



Our definition of equity

Each educational partner (students, parents, staff, and community) commits to end systemic racism and discrimination that harms students, families, and staff because of their cultures, disability/ special education status, ethnicity, gender expression, gender identification, immigration status, race, religion, sexual orientation, and/or socioeconomic status.

We commit to the knowledge that systems harm the historically and currently marginalized, the belief in cultural responsiveness, and the will and skill to identify and address barriers. We center the needs of our Black, Indigenous, Latinx, People of Color and students with disabilities/special education status to deliver an excellent educational experience to each student.

Equity Leadership Dispositions

01 Self-Aware

A self-aware leader embraces the belief that equity starts with understanding their own identity and the biases they bring to their role (Rigby & Tredway, 2015; Berg, 2018; Welborn, Casey, Myatt, & Lindsey, 2022, p. 4). They intentionally reflect on how their actions and decisions influence others, particularly those historically marginalized, and take responsibility for addressing the impact of their leadership (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis., 2016; Lopez, 2016, p. 19). This leader values humility, acknowledging their limitations and actively seeking opportunities for growth (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006; Cooper, 2009; Hutchings & Reed, 2022, p.50). By prioritizing personal reflection and seeking input from diverse voices, they work to align their actions with equity-centered principles (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2009; Lowery, 2019; Welborn et al., 2022, 142). A self-aware leader models vulnerability and openness, inspiring others to engage in self-examination as a pathway to collective progress (Sue et. al, 2009; Minkos et al., 2017; Welborn et al., 2022, p. 163). Their commitment to understanding themselves creates the foundation for more inclusive and equitable systems (Eden, Chisom, & Adeniyi, 2024).

LIVE THIS DISPOSITION BY

- Reflecting on how personal experiences and beliefs shape leadership practices.
- Seeking diverse perspectives to uncover blind spots and challenge assumptions.
- Taking ownership of decisions and their impact on students, staff, and families.
- Acknowledging privilege and identifying ways to use it to advance equity.
- Modeling vulnerability by sharing growth areas and lessons learned.
- Recognizing harm and taking intentional steps to repair and rebuild trust.
- Examining biases to ensure they do not influence decision-making.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- How do I reflect on my identity, power, and privilege in a way that helps me better understand my impact on marginalized communities and the systems I lead?
- What patterns or blind spots have I identified in my assumptions or behaviors, and how am I actively working to address them to align with equity-centered goals?
- How does my positionality influence the way I make decisions, and in what ways have I sought input from others to challenge my perspective?
- When receiving feedback that challenges my understanding of myself or my work, how do I process and apply it to grow as a leader?
- How do my personal values and experiences inform the way I approach difficult conversations about equity, and how do I model vulnerability in those moments?

02 Bold, Courageous, and Visionary

A bold, courageous, and visionary leader believes in the importance of challenging inequitable practices and reimagining systems to better serve all students (Lopez, 2016, p. 20; Leithwood, 2021). They lead with determination and creativity, unafraid to take risks in pursuit of transformative change (Lopez, 2016; p. vii; Newcomer & Cowin, 2018; Lowery, 2019). This leader approaches complex problems with curiosity and seeks innovative solutions grounded in equity (Theoharris, 2010; Lopez, 2016, p. xv). By engaging others in a shared vision, they foster a sense of purpose and collective accountability (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015; Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017; Leithwood, 2021). They reckon with their own discomfort and confront resistance while maintaining focus on achieving long-term goals (Theoharris, 2010; Lopez, 2016, p. 12). Courageous leaders inspire others to think beyond current limitations, using their imagination and resolve to build a more just and inclusive future. Their boldness drives both systemic change and a culture of equity-centered action (Lopez, 2016, p. 13; Hutchings & Reed, 2022, p.18).

LIVE THIS DISPOSITION BY

- Identifying and challenging systemic inequities in practices and policies.
- Articulating a compelling vision for equity that inspires collaboration.
- Encouraging teams to embrace discomfort as part of the change process.
- Taking calculated risks to test innovative, equity-driven solutions.
- Listening to marginalized voices to guide bold decision-making.
- Building coalitions of support to drive transformative change.
- Encouraging others to think beyond traditional limitations.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- How am I actively disrupting inequities in my organization, and what bold steps am I taking to create a system that is inclusive and just for all stakeholders?
- When faced with resistance or discomfort in conversations about equity, how do I maintain focus on my vision while supporting others through the process of change?
- How do I balance risk-taking with thoughtful planning to ensure that the changes I implement are sustainable and meaningful for marginalized students and families?
- What role does curiosity play in my leadership, and how do I use it to generate innovative solutions to complex systemic challenges?
- How am I ensuring that the voices of those most impacted by inequities are centered and elevated in my decision-making and vision-building processes?

