



Equity at Work

Key system leader moves
for improving schools for
every student



Empowering leaders. Transforming
schools for every student.



ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Every child in America has the right to a quality education. We support district and school leaders to deliver on that commitment.

WHO WE ARE

The Leadership Academy is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization with a clear mission: *to build the capacity of educational leaders, at every level of the system, to confront inequities and create the conditions necessary for all students to thrive.*

Since 2003, The Leadership Academy has worked with more than 185 public school districts, charter and parochial schools, state departments of education, universities, foundations, and nonprofit organizations across 36 states, Washington, D.C., and internationally. We prepare and support high-quality leaders who can transform schools and ensure all students have access to effective instruction and are nurtured socially, emotionally, and academically. Reform leaders and funders such as The Wallace Foundation and The George W. Bush Institute have chosen us to support their educational leadership initiatives.

OUR FOCUS ON EQUITY

Equity for us means that each student and educator has access to the resources and opportunities they need to fulfill their potential, and that their race, culture, and other characteristics of their identity should not stand in the way of that access. We are committed to eliminating inequities in educational systems by supporting and developing school and school system leaders to build culturally responsive, equitable learning environments that serve all students. We focus on leaders because they are the lead learners in a school. They set and guide the implementation of the school vision. A strong leader will courageously model behaviors, mindsets, and expectations, in turn encouraging staff to do the same.

The Leadership Academy has always worked at the nexus of leadership and equity. We were created 16 years ago to help recruit and develop exceptional leaders — particularly women and people of color — for New York City's lowest-performing schools. Since then, we have worked with hundreds of school systems and educational organizations to build the capacity of leaders who help raise expectations and increase learning for underserved kids.

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A LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Dear School System Leader,

Welcome to *Equity at Work*. We set out to write this guide to explore some deep questions that we hear from system leaders over and over: **In systems where historically persistent opportunity and achievement gaps have narrowed, what moves did the leaders and their teams make to experience that success? What actions are those leaders taking in the short- and long-term to sustain the improvements they have made?**

To create *Equity at Work*, we posed those queries to system leaders who have successfully tackled some of the inequities in their schools. Their answers, along with the latest research and advice from our organization's experts, are documented in these pages and represent the incredibly hard, focused work behind their successes. **We present these valuable experiences to you not only as a source of inspiration for your own work, but also as an intentional tool for equity-focused strategic planning.** No school system leadership team can action plan without closely examining where its system needs to improve. Which groups of students are, and are not, getting access to accelerated classes and to the most qualified teachers? How engaged are students in their classroom instruction? Why aren't they engaged, and how is that affecting their learning? The superintendents we spoke with shared the steps they took to start to get at the root cause of some of the entrenched inequities found across their schools. We learned, for example, what they did to better support principals so that each student has access to rigorous, culturally affirming, and engaging instruction.

From our research and interviews with system leaders, we learned that effective leaders tend to focus on seven overarching areas of work that have made a difference in their schools:

- Establish, communicate, and garner support for a vision of equity
- Develop a highly effective team of equity-minded educators and leaders
- Set accountability measures and monitor progress
- Budget equitably and with equity in mind
- Build a supportive, inclusive and equitable school culture
- Collaborate with families and communities to build on their assets
- Partner with early childhood education programs to ensure these practices start early

We encourage you to use this guide to help you assess what practices you already have in place to help address inequities, and what policies and practices you should consider developing to help you meet your equity goals.

Of course, this is not the work of one person; it cannot be done in isolation. The leaders we spoke with found that the more people representing varying perspectives they involved in their strategic action planning process early on, the more likely the work would address the needs and have the support of the whole community. It requires the involvement of school board members, families, teachers, and other stakeholders.

By engaging and empowering a range of stakeholders in this planning process, you increase the chances that this plan will not just sit on a shelf collecting dust. Instead, it will serve as a living document, a roadmap referred to again and again, and revised as needed, for the work your community will embark on in order to dismantle systems of inequities that have held back students for far too long.

Sincerely,



Dr. Nancy B. Gutiérrez
President & CEO
The Leadership Academy

HOW TO USE EQUITY AT WORK

District leaders and their teams can use the exemplary leadership practices outlined in this guide as part of their formal school system-level equity-focused strategic planning work. These exemplars grew out of a review of the research literature and interviews with several current and former school system leaders from systems across the country who have succeeded in effectively addressing some disparities in student learning and school culture. We asked these leaders to what they attributed their success and what action steps they believe had the greatest impact on their ability to make real sustained change. In these pages we offer

lists of leadership practices found in the research, and stories from school district superintendents detailing their innovative approaches and how they put some of those practices into action.

By comparing the current state of your work with the ideal state depicted in these exemplars, you can begin to identify gaps in your school system's policies and practices. Where are you and your team already engaging in work that is likely to help reduce inequities, and where do you need to work with your team to plan out and make changes?

EQUITY ACTION AREAS, PRIORITIES, & BEHAVIORS

We focus here on twelve critical **equity action areas** which we found through our research are essential for moving schools toward equity. Please note that while we separated the work into these categories for easy reference, you will see that these topics are very interconnected. For example, cultural competency and personnel are foundational to much of the work in all 12 areas. Each of these equity action areas are then broken into **priorities**, actions that we have found through our research, if taken by system leaders, can help create more equitable education systems:

- Establish, communicate, and garner support for a vision of equity
- Develop a highly effective team of equity-minded educators and leaders
- Set accountability measures and monitor progress
- Budget equitably and with equity in mind
- Build a supportive, inclusive and equitable school culture
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- Partner with early childhood education programs to ensure these practices start early

These priorities are then broken down into **model behaviors**. The table below offers an example.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Equity Action Area | Cultural competency |
| Priority | Establish, communicate, and garner support for a vision of equity |
| Model Behavior | Share publicly and with staff leadership's commitment to ensuring that all school and school system staff expect that children can learn and perform at high levels |

ACTION AREAS

- 1 CULTURAL COMPETENCY
- 2 PEDAGOGY
- 3 COLLECTIVE ACTION
- 4 FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
- 5 DISCIPLINE
- 6 SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
- 7 PERSONNEL
- 8 SCHEDULING
- 9 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
- 10 CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS
- 11 STUDENTS WITH INTERRUPTED ACCESS TO SCHOOLING
- 12 TRANSPORTATION

INCORPORATING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

While much of this guide is designed for K-12 school systems, note that within several sections we also include effective practices for incorporating early childhood education programs into system-wide strategies. The research has made it clear that to create truly equitable education systems, we need to start well before kindergarten.

HOW THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CAN SUPPORT YOU

The educational leadership and equity experts at the Leadership Academy can support your effort to use Equity at Work and to create equity-focused strategic plans by:

- Helping you assess the applicability of the equity practices detailed in this guide as your strategic equity needs emerge during your strategic planning process.
- Developing and delivering professional learning to build school and district leader capacity around equity-focused action planning.
- Offering leadership coaching for those leading the strategic planning process.

For more information, please email us at contactus@nycleadershipacademy.org.

SHORT- AND LONG-TERM EFFORTS

As you go through this guide, we encourage you to consider what you can accomplish in less than two years (what we consider short-term), and what will require more time to do well. The length of time needed will depend on the current conditions of your school system. Here are some guiding questions to help you and your team determine whether different actions will be short- or long-term endeavors:

- How accessible and robust is your data?
- What level of political support do you have?
- What level of commitment does the school board have for equity? Is there a district-wide equity policy in place?
- How prepared are your leadership team and educators to engage in the work outlined here?
- Do you have the capacity to do this work on your own or is additional professional learning needed to build capacity before engaging in the work?



A SYSTEMIC APPROACH

Equity at Work breaks down the equity-focused strategic planning process into specific focus areas so that system leaders can target their efforts to areas they and their community determine are most in need of change. The ultimate goal is for the work of dismantling inequities to seep into every corner of a school system, from personnel to pedagogy to scheduling. As inspiration for what that far-reaching effort can start to look like, we open here with a story of how one district is taking a multi-pronged system-wide approach to tackling historically persistent inequities. Throughout Equity at Work, you will find other stories from leaders in the field to inform and inspire your work.

