**Equity Audits**

The Equity Audit: “a systematic way for school leaders -- principals, superintendents, curriculum directors, teacher leaders – to assess the degree of equity or inequity present in ...their schools or districts” (Skrla et al., 2009, p. 3).

Skrla et al. (2009), argue for an audit approach that yields a usable, actionable result. See the reverse for a historical perspective about “usability” from these writers.

### Three Approaches to Equity Audits

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<td><strong>FOCUS:</strong> “[our audits] are designed to provide insight into, discussion of, and practical responses to systemic patterns of inequity...” (p. 6).</td>
<td><strong>FOCUS:</strong> “I argue for a more comprehensive way of finding oppressive practices and structures in schools...looking at ways students, parents, &amp; communities are marginalized” (p. 76).</td>
<td><strong>FOCUS:</strong> “The community-based equity audit helps educational leaders reconsider underserved communities from resilient and asset-based perspectives” (p. 5).</td>
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<td><strong>Encourages an audit of twelve indicators in three areas:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Looks at four areas:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Consists of four phases:</strong></td>
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| - Teacher Quality Equity  
  Teacher education, mobility, experience, etc. | - Equity trends  
  *data review*  
  - Survey data  
  surveys to stakeholders about culture, climate, engagement, etc.  
  - Policy analysis  
  examination of policies that may contribute to disproportionality  
  - Culturally responsive curriculum, pedagogy and leadership  
  examination of instructional & leadership practices | - Disrupt deficit views about community  
  school-based teams participate in studies & discussions of texts & experiences & examine core beliefs, etc.  
  - Conduct initial community inquiry and shared community experiences  
  conduct initial community inquiry through asset mapping; interview community leaders; have shared community experiences in key spaces  
  - Establish a community leadership team (CLT)  
  CLT includes formal and informal community leaders & represents demographic profile of the community  
  - Collect equity, asset-based community data  
  *data on community history, opportunity indicators, & community dialogues; data used by CLT for prioritizing and action* |
| - Programmatic Equity  
  examination of special education, gifted education, bilingual education, and student discipline | | |
| - Achievement Equity  
  state achievement; drop-out rates; graduation rates, etc. | | |


The equity audit is a process, a beginning; not a destination.
It is a way of thinking for the long haul.

From Skrla et al. (2009): “There is no spreadsheet or checklist that people could simply fill in that would satisfy the intent of this process. The power of this form of equity auditing is in the process itself — the process of making choices about how to proceed, gather data, discuss results, grapple with the meaning, and plan for change” (p. 25).

From Khalifa (2018): “Discussions about race are good, but fairly quickly, those conversations need to move into what system-level reforms must begin to occur to attain cultural responsiveness in all aspects of schooling. An obvious first step is an equity audit, but after that, school leaders must bring in scholars who understand the research, and how the...findings can be linked to culturally responsive change” (p. 160). “...sustainable reform must include leadership reform experts, subject area reform experts and community people who can help add cultural knowledge... [for] deep cultural work” (pp. 160-161).

From Greene (2017): “...the community-based equity audit is not a step-by-step, one-size-fits-all, linear process that must be followed religiously, even though I numerically demarcate the phases of the audit ... to guide leaders with implementation. Instead, it is an approach that educational leaders and community stakeholders can flexibly apply to develop context specific strategies to pressing school–community concerns. Second, the community-based equity audit should not be viewed as a quick fix solution to “technical problems” ... equity audits should be viewed as an approach to address adaptive and systemic problems that require time, trust, experimentation, iteration, and commitment to shift from deficit to asset-based perspectives about students, families, and communities...” (p. 5).

Equity Audits: A Historical Perspective

According to Skrla et al. (2009), equity audits have a history in U.S. Education in three areas:

- **Civil rights enforcement.** Audits in this area happen voluntarily or as a result of an order from the US Department of Education. They determine the degree of compliance with a number of civil rights statutes (e.g, Title II of the ADA; Title VI of the CR Act of 1964; etc.).

- **Curriculum auditing and reform.** Audits in this area examine equity within programs or content-areas, such as the “equity metric” analysis to study gender and racial equity in math and science in several schools (Hewson, Kahle, Scantlebury, and Davies, 2001).

- **State accountability.** State departments of education use this area of audits for state school reform and accountability efforts.

Skrla et al., have stated that these versions have “limited usability.” Their equity audit approach, therefore, is a more focused, more limited and, they believe, more understandable and useful for school or district action.