RESOURCE EQUITY GUIDEBOOK

LEARNING-READY FACILITIES

ALLIANCE FOR
RESOURCE
EQUITY

Uniting advocates and education leaders
to unlock excellence for every student

About

This guidebook for district- and school-level action planning leverages Education Resource Strategies' deep expertise supporting districts and schools and iterates from frameworks and tools that we have tested and used with school and district leaders from across the country over the last decade.

It was also informed by strong collaboration with The Education Trust and its expertise working with equity advocates across the country to support state and federal policy development that focuses on eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps for students of color and students from low-income backgrounds.

The Alliance for Resource Equity is a partnership between **Education Resource Strategies (ERS)** and **The Education Trust**.

WHY AN ALLIANCE?

Across the nation, local decision makers and equity advocates are committed to improving schools—including school board members, state and district leaders, civil rights advocates, families, educators, and even students themselves. However, a lack of coordination can limit the impact of these efforts. The Alliance for Resource Equity works to bring many combinations of stakeholders together around a framework for shared understanding, and a plan for collaborative action.

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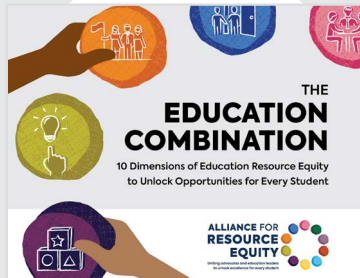THE EDUCATION COMBINATION

Learn about the 10 dimensions

This paper turns the spotlight on education resource equity by sharing the 10 dimensions that unlock better, more equitable experiences in school for all students.
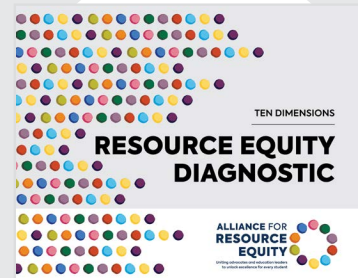
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THE RESOURCE EQUITY DIAGNOSTIC

Identify strengths and gaps

This tool helps you better understand the current state of education resource equity and excellence for students in *your* school system across all 10 dimensions.

■ **Advocates' Guide**: Tailored guidance for advocates on how to use the diagnostic in partnership with your local school system.

■ **Sample Meeting Agenda**: An example of a meeting agenda to help community advocates and district leaders work collaboratively to kick off the process of improving education resource equity.
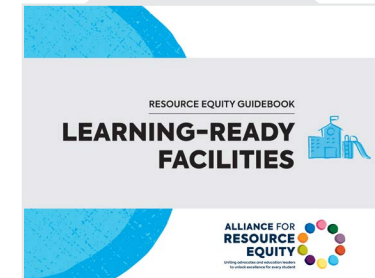
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THE RESOURCE EQUITY GUIDEBOOKS

Explore next steps

This series of guidebooks digs deeper into your diagnostic results by probing underlying causes of challenges in your school system and considering ways to improve students' experiences in school.

DIMENSION 1

School Funding

DIMENSION 2

Teaching Quality & Diversity

DIMENSION 3

School Leadership Quality & Diversity

DIMENSION 4

Empowering, Rigorous Content

DIMENSION 5

Instructional Time & Attention

DIMENSION 6

Positive & Inviting School Climate

DIMENSION 7

Student Supports & Intervention

DIMENSION 8

High-Quality Early Learning

DIMENSION 9

Learning-Ready Facilities

DIMENSION 10

Diverse Classrooms & Schools

Dimension 9: Learning-Ready Facilities

ABOUT THIS GUIDEBOOK

Your team of district leaders and community members can use this guidebook about **Learning-Ready Facilities** to choose promising actions based on your district's challenges and the distinct needs of your students.

- Determine **root causes** of challenges in your school district

- Explore **potential actions**

- Plan **next steps**

In this guidebook, each key question is a separate "chapter"—and depending on what growth opportunities your team identified in the diagnostic, you can choose to look at any number of these key questions. **For each key question that is relevant to your district, you will investigate the underlying root causes of challenges, explore potential actions, and plan next steps.** Key questions, root causes, and potential actions often connect to each other across chapters.

Refer to your Resource Equity Diagnostic (bit.ly/ equitydiagnostic) as you use this guidebook.

KEY QUESTION

9.1

Does each student have access to *facilities* that are designed, maintained, and utilized in line with modern building standards and in ways that meet students' needs?

KEY QUESTION

9.2

Does each student have access to *well-equipped* physical environments that facilitate learning and meet students' needs?

WHAT IS EDUCATION RESOURCE EQUITY?

When schools, systems, and communities work together to mobilize the right combination of resources that create high-quality learning experiences for all students, that is what we call **education resource equity**. Yet many schools and systems are set up as if different students all need the same things. Worse yet, students with higher needs and students of color are often *less* likely than their peers to have access to the high-quality learning experiences that research tells us are necessary to prepare them for college and career.

Education resource equity is what we need to make sure that school unlocks every child's power to live a life of their choosing—and that race and family income no longer predict a student's life trajectory.

To change students' educational experiences for the better, we need to "do school" differently by making changes at the district and school levels. This means working together to design schools and systems that use the right combination of resources to meet each child's distinct needs.

KEY TERMS

Students with higher needs includes students in your district who may face additional barriers to success, such as students from low-income backgrounds; English learners; students with disabilities; and students experiencing foster care, homelessness, or the juvenile justice system.

Students of color, in this context, includes Black, Latino, and Native American students, or other historically underserved racial/ethnic groups in your district.

The 10 dimensions of education resource equity often interact. For example, **Learning-Ready Facilities** is closely related to other dimensions, such as: **School Funding** because inequities in facilities are often closely tied to available funding; and **Empowering, Rigorous Content** because learning environments and instructional equipment are influenced by the courses and curricula a district or school offers and must be accompanied by high-quality instructional materials. No single dimension of education resource equity can unlock every student's potential—but when dimensions are combined to meet students' distinct needs, they are a strong foundation for unlocking better, more equitable experiences in school.

Learn more at educationresourceequity.org/dimensions.