TAKING A SYSTEMWIDE APPROACH TO EQUITY

Roberto Padilla, Superintendent, Newburgh Enlarged City School District, NY

For us it started with creating a shared understanding and language around equity. This then resulted in a board of ed equity policy. It's so important to engage multiple stakeholders in this work, so we are always looking for entry points to engage board members, teachers, administrators, families, students. No one stakeholder group can be left out of the conversation. Whether it's creating a policy, launching the Newburgh Equity Team that's comprised of all of these different stakeholders, looking at academic practices, looking at the kinds of supports we bring on board and how they're aligned to our equity agenda. The conversation about equity has been constant. It couldn't be stop and go. We looked at data, we looked at access, and we looked at who was sitting in certain classrooms. It's about being honest, too. You can't do this work if you're not willing to be honest and understand that it might not look good. This is certainly not the kind of work that you want highly publicized, that you want to say, "Hey, the Newburgh school district is not serving all of its

students the way it should." But for us to get where we want to be, we've got to be honest about where we're falling short and I think there's a real appetite within the community to do something about it which I appreciate. You can create that appetite if you strategically show the misalignment between your vision for educating all kids and your practice. As the appetite grows within the community, as more people get to touch it, feel it, and see it, this becomes more than just leading the work. Other people are leading it right along with me. That's intentional. We created an Office of Equity & Access to oversee this work, and we created a Chief Equity Officer role as a senior executive position to make sure that equity is embedded in each of our divisions. Everyone has to own the work. Now, we have the equity policy in place, the board has goals. Those are things that are beyond just me. Those are things that other people are adopting and making their own.

1 CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Culturally responsive teachers and staff members ensure all students have access to learning experiences that are relevant, respectful of difference, rich and engaging.

ESTABLISH, COMMUNICATE, AND GARNER SUPPORT FOR A VISION OF EQUITY



- Share publicly and with staff leadership's commitment to ensuring that all school and school system staff expect that children can learn and perform at high levels.
- Communicate clearly to the community that all teachers and staff members will be trained in and observed for their use of **culturally responsive curriculum and instruction**.

Culturally responsive curriculum and instruction 1) recognizes and includes the experiences and backgrounds of the students in the classroom and in the community, and 2) honors global diversity and history, incorporating a diversity of perspectives into all subjects. Research has found that when students see themselves in their curriculum, they are more engaged and their academic achievements improve, and when students learn about a diversity of cultures and perspectives as part of an integrated curriculum, their negative attitudes about people of different races and backgrounds tend to diminish.

DEVELOP A HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE TEAM OF EQUITY-MINDED EDUCATORS & LEADERS



- Ensure all teachers understand and honor the characteristics and contributions of different ethnic groups.
- Require all teachers, school leaders, and district leaders and staff to have anti-bias training as well as professional development in cultural competency and stereotype threat.
- Ensure teachers understand that when students' experiences and cultures are reflected in instructional material, the material is more meaningful, more easily learned, and leads to a rise in student achievement.
- Offer principals professional learning on how to lead challenging and important conversations about race, prejudice, biases, discrimination and the inaccurate representations of various ethnic groups portrayed in the media. Educators should learn the importance of avoiding using "coded language" such as the term "minority" and use accurate and respectful language to refer to students' race and ethnicity.

SUPPORTING PRINCIPALS TO LEAD FOR EQUITY

Valeria Silva, former Superintendent, St. Paul Public Schools, MN

It was my dream for every leader in the district to take his or her own racial equity journey and eventually have epiphanies as I had. I tried to work with all 350 leaders, from principals to school board members, through equity-focused workshops and coaching. As a team we pushed ourselves to move beyond technical solutions to examine deeply rooted practices and beliefs about children of color, from how cafeterias were managed to how we were teaching the social studies curriculum. It had to start with the principal modeling, showing vulnerability, and examining all aspects of school practices. It was uncomfortable work, and many people just wanted a checklist of behaviors that they needed to learn. But there is no checklist. That's not how you make systemic transformational change for racial equity.

So we shifted our focus to work with a select group of leaders who wanted to engage, who already saw racial equity work as a critical way to improve their leadership and student learning. About a dozen "beacon schools," as we called them, volunteered. We hoped that when other schools saw the progress these schools would make over time they too would want to commit to addressing

inequities. In the first year, the district equity team supported these schools with coaching and help with budgeting and operations. We trained classroom teachers and principals, and leaders from across the schools met to share and learn from one another. They started identifying and changing practices that were hurting kids. One school, I remember, for years had students with special needs who arrived by bus each morning entering the school through a dark back alleyway because it was the easiest place for the bus to drop them off. It might have been convenient, but when my team started asking the school leaders how the students must feel using this second-class entrance, it really made them think. The school changed this practice and had those students enter through the main doors each day like every other child. In a short time, we saw their self-esteem improve tremendously. They even made a video about it. The beacon schools made some real improvements. Student learning improved, discipline incidents dropped, and parents participated more in schools.

BUILD A SUPPORTIVE, INCLUSIVE, & EQUITABLE SCHOOL CULTURE



- Ensure each student has a strong relationship with at least one adult in their building. Programs encouraging this include advisories and mentoring.
- Make clear to all students that they are loved and that each of their teachers has high expectations for their learning.
- Build school leaders' capacity to offer culturally responsive curriculum and courses that resonate with and empower students. Share information about the contributions people from all ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds have made on, among other areas, science, math, medicine and the arts.
- Support school leaders in developing the skills to work with their teachers to comprehensively review and revise curricular materials so that they fully and respectfully represent diverse cultures.
- Work with leaders to support their teachers in employing flexible, heterogeneous student groupings so that all children benefit from classroom diversity and develop relationships with children from different racial, linguistic, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds.
- Support the development of systems for teachers to interview students and alums to understand the types of lessons that were most meaningful and engaging and that most effectively prepared them for life after graduation.
- Ensure all students have a plan for post-secondary learning and career.
- Support school leaders in leading schools that are inclusive and welcoming, paying attention to "symbolic curriculum" like bulletin boards.

INCLUDING STUDENT VOICE IN POLICYMAKING

Irwin Blumer, Superintendent, Newton Public Schools, MA

As the leader of the school district, the values you're promoting become crucial. You can't send out a memo. You need to be clear about what you believe and engage other people in that conversation to the point where you have a significant number of people saying, "I understand that and I want to work on that." At one point, the principal of an elementary school came to me about wanting to pull together student affinity groups as a way to create an active anti-racist environment. So a Black teacher and a White teacher met with Black third graders at that school.

At first people thought third graders wouldn't be able to understand this. But the fact of the matter was the third graders were extremely articulate about how they felt as the minority in the school. What they said to us led us to place a much greater emphasis starting in kindergarten on how we help each kid feel that the school belongs to him or her. Good intentions aren't enough. We found some of our behaviors that were based in good intentions were not best for kids. Expectations weren't anywhere near high enough.

SET ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND MONITOR PROGRESS



- Incorporate cultural competency accountability measures into evaluation systems for principals, teachers, and system staff members. This can be done by disaggregating data from school climate surveys across multiple student subgroups; or regularly surveying students, parents, and system staff on educators' implementation of cultural competency practices; or conducting focus groups and interviews with stakeholders.
- Establish expectations that enrollment in honors and AP courses is reflective of the district's overall demographics. Design and implement processes to support this work.
- Use data from formative and summative assessments to analyze and address achievement and opportunity gaps. When gaps are present, consider how existing policies may be contributing to these gaps.
- Based on these monitoring processes, share progress with the community twice a year.

