PSTC

Puget Sound Transformational Collaborative

Phase 2 Playbook

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The Puget Sound Transformational Collaborative (PSTC): Background and Intro to the Phase 2 Playbook

Intro to the PSTC

Background:
COVID-19 has disrupted the educational system as we know it, presenting immense challenges to students, families, educators, and district leaders – as well as an unprecedented opportunity to transform systems by leading with racial equity. Recognizing the need and opportunities to band together on behalf of all children across the region, PSESD initiated a network of community and district leaders to transform conditions for the benefit of Black & Brown students and families. To date, there have been two phases: 1 (May - October 2020) and 2 (November 2020 - March 2021).

Phase 2 Purpose:
The PSTC will build trusting relationships for equitable collaboration that aims to uplift bright spots & transformational opportunities across multiple systems drivers of Black & Brown student engagement. Figure one illustrates our prioritized systems drivers, specific focal areas, and intended outcomes in further detail.

Who we are:
Members include student, family, community, district, and PSESD leaders from across King & Pierce counties. A full list of phase 2 participants is available in Appendix One.

How we collaborate to achieve our shared purpose:
The phase 2 purpose was established according to members' shared priorities. The trajectory of phase 2 and each session was planned in conjunction with district and community advisors and in consultation with Erin Jones who led our relationship building efforts. Convenings occurred every other week for 1.5 hours. Figure two illustrates our full process and timeline.

Intro to the Phase 2 Playbook

Each playbook page synthesizes the recommendations and bright spot practices emerging from each of the 8 sessions (2 sessions per system driver of Black & Brown student engagement), with one section dedicated to our relationship building. We aim to disseminate this across the region, and to uplift these practices & recommendations during Phase 3 continuous improvement cycles.

Please note that the playbook is just one mode of capturing the beliefs, hopes, & practices shared by members. To fully leverage the wisdom within, it must be coupled with the changing of hearts and minds within our educational system in order to create an equitable culture that values and celebrates the lived experiences of all students & adults.

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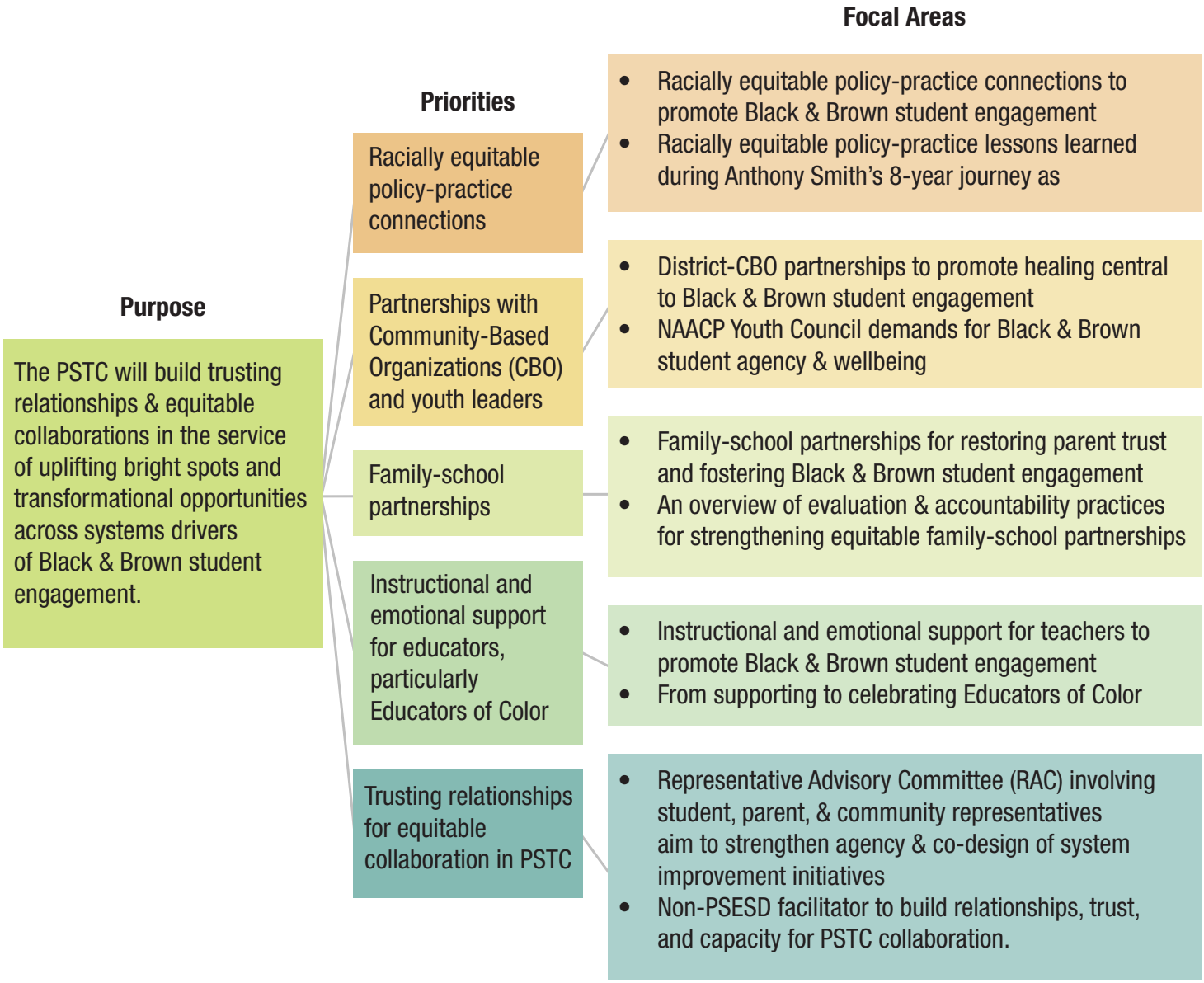
Figure 1. Phase 2 Purpose, Priorities, Focal Areas, and Outcomes



Outcomes

1. Strengthened relationships towards more equitable collaboration.
2. A "playbook" of key recommendations and action opportunities for strengthening Black & Brown student engagement.
3. Role specific opportunities to uplift collaborative focal priority areas.

