

THE DISCOVERY CENTER  
A classroom without walls for a future without prejudice



## Educational Equity – Action Beyond the Buzzword

**School Climate through the Lens of Equity  
in Manchester Public Schools**  
Wednesday January 25, 2017

# TODAY'S FACILITATORS



Matt Geary  
Superintendent of  
Manchester Public  
Schools



Diane Kearney, Ed.D  
Manchester Public  
Schools



Ellen Tuzzolo  
The Discovery  
Center

# GOALS FOR THIS SESSION

- Connect the concepts of equity and school climate/culture
- Explore how culture shapes environment and the effect an inequitable culture has on students, teachers, families
- Provoke interest in the Climate/Equity Tool as a way to develop a plan to achieve equity
- Explore the concepts of “equity” and “educational equity” and their importance

# WHY ARE WE HERE?

To address a fundamental disconnect in our educational systems...

**School systems are created to serve students with “mainstream” identities.**



# THE OPPORTUNITY IN MANCHESTER

- Using the existing climate survey as an entry point to assess equity
- District readiness
  - Executive Leadership at the helm
  - Prior focus on race, racism and adaptive change...stay tuned
- Partnership with The Discovery Center, MPS and national expert Dr. Paul Gorski from EdChange
- Generous grant funding from The Graustein Memorial Fund

# OUR APPROACH

## Deficit Focus

“there is something wrong with students and families”



## Systems Focus

“there is something wrong with the educational system”



**THIS IS A CRITICAL  
SHIFT!!**

# USING SCHOOL CLIMATE TO MEASURE EQUITY

## Our Assertions:

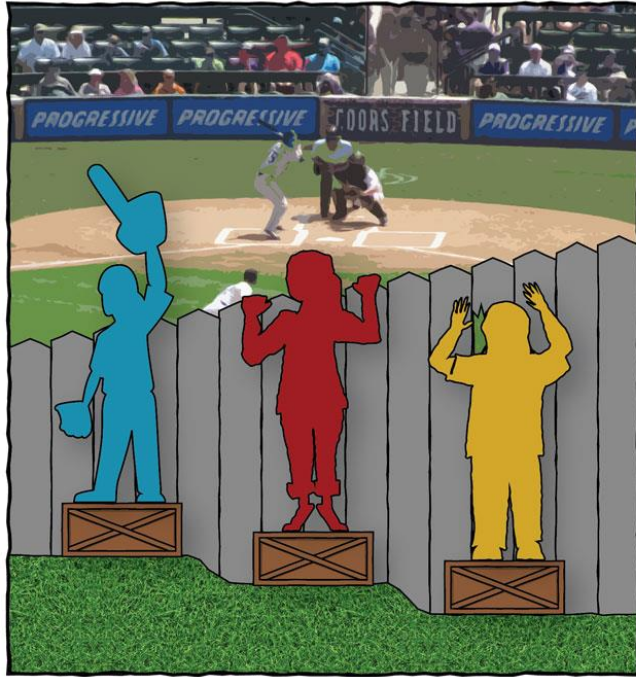
- By assessing school climate, we can better understand how equitable our schools are.
- To do this, we must change the way we assess climate to hone in on the experiences of students with marginalized identities.
- **This type of change can only happen when there is commitment to EQUITY from the TOP!!**

# What is Equity?





# Notice, Feel, Question, Think... Act



**EQUALITY**



**EQUITY**

# EQUITY

Equity is achieved when student outcomes are not predicated by gender, race, ethnicity, class, or special needs and where all students reach a level of efficacy and competence that supports a rewarding and productive life. This requires elimination of the inequities that contribute to disproportionate learning and achievement by students of certain social groups while ensuring students are prepared for a productive and meaningful life.

*Taken from the Connecticut Center for School Change Presentation on Equity*

# EQUITY

|

"I believe that education is the civil rights issue of our generation. And if you care about promoting opportunity and reducing inequality, the classroom is the place to start. Great teaching is about so much more than education; it is a daily fight for social justice."