BUDGET EQUITABLY AND WITH EQUITY IN MIND



- For on-going, job embedded professional learning on anti-bias and culturally responsive teaching.
- For release time to attend racial equity conferences.
- For release time for more teacher collaboration.
- For curricular reviews to ensure the curriculum accurately and respectfully includes and represents all cultures, races, and ethnic groups.
- For creation of new curricula and courses, including ethnic studies courses.

PARTNER WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THESE PRACTICES START EARLY



- Budget for on-going and job embedded professional learning on anti-bias and culturally responsive teaching.

2 PEDAGOGY

Teaching that is individualized, high quality and rigorous is going to have the greatest impact on achievement for all students.

ESTABLISH, COMMUNICATE, AND GARNER SUPPORT FOR A VISION OF EQUITY



- Communicate the district's commitment to having exceptional teaching for every child in every classroom. Clearly and publicly state that struggling teachers should not remain in classrooms.
- Share widely the data indicating what achievement gaps exist and the plans for addressing those gaps.
- Set targets that narrow specific gaps for subgroups and increase achievement for all children.

DEVELOP A HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE TEAM OF EQUITY-MINDED EDUCATORS & LEADERS



- Build the capacity of every principal to understand what rigorous, culturally responsive instruction looks like (e.g. students are constructing ideas and solving problems rather than sitting passively).
- Support the development of rubrics for projects across disciplines so students and teachers have a consistent understanding of high expectations.
- Train all instructional leaders (principals, assistant principals, coaches) to coach teachers in the use of research-based effective practices such as the re-teaching and extension of concepts; the use of questioning as a form of differentiation; giving students varied options to express what they have learned; giving students the feedback and support they need to improve their work; leading conversations where students ask one another (not just the teacher) questions to deepen their own understanding.
- Build the capacity of your school leaders to support teachers' content knowledge so that they can anticipate and address student misunderstandings.

BUILD A SUPPORTIVE, INCLUSIVE, & EQUITABLE SCHOOL CULTURE



- Use student and parent surveys and interviews to target areas of the culture and climate in need of improvement.
- Provide teachers, staff and social workers with training in a consistent, research-based social emotional learning program and support the fidelity of its implementation.
- Ensure school leaders have the skills to support the design of lessons and school events that are respectful of and responsive to students' learning styles, home languages, cultures and customs.
- Use the master schedule to allow all students to have literacy at the same time to enable flexible grouping and personalization.
- Support school leaders in providing opportunities for educators to reflect on the concepts and skills they have learned and how they are being rolled out in every classroom.

PUTTING STUDENTS AT THE CENTER OF THEIR LEARNING

Rhoda Mhiripiri-Reed, Superintendent, Hopkins Public Schools, MN

We are committed to creating a district where all students feel affirmed. We do this by putting students at the center of their learning environments. We have trained our teachers in culturally responsive strategies such as “call and response” to ensure every student feels heard and respected in the classroom, and we will train our teachers to avoid racially coded language. Students are involved in curriculum design by co-creating learning experiences with their teachers and then prototyping them in our “innovation labs.”

We are working to ensure the curriculum has clear real world connections. Recently, some students conceptualized a new school while others led community engagement sessions. We are also redesigning our classrooms with modular furniture like standing desks and cocoon-like chairs for more flexible grouping and learning. Our goal is to develop students who are confident, globally minded, empathetic, and critical in their thinking as they work collectively to solve our world’s most daunting problems.

SET ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND MONITOR PROGRESS



- Support school leaders in evaluating teachers' effectiveness with each student (on both instruction and relationship development) using multiple measures (e.g. value added, standardized test scores, portfolios, student work, and surveys).
- Support leaders in evaluating teachers on their ability to assess comprehension.
- Support leaders in ensuring that teachers and their students are clear about the lesson objectives and how concepts being taught are relevant to other disciplines and the real world.
- Ensure school leaders are regularly observing instruction and offering teachers feedback on whether they are regularly asking every student critical thinking questions; whether each child is learning material aligned to standards and on grade level; whether students are engaged in learning; which students are not engaged and how to better engage them.
- Give principals the latitude to remove teachers from the classroom who are unable to improve despite feedback and support.
- Ensure leaders guide teachers to use both formative and summative assessments to adjust practice.

BUDGET EQUITABLY AND WITH EQUITY IN MIND



- Invest in research-based practices for improving teachers' pedagogic knowledge and instruction such as by hiring school-based instructional coaches.
- Provide the support necessary to ensure teachers have time to collaborate.
- Ensure teachers have opportunities to observe model practices within and outside of district.
- Make sure schools have the funds to purchase necessary materials (e.g. manipulatives, writing journals) to allow teachers to implement selected programs with fidelity.
- Create a system for sharing materials, field trip opportunities, and access to experts within and across schools to support and deepen curriculum and instruction (e.g. potential speakers).
- Support school leaders in funding meeting time at the beginning and middle of the school year to give teachers sufficient time to read, understand, and ask questions of experts about students' learning plans, like IEPs, and what strategies best support their learning.

PARTNER WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THESE PRACTICES START EARLY



- Invite area pre-school programs to send their teachers to school system trainings.
- Support your school leaders in bringing together elementary and preschool teachers to look at student work and ensure consistently high expectations.

3 COLLECTIVE ACTION

Adaptive problems can be more effectively solved with collective, rather than isolated, action.

ESTABLISH, COMMUNICATE, AND GARNER SUPPORT FOR A VISION OF EQUITY



- Communicate consistent communitywide goals to all stakeholders.
- Establish a committee of stakeholders to develop a coherent description of the specific problem facing the community that you will collectively work to address.
- Share widely a belief that problems are best solved by diverse groups of people with varied expertise and backgrounds.

BUILD A SUPPORTIVE, INCLUSIVE, & EQUITABLE SCHOOL CULTURE



- Regularly communicate progress, successes and challenges around the collective action work with stakeholders to develop collective ability to problem solve.
- Meet in person with the committee of stakeholders at least monthly to create shared language and to build trust.
- Communicate virtually regularly between meetings to further collaborate and build trust.

DEVELOP A HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE TEAM OF EQUITY-MINDED EDUCATORS & LEADERS



- Share the research illustrating the success of collective action across the country.
- Share case studies and/or observe effective models of collective action to replicate.
- Train educators on how they can effectively participate in collective action.

SET ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND MONITOR PROGRESS



- Evaluate teachers, principals and school and district staff on their efforts to work collaboratively with colleagues in and outside of the district to address classroom, school, and district challenges. Consider, for example, how well they have worked with other government agencies to bring services or funds into the school.
- Create common objectives across local government agencies and organizations.
- Develop a consistent set of measures across agencies and organizations.

BUDGET EQUITABLY AND WITH EQUITY IN MIND



- Budget for staff to carefully coordinate the collective action process, such as bringing stakeholders together regularly.
- Share resources across agencies working towards shared goals.
- Apply for grants collaboratively.

PARTNER WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THESE PRACTICES START EARLY



- Invite leaders from early childhood centers to participate in training and planning.

4 FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Strong relationships between school, family, and community result in significant gains in student learning, better family-child relations, and lower drop-out rates.

ESTABLISH, COMMUNICATE, AND GARNER SUPPORT FOR A VISION OF EQUITY



- Communicate to district leaders and staff the importance of reaching out to all families and the belief that all families add value to the school community.
- Change the terminology around family engagement to include a variety of parental arrangements, challenging and redefining belief systems around what parent engagement must look like.
- Share the belief that all family members want the very best for their children, although they may communicate this in different ways.
- Encourage educators to build trust with family members through on-going, positive and varied communication (e.g. starting the school year by calling parents and guardians with good news about each student's learning).
- Communicate the importance of designing events that offer parents the opportunity to see what their children are learning.

DEVELOP A HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE TEAM OF EQUITY-MINDED EDUCATORS & LEADERS



- Offer on-going, differentiated training for teachers, counselors and principals on research-based, culturally responsive best practices for family engagement.
- Provide training for teachers to help family members support children's learning at home.
- Ensure educators have training on biases and how those biases may impact their work with families.
- Give educators feedback on ways they can more effectively engage family members.

