JUNE 2025

LEADERSHIP FOR EDUCATIONAL JUSTICE

COHORT 1 IMPACT REPORT

Prepared by: Dr. Kandace Forrester
Restorative Equity Partnership

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OVERVIEW

The Leadership for Educational Justice (LEJ) workshop series was a nine-session learning journey designed to build leadership capacity across Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) through a justice-centered lens.

This series grounded leaders in frameworks such as Fraser's Framework for Social Justice and Targeted Universalism, while creating structured space for collaboration, visioning, and strategy development.

Participants engaged deeply with justice-oriented theory and practice, explored their own roles within the system, and began to map actions aligned with districtwide goals. While attendance varied, the feedback collected through surveys and written reflections reveals a meaningful and resonant learning experience.

CORE CONCEPTS

Throughout the series, participants engaged with a range of frameworks and tools to deepen their practice and leadership for equity. These included:

- Fraser’s Framework for Social Justice (recognition, representation, redistribution)
- Targeted Universalism
- Dr. Forrester’s CUE (Curiosity, Understanding, Empathy) Framework
- Dr. Maisha T. Winn’s Five Pedagogical Stances for Equity (History, Race, Language, Futures, Justice)
- Equitable Data Analysis
- Implementation Science
- Cognitive Biases and Decision-Making

These tools provided a common language and strategic orientation to move equity from theory into practice.

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APPLIED PRACTICE THROUGH COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

As participants engaged with these frameworks, they applied them in real time to address current equity challenges in the district. The workshop design ensured that learning was not abstract, but grounded in the realities of the district and centered on real-world application. Each participant joined a thematic workgroup—focused on students, families, or staff—and used Targeted Universalism to work through the entire problem-solving process.

Through these collaborative efforts, participants:

- Identified equity issues relevant to their focus group
- Examined the historical and racial dimensions of those issues, guided by Dr. Maisha T. Winn's pedagogical stances
- Engaged in inquiry through the CUE framework, approaching each challenge with curiosity, empathy, and a commitment to deep understanding
- Created universal goals grounded in educational justice
- Applied Fraser's principles to reflect on recognition, representation, and redistribution
- Analyzed data through an equity lens to better understand subgroup experiences
- Considered implementation strategies using tools from Implementation Science

This structure enabled participants to immediately connect theory with practice, and to consider how these ideas could inform meaningful change in their own spheres of influence.

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STUDENT-FOCUSED GROUP

The student-focused group created the following universal goal: "In response to students not feeling seen or heard, an appropriate universal goal would be that every student be able to appropriately self-advocate to take ownership of their educational experience." This group explored several approaches to building student capacity and staff awareness around self-advocacy. Though they initially considered digital training tools for staff, technology limitations led them to pivot. Their current focus is on exploring low-tech strategies including:

- Embedding student-facing messages about self-advocacy in handbooks
- Sending email blasts to teachers with guidance on recognizing advocacy behaviors
- Distributing physical self-advocacy prompt cards to students (potentially integrated with ID cards)

STAFF-FOCUSED GROUP

The staff-focused group identified the following universal goal: Ensure all staff, especially district leadership, participate in Cultural Proficiency Training.

This group focused on identifying mechanisms to scale cultural proficiency training across the district. They continue to develop a plan to expand access and ensure district-wide consistency in expectations, tracking, and support.

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FAMILIES-FOCUSED GROUP

The families-focused group developed the following universal goal: Ensure that all families have access to timely and useful information from schools and the district.

To better understand communication barriers, this group initiated a pilot study to gather data from families. Their findings revealed several key insights:

- Many families had more positive perceptions of current communication strategies than expected
- Gaps in technology access and tech support varied widely by site
- Families with limited internet or device access were often excluded the data
- There was inconsistent awareness of how to access existing supports (e.g., FLATS centers)

The group recommended expanding outreach and creating more uniform pathways for families to access technology support and information. They are continuing to collect data to better represent the experiences of less-connected families.

