



Equity by Design

The State of Education:
Equity Considerations for Asian
American, Immigrant, American
Indian, and Dis/abled Students

Rodney S. Whiteman

Kathleen A. K. Thorius

Seena M. Skelton

Tiffany S. Kyser

The State of Education: Equity Considerations for Historically Underserved Populations

In 2013 and 2014, the Great Lakes Equity Center prepared a series of *Equity Dispatch* newsletters, each highlighting a historically underserved population and raising equity issues for those populations. The four part series focused on American Indian students, immigrant students (Chen et al., 2013b), students with dis/abilities (Chen et al., 2014b), and Asian American students (Chen et al., 2014a). This present brief summarizes this “State Of” series and provides some additional statistics from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR).

The summaries and discussion presented here are salient for a number of reasons. First is to serve as a reminder of the diverse populations of historically underserved students in schools. By considering the idiosyncratic needs and challenges of various learners, equity-minded educators can be aware of, and responsive to the Black-White binary that tends to dominate conversations about racial equity (Alcoff, 2003), responsive to the challenges of linguistic diversity, and responsive to ways in which dis/ability is constructed in schools (McDermott & Varenne, 1999).

This awareness leads to the second reason these summaries and discussions are relevant: supporting educators in working toward a model of educator quality that includes a cross-pollination (Waitoller & Thorius, under review; Whiteman, Thorius, Skelton, & Kyser, 2015) of

asset pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012) and principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Rose & Meyer, 2002). Finally, by summarizing and discussing several “State Of” newsletters, it is possible to recognize patterns in the needs of historically underserved populations and to also recognize how education systems and structures unfairly benefit some students while marginalizing and excluding others. This brief attempts to support equity-minded educators by providing some language around the intersections of identities and illuminate ways in which schools systematically address or ignore these intersections, which can lead to inequitable practice.

To achieve these purposes, this brief summarizes each *Equity Dispatch* in the series. These summaries provide background knowledge about the student populations in question. Then the brief will move to a discussion of themes common across the series, as well as important differences for various populations. Finally, the brief provides recommendations for practitioners.

Summaries of the Equity Dispatch “State Of” Series

The State of American Indian Education

American Indian education has been a contentious issue since the advent of U.S.

public education (Assembly of First Nations Education, Jurisdiction, and Governance, 2012).

The education of American Indians has often been studied from the European colonists' perspective, which assumed that natives were

uneducated until Europeans colonized and "settled" North America (Warren, 2007a, 2007b). Such a perspective ignores the indigenous people's existing culture and ways of knowing and learning (Brayboy, 2006). Instead, European-style education was used as a tool to assimilate and subjugate the native peoples (Minnesota Indian Affairs Council and Minnesota Humanities Center, n.d; Valenzuela, 2008).

Though it may seem that this cultural deprivation is a thing of a sordid U.S. past, some schools still have homogenizing, marginalizing policies that affect American Indian students (for example, suspension of an American Indian student for refusing to cut his hair, see American Civil Liberties Union, 2011). There are deep historical roots to ways in which White, European-controlled education has been used to devalue and erode basic American Indian values and to separate young children from their tribes' or nations' customs and values (Utley, 2004). This legacy continues to structure contemporary equity-related concerns for American Indian education.

Contemporary American Indian education.

In contemporary U.S. schooling, there are profound opportunity gaps for American Indian students

(see Figure 1.)

These opportunity gaps parallel performance gaps. On the 2013 National Assessment for

Educational Progress (NAEP), 23% of fourth-grade American Indian/Alaskan Native were at or above proficient in mathematics, compared to 54% of their White peers; this gap persists in eighth grade (21% and 45%, respectively) (U.S. Department of Education National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP], 2013c, 2013e). Similar patterns can be seen for reading scores, with 21% of fourth grade American Indian/Alaskan Native students at or above proficiency and only 19% of eighth graders at or above proficiency, compared to 46% and 46% for their fourth and eighth grade White peers (NAEP, 2013h, 2013k).

What should educators make of these disparities in both opportunities and outcomes?

Researchers have demonstrated that American Indian students have different ways of knowing and different values when compared to students from other cultural backgrounds (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Mestre, 2010). These cultural differences may manifest as lower academic performance and higher discipline rates if instruction and assessment does not acknowledge and allow for difference.

Educators must be able to recognize, appreciate, and cultivate difference in their classrooms.

