



# Engage: Implementing Culturally Competent and Responsive Approaches

ALLIANCE DISTRICT SYMPOSIUM – October 18, 2019

# Session Content

**1 Science of Learning and Development**

**2 Equity Lens**

**3 Supportive School Environments**

**4 Disparities**

A glowing DNA double helix structure is shown against a dark blue background. The DNA is rendered in a bright, shimmering blue color, with the two strands forming a continuous spiral that winds across the frame from the bottom left towards the top right. The background is a solid, deep blue, which makes the glowing DNA stand out prominently.

The Science of Learning  
and Development:

Background and Key  
Findings

# Science of Learning and Development

- The interconnectivity of social, emotional, and cognitive development
- Social and emotional competencies can be developed or changed
- Relationships between learning and the development
- The importance of both the individual and the environment
- Equity can be attained with excellence and without excellence we cannot have equity

# Changeability

- People's brains remain malleable and open to change throughout their lives, helping them learn new things and overcome challenges to learning based on their experiences.
- The brain is also resilient. It can be trained, throughout life, to create new neural pathways even when some areas have been damaged.
- Motivation, Identity formation, agency, and meaning making drive and moderate change and development.

# Individuality Matters

- Each child learns and develops along pathways that are unique based on the interaction between their biological and neurological make-up and their environment.
- Variation is the norm, not the exception, in learning and development.
- Experiences, relationships, and environments—deeply shape how children learn and develop.
- Relationships within these contexts is the key driver.

Potential: Every student has the potential to learn and thrive at every stage of learning

- Our brains are constantly developing in response to experiences and opportunities we offer them.
- This challenges the old view that potential is pre-determined by genetics turns out to be wrong.  
***Epigenetics trumps genetics, with experience as the driver....***
- Of more than 20,000 genes in the human genome, fewer than 10% are expressed, and the ones that are activated are determined by experiences – including the relationships and opportunities to learn that are provided.

# Epigenetics

Studies of the epigenome—a dynamic layer of information associated with DNA that differs between individuals and can be altered through various experiences and environments.

Provides an understanding how development of psychological disorders may be influenced by the surrounding environment.

Understanding these mechanisms is an important aspect of research in current biology, particularly in the study of learning and memory, emotion, and social behavior in humans.

Moreover, epigenetics in psychology provides a framework for understanding how the expression of genes is influenced by experiences and the environment to produce individual differences in behavior, cognition, personality, and mental health.

<https://nobaproject.com/modules/epigenetics-in-psychology>



## Adversity

Adversity can affect development, mental and physical health, and learning.

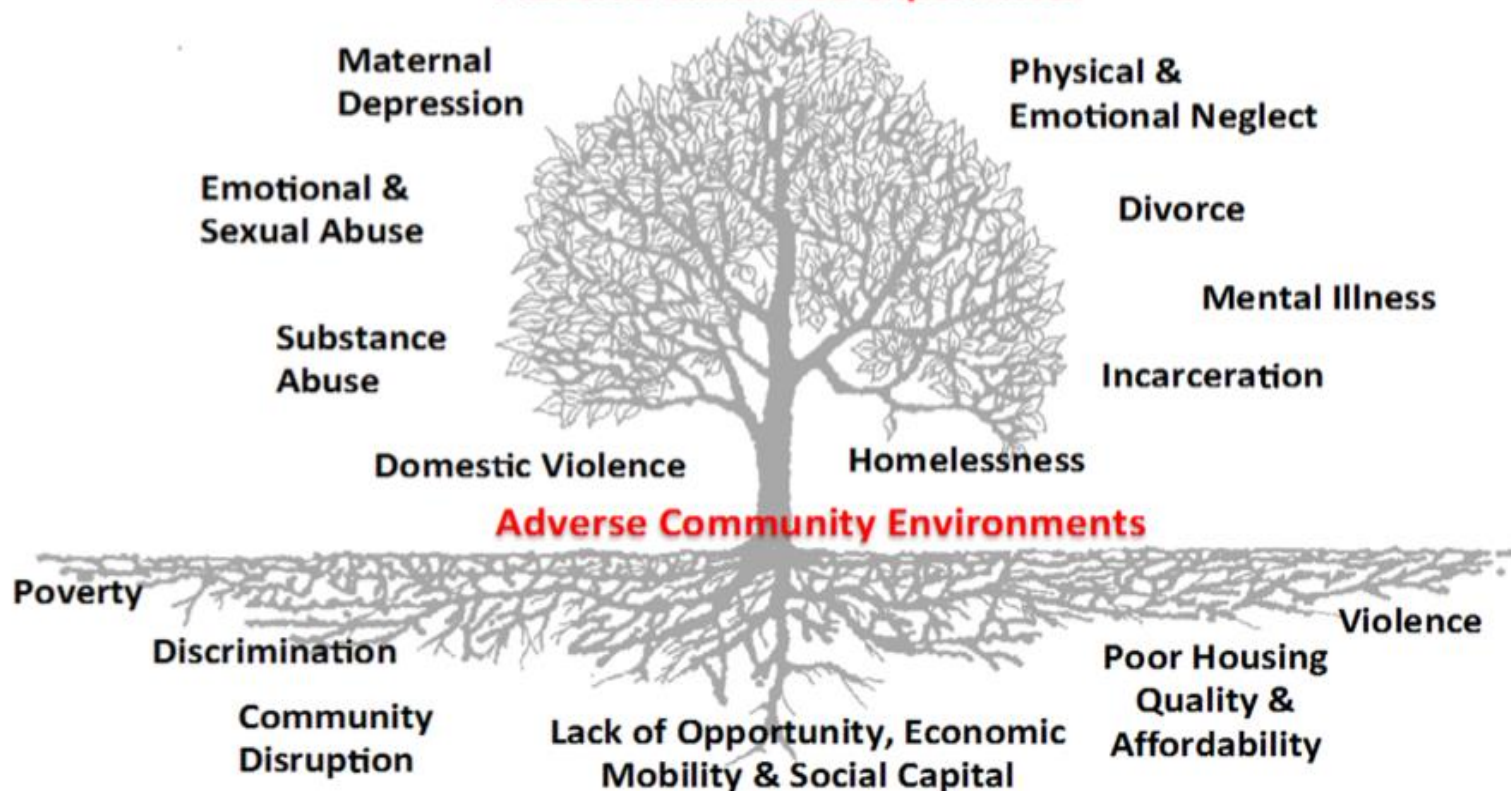
- Trauma and Adverse Child Experiences
- Compromised attachment
- Compromised ability to self-regulate
- Punitive & exclusionary discipline can amplify these impacts

*When unaddressed this can have multi-generational consequences.....*

# Trauma and ACEs

## The Pair of ACEs

### Adverse Childhood Experiences



Ellis, W., Dietz, W. (2017) A New Framework for Addressing Adverse Childhood and Community Experiences: The Building Community Resilience (BCR) Model. *Academic Pediatrics*. 17 (2017) pp. S86-S93. DOI information: 10.1016/j.acap.2016.12.011

## *Historical Trauma*

- Relived historical experiences of traumatizing events and experiences
- The past can be present-
  - Marginalization
  - Cultural Disrespect & Prejudice
  - Microaggression
  - Segregation and Wealth Accumulation

