particular.[63] Many of the evidence-based strategies that combat educator workforce shortages can also ensure a stable, diverse, and high-quality workforce long into a state's future.[64]

Being taught by teachers of color offers benefits to all students, and especially to students of color.[65] Research shows that students cognitively benefit from exposure to "mirrors" (those who reflect their culture and help build a positive identity) and "windows" (those who offer a view into different experiences).[66] Indeed, evidence suggests that "the presence of a principal of color appears to lead to more frequent hiring and retention of teachers of color and better outcomes for students of color, including higher math scores and higher likelihood of placement into gifted programs."[67] However, recruitment of educators of color must be paired with supportive pathways into and throughout teaching, as well as strong school leadership and school conditions.[68]

The importance of school leadership

School leaders play a key role in recruiting and supporting well-prepared, well-mentored, racially diverse, and culturally responsive teachers[69] and in leading decision-making in other areas of school policy (e.g., instructional practices, school discipline, and community engagement) that advance equitable opportunities and access for students of color.

Well-prepared principals who also have access to ongoing professional learning are able to retain teachers at higher rates and support stronger student achievement, especially for historically marginalized students of color.[70] School leaders enter the profession with different understandings, experiences, and needs when it comes to leadership oriented to racial equity.[71] Recruiting and developing racially diverse and culturally responsive leaders can help support the awareness, knowledge, and skills required to lead in ways that advance racial equity.[72]

An asset-oriented and culturally responsive workforce

Leaders and teachers must be aware both of the individual experiences, talents, and interests of their students and of the local context in which their students are learning, including the historical, economic, political, and social influences on the educational experiences of students of color.

To ensure each and every student is engaged in deeper learning in culturally responsive environments, teachers must know their students, families, and communities and have authentic, caring relationships with them to contextualize lessons in ways that build on students' culture, experiences, and prior

knowledge. Drawing upon students' funds of knowledge[73]—the culture-based knowledge, critical thinking, and skills students and their families have and enact in their daily lives—allows teachers to go beyond shallow incorporation of racial diversity in course materials and instead create units and lessons that tap into students' cultural assets and build upon the knowledge, strengths, and skills each and every student brings with them into the classroom.

Educators' attitudes toward their students can significantly shape the expectations they hold for student learning, their treatment of students, and what students ultimately learn.[74] When teachers view students' backgrounds and experiences as assets and welcome students' voices, they create identity-safe and engaging classroom environments. Moreover, when educators are aware of the implicit biases that can operate in the society, school, and classroom, and take steps to change implicit associations (e.g., through meaningful, positive engagement with individuals of color and exposure to a counter-stereotypical exemplar), they can mitigate the discrimination students so often experience in favor of more equitable actions.[75]

Rubric and examples for Domain IV: Resources

Every school has the resources, including a diverse, stable, high-quality workforce, necessary to support the learning and healthy development of each and every student. The state supports proactive educator recruitment and retention strategies, and school and district staff and leaders engage in professional learning opportunities to develop their ability to create racially equitable school environments.

RUBRIC FOR DOMAIN IV: FINANCIAL, HUMAN, AND MATERIAL RESOURCES THAT ARE SUFFICIENT, APPROPRIATE, AND EQUITABLY ALLOCATED	
ASK	**LOOK FOR**
Does the state equitably distribute financial and material resources?	• State has adopted an adequate and equitable **school funding formula** that is: (1) based on student need; and (2) predictable, stable, and equalized to ensure that a student's zip code does not dictate the quality of their education. • State promotes **financial transparency** through easily accessible data and reporting that allows the public to identify and understand gaps/disparities in funding. • State regularly assesses the current condition of school buildings to identify and target funding toward inequities in **facilities conditions and quality**. • State ensures that each and every student has appropriate, sufficient, and up-to-date **equipment and supplies** for deeper learning instruction (e.g., curricular materials, books, and lab equipment). • State is closing the digital divide by ensuring each and every student has appropriate digital devices and high-speed internet. • State incentivizes educators to work in **hard-to-staff schools** through, for example, service scholarships and loan forgiveness programs for prospective educators and stipends or bonuses for expert leaders, teachers, and support staff. • State supports equitable and competitive teacher compensation across districts and sufficient funding levels to ensure compensation comparable to other college-educated professionals. • State invests in and supports programs that allow families/caregivers and children to access high-quality and integrated **early learning** experiences, regardless of family income, to address achievement gaps early, before they widen. • Other _____

