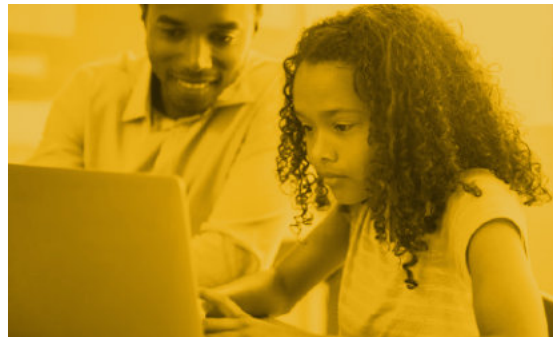


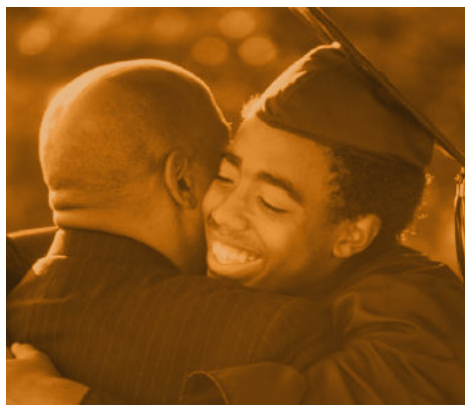
# SUPPORTING THE AFRICAN AMERICAN LEARNER



*A Guide for Transforming Beliefs, Systems, and Practices for Black Students*



**Los Angeles County  
Office of Education**





## RIVERSIDE COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

EDWIN GOMEZ, Ed.D. | County Superintendent of Schools



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and Practices for Black Students*

# Acknowledgements

**Supporting the African American Learner** is a collaborative project of the Los Angeles County Office of Education, Riverside County Office of Education, University of California Los Angeles and The Center for Powerful Public Schools. These agencies envisioned the development of a document that would provide guidance to teachers and administrators to promote effective instructional practices for African American students.

This project was initiated and is managed by LACOE's Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in collaboration with LACOE's Reading/Language Arts Coordinator.

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# Dedication

Rooted in love,  
this document is one step in a journey of many lifetimes,  
dedicated to centering Black students:  
their voices, their dreams,  
their passions, their lives.

# Foreword



The Los Angeles County Office of Education and the county's 80 school districts serve one-third of California's more than 324,00 African American students. We care about the success of Black students and are committed to ensuring they receive equitable, high-quality instruction.

For decades, achievement data for African American students have portrayed their disparate access to rigorous instruction and relevant curricula. According to 2018-19 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress data for African American students in Los Angeles County, just 34 percent met or exceeded standards in English language arts while only 16 percent met or exceeded standards in mathematics.

The statewide numbers are also discouraging, with 33 percent and 20 percent of Black students testing proficient in English language arts and mathematics, respectively. These results are not a reflection on the ability of Black students, but rather on the system's failure to adequately serve their needs.

