Empowering Educators to Disrupt Inequity

Tovi C. Scruggs-Hussein, CA Regional Executive Director
Why “Partners” exist...

...because the achievement gap persists.

Results from a wide variety of state and national tests administered over the last half-century have been fairly consistent in at least one respect. They have indicated that certain groups of children repeatedly score below children in other groups (EdSource).
Our Mission

To transform teaching and learning in the lowest-performing public schools so that every student, regardless of background, thrives.
CA Partnerships
- Franklin McKinley
- Hollister
- Los Altos
- Milpitas
- **Oak Grove**
- Oakland
- San Bruno
- San Francisco
- **West Contra Costa**
Results-Oriented Change Agents

Transformation leaders, committed to equity and social justice, serving in roles across the system. ROCAs are:

- Masters of rigorous and culturally responsive pedagogy
- Deeply committed to developing cultural proficiency
- Adept at adult learning and change management
- Skilled in leveraging Partners transformation approach
- Improvement scientists and data evangelists
- Able to embody transformation mindsets (results-orientation, social justice, continuous improvement and systems thinking)
“Any reform effort attempting to solve the inequities in education that doesn’t help people heal from the hurts of growing up in a racist and classist society is not likely to succeed over time.”

Julian Weissglass

“All meaningful and lasting change begins on the inside.”

Martin Luther King Jr.
Equity Challenges in Our Schools

African American boys are being disproportionately sent out of class. The mostly white teachers are asking the African American principal to enact “harsher” consequences for these students.

Teachers are frustrated about a lack of interventions and supports for their students; a walkthrough of classrooms uncovers little evidence of differentiation and small group instruction.

A new district initiative engages school leaders and teachers to engage in a school redesign process. After a year of planning - they find out that the resources needed to move their ideas into action no longer exist.
Change Agents Committed to Equity

Engage in Self-Reflection
Move from Theory to Practice
Act in Solidarity With Historically Oppressed People
Deepen Understanding of Systemic Oppression
Demonstrate Respect for Community
Change Agents Committed to Equity

5 Corners:

Round 1: Which aspect of equity work is already a strength or a passion for you? - 2 min/each

Round 2: What practice would you like to grow or spend more time on? - 2 min/each
A cohort of 54 teachers, principals, instructional coaches and district leaders from a high school feeder pattern.

Monthly 5 hours evening sessions

Differentiated follow-up coaching ranging from 1-3.5 days/week on site.
# Scope & Sequence of Equity Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Equity Topic(s)</th>
<th>Instructional Leadership Topic(s)</th>
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| Sept  | ● Change agents role related to equity  
          ● Difficult conversations framework | ● Stages of Creating a Strong Team  
          ● Discourse 1 & 2 |
| Oct   | ● Defining key terms for doing race & equity learning and introducing equity change agent framework | ● Unpacking Qualitative Data  
          ● Identify Equity Traps that exist at school |
| Nov   | ● Building self-awareness  
          Intersectionality | ● Collect Adult Practice Data  
          ● Deepening Teacher Collab |
| Jan   | ● History of Systemic Oppression | ● Data-Cycle Review  
          ● Timeline Activity Unpacked! |
| Feb   | ● White Privilege  
          ● White Dominant Culture | ● The Power of ILTs in Coaching |
| March | ● Disrupting equity challenges at your site | ● Going Deeper |
Learning Strategies

1. Key Terms
2. History of Public Education Timeline
3. Unpacking Identity
4. Diversity Rounds
5. Difficult Conversations
Strategy 1: Defining Terms

**Privilege** - a special right, advantage, benefit, entitlement, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group of people

**Oppression** - The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness.

**Marginalization** - discriminatory, alienating, trivialized treatment of a person, group or concept as insignificant or peripheral

Pair Share: How do these definitions align with your personal/prior understanding of these words? What is new or different for you?
Strategy 2: History of Education

- Participants walk through a gallery of key events/policies in history of education that have contributed to inequitable outcomes.
- After they have had time to review the timeline, they choose 1 event to take a photo of and then join a group to reflect:
  - What visceral reaction did you have to the timeline overall?
  - What event did you choose and why?
  - What racialized policies, beliefs, or dynamics do you still see at play in school today?
Strategy 3: Unpacking Identity

**Intersectionality**: the social, economic and political ways in which identity-based systems of oppression and privilege connect, overlap and influence one another.

