



Equitable Access Support Network

Equity Labs: Engaging LEAs in Ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

April 11, 2017



Agenda

10 minutes

Welcome and Overview

40 minutes

Equity Lab Concept: *Lessons Learned from Connecticut and Missouri*

20 minutes

Introduction to the *Equity Lab Toolkit*

5 minutes

Closing Remarks

Welcome!



Objectives

The purpose of today's webinar is to:

- Expose State leaders to the concept of the equity lab;
- Help States understand how to implement equity labs; and
- Introduce States to a toolkit they can use to plan and implement equity labs.



Do Now

Please answer the following using the poll on the screen:

What has your State done to engage LEAs in the implementation of the State Equity Plan?

Feel free to use the chat function to ask questions or make comments during the webinar.



Educator Equity Plans

- In 2014, the Department required each State to submit educator equity plans, describing how the State would ensure that poor and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers.
- The December 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) – the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – maintains a focus on students’ equitable access to excellent educators.
 - Section 1111(g)(1)(B) requires a State to describe “how low-income and minority children enrolled in [Title I schools] are not served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers, and the measures the State educational agency will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress of the State educational agency with respect to such description.”



EASN and Equity Labs

Challenge: State educational agencies (SEAs) are charged with the development and implementation of plans but success in implementing some planned strategies depends on work of local educational agencies (LEAs).

Question: How do SEAs effectively engage their LEAs in the implementation of strategies the State has developed to improve access to excellent educators?

Possible Solution: Equity labs.

A State-led convening of district leaders and stakeholders designed to give SEA staff the opportunity to:

- Share the purpose of State educator equity plans
- Collect feedback on State-level strategies
- Facilitate LEA-level equity planning
- Provide LEAs access to critical friends and a network of colleagues for planning and implementation

Who's hosted an equity lab?

Connecticut Missouri Mississippi Ohio



State Spotlights



**Andrea Dixon-Seahorn, Special
Consultant for Equitable Education**

Missouri Department of Elementary
& Secondary Education's Office of
Educator Quality



**Kim Wachtelhausen, Education
Consultant**

Connecticut State Department of
Education's Bureau of Educator
Effectiveness





Equity Lab Content and Discussion

State panelists will respond to six prompts:

- What were your State's objectives for holding an equity lab?
- How did your State plan its equity lab?
- What were highlights from your State's equity lab?
- What went well and what didn't?
- What tips would you give other States as they plan and implement their own labs?
- What's next for your State related to your equity lab work? How are you maintaining momentum from the work started at your lab(s)?

Please use the chat log to ask questions or make comments during the discussion.



Discussion/Q&A

- What were your State's objectives for holding an equity lab?
- How did your State plan its equity lab(s)?
- What were highlights from your State's equity lab(s)?
- Q&A



Discussion/Q&A

- What went well and what didn't?
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- Q&A



Tips from Missouri

- Collaborate with Technical Assistance Providers in the equity lab planning, implementation, and/or evaluation process.
- Garner support for the equity lab from other offices within the State Department of Education.
- Start with a pilot group of 5-7 invited districts to participate in the equity lab.





Tips from Connecticut

- Determine who is critical to be in the room. Make phone calls to personalize the invitation beyond the initial invite.
- Lay out the organization of the day and the rationale as part of the agenda. Recognize and plan for district team work, but place value on input from other education partners in attendance and provide opportunities for cross collaborations.
- Be realistic about outputs regarding action planning. Create a simple collectible that will contribute to determining next steps for the DOE.





Introduction to the Equity Lab Toolkit

As we review the toolkit, we'd like your feedback:

- How would this toolkit impact your State's willingness/ability to host an equity lab?
- What additional information or resources would be helpful to better support a State planning an equity lab?
- Have you developed any tools that we should consider for inclusion?



Connecting the Dots

A Toolkit for Designing and Leading Equity Labs

APRIL 2017

Please use the chat log to ask questions or make comments.



