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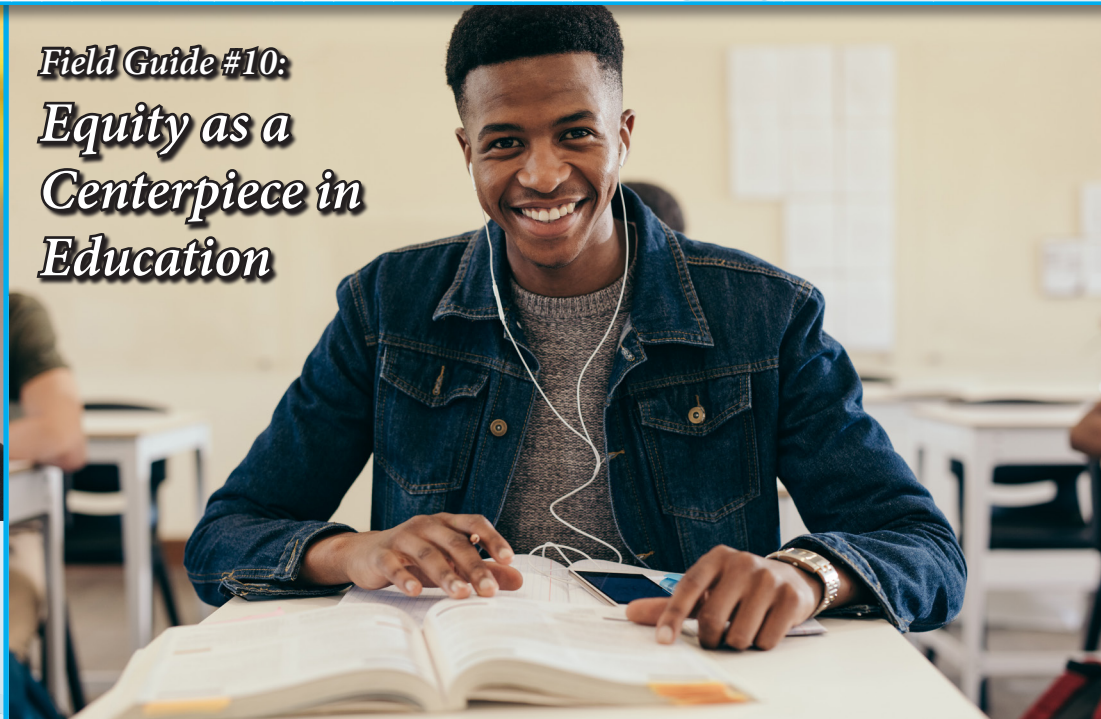
Field Guide #10:
Equity as a Centerpiece in Education

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School Re-orientation for Post-COVID Learning:

What to Know, Do, and Expect as In-Person Instruction Resumes

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Field Guide Overview

The California Association of African American Superintendents and Administrators (CAAASA) is committed to elevating the conversation about the depth to which adverse race-based experiences can interrupt and interfere with the education of students of color. It has been almost 70 years since the Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court decision outlawed segregation in public schools due to the harmful impact it had on African American students.

Fortunately, we are gradually moving away from the overt and covert forms of educational inequities. Unfortunately, the marginalization of black students has morphed into the less obvious structural and institutional practices still producing undesirable outcomes. By confronting adverse issues head-on, we might break away from the appalling unequal past to which we are chained, but doing so cannot be accomplished by pretending that the chains of racial discrimination never existed, and that every American has always been extended the same educational opportunity. It is our hope that we can disrupt the long history of social and educational inequalities by presenting a candid and accurate picture of our past, and more importantly, how we can improve future educational prospects for African American children. It has been said that the morals of a society can be measured by how it treats those who are the least powerful. The most powerless members of our society have historically been children of color, who have a desire to succeed academically as much as any other group. Historically, interlocking systems of inequities have presented barriers to their success in school.

Research tells us that any pro-diversity initiative has a greater chance of effectiveness when it is targeted to a specific subset of the population. While the focus of our equity initiative is educators, students of color will enjoy the academic benefits of being treated with equity in the mind of all educators.

Field Guide Overview

Description and purpose:

The questions that will be addressed in this Field Guide include the following:

- What have we learned about the long-term impact of an unequal distribution of educational opportunities?

- Since the pandemic, what were some of the lessons we learned about inequalities that can be addressed immediately?

- How can we apply those lessons learned in ways that will improve the prospects of academic success for African American students and other students of color in the future?

- What obstacles still need to be removed in order to provide greater access and equity for BIPOC - Black Indigenous People of Color - students?

Introduction to Field Guide #10

Dr. L.K. **Monroe**
Superintendent
Alameda County Office of Education

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- What changes can be made in our educational delivery that will lead to higher achievement for African American students and other students of color?

Learning objectives:

Equity in education must not be conflated with educational equality, since equality translates into providing each student with identical resources regardless of what each student needs. Educational equity is defined as creating an educational system that gives each child what he/she needs to reach grade level competence and to perform at an acceptable achievement level (as defined by school district and state standards).

The professional learning objectives embedded in this Field Guide are designed to help educators do the following:

- Understand that educational inequities have a long historical past in the US, which continues to negatively impact students of color today.

- Be able to articulate the myriad effects (social, economic, psychological, etc.) on individuals that result from inequities and how they also impact the greater society.

- Understand how internal and external members of the school community can play a role in eliminating some of the historical barriers to quality education for BIPOC students.

- Be able to lead (or actively participate in) a school wide conversation on the lingering effects of inequality in education.

- Assess the ways in which each of us can contribute to or reduce the common inequities found in educational practice, and the ways in which we can reduce the same by completing the "Educator's Equity Self-Evaluation" that can be found near the end of this Field Guide on pages 29 to 33.

Components:

The Equity as a Centerpiece in Our Schools Field Guide has been developed around the following essential components:

a. The verbatim "Voices" -- excerpts from interviews with students, parents, and administrators. The focus will be on their personal experiences inside their local educational systems, and how those institutions address the needs of BIPOC students.

b. Lessons learned – analyzing what has worked well in promoting equality in education for African American students, what did not work well, and how we can apply those lessons learned for a more promising future for our students in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic.

c. Each of the above professional learning experiences will be accompanied by:

- Questions and written responses to be completed independently or in small groups (with opportunities to share responses with colleagues).

- "Reflections and Applications" that are designed to provoke reflections on the Field Guide contents, and thoughts on how to devise multiple strategies for applying the content to their school, school district, educational program, and/or daily work.

d. Videotaped excerpts from an "Advancing Equity in an Era of Crisis" webinar conducted by a distinguished California educational leader.

e. Recommendations of additional print and video resources that can be useful tools to help African American students and students from other communities of color in their pursuit of educational equality.

f. A survey tool to evaluate Field Guide #10.

The Why

Our goal: A "Color Brave" educational environment for all students

Mellody Hobson, President of Aerial Investments, declared, "It's time for us to be comfortable with the uncomfortable conversation about race. If we truly believe in equal rights and equal opportunity in America, we need to have real conversations about this issue. We can't be colorblind; we have to be color brave." In this Field Guide, we will delve into the uneasy conversation about our troubled history of unequal opportunities in American education. A great degree of our discomfort comes from the fact that, while most Americans subscribe to the notion of equality, greater numbers have vigilantly fought against it. Moreover, the latter worked to create laws, institutions, and structures with perpetual race-driven inequality built in.

We recognize that our descriptions of "white," and "white privilege" can provoke defensiveness or resistance from some members of the dominant culture. However, there is no totalizing assumption made that every white person supports inequity. Instead, we assume quite the contrary, particularly educators. Regardless of color, most people are advocates of fairness and equity. Our goal is to help make the easy-to-implement practices recommended in this Field Guide operational in every school community.

The inherent inequities

During the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and '60s, advocates of equal rights demanded that the guarantees of equality penned into the U.S. Constitution be finally granted to the descendants of enslaved Americans. The philosophical position of the founding fathers was that no American should be afforded any privileges of citizenship that were more generous than another citizen and certainly no less than any other. Every man had an equal right to vote, and no vote counted more than another. Fifty years later, educators and parents of color pursued an analogous undertaking, declaring that the enduring vestiges of racial discrimination and segregation in education had no place in education where all children were seen as equal.

By the mid-20th century, it was not uncommon for the per-pupil spending for white schools to be 5-11 times greater than it was for schools serving black students. Consequently, it was hardly surprising to most educational researchers and social scientists that African American student achievement was typically lower than that of white students. Regrettably, the end results were used to justify racist notions of intelligence as well as the continued disinvestment in black education.

In the 1970s and '80s, when black students were integrated into previously all-white schools, they typically performed at higher achievement levels than their counterparts who remained in disadvantaged predominantly black schools, where overcoming the systemic disparities was difficult and only occurred with impressive determination. Consequently, the black-white IQ gap fell by 25% be-tween 1970 and 2000, and the difference in reading scores for 17-year-olds shrank by 62% between 1971 in 1988. White students were no longer viewed as members of an academically-inclined elite class, but merely as students who confirmed that a greater investment in educational resources yielded correspondingly higher student achievement. When comparable investments were made in black students, they excelled as well. The burden of proof that all children can learn regardless of color, if given an equal opportunity, made itself obvious.

Research shows that diverse classrooms improve learning outcomes for every student. When socioeconomic factors are controlled, schools that are more diverse, have no difference in test scores than schools that are less diverse. Today, we recognize that schools with the smallest achievement gaps between demographic groups typically:

(1) distribute educational resources more democratically, and

(2) have the highest overall test scores.

American school systems were intentionally structured with significant inequities. Students were sorted out by skin color, and educational resources were skewed to enhance the probability of academic success for white schools, thereby intensifying educational, social, and economic inequalities with each generation of black and white Americans. Some schools became "sites of black suffering," as described by Michael Dumas of New York University. Educators today can either disrupt or exacerbate inequalities. They can reduce the impact that those inequities have on BIPOC students by committing themselves to classrooms where equity is a centerpiece.

From its inception, America has been disingenuous at best when it came to translating its most famous mottos into a reality for African Americans. The treasured beliefs freedom and equality drew

a color line and unconscionably excluded African-Americans for centuries. Not only was freedom denied to nearly all black Americans, conversations or printed materials advocating such was not only frowned upon but was made illegal and punishable by fines and incarceration. Consequently, conversations about equity today still generate discomfort. One has to ask, "Why?"

Operational Definitions

Any conversation about access and equity must begin with common language. Below are operational definitions for the descriptions that follow.

- **Diversity** = counting the number of individuals who have been hired by a school, school district, or organization who fall into designated categories based on personal traits and physical characteristics. We "check the boxes" based on race, gender, national origin, first language, etc. to determine if we have statistically met our diversity goals. There is danger in falling into a false sense of security from reaching desired diversity statistics without establishing inclusion strategies as well.

