

Goal 4. Equity:**Ensure effective educational opportunities for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sex, disability, language, and socioeconomic status.****Overview**

All students—regardless of circumstance—deserve a world-class education. Yet far too often, the quality of a child’s education, and the opportunities that the child has to succeed are determined by his or her background or status.

To ensure that America has the best-educated population, with the most competitive workforce and the highest proportion of college graduates of any country in the world, we must close the pervasive achievement and attainment gaps that exist in our nation.

A key federal role in education is to ensure that all students have opportunities to learn and excel by closing the gap between high-need students and their more advantaged peers in access to opportunities and resources. As it is at the core of the Department’s mission, addressing issues of equity are addressed in the goals already listed (Postsecondary Education, Career and Technical Education, and Adult Education; Elementary and Secondary; and Early Learning).

The Department will ensure that equity is embedded throughout its initiatives, and will vigorously enforce the federal civil rights laws to ensure students are free from discrimination in our nation’s schools and colleges.

The Department of Education enforces federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability and age in our nation’s schools—primarily in educational institutions that receive federal funds from the Department. In addition, the Department ensures that the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups have equal access to meeting space in elementary and secondary schools that receive funds through the Department.

The Office for Civil Rights, a law enforcement agency within the Department, performs the Department’s civil rights enforcement responsibilities in a variety of ways, including: investigating complaints alleging discrimination; conducting compliance reviews to determine whether educational institutions are meeting their legal obligations; and providing technical assistance to help educational institutions understand how to comply with the laws and to inform parents and students of their legal rights.

The Department also issues regulations on civil rights laws, develops policy guidance interpreting the laws, and distributes the information broadly.

Goal 4: Details

Equity Indicators of Success*	Results				
	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
4.A. Increase in the combined annual number of significant proactive and outreach activities related to civil rights enforcement (new policy documents, compliance reviews, and technical assistance activities)	NA	NA	NA	NA	Estab. BL

* In addition to the measure below, other measures tracking Equity Indicators of Success are shared across goals, including: Measures 1A and 1B, FAFSAs among low-income and non-traditional students; measure 2H, monitoring of School Improvement Grants; measure 3A, states implementing high-quality early education plans; measure 5C, percentage of state report cards addressing specific metrics; measure 5G, Departmental priorities to address equity-related issues in grants and awards; and measure 6F, student access data.

NA = No data available for the period

Source:

4.A. U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

Explanation and Analysis of Progress: Measure 4A will establish a baseline using FY 2011 data. Data for measure 4A are collected and reported by the Department. Data for measure 4A are most influenced by actions taken by the Department, but also are influenced by factors that are beyond the control of the Department. Equity-focused efforts could be held back because of differences in availability of funding at the state and local levels, and the fact that state and local resources are often not targeted at the highest-need students.