DIMENSION 1
School Funding

DIMENSION 4
Empowering, Rigorous Content

DIMENSION 9
Learning-Ready Facilities
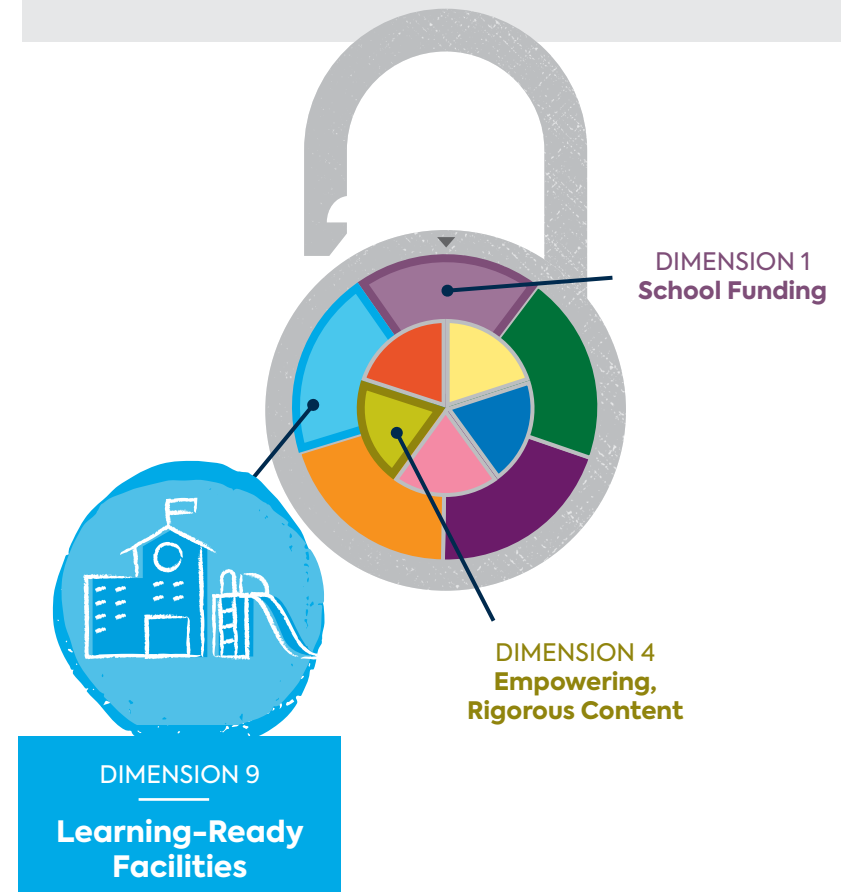
FOUNDATIONS FOR EXCELLENCE & EQUITABLE ACCESS

To make progress toward education resource equity, your team will need to consider:

FOUNDATIONS FOR EXCELLENCE
Systemwide

Foundations for Excellence gauges whether there is enough of a resource available at the system level and whether foundational structures, practices, and policies are in place to enable equitable access to the resource for all students. For example, a challenge in Foundations for Excellence may mean that your district does not have enough seats in safe and well-maintained school buildings to accommodate the student population.

If your district faces challenges with Foundations for Excellence, then your team will need to consider how the root causes you see in this guidebook play out across the system, for all schools or all students. The actions you choose to address these root causes should be implemented systemwide.
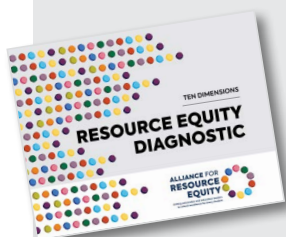
The [Resource Equity Diagnostic (bit.ly/equitydiagnostic)](bit.ly/equitydiagnostic) can help your team determine key opportunities and challenges both systemwide (**Foundations for Excellence**) and in specific schools or classrooms (**Equitable Access**). Keep these results in mind as you work through this guidebook to ensure that your team is addressing the specific challenges your district faces.

EQUITABLE ACCESS
In specific schools or classrooms

Equitable Access assesses whether students with higher needs, students of color, and students with lower academic performance have access to the right amount and combinations of resources necessary to meet their needs. Challenges in Equitable Access may mean that in your district there are...

- **Inequities *across* schools**—for example, if schools that serve higher proportions of students of color are more likely to have outdated buildings in need of maintenance.

- **Inequities *within* schools**—for example, if students with disabilities are less likely to have access to high-quality instructional equipment or technology that meets their needs.

If your district faces challenges with Equitable Access, then your team will need to consider how the root causes of those inequities play out at specific schools or for specific groups of students. The actions you choose to address these root causes should be targeted toward specific schools or classrooms.

HOW DO WE USE THIS GUIDEBOOK?

First, get everyone together at the table.

Every community, district, school, and child is unique. And your system undoubtedly has strengths, challenges, and possible barriers that will surface as you explore this guidebook.

==That's why the first step to ensuring that students have better, more equitable experiences in school is engaging the people who know that unique context best.== To accurately identify and effectively mobilize the right combination of resources for meeting students' needs, many different people need to be part of the process. Their perspectives, expertise, and lived experiences will help to inform a planning process that reflects your system's unique context and has broad community support.

Therefore, you should use this guidebook as part of a facilitated group exercise and a starting point for larger conversations and planning. Include the following groups from the outset: **PRACTITIONERS**, including school board members, district leaders, and central office department staff; **EDUCATORS**, including school leaders and teachers; and **ADVOCATES**, including civil rights leaders, business leaders, families, and other community members.

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

After you've decided which key question chapter(s) to start with, use the guiding questions to help you narrow down the menu of common root causes and select the one(s) that are most significant, relevant, or true for what is driving your district's challenges. Together, you should use the root cause menu to help your team think, discuss, analyze data, seek out other views, and keep asking "why?" to dig deeper. You may find that this menu doesn't include every root cause that contributes to your district's challenge. You can add your own customized root cause based on your diagnostic results and insights from the diverse groups of stakeholders at the table.

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

Next, use the guiding questions as you explore potential actions and choose the ones that seem most promising given the needs of students in your community. For each action you choose, indicate if you will pursue it **systemwide**, in **specific schools or classrooms**, or both.
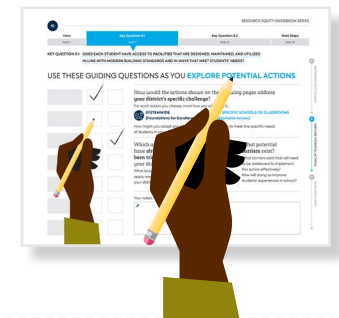
C PLAN NEXT STEPS

Making changes isn't easy. As you gear up for deeper planning and implementation, your team will need to organize your roles and identify both short- and long-term next steps. Use the guidance on "Plan Next Steps" on page 35 to prioritize which of the actions you selected seem most promising to pursue (and when), to further customize those actions to meet the unique needs of your students, and to check for alignment with other district efforts and priorities.

KEY QUESTION

9.1

Does each student have access to *facilities* that are designed, maintained, and utilized in line with modern building standards and in ways that meet students' needs?

RESOURCE EQUITY GUIDEBOOK SERIES
DIMENSION 9: LEARNING-READY FACILITIES

KEY QUESTION 9.1: **DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *FACILITIES* THAT ARE DESIGNED, MAINTAINED, AND UTILIZED IN LINE WITH MODERN BUILDING STANDARDS AND IN WAYS THAT MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?**

USE THESE GUIDING QUESTIONS AS YOU **DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES** OF YOUR DISTRICT'S CHALLENGE

In your district, **where** does this challenge occur?