## Resilience and Thriving are Possible

- Adaptable, caring, and supportive relationship with an adult
- A sense of mastery over life circumstances
- Strong executive function and self-regulation skills
- Affirming faith or cultural traditions
- Safe and supportive environments (schools and communities)

*The ability of adults and near peers to attune with children, buffer stress, and support their cognitive, social, and emotional development is key to learning and healthy development.*

# Impact Of Trauma On School Culture and Climate



- Students more likely to escalate and act out
- Adults increasingly crisis-driven, reactive, and punitive to maintain control
- Difficult to maintain a safe environment most conducive to learning
- Schools risk re-traumatizing students by creating situations that mirror or replicate other traumas (e.g., harsh, punitive discipline, disrespectful interactions, chaotic environments)

*Safety, Equity, Engagement, Learning, And  
Wellbeing Can Be Realized....*

*By Creating Supportive Of School And  
Classroom Environments*

## Four strategies to enhance equity in schools:

- **Encourage staff members to talk about issues of diversity, values, and social justice within their Professional Learning Community.**
- **Model equity beliefs for staff members.**
- **Clarify misconceptions about equity.**
- **Create a safe, affirming school environment.**

*Ross, J. A., & Berger, M. J. (2009).*

# Leadership

Through our work with principals, we often find that “one of the most egregious contributors to achievement is the opportunity gap”.  
(Rimmer, 2019)

We have identified ***two high-leverage school-level leadership practices*** that, if done well, support schoolwide efforts to address student equity and opportunity gaps:

- Providing effective feedback to teachers on instruction
- Leading data discussions among teacher teams/departments

Instructional leaders currently are struggling with ***two main challenges***:

1. Identifying inequities that impact student access; and
2. Learning the skills and developing the confidence to engage in feedback to teachers that drives change in practice.

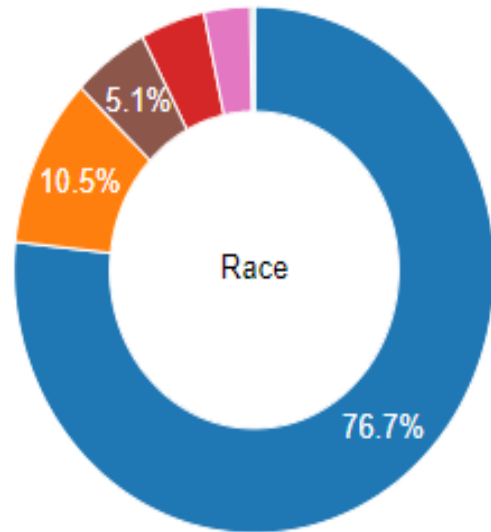


# Variables to Consider:

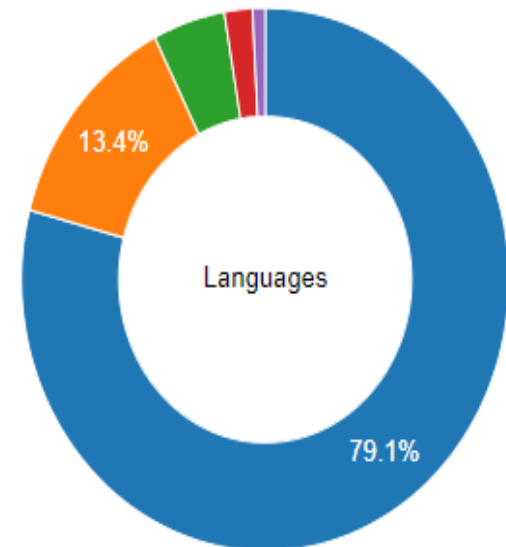
- Changing demographic of America – see CT data
- Persistent achievement gaps in our K-12 education system
- History of systemic inequity in our education system that perpetuate opportunity gaps
- Cultural incapacity and blindness impact policies, practices and people in the system.
- Skill vs. Will gap
- Strategic systems alignment
- How to Implement

# Demographic Data: 3,567,871 population

Source: US Census 2017 ACS 5-Year Survey (Table B03002)



- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- Some Other Race
- Two or More Races



- Only English
- Spanish
- Other Indo-European
- Asian
- Other

# What is needed:

- A systemic approach grounded in the tenants of Cultural Proficiency
- Increasing Knowledge and Awareness
- Needs Assessment Grounded in Equity
- Planning, Vision, and Goal setting with an Equity Lens

# Cultural Proficiency Continuum

Descriptive language for healthy and nonproductive policies, practices, and behaviors



Lindsey, R. B., Robins, K. N., & Terrell, R. D. (2003). *Cultural proficiency: A manual for school leaders* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

What are some of the steps to take to create a more equitable school?

# Supportive Student-Teacher Relationships Promote:

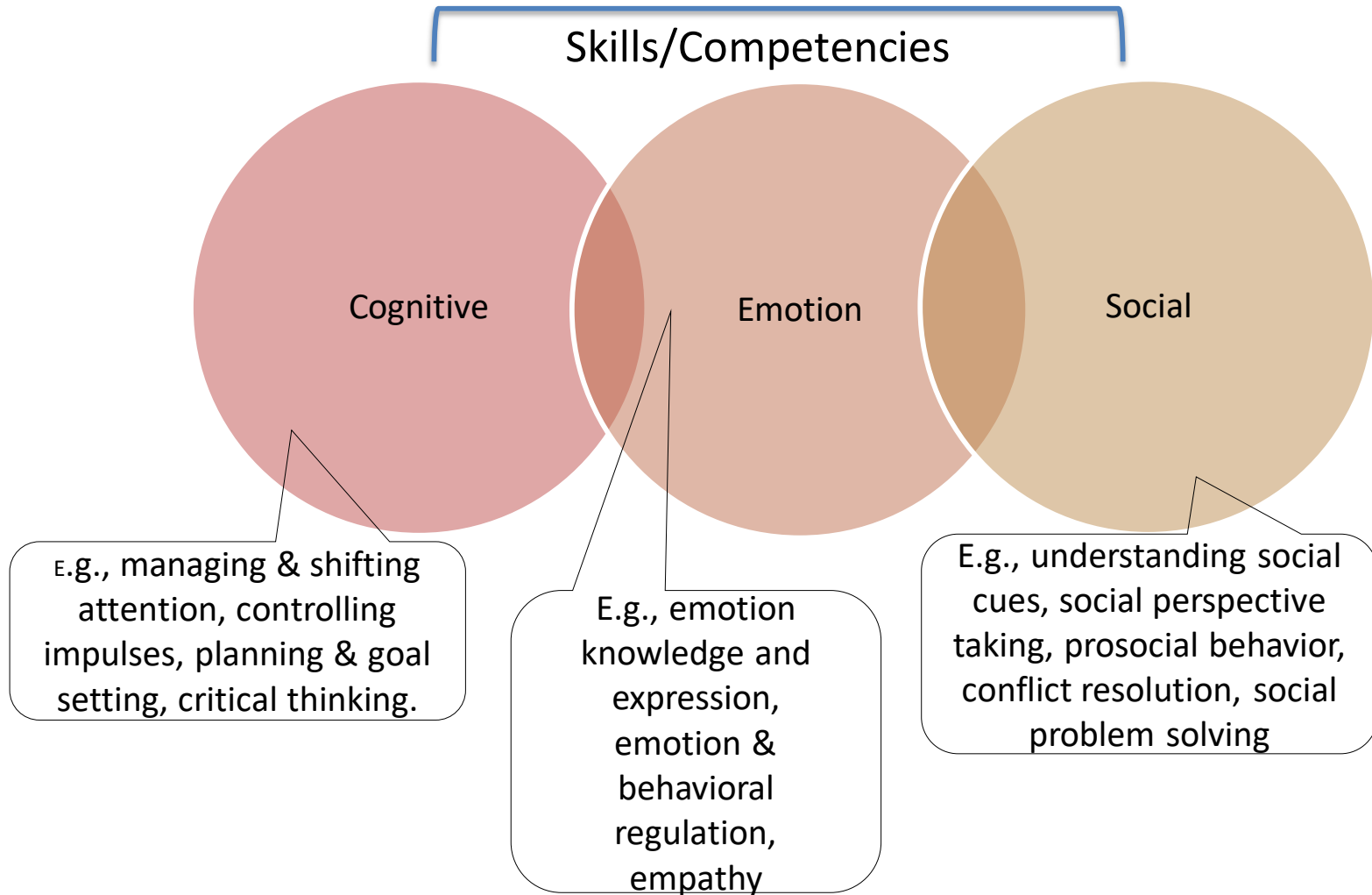
- Student engagement
- Positive attitudes
- A sense of belonging toward school
- Motivation
- Academic achievement

