

# Voices From the Field: Early Experiences With State Equity Plan Implementation

Wednesday, June 22, 2016  
1:00–2:30 p.m. Eastern Time

Center on  
**GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS**  
at American Institutes for Research ■



NORTHEAST COMPREHENSIVE CENTER



# Introductions

Organization	Participants	
<b>Center on Great Teachers and Leaders</b>	Ellen Sherratt, Deputy Center Director	Dana Chambers, Senior TA Consultant & Presenter
<b>Midwest Comprehensive Center</b>	Lynette Thompson, Senior TA Consultant & Presenter	
<b>Northeast Comprehensive Center</b>	Kathy Dunne, Lead of Regional GTL Equity Project & Facilitator	Carol Kierstead, Co-Director
<b>State Panelists</b>	Ivy Pfeffer (Arkansas) Jill Grubb (Ohio) Etai Mizrav (DC) Robin Hebert (Kentucky)	Andrea Dixon-Seahorn (Missouri) Sheila Briggs (Wisconsin) Maria Stecker (Delaware) Caitlin Beatson (Indiana)

# Today's Presenters and Facilitator



**Dana Chambers**  
Center on Great  
Teachers and  
Leaders



**Lynette Thompson**  
Midwest  
Comprehensive  
Center



**Kathy Dunne**  
Northeast  
Comprehensive  
Center

# Northeast Equitable Access Collaborative Technical Assistance

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Supporting states in the Northeast in the implementation of plans to ensure equitable access to effective educators:

Center on Great Teachers and Leaders  
Council of Chief State School Officers

National Center for Systemic Improvement

Northeast Comprehensive Center

Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands



# Process and Purpose

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- **Process:** The GTL Center reached out to comprehensive center directors and the Equitable Access Support Network (EASN) to identify states with early successes in equity plan implementation.
- **Purposes:**
  - To inform ongoing state equity plan implementation by sharing information on early successes of 10 states
  - To provide an opportunity for state leaders to learn from each other

# Webinar Design and Structure

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- Background, context, and agenda review
- Presentation of interview findings
- Opportunity to ask questions through the chat feature
- Opportunity to provide information on your state's efforts through poll feature
- Opportunity to request additional follow-up conversations with SEA leaders from other states



# Interviewing States About Equity Plan Implementation



# Interviews With SEA Equitable Access Leaders

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- Needs-sensing conducted by the GTL Center and the Northeast Comprehensive Center
  - Through interviews with SEA staff addressing four areas related to the implementation of state equitable access plans.
- SEA respondents are with us today and available to answer any questions.

# Focus of Interviews

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# Participating States

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- Arkansas
- California
- Delaware
- District of Columbia
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Missouri
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Wisconsin



# Strategy Prioritization and Organizing the Work Within the SEA

# State-Level Equity Plan Strategy Implementation Efforts

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- Most states indicated that they are currently implementing all of the strategies in their equity plan.
- A small number of states are prioritizing a subset of strategies in the short term based on readiness and urgency, as their plans specified.

# Prioritized Strategy Implementation

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- **North Dakota:** Addressing critical teacher shortages
- **Kentucky:** Improving the school culture and diversifying the educator workforce
- **District of Columbia:** Implementing a voluntary data collaborative



# SEA Organizational Structure: Situating the Work in the Agency

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SEAs situate the work in a variety of departments, agencies, or teams within their larger organizational structure:

- Title II
- Educator quality or educator effectiveness
- Educator policy and compliance
- Educator licensure and effectiveness

# SEA Organizational Structure: Situating the Work in the Agency

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Where the equity work is situated reflects other SEA priorities:

- **District of Columbia:** Equity plan as a school improvement tool focusing on the lowest performing schools
- **North Dakota:** Situates work in federal title programs office
- **Delaware:** Leads the work through its Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Unit (TLEU)
- **Wisconsin:** Division for Academic Excellence (licensing, educator effectiveness, and content areas) leads the work
- **Ohio:** Situated in the Center for the Teaching Profession partnering with the Office of Federal Programs to support local equitable access planning