SYSTEMWIDE for all schools or all students (Foundations for Excellence)

IN SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS, affecting specific groups of students (Equitable Access)

Which of the root causes on the next page drive this challenge in your district?
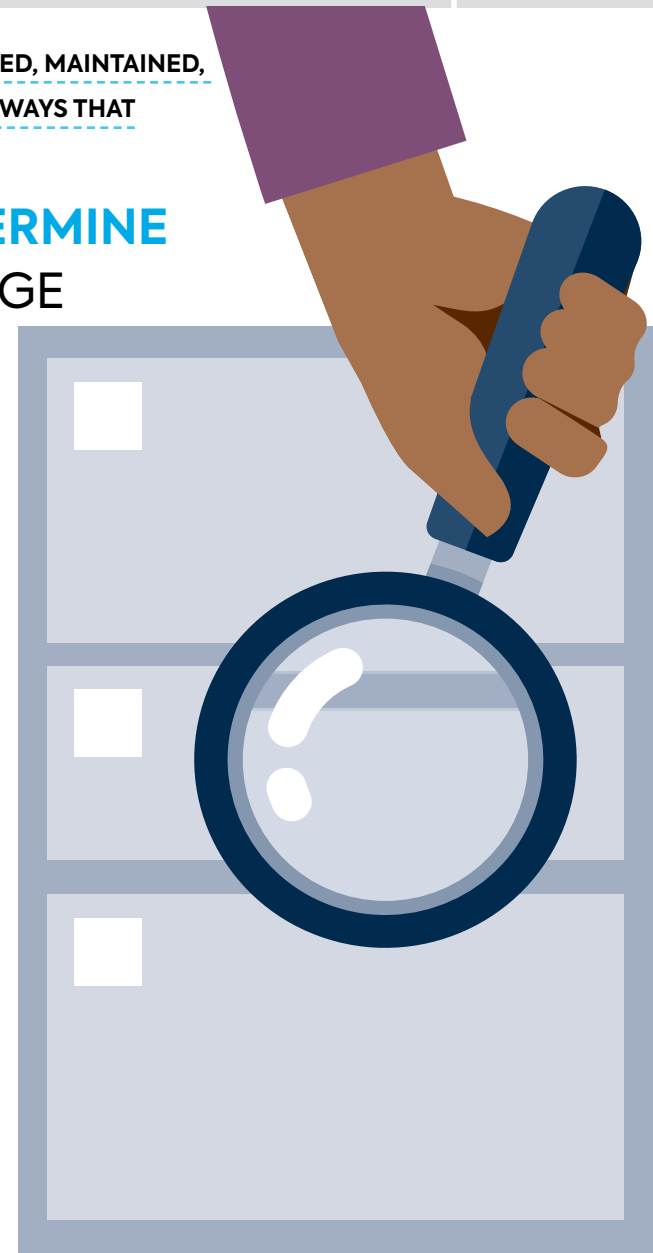
Consider...

- Available district data
- Input from different stakeholder groups, particularly those most directly impacted by existing inequities

How do biases play out in your district?

Explicit or implicit biases can underly root causes and/or affect peoples' perceptions of root causes.

Your notes:

A **DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES**

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

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KEY QUESTION 9.1: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *FACILITIES* THAT ARE DESIGNED, MAINTAINED, AND UTILIZED IN LINE WITH MODERN BUILDING STANDARDS AND IN WAYS THAT MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE ROOT CAUSES OF YOUR DISTRICT'S CHALLENGE?

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

ROOT CAUSES

Funding PAGE 11

Funding for facilities and infrastructure is insufficient and/or too inflexible to meet the district's needs.

Public Engagement & Accountability PAGE 13

The district does not consistently, equitably, or meaningfully engage the broader community in decisions about facilities, or does not transparently share information in ways that invite accountability—therefore hindering efforts to ensure that facilities meet student, family, and community needs.

Planning & Management Systems PAGE 15

Facilities management staff don't have consistent access to actionable and up-to-date data, plans, or schedules that could be used to inform efficient management and maintenance of facilities.

Staff Capacity & Expertise PAGE 18

Facilities and maintenance staff lack the structures, time, specialized expertise, and/or support needed to perform necessary preventative and corrective maintenance tasks well.

Other* PAGE 20

*You can add a custom root cause depending on your district's unique context

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KEY QUESTION 9.1: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *FACILITIES* THAT ARE DESIGNED, MAINTAINED, AND UTILIZED IN LINE WITH MODERN BUILDING STANDARDS AND IN WAYS THAT MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

USE THESE GUIDING QUESTIONS AS YOU **EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS**

How would the actions shown on the following pages address **your district's specific challenge**?

For each action you choose, mark how you will apply it...

SYSTEMWIDE (Foundations for Excellence)

IN SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS (Equitable Access)

How might you adapt any actions that seem promising to meet the specific needs of students in your district?

Which actions have **already been tried** in your district?

What lessons can you apply now to address your district's challenge?

What do stakeholders **recommend**?

What recommendations do different stakeholder groups have—particularly those most directly impacted by existing inequities?

What potential **barriers** exist?

What barriers exist that will need to be addressed to implement this action effectively? How will doing so improve students' experiences in school?

Your notes:

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

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WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE   SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Funding

THE VISION

Funding for facilities and infrastructure is both sufficient and adequately flexible to meet the district's needs.

Create a coalition with families, community leaders, and leaders from other districts to advocate for **more effective policies and increased funding at the local, state, and federal levels**, thereby making school facilities **a public priority.** For example:

- Campaign for a **dedicated school facility capital fund** that is distributed in an equity-conscious way, and/or legislation that provides districts with the flexibility to raise revenue.

- Recommend the creation of a **statewide school facilities office** that provides financial and technical support to school districts, as well as an independent advisory committee of health, environment, and education experts that informs state decision-making using input from directly impacted communities.

- Develop innovative **partnerships with suppliers and providers**—including local and national private companies, community-based organizations, technical schools, and government agencies—by using contracts that facilitate shared municipal service delivery (such as with libraries or senior centers) and/or discounted maintenance work.

- Establish **joint-use agreements** with other entities—including other schools and districts, postsecondary and public institutions, and private organizations—to provide students with greater access to high-quality facilities (like laboratories, libraries, art studios, and athletic fields) in a cost-effective way.

- Conduct rigorous **budget, process, and quality audits** of capital projects—including school construction, major renovation, and systems renewal projects—to ensure fiscal responsibility, best practice, and compliance.

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

KEY QUESTION 9.1: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *FACILITIES* THAT ARE DESIGNED, MAINTAINED, AND UTILIZED IN LINE WITH MODERN BUILDING STANDARDS AND IN WAYS THAT MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE

SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Funding
(cont'd)

THE VISION

Funding for facilities and infrastructure is both sufficient and adequately flexible to meet the district's needs.

Identify and pursue opportunities for generating additional revenue. For example:

- Lease or rent district facilities and contract out associated services and equipment to other entities—for example, open schools and athletic facilities after-hours to host external organizations or contract out snow removal and grounds maintenance services.
- Leverage supplementary funding sources—including bonds, private donations, corporate sponsorships, state matching funds, and government grants—to help finance capital projects and major one-time expenses, such as building construction, expansion, remodeling, and upgrades.