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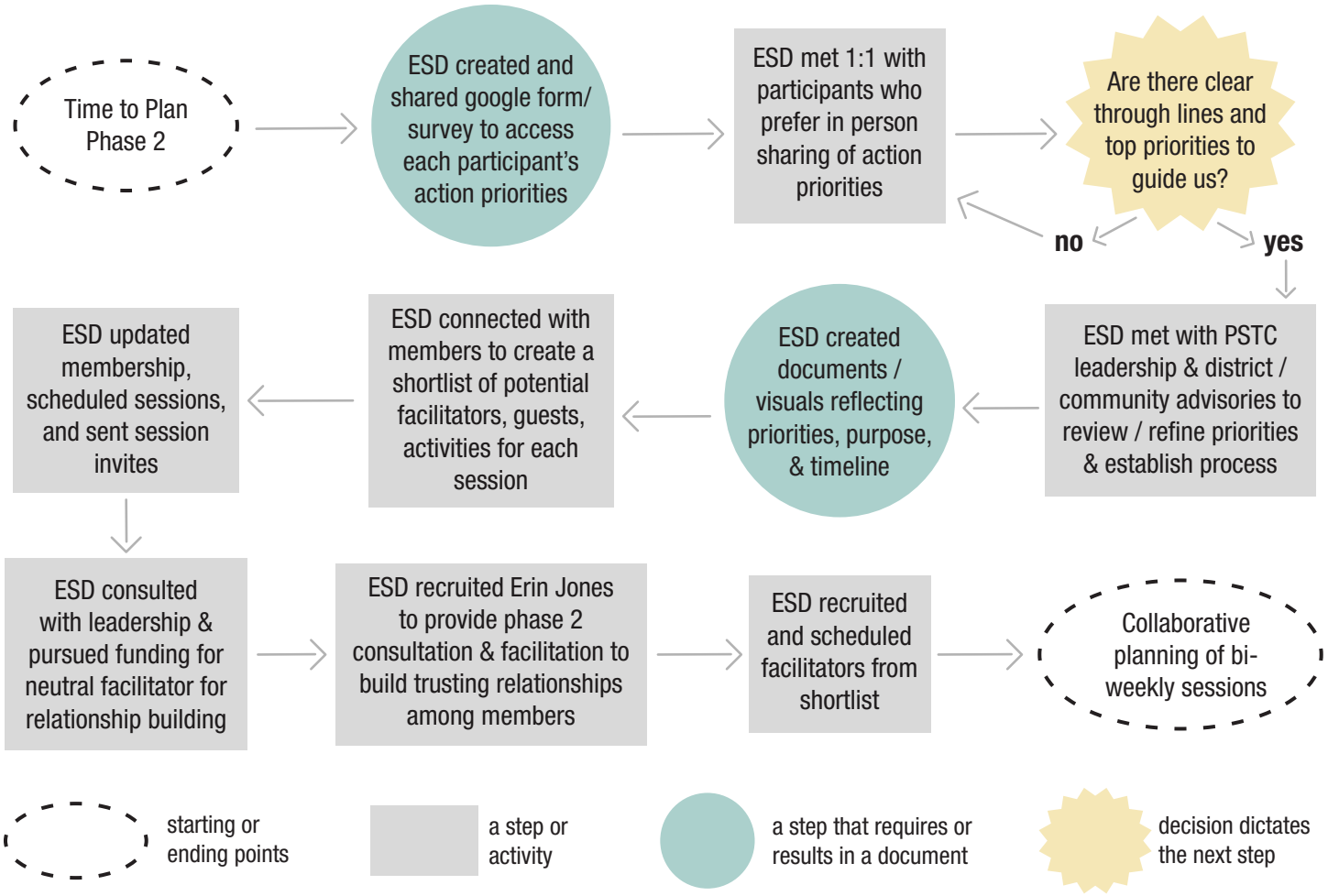
Figure 2. Process Map for Phase 2



Phase 2 Timeline: November 2020 – March 2021

Nov. 17
Racially equitable policy-practice connections 1

Dec. 15
Family-school partnerships 1

Jan. 26
Racially equitable policy-practice connections 2

Feb. 23
Family-school partnerships 2

March 23
Reflection, synthesis & celebration

Dec. 1
Community-Based Organization (CBO) & youth leadership partnerships 1

Jan. 12
Instructional & emotional support for teachers 1

Feb. 12
Instructional & emotional support for teachers 2

March 9
Community-Based Organization (CBO) & youth leadership partnerships 2

Building Trusting Relationships and Shared Commitments to Phase 2 Collaborative Priorities, Mutual Growth, and Accountability

Erin Jones, Independent Education and Systems Consultant

To build trusting relationships & shared commitments, the collaborative focused on:

Growing from….	Towards….
Grounding collaboration in norms that "normalize" white middle class values	Initiating every collaboration with gratitude and establish BRAVE spaces with community *agreements*
Approaching racial equity learning as an intellectual exercise	Building partners' emotional and behavioral capacities to engage in racial equity learning with grace & repetition
Analyzing documents (e.g. "White Supremacy Culture Characteristics")	Adopting the actions the document inspires, with multiple repetitions to internalize & integrate over time
Leading with one-way expectations of others	Leading with vulnerability and modeling personal commitment
"Calling out" and a culture of shame and guilt	"Calling in" and collectively lifting up each other's best selves

...While grounding all efforts in the 3H's

HUMANITY	HISTORY	HUMILITY
I do my best to center the humanity of ALL around me, especially those who are different from me (look/ sound/believe different things). I seek to see the dignity in each person in my presence.	We ALL have stories, those stories must center us. Those stories include good, bad, ugly. We can't fix what we won't face, in our own personal stories, the stories of our communities, the stories of public education, the stories of this nation.	I don't know everything. I am always in a learning posture. I can't do anything great on my own. I need the support of others around me.

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Three White Supremacy Culture Characteristics Prioritized by PSTC to Identify and Disrupt

PSTC members engaged in cycles of shared growth and accountability to disrupting white supremacy culture – damaging norms and standards that promote white supremacy thinking.
Members prioritized identifying and disrupting the following 3 characteristics of white supremacy culture:
Perfectionism – tendency to identify what is inadequate.
Sense of Urgency – tendency to not take the time to be inclusive, thoughtful, or to think long-term
Defensiveness – tendency to view criticism as an individualized attack of another's character
These characteristics and their antidotes are described further in Appendix 2.

Defensiveness

"Looks like: Pushing back on any information that challenges existing beliefs.
Sounds like: "But what about...", "You're lying about...", "You're presenting a biased perspective".
Feels like: white fragility, marginalizing, invalidating."

"Feels like **justifying instead of reflecting** and sounds like interrupting, knowing, reacting without acknowledging uncertainty/growth areas."

"When we **humanize the space** it helps to diffuse these characteristics."

"Speak up and **support.**"

"**Slowing down** and being intentional about inclusion."

"**Calling it out** as soon as I see it first appear."

"Developing empathy and compassion is a sign that **we are transforming defensiveness.**"

Sense of Urgency

"**We can't** because we need to focus on COVID."

"**I don't have time** to collaborate on my agenda with key individuals or create relationships so I am going to just move ahead."

Perfectionism

"Personally taking mistakes as something wrong and taking a long time to get things done; in prior workplaces and in own culture growing up, it was easy to point out the mistakes, **wasn't a culture of appreciation.**"

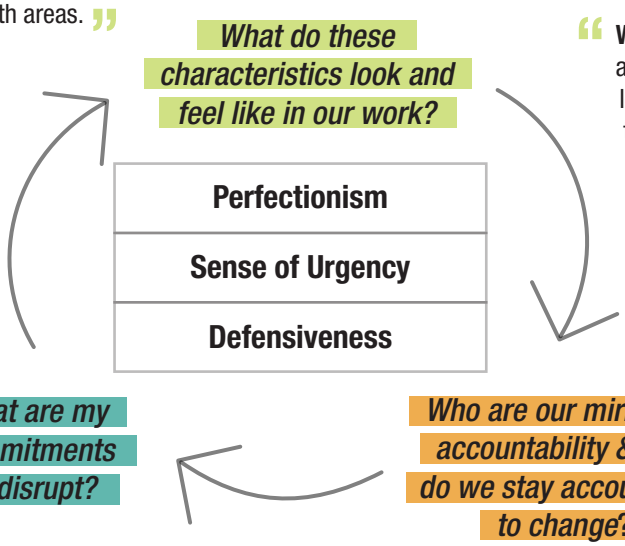
"Inner expectations of being Black and **having to do more.**"

"**We become paralyzed** because things are not perfect; **we can't move on.** We lose the voices who are trying to move the work forward in an authentic way."

