



VOICES FOR  
RACIAL JUSTICE

Pathway to Education Equity

## Key Terms

**Access:** The freedom and ability to obtain or make use of something. Not just the availability of an opportunity, but also having the conditions for being able to take advantage of the opportunity.

**Accountable:** Showing responsibility for decisions and actions. Able to justify or explain to others decisions and actions.

**Continuous improvement:** An ongoing effort to improve. In education equity, a commitment to continuous improvement involves change coming from the community itself, multiple small changes rather than one “silver bullet,” and long term vision for change.

**Culturally competent:** Having the knowledge and understanding of the cultural experiences of a community, but also the operational effectiveness to truly and respectfully include diverse community members in all aspects of planning, decision making, and practice.

**Disparity:** The condition of being unequal in outcomes in one group compared to another.

**Disproportionality:** Overrepresentation of a group of people (described by race, poverty level, disability, or other indicator) in a particular group, system, or outcome compared to their representation in the overall population of the community.

**Equity:** Justice, fairness, and inclusion. From the City of Minneapolis *Eliminating Racial Employment Disparities* report, March 19, 2013:

“Just and fair inclusion. It is the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups. Equity is different from equality; equity is a principle that is based upon justness and fairness, while equality demands everyone be treated at the same level.”

**High expectations:** Belief that all students can learn and achieve. Teachers may need to identify their own differential treatment of students or groups of students and then engage in positive interaction with students who they have treated differently.

**Inclusion:** Creating a sense community and belonging. The conditions for full participation through a welcoming and accepting atmosphere.

**Learner-centered instruction:** Instruction that allows the student to gather, synthesize, and integrate information. In contrast to teacher-centered instruction that focuses on teachers providing information to students. Learner-centered instruction is focused on the process of learning, including making mistakes. In the context of education equity, this approach recognizes that students bring multiple and diverse racial, cultural, and economic experiences to their learning.

**Mutual respect:** Holding a person in high regard and treating him or her with dignity, and the reciprocation of that regard and treatment. In education equity, mutual respect between



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teachers and students, between teachers and families, and across other groups is essential for building equitable schools where all members feel included and their voices heard.

**Pilot Project:** A test or trial project conducted on a smaller scale, intended to demonstrate the effectiveness of a full program.

**Racial Equity Impact Assessment:** A tool to assess whether and how proposed policies or practices will affect racial equity, either positively or negatively. When used as part of the decision making process, asking the questions raised in an Equity Impact Assessment can help avoid unintended consequences and allow for changes to the proposal before adoption.

**Restorative justice:** An approach that considers the needs of victims, offenders, and communities, rather than only focused on punishment of the offender. In schools, restorative justice strategies help repair relationships in the school community, focus on responsibility and accountability, and allow for growth and development.

**Role model:** Individual whose qualities inspire others. For students, a role model can be an important source of building confidence and motivation. Often, it helps to have role models who share characteristics, whether race, culture, or experience, so that a student can see his or her own potential through a role model's qualities.

**Rubric:** Tool for measuring or scoring mastery. In education, rubrics are most often used for guiding grading and assessment processes. Rubrics can be used to guide an ongoing process of effort or learning. The Education Equity Pathway functions like a rubric by helping to guide and assess progress toward education equity in institutions. It is intended to help schools and districts both recognize their success in creating greater education equity and indicate areas for growth.

**Transformative change:** System-wide change that has an inclusive process of all community stakeholders, that considers whole institutions (rather than only individuals), and that is visionary or that sees big change as possible. Because transformative change engages communities from the beginning of the process, community members see their role in developing and carrying out solutions. Transformative change is long-lasting because of that community investment.

**Transparent process:** A process that exhibits openness, communication, and accountability. Operating in a way that allows others to see what actions are being performed.

**Stakeholders:** Those affected by institutional decisions, who have influence or power over them, or who have an interest in the institution's success.