BUILD A SUPPORTIVE, INCLUSIVE, & EQUITABLE SCHOOL CULTURE



- Ensure materials sent home are translated in all languages spoken by parents / guardians.
- Arrange translation for parent/guardian phone calls, conferences, and meetings.
- Support principals in designing school bulletin boards and placards so that they are welcoming, inclusive, and representative of families' cultures.
- Create family engagement events that focus on the district's academic and social emotional areas for improvement

SET ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND MONITOR PROGRESS



- Evaluate teachers' and principals' ability to engage families in student learning.
- Assess the effectiveness of family engagement programs and adjust them as needed to increase effectiveness.

ENGAGING FAMILIES IN MULTIPLE WAYS

Habeeb Quadri, Superintendent, Muslim Community Center Academy, IL

It has been exciting to work in my own schools and also see the incredible work being done in our area public schools to engage families. We are all committed to deeply engaging our families and work in a variety of ways to make sure all members of the community feel comfortable and celebrated in our schools. We publish materials and offer translation for our school events and meetings in six languages. We seek cultural and linguistic expertise not just from within the district, but also in the greater community by locating translators and guest speakers at local churches and community organizations. This way, parents can participate in educational events and also have an avenue for asking their own questions. We also send school staff to local churches, mosques, temples, cultural centers and organizations, such as civil rights non-profits, to

publicize events. To help families feel included, we teach students and staff the importance of social justice and sensitivity to all groups of people living in the area, including religious groups and refugees. Niles Township also holds an annual in-depth global study of world cultures called Coming Together. This K-12 study is interdisciplinary and engages educators, parents, children, and community organizations. Finally, we encourage our teachers and coaches to advocate for changes in state policies such as one that banned students in head scarves from playing in basketball games. In all of these ways we seek to build a community where all family members feel respected, heard and engaged.

BUDGET EQUITABLY AND WITH EQUITY IN MIND



- Fund programs to help educators think creatively about how to involve all parents.
- Budget for educators to make home visits and for meetings to take place before and after school hours.

PARTNER WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THESE PRACTICES START EARLY



- Invite leaders and their teachers at local pre-schools to participate in trainings on family engagement.
- Ask elementary school leaders and teachers to engage with pre-school educators in discussing ways to engage parents/guardians of children transitioning to kindergarten.

5 DISCIPLINE

Students are most likely to achieve academically and be prepared for post-secondary learning when they are in their classrooms daily, have positive relationships with their teachers and the support of mental health professionals as needed.

ESTABLISH, COMMUNICATE, AND GARNER SUPPORT FOR A VISION OF EQUITY



- Share leadership's commitment to keeping all students in school and eliminating discipline disparities.
- Communicate clearly to the community that all teachers and staff members will be trained in and observed for their use of positive and restorative disciplinary practices.

BUILD A SUPPORTIVE, INCLUSIVE, & EQUITABLE SCHOOL CULTURE



- Develop disciplinary systems that are positive and restorative rather than punitive.
- Ensure a social-emotional learning program is in place so that students can learn how best to address social challenges like bullying in school.
- Establish student support teams that include mental health experts who can respond quickly when students and teachers require support.
- Make clear through your school/district's vision, mission and curriculum that all students, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, immigrant status or learning style are valued and welcome in the community.

DEVELOP A HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE TEAM OF EQUITY-MINDED EDUCATORS & LEADERS



- Share research on the ineffectiveness of “zero tolerance” policies and the damaging effects they can have on students who have experienced trauma.
- Require training for educators on the frequency, impact, and signs of childhood trauma so that teachers know how to minimize triggers and support their students.
- Support school leaders in developing supportive school environments for shifting teachers' mindsets and helping them engage in new restorative practices.
- Look for signs of stress in school leaders who may be supporting large numbers of children who have experienced trauma, and support principals in doing the same for their teachers.
- Ensure new leaders in the district have extensive trauma-sensitive training and experience with positive disciplinary techniques.

SET ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND MONITOR PROGRESS



- Include within school leader, teacher, and other staff evaluations accountability measures for their ability to diminish discipline disparities and create an inclusive school culture.
- Regularly collect feedback and data on discipline practices and policies, which can then be used to determine whether practices should be revised. Effective data could include surveys or input from focus groups of students, parents, and staff.
- Design monitoring processes to ensure students of color are not receiving a disproportionate number of office referrals, such as by requiring principals to enter discipline data into a district- or state-wide system that can help you analyze trends and target support to schools that need it.
- In schools where discipline disparities persist, make available additional training for teachers and other school staff.

BUILDING TRUST TO KEEP STUDENTS IN CLASS

Edwin M. Quezada, Superintendent, Yonkers Public Schools, NY

I started focusing on discipline as an equity issue early in my career. As I looked at the discipline data in Yonkers, I knew I wanted to target our suspension practices because our elementary students of color were being suspended at very high rates. I spoke with the principals about my findings, but also shared the data publicly with the community so that everyone would share my sense of urgency and help me to affect change. As a result, the community has worked together to take on many initiatives that have allowed us to greatly diminish the rate at which students are removed from instruction for disciplinary reasons. We have ensured that teachers

understand their own biases and use restorative practices, which help children heal and return to their learning. We also rewrote the Code of Conduct to ensure that our daily practices reflected our commitment to students being valued, respected and appreciated. Additionally, we started programming for parents with infants so that we could begin to have collaborative and trusting relationships with them from the very beginning. We are seeing evidence of success now. For example, our rate of suspension hearings decreased by 26% and the overall rate of children being suspended decreased by 20%.

BUDGET EQUITABLY AND WITH EQUITY IN MIND



- Budget for positive and restorative practices training for school leaders, teacher coaches, teachers, district leaders and staff.
- Fund training for all staff on how to support children who have experienced trauma and the behaviors that can result from that trauma.
- Budget for mental health staff to support the social emotional needs of students and staff.
- Support collaborations between schools and community agencies that support the emotional well-being of families and students.

PARTNER WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THESE PRACTICES START EARLY



- Collaborate with early childhood centers to train their educators in restorative practices.
- Work with early childhood centers to share community mental health services and other resources for families in crisis.
- Meet with counselors and educators of rising kindergarteners to ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten and the continuation of any necessary support services.
- Work with city or town officials to share positive disciplinary practices with parents/guardians of young children.

6 SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Commit to enrolling every child in a school with well-prepared, highly-effective teachers.

ESTABLISH, COMMUNICATE, AND GARNER SUPPORT FOR A VISION OF EQUITY



- Communicate a commitment to having every child, especially those who have been historically marginalized, enrolled in a school with exceptional teachers.
- Set regular clear, public goals for increasing the number of historically marginalized children enrolled in schools with highly trained teachers.
- Create policies that desegregate schools, such as by redrawing school district lines or separating students' school assignments from their neighborhoods.

DEVELOP A HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE TEAM OF EQUITY-MINDED EDUCATORS & LEADERS



- Train district staff responsible for school enrollment in cultural competency and biases to ensure they are not making assumptions about which schools are the best fit for students based on race, culture, or socio-economic status.
- Ensure district's enrollment staff are doing all they can to offer every family access to information about the highest quality schools and programming, such as offering parent open houses in different neighborhoods.

SET ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND MONITOR PROGRESS



- Measure regularly, by subgroup, the number of children who are enrolled in a school and classroom with a teacher certified in the subject being taught.
- When new enrollment policies and practices are implemented, regularly monitor their impact on children from all subgroups.

BUDGET EQUITABLY AND WITH EQUITY IN MIND



- Invest in the transportation necessary to separate students' school assignments from their neighborhoods.
- Fund research necessary to investigate and implement enrollment practices that will increase students' access to high quality teachers and schools.
- Fund research necessary to investigate and implement enrollment practices that desegregate schools (e.g. controlled choice).
- Support the design and implementation of new technologies to communicate with families and simplify the communication process.

