



# District's DEIJ Plan Starter Kit

Resources and Examples to Streamline the  
Planning and Writing Process

District Leadership Forum

- Section 1: Initiating the Planning Process
- Section 2: Plan Development
- Section 3: Writing and Organizing the Plan
- Section 4: Implementation



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from enrollment to graduation and beyond

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right-fit students

➤ Support and graduate  
more students



➤ Prepare your district  
for the future

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**8,000+** Peer-tested  
best practices

**500+** Enrollment innovations  
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➤ **ADVANTAGE OF SCALE**

**2,100+** Districts  
served

**9.5 M+** Students supported  
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➤ **WE DELIVER RESULTS**

**95%** Of our partners continue  
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# Initiating the DEIJ Planning Process

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SECTION

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- Assess Your District's Readiness
- Choose Your Planning Time Horizon
- Build and Organize Your Planning Team
- Ground DEIJ Planning With an Organizational Framework

# Assess Your District's Readiness

## Questions to Ask Before Starting a District-wide DEIJ Planning Process

Demands for quick action to address racial justice are growing in urgency. But without due diligence, the planning effort may lose momentum or point your district in the wrong direction. Use the questions below to determine whether your district is ready to proceed with DEIJ planning. Your answers will indicate whether you need to build a stronger foundation for success or whether the essentials are in place to get started.



### Leadership Support and Buy-In

*Clear support from district leaders is essential to establishing DEIJ as a district priority and driving progress.*

- ▶ Does our executive leadership see the strategic value in DEIJ planning and progress?
- ▶ Does our DEIJ planning initiative have vocal support from departments and units across the district?

*Lee Summit R-7 School District*

- [Building High-Level Buy-in and Support](#)
  - The leadership team is accountable for DEIJ goals while also delegating responsibility to different unit-level owners

*Society for Human Resource Management*

- [Commitment From the Top](#)
  - Questions to consider (e.g., who are your natural champions?) and recommended action steps for securing leadership buy-in



### District Strategic Plan

*Alignment with overarching district goals is key to successful DEIJ strategic planning.*

- ▶ Is DEIJ a key component of our district's most recent strategic plan?
- ▶ How will the DEIJ plan align with and build off the strategic plan?



### Key Stakeholders and Resources

*DEIJ planning requires diverse perspectives and participation across the district and beyond.*

- ▶ How can we recruit stakeholders from across the district so that responsibility is not placed solely on our Director of Diversity & Inclusion?
- ▶ What mechanisms do we have to engage our surrounding community in the planning process?



### Data Infrastructure

*Trusted, high-quality data is a primary input measuring progress on DEIJ initiatives and affects the credibility of the plan.*

- ▶ Can we access high-quality data as needed to support DEIJ strategic decision-making?
- ▶ Does our district culture embrace the use of success metrics to measure impact and progress toward strategic goals?



### Communication

*The DEIJ plan must resonate with a variety of audiences, both internally and externally.*

- ▶ Can we make use of a robust network of channels for communicating strategic issues and goals (e.g., website, blog, town halls, social media)?

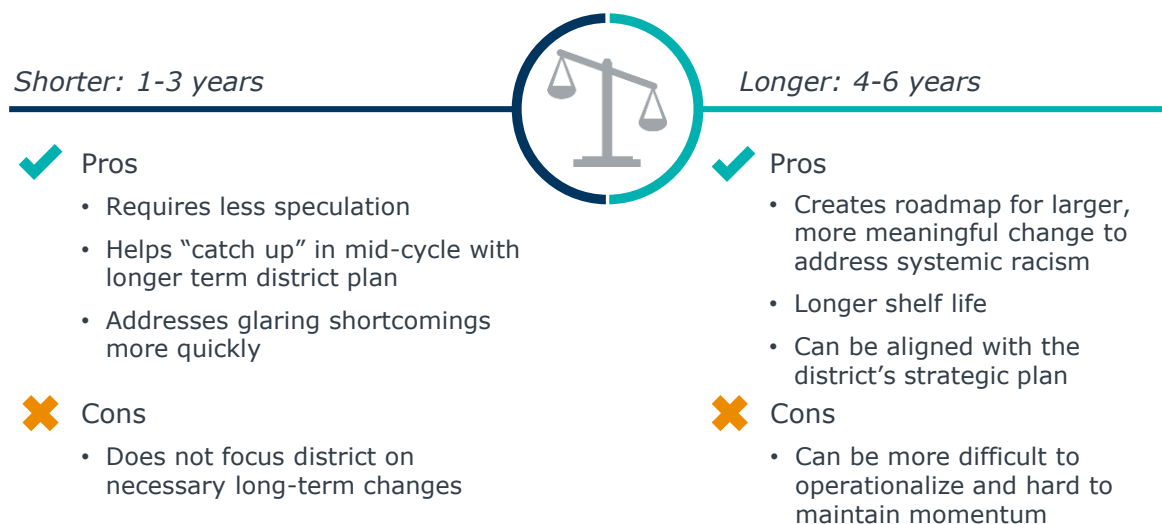
Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

# Select an Appropriate Planning Time Horizon

## Considerations for Choosing Your DEIJ Plan Timeline

Once your district is ready to proceed with DEIJ planning, one of the first details to decide is the time period your plan will cover. This decision has implications for the whole process, affecting actions like what goals to set and what kind of data and analysis you require. More fundamentally, it sets bounds on the sort of district and organizational changes the plan will consider. Four to five years is a common DEIJ strategic planning timeframe, but some districts may prefer a shorter period to better respond to pressing challenges. See below for pros and cons of both shorter- and longer-term DEIJ Plans.

### Weighing Agility and Preparation for Long-Term Needs in Your District Planning



# Build a Representative Planning Task Force

## Considerations for Who To Involve

While the Director of Diversity and Inclusion plays a critical role, EAB research highlights how no single individual or office should be solely responsible for the planning and execution of a district-wide DEI plan. To drive meaningful progress, coordination across schools is essential and your task force should reflect this reality.

In general, task force members can be either appointed, nominated, or recruited through an open call to participate. Other factors to consider include participant availability, time commitment, expertise, and how size of group can help or hinder progress. Keep in mind that participants can serve in either permanent positions or supplemental advisory roles as needed for specific issues or project phases.

Use the checklist below to ensure the planning team accurately reflects your district priorities.

### Potential Stakeholders for DEI Strategic Plan Development

Department Representative	Permanent Member	Advisory Role
Human Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Superintendent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum and Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Relations/Communications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



See how [Harborfields Central School District](#) established a DEI Task Force which includes administrators, teachers, parents, community members and alumni.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

# Build a Representative Planning Task Force (cont.)

## Achieving a Diversity of Perspectives and Embracing Strategic Change


Too often, planning teams, composed of stakeholders with different backgrounds and expertise, produce incremental visions and poorly articulated goals, failing to envision the district as different in the future. That is typically because they must navigate group dynamics and mindsets that limit strategic thinking, namely, cognitive biases or inclinations toward a particular thought pattern.

To effectively manage group dynamics and let go of preconceived ideas, EAB recommends applying psychological principles through role play at some of your task force meetings. This will force participants to adopt the perspectives of others. EAB recommends the Six Thinking Hats Framework to guarantee that a variety of different perspectives are represented:

- Blue: focus on leading, making sure all “hats” are represented
- White: focus on data and gaps in knowledge
- Yellow: focus on strengths and optimism
- Black: focus on weaknesses and criticism
- Green: focus on creativity and imagination
- Red: focus on emotion and gut reactions

Applying this framework will force your team to communicate in new and different ways, encourage a larger range of perspectives to drive analysis for problems, improve the quality of ideas and solutions, and improve the likelihood that initiatives and messages will gain traction and engagement across your district.

### Apply Psychological Principles at Some of Your Meetings



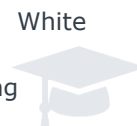
**Six Thinking Hats Framework Role Play**

As a team, walk through each of the six thinking hats together one hat at a time. In doing so, your team will examine an individual scenario from every angle as a group and leverage parallel thinking for rigorous debate and stronger solutions.



Blue

- Focus on steering the meeting
- Direct conversation



White

- Focus on data
- Analyze trends
- Identify gaps



Yellow

- Focus on strengths
- Be optimistic



Black

- Focus on weaknesses
- Be critical



Green

- Focus on creativity
- Brainstorm out-of-the-box solutions



Red

- Focus on emotion
- Provide skeptics' gut reaction



See the appendix for a group exercise to practice applying the six thinking hats framework.