Purpose and Content of Toolkit

Purpose: The toolkit offers a step-by-step guide for the design and implementation of a successful equity lab

Contents:

- Summaries of four States' labs
- A detailed 9-step approach to designing, implementing, and debriefing an equity lab
- Tools, including sample measures for equity lab outcomes, a sample work plan, a sample debrief session tool, and sample surveys to get participant feedback and plan next steps



The Toolkit Offers a 9-Step Process

Toolkit Step	Action
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- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Step 1 | Decide if an equity lab is right for your State. |
| Step 2 | Identify equity lab lead, design team, potential partners, and champions. |
| Step 3 | Create an equity lab work plan. |
| Step 4 | Identify desired outcomes for the equity lab. |
| Step 5 | Identify the date, location, and participants. |
| Step 6 | Create and implement a communication and engagement strategy. |
| Step 7 | Design equity lab and create agenda, activities, and materials. |
| Step 8 | Train presenters and facilitators. |
| Step 9 | Debrief, reflect, and plan forward. |



Quick Start Guide—Steps 1 and 2

Quick Start Guide

The Quick Start Guide provides an overview of a nine-step process for designing, leading, evaluating, and following through on an equity lab. In the next section, the *Toolkit* expands upon each step in this process with detailed information, tools, resources, and research where appropriate. Users can click on the hyperlinks below to advance them to individual sections they want to review.

Step 1: Decide if an equity lab is right for your State

- Think about what can be accomplished in an equity lab.
- Assess the SEA's capacity to design, lead, evaluate, and follow-up on an equity lab.
- Consider external factors that can influence the success of an equity lab.

Step 2: Identify equity lab lead, design team, potential partners, and champions

- Identify one person who will oversee the equity lab from start to finish.
- Create a design team to support the equity lab lead through the entire process.
- Secure one or more champions who will communicate the purpose of and need for the equity lab, remove barriers, and increase visibility.
- Identify partners who can help you plan.



Step 1: Decide if an equity lab is right for your State

Step 1: Decide if an equity lab is right for your State

SEAs that are thinking about holding an equity lab should begin by answering an important question: *"Is an equity lab the right strategy for our State?"* This section details how SEAs might answer this and other key questions before beginning to plan a lab.

To complete this step, SEAs should:

- » Think about what can be accomplished in an equity lab.
- » Assess the SEA's capacity to design, lead, evaluate, and follow-up on an equity lab.
- » Consider external factors that can influence the success of an equity lab.

Think about what can be accomplished in an equity lab.

Deciding if an equity lab is the right strategy should be an SEA's first consideration. No two equity labs are necessarily alike, but they generally share similar objectives:

- Share the State's equity plan and increase visibility of the State's work to promote equitable access to excellent educators
- Ensure that local equity plans are aligned with State equity plans
- Create a sense of urgency around the work of



What is an equity lab?

An equity lab is a convening of districts focused on advancing equitable access to excellent educators locally, in alignment with a State's equity plan. An equity lab can be a catalytic force to help close State equity gaps. It is a start of a crucial conversation about how districts, SEAs, and other partners can join forces



Step 2: Identify equity lab lead, design team, potential partners, and champions

Step 2: Identify equity lab lead, design team, potential partners, and champions

Putting together a team to support the implementation of an equity lab every step of the way is essential to the lab's success. The team does not need to be big, nor does it need to be limited to SEA staff. A small team with a dedicated leader, a real champion, and the right partners can achieve great results.

To complete this step, SEAs should:

- » Identify one person who will oversee the equity lab from start to finish.
- » Create a design team to support the equity lab lead through the entire process.
- » Secure one or more champions who will communicate the purpose of and need for the equity lab, remove barriers, and increase visibility.
- » Identify partners who can help you plan.

Identify one person who will oversee the equity lab from start to finish.

