

Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in Pennsylvania:

↳ Perceptions and Clarity ↵

Educational communities are seeking clarity around the purpose, intention, and need for equity, inclusion, and belonging in educational spaces. This information is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to help address perceptions and offer clarity on equitable practices in education.

① Equity

Equity in education is defined as every student having access to the resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, family background and/or family income. (adapted from www.ccsso.org)

② Inclusion

Inclusion is defined as engagement within a community where the equal worth and inherent dignity of each person is honored. An inclusive community promotes and sustains a sense of belonging. (adapted from Cobb & Krownapple, 2019)

③ Belonging

Belonging is defined as experiencing appreciation, validation, acceptance, and fair treatment within an environment. (adapted from Cobb & Krownapple, 2019)

Perception	Clarity
Equity, inclusion, and belonging is only for urban educational spaces with diverse populations.	Equity, inclusion, and belonging helps create access, opportunity, and a healthy learning environment for ALL learners, regardless of demographic (urban, rural, suburban). Educational communities include people of varying lived experiences who have diverse needs and a variety of strengths.
Equity, inclusion, and belonging is another way of promoting Critical Race Theory.	Critical Race Theory is not part of or taught in any state required curriculum. Equity, inclusion, and belonging in education helps create spaces for ALL learners and staff to be their authentic selves. Discussions about cultures and identities in education are important to ensure equitable access for ALL learners.
Equity, inclusion, and belonging is only about funding.	Equitable funding is an important consideration to ensure fair access and opportunity for students across Pennsylvania. Funding is one part of the process to create healthy learning environments - but it cannot shift systems in isolation.
Equity, inclusion, and belonging suggests that I am not a good person or that my education system is bad.	It is important to understand who we are as we interact with others. Self-Awareness, one of the PDE equity pillars of practice , invites people to explore and reflect upon their own thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. Self-awareness supports how to engage in healthy relationships with people of diverse backgrounds—but it is not intended to encourage guilt, shame, or hopelessness. Discussing equity, inclusion, and belonging may be uncomfortable, however, it is important to ensure we can engage with individuals, families, and communities who are different from us.
Equity, inclusion, and belonging does not allow for diverse viewpoints.	Diverse viewpoints are an important part of our democracy and help our nation thrive. Equity, inclusion, and belonging help create the conditions for civil dialogues to occur. Equity in voice, inclusion of different perspectives, and honoring the lived experiences of others is a vital part of preparing youth for global citizenship, as well as a global workforce and marketplace.