RUBRIC FOR DOMAIN IV: FINANCIAL, HUMAN, AND MATERIAL RESOURCES THAT ARE SUFFICIENT, APPROPRIATE, AND EQUITABLY ALLOCATED

ASK	LOOK FOR
Does the state support a well-prepared, stable, and diverse educator workforce?	• State **preparation, licensure, and certification** processes ensure that teachers and leaders are knowledgeable about student learning and development and about the racial, ethnic, and cultural communities they serve and are committed to advancing the welfare of each and every student. • State policies and investments ensure an **adequate supply** of well-prepared educators through policies designed to recruit, prepare, and retain educators (e.g., high-quality teacher and leader residencies, Grow Your Own programs, service scholarships, and loan forgiveness programs), especially those that target culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse candidates. • State collects, analyzes, and reports **data** on: (1) the percentage of teachers fully certified for the courses they teach, (2) the percentage of teachers with more than 3 years of experience, (3) the number of teacher vacancies, (4) teacher and leader retention rates, and (5) the racial diversity of teachers and leaders, and these data are disaggregated by teacher/leader/student race and ethnicity, and school/district, as applicable. • State supports **proactive hiring strategies** that can increase workforce diversity by, for example, fostering district partnerships with local teacher preparation programs and ensuring that state budgeting supports early district hiring timelines. • See also Domain VI: Data Systems. • Other _____
Does the state promote the development and support of all school and district leaders, teachers, and support staff?	• State supports and provides tools to regularly **survey leaders, teachers, and school staff** about professional learning needs, working conditions, and school climate and disaggregate the results by race and ethnicity and by school composition. • State administers, funds, or recommends **effective and freely available professional development** for leaders, teachers, and support staff—aligned to professional learning standards—in key areas identified to support each and every student (e.g., deeper learning skills within and across content areas, social and emotional learning and restorative practices, safe and inclusive environments, cultural competency, supports for students with special needs). • State supports, sets minimum requirements for, and funds high-quality **induction and mentoring programs** for novice teachers and school leaders to support their effectiveness and retention, with additional supports targeted toward districts serving high concentrations of students of color and those with high concentrations of novice teachers. • State provides support and technical assistance to districts and schools in **school redesign** (e.g., reconfiguring school schedules) to allow for increased opportunities for staff collaboration that support teacher efficacy and retention as well as foster stronger, more supportive student and staff relationships (e.g., looping or advisory systems). • Other _____

EXAMPLES FOR DOMAIN IV: FINANCIAL, HUMAN, AND MATERIAL RESOURCES THAT ARE SUFFICIENT, APPROPRIATE, AND EQUITABLY ALLOCATED		
ASK	**STATE POLICY OR PROGRAM**	**DESCRIPTION**
Equitable distribution of financial and material resources	Arkansas - A.C.A. Section 6-17-1901 et seq – Minority Recruitment	Arkansas law requires all districts and charter schools to prepare a 3-year teacher and administrator recruitment and retention plan. The plan must be focused on teachers and administrators of minority races and ethnicities who increase diversity among the district staff. An Equity Assistance Center provides technical assistance, guidance, and support in the development of the plans.
	The Kirwan Commission's Blueprint for Maryland's Future	The work of Maryland's Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education resulted in 2019 legislation (the Blueprint for Maryland's Future) that overhauled the state's school funding formula. Among other changes, the new formula increases the state's base per-pupil funding amount and increases funding for English learners, students living in poverty, and students with special needs.
	Michigan's Great Start Readiness Program	The Great Start Readiness Program is Michigan's state-funded preschool program for 4-year-old children. The program is targeted to preschoolers with a maximum family income of 250% of the federal poverty level, and children are prioritized for enrollment based on income and other risk factors.
	North Carolina Teaching Fellows Service Scholarship Program	This program covers a significant portion of preparation costs, targets high-need subjects, and incentivizes teaching in schools most prone to experience shortages. In exchange for a scholarship of $8,250 per year for 4 years ($33,000 total), candidates commit to teaching special education or STEM for 8 years in a North Carolina public school or 4 years if teaching at a low-performing North Carolina public school.

