"There is a Bigger Story Going on Here"

How are States Using Broader Measures of Student Success to Address Education Disparities?
An Organizing Framework and Landscape Scan (Jan 2022)

presentation to Results for America | June 2, 2022

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experience | quality | results

In Fall 2021, Education First began researching which indicators of education equity are being used in states today—and to craft ideas and considerations that could help policymakers and system leaders make further use these indicators in their decision-making

What we set out to learn

1 What **specific indicators** are being proposed to measure education equity? What is the research base behind these proposed measures, and what might be a helpful framework for considering the different information different measures might yield?

2 How have states **collected data** on equity measures, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic? How have and how will states **use the data** on equity measures they collect?

3 What **challenges** do states face in collecting data on equity measures? How can and have states **overcome these challenges?**

4 What **promising practices, bright spots or lessons** can SEAs share about their use of equity measures?

In conducting this research, Education First collaborated with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Walton Family Foundation and the Council of Chief State School Officers

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2

DEFINITION: *Measures of education equity* are intended to (1) better identify disparities among K12 students by using a broader range of indicators, *and thereby* (2) inform potentially more effective supports or interventions

While federal accountability policies emphasize student learning as measured by traditional tests—which remain an important tool for addressing equity—many educators and policymakers increasingly want to measure and understand a broader range of outcomes that examine student progress across important K12 transitions, whether and how well opportunities and access are provided to help students succeed, and the community context students experience outside of schools that may also need attention.

"Equity indicators go far beyond disparities in test scores and graduation rates to include broader measures of **student outcomes**, … a deeper understanding of disparities in **school-based opportunities to learn**…and **school and community conditions** that influence learning." —*FutureEd[1]*

"In March 2020, the coronavirus pandemic and attending shift to remote schooling initiated a dramatic impact on student learning, an impact that state and district leaders feel a sense of urgency to understand and address…. **These conditions warrant an expanded indicator system.**"—*Center on Assessment[2]*

"A carefully chosen set of equity indicators can **highlight disparities**, provide a way to explore **potential causes** and point toward **possible improvements**."—*National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine[3]*
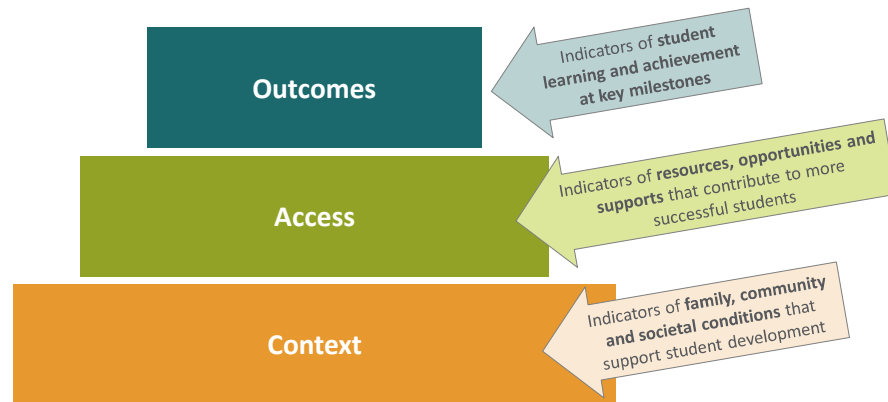
[1] FutureEd, 2021. Changing the Narrative: The Push for New Equity Measures in Education
[2] National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, 2020. Using Opportunity-to-Learn Data to Support Educational Equity
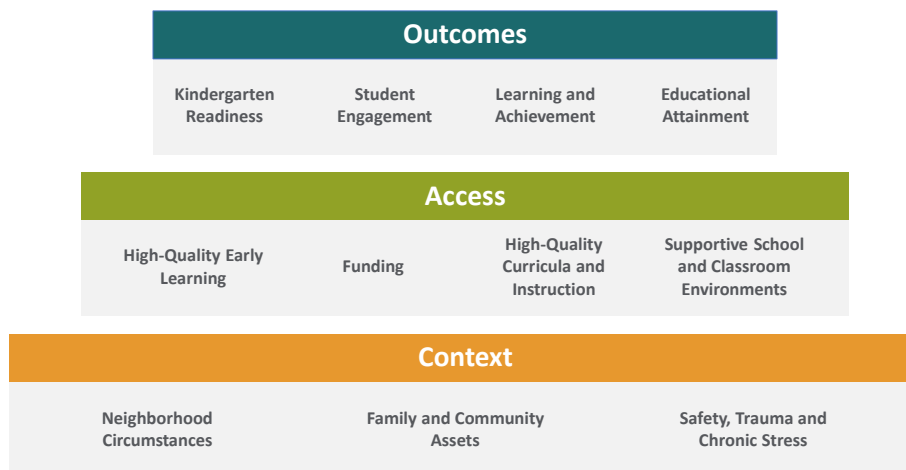*[3] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, 2019. Monitoring Educational Equity*