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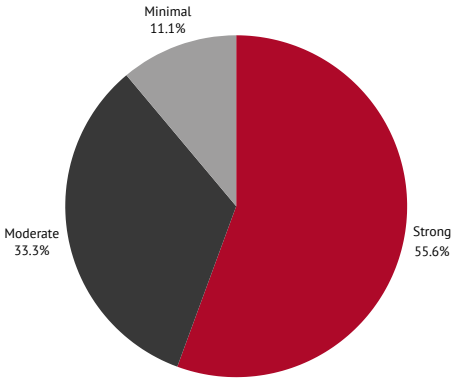
DATA AND REFLECTIONS

- *Pre-Series Survey Responses: 18*
- *Final Session Survey Responses: 7*
- *Qualitative Reflections Collected: Over 60 individual, anonymous responses across sessions*

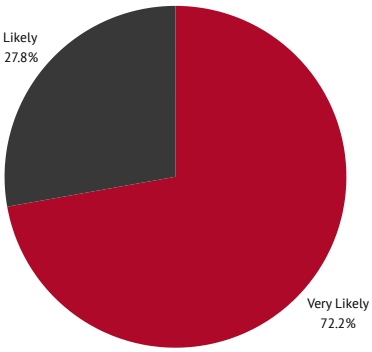
Participants were asked to respond to several questions both at the start of the series and again at its conclusion. The following section summarizes the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from those surveys, offering insight into what participants learned, how they experienced the series, and how they envision applying their learning moving forward.

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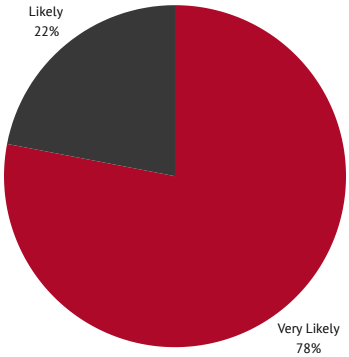
PRE-SERIES SURVEY (N=18)



Understanding of Educational Justice

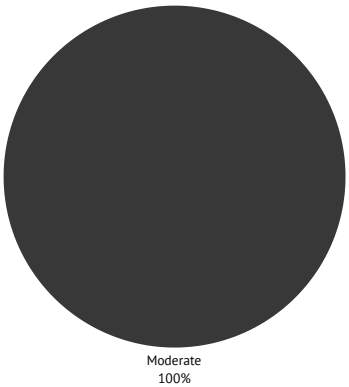


Likelihood of Applying Learning to Improve Student Outcomes

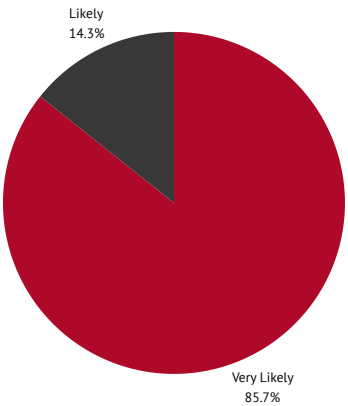


Likelihood of Applying Learning to Improve Student Experience

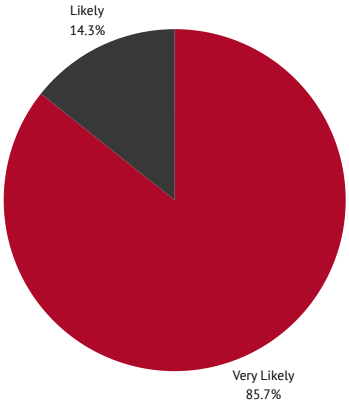
POST-SERIES SURVEY (N=7)



Understanding of Educational Justice



Likelihood of Applying Learning to Improve Student Outcomes



Likelihood of Applying Learning to Improve Student Experience

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SURVEY RESULTS

Narrative Analysis

From the beginning, participants demonstrated a relatively high baseline understanding of educational justice. Nearly all pre-survey respondents reported either a strong or moderate understanding of the concept of Educational Justice. Similarly, at the end of the first session, most participants indicated they were very likely to apply what they learned to improve both student outcomes and experiences.