ASK	STATE POLICY OR PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
Well-prepared, stable, and diverse educator workforce	Minnesota's Grow Your Own (GYO) Grant Program	Legislation (e.g., MN HF 2 - Sec. 6) created a GYO grant program, making funds available to districts for a grant for a professional standards board–approved teacher preparation program. Grant recipients must use at least 80% of grant funds to provide tuition scholarships or stipends to enable district employees or community members affiliated with a district, who are of color or American Indian and who seek a teaching license, to participate in the teacher preparation program. GYO grant funds are also available for scholarships for graduating high school students who are of color or American Indian to enroll in board-approved undergraduate teacher preparation programs at a college or university in Minnesota.
	Pennsylvania's Aspiring to Educate Program	This pilot program is a partnership between the state Department of Education, the School District of Philadelphia, seven area colleges and universities, and local education and youth organizations. The program provides three pathway options for youth and adults interested in becoming educators. The state provides mentorship and financial support for aspiring educators as they complete their preparation pathway.
	Washington State's Cultural Competency, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CCDEI) Standards Initiative	Following 2021 legislation, Washington state's Professional Educator Standards Board unanimously adopted CCDEI standards for the state's educators. These standards, developed with significant interest holder input, describe how educators can approach students, colleagues, and their own teaching practice in ways that create supportive classrooms that value students and families. The 2021 legislation also required the development of CCDEI school director governance standards to ensure that school board policies and budgets support classroom practices. Additional state legislation connects educator certificate renewal to specific clock hour learning in equity-based school practices using the CCDEI standards.

EXAMPLES FOR DOMAIN IV: FINANCIAL, HUMAN, AND MATERIAL RESOURCES THAT ARE SUFFICIENT, APPROPRIATE, AND EQUITABLY ALLOCATED		
ASK	**STATE POLICY OR PROGRAM**	**DESCRIPTION**
All school and district leaders, teachers, and support staff are developed and supported	Massachusetts's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce	Massachusetts provides a number of targeted resources to support a diverse educator workforce, including: (1) a guidebook to support district and school leaders in designing and implementing a teacher diversification strategy; (2) fellowships for current educators seeking to hold superintendent positions or recruit in their communities; and (3) professional learning communities and a statewide affinity network, among other strategies.

Domain V: Meaningful engagement with students, families, interest holders, communities, and leaders

Interest holder engagement across education policy leaders, practitioners, and participants is critical for an effective approach to racial equity in education, as it is for any policy agenda or initiative. Early and broad interest holder engagement can strengthen the design and approach to strategies for racial equity in education and can increase the likelihood of support during implementation. The state plays an important role in building the structures and providing the supports and resources to convene a wide range of interest holders, including students, families and caregivers, educators and unions, school and district leaders, community organizations, business leaders, and state leaders across the youth-serving ecosystem.

Moreover, the state can support families and caregivers in meaningfully engaging with their students' learning and schools, which has a positive impact on both student outcomes and the school community.[76] Schools have not traditionally been spaces where parents and families of color feel welcomed and supported. However, it is possible for states, districts, and schools to build authentic partnerships and feedback loops with families and communities that ensure the healthy learning and development of students of color.[77]

Schools that successfully engage families from racially diverse backgrounds adopt a philosophy of partnership in which power and responsibility are shared and important decisions are structured to include family participation.[78] Engaging with parents' expertise entails drawing on their knowledge, practices, and values.[79] Where strong staff–family relationships exist, families are engaged as valued experts and there are regular exchanges between home and schools.[80]

The positive effects of programs that meaningfully involve parents in their children's schooling are evident for children of color in all grade levels, PreK through 12.[81] A substantial body of research demonstrates that family and community participation in schools is important for improving student achievement, motivating school improvement, and building inclusive school cultures for students of color.[82] Students with involved parents have more self-confidence, feel school is more important, earn higher grades, and are more likely to attend college.[83]

Reciprocal family–school partnerships benefit teachers as well. For example, when teachers visit homes with the purpose of deeply understanding families' funds of knowledge—their historically and culturally developed knowledge and skills—teachers are able to create high-quality instructional activities that support student growth and well-being by tapping into families' cultural practices and building on learning practices familiar to the students.[84]

Rubric and examples for Domain V: Engagement

A broad range of interest holders, especially in communities of color, continuously shape the direction of racial equity solutions and are integral in helping them to be effective. Interest holders include students, families and caregivers, educators and unions, school and district leaders, community organizations, and business leaders.

