



5272 River Road, Suite 340
Bethesda, MD 20816

301-657-7741
www.maec.org

EQUITY AUDIT MATERIALS

*Criteria for an Equitable School; Criteria for an Equitable Classroom;
Teacher Behaviors that Encourage Student Persistence*

Disclaimer

The Mid-Atlantic Equity Center is committed to the sharing of information regarding issues of equity in education. The contents of this practitioner brief were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

Criteria for an Equitable School – Equity Audit

An equitable school provides the climate, process, and content which enable students and staff to perform at their highest level. An equitable school ensures successful academic outcomes by providing equitable resources and appropriate instructional strategies for each student. The equitable school:

1. Has a clear mission which is committed to equitable access, processes, treatment, and outcomes for all students, regardless of race, gender, national origin (English Learners), disability, or socioeconomic status.
2. Provides an inclusive visual environment - halls, displays, and classrooms exhibit pictures and information about diverse students and cultures.
3. Reflects and works in collaboration with the various socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, language, gender, and disability groups within the school community.
4. Works in partnership with parents, the business community, and civic and community organizations to enrich the curriculum, provide consistently high expectations for all students, and develop supports and opportunities for all students.

School Policy

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Does the school/school system have a specific policy regarding educational equity?			
2. Does the policy clearly explain the procedures for reporting complaints, fact finding, and appeals?			
3. Does the school have a clear mission statement regarding educational equity?			
4. Are the policy and mission statement publicized regularly to staff, students, and parents?			
5. Is the policy monitored for consistent and complete implementation as well as any necessary modification?			
6. Has the school developed an equity plan of action based on the policy, mission statement, and analysis of its current equity needs?			
7. Did all component groups: the staff, parents, students, and community participate in the development of the mission statement and equity plan?			
8. Is there an equitable distribution of highly-qualified teachers?			

9. Is there a policy and procedure to assure that no student is denied participation in extracurricular or co-curricular activities because of financial reasons or because of transportation limitations?

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School Organization/Administration

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Are school administrator(s) able to identify equity issues, and trained to provide leadership in developing alternative strategies to achieve excellence and equity among staff and students?			
2. Is there a team or advisory committee that coordinates school improvement and assures equity compliance in all phases of school management?			
3. Have interpreters been identified for the varied languages present in the school community?			
4. Are enrollments monitored in special education and gifted and talented programs for disproportionate representation of one racial or ethnic group or by gender?			
5. Is data regularly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed in the following areas and by different ethnic groups? (check all which apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Course level enrollment <input type="checkbox"/> Grade point average/achievement scores <input type="checkbox"/> Standardized test scores <input type="checkbox"/> Student discipline, suspensions, and expulsions <input type="checkbox"/> Cross cultural friction or harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in school activities and honors			
6. Have policies or programs been implemented to respond to this data?			
7. Have curriculum and/or instructional strategies been modified as a result of data analysis combined with anecdotal and other information?			
8. Are the parents, community members, and business people involved in school planning, support, and governance, representative of the school community?			
9. Are values of equity, fairness, and inclusion modeled by all school staff?			

School Climate/Environment

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Do bulletin boards, displays, hall decorations, classrooms, and offices show males and females, members of varied racial or ethnic groups, and people with disabilities in a variety of roles?			
2. Does the interaction of school staff with each other, students, and parents, convey a respect of people regardless of race, ethnicity, language, gender, disability, age, religion, or socioeconomic status?			
3. Are special efforts made to achieve classroom integration when students self-segregate in the classroom (e.g. teams for contests, groups for instruction, other forms of classroom organization)?			
4. Is the code of student conduct applied fairly and equitably to all students?			
5. Do school assemblies, special programs, and speakers reflect the diverse nature of the school and larger community?			
6. Are the people involved in planning school events and programs representative of the school community by race, ethnicity, language, gender, disability, and socioeconomic status?			
7. Do all segments of the school community attend and participate in school events including athletic, dramatic, service, PTA/PTO, etc.?			
8. Are school emblems, mascots, team names, and other symbols free from racial, ethnic, gender, or disability bias?			
9. Does the library/media center have recent visual, print, and non-print materials which accurately provide information about males and females of varied groups in traditional and non-traditional roles?			
10. Are materials, notices, and other school communication available in multiple languages, Braille, or audio versions as required?			

Staff

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Are all students talked to in the same manner and held to consistent standards of behavior?			
2. Are discipline infractions and praise distributed equitably in the classroom?			
3. Are students given access to resources, facilities, and academic placement dependent on individual talent, skill and interest?			
4. Are acceptable standards for students' behavior, language, and dress non-			

discriminatory?			
5. Is the composition of the school staff representative of the racial/ethnic/gender/disability composition of the student body and larger school community?			
6. Are staff members of different genders, races, ethnic backgrounds, or disabilities distributed equitably across the various job classifications from administration to noncertified positions?			
7. Are all staff members familiar with the varied demographic groups and neighborhoods in the school?			
8. Do staff members communicate well and on a regular basis with staff members from other ethnic, racial, language, gender or disability groups?			
9. Have all staff members received in-service training to recognize strategies for countering bias?			
10. Are members of the instructional staff able to utilize personalized instructional methods to meet diverse student needs and learning preferences?			
11. When staff members are assessed, are competencies in educational equity an integral part of their performance?			
12. Are people at different job levels, paid or volunteer, treated with comparable respect?			