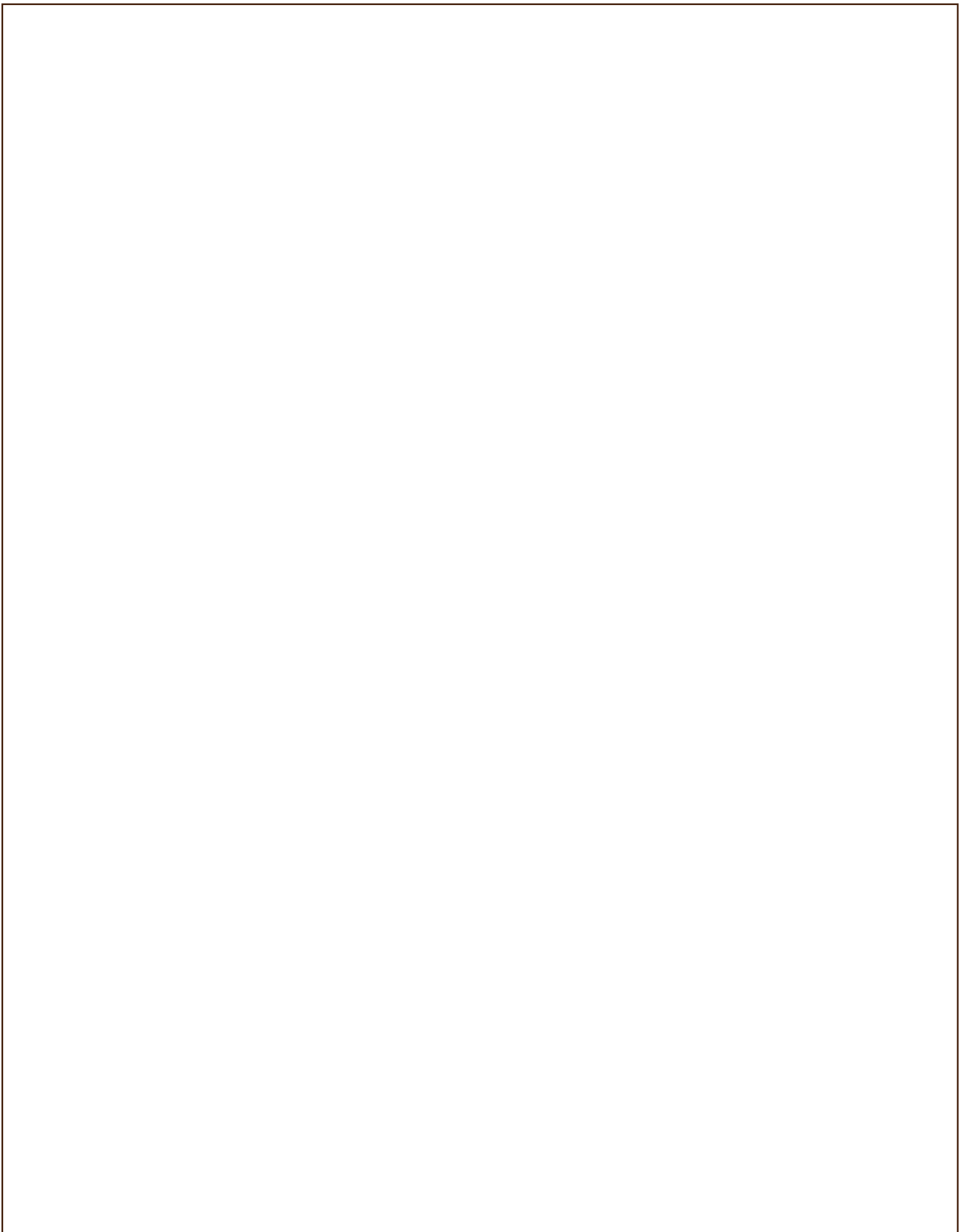
Many factors determine the cradle-to-college trajectory for African American students prior to their entering the K-12 system. While school readiness disparities among racial/ethnic groups are narrowing for young children, a great deal of work remains. Bias, low expectations, punitive discipline practices, and limited access to college-prep academics are among factors that both inhibit and impede equitable access and opportunity for Black students.

*Supporting African American Learner* is an invaluable guide for improved and enhanced dialogue, learning opportunities, and outcomes through strategies and best practices that promote high-quality teaching and learning. It will assist education agencies by raising awareness of the value of mindset, cultural proficiency, culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy, systems thinking, and strategies to address the needs of our most vulnerable students and the adults who serve them.

Initiated by the Los Angeles County Office of Education, this guide is a collaborative effort drawing on the knowledge, expertise, commitment, and passion of individuals from several organizations. They include the Riverside County Office of Education, UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools, and the Center for Powerful Public Schools.

California educators have no time to waste in closing longstanding opportunity and achievement gaps. This guide points the way to transforming beliefs, systems, and practices to benefit our African American students, the teachers who serve them, and the communities in which they live.