"**I started with myself** and then looked at my daughters, son, nieces and nephew. They are my mirrors."

"My children, our families and **community** are my mirrors."

"**Younger students** are my mirror."



"Do we honor time over people? Time is more than the clock on the wall." I commit to allowing the people in a space to **dictate what they need** rather than the agenda."

"**I have to first disrupt my perfectionism.** After that happens, I will commit to telling someone that they are not perfect and to move on."

"I can commit to asking more questions and **encouraging shared power** and decisions making with community which should slow the process to be more inclusive."

"If you really want other people to change, **it has to echo through you, shine through you**..mimic and emulate for others. They will see you, be curious, ask questions."

"We have to have these types of dialogue to name it, so that we can interrupt. How do we create an environment where it is a collective effort to undo it. **Have to be able to see it to undo it.**"

"For us, it is about **authentic student voice** along with parent voice and having individual and small group conversations and the qualitative data that comes from that, as well as specifically acting on data and progress around disproportionality, opportunity, removing barriers, etc. That work is progressing."

"One of the things that supports me in assessing impacts is **listening** for and **engaging** with those who are most critical of our work."

"**Hit pause** when the sense of urgency takes over."

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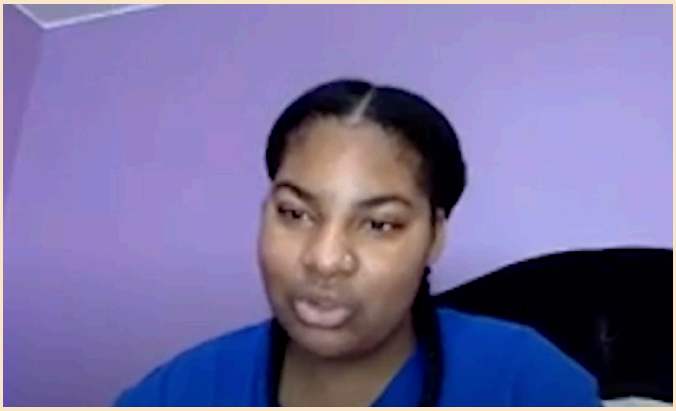
NAACP Youth Council Warm Demands for Black & Brown Student Well-Being & Engagement

Increase Youth Voice, Especially BIPOC Youth in Decision-Making at All Levels of Public Education

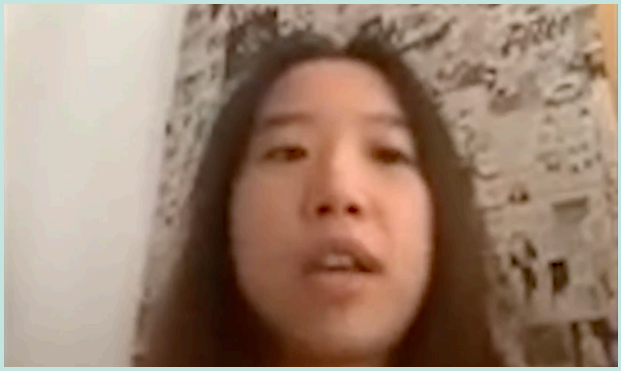


Rena Mateja Walker Burr, 11th Grade, Cleveland High School, Seattle, WA, NAACP Youth Council **VIDEO**

Next Steps:

- Having student voice is one thing, using student voice is another. Bring in students and families IF the system is ready to take action.
- Determine what a welcoming culture that centers youth voice would look and feel like and aim for it.
- Consider how existing committees would benefit from BIPOC student leadership.
- Commit superintendents and admin to coming to schools & classrooms to see what is going on with students. There are real people behind numbers who have to live with the effects of those numbers.

Increase Access to Opportunities, Mental Health Services, and Financial Literacy Pathways



Kaley Duong, 11th Grade, Meadowdale High School, Lynnwood, WA, NAACP Youth Council **VIDEO**

Next Steps:

- Attend to the ways in which racism impacts mental health of your BIPOC students
- Increase access to BIPOC counselors and therapists
- Ensure all students are connected to trusted adults
- Consider telehealth & online services
- Provide clear pathways to resources and services for BIPOC students

Hire and Retain More BIPOC Educators

Alexis Mburu, 10th Grade, Foster High School, Tukwila, WA, NAACP Youth Council **VIDEO**

Next Steps:

- Listen to BIPOC student testimonies about what they gain by having BIPOC teachers.
- Listen to BIPOC teachers about the challenges they face in their buildings and in their districts.
- Ensure constant communication, feedback, and input by partnering with BIPOC educators to improve retention.
- Attend to the ways racism impacts mental health of your BIPOC educators.
- Make sure your administrators, building leaders, and teachers know the evidence for the benefits of BIPOC students having same-race teachers.

Incorporate Restorative Justice Practices in Police-Free Schools Instead of Problematic, Outdated Discipline Practices

Anya Souza-Ponce, 9th Grade, Ballard High School, Seattle, WA, NAACP Youth Council **VIDEO**

Next Steps:

- Work with students to create restorative justice policies and practices.
- Change mindsets to problem-solve and to think of discipline as getting better, not punishment.
- Examine disproportionalities in discipline, suspension, and expulsion rates for BIPOC boys and girls and look to the system (policies, practices, etc.) for opportunities to address this.
- Expand counseling and mental health services in place of security or school policing.
- Consider restorative justice or connection circles with youth and parents that provide agency, reflection, and collaborative engagement.

Racially Equitable Policy-Practice Connections to Promote Black & Brown Student Engagement

> Americans have long been trained to see the deficiencies of people rather than policy. It's a pretty easy mistake to make: People are in our faces. Policies are distant. We are particularly poor at seeing the policies lurking behind the struggles of people.
> — Ibram X. Kendi, How to Be an Antiracist

Recommendations from the Puget Sound Transformational Collaborative

1. Cultivate a leadership role for Black & Brown students, families, teachers and staff to review, revise, and create policies impacting them.

Regional Bright Spot from Clover Park School District: A critical component to our commitment to equity and inclusion involves elevating and empowering student voice through communication channels for traditionally marginalized students to share their insights, feedback, and perspectives with district administrators. Specifically, we equip students to influence and impact our decisions, operations, and policies via the Superintendent's Youth Advisory Coalition (SYAC) –a group of 18 students across 3 high schools empowered to directly advise the superintendent on matters most closely impacting them. To date, students have sharedcritical feedback about remote learning challenges, operational short falls, and communication weaknesses across platforms. Student feedback directly informed district-side adjustments to remote learning to better meet the needs of all students. **(Grant Twyman)**

2.Ensure existing policies are racially equitable, student-centered, and humanizing in language and content.

