

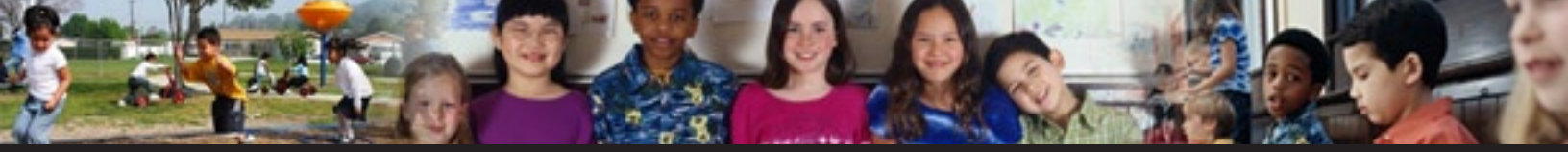


# Report: Quarter 2 of Year 2

*January - March 2010*

CFDA 84.004D: Civil Rights Training and Advisory Services  
Equity Assistance Centers Program  
U.S. Department of Education Award #S004D080027





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# Leadership

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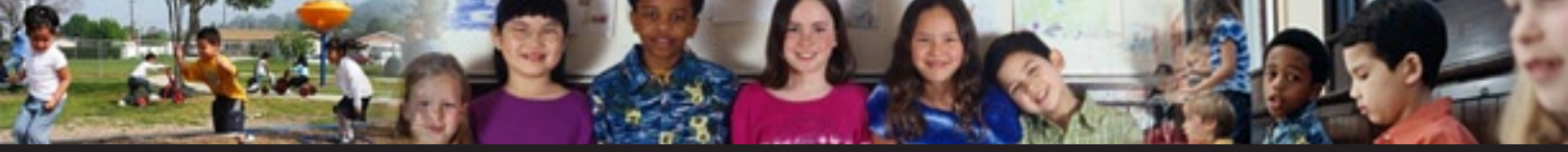
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# The Equity Alliance at ASU

*The Equity Alliance promotes the development of culturally responsive, inclusive educational systems.*

The Equity Alliance at ASU is a regional Equity Assistance Center (EAC) supported by a \$2.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, awarded through the Department's initiatives to support Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act through rights training and advisory services for schools and communities to address equity and access issues in public education. In all, there are ten regional equity assistance centers in the U.S. The Equity Alliance at ASU is the Center for Region IX, the southwestern region comprised of Arizona, California, and Nevada. Equity Assistance Centers provide technical assistance (TA) and training, at the request of school boards and other responsible governmental agencies for the preparation, adoption, and implementation of plans for the desegregation of public schools in Arizona, California, and Nevada. As defined by program guidelines, desegregation refers to equity—including desegregation based on race, sex, and national origin and the development of effective methods of coping with special educational problems occasioned by desegregation.

Building on the educational theory, cutting-edge research, and the momentum of the National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt), the National Institute for Urban School Improvement (NIUSI), and NIUSI-*LeadScape*, the mission of the Equity Alliance at ASU is to promote equity, access, and participation in education by supporting the capacity of States and local school systems to provide high-quality, effective opportunities to learn for all students, regardless of race, gender, or national origin, and to reduce disparities in academic achievement.

This Center's approach is grounded in emphases on civil rights and cultural responsiveness, as well as the belief that all students can excel in academic endeavors if they are provided with access to high-quality teachers, curricula, instruction, programs and resources, and their cultures, languages, and experiences are valued and used to facilitate their learning. Guided by a thematic focus on enhancing understanding of equity in classrooms, schools, and school systems and the use of scientifically-based solutions, our approach addresses the gaps and priorities identified in recent, major policy and research equity reports (Artiles et al. 2005; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Ferguson et al., 2003; Harry & Klingner, 2006; Klingner et al., 2005; Skiba et al., 2008; Losen & Orfield, 2002).

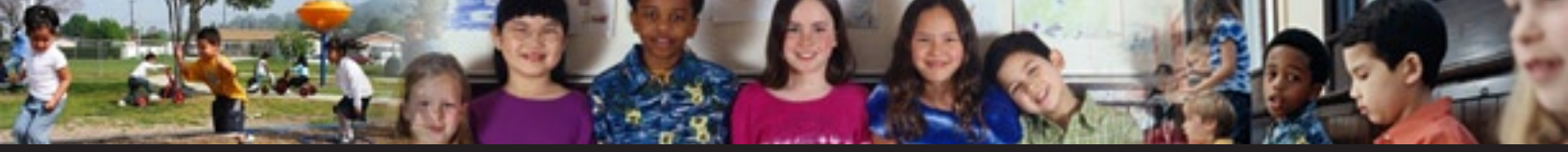
Rather than view race, class, and gender as isolated factors, this perspective suggests that the current inequitable conditions of schooling are connected to historical legacies of exclusion and inclusion based on normative assumptions about race, class, gender, and national origin that define who is considered competent or different (Minow, 1990). Indeed, schools engaged in equity work need to critique and transform such assumptions and focus on belonging, nurturing, and educating all students, regardless of differences in race, gender, cultural, language, ability, or class (Artiles & Kozleski, 2007). This kind of work must be transformative to change systemic contributors to inequity. Both inclusivity and cultural responsiveness are grounded in transformative equity and social justice. Understanding how this perspective informs classroom practice, school organization, and district policy is a hallmark of the successful work of the Equity Alliance at ASU. In supporting state, district, and schools' work to create equitable school systems, the Equity Alliance at ASU promotes the development of culturally responsive, inclusive educational systems.



A major purpose of the Equity Alliance at ASU is to assist schools in complying with federal civil rights requirements through the adoption or improvement of policies and practices and to help parents, students, educators, and community members to understand their rights under federal law. The Center is responsive to states and school boards where students are at risk for language, racial, gender, and national origin equity issues that affect student achievement and respond by working with districts, schools, and practitioners who are struggling to serve ALL their students equitably through onsite TA and coaching. Our relationships with Regional Resource Centers, Regional Educational Labs, Comprehensive Centers, the New Teachers Center, content centers, and other equity networks and professional organizations make us well poised to provide TA to Region IX because we can create synergies between efforts.