(Barber & Oson, 1997; Begin & Begin, 2009; Birch & Ladd, 1997, Christenson & Anderson, 2002; Connell Halpern-Felsher, Clifford, Crichlow, & Usinger, 1995; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Wentzel, 1997; Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998).

# Connect With Every Child

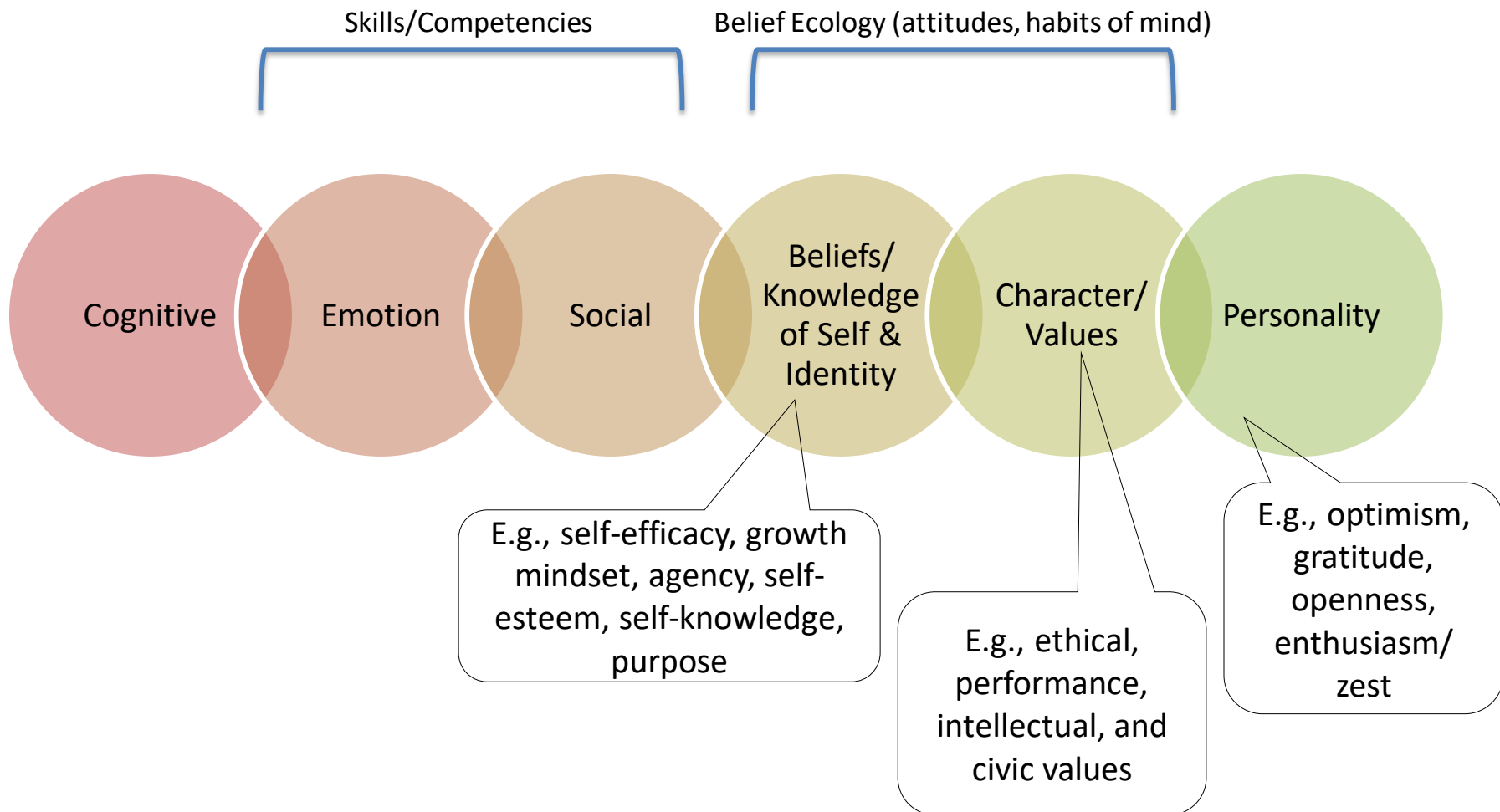
- Small schools/ Academies
- Well planned, organized, managed classrooms
- Positive and restorative discipline policies
- Overlapping and integrated social groups
- Strengths-Based and Additive Approaches– Not Subtractive Schooling
- Developmental Relationships
- Family Connections
- Classroom Meetings