Look For:	Common Pitfalls	Recommendation
Whose needs, experiences, beliefs are centered?	Example phrasing: "The board believes..." "The principal shall establish"	Rephrase to: "Together with students and families...."
To whom is the responsibility, burden, or expectation placed on for success?	Placing entire responsibility on students	Make explicit how teachers, administrators, and communities are partnering to support student success
Whose cultural norms are valued?	White-supremacist cultural values like individualism or productivity are prioritized (e.g., "develop self-discipline and associated good working habits")	Explicitly reference the ways, norms, and values of communities of color that are reflected in the policy.

Look For:	Common Pitfalls	Recommendation
Subjective Language	Subjective language translate to assumptions and inferences that center dominant cultural norms & values (i.e. white supremacist values)	Consider associations & assumptions implicated in the given phrasing that require explicit retraining & modification
Does language emphasize student deficits or strengths?	Example phrasing: "to help students master specific skills"; "to help student gain the maximum benefits"	Intentionally anchor policy in strengths of students, families, and educators and in cultural community assets.
Does language adopt a 'one-size' fits all approach and overlook individual & cultural differences?	Policy refers to 'all students'	Ensure policy connections and implications explicitly prioritize supports for historically underserved students. Consider creating adaptive, targeted policies to achieve universal goals.
Is language humanizing or dehumanizing?	The policy is done to students not with students	Co-construct and review policy with students to ensure the language and purpose reflects students' lived experiences
Is language punitive, evaluative, or formative?	Emphasis on evaluation or consequences	Emphasize growth and learning oriented opportunities afforded by the policy
Is the implicit educational objective holistic or academic achievement-centered?	Example phrasing: "establish guidelines which clarify the nature and use of homework assignments to improve school achievement"	Decenter 'academic' achievement and highlight whole-child learning & development (e.g. identity, relationship building, community, culture, social justice)

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3. Replace universal policies with adaptive, targeted policies that are meaningful & relevant across students with diverse abilities, needs, and culturally linguistic backgrounds to achieve universal outcomes. Check out a timely article and a short video on targeted universalism.

Targeted Universalism is an approach to advancing equity and justice that acknowledges our common goals and shared fate as human beings, while also addressing the stark contrasts in access to opportunity between different groups of people as a result of structural racism and other forms of systemic oppression and "othering".

- Kathleen Osta, National Equity Project

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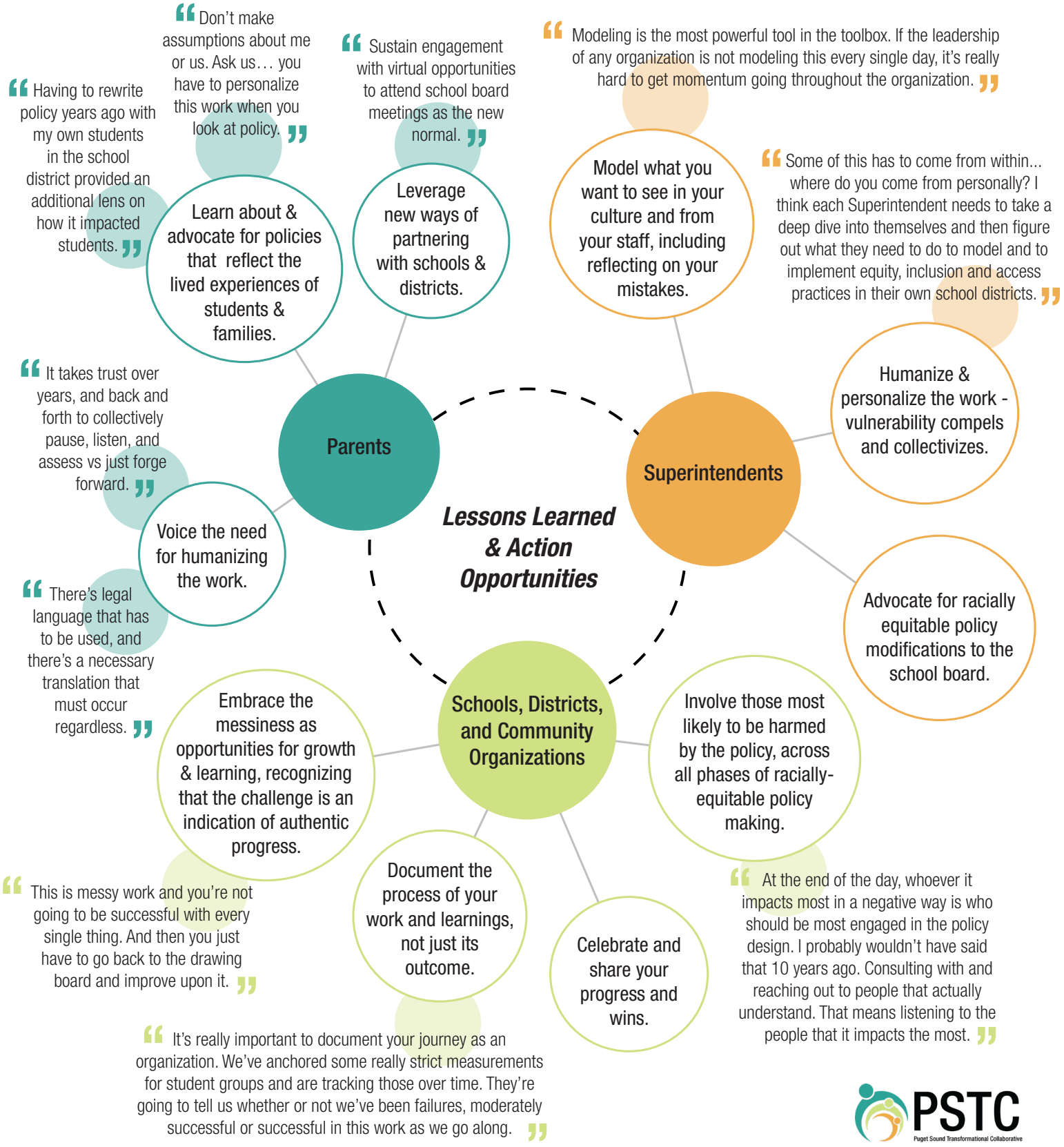
Racially Equitable Policy-Practice Lessons Learned during Anthony Smith's 8-Year Journey as Superintendent:

Parent, Community, and District Leaders Reflections & Action Opportunities



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Instructional and Emotional Support for Educators of Color to Promote Black & Brown Student Engagement

For healing-centered engagement & the creation of antiracist work environments, Black & Brown leaders ask co-conspirators to:

"Work to practice **healing centered engagement** even through the hard and difficult conversations and situations."

"**Lift honest over nice.**"

"**Actively listen** and keep family values near and dear."

"**Graciously stand up** for our humanity."

"Address **internalized racial oppression** and the manifestations of inferiority, i.e. mimicking and supporting white supremacist culture in professional spaces."

"**Take risk.**"

"**Lighten the load** on Educators of Color who are already going above and beyond for students, which takes a toll on BIPOC people who are already confronting racism in their own lives."

"Speak up on behalf of BIPOC folx publicly. **Solidarity** when folx speak up."