- **Equality** = providing equal opportunities for all groups, including inside educational settings where all

  ➢ students receive identical instructional materials regardless of ability or need,

  ➢ they are required to listen to the same lecture and digest information whether they understand English well or not,

  ➢ they received the same assignments with the same requirements,

  ➢ and finally, their mastery of academic content is measured with the same assessment instrument, on the same day, regardless of their diverse (racial, socioeconomic, linguistic, ability, and cultural) backgrounds.

  While equity is often our preferred goal to effectively address individual needs, there are occasions when equality is an acceptable goal for students (example: social justice).

- **Inclusion** = making sure that the needs, values, and input from BIPOC people in a classroom, school, school district, or organization count (you matter, and you are respectfully received) within the organization. Meeting numerical racial quotas does not equate with the inclusion of those individuals reflected in the statistics. Most importantly, inclusion is most notably about feeling a recognized and valued member of a school or workplace community.

- **Equity** = is operating within a space where we acknowledge that not everyone enjoys the same advantages today, they may not have been the recipient of advantages in the past, nor do they approach learning in the classroom with the same background knowledge. Different students learn better from different instructional approaches. Equality in the classroom does not deliver equity to its students until we acknowledge student differences that come by way of background or that others have not. (In a frequently used example, "equality" means everyone receives the same sized shoe; whereas under "equity" everyone is fitted with shoes that match their foot size.) Equity means mobilizing the right combination of resources that address the needs of each student.

Our pursuit of "freedom and equality"

Theologian Reinhold Niebuhr said, "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary." The hallmarks of American democracy are grounded in the notions of freedom and equality. The four most prominent altruistic phrases ("catch phrases") describing the promise that America makes to its citizens include the following:

- "All men are created equal."

- "America is a melting pot."

- We live in the "land of the free, and the home of the brave."

- America delivers "…liberty and justice for all."

One of the countless contributions made by Thomas Jefferson during the writing of the Declaration of Independence during the Constitutional Convention in the late 1780s was, "All men are created equal." A man of monumental contradictions, Jefferson simultaneously enslaved well over 600 people during his lifetime (more than any other US president). Moreover, genetic evidence today indicates that Jefferson fathered at least six children by Sally Hemmings, a woman who he held in enslavement for her entire life. Jefferson's expansive ideas of freedom, equality, and liberty did not stretch enough to open the doors to freedom for African Americans.

The metaphorical phrase, "America is a melting pot," comes from to the playwright Israel Zangwill. The 1918 premiere of his play "The Melting Pot" contained the noble message that descendants of any country would be embraced as US citizens upon arrival to America. One's new "American" identity would override his nation of origin and each immigrant group would be fused into the wider American culture, where one's birthplace (or station at birth) would become irrelevant. Zangwill's optimistic description became a popular expression describing the United States as a unique land where the constant influx of heterogeneous immigrants with divergent nationalities, ethnicities, and cultures would all "melt together." They would blend themselves into an intimate homogeneous society where everyone was to be fully integrated with all others. However, an unspoken feature of the melting pot was that only Europeans were allowed to melt into the final mixture.

Francis Scott Key authored the famous phrase, "…the land of the free and the home of the brave." He wrote those words in 1814, but they became prominent in 1931 as part of the "Star-Spangled Banner", the national anthem. Key made it clear that he was no friend of African Americans and

advocated that Blacks be re-colonized in Africa since they were, "a distinct and inferior race of people." As with Jefferson, the glaring contradictions of his words juxtaposed to his allegedly deep-seated beliefs of inequality were not apparent to Key.

In 1892, minister Francis Bellamy published the Pledge of Allegiance in *The Youth's Companion.* In its original form, the pledge read: "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." The length of the pledge was expanded twice and the final 1954 edition, which added "under God" in response to Cold War communism, is the version recited in public schools today. (During the Cold War, segregationists frequently linked the Civil Rights movement with the rise of communism around the world). Although "With liberty and justice for all" are powerful words often attributed to our Founding Fathers, Bellamy's words were written over 100 years after our nation's founding. Bellamy's writing may not have been completely original, and possibly inspired by Lincoln's appeal to our better angels when he wrote, "With malice towards none, with charity for all," following the Civil War. Unfortunately, the words of neither Bellamy nor Lincoln served as a beacon lighting the pathway to justice for Americans of all colors. Even our most influential leaders permitted unnecessary racial animus to dictate their conduct more than the democratic principles they were purported to hold so dearly.

The Pledge of Allegiance is a solemn oath taken with one hand placed over the heart as a promise to pursue the goals expressed in the pledge. In some areas of the country during the 1960s, black students refused to recite the pledge because a segregated America was making no effort to deliver on the promise of "liberty and justice for all." Rather than reversing the ethically efficient practices that sponsored the students' protests, white America instead chose to expel the black students from school, unaware that such harsh penalties gave further evidence to the hypocrisy that prompted the students' nonviolent protests.

Each of these legendary phrases highlighted the advantages of democracy, although all were undermined by the subsequent practices of racism.

Nonetheless, our K–12 curriculum takes great pride in echoing these noble messages of equality at all opportune moments. However, the utopian vision of equality, full integration, and assimilation into the American fabric was elusive to African Americans beginning with the creation of the new nation in waning years of the 18th century. Whites were adamant about keeping the races (including Native Americans) separate and unequal with laws and practices that became infused into the broader American culture, most conspicuously in the "Southern way of life."

Permanently placing African Americans in deferential positions in all social, legal, political, and economic matters came by way of legislation and custom. For whites, there was a measure of safety and security through adherence to race-based laws. Any violation placed an individual's livelihood, reputation, family, or life in jeopardy. A wide variety of race-based practices shaped American law, politics, and society.

Historical explanations for our high "racial consciousness"

We often hear declarations that, "Other racial groups came to America, they assimilated, and improved their lot with each generation. Many of them came here decades or even centuries after black people did, so why haven't African Americans done what every other group did to assimilate and 'make it' in America?" African Americans are often confronted with this and similar ill-informed questions that, in reality, are callous accusations disguised as innocuous questions. The subject is broached exclusively to imply that the status nonwhites today can correlated to their lack of effort, ambition, and determination, renders African Americans and other people of color solely responsible for their current circumstances. An understanding of historical events and their consequences leads one to quite a different set of conclusions.

At the 2014 Missouri AFL-CIO convention, President's Richard Trumka said, "Racism is part of our inheritance as Americans. Every city, every state and every region of this country has its own deep history with racism." Some Americans today would prefer that a revisionist more sanitized history be taught in our schools, with all incidences of racism excised from the pages of all textbooks. An honest history of America acknowledges that the tentacles of racism reached into every facet of life, explaining how we arrived at where we are today. Anything less is a self-destructive academic pretense.

Between Reconstruction and the civil rights movement, state constitutions, state laws, county regulations, and city ordinances were implemented to elevate the status of whites and subjugate people of color. Many states passed laws prohibiting businesses and public institutions from allowing their black-and-white clientele to intermingle in any manner, regardless of how minor their physical contact might be.

Every aspect of life including employment, travel and transportation, voting, political parties, dating/marriage, health, churches, intergenerational wealth, education, courtroom proceedings, banking, property ownership, housing, loans, life insurance, home insurance, criminal justice, literature, media, military service, science (including the pseudo-scientific theories of racial hierarchies), lunch counters, water fountains, restaurants, food service, waiting rooms, bathroom facilities, entertainment, sports, recreation, public parks, public gathering places, swimming pools, ticket booths, building entrances, elevators, theater seating, amusement park cashier windows, libraries, hospitals, nursing, residential homes for the elderly, asylums, barbershops, textbooks, phone booths, cemeteries, and of course, public schools, were governed by race and enforced by law. These forms of racial discrimination were defined and administered by legal entities and governmental offices, which continuously gave oxygen to all forms of racist practices.

From its founding, America has made it clear that equality was not wholly a national goal to which white America was fully committed. Blending African Americans in the "melting pot" in practice was prohibited by local, state, and national obstacles (typically ordinances, regulations, restrictions, and laws that were strictly enforced) until the end of the 20th century. From time immemorial, African-Americans subscribed to an over reliance upon whites' faithfulness to the political philosophy and religious beliefs that they publicly expressed.

Different forms of racism became intertwined in some measure through the following laws, which not only dictated how individuals lived their lives, but they also shed additional light on the roots of today's profound social, economic, and educational inequalities:

- "It shall be unlawful to conduct a restaurant or other place for the serving of food in the city, at which white and colored people are served in the same room, unless such white and colored persons are effectually separated by a solid partition extending from the floor upward to a distance of seven feet or higher, and unless a separate entrance from the street is provided for each compartment." (The state of Alabama)

- "No persons, firms, or corporations, who or which furnish meals to passengers at station restaurants or station eating houses, in times limited by common carriers of said passengers, shall furnish said meals to white and colored passengers in the same room, or at the same table, or at the same counter." (The state of South Carolina)

- Transportation companies are required to establish "separate waiting rooms at all stations for the white and colored races." (The state of North Carolina)

- Black barbers are not permitted to cut the hair of white women or girls. (The state of Georgia)

- "The Conservation Commission shall have the right to make segregation of the white and colored races as to the exercise of rights of fishing, boating and bathing." (The state of Oklahoma)

- It is unlawful for Blacks "to frequent any park owned or maintained by the city for the benefit of white people" and vice versa. (The state of Georgia)

- "Any white person of such county may use the county free library under the rules and regulations prescribed by the commissioner's court and may be entitled to all the privileges thereof. Said court shall make proper provision for the negroes of said county to be served through a separate branch or branches of the county free library, which shall be administered by [a] custodian of the negro race under the supervision of the county librarian." (The state of Texas)

- There will be "two kinds of schools." Those exclusively for white children and "separate schools for colored children." (The state of Texas)

- "It shall be unlawful for any colored child to attend any white school, or any white child to attend a colored school." (The state of Missouri)

- "There shall be maintained by the governing authorities of every hospital maintained by the state for treatment of white and colored patients separate entrances for white and colored patients and visitors, and such entrances shall be used by the race only for which they are prepared." (The state of Mississippi)

- "It shall be unlawful for a Negro and white person to play together for the company with each other at any game of pool or billiards." (The state of Alabama)

- "Any person...who shall rent any part of any such building to a negro person or a negro family when such building is already in whole or in part in occupancy by a white person or white family, or vice versa when the building is in occupancy by a negro person or negro family, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not less than twenty-five ($25.00) nor more than one hundred ($100.00) dollars or be imprisoned not less than 10, or more than 60 days, or both such fine and imprisonment in the discretion of the court." (The state of Louisiana)

- "It shall be unlawful for any amateur white baseball team to play baseball on any vacant lot or baseball diamond within two blocks of a playground devoted to the Negro race, and it shall be unlawful for any amateur colored baseball team to play baseball in any vacant lot or baseball diamond within two blocks of any playground devoted to the white race." (The State of Georgia)

- "No person or corporation shall require any white female nurse to nurse in wards or rooms in hospitals, either public or private, in which negro men are placed." (The State of Alabama)

- "Any instructor who shall teach in any school, college or institution where members of the white and colored race are received and enrolled as pupils for instruction shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof, shall be fined in any sum not less than ten dollars ($10.00) nor more than fifty dollars ($50.00) for each offense." (The State of Oklahoma)

- Laws against intermarriage carried the harshest penalties including lynching. Many states (both North and South) considered interracial marriages (with "Negroes, mulattos, Mongolians, or Malaya") unlawful and any marriage certificate given would be considered null and void.