PARTNER WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THESE PRACTICES START EARLY



- Work with leaders at early childhood learning centers to ensure that preschool-aged children from every neighborhood have access to high quality childcare.

CREATIVE STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING SCHOOLS

Mohammed Choudhury, Chief Innovation Officer, San Antonio Independent School District, TX

My goal in Dallas and now in San Antonio has been to create exceptional, socio-economically and racially integrated schools through a variety of innovative enrollment practices. Often when specialized schools open, even when they are designed to be intentionally diverse, a majority of affluent white and/or middle- and upper-middle class parents end up enrolling their students. Open enrollment initiatives that do not have equity guardrails in place will exacerbate the inequities inherent in our cities. To address this equity challenge in both cities, we created open enrollment schools that were socioeconomically diverse pilots. In San Antonio, we have developed a 'priority radii' approach that allows us to target a strategic enrollment zone of both low-income and upper-income families. We have also used a 50/50

enrollment strategy in our diverse-by-design school models, which is a form of controlled choice that requires that a school enroll 50% low-income students and 50% middle and upper-middle class students to ensure that the school remains balanced socio-economically. We also carefully choose the location and theme, such as Montessori or dual language, so that it appeals to a wide range of families and promotes the actual work of integrating students within learning environments. Finally, it is crucial that we engage in active and accessible marketing and communication so that families in all parts of the city learn about exciting new school options and have the tools they need to enroll.

7 PERSONNEL

Students are most likely to be successful if they have diverse, culturally responsive and highly effective teachers and other school staff members.

ESTABLISH, COMMUNICATE, AND GARNER SUPPORT FOR A VISION OF EQUITY



- Communicate clearly to the community that diversity will be a priority in hiring.
- Communicate the district's commitment to hiring and retaining highly effective educators.
- Set clear goals for the teaching and administrative staff to reflect the demographic diversity of the students in the district.
- Aim to have a more diverse faculty than the student body in districts where most students are white to expose students to people who are different from themselves.

DEVELOP A HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE TEAM OF EQUITY-MINDED EDUCATORS & LEADERS



- Retain exceptional teachers through the creation of leadership roles like instructional coach.
- Develop a leadership pipeline by encouraging talented and diverse teachers to train to be principals.
- Support school leaders in creating opportunities for teachers to learn from the high-quality practices of district colleagues through such practices as the creation of model classrooms and peer visits.

BUILD A SUPPORTIVE, INCLUSIVE, & EQUITABLE SCHOOL CULTURE



- Create affinity groups and hire mentors to support staff members of color.
- Ensure all new school leaders and teachers have highly effective, collaborative and supportive mentors.
- Support school leaders in offering all teachers the time necessary to collaborate, examine student work together, and share best practices.

CREATING A DIVERSE TEACHING STAFF

Barbara Allen, Executive Director of Human Resources, and Ramon De Jesus, Director of Diversity Development, Cambridge Public Schools, MA

While we are proud to have the second highest rate of teachers of color (27%) in the state of Massachusetts, we are aiming to reach 30% by 2020 because we feel it is critical that our faculty better reflect the demographics of our student body. The research is clear on the benefits that all students experience when they are taught by a diverse faculty and we also know that for students of color, being reflected in their teachers is important. To that end, we are using a variety of strategies to diversify our team. First, our school committee developed a hiring policy setting the goal of hiring and retaining 30% teachers of color. We continuously communicate this policy and the reasoning behind it to all of our hiring administrators. To ensure there is consistent oversight over this work, we created the new position of Program Manager for Diversity Development, filled in October 2017. We are leading professional learning for all of the district's leadership to help them understand how to create culturally responsive school environments and to

become aware of how their biases impact interview and selection processes. We have worked hard to increase our outreach to teachers of color by holding specialized job fairs, visiting colleges with higher numbers of students of color such as those of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and are partnering with anti-racist educational organizations. We have expedited our hiring process so that we can attract the very best candidates of color. We are also being very intentional in our creation of diverse hiring committees and hiring pools to ensure that there are people of color represented in the hiring decisions and that there exists a pipeline of diverse candidates to interview. Many of these initiatives have already yielded results, with 46% of our new teachers identifying as people of color, and we are hopeful that they will continue to help us in championing an equity-centered environment for our students and staff.

SET ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND MONITOR PROGRESS



- Develop guidelines for ensuring hiring managers receive anti-bias training, assemble a diverse hiring committee, and interview diverse candidates.
- Evaluate principals on their ability to support struggling teachers and remove them when the support does not result in improvements.
- Evaluate principals' ability to hire and retain highly effective, diverse educators.
- Triangulate educator effectiveness data such as observations, parent and student surveys, and student growth measures to gain a deeper understanding of educators' strengths and areas for improvement.
- Measure the access historically marginalized students have to the district's most effective teachers.
- Move teachers as necessary to ensure low-income students and students of color have access to the district's best teachers.

BUDGET EQUITABLY AND WITH EQUITY IN MIND



- Dedicate funds to training hiring managers in equitable practices.
- Financially support efforts to expand the pool of candidates, such as advertising in a range of publications and traveling outside of the district for interviews and recruitment.
- Budget for alternative pathways to certification within the district as a way to develop educators who enter the profession as paraprofessionals and substitutes and in turn expand the pool and diversity of candidates.
- Fund technology to assist hiring managers in quickly and effectively learning about candidates.
- Support a leadership pipeline by funding the on-going development of aspiring principals.
- Provide resources to give teachers of color access to affinity groups.

8 SCHEDULING

Every child will have a schedule that gives them access to rigorous coursework and high quality teaching.

ESTABLISH, COMMUNICATE, AND GARNER SUPPORT FOR A VISION OF EQUITY



- Communicate that every student will have a schedule that allows him or her to graduate in a timely manner and to be ready for post-secondary learning and a career.

DEVELOP A HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE TEAM OF EQUITY-MINDED EDUCATORS & LEADERS



- Train district leaders to think creatively about scheduling to best meet the needs of students (e.g. staggering teachers' schedules).

BUILD A SUPPORTIVE, INCLUSIVE, & EQUITABLE SCHOOL CULTURE



- Use the master schedule to allow all students to have literacy at the same time to enable flexible grouping and personalization.
- Ensure sufficient time is allowed for classes that develop students' social emotional skills.
- Create time for student affinity groups to gather and build relationships based on commonalities including interests, race and culture.
- Support school leaders in hosting community events that build community and trust.

SET ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND MONITOR PROGRESS



- Support school leaders in reviewing student and teacher schedules (e.g. block, dropped, rotating) regularly and evaluate leaders on their ability to use educators' and students' time most efficiently and effectively.
- Ensure that all school leaders schedule their neediest students (e.g. ELLs, special education students) first, ensuring they have access to the resources they need, including to the strongest available teachers.
- Require all leaders allocate collaboration time sufficient to share best practices and student work.

CREATING A DIVERSE TEACHING STAFF

Barbara Allen, Executive Director of Human Resources, and Ramon De Jesus, Director of Diversity Development, Cambridge Public Schools, MA

When Jefferson County was asked to identify its lowest performing schools, as required under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, almost half of its 21 high schools were designated as persistently low-performing and in need of turnaround strategies. These schools reflected the district's overall demographics, but when we disaggregated the data by race and socio-economic status, we saw real inequities. The assistant superintendent for high schools Joe Burks and I decided to restructure the low-performing schools' approach to instruction.

The core of the restructuring lay in teacher collaboration. Dubbed Project Proficiency, the approach integrated four principles: 1) teachers would work together to set clear and realistic proficiency-based learning targets; 2) teachers would help students understand the targets; 3) teachers would collaborate in subject-area teams; and 4) the district would support flexible scheduling to facilitate teacher collaboration.