Intersection of race/ethnicity and socio-economic status. Poverty continues to be a challenge to American Indian students' access to quality learning opportunities and potential success in schools. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that 32%-39% of American Indian children live in poverty, a rate almost twice the national average (2008). Though more than half of American Indian youth attend regular public schools, 31% attended a school that ranked as high-poverty as compared to 6% of their White peers (Lehr, 2013). Poverty, education, and (un)employment rates are all tightly related. Couple these economic factors with the

that shape the education system and privilege the dominant status quo.

The State of Education for Asian American Students

Though the U.S. Census and other government agencies use the phrase "Asian American," it is important to know that this term represents a heterogeneous and dynamic group. Education statistics do not often capture this heterogeneity, which can portray an inaccurate picture of a given student's reality. One example of this diversity is native language. In California in 2006-07, over 134,000 Asian English Language Learner (ELL) students spoke seven different primary languages (Vietnamese, Filipino or Tagalog, Cantonese, Hmong, Korean, Mandarin, and Punjabi), and this count only includes languages spoken by Asian ELL populations above 10,000 (Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, 2008). Additionally, income disparities within the Asian American community exist (see Figure 2). In other words, many more language, cultures, and countries of national origin, and socio-economic statuses are encompassed in the phrase "Asian American," than many educators might initially think.

In some communities, Asian Americans are divided into class castes by their national origin and the stereotypes that are associated with those origins. Hmong and Vietnamese have been stereotyped as low-achieving, and Hmong and Vietnamese students are more likely to be tracked into lower-level courses (Thao, 2003). These problems may be compounded when

Figure 1. Opportunity Gaps for American Indians

Percent of Students with Access to Full Range of Math and Science Courses

Asian	81%
White	71%
Latino/a	67%
Black	57%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	47%

(Source: U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights [OCR], 2014a)

Retention of American Indian Students

(Source: OCR, 2014a; 2014b)

systematic racism and marginalization American Indians have historically and continue to endure, it becomes clear that American Indian students are disadvantaged not by their own deficits, but by the socio-cultural structures

refugee status, ELL status, or religion also come into play.

The “model minority” myth. The “model minority” myth comes, in part, from popular belief that Asian American students are uniformly high academic achievers (Kao & Thompson, 2003). Asian Americans from East Asian countries are often stereotyped as having a strong work ethic, maintain close family relationships, placing a high value on education, achieving higher grades, and demonstrating a willingness to sacrifice for their children (Min, 2003; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). This myth

American Indian students have different ways of knowing and different values when compared to students from other cultural backgrounds.

couples with the meritocracy myth, which suggests a color-blind society in which anyone who works hard and espouses the correct values (i.e., hard work) can advance in America. Combined, the meritocracy and model minority myths obscure the role of systemic obstacles to equity by attributing poor schooling outcomes to students’ cultural backgrounds and value systems rather than on the education system itself (Suzuki, 2002).

The model minority myth is harmful to the entire spectrum of Asian American students. Aggregated data may suggest that Asian American students are excelling in school. For example, 64% of Asian/Pacific Island 4th graders were at or above proficient in math, compared to 54% of White 4th graders (NAEP, 2013c). However, these aggregated data may obscure the needs of students who vary by ethnicity, class, and ELL status (Asian American Legal

Defense and Education Fund, 2008). For Asian American students who do excel in some areas of schooling, educators may neglect certain needs (e.g., a need to understand culturally nuanced language and subject-area content) by relying on stereotypes that these students will somehow excel across the board without intervention or targeted supports (Goodwin, 2010).

Intersection of race/ethnicity, language, and religious identities. If we should not expect Asian Americans to be monolithic in national origin or cultural resources, then we

should also not expect uniformity in linguistic or religious identities. As noted above, there is a great deal of linguistic diversity associated with Asian countries, and also within Asian countries. This can be a challenge for schools, which may not be equipped to support that kind of diversity or which may be thinking of ELL primarily as supports for Spanish-speaking students (Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, 2008).

Additionally, schools should be prepared to accommodate the religious diversity associated that may be reflected in the Asian American community. When an individual or family immigrates into the United States, they immigrate into a country that strongly identifies with Christian religions (Gallup, 2013). This Christian ubiquity can lead to a sometimes false assumption that everyone within a given area, including a classroom, is also Christian. This

phenomenon, called Christian normativity, is embedded in U.S.'s racialized social systems (Kamran, 2012). Religious bias is particularly challenging for students who are neither Christian nor White; these students have an especially difficult time fitting in at school (Joshi, 2006).

