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EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN ACP PART II

Strategies for Closing Gaps and Addressing Systemic Barriers

This report by the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC) leverages evaluation findings, research, and expertise to provide educators with strategies and resources to ensure that Academic & Career Planning (ACP) services are equitably provided to all students. Parents, community members, policy makers, and others may also find this valuable.

Part I ([Equitable Participation in ACP: State of Equity in Wisconsin](#)) illustrated persistent gaps in student participation in ACP programs and activities along demographic patterns such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic, disability, and English learner status. Part I also included resources for local teams on disaggregating and examining data on these gaps. This report includes strategies for schools and districts to address gaps in participation. Some strategies can be applied to an ACP program in general, or to a variety of activities. Others are more targeted toward specific types of activities, particularly those optional, high-leverage activities that tend to advance student preparedness for after high school, such as internships, apprenticeships and other types of work-based learning, Advanced Placement (AP) course enrollment, dual enrollment/credit (DE/C), Career and Technical Education (CTE) enrollment, and career pathways.

GENERAL STRATEGIES

Strategies applicable to ACP programs in general or across multiple activities include:

- Review disaggregated data to identify groups of students who are over-represented or under-represented (see Part I for resources).

- Center equity in the work so equity is not an "add-on" or after-thought; include training about implicit bias, anti-racist practices, and cultural responsiveness to ensure that educators, counselors, and school leaders believe all students can succeed. Resource: **equity mindset cards**.

- Increase communication around ACP and its components, including information at earlier grade levels to all students and families, specifically identifying how participating will benefit them. Resources located on final page.

- Increase and target timely student advising to under-represented students.

- Create infrastructure and the expectation that all students will be able to build safe and trusting relationships with an adult (**Educator Brief #3**).

- Remove student cost barriers.

- Remove student transportation barriers.

STRATEGIES FOR CLOSING GAPS IN SPECIFIC ACP ACTIVITIES

Optional ACP-related activities (such as the array of ca-reer-based learning activities, DE/C, AP, and CTE enrollment ten show the greatest gaps in access and participation. Yet th activities tend to be among the most meaningful in "moving needle" for student preparedness, and thus deserve careful attention in disaggregated participation data.

> Considerable research has been conducted on participat gaps in these types of activities. In one extensive nationa study, researchers not only documented widespread rac ethnic participation gaps in AP and DE/C programs, but a found that "district-level resources and state policies tha provide greater access to AP and [DE/C] are also associate with wider racial enrollment gaps, implying that greater resources may engender racial disparity without adequat efforts to provide equitable access and support for mino students."[1]

Primary barriers to access and participation in these activitie include lack of awareness of opportunities; unnecessary/pro hibitive prerequisites; ability grouping such as gifted progra which often drive segregation; student self-doubt and misco ceptions about who can participate; and lack of adult encour agement/support for students before and during the activity However, it is important to understand the underlying reaso (root causes) for equity gaps and address them accordingly b identifying potential strategies and subjecting them to testin and evaluation. The **National Alliance for Partnerships in E ty (NAPE)** provides considerable information and resources doing Equity Gap Analyses, identifying Root Causes, and find and testing Strategies Aligned to Root Causes.

1 Xu, D., Solanki, S., & Fink, J. (2021). College Acceleration for all? Mapping Racial Gaps in Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment Participation. *American Educational Research Journal*, *58*(5), 954-992. **http doi.org/10.3102%2F0002831221991138**

NEXT STEPS FOR DISTRICT AND SCHOOL LEADERS

The following process is intended to be cyclical.

Conduct Equity Aud continuous reviews disaggregated data to id participation gaps

BROADENING EXPECTATIONS & GOALS FOR WORK- & CAREER-BASED LEARNING

- Relationships with community and employers representative of student populations
- Guidance and training to partners on working with students and ensuring all students are treated fairly
- Opt-out, not opt-in policies
- Graduation requirements (example: all graduates will complete at least one work-based learning activity or job shadow)
- Career fairs for ALL students (not just subsets, such as students in CTE courses)

INCREASING ACCESS TO COLLEGE ACCELERATION PROGRAMS

- Infrastructure for early planning (8th or 9th grade)
- Relationships with post-secondary partners with representative student populations, ensuring they treat students fairly
- Access to DE/C through CTE courses
- Policies that do not limit participation in AP or DE/C to only high-achievers:
  - Removal or broadening of entry requirements
  - Removal of enrollment caps
  - Expansion of goals & expectations for participation (example: 90% of graduates have at least one DE/C experience)
- Funding of fees and materials
- Providing/paying for transportation

