

Pursuing Equity for Black Students in K–12 Education:

Exploring the Intersection of Race and Disability Thought Leader Conversation (TLC) Series

Stakeholder and Family Engagement: Creating Meaningful Opportunities for Authentic Student, Family, and Stakeholder Voice Thank you for being here!
We will begin shortly. In the meantime, please reflect on this quote and provide your thoughts in the chat.

"Fundamentally, your success in engaging every family will come down to what you think about families — every family — and their value as partners to support student learning."

Steven Constantino



Session Agenda

Framing the TLC and Today's Session

Meet Our Thought Leaders

Stakeholder Engagement: Embracing an Equity Mindset

Policies to Engage Stakeholders and Families

Future TLC Sessions



Welcome & Introduction to NCSI

- The National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) supports states to transform systems to improve outcomes for students with disabilities
- We are committed to helping state agencies and their stakeholders understand the intersection of race and disability in education in order to resolve inequities that disadvantage Black students with disabilities or those who may be identified as needing special education services

Purpose of Thought Leader Conversation (TLC) Series

- A series of conversations with experts focused on the intersection of race and disability in K–12 education
- Exploring ways systems can improve teaching and learning conditions and outcomes for Black students with disabilities or those who may be identified as having a disability

Series Recap

Foundational Session (held November 10, 2020)

- Examined the reasons for long-standing inequitable learning conditions and outcomes for Black K–12 students
- Identified systemic beliefs, policies, procedures, and practices that contribute to racial inequities for Black students in K-12 education
- The session recording, webinar materials, and related resources are available:

https://ncsi.wested.org/resources/pursuing-equity/

Series Recap cont.

Data Literacy Session (held December 15, 2020)

- Explored equity-driven, culturally responsive data literacy
- Examined the role of data from various perspectives, including using data to meet the needs of Black students rather than traditional approaches which often focus on stratifying their performance
- Explored strategies and resources for collecting, analyzing, and making meaning of data to achieve equity for Black students with disabilities or those who may be (mis)identified as having disabilities
- The session recording, webinar materials, and related resources are available here:

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Framing Today's Session

Apology vs. Reconciliation

Apologies don't mean anything if you keep doing what you're sorry for...

~Author Unknown

Today's Session Objectives

In order to create equitable learning conditions and outcomes for Black students with disabilities or those who may be (mis)identified:

- Recognize the importance of authentic stakeholder and family voice and engagement
- Examine the systemic beliefs, policies and procedures, and practices rooted in dominant culture that hinder meaningful stakeholder and family engagement
- Identify policies and practices that create authentic engagement to welcome and support stakeholders and families



Please Meet Our Thought Leaders...



2020-2021 Thought Leaders



Dr. Eddie Fergus Temple University



Alexandria Harvey WestEd



David Lopez WestEd



Dr. Erica McCray CEEDAR Center



Dr. Kent McIntoshPositive Behavioral &
Interventions Support Center



Dr. Tom MunkIDEA Data Center

2020-2021 Thought Leaders Cont.



Esley NewtonOSEP, US Department of Education



Christine Pilgrim
OSEP, US Department of
Education



Dr. Seena M. Skelton Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center



Dr. Kathleen King ThoriusGreat Lakes Equity Center



Dr. Zelphine Smith-Dixon Georgia Department of Education



Dr. Saroja WarnerWestEd

2020-2021 Thought Leaders: Today's Presenters



Amanda Byrd North Carolina Department of Public Instruction



Natasha Capers New York City Coalition for Educational Justice



Heather Calomese California Department of Education



Debra Jennings National Center for Systemic Improvement



Dr. Fatima Morrell Buffalo Public Schools



Heath Peine Wichita Public Schools

Gratitude to Parents and **Students**

We want to acknowledge and thank the students and families who graciously shared their perspectives with us for this presentation.





From Stakeholder and Family Management to Authentic **Engagement: An Equity Mindset**



Reflection

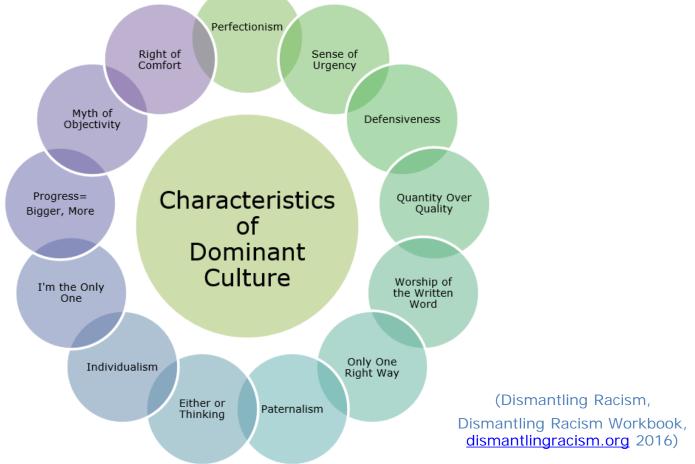
How does your agency or organization define stakeholders (both internal and external)?

