

DRAFT

CPS EQUITY FRAMEWORK



CREATING AND SUSTAINING
EQUITY AT THE INDIVIDUAL,
SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEVEL

DRAFT

IN SEPTEMBER 2018

CPS launched the Office of Equity to work hand-in-hand with every district office to ensure each undertaking, from capital improvements to curriculum design, is pursued with equity as a goal.

This is the City of Chicago's first office devoted solely to equity in education.

The Office of Equity develops, supports, implements, and reports on district efforts to eliminate the opportunity gaps in education quality, policies, and supports for students and adults.

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Framework: Creating and Sustaining Equity
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Office of Equity, Chicago Public Schools
District

THEORY OF ACTION

**LIBERATORY
THINKING**



**INCLUSIVE
PARTNERSHIPS**



SHIFTS IN PRACTICE

**EQUITABLE
OUTCOMES**

CHANGE IDEAS

**RESOURCE
EQUITY**



**FAIR POLICIES &
SYSTEMS**





“ WE ARE COMMITTED TO PROVIDING A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN, REGARDLESS OF THEIR RACE, ZIP CODE, ABILITY, OR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN. ACHIEVING THIS GOAL WILL TAKE A COMMITMENT FROM ALL OF US — STUDENTS, FAMILIES, EDUCATORS, AND SUPPORTERS OF CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS. IT WILL REQUIRE EXAMINING EVERY INEQUITY, MINING EVERY RESOURCE, AND ENGAGING EVERY COMMUNITY UNTIL STUDENTS IN ALL CORNERS OF OUR CITY HAVE ACCESS TO THE HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION THEY DESERVE. ”

- Dr. Janice K. Jackson, CEO, Chicago Public Schools, CPS 5-Year Vision



Dear CPS Family,
As the Chief Executive Officer of Chicago Public Schools, I spend a lot of time talking about how CPS is a district on the rise. I have seen our district's growth firsthand as a CPS student, then as a teacher, principal, network chief, chief education officer, and now as both CEO and a CPS parent. We have come a long way, but there's a lot of work to do in order to give every child in Chicago the education they deserve. This work starts by acknowledging that although talent is evenly distributed among our students, opportunity is not, and that the children who need more support should get more support. The district's Five-Year Vision lays out concrete commitments to build upon

the district's academic progress, ensure continued financial stability, and strengthen integrity through regular parent and community engagement. At the heart of our vision is a renewed focus on equity—not as a stand-alone initiative, but as our driving value through which we make every decision. Achieving the goals in our vision will take a commitment from all of us—students, families, educators, and community members. Only once we have examined every inequity, mined every resource, and engaged every community in our district, will we be able to ensure students in each corner of our city have access to a high-quality education. To guide this work, we launched the CPS Office of Equity in 2018, the first office in Chicago committed specifically to educational equity. Releasing this first draft of the CPS Equity Framework is another step toward equity for our district. This framework, which will continue to evolve as we receive additional feedback from our stakeholders, will help us ensure equity is at the center of every decision we make, and will guide us as we work to transform our students' experiences at CPS.

Thank you to the students, parents, teachers, partners, and community members who work tirelessly toward equity within our district and our city. We can't create educational equity alone, and you are valued partners in this work.

Sincerely,

Janice K. Jackson, EdD
Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Public Schools



Dear CPS Family,
Even today, I can still name the educators and mentors who supported me back in high school. Throughout my career, as a neighborhood high school principal on the South Side to my current role as Chief Equity Officer for the district, I have always had a front-row seat to the positive impact that supportive adults have on a student's educational journey.

As part of our ongoing commitment to foster educational equity in our district, the Office of Equity is excited to share this draft of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Equity Framework. As we engage schools in our district's equity work, this framework will serve to guide CPS staff and community members as agents of