"Not leave all of the teaching on me, **speak up.**"

"When exposing and exploring themes related to BIPOC challenges of staff and students, any themes identified must tie **action items** to identified concerns. **If doesn't get written then it doesn't get acted on.**"

Systems moves for retention of EOCs

from **If you listen, We will stay: Why Teachers of Color Leave and How to Disrupt Teacher Turnover**

- Collect and disaggregate data (by race/ethnicity) on teacher recruitment, hiring, and retention.
- Value teachers of color by providing loan forgiveness, service scholarships, loan repayment incentives, and relocation incentives for teachers coming into the field.
- Invest in the recruitment, preparation, and development of strong, diverse leaders committed to positive working conditions for a diverse workforce.
- Empower teachers of color by ensuring that curriculum, learning environments, and work environments are inclusive and respectful of all racial and ethnic groups.

Recommended Resources

- **Martinez Fellowship - Early Career POC Educator Support**
- **Educators of Color Leadership Community**

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Transition from Supporting to Celebrating Educators of Color

Regional Bright Spot Example: Educators of Color Leadership Community (ECLC)

The ECLC Journey

2017

Road Map superintendents prioritize retention of Black, Indigenous, Educators of Color

Focus groups funded by the Gates Foundation inform the establishment of the ECLC

2018

psesd excellence & equity in education
Puget Sound Educational Service District

PSESD co-designs the ECLC with regional educators of color

EDUCATORS OF COLOR LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY
"He aupuni palapala ko'u" — King Kamehameha III

Launches 1st cohort

Purpose of ECLC emerges as a transformative, healing space to support professional learning and experiences specific to Educators of Color.

4 cohorts of 140 educators

Positive impact is **nationally renowned**

For more information, see the following **report**

2021

Priorities & Wisdom for Creating Liberatory Spaces for Educators of Color to Thrive:

Key Takeaways from ECLC Leaders, Eileen Yoshina, Érica Gonzalez-Jones, Tamasha Emedi, & Sui-Lan Ho'okano, and Transformational Collaborative members.

Priority Areas for Creating Liberatory Spaces	Collaborative Voices
Educators of Color (EOCs) are assets to be valued, not challenges to be assimilated.	I know there are many people in this room who, as young people, remember being taught that we were challenges...Using myself as a very easy example, I'm loud and I talk to everybody and I stay networking. In first, second, third grade, especially as a black girl, that's seen as bossy, but then thinking about how that translated to me as now a building leader, it's seen as wrapping my community around each other and making sure we always turn towards one another.
Compensate for and redistribute the additional burden on EOCs.	Principals – it's your job to take on the pushback, handle that, that labor so Educators of Color don't have to.
	Have conversations with districts to help them engage more with community to lessen the pressure on individual people of color and to try to get the collective power so people can talk through their coalition so an individual doesn't have to compromise and feel like they won't be retaliated against, help people share their voice.
	On a micro level if a principal says don't worry about your sub, I'll cover your class if I have to so you can go to this opportunity. That's an example of a small way of how you show up differently.

Priority Areas for Creating Liberatory Spaces	Collaborative Voices
Liberatory spaces help EOCs move from surviving to thriving.	Too many times we are in spaces where we're cut off and we're left with the reopening of our wounds. ECLC became this collective to share our stories and to heal each other and we were able to remove ourselves from the isolation that we were in while we were in our buildings. And that created a village...supporting each other, knowing we're not alone to share the resources and create the collective necessary to not just survive, but to dismantle and to build even stronger in our movements.
	The labor that we do often goes silenced or unrecognized and often uncompensated. Can you just be flexible over here? Hey, this Black kid or this queer kid really needs some support. And if you could. If you could. It can become really paralyzing. None of us were experiencing those things in a silo...they were happening throughout Washington state schools. [In the ECLC] We had community with each other. It's built trust and it's built its relationship, but it's also built the ability for us to ask others who have navigated before us, what did that look like and what do we need to do?
Support creation of and participation in liberatory spaces across the system.	Good people get promoted but get burned out. They forget the way it feels to work with kids. The higher you get in organizations the more racist it can get!
	You can be fearless - but you go back into survival mode and get paralyzed when met with more power or barriers on high-levels.
Use the power we have as EOCs vs the power we are given.	We really had our own inherent power, not that was granted to us by our positionality or titles or certificates, but that was given to us by our ancestors, by our community, by our people, and being able to be rooted in that power and stay focused there. The ECLC became the collective ability to take ourselves out of a system that individualizes everything.
	The power we have is actually this incredible fractal power where what we do in our small scale spaces is reflected into the large and then back reflected into the small. A really good example of a micro liberatory space that I like to think about is how I present as a queer educator in an elementary school classroom. I'm not necessarily bringing up everyday to my students like it's me, the queer teacher. But they see it and they know it. And so then they start recognizing like, oh, maybe we don't laugh at kids who we think are boys, but sometimes dress in girl clothes and then that goes back to their families. And suddenly there's like a big liberation shift that happened because of this micro decision to not feel like I have to fit into what people imagine when they say elementary school teacher or elementary school leader. I'm actually just being my full, authentic self. And kids are then recognizing, well, what if I'm my full, authentic self? And what happens if we all just practice authenticity.
It's not just about the numbers: Retention IS Recruitment.	As Black educators, Indigenous educators and educators of color, we've all been in positions where we have folks that we look up to who have been in education longer than us...should we go where you are? And it doesn't matter what we put on the website. It does not matter how many policies are written. What matters is that Black educator that's already there telling me whether or not I should apply.
	...look at who's around. Looking at the pictures, looking at who's available. If I'm looking around and trying to decide, I want to see who's already there. And so when we as communities are able to retain our Black educators, our Indigenous educators and our educators of color, we are just drawn to where we are already.

Priority Areas for Creating Liberatory Spaces	Collaborative Voices
Centering EOCs is Centering Community.	It isn't just a profession. It isn't a job. It's our every breath. It's our daily life. It's our children. It's our future. It's our survival. And so when you're looking at Educators of Color, you're actually looking at people who are coming with their community and they're valuing their communities and there's no separation. So when you look at family engagement, that's a huge part of educators of color as well. That family engagement piece, because we are the community, we are a part of that community. We're bringing the richness of those communities. And so you're centering the community. You're not centering just the educators of color. And that's one of the most valuable pieces that are forgotten, that when you bring the richness that the educators of color bring, you bring community. And with education systemically, it's always been the education and then the community. It should always have been the other way; that the communities are the drivers, the education systems are the passengers.
The thriving of EOCs is an essential condition for thriving students.	The health and well-being of the Educators of Color is a very good indicator of the health and well-being of your Students of Color because they see us. They're paying attention. They notice who leaves every year, they notice who stays, they notice how different their different educators are treated throughout.
	Being able to have our educators of color recognize their value and understanding that is a richness that they are born into. And this is a part of who they are. Just by being born and bringing that life into the classroom, in turn brings life to our students, because then they're able to value the richness that they come with. And when they bring themselves into the classrooms, they're bringing their culture, they're bringing their food, they're bringing their languages.
	"We need more people who look like the kids", it's not about that, it's about how they value children of color, how they see their gifts, how they see their brilliance when they disrupt white dominant norms, a lot of time is spent teaching white people how to emulate what people of color are doing.

