Driving Toward Equity Through School Improvement: Strategic Priorities and Resource Equity

April 5, 2023

Session Summary

Facilitators: Carol Keirstead, National Comprehensive Center, Project Co-Lead
Chris Dwyer, National Comprehensive Center, Senior Advisor

Session Highlights

≫ State Team Strategic Priorities: State team leads presented their strategic priorities and sought feedback from other states during breakout groups.

- o Alabama: Develop a framework to support schools using an equity lens with a focus on low-performing schools. The state will examine current structures and resources, look for alignment of resources and analyze the relationship between funds spent on initiatives and outcomes.
- o Illinois: Implement tiered support to the lowest performing schools. This priority is aligned to the state board's strategic plan and the Education Equity Impact Analysis Toolkit.
- o Mississippi: Examine root causes to mitigate challenges with the deployment of data systems that can strengthen efforts to advance equity. Explore how data can be used to address disparities.
- o New York: Investigate how different parts of the system collect and use data to identify and mitigate disparities in school discipline.
- o North Carolina: Examine how to leverage current resources within the state agency to have the most collective impact in district and school improvement efforts in the most equitable way.
- o Oregon: Explore ways to refine existing data systems to more granularly identify and support students and ensure they see themselves represented in the data. Understand how the state team can work to develop consciousness around conditions resulting in inequitable outcomes and consider policies and practices (actions) that would address those outcomes.
- o Pennsylvania: Utilize vested partner relationships to develop a statewide integrated data system to promote reporting of federal and state monitoring capacities and to consistently provide oversight to educational programs.

Across state teams, the following themes emerged: breaking down silos through cross department collaboration, improving and rethinking data systems, creating greater consciousness about existing disparities and the need to mitigate disparities, better use of existing systems such as monitoring to identify and address disparities, and navigating challenges around addressing equity within the current political climate.

≫ Resource equity overview: each of the following presenters conducted "mini" workshops on a topic related to resources.

- o Edunomics School Spending and Outcomes Snapshot: This presentation discussed the use of data displays about financial resource allocations and school outcomes to drive productive conversations around creating more equitable distribution of resources and outcomes. The data display snapshots are the result of two years of work with districts.
- o U.S. Education Department (USED) Resource Equity Requirements to Support School Improvement in Title I, Part A: This group discussed the resource equity requirements of school improvement under ESSA's Title I. The program office used a targeted monitoring protocol over the past year with nine states. Discussions during the presentation included lessons from the nine states, and promising practices as well as strategies that participating states are using to encourage quality district reviews.,.
- o Alabama's School Improvement Funding Allocations: This presentation shared various models of weighted subgroup categories for distributing school improvement funding allocations more equitably to address needs. Alabama used the CSI allocations as the starting point and adjusted weightings using existing and available data.
- o The Educational Opportunity Project: This presentation demonstrated how to use the project website and available data tools.