



The Education Trust

State Equity Audit

Advancing Equity for Students of Color

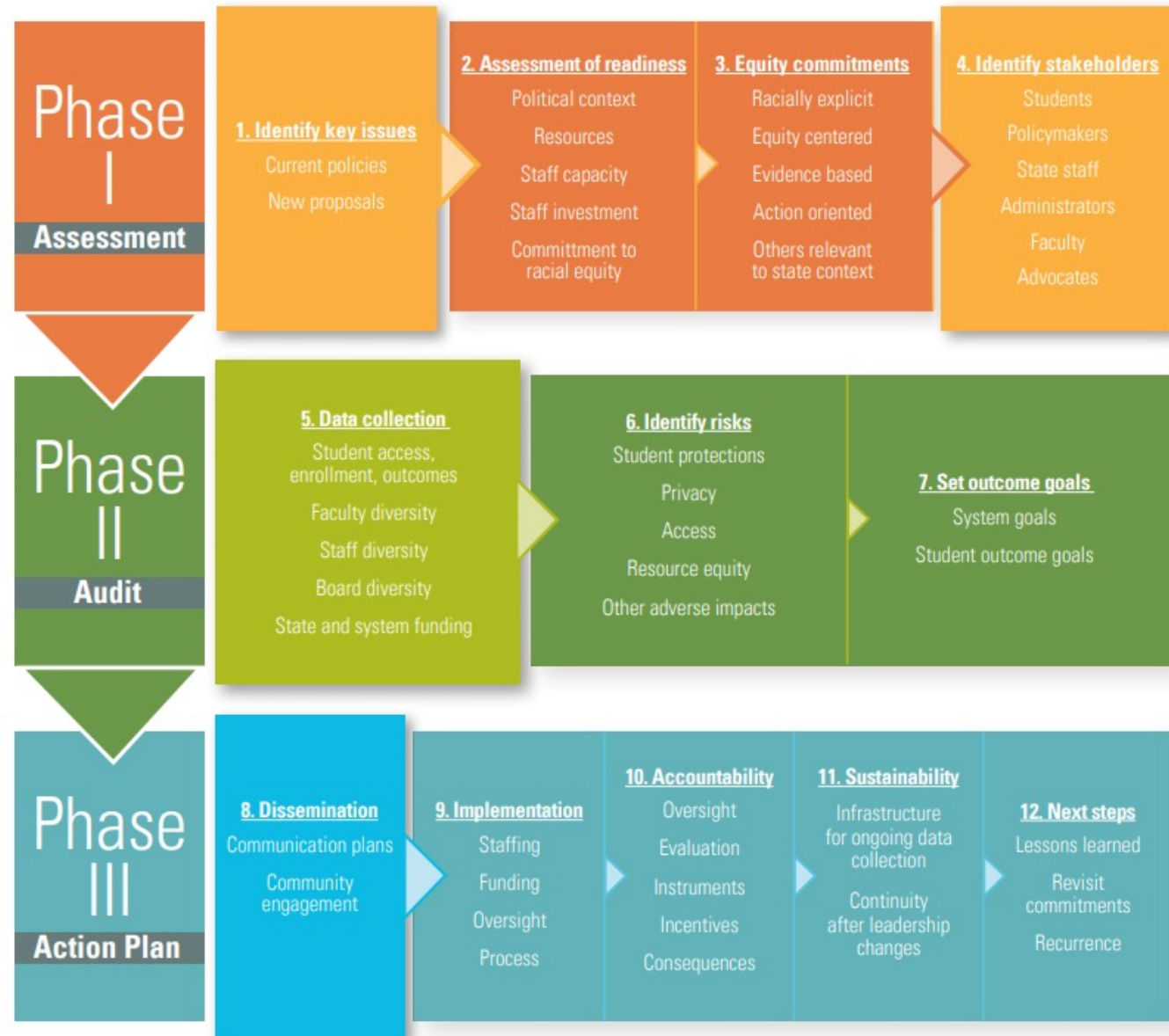


About the State Equity Audit



Advancing racial equity in higher education requires the dismantling of historic and present-day systems of injustice that disadvantage students of color. Based on themes and gaps in the literature, Ed Trust developed a 12-step framework that allows states to review their current policies, principles, and practices and prepares them to identify and remove barriers to access and attainment for students of color.

12 Step Framework



The framework includes four "mobile" steps: Identify key issues, Identify stakeholders, Data collection, and Dissemination. The order of these steps can be rearranged depending on the state context, such as data limitations, state priorities, system, and governance types.

Phase I

Assessment

1. Identify key issues

Current policies
New proposals

2. Assessment of readiness

Political context
Resources
Staff capacity
Staff investment
Commitment to
racial equity

3. Equity commitments

Racially explicit
Equity centered
Evidence based
Action oriented
Others relevant
to state context

4. Identify stakeholders

Students
Policymakers
State staff
Administrators
Faculty
Advocates

Phase I Assessment

Phase I- Assessment of Readiness

In this phase, you will assess whether your is ready to engage and complete this 12-step process. Phase I is designed to assess whether states have the capacity, skill, and conditions to truly center racial equity in the analysis, the solution, and throughout the process itself.

