

# LEADING FOR EQUITY

A Practical Framework for Board Discussion and  
Action



# WHAT'S YOUR STORY

## HOW IT STARTED

Why are you here today?

Why does equity matter to you?



# CREATING A LEARNING SPACE





# MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

No one is an expert and no one is perfect. (Not even you.)

Everyone enters this work at various levels of readiness.

Keep a growth-mindset. We're looking for progress.

Change takes time.... and consistent effort.

There is no single path forward and no guarantees.

When you fail, fail forward.

You control only your own thoughts, actions and reactions.





# LEARNING VS. SAFE SPACE

A **learning** space allows for open, honest and respectful dialogue. It is different from a “safe space” in that safety implies participants are free to say or do anything without challenge.

Today we are in a **LEARNING** Space.

What are the rules of engagement (norms) for this space?

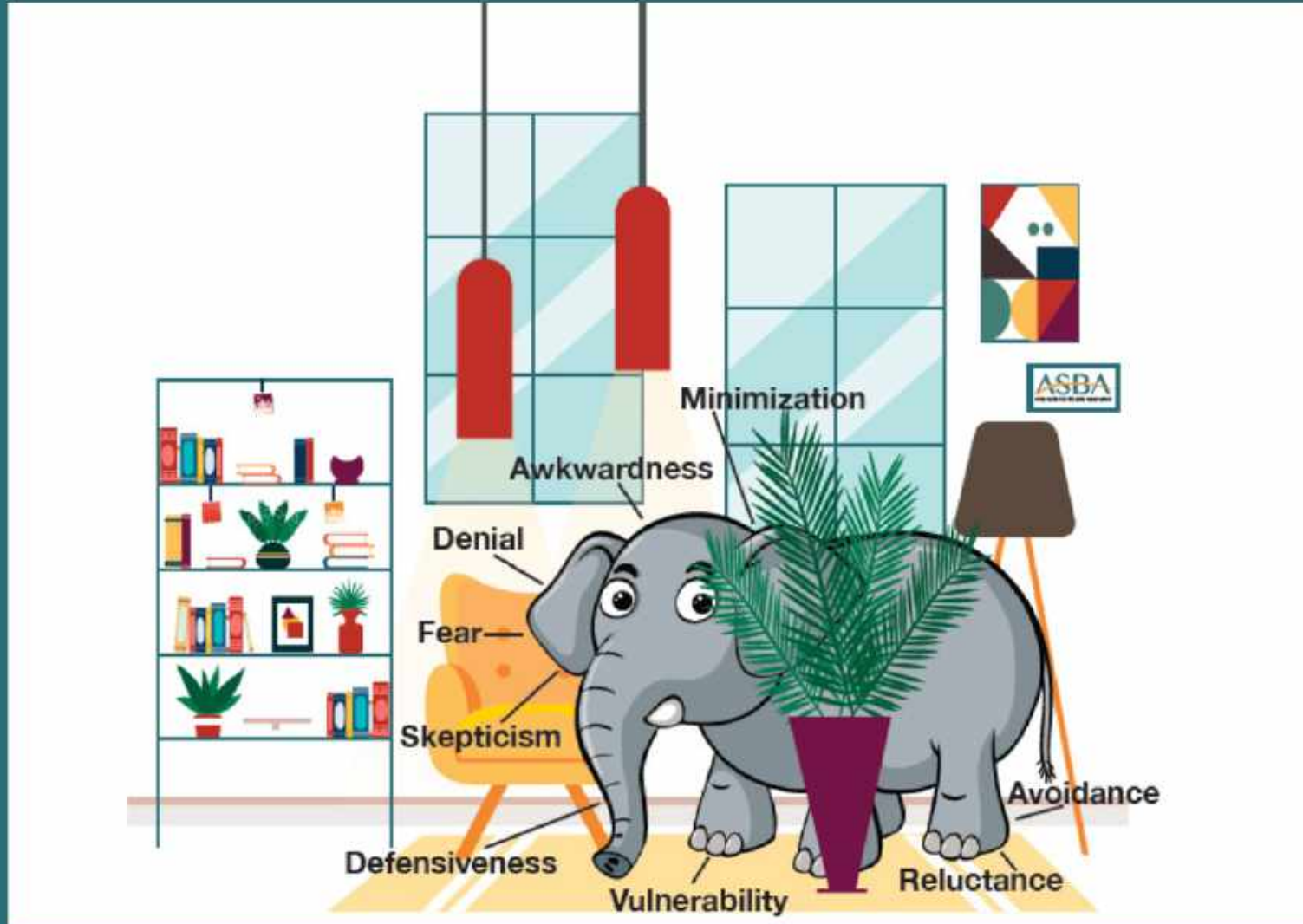
How will conflict be managed?