Supported by a progressive teachers association that worked closely with school and district administrators, the project was implemented in 10 schools and achieved exceptional results. Schools that had routinely had single-digit levels of math and ELA proficiency made 20- to 30-point gains. Attendance, graduation rate, teacher morale, and

school climate also improved. Key to the project's success was that each school arranged regular times for teacher collaboration. Each grading period, curriculum specialists and teacher leaders met to identify three key standards that each core course would focus on and to create the summative assessments that would measure each student's proficiency on those standards. Teachers worked in professional learning communities to develop standards-aligned lessons and activities. For example, all Algebra I teachers had a common preparation time daily and full-day meetings every six weeks to work with a math coach to develop lessons, analyze student performance data, and plan re-teaching strategies for students who were struggling with a concept. Teachers expected students to earn at least an 80% on each assessment before moving on to the next key standards, and they set aside time before and after assessments to support students in reaching that goal. The scheduled collaboration time enabled teachers to accept and act upon their collective responsibility to ensure that every student, regardless of race, culture, or economic level, achieved academic success.

BUDGET EQUITABLY AND WITH EQUITY IN MIND



- Fund extra learning time before and after school as needed for enrichment and remediation.
- Give school leaders the flexibility to budget for teachers to have time for re-teaching and extensions during the regular school day.

PARTNER WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THESE PRACTICES START EARLY



- Share creative scheduling ideas with leaders at early childhood centers.

ADDRESSING SCHEDULING INEQUITIES TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

Sheldon Berman, former Superintendent, Eugene School District, OR

When I arrived in Eugene, a looming concern was the district's declining graduation rate, which was 66% in 2012. The graduation rate disparities between economically advantaged and disadvantaged students were particularly concerning. Class scheduling seemed to be at the root of many of the inequities. The high school schedule called for students to take eight courses per year. But many students' class loads had been reduced to six or seven in part because of financial pressure in Oregon schools that made it hard for the district to staff enough periods for every student to take eight classes. Schools claimed six classes would be enough for students to meet the 24-credit graduation requirement.

The inequities arose because many middle- and upper-middle class parents advocated for their children to have a full eight-class schedule, and those requests were generally accommodated. Students whose parents were not pushing for their children to have eight classes, many of whom were economically disadvantaged, were scheduled for only six or seven classes. Students taking only six classes weren't adequately prepared for college. If they failed a class, they had no wiggle room to make up those credits to graduate. And because there was no productive activity for the other two periods of the day, students taking six classes

often left campus during the day, prompting them to miss more classes.

My team and I set a goal of 100% graduation rate and proposed that, to reach that goal, every student be fully scheduled. The teachers' union resisted, fearing full scheduling would increase class size and questioning whether all students could handle a full course load. We stood firm. The school board understood that the district could not reach our graduation goal without moving every student to a full schedule, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and so was highly supportive. To start, we added enough teachers to fully schedule freshmen. Next, the district adopted a more economical high school schedule that enabled full scheduling for sophomores. At that point, most of the schools began to fully schedule juniors and seniors, too. By 2016, Eugene's graduation rate reached 75%, a 9% increase in just four years. From 2012 to 2016, graduation rates for economically disadvantaged students rose from 55% to 62%, and rates for students from traditionally underserved races and ethnicities rose from 57% to 68%.

9 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Use a rigorous, unbiased process for the referral of students to special education. Provide students with disabilities with enriching, standards-based, inclusive programs.

ESTABLISH, COMMUNICATE, AND GARNER SUPPORT FOR A VISION OF EQUITY



- Share leadership's commitment to designing an inclusive school and eliminating disparities in special education referrals by race, gender and socio-economic status.
- Communicate clearly to the community that all teachers and staff members will be trained in and observed for use of inclusive, researched-based, **universal design for learning (UDL)** practices.
- Provide students with the accommodations they need to fully participate.
- Ensure students with disabilities have access to academic and extracurricular opportunities that challenge and engage them.

DEVELOP A HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE TEAM OF EQUITY-MINDED EDUCATORS & LEADERS



- Share research on the importance of minimizing barriers to the grade-level, standards-aligned curriculum.
- Require training for special and general education staff on the best ways to scaffold instruction.
- Build supportive schools where staff are encouraged to take risks and try out their new learning.
- Ensure new leaders have training in inclusive and research-based best practices for special education.
- Work with all educators to ensure that they are providing students with high expectations as well as the specific feedback and support

Based on cognitive neuroscience research, **universal design for learning (UDL)** is a framework for creating instructional goals, assessments, methods, and materials that can be customized to meet individual learning needs. Teachers following UDL principles minimize barriers to learning and meet the needs of diverse learners by presenting content in a variety of ways, asking students to express their understanding in different ways, and giving students choice in how they engage with the learning. UDL is widely endorsed including in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

USING TEACHER TEAMS TO BOOST LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

Renee Greenfield, assistant principal, Fort River Elementary School, and Dr. Faye Brady, Director of Student Services, Amherst Regional Public Schools, MA

We wanted our students with IEPs to receive their specially designed instruction in the general education classroom. We also sought to improve student achievement overall, offer greater access for all students, and enhance the learning outcomes of students with disabilities in our district. We did this through a co-teaching model. We knew from studying other co-teaching experiences that without continuous professional development and coaching, the instructional model would be difficult to sustain. At the inception, we increased allocations of special educators at the elementary and secondary schools. Every co-teaching pair, comprised of general and special educators, many of whom opted in to participating, attended a summer session of professional learning. In those initial sessions, educators unpacked their beliefs and practices around teaching and learning and learned about the six co-teaching models. We followed up with two years of non-evaluative, instructional coaching for the co-teaching pairs. During the first year, the coaching supported teachers in meeting their professional

practice goals, which primarily focused on using more than one co-teaching instructional model (i.e., team teaching, station-based teaching). The second year of coaching was designed to address questions and challenges raised by each teaching pair. Based on educators' and school leaders' input, we also encouraged other professionals to consider co-teaching, including teachers of English learners and speech-language pathologists. Existing and new pairs were invited to participate in fall, winter, and spring professional learning opportunities crafted for them, including visits to colleagues' classrooms and the use of station or center-based instruction. We are now in our fourth year of using this model and we have co-teaching in all of our schools, grades 1—10. We are growing the model one year at a time and will eventually have it through grade 12.

BUILD A SUPPORTIVE, INCLUSIVE, & EQUITABLE SCHOOL CULTURE



- Ensure a social-emotional learning program is in place so that students can learn how best to address social challenges, such as bullying, which may be more likely to occur because of their disabilities.
- Establish student support teams that monitor student progress and call team meetings in a timely manner when progress is not being made.
- Make clear through your mission and curriculum that all students are valued, regardless of sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, immigrant status, disability, or learning style.

SET ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND MONITOR PROGRESS



- Include within principal, teacher, and staff evaluation systems accountability measures that assess their ability to diminish referral disparities and create an inclusive, universally designed for learning, and rigorous school culture for all children.
- Survey students, parents and staff regularly to ensure all members of the community feel connected, respected, and embraced. Reflect on the results with staff and create an action plan to address concerns. Monitor actions and revise plan as needed.
- Design monitoring processes to ensure students of color are not being referred in disproportionate rates for special education. Provide additional training and accountability measures for schools or teachers where disparities continue.
- Support school leaders in developing the knowledge and skills to observe classrooms for rigorous, standards-aligned instruction and to offer educators effective feedback.
- Ensure assessments accurately measure what students need to know and be able to do and explore different means of assessing learning like student portfolios and technology.
- Monitor school-based practices to make sure students with disabilities are integrated into general education settings. Foster collaborative team teaching classrooms.
- Monitor suspension rates to ensure that students with disabilities are not being disproportionately disciplined and suspended.
- Monitor Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to ensure that students are being given appropriate interventions and are not being unnecessarily referred for special education for issues such as reading support.
- Share progress and goals with the community regularly.