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3

1 | Framework for thinking about (and organizing) equity indicators

4

To better understand the various aspects of education equity indicators and to organize our research, Education First started by examining existing reports and analysis; from these sources, we created a framework with three major categories

Outcomes

Indicators of **student learning and achievement** at key milestones

Access

Indicators of **resources, opportunities and supports** that contribute to more successful students

Context

Indicators of **family, community and societal conditions** that support student development

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Next, within each category of our framework, we identified specific measures of education equity that have broad support and a research base to support their use (we found 100+ possible indicators, many of which are already measured in some way)

Outcomes			
Kindergarten Readiness	Student Engagement	Learning and Achievement	Educational Attainment

Access			
High-Quality Early Learning	Funding	High-Quality Curricula and Instruction	Supportive School and Classroom Environments

Context		
Neighborhood Circumstances	Family and Community Assets	Safety, Trauma and Chronic Stress

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For each of these indicators in the three categories, we identified specific possible data sources—contact Education First to see more details about our analysis

6

Research suggests that indicators from all three categories (not only traditional outcome measures) can help policymakers and system leaders better direct new resources or new policies to more effectively address education disparities

Well-chosen use of equity measures can help answer questions such as…

Context	Access	Outcomes
• How might **family and neighborhood conditions** be impacting student learning in schools? How could these conditions be better addressed? By which partners? • Are there **policies, investments or supports** outside of schools that could strengthen or stabilize in-school learning for some students?	• Do disparities exist in how **resources or educators** are deployed to different schools? • What **conditions or opportunities** do policymakers or district leaders believe most influence student learning—and are those conditions **available for all students**, especially those achieving lower outcomes than others?	• Are disparities between what students are **learning and accomplishing** as they progress through the K12 system growing smaller or larger? Why? Where? • In addition to graduation rates, what else can we learn about how well different schools have **prepared students to succeed** in their next steps after high school?

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7

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2 | RESULTS FROM REVIEW OF SEA WEBSITES AND STATE REPORT CARDS, PLUS SURVEY OF 20 SEA LEADERS

Finding #1: States' use of a wider range of equity indicators is under-developed today

8

We applied our framework to a review of 51 SEA websites, seeking to learn whether states were using any of the 100+ education equity indicators we had identified in their decision-making

Our conclusion: *Sort of…*

FINDING #1: We learned *few states are currently collecting—much less using—new measures to better understand disparities in different outcomes and opportunities*

➡ SEAs prioritize collecting and publishing/using **only data required by federal school accountability laws** (And in some cases, SEAs collect these required data but don't publish)

➡ Regardless of the variety of student success data they collect, **many SEAs rely on state and district assessment results to craft school improvement plans**
  Our survey of state education agency leaders suggests that even when SEAs require the collection of additional equity measures, they rarely use these data in diagnosing needs and crafting improvement plans for struggling schools.