The State of Education for Immigrant Students

Immigrant (and refugee) students and their families have their own unique challenges when interacting with the U.S. education system. It is necessary to acknowledge shifting demographics in U.S. society and, consequently, in U.S. schools. In 2005, one in

schools. Additionally, students born outside the U.S. or to parents from outside the U.S. have diverse immigration status, including documents, undocumented, and refugee. Each immigration status comes with its own political and identity challenges, which when coupled with linguistic, religious, and cultural difference, makes for a complex and challenge landscape for educators to navigate.

The range of country of origin for those born outside of the U.S. is vast (see Figure 3), as is the range of reasons for resettling (Center for



Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2011). Equity-minded educators should keep this in mind when communicating with, and meeting the unique needs of this student population. The stress and trauma of resettling, especially for refugee students, requires particular attention (McBrien, 2005).

Immigrant students and American schools.

Immigrant children are more likely to attend under-resourced American schools, located in urban areas (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2011; Rong & Preissle, 2009). Many immigrant students report their teachers have unfavorable views of them (Peguero & Bondy, 2011), and that they experience social and academic isolation in

Figure 2. Asian American Economic Disparities

Median Household Income for Asian American Families

	All Asian American	Hmong
Household Income	\$68,950	\$46,308
Households Raising Their Own Children	\$81,605	\$45,009

(Source U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a; 2010b)

five children was born to immigrant parents, and 17 million children spoke a language other than English at home (Rong & Preissle, 2009). Nearly one in ten students were born in a country other than the U.S. (Greico et al., 2010). These students come from all over the world, and they bring a great deal of linguistic, religious, and cultural diversity into U.S.

school (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2011). This isolation may be exacerbated for undocumented immigrant youth, whose families risk entanglement with law enforcement and potential deportation when interacting with schools (Scribner, 2015?).

The National Assessment of Education Progress does not readily report education outcomes for immigrant students. However, it does report education outcomes for English Language Learners (ELL) (see Figure 4).

Some educators and policymakers believe that the best way to meet these students' needs is to assimilate them into United States' language, culture, and ways of thinking and knowing as soon as possible (Noguera, 2004). This view is based on beliefs that these students are at a deficit and lack cultural and social capital (Valenzuela, 1999). However, equity-minded educators work to know their students and view their students' strengths, values, language, and culture as assets (Assiter, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Paris, 2012). Additionally, these great educators recognize difference even within a particular immigrant or refugee community (Gibson & Koyama, 2011). Under conditions in which immigrant students are validated, feel valued, attend classes with high-performing peers, and have strong programmatic and pedagogic supports for immigrants, these students excel and rapidly improve (Baker, 2011; Han, 2013; Krashen & McField, 2005).

Intersection of immigrant/refugee status, race, and religion. When families immigrate to

the U.S., they come to a racialized and classed society that they may not have experienced in their country of origin. Immigrants may become racialized, which is the process by which racial classification and meaning are imposed on a group of people previously unclassified (Omi & Winant, 1994). As an example highlighted in a 2014 Great Lakes Equity Center *Equity Dispatch*,

Somali refugees in Minnesota have been racialized as Black; however, when they lived in Somalia, no such racial meaning existed for them (Bigelow, 2008). In other words, while in Somalia, they were not "Black" as Americans construct "Black" as a race (Whiteman, Le Sesne, Rogers, Skelton, & King Thorius, 2014).

For immigrant students, the realities of a racialized U.S. society may add to the challenges of acclimation and feeling welcomed.

Additionally, immigrants and refugees may face challenges adapting to U.S. Christian normativity. Educators should be sensitive to religious expression, which is sometimes conflated with immigrant students' identity expression. Some Islamic women, or women from countries in which Islam is prevalently practiced, may wear a hijab (veil) as a symbol of cultural or national pride, as a purely religious expression and interpretation of Islamic law, or even as a political statement to resist harmful stereotypes (Bigelow, 2008; Gregory, 2014; Khan, 2002). Schools are legally obligated to allow some forms of religious expression (see Ali, 2010), but great educators move beyond mere tolerance and value these differences as

necessary for equitable schools and for all students' social and academic well-being.

