

RESOURCE EQUITY GUIDEBOOK

---

# INSTRUCTIONAL TIME & ATTENTION



**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.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

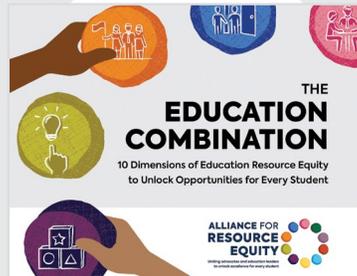
This work is the result of joint efforts among dozens of people, led by Education Resource Strategies, with strong collaboration from The Education Trust, as part of The Alliance for Resource Equity.

First, we owe our deep thanks to the many people in the field who inspire us by engaging in this difficult (yet rewarding) work each day: Thank you to our partners within the schools, systems, and communities that we have worked with throughout the years; to the leaders and researchers from peer education organizations who served as valuable thought partners; and to the many district and nonprofit leaders, advocates, teachers, and families from across the country who contributed with an ongoing willingness to reflect, share their stories, and help others learn.

We would also like to acknowledge the many team members who contributed to this work. At Education Resource Strategies, this includes Hayley Bacon, Nicole Katz, Torrie Mekos, Tara Anderson, Genevieve Quist Green, Rob Daigneau, Betty Chang, Jonathan Travers, and Karen Hawley Miles. At the Education Trust this includes Terra Wallin, Allison Socol, Tanji Reed Marshall, and Kayla Patrick. Thank you to J Sherman Studio for their design partnership.

This work was made possible by the support of The Raikes Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and The W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The Alliance for Resource Equity is solely responsible for the ideas presented in this document and for any errors.

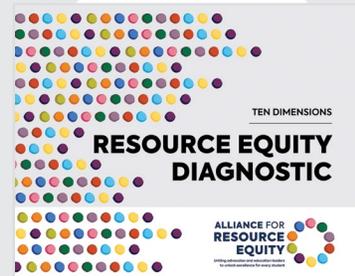


1

### 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.



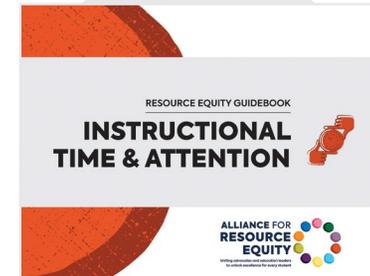
2

### 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 ten 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.



3

### 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 5: Instructional Time & Attention

# ABOUT THIS GUIDEBOOK

Your team of district leaders and community members can use this guidebook about **Instructional Time & Attention** to choose promising actions that are based on the distinct needs of students in your school district.

- Determine **root causes** of challenges in your school district
- Explore **potential actions**
- Plan **next steps**

This dimension focuses on two key questions. Because the root causes and potential actions for both of these key questions are so similar, they have been combined into the same “chapter” for this guidebook.

### KEY QUESTION

## 5.1

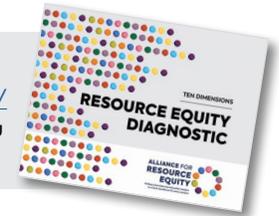
Does each student who needs more high-quality instructional *time* receive it?

### KEY QUESTION

## 5.2

Does each student who needs more high-quality instructional *attention* receive it?

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



### INSIDE THIS GUIDEBOOK

What is Education Resource Equity?

PAGE 4

Foundations for Excellence & Equitable Access

PAGE 5

How Do We Use This Guidebook?

