

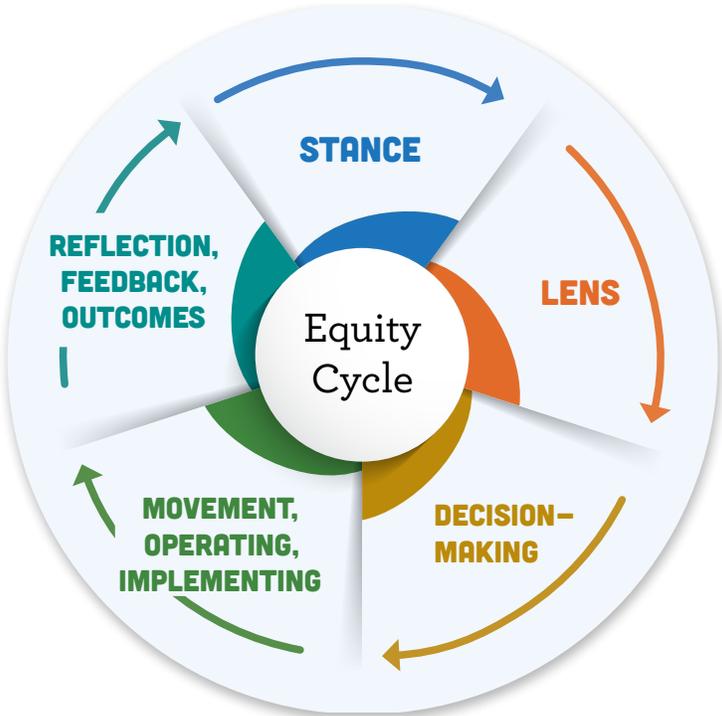
APPENDIX E: EQUITY LENS AND TOOLS

EQUITY PRACTICES AS CONTINUOUS PRACTICES

Equity tools are best utilized in continuous cycles that include:

- 1. An equity stance:** Core values, commitments, orientations, principles, strategies, and frameworks that your district, organization, school, or team has decided are foundational to what you wish to prioritize in decision-making.
- 2. An equity lens:** An active tool that supports core values, commitments, orientations, and questions to become *operationalizable*. An equity lens must support navigating choices in the *here and now*. It helps translate theory into practice, focuses on assets rather than deficits, and avoids making decisions that could marginalize or harm students, staff, families, and communities. An equity lens could also include:
 - a. Facilitation Tools or Protocols:** Possible protocols (such as a consultancy protocol) to use the equity lens in a facilitated space or discussion.
 - b. Decision-making Tools or Protocols:** Possible tools (such as the ODE decision tools or consensus tools like Fingers to Five) that help guide decision-making based on the questions and framework in the equity lens.
- 3. Implementation:** An equity lens should also guide decisions around the roll-out and operationalization of key equity strategies and activities, and can be used throughout the entire process of implementation.
- 4. Processes for reflection, feedback, and learning:** Throughout the entire cycle and process, teams should consider how reflection, feedback, and learning time and processes are built in to refine the equity stance, lens, and other tools.

Taken together, this cycle and these steps could look like:



THE OREGON EQUITY LENS

The purpose of the Oregon Equity Lens¹¹³ is to clearly articulate the shared goals we have for our state and the intentional investments we will make to reach our goal of an equitable educational system. This equity lens helps educators and decision-makers recognize institutional and systemic barriers and discriminatory practices that have limited student success in the Oregon education system. The equity lens emphasizes underserved students, such as out of school youth, English Language Learners, and students of color with a particular focus on racial equity.

The focus of this equity lens is on race and ethnicity. This is based on an understanding that when we focus on racial disparities as a lens to consider investments for each and every student and community, we can and will generate opportunity and improvement in every area of educational practice and performance. Centering racial equity is rooted in the historical context of Oregon and is the path through which we can heal while targeting areas of action, intervention and investment. The passage of the Student Success Act directly calls upon educators and leaders across the state to act together, with a shared sense of purpose and possibility.

The questions offered below can and should be adapted to ask questions regarding each of the focal groups named in the Student Success Act as being farthest away from opportunity and deserving our collective attention.

1. Who are the racial/ethnic and underserved groups affected? What is the potential impact of the resource allocation and strategic investment to these groups?
2. Does the decision being made ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences? What is the impact on eliminating the opportunity gap?
3. How does the investment or resource allocation advance student mental or behavioral health and well-being and/or increase academic achievement and address gaps in opportunity?
4. What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)
5. How have you intentionally involved partners who are also members of the communities affected by the strategic investment or resource allocation? How do you validate your assessment in (1), (2) and (3)?
6. How will you modify or enhance your strategies to ensure each learner and communities' individual and cultural needs are met?
7. How are you collecting data on race, ethnicity and native language?
8. What is your commitment to professional learning for equity? What resources are you allocating for training in culturally responsive and sustaining instruction?

113 The [Oregon Equity Lens](#) was adopted by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) in 2014 as a cornerstone to the State's approach to education policy and budgeting. The Equity Lens was originally developed by and adopted by the former Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) and was implemented by the Oregon Chief Education Office in addition to the HECC. We encourage applicants to build on this lens using their own needs/goals and the checklist provided in this guidance.

DEEPENING YOUR EQUITY LENS

While the Oregon Equity Lens offers a powerful starting point, we also encourage applicants to consider their unique equity needs, values, and experiences that they wish to center¹¹⁴. To support the development of an equity lens that reflects your district, community, or team's equity stance and needs, we have created a checklist of what an equity lens should address and considerations you may wish to have when developing a lens:

What is your equity stance:

- Can you see throughlines to your equity lens? For example, if your stance is intended to dismantle *structural* and *systemic* racism, how does your lens target deeper levers as well?
- How does it include district wide equity policies, statements, strategic plans?
- Which communities' values and priorities are represented in the equity stance? Which ones might be missing?

What team will be using this equity lens:

- Is the team less experienced with equity and therefore requiring a more prescriptive lens? Or is the team more experienced allowing for the lens to be more adaptive and flexible?
- What make-up (of staff position, demographic, etc.) does the team need to be for the equity lens to be used appropriately?

How does your equity lens address the following:

- Particular regional stories, community make-up, intersectional dynamics, and historic and systemic oppression
- The kinds of identities and demographics that experience marginalization state-wide and in your community, including race, ethnicity, class, gender, and/or sexual orientation, disability/ability, religion, etc.
- Student, family, community and staff assets and strengths
- Current and historical trauma, and the impacts of microaggressions, exclusion, and other forms of psychological harm (using a strengths-based, trauma-informed approach)
- Particular problems, dilemmas, tensions or complexities in your context, including:
 - Levels of access to quality education resources across focal groups and various identities
- Dimensions of power: in decision-making, who is on the team, etc.
- System health, including levels of collaboration and trust
- Community involvement: who is involved in knowledge gathering, sense making, and decision making

What other tools, structures or processes do you need to include, such as:

- Facilitation protocols to structure discussion (like the [SRI Protocols](#))
- Decision-making protocols to clarify roles and process (like the [Fist to Five Voting & Consensus](#) model)
- Structures, timelines or tools for continuous improvement, reflection, and learning

Additional Resources

- [ODE Decision Tools](#)
- [Racial Equity Impact Assessment](#)
- [SRI Protocols](#)
- [Fist to Five Voting & Consensus Decision Making](#)
- [The Non-Profit Association of Oregon Equity and Inclusion Lens Guide](#)

¹¹⁴ For an example of a customized equity lens, see [Lane ESD's Equity Lens](#)