Examples of Norms:

- Use “I” statements.
- Assume positive intent.
- Accept that other’s feelings and perceptions are their reality
- Take space when needed
- Ask clarifying questions respectfully



# ACTIVITY: ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM



# WHAT IS EQUITY?







## Equality



## Equity





# WHAT IS EDUCATIONAL EQUITY?

Equal = Same

Equity = Fair

Equal is not always equitable.

## INFLUENCES, CHARACTERISTICS, CIRCUMSTANCES & EXPERIENCES

Race & ethnicity

Gender, gender identity & sexual orientation

Ability- physical & cognitive

Immigration status

Physical & emotional well-being

Basic needs- food & shelter

Safety & security

Stability of home & family

Shared language & culture

Acceptance & understanding

Location & proximity

Resources & support

More...



## ACCESS (MEASURES)

- Can they get to school?
- What is the quality of the buildings, teachers and materials?
- What resources and opportunities are offered?
- Are they able to effectively receive instruction?
- Does the environment make them feel included and safe?

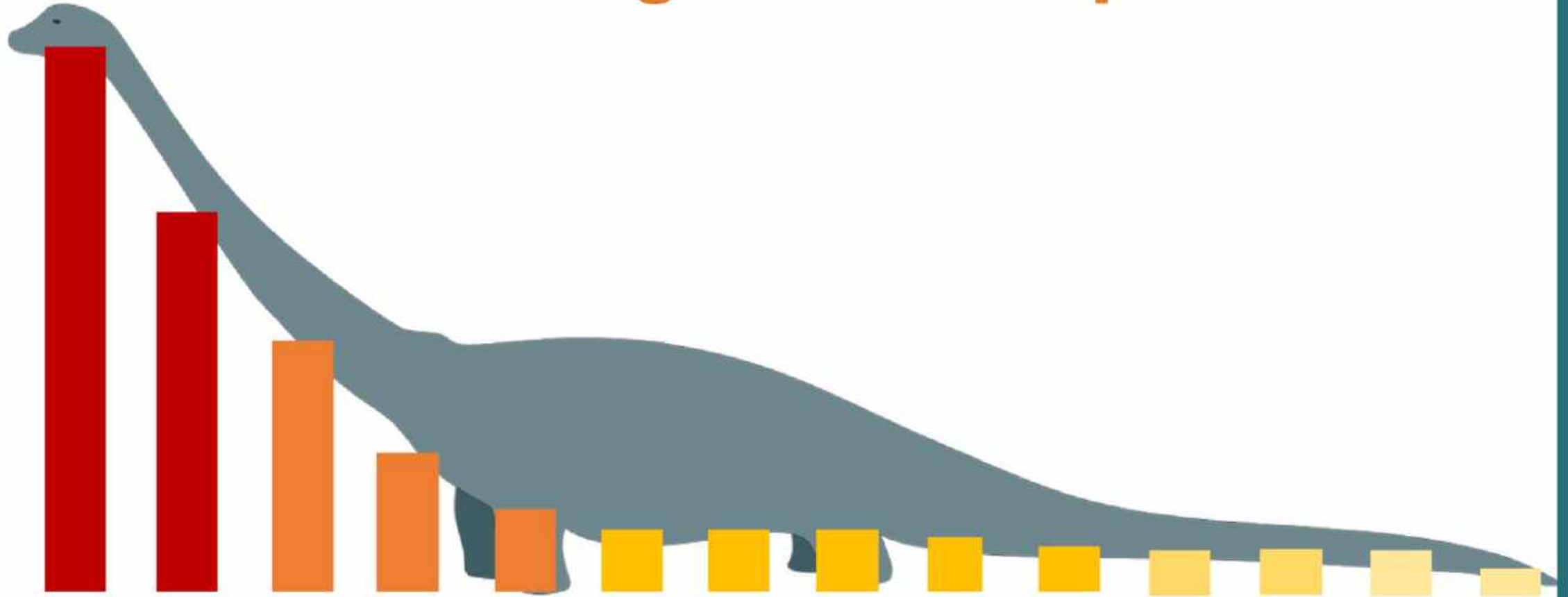


## OUTCOMES (IMPACT)

- Academics
- Attendance
- Behavior
- Awards & recognition



# The Long Tail Principle



# WHAT IS THE ROLE OF DISTRICTS & BOARDS?

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY

In order to better serve students and address gaps in achievement and opportunity, boards and districts must identify the barriers or inequities that are at the root of these gaps in order to successfully address them and meet their purpose and responsibility as public-school leaders.



