

Speak Up At School Board Workshop Presentation September 10, 2025

Dr. Becky Clifford



2025-2026 District Goals

Goal 1: Social-Emotional Learning We will deepen our school culture of care and belonging with particular attention to systems, practices, and staff intra- and interpersonal capacities.

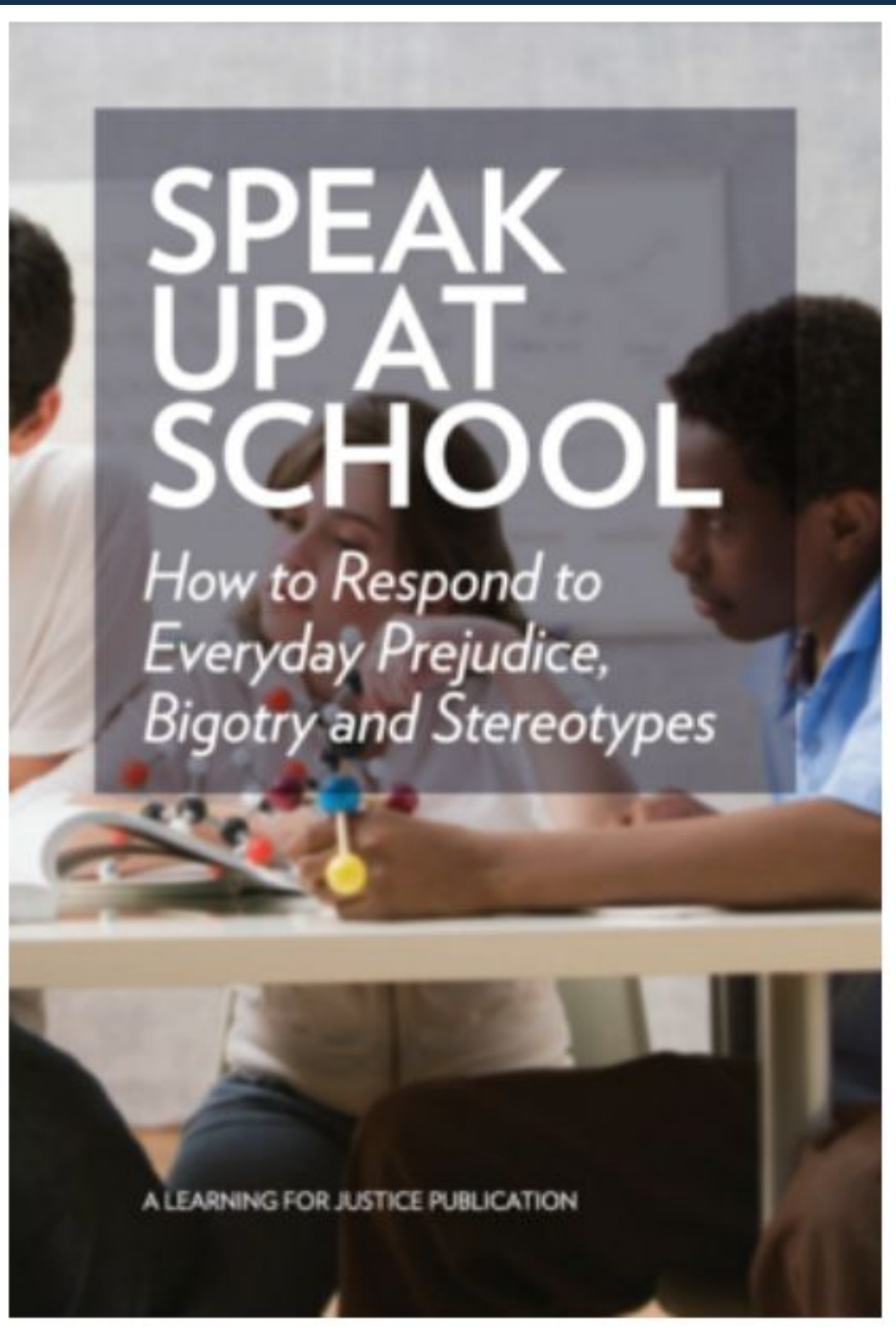
Goal 2: Academic Growth We will expand and hone our use of best practices that nurture and create innovative learning environments supportive of every student's resilience and success in the future they choose.

Goal 3: Logistics Mission-aligned and discerning stewardship and use of district assets (land, facilities, people, money, institutional knowledge, and time) in this time of transitions to facilitate long-term district success.

Board Goal Alignment

Goal 2: Emphasize brevity of Communication and focus on student outcomes.