Arne Duncan  
former Secretary of Education

# EQUITY

“Rather than give in to the helplessness we feel to stop racism and our collective, civic hemorrhage, every institution must examine its own role in perpetuating (inadvertently and advertently) racist thinking and policies. We can't truly create equal opportunities for all until our institutions take specific actions to end that thinking and those policies. And ground zero for an equitable, non-racist society is the K–12 classroom.”

Let's Talk about Racism in Schools

Rick Wormeli

# EQUITY

The major challenge is to meet the need to generate new leadership. The paucity of courageous leaders ... requires that we look beyond the same elites and voices that recycle older frameworks. We need leaders - neither saints nor sparkling television personalities - who can situate themselves within a larger historical narrative of this country and our world, who can grasp the complex dynamics of our peoplehood and imagine a future grounded in the best of our past, yet who are attuned to the frightening obstacles that now perplex us. Our ideals of freedom, democracy, and equality must be invoked to invigorate all of us, especially the landless, propertyless, and luckless. Only a visionary leadership that can motivate the better angels of our nature as Lincoln said and activate the possibilities for a freer more efficient and stable America - only that leadership deserves cultivation and support.

Cornel West, Author

# EQUITY

The most transformative and resilient leaders that I've worked with over the course of my career have three things in common: First, they recognize the central role that relationships and story play in culture and strategy, and they stay curious about their own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. Second, they understand and stay curious about how emotions, thoughts, and behaviors are connected in the people they lead, and how those factors affect relationships and perception. And, third, they have the ability and willingness to lean in to discomfort and vulnerability."

Brené Brown, Author

# EQUITY



# WORK IN MANCHESTER TO DATE...



- Data
- Race
- Culture
- Difference



# RACE MATTERS

- Colors our approach
- Difficult to Discuss



# TECHNICAL PROBLEMS VS. ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES

## Technical

- Easy to identify
- Quick solutions
- Solved by Authority

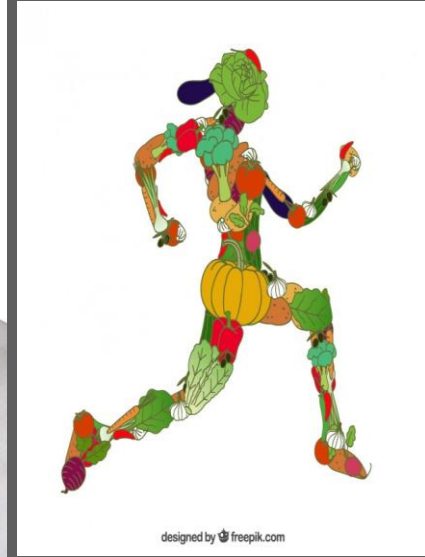
## Adaptive

- Difficult to identify
- Require changes in values, approaches, relationships
- People with the problem do the work of solving it