Other potential action(s):

A — DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B — EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C — PLAN NEXT STEPS

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KEY QUESTION 9.1: **DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *FACILITIES* THAT ARE DESIGNED, MAINTAINED, AND UTILIZED IN LINE WITH MODERN BUILDING STANDARDS AND IN WAYS THAT MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?**

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE **SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS**

Public Engagement & Accountability

THE VISION

The district consistently, equitably, and meaningfully engages the broader community in decisions about facilities and transparently shares information in ways that invite accountability.

Cocreate **standards for facility operation** with the community (including students and families from underserved backgrounds)—especially for schools in old buildings or those with small enrollments. Consider benchmarks and metrics—such as occupancy, utilization, efficiency, accessibility, safety and code standards, and operational and maintenance costs—so that decisions to close or repurpose facilities are transparent and follow pre-determined procedures.

Establish **policies that require local community involvement in major decisions about facilities**, such as consolidating or closing school sites, choosing sites for new facilities, or passing budgets for major capital projects. Establish committees, host events, and organize referendums that center the voices of students and families from underserved backgrounds.

Develop **inclusive practices for engaging with students, families, and community members** to ensure they have opportunities to understand all of the options and related tradeoffs when districts renovate, repurpose, or build schools and facilities—for example, to encourage participation, host meetings at existing facilities or intended sites outside of traditional work hours and provide translation services, transportation, food, and childcare.

Conduct **family and community surveys** in multiple languages and via multiple communication methods to gather data on peoples' experiences with existing facilities, their needs, and their recommendations for new facilities; analyze this data across different groups to identify disparities.

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

KEY QUESTION 9.1: **DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *FACILITIES* THAT ARE DESIGNED, MAINTAINED, AND UTILIZED IN LINE WITH MODERN BUILDING STANDARDS AND IN WAYS THAT MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?**

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE   SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Public Engagement & Accountability *(cont'd)*

Ensure that families and community members have ==representation on governing bodies== (such as school boards and capital project planning committees) by ensuring enough seats are dedicated to family or community representatives and that these seats are both equitably accessible and reflective of the diversity of the community being served.

Publish facility ==data, budgets, and proposals== online in multiple languages and in publicly accessible formats to foster transparency with students, families, and the community, and to promote accountability when inequities persist.

Other potential action(s):

THE VISION

The district consistently, equitably, and meaningfully engages the broader community in decisions about facilities and transparently shares information in ways that invite accountability.

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

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WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE

SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Planning & Management Systems

THE VISION

Facilities management staff have access to actionable and up-to-date data, plans, and schedules that are used to inform efficient management and maintenance of facilities.

Develop a **long-term facilities budget and plan** that are readily accessible online, easy to understand, representative of community involvement, and aligned with the district's mission. This plan should be informed by:

- A **clear vision** for equitable access to high-quality school facilities (including the outdoor space on school campuses) that is written into the district's mission, priorities, and strategic plan.

- Frequent and thorough assessments to monitor the **current state of facilities** by collecting up-to-date, accurate, and comprehensive data (including information from work orders) about the conditions, repair needs, utilities costs, code compliance (such as ADA), safety standards, prior investments, and deferred maintenance for each property.

- Comprehensive **student, staff, and community surveys** that are conducted in multiple languages and via multiple communication methods to gather data on people's experiences with existing facilities, their needs, and their recommendations for new facilities—including analysis across different demographic groups to identify disparities.

- A **sustainability commitment** that leverages data about utilities to identify ways to modernize infrastructure and improve energy efficiency—therefore freeing up funds for other priorities, such as installing energy-efficient HVAC systems and occupancy sensors or investing in renewable energy sources, such as solar panels.

Regularly review the district's **school portfolio strategy**, ensuring a range of factors and perspectives are considered when making major decisions about facilities, such as opening or closing school sites. For example:

- Examine and mitigate **inefficiencies and inequities** that exist at specific school facilities, especially schools located in old or underutilized buildings with high maintenance costs.

- Identify and pursue opportunities for greater **operational efficiency** in order to reduce high overhead costs, including sharing facilities services and maintenance equipment (such as snow removal, grounds upkeep, and transportation) within the district.

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

KEY QUESTION 9.1: **DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *FACILITIES* THAT ARE DESIGNED, MAINTAINED, AND UTILIZED IN LINE WITH MODERN BUILDING STANDARDS AND IN WAYS THAT MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?**

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE

SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Planning & Management Systems
(cont'd)

THE VISION

Facilities management staff have access to actionable and up-to-date data, plans, and schedules that are used to inform efficient management and maintenance of facilities.

Design and implement an effective strategy for ongoing inspections and maintenance:

- Conduct regular health and safety inspections of school facilities—first prioritizing facilities that are old or known to be in poor condition—in order to identify any risks or hazards; communicate findings to the appropriate staff and coordinate a plan for how they will be resolved.

- Prepare and follow realistic annual maintenance schedules that are coordinated across the district and structured by month and/or week for each facility—this will help ensure that preventative maintenance is reliably performed, that deferred maintenance is promptly rescheduled, and that major disruptive work is aligned with school breaks.

- Invest in a computerized, easy-to-use system for maintenance reporting and management, ideally with functions such as data dashboards, automatic notifications, stakeholder updates, recurrent issue detection, inventory forecasting, and expenditure tracking; use this system to streamline communication, coordinate services, and track progress on work orders, preventative maintenance, and capital improvements.

- Conduct audits of maintenance requests, reports, and timelines to help ensure equitable prioritization of support to schools with the greatest needs.

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

KEY QUESTION 9.1: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *FACILITIES* THAT ARE DESIGNED, MAINTAINED, AND UTILIZED IN LINE WITH MODERN BUILDING STANDARDS AND IN WAYS THAT MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE **SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS**

Planning & Management Systems *(cont'd)*

THE VISION

Facilities management staff have access to actionable and up-to-date data, plans, and schedules that are used to inform efficient management and maintenance of facilities.

Devise a **robust network and connectivity plan** that ensures an equitable opportunity for students to learn inside and outside of school hours and buildings:

- Ensure **widespread and reliable access to high-speed internet** and school networks while at school and at home. Analyze usage data to determine the necessary bandwidth and best physical locations for installing wired and wireless access points in school buildings. Implement comprehensive network security and safeguarding measures (such as firewalls, intrusion detection systems, internet filters, and privacy protections) so that threats and malware can be centrally monitored and resolved.

- Promote awareness and support around enrollment in **federal broadband subsidy programs for families,** ensuring materials are distributed in their home languages.

- Develop a comprehensive and workable **remote learning plan** to ensure that all students have access to spaces that are conducive to learning (such as local public libraries, community centers, or via partnerships with local businesses) when school facilities are temporarily unavailable.