Assessment/Placement

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Are multiple instruments used for student assessment, including performance measures?			
2. Is all assessment data analyzed according to individual student progress as well as disaggregated patterns and outcomes by race, gender, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, and geographic location?			
3. Are assessment procedures available which accommodate English Learners and students with disabilities?			
4. Are all levels of classes, including special education, vocational education, and gifted and talented programs, comprised of students who proportionately reflect the diversity within the overall student population?			
5. Is guidance and counseling provided to encourage all students to take higher level courses, particularly in the critical filter areas of Honors, STEM, AP, and IB courses?			

Professional Learning

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. In order to ensure flexible, heterogeneous, and integrated grouping within classes, are teachers exposed to a variety of instructional approaches to meet differing learning preferences and foster both competitive and cooperative skills?			
2. Are relevant equity issues infused throughout all professional learning activities?			
3. Are opportunities provided for staff at all levels and in all job descriptions to obtain in-service training regarding educational equity issues and concerns relevant to specific populations?			
4. Are staff members trained to identify equity needs and to utilize instructional methods to meet the learning preferences of diverse students and groups?			
5. Are in-service opportunities offered to provide dialogues between policy-makers, administrators, teachers, support staff parents, as well as business and community leaders, to develop comprehensive strategies for addressing equity issues?			
6. Are translators or sign language interpreters available for participants in staff development who are from particular language minority or disability groups?			
7. Is content training offered to provide staff with curricular information and knowledge of multicultural print, non-print, and human resources available to enhance educational equity?			
8. Do staff members receive training in cross-cultural communication and group processes to increase their effectiveness in working with diverse populations?			
9. Are critical educational issues addressed in ways that do not stereotype or stigmatize particular groups?			
10. Are presenters and facilitators of in-service programs representative of the gender, racial, ethnic, and disability composition of the school system?			
11. Is professional learning delivered in ways which model techniques and authentic perspectives which are relevant to the diverse groups in the school community?			

Standards and Curriculum Development

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Are all teachers involved in curriculum development to meet standards?			
2. Are all students held to the same standards?			
3. Are the policy and instructional modifications put in place when students are unable to meet the standards?			
4. Does the curriculum utilize print and non-print materials that represent diverse groups?			
5. Do recommended textbooks and other instructional materials reflect, as much as possible, the experiences and perspectives of both genders and different cultural groups?			
6. Are the teachers' classroom activities and examples multicultural according to race, ethnicity, language, gender and disability?			
7. Does the teacher use classroom lessons to increase awareness and counter the past effects of bias and discrimination?			
8. Do the curricula infuse culturally responsive information into instructional approaches and prepare students for a diverse society and workplace?			
9. Are people with disabilities shown in the curriculum actively interacting with both people with and without disabilities?			
10. Is language used which does not stereotype people or groups?			
11. Does the curriculum suggest ways to examine the perspectives and contributions of people of color and women in every subject area, especially in Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, History, and English?			
12. Are teachers encouraged to use and provide examples of materials produced by women, people of color, and people with disabilities as part of the curriculum?			
13. Are lists and descriptions of resources (e.g. community organizations, parent volunteers, events, historical sites, etc.) provided to reinforce curriculum relevant to the experiences and contributions of diverse cultural groups?			

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Criteria for an Equitable Classroom – Equity Audit

An equitable classroom reflects the overall school environment and is characterized by:

1. An inclusive climate and visual environment;
2. Multicultural and culturally responsive pedagogy, curricula, and materials;
3. A wide variety of instructional strategies to meet differing learning styles and backgrounds;
4. Utilization of student funds of knowledge and outside resources to provide diverse tools, strategies, and role models;
5. Availability of extracurricular activities to enrich the curriculum and provide multicultural experiences;
6. Active outreach to and substantive involvement of parents/families from all groups in varied aspects of the educational program, both planning and instructional; and
7. Recognition of multiple intelligences and student strengths through academic opportunities, honors, leadership roles, and creative options.

Academic Placement/Tracking and Grouping

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Does the teacher use flexible and heterogeneous grouping to provide enrichment and higher order thinking skills for all students in differing subjects and activities?			
2. Are students reassessed regularly for appropriate academic placement and content?			
3. Does the teacher assign classroom seating patterns, projects, and other structured group activities to integrate students by race, gender, disability, and/or ethnic group?			
4. Are educational decisions based upon student profiles that include parent, student, and teacher recommendations, as well as classroom tests and grades, interest inventories, and standardized tests?			

