

# Austin Independent School District Equity Action Plan\*

## Purpose

The purpose of the Equity Action Plan is to guide district leaders of PK-16 education to intentionally achieve equity for all students as they implement planning and decision-making processes so that all students receive what they need to achieve their full academic and social potential.

The Equity Action Plan was informed by data collected August 2019 through March 2020. The data were collected from Austin ISD staff, community groups, and community grassroots organizations (participants) during facilitated sessions and workshops at various sites throughout Austin. During the conversations, participants identified points of pride, challenges, and solutions relative to Austin ISD. The language used in the data collection section is the language used by the participants of the facilitated sessions and workshops.\* **This document is a first draft and the review process is ongoing.**

Provide input online at this link: <https://forms.gle/4Wto9jD1GDucDY4u8>

**Page 2** features an Equity Strategies/Strategic Plan Template. This template will allow for the intersection of the 10-Principle AISD Equity Framework and Board Priorities.

**Page 3** includes a graphic of the 9-step development of the 2019-2020 Equity Action Plan.

**Page 4** is a list of student groups the participants identified as the District underserving in some capacity and how they perceive the students are being underserved.

**Pages 5–6** organize the data collected from the participant groups by board priority.

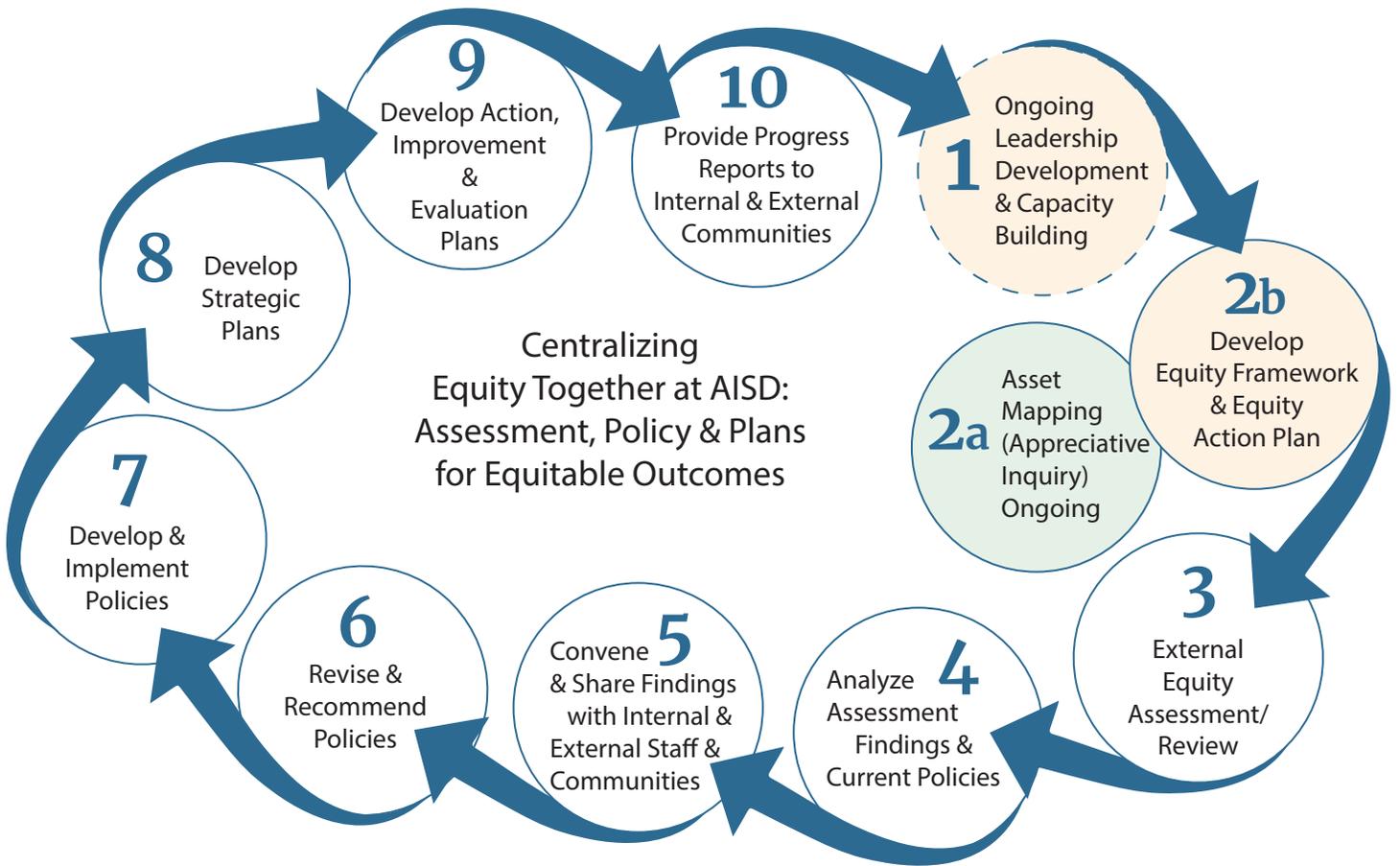
**Page 7** is an appendix that shows the participant engagement events and the number of AISD staff, community group members and grassroots organization members at each event.