The Equity Alliance at ASU serves as a resource to the Office of Civil Rights and Department of Justice in ensuring equity for all students, regardless of race, gender, or national origin, by pursuing the following outcomes:

1. Reduce the over-representation of minorities in special education;
2. Increase the representation of minorities in gifted and talented and advanced placement programs;
3. Increase the use of scientifically-based, culturally responsive curricula and instructional practices in classrooms, schools, and districts including the provision of resource materials, professional development and training on successful strategies for providing Limited English Proficient (LEP) students with equitable access to a high-quality education;
4. Build local coalitions between higher education, preK-12 systems, communities, and families to provide equal access to highly qualified teachers, especially for students who are economically disadvantaged;
5. Support, develop, and disseminate effective approaches to school dropout prevention and reentry;
6. Promote equity by addressing the special needs of high-risk students, including students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds; and
7. Support districts transitioning to unitary status in desegregation cases.



# Introduction

Transformative equity assistance work requires coordinated efforts that build capacity and nurture ongoing professional development, supported with the use of cutting edge tools. In addition, transformative equity work is institutionalized and scaled up through a distributive model of organizational change in which effective practices are systematically disseminated through school networks. The Equity Alliance at ASU's approach centers on four key change levels:

**GOAL 1: On-Demand Technical Assistance and Professional Development**

**GOAL 2: Networks of School Systems Engaged in High-Quality Equity Work**

**GOAL 3: A Virtual Clearinghouse**

**GOAL 4: Continuous Improvement and Evaluation.**

This four pronged approach (1) provides the impetus and skills to make organizational change for social justice and equity outcomes, (2) creates access to tools that will capture progress on critical equity issues pressuring change for those who lag behind on educational achievement based on gender, national origin, and race, (3) demonstrates how a focus on improving results for ALL students improves results for particular groups as well, (4) provides resources and training in the areas of hate crimes, racial prejudice, disproportionality, ELL instruction, school completion, bullying, and sexual harassment, and (5) underscores our commitment to continuing to improve results.

## Goal 1: *Technical Assistance & Professional Learning*

*Leverage continued improvement in research-based practices in schools through regional Technical Assistance and Professional Development supporting school, district, and state-wide development of assessment, referral, and instructional practices that address disparities related to race, national origin, and gender, as well as eliminating hate crimes, racial prejudice, and bullying/harassment.*

- 1.1. Provide personalized, context-driven, scientifically-based technical assistance and professional development at the request of responsible governmental agencies.
- 1.2. Develop a variety of platforms for providing technical assistance.

### Summary

Goal 1 activities during the second quarter of year 2 deepened the efforts in responsive, personalized assistance and the innovative uses of a variety of platforms for delivering technical assistance. The deepening of efforts occurred through continued work with key leadership teams, especially in planning for large-scale professional development in California and through local systemic planning with school districts. These two very different ends of a spectrum of possibilities for technical assistance are evidence that the Center continues to pay attention to a full range of technical assistance, using its model of levels of technical assistance (Figure 1) as well as its Systemic Change Framework, that situates technical assistance from the classroom and professional levels up to districts and states.



The quarter saw increased use of the webinar-type platform for remote technical assistance. The Center uses that particular platform for informal assistance at the most intensive levels, as well as formalized outreach (e.g. lectures, presentations, and large group discussions) at the most extensive outreach levels of resource distribution.

In the section below, we highlight some of the work in Arizona, California and Nevada (Table 1) and provide updates on the uses of the platforms for professional learning

### Provide Technical Assistance and Professional Development On Request

Equity Alliance staff was active in responding to inquiries for factual, research based information to support equitable education. The following are examples of technical assistance and developing partnerships for long term support for systemic reform efforts.

#### Arizona

Arizona State Department of Education. Staff discussed technical assistance needs with the Arizona State Department of Education. Following the dialogue, staff reviewed a list of all the districts that were working to include culturally and linguistically different (CLD) students in gifted programming. We are building several strategies for future opportunities, including presenting research on this topic at a conference, providing technical assistance to the state education agency, and meeting the needs of networks of reforming schools. We plan to host a session at the CLD conference at which Arizona state officials and Equity Alliance staff will facilitate a group discussion of districts increasing CLD student representation in gifted programs, and then co-authoring a brief that gets disseminated to Arizona school districts, and posted our site.

#### California

Staff held Bi-monthly conference telephone calls with the Natomas Unified School District and with the California Department of Education. In March staff met with representatives of the California Department of Education and provided a General Overview of the Equity Alliance at ASU, a description of the work in progress, and reviewed the next steps and collaborative decision points. Work continued on the development of an on-line professional learning module, using Moodle as a platform for teacher learning. Staff and state department of education officials are collaborating on plans to involve several local districts in the refinement and piloting phase of this project, which will begin in September 2010.

Equity Alliance at ASU  
Tiered Model of Technical Assistance

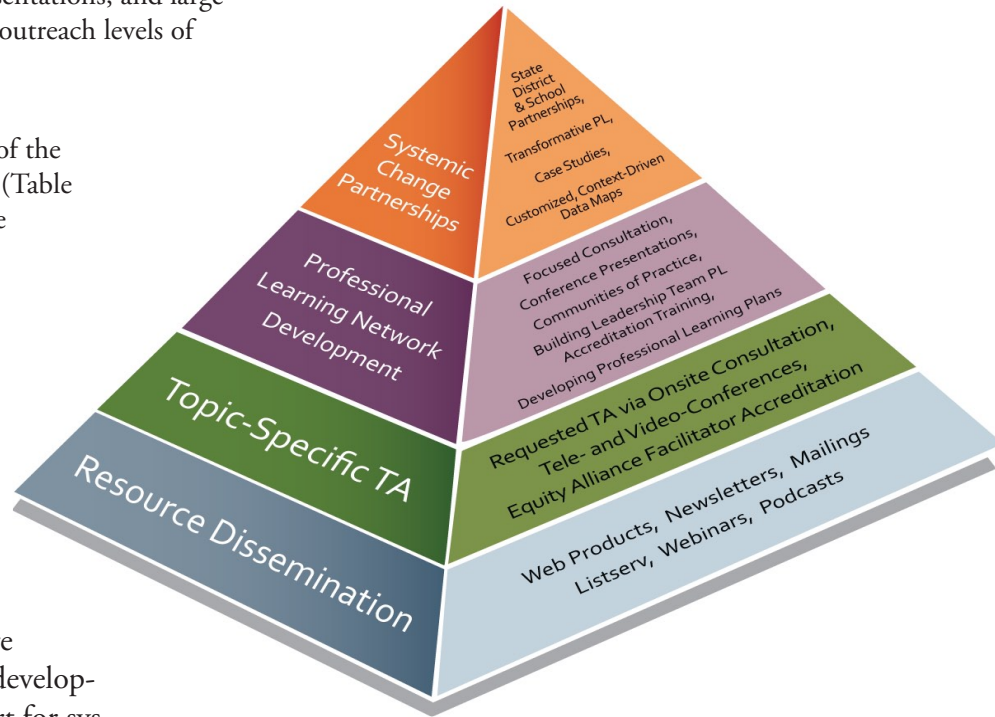
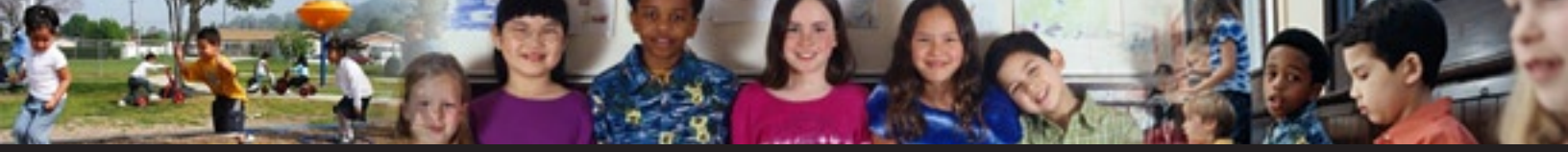