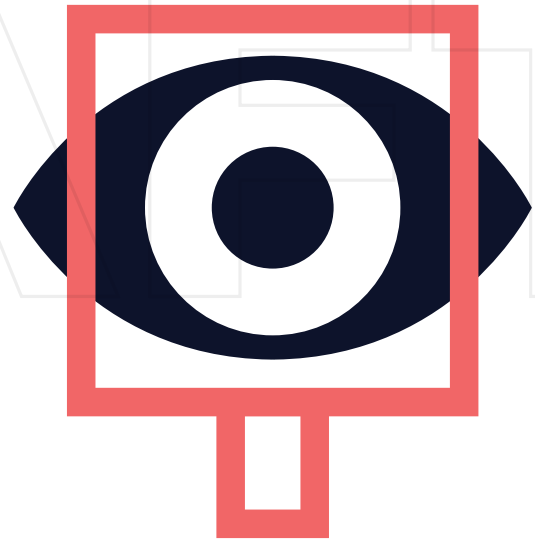
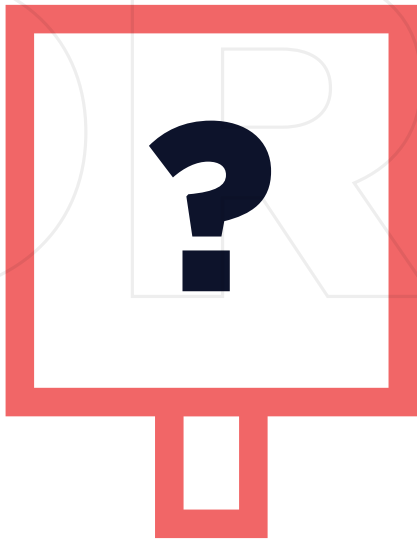
change in addressing complex equity issues in our district.

The draft Equity Framework is the result of ongoing, thoughtful partnerships with stakeholders committed to advancing educational equity, including central and network office staff, principals, educators, parents, students, and community partners. It is important to approach this document with the understanding that there are no simple or quick solutions. This draft framework serves as a set of core values, evidence-based ideas and concepts, texts, and tools designed for people at multiple stages in their understanding of equity. Over the coming months, we will refine the framework to ensure it provides a common vision, language, and approach for driving change at every level.

Each of us has a role to play and work to do, and it will be important to apply this framework to our work in our own contexts, whether it is a district office, network, school, collaborative team, or classroom, with the shared goal of advancing equity for all students. We look forward to hearing your feedback and developing a framework that will serve as a source for guidance and action to transform our system and achieve educational equity.

Sincerely,

Maurice R. Swinney, EdD
Chief Equity Officer
Chicago Public Schools



The CPS Equity Framework holds three essential questions at its core:

Even with our best efforts and intentions, why do differences in achievement and educational experiences and outcomes persist for some student groups?

Each individual has a role in the system. What can each of us do to advance equity in Chicago Public Schools?

How can we increase transparency and engagement, resulting in better, sustainable outcomes and productive relationships?

The CPS Equity Framework is the product of:

Extensive and ongoing dialogue with students, parents, caregivers, and educators, numerous school visits, and active participation in CPS steering committees.

Reviewing current research on equity and inequity in schools, school districts, cities, and levels of government.

Collaboration with the Building Equitable Learning Environment (BELE) Network.



WHY:

Every student deserves access to a high quality education.

WHAT:

The Equity Framework is a package of resources designed to both instill a deep foundation of and commitment to equity as well as resources to help school leaders and educators initiate change, within their school-specific context and data, in their school communities.

HOW:

The Framework provides shared language, tools, and accountability on what equity means in CPS, the four dimensions that will support driving equity in our work, and the foundation for understanding and building out change ideas.

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WHEN WE ARE WORKING IN EQUITABLE WAYS AND MAKING PROGRESS ON EQUITY:

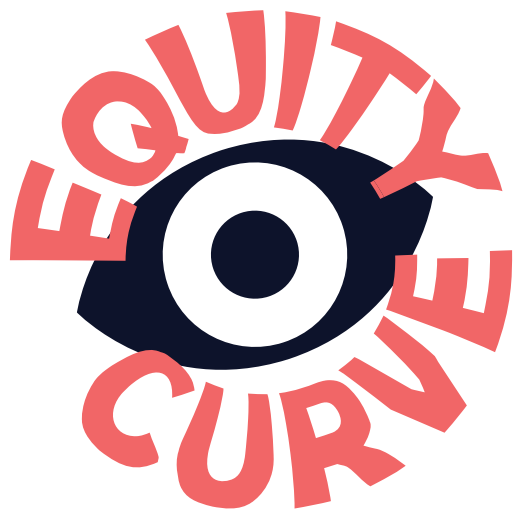
There is acknowledgement and account for past and current inequities, and we provide all people, particularly those most impacted by racial inequities, the infrastructure needed to thrive.

People, including students of color and their caregivers, families, and other groups that have been historically marginalized, are part of the decision-making processes.

Everyone benefits from a more just, equitable system.

