## District Equity Templates: Engaging Stakeholders in Root Cause Analysis

For additional guidance, see the [Equity Roadmap](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/equitableaccess/resources/templates-strategies.docx) and additional District Equity Templates

Developing an equity plan will require stakeholder engagement and application of stakeholder input—that can **also help inform root cause analysis**. Consider how to ensure inclusion of diverse stakeholders, including district data coordinators, human resources personnel, students, and representatives of historically disadvantaged student groups. Districts should prioritize consulting with **administrators, teachers and parents**.

**Example cases:** Economically disadvantaged students inDistrict F experience gaps in access to highly rated and in-field teachers. District data suggests that a root cause may be a lack of new teachers’ preparation for the district’s context and student needs. The district can consult new teachers, educator preparation programs, and teacher candidates/student teachers, and ask about how teacher candidates learn to serve economically disadvantaged students to help develop a better picture of how to inform educator preparation.

In District G’s high school, students of color have lower rates of assignment to highly rated teachers, and one root cause is lower enrollment in advanced courses. The district can consult middle and high school teachers, school counselors, students, and parents to understand better the barriers to advanced-course enrollment for students of color, and what the district can do to address the barriers.

**Examples of stakeholder engagement questions:**

* How are students assigned to teachers each year?
* What are we prioritizing in hiring new teachers?
* How does the distribution of our educator evaluation ratings and feedback contribute to gaps in performance?
* What structures in the master schedule are influencing assignment?
* Could root causes of gaps be different in elementary and secondary schools? For example, class assignment often occurs differently in high school. Tracked classes are more common in secondary schools.
* How do schools decide which teachers have which classes? For example, are certain types of teachers more likely to teach advanced, inclusion, or SEI classes? Does this vary across schools?

| **Stakeholder name:** | **Key questions/input to solicit:** |
| --- | --- |
| **Key takeaways for root cause analysis:** |
| **Key takeaways for strategy development:** |
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## Analyzing root causes based on stakeholder feedback and quantitative/qualitative data

Quantitative data and knowledge of local contexts should inform a discussion of root causes of gaps in educator access.

**Example case:** District C may conclude that equity gaps are partially due to teachers waiting until the summer to report that they plan to leave. In that case, administrators in schools with more economically disadvantaged students must often find new hires at the last minute, when the highest quality candidates are no longer available. One factor that the district can control is incentives to disclose plans to leave early, such as allowing departing teachers to retain their benefits over the summer, so that the school can hire replacement teachers earlier.

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| **Specific equity gap area:[[1]](#footnote-1)**  |
| --- |
| Which of the following are likely categories of root causes for this gap area? |
| * Teacher recruitment and hiring
* Teacher development and assignment
* Teacher retention
* Evaluator calibration
* Student course selection and assignment
* Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
 |
| How are the selected root cause categories connected to this equity gap? Which causes are within the district’s control? |
|  |
| Why do you think this is the case?  |
|  |
| How do you know? (data/evidence) |
|  |
| What are the *specific* root cause/s? |
|  |

**Example template:**

| **Specific equity gap area:** *In District E, ELs are less likely to be assigned to teachers rated E/P.* |
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| Which of the following are likely categories of root causes for this gap area? |
| * **Teacher recruitment and hiring**
* **Teacher development and assignment**
* Evaluator calibration
* Student course selection and assignment
* **Teacher retention**
* Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
 |
| How are the selected root cause categories connected to this equity gap? Which causes are within the district’s control? |
| * *We have difficulty recruiting and hiring teachers with a record of successfully teaching ELs.*
* *Our teachers in schools with larger proportions of ELs require more support in teaching diverse learners.*
* *Our teachers in schools with larger proportions of ELs are more likely to leave the district.*
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| Why do you think this is the case? |
| * *Teachers specifically seeking to work with ELs target districts with a larger EL population, and we hire relatively late in the year.*
* *The district has focused on providing individual teachers with training, but not on a systemic approach to building leaders’, coaches’, and evaluators’ capacities to support teachers in serving ELs.*
* *Teachers do not feel adequately supported to teach ELs.*
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| How do you know? (data/evidence) |
| * *Recruitment and hiring: anecdotal information from teachers who declined offers at our district; discussions with neighboring high-incidence EL districts; comparison of our hiring timeline to those of neighboring districts*
* *Development: ELs more likely to have teachers with low ratings in Standard II, “Teaching All Students.” Evaluation data shows much variation across evaluators’ ratings and feedback. Teacher survey data shows that SEI teachers do not feel adequately supported by building leaders. Anecdotal evidence shows SEI teachers often turn to ESL teachers for support that they do not receive from leaders.*
* *Retention: Teacher in-service and exit survey data*
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| What are the *specific* root cause/s? |
| * *Because we are a moderate-incidence EL district, and prospective hires are not well aware of our EL programs, the SEI teachers who are successful in working with ELs are attracted to jobs in districts with a larger EL population. Because we hire later, we miss the opportunity to hire many successful teachers.*
* *Because our district has focused more on teacher training than on school leader, coach, and evaluator training to improve instruction of ELs, not all leaders, coaches, and evaluators are prepared to support SEI teachers. Evaluators are not calibrated around what best practices in Standard II should look like.*
* *Because our district has not focused on training school leaders, coaches, and evaluators to support teachers of ELs, teachers are more likely to leave the district and be replaced by teachers without experience teaching ELs.*
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1. Table adapted from the Texas Education Agency’s Texas Equity Toolkit [↑](#footnote-ref-1)