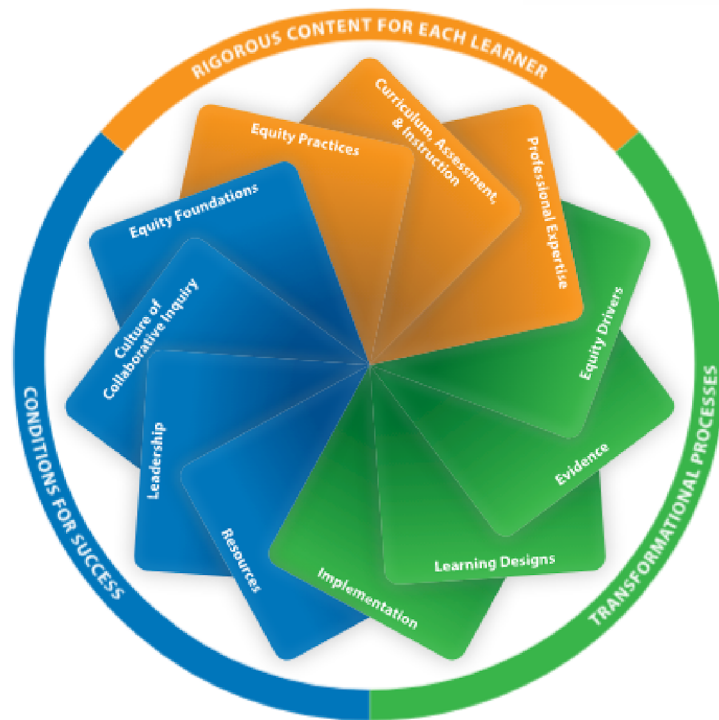


# Equity Foundations



## Standards for Professional Learning



LEARNING FORWARD

# Equity Foundations

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**Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators engage in continuous improvement, build collaboration skills and capacity, and share responsibility for improving learning for all students.**

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Educators build their capacity to create professional learning that serves each educator and respects all aspects of their identities. Educators recognize that high-quality professional learning can serve as a lever to achieve equity throughout schools and districts only when educators and students have access to and opportunity for rigorous and relevant learning. High expectations, an inclusive culture, and sustained and aligned structures for equitable professional learning are critical to eliminating barriers and dismantling inequities in schools.

Educators in positions of leadership at the school system level have primary responsibility and autonomy to establish conditions, structures, and cultures that put equity at the heart of professional learning. Educators at all levels have responsibility and agency to contribute to such conditions through how they engage, respond, and make explicit their expectations for themselves, their peers, and the leaders who support them.

Here are the main constructs of the Equity Foundations standard.

## **Educators establish expectations for equity.**

Educators make explicit their expectation that professional learning serves as an equity lever, articulating the belief that professional learning has the potential to ensure each student experiences culturally relevant teaching and learning at grade level. They connect educators' universal access to high-quality professional learning to students' universal access to high-quality learning. They define equity and its connections to professional learning.

Educators create conditions where equity considerations permeate professional learning rather than standing apart as a separate issue to address. Through their expectations, educators foster equity for each learner.

Educators study how barriers related to all aspects of student and educator identity limit access and opportunity for learning that fosters excellence within and beyond schools and in a range of learning contexts. They build their awareness of how historical and ongoing inequities and institutionalized racism and sexism have shaped education systems and student outcomes through history.

In exploring and establishing systems that promote equity, they build their knowledge about how policies at national, regional, provincial, state, and local levels impact education. To understand how professional learning can remove barriers to equitable learning, educators explore how education is funded and its connections to other elemental aspects of society, including health care, child care, housing, and the workforce.

Educators contribute to professional learning systems that dismantle barriers to equity, applying their knowledge of how structures, policies, and beliefs have long served as impediments to learning for each educator and student. For example, district leaders may publish an expectation that external providers' professional learning content is aligned to the system's articulated commitment to equity. They examine models and evidence of successful practices in education to understand and implement practices that advance equity goals.

### **Educators create structures to ensure equitable access to learning.**

Educators create and sustain structures to implement and integrate expectations for equity throughout a professional learning system. Structures that impact equity in professional learning include human resources policies and practices, resource allocation, and data use as well as how decisions are made throughout a school system.

While such elements can veer beyond professional learning, system leaders in particular have a responsibility to build their capacity to understand how transforming district-level structures can create conditions for equity.