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EQUITY WORK REQUIRES



CURIOSITY

URGENCY

RESILIENCY

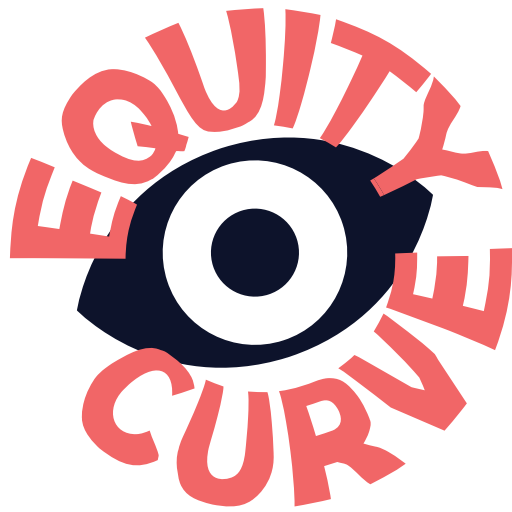
VULNERABILITY

EMPATHY

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WE ASK THAT EACH PERSON
APPROACHES EQUITY WORK
FROM THE EQUITY CURVE.

SETTING NORMS ARE ABOUT HOW WE COMMUNICATE IN A SPACE WITH OTHERS. THE EQUITY CURVE SUPPORTS THIS COMMUNICATION.



C - Withhold judgment and be in a space of inquiry - be **curious** to gain a better understanding of an issue.

U - Work with a sense of **urgency** when championing the success of our students. We have to respond in a timely manner.

R - Acknowledge that this work can be difficult and requires **resiliency**.

V - Recognize that each of us may not know a solution, but we can be **vulnerable** to collectively learn and problem-solve together.

E - Build connection. Show **empathy** across differences, with someone who you think may not share your experiences.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:
WHICH WORD FROM THE EQUITY CURVE CHALLENGES YOU AT THIS MOMENT?

WHICH WORD IN THE CURVE RESONATES WITH YOU?

ALLOW YOURSELF THE SPACE TO ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR DAILY DISPOSITION. SELECT A KEY WORD FROM THE CURVE AND REPEAT IT TWICE.

The construction of the CPS Equity Framework formally began with the launch of equity work within CPS led by the Race & Equity Working Group¹ in 2016.

One of the goals of the **Race & Equity Working Group (REWG)** was a framework that would be the guiding document and commitment for the district. When the Office of Equity opened in September 2018, we met with students, parents, teachers, leaders, partners, and community members to learn and actualize the vision of equity within CPS. Their candor, openness, and insights are reflected in the framework and will guide our district's work.

Race & Equity Working Group (REWG)

The REWG was established to address the disparities opportunities and outcomes persisting for student groups based on race, neighborhood, socioeconomic status, learning pathway, and other identities and experiences. The REWG was composed of Central Office department staff, Network Chiefs & staff, and community partners (CASEL, Chicago Consortium

on School Research, Chicago Public Education Fund, Facing History, Joyce Brown Consulting, Umoja, Youth Guidance). The group organized into three subcommittees: communications & stakeholder engagement, research, and toolkit development. After a year of listening, analyzing, synthesis, and documentation, the REWG released initial recommendations for the district, including:

- (1) Release a public commitment and action plan on equity while continuing to push on more equitable state funding structure
- (2) Develop an Equity Office with a Chief Equity Officer reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer

The REWG and Steering Committee, composed of representative leaders from the REWG, established a working definition for equity within CPS. We have built on that definition and included it in the first section of the Framework. These CPS equity champions have collaborated with us on this framework to ensure it aligns with CPS' shared vision for our students.

We've heard from over 3,000 voices across the city.

STUDENTS

including Student Voice and Activism Fellowship members, critiqued, strengthened, and informed the change ideas that will spark innovation for equity at CPS. Students at elementary and high schools shared their experiences in their learning environments. Their candor on what works and does not work for them was key to developing the CPS equity lens.

PARENTS

at Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meetings voiced their celebrations and concerns in spaces facilitated by the CPS Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE). Parents spoke proudly of how they designed and delivered beginning-of-year orientation opportunities for educators on the curriculum their students would experience. They shared the experiences that made them feel welcome in schools and how they motivated their young people academically at home.

EDUCATORS

opened their schools and classrooms, where we saw them delivering curriculum with a

growth mindset. Educators shared their deep commitment and wins through student stories. They reflected critically on their challenges and generously provided their expertise on how different schools operate and where equity challenges are concentrated. Their input was critical for developing the Framework's change ideas.

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

re-confirmed that we cannot do this work alone. CPS is a system that operates within the much larger, asset-rich city of Chicago. External Partners, including school districts and equity organizations across the country, willingly shared their lessons learned, tools, and practices to support the achievement, aspirations, and potential of CPS students.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

including Community Advisory Councils and local community-based organizations, shared their experiences directly providing support to the young people of Chicago. They emphasized the need to work together to boldly move forward on equity within our city. Community members want to be engaged in designing solutions in their community.

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Understanding four key dimensions that create an equity lens

Applying the lens allows us to see the system differently to inform the ways we work together as we create a more equitable system.