# Social and Emotional Skills/Competencies





# Social and Emotional Dispositions

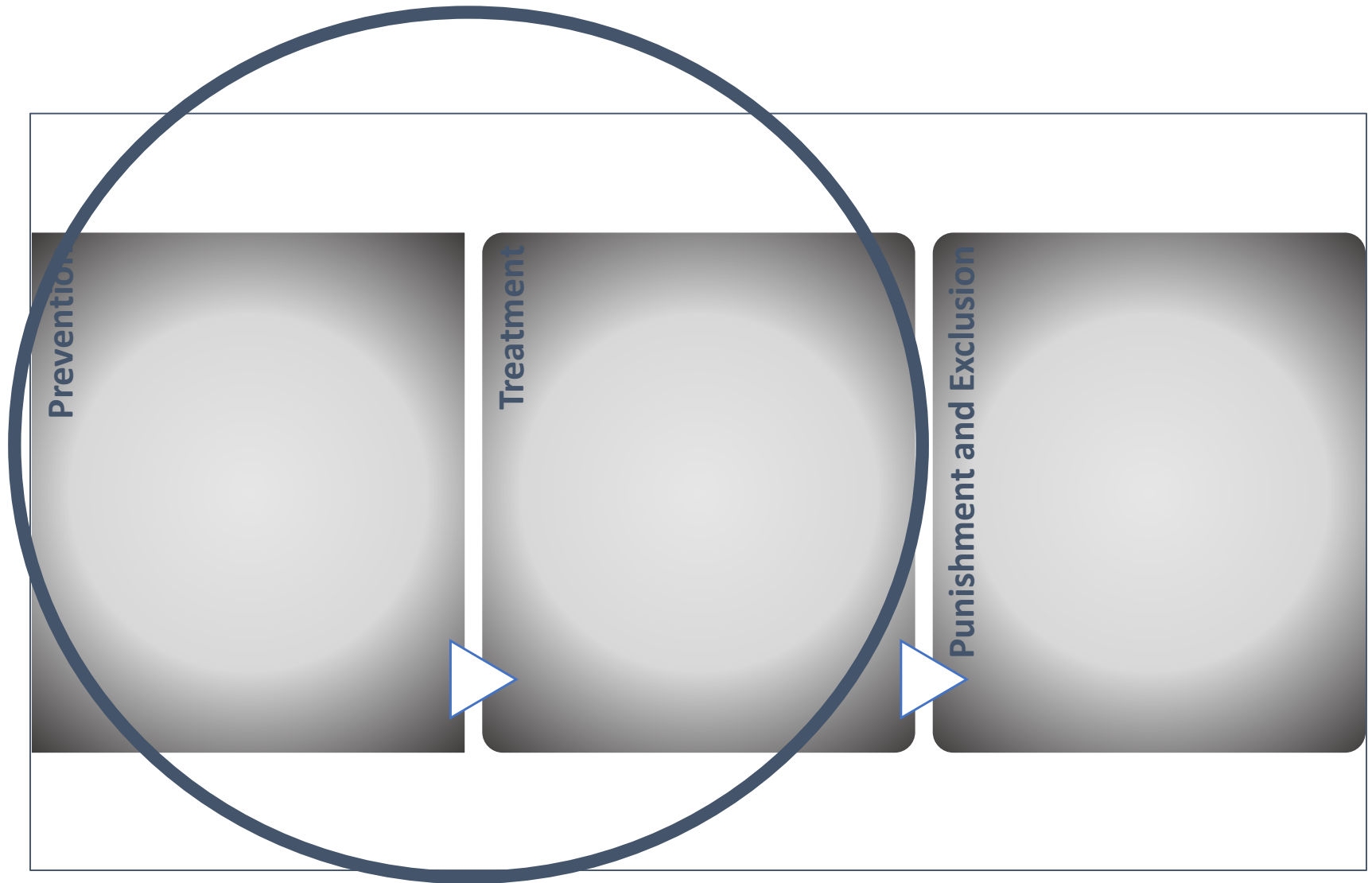


Adapted from slide by Stephanie Jones

Let's look deeper at an issue of disparities:



# Three approaches to discipline in schools



# What Research Says About Punitive Discipline

- Has detrimental effects on teacher-student relations
- Models undesirable problem solving
- Reduces motivation to maintain self-control
- Generates student anger and alienation
- Lowers Self-Efficacy
- Does not teach: Weakens academic achievement
- Has limited long term effect on behavior

# Why the Root Cause Analysis Guide

- Disparities are pervasive and hard to address
- The fact that they are not just based upon individual factors is reflected in their presence across and throughout multiple systems
  - Health & Mental Health
  - Child Welfare
  - Juvenile Justice & Adult Corrections
  - Education
    - Opportunities to Learn
    - Academic Outcomes
    - Discipline

# Why the Root Cause Analysis Guide

We often find it hard to:

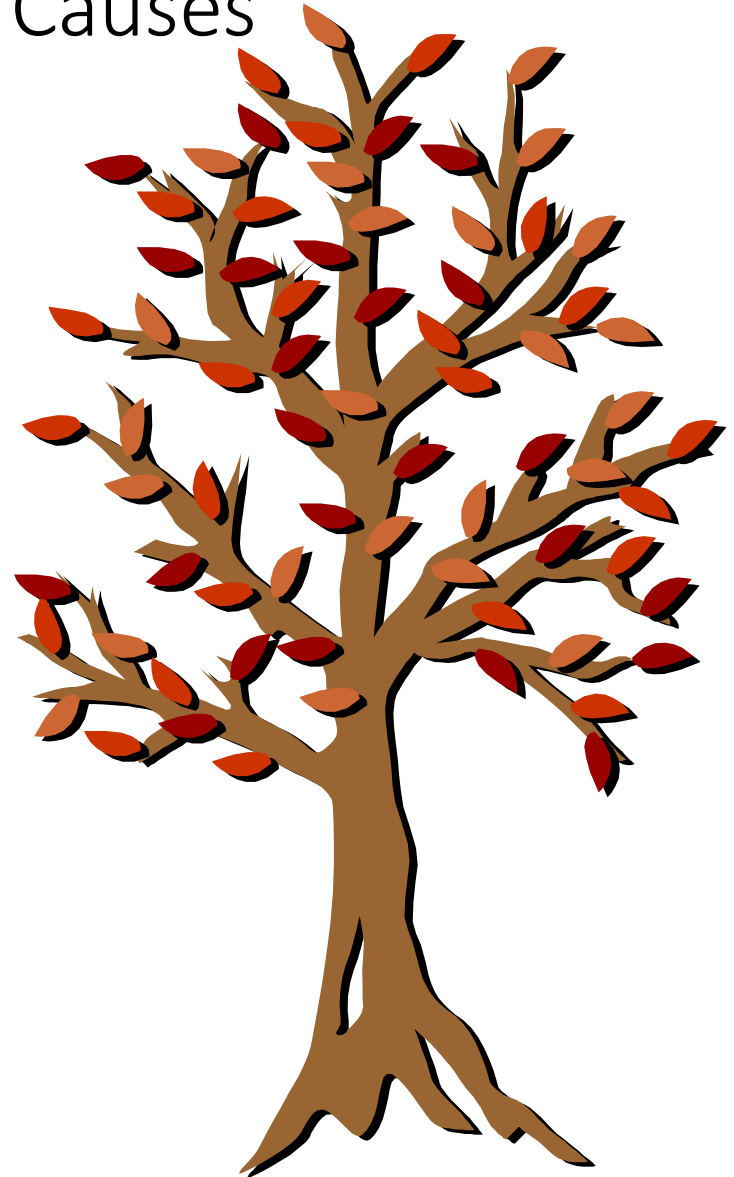
- Look beyond the symptoms
- Have honest, non-defensive and non-blaming conversations about issues that affect those who experience disparities directly, e.g.,
  - Race
  - Gender
  - Culture
  - Disability
- Transform these conversations into systemic changes

# Why the Root Cause Analysis Guide

- Hard problems like disparities are likely to be routinized, systemic, and embedded in what people take for granted
- We often silo interconnected matters, e.g.,
  - Academics
  - Experience of Climate and Conditions for Learning and Engagement
  - Student Support
  - Discipline
- Small decisions that don't stand out matter or accumulate
- We often employ “victim blaming approaches” rather than an ecological and transactional approaches