PAGE 6

Key Questions 5.1 and 5.2

PAGE 7

Plan Next Steps

PAGE 21

Appendix

PAGE 28

# 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.

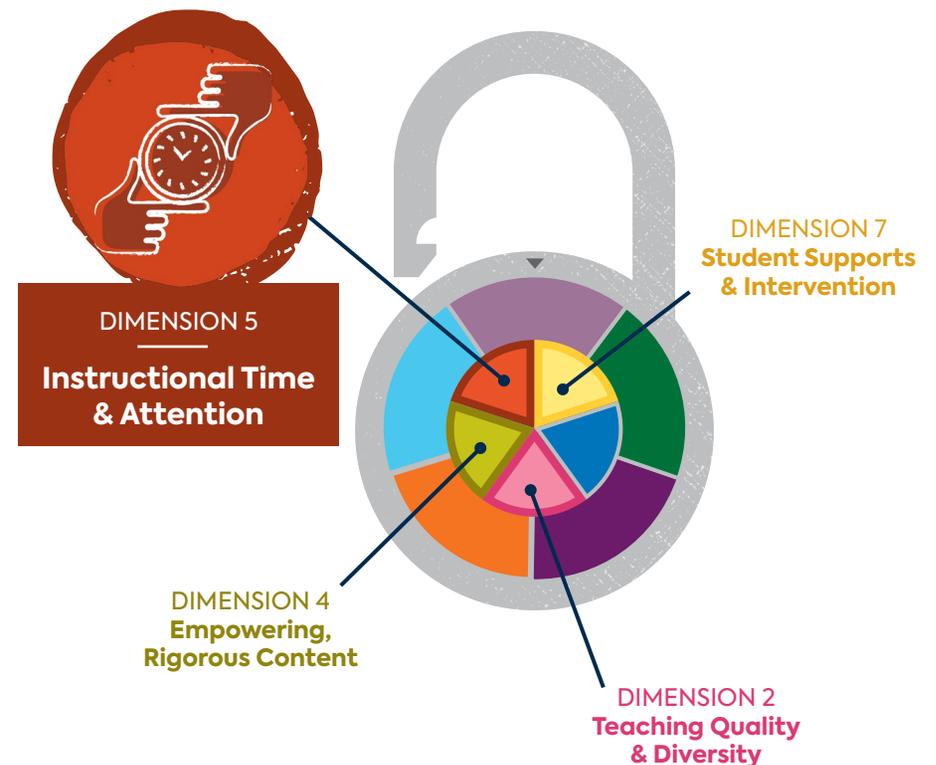
## KEY TERMS

**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, **Instructional Time & Attention** is closely related to other dimensions such as: **Student Supports & Intervention**, because students’ academic and non-academic needs are closely intertwined and both **Teaching Quality & Diversity** and **Empowering, Rigorous Content**, because the benefits of increasing instructional time and attention depend on the quality of the instructional practices and materials that are used. 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](https://educationresourceequity.org/dimensions).



# 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, challenges in Foundations for Excellence may mean that your district does not have sufficient instructional time overall.

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.



## 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 have higher proportions of students with lower academic performance have less instructional time in core subjects than schools with higher academic performance; and/or
- **Inequities within schools**—for example, if students with lower academic performance don't receive more targeted instructional time than students with higher performance who attend the same school.

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.



The [Resource Equity Diagnostic \(bit.ly/equitydiagnostic\)](https://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.

# 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: **PRAC-TITIONERS**, 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 21 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

# 5.1

Does each student who needs more high-quality instructional *time* receive it?

KEY QUESTION

# 5.2

Does each student who needs more high-quality instructional *attention* receive it?



KEY QUESTION 5.1: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL TIME RECEIVE IT?

KEY QUESTION 5.2: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL ATTENTION RECEIVE IT?

# 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:



Intro PAGE 3	Key Questions 5.1 & 5.2 PAGE 7	Next Steps PAGE 21
-----------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------

**KEY QUESTION 5.1: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL TIME RECEIVE IT?**

**KEY QUESTION 5.2: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL ATTENTION RECEIVE IT?**

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

ROOT CAUSES

**Identification Processes** PAGE 11

Schools do not consistently use a transparent and unbiased system for identifying students' academic needs, matching them with appropriate supports, and monitoring and adjusting those supports over time.