Figure 1. Levels of Technical Assistance



Natomas Unified Schools District. In March we conducted a webinar with district planners from the Natomas Unified schools district to collaborate on a federal grant to support school leadership by developing ways to analyze and display student achievement data for school improvement. The staff at the Equity Alliance at ASU also worked with district administrators to improve student achievement by providing teachers with resources to improve progress monitoring of individual students. We analyzed and created charts of Natomas student achievement and demographic data. Staff used these charts and graphs as tools for their work with administrators and teachers seeking to plan for systemic change.

## Nevada

- Washoe County School District. In January we conducted a video conference with Washoe County, NV. The teleconference included key personnel at the Washoe County District Office and the Equity Alliance at ASU. During that time, staff presented a variety of ways in which the Equity Assistance Center for Region IX, and other grant-funded projects housed within the Equity Alliance, had partnered with districts around the U.S. to address similar issues.
- As a result of the communication, the Washoe County School District invited the Equity Alliance at ASU to visit Washoe in order to proceed with identifying next steps to form a strategic partnership and allow the Center to become more familiar with the local contexts of the schools and district infrastructure for guiding decisions.
- In March, the visit to the Washoe County School District opened the door for dialogue about what, when, and where the supports of Equity Alliance at ASU could best be used to build capacity within the Washoe County educational system to ensure equity and access for every student. Washoe County School District is the 57th largest school district in the nation serving more than 63,000 K-12 students. It is also the largest employer in northern Nevada with more than 8,000 certified teachers, professionals, administrators, and classified staff.
- During the visit we conducted “School Walk-Throughs” using a tool developed to assess the Systemic Change Framework. District personnel selected two schools for our team to visit. In these visits, which included an elementary and a high school setting, our team conducted the “Walk-Through” with the principal of each building, gathering information about the school curriculum, organization, and its challenges.
- Our work with the Washoe County School District is being designed to improve the achievement of students of color, by supporting Washoe Superintendent Dr. Heath Morrison’s question shared at the beginning of the school year: “How can we engage all stakeholders in systemic reform to ensure the bar of academic rigor is raised for all students while ensuring the elimination of the achievement gaps?”



**Table 1. Technical Assistance Activities Details**

Location	Date	Participants	Description
<b>Webinar with Natomas, California</b>	March, 2010	District administrative staff	Staff conducted a webinar with the Natomas Unified schools district to collaborate on a grant to analyze and display student achievement data
<b>California</b>	March, 2010	State Department of Education staff	Staff provided a general overview of the Equity Alliance at ASU, and planned collaborative decision points.
<b>Washoe County, Nevada</b>	March, 2010	District leadership team	Staff visited the Washoe County School District to build capacity for ensuring equity and access
<b>Phoenix, Arizona</b>	March, 2010	State Department of Education representatives	Staff reviewed technical assistance needs with Gifted and Talented Programs

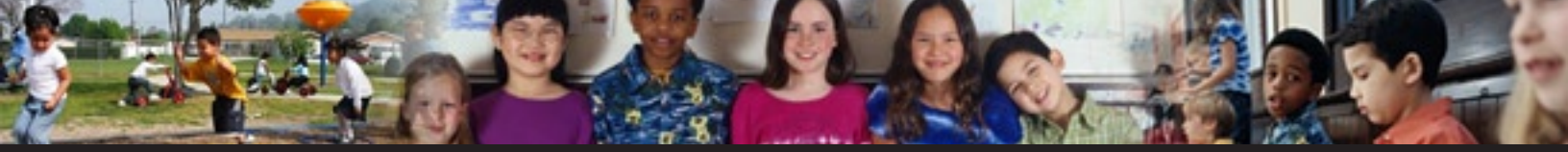
### Provide Platforms for Professional Learning

Coaching for Inclusive Practices Webinar. 119 persons registered for the fourth webinar in the Equity Alliance at ASU’s series on Educational Equity, Coaching for Inclusive Practices on March 19.

Participants reported their professional background as coaches, consultants, professional developers, state and local district administrators, and others. The presentation, based on a pilot project with NIUSI Lead-Scape, describes a cognitive coaching model, examines features of effective coaching dialogues, and emphasizes coaching conversations that are initiated from technical, contextual, and critical perspectives.

A coaching relationship is a supportive professional interaction that provides school leaders with opportunities for reflecting on school culture, policy, and daily practices in an intentional manner. Therefore, coaching is a tool that is used in schools in a variety of ways in order to build capacity and continually improve practice. It’s a way to mediate understandings and beliefs (“ways of being”) in order to influence daily activities and interactions (“ways of doing”). This is something that’s often done with a primarily technical focus, for example by Literacy or Curriculum coaches. But in the case of school improvement, coaching





that includes contextual and critical dimensions is crucial to creating substantive change, because systemic change is complex and elusive. School improvement is a long-term, complex process, and ongoing reflection- which is supported by coaching- is an important activity for school leaders to be able to review progress, identify new areas of focus, and ensure that efforts are strategic and purposeful.

