

EQUITY, INCLUSIVITY, AND DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION EXHIBIT

Key Equity Definitions

The following definitions have been taken from several sources, listed below. These definitions are offered to foster a deeper understanding of equity, inclusivity and diversity.

DEFINITIONS

- **Achievement gap** refers to the unequal or inequitable distribution of educational results and benefits – the outputs. Compare to Opportunity gap and Learning gap.¹
- **Culture** is defined as the multiple components of one’s identity, including but not limited to: race, economic background, gender, language, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, and ability. Therefore, it far transcends practices such as cuisines, art, music, and celebrations to also include ways of thinking, values, and forms of expression.²
- **Cultural competence** refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures and is comprised of four components:
 1. Awareness of your own cultural worldview;
 2. Attitude towards cultural differences;
 3. Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews; and
 4. Cross-cultural skills.⁶
- **Cultural responsiveness** acknowledges the presence of culturally diverse students and the need for students to find relevant connections among themselves and the subject matter and the tasks teachers ask them to perform.⁴
- **Disaggregated data** means the numerical or non-numerical information that has been (1) collected from multiple sources and/or on multiple measures, variables, or individuals; (2) compiled into aggregate data—i.e., summaries of data—typically for the purposes of public reporting or statistical analysis; and then (3) broken down in component parts or smaller units of data. For example, information about whether individual students graduated from high school can be compiled and summarized into a single graduation rate for a school or a graduating class, and annual graduation rates for individual schools can then be aggregated into graduation rates for BOCESs, states, and countries. Graduation rates can then be disaggregated to show, for example, the percentage of male and female students, or white and non-white students, who graduated. Generally speaking, data is disaggregated for the purpose of revealing underlying trends, patterns, or insights that would not be observable in aggregated data sets, such as disparities in standardized-test scores or enrollment patterns across different categories of students.¹
- **Disparities** mean the unequal outcomes of one subgroup (e.g., racial or ethnic groups) as compared to outcomes for another subgroup.³

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- **Disproportionality** is the underrepresentation or overrepresentation of a subgroup (e.g., racial or ethnic groups) compared to its percentage in the total population.³
- **Diversity** is a reality created by individuals and groups from a broad spectrum of demographic and philosophical differences. These differences can exist along dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, language heritage, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of difference contained within everyone. Finally, we acknowledge that categories of difference are not always fixed but can be fluid, and we respect individual rights to self-identification, as no one culture is intrinsically superior to another.⁵
- **Educational equity** means raising the achievement of all students while all students while (1) narrowing the gaps between the lowest and highest performing students, and (2) eliminating the racial or cultural predictability and disproportionality of which student groups occupy the highest and lowest achievement categories including rates of graduation. The principle of educational equity goes beyond formal equality where students are treated the same. Instead, educational equity fosters a barrier-free environment in which all students have the opportunity to benefit equally.⁴
- **Equity lens** means an intentional focus on analyzing or diagnosing the impact of the design and implementation of policies on under-served and marginalized individuals and groups, and to identify and potentially eliminate barriers.⁵
- **Historically marginalized** refers to individuals who have not been able, due to societal constraints, to compete fairly in society (definition created by NYSSBA).
- **Inclusive education** is education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honored and all individuals are respected. An inclusive school system ensures that each student can participate in the classroom and in the community in positive and contributing ways.¹
- **Implicit bias** is defined as a belief or attitude that affects our understanding, decision, and actions, and that exists without our conscious awareness.¹
- **Institutional racism** is racial inequity baked into our institutions, connoting a system of power that produces racial disparities in domains such as law, health, employment, education, and so on. It can take the form of unfair policies and practices, discriminatory treatment and inequitable opportunities and outcomes. A school system that concentrates people of color in the most overcrowded and under-resourced schools with

the least qualified teachers, compared to the educational opportunities of more advantaged students, is an example of institutional racism.¹

- **Internalized racism** is the private racial beliefs held by and within individuals. The way we absorb social messages about race and adopt them as personal beliefs, biases, and prejudices are all within the realm of internalized racism. For people of color, internalized oppression can involve believing in negative messages about oneself or one's racial group. For Whites, internalized privilege can involve feeling a sense of superiority and entitlement or holding negative beliefs about people of color.²
- **Learning gap** refers to relative performance of individual students—i.e., the disparity between what students have actually learned and what they were expected to learn at a particular age or grade level, as compared to “achievement gap” and “opportunity gap”.¹
- **Microaggressions** are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. In many cases, these hidden messages may invalidate the group identity or experiential reality of targeted persons, demean them on a personal or group level, communicate the perception that they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment.²
- **Opportunity gap** is the ways in which race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, community wealth, familial situations, or other factors contribute to or perpetuate lower educational aspirations, achievement, and attainment for certain groups of students.¹
- **Rigor** is defined as instruction, schoolwork, learning experiences, and educational expectations that are academically, intellectually, and personally challenging. Rigorous learning experiences, for example, help students understand knowledge and concepts that are complex, ambiguous, or contentious, and they help students acquire skills that can be applied in a variety of educational, career, and civic contexts throughout their lives.¹
- **Socioeconomic status** is the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation. Examinations of socioeconomic status often reveal inequities in access to resources, as well as issues related to privilege, power, and control.²
- **Sociocultural responsiveness** involves the active sensitivity to what all students need to be successful academically, psychologically, emotionally, and socially. Such responsiveness recognizes that all students are different and must be uniquely responded to, challenged and stimulated, and strategies must be adapted to meet the needs of individual and groups of students.²

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- **Student engagement** is the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education. Generally speaking, the concept of “student engagement” is predicated on the belief that learning improves when students are inquisitive, interested, or inspired, and that learning tends to suffer when students are bored, dispassionate, disaffected, or otherwise “disengaged”.¹

SOURCES

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