- a. Engage with teachers and students in buildings or at events, then report back to board on what was learned
- b. Engage with presenters on student outcome data
- c. Empower student board representatives
- d. Board members use the 🙌 symbol (reminder for brevity) to hold each other accountable during meetings, when appropriate



Speaking Up Against Bias in Schools

Educators must prepare themselves and students to challenge biased language, prejudice, and stereotypes in schools through strategic preparation and practice.

Four Key Strategies

- Interrupt biased comments
- Question the speaker's intent
- Educate about impact
- Echo support for targets

Context Matters

Your relationship with the speaker and location affect how you respond - classroom, hallway, cafeteria, or teacher's lounge

Practice Through Role-Play

Use real scenarios to prepare responses and build confidence in speaking up against bias in timely, effective ways.

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A LEARNING FOR JUSTICE PUBLICATION

SPEAKING UP AT SCHOOL - WHY?

Our Vision:

Every South Whidbey School District Student is a lifelong learner who is *multi-culturally* engaged, literate, and an active community member able to meet the challenges of our *global society*.

Our Mission:

In collaboration with our community, every student will be supported to be a resilient, innovative, compassionate, and productive graduate *prepared for a diverse and dynamic world*.

DISTRICT GOALS

Goal 1: Social-Emotional Learning We will deepen our school culture of care and belonging with particular attention to systems, practices, and staff intra- and interpersonal capacities.

Pillars

Expand Culture of Care work within staff.

- **Create an environment to engage in difficult conversations (including around equity and bigotry).**
- Build relationships to enable collaborative negotiations in the future.
- Support staff professional development to improve student outcomes.

Build student feelings of safety and belonging.

- **Maintain/build pride of place (including through construction)**
- Build resilience.
- Continue to minimize exclusions.

Equity looks like: Each individual feels seen for who they are and is valued within and accountable to the school community.

Courageous Conversation Four Agreements

1. **Stay engaged:**

- Staying engaged means “remaining morally, emotionally, intellectually, and socially involved in the dialogue” (p.59)

2. **Experience discomfort:**

- This norm acknowledges that discomfort is inevitable, especially, in dialogue about race, and that participants make a commitment to bring issues into the open. It is not talking about these issues that create divisiveness. The divisiveness already exists in the society and in our schools. It is through dialogue, even when uncomfortable, the healing and change begin.

3. **Speak your truth:**

- This means being open about thoughts and feelings and not just saying what you think others want to hear.

4. **Expect and accept nonclosure:**

- This agreement asks participants to “hang out in uncertainty” and not rush to quick solutions, especially in relation to racial understanding, which requires ongoing dialogue (pp.5865).

SPEAKING UP AT SCHOOL

What is biased language?

What type of biased language do you hear

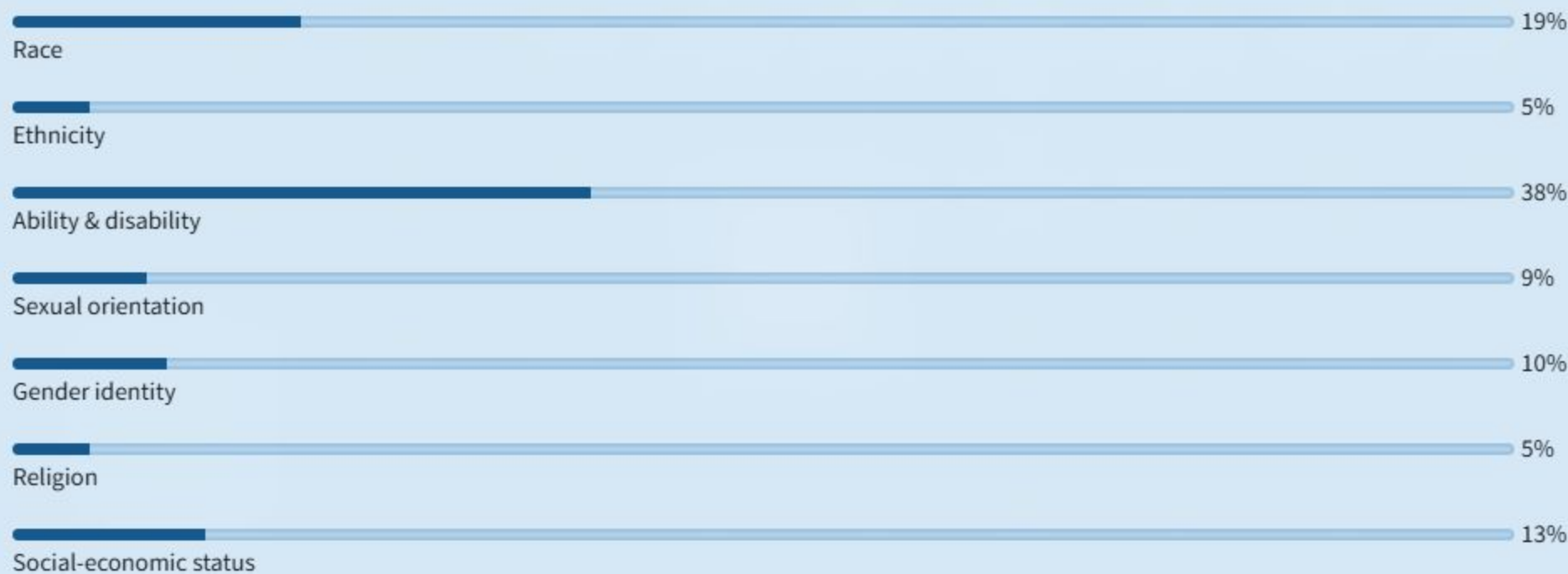
What type of biased language do you hear at your school?