RUBRIC FOR DOMAIN V: MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH STUDENTS, FAMILIES, INTEREST HOLDERS, COMMUNITIES, AND LEADERS	
ASK	**LOOK FOR**
Does the state engage with a diverse range of interest holders in the development and implementation of the state's vision for racial equity?	• State regularly **convenes leaders** across the youth-serving ecosystem (e.g., health and human services, economic development, education, higher education, transportation, housing, child welfare, juvenile justice/corrections, labor, tribal nations) to coordinate activities supporting the state's racial equity vision. • State **supports interest holder engagement** related to the state's racial equity vision by, for example: (1) regularly communicating about and providing communication tools related to the state's activities in pursuit of its equity goals, (2) providing opportunities for feedback, (3) sharing ways interest holders can get involved, and (4) subsidizing the cost of transportation and/or technology to enable participation. • State supports the convening of **local interest holder task forces** to develop and recommend targeted activities in support of the state's equity goals and plan, including through strategic use of needs assessments and data. (See also Domain I: Vision and Domain VI: Data Systems.) • State **provides resources**, such as translation services, to schools and districts to support local interest holder engagement that is designed to reach a wide range of racially and linguistically diverse audiences and communities and that leverages local knowledge about communication strategies and processes that resonate with the community. • Other _____
Does the state support students and families in meaningfully engaging with their own/their students' learning and school?	• State provides training, time, support, and funding for active, two-way communication between school and home to strengthen student and **family engagement** both in their children's education and in school decision-making. • State encourages districts and other government entities to partner with **community-based organizations** to support meaningful student and family engagement along with the academic, social-emotional, and physical well-being of students and families. • Other _____

ASK	STATE POLICY OR PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
Engagement with a diverse range of interest holders	Kansas's Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund	The Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund fosters cross-sector collaboration for early childhood. The cabinet's activities are guided by the state's Blueprint for Early Childhood, which coordinates services through the state's mixed-delivery system via a common framework. Services include health care, child care, early intervention, early education, mental health, prenatal and maternal support, home visiting, developmental screening, and child abuse prevention programs.
	North Dakota's Children's Behavioral Health Task Force	In 2017, the North Dakota Legislature created the Children's Behavioral Health Task Force to oversee and align different sectors of children's behavioral health. The task force consists of six members from education, health, human services, corrections, the Indian Affairs Commission, and the Committee on Protection and Advocacy. This interagency task force provides guidance and recommendations in the areas of education, health, welfare, community, and juvenile justice.
	Oregon's Educator Advancement Council	Created by SB 182, the council is aimed at helping the state achieve high-quality, well-supported, and culturally responsive educators in every classroom. Membership comprises not only representatives from key state agencies and commissions, but also educators, school and district leaders, a tribal representative, and community organization representatives, among others. The council also publishes Oregon's Educator Equity Report.
	Washington State's Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee	This committee of state and community leaders makes recommendations to the legislature, the governor, the state superintendent, the board of education, and other education agencies on a wide range of topics, including how to: (1) support parent/community engagement, (2) enhance the cultural competency and diversity of educators and leaders, and (3) close the state's achievement gaps. The committee includes, among others, leaders from the legislature; Governor's Office of Indian Affairs; and state commissions on Asian Pacific American Affairs, Hispanic Affairs, and African American Affairs.

EXAMPLES FOR DOMAIN V: MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH STUDENTS, FAMILIES, INTEREST HOLDERS, COMMUNITIES, AND LEADERS		
ASK	**STATE POLICY OR PROGRAM**	**DESCRIPTION**
Students and families meaningfully engaged with their own/their students' learning and school	California's Community Engagement Initiative	Created by legislation in 2018, the Community Engagement Initiative builds community and district capacity to have conversations about and address challenges to student success as part of the state's larger system of school support. Composed of a network of families, school and district leaders, educators, and community partners, the initiative is designed to be responsive to the racial, cultural, linguistic, and experiential assets of the communities in which it works.
	Colorado Department of Education's Office of Family, School, and Community Partnerships	The Colorado Department of Education created this office to support schools and districts in implementing family and community engagement practices. The office provides a Family-School-Community Partnership Framework and an aligned self-assessment rubric, as well as a compilation of promising partnership practices, research briefs, and a newsletter.
	Ohio Department of Education's Local Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit: A Guide for District and School Leaders	While created to support interest holder engagement in the development of the state's Every Student Succeeds Act plan, this toolkit provides school and district leaders with a straightforward template for effective and sustained interest holder engagement.