**Scheduling & Staffing Strategies** PAGE 14

Schools lack strategic scheduling and staffing approaches—such as intervention and enrichment blocks, longer classes in core subjects, small groups, and individual support—to provide additional time and attention that matches students' needs.

to grade-level content by scaffolding their learning

**Available Time & Staff Capacity** PAGE 13

Schools do not have sufficient overall instructional time and/or sufficient staff to meet the needs of all students and enable targeted time and attention to students who need it.

**Curriculum & Instruction** PAGE 16

Staff are not equipped and supported with the curriculum, materials, aligned assessments, and access to expertise that they need to effectively plan and maximize instructional time, including for small group settings that expose students

**District & State Policies** PAGE 18

Unclear or inflexible state and/or district policies (such as “seat time” requirements) prevent schools from being able to create student groupings and student/staff schedules that match their unique context and needs.

**Other\*** PAGE 19

\*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

KEY QUESTION 5.1: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL TIME RECEIVE IT?

KEY QUESTION 5.2: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL ATTENTION RECEIVE IT?

# USE THESE GUIDING QUESTIONS AS YOU EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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

Intro PAGE 3	Key Questions 5.1 & 5.2 PAGE 7	Next Steps PAGE 21
-----------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------

**KEY QUESTION 5.1: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL TIME RECEIVE IT?**

**KEY QUESTION 5.2: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL ATTENTION RECEIVE IT?**

## WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?



SYSTEM-WIDE



SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS



### Identification Processes

**THE VISION**  
Schools consistently use a transparent and unbiased system for effectively identifying students' academic needs, matching them with appropriate supports, and monitoring and adjusting those supports over time.

Provide guidance on how to situate academic supports—including special education and general education supports—as part of **a multi-tiered system of supports** with early assessment and tiers of interventions to meet students' needs and enable access to grade-level content; additional time and attention should be targeted to both students who are far behind and students who are nearly ready for more advanced coursework.

Develop a system to assess **student progress** that is aligned to high-quality, culturally relevant curricula—including interim assessments with well-organized, granular data reports and analysis of students' work against clear benchmarks.

Maintain a comprehensive, integrated **data system** for identifying and monitoring each student's academic and non-academic needs (such as assessment scores, grades, IEP/504 information, ELL information, and social-emotional data), as well as supports they receive and outcomes over time. This system should be clear, accurate, and easily-accessible to help promote high standards for documentation across schools and support student transitions between schools.

Provide job-embedded **professional learning for teachers and support staff** about how to assess students' progress, accurately identify students with higher needs, and effectively pinpoint the types of academic supports that will help meet their needs.

Ensure that students are neither denied supports nor targeted for supports as a result of **bias**; provide professional learning that includes opportunities for both continuous reflection and data analysis that focuses on examining disproportionalities in services by race and ethnicity, family income level, or first language.

Intro

PAGE 3

Key Questions 5.1 & 5.2

PAGE 7

Next Steps

PAGE 21

KEY QUESTION 5.1: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL TIME RECEIVE IT?

KEY QUESTION 5.2: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL ATTENTION RECEIVE IT?

## WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?



SYSTEM-WIDE



SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

### Identification Processes (cont'd)

Schools consistently use a transparent and unbiased system for effectively identifying students' academic needs, matching them with appropriate supports, and monitoring and adjusting those supports over time.

THE VISION

Establish regular collaborative planning time for teachers and support staff (for example, school-based literacy specialists) to share observations and use data to identify students who would benefit from additional instructional time and/or attention in particular subjects, to propose flexible changes to student schedules and/or grouping structures, to monitor the effectiveness of these changes, and to regularly adjust as needed.

Provide ongoing, job-embedded professional learning for district leaders, school leaders, and teachers about how to create high-quality support plans—including plans for English learners, IEP/504 plans, student-led IEPs, transition planning for students with disabilities, and other plans to ensure all students receive the additional supports they need.

Establish a clear process for staff to meaningfully engage families and students in discussions about progress and in decision-making about their academic support plans (for example, changes to student schedules).

