A Model for Improving Educational Equity

Continuous Improvement Process Equity Model

san diego county office of
EDUCATION
FUTURE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES℠

WWW.SDCOE.NET/EQUITY

All Students
Deserve a High-Quality Education

The San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) is committed to cultivating educational equity to ensure *each and every student* has access to quality learning experiences and the necessary supports to engage in powerful learning opportunities – in every classroom, every day – in order to be successful in college, career, community, and life.

The County Office envisions a future where all students graduate with the option to attend a University of California or California State University school, and a clear path to their own success.

The San Diego County Board of Education goals guide SDCOE's educational opportunities and supports to districts and schools so that all students, including historically under-served students, are successful.

The Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) Equity Model is one important component of SDCOE's effort to expand and enhance efforts to transform schools into places of opportunity for our most vulnerable youth.

The CIP Equity Model supports the improvement of educational equity in schools by engaging participants in a process that both strengthens their understanding of the complexities of equity and helps them develop a continuous improvement habit of mind with the goal of implementing sustainable system change for all students. The model includes research-proven methodologies and strategies.

Educational equity means students have access, opportunities, and supports to thrive in school. Social or cultural factors – income, ZIP code, ethnicity, gender, language, and learning ability – should not predict whether students are prepared for college or career. Educational equity requires a systemic approach that flexibly responds to the diverse needs of students.

At the San Diego County Office of Education, our goal is for 100 percent of students to graduate from high school with the option of attending a four-year college.

While state averages continue to show discrepancies among student groups, California has made substantial progress to ensure all students have a quality education.

Even with some gains, we have a lot of work to do to ensure that every student meets the University of California and California State University admission requirements of completing high school "a-g" courses.

## Cohort Graduation Rates for San Diego County (2017-18)

Student Group	Grad Rate	Meeting UC-CSU Requirements
Foster Youth	48%	23%
Homeless	57%	35%
Students with Disabilities	61%	35%
English Learner	64%	30%
Migrant Youth	74%	36%
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	74%	48%
African American	74%	53%
Latinx	76%	48%
Native American	80%	42%
White	87%	64%
Asian	93%	84%
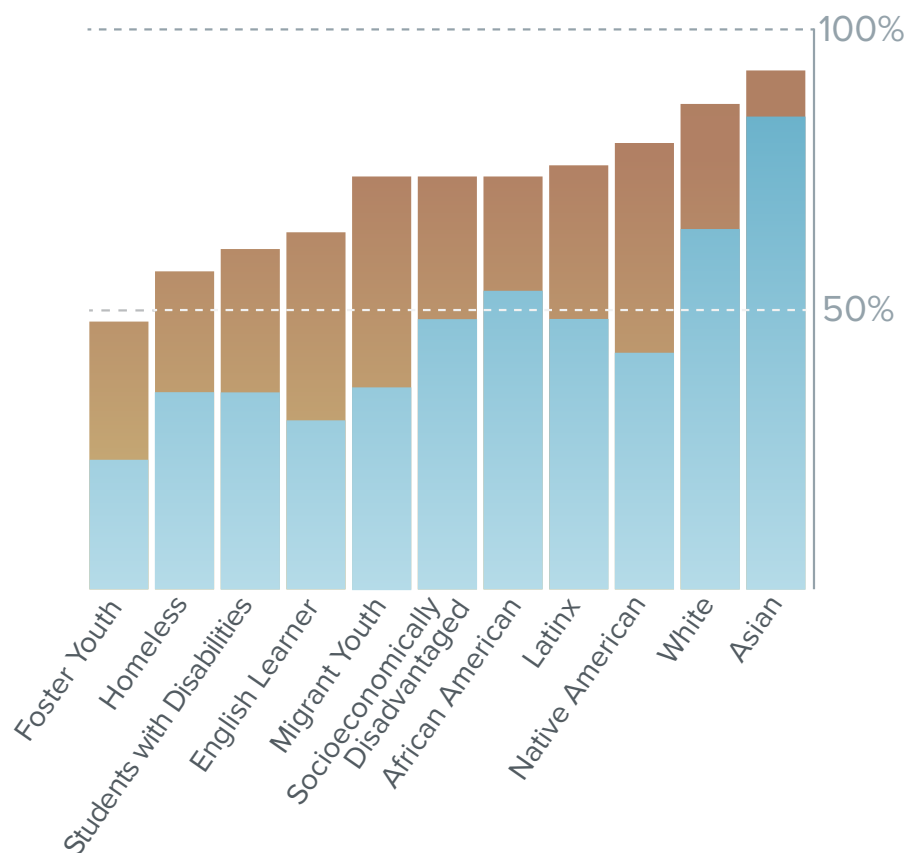
Continuous Improvement Process Equity Model