# SEA Organizational Structure: Leadership and Management

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States noted one key point of contact coordinating cross-department efforts to be most effective in managing the work:

- **Arkansas** organizes strategies into three categories: (1) attract and prepare; (2) develop, support, and retain; (3) use existing resources; strategies overseen by the assistant commissioner
- **North Dakota** has a coleadership structure and is hiring a new SEA staff member
- **Ohio's** Office of Educator Effectiveness in the Center for the Teaching Profession has primary leadership; each strategy in the plan has an individual lead

# SEA Organizational Structure: Funding Equity Plan Implementation

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## ■ Funding

- States are moving forward with implementation without additional funding sources.
- Many states leverage existing funding streams.
- Some state funding is differentiated based on the department responsible.
- Some states allocate funds to local districts to support implementation.

## ■ Leveraging Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- States expressed interest in funding that can be leveraged within ESSA to support implementation.

# SEA Organizational Structure: Funding Equity Plan Implementation

- **Arkansas** leverages existing resources by improving strategies already in place.
- **California** uses a Local Control Funding Formula that prioritizes particular student populations and demographics.
- **Delaware** notes that nearly 80% of its TLEU funding is related to its seven equity strategies.
- **Missouri** integrates the equity plan work into its overall educator quality budget.
- **Indiana** leverages a \$2 million Excellence in Performance Grant to support equity plan strategies (e.g., compensating teachers serving in leadership roles).

# Poll 1: SEA Organizational Structure for Equity Plan Implementation

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Which department or office in your SEA (or the SEA you work with) manages equity plan implementation?

- a) Title II or federal programs office
- b) Educator quality or effectiveness office
- c) Professional learning office
- d) Licensure or preparation office
- e) More than one office

# Poll 2: Funding Equity Plan Implementation

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How does your state fund equity plan implementation?

- a) Dedicated funding stream
- b) Existing educator quality/effectiveness funds
- c) Grant funding
- d) Have not identified a funding source



# Q&A: Ask the Panelists!

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- What questions do you have for the states we interviewed regarding how they organize and fund equity plan implementation?
- ***For example:***
  - What are the benefits and challenges of organizing the equity work in one department vs. another?
  - Has your state considered any creative ways to leverage ESSA funding to support the equity work?



# Stakeholder Engagement and Challenges with State Equity Plan Implementation

# Stakeholder Engagement Efforts

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- States continue to involve stakeholders in implementation, and some of them plan to revisit these efforts:
  - Several states have ongoing task force or committee involvement.
  - States consistently involved stakeholders in plan development, but not all states have stakeholders actively involved in implementation efforts.
  - States have done focus groups, held committee/task force meetings, and administered surveys.
  - Most states did not note specific efforts to support districts in engaging stakeholders.

# Stakeholder Engagement Efforts

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- **California:** Presentations of the equity plan throughout the state to gather feedback; Educator Excellence Summit
- **Missouri:** Equity labs, committees, and conferences
- **North Dakota:** Teacher Recruitment and Retention Task Force
- **Arkansas:** Educator shortage focus groups in the fall and follow-ups in the spring
- **Indiana:** Share strategies with focus and priority schools and promising practices for recruitment and retention

# Support for the Equity Work Outside of the SEA

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- Broad and high-level stakeholder involvement has aided initial implementation:
  - Several states have stakeholder task forces or committees.
  - Outside supporters of equity plan implementation include the following: state legislators, state commissioners, regional comprehensive centers (RCCs), the GTL Center, EASN, education advocacy organizations, and other community partners and associations.
  - Some states noted a need for additional stakeholder buy-in for the equity work.