Having a dedicated SEA leader to oversee an equity lab from start to finish is essential. In addition to being familiar with the State Equity Plan, the equity lab lead should be given the time to lead all stages of the effort, approximately 4-6 hours per week during the early planning stages and 10-15 hours a week during the week or two leading up to the lab.

Create a design team to support the equity lab lead through the entire



Step 3: Create an equity lab work plan

Step 3: Create an equity lab work plan

The equity lab work plan ensures that all team members are aware of and on track to meet expectations. This work plan provides clarity and will help leaders keep all participants accountable for meeting deadlines.

To complete this step, SEAs should:

- » Create a work plan with clearly defined tasks, assignments, and a timeline.
- » Establish steps for obtaining approval for major activities.

Create a work plan with clearly defined tasks, assignments, and a timeline.

A successful work plan clearly defines tasks, deadlines, and owners and also leaves space to update the status of individual items. The work plan should include all of the action items necessary for the event, including allowing time for multiple iterations of materials, and be accessible to all team members.



Sample Equity Lab Work Plan for Ohio Equity Lab

TASK	DEADLINE	LEAD	STATUS
Determine location for lab	10/17/16	ODE	Complete
Finalize objectives and outcomes	10/18/16	ODE	Complete



Sample Equity Lab Workplan



Sample Equity Lab Work Plan

TASK	DEADLINE	LEAD	STATUS
Determine location for lab	10/17/16	ODE	Complete
Finalize objectives and outcomes	10/18/16	ODE	Complete
Identify target districts to invite	10/25/16	ODE	In process
First draft of participant agenda	10/25/16	EASN	In process
Identify stakeholders	10/25/16	ED/ODE	In process
Send save-the-date to target districts	10/28/16	ODE	Not started
Plan all lab logistics	11/8/16	ODE	Not started
First draft of annotated agenda	11/8/16	EASN	Not started
Determine registration process	11/8/16	ODE	Not started
Finalize participant agenda	11/15/16	EASN	Not started
Second draft of annotated agenda	11/15/16	EASN	Not started
Develop first draft of lab materials and slide deck	11/15/16	EASN	Not started
Invite speakers/presenters	11/15/16	ODE	In process
Send formal invitation to districts with pre-work	11/15/16	ODE	Not started
Finalize annotated agenda	11/22/16	EASN	Not started
Review all lab materials	11/22/16	ED/ODE	Not started
Confirm lab attendees	11/29/16	ODE	Not started
Finalize lab logistics (meeting space, A/V, food, etc.)	11/29/16	ODE	In process
Pre-meeting with district teams	11/29/16	ED/ODE	Not started
Provide training for presenters and facilitators	11/29/16	ED/ODE	Not started
Finalize all materials	12/2/16	EASN	Not started
Equity Lab	12/6/16		
Debrief convening and outline next steps	12/13/16	All	Not started



Step 4: Identify desired outcomes for the equity lab

Step 4: Identify desired outcomes for the equity lab

Being clear about purpose of the equity lab is also essential to its success. This section outlines a process by which an SEA can identify the desired outcomes of the lab and steps toward creating a plan to gather feedback from participants to evaluate whether those outcomes have been achieved.

To complete this step, SEAs should:

- » Determine what you want participants to know or be able to do at the conclusion of the equity lab.
- » Create a plan to measure the success of the equity lab.

Determine what you want participants to know or be able to do at the conclusion of the equity lab.

Determining what you want to accomplish is an important early step in designing a successful equity lab. By starting with the end in mind—what you want participants to know or be able to do as a result of participating in an equity lab—you can guide the development of activities that will help participants achieve desired outcomes. Think of outcomes as the measurable results that will help you evaluate the success of your lab.

