

# Moving Toward Equity Stakeholder Engagement Guide



Interactive Overview

JANUARY 2015

# BEGIN USING THIS INTERACTIVE OVERVIEW

This *Interactive Overview*, developed by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center), is designed to help Chief State School Officers and state education agency (SEA) staff zero in on strategies to engage critical stakeholders—including teachers, principals, district leaders, parents, and civil rights and community organizations—in developing and implementing a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators. Engaging stakeholders in this process ensures that critical educational policy decisions are reached in an inclusive, collaborative manner and also presents a unique opportunity to gain input to improve student outcomes.

This interactive version is abridged from the full *Moving Toward Equity Stakeholder Engagement Guide* and consists of three parts. Start where you wish:

➤ **INTRODUCTION.** Brush up on background information.

➤ **PART 1 | GETTING STARTED.** If your SEA is new to stakeholder engagement or is seeking a new approach, begin your journey here by focusing on the planning and vision process.

➤ **PART 2 | TAKING ACTION.** Ready to dive in? Start the stakeholder engagement process right here.

## Supporting Materials

### Stakeholder Engagement Resources

- Resource 1:** Four Key Steps for Equitable Access Communication Planning
- Resource 2:** Sample SEA Internal Team Meeting for Identifying Existing State Efforts and Stakeholder Groups
- Resource 3:** Example of a State Vision Statement
- Resource 4:** Sample Meeting Agendas
- Resource 5:** Incorporating Stakeholder Feedback—Discussion Planning, Recording, and Summary Forms
- Resource 6:** Sample Timeline and Timeline Template for Developing a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators
- Resource 7:** Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis
- Resource 8:** “Taking the Temperature” Activity
- Resource 9:** Sample State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators
- Resource 10:** Build-Your-Own State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators
- Resource 11:** PowerPoint Template
- Resource 12:** Developing a Local Stakeholder Engagement Guidance Document for Your Local Education Agencies

## Companion Resources

*Moving Toward Equity Stakeholder Engagement Guide* | Complete and detailed guide for involving diverse stakeholders in developing and implementing a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

*Moving Toward Equity Technical Assistance Resources Overview* | Overview of the GTL Center’s technical assistance tools for analyzing root causes, reviewing data, and engaging stakeholders in equity work

*Moving Toward Equity Online Tool* | Interactive online tool with resources and strategies for ensuring equitable access

*Moving Toward Equity Quick-Start Guide* | Key questions and examples for setting priorities and taking action around equity

*Moving Toward Equity Root-Cause Analysis Workbook: A Guide for State Education Agencies* | Workbook for determining the root causes of equity gaps in access to excellent teachers and leaders

*Moving Toward Equity Data Review Tool* | Electronic tool for interpreting data, determining policy implications, and communicating findings

*Everyone at the Table: Equitable Access Choicework Discussion Guide* | Discussion starter for engaging stakeholders in constructive dialogue on ensuring equitable access to excellent teachers (Coming Soon)

*Innovation Station Database* | Online database of cutting-edge tools and resources on how to recruit, reward, retain, and extend the reach of excellent teachers and leaders

*Everyone at the Table: Engaging Teachers in Evaluation Reform Website* | Website with online videos and materials for engaging teachers in respectful dialogue on evaluation reform

GTL Center staff are available to provide state education agencies with direct technical assistance in using these and other resources. For questions about this *Interactive Overview* or the full *Stakeholder Engagement Guide*, please contact Ellen Sherratt ([esherratt@air.org](mailto:esherratt@air.org)) or contact the GTL Center directly ([gtlcenter@air.org](mailto:gtlcenter@air.org)).



**CLICK ON THE TOPIC** you want to learn more about

## CONTENTS



### INTRODUCTION



### PART 1 | GETTING STARTED



STEP 1.1 | Building an Internal SEA Team



STEP 1.2 | Creating a Big-Picture Vision



STEP 1.3 | Identifying Stakeholder Groups



STEP 1.4 | Envisioning the Mechanisms for Engaging Stakeholders



STEP 1.5 | Envisioning How Best to Prepare Stakeholders for Engagement



STEP 1.6 | Envisioning a Long-Term Equitable Access Coalition



STEP 1.7 | Planning for Stakeholder Engagement: A Suggested Approach



### PART 2 | TAKING ACTION



STEP 2.1 | Engaging Stakeholders in Understanding the Problem



STEP 2.2 | Engaging Stakeholders in Setting Priorities



STEP 2.3 | Engaging Stakeholders in Raising Awareness



STEP 2.4 | Engaging Stakeholders in Taking Action



STEP 2.5 | Engaging Stakeholders in Measuring Progress and Adjusting Strategies



# INTRODUCTION

On July 7, 2014, the U.S. Department of Education announced the Excellent Educators for All initiative to help states and school districts support great educators for the students who need them most. As a key piece of the initiative, each state is required to submit a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators by June 2015 that describes how the state education agency (SEA) will ensure that students from low-income families and students of color are not taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers.

This *Interactive Overview*, developed by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center), focuses on strategies that Chief State School Officers and SEA staff can use to successfully and actively engage stakeholders in developing their equitable access plan.