# Support for the Equity Work Outside of the SEA

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- **Missouri:** Broad range of professional organizations, Midwest Equity Assistance Center, Central Comprehensive Center, state board of directors
- **Kentucky:** Education commissioner, professional associations, community groups, Education Professional Standards Board
- **California:** Community organizations, California Comprehensive Center, GTL Center



# Challenges to State Implementation

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Some challenges that states face include:

- **California:** Increasing the diversity of the workforce
- **District of Columbia:** Balancing charter autonomy with state responsibility
- **Delaware:** Pressures for “equal” instead of “equitable” funding and stakeholder buy-in
- **Kentucky:** Culture shift in personnel placement decisions
- **Indiana:** Restrictions on state data collection by state legislation

# Possible Solutions for Challenges of State Implementation

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## **Time and funding—“leverage, not layer”:**

- Leverage existing initiatives, meetings, or funding streams to maximize efficient use of time and resources.
- Consider GTL Center “Implementation Playbook” tools for project management.

## **Data limitations:**

- Consider creative ways to incentivize or encourage districts to share data.
- Consider GTL Center monitoring implementation tools.

## **Stakeholder awareness and “buy-in”:**

- Reach out to the GTL Center or comprehensive centers for support on meaningful stakeholder engagement.
- When engaging stakeholders, discuss what would make the teaching profession more attractive.

# Poll 3:

## State Implementation Challenges

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What challenges or barriers has your state (or the state you worked with) faced in implementing your equity plan?

***(Select all that apply)***

- a) Lack of stakeholder buy-in
- b) Lack of time and resources/funds
- c) Engaging districts to do the work on the ground
- d) Accessing necessary data

# Q&A: Ask the Panelists!

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- What questions do you have regarding the challenges SEAs have faced in their implementation efforts, and how they have worked to overcome these challenges?
- What questions do you have about states' stakeholder engagement efforts in support of equity plan implementation?

## ***For example:***

- Has your state found any creative ways to address some of the implementation challenges discussed today?
- What types of stakeholder engagement approaches have been most successful in your state?

# Supporting District Equity Plan Implementation



# Support for District Implementation

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- Many states do not want this work to be perceived as a compliance requirement.
- Some states with local control environments are able to require local education agency (LEA) participation through annual reporting or funding application mechanisms.
- Some states are prioritizing support for districts with the largest equity gaps.
- Some states incentivize participation through providing useful data to LEAs.

# Support for District Implementation

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- **Ohio:** Developing a guidance document for LEAs to assist them in the local equitable access planning process
- **Wisconsin:** Engaged LEAs through a series of voice-over webinar “homework” assignments to support plan development
- **Arkansas:** LEA participation is voluntary; use a skill-will matrix and prioritize highest need districts first
- **North Dakota:** Local control; requires LEAs to report on equity efforts and progress
- **Kentucky:** Integrates equity participation into its annual statewide monitoring, including equity “diagnostic”

# Q&A: Ask the Panelists!

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- What questions do you have regarding how SEAs have supported district development and implementation of equity plans?



# Challenges to District Implementation

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- **North Dakota:** Has a small but vocal group that is anti-testing/Common Core State Standards
- **Wisconsin:** Some districts initially questioned the accuracy of state-level data to identify equity gaps, but have since moved forward with equity plan development.
- **California:** Large state with a wide range of needs

# Possible Solutions for Challenges to District Implementation

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- **Local control autonomy:**
  - Consider incentives for district participation and build awareness of the importance of this issue through stakeholder engagement.
  - Consider GTL Center stakeholder engagement support and tools.
- **Varied capacity:**
  - Consider a skill-will matrix when thinking about how best to support districts of varying capacity.
  - Consider GTL Center district implementation tools and guidance.
- **Getting the message out and dealing with vocal opposition:**
  - Reach out to the GTL Center or comprehensive centers for support on meaningful stakeholder engagement and communications planning.

# Resources to Support Implementation

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## Helpful Resources:

- Comprehensive center partners
- GTL Center technical assistance and resources
- EASN workgroups

## Resources States Wish They Had:

- Clearer ESSA guidance
- More time for the work
- More opportunities to share knowledge with other SEAs

# Poll 4: Resources to Support Implementation

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What types of resources have you found most valuable in supporting equity plan implementation?