- "Any person who shall be guilty of printing, publishing or circulating printed, typewritten or written matter urging or presenting for public acceptance or general information arguments or suggestions in favor of socially equality or of intermarriage between whites and Negroes, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine not exceeding $500 or imprisonment not exceeding six months or both." (The state of Mississippi).

  Throughout the United States, there were both written and unwritten laws (customs) against advocating or supporting the socially equality of African Americans and other people of color. While many states would not allow themselves to suffer the self-generated humiliation of being labeled "racist" by placing such laws on the books, their practices yielded the desired results.

- In Georgia, African Americans were given a different Bible from whites to swear on during court proceedings, and in many states, First-class train tickets could only be purchased by white passengers.

- Law enforcement officers and the lopsided laws they enforced, gave whites permission to assault the bodies, lives, dignity, and security of African Americans overtly. In some cities, there were prohibitions against African Americans being present within the city limits after sundown (the "Sundown laws"). Blatant forms of racism were common from the statehouse to the dustiest streets of America.

- Not only was it illegal for African Americans to compete against whites in sports, competing on the economic front could be more hazardous. In many states both North and South, there were laws prohibiting African American businesses from competing with white businesses. One of the most horrendous of such incidents occurred in Memphis, TN in 1892, where two black men opened "The People's Grocery" store. The owners and their black employees were lynched by a white mob for their entrepreneurial success. Throughout the country, assaults on successful black businesses took place, one of the most notable was Tulsa, Oklahoma's "Black Wall Street" massacre in 1921.

These Jim Crow laws existed well into the 1970s ensuring that the lived experiences of black and white Americans were seldom shared. There is no "scale of justice" large enough to weigh the total damage of what occurred to people of color for three centuries in America.

It should also be noted that many southern school districts did not provide secondary (beyond the eighth grade) educational opportunities for African American students, which had not only profound educational implications, but economic and psychological consequences as well. While "whiteness" came with no restrictions, for black lives, color always mattered, and African Americans were required to be mindful of the color boundaries at all times. Minor racial infractions were not immune from fatal outcomes.

We are still in the early stages of a post-apartheid America where the social barriers of segregation were not only legally protected by the local, state, and federal governments, but were tightly woven into nearly every aspect of life for people of color. These laws made for institutional inequities that produced disparate outcomes which are still affecting African Americans today. Some people

encountered monumental obstacles that interfered with their advancement, while others enjoyed personal and social circumstances that made it substantially easier for them to excel.

Thus, we say that inequity is historical, structural, institutionalized in ways that made it difficult to challenge and change. Intertwined injustices often reinforce and overlap with one another. In a 2019 article published in the Journal of professional nursing authors Waite and Nardi wrote, "The plague of racism is insidious, entering into our minds as smoothly and quietly and invisibly as floating airborne microbes enter into our bodies to find lifelong purchase in our bloodstreams." Such conditions feed an atmosphere of mutual mistrust making social cohesion elusive.

It was not until the 1970s that the myriad laws and institutional regulations promoting and protecting (1) white advantages, (2) white supremacy, and (3) the appalling oppression of people of color were ruled unconstitutional and/or unenforceable. Although we should celebrate these hard-won successes, the question must be asked, "Why was there such an intense resistance to simple justice recognizing that it is not a zero-sum game?" Justice for all has no losers.

Over the past two centuries, American education did not transpire inside a protective bubble, nor was it conducted in a safe space disconnected from the negative pressures of the dominant society influenced heavily by racism. Instead, the factors impacting black educational achievement include but are not limited to those presented below in Chart #1 - The Barriers to Educational Success.

The Barriers to Educational Success

Poverty

Racial superiority
Racial violence (e.g., KKK)
Implicit bias
Explicit bias
Jim Crow Laws
Segregated schools
Housing/Redlining
Employment discrimination
Income disparities
The Wealth Gap
Black Lives Matter

Systemic racism
Historical racism
Institutional racism
Criminal Justice
Individual prejudice
Xenophobia
Pseudo-science (e.g., Eugenics and "Intelligence" Tests)
Voter suppression & electoral power
Health disparities
White privilege

Intersectionality

African American author James Baldwin said, "History, as nearly no one seems to know, is not merely something to be read. And it does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do." When the laws by which Americans have lived for decades are suddenly nixed, our related cultural beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes do not change instantly. Today's racial disparities have their origin in structures, institutions, practices, and behaviors of an American caste system governing nearly all interracial interactions. For progress to be made, the practices must all be retired. It must be remembered that by ignoring inequities, disparities, and racism and merely hoping they will go away gives them the oxygen

they need to thrive. Complicity has given protection to racial inequities since the founding of our country. Silence and inaction are not neutral. Quiet complicity allowed brazen forms of institutional and systemic racism to thrive unchecked for centuries and has been the most toxic form of silence affecting African Americans. Silent racism has often led to disruptive and even deadly consequences. In the 1970s, a popular phrase was, "You're part of the problem, or part of the solution." Educators can play a prominent role in solving the problem of cyclical racial disparities.

The What

Meritocracy, supremacy, and stereotyping

Throughout American history, it was not uncommon to blatantly erect obvious barriers to black success to ensure the perception of white superiority. Such was the case of "The Golden Thirteen," who were thirteen African American enlisted men who became the first African American commissioned and warrant officers in the U.S. Navy.

From 1893 until World War I, African Americans could only enlist in the Navy's Messman's and Steward's branches (cooking, serving and cleaning), which not only separated African Americans from the rest of the Navy community, but it also precluded them from becoming commissioned officers. Until the end of World War I, the Navy had only permitted African Americans to provide general support services, but it barred Blacks from fully joining the Naval ranks from 1919 to 1932. (Woodrow Wilson did more to segregate America than perhaps any other US president in the 20th century.).

During World War II, President Franklin D Roosevelt signed an executive order in June of 1941 prohibiting ethnic and racial discrimination by federal agencies and contractors involved in the defense industry. In April of 1942, due to protests and pressure from civil rights leaders and the black press, the US Navy began to allow African American men into the general service ratings for the first time, but Blacks could not become Naval officers. In January 1944, as response to additional pressure, the Navy began an officer training course for 16 African American enlisted men at Camp Robert Smalls in Illinois.

To ensure the failure of the 16 selected African Americans, the 16 weeks that were customarily allowed as the normal training period for the officers' exam was cut to 8 weeks for the black cadets. When they realized that the Navy had deliberately attempted to undermine their success, the African American cadets covered the windows of their barracks and studied by flashlight throughout the nighttime to prepare for the exam.

When they were tested, not only did the entire group of 16 pass the test with high marks, but their scores were the highest average of any class in Navy history at the time. Disbelief in the chain of command that an all-black cadet class could achieve higher scores than any all-white class forced the black sailors to suffer the indignity of re-taking the exam since "they must have cheated!" Once again, all 16 passed, and the class average at graduation was 3.89 on a 4.0 scale.

Although all sixteen members of the black cadets' class passed the course, only 13 were commissioned in March of 1944. Why only 13, when all of them had passed? No explanation was ever given. However, by doing so it brought the pass-rate of the black cadets down to the same level of the average class of white candidates (coincidentally).

The excellence of the Golden Thirteen helped pave the way for President Truman to fully desegregate the US military four years later. The myth of white superiority and black inferiority had been shattered once again by the kind of black intellect exhibited by the 16 cadets, which had always existed, but all evidence was immediately censored at any cost. Unfortunately, many white Americans have grown to be far more comfortable in seeing examples of African American deficiencies rather than patterns of black excellence. On multiple forms of assessments, there are white students who score better than the average African American, and, more importantly, there are also numerous Black students who outperform the average white test-taker dispelling any evidence of supremacy in either group. Sorting and rewarding students based on standardized tests purported to measure student ability further marginalizes students of color and exacerbates educational inequity.

There is a "Myth of Meritocracy" that carefully ignores the fact that the past and present achievement results merely reflect the inevitable return on the investment into white students versus black students, not the "merit" or "intellectual superiority" of white students. One wonders "What would have occurred if this black-white educational investment equation had been reversed for the past 150 years?" When we drill down deep into the elements contributing to the widely-discussed achievement gaps acknowledging the prearranged inequities over the decades, one of the greatest surprises should be that the black-white achievement gap is not considerably wider, deflating any inflated notion of white supremacy.

When comparing achievement results based on the premise that they were determined by merit, one must begin with the assumption that all factors were initially equal. However, even the most superficial observation exposes the fact that all Americans have not been granted equal access to opportunities that lead to success. Improved access to academic excellence almost invariably leads to better academic and developmental outcomes.

Recognizing the limitless superior abilities often attributed to "whiteness," it begs the question, "Then why did white privileges become so crucial as to require codification into laws giving whites countless unearned advantages?" The answer to this question confirms that white supremacy was a culturally supported illusion that was contradicted by the insistence upon unfair advantages conveyed to whites. If rules in a game were written to favor certain players, then logic would suggest that those players are admitting their inferiority, or those privileges would be wholly unnecessary. White supremacy, in practice, requires a significant dosage of cognitive dissonance for it to be appropriately digested. While the inconsistencies are clear to people of color, many whites appear oblivious to the clear breaches of simple logic.

Race throughout American education

At the turn of the 20th century, the school curriculum that was made available to black children paralleled the employment prospects available to black adults, which was largely constrained to domestic service (maids, cooks, housekeepers, laundresses, and nursemaids for white children) and agricultural jobs that were not markedly different from the antebellum work performed by Blacks. The white-dominated economy did not demand educating black children beyond these two broad labor categories. Education that exceeded basic literacy and simple computation was thought to render Blacks less interested in work that reflected their pre-1865 roles.

Consequently, schools serving white students typically received five to six times the per-pupil budget allocation as schools designated for black children. In the state of South Carolina, the earmarked dollar amounts were closer to a ratio of eleven-to-one.

For most school districts, the greatest percentage of the overall budget is spent on teacher salaries. However, in the 1930s, black teachers in southern states receive a monthly salary that was only 60% of the average white teacher. It was not uncommon for black children to spend only 74 days per year in school com-pared to 120 days for white students. Since black schools were in session for two or more fewer months each year (so black children could join in planting and harvesting), the average annual salary for white teachers was even higher. To make matters worse for black education, during World War II, black women could work in the Navy Yard earning $40 a week, at a time when black school teachers earned $12 per week. Paltry salaries for black teachers were seen as a clever way to sabotage black education via institutional inequities. Despite their lower salaries in comparison to white teachers, African American educators were held in high esteem within the black community.

