



Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest

District Leaders

Join the Making Equitable Schools Audit Partnership

Your district is invited to join the Making Equitable Schools Audit (MESA) partnership, which **strives to ensure that all members of a school community—including students, teachers, and staff—experience a safe and supportive school environment.** MESA is a yearlong facilitated and collaborative approach designed to help schools use existing data and leverage communitywide relationships to move toward more equitable and belonging-filled experiences for all in a school community.

The MESA approach is designed to:

- ▶ Use existing school data to identify equity gaps in discipline, student belonging, and high-quality learning opportunities.
- ▶ Bring together leadership and diverse representatives from across a school community to look at data, identify common themes, and prioritize findings for action.
- ▶ Engage in an intentional planning process to boost student sense of belonging, reduce the use of exclusionary discipline, and improve the overall school environment.

The MESA approach provides **free, ongoing coaching and resources for school leaders** as well as support for a **facilitated equity audit** that includes representatives of the broader school community. The approach includes:

- ▶ Three virtual coaching sessions for school leaders to begin planning for the equity audit.
- ▶ A full-day equity audit to make meaning of data and identify priorities for action for school leaders as well as identified teachers, staff, parents, students, and community members. Brief preparation and debrief virtual sessions are held before and after the full-day audit.
- ▶ Five virtual coaching sessions and two action and monitoring sessions for school leaders to identify policy and practice changes and support implementation and monitoring.

A school librarian called the equity audit collaboration with Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest a “milestone” of the year. The MESA partnership and its focus on equity, she explained, became “part of my development in keeping me going in the educational field, inspiring me, reminding me of where I’m at, how I got here, and why I want to stay.”

A school administrator reflected on the MESA partnership: “[The REL Midwest team] were great to work with. I enjoyed the process. From an educator standpoint and a school leader, you want to hear how you can improve. And this made it very easy just to identify some of the work.”



The MESA approach was developed by REL Midwest in partnership with Akron Public Schools. REL Midwest is funded by the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education.



What it means to be a member of the MESA partnership

Districts that implement the MESA approach work in partnership with REL Midwest to integrate MESA's facilitated coaching and equity audit sessions into their schools' schedules. Districts agree to collaborate with REL Midwest to support schools as they participate in equity conversations, convene diverse members of the school community, and develop plans for policy and practice changes to support equitable school environments. Districts implementing the MESA approach also agree to work with REL Midwest to assess the success of the MESA approach in increasing student sense of belonging, reducing the use of exclusionary discipline, and improving the school environment through surveys, interviews, and administrative data. Districts that are not implementing the MESA approach may still join the partnership to learn more about the work and consider opportunities for participation in the future.



MESA's timeline

Activity	Timing
Districts join the MESA partnership.	March/April 2024
School principals attend onboarding sessions.	May 2024
Districts communicate with and distribute beginning-of-year MESA materials to staff.	Fall 2024
School leaders attend preaudit coaching sessions.	Fall 2024
Schools convene for equity audit sessions.	Winter 2025
School leaders attend postaudit coaching sessions.	Spring 2025
School leaders attend action and monitoring sessions.	June 2025
Districts communicate with and distribute end-of-year MESA materials to staff.	June 2025



Interested in joining the partnership or want to learn more?

We look forward to partnering with districts ready to cultivate lasting outcomes for their students. Please send your questions directly to Melissa Yisak at relmw.mesa@air.org.

Contact Us



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