*2010 Equity Forum.* The 2010 Leadership for Equity and Excellence Forum was held at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Phoenix to create opportunities for learning and dialog among SEAs, LEAs, local schools, advocacy groups, technical assistance centers, institutes of higher education and family groups. Presentations, panels, and workshops were presented in 67 sessions over the two days of the Forum. Of the 193 people who attended, 86 were from schools and districts, 57 came from colleges and universities, and 50 came from educational projects and organizations; 111 different organizations were represented.

The forum participants were highly pleased with the high quality of the content and variety of opportunities to learn and network with their colleagues from throughout the nation, as indicated in the evaluation results. The 415 session evaluations reported a high-range mean of 2.72 on a scale of 1 to 3, with an average of 7 evaluations per session. A total of 80% (44) of the sessions scored 2.5 or above (high-range) and 11% (6) of the sessions scored a perfect 3 (highest). Only 4% (2) of the sessions scored less than 2 (low range).



## Accomplishments

- 193 people attended the 2010 Leadership for Equity and Excellence Forum
- 119 persons registered for the fourth webinar in the Equity Alliance at ASU's series on Educational Equity, Coaching for Inclusive Practices on March 19

## Next Steps

- Continue to develop the partnership with Washoe County School District.
- Follow-up on the Natomas Unified School district partnership
- Begin planning the 2011 Leadership for Equity and Excellence Forum

## Goal 2: Networking & Dissemination

*Engage regional clients, networks, and providers in peer-to-peer learning and inquiry to improve practice and results for social justice and equitable outcomes for all students.*

- 2.1. Design, develop, and maintain a communications and technology infrastructure for the Center.
- 2.2. Develop and maintain a strong network of other TA providers, educators, community and professional organizations, and families.
- 2.3. Develop, implement, and monitor a strategic, proactive dissemination plan for the Center's products and services.

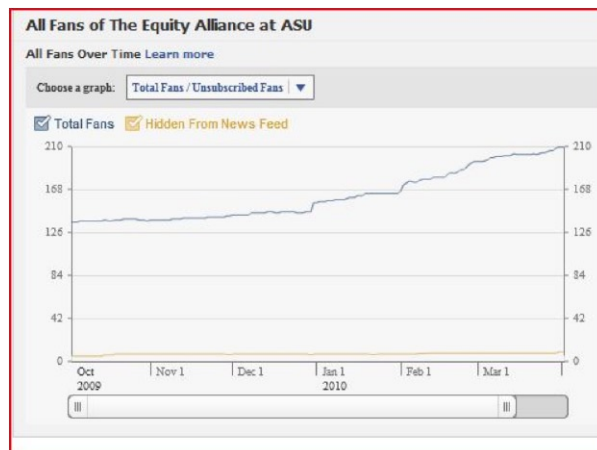
### Summary

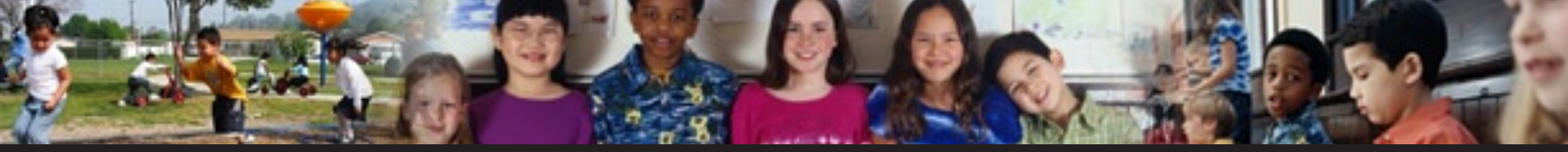
Progress on networking and dissemination in the second quarter included improvements in the infrastructure via new and improved platform capabilities, increased numbers of people being served, additional presentations of our research and efforts, and recognition of the Center's work by others. Additional resources were added and disseminated through the much-used clearinghouse, the Learning Carousel. In the section that follows, we provide details about the progress.

### The Equity Alliance Communications Infrastructure

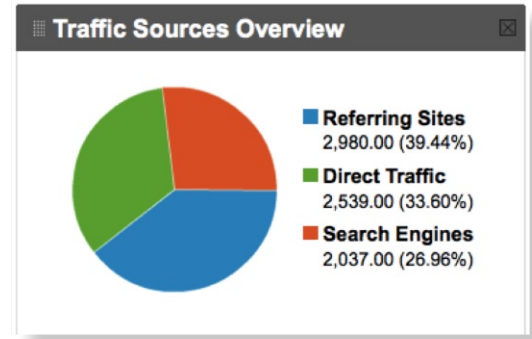
*Equity Alliance at ASU Facebook page.* The activity on the Equity Alliance Facebook page, in its first year, is gaining fans and interest as measured by the number of page views. As indicated in the chart to the left, the number of fans of the Equity Alliance at ASU Facebook pages is increasing. The topics discussed included a report in Education Week regarding the level of acceptance for diverse students in U.S. colleges, classroom placement patterns for students with exceptionalities, curriculum and instruction for students from diverse backgrounds, teacher effectiveness and tenure, disproportionate representation, resources such as Teaching Tolerance and Equity Matters publications, school leadership, gender equity, differentiated instruction.

*Recognition by others.* Equity Alliance to be featured in a California state special education newsletter. Staff provided assistance in the development of an article about the work of the Equity Alliance at ASU that will be distributed to districts statewide. The attention by the state's leaders in this area of equity technical assistance demonstrates the growing appreciation of the Center by region IX leaders, and is part of our larger dissemination strategy, using innovative technical assistance platforms.





Equity Alliance at ASU webpage. The Equity Alliance at ASU webpage continues to attract attention. According to Goggle Analytics data, the webpage received 30,724 total page views and 20,661 unique views during this quarter, with about equal contributions of visitors from searching, referring websites and direct traffic during the quarter. These three sources are evidence of good market penetration, because direct traffic comes from people who already know the site well, referring sites traffic comes from other web sites who trust and recognize the Center, and search engine traffic represents outreach to new people based entirely on their interests in the content. Much of the web traffic during this period was due to the interest in the Equity Forum, which took place in February, since pages that allowed for viewers to see conference sessions (1,326) and register on-line (779) were popular web hits. Next in number of initial visits were the language differences media lab (1,229), the “about equity alliance at ASU page” (954) and the webinar registration page (779).



