**A Guide for School Teams:**

**Assessing Racial and Ethnic Disparities and Empowering Schools to Move Toward Educational Equity**

# Purpose of the Guided Reflection Tool:

The purpose of this guided reflection tool is to help schools consider factors that either widen or reduce disparities in opportunity, experiences, and outcomes for each student in the school community. This resource is supported by cooperative agreement NU87PS004366 funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views or endorsement of the CDC or the Department of Health and Human Services.

First, gather information and observe what is happening in your school. Then, explore, discuss, and rate your school community using the template in this document. Detailed instructions, including example statements that your team can use for “Reflections for Action” can be found in the companion PDF at <https://www.apa.org/education-career/k12/covid-19/racial-ethnic-disparities-guided-reflection-tool>.

# Guided Reflection Tool Rating Scale:

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| **0:**  **Unavailable or insufficient** | **1:**  **Aware** | **2:**  **Emerging** | **3:**  **Strengthening** | **4:**  **Emphasizing** |
| This resource may be unavailable or insufficient. | This resource is not yet developed and is a **growth opportunity** in the school’s practice. There is a general awareness of the importance of the resource but it’s **not evident in the practices** of the school. | This resource is an **emerging competency** in the school’s practice. The school has **at least one example** of implementation. | This resource is an **emerging strength area** in the school’s practice. The school provides numerous **examples of how they apply this resource** and the impact on student learning. | This resource is a **strength area,** and the school **provides clear evidence of student growth as a result**. This resource drives professional development and serves as a model for other educators and schools. |

# Domain Definition:

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| **Domain** | **Definition** |
| **Teacher Quality and Expertise** | The combined attributes of knowledge, skills, attitudes, educational experiences, and certification, that promote teachers effectiveness in organizing and facilitating student learning. In other words, the teacher quality and expertise that encompass teacher pedagogical skills, content knowledge, experience, and in combination is used to meet diverse student needs. |
| **Teacher Diversity** | The representation of a variety of backgrounds, cultures, experiences, and demographics among teachers. Teacher diversity aims to ensure that the teaching workforce reflects the diversity of the student population to promote inclusive and culturally responsive education. |
| **Financial Resources** | The availability and allocation of funds within a school system. Financial resources encompass budgetary considerations, funding sources, and how resources are prioritized and distributed to support educational programs, infrastructure, and student services. |
| **Curriculum and Instructional Standards for Learning** | The structured set of educational content, skills, and objectives that guide teaching and learning. Curriculum and instructional standards provide a framework for educators, ensuring consistency and alignment with educational goals and benchmarks. |
| **School Climate** | The overall atmosphere, environment, and policies within a school encompassing the social, emotional, and physical well-being of students and staff. A positive school climate fosters a sense of belonging, psychological safety, and engagement, contributing to student academic success. |
| **Discipline** | School responses and strategies intended to provide guidance, accountability, and manage student behavior. These might be guidelines for teachers in response to individual student behaviors, or guidelines for classroom, grade, or school-level responses. |
| **Policy Climate** | The educational regulations, policies, and practices at local, state, and national levels used to encourage academic successes. The policy climate influences the educational landscape broadly, shaping curriculum selection, assessment practices, funding, and other aspects of the school system |