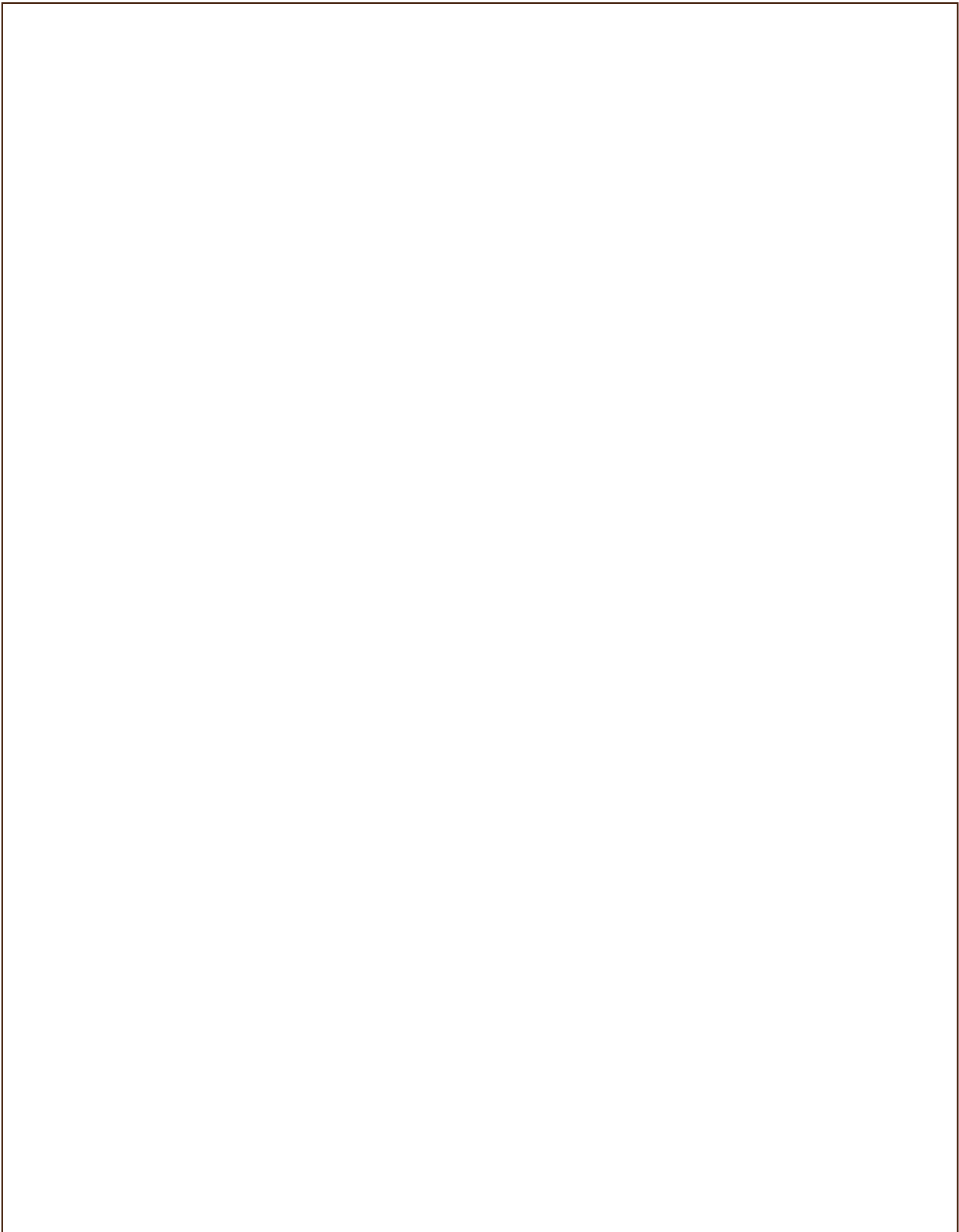
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# Introduction

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*“Black children are the proxy for what ails American education in general. And so, as we fashion solutions which help Black children, we fashion solutions which help all children. It is with this mindset and non-partisan mission that we reach to empower all education stakeholders across the country.”*

Congressman Augustus Hawkins

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Education is a civil right to which all students are entitled. Each student deserves equitable access to a high-quality education from early childhood to grade twelve and beyond in preparation for productive and engaged citizenship. The reality is that large numbers of African American students in California and elsewhere across the country, particularly in large urban centers, regularly exhibit lower academic performance than their counterparts from other ethnic groups. Black students consistently score at least 50% lower than their white counterparts. To date, no comprehensive support has been offered to address this.