Please share your response in the chat box.

Traditional Modes of Engagement

- History of stakeholder and family engagement reflects dominant culture, mirroring management instead of genuine engagement
- These modes can be damaging because they consist of norms and standards not agreed upon by the families and stakeholders they intend to serve

Characteristics of Dominant Culture



Dominant Culture and Family Engagement

- Dominant culture often dismisses or erases family engagement
- Educators and parents have different perspectives about engagement:
 - Educators claim parents do not attend special education related meetings
 - A majority of parents do attend those meetings

SSAGE

A Critical Practice Analysis of Response to Intervention Appropriation in an Urban School

Remedial and Special Education © Hammill Institute on Disabilities 2014 Reprints and permissions: sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.ru DCI: 10.1177/0741992514522100

Kathleen A. King Thorius, PhD1, Brendan D. Maxcy, PhD1, Erin Macey, BA2, and Adrienne Cox, EdS2

This qualitative case study focuses on factors mediating an urban school's enactment of Response to Intervention (RTI). Over one school year, we (a) observed weekly RTI meetings, (b) debriefed observations weekly, (c) interviewed RTI team members, and (d) examined procedural documents. Analyses included post-observation debriefing and coding fieldnotes and interview transcripts; categorical meaning and themes were coded recursively. Informed by critical policy studies research and theory, findings indicated limited supports and minimal technical understandings of RTI. Educators appeared to replicate pre-RTI special education eligibility determination processes, manifested in scripts about student diagnoses based on minimal "interventions" and deficit-laden representations of students/families. Findings highlight challenges with urban schools' RTI enactment and justify future critical qualitative research regarding learning in schools shifting practice under policy directives. Although the study focuses on RTI as a case-in-point, findings have implications for future research that utilizes critical practice approaches to analyze ways local contexts mediate policy enactment.

policy, response to intervention, critical theory

Response to Intervention (RTI) emerged in the early 2000s out of critique in the special education field about the definition of and process for diagnosing learning disabilities (LDs; Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009), RTI is a framework for providing instruction for all students and interventions for those struggling academically, as identified through ongoing progress monitoring, most often in reading (Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003). Intervention intensity varies within the three or four tiers of RTI frameworks. In Tier 1, all students receive evidence-based general education instruction and progress is monitored based on improvement rate expectations. Those not improving at this rate move to Tier 2 and receive more intensive interventions in target skill areas in small groups. Those not making expected progress move to Tier 3 for more intensive interventions, which often results in the provision of special education (Artiles & Kozleski, 2010). In four-tiered frameworks, the Tier 4 is usually conceptualized as special education.

RTI is conceptualized in two ways. In standard protocol models, instruction and interventions reflect research-based strategies, and students' response is monitored and determines movement to increasingly intensive tiers of standardized interventions. In problem solving models, educator teams select interventions based on interpretations of student progress. Common to both models is reliance on

interventions tested in experimental research and progress monitoring informed by curriculum-based measurement (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Stecker, 2010).

The Promise and the Pitfalls of RTI

The 2004 Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) included RTI as an option for local education agencies (LEAs) to consider in determining special education eligibility. Due to its focus on early intervention, RTI has been recognized for its potential to address injustices in the distribution of educational opportunities for historically underserved students (Artiles, Bal, & Thorius, 2010). The common logic was that RTI's emphasis on highquality instruction for all students and early evidence-based intervention for struggling students would curb overrepresentation of students of color in special education resulting from inadequate opportunities to learn rather than actual

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Thorius et al., 2014

Defining Terms

We want to be intentional in this session about embracing a broad definition of both the terms "family" and "community"

- "Family" encompasses not only parents but older siblings, grandparents, cousins, foster parents, step-parents, and both the related and unrelated aunties, uncles, and other caregivers who collectively care for children
- "Community" should expand beyond nonprofits, social service agencies, businesses, and churches, etc. but could include groups of people who share a racial or cultural identity, a neighborhood, or a group of children

(Ishimaru, 2020)

Factors That Influence Inequities

The beliefs that educators and educational institutions hold about students and communities

Beliefs

Policies & Procedures

The written guidelines that influence educational institutions

The actions taken by educators and educational institutions that are often a result of beliefs, policies, and procedures

Practices

A Black parent's perspective on engagement...

"Decisions in my district are made with little or no input from parents. Many times, parents are put in the position of having to object to decisions that are made because the decisions do not reflect parents' wishes or situations."



