# Dimensions of Resource Equity

What do we mean by dimensions of resource equity? Each dimension below is a type of resource that can be differentiated and brought to bear consistent with the needs of students.

We can assess the level of equity of each of these types of resources by exploring the extent to which this resource is differentiated across schools and students, consistent with differences in student need (i.e., where higher needs students have access to more of these resources) or differentiated inversely with student need (i.e., where lower needs students have access to more of these resources).

We are not asserting that higher needs students need a certain amount more of any of these resources or that higher needs students must have more of each of these resources to eliminate inequitable outcomes/achievement gaps. Rather, *this framework of dimensions of resource equity can enable system leaders to take stock of their investments in equity and make deliberate decisions about how to reallocate and invest to align these resources with need, consistent with district strategy and context.*

1. **Teacher Effectiveness** – Consistent access to a highly effective teacher has a dramatic effect on student achievement. However, too often districts have difficulty in attracting and retaining their most effective teachers in high needs schools. This can create a vicious cycle of new teachers being assigned to higher needs schools and turning over at higher rates. Areas to consider include:
   1. Highly effective teachers: Is the district leveraging top talent to serve the students who are furthest behind? How does the percentage of high needs students being taught by a highly effective teacher (as defined by the district) compare to the percentage teaching low needs students?
   2. Novice teachers: How are novice teachers distributed across students of different need levels? How does the percentage of high needs students being taught by a novice teacher compare to the percentage teaching low-needs students?
2. **School Leadership** – Similar to access to highly effective teachers, students enrolled in schools with highly effective leaders tend to perform better. Like equity of teacher effectiveness, areas to consider when assessing the equity of access to effective school leadership include effectiveness, experience and stability.
3. **School Funding** – School funding levels and/or staffing ratios are differentiated based on student need. Examples of systems that may differentiate funding levels based on need include using need-based funding weights or differentiated staffing ratios based on student need. Key questions to consider are: to what extent do schools with higher need levels spend more on a per pupil basis? If novice teachers disproportionately teach in higher needs schools, do the extra resources allocated to these schools more than offset the inequities associated with teacher pay?
4. **Personalized Student Experience** – We want students to have a school experience that aligns with their needs and interests. This can mean students getting individual attention in areas of need, or students taking classes consistent with their goals and preferences. In some districts, schools with greater needs tend to be small and under-enrolled, and as a result, may offer a narrower range of course offerings with less ability to differentiate group sizes for students who need more individual attention. Areas to consider include:
   1. Course offerings: To what extent are students with greater needs (or students in schools with greater needs) able to enroll in courses based on their specific goals or interests?
   2. Individual attention: To what extent are schools differentiating class and group sizes to provide greater individual attention to students who are further behind?
5. **Early Intervention and Remediation** – This dimension considers student access to early services to support learning including: access to Pre-K and access to early intervention supports when needed. Areas to consider include:
   1. Pre-K: To what extent are higher needs students enrolled in high quality Pre-K programs before starting kindergarten?
   2. Early Intervention: To what extent do students who fall behind have access to RTI and other early intervention supports, without having to rely on referral to special education as the means of providing supplemental supports?
6. **Physical and Emotional Wellness Supports** – Students who do not feel physically safe or have unmet social or emotional needs struggle more with academic coursework and are at greater risk of poor performance. This dimension considers student access to social and emotional supports within the school as well as access to physical health services and to a safe and secure learning environment.
   1. Physical safety: To what extent do higher needs students report feeling physically safe in and around their school? What are the rates of incidents of violence in schools with more high needs students? How do these compare with rates for schools with fewer high needs students?
   2. Social/Emotional supports: To what extent do higher needs students have access to counselors, social workers or other mental health resources? How does this access compare to lower needs students?
7. **Student Time: Length of Day/Year** – The amount of time spent on school and schoolwork can vary greatly across students, schools and systems. Intuitively, students who are further behind should need to spend more time learning in order to catch up. Areas to consider include:
   1. Hours of instruction for students: To what extent do students who have greater needs spend more time in school per week or year than students who are further ahead? Does this vary across schools or across students within schools?
   2. Total time on schoolwork: Independent of length of the school day, to what extent do students who have greater needs spend more time engaged in schoolwork (after-school programming, homework, etc.) per week or year than students who are further ahead?
8. **Rigor of Curriculum and Instruction** – Research has shown a relationship between the level of expectations that districts, schools or teachers set for their students and their students’ subsequent levels of achievement. Areas to consider when assessing rigor include:
   1. Access to advanced coursework: Do schools with higher needs students offer AP and advanced coursework at similar levels as schools with lower needs students? Do students with similar performance levels across schools get placed into advanced or AP classes at the same rates across high and low needs schools?
   2. Rigor of instructional practice and assignments: Are assignments in equivalent courses equally challenging across high and low needs schools? Do teachers use equally rigorous questioning and engagement practices across higher and lower needs student populations?
   3. Grading practices: Do the relationships between student grades and state assessment outcomes reflect all students being held to high standards?
9. **Achievement of Peers** – Our analysis of student performance across districts shows that student performance is impacted by the performance and need of his/her classmates. Specifically, we see that high-needs students in low-need schools often out-perform low-needs students in high-needs schools. Often a function of a community’s housing patterns, and the district’s student assignment and school choice policies, the rate at which low-performing students are in the same schools (and the same classes within schools) as their high-performing peers varies greatly across systems and can be a powerful lever for equity. Areas to consider include:
   1. Economic Disadvantage: To what extent are economically disadvantaged students attending schools/classes with non-disadvantaged students? How does this compare to the district’s average rate of economic non-disadvantage?
   2. Incoming performance: To what extent are low performing students attending schools/classes with higher performing classmates? How does this compare to the district’s average rate of higher performance?
10. **Parental Involvement** – Parent engagement in their students’ learning is a critical factor impacting student achievement. In our analysis, we often see that parent engagement varies significantly across school and neighborhood. Key questions to consider include:
    1. How involved are parents in partnering with schools to meet student learning goals?
    2. In what ways does the district and its schools engage parents in their students’ learning goals?