

# Moving Toward Equity Stakeholder Engagement Guide



## Summary



# Introduction

In response to Education Secretary Arne Duncan's July 2014 announcement of the Excellent Educators for All initiative, the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center) has developed a step-by-step *Moving Toward Equity Stakeholder Engagement Guide* to help state education agencies (SEAs) brainstorm and implement effective methods for authentically engaging key stakeholder groups in the design and implementation of their State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators. Successful engagement of stakeholders not only is a requirement of the Excellent Educators for All initiative but also is vital to ensure that states' equitable access plans generate the public and political will and collaboration needed to result in every child's access to excellent educators.

The full *Stakeholder Engagement Guide* and supporting materials are available online (<http://www.gtlcenter.org/learning-hub/equitable-access-toolkit/stakeholder-engagement-guide>). This summary provides an overview of the guide's contents and approach.

The *Stakeholder Engagement Guide* consists of two parts that guide SEAs in engaging stakeholders through short- and long-term planning for equitable access. For states that are newer to stakeholder engagement or could benefit from a new approach, the SEA team should begin with Part 1. For states that already have established structures and processes for stakeholder engagement, the SEA team may wish to begin with Part 2. In either case, the Excellent Educators for All initiative presents an opportunity to reinvest in stakeholder engagement through the incorporation of methods intended to bring in new voices.

## PART 1. Getting Started

Part 1 guides the SEA in getting started and envisioning the process for its unique state context. The steps are as follows:

### STEP 1.1: Building an Internal SEA Team

This step summarizes the internal SEA team's composition and responsibilities and provides key steps to building an effective team.

### STEP 1.2: Creating a Big-Picture Vision

This step guides the internal SEA team in establishing a big-picture vision for planning for equitable access and also provides sample vision statements.

### STEP 1.3: Identifying Stakeholder Groups

This step provides tips for selecting stakeholder groups from across the education spectrum.

### STEP 1.4: Envisioning the Mechanisms for Engaging Stakeholders

This step suggests a variety of possible formats for successful stakeholder engagement.

### STEP 1.5: Envisioning How Best to Prepare Stakeholders for Engagement

This step helps SEA leaders make the most of stakeholders' time and knowledge by familiarizing them in advance with the relevant issues and data.

### STEP 1.6: Envisioning a Long-Term Educator Equity Coalition

This step provides information for creating and maintaining an educator equity coalition.

### STEP 1.7: Planning for Stakeholder Engagement: A Suggested Approach

This step details a suggested approach to the process of engaging stakeholders on educator equity, from start to finish.

## PART 2. Taking Action

Part 2 of the guide provides guidance for SEA staff to take action on stakeholder engagement. The steps are as follows:

### STEP 2.1: Engaging Stakeholders in Understanding the Problem

The SEA gives stakeholders several opportunities to examine the relevant metrics on equitable access for various schools and populations across the state as well as other research and data. This examination should allow stakeholders to more fully understand the problem and at the same time deepen SEA leaders' understanding of the challenges behind equity gaps. Topics and materials include:

- **PowerPoint Template.** Template for a presentation of background information to stakeholders.
- **“Taking the Temperature” Activity Template.** Assessment of each stakeholder group's existing knowledge of the issues of equitable access.
- **Data Profile and Other Tools for Developing Equitable Access Metrics.** Menu of metrics, sample data display tools, and guiding questions for analyzing, displaying, and considering your state's equitable access data. Useful resource: the *Moving Toward Equity Data Review Tool*, a companion resource to help SEAs understand and assess equitable access data to support the root-cause analysis and, ultimately, the equitable access plan itself.

### STEP 2.2: Engaging Stakeholders in Setting Priorities

In this step, stakeholders conduct a root-cause analysis of the issue. In so doing, they exchange perspectives that will inform shared priorities regarding equitable access. Parents, teachers, and leaders at all levels will engage in tough but crucial conversations about the issues that lie at the heart of equitable access. This step also is a good time to take stock of existing current initiatives through a policy inventory. Topics and materials include:

- **Root-Cause Analysis Workbooks.** Two useful resources: *Moving Toward Equity Root-Cause Analysis Workbook: A Guide for State Education Agencies*, a workbook for SEA staff to think through the underlying reasons why equitable access

challenges persist; and *Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis*, a companion resource that offers a step-by-step approach to directly engaging stakeholders in a root-cause analysis activity.