Family-School Partnerships for Restoring Parent Trust and Fostering Black & Brown Student Engagement

> I hope that this is a lesson learned to prioritize family and community engagement and technology access for our students. The biggest issue is not just technology access, but also supporting our families to become designers on what that looks like and feels like for them.
>
> As a district, we need to center our Black and Brown families and work closely with them to understand how we build those bridges. We need to center understanding that we learn from them and honoring their brilliance and the wealth of knowledge they bring forward.
>
> - *Carlina Brown-Banks*

The PSTC recommends schools & families establish realistic expectations & commitments to implementing the following practices for building equitable collaborations one at a time or in tandem:

1. **Build capacity for equitable collaboration among both family partners and school staff and differentiate the skills necessary for collective impact.**

Family partners must be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the educational system. Equally important, educators must simultaneously strengthen their asset-based mindsets, strengthen and diversify their communication methods, and view parents as integral to student success. Underemphasizing or ignoring educators' needs for capacity building is a common pitfall to equitable collaborations that perpetuates unequal power dynamics.

2. **Apply the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for identifying & developing *specific* conditions and capacities essential to equitable, effective school-family partnerships.**

The Dual Capacity-Building Framework is a nationally-recognized, research-based, and field-tested support for building family-school partnerships. Additionally, it has the added benefit of strong recent, regional uptake across a number of school and family partnerships. For a brief overview of the framework see Figure 1 or **www.dualcapacity.org.**

3. **Establish multiple modes for family engagement and consistently assess them for how beneficial they are to student success.**

Ideally, families should be able to *name and transparently assess* multiple practices and offerings to partner with schools for student success. A regional exemplar of this includes **Highline School District's Family Engagement Catalogue**, which makes transparent family ratings of multiple engagement opportunities across 5 domains - learning, relational, developmental, collaborative, and interactive.

4. **Apply key principles for equitable family-school collaborations to those involving community based organizations (CBOs).**

Identify conditions and capacities (e.g. leadership support, sustainable resources & infrastructure) applicable across school-CBO partnerships, and foster shared language and practices across partnership types.

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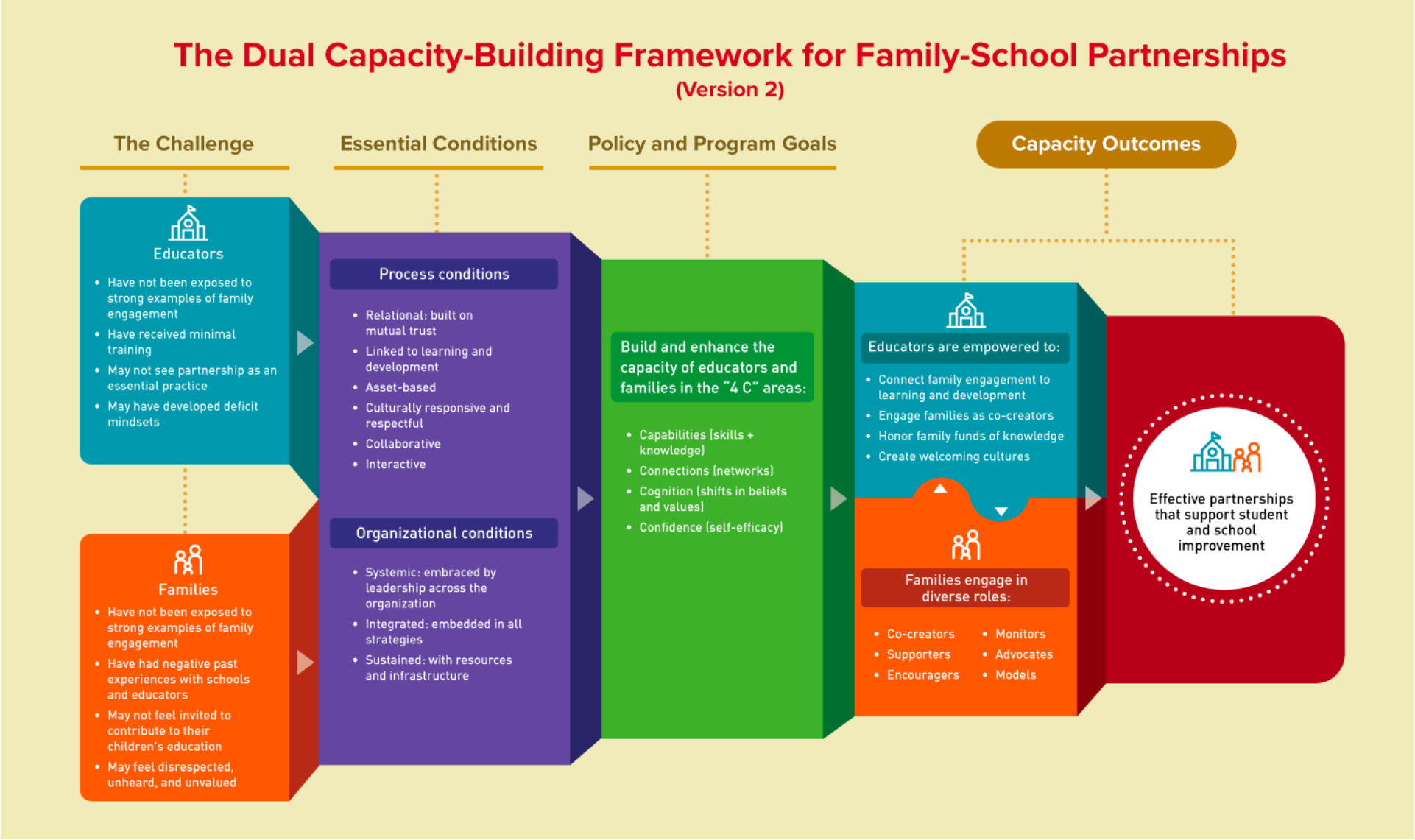
Figure 1. The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships (Version 2)



Mapp, K. L. & Bergman, E. (2019). Dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships (Version 2). Retrieved from: www.dualcapacity.org

Conditions & Opportunities for Family-School Partnerships: **Highline's Family Action Committee**

Reflections by Superintendent Susan Enfield

Essential Conditions

Language and practice must prioritize action over advising

Many superintendents have a family advisory committee or something else. But I think language matters. It's a family action committee, not advisory committee, because that changes, if you think about it, what that group really is.

Board support & vision is essential to effectiveness and sustainability

...this work has to be first and foremost supported by the board. So our board president and my boss, Angelica Alvarez, is here and she is the mother of graduates of Highline and the grandmother, the abuela, of a Highline student as well.

Align around a shared purpose: 'Team Kid'

...if we really want our families to be our partners and for all of us to be on the same team, we're all on team kid.

Trust is a multi-year investment in the success of the partnership

We now have many members of our family action committee who have been members for multiple years. So there's just a high level of trust and honesty and they know they can push and but they also trust that we are in this work with them. They don't expect us to be perfect, but they expect us to be in the work with them with honesty and integrity and tenacity, and that we can deliver, can't deliver on perfection, but we can deliver on the rest.

