Leadership Practices for Promoting Equity Overview Session

Kent Intermediate School District

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During our time together we will:

- Provide an introduction to fundamental Leadership for Equity Practices
- Describe district team learning experience
- Introduce district teams to the Great Lakes Equity Center Resources and Supports
Great Lakes Equity Center

One of the ten regional EACs funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The Great Lakes Equity Center provides assistance to state education agencies and public school districts in the areas of race, gender, and national origin equity.
Our Mission

- Ensure equity in student access to and participation in high quality, research-based education

- Expand states’ and school systems’ capacities to provide robust, effective opportunities to learn for ALL students

- Reduce disparities among and between groups in educational outcomes

- Serve as a resource for the Office for Civil Rights and Department of Justice
As demographics have changed within school communities and as the differences between the backgrounds of teaching staff and the students and families they serve continue to increase, educators have struggled with addressing the behavioral and learning needs of diverse student populations for a variety of individual and systemic reasons.
The Challenges of K-12 Systems

- Performance Gaps
- Opportunity Gaps
- Disproportionality
How do I know school is a place for me … a place where I can achieve?

Can I be successful in school and still be me?

Do my teachers, principals and other adults in my school believe I can achieve to high standards? How do I know?
Transformative leadership for equity is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems. Transformative leadership creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of mobilizing efforts towards equity.

Gonzales & Skelton (2011) Equity Alliance at ASU
Educational Equity is …

when educational practices, policies, curricula, resources, and school cultures are representative of all students, such that each student has access to, participate and make progress in high quality learning experiences, regardless of her or his race, ses, gender, ability, religion affiliation, national origin, linguistic diversity, or other characteristics.
Many school improvement efforts have focused on “fixing” the problem.

“Fixing” the numbers
“Fixing” the teachers
“Fixing” the students

From the Equity Alliance at ASU, Skelton & Kozleski, 2010
We need to stop trying to “fix” the problem and focus on transforming schools and schooling.
Creating schools and learning communities where:

Cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, are acknowledged both as legacies that affect students’ dispositions and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum.

Meaningful bridges are built between home and school experiences, as well as between academic abstractions and lived sociocultural realities.

A wide variety of instructional strategies are used.

Gay (2000)
Creating schools and learning communities where:

- Students are taught to know and praise their own cultural heritages and the cultural heritages of others.
- Multicultural information, resources, and materials are incorporated in all subjects and skills routinely taught in schools.
- All students are affirmed and supported to meet high expectations.

Gay (2000)
Understanding our Cultural Identities

Culture is dynamic, contextual and socially mediated. Cultural practices are learned, as we are socialized to behave according to traditions established over generations.

Learning and work communities influence how people see themselves and therefore there is a need to understand and validate people’s backgrounds.

The cultures of institutions may or may not be in harmony with the culture each person brings.

Adapted from the Equity Alliance at ASU, 2011
Reframe deficit thinking

Create opportunities to learn

Dislodge deficit discourse

Demonstrate a valuing of diversity and use the language of possibility

Revising Stratifying Discourse

Negotiate agreements for cultural practices that create inclusive, respectful, supportive and responsive learning environments.

Briscoe, Arrizaza & Henze, 2009
Equity is the vision!

Culturally Responsive Education is the Strategy.
Culturally Responsive Education is...

the overall **approach** one takes to delivering instruction, using curricular materials, making educational decisions, including student discipline; and interacting with students and their families.

the **lens** through which teachers see their students and their students' learning.

the **filter** through which teachers **listen** to how students express their needs and desires.
What does this mean for ....
Curriculum

- Multicultural perspectives
- Diverse cultural referents across content areas
- Relevant to students’ lived experiences
- Multiple means of presenting content
- Rigorous
Instruction

- Multiple ways students can express what they know
- Multiple ways of engaging students
- Build on students’ prior knowledge and lived experiences
- Differentiated based on student learning needs, interests and preferences
- Teacher use of realia and other “real life” culturally relevant examples
Environment

- Culturally relevant and respectful environmental cues
- Supportive, affirming and responsive interactions
- Rigorous and highly engaging for all students
- Predictable but not rigid
- Highly communicative
Ways the work gets done.

- School
- Classroom

- Policies
  - Dispositions
  - Awareness
  - Skills
  - Competencies

- People

- Practices
  - Curricular Material
  - Instructional Decisions
  - Social Interactions
Competencies for equitable practices

- Examining one’s own cultural identities
- Engaging in inquiry and reflection for continuous improvement
- Getting to know the cultural practices of students
- Implementing equitable instructional practices
- Surfacing issues of power and privilege
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“Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development.

- Kofi Annan
Welcome to the Great Lakes Equity Center, one of ten regional Equity Assistance Centers (EACs) funded by the U.S. Department of Education. We provide technical assistance resources and professional learning opportunities related to equity, civil rights, and systemic school reform throughout our six-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Please explore our website to learn more about what we do and how we may serve as a resource for you. We look forward to hearing from you!
Thank you for your participation!

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