“

INSPIRING WORDS

**You can't wake a person who is  
pretending to be asleep**

NATIVE AMERICAN PROVERB  
(NAVAJO)



# FOUNDATIONAL PREMISES OF EQUITY



## 1 FOCUS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Student achievement and positive student outcomes must be the central focus of the work of school boards



## 2 ADDRESS OPPORTUNITY GAPS

Opportunity gaps exist in every school and in every district.es.



## 3 RESPONSIBILITY OF SCHOOL BOARDS

School boards are responsible for setting expectations and making decisions that support educators in closing opportunity gaps.



## 4 BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

School boards must have trusting and collaborative relationships with the many communities they serve to be successful in these endeavors and model this for district staff..



## 5 COMMIT TO THE JOURNEY

Educational equity is an ongoing journey, not a fixed destinations.

For more information and tools to support your equity journey visit: [www.azsba.org/equity](http://www.azsba.org/equity)

# PARTICIPANT POLL

## HOW READY IS YOUR DISTRICT TO LEAD FOR EQUITY?

1. There are initial talks happening among a small group of interested folks.
2. It's been identified as a priority but little work has begun.
3. It's early but equity work is happening.
4. Equity is a clear goal of our district--consistent work and progress is being made.
5. Equity is embedded system-wide and is an accepted part of our district culture.

# 5 ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EQUITY



Vision



Understanding



Engagement



Action



Accountability



# ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS & THE FRAMEWORK

The Leading for Equity Framework is a tool districts can use to build up the Five Essential Components of Equity.



# Leading for Equity Pathways



Define Equity  
Within Your  
Community



Dig Into Data



Practice  
Cultural  
Awareness,  
Humility &  
Agility



Embed Equity  
System-Wide



Demonstrate  
your  
Commitment





# DEFINE EQUITY WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY

Equity and equality often get used interchangeably but they are actually two distinct ideas. Developing a common definition of equity in your community will help you shape your vision for the future.



## INFLUENCES, CHARACTERISTICS, CIRCUMSTANCES & EXPERIENCES

Race & ethnicity

Gender, gender identity & sexual orientation

Ability- physical & cognitive

Immigration status

Physical & emotional well-being

Basic needs- food & shelter

Safety & security

Stability of home & family

Shared language & culture

Acceptance & understanding

Location & proximity

Resources & support

More...



## ACCESS (MEASURES)

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## OUTCOMES (IMPACT)

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# Leading for Equity Framework: Overview

## PATHWAYS

The framework consists of five pathways boards can explore on their equity journey.

## THINK ABOUT

Questions in this section are intended to encourage boards to assess their current practices

## I CAN/ BOARD CAN

Consider what board members can do as individuals and what boards can do together to progress equity

## DIGGING DEEPER

For boards that have already begun their work, this section offers suggestions to go further.

# DEFINE EQUITY WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY

## Getting Started:

- Does district leadership understand the difference between equity or equality?

## Digging Deeper:

- How will you create and share with all stakeholders the district's equity definition or vision?



**Think About**



**I Can...**



**The Board Can...**



## SCENARIO

The district has received a grant to provide free preschool to 75 students per year. The board must decide which school site will host the program. Parent groups at two of your schools have been outspoken at board meetings in their requests to host it and are upset that the board is considering a third school from which no parents have attended a meeting.

**Think About**



**I Can...**



**The Board Can...**

# DEFINE EQUITY WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY

## I Can:

- Suggest the leadership team discuss equity versus equality, how it relates to our vision and mission and where it aligns to our strategic plan.



## District Can:

- Create and encourage participation on a committee or task force to define equity and set a vision for the district.

**Think About**



**I Can...**



**The Board Can...**

# DIG INTO DATA

Being aware of the different groups your district serves and in what proportions is foundational knowledge for equity-focused discussion and decision-making. Also important is data around outcome and access measures for these groups.