Other potential action(s):



Intro

PAGE 3

Key Questions 5.1 & 5.2

PAGE 7

Next Steps

PAGE 21

**KEY QUESTION 5.1: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL TIME RECEIVE IT?**

**KEY QUESTION 5.2: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL ATTENTION RECEIVE IT?**



SYSTEM-WIDE



SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

## WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?



### Available Time & Staff Capacity

Schools have sufficient overall instructional time and sufficient staff to meet the needs of all students and enable time and attention to be further targeted to students who need it.

THE VISION

Increase the **amount of instructional time** for all students to ensure sufficient time for learning and content mastery by meaningfully extending the school day or school year. This could be accomplished by:

- Investing in additional compensation for teachers and school staff in exchange for a longer school day or year; this may require seeking additional funding or trading off investments in other areas.
- Leveraging existing resources—for example, staggering teachers’ schedules or collaborating with community partners to provide non-core instruction beyond the standard school day.

Increase the **amount of teaching staff** to ensure class and group sizes are small enough for teachers to provide individualized attention to all students. This could be accomplished by:

- Increasing the amount of staff (or funding) allocated to schools; this may require seeking additional funding or trading off investments in other areas
- Leveraging existing resources—for example, by strategically assigning resident teachers or by redefining existing roles.

Other potential action(s):

Intro

PAGE 3

Key Questions 5.1 &amp; 5.2

PAGE 7

Next Steps

PAGE 21

KEY QUESTION 5.1: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL TIME RECEIVE IT?

KEY QUESTION 5.2: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL ATTENTION RECEIVE IT?



SYSTEM-WIDE



SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

## WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

### Scheduling & Staffing Strategies

THE VISION

Schools use strategic scheduling and staffing approaches to provide additional time and attention that matches students' needs.

Support school leaders with approaches to scheduling that increase instructional time and attention for students who need it (either because they have lower academic performance or because they need additional support to be prepared for more challenging work) by providing **examples and tools**, such as sample schedule and staffing models that address specific needs and school contexts.

Group students and teachers in ways that create **manageable teaching loads** by taking into account students' needs, course subject area, and teachers' expertise, so that teachers can provide individualized attention to students with higher needs.

Implement **expanded learning time** for students who need it by adding supplemental instruction opportunities before or after school or during the summer; consider low-cost strategies such as forming partnerships with community service providers to provide tutoring or enrichment.

Use targeted and flexible **intervention/enrichment blocks** to provide additional time and **differentiated small group instruction** in priority subjects, based on data about students' needs. Include regular opportunities throughout the school year for students to move across groups depending on how their needs evolve over time.

Schedule students into **longer blocks or additional courses** for subject(s) they are struggling in, using strategies such as “double-blocking” in which students have twice as much time for a given course, or accelerated course sequencing in which students take multiple courses in the same content area (such as Algebra and Geometry), without jeopardizing opportunities to enroll in electives or key courses, or access grade-level content.

A

DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B

EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C

PLAN NEXT STEPS

Intro PAGE 3	Key Questions 5.1 & 5.2 PAGE 7	Next Steps PAGE 21
-----------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------

KEY QUESTION 5.1: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL TIME RECEIVE IT?

KEY QUESTION 5.2: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL ATTENTION RECEIVE IT?

## WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?



### Scheduling & Staffing Strategies (cont'd)

THE VISION

Schools use strategic scheduling and staffing approaches to provide additional time and attention that matches students' needs.

Provide **targeted individualized instruction** for students who need it through structures such as high-dosage tutoring, push-in support, or within-class grouping by leveraging the full set of adults in the building, as well as technology.

Reduce **group sizes** by using staff strategically (for example, using interventionists to create smaller groups for literacy blocks), or invest in significantly **reduced class sizes** for targeted subject areas or grades (the greatest benefits are in grades K-3) to provide additional instructional attention to students who need it.

Provide regular **course planning** assistance for students and their families through school counselors, administrators, and/or advisors to ensure that all students are scheduled with a full courseload, including courses that align with their needs and interests and that will prepare them for college and career. Include insights, voices, and perspectives from students and families in this process.

