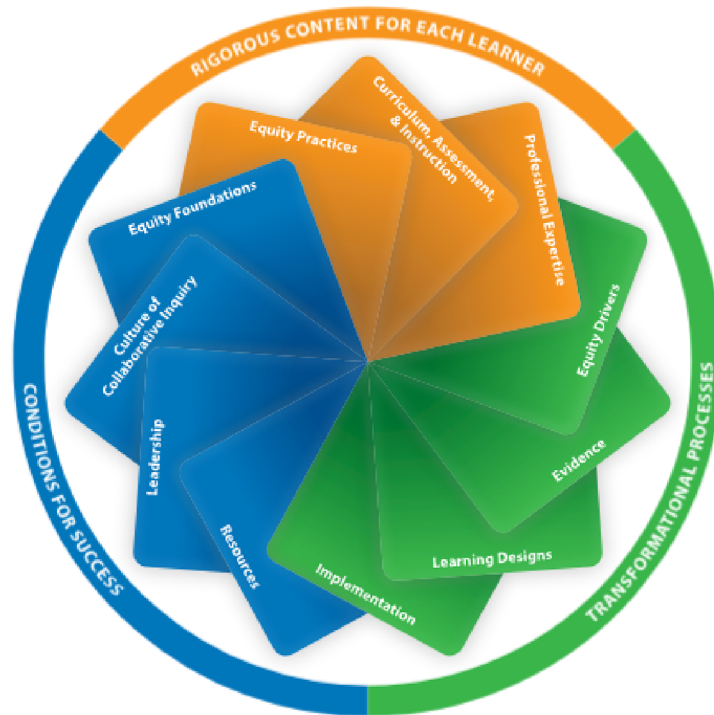


Equity Practices



Standards for Professional Learning



LEARNING FORWARD

Equity Practices

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators understand their students' historical, cultural, and societal contexts, embrace student assets through instruction, and foster relationships with students, families, and communities.

Educators engage in professional learning that helps them create high-quality learning experiences for all students, honoring all aspects of identity students bring to the school. Educators build capacity to serve the whole child, deepening their understanding of who their students are and how their life experiences and identities impact what they need at school. Educators learn to recognize each student's strengths and personalize learning to maximize impact on a range of student outcomes.

Educators who plan, facilitate, and design professional learning at the system and school levels hold primary responsibility for creating job-embedded, collaborative learning so educators understand and apply inclusive practices in the contexts where they serve students, whether in classrooms or other learning and schooling environments. Educators at all levels have responsibility and agency to support their colleagues in developing, improving, and practicing equity strategies and in their own development and use of new practices with students.

Here are the main constructs of the Equity Practices standard.

Educators understand students' historical, cultural, and societal contexts.

Educators learn about contextual aspects of student identity and experience, increasing their knowledge of local, national, and global history and culture as well as contemporary implications so they understand better the experiences and needs of the students, families, and communities they serve. To meaningfully serve their students, educators are responsible for understanding the history of community members and families in their national or local context, and in particular how that history shapes what their students and communities experience today within and beyond education.

Educators explore the complexities of how students' identities affect their lives and their contexts for learning. They seek to understand how all aspects of students' lives impact their opportunity and access to effective schooling, including family or caretaker and living situations, home language, socioeconomic conditions, and physical, emotional, and mental health details.

Educators engage in professional learning to understand racism, colonization, misogyny, poverty, ableism, and other barriers that prevent adults' and students' access and opportunities to learn.

The content of educator learning fosters exploration of what those barriers mean and how they impact adult and student learning. Educators gain skills and practices to eliminate these and other barriers to learning at whatever level they serve.

Educators collaborate to deepen their knowledge about the students, adults, and communities they serve. Teams of educators increase their impact by committing to collectively develop the knowledge and skills to serve each student in their spheres of influence, leveraging individual strengths, sharing knowledge and successes, and together bearing the responsibility for a diverse range of equity practices.

In continually examining their own experiences and biases as specified in the Equity Drivers standard, educators move beyond reflection by shifting practices, monitoring impact, and sustaining the critical work of talking openly with colleagues and students about such topics as race, culture, and class.