# Organize Your DEIJ Planning Task Force

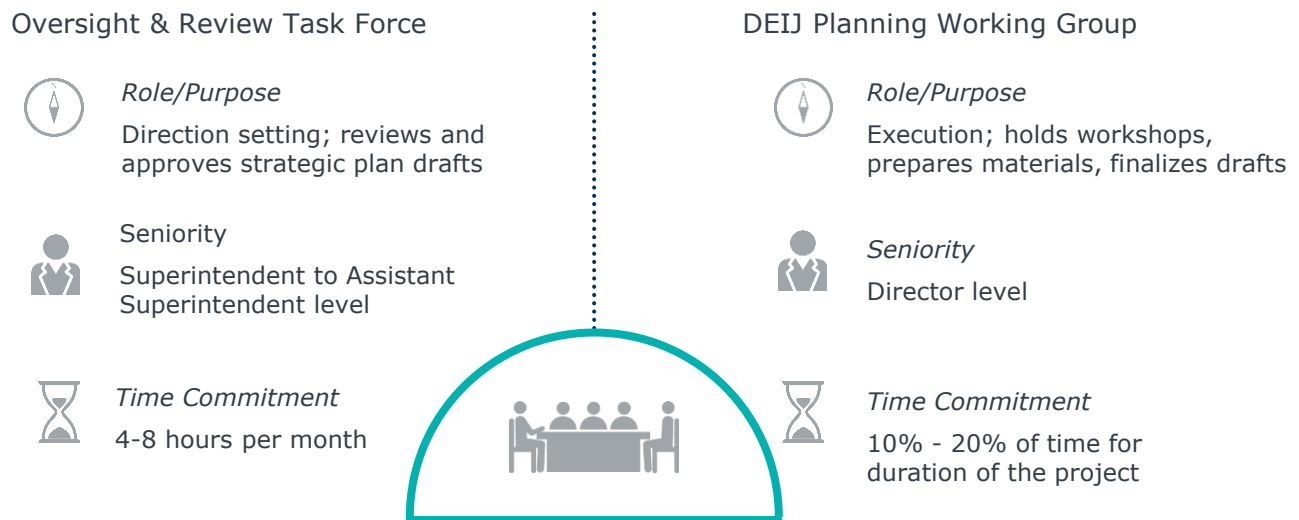
## Considerations for Organizing Your Team

DEIJ Planning Task Force should be organized in a way to overcome common strategic planning pitfalls, including:

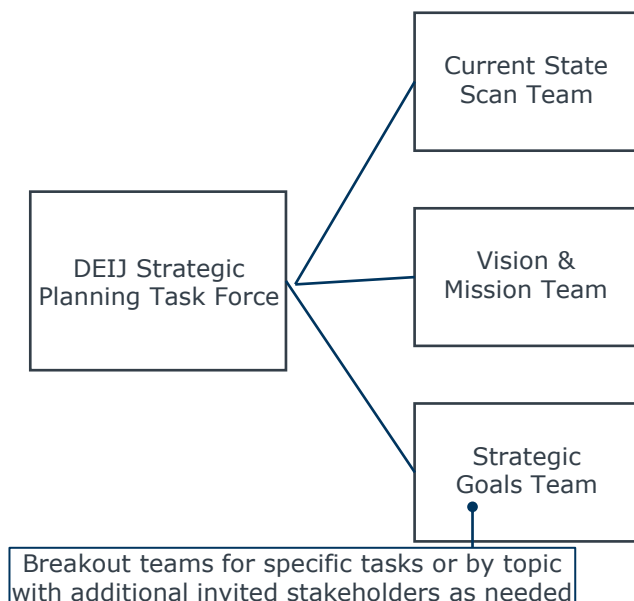
- Task force deadlocks that stall progress
- Too much emphasis on discussion, not enough on making decisions and drafting the plan
- Lack of accountability for attendance
- Loss of interest due to lack of senior leadership involvement

That said, there is no “correct” infrastructure for the planning team. Explore the sample organizational structures below to determine the best fit for your district.

### Bicameral Structure Balances Steady Work With Periodic Oversight



### Organize Subcommittees by Task/Topic



### Higher Education Guidance Example

- ▶ *University of California, Berkeley*
- [Strategic Planning Toolkit for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity](#) (p. 17)
- Guidance and considerations for establishing the infrastructure of your DEIJ planning process, including planning team models, roles, and responsibilities

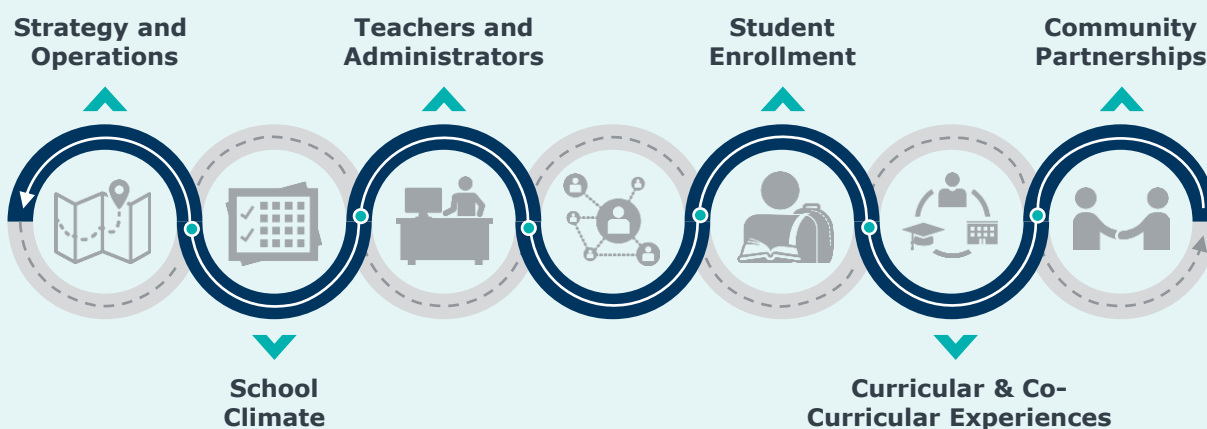
# Ground Your Plan With an Organizational Framework

Districts need to center their DEIJ planning around a comprehensive framework that marries transformative goals with more granular components to support ongoing actions at all levels. While the context of your district and community will change, an organizational framework will help to ensure that racial justice remains a centerpiece of your mission and work.

Explore EAB's framework below and review the related webinars to ensure the actions you take will not just be one-off or standalone initiatives, but rather a part of ongoing conversations and work to meet long-term strategic goals for your district, students, employees, and communities.

## EAB's Framework for Transformation

*Continuous Behaviors and Actions that Promote Racial Justice in Education*



### Webinar: Hallmarks of an Anti-Racist Institution

*The Behaviors and Actions that Promote Racial Justice in Education for District Leaders*

[Uncover the Hallmarks Here](#)

## Framework Examples

*Douglas County School District (DCSD)*

- ▶ • [DCSD Strategic Plan](#)
  - See how DCSD's framework addresses social emotional learning, access and success, school climate, and recruiting & retaining teachers of color.

*California State University San Marcos*

- ▶ • [CSUSM's Definition of a Diversity Framework](#) (p. 2-3)
  - See how CSUSM, a public university, tailored an executive order into its own Diversity Framework

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

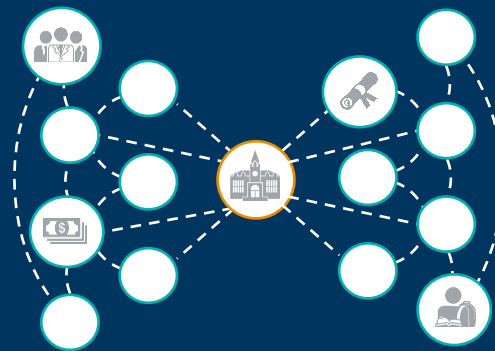
# Apply Systems Thinking to Your Framework

The traditional approach to solving district problems is breaking down complex issues into discrete, isolated units. When addressing structural racism, this approach fails to account for the interconnected nature of districts and the dynamic impacts that elements have on each other in a system. Systems thinking, however, allows for better understanding complex systems and how they operate. It considers the processes, inputs, and feedback loops happening congruently across interconnected parts of a system. Within a hallmark, using systems thinking supports strategy and intention because it:

Consider participating in an EAB-facilitated workshop to equip you and your cabinet with the tools to analyze how units across the district must work together to amplify and scale the impact of racial justice efforts.

## What Is Systems Thinking?

**A holistic approach to understanding the complex nature of systems by considering the relationships and patterns between inputs, processes, and their feedback.**



### This virtual workshop will:

- Outline EAB's industry-wide point of view on what are the **defining actions and behaviors** of an anti-racist district
- Analyze existing **racial inequities and barriers** to transformative change across the K-12 system
- Introduce **systems thinking frameworks** as approaches to address systemic barriers to racial equity in schools.

### Virtual Workshop Elements



*Systems thinking frameworks and tools*



*Blueprint of behaviors and actions of anti-racist districts*



*Facilitated cross-cabinet discussion*

## Participation

If you are interested in participating, **please reach out to your dedicated advisor** to begin the process.



# Appendix

Initiating the Planning Process

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APPENDIX

- Six Thinking Hats Persona Exercise

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# Six Thinking Hats Exercise

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## Facilitator Guide

**Exercise Goal:** By the end of the exercise, participants should be able to identify potential responses to a strategic question and clarify which options they will explore further.