➡ While some SEAs pioneered use of new student learning indicators during the worst of the COVID pandemic (when summative test results were not available), we **didn't find evidence of SEAs planning to continue collecting these other data**

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9

We applied our framework to a review of 51 SEA websites, seeking to learn whether states were using any of the 100+ education equity indicators we had identified in their decision-making
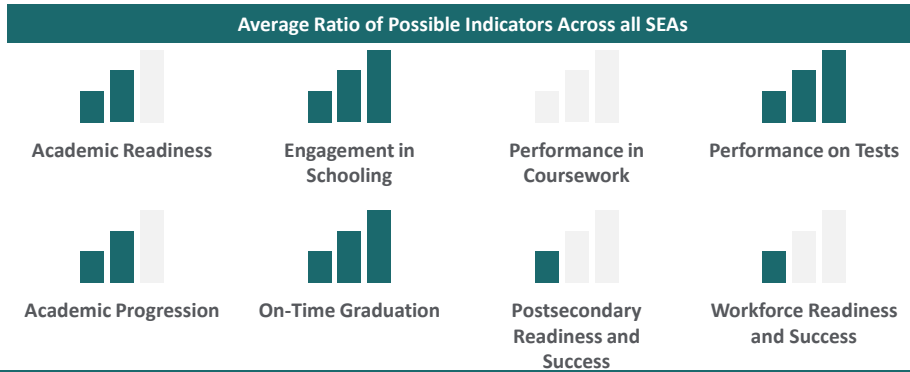
Our conclusion: *Sort of…*

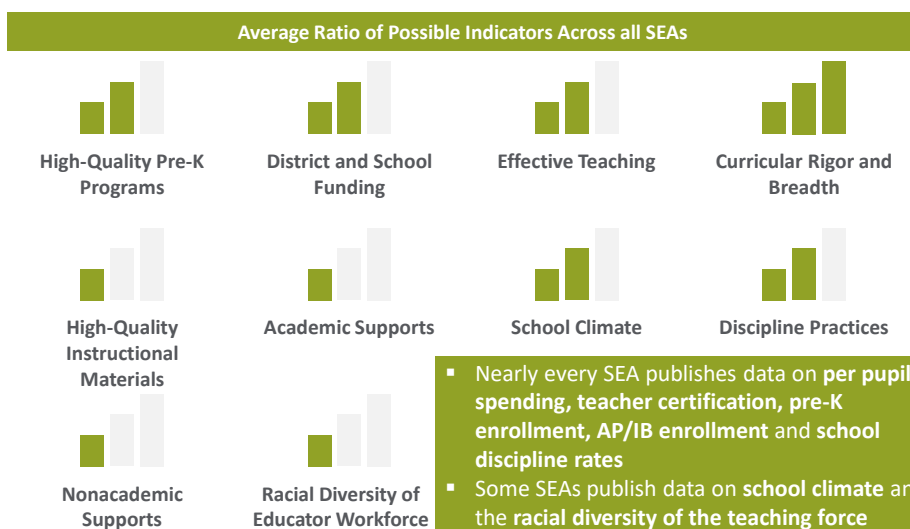**FINDING #1: We learned** *few st...*
much less usin...

CAVEAT

In assessing which SEAs collect and use which indicators, Education First *looked for evidence that data were used in some way* to inform policy deliberations or school improvement plans. We carefully reviewed a variety of sections on SEA websites to see if we could find evidence (seeing an indicator on the state report card or in state accountability requirements were the easiest ways to determine "use" but we looked elsewhere too). It is possible an SEA is collecting data on equity indicators and not publishing the results, for whatever reason, but still using them in some way; that situation (which seems less than ideal in our judgement) won't show up in our reporting and analysis on the following slides.

➡ Wh... ...arning indicators during the wor... ...summative test results were not available), we ...ence of SEAs planning to continue collecting these other data

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10

Not surprisingly, all SEAs collect and publish data from many (traditional) Outcomes indicators; however, some states are beginning to use newer measures to better diagnosis disparities, too

Average Ratio of Possible Indicators Across all SEAs

Academic Readiness

Engagement in Schooling

Performance in Coursework

Performance on Tests

Academic Progression

On-Time Graduation

Postsecondary Readiness and Success

Workforce Readiness and Success

- Nearly every SEA publishes data on **attendance, graduation rates, drop-out rates and summative test scores**
- Fewer SEAs publish data on **kindergarten readiness** and **academic growth**
- Many SEAs publish data on **postsecondary enrollment**, but few publish data on **postsecondary persistence or completion**

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11

SEAs have incorporated data from some Access indicators into their school report cards—but mostly indicators federal law requires to be collected anyway