Step 1- Identify Key Issues

☐ **Does the issue require legislation?**

States should identify issues which can be changed under the authority and governance of a governing or coordinating board, state higher education executive office, or governor.

This process is not suited for lobbying but for thorough policy evaluation and implementation.

☐ **Does the key issue(s) fall into one or more of the three priority areas?**

1. State finance
2. Need-based aid
3. Recognition of learning

Step 2- Assessment of Readiness

Is the current political environment favorable to advancing racial equity?



Does your team have leadership investment in and support for this process?



Is your team ready to provide the necessary resources and budget to staff and complete the audit?




Are staff prepared for a process centered on racial equity?



Is your team ready to make an explicit commitment to racial equity?

Step 3- Commitments to Audit Process

Is your team committed to centering racial equity throughout this process and in the process itself?



Will your team commit to collecting, using, and disseminating data that is disaggregated by race?



Does your team commit to using and creating evidence-based policies and practices?



Is your team committed to acting on the results of this audit?



What other are factors should your team consider relevant to your state context?

Step 4- Identify Stakeholders

What roles and perspectives must be included?



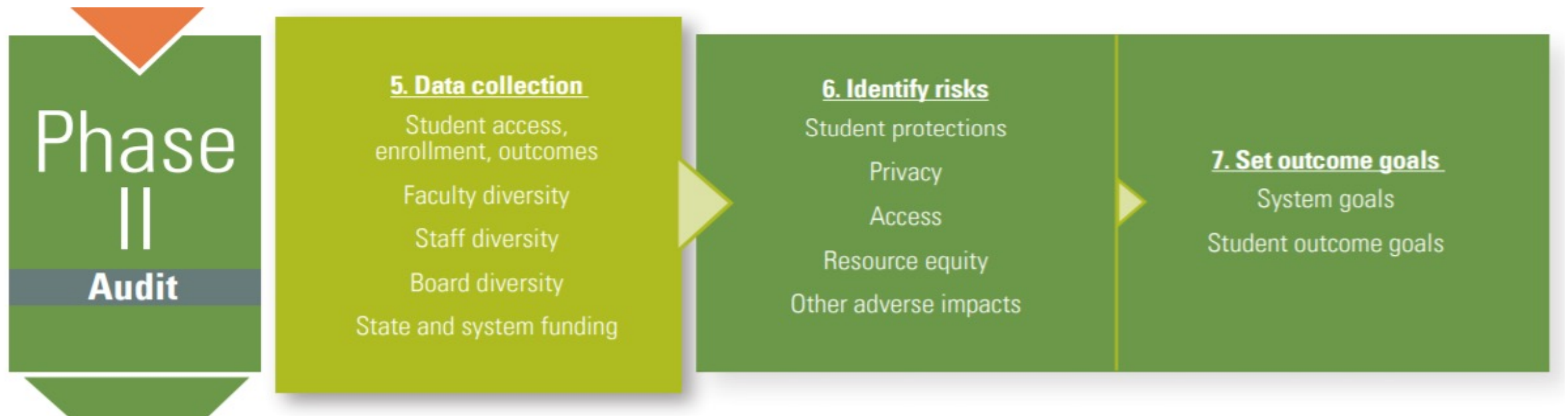
How will your team equitably identify stakeholders in the audit process?



How will you center equity in your engagement of stakeholders?



Phase II Audit



Phase II Audit

**In this phase, you will gather all of the information you need to:
evaluate the current impact of your policy using data; and
determine how to revise, replace, or eliminate a policy to ensure
equity. Your team will consider a policy's intended and unintended
consequences, as well as the broader statewide policy and political
context that will help or hinder your work.**

Step 5- Data Collection

Data Collection

What are your data sources?

- How comprehensively does your data capture the problem?

How recent are your data?

- What are the benefits to using multiple forms of data, both quantitative and qualitative, to identify your problem?

What timeframe does your data cover?

- Does the timeframe you selected sufficiently capture both disparities and growth?
- Who's missing in the data? Why are they missing in the data?
- Why might certain populations be missing in the data?
- Is your capacity to collect and analyze complete data limited?

Are your data appropriately disaggregated?

- Data should be disaggregated and cross-tabulated at a minimum by race/ethnicity and income, as well as other student characteristics that are important for your audit.

