C1: Transformative Systems Through Equity – Where are we?

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Transformative Systems through Equity

WHERE ARE WE?

Dr. Nikole Hollins-Sims
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Welcome!

• Who am I?
  • Senior Consultant – Hollins-Sims Consultation, LLC
  • Former technical assistance coordinator (TAC) - Midwest PBIS
  • Former special assistant to the secretary of education in Pennsylvania – Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging
  • PA School Psychologist of the Year (2021)
  • Author
Where do we begin?
Remember.....

Language Matters!
What is your personal definition of "equity?"

- All provided what is needed to succeed
- Equal Opportunity/Access
- Fairness (no detail on what is 'fair')
- Equality
- Elevating Disadvantaged Group(s)*
- Overcoming barriers or structural issues**
- Level playing field**
- Other

Combined Survey Results: Urban, Suburban, Rural
PA Teachers, April-May 2021

*Marks categories reflected only in suburban teacher responses
**Marks categories reflected only in urban teacher responses
What is Equity?

Ensuring that every learner (& opportunity) has access to the educational resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, family background and/or family income.

Source: www.ccsso.org & www.aspeninstitute.org/education
What is inclusion?

Inclusion is defined as engagement within a community where the equal worth and inherent dignity of each person is honored. An inclusive community promotes and sustains a sense of belonging.

Source: Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity, Cobb & Krownapple, 2019
What is belonging?

Experiencing **appreciation, validation, acceptance, and fair treatment** within an environment. When people feel that they belong, they aren’t distracted and worried about being treated as a stereotype or a singular part of their multidimensional personhood.

Source: Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity, Cobb & Krownapple, 2019
Educational communities are seeking clarity around the purpose, intention, and need for equity, inclusion, and belonging in educational spaces. This information is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to help address perceptions and offer clarity on equitable practices in education.

1. **Equity**

   Equity in education is defined as every student having access to the resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, family background and/or family income. (adapted from www.ccsso.org)

2. **Inclusion**

   Inclusion is defined as engagement within a community where the equal worth and inherent dignity of each person is honored. An inclusive community promotes and sustains a sense of belonging. (adapted from Cobb & Krownapple, 2019)

3. **Belonging**

   Belonging is defined as experiencing appreciation, validation, acceptance, and fair treatment within an environment. (adapted from Cobb & Krownapple, 2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions</th>
<th>Clarity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equity, inclusion, and belonging is only for urban educational spaces with diverse populations.</td>
<td>Equity, inclusion, and belonging helps create access, opportunity, and a healthy learning environment for ALL learners, regardless of demographic (urban, rural, suburban). Educational communities include people of varying lived experiences who have diverse needs and a variety of strengths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity, inclusion, and belonging is another way of promoting Critical Race Theory.</td>
<td>Critical Race Theory is not part of or taught in any state required curriculum. Equity, inclusion, and belonging in education helps create spaces for ALL learners and staff to be their authentic selves. Discussions about cultures and identities in education are important to ensure equitable access for ALL learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity, inclusion, and belonging is only about funding.</td>
<td>Equitable funding is an important consideration to ensure fair access and opportunity for students across Pennsylvania. Funding is one part of the process to create healthy learning environments - but it cannot shift systems in isolation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity, inclusion, and belonging suggests that I am not a good person or that my education system is bad.</td>
<td>It is important to understand who we are as we interact with others. Self-Awareness, one of the PDE equity pillars of practice, invites people to explore and reflect upon their own thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. Self-awareness supports how to engage in healthy relationships with people of diverse backgrounds—but it is not intended to encourage guilt, shame, or hopelessness. Discussing equity, inclusion, and belonging may be uncomfortable, however, it is important to ensure we can engage with individuals, families, and communities who are different from us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity, inclusion, and belonging does not allow for diverse viewpoints.</td>
<td>Diverse viewpoints are an important part of our democracy and help our nation thrive. Equity, inclusion, and belonging help create the conditions for civil dialogues to occur. Equity in voice, inclusion of different perspectives, and honoring the lived experiences of others is a vital part of preparing youth for global citizenship, as well as a global workforce and marketplace.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
What is MTSS?

A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is a proactive and preventative framework that integrates data and instruction to maximize student achievement and support students' social, emotional, and behavior needs from a strengths-based perspective.

Source: https://mtss4success.org/essential-components
Core MTSS Foundations: Equity is Tier 1

• Standards Aligned Core Instruction
• Universal Screening
• Shared Ownership
• Data-Based Decision Making
• Family/Community Engagement
• Professional Learning
Equity, Inclusion & Belonging

• Equity Pillars of Practice
  • General Equity Practices
  • Self-Awareness
  • Data Practices
  • Family/Community Engagement
  • Academic Equity
  • Disciplinary Equity (Learning Environment)

• Equitable Practices Hub (pa.gov)
How can we make equitable practices important?

Pennsylvania Teachers Advisory Committee
Survey of Rural, Suburban, Urban PA Teachers, April-May 2021

What resources do you use when looking for information about equitable education practices?

Rural: 30%
Suburban: 18%
Urban: 14%

Percentage of teachers that report not looking for resources about equitable education practices.
What is the current landscape?