Average Ratio of Possible Indicators Across all SEAs

High-Quality Pre-K Programs

District and School Funding

Effective Teaching

Curricular Rigor and Breadth

High-Quality Instructional Materials

Academic Supports

School Climate

Discipline Practices

Nonacademic Supports

Racial Diversity of Educator Workforce

- Nearly every SEA publishes data on **per pupil spending, teacher certification, pre-K enrollment, AP/IB enrollment** and **school discipline rates**
- Some SEAs publish data on **school climate** and the **racial diversity of the teaching force**

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12

SEAs collect and publish the least data about students and schools on Context indicators, although other state agencies often collect and publish these data separately

Average Ratio of Possible Indicators Across all SEAs

- Racial, Ethnic and Economic Segregation
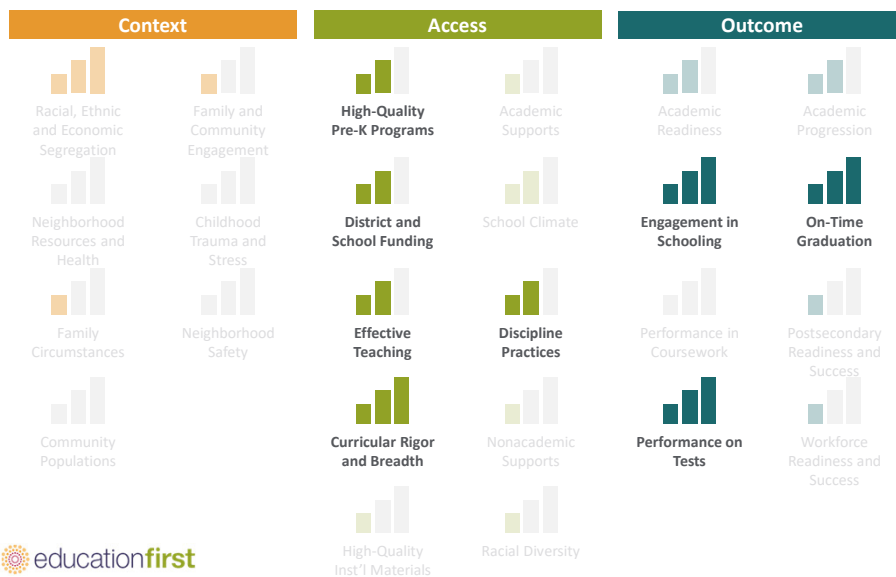- Neighborhood Resources and Health
- Family Circumstances
- Community Populations
- Family and Community Engagement
- Childhood Trauma and Stress
- Neighborhood Safety
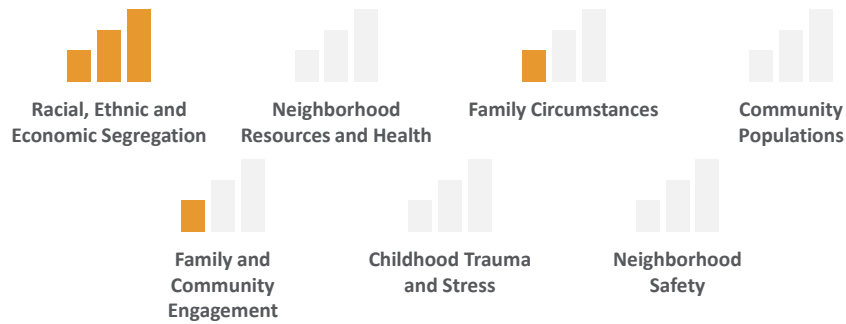
- Nearly every SEAs reports **enrollment by race, ethnicity and poverty status** at each school
- Some publish rates of students facing **housing insecurity** and the level of **family engagement** Further collection and use of Context indicators would likely require SEAs to collaborate with other state and local agencies that may collect additional data

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13

Federal education accountability laws (required data highlighted below) appear to be the biggest factor in state decisions about which data to collect, publish and use