## Mission

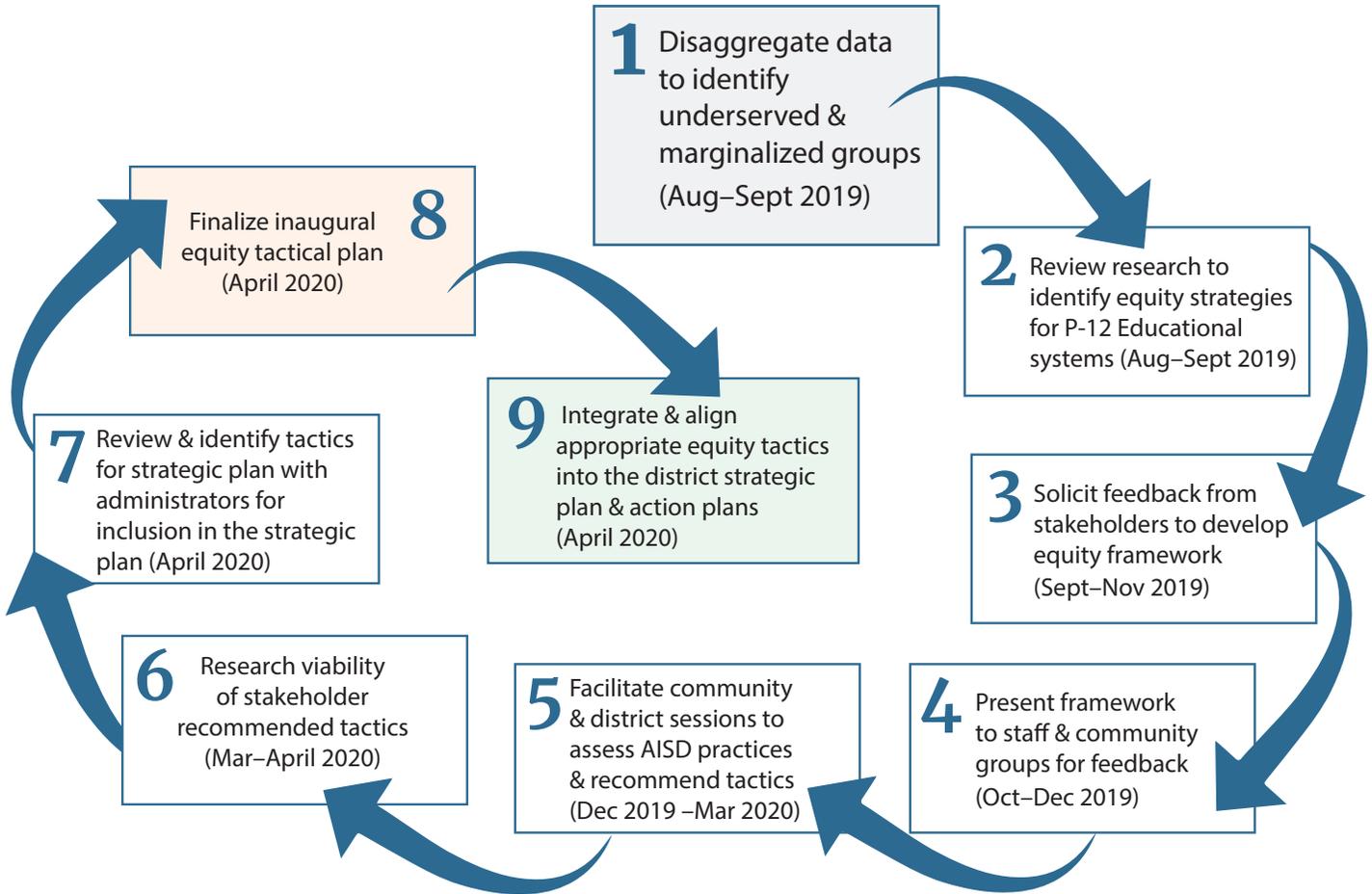
Support the district in consistent and equitable resource allocation, evaluation, development and implementation of tools, policies and practices to achieve racial and social equity for students, teachers, staff and the community, regardless of race, ability, socioeconomic status, language, religion, sexual orientation, sex, national origin, gender identity & expression and other human differences.