Black college graduates found the meager wages offered to black educators frighteningly unattractive and avoided the field of education altogether. As a result, individuals with far less than an adequate educational background were hired to fill teaching posts in all-black schools. One researcher concluded that nearly 50% of the teaching positions were often filled by individuals
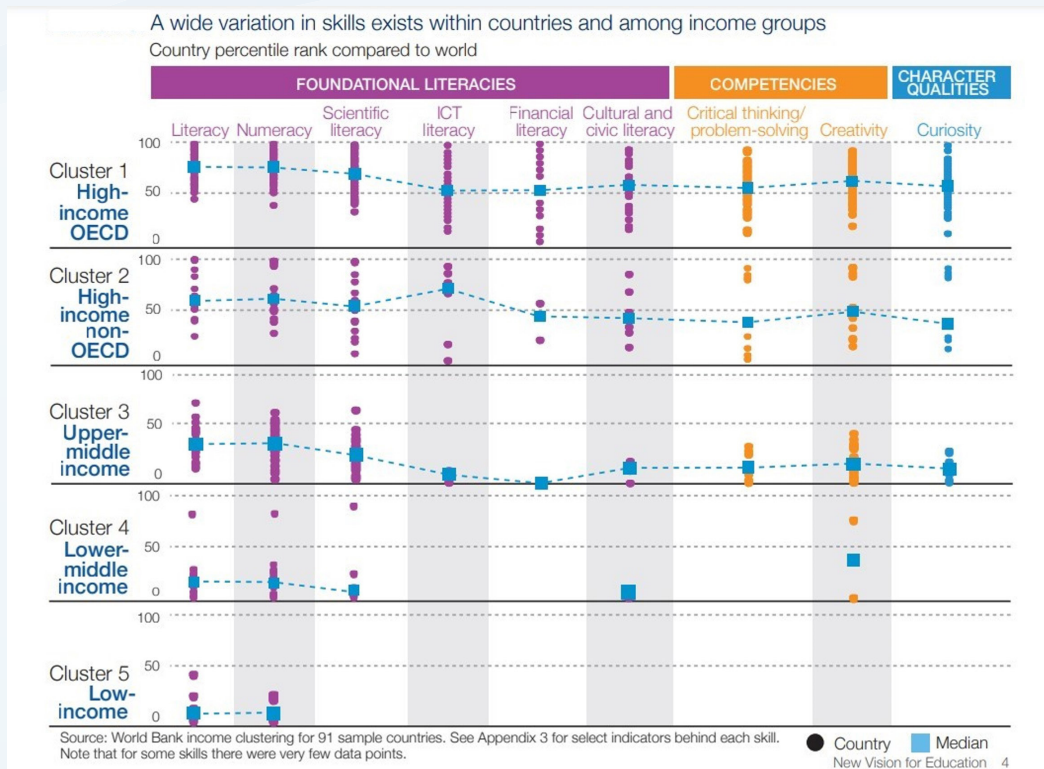
functioning below the eighth-grade achievement level themselves and woefully incapable of teaching at the secondary level.

In addition to inadequately trained educators, many black children in the South were required to accompany their parents in farm work, of which white landowners approved, since it added to the labor pool without decreasing the land-owners' profits. Although white income increased, black education suffered with very few African Americans ever given an opportunity to attend or complete high school. The shortened school year, the racial segregation, and per-pupil funding ratios created insurmountable resource gaps that led to the highly predictable black-white achievement gaps. Collectively, this epitomizes structural (built into the design) inequality. A recent U.S. Department of Education study reported that 45% of high-poverty schools in the US still receive fewer state and local dollars for school funding than the average received for other schools in the same school district.

In 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded to challenge the local, state, and federal laws that created barriers to the educational, civil, human rights of African Americans. If a legal case benefiting African Americans made its way to the courthouse, the NAACP most often deserved the credit in the eyes of grateful African Americans, and the blame according to many hostile whites.

To intimidate black teachers, many states enacted legislation demanding that educators list all of their organizational memberships as a condition of employment. The NAACP was a disqualifying association, because the organization was instrumental in desegregating public schools throughout America, making it a target of all-consuming hatred for many whites. Following the 1954 Brown v. the Board of Education Supreme Court decision where the NAACP played a pivotal role, the Prince Edward County, Virginia school board closed all of their public schools rather than integrate any of them. Their schools remained shuttered for five consecutive school years to the detriment of both black and white students. Decades later, statistics showed that achievement gaps between African American and white students shrank when a different racial composition (integrated) reflected school classrooms.

During the school integration era of the 1950s and 1960s, an extensive negative reaction of southern whites coalesced into the "massive resistance" to school desegregation. Federal courts compelled southern school districts to create plans to integrate their schools, but it instead led to punishing job losses for black teachers and principals when white school boards closed the all-black schools. In a democratic society, we have an obligation to maximize the potential of every student in our schools. Yet, there are well-known inequities that impact students of poverty and students of color, often overlapping categories. In the New Vision for Education: Unlocking the Potential of Technology report produced by the World Economic Forum, they found differences in the academic focus in schools for students in wealthy highly developed countries compared to poor developing countries. *(See Chart #2 below: A wide variation in skills exist within countries and among income groups).*

A wide variation in skills exists within countries and among income groups
Country percentile rank compared to world

Source: World Bank income clustering for 91 sample countries. See Appendix 3 for select indicators behind each skill. Note that for some skills there were very few data points.

● Country ■ Median

New Vision for Education 4

Wealthy countries not only provide students with instruction and learning experiences in the foundational literacies, but also in the 21st century competencies that develop complex thinking, curiosity, creativity, and the necessary skills required for working with others effectively in a global community - a total of 16 skills and competencies. By comparison, the educational concentration in poor countries was only in two areas - literacy and numeracy (reading and mathematics).

In the US, we see similar patterns where students in high income neighborhoods are offered the full range of developmental competencies that prepare them for college and careers, while students from poor neighborhoods spend the vast majority of their school time engaged in ELA and mathematics and little time cultivating the more sophisticated 21st-century skills that will prepare them for college and careers. Preparing students of color for the 21st century cannot be achieved by teaching only 19th century skill sets.

Racism cannot be tackled in classrooms by learning more about "other cultures." It is imperative that we learn their particular histories in America.

Following the Emancipation Proclamation in 1865, public education for African Americans was legal (permitted and limited by laws), but it was largely influenced by economics. In the United States, historically,

(1) there have been certain groups that have received an abundance of opportunities to access a high quality education by law and by deliberate design (institutional),

(2) the philosophy dictating educational practices disadvantaged other groups,

(3) the distribution of financial resources to schools were controlled and defined by powerful forces that created and maintained inequities in educational opportunities based on race.

Parents on the lower end of the income spectrum cannot afford to send their children to higher quality schools that parents in higher income tiers can. This economic factor contributes to institutional inequalities, where institutions them-selves contribute to educational inequality. As a result, inequity in schools translates into a community, city, state, and nation that loses the economic output potential of Americans forced into the lower-income tiers because of their race. For generations, many southern school districts did not offer formal education to black students beyond the eighth grade. Workers with a college degree earn 84% more than those with only a high school diploma. Those conditions decelerated economic growth for everyone in the state including those in power. One wonders if the southern states would have kept pace economically with their northern counterparts if southern whites had abandoned their strict practices of institutional racism that hurt Blacks, but simultaneously hurt themselves as well.

In a study conducted by the McKinsey group, they revealed that the achievement gap caused by inequity in education has cost the U.S. economy more than all of the recessions have since the 1970s. All Americans benefit, when all Americans are well-educated. Inequity in education can slow economic growth and development just as much as cyclical recessions do. Students who are not given access to adequate educational resources typically do not perform at their optimal academic levels. They learn less in school. They earn less as an adult. They do not build family wealth over the next generation. Their children seldom excel in poorly-resourced schools, and this sequence of events can repeat itself for countless generations. This cycle of structural inequality continues to cheat both individuals and their communities, contributing to further educational and income inequality.

Stereotyping
In large the body of research on American education, there is an abundance of descriptive evidence documenting the wretched conditions under which African American schools were operated compared to nearby white schools controlled by the same school district. The academic outcomes for disadvantaged black students compared to their white counterparts who attended well-resourced schools were not only predictable but were precisely the desired results that the educational systems were designed to produce. Schools in the North and South were created and funded with different outcomes intended for African American and white students. High financial investments were made in white schools giving them a distinct advantage over black schools.

Sadly, the disparities in academic performance have nurtured the beliefs in white intellectual superiority and black inferiority, which can only persist when one intentionally remains oblivious to historical facts. White supremacy was constructed upon destructive stereotypes of black intellectual inferiority, which became enduring cultural messages for two reasons, both grounded in neuro-science. First, the human brain is hardwired to respond to patterns. Stereotypes provide preconceptions about the traits and characteristics for broad categories of people. Second, regardless of number of confirming examples, the perception of patterns often lead to sweeping generalizations due to biased expectations.

In most cases, a prejudice ("pre-judgements") is (1) predominantly a learned reaction, and (2) grounded in "social categorizations." A 2018 study involving children between the ages of 3

and 9 found that, when the parents embraced an ethnic prejudice (no matter how subtle), their sentiments accurately predicted whether or not their children held a similar implicit prejudice. Once formed, biases, along with their accompanying stereotypes, are difficult to consciously discard. Their long term hidden danger is that biases can eventually be used to justify harassment, resentment, discrimination, and violence directed towards the target group. Unfortunately, below-average performance outcomes that result from disparities in treatment serve to effectively reinforce racialized stereotypes.

Since it can often be quite time-consuming to investigate each positive and negative feature in each individual, stereotypes give license to our mental shortcuts. Throughout the day, we are bombarded with massive amounts of stimuli that must be sorted through in real time. Rather than engaging in the laborious cognitive task of assessing each factor of individuality, we minimize the work by assigning (or exaggerating) traits to people who share another common (race, religion, gender, etc.) characteristic. Another study found that the attitude of one's peers affected teenagers' adopted prejudices. The greatest danger that stereotypes pose is the generations of discrimination impacting the targeted group.

Although we often say that "seeing is believing," more accurately "believing is seeing." We look for verification of the biases we believe to be accurate representations of our reality, which psychologists refer to as "confirmation bias." Our brains are on a constant mission to locate validations of our beliefs. If we believe that African American men are threatening, two muscular black men walking towards us on a sidewalk, generate an automatic fear response. If we instead believed that large African American men are most often friendly athletes and entertainers, those same two men are more likely be asked for an autograph instead. While the stimulus remains the same, different responses emerge based on presumptions. The cultural-psychological approach to understanding racism suggests that ideas, values, and practices shape culture, and culture shapes the thinking of its individual members.