In his July 2014 letter<sup>1</sup> to Chief State School Officers, Education Secretary Arne Duncan stated that **“to prepare a strong plan, each SEA will analyze what its stakeholders and data have to say about the root causes of inequities and will craft its own solutions.”**

Engaging diverse groups of stakeholders as partners in this work has many benefits. By collaboratively reviewing data and identifying the root causes behind inequitable access to high-quality teaching and leading, SEAs can forge and strengthen critical partnerships while developing a strong plan that benefits all students. As a result:

- › Equitable access plans will be fully informed by the ideas, insights, and perspectives of educators “on the ground” and promote consensus and agreement among diverse stakeholder groups.
- › Equitable access plans can garner public support and political will, leading to successful implementation.

<sup>1</sup> The letter is available [online](#).

Meaningful stakeholder engagement takes time and careful planning, but the end result has enormous potential. To lead the way on equitable access to effective teaching in your state, sparking discussions with all key stakeholders must be at the center of your planning. This *Interactive Overview* provides step-by-step considerations to help you in planning and conducting those crucial conversations.

## Equitable Access Toolkit

The materials in this *Interactive Overview* are based on the GTL Center’s [Equitable Access Toolkit](#).

EQUITABLE  
ACCESS TOOLKIT



In this *Interactive Overview*, you can explore:

- › *Short-term strategies* for engaging stakeholders to inform the design of an equitable access plan.
- › *Long-term strategies* for building a coalition of critical partners to sustain commitments to the educator equity goals and other systemic improvements outlined in the equitable access plan.
- › Practical ideas to implement a *system for continuous improvement* rooted in ongoing stakeholder feedback.

# CONTENTS



## PART 1 | GETTING STARTED



STEP 1.1 | Building an Internal SEA Team



STEP 1.2 | Creating a Big-Picture Vision



STEP 1.3 | Identifying Stakeholder Groups



STEP 1.4 | Envisioning the Mechanisms for Engaging Stakeholders



STEP 1.5 | Envisioning How Best to Prepare Stakeholders for Engagement



STEP 1.6 | Envisioning a Long-Term Equitable Access Coalition



STEP 1.7 | Planning for Stakeholder Engagement: A Suggested Approach



# PART 1 | GETTING STARTED

**Part 1: Getting Started** guides the SEA in setting the stage and envisioning the process for engaging stakeholders in its unique state context. This process includes considerations such as effective engagement strategies, communication approaches, and data use.



## Know the Dynamics of Effective Engagement

When diverse stakeholder voices come together to provide insight and input into equity work, SEAs can build buy-in and improve the long-term impact of their efforts. Effective stakeholder engagement is

**INCLUSIVE,**  
**TWO-WAY,** and  
**SOLUTIONS ORIENTED.**

Stakeholder engagement also should be

**ONGOING** (not a single event) as well as  
**OPEN** and  
**FLEXIBLE** (not prescriptive or focused  
on a predetermined solution).



## Realize the Importance of Communication

Successful stakeholder engagement begins with communication. Strategic communication is critical because it can help or hinder the acceptance of a new equitable access initiative. Communication planning should begin on Day 1. Key communication junctures in the equity planning and implementation process correspond to the five components of the *Moving Toward Equity* framework: understanding the problem, setting priorities, raising awareness, taking action, and measuring progress and adjusting strategies.



## Consider Data as the Foundation for Engagement

A key ingredient for effective stakeholder engagement on equitable access is discussions centered on data and evidence—data on the scope of the equitable access challenge, data on interventions and their impact, and data on progress toward achieving equitable access goals. Possible data and evidence sources may include teacher and principal distribution and mobility data, rigorous research study findings, program evaluations, teacher supply and demand data, or other relevant data.

### Looking for Data? Start Here:

- Review the U.S. Department of Education’s preliminary data profile for your state.
- Your own state data office or officer is responsible for tracking information ranging from demographics to student attendance, test scores to teacher placement. Connect with the appropriate office partners to examine which data currently are available.
- The Institute of Education Sciences provides a [Data Files and Tools](#) webpage, which includes links to research, education data, and analysis on a wide range of topics for all 50 states.




For more information, see the full [Moving Toward Equity Stakeholder Engagement Guide](#).

## STEP 1.1 | Building an Internal SEA Team

To be successful in engaging stakeholders, the state needs to build an internal SEA team that is charged with specific tasks and reflects various SEA offices. One initial task of this team is to make an inventory of current policies and initiatives.

### Determine the Tasks for the Internal SEA Team

Encourage the internal SEA team to take on the following tasks:

-  Lead the preplanning process, identifying stakeholders and envisioning what their engagement will look like.
-  Serve in an information support role for stakeholders, acting as a resource and point of contact as well as facilitating meetings with stakeholders.
-  Serve as a critical element throughout the implementation stage by facilitating continuous, two-way feedback and leading the ongoing assessment of progress.

