

Issue 2 – Equity and Fairness: The Opportunity to Succeed

Issue Overview

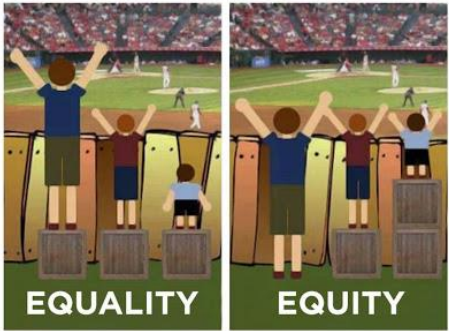
What is educational equity? What does it look like? What would it take to achieve it? These are questions that have been present in education policy discussions for a long time. However, with the growing focus on accountability coupled with changing demographics and the shifting roles of federal and state responsibilities, issues of educational equity have recently taken center stage. Educational equity means:

Every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, despite race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, family background or family income.

Significance for Georgia

Equity does not mean creating equal conditions for all students, but rather targeting resources based on individual students’ needs and circumstances so that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed. While some Georgia students come from well-resourced homes where their families provide for all their needs, other students live in more challenging conditions often related to a low household income or one that qualifies as being below the federal poverty level.

Equality V. Equity



Examining outputs such as achievement rates are but one measure of equity. However, importantly, inputs such as the *distribution of funding, access to educational supports such as high-quality teachers, rigorous coursework, support services, supportive school climates, and extracurricular opportunities* all contribute to educational equity and the opportunity gap. Students facing adverse conditions at home can benefit from supports that take into account the difficulties they likely face in succeeding in school.

Action Steps for Georgia

Education equity in the United States is becoming more urgent as the diversity of the nation grows. In the ESSA state plan developed by GaDOE and submitted to USED, Georgia addressed how the state would ensure low-income and minority children have equitable access to effective, in-field, experienced teachers. Districts must use the information provided by the state to address inequities through their annually submitted district improvement plans, which must include an equity component and school improvement goals. Districts must use the information provided by the state to address these inequities through their annually submitted district improvement plans, which must include an equity component and school improvement goals.

Access to a *high-quality teacher* is but one aspect of equity of opportunity to succeed. Teachers and school leaders need resources and support to help overcome the harmful impacts of poverty and adverse neighborhood factors. It is rare that a school can outperform its community.

Georgia must use collaboration, data, clear accountability, and community support, with limited resources to move the dial on equity in education, because the American promise of educational opportunity – no matter background or family – depends on it.