



The Role of the School Board in Ensuring Equity in Education in Various Learning Environments

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Teaching during COVID-19 is stressful, challenging, and confusing to even those of us who are career educators. Luckily, at least we know what is expected of us, though the environment might be varied. School board members, who don't necessarily have experience in the classroom, are probably wondering how they can be most effective in their role. Whether an experienced educator or not, this is an excellent time for school board members to take a step back and determine what local measures are in place to ensure that all students, no matter how they attend school, receive an equitable learning experience.

In this E-Hint, we present a series of questions to serve as a starting point for open dialogue between a school board and its district superintendent, curriculum director, and the staff at large. These challenging questions would also be appropriate for an administrative team to affirm

or evaluate their current curriculum processes in this environment of students “attending school” in remote, hybrid, and in-person settings.

The first question the school board and administration should answer is, “Is there consistency in *what* is taught and *what* is expected of all students within the same grade-level or course regardless of the teacher, learning environment, and time of day?” Skills, topics, and level of rigor should remain the same no matter the variables associated with teaching. Therefore, is this articulated K-12 for each content area? In other words, do we have a locally written, results-based curriculum to which all teachers have access?

Additional questions to help ensure equity in education through COVID-19 include:

1. Do we have a model or system of processes that we follow, as a district, to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment?
2. Do we have a district-wide, board-approved policy for how curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student learning decisions are made? Does it ensure stability when there are multiple learning environments for students and when immediate changes occur to those environments?
3. Do we have locally written, approved, common assessments by which student learning is measured?
4. How do the building principals and other administrators function as instructional leaders within the district and monitor student progress in various learning environments?
5. How are staff members prepared to follow the local curriculum and assessment protocols as they meet the challenges of the current reality in various learning environments?
6. Do we have a method of determining student placement in courses at the beginning of the next school year?

Although not exhaustive, these are some examples of questions that the *CLI Model for School Improvement* provides support in answering. The media presents the message that education is in a state of disarray. At the Curriculum Leadership Institute, we believe that teachers and districts are currently doing their best to meet student needs, even as difficult as that might be. As long as dialogue continues to ensure equity and alignment, we can successfully navigate this challenge in education as we have met challenges in the past.