### Determine the Members and Roles of the Internal SEA Team



In building your internal SEA team, consider and select 3–7 staff leaders from the following SEA departments:

- › Curriculum and Instruction
- › Teacher Professional Development
- › School Turnaround
- › Assessment
- › Data
- › Early Learning
- › Special Education
- › Educator Talent (e.g., licensing, hiring, and evaluation of educators)
- › Career and Technical Education
- › Parent Involvement and Community Outreach
- › Communications and Public Affairs
- › Legislative Affairs

Then consider what roles each SEA team member is best suited to fill. For example:



The “go to” person for research questions and data



The communication strategy leader



The “point person” for consolidating, reporting, and incorporating stakeholder feedback throughout the process of drafting the equitable access plan



The “coherence” lead for taking stock of prior and existing policies and initiatives focused on equity gaps as well as relevant socioeconomic information.

### Make an Inventory of Existing Policies, Initiatives, and Stakeholders

Use [Resource 2: Sample SEA Internal Team Meeting for Identifying Existing State Efforts and Stakeholder Groups](#) to create an initial inventory of current state efforts and stakeholders. Such an inventory can help your state respond coherently to suggestions from stakeholders and ensure that your equitable access plan priorities are grounded in your state’s unique needs and context.

#### RESOURCES

- [Resource 2: Sample SEA Internal Team Meeting for Identifying Existing State Efforts and Stakeholder Groups](#)
- [Talent Development Framework for 21st Century Educators: Moving Toward State Policy Alignment and Coherence](#)

## Step 1.2 | Creating a Big-Picture Vision

This step involves envisioning the desired outcomes of your state’s equitable access plan and creating a vision statement. A shared vision is vital for organizational success and will enhance your ability to make quick, agreed-upon decisions during planning and implementation.

### Consider Preliminary Information

Consider the policy and political context of your state and stakeholder groups, as identified by your internal SEA team. Also consider the perspectives of key stakeholder groups.

### Develop Your Vision Statement

Envision what outcomes are desirable to your team. Then outline the initial concrete goals of your stakeholder engagement process, or express the goals of your equitable access planning. Consider the following questions:

- › What would it look like to have clear communication, input, and agreement from all relevant parties?
- › What do you hope to be able to say your state achieved for equitable access?

Use the following sample vision statements to guide the development of your vision statement for equity.

#### Sample Vision Statement 1:

“Our mission is to provide a high-quality, comprehensive, and meaningful education for all students, with special attention given to ensure that students from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to excellent teachers and principals. To achieve this goal, we will ensure that all students have access to an excellent teacher by taking the following actions.”

#### Sample Vision Statement 2:

“Every student in [our state], regardless of background, will have access to an excellent teacher. [Our state] will place the highest priority on improving school climate, improving efforts to recruit and retain the most effective teachers and leaders, and providing high-quality teacher preparation.”

### Refine Your Vision Statement

You may develop several vision statements and then choose the one that seems best. Remember that your vision statement is amendable. You can adjust the details of the vision later as new data, insights, and priorities arise.