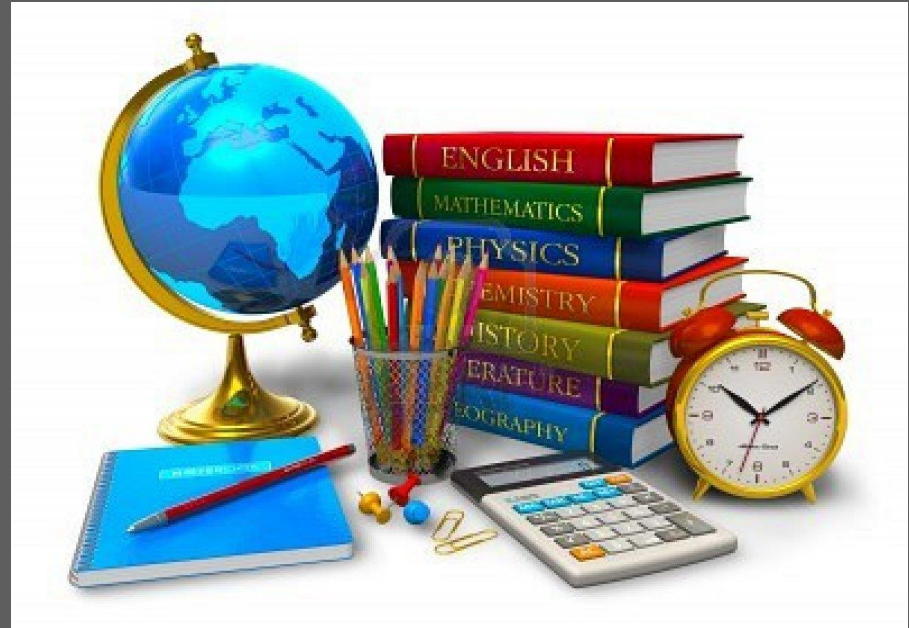
# TECHNICAL CHANGE



# ADAPTIVE CHANGE



# ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES





# WORK IN MANCHESTER

## Technical



## ADAPTIVE

Problem: Opportunity gap between students of color and their white counterparts

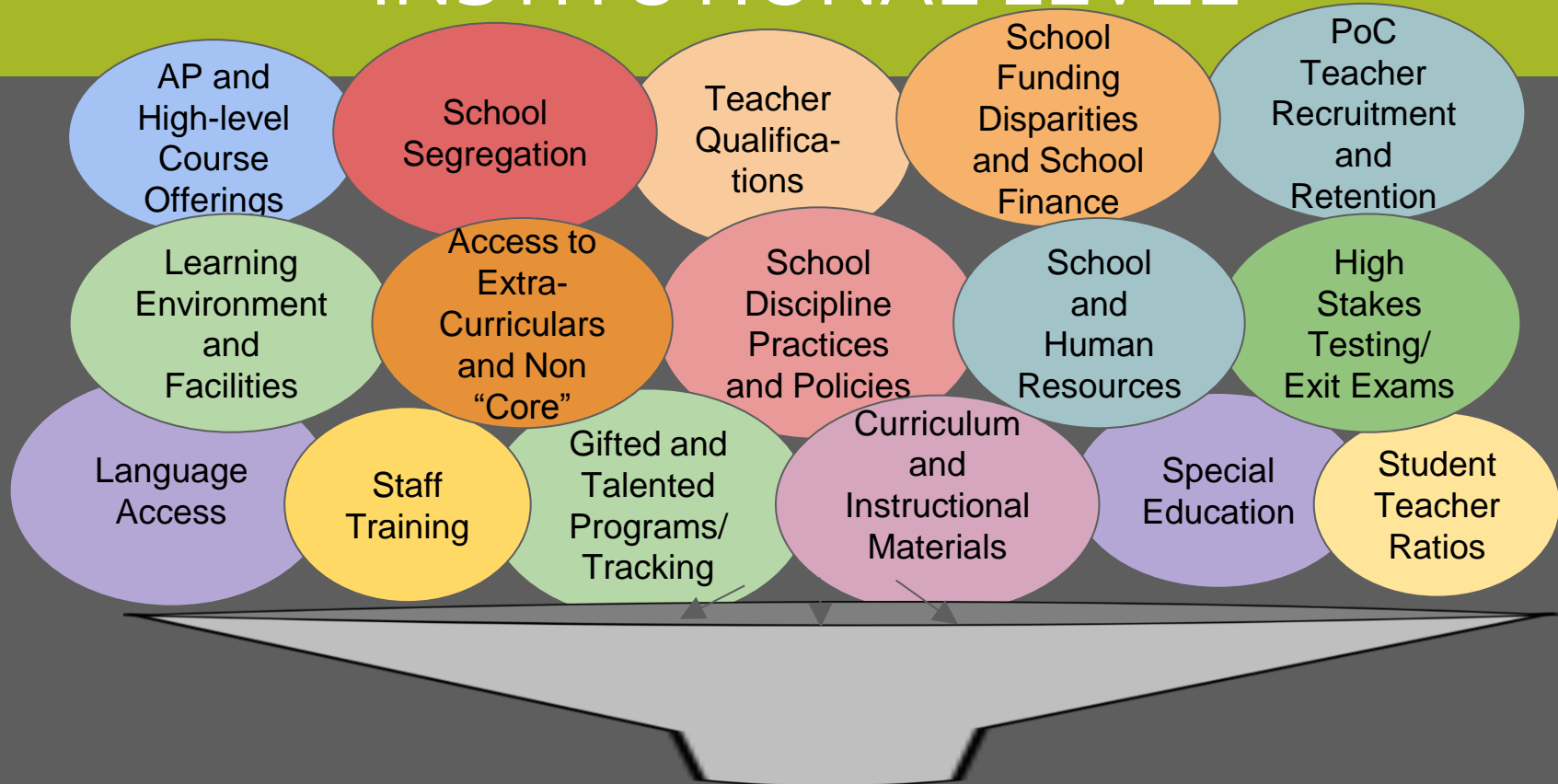
**Technical**  
Instead of doing  
solely this...



