

## What Is a Success Gap?

*Note: Leaders should share this handout with equity team members after they agree to participate.*

A success gap is a difference in educational outcomes between different groups of children. An identified success gap indicates that a district or school is not serving all groups of children equally well. For children in the affected groups, these gaps often result in poor outcomes, such as the following:

- increased dropout and lower graduation rates;
- lack of achievement in reading or math;
- decreased postschool outcomes such as employment rates and college completion;
- increased likelihood of disciplinary actions; and
- increased likelihood of identification of disability.

Gaps can exist between different racial/ethnic groups or relate to factors such as disability, English learners, low income, migrant, and other factors. Addressing success gaps requires a close look at issues of equity, inclusion, and opportunity.

## Why Do Success Gaps Matter?

If your district or school data show success gaps, the gaps may indicate that the educational program it offers is not meeting the needs of all groups of children. When you allow success gaps to continue, they can lead to poor long-term outcomes for particular groups of children.

## The *Success Gaps Toolkit* and Process

The *Success Gaps Toolkit* offers a student-focused continuous improvement process. At the center of the process is a success gap statement. The success gap statement summarizes the important information about the success gap—including the group of children experiencing the success gap, the area in which the success gap is occurring, and the data point that supports identification of the gap. To begin the process of addressing an identified success gap using the *Success Gaps Toolkit*, district or school leaders will work through these steps:

1. Assemble an appropriate team.
2. Prepare and share data about success gaps.
3. Determine actionable root cause(s).
4. Create an action plan.
5. Implement plan and monitor progress.