Other potential action(s):

Intro

PAGE 3

Key Questions 5.1 &amp; 5.2

PAGE 7

Next Steps

PAGE 21

KEY QUESTION 5.1: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL TIME RECEIVE IT?

KEY QUESTION 5.2: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL ATTENTION RECEIVE IT?



SYSTEM-WIDE



SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

## WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

### Curriculum & Instruction

Staff are equipped and supported with the curriculum, materials, aligned assessments, and access to instructional expertise that they need to effectively plan and maximize instructional time, including for small group settings that expose students to grade-level content by scaffolding their learning.

THE VISION

Establish clear **instructional strategies** that prioritize students' access to grade-level content alongside "just-in-time" scaffolds that are targeted to their specific needs at the moment. Align curriculum-, scheduling-, and instructional-related decisions with these strategies.

Ensure that each class uses **curricula, materials, and assessments** that...

- Are high-quality and standards-aligned
- Are culturally relevant **i**—such as literature with characters who look like students or face relatable challenges
- Provide students with access to grade-level content
- Are aligned and cohesive with one another, as well as across core classes, special education or ELL instruction, and supplemental instruction (such as intervention/enrichment blocks, tutoring, and summer programs).

Provide **incentives** that encourage strong teachers to teach in priority subjects, courses, and grade levels for which they have demonstrated excellence with a wide variety of students to help ensure that students with lower academic performance have access to the high-quality instruction that they need.

Adjust hiring and assignment practices to ensure that there is a sufficient number of **high-quality academic specialists** (such as reading and math interventionists) in the places and roles where they are needed most. (These specialists can provide targeted support for students and expert guidance for teachers.)

Provide **content-specific, ongoing, job-embedded professional learning** to help teachers develop a deep understanding of their content standards, what the most critical prerequisite knowledge and skills for each standard are, and how to scaffold content and instruction toward grade-level standards for students who are behind, students with disabilities, and English Learners.

A

DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B

EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C

PLAN NEXT STEPS

Intro PAGE 3	Key Questions 5.1 & 5.2 PAGE 7	Next Steps PAGE 21
-----------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------

**KEY QUESTION 5.1: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL TIME RECEIVE IT?**

**KEY QUESTION 5.2: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL ATTENTION RECEIVE IT?**

## WHAT ARE THE **POTENTIAL ACTIONS?**



### Curriculum & Instruction (cont'd)

Staff are equipped and supported with the curriculum, materials, aligned assessments, and access to instructional expertise that they need to effectively plan and maximize instructional time, including for small group settings that expose students to grade-level content by scaffolding their learning.

Organize teachers into content-focused teams that have weekly **dedicated time to collaborate** on planning lessons, reviewing students' work, and determining how to adjust instruction and student groupings in ways that meet students' needs for all courses. These teams should be led by teacher-leaders, instructional coaches, or other experts, and should involve special education and English Learner teachers.

Ensure that teachers are effectively using additional instructional time and/or smaller group settings by providing ongoing informal observations, modeling, **instructional coaching** from coaches with relevant expertise, and growth-oriented feedback on the types of instructional practices that help all students to meet grade-level standards.

Provide ongoing, job-embedded professional learning and collaborative planning time for all **support staff** who are involved in instruction (such as staff members who provide push-in services or participate in intervention/enrichment blocks) to improve the quality and alignment of small group instruction.

Other potential action(s):

Intro

PAGE 3

Key Questions 5.1 &amp; 5.2

PAGE 7

Next Steps

PAGE 21

KEY QUESTION 5.1: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL TIME RECEIVE IT?

KEY QUESTION 5.2: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL ATTENTION RECEIVE IT?



SYSTEM-WIDE



SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OR CLASSROOMS

## WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ACTIONS?

### District & State Policies

THE VISION

Clear and flexible state and/or district policies enable schools to group students and schedule student/staff time in ways that match their unique context and needs.