**Adaptive**  
Do this.



# EDUCATIONAL INEQUITY: INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL



# WORK OF THE DISCOVERY CENTER...

- A connected web of supports designed to result in systems becoming more equitable
- We work with schools and organizations that serve youth
  - Manchester Public Schools project to assess inequity in the school system and implement a plan of action
  - Workshops/PD with administrators and teachers helping them to see inequity and be inspired to change it
  - Youth programming centered on facilitating spaces where youth can understand and challenge systemic racism and oppression and think critically about their role in changing their communities
    - Residential Program



# LET'S TAKE A QUICK SURVEY!!

## THE DISCOVERY CENTER

A classroom without walls for a future without prejudice

### Equity Audit Statements

The Discovery Center is working with some local and national partners to develop an Equity Audit Assessment and Implementation Plan. Below are some sample statements that can be used to identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth within your school and district. Please read each statement, answer with the suggested scale, and then we will discuss meaning and evidence to support each statement rating.

1. – Strongly Agree
2. – Agree
3. – Disagree
4. – Strongly Disagree

#### Statements are adapted from:

- Nelson, J. and Bustamante, R. (2007). The School-Wide Cultural Competence Observation Checklist.
- Bustamante, R. (2008) The "Culture Audit": A Leadership Tool for Assessment and Strategic Planning in Diverse Schools and Colleges. Version 1.2; March 23, 2008 (retrieved from <http://cns.org/content/m13691/1.2/>)
- Affirm Organizational Development and Training (2009). Cultural Competence Audit. (Retrieved from <http://www.affirm.net.au/>)

### Community and Parent Factors

- We know the makeup of our community in regards to race and culture.
- Meeting the needs of our diverse community is built in to all our school planning and practices.
- Our staff has the knowledge and skills needed to work with a diverse community.
- We build networks and connections with groups and individuals who represent different sections of our community.
- We reach out to our community in meaningful ways and seek input on school decisions.
- Our communication strategies (e.g. posters, website, materials, meetings) are appropriate for our diverse community.
- Our budget includes resources such as interpreters or translators for staff and parents.
- We speak respectfully about and to people from different races.
- We speak respectfully about and to people from different cultural backgrounds.
- We have parent involvement programs that address the needs of all cultural groups.

# EQUITY LITERACY ABILITIES

- Ability to **Recognize** biases and inequities, including subtle biases and inequities
- Ability to **Respond** to biases and inequities in the immediate term
- Ability to **Redress** biases and inequities in the long term
- Ability to **Create and Sustain** a bias-free and equitable learning environment

# DEBRIEF OF SURVEY EXPERIENCE

1. What did you **NOTICE** about the survey?
2. What **FEELINGS** arose as you were filling out the survey?
3. What **QUESTIONS** do you have about the survey?

# CLOSING AND THANK YOU!!

**Diane Kearney**

[b11dkear@mpspride.org](mailto:b11dkear@mpspride.org)

**Matt Geary**

[mgeary@mpspride.org](mailto:mgeary@mpspride.org)

**Ellen Tuzzolo**

[ellentuzzolo@discoveringdiversity.com](mailto:ellentuzzolo@discoveringdiversity.com)