Other potential action(s):

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

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KEY QUESTION 9.1: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *FACILITIES* THAT ARE DESIGNED, MAINTAINED, AND UTILIZED IN LINE WITH MODERN BUILDING STANDARDS AND IN WAYS THAT MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE

SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Staff Capacity & Expertise

THE VISION

Facilities and maintenance staff have the structures, time, specialized expertise, and support they need to perform necessary preventative and corrective maintenance tasks well.

Clearly establish or redefine the **roles** of the district- and school-level leadership positions and teams who are responsible for directly collaborating with facilities staff on facilities assessments, management, and maintenance.

Create and maintain an **accessible bank of industry and academic research, data, and case studies** on school facilities that can be used to inform decision-making.

Ensure district facilities departments are adequately staffed by hiring and retaining **specialized facilities team members** who have the necessary expertise and licensure to work across district locations; sponsor certification for existing staff (such as by recruiting from technical schools or establishing apprenticeship programs) to ensure maintenance needs can be addressed quickly and efficiently.

Provide high-quality **training and ongoing technical support** to ensure facilities staff are well-equipped to service new, specialized, or technical building features; consider the sophistication of such features prior to installation.

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

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WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE   SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Staff Capacity & Expertise *(Cont'd)*

THE VISION

Facilities and maintenance staff have the structures, time, specialized expertise, and support they need to perform necessary preventative and corrective maintenance tasks well.

Collect and analyze data to understand and evaluate ==staff effectiveness and maintenance quality==; ensure this data is relevant and useful by clearly defining skills and competencies for maintenance employees, leveraging multiple measures of growth and effectiveness, and monitoring progress over time.

Collect and analyze ==data to better understand staff allocations== across locations and over time and to adjust as necessary; compare facilities team staffing with the size and/or demands of their respective facilities to make sure ratios are allowing sufficient time for staff to carry out both scheduled preventative maintenance and urgent corrective maintenance.

Assess staff capacity and budgets to develop ==realistic, achievable plans== and to determine which work will be conducted by in-house staff versus other entities, such as contractors, administrators, public works, or technological solutions.

Other potential action(s):

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

KEY QUESTION 9.1: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *FACILITIES* THAT ARE DESIGNED, MAINTAINED, AND UTILIZED IN LINE WITH MODERN BUILDING STANDARDS AND IN WAYS THAT MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE

SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Other Root Cause

You can add a custom root cause depending on your district's unique context.

A — DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B — EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C — PLAN NEXT STEPS

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KEY QUESTION 9.1: **DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO _FACILITIES_ THAT ARE DESIGNED, MAINTAINED, AND UTILIZED IN LINE WITH MODERN BUILDING STANDARDS AND IN WAYS THAT MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?**

NOTES

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

KEY QUESTION

9.2

Does each student have access to *well-equipped* physical environments that facilitate learning and meet students' needs?

RESOURCE EQUITY GUIDEBOOK SERIES
DIMENSION 9: LEARNING-READY FACILITIES

KEY QUESTION 9.2: **DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *WELL-EQUIPPED* PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT FACILITATE LEARNING AND MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?**

USE THESE GUIDING QUESTIONS AS YOU **DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES** OF YOUR DISTRICT'S CHALLENGE

In your district, **where** does this challenge occur?

SYSTEMWIDE for all schools or all students (Foundations for Excellence)

IN SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS, affecting some groups of students (Equitable Access)

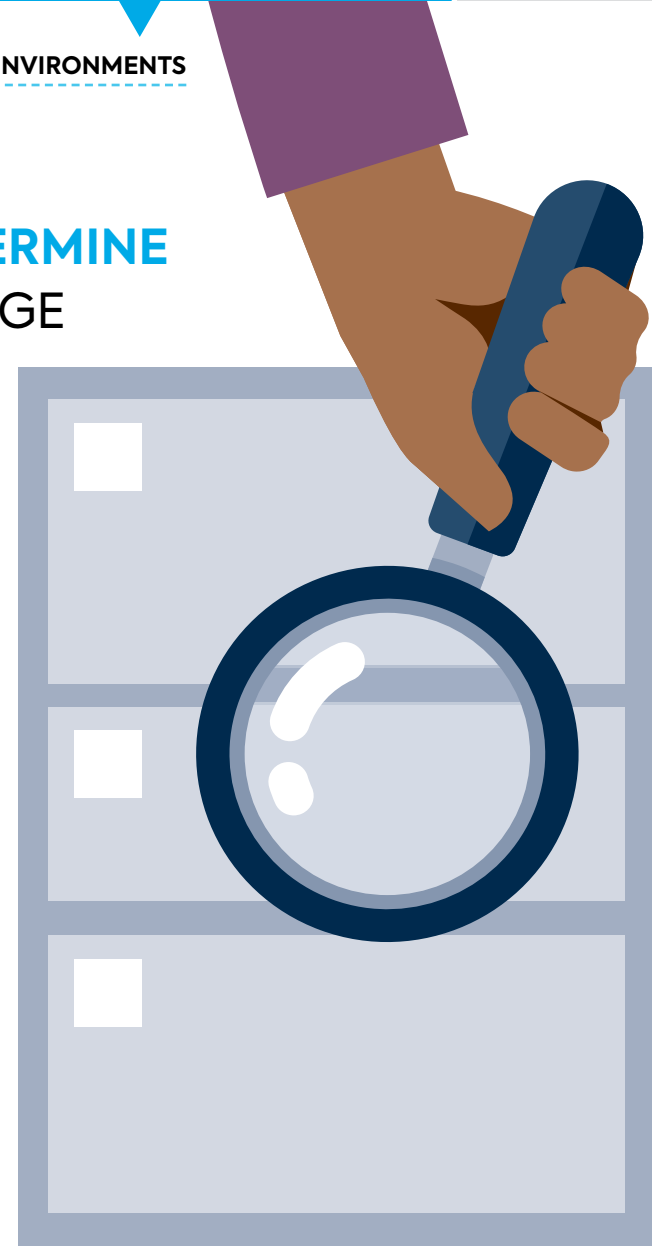**Which** of the root causes on the next page drive this challenge in your district?

Consider...

- Available district data
- Input from different stakeholder groups, particularly those most directly impacted by existing inequities

How do biases play out in your district?

Explicit or implicit biases can underly root causes and/or affect peoples' perceptions of root causes.

Your notes:

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

KEY QUESTION 9.2: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *WELL-EQUIPPED* PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT FACILITATE LEARNING AND MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE ROOT CAUSES OF YOUR DISTRICT'S CHALLENGE?

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

ROOT CAUSES

Funding PAGE 26

Funding for learning equipment and technology is insufficient and/or too inflexible to meet the district's needs.

Planning & Management Systems PAGE 27

Staff don't have consistent access to actionable and up-to-date information, plans, or schedules that could be used to inform efficient management of learning equipment, technology, and supplies.