Context	Access	Outcome
Racial, Ethnic and Economic Segregation	High-Quality Pre-K Programs	Academic Supports
Family and Community Engagement	Academic Readiness	Academic Progression
Neighborhood Resources and Health	District and School Funding	School Climate
Childhood Trauma and Stress	Engagement in Schooling	On-Time Graduation
Family Circumstances	Effective Teaching	Discipline Practices
Neighborhood Safety	Performance in Coursework	Postsecondary Readiness and Success
Community Populations	Curricular Rigor and Breadth	Nonacademic Supports
	Performance on Tests	Workforce Readiness and Success
	High-Quality Inst'l Materials	Racial Diversity

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14

At the same time, in our review it became clear that (#1) SEAs collect more data than they publish as part school report cards or as part of information or reports on other parts of their websites…

Some Data State Publish can be Disaggregated, but Other Data Cannot

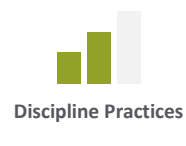SEAs regularly collect and publish data on student subgroups (which is one of the Context indicators)…

Racial, Ethnic and Economic Segregation

… but many other indicators are not able to be disaggregated beyond "all students"—this one (also from the Context category) is an example

Family Circumstances

And Some Data are Collected but not Published or Unclear if Used

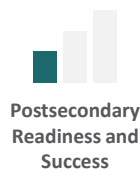Data from these indicators are required to be collected and reported to the US DOE Office of Civil Rights

High-Quality Pre-K Programs

Curricular Rigor and Breadth

Discipline Practices

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15

…and (#2) that other federal and state agencies often collect data on many equity indicators—but these aren't used, integrated or published by many SEAs

U.S. Census Bureau

Higher Ed systems

U.S. Dept of Labor
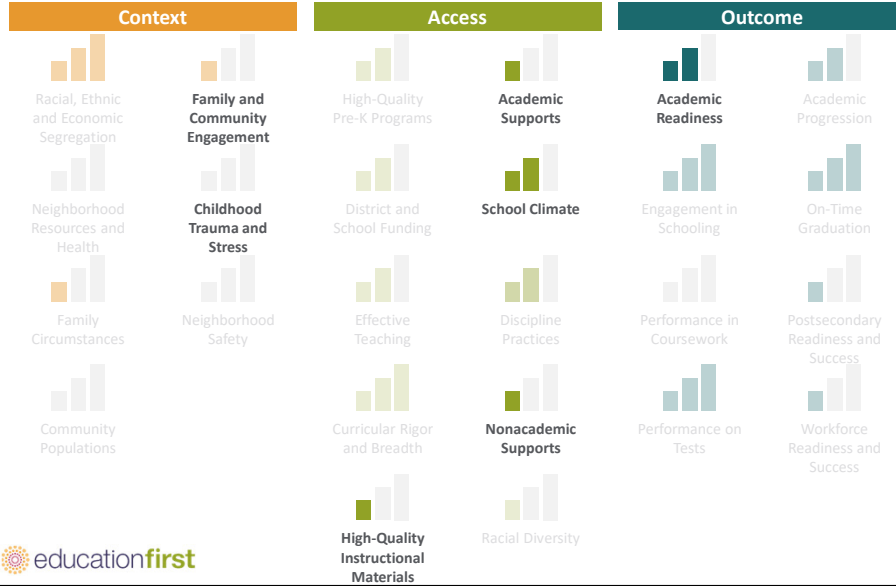
Racial, Ethnic and Economic Segregation

Postsecondary Readiness and Success

Workforce Readiness and Success

U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services

Neighborhood Safety

Childhood Trauma and Stress

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16

Although some SEAs do not require data for certain equity indicators, they do provide guidelines, resources or standards for LEAs to collect data—in the areas highlighted below

Context	Access	Outcome

Racial, Ethnic and Economic Segregation	**Family and Community Engagement**	High-Quality Pre-K Programs	**Academic Supports**	**Academic Readiness**	Academic Progression
Neighborhood Resources and Health	**Childhood Trauma and Stress**	District and School Funding	**School Climate**	Engagement in Schooling	On-Time Graduation
Family Circumstances	Neighborhood Safety	Effective Teaching	Discipline Practices	Performance in Coursework	Postsecondary Readiness and Success
Community Populations		Curricular Rigor and Breadth	**Nonacademic Supports**	Performance on Tests	Workforce Readiness and Success
		High-Quality Instructional Materials	Racial Diversity		