03 Growth-Oriented

A growth-oriented leader believes in the power of continuous improvement to drive equity and achievement (Welborn et al., 2022). They approach challenges as opportunities to learn, adapt, and refine systems for better outcomes (Mansfield & Jean-Marie, 2015; Welborn et al., 2022). This leader fosters a culture of innovation, encouraging others to take risks and view failure as part of the learning process (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015; Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017; Berg, 2018). By analyzing data and feedback, they identify gaps and implement strategies that center on the needs of historically marginalized students (Smith, 2005; Mansfield & Jean-Marie, 2015; Hutchings & Reed, 2022, p.18). They collaborate with educational partners to co-create solutions, ensuring that all voices contribute to the growth of equitable practices (Lindsey, et al., 2009; Theoharris, 2010; Hutchings & Reed, 2022, p.8; Uy et al., 2024). Growth-oriented leaders are resilient and adaptive, using every experience to inform and improve their work (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015; Lopez, 2016, p. xvii). Their focus on progress over perfection ensures sustained momentum toward equity and excellence.

LIVE THIS DISPOSITION BY

- Using feedback and data to evaluate and refine leadership practices to meet diverse needs.
- Encouraging experimentation and fostering a culture where failure leads to learning.
- Designing iterative processes for reflection, improvement, and innovation.
- Analyzing the intersection of systemic practices and student outcomes to identify barriers.
- Modeling adaptability and resilience by responding constructively to setbacks.
- Aligning improvement efforts with the needs and aspirations of historically marginalized communities.
- Celebrating incremental progress to sustain motivation and maintain focus.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- How do I evaluate whether my current leadership practices are effectively addressing systemic barriers to equity, and what specific changes am I making to improve?
- How do I use feedback not only to refine my decisions but also to create a culture where others feel empowered to experiment and learn?
- In what ways have I created opportunities for myself and others to learn from failure, and how does that contribute to fostering innovation and resilience in my organization?
- How am I supporting iteration – utilizing short-term cycles of continuous improvement and/or design thinking - to harness the potential to learn from new and rapidly evolving challenges?
- How do I intentionally celebrate progress and small wins in a way that sustains momentum while remaining focused on long-term equity goals?

04 Strategic and Results-Focused

A strategic and results-focused leader seeks the underlying causes of presenting challenges and uses multiple sources of data to identify and dismantle systemic inequities (Smith, 2005; Bustamante, Nelson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Gooden & Dantly, 2012). They set high expectations and use data transparently to guide decisions, distribute resources, and address ineffective practices (Klingner et al., 2005; Theoharris, 2010; Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017). This leader believes in holding themselves and others accountable for their impact including the intended and unintended consequences of their decisions (Khalifa, et al., 2016; Eden, et al., 2024). They maintain an unwavering focus on continuous improvement, aligning their daily actions to priorities, inviting feedback and building their own and others' capacity to ensure success (Rigby & Tredway, 2015; Lopez, 2016, p. 12; Leithwood, 2021).

LIVE THIS DISPOSITION BY

- Proactively engaging students, families, staff, and the community in decision-making processes and creating opportunities for collaboration in strategic planning.
- Using regular cycles of disaggregated data to examine outcomes, identify successes and challenges, and guide decisions in real time.
- Anticipating the impact of decisions by considering their potential to sustain or disrupt inequities.
- Actively pursuing disconfirming evidence to reduce assumptions and bias in interpreting data and making decisions.
- Ensuring resources are distributed, and opportunities are extended, in ways that are responsive to the community and meet students' needs.
- Communicating about goals, data, and progress clearly and often to build trust and demonstrate accountability.
- Using knowledge of local, state, and federal laws, research, and best practices to guide decisions.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What data and evidence do I tend to prioritize or deprioritize when I am making decisions? What are some of the unintended consequences?
- What story does the data tell about who is benefiting and who is not as a result of current practices?
- How do I, or can I, actively include diverse voices—especially those from historically marginalized groups—in determining how resources are distributed?
- How well does each student, family, and staff understand my team's goals and the progress we are making toward achieving them?
- What process(es) have I put in place to evaluate existing system policies, practices, and procedures?