## Centralizing Equity Logic Model

The process of assessment, policy development & planning for equitable outcomes



## Austin ISD Equity Action Plan Development 2019–20



## Groups the District Underserves in Some Capacity

According to Session Participants & Workshop Attendees

**African American/Black Students**—Lack of academic support for their success; overly placed in In-School Suspension, Disciplinary Alternative Education Program; district not supporting high outcomes; no systemic change to support participation in Gifted & Talented and Advanced Placement; culture in classrooms for rigorous academics described as “oppressive and alienating”; low expectations; disproportionately identified for Special Education

**Asian and Asian American Students**—Microaggressions and bullying ignored in the system; unrealistic expectations academic stressors; some students struggling academically, but undetected

**Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students**—Provisions for supports intermittent at some schools; unaddressed academic needs

**Emerging Bilingual Students**—Lack of translators and no timely translations; language access barriers unaddressed; multilingual programs inconsistent and not appropriately assessed; quality is inconsistent

**Hispanic/Latinx Students**—Lack of academic support for their success; overly placed in In-School Suspension; Disciplinary Alternative Education Placement; district not supporting high outcomes; no systemic change to support participation in Gifted and Talented; culture in classrooms for rigorous academics described as “oppressive and alienating”

**Immigrant Students**—Religious bigotry, language access barriers; unidentified academic & social emotional support; disproportionately identified for special education

**Indigenous Students**—Failure to recognize and address concerns; racist and marginalizing language in curricula & racist mascots; peer pressure to deny identify; unaddressed bullying

**Girls**—Participation in Science Technology Engineering and Math and some not encouraged and supported, no discussion of data or goal setting; being at greater risk of sexual harassment and dating violence

**Students Identified with Mental, Cognitive and Physical Disabilities**—Needs unidentified at some schools; bullying unaddressed at some schools

**Refugee Students**—Lack of language access; not enough people identifying needs at all schools; bullying unaddressed

**Students Who Identify as LGBTQIA+**—Unaddressed bullying and stress; not enough data collected to provide systemic change for support; system does not prepare teachers and staff to support students; district does not have all protective policies and practices in place; gender-inclusive restrooms and locker rooms are not in place in all schools

**Students Identified as Economically Disadvantaged**—Lack of support with inexperienced teachers in Title I schools; no systematic ways to support participation in rigorous courses; closing schools and disrupted school communities and learning