Adjust the **funding/staffing formula** to provide additional funds or staff to schools based on student need—this will help schools provide additional instructional time and/or attention, such as smaller group sizes or an extended school day or year.

Provide **flexibility in how school leaders organize funds and/or staff** (for example, the ability to swap staff positions) so that schools can provide targeted time and attention that is based on their students' distinct needs.

Provide schools with the **flexibility to adjust student and staff schedules** (for example, to extend class times in core subjects or add time for collaborative teacher professional learning) to better differentiate instructional time and attention.

Change (or advocate for the state to change) **class size policies / flexibilities** so that schools can provide additional instructional attention to targeted groups of students who need it by increasing class sizes in certain non-core subjects or grade levels in order to decrease class sizes in pivotal grade levels or subjects. This type of tradeoff could be made feasible by varying class size maximums by grade level and subject, rather than having across-the-board maximums.

Enable schools to make more flexible adjustments to schedules and **modes of instruction** to meet the needs of their students—for example, using a combination of in-person instruction and online lessons, or by awarding (or advocating for the state to award) academic credits based on a student's competency in a subject area rather than the time they physically spend in a traditional classroom setting (known as "seat time" requirements).

Other potential action(s):

A

DETERMINE ROOT CAUSES

B

EXPLORE POTENTIAL ACTIONS

C

PLAN NEXT STEPS

Intro

PAGE 3

Key Questions 5.1 & 5.2

PAGE 7

Next Steps

PAGE 21

KEY QUESTION 5.1: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL *TIME* RECEIVE IT?

KEY QUESTION 5.2: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL *ATTENTION* RECEIVE IT?

## 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.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

<b>Intro</b> PAGE 3	<b>Key Questions 5.1 &amp; 5.2</b> PAGE 7	<b>Next Steps</b> PAGE 21
------------------------	--	------------------------------

**KEY QUESTION 5.1: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL *TIME* RECEIVE IT?**

**KEY QUESTION 5.2: DOES EACH STUDENT WHO NEEDS MORE HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL *ATTENTION* RECEIVE IT?**

For prompts to help your team think about next steps, go to page 21.

# NOTES



# Plan Next Steps



1. PRIORITIZE



2. CUSTOMIZE

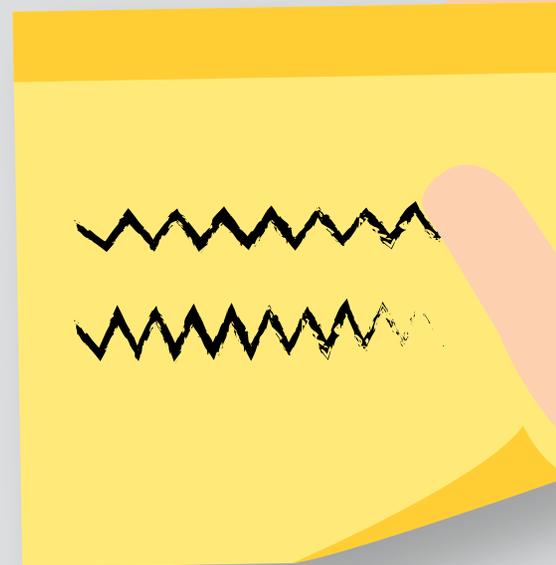


3. ALIGN



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 **Instructional Time & Attention**, 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](https://educationresourceequity.org)