Educators embrace student assets through instruction.

A critical dimension of leveraging professional learning to achieve equity in schools is recognizing the importance of building all educators' knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions to personalize teaching in consideration of each student's culture, identity, interests, and needs.

Educators develop skills and practices to create culturally relevant, responsive, and sustaining instruction as well as to attend to the social and emotional aspects of the classroom experience. Professional learning leaders therefore prioritize not only understanding what culturally relevant or sustaining teaching looks like but also providing opportunities for educators to explore and apply such teaching practices with feedback and support.

Professional learning that increases educators' capacity to recognize and embrace aspects of students' identities as assets rather than deficits enables them to create culturally sustaining instruction and classroom environments. When educators shift to a strengths- or assets-based approach, they embrace inclusive practices that build on what students bring to the classroom in terms of experiences, talents, and interests rather than seeing differences as gaps or weaknesses.

Professional learning that increases an educator's capacity to personalize learning based on who students are and how they learn is tightly integrated with the academic aspects of teaching and learning as well as the curriculum and instructional materials in use in a classroom. Educators also address their capacity to recognize and serve students with a range of abilities, often working in partnership with specialized staff to adapt all aspects of teaching to create learning that is rigorous and accessible.

As educators strengthen their capacity to teach to the whole child, addressing all aspects of academic and nonacademic development, understanding the importance of social and emotional learning is critical. Educators learn about the intersection of students' social and emotional skills and academic success and leverage strategies to help students develop such skills.

Educators learn to create classrooms where students have safety, agency, and voice to talk openly about their lived experiences. What educators hear from their students helps them identify areas for further exploration. They learn how to recognize how their own practices encourage or discourage student voice and any patterns in classroom management that are based on and perhaps unintentionally reinforcing bias or misconceptions.

Educators foster relationships with students, families, and communities.

Educators recognize the importance of building their capacity to establish authentic and caring relationships with students, families, and community members. They study the importance of establishing trust and learn strategies to build and sustain two-way communication so students and families experience trusting relationships throughout the education system.

Educators listen to students to understand their interests and needs and establish students' autonomy in influencing the learning and schooling they experience. Educators in positions of leadership at the school and system levels understand a range of approaches, such as restorative justice, for establishing positive learning contexts that support the whole child. They also learn approaches related to classroom safety such as alternative disciplinary practices and emotional regulation.

Educators strengthen capacity to interact with families and caretakers as well as community members so they can draw on essential sources of student information to create relevant learning experiences. Educators who work with families provide essential partnership to parents and caretakers, who are then better positioned to engage fully in their children's education. To build and sustain relationships with all community members, educators increase their capacity to talk openly about difficult or controversial topics without using language or stances that are inflammatory or that would serve as barriers to productive collaboration.

Educators turn to local community members and students' families as experts, seeking their partnership and permission to employ such learning designs as shadowing to deepen their expertise. Educators recognize that the instructional materials they use are critical content for discussions and partnerships with families and communities and therefore should be culturally responsive and designed to act as catalysts for improved relationships.

Educators working as family partners can more deeply understand and leverage cultural assets, integrating relevant information into instruction. They are also better positioned to allocate or advocate for particular resources to meet a student's need for specific support, whether that comes in the form of technology tools, learning needs modifications, or health and wellness referrals.

Depending on their role in the school or system, educators strengthen their knowledge, skills, and practices to develop and sustain partnerships with community members to support students and their families.

Individual educators are not solely responsible for serving the multitude of student needs that are often identified in the classroom. However, any educator may serve as a primary liaison for a student and therefore needs capacity to tap appropriate colleagues and collaborate to address particular student needs.

Selected research

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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 Practices standard connects to other standards:**

The **Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction** standard emphasizes the importance of educators developing their capacity to implement high-quality instructional materials so they are able to scaffold and accelerate learning for the students they serve.

Through the **Equity Drivers** standard, educators bring an equity perspective to their own learning processes just as they seek an equity lens on how they serve each student.

The **Culture of Collaborative Inquiry** standard engages teams of educators in cycles of continuous improvement to build collective commitment to each student supported by any member of the team.