

EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION (GEPA, 427)

Missouri's Outstanding Schools Act (OSA) addressed educational equity by requiring changes to the foundation formula which applies a base of support for all schools in the State. The Act also required schools to set aside a percentage of their foundation formula funds for professional development activities to support the continuous improvement of all educators. To support districts in this requirement, Regional Professional Development Centers have been established throughout the state and are accessible to all educators.

Technology is also an important tool for promoting equity providing shared educational data, information, training, and research. Technology also allows for alternative education opportunities for economically disadvantaged, limited English, homebound, and geographically isolated students.

Districts are required to annually disaggregate and review achievement scores and dropout rates by race/ethnicity, gender, and disabilities. Districts are also encouraged to disaggregate and review data in other areas, such as special programs, attendance rates, retentions/suspensions/expulsions, etc., changes in instruction and assessment necessitated by the State's performance standards and assessments. This will promote successful learning for all students.

To ensure equitable access to and participation in federally funded, state-level activities for schools, students, teachers, and other beneficiaries with special needs, the Department will take the following steps. These measures will address equitability based on: gender, race, national origin, color, age, disability, or other categories which may be identified.

1. All districts, regardless of size or resources, receive state funding.
2. The Department has transitioned grants to a uniform application and application process for districts and provides technical assistance to help them develop and submit approvable applications.
3. Project applicants will be awarded additional points based on serving students of poverty, when applicable. All applicants must assure that they will take all reasonable measures to ensure equitable access to and participation in the project.
4. State assessments are structured to address all student needs.
5. Documents are translated, at the state and/or local level, into other languages and formats as needed.
6. All workshops and conferences sponsored by the Department are located in accessible facilities.
7. The Department conducts diversity training for all staff.

At the local level, each district will assure equitable access to and participation in federally assisted programs as part of its overall assurances.