



Identifying Resource Inequities

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February 2024

The content of this report was developed under a grant from the Department of Education through the Office of Program and Grantee Support Services (PGSS) within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), by the Region 15 Comprehensive Center at WestEd under Award #S283B190053. This contains resources that are provided for the reader's convenience. These materials may contain the views and recommendations of various subject matter experts as well as hypertext links, contact addresses, and websites to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. The U.S. Department of Education does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any outside information included in these materials. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service, enterprise, curriculum, or program of instruction mentioned in this document is intended or should be inferred.

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Purpose

This document provides state education agency (SEA) leaders with a systematized approach to identifying and defining elements, major tasks, and deliverables for conducting a meaningful resource allocation review (RAR). Based on the findings of an intensive four-year design process, field research, and recommendations from the pilot audit of the RAR process conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, this document

- offers education leaders at the state and local level with concrete examples of resource inequities,
- presents considerations for decision-making around resources, and
- proposes ways to reduce the burden on LEAs and schools by streamlining the RAR completion process.

The Region 15 Comprehensive Center (R15CC) believes the primary objective of the RAR is for SEAs to support local education agencies (LEAs) in reviewing their resource planning and alignment to address inequities. This involves establishing connections between identified needs, evidence-based strategies, and resource allocation methods used to support the design and delivery of programs. The intended outcome is to address resource inequities, thereby improving student outcomes and the educational experience for all students. Users are encouraged to refine and customize this guidance to fit their context.

Equitable Resource Planning and Alignment

SEAs have a tremendous opportunity to leverage the RAR in supporting LEAs and schools to adopt a systemic approach to equitable resource planning and alignment. Building on the

primary objective of the RAR, key components of resource planning and alignment support include

- managing and coordinating resources to support educators in having a greater impact on student engagement and learning;
- designing and delivering innovative, equitable programs and services that adapt to the changing needs of students and educators, as well as the local community; and
- ensuring that all available resources are allocated equitably across the district and expand access to all educational opportunities.

As states refine the RAR process to ensure its meaningfulness, R15CC encourages SEAs to consider broadening their scope by designing a process that supports all LEAs and schools, regardless of achievement and performance levels, to participate in examining resource inequities throughout each stage of the planning process.

Defining Resources for Funding and Beyond

Determining the type of resources to include, including fiscal and non-fiscal, is at the heart of the RAR. A review of fiscal resources should include, at minimum, an examination of expenditures. The per-pupil expenditure reports required by ESSA provide an SEA with the capability to examine spending of each LEA and school. Revenue allocations serve as another crucial data point when reviewing fiscal resources, aiding in determining the amount of funding received by both LEAs and schools, as well as the carryover amounts for each. Drilling down by account codes, including program (resource), object, and function, enables leaders to determine what funding sources have spending gaps. It also helps identify the types of funds that may or may not be spent and where there are trends in carryover.

Beyond financial considerations, resources beyond funding include human resources, organization of time, materials and supplies, programs and services, community collaborations, and partnerships. Table 1 provides some considerations that key LEA and school decision-makers can use to reflect on how their decisions might impact students. This is not an

exhaustive list, but it contains many resources that touch upon most normal operations in our educational institutions.

Table 1. Resource Examples and Review Considerations

Resources	Examples	Review considerations
Fiscal resources	<p>Resource examples: State, federal, local, grant funding</p> <p>Inequity examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding formulas account for average salaries or FTE rather than actual cost of highly qualified educators • Resource allocation methods are based on equal per-pupil allocations versus equitably differentiated by need • Capacity to apply and compete for grant funds and the reporting requirements that follow once awarded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are highly qualified teachers distributed to schools that need them most? • How are resource allocation methods meeting both base costs and supplemental needs? • How can access to grant funds be streamlined and supported?
Human resources	<p>Resource examples: Qualified and certified educators, teaching out of certification, years of experience, student–teacher ratio, support staff ratio, school leader experience, teacher and administrator turnover rates</p> <p>Inequity examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools with a higher number of teachers teaching out of certification • Staffing ratios are inconsistent across the district • New teachers and administrators are placed at high-poverty schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What data are used to make staffing decisions? • How are teachers supported in high-needs schools? • How are additional staff allocated to supplement schools that qualify for CSI, ATSI, or other intensive supports?
Time organization and structure	<p>Resource examples: Time for professional learning, collaboration, planning, school master scheduling (extended learning and out-of-school), access to in-school electives and interventions</p> <p>Inequity examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning is offered that is important, but it is optional • Professional learning opportunities are differentiated • Long-term substitute teachers are not included in professional learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of support resources are allocated to provide additional planning or collaboration time for educators? • Does the school calendar or master schedule allow enough planning and collaboration time? • Does the school calendar accommodate local needs and efficiently address absentee hotspots?

Resources	Examples	Review considerations
<p>Equipment, materials, and supplies</p>	<p>Resource examples: Equipment leases, inviting school spaces (maker spaces, kid-friendly furniture, intervention spaces), curriculum, instructional materials, library books, technology</p> <p>Inequity examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newest teachers have old, mismatched furniture • Special education teachers do not have a set of general education curricular resources (general and special education) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do curriculum and materials meet the needs of all students? • Do staff have the capacity to utilize the provided materials fully? • Do learning environments create a positive and safe learning space?
<p>Programs and services</p>	<p>Resource examples: Extra-curricular enrichment activities (sports, arts, band, etc.), STEM/ STEAM programs, specialists (interventionists, reading and math specialists, instructional coaches, family engagement staff), translators, parent education, dual-immersion programs, AP classes, dual-enrollment classes, mentoring</p> <p>Inequity examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of student access to AP exams due to cost • Lack of student access to programs (for example, dual enrollment) due to transportation • Course and program offerings are not available across the district • Counseling does not provide consistent programming to students for coursework requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the spending priorities for this year? • How are the needs of the lowest-performing student groups being met? • What electives or enrichment opportunities are available, and do they align with the existing needs of students?
<p>Community collaboration and partnerships</p>	<p>Resources examples: Parent engagement, partnerships with organizations (Boys and Girls Club, after-school programs, health clinics, universities, libraries, the city)</p> <p>Inequity examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different levels of access to after-school care • Different levels of access to community art and music programs • Different levels of access to college counseling for first-generation families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are parents informed of the differentiated support their children are receiving? • How are community partnerships leveraged to enhance provided support? • How are parents and community members engaged in the planning process?

Examples of Addressing Resource Inequities

- 1. Staffing at schools was decided solely based on a per-pupil formula.** After reviewing for resource inequities, staffing decisions were shifted to account for additional needs of students (e.g., multilingual language specialists, intervention specialists, etc.) by school and grade level.
- 2. The same district-wide professional learning in English language arts has been offered to all teachers in the district.** After reviewing for resource inequities related to English learners and students with disabilities, reallocating resources allowed differentiated professional learning, emphasizing these specific areas.
- 3. Dual-enrollment offerings for high school students were available in schools based on their proximity to community colleges.** After reviewing resource inequities, funding was made available for dual-enrollment courses offered at high school campuses that were too far for students to commute.

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