

## Recommendations on Equity Guidelines for COVID-19 Continuous Education

### WEA Belief:

1. Institutional racism and structural racism consciously and unconsciously exist in the systems that educate students in public schools.
2. The best strategy to combat institutional racism and structural racism are culturally responsive leaders in power who implement a lens of “Explicit Equity” in their choices, decisions and practices. For our purpose, “leaders” include a wide range of people and educators who work with or for students, in school buildings, administration, education unions, or state government.
3. The lens of “Explicit Equity” is a choice that leaders must use to examine new policies in teaching and learning during Covid-19 for online learning and distance learning. If an “Explicit Equity” lens is not used, then “implicit bias” wins. The results will magnify and perpetuate the inequities that currently exist in public schools for our most marginalized students including: students with special needs, English Language Learners, those who receive free and reduced lunch, homeless students and students with little or no access to online resources.
4. **WEA Racial Justice:** Systematic treatment that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for people of all races while eliminating/rejecting the behaviors and practices of white supremacy culture. For those not familiar with the term, white supremacy culture refers to a number of conscious or unconscious practices and expectations that reinforce existing power structures.
5. **WEA Social Justice:** Disruption and elimination of social systems that maintain advantages and disadvantages based on social group memberships in order to create and sustain opportunities and outcomes rooted in equity.

With these beliefs, the Washington Education Association recommends the following explicit equity questions to help guide Washington state leaders, WEA leaders, bargaining teams and policy makers when implementing online learning access and strategies for the students in public schools during the Covid-19 school closure crisis.

### COVID-19 EXPLICIT EQUITY GUIDANCE

1. Who are the students negatively affected by off-site, distance learning and/or online learning programs, practices or decisions? They include special needs students, students receiving free and reduced lunches, students of color or of varied ethnicities, or students living in rural areas. And what are the potential impacts of off-site, distance and/or online learning on these marginalized groups?
2. Does this online teaching and learning policy, program, practice or decision ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences for our most marginalized students?

3. How have policy makers and leaders intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by this policy, program, practice or decision? Can you validate your assessments in (A) and (B)?
4. What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes to online learning? For example, are the barriers mandates, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial?
5. How will you overcome the negative impacts and eliminate the barriers so that all Washington students have access to educational opportunities during the mandated school closures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic?

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