- **Superintendent Challenges**
  - Critical Race Theory Debate
  - Book Bans
  - Mental Wellness
  - Workforce Shortages
  - Microaggressions
  - School Board Supports
  - “How can we have a civil dialogue?”

- **K-12 DEI Officer Challenges**
  - Critical Race Theory Debate
  - Right to Know requests that appear targeted to only the DEI administrator
  - Teacher fear
  - Tarnished legacy concerns
  - Threats to safety
  - Intentionality in the role and supports
  - School Board Resistance
  - Protecting students from harmful words and actions
But COVID…
COVID-19 is an Equity Issue

Health Equity

Education & Learning

Connectivity

Mental Wellness

Socioeconomics
There is a tension between equity & efficiency....

-Dena Simmons
## Equity Traps and Tropes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traps &amp; Tropes</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doing Equity</td>
<td>Treating equity as a series of tools, strategies, and compliance tasks versus a whole-person, whole-system change process linked to culture, identity, and healing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Siloing Equity</td>
<td>Locating equity work in a separate and siloed policy, team, or body.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Equity Warrior</td>
<td>Nesting equity with a single champion and holder of the vision.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spray &amp; Pray Equity</td>
<td>Engaging “equity experts” to drop in for a training with no ongoing plan for learning or capacity building.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Navel-Gazing Equity</td>
<td>Keeping the equity work at the level of self-reflection and failing to penetrate the instructional core and school systems and structures (such as instructional planning, student tracking).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structural Equity</td>
<td>Redesigning systems and structures (such as master schedule) without investing in the deeper personal, interpersonal, and cultural shifts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket Equity</td>
<td>Investing in a program or curriculum rather than building the capacity of your people to address equity challenges as complex and ongoing places of inquiry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tokenizing Equity</td>
<td>Asking leaders of color to hold, drive, and symbolically represent equity without providing support and resources, nor engaging the entire staff in the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superficial Equity</td>
<td>Failing to take time to build equity-centered knowledge and fluency, leading to behavioral shifts without understanding deeper meaning or historical context.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boomerang Equity</td>
<td>Investing time and resources to understand your equity challenges, but reverting back to recycled, status quo solutions.</td>
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Adapted from: Street Data: A Next Generation Model for Equity, Pedagogy, and School Transformation (Corwin, 2021) by Shane Safir and Jamila Dugan
Reflection Time

- Which equity traps and tropes sound or feel familiar to you?
- How can you and your colleagues become more aware of equity traps and tropes?
- What might be the converse of the traps or tropes you identified?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity Heat Map</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational Equity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get close and specific (Get proximate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which inequities are personal, local and immediate – what is in your locus of control?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide on 1-2 equity goals…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structured Equity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify what teams you already have…..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center voices of those who are marginalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evident Equity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Live it out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is equity living and breathing all around you? It is more than words…..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shared Equity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Build a coalition and build capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop strategies for turning up the heat and turning down the heat….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider multiple entry points to build your coalition..</td>
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</table>

Source: *Evident Equity* by Lauryn Mascarenaz (2022)
What say you?

What are the things that are working in your district/role to create and sustain a space of equity, inclusion and belonging for staff and students?
What say you?

What are the challenges in your district/role to create and sustain a space of equity, inclusion and belonging for staff and students?
Pit stop:
How are the children?
What are they saying?
What do they need?
**PAYS Data** (n = 280,000+) (Grades 6, 8, 10 & 12)

- Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) 2019 Data

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Top Risk Factors of Concern [across grade levels]</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Commitment to School</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Risk of Drug Use</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Attitudes Favorable toward Anti-Social Behavior</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Neighborhood Attachment</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressive Symptoms</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) 2019
PAYS Data  (n = 280,000+) (Grades 6, 8, 10 & 12)

• Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) 2019 Data

Top Protective Factors [across grade levels]

Family Attachment
Prosocial Involvement
Rewards for Prosocial Involvement

Source: Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) 2019
IF STUDENTS RULED THE FUTURE
WORLD OF EDUCATION . . . .

• Relationships
• Personalization of Learning
• Learner Supports
• Learning Locations
• Learning Cultures

Relationships

….with and among peers, educators, and mentors involved in learning (p. 3)

Personalization of learning

...learning that is oriented around each learner’s needs, interests, and goals.

Learner supports assistance and interventions that address learners’ needs.

Learning locations

...places and spaces where learning happens and their key features and functions.

Learning cultures

...guiding beliefs and values that shape how a learning location operates and what it feels like to be there.

What do the learners like about today and what should remain? (p. 9)

• Continue to make equity a key issue – More needs to be done.
• Expand access to and thoughtful usage of digital devices.
• Retain online and hybrid learning as options.
• Give teachers time and discretion in how they plan their days to enable connections with students.
• Bring the comforts of home into other learning spaces to help create welcoming learning environments.

What supports do you need as a leader?

How are you taking care of yourself?
Where do we go from here?
“For there is always light. If only we’re brave enough to see it. If only we’re brave enough to be it.”

-Amanda Gorman