# DEFINE EQUITY WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY

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**Think About**



**I Can...**



**The Board Can...**

# DOCTOR VISIT



# DATA DEFINED



## AGGREGATE VS. DISAGGREGATE

**Aggregated Data:** Data presented in total, averaged

**Disaggregated Data:** Data broken down or separated by group, location or other factors



# DATA DEFINED



## QUANTITATIVE VS. QUALITATIVE

**Quantitative Data:** Counts, percentages (e.g. test scores or number of students)

**Qualitative Data:** Experiences, perceptions (e.g. students/family reports, teacher observations)

# DATA AS A FLASHLIGHT, NOT A HAMMER



# PARTICIPANT POLL

## HAMMER OR FLASHLIGHT?

Third grade reading scores at Cactus Blossom Elementary School have been declining over the past two years. Mark "F" for a flashlight approach to using this data and "H" for the hammer approach.

\_\_\_\_\_ Based on the data, the board makes several assumptions about the ability of students, the lack of parent engagement and the quality of teaching at the school and questions administrators on why they've done nothing to address the issue.

\_\_\_\_\_ Based on the data, the board requests more information on trends within student populations and by campus to identify which populations/ campuses are struggling and if there are bright spots that could provide insight to successful practices.



# DIG INTO DATA

## Getting Started:

- How many students live in poverty? In rural/remote areas? How many have a primary language other than English?

## Digging Deeper:

- How might poverty, living in a rural/remote area, being an English language learner, etc. impact students and families?



**Think About** | **I Can...** | **The Board Can...**

# DIG INTO DATA

## I can:

- Request data on the demographics of the community you serve and disaggregated data on outcome and opportunity measures.

## Board/District can:

- Request administration provide training on and/or solicit representative feedback, using various communication platforms, from populations served by the district.



**Think About**



**I Can...**



**The Board Can...**



# CULTURAL AWARENESS, HUMILITY & AGILITY



Systems are most effective when they respond respectfully and authentically in a manner that recognizes, affirms values and preserves the dignity and worth of individuals, families and communities. Public schools and districts are no exception.





# AWARENESS

**Daddy Files** @DaddyFiles · Oct 22, 2018

Replying to @DaddyFiles

So he proudly wore his red nail polish to kindergarten this morning because Sam has absolutely no concept of nail polish only being for girls or reason to think anyone would possibly have a problem with beautiful nails.



**Daddy Files**

@DaddyFiles

but his classmates did have a problem. A big one. Sam was ridiculed for being a boy with nail polish. They called him a girl and told him to take it off. This lasted the entire day.

8,783 · 5:20 PM · Oct 22, 2018 · Massachusetts, USA

For Black History Month, this Loudoun County elementary school played a runaway slave 'game' in gym class



Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT LIVES WITH:**

☐ Mother ☐ Father

**MOTHER**  
**Father/Male** Guardian Name Sam

Cell Phone ( 602 ) 980.4

Work Phone ( 602 ) 347.

**Mother/Female** Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone ( 602 ) 574

phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_



# HUMILITY





# AGILITY

## ARE YOU OPEN TO CHANGE?

**Summer Schaudt**  
January 25 at 12:28 PM · 🌐

2 days ago I posted this. I reached out to my friend, Pam on the school board and today, she had the superintendent contact me. He discussed how outdated the forms were and how he was upset he didn't even think about the wording.

After reviewing them, he said that all forms would be changed to reflect the diversity of families in our community. They are switching to an online system next year and will use neutral parent/guardian on all sections when asking for caregiver information. This change will effect over 15,000 families.

This was the quickest activism I've ever encountered.

Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT LIVES WITH:**

☐ Mother

☐ Father

**MOTHER**  
**Father/Male** Guardian Name SU

Cell Phone ( 602 ) 980.4

Work Phone ( 602 ) 347.3

**Mother/Female** Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone ( 602 ) 574

phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_



## Sacramento School Changes Name of 'Father-Daughter' Dance to be More Inclusive

POSTED 7:14 PM, MARCH 8, 2017, BY [SARA ZENDEHNAM](#), UPDATED AT 07:13PM, MARCH 8, 2017

# Decision-Making Equity Lens

## Equity Lens

**When making decisions, problem solving and taking action,  
utilize the following questions:**

- Does this decision align with the District mission/vision?
- Whom does this decision affect both positively and negatively?
- Does the decision being made ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences?
- Are those being affected by the decision included in the process?
- What other possibilities were explored?
- Is the decision/outcome sustainable?