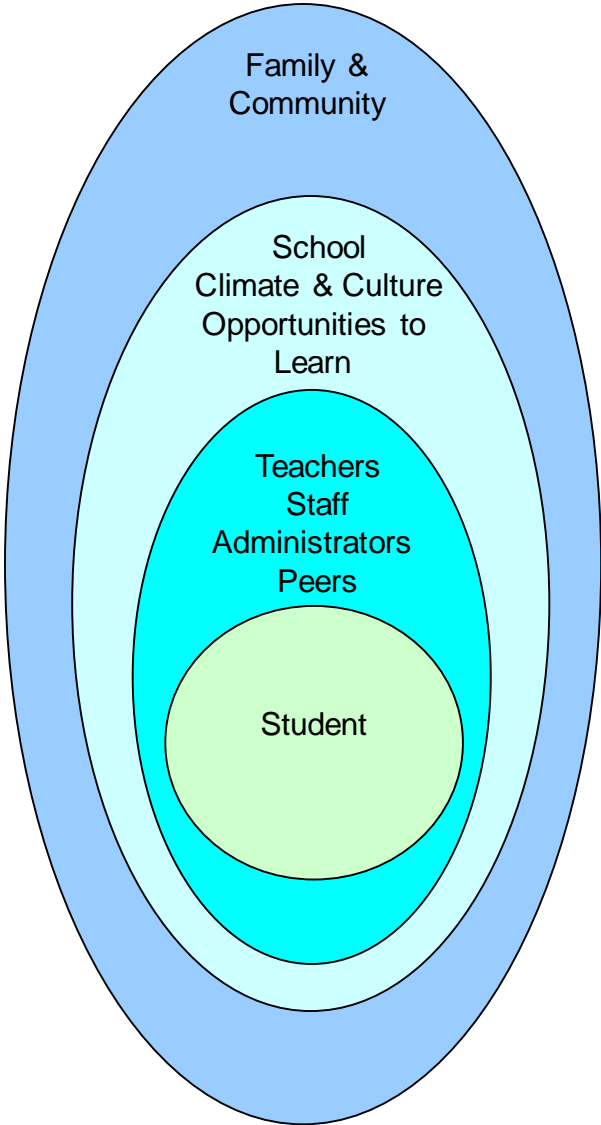
# Find and Address the Root Causes

- What's the problem?
- Why is it happening?
- What can be done to prevent it from happening again?





# Where to Look In for Causes, Needs and Strengths



# What Do We Know About Disparities: Group and Organization Factors

- Race Matters
- Culture Matters
- Ethnicity Matters
- Language Matters
- History Matters
- Poverty Matters
- Local Context Matters
- Families Matter
- Organizational Capacity Matters
- Planning and Continuous Improvement Matter

# What Do We Know About Disparities: Individual Factors

- Beliefs Matter
- Knowledge Matters
- Mindsets Matters
- Attitudes Matter
- Motivations Matter
- Biases Matter- explicit, implicit, attribution
- Leadership and Support Matter

# *Root Cause Analysis Toolkit for Addressing Discipline Disparities*

Action Planning Guide with  
Examples

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/addressing-root-causes-disparities-school-discipline>

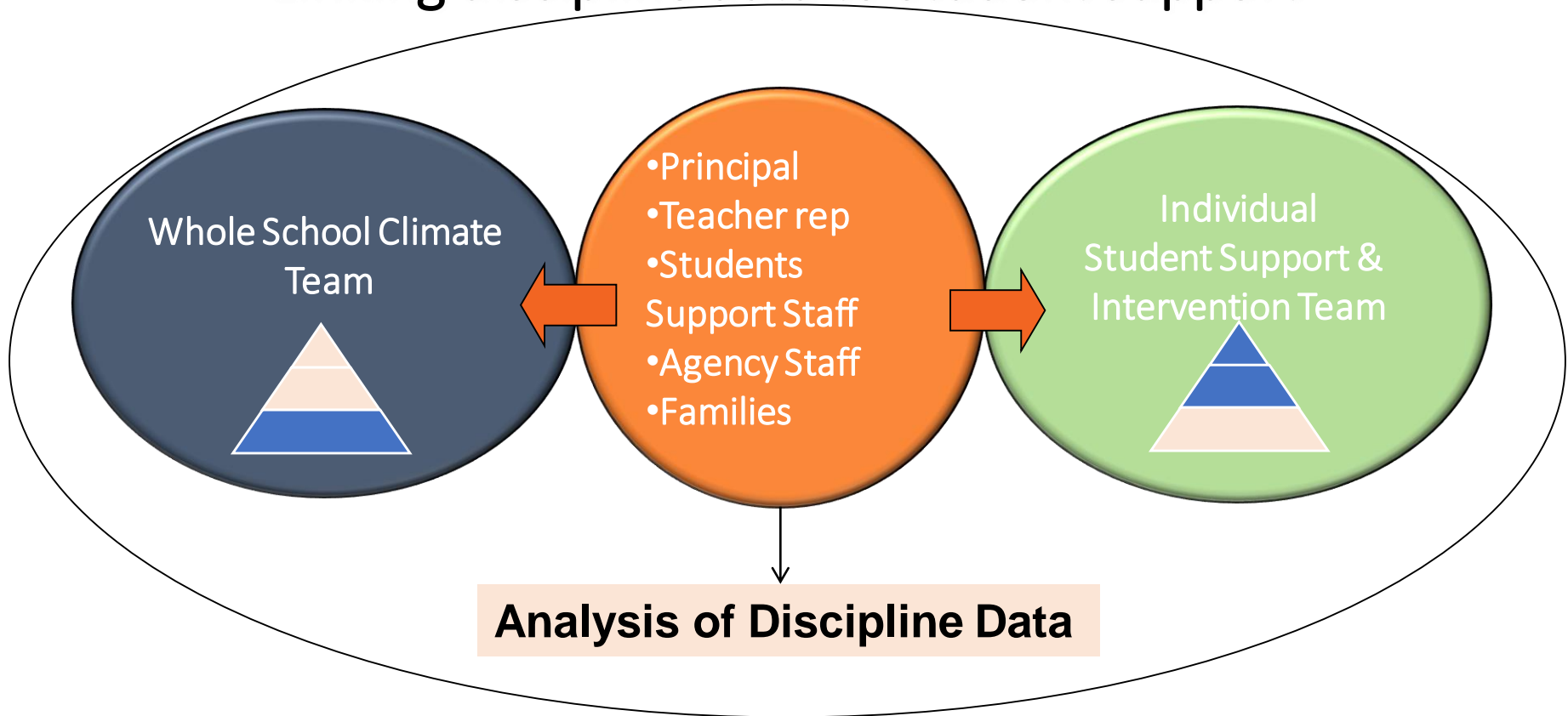
# Action Planning Guide

- **Audience:** school teams and district teams
- **Goal:** for teams to use a data informed process to examine disparities in school discipline and adjust policy and practices
- **Foundation for the Guide:**  
*School Climate and Discipline: A Guidance Package and the School Discipline Consensus Report*

## Three important areas:

- 1) Climate and prevention
- 2) Clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations and consequences
- 3) Measurable equity and continuous improvement

# Linking discipline data to student support



Core team members may serve on various interventions teams.  
Key is diversity and inclusion.

