Equity in education

A principle that guides policy and practice holding high expectations and providing appropriate resources so that all students can achieve at a rigorous standard.
Culture is complex...

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Religion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
<td>Family</td>
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<td>Socio-Economic Class</td>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
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<td>Geography</td>
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Diversity & Cultural Competence

Valuing Diversity is a necessary step along the continuum of cultural competency and culturally responsive pedagogy, but it is not enough.

Cultural Competence requires knowledge, skills and experience and the ability to transform these into practice which results in improved services and outcomes.
Cultural Competence is:

• The ability to work effectively across cultures
• A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system
Cultural Competence means:

- Understanding one’s own identity and values
- Knowing how one’s own background influences perceptions
Cultural Competence requires:

- Knowledge, skills and experience
- The ability to transform these into practices which result in improved services and an equitable education for all students
Cultural Competence Continuum

- Destructiveness
- Incapacity
- Blindness
- Emerging
- Competence
- Proficiency
Cultural Competence Continuum

- Cultural Destructiveness
  *Intentionally maintains inequity*

- Cultural Incapacity
  *Not intentional but maintains the status quo*

- Cultural Blindness
  *Expresses a philosophy of being non-biased*
Cultural Competence Continuum

- **Emerging Cultural Competence**
  Recognizes diversity & inequity and attempts some improvements

- **Basic Cultural Competence**
  Accepts & respects differences, recognizes need for systemic change

- **Advanced Cultural Competence**
  Holds culture in high esteem. Ongoing individual & institutional change to address equity based on informed decision making
Challenging Ruby Payne’s work: Beyond the culture of poverty

• Deficit perspective


Misconceptions about families in poverty and the value of education

• Deficit thinking in its individualistic perspective on the origins and maintenance of poverty
  
  *Equity and Excellence in Education*

• Dangers of using poverty as the focus in understanding inequities for children of color

  Ladson-Billings, G. (2004). It’s not culture of poverty; it’s the poverty of culture” The problem with Teacher Education.  
  *Anthropology and Educational Quarterly*
Cultural Competence

Facilitates and supports the achievement of all students at three levels:
- The Institutional
- The Instructional
- The Individual
Institutional

- School organization
- Policies and procedures
- Community Involvement
(a) In developing a school's strategic and continuous school improvement and achievement plan under IC 20-10.2-3, the school's committee shall consider methods to improve the cultural competency of the school's teachers, administrators, staff, parents, and students.

(b) The committee shall:
   (1) identify the racial, ethnic, language-minority, cultural, exceptional learning, and socioeconomic groups that are included in the school's student population;
   (2) incorporate culturally appropriate strategies for increasing educational opportunities and educational performance for each group in the school's plan; and
   (3) recommend areas in which additional professional development is necessary to increase cultural competency in the school's educational environment.
• Acknowledge students’ differences as well as their commonalities
• Validate students’ cultural identity in classroom practices and instructional materials
• Educate students about the diversity of the world around them
• Promote equity and mutual respect
• Assess students’ ability and achievement validly
• Encourage students to think critically
• Challenge students to strive for excellence as defined by their potential
Personal

- Engage in reflective practice
- Explore personal and family histories
- Acknowledge membership in different groups
- Learn about the history and experiences of diverse groups
- Visit students’ families and communities
- Visit or read about successful teachers in diverse settings
- Participate in reforming the institution
Disproportionality must be understood contextually.

The disproportionality of students of color in educational programs cannot be fully comprehended as long as it considered a singular event, somehow divorced from the broader context of American education and American society.
Approximately 90% of classroom teachers are White

“I thought it was wrong to see color. Like the t-shirts—“Love sees no color”. As I’ve come to understand you’re missing a big part of a person if you refuse to see it” – elementary school teacher

“When a teacher doesn’t see color do they also ignore discriminatory institutional practices such as disproportionality in suspension, graduation, achievement etc…..?”
In addition to the problems the students experience in their personal lives away from school, the schools create a whole new set of problems for children they deem different. As schools become more wedded to psychological models, students are recruited into new categories of pathology. Students who do not conform to particular behavioral expectations may be labeled "disabled" in some way, that is, suffering from attention deficit disorder, emotional disability, or cognitive disabilities. Students do in fact confront real mental and emotional problems, but we need to consider the way students' racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic characteristics are deployed to make their assignments to these disability categories more likely.

Gloria Ladson Billings
LOCAL EQUITY ACTION DEVELOPMENT........ LEAD

The Process:

1. Form a planning team
2. Identify the action of greatest potential impact
3. Develop the plan
4. Implement the plan
5. Assess and adapt
LOCAL EQUITY ACTION DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

ONGOING QUESTIONS
- What do we know about disproportionality in our district?
- What changes in school-based processes will have the greatest impact on disproportionality in our schools?
- How do we involve others in the process of creating ownership for and bringing about change?
- How will we know if our efforts are working?
- What impact will this have on other issues of equity?

PROCESS STEPS

**Form a Planning Team**
- Form a preliminary planning team
- Review existing data
- Name the issue
- Expand the planning team to include other key district stakeholders
- Gather and analyze new information

**Identify the Action of Greatest Potential Impact**
- Hold focus groups to examine the issue and possible actions
- Examine and discuss input from the focus groups
- Gather research and information on best practices and models
- Engage in honest conversations about expectations for ALL students and staff

**Develop a Plan**
- Design a LEAD pilot
- Provide professional development, time, and other supports
- Develop an Action Plan for Implementation
- Pilot in a few places
- Gather feedback
- Adapt the pilot
- Plan for expanded implementation

**Implement, Assess, Adapt**
- Expand the team to include representatives from all sites to assure two-way communication
- Provide professional development as needed for best practice
- Clarify links and communicate with other district initiatives and ELL, Title, School Improvement etc.
- Use data consistently
- Deepen conversations about equity and culturally responsive pedagogy
- Include parents and community
- Ongoing assessments continue to inform implementation
All Plans Must Be Local; Addressing Local Realities and Local Needs.

In order to address the complexity of disproportionality issues in a way that is meaningful and appropriate to the culture of that district, plans must originate from within the district.

While center staff provide guidance and technical assistance, decisions on plan design and implementation are made by the district LEAD team.
Planning and Evaluation Must Be Based Upon Local Data.

Local data on equity provide a framework that can motivate and guide local remediation efforts.

The success of any systems change efforts can be judged only by changes in those data.
LEAD Must Be a Collaborative Effort.

General and Special Education Title, ELL, Literacy, Mentor Programs, and other initiatives and stakeholders should be represented.
Difficult Dialogues are a Crucial Part of The Process.

Conversations about race, disproportionality, and equity are awkward and often difficult, but necessary.

Part of the role of the team is to ensure that team meetings are a safe place for having honest and “courageous” conversations, where common understandings can be created.
How do we begin these conversations?

Consider the culture of your school and school district

Facilitation is key
Using Data

Disaggregating special education data, discipline data, achievement data, and graduation rates and exploring what the data indicates and what the causes might be.

Compare your hypotheses to the research, and compare views across diverse groups.

How does this apply to practice?
Text Based Discussions

There are many excellent articles and books which can form the basis for study groups or discussions at staff meetings.

Using a protocol for a text based discussion is a tool to keep the focus on the material and provide varied opportunities for participants to share.

How does this apply to practice?
Experiential Workshops

A well facilitated workshop in developing cultural competence provides a common language and acts as a catalyst for engaging in conversations.

Key to effectiveness is continuing to pursue the discussion in groups such as professional learning communities.

How does this apply to practice?