System leaders build their capacity to create and sustain educator and leadership development programs, pipelines, and networks designed to establish and maintain a diverse workforce, building on what is known about effective development programs in general, including the research about teacher leadership and principal pipelines. System leaders become knowledgeable about the importance of encouraging a diverse educator workforce and the resulting benefits that accrue to all educators and students.

Educators are responsible for ensuring that data systems, platforms, and practices foster the use of data to identify gaps in learning opportunities based on characteristics of student or educator identity. They build their expertise to support data use that advances how they and their peers identify specific student and adult learning challenges and take aligned and sustained action based on that data.

Educators investigate how the allocation and use of resources is linked to achieving goals to create equitable access to powerful learning for each educator and student. Resources include money, people, time, and materials for professional learning.

Through the structures they establish, system leaders make centering equity integral to the day-to-day work of planning, facilitating, and engaging in professional learning. Other learning leaders at the school and district level have a responsibility to leverage those structures for equity and demand improvements when necessary.

## **Educators sustain a culture of support for all staff.**

Educators recognize that the culture in schools and systems is as important as the structures in creating conditions for learning that promote growth for each educator and student. Supportive and diverse professional cultures improve teacher satisfaction and retention.

Educators prioritize establishing trust among staff, students, and community members. They learn about the factors that contribute to creating trust and examine how their own actions and the actions of their peers establish trust. They recognize that trust is critical to sustaining expectations for equity and conditions that encourage open dialogue about difficult topics among all educators.

Educators apply their expectations for equity in professional learning to how and what educators learn, considering their processes for learning and how the content builds their capacity to serve each student. They learn to support their colleagues through inclusive cultures and practices and by inviting educators at all levels to voice their needs, insights, and concerns.

Educators insist on diverse representation to decision-making bodies and conversations. Educators intentionally invite ongoing feedback about the professional learning culture to ensure all learners have voice and safety to grow as individuals and on diverse teams.

Educators study and use assessment and monitoring options to regularly audit that their professional learning system delivers on its vision for equity. They regularly and publicly celebrate their successes and acknowledge where they are falling short. They learn to hold themselves accountable to their high expectations for equity and make adjustments to continue to improve.

### **Selected research**

**Gates, S.M., Baird, M.D., Master, B.K., & Chavez-Herrerias, E.R. (2019).**

*Principal pipelines: A feasible, affordable, and effective way for districts to improve schools.* RAND Corporation. [www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Principal-Pipelines-A-Feasible-Affordable-and-Effective-Way-for-Districts-to-Improve-Schools.pdf](http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Principal-Pipelines-A-Feasible-Affordable-and-Effective-Way-for-Districts-to-Improve-Schools.pdf)

**Gershenson, S., Hart, C.M.D., Hyman, J., Lindsay, C., & Papageorge, N.W. (2018, November).** *The long-run impacts of same-race teachers* [Working Paper 25254]. National Bureau of Economic Research.

[www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w25254/w25254.pdf](http://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w25254/w25254.pdf)

**Grissom, J.A., Egalite, A.J., & Lindsay, C.A. (2021).** *How principals affect students and schools: A systematic synthesis of two decades of research.* The Wallace Foundation.

[www.wallacefoundation.org/principalsynthesis](http://www.wallacefoundation.org/principalsynthesis).

**Rigby, J.G. & Tredway, L. (2015).** *Actions matter: How school leaders enact equity principles.* In M. Khalifa, A.N. Witherspoon, A.F. Osanloo, & C.M. Grant (eds.) *Handbook of Urban Educational Leadership.* Rowman & Littlefield

### **Links to other standards**

Educators use the Standards for Professional Learning together to inspire and drive improvement. Each of the 11 standards connects to the other standards to support a high-functioning learning system. **Here are some of the ways the Equity Foundations standard connects to other standards:**

The Standards for Professional Learning include three standards that have a specific focus on equity. The **Equity Foundations** standard addresses the learning context, the **Equity Drivers** standard outlines how learning processes contribute to equity outcomes, and the **Equity Practices** standard addresses the specific learning content essential to building educator capacity for equity. The three equity standards serve as guideposts for all learning.

Leveraging the **Evidence** standard is critical to understanding how expectations for equity are being met and for continually examining progress toward aspirational goals for all students and educators.

Allocation of time and money is addressed in the **Resources** standard and mentioned in **Equity Foundations**. This purposeful redundancy highlights how specific actions to achieve a vision for equity embed equity goals in each standard.