These trends held steady in the post-series responses. 100% of respondents indicated they were likely or very likely to apply their learning.

Interestingly, all post-survey respondents reported a “moderate” understanding of educational justice. This shift may reflect the effect of inquiry-driven learning design. Through frameworks like CUE, participants were encouraged to question their assumptions and examine the structural roots of inequity. As critical consciousness deepens, so does an awareness of complexity, which can lead to more cautious self-assessment. Walking away with more questions is a signal of growth, not regression.

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QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

What Participants Learned

Based on participant feedback, Fraser's framework helped individuals name injustice more precisely and offered structure for designing equitable interventions. Targeted Universalism was widely recognized as a powerful tool for creating strategy that is both equity-focused and outcomes-driven.

What Participants Loved

Participants repeatedly expressed gratitude for the space to reflect, share, and connect with peers across departments. They appreciated the time to move beyond surface-level discussion and dig into meaningful dialogue.

> "I feel empowered to kindly challenge decisions... to shape more equitable options using what I've learned."
>
> "It was super dope to have folks from different backgrounds share together as equals in this framework."
>
> "I feel more hopeful than ever that the goals we set will be reached. We have the right people, right passion, and belief in our ability to do better as a system."

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What Participants Longed For

According to participant reflections, several individuals requested printed materials in addition to the shared digital folder, along with more structured implementation support. Some felt progress stalled during the goal-setting phase and recommended smaller groups or coaching pods to help maintain momentum. Others expressed the need for clearer support structures, especially for staff in non-student-facing roles.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINUED IMPACT

Follow-Up Engagement

Participants asked for small group coaching cycles to support implementation. This proved challenging given fluctuating attendance. Going forward, smaller implementation teams should be formed at the start, with clear participation expectations and metrics for accountability.

Tools for Sustainability

While a shared folder was provided and printed handouts were available during in-person sessions, some participants requested a comprehensive binder of resources from the outset of the series. Because this was the first year of implementation, and significant adjustments were made based on ongoing participant feedback after each session, it wasn't feasible to provide a complete binder in advance. However, based on this year's feedback and the evolving clarity around foundational resources, such a tool is much more feasible for future cohorts. It is recommended that future participants receive a three-ring binder at the beginning of the series that includes key frameworks, tools, and note-taking space. As the facilitator identifies additional resources throughout the series based on the needs and experiences of each cohort, those materials can be easily added to the binder to support both structured learning and responsive facilitation.

Integration into District Culture

The selection process for future participants could be more inclusive. Currently, cultural proficiency training is a prerequisite. However, some individuals demonstrate a strong equity lens through lived experience, district work, or external study. Consider allowing participants to join based on demonstrated readiness, assessed through a short reflection or intake conversation.

In addition, while having diverse stakeholders at the table strengthens the learning experience, there is a need to ensure that all participants, especially those in non-student-facing roles, have clear, meaningful ways to apply the frameworks and tools introduced. Future cohorts would benefit from differentiated supports that are responsive to participants' specific roles and contexts.

Scaffolded Learning Opportunities

There's clear demand for differentiated pathways. Some participants are ready for advanced work focused on policy redesign or system-level strategy. A more robust intake process could help ensure that each cohort receives the right level of challenge and support.

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CLOSING REFLECTION

Over the course of the series, district staff from across roles and regions built their capacity to analyze systemic inequities, apply research-based frameworks, and co-design responsive, equity-centered solutions.

Participants not only deepened their understanding of educational justice—they practiced it. Through regional collaboration, facilitated inquiry, and data-driven planning, they worked to bridge the gap between theory and action.

While this year marked the pilot launch of the series, its impact is already evident: stronger conceptual grounding, clearer alignment with district goals, and increased readiness to engage in equity work that is not abstract, but actionable. Feedback from participants reflects both appreciation for the learning and a call for continued investment in this kind of deep, sustained, and scaffolded professional learning.

As Fresno Unified continues to pursue bold student outcome goals and maintain its guardrails, the LEJ Workshop Series offers one model for how to build the internal leadership, critical consciousness, and shared language necessary to make those commitments a reality.