# STAGE 1: DIGGING INTO THE DATA

Question: Do disparities in school discipline exist in our school or district?

## Stage 1 Tasks:

- 1.1 Determine Data Needs
- 1.2 Designate Data Gatherers
- 1.3 Identify the Data You Already Collect
- 1.4 Determine Additional Data Needs
- 1.5 Ensure Data Privacy and Quality
- 1.6 Disaggregate Data
- 1.7 Analyze Data for Disparities
- 1.8 Develop Preliminary Findings and Identify Disparity Issues
- 1.9. Prepare to Present Your Findings

# Big Risk Questions

**How many students are subjected to disciplinary action?**

**To what extent are students in specific demographic groups experiencing exclusionary discipline?**

**Which student demographic groups are at the greatest risk for exclusionary disciplinary action?**

**What is the rationale behind disciplinary actions taken against students? Is disciplinary action taken uniformly regardless of the type of offense or does the severity of the action taken vary?**

How have exclusionary disciplinary practices influenced student outcomes? Is the school pushing students out or is the school or district maintaining responsibility for educating students despite the disciplinary actions taken against them?



Question: What are the root causes of disparities in school discipline?

## Stage 2 Tasks:

- 2.1 Generate Possible Causes and Explanations
- 2.2 Collect and Review Qualitative Data to Validate Your Conclusions  
Compendium of School Discipline Laws and Regulations
- 2.3 Conduct a Root Cause Analysis (diagnostic template)

# Root Causes of Disparities

## Range of Domains:

- Procedural matters (policy on tardiness)
- Practices (curriculum, instruction)
- School climate and culture (e.g. norms, beliefs, rituals)
- Systemic factors (e.g. class placements)
- Staff attitudes and beliefs

## Other Factors:

- Early school history lacked access to clubs, extracurricular activities or challenging curricula
- Capacity Issues (staff skills, tools, training, access to support)
- Intervention issues (limited and less supportive)
- Bias
- Policy Issues
- Attitude, knowledge or behavior

# STAGE 3: CREATING AN ACTION PLAN

Question: How will you address the root causes of disparities in school discipline?

## Stage 3 Tasks

- 3.1 Share Your Findings with the Community
- 3.2 Develop an Action Plan
- 3.3 Implement the Action Plan

**TIP: clearly define roles and responsibilities and clearly define a review/revise/action planning process....how to sustain this work....**

# Action Planning Guide Includes:

<b>Resource 1</b>	<b>Glossary</b>	This resource defines a selection of terms underlined in the guide and describes how they apply to addressing discipline disparities.
<b>Resource 2</b>	<b>Discipline Data Checklist</b>	This resource helps determine and track which data you collect, including identifying gaps to be filled.
<b>Resource 3</b>	<b>Data Mining Decision Tree Tip Sheet</b>	This resource offers graphical guidance on data collection decisions to be made.
<b>Resource 4</b>	<b>Disciplinary Disparities Risk Assessment Tool</b>	<p>This resource provides a series of Microsoft Excel-based worksheets with detailed instructions on what data to collect, how to collect them, how to enter them into the tool, how to answer key questions, and how to analyze your results. The tool autogenerates graphic representations of your results.</p> <p>This tool can be used as-is, modified, or serve as a model for designing a tool that can integrate with or import data from an existing school or district database or student management system. The tool also can be used in concert with existing data collection efforts, such as PBIS.</p>
<b>Resource 5</b>	<b>Supportive Data Resources</b>	This resource describes the type of data your school or district may already be collecting under federal grants and initiatives as well as behavioral strategies, such as PBIS or restorative practices, which can inform your disciplinary analysis.
<b>Resource 6</b>	<b>Action Plan Template</b>	This resource provides a blank template for you to gather important information as you work through each of the three stages, culminating in a complete plan.
<b>Resource 7</b>	<b>Root Cause Diagnostic Tree</b>	This resource provides a blank template for you to fill in issues, causes, root causes, and corrective actions as they are identified.

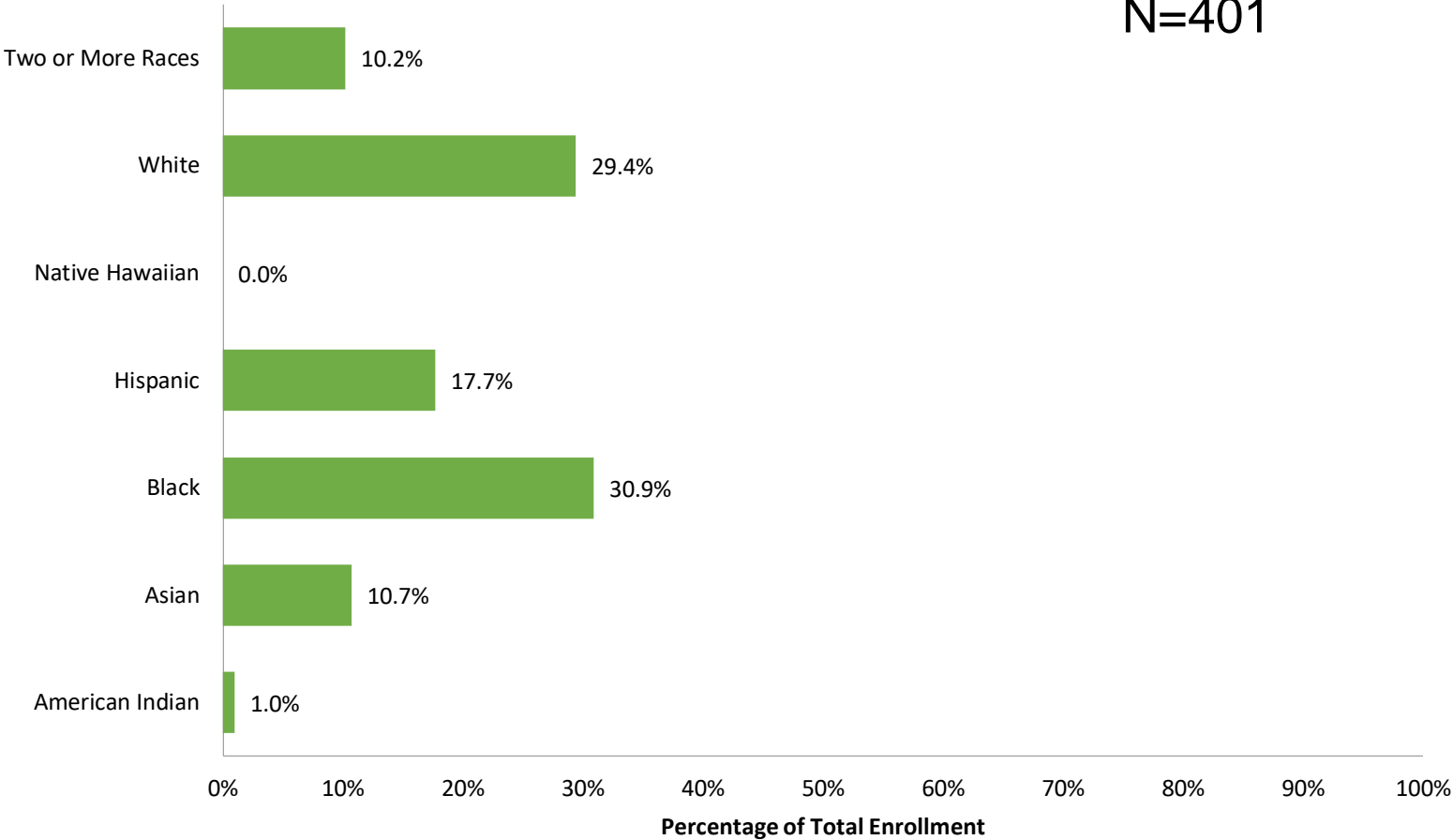
# Disciplinary Disparities Risk Assessment Tool: An Illustration

Let's examine three risk calculations (risk index; risk ratio; risk gap) to identify potential disparities

# School "X"

## Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

N=401



## Risk Index

- **Purpose**: The risk index indicates the underlying rate in which a demographic group (e.g., black students or black male students) receives a disciplinary action or a set of disciplinary actions (e.g., one or more suspensions).
- **Illustrative Question**: What is the likelihood that black students experience one or more suspensions?