Learning Environment Design PAGE 29

Physical learning spaces inside and outside of school buildings are not intentionally designed to meet the needs of students and educators, and/or spaces are not able to be used in flexible, creative, and effective ways.
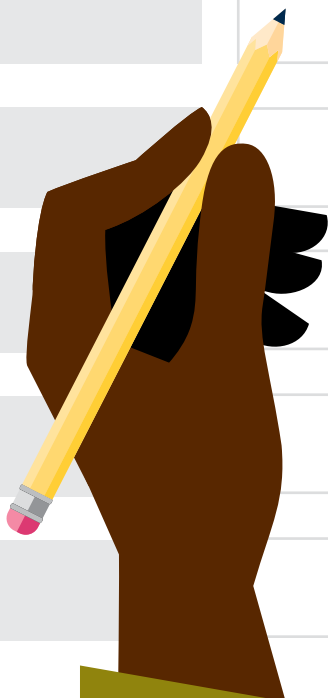
Staff Capacity & Expertise PAGE 31

Staff lack the time and/or expertise needed to design physical environments and use equipment and technology in ways that facilitate students' learning and meet their needs.

Other* PAGE 33

*You can add a custom root cause depending on your district's unique context

Intro	Key Question 9.1	Key Question 9.2	Next Steps
PAGE 3	PAGE 7	PAGE 22	PAGE 35

KEY QUESTION 9.2: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *WELL-EQUIPPED* PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT FACILITATE LEARNING AND MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

USE THESE GUIDING QUESTIONS AS YOU EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

How would the actions shown on the following pages address **your district's specific challenge**?

For each action you choose, mark how you will apply it...

**SYSTEMWIDE
(Foundations for Excellence)**

**IN SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS
(Equitable Access)**

How might you adapt any actions that seem promising to meet the specific needs of students in your district?

Which actions have **already been tried** in your district?

What lessons can you apply now to address your district's challenge?

What do stakeholders **recommend**?

What recommendations do different stakeholder groups have—particularly those most directly impacted by existing inequities?

What potential **barriers** exist?

What barriers exist that will need to be addressed to implement this action effectively? How will doing so improve students' experiences in school?

Your notes:

A

DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B

EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C

PLAN NEXT STEPS

KEY QUESTION 9.2: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *WELL-EQUIPPED* PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT FACILITATE LEARNING AND MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE

SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Funding

THE VISION

Funding for learning equipment and technology is sufficient and adequately flexible to meet the district's needs.

Maximize the use of **federal, state, and other grants** for specific learning equipment and technology programs, such as laptops and tablets.

Obtain **discounted learning equipment and technology** by leveraging district or statewide cooperative purchasing, developing contracts with specific local suppliers, or via partnerships with businesses, nonprofits, and other organizations that can help secure donations or student memberships.

Facilitate **partnerships and joint-use agreements** with other entities—including other schools and districts, postsecondary and public institutions, and private organizations—to provide students with greater access to high-quality equipment and technology for both academic and extracurricular activities (such as workshop tools, sports gear, and audio-visual production software) in a cost-effective way.

Review, and if necessary revise, **district and school allocation methods** to ensure equipment and technology are being distributed to schools and students in equitable and structured ways, rather than based on course levels or individual advocacy; make this information publicly available to promote transparency and accountability.

Establish **flexible school equipment budgets** (accompanied by district guidance and support) to give school leaders greater control over the equipment they purchase to meet varied student and staff needs.

Other potential action(s):

A — DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B — EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C — PLAN NEXT STEPS

Intro	Key Question 9.1	Key Question 9.2	Next Steps
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KEY QUESTION 9.2: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *WELL-EQUIPPED* PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT FACILITATE LEARNING AND MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE   SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Planning & Management Systems

THE VISION

Staff have access to actionable and up-to-date information, plans, and schedules that are used to inform efficient management of learning equipment, technology, and supplies.

Develop comprehensive **learning equipment budgets and plans** that include classroom furniture, instructional equipment, technology, and supplies that meet the needs of students and staff:

- Collect accurate data on **school equipment inventory** (including rented items), such as condition, accessibility, and utilization.

- Conduct **student, family, and staff surveys** on equipment and learning environments to assess their experiences and satisfaction and to ensure schools are fully accessible, inclusive spaces that meet students' needs and supplement the curriculum and courses that are offered.

Design and implement an effective **strategy for the ongoing management of school equipment:**

- Prepare and follow **annual procurement and maintenance schedules** for all schools and departments to replenish consumable supplies, update technology services and software, and repair longstanding equipment, so that students and staff have consistent access to the equipment they need throughout the school year.

- Employ an online, **easy-to-use inventory management system** that updates data and coordinates services, such as counting and procuring supplies, predicting deficiencies, tracking repairs, and streamlining communications with staff about service requests.

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

Intro	Key Question 9.1	Key Question 9.2	Next Steps
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KEY QUESTION 9.2: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *WELL-EQUIPPED* PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT FACILITATE LEARNING AND MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE **POTENTIAL ACTIONS?**

SYSTEM-WIDE

SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Planning & Management Systems *(cont'd)*

THE VISION

Staff have access to actionable and up-to-date information, plans, and schedules that are used to inform efficient management of learning equipment, technology, and supplies.

Encourage operations departments and instructional staff to collaborate with one another and engage with students and families to:

- Elevate the voices of students and staff members during **the process of selecting classroom furniture and instructional equipment**—for example via a cross-departmental equipment committee or procurement meetings to trial products and provide feedback—so that decisions better align with the curriculum, teachers' pedagogy, and students' needs.

- Develop **equitable approaches for allocating limited equipment**—for example, ensure that access to well-equipped science laboratories isn't restricted only to students who are enrolled in advanced courses.

- Establish **transparent minimum standards** for equipment use that consider metrics such as utilization, accessibility, safety and code standards, and operational and maintenance costs.

- Standardize **fundamental equipment** within schools when possible (while also offering a selection of content-specific or more specialized equipment)—for example, purchase one model of Smartboards or calculators so that students and staff can consolidate knowledge and easily use equipment outside of their usual classrooms.

Other potential action(s):

A DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C PLAN NEXT STEPS

Intro	Key Question 9.1	Key Question 9.2	Next Steps
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KEY QUESTION 9.2: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *WELL-EQUIPPED* PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT FACILITATE LEARNING AND MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE   SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

A — DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B — EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C — PLAN NEXT STEPS

Learning Environment Design

THE VISION

Physical learning spaces inside and outside of school buildings are intentionally designed to meet the needs of students and educators and are able to be used in flexible, creative, and effective ways.

Collaborate with school leaders, teachers, and students to design a **range of inclusive and welcoming classroom spaces** that serve different purposes and meet different needs—for example, incorporating features like idea walls, bean bags, and mobile whiteboards.

Establish **cross-functional positions and teams** to coordinate best practices and share expertise for designing flexible, practical, and inclusive learning environments that meet the needs of all staff and students (especially students with disabilities):

- Procure **furniture** that aids easy navigation, decentralizes teacher spaces, and is conducive to arrangements that promote collaboration—for example, being able to organize tables in clusters, create spacious walkways, and hang Smartboards or whiteboards on several walls.