Starting with outcomes in mind, an SEA might ask: What

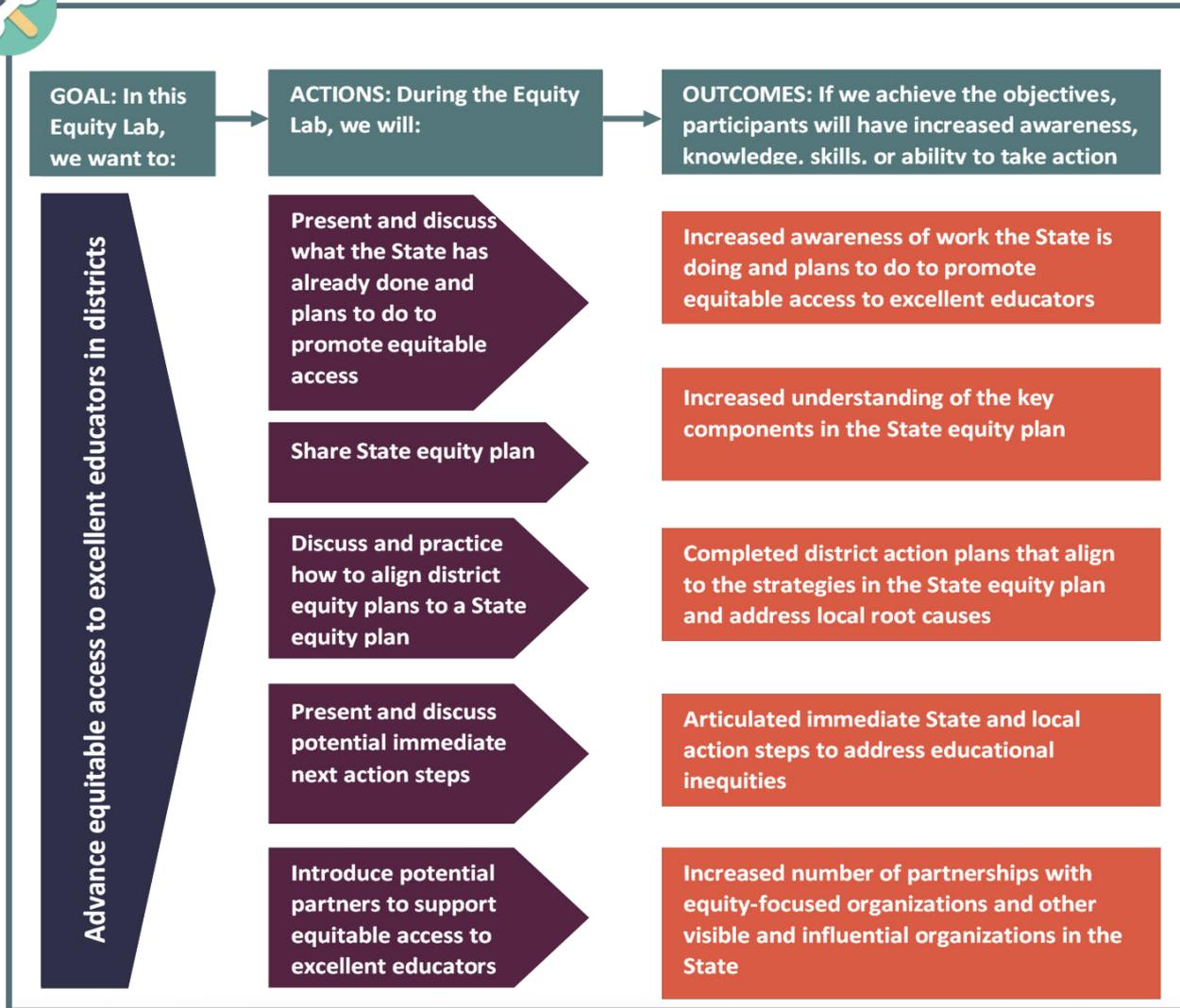


Missouri's Three Primary Objectives for the Equity Lab

- Introduce participants to educational inequities that exist in our state as outlined in the Missouri Equity Plan.
- Explore school district data, identify



