

Advocating for Equity Across All Levels of Government

DIMENSION 10:

DIVERSE SCHOOLS & CLASSROOMS

**ALLIANCE FOR
RESOURCE
EQUITY**

Uniting advocates and education leaders
to unlock excellence for every student



DIMENSION 10:

DIVERSE SCHOOLS & CLASSROOMS

THE VISION: Each student is enrolled in classes that are racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse, so all students can reach high standards and thrive.

KEY QUESTION

10.1

Is each student enrolled in a school and attending classes that are racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse?

Federal

- **Congress** authorizes and funds several programs that support school diversity and integration, such as:
 - The Fostering Diverse Schools Demonstration Grants program
 - The Magnet Schools Assistance Program
 - Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to support students from low-income backgrounds
 - School transportation programs, which can also be used to support school integration
 - Other programs administered by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development that support the residential diversity of neighborhoods (e.g., by building mixed-income housing, providing families from low-income backgrounds with housing vouchers, etc.), which have the second-order effect of diversifying the schools serving those neighborhoods
- **The US Department of Education** can:
 - Issue guidance and technical assistance, primarily to state education agencies, about how federal education funds can and should be used for diversity initiatives

- Provide guidance on how elementary and secondary schools and districts may voluntarily consider students' race in efforts to increase diversity and avoid racial isolation in schools
- Fund Equity Assistance Centers that provide technical assistance to school districts on promoting equitable education opportunities to students of diverse races and backgrounds
- Bring school districts together to collaborate and develop strategies for school integration

State

- **State legislatures** can:
 - Establish grant programs or fund the creation and operation of specialized schools that are relevant and accessible, especially for underserved students and families
 - Draw or require school and school district boundaries that promote diversity
 - Set rules and review processes to ensure that when districts are redrawn, divided, or consolidated, these changes increase rather than decrease district diversity and the potential for meaningful intra-district integration



- Create advisory bodies or offices within the state education agency to recommend best practices for diversifying schools within the state context
- Design inter-district programs that allow some students to enroll in schools outside their districts of residence and incentivize or require schools to receive out-of-district students
- **State education agencies** can establish regional authorities (county or intermediate offices) to administer multi-district initiatives that focus on promoting diverse school enrollments across district lines

School District

- **Local school boards** can:
 - Design school zoning boundaries and feeder patterns to maximize school diversity and prevent the replication of neighborhood segregation in schools
 - Make decisions (about school size, grade levels, school pairings, school locations, etc.) to maximize school diversity
 - Make their schools available to out-of-district students with enrollment priorities
 - Create specialized schools or programs (STEM, dual language, arts, etc.) that attract families of all backgrounds and ensure seats go to students with higher needs⁰¹
 - To overcome residential barriers created by historic discrimination practices, ensure choice policies are equitable and hold all schools accountable for student success
 - Work with school district administrators to:
 - Analyze current racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic enrollment patterns across schools within the district

- Analyze transportation needs and opportunities
- Inform families about the benefits of diverse classrooms and schools, including through partnerships with community organizations
- Engage educators, students, families, and community members to ensure changes to district structures, policies, and school offerings maximize diversity and accessibility, especially for underserved students and families
- Build and communicate about advanced course offerings that are free of cost
- Monitor data on enrollment rates, assess the degree of within-school segregation present, and determine whether corrective measures are needed
- Pursue partnerships with other school districts to create options for inter-district enrollment that facilitate integration across district lines
- Review their open enrollment policies for inter-district and intra-district school transfers and prioritize transfers that increase integration

- **School district administrators** can ensure equitable access to advanced coursework (for more on this, see Dimension 4: Empowering Rigorous Content)

School

- **School leaders** can:
 - Ensure equitable access to advanced coursework (for more on this, see Dimension 4: Empowering Rigorous Content)
 - Analyze and revise student schedules to create more diverse classrooms, and audit schedules to ensure all students have access to appropriate courses and learning environments