**Exercise Time:** This activity can be run as an hour-long session with 5-10 minutes dedicated per hat. Additionally, this can be a half day strategy retreat with breakout groups working on multiple strategic questions.

**Instructions:** Use the “Typical [insert color] questions” to guide the conversation for your strategic challenge. The “Hats” can be discussed in different orders, and the same hat can be returned to multiple times if necessary. However, teams should by and large adhere to the following rules:

- Always start with the Blue Hat to clarify the strategic question that will be discussed. Only one person (the facilitator) wears the Blue Hat
- Follow the Blue Hat with the White Hat to outline the facts related to the strategic question being discussed
- Save the Red Hat until after the facts, opportunities, challenges have been discussed – and typically until after solutions have been proposed and evaluated (with the yellow and black hats)
- Finish with the Blue Hat to clarify the group’s response to the question
  - Sample Sequence: Blue, White, Yellow, Black, Green, Yellow, Black, Red, Blue

**Role of the Facilitator:** Fairly minimal. This activity is designed to facilitate discussion and ideas-sharing between participants. The facilitator will function mostly as a discussion starter (when necessary), and an unobtrusive guide (e.g., if the conversation veers into nonstop complaining).

### Do’s and Don’ts:

- **Do** allow participants to largely determine the flow and pace of the discussion. These are issues that are highly relevant to every district, so participants will likely have a lot to say here
- **Do** encourage leaders to think about their role as Blue Hat (i.e., strategy leaders, discussion/culture drivers) Thinkers, rather than as involved in highly operational activities. This discussion should have them focus on their role as district visionaries and communicators
- **Do** encourage participants to share ideas and tips with one another
- **Don’t** allow the conversation to devolve into simply complaining about certain roles/processes. Ask questions like “What do you think the motivation is behind that?” or “Who has found a solution to this issue?” to guide the conversation to a more productive point

# The Blue Hat: Running the Show

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## What Blue Hat Thinking Does:

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- Acts as the “conductor of the orchestra”
- Organizes and manages thinking of the different hats
- Provides an overview of the conversation
- Makes sure people stick to their hats
- Breaks up arguments
- Asks for an outcome at the end—a summary, conclusion, decision, or solution



## Typical Blue Hat Phrases:

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- *Let's start by thinking about...*
- *I think we are headed in the right direction, let's hear some more ideas.*
- *We need to hear more from the white hat to understand the problem.*
- *Now we need some concrete suggestions, let's hear from the yellow hat.*
- *Hold off on the black hat thinking for a moment—we're still listening to ideas.*
- *We're spending too much time arguing.*
- *I hear two conflicting views. We don't have to decide which is correct right now.*



## Typical Blue Hat Questions:

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- *What perspectives will we need to have a productive conversation?*
- *What do we need to understand to make a decision or come to an agreement?*
- *Is this the real objective here?*
- *Are we getting anywhere in this conversation?*
- *What outcome would be successful?*
- *What do we all agree on?*

## The White Hat: Facts and Figures

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### What White Hat Thinking Does:

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- Collects available information
- Focuses on objective facts and figures
- Separates facts from interpretation and belief
- Prevents distortion of information and ideas
- Excludes hunches, intuition, judgment, feeling, impression and opinion



### Typical White Hat Phrases:

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- *I want to start by thinking through what we know about this topic*
- *Just give the facts without an argument*
- *We don't know that for a fact*



### Typical White Hat Questions:

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- *What data do we have?*
- *What is the evidence?*
- *Is that a fact or a likelihood?*
- *Is that a fact or a belief?*
- *Is that a trend?*

## The Yellow Hat: Speculative-Positive

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### What Yellow Hat Thinking Does:

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- Looks for the benefit, value, and potential positive outcome in everything
- Provides deliberate constructive thinking as a counterweight to critical thinking
- Thinks about opportunities, and willing to explore remote possibilities of success
- Makes concrete proposals and suggestions for what to do



### Typical Yellow Hat Phrases:

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- *I have a vision where we could make this happen*
- *I can see how we get this done.*
- *There are a lot of benefits to trying this.*
- *This is going to work.*
- *If there is a remote chance this will work, we should explore it.*
- *Here is the first thing we should do.*



### Typical Yellow Hat Questions:

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- *What is the best-case scenario?*
- *What are the benefits?*
- *What are all the reasons we could succeed at this?*
- *What is the best next step?*
- *How much do we stand to gain?*
- *Under what conditions would this work?*



## The Black Hat: Cautious and Careful

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### What Black Hat Thinking Does:

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- Prevents groups from doing overly risky things
- Introduces caution and skepticism to the conversation
- Identifies why something may not work
- Points out how something does not fit available resources, policy, strategy, mission
- Questions the strength of the evidence and conclusions



### Typical Black Hat Phrases:

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- *I can see a number of risks and vulnerabilities for us in this plan*
- *Let's try to see the obstacles so that we can figure out how to overcome them*
- *We need to know how risky this is for us*
- *I'm skeptical this will work as planned*



### Typical Black Hat Questions:

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- *What is the downside?*
- *What are all the potential problems?*
- *Does this conclusion make sense?*
- *Does this fit our past experience?*
- *Do we have the resources to do this?*
- *Is this in line with our policy and strategy?*
- *What can go wrong?*
- *Will this continue to be sustainable?*

# The Green Hat: Creative Thinking

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## What Green Hat Thinking Does:

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- Generates new ideas and new ways of looking at things
- Suggests multiple courses of action
- Invested in making changes and innovating
- Interested in thinking through all the alternative ways to solve a problem or launch a new initiative



## Typical Green Hat Phrases:

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- *I can think of a number of ways we could solve this problem.*
- *We should think through how we could try this idea.*
- *I have a wild idea, but it just might work.*
- *Let's try something different.*



## Typical Green Hat Questions:

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- *What are all the possible alternatives?*
- *Is there any way we can use this idea?*
- *Can we shape the idea so that it works for us?*
- *How could we test this idea?*
- *What comparisons can we make?*
- *What if we tried it, what would happen?*

# The Red Hat: Emotions and Feelings

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## What Red Hat Thinking Does:

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- Acknowledges the hidden emotions that affect every conversation and decision, bringing them to the surface
- Insists that feelings have a right to be made visible
- Honors and gives voice to gut reactions, intuition, hunches, intuitions, impressions



## Typical Red Hat Phrases:

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- *I feel like this idea has potential.*
- *I find this solution threatening.*
- *That is an unusual approach.*
- *Don't ask me why, I just don't like this vision.*
- *I have a hunch...*
- *I have a soft spot for...*



## Typical Red Hat Questions:

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- *What is your gut reaction?*
- *How do we think people will react?*
- *How will our stakeholders feel?*
- *What's our best guess?*
- *What is the opinion about...?*
- *Is this fair?*

## Identifying the Six Thinking Hats in Your District

- 1 What behaviors or tendencies have you observed from district stakeholders who tend to display [color] hat thinking?
- 2 What are their long-term priorities? What are they concerned about?
- 3 What is the most effective way to persuade a [color] hat thinker?
- 4 Where is [color] hat thinking valuable when creating strategy? Where should we be plugging [color] hat thinkers in?

## Identifying the Six Thinking Hats in Your District

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1

What hat(s) did you identify with most before joining your district's planning committee/task force?

2

What is the composition of your planning committee/task force, in terms of thinking styles? What thinking style(s) is underrepresented?



**Group Discussion:** Now that you've reflected on the thinking styles within your district, how would you better drive progress on a key initiative (e.g., task force structure, accountability mechanism, org design, goals)



# Plan Development

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SECTION

# 2

- Assess the Current State of DEIJ at Your District
- Uncover Hidden Sources of Data
- Engage Students through Fair Process
- Hold Unit-Level Listening Tours
- Evaluate Local Community Needs
- Conduct a SWOT Analysis