Impacts

Strengthened district policies & procedures, particularly for racial equity

I will say that one of the more powerful areas of work that we've done with our family action committee is reviewing board policies and procedures specifically around equity and having them really look at the language and say, yes, no, why this? We share any sort of major initiative that we are planning to launch with the district. We try to bring to them for them to help shape it before it goes public. So rather than just always coming in with things that are already baked and implemented and say, hey, what do you think? And they've helped us identify areas of need and find solutions.

Family-led trainings & strategies for creating welcoming school environments

One of the great things they came up with several years ago was a perennial problem for us has been the fact that not all of our schools are very welcoming when families come in. I'm the superintendent and sometimes I'm a little shocked at how I'm treated when I walk in and I sign the paychecks! So I'm thinking, if I can get that kind of a reception, what does that mean for a family member who comes in, especially someone who speaks a language other than English?

So what are we doing to help create a more welcoming environment? And so our family action committee worked with staff to come up with videos, a little training videos for office staff on what does, for lack of a better term customer service look like for a family member? How do they want to feel? How do they want to be treated? What are some techniques, strategies that that staff and in buildings can use to better welcome our family?

Recommended Resources

Website and Videos on Dual Capacity Framework

- Dual Capacity Framework Organization
- A Family Engagement Framework for All
- Watch the full-length version to learn how leaders can use family engagement plans in their schools and districts.
- Dr Karen Mapp on parent and family engagement in education
- Family Engagement in Education – Harvard Institute

Books and Articles

- Joining Together to Create a Bold Vision for Next Generation Family Engagement

Evaluation

- Evaluating Family Engagement – Case Study
- User Guide Road Map Family Engagement Survey

Parent Leadership

- Capture the Ripple Effect Phase 1
- Capturing the Ripple Effect: Theory of Change
- Community Organizing and Family Issues
- Phase 1-3 Learning Manuals

Regional Leadership Panel:

An Overview of Evaluation & Accountability Practices for Strengthening Equitable Family-School Partnerships

> "We have to evaluate it in that way and make sure that we are building those bridges instead of building walls and finding a way to tear down those walls."

Parent Leader (Seattle) Sebrena Burr

- Build relational bridges between students' first and lifelong teachers – their family – and their classroom teachers
- Indicators of Progress:
  - Reciprocity
  - Genuine respect for the wisdoms of both parents and classroom teachers
  - Communication with grace
  - A student's strengthened sense of self and love for learning

District Leader (Federal Way) Marla Newton

- From the superintendent to the school levels, monthly zoom sessions are held to access family voice & directly translated to policies & procedures.
- Routine review of these policies & procedures involves a feedback loop that communicates to families how their voices are informing practice and assesses whether and how practices are working for those most impacted.

> "… I think one of the important things to really recognize with feedback is once it's given and you take action to circle back and to be shown, here's what you said, here's what we did. How is that working for you?"

> "All families have the capacity to support their children's learning. Families and school staff are equal partners, and the responsibility for cultivating and sustaining relationships among school, home and community rests primarily with teachers and school leaders. And so we had over a thousand staff take that survey. And what that enabled us to do is see where those gaps are in the beliefs."

Family Engagement Leader (Highline) Lolita O'Donnell

Leverage **surveys** & family outreach efforts to identify:

- Gaps in teacher & administrator beliefs around family engagement that must be bridged for equitable school family partnerships.
  - Areas of alignment in educator beliefs around family engagement to identify strengths to build upon.
  - Professional learning opportunities to develop capacity of educators around best practices for authentic partnership with families.
- Family perspectives on what is/is not working during remote learning & needs and opportunities to bridge gaps according to the principles of targeted universalism.

School Board Leader (Highline) Angelica Alvarez

- Establish & nurture relationships with all partners integral to student success – from the community to the superintendent levels – in which the impact of collective efforts can be critically and truthfully reflected upon.

> "When it comes down to how to evaluate the effectiveness is really connecting with my community relationships. To me, relationships really are the opportunity for us to get the truth…I am thankful that I have a good relationship with our superintendent as well, because I'm able to push back and she's able to hear what she doesn't want to hear."

Additional Collaborative Recommendations for Strengthening Evaluation & Accountability Practices for Equitable School-Family Partnerships

- Equip Black & Brown families with the skills and knowledge to navigate the system, starting in Kindergarten
- Involve families most likely to be impacted by a policy/procedure, repeatedly over a year, to assess whether and how desired impacts are being achieved.
- Create an executive level blueprint of bright spot practices & evidence for their effectiveness in which superintendents can leave their legacy.
- Integrate data storytelling in evaluation to unpack intergenerational stories lived by students and parents.
- Move beyond listening sessions by adopting a three level accountability process involving: 1) accessing student voice; 2) designing practices & policies according to what was shared; 3) enlisting communities in the monitoring & evaluation of the outcomes of this process.

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District-CBO Partnerships to Promote Healing Central to Black and Brown Student Engagement

> Building community with others creates a feeling of belonging, a feeling I cherish and need, coming from someone who was born and raised in Eastside of Tacoma all 17 years of my life.
> - Tina Tran- Lincoln High School Senior

PSTC Recommendations for Creating Equitable Conditions to Strengthen District-CBO Partnerships that Promote Healing Central to Black and Brown Student Engagement

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Regional Bright Spot Example: Partnership Involving Greater Tacoma Foundation and Tacoma Public Schools to Improve Social Emotional Learning during Remote Learning (Partnership for Social Emotional Learning).

Impact: When urban schools and their expanded learning partners worked together to improve an online experience to foster social emotional learning, adults coalesced around a shared understanding and commitment to systematically uplifting three core practices designed with community and student input.

Over the past 4 years, the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation has been facilitating partnerships between the school district and multiple expanding learning providers for social & emotional learning. These partnerships were designed to create an in person and online experience around a set of culturally responsive signature practices informed by student voice -- *warm welcomes, emotional check-ins, and closing circles* -- that aligned adults across community and school contexts and modeled consistent messages to students.

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1. Foster partner commitments to identifying shared entry points to the work that can be modeled by multiple adults across multiple settings.

Example: *We had to go into the space and figure out what are some low hanging fruit in the space that's already happening, that's already done, that kids know is common, whether they're in the morning getting breakfast, talking to their lunchroom lady and she's saying, what's up to them? Or they're after school talking to they're out of school time ELO Provider….we had to find some common practices to help center and help align everyone in the space.So it doesn't feel like to teachers, this is one more extra thing they have to do in the classroom because they are already stretched too thin. And then it doesn't feel like to our ELO providers that we already do this….common strategies, it helps everyone in the space stay connected.*

And this work, what we call whole child work/child centered work has a thread of what we call signature practices ['Warm welcomes', 'emotional check-ins', and 'closing circles'] that served to align adults across community and school contexts modeling consistent messages to students…. I cannot stress enough how hard the work is because we can't ask young people to do what we won't do….So what we've done is we were able to attach to here's things that we want to see, not just from adults in the ELO space but from adults and community in our CBOs, adults in our business spaces…. **- Fahren Johnson**

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2. Ensure all partners have a common definition & understanding of the work.