BUDGET EQUITABLY AND WITH EQUITY IN MIND



- Budget for educator training in research-based best practices for meeting the needs of all students including in universal design for learning, co-teaching and other inclusive practices.
- Fund a robust process for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to ensure that students are receiving high quality tiered support before being referred for special education services.
- Budget classroom teachers and special educators to have sufficient co-planning time.
- Budget for teacher coaches to support the implementation of co-teaching and other inclusive practices.
- Fund technology (e.g. taped texts) and materials necessary for all students to participate fully in all classes.

PARTNER WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THESE PRACTICES START EARLY



- Provide transportation to early childhood centers that have shown their effectiveness in preparing all children for kindergarten. Use national standards such as National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to determine effectiveness.

10 CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

Serving the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students requires intentional and strategic planning and actions.

ESTABLISH, COMMUNICATE, AND GARNER SUPPORT FOR A VISION OF EQUITY



- Create a shared vision that states the community's commitment to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students both online and in person and that language learning is the responsibility of all teachers.
- Communicate clearly to the community that all teachers and staff members will be trained in, observed for and given feedback on their use of inclusive, researched-based practices for the teaching of CLD students to continuously improve their practice.
- Communicate to the community the importance of deeply knowing every child and the assets each brings to the classroom including their schooling experiences, time in the country, home language, and culture.
- Establish and widely communicate that bilingualism and biculturalism are the goals for students entering school with a predominant language other than English. Provide opportunities for English-only peers to develop second language proficiency and multicultural awareness.

DEVELOP A HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE TEAM OF EQUITY-MINDED EDUCATORS & LEADERS



- All levels of leadership should demonstrate a deep understanding of and reflect the community served. Help staff and students learn about the cultures represented in their schools.
- Engage staff in ongoing discussions about the challenges CLD students face.
- Involve all leaders, teachers and staff in a comprehensive, schoolwide effort to develop an effective program for culturally and linguistically diverse students.
- Establish commitment that all CLDs will be provided grade-level standards-aligned curriculum with supportive scaffolds.

DEVELOP A HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE TEAM OF EQUITY-MINDED EDUCATORS & LEADERS (Cont'd)



- Provide all teachers in all content areas with ongoing training in research-based best practices for CLDs such as:
 - ⇒ offering content-language integration so that multilingual students learn new academic content and language simultaneously.
 - ⇒ providing additional wait time and language scaffolds (e.g., visuals, repetition, gesture)
 - ⇒ ensuring that all lessons incorporate speaking, writing, interacting, reading and listening, and teaching academic, content rich language across the curriculum.
- Ensure teachers have common planning time to develop challenging and culturally responsive curriculum and instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students in in-person and virtual classrooms.
- Match curriculum to the cultural and linguistic background of CLD students so they can access their conceptual repertoires as they learn. Offer texts that offer both “windows” and “mirrors” to all students so they learn about cultures beyond their own and also see themselves reflected in the literature.
- Make the curriculum relevant by embedding stories, readings and perspectives that focus on immigration and community and provide opportunities for students, family members and community leaders to bring personal stories to the classroom.
- Use storytelling and other techniques to ensure understanding is deep and does not promote stereotypes.
- Support teachers’ creation and use of visuals (e.g., number lines) and diagrams across all subject areas, and especially in math, to develop and deepen CLD students’ conceptual understanding.
- Offer “language supports” (e.g., sentence starters) and encourage students to create their own diagrams to communicate their understanding.
- Praise students’ ability to “translanguage,” or create sentences that incorporate more than one language as it can deepen their understanding of new concepts.
- Support educators in holding students to high expectations, including how they give specific, prompt feedback and other supports students need to meet those expectations.
- Support the formation of language-based affinity groups in in-person and virtual spaces that allow CLD students to communicate about important topics.
- Limit pull-out instruction time to maximize CLD students’ contact with peers and to support their development of new friendships and skills.

SET ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND MONITOR PROGRESS



- Survey all students, families and staff regularly in a language, format, and modality that works well for them to ensure all community members feel connected, respected, and embraced. Reflect on the results with staff and create an action plan to address concerns. Monitor actions and revise plan as needed.
- Support school leaders and instructional coaches in developing the knowledge and skills to observe classrooms virtually and in-person for rigorous, standards-aligned instruction and to offer the teachers of CLDs effective feedback.
- Ensure assessments accurately measure what students need to know and be able to do, using native-language assessments when possible, and explore different means of assessing learning like student portfolios and technology.
- Provide accommodations like use of dictionary/ Google translate, extended time, native language support for all assessments.
- Monitor discipline data, including referrals, suspensions and expulsions, to ensure that CLD students are not being disproportionately disciplined.
- Provide the code of conduct and information on discipline expectations in a language understood by all students and families.
- Monitor interventions for both language and content to ensure students are given appropriate supports.
- Use varied communication strategies to share progress and goals with families and translate as needed for CLD families.
- Ensure educators understand best practices for checking comprehension of their CLD students and know how to use that data to adjust instruction.

BUDGET EQUITABLY AND WITH EQUITY IN MIND



- Budget for training for classroom teachers and instructional leaders in research-based best practices for meeting the needs of CLD students in both in-person and virtual spaces.
- Budget for general and ENL teachers to have sufficient co-planning time.
- Budget for instructional coaches with expertise in teaching CLD students.
- Fund technology and materials necessary for all students to participate fully in all classes and to develop content knowledge in their native languages.
- Engage in a periodic audit to ensure Title III and other funding sources are being dedicated to support CLD student learning.

BUILD A SUPPORTIVE, INCLUSIVE, & EQUITABLE SCHOOL CULTURE



- Establish student support teams that monitor student progress and call team meetings in a timely manner when progress is not being made.
- Make clear through your mission and curriculum that all students are valued and that you recognize students' intersectional identities such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigrant status, language, disability, or learning style.
- Encourage and create opportunities for students to connect with and build relationships with students who have cultural and linguistic identities different from their own.
- Ensure materials, meetings, announcements and newsletters are translated and reach out to community organizations with connections to diverse linguistic populations when the need for translation of a new language is determined.
- Remove barriers to enrollment, such as requests for social security numbers, and accept multiple document types that families can show to prove a student's age and residency.
- Share a home language survey with families when enrolling, asking what language(s) they speak at home, their preference for language instruction at school, and their language choice for communication from teachers and staff. Questions should also address previous formal schooling experiences and parent expectations for learning English and becoming bilingual and bicultural.
- Empower families to navigate and manage school logistics by helping them access school supplies, providing technology, and explaining the basic logistics of the school system such as calendar, personnel, rules, contacts, PTA and other school organizations, and availability of adult ESL courses.
- Acknowledge family expertise and language to encourage their involvement in schooling.

PARTNER WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THESE PRACTICES START EARLY



- Collaborate with early childhood centers to support educator training in best practices for CLDs.
- Meet with counselors and educators of rising kindergarteners to ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten and the continuation of
- Share early childhood information with families of newly enrolled school age sibling.
- Promote native-language and bilingual early childhood programs.

BUILDING A DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Dr. Christine Dahnke, former Executive Director of ESOL and Dual Language Programs, and Dr. Vanessa Mangual, former District Dual Language Program Principal, Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville, FL

The success of our two-way immersion Spanish-English dual language program can be directly attributed to Dr. Nikolai Vitti and his vision as superintendent. Dr. Vitti onboarded an experienced and highly qualified team and empowered us to dream big. When we began our program in 2010, the State of Florida recognized dual language programs but provided no additional funds. Dr. Vitti's commitment to ensuring all students had the best possible education ensured visibility and support for the program. We first implemented dual language programs in eight kindergarten and first grade classrooms at two elementary schools, then expanded to another elementary, middle and high school. We partnered with researchers at the University of Florida to support principals and select teachers, and with the Jacksonville Public Education Fund to start a preschool program. We created a framework and handbook to support educators' learning. We improved the curriculum, intentionally hired Latinx teachers from many different countries and wove lessons about different Spanish-speaking cultures into our

classes. A waitlist of native English and Spanish speaking families grew and we currently serve more than 975 students. We encourage dual language students to take the Spanish AP and created a seal of biliteracy for high school diplomas. Hundreds of students speaking about 15 different languages have earned the seal each year. This showcases our rigorous learning expectations, improves students' college admission opportunities and highlights the fact that our refugee community and many second-generation families want their children to carry on speaking, reading and writing in their native language. Our data also demonstrates that dual language students have shown growth in all their subjects, helping contribute to the overall improvement of the entire district.