The State of Education for Students with Dis/abilities

Historically, U.S. schools had no consistent approach to educating students perceived as dis/abled, and often completely excluded many of these students from any kind of public schooling (Danforth, Taff, & Ferguson, 2006). The first federal effort to ensure a free public education for students with dis/abilities was the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act, later reauthorized as Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 1990 (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2012). As the 2014 *Equity Dispatch* observes, this legislation is “equity-focused in that it promotes educational access, participation, and outcomes for students with dis/abilities. But there is still much work to be done to create educational systems that are asset-focused and inclusive” (Chen et al., 2014b).

Dis/ability labels rely on assumptions about normalcy in order to describe variability in human behavior and functioning (Gallagher, 2006; Graham & Slee, 2006; A. Sullivan & Thorius, 2010). Because the term “disability” implies something other than “normal,” it also assumes deficits in the person labeled as disabled and neglects a full continuum of human behavior and abilities (Linton, 1998; Scotch & Schriener, 1997; A. Sullivan & Thorius, 2010). Consequently, the unique strengths and alternative ways of thinking are often

undervalued for those students labeled as “disabled” (Graham & Slee, 2006; Grandin, 2010).

Most schools and classrooms are designed with a

Figure 3. Diverse Countries of Origin
Top Ten Countries of Origin for Foreign Born and Refugee Populations Living the U.S.

Foreign Born	Refugee
Mexico	Iraq
India	Burma
The Philippines	Bhutan
China	Somalia
Vietnam	The Democratic Republic of Congo
El Salvador	Iran
Korea	Ethiopia
Cuba	Malaysia
The Dominican Republic	Afghanistan
Guatemala	Cuba

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2013)

sense of normalcy in mind that privileges particular students over others (Andersen & Collins, 2004; Graham & Slee, 2006; Losen & Orfield, 2002). Students who cannot function “normally,” or as educators prescribe or predict, in these constructed “normal” spaces are then labeled disabled in some way (McDermott & Varenne, 1999). Students who are so labeled are then provided specially designated spaces and specially designated teachers, a trend that persists across the country (Baglieri, Bejoian, Broderick, Connor, & Valle, 2011). This separation sends signals that students with

different abilities do not belong (Rice, 2006) and also excludes these students from rigorous programs of study (Carlson, Brauen, Klein, Schroll, & Willig, 2001).

Each immigration status comes with its own political and identity challenges, which when coupled with linguistic, religious, and cultural difference, makes for a complex and challenge landscape for educators to navigate.

Dis/ability in

American schools. Despite legal protections for the least restrictive environment and a free and appropriate public education, exclusion of students with dis/abilities persists. Approximately 14% of U.S. children are identified and labeled with dis/abilities and are

time isolated from general education classrooms (A. Sullivan, Kozleski, & Smith, 2008).

Access to education programs and educational outcomes are linked. In terms of access, only 1% of

students served under IDEA participate in gifted and talented (GATE) programs, compared to 7% of non-dis/abled students (OCR, 2014a). Denial of access to education programs can be within buildings, but also can manifest as placing students with dis/abilities in schools with limited course offerings. Only 63% of students served under IDEA are enrolled in schools offering the full range of math and science courses, compared to 69% of non-dis/abled students. Students with dis/abilities are more than twice as likely to be suspended out of school than their non-dis/abled peers (OCR, 2014c). Finally, students served under IDEA make up 12% of the student population, but 25% of students who are referred to law enforcement by schools and 25% of students subjected to school-related arrests (OCR, 2014c).

Given exclusionary policies and deficit pedagogies based on the ability-disability binary, disparities in education outcomes for students with dis/abilities should not be surprising (see Figure 5).

Intersection of dis/ability status, race and class. Data show relationships between

Figure 4. Performance on 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress

Percent of Students At or Above Proficient

	ELL Students	Non-ELL Students
Fourth Grade		
Reading	7%	38%
Math	14%	45%
Eighth Grade		
Reading	4%	38%
Math	5%	37%

(Source: NAEP 2013b; 2013e; 2013g; 2013j)

served under IDEA (Special Education Advisor, 2010). Furthermore, data suggest that nearly half of all students with dis/abilities spend less than 20% of their time in the general education classroom with their peers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009), and 15% spend the majority of their

race and class and the labeling of dis/ability. Some populations of students of certain races/ethnicities, as well as language minorities, are disproportionately identified as disabled and are more likely to be segregated into separate classrooms or schools (Ahram, Fergus, & Noguera, 2011; Skiba et al., 2008; A. L. Sullivan & Artiles, 2011). Black students are disproportionately represented in nearly all special education categories, and they are more likely to be given labels like “intellectually disabled” or “emotionally disturbed” (Thorius & Stephenson, 2012; US Department of Education, 2006). American Indian and Alaskan Natives have high rates of identification for specific learning disabilities (Ahram et al., 2011). In terms of class, around 45% of students with dis/abilities are from low-income families.