Example: *When we first brought this work down to the space, everyone had their different understanding of what they thought whole child work was or what they thought SEL work was or what they thought healing centered work was. But what it is not and what a lot of people had adapted and thought was that it's something to make kids behave, you know, it's something to manage behavior and students...You won't be committed to the work being impactful if you feel like the role of this work is to make others behave, because it's all about internal work first. And so that was an early lesson for us. We came in naively thinking that folks understood shared/common outcomes between in and out of school time spaces. This was the work, alignment and the planning on the how this work would be done.*

Warm welcome. What does that look like? All that means is "I don't care where you are as an adult in the space, you are saying what's up to students." What that does is help them to build a sense of belonging and it lets them know that you see them, that you know their name and wherever they are in the space, somebody is going to speak to them. So young people have a common language, they have a common understanding of like here's the culture of our school: We say "what's up?" to each other. Here's the culture of our school: We check in. Here's the culture of our school: If there's something that needs to have conversation, we have conversation about it. And we've built these really cool, some call them rituals that say this is our community…. **- Fahren Johnson**

Recommended Resources

1. Bright spots in CBO-District partnerships identified by collaborative members across the region
2. Connection Circles - Origin & Adult Practices
3. Talking Circles for Restorative Justice & Beyond - Background & Process
4. Tacoma Expanded Learning Opportunities
5. Tacoma Whole Child Resources
6. WA State Social Emotional Learning Policy Brief
7. Video: Partnerships for Social and Emotional Learning

Glossary Terminology

Culturally-Responsive [Design]

- Recognizing & uplifting students cultural references, norms, and values

Expanded Learning Organization (ELO)

- Organizations that offer High Quality, Equitable, SEL infused fun enrichment learning environments outside of the school day that support and complement what students are learning during the day

Social & Emotional Learning

- Transformative social & emotional learning (SEL) centers vulnerability, healing, joy and community and models "a process whereby students and teachers build strong, respectful relationships founded on an appreciation of similarities and differences, learn to critically examine root causes of inequity, and develop collaborative solutions to community and societal problems" (CASEL, 2018).

What SEL is NOT:

- SEL is NOT a behavior management strategy.
- SEL can NOT be rooted in White norms that serve to marginalize or even police BIPOC communities.
- SEL is NOT a standalone curriculum, an additional class, or set of lessons; it is central to relationship-building, and all teaching and learning.

Appendix 1: The Puget Sound Transformational Collaborative (PSTC) Members

Puget Sound Educational Service District Leaders

- Abraham Hernandez
- Adam Kay
- Amber McCulloch
- Amy Okeze
- Angelica Alvarez
- Brad Brown
- Julie Rolling
- Kim Beeson
- Megan Streeter

Parent Leaders

- Delhia Winbush (RAC member)
- Jacquetta McGowen (RAC member)
- Sebrena Burr (RAC member & Advisor to PSTC)
- Shereese Rhodes (RAC member & Advisor to PSTC)

Student Leader

- Teá Fortune (RAC member)

School & District Leaders

- Anthony Smith - Riverview
- Brooke Brown - Franklin Pierce
- Diane DeBacker - Seattle
- Ellen Dorr - Renton
- Grant Twyman - Clover Park
- Kelly Denn - Sumner-Bonney Lake (District Advisor to PSTC)
- Krestin Bahr - Eatonville
- Lolita O'Donnell - Highline
- Louanne Decker - Auburn
- Marla Newton - Federal Way (District Advisor to PSTC)
- Michael Farmer - Dieringer
- Rebekah Kim - Highline
- Susan Enfield - Highline
- Susan Kontos - Clover Park
- Tanesha Brandon-Felder - Shoreline
- Vicki Bates - Auburn

Community Leaders

- Anne Arias - Youth Development Executives of King County
- Carlina Brown-Banks - Community Center for Education Results
- Erin Jones - Erin Jones Consulting
- Fa'izah Bradford - Community Center for Education Results
- Haydee Lavariega - United Way King County (RAC member)
- Joseph Seia - Pacific Islander Community Association of Washington
- Kimberly Walker - Best Starts for Kids
- Mahogany Montgomery - South King County Discipline Coalition (RAC member)
- Mary Fertakis - Educational Advocate/Consultant (RAC member)
- Mehret Tekle-Awarun - Building Changes
- Monali Patel - Community Center for Education Results
- Russell Brooks - Red Eagle Soaring

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Appendix 2. Full Descriptions and Antidotes to the Three White Supremacy Culture Characteristics Prioritized by PSTC to Identify and Disrupt

Perfectionism

1. Little appreciation expressed among people for the work that others are doing; appreciation that is expressed usually directed to those who get most of the credit anyway
2. More common is to point out either how the person or work is inadequate
3. Or even more common, to talk to others about the inadequacies of a person or their work without ever talking directly to them
4. Mistakes are seen as personal, i.e. they reflect badly on the person making them as opposed to being seen for what they are -- mistakes
5. Making a mistake is confused with being a mistake, doing wrong with being wrong
6. Little time, energy, or money put into reflection or identifying lessons learned that can improve practice, in other words little or no learning from mistakes
7. Tendency to identify what is wrong; little ability to identify, name, and appreciate what is right

Antidotes: Develop a culture of appreciation, where the organization takes time to make sure that people's work and efforts are appreciated; develop a learning organization, where it is expected that everyone will make mistakes and those mistakes offer opportunities for learning; create an environment where people can recognize that mistakes sometimes lead to positive results; separate the person from the mistake; when offering feedback, always speak to the things that went well before offering criticism; ask people to offer specific suggestions for how to do things differently when offering criticism.

Sense of Urgency

1. Continued sense of urgency that makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive, encourage democratic and/or thoughtful decision-making, to think long-term, to consider consequences
2. Frequently results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results, for example sacrificing interests of communities of color in order to win victories for white people (seen as default or norm community)
3. Reinforced by funding proposals which promise too much work for too little money and by funders who expect too much for too little

***Antidotes*:** Realistic workplans; leadership which understands that things take longer than anyone expects; discuss and plan for what it means to set goals of inclusivity and diversity, particularly in terms of time; learn from past experience how long things take; write realistic funding proposals with realistic time frames; be clear about how you will make good decisions in an atmosphere of urgency.

Defensiveness

1. The organizational structure is set up and much energy spent trying to prevent abuse and protect power as it exists rather than to facilitate the best out of each person or to clarify who has power and how they are expected to use it
2. Because of either/or thinking (see below), criticism of those with power is viewed as threatening and inappropriate (or rude)
3. People respond to new or challenging ideas with defensiveness, making it very difficult to raise these ideas
4. A lot of energy in the organization is spent trying to make sure that people's feelings aren't getting hurt or working around defensive people
5. The defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture

Antidotes: Understand that structure cannot in and of itself facilitate or prevent abuse; understand the link between defensiveness and fear (of losing power, losing face, losing comfort, losing privilege); work on your own defensiveness; name defensiveness as a problem when it is one; give people credit for being able to handle more than you think; discuss the ways in which defensiveness or resistance to new ideas gets in the way of the mission.

From Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups, by Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun, ChangeWork, 2001