#### RESOURCES

- Resource 3: Example of State Vision Statement

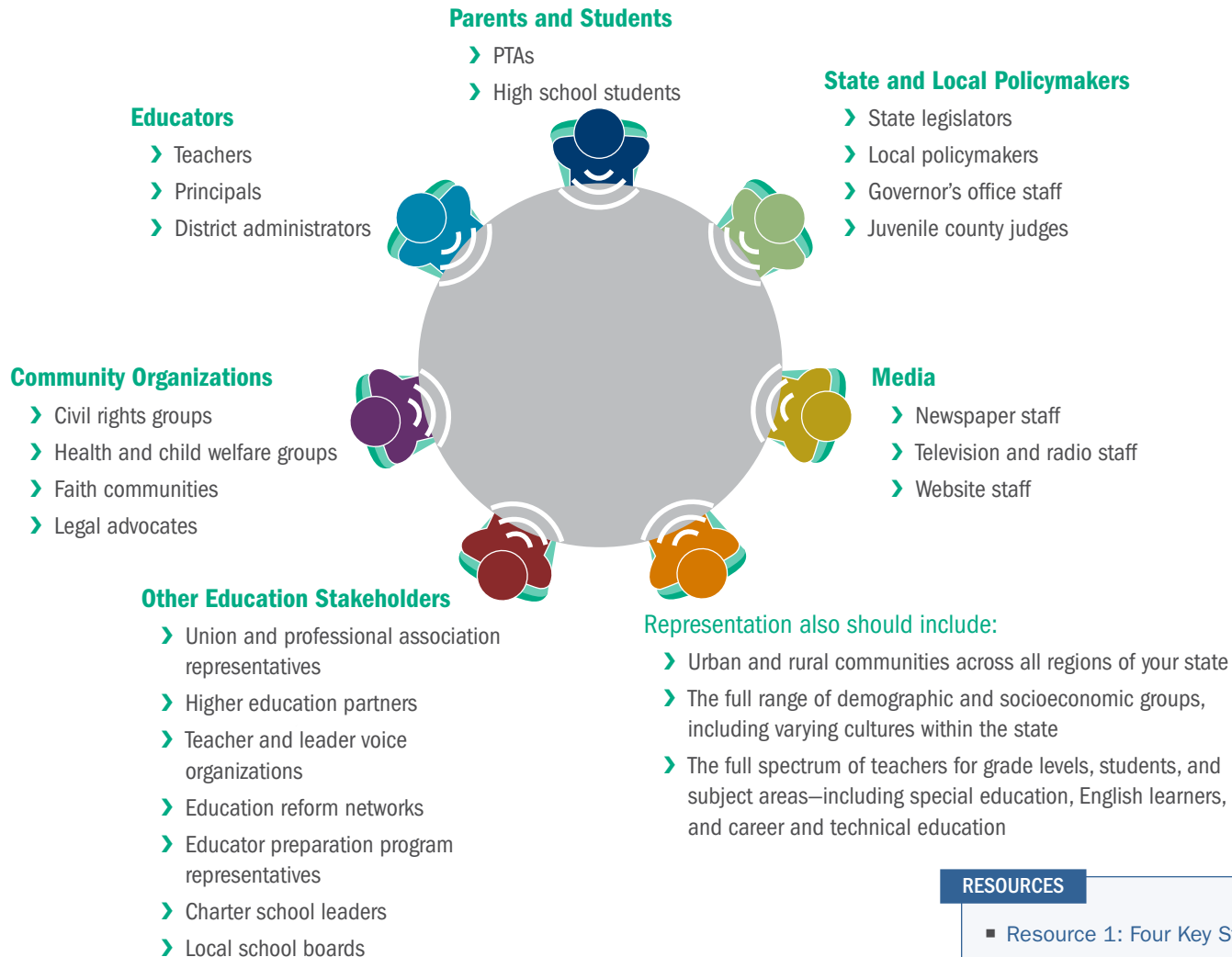


## Step 1.3 | Identifying Stakeholder Groups

To enrich the development of the state's equitable access plan, stakeholder groups should consist of individuals from across the education spectrum, parents and students, community organizations, policymakers, and the media.

### Bring Diverse Voices to the Table

Consider including viewpoints from the following stakeholders:



### Target the Expertise of Each Stakeholder Group

To capitalize on each stakeholder group's areas of expertise and experience, consider the following questions:

- › Which stakeholders can provide critical insights and perspectives regarding teacher and leader turnover?
- › Which stakeholders can bridge the perspectives between education-based and community-based stakeholders?
- › Which stakeholders will play an important role in implementing policy?
- › Which stakeholders can provide an understanding of the different policy levers that influence the distribution of teachers and leaders?
- › Which stakeholders can provide perspectives on the effects of the equity gap and build community credibility?

#### RESOURCES

- Resource 1: Four Key Steps for Equitable Access Communication Planning



## STEP 1.4 | Envisioning the Mechanisms for Engaging Stakeholders

The appropriate meeting format will set a positive tone for engaging stakeholder groups in productive conversations. Using an agenda and communicating effectively also are vital for signaling the importance of stakeholder time and viewpoints.

### Use Appropriate Meeting Formats

Choose the meeting format that will ensure rich discussion, space for reflection, and broad information sharing

#### Small-Group Strategy Meeting (6–10 participants)



- › *Best Use:* Strategic advisory session with leadership
- › *Type of Group:* Heterogeneous group
- › *Who:* Advocacy organization representatives, professional association representatives, teachers, principals, parents, or SEA representatives

#### Focus-Group-Style Discussion Meeting (8–12 participants)



- › *Best Use:* Big-picture insights or specific feedback on an equitable access plan
- › *Type of Group:* Homogenous group and moderator
- › *Who:* Teachers, principals, district administrators, parents, advocacy groups

#### Town Hall (50–200 participants)



- › *Best Use:* Presenting at the end of the planning cycle and receiving feedback on the proposed plan
- › *Type of Group:* Diverse, heterogeneous group
- › *Who:* All groups—teachers, professional associations, district leaders, parents, principals, other community members

#### Online Meeting (Up to 150 participants)



- › *Best Use:* Presenting a proposed plan and receiving feedback
- › *Type of Group:* Heterogeneous and larger geographic group
- › *Who:* All groups—teachers, professional associations, district leaders, parents, principals, other community members, rural stakeholders

### Create an Agenda for Each Meeting

Create a meeting agenda to help you think through the best use of stakeholders' limited time and to ensure that the meeting is focused and efficient. For ideas, see [Resource 4: Sample Meeting Agendas](#).

### Communicate Effectively

Use communications that inform, inquire, involve, and inspire. For ideas, see the Reform Support Network's *Framework for Communications and Engagement*.

#### RESOURCES

- [Resource 4: Sample Meeting Agendas](#)
- [Reform Support Network's Framework for Communications and Engagement](#)

## Step 1.5 | Envisioning How Best to Prepare Stakeholders for Engagement

Equitable access involves complex issues and terminology that may not be familiar to all stakeholders. When everyone is on the same page, conversations will be more focused and productive. Engaging stakeholders in this process is about relationship building and ensuring that the perspectives of the participants are genuinely valued.