# Assess the Current State of DEIJ at Your District

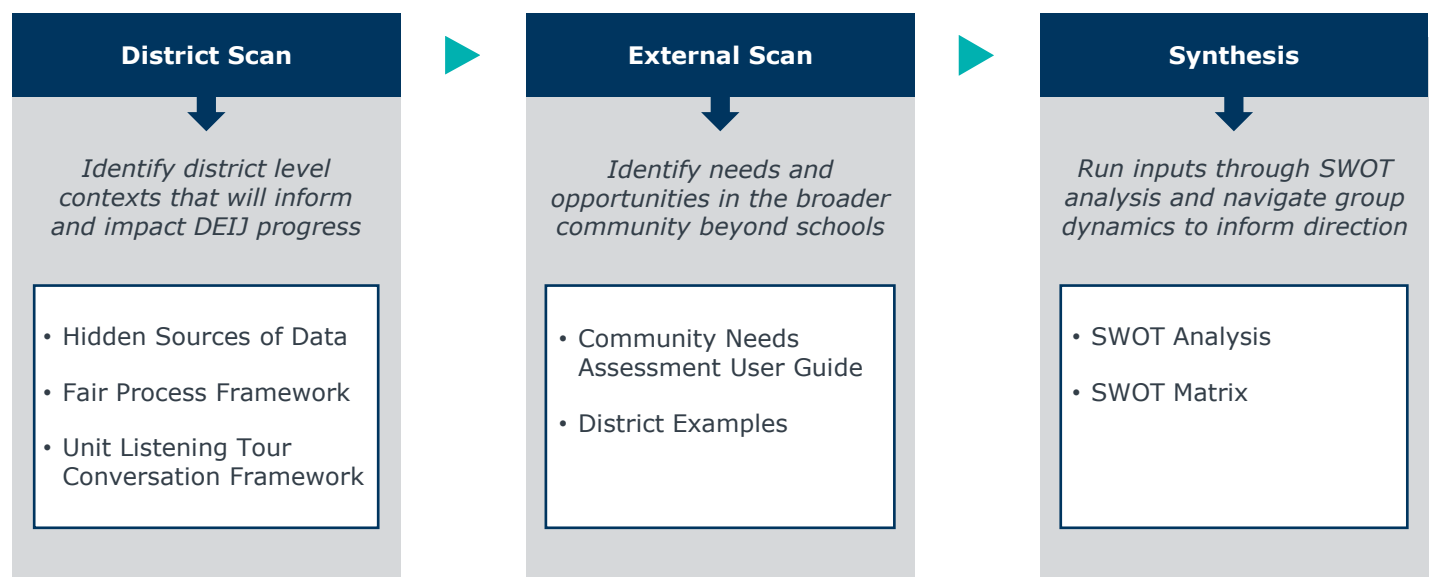
## Gathering Information to Provide Context for Planning

One of the first steps the task force should take on is an environmental scan of current DEIJ state at your district to set the context for effective planning. In this process, the task force will gather intelligence to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. These inputs will help to inform the direction of the DEIJ plan and the strategic goals and actions within it. Data and feedback collected in this stage (e.g., current demographic diversity, retention, and success metrics for students, teachers, and administrators) will also provide a baseline that districts can use to measure progress against.

Beyond helping to set course, including context about the district's current DEIJ state in your plan helps to build credibility and ensure that all community members understand the analysis and intentionality that went into creating the district strategy.

To conduct a thorough scan, DEIJ planning task force must gather information from across and beyond their district, accounting for past performance, current capacity, and emerging possibilities. The following pages offer guidance and resources to identify these opportunities.

### Key Steps of an Environmental Scan and Analysis



# Uncover Hidden Sources of Data

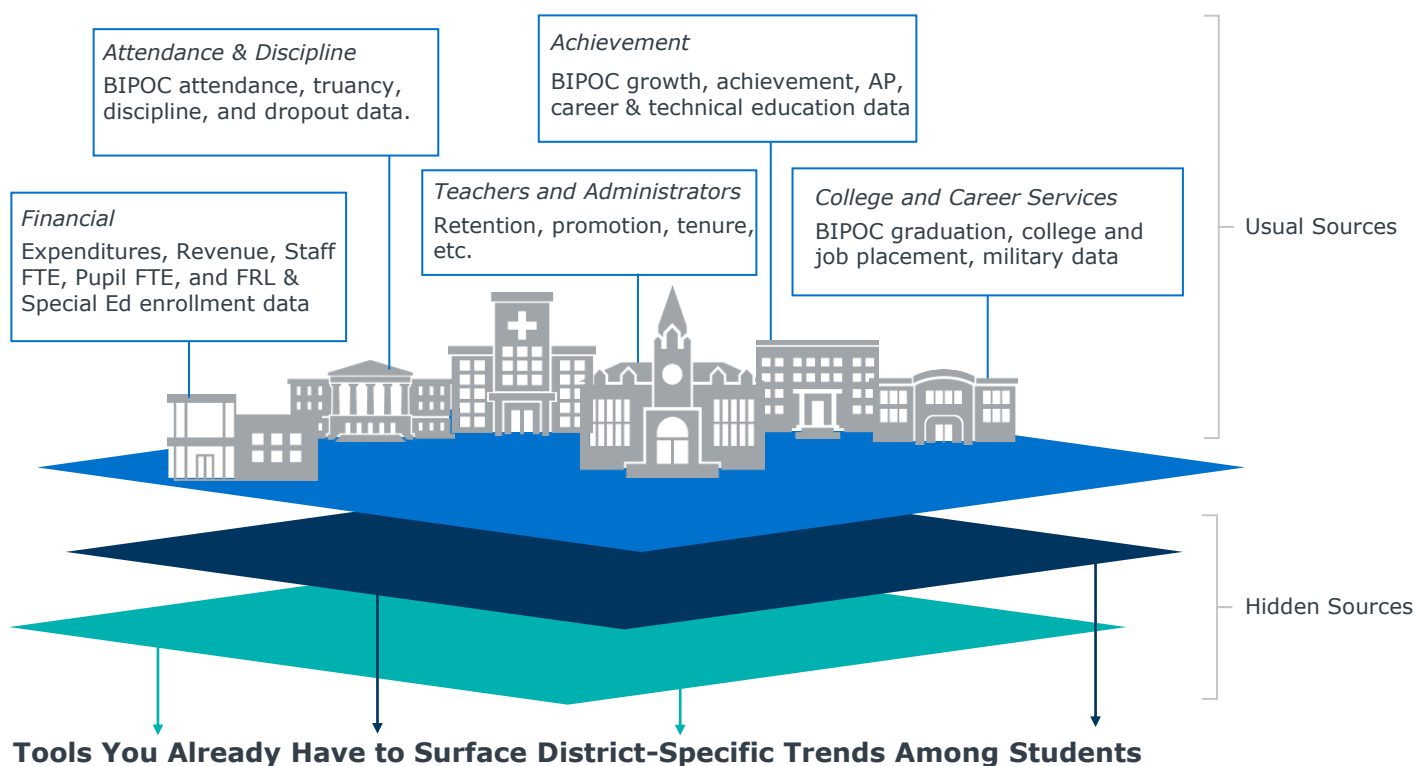
## Painting a Fuller Picture with Qualitative Information

Districts possess an abundance of data across countless sources. Still, leaders sometimes feel like they lack credible data in certain areas, inhibiting their efforts. This is especially true for qualitative data, which can serve as critical inputs for DEIJ planning.

Some data, like demographics and success, are easier to collect than others. They live within the district research office or are tracked in learning management systems. Other data, like responses to climate surveys and other qualitative assessments, can be more difficult to collate into useful formats or even to identify at all. Yet they can help to identify pain points and make improvements.

Consider the data sources and questions below to help inform your planning process.

### Usual Data Sources Helpful, But Obscure Troves of Meaningful Qualitative Data



Past Student Activism



Climate Survey Data



Student Roundtables



Real-Time Intel Online

#### Finding Insights in the Qualitative Data



What have past student activists asked for?



How do students' experience at schools differ by race?



What does our communication with BIPOC students say about how their needs are evolving?



How do current and prospective BIPOC students see our district?



# Engage Students through the Fair Process<sup>1</sup> Framework

## Following Through on Gathering Student Input

Input from students is critical to DEIJ planning, but traditional efforts don't always instill confidence in the larger student body. There are several reasons for this:

- Students may not believe the small sample of students who have been included in conversations represent the opinions of all students or an important vulnerable student group.
- Students are unaware of the responsibilities of school and district leadership.
- Emerging student groups are increasingly active in school, yet the leaders of these groups often are not included in conversations with school and district leaders.
- Decisions are not disseminated on platforms students use most, limiting clarity and leave many students to make assumptions about the process.

To limit issues, districts should embrace a formalized process for incorporating student input. EAB recommends fair process framework for inclusive decisions that prompts you to seek the perspectives of those who will be affected before making a decision that will impact them and explain and clarify the decision after. Above all, fair process should ensure that impacted parties have an opportunity to be heard.

## Using the Fair Process Framework for Inclusive Decisions

**Fair Process:** a commitment to **seeking the perspectives of those who will be affected before making a decision** that will impact them. *Fair Process is NOT a commitment to consensus.*



### Engagement

Creating space and time to hear the perspectives of those who will be affected by a decision



*How have we sought the perspectives of those who will be affected? If not, how can we?*

### Explanation

Prioritizing explaining the reasoning behind a decision to everyone who has been involved or affected by it



*How do we plan to communicate why we chose to implement or not implement?*

### Clarity

Providing a clear explanation about what is expected moving forward after a decision



*How do we ensure students understand what to expect from us moving forward?*

<sup>1</sup>) Fair process is the commitment to seeking the perspectives of those who will be affected before making a decision that will impact them

# Hold Unit-Level Listening Tours

## Surfacing Diverse District Needs

Team conversations can also help to unearth perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. These conversations with district leaders (as well as focus groups with larger groups of district stakeholders) should concentrate on future-focused goals. That said, planning task forces should ask about both direction and execution to uncover the “what” and “how” of district DEIJ progress.