### Developing and Maintaining Networks

*Region 5 Technical Assistance Coordination Meeting.* Staff participated in the Region 5 – Regional TA Coordination Meeting held at the WestEd Office in Phoenix, AZ. The proposed outcomes addressed at the meeting included,

- Introduction to new Equity Assistance Centers and updates on new EAC priorities
- Updates on critical issues or priorities across the region within individual centers
- Shared information about various collaborative activities within the states in Region V
- Shared insights relative to priority issues such as systems of support and assessment

In addition, a number of presentations (Table 2) document how the Center’s efforts lead to new research-based reports, contributions to professional dialogs, and dissemination of ideas that lead to potential partnerships and new requests for assistance.

**Table 2. Research Presentations**

Location	Date	Presenters	Title
<b>National Associate of School Psychologists, Chicago, Ill.</b>	March, 2010	Miranda Kucera, Kathleen King-Thorius	School Psychology as Interdisciplinary Practice: General and Special Education Collaboration
<b>TESOL Annual Convention, Boston</b>	March , 2010	Alfredo J. Artiles	ELL Placement in Special Education Implications for RTI Research,
<b>Research symposium on Educational Equity &amp; Diversity in the Southwest, ASU, Tempe, AZ</b>	March, 2010	Alfredo J. Artiles, Janette Klingner, Amanda Sullivan & Edward G. Fierros	ELL Special Education Placement in English-only States



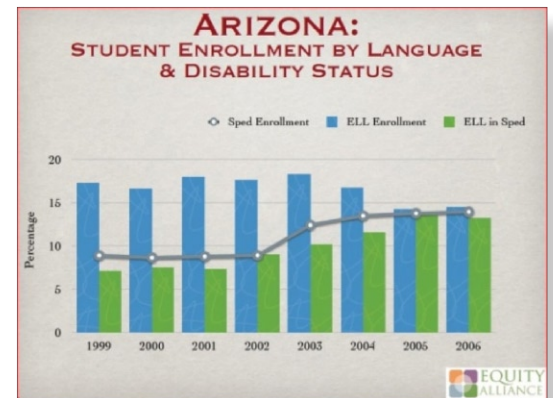
*National school psychologists' annual conference presentation.* Staff made a presentation at the national school psychologists' annual conference on the topic of collaboration among special education and general education staff. The Center presenters explained that "There are many tensions we face as we expand these roles... historically, school psychologists have spent the majority of their time working on the left side of these tensions, but the profession is ...shifting focus from reactive consultation and support to proactive." Recommendations of this report include,

- to strategically spend time on intervention and prevention
- to support students' access to services and supports through inclusive practices

*ELL Special Education Placement in English-only States.* Dr. Alfredo J. Artiles made a presentation at the Teachers of English as a second language (TESOL) Annual Convention which was held in Boston, Massachusetts. The talk was titled ELL Placement in Special Education Implications for RTI Research.

As the bar chart on the left indicates, in Arizona the special education enrollment has increased from about 9% in 1999 to almost 15% in 2006. At the same time the enrollment of ELL students has been level or decreased the ELL enrollment in special education has increased from about 8% to almost 15% in 2006. ELLs were consistently less likely to be placed in gifted and talented program. In Arizona, ELLs had a greater risk after 2002 than their English proficient peers to receive special education services in resources programs where they are removed from the regular classroom between 21 and 60% of the day. The implications, according to the author, are that,

- There is an urgent need for comprehensive information infrastructures across systems
- It is necessary to create better guidelines to measure and track the problem
- Opportunity to learn indicators and educational outcomes data should be included to track ELL disproportionate representation in special education
- There is an urgent need to examine within-group diversity

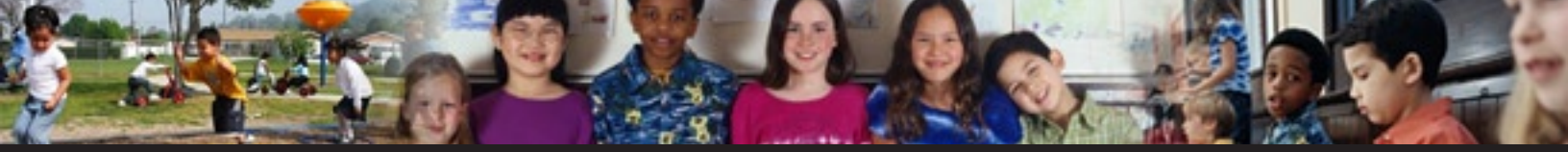


*ELL Placement in Special Education Implications for RTI Research.* Dr. Alfredo Artiles made a presentation at the Research symposium on Educational Equity & Diversity in the Southwest. The symposium took place at Arizona State University.

In this presentation, Dr. Artiles of the Equity Alliance described the issue of overrepresentation of English Language learners from California and Arizona. Some of his research findings are:

- Increasing numbers of ELLs are being placed in special education .e.g., Learning Disabilities (LD) in Arizona, and Mental Retardation (MR) in California.
- A considerable proportion of school districts had ELL overrepresentation

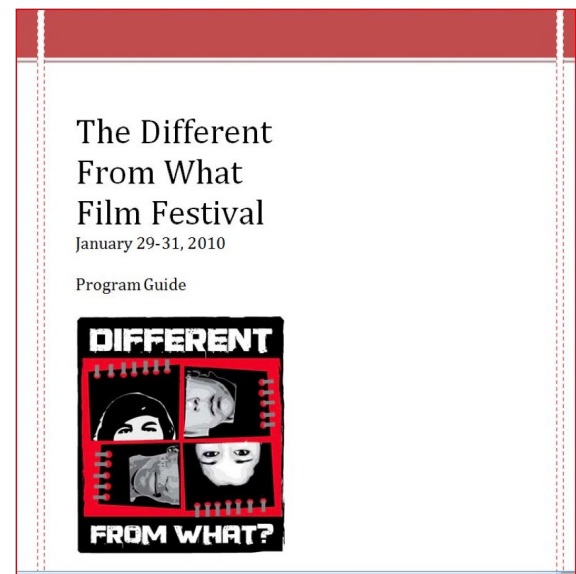




An innovative dissemination method during this quarter included leadership and participation in the Different from What Film Festival, which expanded the range of audiences being impacted by the Center. Open to the public and attended by hundreds of people who might not otherwise encounter the work of the Center, this new mechanism holds great promise for expanding the numbers of people who are impacted to consider how equity matters to all of us.

The Center cosponsored the first national film festival about disabilities in Tempe, Arizona as a celebration of the differences that punctuate community discourses. The planning committee based the festival on a few key questions: What if we could transform the way we think about differences? What if we could challenge who is thought of as different? What if we ask an even more audacious question—Different from What?