Criteria for an Equitable Classroom – Equity Audit

Student Leadership and Recognition

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Does the teacher structure classroom activities in order to promote the development and exercise of leadership skills among a variety of students?			
2. Does the teacher encourage parents and other community members of diverse backgrounds to act as role models and help students to develop their abilities and obtain needed resources?			
3. Does the teacher facilitate diverse student representation in curricular, extracurricular, and co-curricular activities?			
4. Does the teacher nurture student self-esteem through the study of student backgrounds and cultures?			
5. Are there established areas of recognition and processes for conveying honors which acknowledge a wide range of contributions, achievements, and services?			
6. Are there opportunities to enable diverse students to develop leadership skills in problem solving and intergroup communication?			

Classroom Environment

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Are expectations for students from different racial, ethnic and socioeconomic status equitable?			
2. Are all classroom procedures and patterns, including seating, lines, and activity areas, as well as academic and athletic groupings, integrated and equitable?			
3. Are the instructional materials multicultural and nonbiased regarding gender, race, national origin, age, socioeconomic status, and disability?			
4. Are classroom tasks distributed equitably without regard to gender, race, national origin, or disability?			
5. Do the bulletin board illustrations and other visual materials depict females and males of varied racial, ethnic, age, and disability groups in a variety of roles'?			
6. Is there an effort made to use nonbiased verbal and nonverbal language in the classroom?			
7. Does the teacher provide an invitational environment where commonalities are appreciated and differences are understood and valued?			

Criteria for an Equitable Classroom – Equity Audit

Instructional Strategies

CRITERIA/QUESTIONS	NO	YES	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
1. Does the teacher provide support to all students based on individual needs and learning preferences?			
2. Does the teacher set consistent expectations, rules, and consequences for student behavior?			
3. Does the teacher praise students for the intellectual quality of their work, irrespective of the student's race, gender, national origin, or disability, from a set of criteria which has been announced to the students?			
4. Does the teacher promote cooperation and integration of students through activities which help students to work together more effectively?			
5. Does the teacher use instructional strategies, such as cooperative learning, to accommodate varied learning styles and backgrounds?			
6. Does the teacher develop appropriate lessons for limited English proficient students?			
7. Does the teacher communicate high expectations and respect for all students including equitable praise, questioning, wait time, feedback, and rewards?			
8. Does the teacher direct the classroom discussion to enable all students to participate?			
9. Does the teacher analyze his or her interactions with students to determine any differential patterns, and take actions to counteract and balance differences?			

Source: *Elements of Equity: Criteria for Equitable Schools*

Developed by Jill Moss Greenberg and Susan Shaffer, Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, Inc., 1991, 2016

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Teacher Behaviors that Encourage Student Persistence – Equity Audit

Below are checklists for: (1) measuring your strengths in encouraging students' persistence in learning and (2) marking areas for self-improvement. Check the appropriate column on the right.

- A = Always
- S = Sometimes
- R = Rarely
- N = Never

Instructional Interventions

DOES THE TEACHER:	A	S	R	N
1. Ask open-ended questions?				
2. Communicate positive expectations?				
3. State requirements for successful completion of assignments clearly and definitively?				
4. Avoid ambiguous statements and directions?				
5. Encourage students to explore new ideas and approaches to problem-solving?				
6. Encourage student self-assessment and evaluation to identify strengths and weaknesses?				
7. Analyze the impact of teaching styles on students learning and make appropriate adjustments in style?				
8. Encourage students to set realistic timetables for completing assignments?				
9. Help students identify milestones in reaching their goals?				
10. Assist students in celebrating milestones and utilizing failure as constructive learning for planning?				
11. Provide opportunities for students to use hands-on materials?				

Teacher Behaviors that Encourage Student Persistence

Curriculum Interventions

DOES THE TEACHER:	A	S	R	N
1. Provide opportunities for students to relate their interests to required curriculum?				
2. Provide as many choices in curriculum content and activities as possible?				
3. Identify a wide range of knowledge and skills which students could acquire if they stayed with the task?				
4. Provide opportunities for students to use hands-on materials?				
5. Provide challenging work that is neither too easy nor too difficult?				
6. Use culturally responsive and multicultural curriculum supplements?				

Classroom Management Interventions

DOES THE TEACHER:	A	S	R	N
1. Model cooperative and collaborative behavior by encouraging students' participation in classroom management decisions?				
2. Demonstrate flexibility and fairness in situations which evoke conflict and potential classroom disruption?				
3. Rotate classroom management responsibilities to give all students an opportunity to be leaders and problem solvers?				
4. Reward and praise students' work equitably and consistently?				

Interpersonal Interventions

DOES THE TEACHER:	A	S	R	N
1. Find opportunities to improve interpersonal skills?				
2. Share problems and persistence techniques?				
3. Provide appropriate verbal and concrete rewards for students' efforts?				
4. Encourage cooperation between students?				
5. Call on students by name?				
6. Admit own learning role by acknowledging information provided by students?				
7. Empathize with students' thoughts, feelings, sense of insecurity, and concerns?				

Teacher Behaviors that Encourage Student Persistence

8. Establish a warm personal relationship that helps students know they are liked and expected to succeed?				
9. Send positive messages home as well as concerns?				

- excerpted from Bessie C. Howard's *Learning to Persist, Persisting to Learn*, published by the Mid-Atlantic Center, adapted 2016

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