

# ***Equity for All Arizonans***

## **East Valley Equity Consortium - Equity in Education**

### **March 31, 2023 – Mesa, AZ**

Equity is critical for maximizing the potential of all students and to close learning gaps with students who may come from historically disadvantaged groups. While equity is important for race, that is not the only group to whom it should apply.

For example, an equitable approach is important to individuals with disabilities because we often don't know what they can become and limit their potential if we don't provide equitable support. If we allow ourselves to think only of their disabilities, we don't allow them to be the best they can possibly be. An equitable approach allows them to reach their full potential.

There is a lot of confusion about the definition of equity. Many confuse it with equality which is very different. We need to have a deeper conversation with parents, legislators and others about the importance of equity for maximizing student potential—especially for those students who have disabilities or who come from historically disadvantaged groups. One description that helps people to understand equity and which most will agree to is this: “We want every child to get exactly what they need to learn the best.”

A big challenge is simply getting people to understand what equity is and why it is so essential to public education. We should provide clarity about the definition of equity, and why it is so essential for an institution that serves students with many different needs. We need to fight through the “noise” around the term of equity and dismantle disinformation.

It's important to think about where and how the information is being communicated. We need to provide information to people in the places where they are and, in a way, they are able to receive and understand it. This means, for example, that we should use storytelling and social media as part of our communication efforts.