Common Themes and Recommendations

When comparing these summaries, some common themes emerge. These themes raise issues educators should be aware of when working with students from any one of the communities described above. The recommendations below will be drawn from these themes.

Common Themes

Need to acknowledge multiple ways of knowing. Language and culture structure individuals’ knowledge and knowledge acquisition. They also structure ways in which students and their families engage in schooling and learning. When linguistic and cultural structures differ from the dominant curriculum and pedagogy, students can be placed at a disadvantage, feel alienated from both school and family, and perceived as disengaged or “at risk” by their teachers (Chung, Flook, & Fuligni, 2009; Sorkness & Kelting-Gibson, 2006;

Valencia & Black, 2002).

Consider a few examples. American Indian students may be perceived as slow to answer teachers’ questions. However,

some American Indian students bring cultural values of respect for others into the classroom, which may manifest as deferring to others and letting them speak first (Stokes, 1997).

Immigrant families sometimes carry similar stigmas, with educators assuming immigrant families do not value education (Valencia & Black, 2002). However, as López and his colleagues (2001; 2001) point out, Latina/o immigrant families’ value for education is deeply connected to work and class, and may simply look different than what many educators may expect. Valuing different ways of knowing applies to students with dis/abilities, as well. Temple Grandin, a designer and author with autism, is a strong advocate for recognition of different minds and thinking styles. By saying “I

Under conditions in which immigrant students are validated, feel valued, attend classes with high-performing peers, and have strong programmatic and pedagogic supports for immigrants, these students excel and rapidly improve

am a visual thinker, not a language-based thinker. My brain is like Google Images,” she clearly presenter her unique ability – one that is often framed as a disability (Chen et al., 2014b; Grandin, 2010).

The unique strengths and alternative ways of thinking are often undervalued for those students labeled as “disabled.”

in which a student’s identities intersect and create complexities for teaching and learning.

As pointed out here, race/ethnicity, immigration/refugee status, ability status, language, and poverty all come into play when defining any one student’s educational

Need for asset-based pedagogies.

Acknowledging and valuing multiple ways of knowing implies asset-based pedagogies. In each of the four summaries, we can see dominant assumptions that these student populations are all in deficit: culturally, socially, or in terms of ability. However, educators should consider ways in which schools are systematically constructing deficits for students by defining which cultural, social, intellectual, and ability resources are valued (Chen et al., 2013a; McDermott & Varenne, 1999; Weiston-Serdan, 2009). Instead, great educators begin with the assumption that all students bring an array of resources into the classroom with them, and these resources can be leveraged as strengths and means to connect all students to the curricular cannon (Paris & Alim, 2014; Paris, 2012). When students’ resources and identities are reframed as assets, and when educators are responsive to those assets, students once perceived of as “at risk” begin to make great strides in schools (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Need to acknowledge intersections. The four summaries include considerations of ways

needs. Additionally, the *Equity Dispatch* series did not include sex, gender, sexual orientation, and religion, which add to this complexity. These intersections imply classrooms are much more diverse than they may initially appear, even in a classroom of all White students and teachers. Great educators acknowledge and are responsive to these intersections. Furthermore, they are aware of how policies and practices may create inequities in schools by how they respond to these intersections (e.g., disproportionate discipline rates for Black females, see Crenshaw, Ocen, & Nanda, 2015; and for Black males, see Skiba, Shure, & Williams, 2012).

Recommendations for Educators

Given the concerns raised above, a pedagogical approach that values students’ assets while also lowering barriers to knowledge can create more equitable schools and create positive educative outcomes for all students. We provide the following recommendations for equity-minded educators.