78

Inactive

Sort By

Default



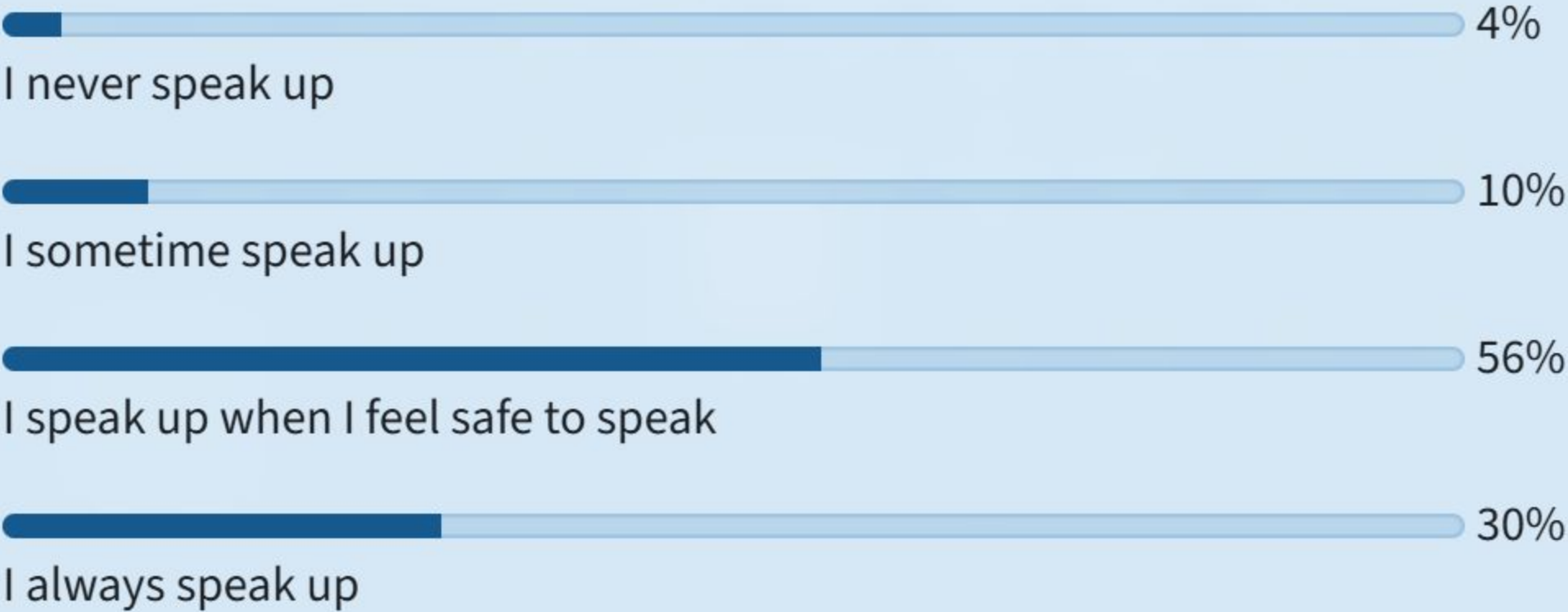
How often do I speak up when these

How often do I speak up when these situations arise?