### Create a Common Starting Point

Provide stakeholders with prereading on the following topics:

- › Importance of equitable access for students
- › Excellent Educators for All initiative
- › Importance and purpose of your state's equitable access plan
- › Past efforts that your SEA has taken to address equity gaps and any lessons learned
- › Definitions and clarifications regarding any technical terminology

### Ensure Authentic Engagement

Consider the following strategies for ensuring that stakeholder *communication* becomes stakeholder *engagement*:

- › **Set Expectations Up Front.** Let stakeholders know how their input will be used—such as a presentation or a set of recommendations.
- › **Create Time for Authentic Engagement.** Set aside time for thoughtful, engaging participation of all stakeholders.
- › **Build Trust.** Create an environment that allows stakeholders to provide meaningful, productive feedback and also keeps them engaged in the process moving forward.
- › **Encourage Participation.** Encourage stakeholders to share their perspectives, suggestions, and feedback. Ensure that all participants have an opportunity to speak.
- › **“Practice” Engagement.** Begin by “practicing” on smaller, lower stakes issues to build relationships and develop trust in one another.
- › **Assign a Note Taker.** Communicate that the discussion is important and will be revisited at different stages in the planning process.

#### RESOURCES

- Resource 5: Incorporating Stakeholder Feedback—Discussion Planning, Recording, and Summary Forms
- Resource 8: “Taking the Temperature” Activity
- Resource 11: PowerPoint Template



## Step 1.6 | Envisioning a Long-Term Equitable Access Coalition

Successful equity work takes place over time. A long-term equitable access coalition, composed of a broad range of individuals of different experience levels and backgrounds, can build institutional memory to consistently implement and monitor the shared vision over time.



### Create an Equitable Access Coalition

Identify the most active stakeholder groups to help carry out the long-term vision for equity, and solicit their involvement in this coalition. Ensure that the coalition is driven not by politics and ideologies but rather by a shared purpose, vision, and responsibility for collective action.



### Help the Coalition Develop a Long-Term Vision and Goals

Encourage the coalition to build on the more immediate-term vision discussed in Step 1.2. Also, encourage the coalition to consider desired long-term outcomes, a realistic timeline, and intermediate signs of success along the way.

If coalition members have differing viewpoints, work to build consensus. Promote a sense of shared responsibility for collective action toward improving equitable access.



### Determine Action Steps to Meet the Coalition's Vision and Goals

Identify concrete steps needed to reach the desired vision or outcomes, such as social media campaigns and progress monitoring. These steps may involve developing materials, finding resources, or holding statewide conversations that bring everyone's voice to the discussion. The coalition could maintain responsibility for recruiting stakeholders to these conversations and for collecting and collating their input to inform ongoing modifications to the State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators.

#### RESOURCES

- Resource 2: Sample SEA Internal Team Meeting for Identifying Existing State Efforts and Stakeholder Groups
- Resource 3: Example of a State Vision Statement
- Resource 6: Sample Timeline and Timeline Template for Developing a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

## Step 1.7 | Planning for Stakeholder Engagement: A Suggested Approach

The GTL Center suggests that stakeholders have clearly defined roles during specific stages of policy development. This approach, which identifies each stakeholder group as an “advisor” (during the early planning state) or a “reviewer” (providing feedback on a draft plan), ensures that stakeholder engagement is timely and meaningful.

Far too often, stakeholders are invited to participate at the end of the process instead of being involved from the beginning. Such limited involvement may be “too little, too late” and can erode trust in the stakeholder engagement process. Instead, the “advisor and reviewer” approach can help your state avoid these obstacles.



### Confirm the Following Advisor Roles

Advisors will:

- › Participate in a small-group strategy session or focus group to review and discuss state data and then share what they learn with their own networks and home communities.
- › Expand communications and outreach to widen the SEA’s reach.
- › Participate in a root-cause analysis to help identify the potential underlying reasons behind the state’s equity gaps in access to high-quality teaching and leading. (For instructions on conducting a root-cause analysis with SEA staff, refer to *Moving Toward Equity Root-Cause Analysis Workbook: A Guide for State Education Agencies*. For instructions on conducting a root-cause analysis with stakeholders, see [Resource 7: Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis](#).)
- › Provide insight into “on-the-ground” realities to inform the equitable access plan while developing stakeholder and public awareness and support for the effort.



### Confirm the Following Reviewer Roles







Reviewers will:

- › Participate in a larger format stakeholder group to review the SEA’s completed equitable access plan.
- › Ensure that the equitable access plan is as strong as possible, reflecting as many stakeholder priorities as possible.

#### RESOURCES

- [Moving Toward Equity Root-Cause Analysis Workbook: A Guide for State Education Agencies](#)
- [Resource 1: Four Key Steps for Equitable Access Communication Planning](#)
- [Resource 6: Sample Timeline and Timeline Template for Developing a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators](#)
- [Resource 7: Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis](#)

# CONTENTS

-  **PART 2 | TAKING ACTION**
-  STEP 2.1 | Engaging Stakeholders in Understanding the Problem
-  STEP 2.2 | Engaging Stakeholders in Setting Priorities
-  STEP 2.3 | Engaging Stakeholders in Raising Awareness
-  STEP 2.4 | Engaging Stakeholders in Taking Action
-  STEP 2.5 | Engaging Stakeholders in Measuring Progress and Adjusting Strategies