The Festival featured the award-winning documentary “SHOOTING BEAUTY” and other national and international films. There were also panels for discussions with the directors, Question and answer opportunities were offered after each film, often including the disabled writers, directors and subjects of the films. In addition, the festival offered dialoguing in live-stream Twitter posts.



## Develop and Maintain a Product Dissemination Plan

**The September issue of the *Equity Matters* monthly newsletter explored data and how to use it to iPublications planning. Staff met weekly in the publication team to review plans for new publications, Newsletters, e-Blasts, and reports of center activities. Staff continued the product development process, involving the use of a rubric to check for quality and relevance on each publication.**

*LeadScape*, Presentation at the National Office of Special Education Programs Project Director’s Conference.

## Accomplishments

- Staff made 3 national conference presentations on equity issues.
- The Equity Alliance at ASU webpage received 30,724 total page views and 20,661 unique views
- First annual Different From What Film Festival was held in January of 2010
- 210 fans increased the amount of activity on the Equity Alliance Facebook page

## Next Steps

- Continue to expand the participation on Facebook.
- Increase the number of publications available through the Learning Carousel.



# Goal 3: Research & Development

*Create, validate, and produce content-rich, cutting-edge scientifically-based resources that translate educational research for diverse learners into practice for practitioners, administrators, families, and policy makers intended to assist schools in providing effective learning environments for all students.*

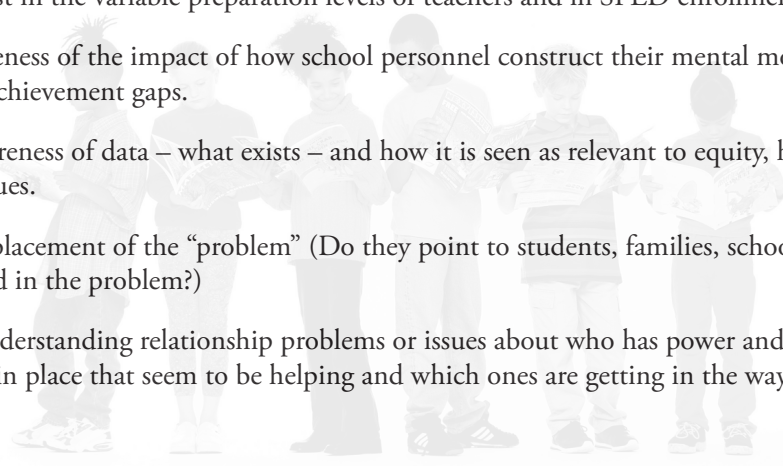
- 3.1. Develop and apply a conceptual framework for the analysis and synthesis of best practices in supporting outcomes for ALL students.
- 3.2. Develop a clearinghouse of resources, partnering with centers and organizations throughout Region IX and the nation, to provide access to products that meet the needs of our clients.
- 3.3. Develop and produce an accessible series of high-quality products that synthesize the existing research-base and practice-base.
- 3.4. Develop and produce new tools for assessing and addressing equity needs and leveraging school improvement.

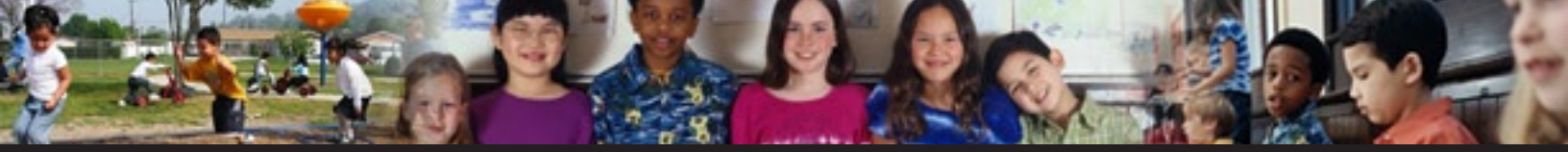
## Summary

During the second quarter, the Center continued to effectively embed and utilize the conceptual Systemic Change Framework in its tools and products, publications, practices and interventions, and reflections. The combined effect of this focus continued to reinforce the idea that inclusive, culturally responsive educational systems are cultivated by inquisitive and committed groups of people who collaboratively influence their complex, hierarchically organized and multileveled structures of practices, policies and values. **Use Conceptual Framework for Synthesis of Best Practices**

In February, the staff reflected on the progress of technical assistance at Natomas Unified School District, beginning with the initial context information that was gathered in the project. There was a conscious use of the Systemic Change Framework at the point of contact, in the tools used and the conversations held during interventions. The review identified the following primary issues and how are they being framed at Natomas.

- Opportunity to learn and outcomes students are experiencing.
- Disaggregating information and data in order to analyze and act.
- There is an interest in the variable preparation levels of teachers and in SPED enrollments.
- Building an awareness of the impact of how school personnel construct their mental models of (how they “problematize”) achievement gaps.
- Assessing the awareness of data – what exists – and how it is seen as relevant to equity, how much is it used to address equity issues.
- Recognizing the placement of the “problem” (Do they point to students, families, school structure, and teaching - as implicated in the problem?)
- Analyzing and understanding relationship problems or issues about who has power and voice in meetings, and what systems are in place that seem to be helping and which ones are getting in the way.





The staff's review in these terms shaped the ways it responded to requests and the resources they recommended to build capacity at the local level.

## Develop a Clearinghouse of Resources

Learning Carousel updated. 211 new publications and products were added this quarter to the list of learning carousel selections.

The Learning Carousel is designed as a source of publications that can be identified and downloaded from the Equity Alliance webpage. It is a searchable, customer friendly source for cutting edge research-based practice. Visitors can find professional learning materials in three ways: by clicking on category words, tag cloud words, or systemic change elements on a colorful central model.

Staff continued work on monitoring usage of products, updating the resource collection and improving and maintaining the functionality of the Learning Carousel. We reexamined the history of key-words used during the quarter, for example, and how they are structured to enhance ease of use and improve access to Learning Carousel resources.