50

Active

Sort By Default



When Presented

Prepare Yourself to Speak Up



Make a commitment
Develop ready responses

Prepare Your Students to Speak Up



Intent vs Impact, Language and Context
Classroom Community, Model Behaviors

Pocket Guide: Stop, Watch, Create



Stop and Think:

- What is hard about speaking up against intolerance in a timely manner?
- How do these strategies help?

Strategies for Speaking Up

1

Interrupt

"I need to stop you there..."

2

Question

"What do you mean by that?"

3

Educate

"That word has a harmful history..."

4

Echo

"I agree with what was just said about..."

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Strategies for Speaking Up

2

Question

"What do you mean by that?"

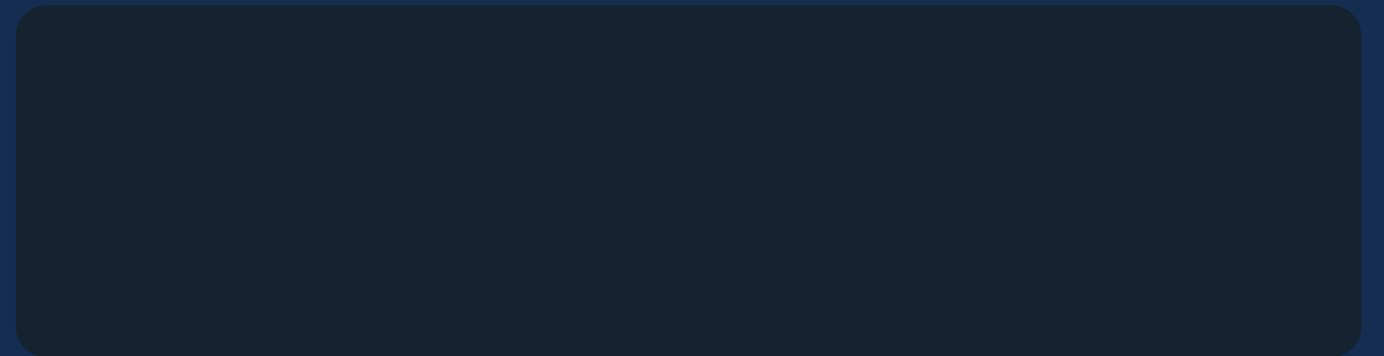
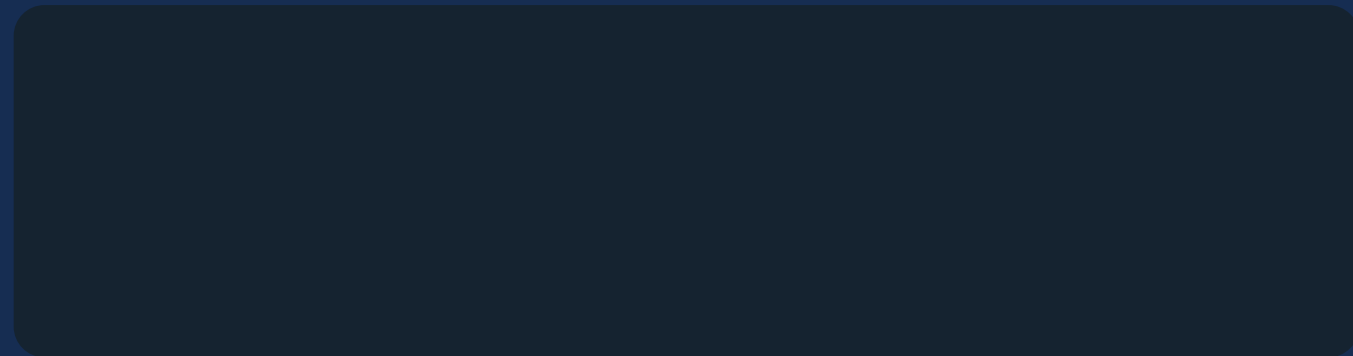
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Strategies for Speaking Up



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Echo

"I agree with what was just said about..."