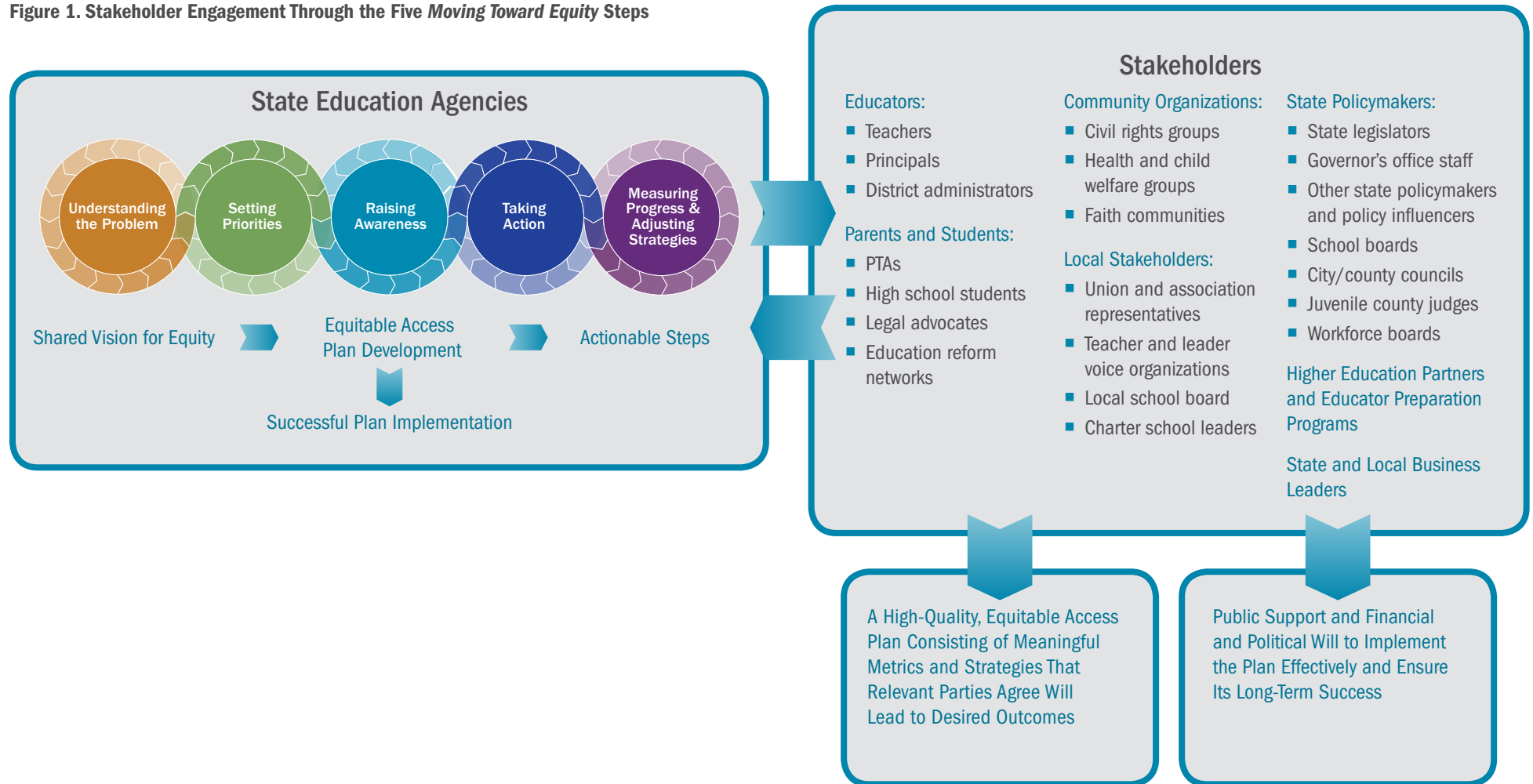


# PART 2 | TAKING ACTION

**Part 2: Taking Action** provides guidance for SEA staff to engage stakeholders. It walks through the five steps of *Moving Toward Equity* framework (understanding the problem, setting priorities, raising awareness, taking action, and measuring progress and adjusting strategies), offering guidance for engaging stakeholders each step of the way. Figure 1 illustrates this process. After taking the time to plan and prepare, SEAs and stakeholders can come to the table ready to jump into engaged and meaningful discussions on equitable access. These discussions have the potential to be powerful and highly beneficial for all parties when SEAs are prepared and have structured tools to drive the conversations.

## Know the Dynamics of Effective Engagement

Figure 1. Stakeholder Engagement Through the Five *Moving Toward Equity* Steps



## Step 2.1 | Engaging Stakeholders in Understanding the Problem

To understand the problem of equity gaps and provide informed feedback, stakeholders need background information as well as opportunities to examine data on equitable access.



### Provide Background Information

Use [Resource 11: PowerPoint Template](#) to provide stakeholders with an overview of information on equitable access to excellent educators. This information may include:

- › Historical background
- › Current national situation
- › Key players, timelines, and other information about the process
- › Data and research on the importance of excellent teachers and leaders—as well as students’ access to excellent teachers and leaders in your state



### Assess and Update Stakeholders’ Current Knowledge

Use [Resource 8: “Taking the Temperature” Activity](#) for two tasks: (1) to assess stakeholders’ current knowledge of equitable access concepts and terminology and (2) to provide an initial overview of the topic to help develop a shared understanding of equitable access and a common language for discussion.