Domain VI: Data systems that drive progress toward racial equity

Effective use of data has been shown to support education improvement efforts generally and the ability to advance racial equity specifically.[85] The use of data for improvement is characterized by a collaborative, transparent, and inquiry-driven approach to collecting and interpreting data, developing solutions, implementing change, and monitoring and evaluating outcomes.[86] When used this way, data can help states, districts, and schools to set priorities and develop effective strategies for addressing problems.

Using data for improved racial equity involves examining a wide range of measures, including quantitative data about learning conditions and outcomes as well as qualitative data from interviews and observations, to develop a deep understanding of systemic opportunities and challenges. Relevant data can illuminate each of the other domains in this handbook: a clear, explicit, and ambitious vision for statewide racial equity; access to rich, deeper learning and inclusive and affirming curricula and practices; safe, healthy, and inclusive school environments; financial, human, and material resources that are sufficient, appropriate, and equitably allocated; and meaningful engagement with students, families, interest holders, communities, and leaders. Disaggregated data can help state and local leaders to understand differences in educational opportunities and outcomes by racial groups.[87]

However, studies have shown that gathering data alone does not guarantee improvement. States working toward a vision for racial equity in education invest in learning how to interpret data from an equity-oriented perspective, which begins with the understanding that every student has assets and can learn. State and local education leaders, as well as school and district staff, can make sense of disparate outcomes in student success by evaluating the underlying inputs and processes that matter for student success, such as access to and availability of resources; deeper learning curricula; and safe, healthy, and inclusive school environments. This approach is different from the more prevalent use of data in education systems, which is often associated with accountability measures to identify problems with student outcomes.[88]

With the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (the Every Student Succeeds Act or ESSA), states now have more flexibility in how they use data to support the continuous improvement of schools and districts. Until the 2015 reauthorization, states had little ability to avoid the disproportionate impact of high stakes accountability on schools serving more students of color—schools that are more likely to be under-resourced and lower performing on standardized exams.[89] In many states, previous accountability requirements led to punitive measures, such as staff reconstitution or school closures.[90]

States and districts that leverage data for equity effectively look specifically at the contexts for and conditions of learning, identify the root causes of identified problems, and consider how changes to the system can improve them.[91] In particular, collecting and analyzing multiple measures of students' participation rates, opportunities to learn, and outcomes can help leaders better understand where additional supports and resources may be necessary to ensure equitable education opportunities.

Research has established that students benefit from learning resources and supportive learning conditions, and that those students with limited access to such learning resources and conditions out of school benefit most.[92]

The use of data to advance racial equity should be embedded within state and local improvement processes or methodologies that involve interest holders and include frequent data monitoring, continuous learning, and action.[93] States can benefit from cultivating a data culture in which school and district staff members are given time and training to examine data and feel that data are used to solve problems rather than to shame and punish.[94] This kind of data culture helps staff members appreciate the value of the data the state collects and makes it more likely that they will use the data to inform decision-making.[95]

Rubric and examples for Domain VI: Data systems

The state systematically tracks progress toward student success and the elimination of racial disparities, engages with interest holders about that progress, and uses information about progress in decision-making.

RUBRIC FOR DOMAIN VI: DATA SYSTEMS THAT DRIVE PROGRESS TOWARD RACIAL EQUITY	
ASK	**LOOK FOR**

Does the state collect, analyze, and communicate a range of student outcomes and academic, social, and emotional supports by race and by schools with high and low percentages of students of color?	• State uses available data to **measure progress toward its equity goals** and adjusts its plan for reaching its goals as needed. Progress is publicly and regularly reported on an easily accessible platform.
	
	• State has established and invested in a **public, accessible statewide data system**, ideally from cradle to career, that can reveal disparities in student participation, opportunities to learn, and outcomes by race and other student characteristics.
	