LIBERATORY THINKING
INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS
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PHASE 2

Coming in 2020

High Impact Change Ideas

DRAFT

SECTION 1

WHAT DOES EQUITY MEAN IN CPS?

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EQUITY MEANS

CPS defines equity as championing the individual cultures, identities, talents, abilities, languages, and interests of each student by ensuring they receive the necessary opportunities and resources to meet their unique needs and aspirations³. In an equitable educational system, every student has access to the resources, opportunities, and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, learning path, accessibility needs, family background, family income, citizenship, or tribal status.

Promoting just and fair inclusion, and creating the conditions in which everyone can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential;

Ensuring that every child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential;

Examining biases, interrupting inequitable practices, and ensuring inclusive school environments for all;

Discovering & cultivating the unique gifts, talents & interests that every human possesses; and

Removing the predictability of success and failure that currently correlates with race, class, gender, gender identity, or any other social or cultural factor.



EQUITY IN CPS

CPS collaborated with over 9,950 students, parents, staff, community members, and civic leaders to develop the CPS 5-Year Vision. The Vision includes a compelling, aspirational, universal goal for our district: At CPS, our Mission is to provide a high quality public education for every child, in every neighborhood, that prepares each for success in college, career and civic life. In setting this goal, we understand the reality that many students across the district experience these disparities in opportunity in myriad ways, every day. Inequities exist for several reasons including:

- Lack of understanding of the needs of diverse student groups;
- Lack of political will or

investment, structural racism; and

- Mindsets that hinder a student's full potential from materializing.

RACIAL EQUITY

We recognize the immediate and pressing need for **racial equity** to transform the experiences of young people within CPS and the City of Chicago. CPS prioritizes racial equity because of its predictable power across intersecting identities of gender, gender identity, socioeconomic group, and health status. We know that a one-size fits-all approach does not work. Therefore, our approach to equity must account for the fact that if we want all of our students to be valued, seen, cared for and to experience the opportunities they need to

thrive intellectually and social-emotionally, then we need to do the hard work of creating thoughtful, adaptive practices which understand the structures or circumstances that either support or prevent students from reaching the universal goal. Racial equity work requires a targeted universalist approach.

TARGETED UNIVERSALISM

The [Targeted Universalist \(TU\)](#) approach to equity, articulated by the [Othering and Belonging Institute](#)⁴:

- organizes members of a school community around a shared universal goal;
- uses quantitative and qualitative data to understand how student groups in that community currently perform in relation to the goal; and
- focuses the work of the community on developing short- and long-term targeted solutions to support different groups within the community in reaching the shared goal.

TU recognizes the critical role of systems and structures in students' everyday experiences, and acknowledges that the way

students interact with those systems and structures differs depending on identity and students life circumstances, both of which can affect how they perform in school. This is important because ***gaps in opportunity are driven by differences in how students are situated in relation to the educational system and the universal goal.***

While we recognize how existing systems and structures might create and maintain inequitable opportunities, we also understand the power of teachers, principals, school communities, those who do work in CPS on behalf of our students, and district staff and leaders to create school environments that support equitable outcomes for all students.

We are utilizing the TU approach to guide our equity work because we believe the most effective way to reduce disparities in opportunities is to empower all educators, staff, and students across the district to identify the challenges within their individual classroom, school, network community, or district department and implement thoughtful, data-driven practices to help all students reach our shared,

universal goal. The TU framework allows us to:

- take a collaborative, outcome-oriented approach;
- respond to immediate challenges while simultaneously pursuing a more durable, transformational change;
- operate with sensitivity to structural and cultural dynamics; and
- focus our attention on the structural changes needed (rather than locating the problems of inequity in our students) - the shared responsibility is on the adults and the system.

TU in Practice

Everyone has room for growth and should be afforded the resources, opportunities, and rigorous educational experiences to achieve the universal goal. We must avoid taking a “one size fits all” approach to equity as we recognize that students have different needs based on how they are situated in their daily lives. For example, if a high school’s universal goal for graduation for all students is 95%, then one must examine how student groups (based on race, gender, gender expression, economic disadvantage, diverse learning needs) are positioned toward the goal. Here are some

sample questions:

- What are the current graduation rates for each student group? (considering intersectionalities of race and gender)
- What are the factors internal and external to the school that affect the experiences of different groups?
- What are the neighborhood assets and challenges where students live and how might those affect their experiences inside or outside of school?
- What are the different conditions and resources necessary for each student group to thrive?
- What policies benefit or burden each student group?