Intro

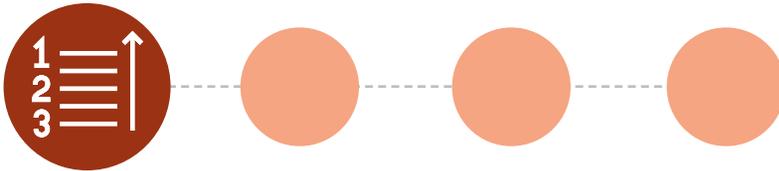
PAGE 3

Key Questions 5.1 &amp; 5.2

PAGE 7

Next Steps

PAGE 21



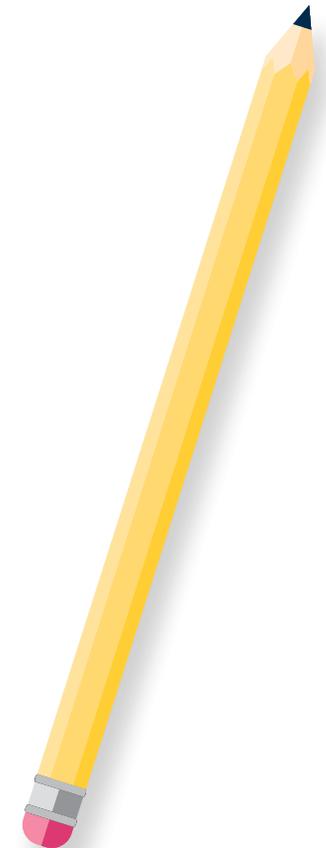
## 1. PRIORITIZE

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?

## NOTES



Intro

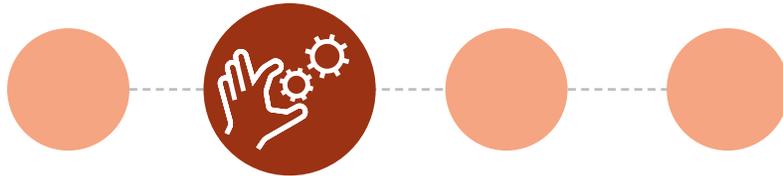
PAGE 3

Key Questions 5.1 & 5.2

PAGE 7

Next Steps

PAGE 21



## 2. CUSTOMIZE

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)

## NOTES



Intro

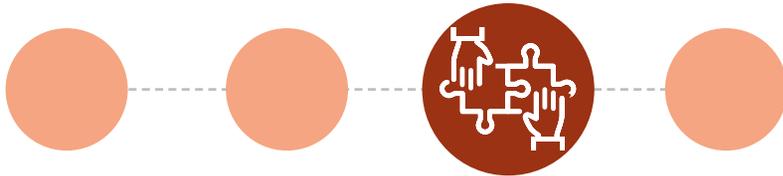
PAGE 3

Key Questions 5.1 &amp; 5.2

PAGE 7

Next Steps

PAGE 21



### 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?

### NOTES



Intro

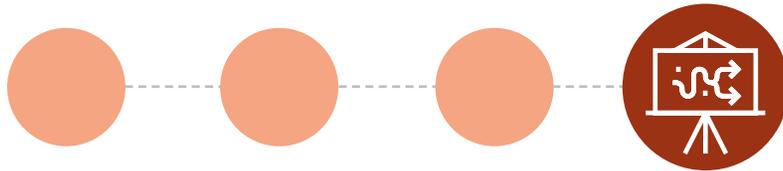
PAGE 3

Key Questions 5.1 & 5.2

PAGE 7

Next Steps

PAGE 21



## 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?

## NOTES







# APPENDIX



# ADDITIONAL NOTES

## CULTURALLY RELEVANT

In teaching and learning, culturally relevant teaching means infusing students' cultural backgrounds (including racial and ethnic identity, gender, socioeconomic class, disability, and language), interests, and lived experiences into their educational environments to engage and empower students—especially those whose experiences and cultures typically get excluded. Culturally relevant teaching can help students better understand the content they are learning and can support students' ability to recognize, understand, and critique social inequalities. It helps all students develop the knowledge and skills they need to critically and meaningfully engage the world and others. Culturally relevant teaching also seeks to sustain students' cultures and validate pluralism as part of the democratic process of schooling—that is why it is sometimes also referred to as culturally sustaining pedagogy.

Examples of culturally relevant materials include literature that features different types of families, characters who look like students or face relatable challenges (without resorting to stereotypes), and assessments that avoid assumptions about students' points of reference without including necessary context, such as past SAT analogy questions that referenced yachts, regattas, and debutante balls.