Step 6- Identify Risks

Identify Risks

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|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Does the issue being addressed ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who are the racial/ethnic and underserved groups affected? | <p>How will you modify or enhance your strategies to ensure each learner and communities' individual and cultural needs are met?</p> | <p>How will you ensure that you provide access to and address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Language barriers?• Technology limitations?• Physical accessibility?• Adequate support and preparation?• Financial support?• Rural communities? | <p>Are there risks or perverse incentives that can derail progress or inhibit opportunity?</p> | <p>What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Political landscape (I.e. political will)• Federal policy limiting or influencing state policy• Financial capital to fund policy change, implementation, & accountability | <p>How does the proposal/policy protect data collected from students from being used in harmful ways?</p> |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|

Step 7- Set Outcome Goals

Set Outcome Goals

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| <p>How has the data collection step informed your outcome goals?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will your stakeholders participate in setting outcome goals? How? | <p>How will impacts be documented and evaluated?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What success indicators will be tracked? | <p>How do these goals close the opportunity gap for historically excluded populations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do these goals ensure that the responsibility to close the opportunity gap lies more on the systems in place rather than individual actions by the students? | <p>Are the goals equity focused & race-conscious?</p> | <p>Have you identified other agencies, departments, institutions, and organizations that will be helping/responsible for certain goals?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What levers can states pull to meet their outcome goals, and how do mitigating factors influence their progress and approach? |
|---|--|--|--|--|

Phase III Action Plan



Phase III

Action Plan

8. Dissemination

Communication plans

Community
engagement

9. Implementation

Staffing
Funding
Oversight
Process

10. Accountability

Oversight
Evaluation
Instruments
Incentives
Consequences

11. Sustainability

Infrastructure
for ongoing data
collection
Continuity
after leadership
changes

12. Next steps

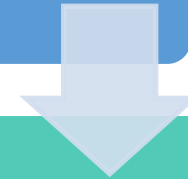
Lessons learned
Revisit
commitments
Recurrence

Phase III Action Plan

Phase III is the equitable response to bias and inequitable issues identified in prior stages. This phase guides states in accomplishing and sustaining the goals of their equity audit and includes steps to measure progress and hold states responsible for positive outcomes, and to prompt and support improvement where necessary.

Step 8- Dissemination

Who is/are the target audience(s)?



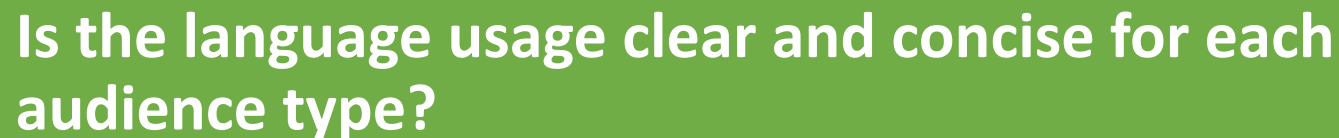
What are your strategies to tailor the media and mode of delivery to students and communities of color?



What messaging is being communicated?



Is the language usage clear and concise for each audience type?



Step 9- Implementation

What are the roles and responsibilities of policy actors?



What are the roles and responsibilities of partners and stakeholders?



What resources are needed for change?



What are the procedures for updates/revisions to existing policy?



What are the administrative structures that will provide support?

Step 10- Accountability

How will you determine whether the policy is achieving the outcome goals?




How frequently will you communicate to stakeholders about your progress?




How will you enforce consequences?

Step 11- Sustainability

Is your equity audit process sufficiently insulated from unexpected changes, such as budget shortfalls, staff transitions, or politics?



Is the policy sustainable? Do you anticipate that there will be sustained and sufficient resources to implement the policy fully and ensure positive, equitable impact?



How frequently do you plan to re-evaluate/audit this policy? How will you communicate with stakeholders and the public about the impact of the policy?



Will any changes to your policy require permanent authorization through the legislative process?

Step 12- Next Steps

What lessons have you learned from the audit process about equity?



How will you operationalize a recurring audit process?

Example: Phase I Assessment

Identify Key Issue

- Basic Skills Assessment Test is keeping qualified candidates of color out of profession

Assessment of Readiness

- Beginning of an administration
- Supportive Governor and State Secretary
- Supportive of racial equity

Equity Commitments

- Disproportionate impact on teaching candidates of color
- Over 80% of students impacted are students of color
- Evidence on math basic skills assessment test is not a predictor of effective teaching

Identify Stakeholders

- Student
- Colleges of Education
- Secretary of Ed
- Policymakers
- School administrators
- State Staff

Phase II Audit

Data Collection

- I used data to identify issue area
- Testing data showed that there were 1000 candidates that had taken the basic skills assessment test and not passed.
- We had data by race & gender

Identify Risks

- Danger that this would be viewed as lowering barriers to entry and we could experience a backlash from legislators.

Set Outcome Goals

- Identify multiple ways students could meet the basic skills requirement.
- Increase the number of candidates of color who were staying in and graduating.

Phase III Action Plan

Dissemination

- Created Fact Sheets for Legislators with evidence and impact of change.
- Announced publicly at statewide event for deans
- Sent out to program coordinators in statewide listserv

Implementation

- Decoupled the test
- Added a second test option for students
- Allowed students to use SAT/ACT to meet the requirement
- Adjusted the cut score on math by one standard deviation.

Accountability

- Deputy Secretary Approved the change.
- Over 800 teacher candidates of color met the requirement that year.

Sustainability

- Division of Certification Services implemented and tracked data.
- Test providers provided reports on passage rates by student demographics and institutions.
- Administrative change that was documented.

Next Steps

- Lessons learned
- Should we have engaged legislators?
- Were there other obstacles we should have interrogated?

Questions/Comments/Feedback

Contact Information



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