	• State collects, analyzes, and reports on **multiple measures** of student participation, opportunities to learn, and outcomes, disaggregated by race, by schools with high and low percentages of students of color, and by other student characteristics, such as:
	
	  - Student achievement data
	  - School climate data
	  - Postsecondary outcomes data
	  - Student participation and engagement data, including discipline practices
	  - Opportunity-to-learn data (e.g., participation and completion rates for college- and career-readiness opportunities)
	  - Educator data (e.g., retention rates, certification levels, experience, vacancies, teacher preparation program candidate and faculty diversity and employment rates)
	  - Early childhood education availability, participation, and quality
	  - Data reflecting the development of deeper learning competencies
	
	• Other _____

RUBRIC FOR DOMAIN VI: DATA SYSTEMS THAT DRIVE PROGRESS TOWARD RACIAL EQUITY	
ASK	**LOOK FOR**
Does the state support schools and districts in using data to address disparities in achievement and opportunity?	• State uses a **broad set of indicators** in its statewide accountability and continuous improvement system that reflects student opportunities for learning and outcomes and encourages shared responsibility to rectify disparities in students' access, opportunities, and outcomes. • State ensures that schools and districts have the necessary **resources and technical assistance for using disaggregated data** to identify the root causes of and address inequities. • State ensures that school and district leaders are **trained** in the effective and strategic use of disaggregated data to craft strategic, equity, or improvement plans that target affected groups. • State provides schools and districts with a **school culture/climate survey** that provides quick-turnaround data, disaggregated by race, to support continuous improvement of school culture and environments. • Other _____

EXAMPLES FOR DOMAIN VI: DATA SYSTEMS THAT DRIVE PROGRESS TOWARD RACIAL EQUITY		
ASK	**STATE POLICY OR PROGRAM**	**DESCRIPTION**
Student outcomes and academic, social, and emotional supports by race	Mississippi LifeTracks	Mississippi LifeTracks is a statewide data system designed to answer critical policy questions relevant to education, workforce, and economic development. The system facilitates research and analysis and provides linkages between early childhood, K–12, postsecondary education, and the workforce.
	Nevada Department of Education's School Climate Survey	The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) partnered with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in 2015 to develop the Nevada School Climate/Social Emotional Learning Survey and administer it to students annually across the state. In 2019, the NDE and AIR launched an online searchable tool to provide data from the surveys to teachers, families, and state officials.
Data to address disparities in achievement and opportunity	Delaware SB 85 (Section 703) – Student discipline reporting and improvement planning	This 2018 bill requires the state Department of Education to compile and release an annual student discipline report that includes data for each school disaggregated by race and ethnicity. Schools may be required to review their discipline policies and submit a corrective action plan to the Department.
	Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's District Data Team Toolkit	This toolkit is designed to assist in the establishment of a District Data Team—a cadre of staff who are collectively responsible for the technical, organizational, and substantive aspects of data use. Designed around a theory of action (the Data-Driven Inquiry and Action Cycle), the toolkit supports effective data use that takes data use from asking the right questions to getting results in an iterative process that supports continuous improvement.
	Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Equity Inquiry Protocol	Among its many data inquiry and root cause analysis resources, Massachusetts's Equity Inquiry Protocol helps teams to identify potential causes of inequity leading to underperformance.
	Michigan Department of Education's Educator Workforce Data Report	The Michigan Department of Education's Office of Educator Excellence publishes educator workforce data and analyses for use by internal and external interest holders.

Conclusion

Achieving racial equity in education means that student success is not predetermined by student race or zip code and that each and every student gets the support and resources they need to develop academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. Student success occurs when students develop appropriate academic knowledge and skills; competencies for work, life, and civic participation; and the social and emotional skills that undergird healthy self-image and relationships with others and the broader world.

Using the State Handbook for Advancing Racial Equity (SHARE), state education leaders and staff can better understand how the complex ecosystem of policies and practices they design, enact, and implement can advance outcomes for each and every student. States can make progress on racial equity by taking a purposeful systemic approach that considers each of the six SHARE domains:

1. **Vision:** Clear, explicit, and ambitious vision for statewide racial equity
2. **Deeper learning:** Rich, deeper learning and inclusive and affirming curricula and practices
3. **School environments:** Safe, healthy, and inclusive school environments
4. **Resources:** Financial, human, and material resources that are sufficient, appropriate, and equitably allocated
5. **Engagement:** Meaningful engagement with students, families, interest holders, communities, and leaders
6. **Data systems:** Data systems that drive progress toward racial equity

This handbook is meant to support state leaders as they conceptualize and organize state-level equity work, review their systems, set equity-oriented goals, and engage in continuous improvement over time.

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