Consider the questions and tips for a conversational framework below when seeking unit- and department-level guidance on your DEIJ plan.

### Four Tips for Productive Engagements



### Sample Questions

Direction Questions

- What is the department trying to accomplish in relation to DEIJ in the next three to five years? How will the department/office be different than it is today?
- What are things we do well as a department? As a district?
- What areas could we improve?
- How must your department change or shift in the next few years to thrive?
- What is the morale like here among staff/faculty?

Execution Questions

- What does meaningful DEIJ progress look for your teachers and administrators?
- How will your district know the DEIJ plan is successful?
- How would you assess the tolerance for risk across your district?
- How will your district know the DEIJ plan is successful?

# Evaluate Local Community Needs

## Including Local Community Members in the Planning Process

District DEIJ plans will affect more than just students, teachers, and administrators. Executed well, strategy will also impact the surrounding community, and their input should be incorporated into the planning process. To do so, consider conducting a community needs assessment (CNA) and/or community forums for feedback.

These assessments provide a snapshot of local policy, systems, and/or environmental status and identify areas of need and possible improvements. They identify needs based on regional scoping and various populations or groups. Once information is collected, needs are prioritized, and the appropriate strategies are developed.

A full formal community needs assessment may not be necessary in every case, including instances:

- When the most important needs of the community or group are well-known, agreed-upon, and have not changed
- When an assessment was conducted recently, and needs have not changed.
- When the community or group would view the process as redundant and wasteful, hurting the goal.

In such cases, planning task force may consider more informal listening sessions and focus groups with local community members.

### Community Needs Assessment Process Guide

1

Plan Assessment

- Identify diverse team and assign responsibilities
- Define parameters
- Determine data requirements
- Create data collection plan
- Develop messaging and marketing
- Create timeline
- Confirm budget

2

Conduct Assessment

- Gather external local data
- Interview community members
- Host listening sessions/ focus groups
- Conduct opinion survey
- Inventory community resources
- Map community assets

3

Analyze Data

- Develop rating scale
- Enter, total, summarize data
- Evaluate and organize qualitative responses

4

Develop Action Steps

- Create reports and present feedback
- Prioritize needs and relevant action steps

## Evaluate Local Community Needs (cont.)

---

### Implementation Questions and District Examples

#### Implementation Questions to Consider

- What information will the CNA seek to uncover? Who makes up the relevant populations? How large is the scope?
- Who at your district will lead the CNA process? Which other internal stakeholders should be involved?
- Which internal and external data sources are available to the CAN team? Which will provide the most relevant data?
- Which are the right/best-fit community partners who can assist with trust-building and messaging?
- Which government or other external partners could support the execution of a CNA?
- Are there external funding opportunities to support program implementation?
- How will you communicate the findings and the value of the CNA? How will you incorporate local community feedback?
- Who will create and who will sign off on the action steps?
- Who will be responsible for reporting on progress and at what frequency?

#### Examples and Guidance

- La Cañada Unified School District's [Strength and Needs Assessment Report](#)
- [Saline Area Schools](#) organized sequential listening sessions to move forward and address new topic
- NC Community Health Assessment Process [Community Assessment Guidebook](#)
- University of Michigan [Engaging Your Community Guidance](#)

# Conduct a SWOT Analysis

## Compiling Comprehensive Environmental Scanning Documents for Review

Completing both internal and external scans produce a varied and potentially large set of outputs to synthesize in a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis. Ultimately, this exercise will help set direction for your DEIJ plan.

Strive for concise and readable documents that focus on the essential issues of each scanning exercise. Make the materials available to SWOT exercise participants at least a week in advance and reserve them for reference by other parties in later stages of the planning process. Follow the steps below and use the resources in the appendix to conduct a SWOT analysis of your findings.

### Conducting a SWOT Analysis

- 1 Facilitator separates participants into groups.**  
 Participants will be assigned either to a Strengths/Weaknesses group or to an Opportunities/Threats group. All participants should have read all the preparatory material.
- 2 Within groups, participants complete the appropriate *Individual SWOT Analysis Worksheet* (see appendix), then share answers.**  
 Each group selects a reporter to record draft items. Note common elements among different items, scrutinize items for clarity, accuracy, and strategic significance.
- 3 Participants revise draft SWOT items as desired.**  
 Participants may work individually or collaborate. Draft items may be left the same, withdrawn, or rewritten.
- 4 Groups break up for lightning review and voting round.**  
 Participants circulate around the room reading the posted drafts. Each person has five voting stickers each for S, W, O, and T which they affix to the draft items of each type they think are best.
- 5 Top-voted statements read aloud.**  
 Return to tables. Facilitator identifies the five top-voted items in each category and reads them aloud. Draft statements are documented with author name(s) and vote count and forwarded to the ITSP working group for creation of a finalized SWOT matrix.

### What to Look for In a SWOT Matrix



Taken as a whole, the matrix comprehensively expresses the district DEIJ environment



Items have strategic, not merely tactical significance



Items are easy to understand and concisely expressed



# Appendix

Plan Development

- 
- SWOT Analysis Toolkit

APPENDIX

2

# Individual SWOT Analysis Worksheet #1

---

Strength	Why is this a current strength? Please provide specific examples.	What are the implications for the district?

Weakness	Why is this a current weakness? Please provide specific examples.	What are the implications for district?

## Individual SWOT Analysis Worksheet #2

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Opportunity	Why is this an area of opportunity? Please provide specific examples.	What are the implications for the district?

Threat	Why is this a current weakness? Please provide specific examples.	What are the implications for the district?



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# Writing and Organizing Your DEI Plan

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SECTION

3

- Key Components of a District DEI Plan
- Avoid These Common Language Mistakes in Your DEI Plan
- Develop Actionable Goals and Objectives
- Enhance Action Steps with the SMART Goals Framework
- Define Success Metrics

# The Key Components of a District DEIJ Plan

## Structuring Your DEIJ Plan

While there is no single ideal structure of a DEIJ plan, each should address seven essential components to demonstrate commitment to and ensure progress toward district goals. These elements, uncovered in a review of 50+ plans, are outlined below, with additional guidance on the following pages.

### 1 Making the Case for DEIJ Progress



Plans that do not outline the district-specific urgency and need for DEIJ progress can signal inauthenticity and a lack of real commitment.

### 2 Finding a Common Language



Progress requires a clear understanding of the key terms that compose this topic and the power of language. DEIJ plans can be an important avenue through which districts can create a common foundation and standard definitions

### 3 Understanding the Plan Development Process



Include details about the plan development process to build credibility and ensure that all community members understand the analysis and intentionality that went into creating district strategy.

### 4 Developing Actionable Goals and Objectives



DEIJ goals need to be responsive to community needs. A plan that is divorced from reality will not inspire confidence and further exacerbate the trust gap between historically underserved families and K-12 schools.

### 5 Embedding Accountability Measures



All too often, districts fail to make progress on strategic DEIJ goals because they have not assigned responsibility for them and/or established deadlines and timelines for their objectives.

### 6 Defining Success Metrics



Without metrics, districts cannot evaluate progress toward goals. However, many DEIJ plans either omit metrics entirely or conflate them with status tracking, defining success simply as executing an action.

### 7 Establishing Ongoing Communication Processes



Districts need to set the expectation upfront that there will be regular updates about the work in the plan to keep the community informed and start to establish trust with groups that have been previously disappointed by district efforts.

# Avoid these Three Language Mistakes in Your DEIJ Plan

## Part 1

While developing a DEIJ plan, it's important for to consider how to frame your priorities and commitments. Many plans use generic and deficit-based language to articulate their priorities. This inattention to language impedes the specificity of action plans and can raise doubts amongst students, teachers, and staff about the district's commitment to progress. To create a common foundation and a shared understanding of district priorities, district leaders should avoid the following common mistakes made in DEIJ plans.

### ✗ Avoid Using Generic Definitions of Diversity, Equity Inclusion, and Justice

### ✓ Contextualize Definitions to Your District Reality

Often, district leaders use DEI and J terms interchangeably without recognizing the distinct meaning each concept brings to this important work. To make progress on DEIJ priorities, districts must have a clear understanding of what each theory actually means. However, including standard definitions of DEIJ is not enough.

DEIJ plans should be unique and relevant to the distinctive context of your district. This also applies to the language used in these plans. Leaders should ensure that the entire district community have a shared, district-specific understanding of what diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice means at their district. This creates a common foundation for progress.

### Examples



*Equity* is the moral responsibility of each member of our learning community to take the intentional actions necessary to create a learning community free of barriers, biases, and disproportionality for each and every person regardless of personal characteristics and social Circumstances.

[Ann Arbor Public Schools Equity Plan](#)



*Diversity:* La Cañada Unified School District (LCUSD) defines diversity as the array of differences which exist between people, on a personal as well as an organizational level. Those differences include, but are not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, ability, religion, family structure, age, and core values.

[LCUSD DEI Implementation Plan](#)



See the appendix and [additional key terms here](#) to contextualize EAB's definitions to your district.

