

Professional Learning Network: Educational Equity

Educational Equity Professional Learning Network (PLN)

What is the purpose of the Educational Equity PLN? The 2015-16 PLN on Educational Equity reflects MA's commitment to addressing persistent disparities in certain student subgroups' access to effective educators. The PLN will bring together eight to ten districts to explore the following problem of practice: students in specific high-needs subgroups (low-income, racial/ethnic minority, ELL, special needs) are less likely to have access to excellent educators than their higher-income or white peers.

What do we mean by Educational Equity? Equitable access has historically been framed from the perspective of teachers, with the "equitable distribution" of teachers leading to strategies that would move teachers from one school or district to another. Many of these strategies have not worked well; teachers do not want to be distributed like pieces on a chessboard, and the focus on using monetary incentives to drive workforce distribution has not proven effective. With *educational equity*, ESE is shifting the focus from teachers to students and asking the question: *What can we do to ensure that ALL students have equitable access to the same educator experiences?*

The Educational Equity PLN addresses equity gaps in students' learning experiences – particularly their assignment to excellent educators – through three entry points:

- **Educator Experience:** Research demonstrates that inexperienced teachers, especially teachers in their first year, are at their lowest point of effectiveness. In Massachusetts, students in low-income and minority subgroups are more likely to be taught by inexperienced educators than other students.
- **Educator Preparation:** The educator pipeline is not yet meeting the demand in certain licensure areas. In Massachusetts, students in high poverty and high minority schools have more exposure to unprepared teachers; they are about five times more likely than students in low poverty and low minority schools to be taught by teachers who are unlicensed or not highly qualified. Additionally, stakeholders indicated that many preparation programs can do more to prepare educators to meet the needs of diverse learners.
- **Educator Effectiveness:** Statewide educator evaluation data from 2013-14 indicates that students in high-need subgroups have less access to effective teachers and administrators -- those rated Proficient and Exemplary -- than do their peers.

These equity gaps and their root causes will vary widely across and within MA districts. Together, we will study prevailing causes, identify and implement the best local strategies to eliminate gaps, and share outcomes with all MA schools and districts.

What is a PLN?

ESE's Educator Effectiveness Professional Learning Networks (PLNs) provide opportunities for districts to engage in a deep partnership with other districts and with ESE to develop and/or refine strategies on targeted topics. In 2014-15, ESE supported two PLNs: the **Teacher Leadership PLN** with 11 districts focusing on the development and implementation of high quality teacher leadership opportunities (see [Teacher Leadership webpage](#)), and the **PLN for Supporting Evaluator Capacity** with 8 districts exploring strategies to build evaluator capacity (see district resources [here](#)) .

- ✓ **GOAL:** The Educational Equity PLN will support districts to identify and formulate plans to address local equity gaps through implementation of strategies articulated in the [2015 Massachusetts State Equity Plan](#), as well as the development of new strategies.
- ✓ **EXPECTATIONS:** PLN district teams will engage in a one-day guided self-assessment during Fall 2015, facilitated by the [Education Delivery Institute](#) (EDI), to (1) identify local equity gaps specific to their students and educators, (2) home in on possible root causes for the gap(s), and (3) identify two to four strategies to address these gaps. Districts adopting similar strategies will then work together throughout the 2015-16 school year to learn from one another and share experiences related to implementation.
- ✓ **OUTCOMES:** In partnership with the [Northeast Comprehensive Center](#), ESE and participating districts will share promising/emerging practices and strategies to overcome inequities in students' educator experiences at the 2016 ESE Spring Convening and Summer 2016 Webinar Series.

Want to learn more or propose a future topic for a PLN? Email EducatorDevelopment@doe.mass.edu.

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Participation

Benefits of Participation

Members of ESE's Center for Educator Effectiveness, in partnership with the Education Delivery Institute (EDI) and the Northeast Comprehensive Center (NCC), will provide comprehensive, targeted assistance to participating districts throughout the 2015-16 year. Benefits to participating districts include:

- ✓ a one-day self-assessment of equity gaps and root causes facilitated by national experts from the Education Delivery Institute (EDI)
- ✓ Access to a network of peers to learn from and share ideas
- ✓ Documentation of outcomes and work to share with other districts
- ✓ Access to specially-designed data reports through EDWIN (ESE)
- ✓ Support for resource refinement and information dissemination (ESE, EDI and NCC)

Expectations of Participation

Participating districts will engage in a one-day guided self-assessment and planning workshop during Fall 2015, facilitated by EDI, to

- 1) identify local equity gaps specific to their students and educators,
- 2) home in on possible root causes for the gap(s), and
- 3) identify two to four strategies to address these gaps.

Districts adopting similar strategies will then work together throughout the 2015-16 school year to learn from one another and share experiences related to implementation.

Time Commitment

All districts will be expected to:

- ✓ Attend and be an active participant in the PLN kick-off meeting (1/2 day, September 24, 2015 or October 1, 2015)
- ✓ Engage in a one-day guided self-assessment, facilitated in the district by staff from the Education Delivery Institute (Fall 2015)
- ✓ Attend a one-day implementation meeting (December 11, 2015)
- ✓ Provide regular feedback on progress related to all PLN initiatives (Winter/Spring 2016)
- ✓ Participate in monthly calls and two district-specific meetings (Winter/Spring 2016)
- ✓ Serve as a presenter at ESE's Spring Convening (May 2016)
- ✓ Participate in a webinar to share information about the PLN focus area with all MA districts (Summer 2016)
- ✓ Contribute to the development of resources related to the PLN focus area to be used by all MA districts

ESE Team: Simone Lynch, Assistant Director for Educator Effectiveness; Claire Abbott, Educator Effectiveness Coordinator; Meagan Steiner, Program Coordinator

EDI Team: Rebecca Davis, Sara Kerr & Danielle Branson

NCC Team: Susan Henry & Adam Tanney