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17

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3 | RESULTS FROM REVIEW OF SEA WEBSITES AND STATE REPORT CARDS, PLUS SURVEY OF 20 SEA LEADERS

<u>Finding #2</u>: Even with capacity constraints, some states are developing and using new measures

18

FINDING #2: While we sensed that SEA leaders remain overwhelmed with all they are juggling, we also found some promising innovations in the field to build on—and *interest among states in learning more about using additional equity measures*

While most SEAs rely on collecting and using federally-required data, **some states have developed new measures to get at different, more holistic indicators of disparities**. These SEAs could provide ideas (and inspiration) for moving forward in other states.

> We were impressed with the new approaches taken by **North Dakota** (statewide survey of student engagement) and **Oregon** (statewide survey of student perceptions on their learning)

Further, SEAs responding to our survey reported they would be very interested in incorporating some other, new indicators into their systems, if the measures were available (they also said they'd be interested in co-creating new tools with other states)

- Students' **achievement in mathematics during MS** to remain "on track" before HS (70%)
- Success of students in the **workforce** after HS graduation (65%)
- **Quality of each school's services and supports for students classified as special needs**, gifted learners, English learners or other special populations (60%)
- Availability of **mental health services** to students and/or educators in each school (55%)

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19

North Dakota Student Engagement Survey

What equity indicators are measured?
- Perceptions of safety, support, culture and/or student/teacher trust (plus other engagement measures identified through community engagement process)
- *In general, the survey measures how students are interacting with the school system— do they shows signs of being engaged (or not) in their learning?*

What is the measurement tool?
- 21-question online survey instrument for students in grades 3-12
- Measures behavioral, cognitive and emotional domains, categorizing student responses into committed, compliant or disengaged
- First used in Fall 2017 and serves as ND's "fifth indicator" under ESSA accountability requirements

How does the indicator contribute to school improvement efforts in the state?
- In response to educator requests, the SEA developed extensive supports and strategies (https://nddpi.onlinehelp.cognia.org/) to help school and district leaders interpret the results and implement specific changes based on the results
- The SEA also maintains online resources and webinars for classroom-level educators and parents

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20

Oregon Student Educational Equity Development Survey (SEED)

What equity indicators are measured?
- Perceptions of agency, safety, support, culture and/or student/teacher trust
- *In general, the survey measures how well the system/schools are supporting students, based on students' perceptions of teaching, resources and classroom interactions*

What is the measurement tool?
- Online survey instrument for students in grades 3-8 and 11 that uses same platform as statewide summative test (and is designed to be administered at the same time)
- Gathers student perceptions in four core constructs: Access to Learning Resources, Opportunity to Learn, Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Sense of Belonging. The OTL and Self-Efficacy constructs focus on specific content areas in each grade level, plus the grades 6-11 surveys include questions pertaining to Career-Technical Education
- Second year of statewide piloting completed during 2021-22 school year
- Developed with significant input from students themselves

How does the indicator contribute to school improvement efforts in the state?
- Surveys for all grades are published on the SEA website
- The SEA has worked extensively in partnership with LEAs and community members to position the survey as an "*actionability* tool" to improve learning conditions rather than an additional compliance and accountability tool

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21

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4 | RESULTS FROM REVIEW OF SEA WEBSITES AND STATE REPORT CARDS, PLUS SURVEY OF 20 SEA LEADERS

<u>Finding #3</u>: State report cards are one obvious place to start using a broader use of equity indicators— and some states do so

22

FINDING #3: Another project goal was to understand states' data collection practices for equity measures. We saw that *SEAs' school report cards could be a possible leverage or starting point for rolling out and using more measures in decision-making*

States' school report cards—a key vehicle for providing data to inform school improvement—**vary considerably in their presentation and accessibility**
- This variability is most notable with data that could help policymakers, educators or parents better understand and examine connections between different inputs and student results

And, according to our survey, state leaders indicate that **technical feasibility remains the top obstacle** for their use of further equity measures

We were impressed with several state report cards that "went above and beyond":
- Ability to compare different indicators to each other—to help users look for patterns or to probe possible connections, and/or
- Wealth of data available (not just minimum federally required school accountability data) and ability to disaggregate data beyond only test score results, and/or
- Visually understandable or easy to navigate/use