# Avoid these Three Language Mistakes in Your DEI Plan

## Part 2

### ✘ Do Not Use Euphemisms When Discussing Target Populations

### ✔ Be Explicit About Who You Are Trying to Serve, While Recognizing Intersectionality

Most DEI plans include goals related to supporting “underserved”, “underrepresented”, “marginalized”, or “minoritized” communities in districts. While there are implied definitions of these terms, it’s important to consider how they vary for each district. Leaders should unpack these terms to provide greater specificity into the populations they hope to serve and support through their plans. Without this foundational work, it is challenging to develop targeted solutions and to accurately assess progress and the impact of proposed action steps.

Further, it is important to recognize how different social identities impact one another. An intersectional DEI approach recognizes that social identities do not exist in isolation and instead are interconnected and impact one another. When applying an intersectional lens to DEI strategies, districts acknowledge how systems of oppression affect one another. For example, they consider how race and gender intersect to shape the experiences of women of color or recognize how class and ability status impact the needs of disabled low-income folks. This perspective will help district leaders develop solutions that account for the holistic experience of their community members.

#### Examples



See how [University of Wisconsin, Superior](#) explicitly states their definition of underrepresented minorities and underserved populations in their DEI plan (p. 6)

“For the purposes of this plan, it’s also important that the campus community understand the demographics in which the plan prioritizes:

Underrepresented Minority Students at UW-Superior

- Native American/American Indian
- African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Southeast Asian of Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong or Laotian descent who entered the U.S. after 12/31/1975
- Two or more races (either alone or as two or more race/ethnicities)



See how [University of Alberta’s](#) EDI Strategic Plan incorporates an intersectional lens to their work.

#### “Intersectionality

An intersectional approach to equity, diversity, and inclusivity begins from the understanding that the different vectors of social diversity, (race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, nationality, religion, language, age, etc.) do not exist separately or in isolation from each other. Instead, the various vectors of social diversity are interwoven and affect each other. Intersectionality focuses on how multiple, interwoven vectors shape social belonging, cultural representations, social and political institutions, as well as the material conditions of our lives in ways that are not reducible to any singular vector or social category.

# Avoid these Three Language Mistakes in Your DEIJ Plan

## Part 3

### ✘ Avoid Using a Deficit-Based Approach in Your DEIJ Plan

### ✔ Use Asset-Based Language throughout Your Document

When drafting DEIJ plans, district leaders should refrain from using a deficit-based approach which places the onus for current disparities on marginalized communities. This runs the risk of reinforcing stereotypes. Instead, plans should focus on how district processes, policies, or strategies contributed to or exacerbated entrenched inequities. This asset-based approach centers district responsibility over perceived “deficits”. For example, instead of pointing out how students lack college navigation skills, district leaders should consider why their schools are hard to navigate in the first place and work to rectify that.

This approach is essential in ensuring that districts take responsibility for their actions and recognize their role in dismantling systems of oppression. It also ensures that action steps and strategies are addressing systemic and structural issues that perpetuate inequities within a district.



#### Deficit-Based Language

Focuses on rectifying a perceived “shortcoming” of a person or community and assumes that they need to be “fixed” to succeed. Examples include achievement gap, at-risk, learning loss, underprepared.



#### Asset-Based Language

Asset-based language emphasizes that district structures and systems must change to better serve historically marginalized communities—not the other way around. Examples include equity gap, education debt, opportunity gap.



Review the [Center for Urban Education at University of Southern California's toolkit](#) to learn more about the pitfalls of deficit-mindedness.

# Develop Actionable Goals and Objectives

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## Considerations for the Structure and Content of Goals

For a DEIJ plan to be successful, overarching goals need to be broken down into sub-steps and strategies to demonstrate commitment and provide a blueprint for progress. Moreover, plans need to be district-specific and contextualized to their reality—there is no one size fits all approach to advancing DEIJ in districts. These elements are essential in ensuring that DEIJ plans are actionable and conducive to building trust with district constituents. See below for guidance and blinded examples to structure goals and reflect district context.

### 1 Break High-Level Goals into Discrete Action Steps to Provide a Blueprint for Progress

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- Increase enrollment of minority students, those with disabilities, low income, and international populations by providing access and opportunity through removal of barriers and more intentional and targeted recruitment efforts
  - Develop a comprehensive recruitment and communication plan with tailored messaging and outreach while providing students and their families with any assistance needed through the entire application and admission process.

### 2 Target Goals to Support Historically Underserved Groups

---

- Enhance Indigenous presence in public spaces, as well as the availability of cultural and living spaces for Indigenous students, teachers and administrators.
- Review district policies that establish accommodations for students with disabilities and observing religious holidays to ensure, insofar as possible, equity in academic assessments.

### 3 Address District's Role in Perpetuating and Benefiting from Systems of Oppression

---

- Lead research initiatives to enhance knowledge of, and to address equitably, the district's connections to slavery and colonialism.
- Explore ways to better engage the community in our complex district history with respect to racial and social equity.

### 4 Incorporate a DEIJ Lens into Strategy and Operations at All Levels of the District

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- Continue efforts to diversify district leadership and build their cultural competency to lead more effectively.
- Maintain recognition for diverse research ideologies and methodologies, including community-engaged, land-based, and participatory action research.

### 5 Recognize the District's Broad Reach and Role in the Local Community

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- Expand supplier diversity program to focus on local Grow Your Own programs to diversify teacher pipeline
- Supporting advocacy work to end systemic racism and violence, including community organizing, protest/dissent, electoral engagement, and legislative and policy changes.

# Enhance Action Steps with SMART Goals Framework

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## SMART Goals Inspire Commitment and Make It Easy to Evaluate Progress

Districts can better deliver on their DEIJ strategies by developing action items using the SMART goals framework. SMART goals are defined as specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. For example, instead of committing to a more general goal like “diversifying faculty,” a district might commit to specifically recruiting more Black faculty and establishing new positions.

SMART goals benefit DEIJ plans by providing clarity and direction, as well as setting expectations for districts. Use this framework and the tools in the appendix to ensure that goals can be acted upon in a strategic manner.

### The SMART Goal Framework

*Questions to Consider When Defining District-Wide Goals*

# S

**Specific**

- Who will be responsible for reaching the goal?
- What are specific outcomes of the goal?
- Why is this goal our top priority

# M

**Measurable**

- What metrics will be used to assess impact and progress toward or away from the goal?
- At what benchmark is goal considered achieved?

# A

**Attainable**

- Does the district have reasonable means to achieve the goal?
- Has the goal been achieved at other comparable districts?

# R

**Realistic**

- Do all stakeholders agree on the desired outcome of the goal?

# T

**Timely**

- At what point should the goal be achieved?
- At what point should progress updates be made?



# SMART Goals in Practice

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The following SMART goals are collected from different K-12 initiatives to provide real-world examples of how districts adopt SMART goals in practice. The components of the goal that are specific, measurable, actional, realistic, or time-bound are highlighted in bold.



Iowa City Public School's four-year Comprehensive DEI plan commits to **attaining diverse and cultural proficient teachers, administrators and staff**. The district plans to not only recruit underrepresented practitioners but also retain and advance them during their tenure.

Iowa City School District  
[Comprehensive DEI Plan](#)



David Douglas School District commits to identifying multiple pathways of family engagement including annual family surveys and feedback loops to give and receive information. Additionally, the Director of ESL and Equity along side the Family Community Partnership Coordinator **plan to host stakeholder meetings in multiple languages by fall of 2022**.

David Douglas School District  
[Strategic Plan 2021-2026](#)



Mamaroneck Union Free School District commits to stakeholder engagement where **local community members organizations are invited to work with the district's Equity Team to dismantle inequitable policies** and rebuild new ones.

Mamaroneck Union Free School District  
[Equity Plan](#)

# Define Success Metrics

## Demonstrating Progress and Impact of Strategies as a Means of Accountability

Too often, DEIJ plans either omit metrics entirely or conflate them with status tracking, defining success simply as executing an action. For example, many plans contain success metrics that track progress on the completion of specific initiatives related to strategic objectives, rather than progress on the objectives themselves. Districts that view metrics this way run the risk of inaccurately measuring the impact of their DEIJ efforts.

While there is no one-size-fits all approach to measuring success, planning task force should ensure that metrics in their plans are measurable, instill accountability, directly link to strategic objectives, measure impact, and provide actionable information for future work.

