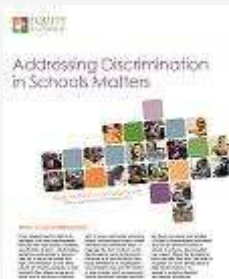


Student Empowerment

Equity Alliance at ASU Online Special Feature:

[Addressing Discrimination Matters](#)



Every student has the right to an education free from discrimination that provides high-quality, equitable opportunities to learn. Unfortunately, sometimes individuals or systems may act in ways that violate this right. Discrimination occurs when people are treated unequally or less favorably than others because of some real or perceived characteristic. In every community and every school, discrimination exists in both intended and unintended ways. All kinds of discrimination are wrong and can be harmful to those involved. In schools, discrimination can make it difficult for students to learn because they don't feel safe or accepted. As such, finding ways to fight discrimination is essential to ensuring students' educational opportunity.

Upcoming Events

- *[DEC's 26th Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families: October 14-17](#)*

"...but we also know that to be educated, the goal of it must be human liberation-- liberation enabling each of us to fulfill our capacity so as to be free to create within and around ourselves."

-- Hillary Rodham Clinton

Equity exists to the degree that all students feel they belong, are included, and empowered.

Many students feel disenfranchised in U. S. schools, especially those born into populations often marginalized by society. Time and again, the very students that need to be included the most are the ones not afforded meaningful opportunities for leadership and involvement. Yet student belonging and empowerment are essential to educational equity.

In order to be culturally responsive and to empower students, educators should actively seek ways to help students understand themselves and others in the shared community. This communicates the importance of students' cultures, languages, and experiences. As a result of educators' conscious efforts to be culturally responsive, students can better connect to classmates, teachers, the curriculum, and ultimately the school and embody the principles of everyday justice.

In order for schools to fulfill a promise to equitable student leadership and empowerment, their programs should focus on:

- Helping students become self aware and better understand their personal talents, values, interests;
- Developing tools and opportunities for students to further understand and develop leadership skills and foundations;
- Helping students understand how their personal values influence motivation and how this can benefit teamwork;
- Giving "voice" to all students involved while working to build a collective vision or common purpose;
- Helping students understand communication processes and their benefits and inherent challenges;
- Allowing for healthy disagreement among participants by encouraging problem solving and conflict management;
- Promoting and providing an inclusive and engaging environment for diverse students and their ideas;
- Helping students understand their connection not only to the school, but the greater community.

A valuable approach to leadership development involves collaboration and concern with fostering positive social change, and we embrace the way this model^[1] examines leadership development from three different perspectives or levels:

- [CollegeBoard presents Prepárate 2011: Call for PROPOSALS due by October 15](#)
- [NASDSE's 73rd Annual Conference and Business Meeting: October 16 - 19](#)

Online Tools

- [Engaging the voices of students](#): a report on the 2007 and 2008 High School Survey of Student Engagement
- [Student Empowerment Training Project](#): The Student Empowerment Training Project (SET) works to strengthen student governments and state student associations into more effective vehicles for student engagement and empowerment.
- [StudentPublishing.com](#) is dedicated to providing special publishing opportunities to students and schools.

Online Publications

- [Educational Leadership: Giving Students Ownership of Learning](#)
- [Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Matter!](#)

- **INDIVIDUAL:** What personal qualities are we attempting to foster and develop in those who participate in a leadership development program? What personal qualities are most supportive of group functioning and positive social change?
- **GROUP:** How can the collaborative leadership development process be designed not only to facilitate the development of the desired individual qualities (above) but also to effect positive social change?
- **COMMUNITY:** Toward what social ends is the leadership development activity directed? What kinds of activities are the most effective in energizing the group and in developing desired personal qualities in the individual?

We hope that the resources and information in this month's Equity Matters will help you and your colleagues to further deepen your understanding of ways to empower students to be active learners and leaders.

[1] St. Cloud State University Student Leadership Development Model, Retrieved from <https://www.stcloudstate.edu/reslife/leadership/documents/ResidentialLifeStudentLeadershipDevelopmentModel.pdf>.

Equity in Action

[***Northpoint Expeditionary Learning Academy is an independent, charter high school.***](#)

Northpoint Expeditionary Learning Academy prepares students for full participation in a dynamic world, promoting relevant and rigorous academics, character development, and social responsibility, while utilizing the talents and expertise of dedicated teachers, community professionals, and engaged family members, within the proven Expeditionary Learning model.



NELA opened with room for 100 ninth grade students in the fall of 2006. Northpoint has added a grade each school year and as of this fall, they are a 9-12 high school.

Prescott is one of only twelve communities in the United States to receive a major grant from Expeditionary Learning Schools Outward Bound (with funds provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) to create a new, small, rigorous high school based on the highly acclaimed Expeditionary Learning model.

Expeditionary Learning offers:

College Preparation, Compelling Topics, Hands-On Learning, Service Opportunities, Close Relationships Emphasis on Reading & Writing, Inquiry-Based Math, Science, & Social Studies, Integrated Art Adventure & Fitness, Opportunities to Explore.

Look at the Expeditionary Learning School Design Principles and discover the incredible impact the model is having on students lives [here](#).

Featured Equity Friend



[Kids As Self Advocates](#)

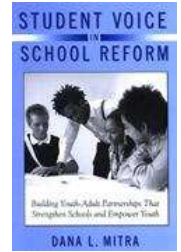
(KASA) is a national, grassroots project created by youth with disabilities for youth. We are teens and young adults with disabilities speaking out. KASA knows youth can make choices and advocate for themselves if they have the information and support they need.

Join My Mailing List 

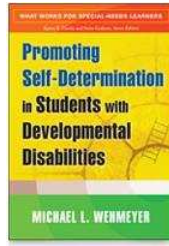


Tools You Can Use

[Student Voice in School Reform](#) by Dana L. Mirta. In documenting the difference that student voice made, this book helps expand ideas of distributed leadership, professional learning communities, and collaboration. The book also contributes much needed research on what student voice initiatives look like in practice and provides powerful evidence of ways in which young people can increase their sense of agency and their sense of belonging in school.



[Promoting Self-Determination in Students with Developmental Disabilities](#) by Michael L. Wehmeyer. Growing evidence suggests that self-determination is a significant factor in improving educational and transition outcomes in students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This volume reviews the breadth of available methods for teaching components of self-determination - including choice making, problem solving, decision making, goal setting, self-advocacy, and self-regulated learning-and provides best-practice recommendations that teachers can put to immediate use in the classroom.



[How to Assess Authentic Learning](#) by Kay Burke. Educator Kay Burke provides a wide range of updated, easy-to-implement alternative assessments that address today's accountability requirements and focus on improving learning. Designed for use across all content areas, these formative assessments are rooted in the language of state standards and emphasize differentiating instruction to meet students' individual learning needs. Offering numerous applications and examples, *How to Assess Authentic Learning* guides teachers in developing the assessment tools needed to help all students meet or exceed mandated academic standards.