Some stakeholders may need more background and explanation of the issues than others. For example, principals and teachers may be familiar with terminology (such as *value-added models*, *teacher attrition*, or *student learning objectives*) but these terms may require further clarification for parents and certainly for students.



### Review the Data Profile and Other Equitable Access Metrics

Use the data profile provided to your state by the U.S. Department of Education to share relevant information about the status of equitable access in your state’s context. In addition, provide any equitable access data collected by your state.

When possible, and especially when working with small groups, invite stakeholders to bring their own laptops or provide laptops to share. Always provide printed handouts of these data to ensure access. By asking stakeholders to share their personal experiences and interpretations of the data, SEA leaders may gain new insights on the nature and causes of inequitable access to effective teaching and leading in the state.

#### RESOURCES

- [Resource 8: “Taking the Temperature” Activity](#)
- [Resource 11: PowerPoint Template](#)





## Step 2.2 | Engaging Stakeholders in Setting Priorities

To set joint priorities with stakeholders, begin by conducting a root-cause analysis to determine the issues that lie at the heart of equity gaps. Then conduct a policy coherence assessment to identify the specific policies that relate to educator talent development. These policies help ensure that all students have access to effective teaching and leading.

### Conduct a Root-Cause Analysis

A root-cause analysis helps the state team and stakeholders think through the underlying reasons why equity gaps persist in their state. The [Moving Toward Equity Root-Cause Analysis Workbook](#) is designed for state teams. [Resource 7: Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis](#) is designed for local stakeholders. Both documents help stakeholders identify equity gaps, review data, identify and categorize root causes, group the root causes into categories, and determine strategies to resolve root causes. The process involves engaging with data, connecting stakeholder input, and setting priorities.

### Conduct a Talent Development Policy Coherence Assessment

The [Talent Development Framework for 21st Century Educators](#) helps states coordinate and align the many interconnected policies and practices that aim to:

- › Attract the right talent into the profession to meet your students' needs.
- › Prepare future teachers and school leaders to meet your students' needs.
- › Develop, support, and retain educators in the field to ensure that they can continue to meet your students' needs.

This framework provides an approach to inventorying the full spectrum of existing educator effectiveness policies and initiatives as well as examining priority areas in greater depth to identify areas where they can be strengthened.

#### RESOURCES

- [Resource 7: Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis](#)
- [Moving Toward Equity Root-Cause Analysis Workbook: A Guide for State Education Agencies](#)
- [Talent Development Framework for 21st Century Educators: Moving Toward State Policy Alignment and Coherence](#)

## Step 2.3 | Engaging Stakeholders in Raising Awareness

Create a communication plan to raise awareness about the state's equity gaps as well as the actions that the SEA and stakeholders are taking to address those gaps. Throughout this process, the SEA and stakeholders continue to gather stakeholder input through two-way feedback loops to further inform the design of equitable access plan.



### Develop a Communication Plan for Key Stakeholders and Wider Audiences

A strategic communication plan helps ensure that stakeholders and the broader community are informed about the steps and progress in addressing equitable access. The communication plan includes four steps:

- › Identify audiences for communication.
- › Identify and implement strategies for communication with key stakeholders and wider audiences.
- › Develop key messages for communication.
- › Monitor the effectiveness of communication.



### Build Communication Loops

A critical piece of communication planning is to develop communication and feedback loops. Feedback loops provide stakeholders directly affected by a policy with the opportunity to inform those administering the policy (SEA and LEA) about its impact and potential areas for improvements. The long-term success of the equitable access plan, through its implementation, relies on a strong design for collecting and responding to feedback from the field.

Suggested methods for developing two-way, continuous feedback loops include the following:

#### Virtual Communication

- › Website and a designated place for open public comment
- › Online platform (e.g., website, Google Docs) to make materials (e.g., agendas, minutes, handouts, datasets) available to participants for further review or consideration
- › Dedicated e-mail address
- › Annual surveys to teachers, LEA administrators, stakeholder groups

#### In-Person Communication

- › Presence at stakeholder meetings and events in order to receive feedback
- › Annual stakeholder group forum to share measured progress
- › Biannual coalition meetings
- › Annual review to share measured progress with SEA team, coalition members

#### RESOURCES

- [Resource 1: Four Key Steps for Equitable Access Communication Planning](#)

## Step 2.4 | Engaging Stakeholders in Taking Action

Successful engagement requires not only soliciting stakeholder input but also incorporating this input into the plan and the action steps.



### Ensure Stakeholder Review and Feedback

Provide ample opportunities for stakeholders to review and provide feedback on the equitable access plan. Use [Resource 9: Sample State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators](#) as an example to which the stakeholders can compare their thoughts. Use [Resource 10: Build-Your-Own State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators](#) as a means for stakeholders to compose and incorporate their strategies. Frame discussions around the root-cause analysis and data review.



### Use a Note Taker

Enlist a note taker to take notes during each discussion session. The note taker can prepare a summary of the discussion so that SEA staff members who are developing the plan can incorporate the stakeholders' ideas, concerns, and priorities.