- Consider how to improve **students' sensory experiences** in classrooms—for example, installing carpeted floors, hanging fabric curtains, installing foam ceilings to absorb sounds, adding lamps and warm layered lighting, and selecting neutral colors that imbue calmness.

- Display **labels and signage** (such as class schedules, codes of conduct, and other posted materials) in students' home languages and with accompanying visuals.

- Incorporate **objects that implicitly empower underserved groups of students and/or recognize and celebrate different cultures**, such as bookshelves that feature books with different types of families, characters who look like students or face relatable challenges (without resorting to stereotypes), diverse textiles and artwork, and non-Eurocentric maps and flags.

Intro	Key Question 9.1	Key Question 9.2	Next Steps
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KEY QUESTION 9.2: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *WELL-EQUIPPED* PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT FACILITATE LEARNING AND MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE

SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Learning Environment Design *(cont'd)*

THE VISION

Physical learning spaces inside and outside of school buildings are intentionally designed to meet the needs of students and educators and are able to be used in flexible, creative, and effective ways.

Consider creating **flexible classroom assignments** that allow teachers and students to identify, reserve, and occupy the spaces in schools that are most conducive to specific content activities, pedagogical techniques, and students' needs.

Identify and utilize **non-traditional spaces within school buildings and on school grounds** (such as hallways, cafeterias, or courtyards) that could serve as temporary learning environments for specific content activities or for different students' needs,

Partner with families and local organizations to ensure all students have adequate short- and long-term access to **spaces that are conducive to learning outside of school**, as well as access to devices, high-speed internet connectivity, and virtual learning tools—so that students can easily study and complete homework outside of school buildings and hours, and continue learning in the event of physical school closures.

Other potential action(s):

A
DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B
EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C
PLAN NEXT STEPS

KEY QUESTION 9.2: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *WELL-EQUIPPED* PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT FACILITATE LEARNING AND MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE   SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Staff Capacity & Expertise

THE VISION

Staff have the time and expertise they need to design physical environments and use equipment and technology in ways that facilitate students' learning and meet their needs.

Use regular surveys and observations to assess **teachers' and school leaders' knowledge of the types of equipment that is available to them**, including how to reserve, access, and maintain it, and how to use it to support students' learning and help meet their needs.

Provide targeted **ongoing, job-embedded professional learning** opportunities in response to the survey and observation findings to help all staff:

- Use and take care of **classroom equipment and technology** properly, confidently, and effectively (and support students in doing the same) so that equipment fulfills its potential to benefit students' learning and stays in good working condition over time.

- Leverage specialized equipment and technology to **support students with specific needs**, such as students with disabilities and English language learners.

- Incorporate **technology** into their personal planning and content activities, such as by using a Learning Management System (LMS).

- Design **physical learning environments** that are flexible, practical, and inclusive, so that classrooms can adapt to meet various pedagogical and student needs.

A   DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B   EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C   PLAN NEXT STEPS

Intro	Key Question 9.1	Key Question 9.2	Next Steps
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KEY QUESTION 9.2: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *WELL-EQUIPPED* PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT FACILITATE LEARNING AND MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE

SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Staff Capacity & Expertise
(cont'd)

THE VISION

Staff have the time and expertise they need to design physical environments and use equipment and technology in ways that facilitate students' learning and meet their needs.

Identify staff who demonstrate expertise in incorporating equipment and technology into their lesson plans to serve as <mark>leaders and mentors</mark> for other staff, and identify school-based experts who can support their colleagues in using specialized equipment and technology, such as CAD/CAM design software or historical database queries.

Create accessible, easy-to-use <mark>knowledge management systems</mark> to supplement professional learning, help students and staff resolve issues, and impart best practices—for example via online FAQ pages, instructional videos, and shareable classroom signage.

Other potential action(s):

A

DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B

EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C

PLAN NEXT STEPS

Intro	Key Question 9.1	Key Question 9.2	Next Steps
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KEY QUESTION 9.2: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *WELL-EQUIPPED* PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT FACILITATE LEARNING AND MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

SYSTEM-WIDE

SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

Other Root Cause

You can add a custom root cause depending on your district's unique context.

A — DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B — EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C — PLAN NEXT STEPS

Intro	Key Question 9.1	Key Question 9.2	Next Steps
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KEY QUESTION 9.2: DOES EACH STUDENT HAVE ACCESS TO *WELL-EQUIPPED* PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS THAT FACILITATE LEARNING AND MEET STUDENTS' NEEDS?

For prompts to help your team think about next steps, go to page 35.

NOTES

A

DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B

EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C

PLAN NEXT STEPS

Plan Next Steps

1. PRIORITIZE   **2. CUSTOMIZE**   **3. ALIGN**   **4. PLAN**

Now that your team has begun to uncover the root causes of your school system's challenges and explored possible actions to improve **Learning-Ready Facilities**, it's time to plan next steps. You can continue to build on the momentum your team has built so far by beginning to outline what you will do next and who will help to move this work forward.

The Alliance for Resource Equity partners directly with state and local systems and communities to support education resource equity. Reach out to bring our team to you for workshops, in-depth engagements, or other support as you analyze resources, design strategies, and gear up for implementation.

educationresourceequity.org

RESOURCE EQUITY GUIDEBOOK SERIES
DIMENSION 9: LEARNING-READY FACILITIES
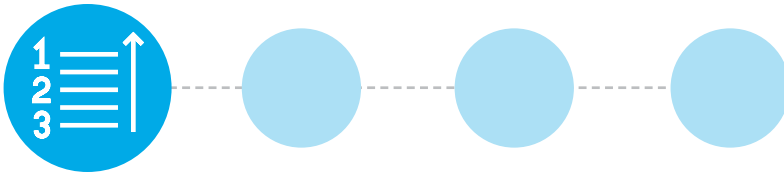
1. PRIORITIZE

How will we choose which promising actions to pursue—and when?

Important considerations:

- How do we believe this action could address our current challenges?

- How does the ease of implementing this action compare with the degree of impact it will have?

- What do we believe are the likely outcomes of implementing this action? For which students? Over what timeframe(s)?

- What is the opportunity cost of *not* moving forward with this action?

- To what extent is there energy and momentum in our community around moving forward with this action?