As noted in the example above, TU encourages us to seek out what is working and the development of diverse solutions to create change because **when we better understand what students need, we can create the practices that will best support all students in reaching the universal goal.** Solutions developed via a TU approach support the most marginalized groups while simultaneously helping all students advance toward the shared goal.

The TU approach calls for an on-

going process of collaborative inquiry to prioritize and understand equity challenges from multiple perspectives (including our inputs, as adults, organizations, or policies) of time, people, and money,) and design, identify, and implement approaches to creating greater equity in terms of goals and outcomes. In the graduation example, teachers and staff would take the information collected to co-construct practices and policies that support all student groups in attaining the universal goal. They would then meet regularly to assess progress and adjust practices as needed.

Teachers, principals, and school staff are on the front lines of leading for equity, by implementing promising practices and creating school cultures that support all students.

Leadership for equity is a “both/and” proposition. Leading systems change for equity requires quick technical wins as well as adaptive changes that will take longer to happen, but have to happen.

Real, sustained systems change is only possible when everyone within the system is leading for equity. Each one of us has an

important role to play in reducing disparities in opportunity and creating a more equitable district.

Once we know how students are situated in relation to our universal goal, we can think about how to move forward. In order to move forward we need to apply an equity lens that helps us understand what is necessary to advance equity.

We offer four dimensions that formulate an equity lens through which each of us can engage in transformational work across CPS:

1. (Use) Liberatory Thinking;
2. (Catalyze) Inclusive Partnerships;
3. (Direct) Resource Equity; and
4. (Design) Fair Policies and Systems.

The layering of these dimensions creates the lens that each of us can use to re-imagine the current system so that we can accelerate change.

QUICK WIN	TRANSFORMATIONAL, ADAPTIVE CHANGE
Change the physical arrangement of a classroom in order to change how students interact with each other and the teacher	Having the resource equity to respond to every student's diverse learning need

SECTION 2

FOUR DIMENSIONS OF AN
EQUITY LENS

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HISTORICAL LENS

MAINTAINS OPPORTUNITY GAP

Conversations about others' limited abilities.

Prioritizes voices of loudest & powerful.

Set criteria for accessing opportunity.

Prioritize resources based on potential highest # of students impacted in school.

EQUITY LENS

MITIGATES OPPORTUNITY GAP

Engage in conversations that create fairness, liberation, no matter background.

Inclusive of least served & under-represented group(s).

Eliminate barriers that inhibit access & opportunity.

Prioritize resources based on greatest needs of schools & student groups in schools.



“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” - Maya Angelou

To become a more equitable school district, we must adopt a new way of understanding the work of equity. Shifting from a historical education lens that upholds structural racism to an equity lens that creates fair access and opportunities for all requires a theory of change for re-imagining what our district could look like and do.

The dimensions of the equity lens provide a descriptive, conceptual understanding of what equity work requires of individuals and groups, and how we can think and act in service of our students, especially those historically underserved. An equity lens using targeted universalism will support each of our schools, network district offices, and departments in having a clearer understanding of the student groups they are serving. Each of us must analyze, reflect, and strengthen our practices in these areas to better serve our students.

(USE) LIBERATORY THINKING

“People would say ‘Who is a leader?’ A leader is a person that does the work. It’s very simple. It’s a personal choice for people who choose to put in their time and their commitment to do the work. It’s a personal choice.”

- Dolores Huerta

DEFINITION

Liberatory thinking is the re-imagining of one’s assumptions and beliefs about others and their capabilities by interrupting internal beliefs that undermine productive relationships and actions. Liberatory thinking goes beyond simply changing mindsets to creating concrete opportunities for others to experience liberation. The opportunities have a focus on underrepresented and

marginalized people. It pushes people to interrogate their own multiple identities in relation to others and to think about the consequences of our actions, especially for students of critical need. It explores how mindsets can impede or ignite progress in the classroom, school, and district⁵.

Liberatory thinking builds on this interrogation process to lift up and institutionalize culturally relevant and sustaining opportunities that celebrate students’ identities and offer positive developmental experiences.

Liberatory thinking pushes us to think about what we want for students as a result of equity - beyond only working to stop the negative consequences of inequity.

Liberatory thinking requires working across difference and in affinity toward a common vision for equity and considers racial justice. Liberatory thinking appreciates and honors the differences among people, which includes but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, learning path, accessibility needs, family background, family income, citizenship, or tribal status.

(USE) LIBERATORY THINKING

IN-PRACTICE

Those who use liberatory thinking:

Broaden how they interpret data to be inclusive of student experiences instead of creating exclusionary practices.

Engage in deep reflective work to understand their biases, multiple intersecting identities, and personal stories.

Examine how they have been impacted by systemic oppression and may inadvertently be perpetuating systemic oppression.

