



## Position Statement on Equity and Access to Science Education

Council of State Science Supervisors

March 14, 2018

### **Our Why:**

The Council of State Science Supervisors, through its state level work, is committed to the equity vision of *A Framework for K-12 Science Education* and seeks to embrace and leverage students' cultures and identities as primary drivers in their science education. An equitable education system ensures that *all* students are known, heard and supported while having access and opportunities to the resources they need to learn, live and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

Promoting and sustaining educational equity while engaging in phenomena driven instruction is the overarching goal of the National Research Council's *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*. This framework clearly articulates the importance that *all* students are afforded equitable access and opportunity to learn deep science and engineering knowledge and practices in order to understand global complexities and make well-informed decisions in the future.

It is critical we ensure that *all* students in the K-12 educational systems have access and supports to participate in the opportunities that a high-quality science education provides. As we continue to recognize and rely on the contributions and advancements from the scientific and engineering communities to inform policy decisions that address our societal challenges, it is imperative to prepare a scientifically literate society. The resulting global interconnectedness and sustainable economic growth is the health and well-being of our nation. Diverse perspectives not only spur innovation and creativity, but also lead to greater opportunities to collectively solve societal challenges and improve humanity.

In the 21st century, an equitable and quality science education is a necessity for *all* students. Being scientifically literate is a fundamental right of *all* students throughout a K-12 public education system – science education is a critical component of a student's sustainable future, not a luxury.

### **Equitable Access:**

The successful implementation of science education across the K-12 system will be evident when gender, cultural backgrounds, and socioeconomic status are no longer predictors of student educational outcomes. Deeply rooted systemic stereotypes and preconceptions about students contribute to inequitable learning opportunities and outcomes in education systems nationwide, and fail to address the needs of the many diverse populations we serve. Our policies and practices regarding science education often mirror the societal inequities within our communities.

Equitable science education empowers our schools, families, and communities to help us engage *all* our students, and creates resources and strategies that focus on the diversity of the stakeholders in science education. To overcome these barriers and challenges, educational systems will need to allocate sufficient time, resources, and expertise to create space for educators to authentically engage *all* students in phenomena driven instruction relevant to every student.

### **Responsibility:**

As state science leaders and affiliated members, we have a responsibility to engage in discourse that interrupts policies and practices that perpetuates the lack of opportunity and belief gaps for our nation's students. The Council of State Science Supervisors will work to foster environments for frank policy discourse, which address systemic inequities, eliminate educational barriers and will afford access and equity for *all* students. The Council of State Science Supervisors will continue its efforts to transform educational systems to provide equitable and inclusive strategies that ensure *all* students depart the K-12 educational system being scientifically literate.