## High Quality Products

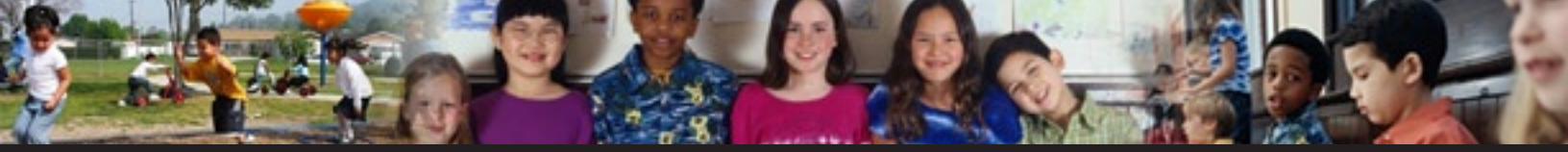
*Gender Equity Matters.* Staff completed a draft of the Gender Equity Matter publication, which summarizes historical issues in gender equity in education and also, according to the author, will “provide basic information about current trends in these opportunities for girls and boys, and then provide some areas for educators to consider as they work toward making sure that students not only experience equitable academic achievement evidenced by improved test scores, attendance, graduation rates, but also that their daily school experiences are not discriminatory on the basis of gender.”



## Tools for Assessing Equity and Leveraging School Improvement

*Assessment tools for technical assistance.* We refined assessment tools for technical assistance to schools and schools districts. The questionnaire prompts included on the next page is a “work in progress” and is being developed as interview questions to be asked of district staff during an initial needs assessment process.

<p>Please talk about the efforts that the district has taken on in addressing issues of equity and inequity. Of making sure that all students are treated fairly and experience positive outcomes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you feel about the quality and intensity of these efforts?</li> </ul>
<p>1. <b>For teachers and admin only:</b> What kinds of topics related to equity and achievement are addressed through professional learning/development?</p>	
<p>2. <b>For teachers and admin only:</b> What are the implications of what you know about students, families, and the community for the work you do and more generally, for the work of the district? <b>For students/parents:</b> Please tell me about how the district and/or this school gets to know students and families and how administrators’ and teachers’ understanding of students impacts the way they teach and interact with students and families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe the aspirations for student success among culturally/linguistically diverse families?</li> </ul>
<p>3. <b>Teachers and admin only:</b> How are teachers assigned to schools in the district?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there reasons that teachers or principals would want to work at one school over another school the district? If so, why do you think this is?</li> </ul>
<p>How are students assigned to schools in the district? In what instances do students not attend the school in their residence area?</p>	
<p>One of the reasons we are here is to help the district address that there are higher numbers of students from racial minority groups in special education than students who are white. Why do you think this is going on in the district?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are some of the ways in which you embrace diversity?</li> </ul>
<p>a) <b>For teachers and admin only:</b> What are your thoughts about teaching culturally/linguistically diverse learners?</p>	<p>a) What role do you believe your attitudes and beliefs about students have in determining student success?</p>
<p>a. How do you feel about special programs that pull students away from the general ed classroom?</p>	
<p>What ways of thinking or assumptions prevent educators from believing that students of color can be successful learners in the district?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What role do you believe cultural influences have in student learning? Teaching?</li> <li>• What role does culture have in your planning, instruction, and assessment?</li> </ul>
<p>What are some examples of inclusion and exclusion of students from general education that you’ve encountered while teaching?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the ways in which you go about equalizing resources, breaking-down barriers, combating segregation, and guaranteeing children an opportunity to learn?</li> </ul>



## Accomplishments

- 211 new publications or products were added this quarter to the Learning Carousel.
- Completed the writing of the *Gender Equity Matters* publication.
- Staff continued to upload expert blogs twice a month.
- Continued publication of monthly Equity Matters newsletter.

## Next Steps

- Publish the Gender Equity Matters issue of the What Matters series on the Equity Alliance webpage.
- Write 2 additional Equity Matters Publication

# Goal 4: Continuous Improvement

*Engage in ongoing inquiry and program evaluation in order to continually improve efforts to support Region IX in providing high-quality opportunities to learn for all students.*

- 4.1. Engage in ongoing assessment to ensure that our efforts assist states in providing effective instruction to all students in Region IX meeting their needs and producing results.
- 4.2. Assess the quality and impact of the Equity Alliance at ASU's services and products.
- 4.3. Engage in continuous refinement of existing products and services.

## Summary

During the second quarter, the infrastructures for continuous improvement were strengthened, internal support continued for collecting and analyzing data, including training and orienting staff to new methods and procedures. The analysis and production systems of the Center were improved by finalizing a suite of tools that now includes NVivo (qualitative analysis), SPSS (quantitative analysis), Constant Contact (client feedback mechanism), Google Analytics (client use pattern analysis and outreach/market analysis) and a clarified internal production process with lines of authority, external review, and a quality improvement cycle.

## Engage in ongoing assessment

Client surveys. Public opinion polls are being conducted at the Equity Alliance webpage under the banner "A Question of Equity." Supporting this ongoing collection mechanism, every month we ask a specific question in our emailed (10,000 people) Equity Matters newsletter that pertains to matters of equity in education, which then directs people to the webpage to register their opinion. People can click the link in the email to reach the page, and other visitors to the page can also view and use the survey. We are interested in gathering more information about how our readers think and feel about issues such as desegregation, educa-



tional disparities, achievement gaps, early intervening, culturally responsive practice, and other equity related concerns. Each question stays open and active for one month, and relates to the theme of our monthly newsletter. Data from these polls will be analyzed and presented in future reports.

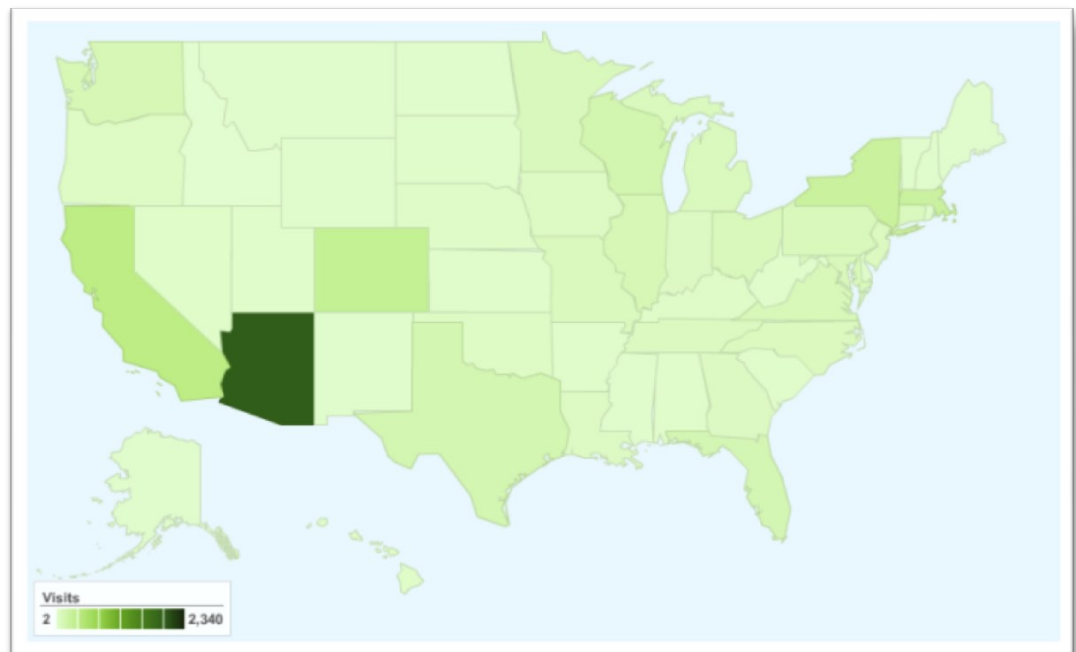
Occasional surveys include both events-driven feedback systems and broad measures taken via online emailed surveys that are used to characterize and better understand the populations being served. The information gained from these improves our system responsiveness, and builds the Center's capability to detect emerging needs for information and technical support. Data from these methods produced during the second quarter were preliminary, and will be aggregated, increased with more survey data, and summarized in the annual report for Year 2.