**Students Who Access Special Education Services**—Not receiving appropriate/timely testing, supports, services; some “misplaced” and do not need services; disproportionately placed in In-School Suspension (or ISS alternatives); teacher shortages call quality of services into question; what are goals for graduation

# Austin ISD Equity Plan, Phase I

## Board Priority: Student Well-Being & Academic Achievement

### CHALLENGES

1. No detailed information about how well the district is and has been serving marginalized student groups & communities over time
2. System does not prepare staff to support students who identify as LGBTQIA+
3. The current system is not preparing the majority of Black & Hispanic students to read by third grade & fails to prepare students for advanced course work
4. Disproportionate numbers of Black & Hispanic students are placed in ISS
5. Emerging bilinguals are not receiving instruction that supports bi-literacy
6. Students in Title I schools are receiving instruction from a disproportionate number of out-of-field and inexperienced teachers
7. Curriculum at all levels has a number of biased and racist references and omissions of Indigenous, African, Asian, and Hispanic and Middle Eastern history and participation in the building of America
8. Few students from racial backgrounds are benefiting from instruction from Asian, Black, and Hispanic teachers
9. Black and Hispanic students identified for accessing Special Education are possibly incorrectly identified and not evaluated in a timely fashion
10. Black & Hispanic students are leaving the district forcing school closures & disrupting their stability & support for achievement
11. Inequitable programming privileging White students & unequal curriculum within schools
12. Ratio of schools-to-trustee is inequitable
13. Low-target goals established for marginalized student groups
14. Lack of accessible counseling results in disproportionately negative interactions with police officers

### STRATEGIES

1. Have a third party equity audit (assessment) conducted for the district and/or Title I schools and high performing schools
2. Provide LGBTQIA+ student training for all teachers and staff
- 3a. Implement culturally relevant, standards-based curriculum & assessment
- 3b. Implement culturally responsive personalized learning strategies
4. Prepare teachers to deliver culturally responsive instruction and participate in ongoing anti-bias professional learning
5. Recruit and retain experienced bilingual teachers
- 6a. Recruit & retain experienced principals and teachers for all Title I schools
- 6b. Implement the TEA Title I Equity Plan for equity in teacher staffing
7. Review & evaluate curriculum to remove inaccurate, biased and offensive materials before new school year
8. Develop & implement plan to diversify teaching staff
9. Hire more culturally competent evaluators and Special Education teachers
10. Develop comprehensive strategic enrollment plan
11. Audit course and curricular offerings by campus and develop strategies to offer high level curricular programming
12. Audit the process for which trustees are assigned schools
13. Set high academic goals for marginalized student groups
14. Hire more counseling, trauma-informed counselors for campuses

### POLICY & BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

1. Allocate funding for the external audit/assessment
- 2a. Review and modify policies and practices to align with best practices LGBTQIA+
- 2b. Provide gender inclusive restrooms and locker rooms in all schools
3. Establish the same high standards for all student groups; ensure reports on student success each grading period
- 5a. Provide funding to support the ongoing training of leadership and teachers
- 5b. Prioritize hiring experienced principals and teachers in Title I schools
8. Mandate all members of search committee must participate in 9-12 hours of professional learning for diversity in hiring and retention of underrepresented groups
9. Establish clear policies about the screening and evaluation of students
13. Ensure Superintendent's Scorecard reflects high goals for all student groups
- 14a. Number of police officers should not outnumber that of counselors
- 14b. Provide professional learning for teachers about classroom management to reduce contact with police officers

## Austin ISD Equity Plan, Phase I

### Board Priority: Employee Well-Being

#### CHALLENGES

- 15. Staff have no safe place to complain about supervisors without fear of retribution.
- 16. Black and Latinx staff are not having as positive an experience in the district as their white peers.
- 17. Racist school mascot and names
- 18. Special education staff report inconsistent communication from Central Office.
- 19. Disproportionate numbers of Title I schools report campus climate scores below the district average.