# Risk Index (continued)

Middle  
School's  
In-School  
Suspensions:

$$\left( \frac{\text{Number of Black students (unduplicated count) subjected to one or more suspensions}}{\text{Total number of Black students}} \right)$$

$$\left( \frac{44}{124} \right) = 35.5\%$$

$$\left( \frac{\text{Number of White students (unduplicated student count) subjected to one or more suspensions}}{\text{Total number of White students}} \right)$$

$$\left( \frac{9}{118} \right) = 7.6\%$$



What percentage of students in each racial/ethnic group experience exclusionary discipline? Conditional formatting has been applied to assist you. **The darker the shading, the greater the percentage of students.**

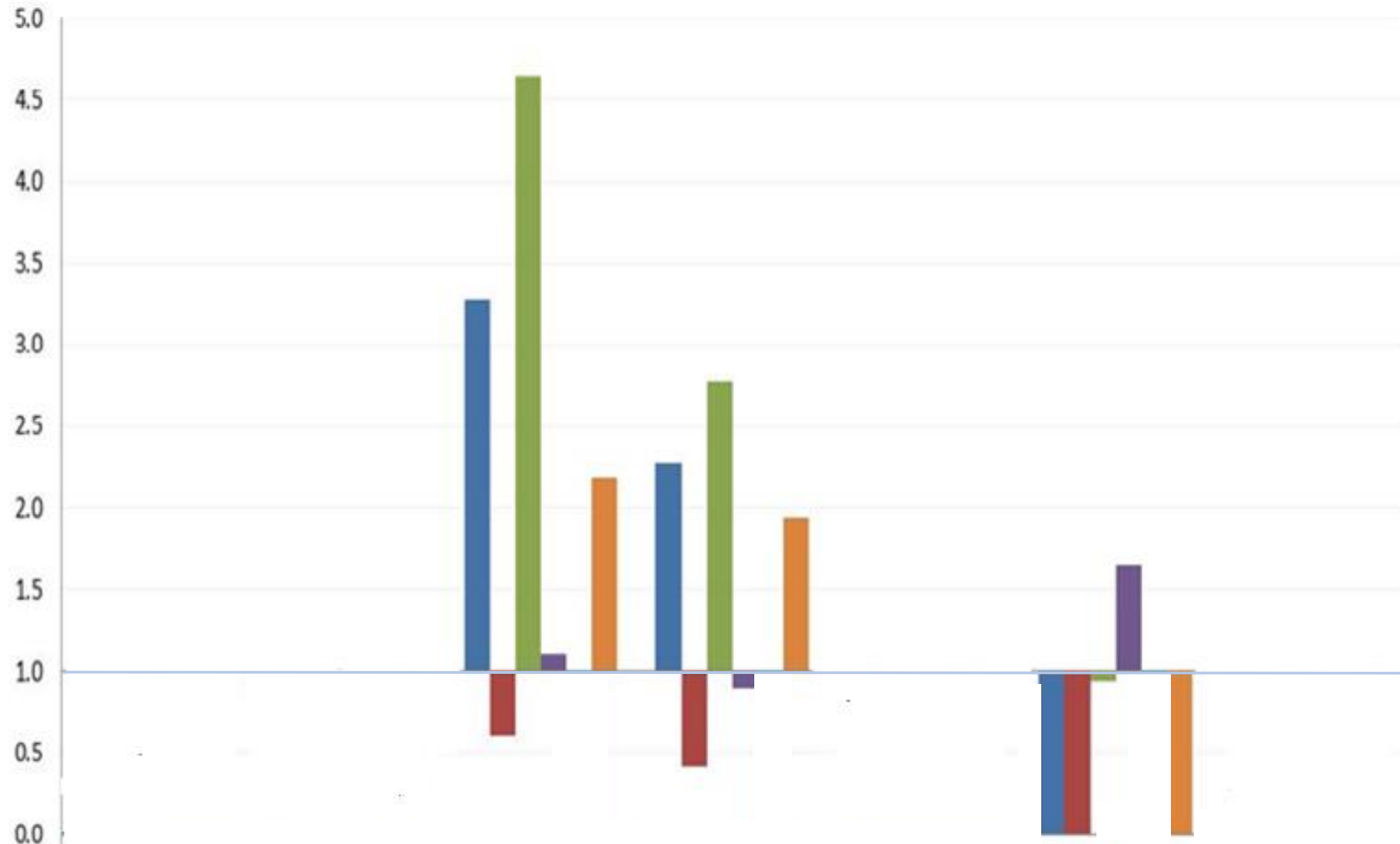
RISK INDEX BY RACE/ETHNICITY	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African-American	Hispanic/Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White
Expulsion with Educational Services	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	NA	0.0%	0.0%
Expulsion without Educational Services	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	NA	0.0%	0.0%
In-School Suspension	25.0%	4.7%	35.5%	8.5%	NA	17.1%	7.6%
Out-of-School Suspension	25.0%	4.7%	30.6%	9.9%	NA	22.0%	11.0%
Referral: Law Enforcement	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	NA	0.0%	0.0%
Referral: Office	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	1.4%	NA	0.0%	0.8%
School-Related Arrest	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	NA	0.0%	0.0%

## Risk Ratio

- **Purpose**: The risk ratio can be used to represent the likelihood of a specific or set of disciplinary action(s) (e.g., one or more suspensions) for a target demographic group (e.g., Black students, Hispanic male students) in relation to one or more peer groups.
- **Illustrative Question**: What is the likelihood that Black students will experience one or more suspensions compared to White students?