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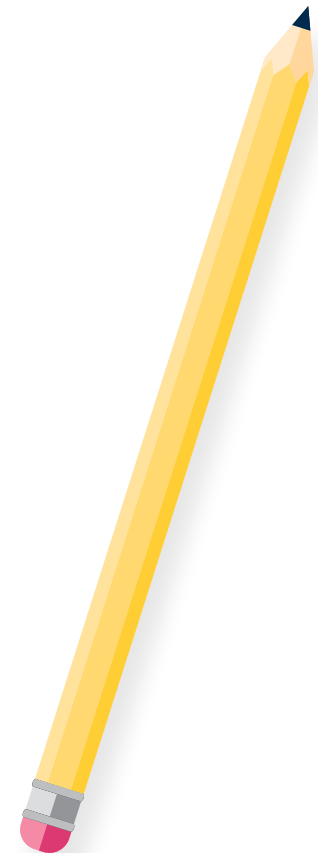
2. CUSTOMIZE

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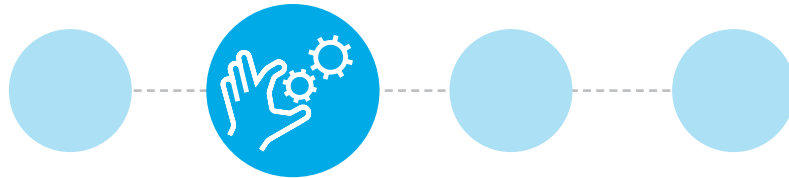
How will we adapt the most promising potential actions to fit our community's unique context?

Important considerations:

- Are there past or current efforts that have been successful that we can adapt or build off of?

- What unique risks or barriers might threaten success?

- How will we get our community involved in making progress on this action?

- What prerequisite steps might be needed before we move forward? (For example, learning more through focus groups or community sessions, partnering with local advocacy groups, or changing existing policies or timelines)
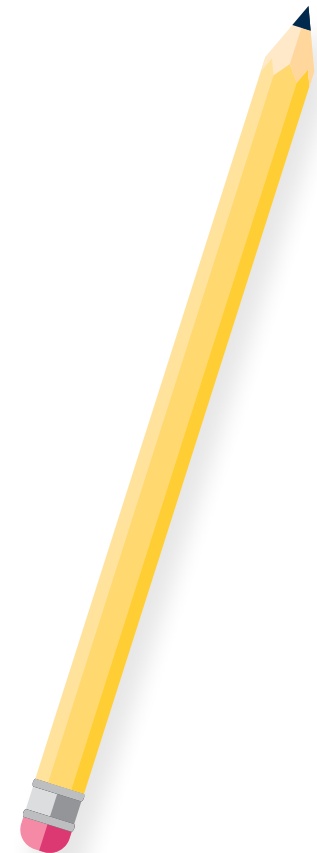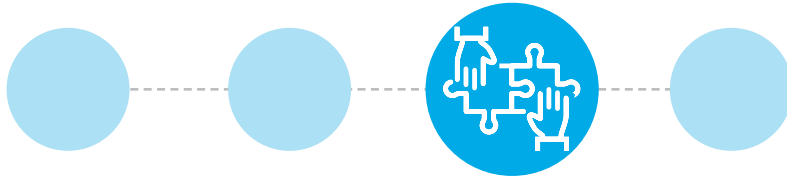
3. ALIGN

How do the most promising potential actions align with other strategic priorities in our district?
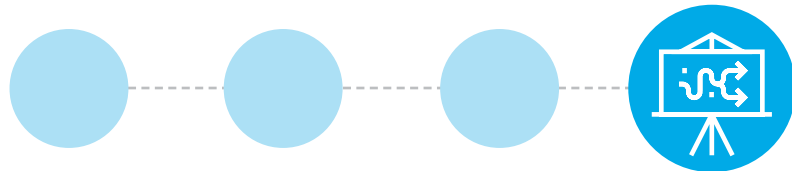
Important considerations:

- What is our big-picture theory of action? How does it tie any new actions that we choose to pursue to our district- or school-level priorities?

- How can we make sure that our strategic plan accurately reflects our equity goals?

- How might our efforts in this action area connect to other dimensions of education resource equity?

- What related efforts or investments does this work rely on? What else do we need to start, stop, or continue doing for implementing this action to be effective?

- How does this action align with the goals and priorities of different groups of people, including families, educators, and students?

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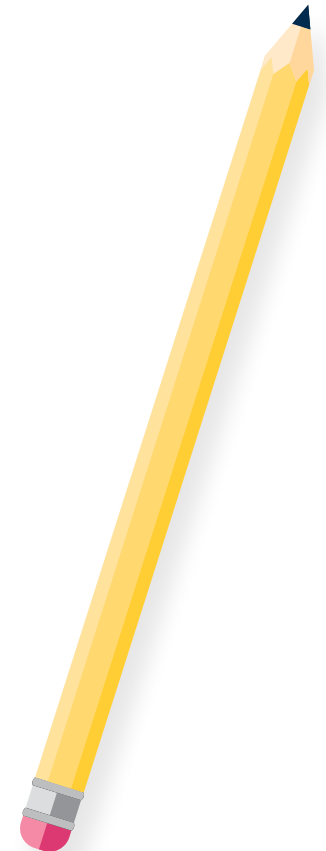
4. PLAN

What is needed to successfully implement the most promising actions?

Important considerations:

- What resources, processes, and mindsets will this work require? What shifts might we need to make? Will these shifts impact other district or school priorities?

- What can we do to proactively mitigate potential risks and barriers to success?

- What are our short-, medium-, and long-term timelines for planning and implementing this action?

- How might we build buy-in around this action?

- How will we measure impact? How will we know we are on track?

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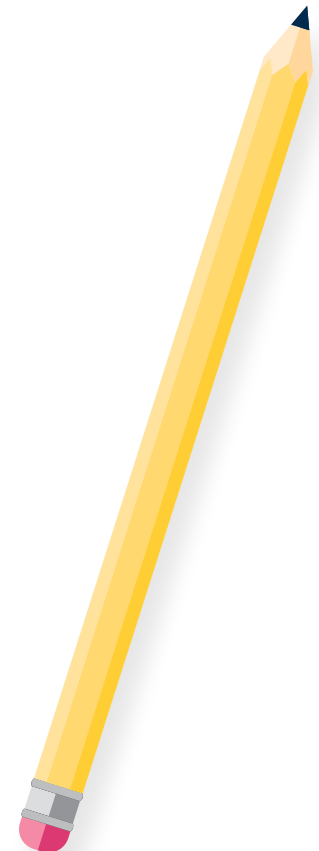
APPENDIX

SOURCES

This guidebook includes best practice research from the following publications:

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13. Sapna Cheryan, Sianna A. Ziegler, Victoria C. Plaut, and Andrew N. Meltzoff. *Designing Classrooms to Maximize Student Achievement.* Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 2014. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2372732214548677

14. Todd Finley and Blake Wiggs. *Rethinking Classroom Design: Create Student-Centered Learning Spaces for 6-12th Graders.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781475818536/Rethinking-Classroom-Design-Create-Student-Centered-Learning-Spaces-for-6-12th-Graders

15. USDOE. *Future Ready Schools: Building Technology Infrastructure for Learning.* USDOE Office of Educational Technology, 2014. https://tech.ed.gov/futureready/infrastructure/

NOTES

ALLIANCE FOR
RESOURCE
EQUITY

Uniting advocates and education leaders
to unlock excellence for every student