Disrupt historical ways of using data on assessment outcomes to compare students to dominant groups.

Develop individual and systemic equity purpose statements to guide decision-making.

Build relationships in affinity and across difference to lead change toward greater equity.

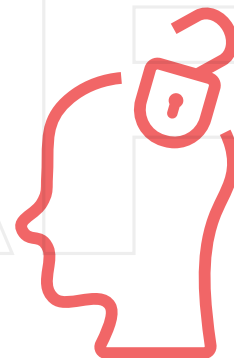
Advocate for fair treatment and opportunities for others.

Engage in courageous conversations on racial equity, internal biases, systemic inequities, and system redesign, including rethinking how they use data and how data impacts student experiences.

Manage privilege and bias by acknowledging and mitigating their personal bias.

Set conditions for safe/brave spaces where both healing and interruption can occur.

Tools coming soon in 2020



(CATALYZE) INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS

“We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community. Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.”
- Cesar Chavez

DEFINITION

Inclusive partnerships bring together and engage diverse individuals from educational institutions, communities, caregivers, and families to collectively create solutions and build trust⁶ that mitigate or solve **complicated** or **complex** problems. “Inclusive partnerships” recognize culture and differences as assets and prioritize three key stakeholder groups:

- People with institutional or historical memory,
- People most impacted by decisions, and
- People responsible for implementing and driving change.

Prioritizing the voices of those with the most critical needs by providing accessible engagement points in schools, communities, online, and beyond furthers transparency and power sharing. The core of inclusive partnerships is bringing together a diverse array of stakeholders to be engaged in authentic, collaborative experiences and develop bottom-up solutions to complex and challenging issues. Internal partners include students, caregivers, school and district staff and volunteers. External partners include community organizations, research organizations, and funders, among others. **All partners must remain committed to sharing power and responsibility as they move toward greater equity.**

This requires inviting and allowing students⁷, families⁸, caregivers, and underrepresented employee groups to speak about their needs to inform improvement efforts.

**(CATALYZE)
INCLUSIVE
PARTNERSHIPS**

IN-PRACTICE

Those who catalyze inclusive partnerships.

Prioritize the perspectives and voices of stakeholders with institutional and/or historical memory, those most impacted by inequitable decisions, and those responsible for implementing and driving change.

Shift from competition to cooperation mindset to productively address conflict, promote healing, and rebuild trust, using tools like meeting norms, with much greater transparency in service of students.

Speak with diverse stakeholders to understand how culture, differences, and lived experiences can be used as assets.

Engage in ongoing listening to co-construct change to ensure underrepresented students and adults are heard and their input is valued.

Elevate student voice data and opportunities across the organization to understand their classroom and school experiences, and inform adult practice. Keep students at the center and make decisions based on the best interest of students.

Embrace families and community members as allies who engage and inform student learning opportunities, including continuous dialogue about how they can be allies and assets inside and outside of school.

Set high, clear expectations for all parties to promote trust and transparency.

Tools coming soon in 2020



(DIRECT) RESOURCE EQUITY

“The knowledge and skills to educate all children already exist. There are no pedagogical barriers to teaching and learning when willing people are prepared and made available to children.”
- Asa G. Hilliard

DEFINITION

The goal of resource equity is to create equitable student experiences in learning-ready environments⁹. Resource equity means consistently prioritizing and allocating people, time, and money to align with levels of need and opportunity.

Resource equity recognizes that providing the same amount of resources to students and schools with

different lived experiences, assets, and challenges will maintain the status quo of unequal achievement.

Based on people’s quality of life, resources needed to support them vary. Resource equity creates opportunities to share resources within a school or institution or across schools to meet the diverse needs of all students.¹⁰ Advocating for resource equity involves tracking level of opportunity in relation to performance or impact and creating progressive spending patterns.

The levers that impact student experiences occur at all levels of the district including classrooms, schools, and district departments and offices. District leaders, school administrators, teachers, and support staff engage in continuous learning to identify ways to disrupt, and design their own policies and practices to promote responsive, timely resource equity for students across the district. Resource equity balances immediate solutions with sustainable, long-term distribution of resources to close opportunity gaps for students.

**(DIRECT)
RESOURCE
EQUITY**

IN-PRACTICE

Those who direct resource equity:

Make allocation decisions across schools and within schools based on data that presents the needs and assets of each community, school, and/or student group, and where they are currently situated within outcomes, to support achieving universal goals.

Use a broad definition of data, including qualitative and multi-sector data, to assess the current and future impact of the distribution of resources in relation to the distribution of opportunity and how each of these correspond with outcomes.