# SOURCES

This guidebook includes best practice research from the following publications:

1. Education Resource Strategies. *Building Block Profile: Personalized Time and Attention*. [https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/school\\_design\\_toolkit](https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/school_design_toolkit)
2. Education Resource Strategies. *School Design: Strategic Scheduling*. 2017. [https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/school\\_system\\_20\\_20\\_checklist\\_scheduling](https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/school_system_20_20_checklist_scheduling)
3. Education Resource Strategies. *School System 20/20: Back from the Brink* Lawrence, MA. 2015. [https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/lawrence\\_public\\_schools\\_case\\_study](https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/lawrence_public_schools_case_study)
4. Education Resource Strategies. *School System 20/20: Do All Students Get the Learning Time They Need?* 2016. [https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/data\\_decisions\\_brief\\_5\\_do\\_all\\_students\\_get\\_the\\_learning\\_time\\_they\\_need](https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/data_decisions_brief_5_do_all_students_get_the_learning_time_they_need)
5. Education Resource Strategies. *School Turnaround in Boston Public Schools*. 2013. [https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/turnaround\\_case\\_studies](https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/turnaround_case_studies)
6. Kristen Ferris, Randi Feinberg, and Nisha Garg. *Putting the Pieces Together: Sustainable Funding for Expanded Time in Public Schools*. Education Resource Strategies, 2015. [https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/expanded\\_learning\\_time](https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/expanded_learning_time)

# SOURCES (CONTINUED)

7. Melissa Galvez. *LAUSD Tackles Absenteeism With A Focus on Optimizing Resources*. Education Resource Strategies, 2017. [https://www.erstrategies.org/news/lausd\\_tackles\\_absenteeism](https://www.erstrategies.org/news/lausd_tackles_absenteeism)
8. The Education Trust. *Rigorous Learning for All Students*. <https://edtrust.org/event/ensuring-rigorous-learning-for-all-students/>
9. Meg Benner and Lisette Partelow. *Reimagining the School Day: Innovative Schedules for Teaching and Learning*. Center for American Progress, 2017. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2017/02/23/426723/reimagining-the-school-day/>
10. Sean Cavanagh. *States Loosening ‘Seat Time’ Requirements*. Education Week, 2012. <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/03/07/23biz-state.h31.html>
11. Center on Education Policy. *Expanded Learning Time: A Summary of Findings from Case Studies in Four States*. Center on Education Policy, 2015. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED555412>
12. Nathan Levenson, Karla Baehr, James C. Smith, and Clair Sullivan. *Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most From School District Budgets*. The District Management Council, 2014. <https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/3412255/Spending-Money-Wisely-Getting-the-Most-from-School-District-Budgets-e-book.pdf>
13. PBIS Rewards. *What is MTSS? PBIS Rewards*. <https://www.pbisrewards.com/blog/what-is-mtss/>
14. John Rogers and Nicole Mirra. *It’s About Time: Learning Time and Educational Opportunity in California High Schools*. UCLA IDEA, 2014. <https://idea.gseis.ucla.edu/projects/its-about-time>
15. TNTP. *Learning Acceleration Guide: Planning for Acceleration in the 2020–2021 School Year*. 2020. <https://tntp.org/covid-19-school-response-toolkit/view/learning-acceleration-guide>
16. TNTP. *The Opportunity Myth: What Students Can Show Us About How School Is Letting Them Down – and How to Fix It*. <https://opportunitymyth.tntp.org/>

## When using this work, please cite as:

Alliance for Resource Equity. *Resource Equity Guidebook: Instructional Time & Attention*. Education Resource Strategies and The Education Trust, 2021. [educationresourceequity.org/toolkit/guidebooks](https://educationresourceequity.org/toolkit/guidebooks)









# ALLIANCE FOR RESOURCE EQUITY

Uniting advocates and education leaders  
to unlock excellence for every student

