The Equity First Institute curriculum supports individuals who are both new and have some foundational experience in the transformational work of achieving equity in organizations, districts, communities and schools.
The Equity First Institutes help participants build capacity to access, engage and sustain complex and challenging conversations about equity, identity and implicit bias that lead to action. Participants engage in a rigorous set of learning experiences that begin in a safe space for us to take up the nuances of exploring our own identity. The Institutes then move us to a brave space where we explore how our identity is apparent when we interact with others, and finally shift us to bold spaces where we take up the work of dismantling the systems of oppression in our current work contexts and designing new systems that address persistent inequities.

SRI believes that educational equity is the practice of ensuring that each child is successful regardless of their external or internal, social or cultural contexts. We understand that as long as racial, social, economic and cultural factors continue to predict the future life chances of children in our nation, we must work to support educators to disrupt these inequities at the individual, classroom, school and organizational level.

The most difficult work educators take up is the conversation about equity and its implications for professional practice. While there is a range of injustices in our educational system that need to be vigorously addressed, it is often the conversation about race that proves the most challenging for educators. Race permeates every aspect of organizations, districts and schools, including: policies; organizational culture; relationships with students, their families and communities; curriculum; and styles of communicating. The conversation about race and equity is challenging not only because of the persistent inequities in our schools and communities, but also because the conversation surfaces deep issues of identity, privilege, history, power and the very purpose of our educational system.

“Educational equity is the practice of ensuring that each child is successful regardless of their external or internal, social or cultural contexts.”
Levels of Transformation

**Personal Awareness**

This two-day institute provides participants with the tools to articulate their own identity, and supports them to develop awareness of identities claimed by others. Through such activities as autobiographical storytelling and racial identity continuum dialogue, participants begin to develop a level of critical consciousness so that the influence of race and culture in our schools and organizations becomes personal and immediate to them.

By the end of the session, participants gain skills for using SRI tools and processes to:

- Identify and name their assumptions and beliefs about race, class and culture;
- Examine and challenge their own assumptions and beliefs about race, class and culture; and
- Reflect on how their and others’ assumptions and beliefs about race, class and culture play out in their work contexts.

**Interpersonal Discourse and Development**

This two-day institute deepens the “Who am I?” identity work from the Personal Awareness Institute by exploring how our identities influence the way we walk in, interact with others and make sense of the world. As a reflective learning group, we address several key questions: What do we mean by power and privilege? Do we all have some level of privilege? How can I identify unintended harm I’ve created in the past due to my privilege, and determine what I would do differently to make sure that I don’t make those mistakes again?

With an explicit focus on equity, participants gain skills for using SRI tools and processes to:

- Participate in reflective conversations about equity;
- Successfully manage dissonance, disequilibrium and anxiety in a reflective learning group; and
- Make explicit connections among educational practice, student learning & barriers to educational equity.
This two-day institute focuses on systems thinking, systems changing and systems design. It guides participants through a data discourse process to ensure that they are looking at relevant data when assessing their current systems, and asking the right questions. This process is done all while supporting participants to continue to reflect on their identity, specifically, how their identity impacts the systems or processes they design. Participants will bring work from their current contexts for us to explore as a reflective learning group where inequities are present, define the work where more equitable outcomes are possible and generate probing wonderings to support participants with prototyping a more equitable work design to take back to their work contexts for implementation and reflection.

By the end of the session, participants will gain skills for using SRI tools and processes to:
• Assess their spheres of influence to redesign systems in their work context;
• Engage in data discourse through an equity lens to identify racial, cultural and class biases in their work that perpetuate inequities; and
• Use a design process of noticing, reflecting, defining, envisioning, developing, implementing and revising current practices until systems are created that support equity and excellence for all.