

Consensus Study on Equity in PreK-12 STEM Education



Frequently Asked Questions

Dr. Eileen Parsons (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) is the current Chair of the National Academies' Committee on Equity in PreK-12 STEM Education. She has deep expertise in the history of diversity and equity in STEM as well as the influences of socio-cultural factors on science learning and participation of students of color in STEM. She is also the Immediate Past President of the National Association for Research on Science Teaching.



What questions about equity in preK-12 STEM will the committee examine?

The committee will write a consensus report that discusses how systemic inequity in STEM education can be addressed at all levels of the preK-12 system to promote success in STEM for all students, regardless of background, demographic status, and community. The committee will:

- Identify and describe the state of inequity in preK-12 STEM education in the United States, and examine the evidence on explanations of and interventions to address those inequities.
- Consider how ongoing implementation of state-level science and mathematics standards can take into account and address existing inequities in areas such as resource and human capital distribution, course offerings, instructional approaches (including classroom management and disciplinary policies and practices), family and community engagement, enrichment programs, access to technology and other concerns relevant to persistent inequities reflected in the literature.
- Review evidence on policy and program interventions at the federal, state, district, and classroom levels that have successfully addressed equity concerns and highlight promising practices.
- Develop recommendations for policy, practice, and research to promote success for all students in preK-12 STEM learning.

What areas of STEM will the committee focus on?

The study will look at all four areas of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

What are the regional field engagement sessions?

Traditionally, the consensus study process affords opportunities for public input during open sessions at committee meetings held in Washington, DC or Irvine, CA. This study will provide additional opportunities to hear from the public via regional field engagement sessions whereby the committee

will be sent out to various regions throughout the United States to learn about the different approaches communities employ in addressing equity issues in STEM education. Regional field engagement sessions enable the committee to hear from various groups who may not have the opportunity or resources to travel and to learn about the successes and challenges faced in different contexts while focusing on equity. The locations of the field engagements will be determined with input from the committee.

Who is on the committee that will write the report?

We were thrilled to receive over 350 nominations, which signifies the importance and timeliness of this study to the field. Staff members hosted multiple conversations with potential committee members and had the monumental task of taking those 350+ nominations and choosing 16 experts with a wide range of expertise who can examine the evidence available and navigate the tensions that the field faces to come to consensus on the questions asked in the study charge.

How will the public be able to use the report?

With this report, the public can utilize the evidence-based strategies to alleviate inequities in STEM education and work to implement them in their own communities. The public will also be able to use the research agenda the committee establishes as a guide to identify and pursue areas of research in an effort to push the field forward.

How can I be involved with the study or stay informed about the committee's progress?

There are multiple ways to stay informed about the committee's progress. First, we welcome the public to attend our open sessions as they are announced in the coming months as well as the regional field engagement sessions. You can also receive updates about this consensus study by subscribing to our mailing list. Finally, if you have questions or comments for the committee, you can send an email to EquityinPreK12STEM@nas.edu.

Who are the sponsors?

We are honored to have the following sponsors for this study:

- National Academy of Sciences Thomas Lincoln Casey Fund
- National Academy of Sciences W.K. Kellogg
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- National Science Foundation
- The Samueli Foundation
- William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- The William T. Grant Foundation