11 STUDENTS WITH INTERRUPTED ACCESS TO SCHOOLING

Students who change schools or move from communities at a high rate due to homelessness, foster care, and migration are often characterized as transient or students with limited or interrupted formal education.

ESTABLISH, COMMUNICATE, AND GARNER SUPPORT FOR A VISION OF EQUITY



- Share your belief that every student can learn and that it is the role of the school to understand each student's unique home experiences, how those experiences affect their school life, and what support they need from the school to be successful.
- Offer a variety of pathways to high school graduation to meet the needs of a variety of life experiences and circumstances that students bring.
- Establish a district-level steering committee to support the needs of students with limited or interrupted education comprised of key school and community leaders to conduct ongoing awareness activities in the schools and community; provide ongoing staff development; and train homeless education liaisons to serve students and educate staff.
- Support the district-level McKinney-Vento liaison in partnering with each school in the district to support their students who are homeless. Schools should be equipped to provide families with lists of community resources and to collaborate with community agencies and outreach organizations to strategically support students and families in need.

DEVELOP A HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE TEAM OF EQUITY-MINDED EDUCATORS & LEADERS



- Ensure all school staff receive training on what qualifies a student as homeless, migrant, or in foster care.
- Familiarize staff with the legal rights of students and families who are homeless and migrant.
- Connect staff with the district's McKinney-Vento liaison, so that they can turn to the liaison for support and guidance.
- Develop staff's understanding of the signs of homelessness such as consistent absences, tardiness, being tired and distracted, or repeatedly wearing the same clothes, so that they can work with colleagues to offer appropriate support.
- Develop staff's understanding of the unique challenges students who are transient face, including poverty, homelessness, and immigration issues.
- Provide principals with professional learning that helps them develop school-wide structures to support this population of learners.
- Create space for staff to have structured and informed conversations with each other about the experiences of different transient students.

STUDENTS WITH INTERRUPTED ACCESS TO SCHOOLING 11

BUILD A SUPPORTIVE, INCLUSIVE, & EQUITABLE SCHOOL CULTURE



- Develop a system for quickly identifying students who are homeless and meeting their needs.
- Work with parents or guardians to make sure that they know their educational legal rights.
- Create a culture where all students feel supported.
- Ensure principals are creating structures that nurture the development of personal and trusting relationships between students who are transient, teachers and peers.
- Ensure principals create a stable and structured school environment for students by providing predictable daily classroom routines and schedules.
- Support principals in fostering trusting relationships with parents and guardians of students who are transient through consistent and strategic communication that has proven to be effective with families who are transient.
- Encourage principals to create at home learning opportunities where students can engage with foundational concepts to fill in learning gaps.
- Ensure students who are transient have a voice in the learning process.
- Integrate art, music, movement, and other non-traditional activities that offer opportunities for students who struggle academically to participate in classroom learning and reveal strengths that might otherwise go unnoticed.
- Develop and implement positive school discipline policies and practices that, rather than punishing and further alienating students, recognize and are responsive to each student's unique circumstances while teaching students to take responsibility for their actions.

SET ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND MONITOR PROGRESS



- Include who are migrant, homeless and/or in foster care in your analysis of data on student learning, discipline, and placements in special education and accelerated classes.
- Create systems for closely tracking student attendance and following up immediately when students are absent.
- Ensure schools have some basic formal and informal assessments in multiple languages on hand that can be easily administered to newly arrived transient students to learn about their knowledge, abilities, and needs. These assessments could include conversations with the student or a journal writing assignment.

STUDENTS WITH INTERRUPTED ACCESS TO SCHOOLING 11

BUDGET EQUITABLY AND WITH EQUITY IN MIND



- Create systems and budget for providing students who are transient with the services they need, such as school supplies, transportation, showers and clean clothes, and emotional supports.
- Consider providing breakfast for students and creating school food pantries for their families.
- Develop systems for supporting students outside of traditional school time.
- Provide after-school expanded learning time for students who are transient who need extra time to practice skills and learn content.

HELPING ALL STAFF UNDERSTAND MIGRANT STUDENT RIGHTS AND CHALLENGES

Carol Mayo, Supervisor, Hillsborough County Public Schools Migrant Education Program

As supervisor of the migrant program for Hillsborough County Public Schools, my team and I spend time driving through neighborhoods, stopping at flea markets and laundromats and talking to local residents. Too often, we come across migrant students who moved across country, state or district lines more than a year ago but were never enrolled in school. Often, they lacked the required documentation and were told by school staff to come back when they had it. Many migrant students arrive speaking little to no English and face obstacles like interrupted learning, poverty, homelessness, and lack documentation. The district has begun requiring training for every school staff member on the legal rights and experiences of migrant students. Teachers are trained on culturally relevant instruction and the Multi-Tiered Support System so that they know how to hold all students to high expectations, communicate those expectations, scaffold for students, and effectively assesses student-learning needs and accelerate or remediate appropriately. Our ELL department is

updating ESOL certification training with this information and working with teachers to understand their students' stories. We also collaborate with local agencies to help students get the vaccinations they need to register for school, find housing and obtain rent assistance, enroll under the McKinney-Vento law so they get the homeless services they are eligible for, all within their first month in the district. We are also focused on equitable distribution of resources and personnel across schools. It's critical that everybody understand the law and that it states that all children have the right to a free public education. It should not require intervention from a supervisor or district staff for a parent to successfully enroll their child in school. We are happy to do it, but enrollment should not be difficult. We must help all stakeholders build their understanding of the process.

12 TRANSPORTATION

Transportation policies and procedures increase all students' access to the most rigorous and high-quality schools and enrichment opportunities available in the district.

ESTABLISH, COMMUNICATE, AND GARNER SUPPORT FOR A VISION OF EQUITY



- Communicate clearly to the community that transportation will be used as a tool to close achievement and opportunity gaps within the district.
- Publicly share data and discuss opportunity gaps caused by lack of transportation as well as the district's plan for closing those gaps.
- Monitor progress and share that progress with the community twice a year.

BUDGET EQUITABLY AND WITH EQUITY IN MIND



- Fund transportation that allows children from every neighborhood to access the schools with the strongest records of achievement.
- Fund transportation for children of every neighborhood to high quality enrichment opportunities like sports and the arts. More funding may be needed for additional bus routes and times.
- Fund transportation that ensures homeless students and those in foster care can remain in the same school.

SET ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES AND MONITOR PROGRESS



- Create cross-functional committees made up of stakeholders from across the community to review enrollment data like number of children of color, students with disabilities, English learners, and low-income students in accelerated programming, to ensure students are accessing these opportunities and that transportation is not in any way a barrier.
- Allow committee members to adjust policies as needed to increase access.

PARTNER WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THESE PRACTICES START EARLY



- Collaborate with early childhood centers to support educator training in inclusive practices.
- Meet with counselors and educators of rising kindergarteners to ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten and the continuation of necessary support services.

**COLLABORATE WITH FAMILIES
& COMMUNITIES TO BUILD ON
THEIR ASSETS**

- Work with local agencies to ensure that all students who walk to school can do so safely and that necessary sidewalk repairs and assistance from safety personnel are available.
- Collaborate with local transportation agencies to ensure public transportation is safe and affordable for families.
- Promote policies, such as controlled choice, that allow families from every neighborhood to access the district's highest performing schools and programs.
- Ensure the cross-functional transportation committee (see "Set accountability measures and monitor progress" above) regularly reviews policies and practices for issues of access.
- Empower the committee to revise policies and practices that limit access.
- Provide families with transportation to ensure they can attend school events, such as conferences and curriculum nights.

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