Characteristic	Progress Tracker	Success Metric
<i>Example</i>	<i>Antiracism taskforce is stood up and meets consistently for a year</i>	<i>Change in student retention rates for Indigenous men year-over-year</i>
Documents the Execution of a Stated Action Item	Yes. Progress trackers instill accountability by allowing districts to <b>demonstrate completion status of promised commitments.</b>	No
Measures the Impact of Action Items on Achieving Overall Plan Objectives	No	Yes. Success metrics instill accountability by allowing districts to <b>determine if action items help achieve overall plan objectives.</b>
Provides Information for New Future Programming	No	Yes. Success metrics allow districts to <b>diagnose opportunities for continued growth and development.</b>
Connects to Specific Sub-Goals and Action Items	Yes. Progress trackers are most helpful when <b>linked to specific action items to allow constituents to determine whether district commitments are successfully executed.</b>	No
Connects to Overall Action Plan Goals and Objectives	No	Yes. Success metrics are most useful when <b>linked to the overarching goals or objectives of a DEIJ action plan.</b>
Can be Compared to Baseline Data	No	Yes. Success metrics can be <b>easily compared to status quo data to determine the efficacy of an action plan.</b>
Can be Staggered Based on Time Horizon for Goal Execution	No	Yes. Success metrics can be <b>adapted to the specific timeframe for execution of the goal.</b>
Can be Disaggregated by Demographic or other Data Vectors (e.g., race or ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, first-gen status, veteran status)	No	Yes. Success metrics <b>allow for greater nuance because they can be adapted to the target populations of the plan.</b>



# Appendix

Writing and Organizing Your Plan

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SMART Goals Framework  
EAB's Glossary of Terms

APPENDIX

3

# Applying the SMART Goals Framework

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## Directions

### **Purpose of this Tool**

DEIJ strategic plans include a number of top goals and priorities that districts wish to achieve. However, these goals often lack clear definitions, implementation steps, and success metrics. EAB recommends that planning task force consider the SMART goal framework when outlining district-wide goals. This tabletop exercise will help planning task force better understand SMART goals and draft more accountable plans.

### **How to Use This Tool**

This exercise will walk you and your team through five key steps for developing SMART goals:

1. Choosing a goal for your district to pursue
2. Identifying three to five current barriers to achieving your goal
3. Brainstorming one to three SMART goals that could help mitigate or address each barrier
4. Assigning the appropriate project owners for each action item
5. Determining your initiative's metrics of success

# Choose Your DEIJ Strategic Goal

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## Step 1

### Instructions

Review the following strategic goals, based on EAB's hallmarks of an anti-racist institution framework, and choose one as the focus of your activity.



Consistently Assess district **Strategy, Policies, and Operations** Through a Racial Justice Lens



Build an **Inclusive District-wide Climate** that Promotes Learning and Safety for All Community Members



Sustain Investment in **Recruiting, Developing, and Advancing** BIPOC Teachers and Administrators



**Center and Celebrate** the Lived Experiences of BIPOC within district culture



Expand Enrollment Strategy to Promote **College Access and Financial Justice** for BIPOC Students



Create and Scale **Curricular & Co-Curricular Experiences** that Are Reflective and Inclusive of BIPOC



Establish Robust **Partnerships to Advocate for Racial Justice** in the Local and Extended Community

# Identify Barriers to Achieving Your Goal

## Step 2

### Instructions

Identify three to five barriers or challenges at your district that have prevented you from accomplishing the goal you chose above.

Existing Barriers to Success	
Goal:	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	



**Pro Tip:** Review materials from your district and external scans to identify problems in this area.

# Brainstorm SMART Goals

## Step 3

### Instructions

Choose three SMART goals that could help mitigate or address each barrier. Consider the questions below and the previous examples ensure your goals add clarity and direction to initiatives.

Barriers to Success	SMART Goal #1	SMART Goal #2	SMART Goal #3



### Guiding Questions

- Do all stakeholders agree on the desired outcome of the goal?
- Does the district have reasonable means to achieve the goal?
- Has the goal been achieved at other comparable districts?
- At what point should the goal be achieved?
- At what point should progress updates be made?

# Assign Project Owners

## Step 4

### Instructions

Identify the appropriate project owners for each action item. When choosing project owners, consider the questions below to determine the appropriate district leader or staff member for each action item.

SMART Goal	Project Owner



### Guiding Questions

- Does this action item fall within the purview of the project owners' unit?
- Does this project owner have the necessary authority to effectively execute on this action item?
- Does this project owner have the necessary expertise and experience to effectively execute on this action item?
- Does this project owner have the bandwidth to take on this action item? Can they meet the expected deadline? If not, should the deadline be adjusted or should a new project owner be designated?
- How will this project owner be motivated to execute on this action item? Will it be tied to performance reviews? Will they be able to gain professional experience they have asked for in the past?



# Determine Metrics of Success

## Step 5

### Instructions

An essential component to developing SMART goals is knowing when and how your goal has been accomplished, as well as the impact it has had. While one aspect of that component is captured through developing measurable goals, it can be difficult in districts to know what metrics are appropriate to measure. With your team, review the SMART goals you’ve developed and discuss what metrics could apply to each goal to track progress, considering the questions below.

SMART Goal	Metric for Success



### Guiding Questions

- At what benchmark is goal considered achieved?
- Does the metrics stem connect to the over-arching strategic objective?
- Does the metric define success as structural and/or behavioral change, rather than execution of an action?
- Will the metric provide information for new future iterations of the goal?

# Glossary of Terms

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The power of language matters, and we must be clear about the concepts that we are applying to our district concepts. Use the common terms and definitions below to help make dialog about diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice explicit at your district.

## **Ableism**

---

Practices and dominant attitudes in society that assume there is an ideal body and mind that is better than all others.

## **Allyship**

---

An active and consistent practice of using power and privilege to achieve equity and inclusion while holding ourselves accountable to marginalized people's need.

## **Anti-Racism**

---

Identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism.

## **Asset-Based Language**

---

By defining communities by their aspiration and contributions the focus shifts from what's wrong with this person or community to what's right. Asset-based language leads with shared values and emphasizes collective responsibility for solving collective problems.

## **Belonging**

---

A sense of fitting in or feeling like you are an important member of a group.

## **Centering the margins**

---

The discursive shift from the majority or dominant perspective to that of minority or subaltern groups.

## **BIPOC**

---

An acronym that stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities.

## **Critical Race Theory (CRT)**

---

Developed officially in 1989 by a group of legal scholars of color and has since spread to many disciplines. CRT suggests that racism remains pervasive in the US, impacts all aspects of society, and is seamlessly embedded in policies and social life—and the individual racist does not need to exist for district racism to be pervasive.

## **Culturally Responsive Teaching**

---

Research-based approach to teaching that makes meaningful connections between what students learn in schools and their cultures, languages, and life experiences.

## **Diversity**

---

Representation of all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another.

# Glossary of Terms

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## **Dominant Culture**

The cultural beliefs, values, and traditions that are centered and dominant in society's structures and practices. Dominant cultural practices are thought of as "normal" and, therefore, preferred and right. As a result, diverse ways of life are often devalued, marginalized, and associated with low cultural capital. Conversely, in a multicultural society, various cultures are celebrated and respected equally.

## **Equity**

Evaluating systems and districts to remove biases in the distribution of opportunities and resources.

## **Ethnicity**

A socially constructed grouping of people who share a common cultural heritage derived from values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, geographical base, and ancestry. Examples include: Haitian, African American (Black); Chinese, Korean (Asian); Cherokee, Navajo (Native American); Cuban, Mexican (Latinx); Irish, Swedish (White European).

## **Gender Expression**

External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut, or voice—which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors—and are typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

## **Gender Identity**

One's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither—how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves, sometimes different from their sex assigned at birth.

## **Implicit Bias**

The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control.

## **Inclusion**

Ensuring differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard, and every individual feels a sense of belonging.

## **Inclusive Pedagogy**

A student-centered approach to teaching by which teachers create an inviting and engaging learning environment to all students with varied backgrounds, learning styles, and physical and cognitive abilities in the classroom.

## **Individual Racism**

The conscious prejudice, hate, or bias against people based on race.

## **Interest Convergence**

The notion that progress toward racial equity is only accommodated when it is also in the interests of whites.

# Glossary of Terms

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## **Intersectionality**

A lens through which to view social issues and see where power and oppression intersect, providing a more holistic view of how individuals are impacted. It includes the understanding that individual or group experiences of oppression cannot be distilled into a single identity.

## **Justice**

Systematic and proactive reinforcement of public policies, district practices, cultural messages, and social norms needed to achieve and sustain equity for all.

### **Economic Justice**

Economic justice infuses economic recovery and development with social justice best practices. The goal is to heighten equitable access to resources, including but not limited to access to childcare, healthcare, employment opportunities, healthy food, affordable housing, and education.

### **Racial Justice**

Systematic reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages needed to achieve and sustain racial equity, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all.

### **Social Justice**

The equal access to wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.

## **LGBTQIA**

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual.

## **Marginalized**

Excluded, ignored, or relegated to the outer edge of a group/society/community.

## **Minoritized**

Used in place of minority (noun) to highlight the social oppression that minoritizes individuals. Minoritized groups in any society are those defined as “minorities” by a dominant group that is numerically larger. This involves a power relationship between dominant and minoritized groups.

## **Oppression**

Systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and disadvantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the advantaged norm, either intentionally or unintentionally.

## **Power**

Access to resources that enhance one’s chances of getting what one needs in order to lead a safe, comfortable, and productive life

# Glossary of Terms

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## **Privilege**

Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal districts of society to all members of a dominant group.