For example, we were impressed with how **Delaware** and **Nebraska** support users in comparing a variety of inputs and outputs

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23

Delaware Report Card

What indicators for student learning/success does this report card include?
- School and district funding
- Effective teaching measures
- Rigorous coursework
- On-time graduation
- Postsecondary readiness
- Discipline practices
- Racial diversity
- Racial, ethnic and economic segregation
- *ALSO, the SEA contributed to creating the [Delaware Open Data Portal](), which includes raw, tabular data elements from multiple agencies—allowing users to combine multiple views of school communities*

What jumped out to Education First about this state's report card?
- Integrates a variety of Outcome, Access and Context indicators
- Offers clean layout and is user friendly

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24

Nebraska Education Profile

What indicators for student learning/success does this report card include?
- School and district funding
- Effective teaching
- Rigorous coursework
- Academic supports
- Discipline practices
- Racial diversity
- Racial, ethnic and economic segregation
- *Starting in SY2022-23*: School discipline

What jumped out to Education First about this state's report card?
- Allows users to examine and compare schools with similar demographics and community factors
- Integrates a variety of Outcome, Access and Context indicators

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25

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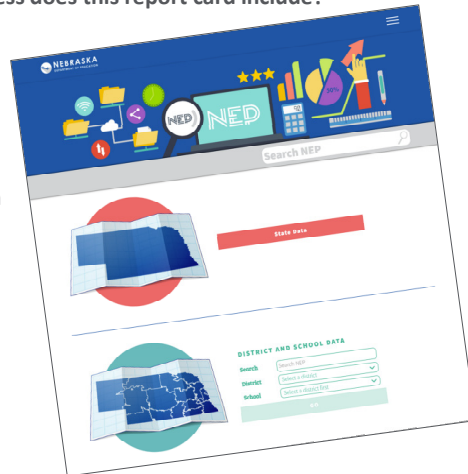
5 | RESULTS FROM REVIEW OF SEA WEBSITES AND STATE REPORT CARDS, PLUS SURVEY OF 20 SEA LEADERS

Finding #4: In considering any new indicators, state and system leaders should start with a plan to support data use, not just data collection

26

FINDING #4: Overall, we found fragmentation and little coherence in how education disparities are being considered and measured. To move forward, states need *clearer hypotheses about which equity data will be most important in their contexts for making change*

Key Takeaways

There is an opportunity for a **stronger cause-effect relationship** between states' report card data that depict disparities in students' outcomes and the resources and supports that could directly address these disparities.

Also, there are multiple ways of looking at and learning about education disparities—and not all of them are about what happens in school buildings, and not all of them are about education systems. To understand disparities, state and system leaders **need to better understand some of the multiple inputs that feed into student learning, *not just education inputs*.** Greater use of some of the Context measures in our framework would help.

SO WHAT?

When choosing among different equity indicators, the use case-making matters! Policymakers need to ask: what data do we need to inform changes in student learning and how can we increase the useability (interpretation and actionability) of this data for the right audiences?

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27

Across our framework, there are 100+ included measures policymakers and education leaders could use—and we are *not* suggesting all of them be put in place

Rather, leaders need to develop *clear goals* for improving equity and reducing disparities for their students, and then *choose those measures that help* them to target new resources and supports and to track progress. A sequence of questions to ask—to link use of equity measures to an explicit strategy—might include…

What are our goals, assumptions and beliefs about how we make our school systems more equitable?

Which disparities in student learning do community members want prioritized? What added data do those most proximate to these disparities want us to collect and use?

What is our hypothesis about why certain learning disparities exist? What policies, supports and resources would address these disparities? What new partnerships with other agencies are needed?

Are disparities closing, as reflected by the multiple measures we have prioritized? If not, how will we adjust our approach? If so, what could further accelerate improvement?

What do we know already about what and how well students are learning, based on the data we already collect?

To advance education equity in school systems, **what additional context/access/ outcomes data do we need**? What measures have a correlation with a specific disparity we want to address?

What additional data about disparities would help us **understand how well any new supports and resources are working**?

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28

14