

Our Challenge

Despite a decade of progress and many instances of excellence, New York's educational system today faces two critical problems that demand urgent attention. First, we face a great divide in educational opportunity and achievement along lines of income, race and ethnicity, language, and disability. Second, New York – and the nation – are not keeping pace with growing demands for still more knowledge and skill in the face of increasing competition in a changing global economy.

Closing the achievement gaps must begin with the fundamental belief that all learners can reach higher standards. It requires that we set high expectations and employ powerful strategies that build on the success of many USNY institutions that are working to close these gaps. (Source: <http://www.oms.nysed.gov/plan05/plan05.htm>)

Current Definition

The ESSA plan and recommendations reflect a commitment to leadership for equity; in this context, the term equity means that the learning needs of every student are supported in an environment where all students are valued; respected; and experience academic success without regard to differences in age, gender, socio-economic status, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, native language, national origin, or immigration status.

Considerations for equity

What social, political, policy, and legal obstacles must the Board of Regents confront to ensure all students have equitable opportunities to prepare for college, careers and civic engagement?

What leadership can the Board of Regents provide to address and eliminate identified obstacles?

Other equity definitions

Council of Chief State School Officers

In an equitable education system, personal and social identifiers such as race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background and/or income are not obstacles to accessing educational opportunities; the circumstances children are born into do not predict their access to the resources and educational rigor necessary for success. Within such a system, all individuals attain sufficient knowledge and skills to pursue the college and career path of their choice and become active and contributing members of their communities.



Source: www.ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2018-01/Leading%20for%20Equity_011618.pdf

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

Equity in education can be seen through two dimensions: fairness and inclusion (Field, Kuczera and Pont, 2007). Equity as inclusion means ensuring that all students reach at least a basic minimum level of skills. Equitable education systems are fair and inclusive and support their students to reach their learning potential without either formally or informally pre-setting barriers or lowering expectations. Equity as fairness implies that personal or socio-economic circumstances, such as gender, ethnic origin or family background are not obstacles to educational success. An equitable education system can redress the effect of broader social and economic inequalities. In the context of learning, it allows individuals to take full advantage of education and training irrespective of their background (Faubert, 2012; Field, Kuczera and Pont, 2007; Woessmann and Schütz, 2006).

Source: <https://www.oecd.org/education/school/50293148.pdf>

Discussion

As part of the work of the Regents Research work group, we are asking that you take a few minutes to review our current definition of Equity that is in our ESSA plan. As you review our current definition, we would like you to suggest any edits you feel may reflect a more comprehensive understanding of Equity.

Have we identified a vision for equity that is consistent with civil rights law and social justice indicators?

Could you lead a conversation in your judicial district that can assess level of support as well as the level of resistance and dissent?