# Guided Reflection Tool Template:

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| **Domain** | **Essential Questions** | **Rate your School from 0-4** | **Reflections for Action** |
| **Teacher quality and expertise** | Effective teachers are knowledgeable about subject matter, student motivation, managing behavior, and principles of culturally responsive teaching as reflected in student achievement, behavioral, and well-being outcomes. Are effective teachers distributed equitably across classes and grades?  Are the least experienced teachers given sufficient mentoring and resource support, including training in inclusive teaching practices?  Are student teachers placed with experienced teachers who can model high-quality teaching, including culturally responsive teaching, for the benefit of future students?  Are all teachers, both experienced and less so, given access to professional development and conferences that will help them to recognize and reduce their biases and engage in practices that promote equity and reduce disparities in student achievement?  Does the school provide opportunities for teachers to learn how to address **microaggressions** directed against protected groups, including minoritized individuals including school professionals and students? |  |  |
| **Resources** | **Types of Resources** | **Rate your School from 0-4** | **Reflections for Action** |
| **Teacher Diversity** | Does the racial and ethnic make-up of the school staff, including teachers, reflect the community served by the school?  Does the administration seek out minoritized teacher candidates who have completed teacher preparation programs, including minority-serving institutions, that reflect the composition of the local communities?  Are minoritized student teachers invited to do their pre-service practice at your school?  When minoritized student teachers do conduct their student teaching at the school, are they given adequate support?  Does the school incentivize the hiring of minoritized teachers?  Does the school provide pathways for paraprofessionals and teacher assistants to become teachers? |  |  |
| **Resources** | **Types of Resources** | **Rate your School from 0-4** | **Reflections for Action** |
| **Financial Resources** | Are funds for the arts and extra-curricular resources distributed throughout the school and to all groups? Must parents or teachers supplement school funds for the arts or other extracurricular resources?  Are school funds available to support field trips and enrichment opportunities for all students?  Is the technology (hardware, software, broadband) needed for high quality on-line learning available to all students?  Is high quality, publicly funded early childhood education available to any families who want it? |  |  |
| **Resources** | **Types of Resources** | **Rate your School from 0-4** | **Reflections for Action** |
| **Curriculum and Instructional Standards for Learning** | Do classrooms have sufficient teacher-student ratios to address the needs of all students including minoritized students, students with disabilities, and English language learners?  Does the school provide opportunities for teachers to review and examine the curriculum to ensure that it is accurate, culturally relevant, and inclusive for the students in their classrooms?  [Does your school support teacher efforts to enhance existing instructional content with materials that include diverse identities and incorporates an equity lens?](https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/Incorporate_Diversity_into_the_Curriculum.pdf)  Does the school incorporate the contributions of different cultures and ethnic groups in required curriculum? Are there opportunities to celebrate student diversity?  Does the school identify and provide opportunities for teachers to explore and address conditions that are more vulnerable to effects of implicit bias? |  |  |
| **Resources** | **Types of Resources** | **Rate your School from 0-4** | **Reflections for Action** |
| **School Climate** | Are school values, rules and cultural expectations translated into any languages needed to be accessible to families? Are the values, rules, and cultural expectations easy to find for those with and without access to the school website?  Do students and families, including those from historically marginalized groups, have opportunities to provide input on school values, rules, and climate?  Are the values held by the school administration explicitly articulated? Is there a check for understanding by the students?  Are there efforts to ensure that every student feels a sense of belonging or value in school, particularly those students historically marginalized such as racially and ethnically minoritized youth?  Is there agreement across administrators, teachers, students, and parents about standards of school safety? Do the school’s efforts to create a safe environment for all students include explicit policy regarding discrimination based on race, ethnicity, ability, socio-economic status, religion, gender, and sexuality?  Does the school feel safe not only physically but also psychologically for all youth? |  |  |
| **Resources** | **Types of Resources** | **Rate your School from 0-4** | **Reflections for Action** |
| **School climate (continued)** | How is school climate assessed? Are focus groups and alumni surveys used to supplement student feedback? How are specific student demographic groups ensured representation in input, especially when they are in the minority in the school?  Do students and staff have easy access to school-based mental health professionals with expertise in inclusive and affirming therapeutic practice?  Does the school connect with parents and community to communicate goals for diversity in the classroom?  Are processes for access to enrichment classes and advanced courses like Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) widely known?  Are minoritized students well represented in enrichment classes and advanced courses like AP/IB? |  |  |
| **Resources** | **Types of Resources** | **Rate your School from 0-4** | **Reflections for Action** |
| **Discipline** | If there is a disparity in school push out, and are resources and policies applied to rectify the problem?  Do teachers and administrators hold the same behavioral expectations for all students?  Are school rules and expectations explicitly stated? Do students understand any “hidden norms” of the school (i.e., expectations schools have of students that are not codified in any policies)?  Are school rules applied and enforced equitably?  Has your school identified vulnerable decision points, or places where teachers may need extra support when engaging in classroom management to help reduce the role racial and ethnic bias may play in educators’ decision making around student behavior?  Does the school engage in restorative and/or transformative justice practices?  If removal suspensions or expulsions are used, are they distributed equitably across student groups in response to the same infractions? Are students encouraged to see school counselors, social workers, or school psychologists before such measures are taken? |  |  |
| **Resources** | **Types of Resources** | **Rate your School from 0-4** | **Reflections for Action** |
| **Discipline (continued)** | Are school discipline data (i.e., office referrals, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion) tracked regularly and disseminated publicly? Are they disaggregated by race, including Asian and Pacific Islander youth? |  |  |
| **Policy Climate** | Does the school include diversity and equity goals in their strategic plans? If so, what resources are allocated to advancing these goals?  Does the school administration, curricular, and mental health leadership solicit input from all constituents of the community on policy decisions including from students, families, teachers, and school staff?  Does school policy foster active integration of students in the school community?  Do special education services fully integrate students with disabilities into the school community? |  |  |

It is important to acknowledge that schools and communities are ever-changing and work on these issues will be ongoing. We suggest periodically revisiting the plan and monitoring progress.