Engage in an extensive, sensitive dialogue with an array of

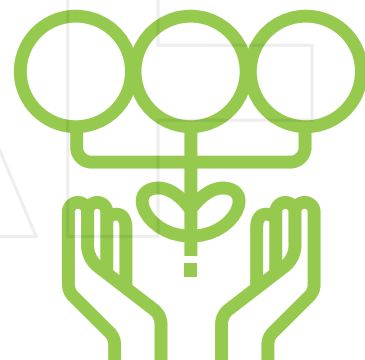
stakeholders, building public moral, economic, and political will to provide the resources and support to co-construct opportunity.

Re-organize themselves to allocate the time and resources within their locus of control to focus on students and schools in areas of concentrated disadvantage.

Facilitate opportunities for schools and networks to share resources within and between schools including human capital, materials, and promising practices to address common problems.

See themselves as resources with agency and prioritize students with the most risk factors working against them in their efforts and actions to support schools and communities.

Tools coming soon in 2020



(DESIGN) FAIR POLICIES AND SYSTEMS

“One does not understand structures or systems by looking at intent. Instead, we have to examine what they actually do—how they operate and what the outcomes are. Certainly a system or structure could be established for the purpose of excluding or discriminating. However, most structures produce racialized outcomes without intent.”
- john powell

DEFINITION

Fair policies and systems promote equitable opportunities to reach equal positive academic and socioemotional outcomes for all student and stakeholder groups with an emphasis on those who are most impacted by structural inequality and inequity. Fair

policies and systems happen after examining the impact of key policies, practices, and budgets on students and communities¹¹ followed by recommending and implementing actions for change.

All policies require systems within which to operate; not all systems require policies. A system can function equitably with or without policies and policies can be used to positively impact systems to function equitably for students.

To examine policies and systems, we must ask who is burdened by past and present policies and practices and who benefits in order to chart a future plan to address the impact of inequity and promote access and opportunity.

The impact of inequity can include, and is not limited to, racial predictability of student success and community and school push out and displacement. Because policies and systems exist at the classroom, school, district, and city level, examining connections between policies and systems is critical for transformation.

All policies and systems should be continuously improved with equity at the center.

(DESIGN) FAIR POLICIES AND SYSTEMS

IN-PRACTICE

Those who design fair policies and systems:

Examine the impact within their control and explore possible equity-based solutions.

Create conditions that foster mutual trust and understanding, and which help stakeholders at all levels to be accountable for equity.

Check to see if their efforts marginalize a group of people or cause an undue burden.

Ensure inclusion and equal treatment of greatest needs groups in their school context.

Find root causes and generate a plan to redesign a policy or system.

Center policy decisions within students' lived experiences.

Inform those who currently hold the power and responsibility to impact the inequity that is uncovered.

Redesign policies and systems to meet the needs of those historically underserved.

Ask a set of agreed upon questions when assessing any policy or system to reduce bias.

Monitor the impact of policies and systems to ensure success for all student groups.

Utilize the strengths of Chicago's diversity to incorporate cultural capital in all decision making.

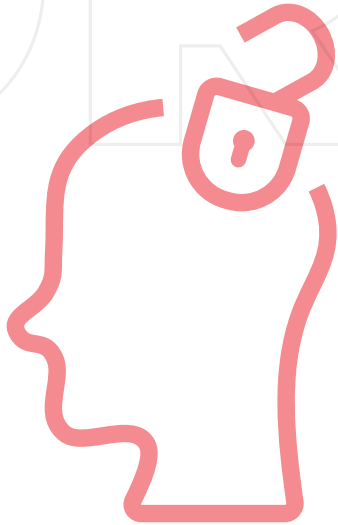
Strengthen the links between school, classroom, and home to increase access and opportunity for parents.

Tools coming soon in 2020



EQUITY LENS

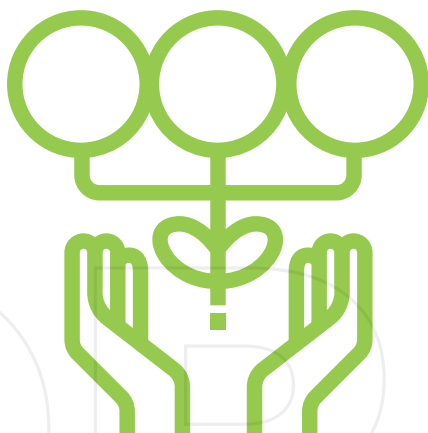
HOW WILL I USE THE LENS TO IMPROVE MY WORK?