*Using your identity matrix, reflect…*

- Mark an x where you have experienced privilege and marginalization.
- Of your multiple identities with which do you feel the most comfortable? Why?
- Which do you believe others identify you with the most? Why?
- How have your multiple identities shaped your experience in childhood and adulthood? Think of times when an aspects of your multiple identities worked to your advantage or your disadvantage.

*Be prepared to share with a small group in 5 minutes.*
Strategy 4: Diversity Rounds

• Our strength is in our diversity and the stories we carry with us

• Sort ourselves into affinity groups based on various prompts
  - Where you are from (state)
  - Your Birth Order (compared to siblings)
  - Your Ethnicity

• Group self generates the categories

• Once grouped, participants break off into pairs or trios and discuss the **impact of this particular identity on their work.**

Protocol adapted from NSRF and NEP
Strategy 5: Difficult Conversations

- Your story
- The other person’s story
- The THIRD STORY

[Diagram with Venn diagram and book cover]
“Schools are a major part of society’s institutional processes for maintaining a relatively stable system of inequality. They contribute to these results by active acceptance and utilization of a dominant set of values, norms and beliefs, which, while appearing to offer opportunities to all, actually support the success of a privileged minority and hinder the efforts and visions of a majority.”

- Eugene Eubanks, Ralph Parish, and Dianne Smith - Changing the Discourse in Schools
Changing the Discourse

Changing the discourse is about **underlying beliefs** - how people define school problems

**Beliefs influence actions** that can either reproduce or transform outcomes
Changing the Discourse

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Changing the Discourse

Changing the discourse is about **underlying beliefs** - how people define school problems

**Beliefs influence actions** that can either reproduce or transform outcomes

Discourse refers not just to how we talk, but also how we define problems, success and failure and how we organize our time and work.
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<td>Internal Reflection</td>
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<td>“Look in the mirror”</td>
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Changing the Discourse

**Pair share:**

What thoughts and feelings come up for you as you consider the current discourse in your school?
Changing the Discourse

FROM ....

● We have a lot of students showing up who just don’t want to learn, they’re taking away from and slowing down the learning of our motivated students.

● I barely have time to teach my grade level standards, how can you expect me to teach the content they should have had years ago and do my job?

● Our most struggling children have parents that aren’t doing their part at home. What are we supposed to do with that? We are powerless.

TO ...

● What are my students interests? How can I structure lessons so that students are excited about what I am teaching? I wonder if they are unmotivated or are they bored?

● I’m overwhelmed by how much it seems my students don’t know. I wonder how I can learn the specific skill gaps they have and how I might differentiate and scaffold my instruction to meet their learning needs?

● How can I partner with parents to strategize ways they can help at home? What can I do in my classroom for students who don’t have assistance at home?
Tardiness Discourse

- Ongoing Tardiness
- Tardy Policies
- Blame and shame discourse
- Belief that students, parents, or “their communities” don’t value education
Toward Discourse 2

Tardies decrease, high attendance rates. Students feel increased engagement and connection to school.

Student focus groups
Parent and student surveys
Home visit/listening campaign
Activate community networks

Inquiry into Root Causes
“What barriers exist?”
“How could we listen deeply to our community?”

We check our assumptions and take an inquiry stance, taking TIME to understand the problem’s complexity.
Discourse Inquiry: Team Time

1. Identify a “hot” issue at your site
2. What does the current discourse look, sound and feel like?
3. What are your hunches about the current assumptions, beliefs, mental models about adults or children, that lie under the surface?
4. Why is shifting the discourse on this issue important to you? What new possibilities might emerge from this new conversation?
5. How could you, together, commit to shifting the discourse on this issue?
Ernesto Sirolli:
Homework: *Just listen*

**Consider your hot topic or TN Team focus:**
- Draft 1-2 questions that will allow you to gather experiential data
- TN Team members each interview 2-3 students (or family members)
- Be prepared to bring the data back at our 10/18 session
What have you valued most?

How you balanced the input around equity and racialized policies and still gave us the space to apply the conversation to our current context.

Getting to meet other teachers and talking about the uncomfortable subject, race. At the end it was fun.

I was able to walk in my truth.

The last part about an equity issue we're facing hit the spot!! We all aligned around one topic so we could talk about that together, with each of us focusing on a different specific aspect of the topic so we got to personalize our planning.

[The time] to step out of our comfort zone so that we can grow as educators, which in turn helps our students to be stronger academic learners.
Take Away Question:

How are you going to support others to learn to disrupt inequity?
Let’s Stay Connected!

Email: tscruggs@partnersinschools.org