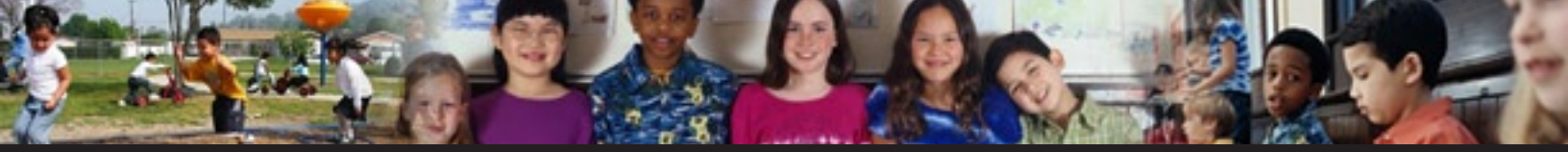
*Evaluation Team meetings.* Staff conducted weekly Evaluation Team meetings to monitor the implementation of the evaluation plan and to identify ways to improve data collection. Work with contractors for the webpage and the data maps was also discussed in order to keep on top of technical issues and updates using the most recent government databases available. Staff adjusted the timeline for gathering and reporting on how the Equity Alliance is doing on meeting the goals for completing program deliverables.

*Review of webpage activity data.* Google Analytics data is used to track website traffic and to analyze use characteristics. These data are used in team meetings that review the webpage contents to understand how to meet client needs. The second quarter saw a 48% increase over the previous quarter in absolute unique visitors (4,217). A map overlay shows that people from 52 U.S. states and territories accessed the site.

A notable data point from this quarter is that over 30,000 pages were viewed (up 57% from the previous quarter). We know that over 1000 people returned to the site over 100 times during the quarter.

When benchmarked compared to other educational sites of a similar size, the Center can show evidence of leading in "pages per visit" and "time on site" (both of these are measures of depth of client utilization of the Center's resources) and that it has room for improvement in "overall visits" (a measure of market share that is benchmarked with a much broader group of sites). Since this is relatively new way of working for a technical assistance center, we are looking forward to benchmarking with closer models over time, and improving the evidence of market share.






## Assess quality of products and services

*Forum Evaluation.* Evaluation staff prepared an analysis of data from the evaluation forms from participants of the keynote presentations and breakout sessions that took place during the Equity Forum. The report will be used by staff to identify ways to improve the next series of professional learning activities for leaders in the field of equity education.

### 2010 Leadership Forum Over all Evaluation



	Low	Medium	High
Rate the Forum's relevance to your current context.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rate the Forum's opportunities to process, reflect, and ask questions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Rank this conference in relationship to other conferences that you choose to attend during the year	<input type="checkbox"/>	won't come again	<input type="checkbox"/>	A contender	<input type="checkbox"/>	My favorite
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What kinds of sessions/presentations would you have liked to see more of?	<input type="checkbox"/> More interactive sessions	<input type="checkbox"/> More time to talk	<input type="checkbox"/> More time to hear from experts
• Add your ideas here:			

To what extent have you deepened your knowledge of these equity issues? (check as many as apply)			
Equity Issues	Not at all	To Some Extent	Extended and Deepened My Understanding
• Increased learning outcomes for students who have been marginalized	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Expand local ownership of equity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Demonstrate the impact of culturally responsive practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Dispel the myth that individual student and group deficits account for disparities in access, participation, and outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

By attending the forum, I .....	Not at all	To Some Extent	Extended and Deepened My Understanding
• Gained a better understanding of the issues around the over-representation of minorities in special education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Networked with thought leaders in order to understand the complexities of transformation for social justice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Examined ways to build bridges and tear down walls in their own local settings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Learned new ideas and strategies for teaching and leading change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Advanced the agenda for equity so that all students receive a high-quality education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Feel better prepared to advance the agenda for equity so that all students receive a high-quality education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Can build coalitions for everyday equity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The continuous improvement and evaluation team continued to develop tools and a plan to send out client surveys to get feedback on Equity Alliance Products and Services. The plan under development includes gathering expert input with the use of a summative rubric. Staff input from a December evaluation retreat will be analyzed and applied to the design of that rubric, which will then be sent to a variety of clients and advisors for feedback during April and May.



## Engage in continuous refinement

NVivo database. Regular reports from staff in the office, and field notes from school and district visits are being tracked and placed into NVivo database for future analysis. An increase in the quality and quantity of reports by staff was noted during this period.

## Accomplishments

- The Equity Forum and Certification Professional Learning Institute were evaluated.
- Staff reviewed Google Analytics data monthly to analyze website page visits and user demographics
- Staff held weekly evaluation team meeting to monitor evaluation activities and program deliverable
- All staff was training in the use of qualitative data evaluation techniques with NVivo software
- Evaluation staff participated in a webinar about completing the 2010 State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) analysis

## Next Steps

- Continue to review data collected about the centers' website
- Conduct an external review of Equity Alliance Products and Services by External Experts
- Train staff on how to better use evaluation tools like Constant Contact, Zoomerang, and NVivo to identify client needs and to assess the quality of products and services

# Report: Quarter 2 of Year 2

*January - March 2010*

The contents of this report were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

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