



REL Southeast
Director's Email

February 2023

Greetings from the REL Southeast,

Researchers at the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights have established that racial and ethnic minorities, children from low-income backgrounds, and children who are not proficient in English, oftentimes do not have the same educational opportunities as their counterparts who are White, from higher income backgrounds, and are proficient in English. These contrasting opportunities and resulting experiences have contributed to significant racial, economic, and English language achievement gaps,¹ which may have been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.^{2, 3}

RELs play an important role in addressing disparities in student achievement, both by contributing to research on how experiences within the country's education system differ by context and student group, thereby impacting outcomes, and by identifying potential solutions to prevent inequities and promote student success. This month, we'd like to share several resources that approach educational equity from a variety of stakeholder perspectives. We hope you find these materials informative and useful, and as always, thank you for helping to improve educational outcomes for every student in our region.

With gratitude,

Dr. Nicole Patton Terry
Director, REL Southeast

¹ Hussar, B., Zhang, J., Hein, S., Wang, K., Roberts, A., Cui, J., Smith, M., Bullock Mann, F., Barmer, A., and Dilig, R. (2020). *The Condition of Education 2020* (NCES 2020-144). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.
<https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2020144>.

² Dorn, E., Hancock, B., Sarakatsannis, J., & Viruleg, E. (2020). COVID-19 and learning loss – disparities grow and students need help. McKinsey & Company.
<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/covid-19-and-learning-loss-disparities-grow-and-students-need-help>.

³ Ibid.



Creating Culturally Affirming Spaces Webinar Series

In this two-part series, presenters and practitioners discussed the practical knowledge and leadership skills necessary to begin creating culturally affirming spaces to make schools more safe and supportive environments for culturally, linguistically, and gender-diverse students.

[Webinar 1: Creating Culturally Affirming Spaces: School and Classroom Practices](#)

The first webinar expanded knowledge and provided practical, evidence-based examples of systems, policies, and practices that are culturally affirming—what they are and what they are not—to inform instruction, school climate-related practices, and everyday decisions that shape the academic and social-emotional well-being of students and their families.

[Click here to watch the archived webinar and explore resources.](#)

[Webinar 2: Creating Culturally Affirming Spaces: A Systems Orientation](#)

The second webinar expanded on how culturally responsive strategies can be used to support academic and social and emotional development, and participants learned about evidence-based systemic leadership approaches and strategies for implementing culturally affirming environments.

[Click here to watch the archived webinar and explore resources.](#)



[Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) Data in Oregon: Using CTE Data to Identify Equity Gaps in Oregon and Strategies for Closing Equity Gaps in CTE](#)

In collaboration with the Oregon Graduation and Postsecondary Success Alliance, REL Northwest held a series of trainings to support district leaders and CTE instructors in Oregon by increasing their understanding of CTE participation, concentration, and persistence rates of students in their

stricts, with a focus on special populations of students as defined in the reauthorization of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V).

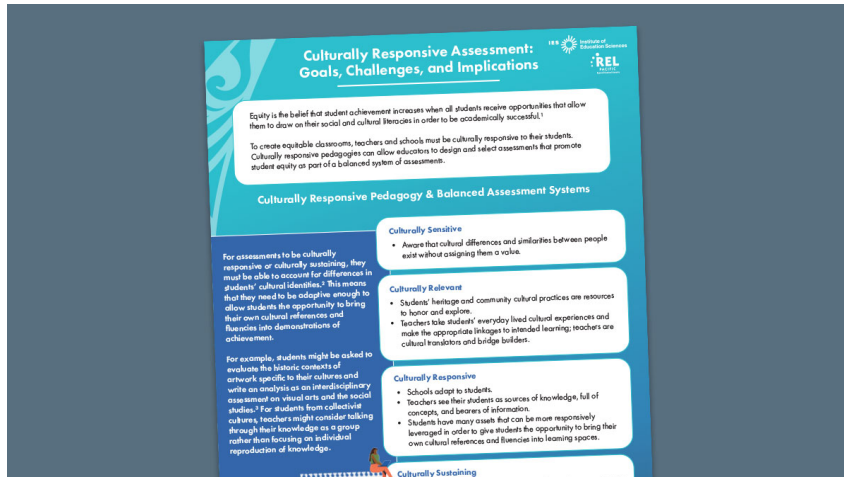
[Click here to watch the presentation and explore resources.](#)



Advancing Equity: Five Districts Focus on Improving Outcomes of Black and Latinx Students

This blog post from REL West discusses the Equity in Action project, created to increase the safety, well-being, and engagement of Black and Latinx students and their families. The post details the project's origins, outlines project activities, and notes positive takeaways.

[Click here to read the blog post.](#)



Culturally Responsive Assessment: Goals, Challenges, and Implications

This infographic outlines key components of a culturally responsive pedagogy, including cultural sensitivity, relevancy, responsiveness, and sustainability, and presents considerations for designing and selecting culturally responsive assessments.

[Click here to explore the infographic.](#)



Improving and Diversifying the Teacher Pipeline

This webinar highlighted research takeaways and actionable strategies to help states and teacher preparation programs to build stronger, more diverse teacher pipelines. REL Midwest shared key findings from the study [*Understanding the Teacher Pipeline for Indiana's K-12 Public Schools*](#). Presenters from state education agencies and teacher preparation programs reflected on the study findings, barriers to entering and completing educator preparation programs, strategies to improve equity, and strategies to support different affinity groups.

[Click here to watch the presentation and explore resources.](#)



Actionable district strategies to build a diverse teacher workforce and foster educational equity

This blog post from REL Midwest discusses their Racine Unified School District in Wisconsin partnership project aimed at promoting strategies that can improve a district's capacity to hire and retain Black teachers. The post details the project's coaching activities and describes three best practices for implementing a cycle of continuous improvement.

[Click here to read the blog post.](#)