#### STRATEGIES

- 15. Hire and maintain an ombudsperson.
- 16. Conduct a root cause analysis, establish goals and strategies.
- 17. Rename schools, remove racist mascots.
- 18. Conduct root cause analysis with staff, establish goals and strategies.
- 19. Conduct root cause analysis with staff to establish goals & strategies.

#### POLICY & BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

- 15. Establish policy to ensure ombudsperson is funded and a permanent part of the district structure.
- 16. Mandate cultural proficiency and inclusiveness professional learning for all campuses.

### Board Priority: Culture of Respect/Customer Service

#### CHALLENGES

- 20. Community is not respected by board and the district as evidenced through public communication & engagement events.
- 21. Special education staff and parents do not receive consistent communication.
- 22. Parents do not feel welcomed at their children's school.

#### STRATEGIES

- 20. Develop guiding principles for community interaction & hold community town hall meetings for accountability.
- 21. Develop & implement an annual communication plan to improve communication.
- 22. Conduct a root cause analysis, establish goals and strategies.

#### POLICY & BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

- 20. Consider changing customer service to community engagement

### Board Priority: Financial Stewardship

#### CHALLENGES

- 23. Data used for decision-making is not transparent.
- 24. District is not making equitable financial and resource investments in schools with low-income students.
- 25. Program review process is ineffective and inequitable, not implemented with fidelity.
- 26. Teacher and staff salary compression

#### STRATEGIES

- 23. Develop process making clear how budget allocations are being made.
- 24. Have a third-party equity audit (assessment) conducted.
- 25. Develop transparent process for program review to ensure programs are serving marginalized groups.
- 26. Revise the salary schedule to be commensurate with years of experience and to show equitable increase by years of experience.

#### POLICY & BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

- 23. Fund external equity audit (assessment).
- 24. Require periodic public report on program efficacy for marginalized student.

## Appendix A

### Individuals and Groups Engaged in Community Engagement Events: Workshops, Presentations, Interviews, Phone Calls & Email Exchanges, August 2019–20

#### Community Members, Organizations & Parents

Austin Area Urban League: 17  
 Blanton PTA: 31  
 East Austin Coalition for Quality Education: 17  
 Austin Council of PTA Executive Team: 7  
 Maplewood Equity Group: 23  
 City of Austin Equity Office: 4  
 Windsor Park Neighborhood Assoc.: 19  
 Austin Neighborhood Assoc.: 56  
 Institute of Urban Policy Research Analysis Think Tank: 11  
 Organization leaders & activists: 22  
 Austin Voices for Education & Youth: 37  
 Go! Austin/Vamos! Austin: 6  
 VELA: 14

#### Staff/Departments

Elementary School Teachers: 16  
 Custodians: 9  
 Middle School Teachers: 13  
 High School Teachers: 16  
 Police/SROs: 86  
 Multilingual Education Staff: 40  
 Translators: 4  
 Central Office Staff: 41  
 Dept. of Communications & Engagement: 31  
 Race Equity Council: 18  
 School, Family & Community Education: 16  
 Child Study Systems: 11  
 Education, Innovation & Research Grant Summit: 150+  
 Tech Design Team: 8

#### Community Members, Orgs & Advisory Groups

District Advisory Committee: 13  
 Special Education Advisory Committee: 16  
 Multilingual Advisory Committee: 22  
 Parents & Caregivers: 131  
 LGBTQIA Affinity Group: 24  
 UoClose: 18  
 LBJ-LASA UIL Task Force: 11  
 Multilingual Education Advisory Committee: 15

#### Administrators

Cabinet: 52  
 Superintendent team/School Changes team: 14  
 Assistant principals: 150  
 Middle school principals: 22  
 School leadership team: 11  
 Fall administrators training sessions: 251  
 High school administrators: 11

#### Students

Eastside Memorial Early College High School: 9  
 Navarro ECHS: 13  
 LBJ ECHS: 8  
 Austin High School: 2  
 LASA: 3  
 DCCCE student engagement meeting & conference call: 31  
 SOAR panel discussion: 4