Perhaps the most pernicious aspect of stereotyping is that it dehumanizes and devalues each individual of the stereotyped group by removing his/her individual value as a human being. One of the most damaging consequences is the cultivation of people who demonstrate that they do not believe that individual black lives matter. The mass killing of African Americans shopping at the local super-market in May of 2022 is just one of the numerous terrifying consequences.
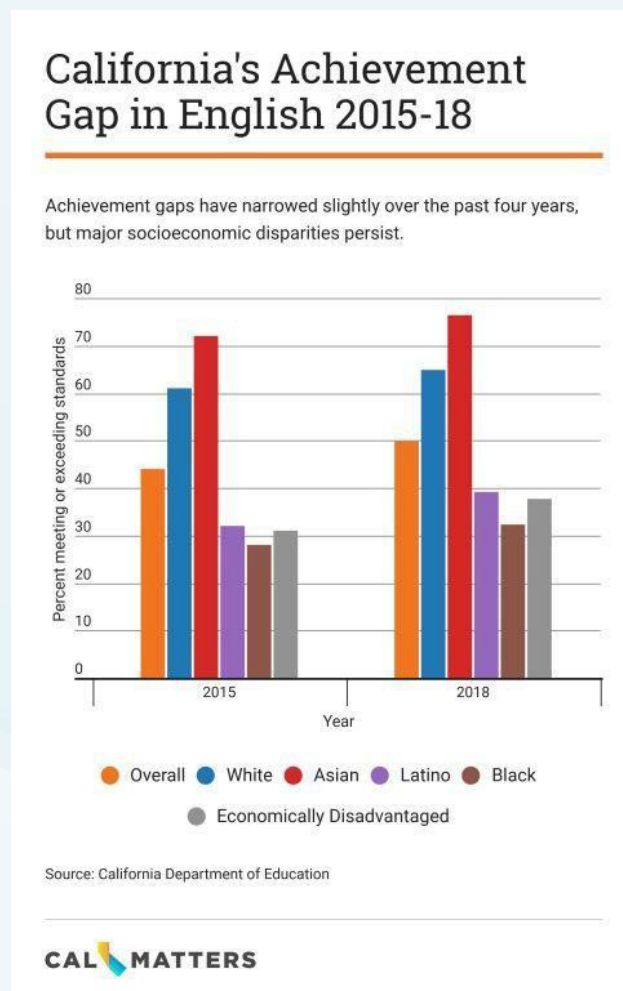
Stereotypes and education

While we often think of education as exclusively an academic experience, schools do considerably more. They teach culture. Racial stereotypes carry immense weight in today's classrooms because they are cultural storylines reflecting deficit narratives that are reproduced. It is often assumed by individuals holding biases that students from marginalized groups are less intelligent than others (Moss-Racusin's et al., 2014). Biases help organize our opinions about others (and ourselves). When persistent cultural messages about race have circulated widely there is a general acceptance that the story holds some truth. Among the hazards of a stereotype is that it can alter the internal narrative of targeted individuals who begin to believe that the cultural message reflects an accurate observation of their group. Students who are the subjects of stereotypes develop negative attitudes concerning their own academic abilities and frequently feel excluded by their teachers and peers (Cheryan et. al, 2009) whether the rejection actually took place or not.

One of the most important psychological features of stereotypes is that they are relative and relational (one group is implicitly compared to others) since their significance is derived from an unspoken comparison of opposites. The stereotype "Blacks are lazy," implies that whites (and perhaps other groups) are ambitious (or at least, not lazy like Blacks). When Asians are described as the "model minority," there is an implication that other minority groups are not exemplary at all, typically intended to implicate black and brown people. In the classroom, students from marginalized groups receive less-challenging materials, less teacher feedback, and are given less time to respond to questions in class than their peers (Beaman et al., 2006).

The annually published academic achievement statistics frequently group "Asian and white" students together and contrast their test scores to their "black and brown" counterparts. Typically, the former grouping outperforms the latter with an implied deficiency in black and brown performance. However, if the four groups were decoupled, Asians could conceivably be deemed "superior" to whites. In the Nation's Report Card in 2019, for fourth grade reading, 72.5% of the states reported scores for Asian students that were above or appreciably above those of white students. (See *https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/ndecore/xplore/NDE*).

In a recent data analysis by the College Board, the average score for white students was 534 while the average score for Asians was significantly higher at 598. However, their report focused on the achievement gap between whites compared to Blacks and Hispanics, when a concern for white achievement deficits could have been equally justifiable, especially given the countless ad-vantages enjoyed by the dominant group.
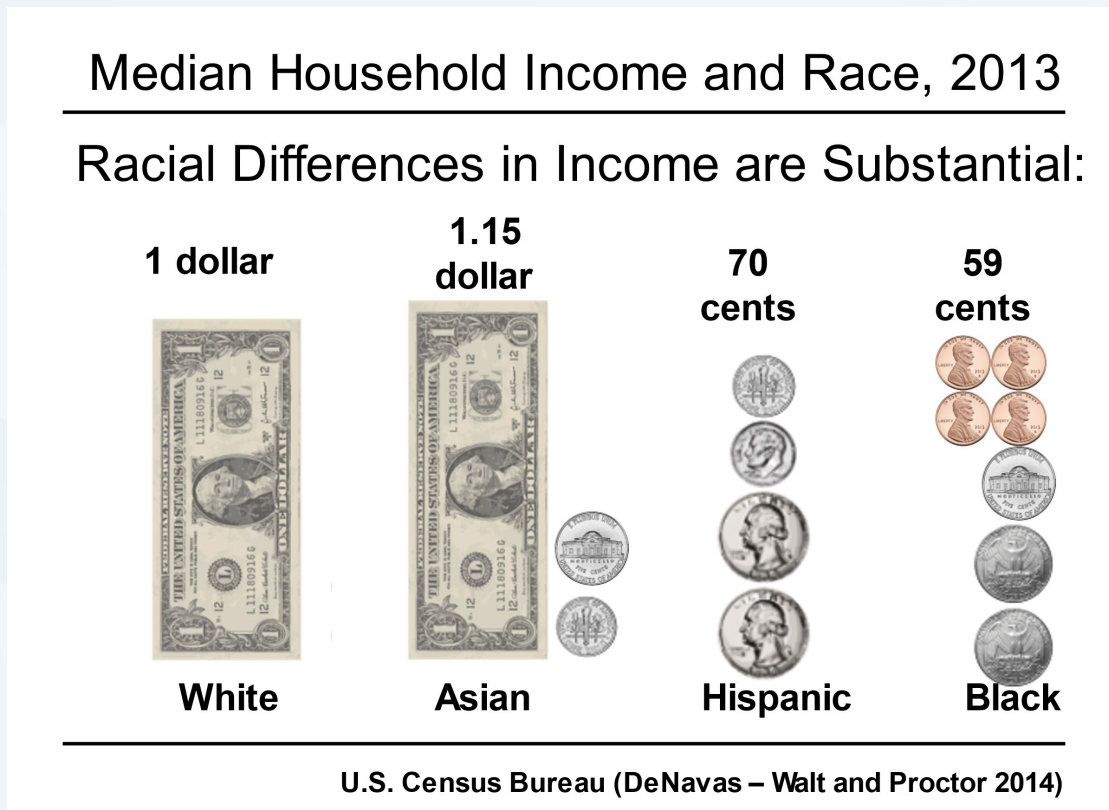
It is not uncommon for Asian students to surpass white students in math and science, but what argument can be presented to justify Asian students outperforming white students in English, of all subjects? (See Chart #3 below- California's Achievement Gap in English 2015 – 18). Equally important is that a considerable percentage of Asian students in California are also immigrants, raising serious reservations about the any theory of "white intellectual superiority."

California's Achievement Gap in English 2015-18

Achievement gaps have narrowed slightly over the past four years, but major socioeconomic disparities persist.

Percent meeting or exceeding standards — Year

Legend: Overall, White, Asian, Latino, Black, Economically Disadvantaged

Source: California Department of Education

CAL MATTERS

In statistical reporting, whites are most often deemed the "standard" by which others are to be measured and therefore, exempt from being designated as deficient. Some members of the
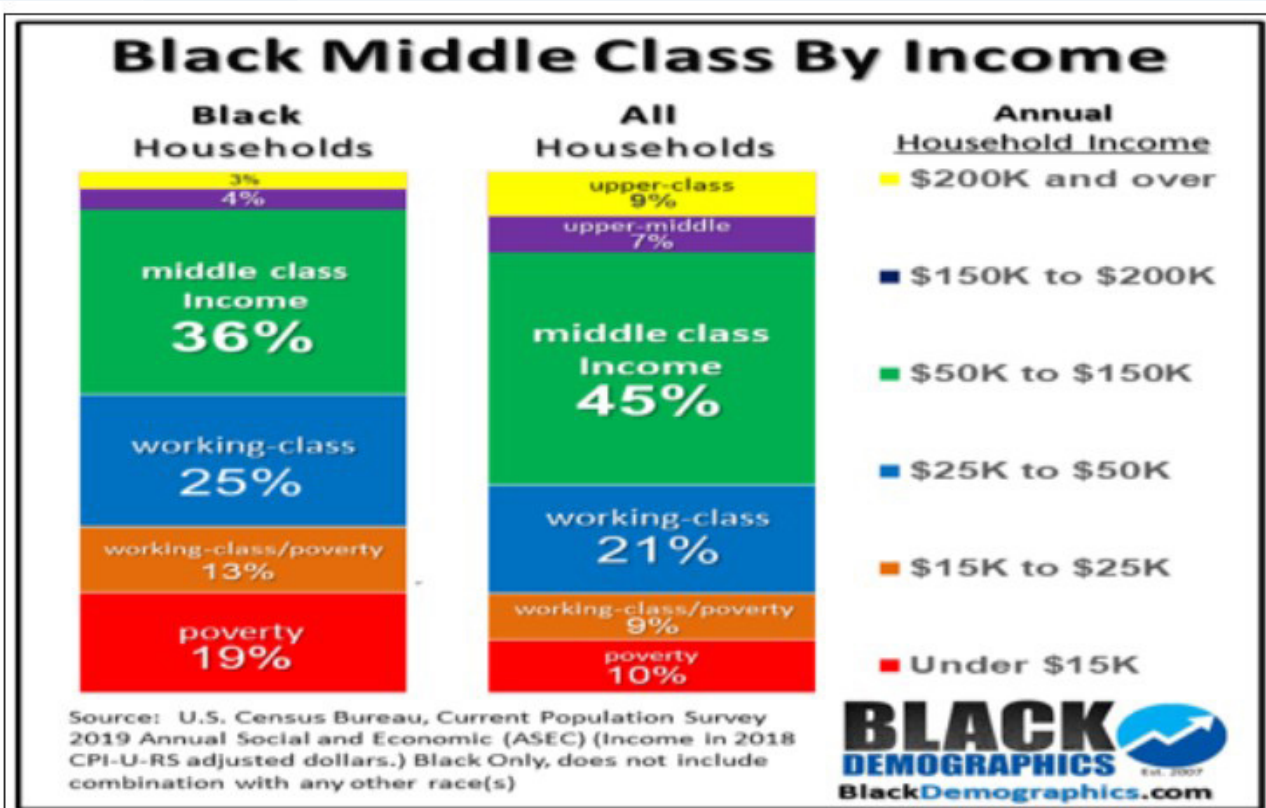
dominant group believe that whites are the default group and serve as the (self-assigned) yardstick by which other groups must be measured (a consistent element of white supremacy).