05 Trust Building

A trust-building leader fosters meaningful relationships through authentic engagement and with deep respect for the lived experiences of others (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Bertrand & Rodela, 2017). They prioritize cultivating relationships with care and integrity, demonstrating humility and a willingness to be vulnerable (Furman, 2012; Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017; Leithwood, 2021). By sharing their own values and beliefs and actively seeking to understand others' perspectives, they create the psychologically brave spaces necessary for risk taking, public learning, and constructive dialogue around race and identity (Berg, 2018). A trust-building leader believes in holding honest, transparent conversations (Mansfield & Jean-Marie, 2015; DeMatthews, Serafini, & Watson, 2021). They articulate their intentions with sincerity and inspire buy-in by fostering mutual understanding and shared purpose (Lopez, 2016, p. 13; Leithwood, 2021). They consistently follow through on commitments, successfully navigating complex dynamics while remaining visible, approachable, and steadfast in their commitment to advancing the district's vision for equity (Furman, 2012; Rigby & Tredway, 2015).

LIVE THIS DISPOSITION BY

- Leveraging both formal and informal touchpoints with students, staff, families, and community members to foster relationships.
- Transparently explaining the reasoning, theory, and motivation behind decisions to foster clarity and mutual understanding.
- Sharing your “why” along with your vision, hopes, and dreams while inviting others to share theirs.
- Following through on commitments and addressing inequitable or biased behaviors directly.
- Communicating truthfully especially in challenging situations.
- Using protocols, norms and structured dialogue to foster psychologically brave spaces.
- Demonstrating a willingness to make tough decisions when needed on behalf of students, families, staff and the community.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- How am I actively seeking out and listening to the voices of each student, staff member, family, and the community, especially those who come from marginalized communities?
- How do I handle situations where bias or inequity arises within the team or the community? What are some things I have put into practice to mitigate biases or inequities?
- In what ways do my actions reflect my stated values and the commitments I've made? How have I addressed concerns when my actions, stated values, and commitments were perceived to be misaligned?
- How do I proactively anticipate needs and respond to concerns to build trust and community?
- In what ways am I supporting shared leadership while maintaining transparency in my own decision-making processes?

06 Student and Community-Centered

A student and community-centered leader is deeply committed to prioritizing the needs of students and families and centering these in their decision-making (Khalifa et al., 2016; Leithwood, 2021; Hutchings & Reed, 2022, p.17). This leader believes in honoring the language, culture, and identity of students, families, and staff and embraces families as partners, recognizing their knowledge, skills, and cultures as essential assets to the educational community (Khalifa, 2024; Uy et al., 2024). They proactively create open, tailored communication channels to ensure the voices of those they serve are heard and valued and create learning environments that are accessible, welcoming, and affirming for all (Theoharris, 2010; Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017; Khalifa, 2024).

LIVE THIS DISPOSITION BY

- Generating authentic connections with students, remembering their names and faces and learning their individual interests and personalities.
- Interacting with students and families on a regular basis to learn about and respond to their experiences of teaching and learning, their feeling of belonging, and ideas for creating a more responsive and equitable environment within the district.
- Creating structures that ensure community perspectives shape initiatives and influence outcomes.
- Ensuring communication is purposeful, clear, and audience-appropriate, without assuming clarity is automatically achieved.
- Hosting community events to expand opportunities for involvement.
- Acknowledging and addressing barriers to access to ensure that all students and families can fully engage and participate in school and community activities.
- Seeking out community groups as key collaborators in improving the school experience for all students.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- How do I show each student that I value and care for them in ways they can understand and receive?
- To what extent are the decisions I am making as a leader reflecting the needs and priorities of each student and family, especially those who are most marginalized? In what ways do I need to change my decision-making process to better reflect their needs?
- How am I actively building relationships and trust with each student, family and members of the community? In what ways am I equipping my staff to do so as well?
- What structures or processes have I established to ensure ongoing, meaningful engagement with the community?
- What am I doing to eliminate or address language barriers and other challenges to access for each student and family I serve?

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