LIBERATORY THINKING



INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS



RESOURCE EQUITY



FAIR POLICIES AND SYSTEMS



APPLYING THE EQUITY LENS

Leading for equity and engaging in equity work requires us to move away from the historical ways in which we educate our students. What is perhaps most challenging and most necessary is that leading and engaging for equity requires all of us to recognize the ways in which we need to shift our own perspectives and practices in order to support more equitable outcomes for students. Doing this requires self-reflection and a recognition of how existing systems and beliefs maintain disparities in opportunity. **We must give ourselves the space and time to learn, innovate, and develop so that we can do the same for our students.** Leading for equity also requires us to

grapple with both complicated and complex challenges, and to be persistent and flexible in developing promising practices to address them.

An essential component of **collective leadership** for equity is the equity lens. We must apply an equity lens that enables us to see and understand all of the structures and conditions at work, and it helps us see what is necessary and possible in terms of what can change to support equity. This is a shift from a historical education lens that upholds structural racism to an equity lens that creates fair access and opportunities for all. Doing so requires using a shared lens when re-imagining what our district could look like and accomplish. An equity lens has four dimensions:



1. (Use) Liberatory Thinking;
2. (Catalyze) Inclusive Partnerships;
3. (Direct) Resource Equity; and
4. (Design) Fair Policies and Systems.

We can think of these dimensions as similar to what happens when an artist mixes colors on a palette to create just the right shade. Individually, the colors are simple and straightforward, but when they are mixed together, the resulting shade has depth and nuance that the individual colors do not possess on their own.

We would never have seen the nuances and the depth if the colors had not been mixed together. Similarly, the dimensions of the equity lens work together to allow us to “see” the system differently. We cannot

see the nuances if we are only using one dimension of the equity lens. All the dimensions must be engaged in order for equity work to succeed. If we developed and implemented a promising practice after only engaging the liberatory thinking dimension, the practice would likely not be as successful as it would had we engaged all of the dimensions of the equity lens simultaneously. In this way, the equity lens provides a descriptive, conceptual understanding of what equity work requires so individuals and groups can think and act in service of our students, especially those historically underserved. Using an equity lens is critical for this work. When we use an equity lens, we create the conditions within ourselves and among our colleagues that lay the foundation for more equitable learning environments.

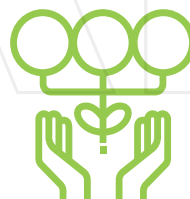
Without an equity lens, we will maintain the very opportunity gaps we are working to mitigate.

The interaction between the four dimensions of the equity lens is what creates disruption in the status quo and opens the door for change. When using the four dimensions of the equity lens, we begin by understanding and re-imagining our own assumptions and beliefs (Liberatory Thinking). Second, we consider how we can create inclusive partnerships that recognize differences as assets and prioritize the voices of those most affected by a proposed change (Inclusive Partnerships). Third, we prioritize and allocate people, time, and money to align with level of opportunity (Resource Equity) in order to create opportunities that meet the diverse needs of all students. Finally, we design policies and systems that promote equitable opportunities to reach equal outcomes for all student and stakeholder groups, with an emphasis on those who are most affected by structural inequality and inequity (Fair Policies and Systems).

The equity lens is applicable to any context - classroom, school, district. It can be applied to current work as a way to shift practice and also to the development

and implementation of new change ideas. With practice and commitment, the equity lens will begin to replace the historical or traditional lens which maintains opportunity gaps. The lens helps us understand how complicated or complex equity work is, and the lens empowers us to individually and collectively do something about it.

When we use an equity lens and we engage with our colleagues on complicated and complex problems of equity, we are creating the conditions to support all students and for real, transformational, sustainable change to take hold. Everyone is accountable for having an equity lens and is expected to continuously improve at the four dimensions that create the equity lens: this is how we transform our district.



DRAFT

PHASE 2

HIGH IMPACT CHANGE IDEAS

A CHANGE IDEA IS A PROMISING PRACTICE THAT ADVANCES EQUITY FOR STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS.

Change ideas are strategies and practices that have been used successfully by other schools in the district to create school environments which better recognize and support the strengths and needs of all students.

COMING IN 2020

DRAFT

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CALL TO ACTION

Driving equity in the Chicago Public Schools demands constant attention from everyone in the system and community: district leaders, district personnel, principals, administrators, support staff, students, parents, teachers, volunteers, communities, and other government agencies have a critical role to play to ensure that time spent outside school is safe and engaging for young people of all ages. Employers and others cannot see themselves as disconnected from the schools. Our neighbors, colleagues at work, customers, and business partners have a direct or indirect link to our public schools.

WHAT THREE STUDENT GROUPS DO I HAVE TO PUSH MYSELF TO BETTER SERVE?

WHAT DIMENSION OF THE LENS DO I COMMIT TO WORKING ON FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS?

ENDNOTES

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