BOTH

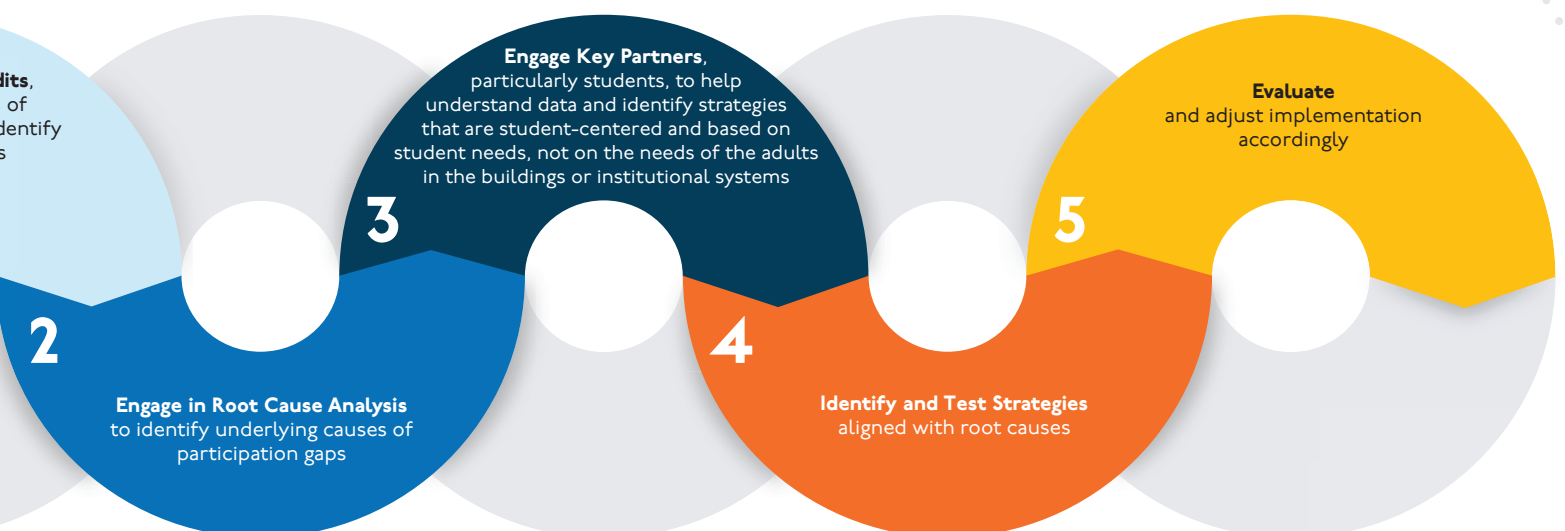Review of programs for access and quality and removal of systemic barriers

Communication to families and caregivers around opportunities, including the steps and time required

Investment in staff and professional development to increase access, remove barriers, and allow for relationship building:

i. More student advisors and mentors

ii. More tutors

iii. More course offerings

Student preparation prior to involvement (soft skills; academic, study skills, workshops, summer programs)

Underlying supports for students once they are enrolled in a program (tutoring, mentoring, peer support, flexible schedules, etc.)

2 Engage in Root Cause Analysis to identify underlying causes of participation gaps

3 Engage Key Partners, particularly students, to help understand data and identify strategies that are student-centered and based on student needs, not on the needs of the adults in the buildings or institutional systems

4 Identify and Test Strategies aligned with root causes

5 Evaluate and adjust implementation accordingly

Resources

NAPE Resources:

- Local Equity Gap Analyses: **https://napequity.org/wp-content/uploads/NAPE-Perkins-V-Local-Equity-Gap-Analysis-At-A-Glance.pdf**

- Root Causes and Strategies: Equity in CTE and STEM: **https://napequity.org/wp-content/uploads/NAPE-Equity-in-CTE-STEM-Root-Causes-Table_2021-04-24.pdf**

- Root Causes and Strategies: Nontraditional Career Preparation: **https://napequity.org/wp-content/uploads/NAPE_RootCauses_Chart_FNL1.pdf**

- Root Causes and Strategies: PIPEline to Career Success for Students With Disabilities: **https://napequity.org/wp-content/uploads/NAPE_Students_wDisabilities_RootCauses_Table_2019-04-04_cac.pdf**

Communication and Engagement Resources:

- **CTE Parent Engagement Toolkit and Resources**

- **Increasing Learner Enrollment in CTE Programs: Parent/Guardian Engagement Tool**

- **DOs and DON'Ts for Engaging Learners and Families around CTE**

- **Career Technical Education Delivers for Families messaging card with fast facts**

- **Promoting Career Technical Education: Social Media Guide**

- **Learner Voice Toolkit**

About the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative

The Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC) is housed at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. WEC's team of evaluators supports youth-serving organizations and initiatives through culturally responsive and rigorous program evaluation. Learn more at **http://www.wec.wceruw.org**