



EQUITY
ASSISTANCE
CENTER -
SOUTH AT SEF

How to Improve Access to Rigorous Coursework

BENEFITS OF EQUITABLE ACCESS TO RIGOROUS COURSEWORK

Equitable access to rigorous coursework enables all students to reach their academic potential, promoting inclusivity and high achievement.

- Higher Test Scores and Graduation Rates
- Increased College Enrollment and Readiness
- Enhanced College Performance
- Access to Higher Earning Potential and Career Opportunities
- Advanced Equity and Inclusion Practices



STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING ACCESS TO RIGOROUS COURSEWORK

Districts and schools can implement proactive strategies to foster equitable access to rigorous coursework. The following are several recommendations:

Identify the Issue: Identify disparities among student groups, both between and within schools, and analyze trends to determine where gaps exist.

Shape Academic Pathways: Establish rigorous and equitable academic pathways starting as early as elementary school. Consider how student choices and available opportunities influence curricular pathways.

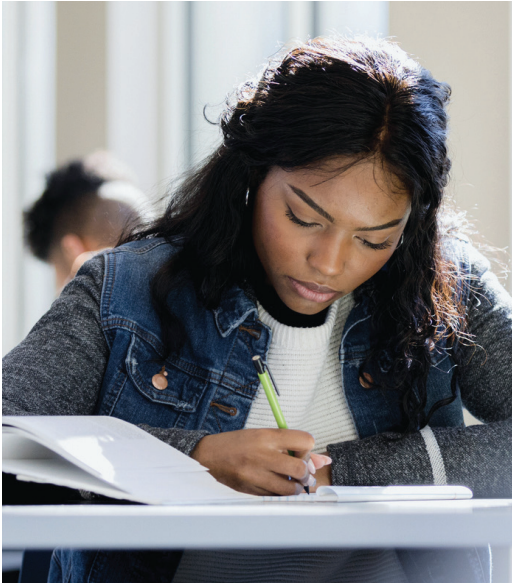
Boost College and Career Readiness: Foster a supportive culture that promotes college and career readiness, including through coursework, internships, and apprenticeships.

Enhance Pre-Collegiate Preparation: Offer a variety of AP and honors courses in different formats: in-person, virtual, and

hybrid. Provide real-world pre-collegiate experiences to help students develop self-efficacy through rigorous academics, improved study skills, and effective time management.

Expand College Access and Preparation: Promote high school participation in college-level and dual enrollment courses and ensure equity and accessibility across all academic levels. Enhance awareness of and assist with college applications and financial aid options.

Involve Students, Parents, and Staff: Host participatory sessions to address questions about advanced courses and provide mandatory professional development for staff to support increased enrollment.



FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INEQUITABLE ACCESS TO RIGOROUS COURSEWORK

Districts and schools have historically overlooked racial and ethnic disparities, often blaming student attitudes and cultural differences. Research shows these disparities cannot be explained by attitudes alone. Black students often exhibit more positive school attitudes and higher aspirations for college than their White peers, and all students share a desire to excel academically. Specific school policies contribute to disparities in access to rigorous courses and programs, despite appearing neutral, due to how students are identified based on criteria that may unintentionally favor certain racial or ethnic groups.

CONSEQUENCES OF INEQUITABLE ACCESS TO RIGOROUS COURSEWORK

When not all students have access to rigorous coursework, the following negative outcomes may occur: Students who lack access to equitable, rigorous coursework in school face several significant harms:

Academic Potential: Deprives students the opportunities to fully develop their academic abilities and restricts future educational and career prospects.

Skills Development: Hinders the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills and in creases the impairment of readiness for higher education and competitive workforce demands.

College and Workforce: Heightens disparities in college admissions and scholarship opportunities,

while also perpetuating social and economic inequalities within society.

Self-Esteem and Motivation: Reduces self-esteem and motivation in students from underrepresented backgrounds, leading to increased disengagement and decreased academic achievement.

Societal Progress: Impedes societal progress including exacerbating economic disparities and social inequalities and hinders the potential for innovation, creativity, growth, and advancement.

For additional details and resources, please scan the QR code.



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For more information about the webinar visit <https://eacsouth.org>