In a comparable summary of 2013 US Census Bureau data on Median House-hold Income and Race (Chart #4 below), while logically Asians should be considered "the standard" by which others are measured since theirs is the highest average , they are not positioned in that manner.

Median Household Income and Race, 2013

Racial Differences in Income are Substantial:

1 dollar	1.15 dollar	70 cents	59 cents
White	Asian	Hispanic	Black

U.S. Census Bureau (DeNavas – Walt and Proctor 2014)

Stereotypes are cognitive artifacts by which we organize our ideas and opinions about others. Adult perceptions of student capabilities are influenced by these dominant racial stereotypes. In middle school and high school classrooms (as well as college), educators frequently operate on the presumption that African American students invariably come from impoverished backgrounds and are likely lacking in academic proficiency.

Individuals within the same racial group have tremendously varied experiences. While there are numerous commonalities in California's African American population, there are differences as well. To that point, there is a broad range of economic and academic diversity among black families. While a black-white wealth gap may still persist, the number of middle- and upper-income African American families in the US *(the "Cosby Cohort")* continues to grow at record levels, as discriminatory employment practices are declining at a glacial pace. *(See Chart #5 below - Black Middle Class by Income).*

Black Middle Class By Income

Black Households	All Households	Annual Household Income
3%	upper-class 9%	$200K and over
4%	upper-middle 7%	$150K to $200K
middle class Income 36%	middle class Income 45%	$50K to $150K
working-class 25%	working-class 21%	$25K to $50K
working-class/poverty 13%	working-class/poverty 9%	$15K to $25K
poverty 19%	poverty 10%	Under $15K

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 2019 Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) (Income in 2018 CPI-U-RS adjusted dollars.) Black Only, does not include combination with any other race(s)

BLACK DEMOGRAPHICS Est. 2007
BlackDemographics.com

In these families there are predictably higher achievement gains and these children develop the agency-related factors such as conscientiousness, growth mindset, future orientation, and social emotional skills that promote success in school.

It should also be stated that there are correlative achievement gaps between African-American students whose parents with no postsecondary educational experience versus children whose parents hold a four-year college degree or higher. For the latter, the black-white achievement gap is narrowed. In school districts where most community members have a two-year college degree or less, 36% of eighth graders were proficient in math. However, in school districts with high percentages of four-year college graduates, the figure jumped to 62% proficiency in math. Test scores are often a proxy for family income and neighborhood.

Clearly, parental education affects cognitive development in ways that are captured and standardized tests. Students who are not so fortunate travel along a different, less promising, academic pathway. An equity-focused leader can share with parents in the latter group how to establish home conditions that can lead to academic success for their children.

The relationship between family income and reading achievement is more significant than the correlation between race and reading scores (*See Chart #6 - 4th Grade Student Proficiency, by Family Income, 2017 for Reading, below*).

4th Grade Student Proficiency, by Family Income, 2017 (Reading)
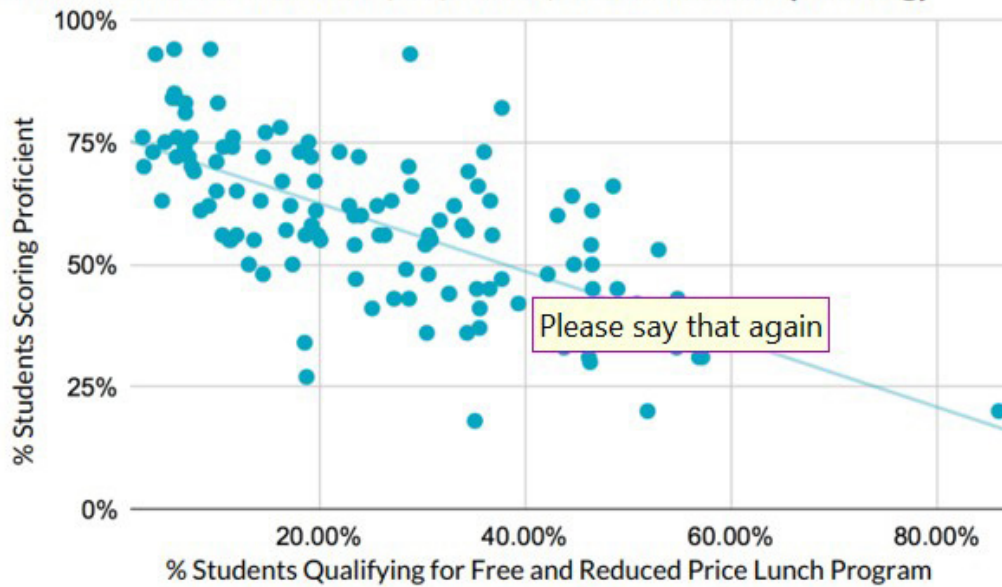
Source: NH Department of Education, 2017

There is also a significant correlation between the number of students experiencing poverty in a school and their teachers' salaries compared to students from wealthier neighborhoods. The annual 2017 difference in salary was approximately $12,000 more for educators who teach students who come from higher income homes. In a school with 84 faculty members, that comes to $1 million more invested in teacher salaries per school. Such institutional practices render poor children more educationally vulnerable.

Unfortunately, with the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the decreases in family income will likely result in greater numbers of African American families experiencing financial insecurity and a corresponding decrease in reading and mathematics test scores.

When victims of stereotyping internalize the negative theories about themselves, the stereotypes can damage one's self-esteem and perceptions of other members of his/her group. Unfortunately, there are the lingering stereotypes associated with race and intelligence. It is not uncommon for black students to accuse their talented black classmates of "acting white," suggesting that a demonstration of intelligence reflects "whiteness" rather than hard work, effort, individual intelligence, and a dedication to one's studies. By doing so, African American students can effectively marginalize themselves. White students are no more gifted than black students, but they do operate within a system of skewed opportunities with highly predictable outcomes where the outcome suggests a socially-promoted premise.

An important facet of applying equity in education is addressing the stereotypes that harm African American students and other students of color. While educating students (and teachers) on the historical linkages of stereotypes, racism, and inequity is an important first step, information alone does not provoke change. Actively pursuing equity (behavior) can change negative attitudes and beliefs.

American education for decades has operated on the unwritten philosophy that its resources, attention, and hopes should be reserved for students in the top ten percent. We hope that the worst aspects of historical and institutional racism are behind us, and the most contentious days are over. Our resources, attention, and hopes should be focused on the top 100% of our students. That is the primary objective of educational equity. The pressing question for educators today is, "Can we disengage ourselves from the decades of biased attitudes, practices, and policies that have driven American education, and deliver high-quality education to all students regardless of race, income, location, background, need, or any other circumstances from which they come to our schools?"

The How

How can we overcome systemic disparities? Colorblindness is NOT enough and should not be our goal.

Today's racially inclusive ("colorblind") vision of America does not legitimately describe our most recent past. Many Americans find colorblindness to be helpful to people of color by asserting that race does not really matter (Tarca, 2005), alt-hough history has demonstrated that an African Americans who discount the significance of their skin color in America can find doing so to be a fatal error.

Colorblindness is the racial ideology which posits that the best way to end discrimination is to treat individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity. The colorblind philosophy is becoming a dominant narrative and can be a convenient detour into denial, allowing one to avoid candid conversations about race, about our troubled history of racial interactions, and about the social meaning of our diversity. Colorblindness can serve as a self-deceptive means by which overt evidence of racism can be comfortably dismissed since "races do not exist."

The negative race-based incidents experienced by people of color can be easily rejected as false when we adopt a philosophy that denies the realities of ethno-racial experiences. We cannot end racial, gender, religious, and ethnic discrimination by pretending they do not exist. Healing racial wounds will not take place by feigning there was never any pain caused by white racism.

Subscribing to colorblindness allows those who are unlikely to experience dis-advantages due to race, to (a) effectively ignore racism in American life, (b) justify the current social order, and (c) feel more comfortable with their privileged standing in society (Fryberg, 2010).

When we dismiss race and declare ourselves a "colorblind" society or school, we engage in the following:

1. Dismiss the racial identity of people of color and the life experiences that they have as a consequence of unequal treatment. Colorblindness implies that no one can be the victim of racism in today's world since skin color is no longer meaningful. Therefore, the painful hardships that people of color might encounter are no different than the plight of a white individual.

2. Overlook the history of American racism as an important context for understanding the current conditions of people of color. Colorblindness assumes positive outcomes for everyone are based on merit regardless of race. (This remains a goal, not a reality.)

3. Disregard the race-based power and privileges that have been extended to some and denied to others. (The "deservingness" belief or the paternalistic "bootstrap theory." "One's work ethic determines who succeeds or fails in America, not skin color," which psychologists refer to as the "ultimate attribution error." Whites are considered more deserving because they have worked harder than people of color.) By not seeing color, one is not forced to acknowledge whiteness and the unearned privileges that often come with it. Colorblindness allows one to "blame the victim" and place the responsibility for unequal outcomes at the feet of people of color.

4. Overlook the ways that race continues to influence life chances. Racial disparities result from discriminatory policies and practices. Colorblindness proposes no accountability for racial inequities. A distinction must be made between personal/group failures and structural (by design) failures.

5. Set aside responsibility to confront biases and stereotypes based in presumed cultural deficits foster ongoing social inequities.

6. Ignore the systemic efforts that must be made to eliminate the persisting social, economic, educational, etc., inequities in America. Racial disparities are not the result of unintended consequences. They result from precisely the opposite.

7. Reinforce the notion that everyone has always had an equal chance to succeed. The excuse "I did not know" (ignorance) is not acceptable in educational environments purported to pursue knowledge. This allows people to operate under the assumption that there is no need to fight racism, because discrimination has been eliminated since we do not see color. Silence in the face of bigotry is deemed forgivable.

8. Refuse to examine the pernicious effects of racism, because it may be seen as an attempt to indict "individuals currently present in the room." (It must be noted that people of color have also knowingly and unknowingly played significant roles in the oppression of other people of color)

9. Avoid any attempt to understand how racism works and the effects it can have on our society and our schools. Although racism harms us all, American racism was designed and maintained to favor whites at the expense of people of color. Colorblindness allows us to ignore covert forms of racism (the Charlottesville, VA, march in support of white supremacy).

10. Refuse to take any liability for eliminating institutional racism in our schools. Racism will only thrive by ignoring our centuries-long history of racist practices culminating in today's racial disparities.

We would not see such disparities in academic performance today if these 10 steps (and likely others) had been deployed in American education from the outset. It can be said that we are either passively promoting and protecting privilege in our society or we are actively working to disrupt it.

From 2010 to 2020, America became more racially and ethnically diverse, according to the US Census Bureau. However, despite the nation's overall increase in diversity, not all individuals were experiencing a change in their interpersonal social interactions. While a majority of whites describe themselves as "color-blind" regarding the race of others, 75% of them also report that they do not have any friends whose race falls outside of their own racial group. Despite our good intentions, we are not colorblind at all.

Teaching with Equity
The Diversity and Inclusive Teacher identifies three imperatives for actively putting into practice teaching for diversity, equity, and inclusion:

1. Difference is an essential part of our history and a current reality. Dealing with human diversity and differential status is intractable in America due to our national history of racism and tensions between individual freedom and the common good.

