EISCA: Equity-Informed School Climate Assessment

A Collaboration between The Discovery Center, EdChange, and Manchester Public Schools

Statement of Purpose: To assess the experiences--educational, emotional and social--of students, families, and staff [in Manchester Public Schools] through the lens of racial equity *and* identify to what extent district and school policy, practice, and culture impact students with marginalized identities, so we can create sustainable changes to ensure equity for each student.

The *Why*:

- When properly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed—an assessment of school climate, can provide an assessment of school equity
- To do this, we must shift the way we assess climate to intentionally focus on the experiences of students (and staff) with marginalized identities--specifically, students of color
  - *Because*: a school is only as equitable as the most marginalized students experience it to be
- When students with the most marginalized identities are served well, ALL students are served well

The *What*:

1. **Background Interviews & Exploratory Focus Groups**
   - This data will inform the *process* and garner broad stakeholder support, not provide *content* data
2. **Survey Instruments for various stakeholder groups (*quantitative data*)**
   - ➢ Students ➢ Parents/Guardians/Family ➢ Administrators/Teachers/School Staff
3. **Focus Groups (*qualitative data*)**
   - Identity-based affinity groups focused on these 6 marginalized identities (led by individuals who hold these identities)—additional, more specific groups may be identified as necessary
     - ➢ Race (Specifically: Black, Latino, Asian) ➢ Female (Specifically: female of color)
     - ➢ LGBTQIA+ ➢ Low Income
     - ➢ Special Education ➢ English Language Learners
4. **Comprehensive Record Review**
   - Examining the disparate impact on students who hold marginalized identities—including:
     - ➢ Curriculum ➢ Policies
     - ➢ Procedures ➢ Academic measures/outcomes
     - ➢ Discipline ➢ AP, Gifted/Talented, Spec. Ed., etc.
5. **Ethnographic Site Visits**

The *How*:

Through a partnership with The Discovery Center and EdChange, Manchester Public Schools (MPS) is seeking to uncover inequities in its current system. Data collection and analysis conducted by The Discovery Center and EdChange will inform the creation of a report with recommendations for action moving forward. Utilizing the recommendations in the report, MPS will create and implement an Action Plan with the aim of creating an equitable learning and working environment for all members of its school community.

Underlying Values of the Equity-Informed School Climate Assessment (EISCA)

- ➢ Action-focused
- ➢ Rigorous, purposeful, strategic
- ➢ Clear, transparent, credible
- ➢ Adaptable and customizable
- ➢ Race is at the center *and* it is intersectional
- ➢ Transformative process: making the invisible, visible
- ➢ Accountable to students, parents & entire school community
- ➢ Accessible: no jargon and multilingual

For more information please contact: info@discoveringdiversity.com or 860.284.9489

E.D.I.fy

What is Equity?

Equity is achieved when student outcomes are not predicated by gender, race, ethnicity, class, or special needs and where all students reach a level of efficacy and competence that supports a rewarding and productive life. This requires elimination of the inequities that contribute to disproportionate learning and achievement by students of certain social groups, while ensuring students are prepared for a productive and meaningful life.

– Connecticut Center for School Change

EISCA is not:

- An easy 5-step equity checklist
- Immediately implementable in all districts or schools
  - A readiness assessment and commitment to action are <u>required</u>
- A 'solution' to inequity

EISCA is:

- A set of assessment tools that can help examine data guided by the goals of Equity Literacy*
  - *Equity Literacy, as defined by Dr. Gorski, refers to the knowledge and skills that enable us to *recognize*, *respond* to, and *redress* conditions that deny some students access to educational and other opportunities enjoyed by their peers. The Equity Literacy framework is based on the reality that equitable educators must be proficient, not just with culture, but with the skills necessary to be a threat to the existence of inequity in their spheres of influence.

Equity Literacy Framework Paul C. Gorski for EdChange	
Equity Literacy Abilities	**Examples of Associated Skills and Dispositions** Equity literate educators:
Recognize biases and inequities, including subtle biases and inequities	• Notice even subtle bias in materials, classroom interactions, and school policies; • Know and teach about how notable people in their content disciplines used their knowledge to advocate for just or unjust actions or policies; and • Reject deficit views that locate the sources of outcome inequalities (like test score disparities) as existing within the cultures of, rather than as pressing upon, marginalized students
Respond to biases and inequities in the immediate term	• Have the facilitation skills and content knowledge necessary to intervene effectively when biases or inequities arise in a classroom or school; • Cultivate in students the ability to analyze bias in classroom materials, classroom interactions, and school policies; and • Foster conversations with colleagues about equity concerns at their schools.
Redress biases and inequities in the long term	• Advocate against inequitable school practices, such as racially or economically biased tracking, and advocate for equitable school practices; • Never confuse celebrating diversity with equity, such as by responding to racial conflict with cultural celebrations; and • Teach, in relevant and age-appropriate ways, about issues like sexism, poverty, and homophobia.
Create & Sustain a bias-free and equitable learning environment	• Express high expectations for all students through higher-order pedagogies and curricula; • Consider how they assign homework and communicate with families, understanding that students have different levels of access to resources like computers and the Internet; and • Cultivate a classroom environment in which students feel free to express themselves openly and honestly.