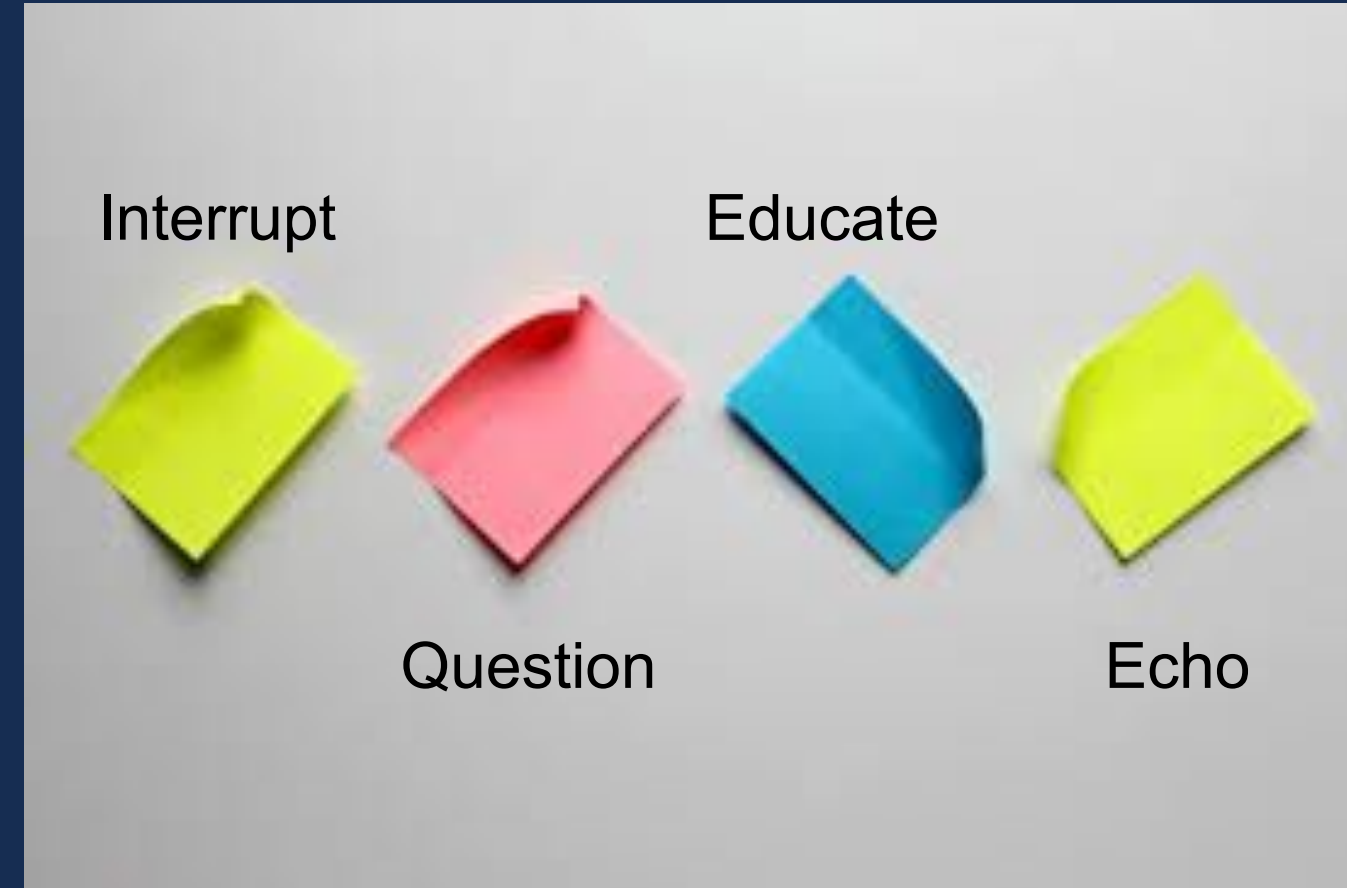
ACTION IN THE MOMENT

Jigsaw: Read Basic Strategies (pgs. 16-23)

Interrupt, Question, Educate, Echo

- Determine who is going to read each strategy
- Write on a sticky note the strategy and things you can say
- Share and discuss as a table group
- Quick whole group share out

WHAT ARE THINGS
I CAN SAY?



Grade-Level Response Examples (Pages 42-43)

Pre-K to Grade 2

"Tina, I'm surprised to hear you use that word. That word is hurtful, and we have a community agreement in our classroom and school not to use hurtful language."

Grades 3-5

"That word carries more weight than you might know, and it can really hurt people... We want everyone to feel safe here."

Middle Grades

"I know that you know that word is hurtful, and I'm surprised, and more than a little disappointed, to hear you use it."

Upper Grades

"That doesn't fly here and you know it. I need you to stop it, or there will be more serious consequences."

Putting It All Together

Be Prepared

Anticipate and rehearse responses to bias

Be Positive

Assume good intentions while addressing harmful impact

Be Confident

Trust your ability to make a difference

Work Together

Create a supportive community approach



Closing - Thank you!

Next Steps

- Staff: continue to reinforce and support these practices
- Student: facilitate training with students
- Hate Speech: deepen and extend this work for the 2026-2027 school year

Reflection

- What strategy gives you the confidence to Speak Up?