The CIP Equity Model is designed for school teams, including site and district administrators, teachers, counselors, and support staff. The process occurs during a school year with in-person learning institutes partnered with onsite or virtual coaching sessions to support school teams during action periods.
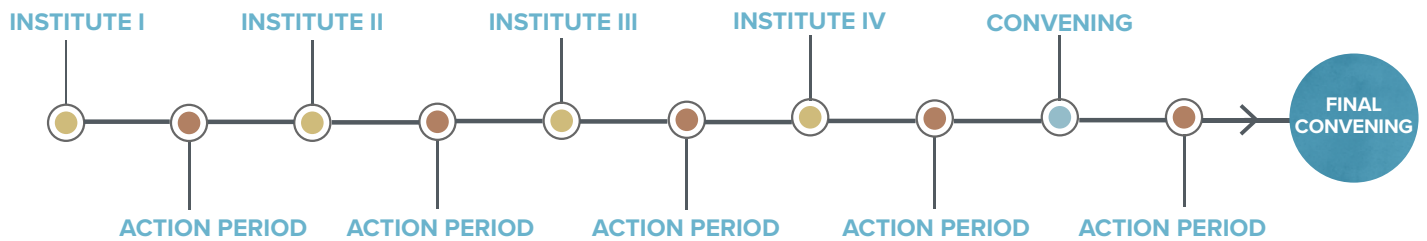
Each institute develops and deepens participants' understanding around the complexities of equity. As teams co-construct and reflect during their action periods, they learn from each other and make research-based adjustments to their equity-focused actions. During action periods, teams engage in customized, onsite and virtual coaching. School teams meet weekly to communicate with their school and district communities about their learning.

Institute I: Equity Launch

During a two-day institute, teams gain foundational knowledge about systems thinking and equity as they develop an initial, shared understanding around this complex work. A common maxim in systems work is that each system is designed to get the results it gets. For this reason, team members acquire the tools and affective learning strategies to discuss and draft what equity means for their schools and districts. To create an environment where productive discourse and continuous improvement can flourish, participants connect with a network of educators who have an interest in sharpening their equity lens, reflecting, and improving their practice.

Action Period (four to six weeks)

Teams return to their sites to draft a school vision and begin the initial steps to plan for an Educational Equity and Excellence Audit through the San Diego State University National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST) in partnership with SDCOE. The two-day audit will guide each team's continuous improvement process. The audit process includes classroom observations, stakeholder focus groups, hallway and passing period observations, and a review of bell and master schedules.

> When leadership teams take very defined and strategic actions toward ensuring equity in education, they are more likely to move forward transformational work in their system.

Institute II

Teams use tools such as the Cynefin framework to develop a deeper understanding of complex systems. Institute learning also includes the concepts of a system of oppression, implicit bias, and the different ways school systems unintentionally perpetuate racialized outcomes for underserved students and families. Teams begin to identify investigation questions to learn more about their system.

Action Period (three to five weeks)

Teams return to their sites and gather additional data and information about their system.

Institute III

During a two-day institute, teams analyze quantitative data, such as California School Dashboard performance and local assessments, and qualitative data from their Educational Equity and Excellence Audit and investigation questions to uncover patterns, trends, and root causes. Teams also begin to identify an equity challenge in their system, an aim statement or goal, and a change idea to address the challenge. Site teams — made up of participants with diverse roles, such as teachers, principals, counselors, and assistant superintendents — collaborate to identify different strategies to address the same equity challenge. Teams explore measures to document improvement. Teams then engage in a plan-do-study-act cycle, a simple but powerful tool for improvement.

Equity Challenge

An equity challenge is an identified circumstance or condition in the school system that contributes to inequitable student academic and social-emotional outcomes. Strategically addressing or changing those conditions can result in the reduction of the predictability of failure based on a student's linguistic, social, and/or cultural identity. Likewise, focusing on equity challenges leads to the opportunity of improved learning experiences that honor and cultivate a student's strengths, including their linguistic, social, and/or cultural identity.

Action Period (two to four weeks)

Teams return to their sites to put their Institute III change idea and strategies into action. They hold frequent team meetings to adjust their actions as needed.

Institute IV

Teams focus on and discuss their change idea actions and outcomes during the two-day institute. Through data analysis, conversations on successes and challenges, and a review of learning from previous institutes, teams refine their equity challenge, aim statement, and change idea.

Action Period (two to four weeks)

Teams return to their sites to put their revised Institute IV change idea and strategies into action. They hold frequent team meetings to adjust their actions as needed.

Convening

At a one-day event, district teams from across the state meet virtually or in person to discuss their respective learning and progress around their work in the CIP Equity Model.

> ❭ Making practices visible and hearing about others' learning can help everyone come up with new and creative ways to strategize around their equity challenge.

Action Period (two to four weeks)

Incorporating feedback from the convening, teams return to their sites to put their revised change idea and strategies into action. Teams record their data and develop a communications plan to share their equity work with their school and district community.

Final Convening

At a one-day event, district teams from across the state meet virtually or in person to discuss how they will scale their respective learning and progress as well as the CIP Equity Model.

Theory of Change

If our education system creates the conditions for continuous improvement through a lens of equity, then we can more effectively take action to transform our systems into places of opportunity for historically marginalized youth.

While no single solution is sufficient to bring about the systemic changes needed to create a more just education system, this approach moves educators to think and act in ways that result in seeing our education system in new and revealing ways.

Equity Lens

Exploring this complex work through an equity lens encourages us to examine our own perspectives and see our multidimensional systems with greater clarity and dimension. When we see differently, we believe differently; when we believe differently, we behave differently. This transformative lens holds space for us to begin to heal, learn, and redesign systems where all students receive a world-class education.

san diego county office of
EDUCATION
FUTURE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES℠

www.sdcoe.net/equity

Contact SDCOE Executive Director, Equity
Dr. Jaguanana Lathan at equity@sdcoe.net for more information.

@SanDiegoCOE

#SDEquity