

Educational Equity: Identifying Barriers and Increasing Access

Equity issues are complex, cutting across education, workforce, health, and society as a whole. The experts at American Institutes for Research (AIR) apply the best behavioral and social science research, evaluation, and implementation support toward improving people's lives—ensuring that everyone has access to the resources they need. This equity-driven mission is our foundation: It shapes the work we do and informs our relationships with clients and partners, and it brings an emphasis on diversity and inclusion in our own offices.

What we mean by **EQUITY**...

Educational equity is achieved when *all* students receive the resources, opportunities, skills, and knowledge they need to succeed in our democratic society.

The Equity Project at AIR

Led by principal researchers Peter Cookson, PhD, and Vanessa Coleman, EdD, AIR's Equity Project is committed to building an inclusive and vibrant future through education. The project uses the breadth and depth of AIR's education research, policy, and practice experience to increase educational opportunities for all American children—especially minority children and children from low-income households.

AIR's Work in the Field

Diversity and Inclusion Policy Development and Implementation

AIR partnered with the Illinois Department of Human Rights in 2016 to **develop best practices to prevent discrimination and promote diversity and inclusion in education**. This included developing metrics to identify achievement gaps based on race, ethnicity, and zip code; AIR also served as an expert partner on the Educational Equity Committee (facilitated by the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law), helping identify and address barriers to opportunity for students in Illinois. □

Strengthening Educator Diversity

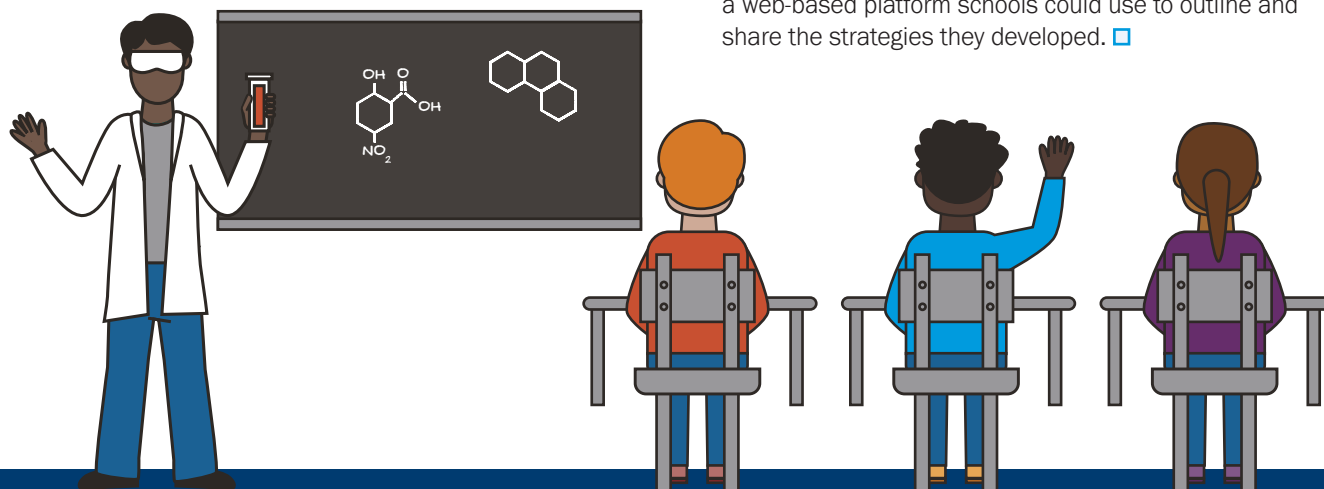
Beginning in 2017, AIR partnered with the Kellogg Foundation to **address issues of teacher diversity and to strengthen the pipeline for K–12 teachers of color**. AIR experts and data analysts are researching teacher diversity issues, and promoting strategies based on this work. We have also gathered a diverse group of leaders to craft a set of resources and tools that school districts and their local partners will soon test on the ground in a range of local contexts. □

Equity-Focused Technical Assistance

AIR's Equity Project joined the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium (MAEC) and WestEd to create the Center for Education Equity (CEE) in 2016. CEE draws on the body of equity research literature to provide technical assistance and training to states, districts, schools, and community-based organizations within the Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern regions. CEE builds the systematic capacity of public education systems to **address problems caused by segregation and inequities**. CEE also works to increase educational opportunities for all students regardless of race, gender, religion, and national origin. □

School Finance Research and Evaluation

In 2013, AIR experts completed the four-year Strategic School Funding For Results (SSFR) project, funded by the Ford Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. The project **gave district and school leaders a more efficient and effective way to distribute resources**. SSFR created a system that gave schools flexibility in how they used resources, and created a web-based platform schools could use to outline and share the strategies they developed. □



Why AIR?

AIR's knowledge in the areas of education, social development, health, and the workforce makes us uniquely able to address our clients' equity issues. We empower communities and institutions with innovative solutions to the most critical challenges in all of these arenas. And we don't use a one-size-fits-all formula: AIR partners closely with stakeholders—state departments of education, tribal nations, policymakers, practitioners, and others—to create a precisely tailored approach to equity issues across the country.

For more information about AIR's work in education equity, visit www.air.org/EdEquity.

AIR's Services

AIR's decades of experience in research, evaluation, policy, and technical assistance allow us to address the full scope of any project. Whether the task is to develop measures of inequality, determine how resources can be used to efficiently promote equity, or help implement best practices, we're dedicated to addressing our clients' unique situations and needs.

Areas of specialty include:

- Supporting states and districts as they respond to new ESSA requirements
- Researching socioeconomic issues and supporting a variety of student populations, including:
 - » English learners
 - » Students with special needs
 - » Rural students
 - » Racial-ethnic minority students
 - » Students from low-income households
- Building district capacity to lead equity-focused change initiatives, including community and stakeholder engagement projects
- Developing and implementing school finance solutions, taking into account elements such as school choice, transportation, and resource allocation
- Strengthening teacher pipelines and educator preparation to ensure all students have access to high-quality educators
- Developing measures of school quality and student success to support data-based decision-making
- Developing or redesigning equity frameworks—and implementing those frameworks
- Implementing evidence-based interventions that can be adapted to meet local needs

AIR's Educational Equity Experts



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