- **Talent Development Policy Coherence Assessment.** Approach to inventorying the existing educator effectiveness policies and initiatives. Useful resource: *Talent Development Framework for 21st Century Educators: Moving Toward State Policy Alignment and Coherence*, to help states attract, prepare, support, and retain excellent educators.

### STEP 2.3: Engaging Stakeholders in Raising Awareness

Stakeholder groups help the SEA raise awareness about the equity gaps in excellent teaching and leading as well as communicate the actions that the state is taking with stakeholders to rectify the situation. Through written and face-to-face communication, stakeholders share information widely within their networks and establish contact points to further gather stakeholder input. Topics and materials include:

- **Developing a Communication Plan for Key Stakeholders and Wider Audiences.** Suggestions for maintaining strategic communication, including identifying audiences and mechanisms for communication, developing key communication messages, and monitoring communication efforts.
- **Building Communication Loops.** Suggestions for developing two-way, continuous feedback loops.

### STEP 2.4: Engaging Stakeholders in Taking Action

Stakeholders provide input into the actionable strategies that will be included in the state's equitable access plan. In addition, it may be necessary for stakeholders themselves to adopt actionable strategies—for example, to secure votes needed by the state board or legislature to adopt or authorize the strategies included in the plan. Topics and materials include:

- **Example State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators.** Sample equitable access plan for your state to react to when building your own plan.
- **Build-Your-Own Plan.** Mechanism to obtain quantitative information about stakeholder priorities on the most meaningful equitable access metrics as well as the strategies for addressing equitable access that respond to the root causes and are realistic within the state context.
- **Incorporating Stakeholder Feedback Into Your Plan.** Suggestions for collecting stakeholder feedback and using it constructively. Useful resource: *Incorporating Stakeholder Feedback—Discussion Planning, Recording, and Summary Forms*, a list of suggestions for collecting feedback and a step-by-step guide to ensuring that stakeholder insights are incorporated into the plan and communicated back to stakeholders systematically.

### STEP 2.5: Engaging Stakeholders in Measuring Progress and Adjusting Strategies

After the plan is adopted, stakeholders continue to be engaged with the SEA and

local education agencies. They provide ongoing input over time, from their vantage point, about how the plan is playing out, so progress can be measured and strategies adjusted.

## Stakeholder Engagement Resources

These 12 resources are provided in a format that allows for state adaptation (e.g., Microsoft Word, PowerPoint) so that they are useable in each state's unique context.

- **Resource 1: Four Key Steps for Equitable Access Communication Planning**  
([http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource\\_1](http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource_1))
- **Resource 2: Sample SEA Internal Team Meeting for Identifying Existing State Efforts and Stakeholder Groups**  
([http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource\\_2](http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource_2))
- **Resource 3: Sample State Vision Statements**  
([http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource\\_3](http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource_3))
- **Resource 4: Sample Meeting Agendas**  
([http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource\\_4](http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource_4))
- **Resource 5: Incorporating Stakeholder Feedback—Discussion Planning, Recording, and Summary Forms**  
([http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource\\_5](http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource_5))
- **Resource 6: Sample Timeline and Timeline Template for Developing a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators**  
([http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource\\_6](http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource_6))
- **Resource 7: Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis**  
([http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource\\_7](http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource_7))
- **Resource 8: “Taking the Temperature” Activity**  
([http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource\\_8](http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource_8))
- **Resource 9: Sample State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators**  
([http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource\\_9](http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource_9))
- **Resource 10: Build-Your-Own State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators**  
([http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource\\_10](http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource_10))
- **Resource 11: PowerPoint Template**  
([http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource\\_11](http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource_11))
- **Resource 12: Developing a Local Stakeholder Engagement Guidance Document for Your Local Education Agencies**  
([http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource\\_12](http://www.gtIcenter.org/resource_12))

## Additional Information

The GTL Center also has prepared technical assistance resources to assist SEAs with reviewing data, conducting a root-cause analysis of equity gaps, and other aspects of the equity planning process. For more information about these and other resources, please check the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders website (<http://www.gtlcenter.org/>) and specifically the Equitable Access Toolkit (<http://www.gtlcenter.org/learning-hub/equitable-access-toolkit>).

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