2. Difference is an unstoppable part of our future. Classrooms are increasingly diverse, and demography assures that this trend will continue.

3. Diversity and inclusion improve teaching and learning. People learn and enrich their abilities to think critically and creatively as they engage in conversations across differences, especially when all learners' abilities and attributes are embraced.

The following are additional DEI priorities to consider:

- Be willing to acknowledge and address inequalities and their history in the classroom.

- Model equity for your students. Give all students a voice in the classroom.

- Use a variety of teaching strategies and a wide range of activities for students to demonstrate their conceptual understanding. Provide students with multiple ways to answer questions or complete assignments.

- Establish classroom rules collectively and enforce them equitably. Always explain the "why" behind the appropriate behavior as well as the corresponding consequences.

- Examine your curriculum to make certain that any "missing voices" represented by the students in your classroom are heard. Include historical narratives from other cultures that may not be presented in the adopted textbooks. Teach students to think from multiple perspectives, which will develop their critical thinking skills as well as their social readiness.

- Provide flexibility with grading. Grades should reflect (1) student performance, (2) student growth and (3) a student's progress in conceptual development.

- When a student uses insensitive language or behaves in a manner disrespectful of others or people of color,

  ➢ pause

  ➢ bring attention to the behavior without necessarily shaming the student

  ➢ explain how the behavior or language runs counter to the DEI goals,

  ➢ discuss alternative behaviors and language that could have been used in that situations (and in the future), and

  ➢ have the students involved commit themselves to positive behaviors in the future that will restore (or create) a positive relationship (restorative justice).

- Introduce diverse perspectives. Have students share objects and traditions about their culture during "show and tell." This will help prepare students for their future in a globally interconnected space.

- Students need to be able to express their individuality in the classroom comfortably and confidently, based on the culture from which they come.

- Look for any DEI issues that may be keeping your students from succeeding in school.

- Add DEI activities and anti-racist lessons to your school curriculum so every student has a sense of belongingness in each classroom.

- Take time for self-reflection on the progress made to incorporate DEI into instruction. A study from the University of California, Los Angeles found that students in the most diverse classrooms are more likely to feel safer, less lonely, and less bullied at school.

Check your own progress.

- Visit the following websites for more information about DEI.

  ➢ **Anti-Defamation League** at https://www.adl.org/

  ➢ **National Museum of African American History and Culture** at *https://nmaahc.si.edu/*

  ➢ **Statistics in Schools** at *https://www.census.gov/schools/*

  ➢ **Learning for Justice** at *https://www.learningforjustice.org/*

  ➢ **EDSITEment** at *https://edsitement.neh.gov/*

  ➢ **PenPal Schools** at *https://www.penpalschools.com/index.html*

  ➢ **Facing History and Ourselves** at *https://www.facinghistory.org/*

  ➢ **Zinn Education Project** at *https://www.zinnedproject.org/*

  ➢ **Asian Pacific American Center** at *https://smithsonianapa.org/*

  ➢ **National Museum of the American Indian** at *https://americanindian.si.edu/*

An "Educator's Equity Self-Evaluation"

Organizational accountability is a means by which we can evaluate the effectiveness of our DIE efforts. However, equally important is that every educator should examine his/her individual efforts made to incorporate equity in their classroom and school. There are times when teachers must

become "the change" they want to see in their classrooms by shifting their role from the teacher to the learner (the roles could be reciprocal.) Below is a tool that can be used as a self-evaluation for educators.

Equity in my classroom

- Is my teaching inspiring, engaging, and culturally relevant to my students?

- Do I plan my lessons incorporating the needs of students who have been historically oppressed and marginalized?

- Are my classroom practices aligned with what I learned in teacher training courses or what I have learned about being culturally responsive to students through teaching content that is culturally relevant to all of my students?

- Instruction and instructional materials have been designed around Euro-centric values and images. Do I validate other cultures as contributors to our civilization?

- Is my instruction planned with an equity mindset (looking through my "equity lens" for inclusive instruction)?

- Have I established an environment where every student feels that he/she can be heard at all times?

- What efforts do I make so that no student or group of students feels "invisible" in my classroom, and all feel as included as possible?

- Students find learning more relevant when they can "see themselves" connect-ed to the curriculum content (student engagement). When instruction commences in my class, are my students confident that they can see themselves as part of their content learning?

- Is the content of my teaching historically accurate and culturally relevant regarding people of color in America?

- Do I teach African American history beginning with enslavement or do I share with my students the rich history of pre-17th century Africa?
- In my classroom, do I capitalize on "teachable moments" that allow me to incorporate social justice issues, their importance, and their history?

- Do I set achievement goals for all of my students based on my personal biases regarding ethnicity based on equity?

- Racial identity plays an important role in personal identity. Recognizing that students often identify themselves along racial/cultural lines, do I make efforts to make positive references to their race and culture during class?

- Do I believe that diversity brings new perspectives into the classroom? How do I make that known to my students?

My professional commitment to equity

- Is the climate in my classroom and my school "colorblind" or "color brave"?

- Do I work with each of my students to make certain that they do not internalize negative stereotypes about themselves or their culture that may be transmitted by the dominant culture?

- Is my classroom a respite from the painful social devaluation of certain groups of people?

- When we describe "successful" individuals in American history, do I also discuss the "myth of meritocracy," to help students understand that some groups are overrepresented and/or underrepresented in certain endeavors because of the disparate opportunities that were extended to or denied to others? (The achievement hierarchy was not coincidental but has been driven by forces favoring one group over others).

- Do I address the consequences of persistent microaggressions, micro-insults, micro-invalidations, and the pathologizing of nonwhite cultural values?

- When I see "race" in my students, is it just an observation or is it also a pre-assessment of each student's ability?

- Do my students believe that I see them any differently than the broader American culture does because of their race or culture?

- How do I address the fact that people around the world (geography) also have a different appearance (physiology) that is adaptive, but not related to abilities?

- If an interviewer asked my students about my honesty in addressing race in my classroom, what would they say? What would I like them to say?

- Do I address matters like the health gap, wealth gap, equal employment opportunity gap, housing gap, etc., with my students so they are aware of how our society has operated for centuries and the degree to which our society has improved? Do I help students understand that inequity is a problem of practice not a problem with certain people?

  - ➤ Young black men 21 times more likely to be killed by police

  - ➤ Black people five times more likely to incarcerated than white people

  - ➤ White households' median wealth is 13 times that of black households

  - ➤ 13.2% of US population is black, yet black people represent:

  - ➤ 2.7% of nation's wealth

  - ➤ 40% of the incarcerated population

  - ➤ there are vicious cycles exacerbating inequalities.

- Would my colleagues characterize me as an individual more prone to support equity and justice or more inclined to support compliance and comfort with the status quo?
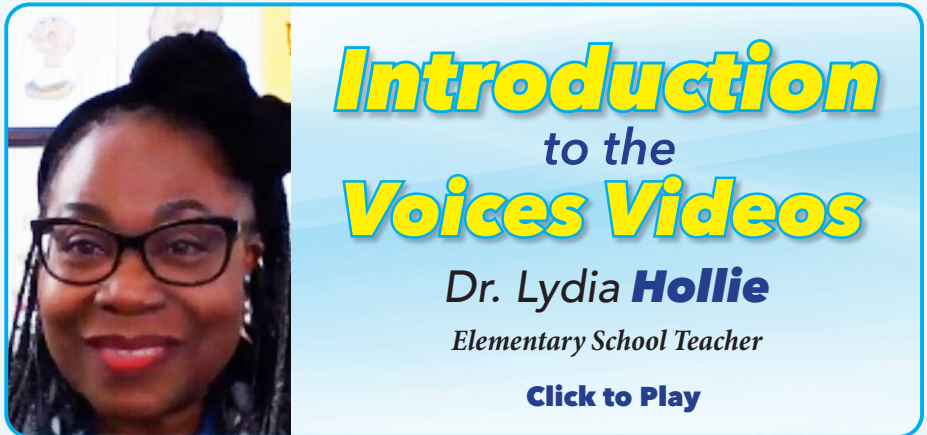
- Do I encourage students to challenge and confront overt and covert forms of in-equity?

- When a student identifies an incident where they feel microaggressions from other adults on campus, do I try to intervene on behalf of the student, or do I defend the adult's behavior? Do I ever invalidate a student's feelings or perceptions?

- The barriers to achievement were often caused by access not by ability. When we discuss people of color who stand out as exceptional (exceptions to the common outcomes), do we also have conversations concerning who made up the rules and what outcomes those rules were intended to produce?

- What evidence can I present that I am altering the learning trajectory of African American students in a positive way? (Am I a "dream-maker"?)

- If my school district had an "Educator's Equity Award," would my students think I deserved to win? What concrete evidence could my students present on my behalf? What can I do so they would say more in my favor in the future?

- In a self-evaluation, would I say that I am a role model for DEI? Why? Am I "culturally competent"? Where and how might I make improvements?

- When conversations get uncomfortable in class, do I shut those discussions down to end any possible student discomfort, or do I deepen the conversation with a rich historical discussion where the goal is to understand, not to blame?

- Do I address historical, institutional, and systemic racism in my classroom, or do I choose to pretend they do not exist and never have? Do I honestly and objectively address the history of "white privilege"?

- How do we celebrate differences in my classroom, so all people are valued?

- Have I communicated the message to my students that the differences in people are not to be interpreted as deficits? How have I conveyed that message to my students?

- How do I address the fact that people of color in America have been taught (via stereotypes, media, literature, science, etc.) to dislike themselves in both direct and indirect ways including through the omissions in our textbooks and curricula?

- In my classroom how do I address racially demeaning or insensitive racial comments? (Children make unkind statements often out of a lack of awareness and understanding of the history).

- When I hear colleagues express negative or prejudice comments about particular groups of students, do I attempt to correct and/or enlighten them about the implicit or explicit biases? Do I excuse, defend or cover-up racist actions or attitudes? Do I isolate racist behaviors and attitudes as if they have no historical context, and thereby do no harm?

- What have I shared with my students about the "Black Lives Matter" movement, as well as why it began?

- Do I understand how students learn? Do I know how my students learn?

It has been said that a rising tide lifts all boats. Educators who are committed to equity in the classroom will find that their philosophy and practices will foster greater student engagement and achievement. If schools want to infuse high-quality teaching into the equity equation, we can incorporate the four features of the "Qualities of a High Quality Faculty Interaction" (Alderman, 2008).