- Educational systems have been shaped by the influence of White dominant culture
- Forms of engagement can be viewed as difficult, causing families, communities, and various stakeholders to feel uncomfortable or excluded during these exchanges

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN WHITE DOMINANT CULTURE

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN AN INTENTIONAL EQUITY MINDSET

Power-Driven

- Those with power think they are capable of making decisions for those without power
- Those with power do not think it is important or necessary to understand the viewpoint or experiences of those for whom they make decisions
- Those with power feel threatened when anyone suggests changes in how things should be done
- There is a desire for individual credit and recognition

Shared Decision-Making

- Those who are affected by the system are actively engaged in identifying problems and implementing solutions
- Everyone involved knows and understands how decisions are made
- Ensure everyone involved knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in decision-making
- Understand that change is inevitable and challenging those in power can be healthy and productive

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN WHITE DOMINANT CULTURE CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN AN INTENTIONAL EQUITY MINDSET

Directed Interactive

- Leaders chart the path, make decisions, and empower others to take action
- Things are either/or, good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us
- Does not acknowledge a need for time and creativity to seek solutions or come up with more options

- Leaders and stakeholders join together, build consensus, chart the path, and collectively take action
- There is an intentional effort to include all parties involved
- Notice when people use 'either/or' language and challenge others to come up with more than two alternatives

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN WHITE DOMINANT CULTURE CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN AN INTENTIONAL EQUITY MINDSET

Traditional

- Values strong documentation and writing skills over non-traditional methods of communication
- Does not take into account or value other ways information can be shared

Progressive

- Take the time to analyze how people get and share information
- Be open to alternative ways of communicating
- Value the contributions and efforts of every person on the team
- Use language free of technical terms, acronyms, and buzz words

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN WHITE DOMINANT CULTURE

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN AN INTENTIONAL EQUITY MINDSET

Authoritative

- Belief in solving problems alone
- Those in power drive decisions and carry out the work in a technical approach
- Belief there is only one right way to do things
- Belief that when others do not adapt or change, something is wrong with them

Shared Responsibility

- Make people accountable as a group rather than as individuals
- Accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal
- · Respect the decisions that others make
- Always be clear that you have something to learn
- Never assume you know what is best

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN WHITE DOMINANT CULTURE

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGAGEMENT ROOTED IN AN INTENTIONAL EQUITY MINDSET

Objective

- Maintain a strong belief in objectivity or neutrality
- Belief that emotions are inherently destructive and irrational, and should not play a role in decision-making
- Invalidate people who show emotion
- Ignore or invalidate those who do not think in a linear manner

Empathetic

- Understand that everyone has a worldview and that it affects the way they understand things
- Sit with discomfort when people express themselves in ways that are unfamiliar
- Assume that everyone has a valid point, and it is your job to understand what that point is

Chat Box

On a scale of 1 to 5, with:

1 = characteristics of White dominant culture and

5 = characteristics of equity mindset

how would you characterize how your organization currently engages with families and stakeholders?



Panel Discussion



Discussion Starters:

- How can education systems create opportunities for authentic family, community, and stakeholder engagement?
- Why is illustrating the relationship between White dominant culture and traditional approaches to family, community, and stakeholder engagement important?





Policies to Engage Stakeholders and Families

Family and Stakeholder Engagement in ESSA

- Meaningfully involve parents and stakeholders in developing and updating state, district and school plans and parent and family engagement policies;
- Build the capacity of families; and
- Identify and address barriers

ESSA: Every Student Succeeds Act

Family & Stakeholder Engagement Policy in IDEA

- Indicator 8: Schools facilitate parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities
- Indicator 14: Students' post-school outcomes. Are respondents representative of the racial/ethnic makeup of the district's students?



Family & Stakeholder Engagement in IDEA

Engagement of Black families and communities in state accountability decision-making and reporting in:

- State Performance Plans (SPP)
- Annual Performance Reporting (APR)
- State Systemic Improvement Plans (SSIP)



A Black student's perspective on learning conditions and outcomes...

"I would say be more cautious when it comes to Black students because in America right now, we are fighting for the injustices we face. Be sure to keep us equal to the rest and not feel separated in a group. For Black students with disabilities, make sure we can access the same resources for our disability as the next non-Black student."





Panel Discussion Continued



Discussion Starters (2):

- What policies at the local and state levels can support more frequent, meaningful and authentic engagement of families, communities, and stakeholders?
- What policies at the local and state levels can present barriers to this goal or hinder authentic family, community, and stakeholder engagement?





Looking Ahead

Upcoming Thought Leader Conversations

Future Thought Leader Conversation Series



Where to Find TLC Information

- Materials, including the PowerPoint and recording from today's session, will be posted to the NCSI website under "Resources": https://ncsi.wested.org/resources/pursuing-equity/
- Registration information for future sessions will be posted to our homepage at <u>ncsi.wested.org</u>
- Please sign up for our mailing list to receive emails about future TLC sessions and registration details: ncsi@wested.org

Session Evaluation



- We appreciate your feedback on our session today so we can continuously improve
- Link to the evaluation is in the chat box and will also be emailed to today's participants

With Gratitude...

Thank you to our **Thought Leaders** for initiating and framing this important conversation



Thanks to **each of you** for your commitment to creating inclusive, equitable systems that support all students to succeed and thrive

Thank you for your commitment to making systemic change for equity Questions can be sent to ncsi@wested.org

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