***(select all that apply)***

- a) Direct TA from center partners (RCCs, GTL, Equitable Access Support Network)
- b) Online resources from center partners (e.g., equity plan development or implementation resources)
- c) EASN workgroups or other communities of practice
- d) Other

# Chat-Bar Question:

## Ongoing Support

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Using the chat bar feature, please indicate what types of resources or support would you find most useful.

For example:

- Direct TA support from RCC or GTL
- Additional guidance on equity as it relates to ESSA
- Resources to support stakeholder engagement
- Resources to support project management
- Resources to support monitoring and improvement
- Resources to support data collection and analysis

# Q&A: Ask the Panelists!

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- What other questions do you have for states that have shared their experiences with equity plan implementation?



# Closing and Next Steps

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- Please provide a response to our feedback survey following this webinar to help us understand how we can best support you.
- A recording of this webinar and PDF of the slide deck will be available on GTL's website and will be sent to participants when it is available.
- To learn more about the information shared today, please don't hesitate to reach out to the GTL Center with your questions:
  - Dana Chambers [dchambers@air.org](mailto:dchambers@air.org)
  - Lynette Thomson [lmthompson@air.org](mailto:lmthompson@air.org)



# Resource: GTL Center's Equitable Access Implementation Playbook

[Home](#) » [Learning Hub](#) » [Equitable Access Supports](#)

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAYBOOK



### Implementation Playbook



Start the process of implementation with this step-by-step tool designed to support you wherever you are in the implementation process. Use this resource to assess community awareness about your equity plan, identify a project leader and team to implement your equity plan strategies, assess current levels of implementation, clarify leading indicators of success, create a project management plan, and act on the plan.

[Download Implementation Planning Tool >>](#)

IMPLEMENTATION  
PLAYBOOK

EQUITABLE  
ACCESS TOOLKIT



Source: [www.gtlcenter.org/learning-hub/equitable-access-supports/implementation-playbook](http://www.gtlcenter.org/learning-hub/equitable-access-supports/implementation-playbook)

# Resource: EASN's Implementation Readiness Assessment

**Equitable Access Support Network**

## State Plans to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

### Implementation Readiness Assessment

February 2016

This table is adapted from the U.S. Department of Education's *Return Support Network (RSN) Sustainability Rubric* and is intended to help State education agencies (SEAs) and their partners self-assess their readiness to implement and sustain strategies to ensure equitable access to excellent teachers for all students. Using this tool, States can identify strengths and areas for improvement in their current implementation plans.

By answering the questions on the tool, States will identify their level of implementation for several readiness indicators. (For example, how aligned their strategies are to state-level systems and their capacity to implement the strategies). There are four levels of implementation:

Levels of Implementation			
Exploration & Adoption (E)	Initial Implementation (I)	Full Operation (F)	Sustainability (S)
Collect information to determine need for intervention, gather stakeholder support, and select strategy.	Start to implement a new strategy, policy, or program and conduct tests and assessments that occur with site change.	States find the new strategy, policy, or program to fully implement into practice.	States see the practice that was implemented as continued through staffing and funding changes and continued community and political support.

For each readiness indicator, state teams should check the applicable descriptors across the row that most accurately represent their current state of readiness. The overall level of implementation for a given readiness indicator is determined by the column containing the majority of checked descriptors. For example, if three boxes are checked under 'Exploration & Adoption (E)' than any other column for a particular readiness indicator, the State is in the 'Exploration & Adoption' phase of implementation for that readiness indicator. If the preponderance of evidence shows that a State is in one of the first two stages of implementation, they may want to refer to the resources embedded in the rubric to help them advance into or meet readiness levels.

For definitions of key terms used in this rubric, please refer to the [glossary](#).

\*Changes to the original language of the RSN Sustainability Rubric can be found in this document.

\*Return Support Network Sustainability Rubric, <https://www.ed.gov/words/return-support-network-sustainability-rubric-fd.pdf>

\*Adapted from Greene et al. (2015). <http://www.assessment.com/assessment/implementation-readiness.pdf>. U.S. Implementation Project, <http://www.implementationproject.org/>

Equitable Access Support Network

Source: <https://easn.grads360.org/#communities/pdc/documents/10012>

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