Identifying Equity Lab Outcomes Tool





Sample Equity Lab Measures for Outcomes

Outcomes	Measures	Data Collection Method
Increased awareness of work the State has been doing and plans to do to promote equitable access to excellent educators.	# of participants who download the State equity plan following the Equity Lab	Website analytics
	# of participants who participate in the Equity Lab	Document review of participant list
	# of participants who can identify educational inequities in the State and the SEA's work to address them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Survey▪ Focus Group▪ Interview
Increased understanding of the key components in the State equity plan.	# of participants who can articulate the key components of the State equity plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Survey▪ Focus Group▪ Interview▪ Observation of participants' related discussions and questions



Sample Equity Lab Measures for Outcomes

Outcomes	Measures	Data Collection Method
<p>Completed district action plans that align to the strategies in the State equity plan and address local root causes.</p>	<p># of completed district action plans</p> <p># of completed district action plans that align to the State equity plan</p>	<p>Document review of district action plans</p> <p>Document review and analysis of alignment of district action plans and State equity plan</p>
<p>Articulated immediate action steps to address educational inequities.</p>	<p># of participants who articulate immediate action steps that indicate a sense of urgency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey ▪ Focus Group ▪ Interview ▪ Observation of participants' sharing out of immediate next steps and related discussions
<p>Increased number of partnerships with equity-focused organizations and other visible and influential organizations in the State.</p>	<p># participants who take immediate action within 1-3 months of an Equity Lab</p> <p># of participants and other key stakeholders who reach out to offer help to the SEA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey ▪ Focus Group ▪ Interview ▪ Document review of district action plans ▪ Documentation of partner outreach



Step 5: Identify the date, location, and participants

Step 5: Identify the date, location, and participants

Once the purpose of the equity lab has been identified, it's important to drill down into the details: when, where, and who. Identifying the right date and location are critical to securing the participation of the right stakeholders and their successful development and execution of local equity plans.

To complete this step, SEAs should:

- » Decide which districts you want to participate in the equity lab and why.
- » Identify a date that works.
- » Identify the "right" location.
- » Determine which district stakeholders should participate.

Decide which districts you want to participate in the equity lab and why.

The rationale for deciding who should attend and why can vary by State and be influenced by a number of factors, including:

- **Location.** Larger States may choose to conduct multiple labs by region and would thus restrict attendees to those LEAs in a particular region or area.
- **Need.** Consider ensuring that the LEAs with the greatest identified equity gaps participate.
- **District type.** Some States may choose to differentiate by district size or type (rural, suburban, urban, etc.) to either ensure a mix of participants or to target certain groups.
- **Level of engagement.** Some districts may consider





Step 6: Create and implement a communication and engagement strategy

Step 6: Create and implement a communication and engagement strategy

Putting together and implementing a communication and engagement plan well in advance of the equity lab is essential to its success. Stakeholders not only need to know that you will conduct a lab but also how their participation in it will make it easier for them to complete their own plans and better serve their students. Engaging them, however, is more complex than simply communicating with them. Stakeholder involvement in the planning and implementation of the lab sends a strong signal that their ideas and work are valued, and spreads ownership for the lab itself and the State- and local-level activities that will emerge from it.

To complete this step, SEAs should:

- » Promote and advertise the equity lab and provide updates to stakeholders.
- » Identify effective methods for engaging districts and stakeholders in equity labs.

Promote and advertise the equity lab and provide updates to stakeholders.

States that have already conducted equity labs report that strategic communications and event promotion contribute to the equity lab's success. In fact, 93% said they were essential or very important.

Strategic communications can take many forms.