## **Race**

Race is a socially constructed concept that places individuals into categories based on appearances that are ascribed with cultural characteristics.

## **Socioeconomic Status**

The social standing or class of an individual or group, often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation.

## **Systemic Racism (Structural Racism)**

A system in which public policies, district practices, cultural representations, and other social norms—while not practiced consciously—reinforce and perpetuate racial group inequity.

## **Underrepresented/Underserved**

Underrepresented or underserved groups are those that are disproportionately lower in number in the district or organization, relative to their number in the general population. They also, historically or currently, have received less attention, resources, and status than others with more power and privilege, resulting in patterns of exclusion and unbalanced difficulty in obtaining social and economic prosperity or other social benefits, such as education.

## **White Privilege**

Race-based advantages, district preferential treatment, and exemption from racial oppression.



# Implementation

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SECTION

# 4

- Operationalize Strategic Initiatives
- Establish an Ongoing Communication Process
- Share Out DEIJ Successes and Progress

# Operationalize Strategic Initiatives

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## Assigning Project Owners for Goals and Sub-Goals

Districts are being asked to go further than ever to foster equity and dismantle systemic racism, but too few have the accountability systems in place to facilitate follow through and drive meaningful progress on their DEIJ plans. In addition to SMART goals, accountability measures like project owners and timelines are critical to moving from rhetoric to meaningful action. See the strategies and examples below to embed accountability measures into your DEIJ plan.

### **Assign Dual Project Owners at Cabinet and Unit Levels to Encourage Collaboration**

No single person can (or should) hold sole responsibility for DEIJ strategy. Dismantling systemic racism demands coordination among multiple departments, so responsibility is necessarily diffuse. Without the right accountability systems in place, however, this can lead to a piecemeal approach to DEIJ efforts.

As a result, EAB recommends that districts should assign action items and objectives to “project owners” at both the cabinet- and unit-level. Naming a senior leader for each item helps ensure buy-in and signals that DEIJ work is a cabinet-level priority. At the same time, assigning objectives to unit-level owners also establishes frontline commitment and helps to translate broad strategy to the department and individual levels.

These “project owners” should include representatives across the entire district and not just one specific office or role. For example, the onus for DEIJ progress should not be placed solely on Director of Diversity & Inclusion. Systemic change requires action from many stakeholders, including enrollment management, residence life, athletics, to health services, academic affairs, and beyond. Finally, project owners must collaborate to ensure everyone is coordinated in both their understanding of the problem and their implementation of solutions.

#### *Examples of DEIJ Project Owners*

► [Lee’s Summit R-7 School District](#)

- Action steps are assigned to teams with executive and unit-level representation

► [Arcadia University](#)

- Arcadia assigns not just an office, but specific faculty, staff, and administrators to be accountable for each action item.

► [American University](#)

- In phase two of its Plan for Inclusive Excellence, American University holds cabinet-level leadership accountable while also delegating responsibility to different unit-level owners.

► [University of Denver](#)

- University of Denver’s plan includes a list of sub-goal level collaborators to facilitate intra-district collaboration.

**Continue to the next page** for more

# Operationalize Strategic Initiatives (cont.)

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## Establishing Deadlines to Drive Tangible Progress

### **Facilitate Follow-Through on Strategic Objectives With Concrete Timelines**

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Demands for change are growing in urgency. Today's students expect fast responses, but too often, districts get caught in a state of inertia.

As another measure of accountability, district leaders responsible for developing DEIJ plans must establish concrete deadlines and timelines for objectives. EAB's review of DEIJ plans revealed that most districts tend to focus on incremental quick wins, rather than bold, sustained action that addresses systemic issues over the long term. The best plans have a balanced mix of short-, mid-, and long-term timelines, so as to not overprioritize one set above another (e.g., focusing too much energy on short-term symptom relief without investing in structural change). That said, it is not enough to label an objective as "short"- or "long"-term. District leaders must define what that means by applying actual lengths of time to them.

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### *Examples of DEIJ Timelines*

- ▶ [Lee Summit R-7 School District](#)
  - Lee Summit names DEIJ goals with deadlines attached to goal outcomes (i.e., "Fall 2022" or "on-going").
- ▶ [American University](#)
  - AU breaks down its goals into immediate steps and long-term objectives that will be tackled each academic year

Taken together, these strategies create a shared understanding of who is responsible for each action item and the estimated time for completion. Ultimately, these accountability elements will help to ensure that DEIJ plans are conducive to making progress and building trust with community members that have long waited for advancement on DEIJ issues.



# Establish an Ongoing Communication Processes

## Keeping the Community Involved in DEIJ Initiatives

Making progress on DEIJ is a continuous improvement process, and schools should therefore set the expectation upfront that there will be regular updates about the work in the plan. These updates will serve to keep the community informed and start to establish trust with groups that have been previously disappointed by school efforts.

Beyond semester or annual updates, it is also important to show where the school is in making progress on specific goals. Providing details and information on more granular action items gives the school community a sense of how the day-to-day work is progressing and can highlight any specific roadblocks. This allows for in-the-moment course correction and helps instill a culture of transparency around the work.

To make it easy to find these updates, EAB recommends schools create a central webpage or hub with their DEIJ plan, any updates, and key resources. This ensures that all relevant information is easily accessible. District Leaders should provide quarterly updates on the progress on strategic goals and action items. These updates should be shared by the Superintendent. See below for additional guidance around key elements of DEIJ plan communication.

### Create Central Website for Current Plan

Review the [Iowa City School District equity webpage](#) for their equity work plan and [FAQ for immigrant and undocumented families](#).

### Solicit Input and Comments

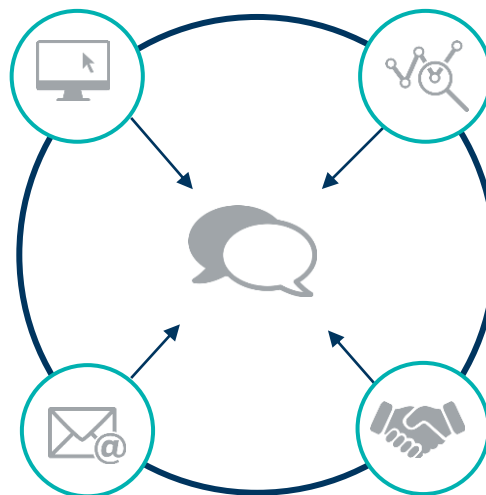
See how [Dartmouth University](#) includes a form for sharing questions and comments at the bottom of each DEI-relevant webpage and commits to replying to every submission.

### Share Progress on Goals and Initiatives

See how [Georgetown Day School](#) provides details about whether actions are in the planning, in progress, or completion phase.

### Allow Individuals and Units to Share Contributions

Learn how the [University of Iowa](#) uses a survey to collect progress information from individuals and units.



# Share Out DEIJ Successes and Progress

## Keeping the District and Local Communities Up to Date

Districts should publish comprehensive DEIJ plan updates to their central websites. Doing so increases transparency and allows districts to celebrate its successes while also laying out clear plans for the work yet to be done. Ultimately, keeping the community updated will build credibility and demonstrate that your district remains committed to the work.

### Fairfield City School District's Diversity Webpage

The screenshot shows the Fairfield City School District's Diversity Webpage. The header features the district's logo, a language selector, and a search bar. The navigation menu includes links for ABOUT, SCHOOLS, DEPARTMENTS, EMPLOYMENT, DIVERSITY, PARENTS, FINE ARTS, ATHLETICS, and CONTACT. The main content area is titled "Diversity Plan" and includes a "Dear Community Member," section, a paragraph about the district's belief statements, a list of two belief statements, a photo of hands joined together, and a paragraph about the district's first Diversity Plan. A sidebar on the right lists links for the Diversity Plan, Equity Leadership Team, Community Diversity Alliance, Diversity Recruitment & Retention Committee, Learn More About Our Equity Work Video, and Resources. A callout box points to the "Diversity" tab in the navigation menu, stating: "Provide easy navigation to 'Diversity' tab for parents & stakeholders to learn about Diversity plan and initiatives." Another callout box points to a list of links at the bottom of the page, stating: "Offer updates on previous year's work, as well as next steps for the year ahead." The list of links includes: Diversity Plan 2019-2023, ELT Diversity Plan Progress Report 12 10 2020, Diversity Plan Progress Report Dec 12 2019, Diversity Plan Progress Report Dec 20 2018, Diversity Plan Progress Report 2017, Diversity Plan Progress Report Dec 15 2016 (4), Diversity Plan Presentation August 18 2016, Equity Plan Progress Report 2015, Equity Plan Progress Report 2014, Equity Plan Progress Report 2013, and Equity Plan Progress Report 2012.pdf.

**Provide easy navigation** to "Diversity" tab for parents & stakeholders to learn about Diversity plan and initiatives.

**Offer updates** on previous year's work, as well as next steps for the year ahead.