1. Faculty members are approachable and personable

2. Faculty members have enthusiasm and passion for their work

3. Faculty members care about their students personally

4. Faculty members serve as role models and mentors for their students.

Field Guide #10 - Equity as a Centerpiece in Our Schools

It is our job as educators, administrators, and parents to help African American children identify their strengths and assets in order to maximize their academic achievement. Although obstacles abound, the support we can give our students of color is boundless with equity as a centerpiece in their education.
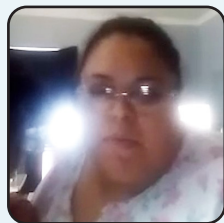

Introduction *to the* **Voices Videos**

*Dr. Lydia **Hollie***

Elementary School Teacher

Click to Play

"Lifting our Voices" videos Interviewees

Akisha **Liggins**
Teacher

Melissa **Hendrix**
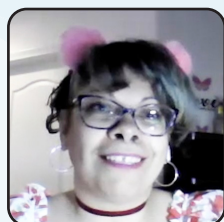*Parent*

LaToya **Reid**
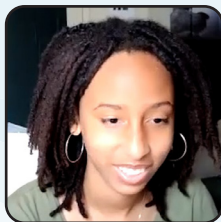*Parent*

Mark **Neal**
Principal

Ana **Filomia**
Teacher

Trinika **Barnett**
Teacher

Ghada **Moreno**
Teacher

Khensani **Pienaar**
Student

Marissa **Pienaar**
Parent

Amirh **Johnson**
Parent

Melinda **Hendrix**
Student (no photo)

Jacob **Hendrix**
Student (no photo)

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Video #1 - Cultural equity in the classroom
        Click to Play - *https://bit.ly/cultureequityvideo*

Video #2 - Professional development and teacher support
        Click to Play - *https://bit.ly/teachsupportfieldguide10*

Video #3 - Addressing equity problems and concerns
        Click to Play - *https://bit.ly/equityproblems*

Video #4 - Equity and technology
        Click to Play - *https://bit.ly/equityandtech*

Video #5 - Using data to understand matters of equity
        Click to Play - *https://bit.ly/usingdatafieldguide10*

Professional learning: Participant Responses

a. What are some of the common equity shortcomings seen in education that were described by the interviewees? Have similar issues surfaced in your school?

b. What are some of the recommendations for professional development that can support the equity challenge?

c. Some of the inequities commonly seen were exacerbated by the pandemic. What were some of the inequities described by the interviewees?

d. How did the interviewees describe technology as one inequity seen both before and after the pandemic? Does your school district offer professional development on equity? If not, why not?

e. Dr. Hollie describes using data to identify equity challenges that change over time. What could be responsible for the drastic data changes that she describes taking place over the course of nine grade levels?

f. "Going back to normal" will not benefit those students whose educational needs were not being met prior to the pandemic. What are you doing post-pandemic to reach African American students instructionally who were not being effectively reached before?

g. The pandemic exposed many inequities and disparities in education impacting students of color. What were some of the inequalities that you noticed most during the pandemic? Have they been resolved in any way by you or your school/school district?
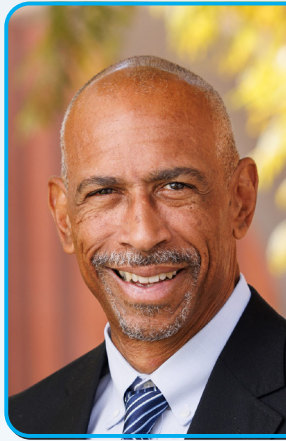
Reflections and applications

a. We are all individually responsible for the success of the students in our classroom. What special effort do you make to increase the academic success of your African American students and other students of color?

b. If equality indicates that every child receives the same instruction, and equity means each child receives the instruction he/she needs to maximize his/her success as a learner, which approach best describes the instruction your students receive?

c. The "one-size-fits-all" factory model (some say fairytale model) of education is an approach that educational institutions are still trying to abandon. How are you addressing the individual learning needs of students of color in your classroom (pursuing "equity")?

d. Were there any specific educational challenges for students of color in your classroom/ school that existed prior to the pandemic. Were those difficulties reduced or exacerbated by the pandemic? Did any other challenges increase for African American students and other students of color?

e. We say that it is difficult to teach students who you don't know. How do you get to know the individual learning needs of your African American students in order to meet those needs for each child?

f. The culture of education has been charged with being highly impersonal, where some students feel collectively invisible. How do you personalize learning for students in your classroom, so students have a presence, have a voice, and are likely to succeed academically?

g. Many students are "turned off" when classroom learning is teacher-centered. What do you do to make your content and delivery more student-centered and more engaging to the learners?

h. Parents play a crucial role in the success of the students in your classroom. At the beginning of each school year, if you could send home a list of five recommendations for parents to support their children's learning at home, what are some of the items that would appear on your list?

i. We say that social-emotional stability in a student is a prerequisite to academic learning. All students perform better in classrooms where they feel respected, safe, and visible. How are the social emotional needs of your students being addressed today in ways that are different from the pre-pandemic years?

j. How do you teach students to understand the importance of equity and equality in your classroom? Do you address the issue of social justice?

k. A noted researcher commented that "disturbances" are required for significant changes to take place. What were the two greatest "disturbances" in your school/school district that led to positive changes in delivering equity for your students? How has your school/ school district changed (been improved)?

Dr. Pedro Noguera, Stoops Dean, University of Southern California, Rossier School of Education

LESSONS LEARNED

Dr. Pedro **Noguera**
Stoops Dean - University of Southern California, Rossier School of Education

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It would not be in the best interests of education nor the students we serve to restore the status quo that existed prior to the pandemic, since that status quo was not operating effectively to meet the needs of our students. Instead, we must re-imagine what education could be and should be for the vast majority of students we serve in California, who are students of color.

Excerpts from Session #21:

What Schools Can Be: Planning for Schools After the Pandemic Conducted by Dr. Pedro Noguera - Distinguished Professor of Education A Guide to Equity in Remote Learning 11 Faculty Director, Center for the Transformation of Schools, UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies Audience - Administrators/Teacher/Parent/Para-ed/Leadership.

Segment #1: *Timestamp 14 - 15:42*

What needs do you anticipate or know that your students and staff are bringing with them to school and how are you preparing to address them?

Synchronous Professional Learning: Discuss the following questions in your small group and report out to the larger body when you reconvene.

Asynchronous Professional Learning: Write your individual answers to each of the following questions.

- How does your school/school district support the mental health needs of students?

- Is there a plan for addressing the "learning loss"?

- What lessons were learned about how children learn at home, as well as the obstacles for learning at home, during the pandemic?

- What did you do to rebuild a sense of community among your students?

Segment #2: *Timestamp 16:30 - 17:30*

What steps are you taking to address the social and emotional needs of students and staff?

Synchronous Professional Learning: Discuss the following questions in your small group and report out to the larger body when you reconvene.

Asynchronous professional Learning: Write your individual answers to each of the following questions.

- What measures were taken at your school to address the social-emotional needs of adults on campus?

- Why is it important to begin all staff meetings with a "check-in"? What are the benefits? What are the possible drawbacks?

- Why is it important to listen to students talk about their own lived experiences? On these occasions, can a teacher learn from a student?

Segment #3: *Timestamp 21:00 – 22-32*
What are the barriers to equity at your school?

Synchronous Professional Learning: Discuss the following questions in your small group and report out to the larger body when you reconvene.

Asynchronous professional Learning: Write your individual answers to each of the following questions.

- In what ways does your school make the pursuit of equity a central goal?

- How do schools pursue equity without lowering the achievement expectations for all students?

- Why is equity an issue that affects all children, not just poor children of color?

Segment #4: *Timestamp 29:54 – 33-25*
In what areas will you need to develop the capacity of your staff and your school to address the needs of your students?

Synchronous Professional Learning: Discuss the following questions in your small group and report out to the larger body when you reconvene.

Asynchronous professional Learning: Write your individual answers to each of the following questions.

- What is a "whole-child focus" and how does it benefit all students?

- When students choose to continue distance learning, what equity considerations should teachers make?

- Why is it important for teachers to focus less on the grades and more on student learning?

- What is the distinction between "student compliance" and "student empowerment"?

Segment #5: *Timestamp 39:11 – 39:57*

How is your district building partnerships with parents? What steps have you taken to ensure that your school is responsive to parental needs and concerns?

Synchronous Professional Learning: Discuss the following questions in your small group and report out to the larger body when you reconvene.

Asynchronous professional Learning: Write your individual answers to each of the following questions.

- When your school reopened following the pandemic, what steps were made to prepare students, and what steps were made to prepare faculty and staff members for their return to on-site learning?

- What capacity building is still needed at your school site to bring about to equity for all students?

- What strategies did your school or school district used to rebuild a sense of community at your school? Was it effective? What else could have been done?

Conclusion:

How do we create equitable classrooms and schools? Investments in early brain development, equity in pre-school education, K-12 classrooms, and higher education, collectively, have the power to shape a child's education, his/her financial future, and the economic status that his/her family will enjoy (or suffer) for decades. The long-term value of education at all levels cannot be overstated, which is why all children should have access to the educational resources that will allow them to maximize their potential and become a contributing member of their community and country. However, not all children are granted equal opportunities to succeed in school and life. Professional development in DEI offers us all a more promising future.

Educational disparities in America would not exist today if DEI had guided American education from the Emancipation Proclamation to the present time. As schools for African American children were established in the late 1860s, all that needed to be done was to apply both the spirit and the letter of the 14th amendment, which called for equality for all citizens (equal protection under the law). Unfortunately, the scourge of racism has had no appreciable cure for over two centuries.

Since the late 1800s, (1) there have been certain groups who have received almost limitless opportunities to receive a high quality education by law, by custom, and by deliberate design, (2) the philosophy dictating educational practices in America disadvantaged other groups, (3) the distribution of financial resources to schools were all controlled and defined by powerful forces that created and maintained inequities in educational opportunities based on race, and (4) we should not be surprised that this ill-fated history has had long-term consequences that have reached into the 21st century.

Research from cognitive science tells us that every child develops differently with a unique set of social, emotional, and learning needs. Not only is it vitally important for an educator who wishes to be effective in the classroom to learn about cultural differences in students, it is also crucial that educators spend time with each child to learn about his/her individual needs. Evaluating children based on a teacher's knowledge of that child, with cognitive growth as the primary goal of education, every child has an opportunity to succeed with equity as a guide in both learning and assessment.

While American educators and parents agree that all students should be treated equitably, putting that philosophy into practice can be challenging without the appropriate tools to achieve that goal. This Field Guide not only addresses the knowledge required for that change to occur, but it provides guidelines that any individual, school, or school district can begin implementing immediately. Daniel Becker said "If it is important to you, you'll find a way. If not, you'll find an excuse." There is no question that all institutions should elevate educational equity from an action item in its "vision statement" to a priority. When that has been achieved, we may finally eliminate our long record of futile excuses. We have an uncompromising challenge ahead of us, which is to guarantee that the educational equity delivered to our students of the future does not at all resemble our shortcomings of the past.

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Evaluation-Survey for Field Guide #10
https://bit.ly/GUIDE10SURVEY

CAAASA *presents:*

Lifting Our Voices:

Field Guide #10:
Equity as a Centerpiece in Education

Presenter:
Dr. Pedro Noguera
Stoops Dean
University of Southern California,
Rossier School of Education

School Re-orientation for Post-COVID Learning:
What to Know, Do, and Expect as In-Person Instruction Resumes

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Superintendents & Administrators