### Incorporate Stakeholder Feedback Into the State's Equitable Access Plan

Develop a systematic approach to documenting, collating, and incorporating stakeholder feedback into the plan. Following are some methods to simultaneously collect stakeholder feedback and share the incorporation of that feedback:



**In-Person Feedback.** At each face-to-face presentation, devote a portion of the allotted time to two-way feedback.



**Online Feedback.** Provide an opportunity for comments or questions to be included on the website and social media sites—with the option of comments being anonymous. Track these comments or questions and provide answers on the website and in “frequently asked questions” documents.



**Survey Feedback.** Solicit feedback while clarifying messages through an electronic survey tool. Report back to audiences about the findings. Indicate how the information will be used to improve communication, implementation, and other facets.

For additional information, see the [Taking Action](#) section of the *Moving Toward Equity* online tool.

#### RESOURCES

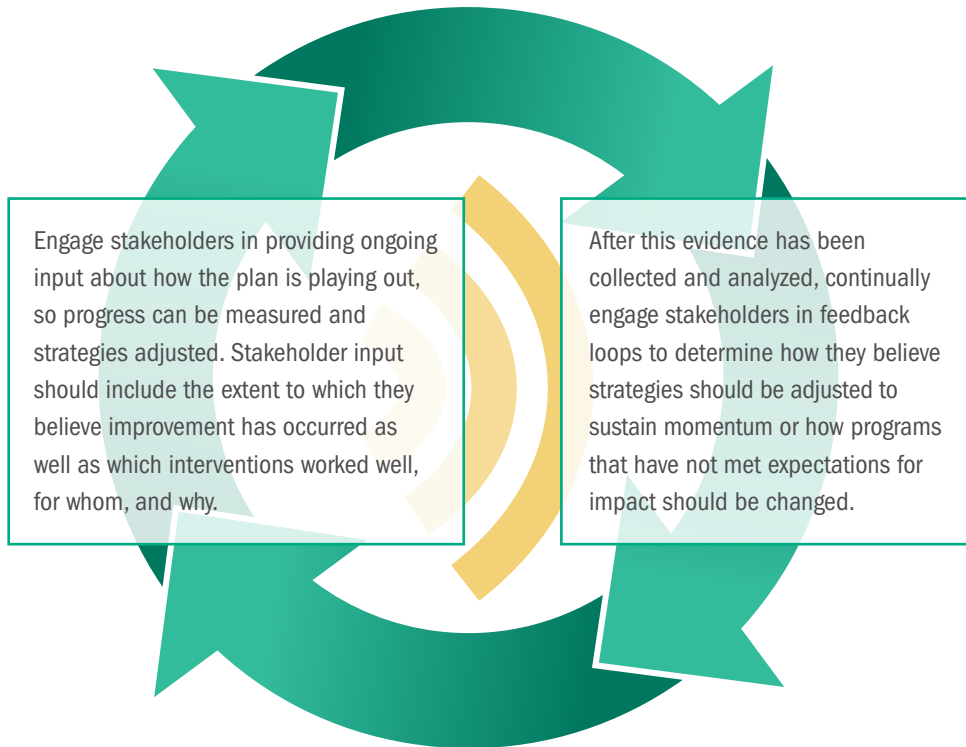
- [Resource 5: Incorporating Stakeholder Feedback—Discussion Planning, Recording, and Summary Forms](#)
- [Resource 9: Sample State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators](#)
- [Resource 10: Build-Your-Own State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators](#)



## Step 2.5 | Engaging Stakeholders in Measuring Progress and Adjusting Strategies

After the state’s equitable access plan is adopted, ensure that all stakeholders continue to be engaged with the SEA leadership through continuous, two-way communication loops (see Figure 2). Be sure to include stakeholders at the local level. Throughout the process, continue to measure progress and adjust strategies as needed.

Figure 2. Communication Loops



### Consider Suggestions for Measuring Progress

- › Collaborate with technical assistance providers—such as your regional educational laboratory, regional equity assistance center, or regional comprehensive center—for help in measuring progress.
- › Collect and analyze equitable access data.
- › Regularly analyze access metrics.
- › Establish benchmarks for success.
- › Seek out ideas for best practices from school districts that have been successful in promoting equitable access.

### Consider Suggestions for Adjusting Strategies

- › Assess the effectiveness of current strategies to address equitable access.
- › Regularly review data-reporting procedures.
- › Revise policies to address equity gaps as needed.

For more information, see the [Measuring Progress](#) and [Adjusting Strategies](#) sections of the *Moving Toward Equity* online tool.

#### RESOURCES

- Resource 7: Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis
- Resource 10: Build-Your-Own State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators
- Resource 12: Developing a Local Stakeholder Engagement Guidance Document for Your Local Education Agencies

Center on  
**GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS**

at American Institutes for Research ■

1000 Thomas Jefferson Street NW  
Washington, DC 20007-3835  
877.322.8700

[www.gtlcenter.org](http://www.gtlcenter.org)



[www.air.org](http://www.air.org)

Copyright © 2015 American Institutes for Research. All rights reserved.

This work was originally produced in whole or in part by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders with funds from the U.S. Department of Education under cooperative agreement number S283B120021. The content does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department of Education, nor does mention or visual representation of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the federal government.

The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders is administered by American Institutes for Research and its partners: the Council of Chief State School Officers and Public Impact.