FROM NORTH CLACKAMAS SCHOOL DISTRICT



# ACTIVITY: APPLYING AN EQUITY LENS

## TARDY POLICY

Mi doesn't plan to be late to class but sometimes things happen. Today their mom hit traffic. They were halfway to class when the tardy bell rang. When they arrived to class the teacher told Mi to go to the attendance office to get a late slip. When Mi tried to object, the teacher informed them it was the policy to get a late slip if you are not in your seat when the bell rings. The teacher also noted that a second tardy would result in lunch detention. Upset, Mi went to the attendance office where they were met with a line of 10+ students. By the time Mi got back to class 15 minutes had passed. They had missed the directions for the day and felt lost and frustrated.



# PRACTICE CULTURAL AWARENESS, HUMILITY & AGILITY

## Getting Started:

- Does our teaching staff and curriculum reflect the cultures and backgrounds of the students and families we serve?

## Digging Deeper:

- Does the district have a system in place to actively recruit underrepresented or marginalized voices?
- How are barriers to participation examined and removed?

**Think About** | **I Can...** | **The Board Can...**

# PRACTICE CULTURAL AWARENESS, HUMILITY & AGILITY

## I can:

- Research community organizations or groups who might be able to provide cultural context and insight for the district.

## Board can:

- Request training on cultural competency, implicit-bias or inclusion practices that support equity.



**Think About**



**I Can...**



**The Board Can...**





# EMBED EQUITY SYSTEM-WIDE

It has been said, "A dream without a plan is just a wish."  
If you dream of a more equitable educational system for your students, a plan must be created. Words and good intentions will not create the changes needed to correct inequities.



# What Factors Affect (In)Equity in School Districts?

## POLICY

- Practices and processes
- Unintended impact

## BUDGET

- Staffing
- Facilities
- Resources
- Programs

## TRANSPORT

- Geography
- Available & Reliable?
- Access to public transit

# What Factors Affect (In)Equity in School Districts?

## DISCIPLINE

- Special education
- Students of color
- Gender

## CURRICULUM

- Reflective of community?
- Eurocentric?
- Homework
- Resources

## CELEBRATIONS RECOGNITIONS

- Culturally relevant celebrations, holidays
- Multiple measures of success recognized

## COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

- Caregiver capacity
- Access to partners
- Community resources (people, time, \$)

# EMBEDDING EQUITY SYSTEM-WIDE

## Getting Started:

- Based on data, where are the biggest gaps in positive outcomes for students?
- Who are our internal champions that could help lead or facilitate change?

## Digging Deeper:

- What is it that we want to achieve? What is the measure of success?
- Have we allocated the resources (people, time, funds) needed to address our goals?

**Think About** | **I Can...** | **The Board Can...**





# STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Define Vision
- Define Mission
- Define Core Values

**Gather Data and  
Identify Issues**



**Agree on Priorities**



**Craft Goals and Strategies**

# EMBED EQUITY SYSTEM-WIDE

## I can:

- Suggest a study session to discuss, assess and prioritize issues facing the district through an equity lens.
- Request a review of the district's strategic plan and the process for creating and addressing goals.

## Board can:

- Establish a committee or task force to assess challenges, identify discrepancies and recommend priorities.
- Provide input and direction to the superintendent regarding the development of equity goals or equity measures within existing goals

**Think About**



**I Can...**



**The Board Can...**





# DEMONSTRATE YOUR COMMITMENT

Accountability is about doing what you say you will do. It requires an honest look at your progress. Remembering that equity work is work we do with our community, not “to” or “for” our community. It is also important that we demonstrate openness and an ongoing commitment to two-way communication.



# DEMONSTRATE YOUR COMMITMENT

## Getting Started:

- Are your equity goals clearly stated and documented in ways that are accessible to all?
- Are equity goals/priorities known and embedded throughout the district (district office to campus and everywhere in-between)?

## Digging Deeper:

- How is progress and the impact of equity work shared with internal and external stakeholders?
- What established practices exist to gather representative feedback from stakeholders?

**Think About** | **I Can...** | **The Board Can...**



## KEEP YOUR PLAN ALIVE

- Be explicit about how the plan is guiding decisions at the board table.
- Talk about how the superintendent's evaluation should be tied to the plan.

# DEMONSTRATE YOUR COMMITMENT

## I can:

- Request reports and study sessions that outline progress on goals
- Request a review of the district's process for communicating out information and progress internally and externally

## Board can:

- Review the budget to see how it aligns with your districts stated goals and priorities
- Establish communication protocols for the board's communication with the superintendent and community.

**Think About** | **I Can...** | **The Board Can...**



ASBA Equity Website  
[www.azsba.org/equity](http://www.azsba.org/equity)



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