Provide a pedagogy based on principles of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and

Universal Design for Learning. In a recent *Equity by Design* policy brief, the Great Lakes Equity Center advocated a model of teacher quality that includes a cross-pollination of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Whiteman et al., 2015). The CSP approach is an asset pedagogy that is not only responsive to students' existing cultural resources, but centers those resources in order to help students feel valued and validated, to help students connect to the curricular canon, to acknowledge and redress social inequities, and

without constructing their heritage or abilities as deficits. It also allows educators to move beyond multicultural education that reinforces harmful stereotypes through "food, fun, festivals and foolishness' forms of [multicultural education]" (Haynes Writer, 2008, p. 1).

Critically reflect on systemic marginalizing practices. Thinking through ways in which students' existing linguistic, cultural, social, and ability resources are undervalued can be challenging. In many cases, no single policy or practice creates inequity; instead, inequity is the result of systemic and systematic marginalization. Inequity is an outcome of practices based on a body of beliefs and assumptions that may be so deeply ingrained in the dominant culture that they seem to be common sense (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2012). In order to bring these beliefs and assumptions to the surface, it is necessary to critically reflect on policy and practice, and to develop critical consciousness as means of professional learning. The Great Lakes Equity Center has resources that can guide educators through critical reflection (see Macey, Thorius, & Skelton, 2012; Radd & Macey, 2013).

Figure 5. Performance on 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress

Percent of Students At or Above Proficient

	Students with Dis/abilities	Students without Dis/abilities
Fourth Grade		
Reading	11%	38%
Math	18%	45%
Eighth Grade		
Reading	9%	39%
Math	9%	39%

(Source: NAEP 2013a; 2013d; 2013f; 2013i)

to enact positive changes in students' lives and their communities (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2014; Paris, 2012). CSP aligns well with UDL, which reduces barriers for all student by providing multiple representations of information through a variety of media, as well as allowing student to express their learning through multiple representations (Rose & Meyer, 2002). Such a shift would authentically value what students bring into the classroom

Conclusion

Great educators value their students' existing resources, enact pedagogies that realize academic gains while sustaining students' cultural heritage, and critically reflect on how their practice promotes (or stymies) equitable opportunities and outcomes for all students (Whiteman et al., 2015). In order to make progress toward equity and toward truly

inclusive and welcoming schools in which all students benefit, it is necessary to acknowledge, value, and cultivate difference within classrooms and communities. This brief highlights four historically underserved populations and serves as a reminder of equity considerations these populations and for all students. Fundamentally, educators must assume that all students enter the classroom with unique linguistic, cultural, social, and ability resources. They must also allow for variation among sub-groups of students. Furthermore, they must recognize within -group variations, particularly for American Indian, Asian American, and Latina/o students who may have dramatically different linguistic, cultural, and national origin backgrounds. Finally, great educators must be aware of how schools construct advantages or barriers for students of various intersecting identities.

When linguistic and cultural structures differ from the dominant curriculum and pedagogy, students can be placed at a disadvantage.

We use the phrase “American Indian” to refer to North American indigenous populations and this phrase is contested in some native languages (Sheep, 2010). The terms “native, indigenous, First Nations person, and aboriginal are often ambiguous, equally problematic, and in some cases more cumbersome” (Bigenow, 2008, emphasis in the original).

Following the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) definition, the full range is Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, calculus, and physics.

For a more detailed discussion, see the Great Lakes Equity Center for Learning and Leadership (2014) “Freedom and Discrimination in Education” (Sesne, Rogers, Skelton, & King Thorius, 2014).

Following Kozelski and Thorius (2014), we use the term “disability” to indicate disability status and ability differences are social constructs (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2011). “Immigrant children and youth: Enabling their success in school.” Retrieved from <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/immigrant.pdf>

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When students' resources and identities are reframed as assets, and when educators are responsive to those assets, students once perceived of as "at risk" begin to make great strides in schools.

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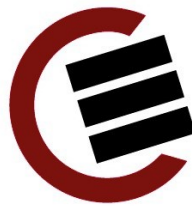
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About the Great Lakes Equity Center

The mission of the Great Lakes Equity Center is to ensure equity in student access to and participation in high quality, research-based education by expanding states' and school systems' capacity to provide robust, effective opportunities to learn for all students, regardless of and responsive to race, sex, and national origin, and to reduce disparities in educational outcomes among and between groups. The Equity by Design briefs series is intended to provide vital background information and action steps to support educators and other equity advocates as they work to create positive educational environments for all children. For more information, visit: <http://www.greatlakesequitycenter.org>.

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