**Equity Lab Leads' Ratings
of the Importance of Strategic
Communications & Event Promotion**



Step 7: Design equity lab and create agenda, activities, and materials

Step 7: Design equity lab and create agenda, activities, and materials

The equity lab design team should spend considerable time preparing the agenda, activities, and materials for the lab to best achieve the stated outcomes from Step 4. Make sure to start this step well in advance of the lab so that there's time to iterate on these details and share with key stakeholders for feedback.

To complete this step, SEAs should:

- » Determine if a pre-lab webinar will be used to build awareness and knowledge.
- » Create agenda, activities, slide decks, and evaluation.
- » Collect materials to be used as part of the equity lab and any pre-work.

Determine if a pre-lab webinar will be used to build awareness and knowledge.

A pre-webinar for LEA participants will help provide them with a sense of the purpose of the event and what they can hope to accomplish. It will also allow for LEA teams to ask questions in advance, think through any data or other materials they may want to prepare in advance, and identify how they would like to spend team time. Finally, it affords the lab planners an opportunity to uncover any issues or questions not previously surfaced and to develop a plan for addressing those at the lab. To ensure that participants are able to adequately prepare for the equity lab, make sure to hold the webinar 1-3 weeks prior to the event. Also consider holding the webinar during two or three different dates/times so that participants with varying schedules can join. Record the webinar so that those who cannot participate in real time can listen to the webinar on their own.



Step 8: Train presenters and facilitators

Step 8: Train presenters and facilitators

This critical step in the preparation process is often overlooked because it is time-consuming and may be perceived as “extra.” Training presenters and facilitators is an essential step in making sure that equity lab outcomes and objectives are achieved within the planned time.

There are different methods for training presenters and facilitators; however, the purpose of the training remains the same: to ensure they are familiar with: the outcomes; the activities to achieve the outcomes; and the structure, flow, and timing of the equity lab. Creating a dedicated time to review this in detail in advance of an equity lab can help ensure that everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities. This section provides basic information that can be used to shape a training session.

To complete this step, SEAs should:

- » Identify key roles and potential stakeholders to fill them.
- » Create a training session for all key roles.

Identify key roles and potential stakeholders to fill them.

The *Toolkit* has already identified some key roles in prior steps, including presenters and speakers. However, there are additional roles that can help to make an equity lab successful. These six distinct roles can help to make an equity lab flow smoothly:

- Host/Facilitator
- Speaker





Step 9: Debrief, reflect, and plan forward

Step 9: Debrief, reflect, and plan forward

Collecting and using evidence to improve and provide any additional future support is at the heart of an effective equity lab. SEAs should consider not only collecting feedback from lab participants but also from those who facilitated, presented, or spoke. Sharing the feedback with your equity lab design team so they can identify ways to improve future labs and support is a necessary near final step. That final step is to share with lab participants and other stakeholders the evaluation findings and the next steps as determined by the design team.

To complete this step, SEAs should:

- » Host a debrief meeting with presenters, facilitators, and speakers.
- » Convene equity lab design team to plan next steps based on evaluation and debrief data.
- » Summarize evaluation findings and next steps.

Host a debrief meeting with presenters, facilitators, and speakers.

Immediately after the equity lab, debrief the meeting with presenters, facilitators, and speakers. They will have perspectives on how to make future labs even better and also will be able to share their ideas on what next steps the SEA should take to support their LEAs. Some of the essential elements of an effective debrief session include:

Facilitator who can lead the group through structured

Recorder to take notes on what works, what can be improved, or

Focus on continuous improvement

Agenda with clear structures and norms for productive



Equity Lab Toolkit Feedback

- How would this toolkit impact your State's willingness/ability to host an equity lab?
- What additional information or resources would be helpful to better support a State planning an equity lab?
- Have you developed any tools that we should consider for inclusion?

Please use the chat log to address these questions, to ask questions, or to make comments about the Equity Lab Toolkit.



Closing Remarks

Thank you for your participation!

Please use the chat log:

Are you considering implementing an equity lab in your State?

Special thanks to Andrea and Kim for sharing their experiences!

Thank You!