# RISK RATIO

## Racial/Ethnic Minority Students Relative to White Students

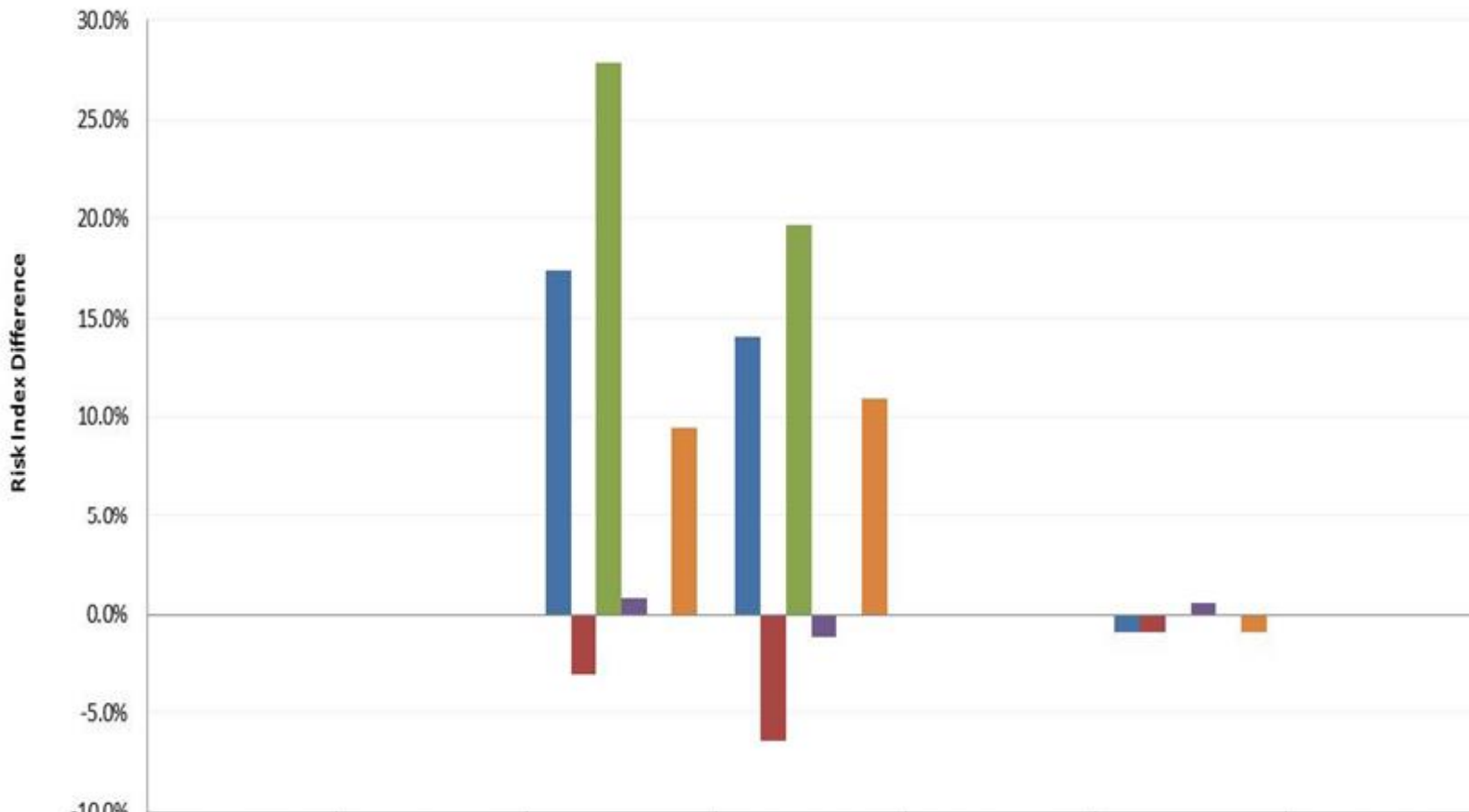


	Expulsion with Educational Services	Expulsion without Educational Services	In School suspension	Out of School Suspension	Referral: Law enforcement	Referral: Office	School-Related Arrest
American Indian or Alaska Native	NA	NA	3.3	2.3	NA	0.0	NA
Asian	NA	NA	0.6	0.4	NA	0.0	NA
Black or African-American	NA	NA	4.7	2.8	NA	1.0	NA
Hispanic/Latino	NA	NA	1.1	0.9	NA	1.7	NA
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Two or more races	NA	NA	2.2	1.9	NA	0.0	NA

## Risk Gap

- **Purpose**: The risk gap can be used to represent the difference in receiving a disciplinary action or a set of disciplinary actions (e.g., one or more suspensions) between a target group (e.g., Black students or Black male students) and a comparison group (e.g., White students or White male students).
- **Illustrative Question**: To what extent do Black and White students differ in the likelihood of receiving one or more suspensions?

# Risk Gap between Racial/Ethnic Minority Students and White Students



	Expulsion with Educational Services	Expulsion without Educational Services	In School suspension	Out of School Suspension	Referral: Law enforcement	Referral: Office	School-Related Arrest
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.0%	0.0%	17.4%	14.0%	0.0%	-0.8%	0.0%
Asian	0.0%	0.0%	-3.0%	-6.4%	0.0%	-0.8%	0.0%
Black or African-American	0.0%	0.0%	27.9%	19.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic/Latino	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	-1.2%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Two or more races	0.0%	0.0%	9.4%	10.9%	0.0%	-0.8%	0.0%

# Interpreting Discipline Disparity Data: Barriers to Reflective Conversations

# Barriers to Reflective Conversations

- Belief that discipline disparities are due to poor kids behaving badly
- Our history
- Fear of holding direct conversations about race and culture

Skiba, 2015

# What Do We Believe to Be the Cause of Disproportionality?

*“Is ethnicity the problem or is poverty the problem?”*

*--School Principal  
(Skiba et al., 2005)*



# Can Poverty Explain Disproportionality?

- Discipline and special education placement are related to SES
  - Poverty makes a *small and inconsistent* contribution, but...
- Effects of race remain after taking poverty into account

# Recommendations: “You Can’t Fix What You Don’t Talk About”

- Data Analysis: How extensive and where are the racial/ethnic disparities?
- Be Willing to Discuss Disparities and Their Causes Thoroughly and Reflectively
- Develop Interventions that Include Race-Conscious Analysis of Causes
- Monitor Intervention Outcomes with Disaggregated Data

# Facilitating Conversations about Race and Discipline

- Develop diverse teams at all levels
  - Include school leaders, board, staff, community
- Leaders can help avoid “clumsy race talk”:
  - Model a willingness to ask probing questions
  - Acknowledge discomfort and “mistakes”
  - Model commitment
  - Take advantage of “race teachable moments”
- Part of long and evolving process

# Resources

- Information on Disproportionality
  - Equity Project at Indiana University: [www.indiana.edu/~equity](http://www.indiana.edu/~equity)
  - Discipline Disparities Collaborative: [www.indiana.edu/~atlantic](http://www.indiana.edu/~atlantic)
- Books & Readings:
  - Beverly Tatum: “Can We Talk About Race?”
  - Mica Pollock: “Everyday Anti-Racism
  - Glenn Singleton: “Courageous Conversations”
  - Lisa Delpit “Other People’s Children”
  - Gloria Ladson-Billings: “The Dreamkeepers”
  - Others: Sonia Nieto, Tim Wise, Geneva Gay, Helen Fox, Pedro Noguera
- Websites
  - Kirwan Institute <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/>
  - Understanding Prejudice.Org: <http://www.understandingprejudice.org/readroom/reducing.htm>
  - White People Challenging Racism: [http://www.wpcr-boston.org/index\\_files/page0006.htmk](http://www.wpcr-boston.org/index_files/page0006.htmk)

Resources provide by Russ Skiba, 2015

# Discussion/ Questions and Answers

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