California is committed to ensuring a best start for all children, beginning with the very young child through state and federally funded early care and education programs including, but not limited to state preschool, family childcare, Head Start and Early Head Start programs. This is even more critical for Black children who begin K-12 systems at a disproportionate disadvantage given economic and social factors that impact their development, involvement and progress in early learning environments. Hence, school readiness and family engagement are central themes of these programs that ultimately seek to ensure all children possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes for success in school and for later learning in school.

**Supporting the African American Learner** addresses these issues with the vision of improving educational systems to support Black students so that each student receives what is most needed. The impetus for the preparation of this document was the ***Beyond the Schoolhouse Policy Report***, released in October 2019. That report identified African American student achievement data to be the lowest in Los Angeles County. The report, authored by UCLA researchers Drs. Pedro Noguera, Tyrone Howard, Joseph Bishop and Stanley L. Johnson, Jr., details findings relative to conditions that contribute to the “accumulation of disadvantage” across various educational, health and social indicators that interact with the academic and developmental outcomes of Black children in Los Angeles County. Recommendations in that report called for the collective action of business and community stakeholders, including school districts, County Offices of Education, city and county governmental agencies as well as policy makers at the state and federal levels, to engage in a collaborative problem-solving approach.

**Supporting the African American Learner** was designed to address policies and practices that negatively impact educational outcomes for African American students. The following four grounding principles are the foundation for this work:

**Principle 1:**

Explore Belief Systems to Begin the Work

**Principle 2:**

Create Educational Systems that Facilitate and Support Learning

**Principle 3:**

Ensure Culturally Relevant, Sustaining, and Revitalizing High Quality Instruction

**Principle 4:**

Mitigate the Accumulation of Disadvantage

Beginning with belief systems is crucial for establishing a common understanding of implicit bias, privilege, and power, and how they impact educator perspectives and behavior. Approaches to educational equity must include attending to both the individual's mental models and belief systems, as well as the collective. A systems approach that includes examination of policies and practices, resource flows, relationships and connections, power dynamics, and mental models is crucial to coherent and lasting change. Additionally, the importance of culturally relevant teaching and learning cannot be overstated. Ensuring

rigorous, asset-based and high quality daily instruction is at the heart of this work. Finally, the connections between in-school and out-of-school factors also significantly impact outcomes for Black students. Acknowledging and attending to the accumulation of disadvantage that Black students experience must be part of the whole-child, whole-community approach to improving educational outcomes.

This document provides information and resources to guide teachers and administrators in examining and transforming the educational system for Black students through a targeted and intentional approach. This approach leverages what we know and can do through the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework. This framework provides opportunity to identify and implement accelerated supports for Black students using assets instead of remediation, relationships instead of discipline, and rigor and relevance instead of low-level tasks and assimilation.

**Citation:**

Noguera, P., Bishop, J., Howard, T., and Johnson, S. "Beyond the Schoolhouse: Overcoming Challenges & Expanding Opportunities for Black Youth in Los Angeles County." Center for the Transformation of Schools, Black Male Institute, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles. (2019).



# Historical Background

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*“What is upsetting the country is a sense of its own identity. If, for example, one managed to change the curriculum in all the schools so that Negroes learned more about themselves and their real contributions to this culture, you would be liberating not only Negroes, you’d be liberating white people who know nothing about their own history. And the reason is that if you are compelled to lie about one aspect of anybody’s history, you must lie about it all. If you have to lie about my real role here, if you have to pretend that I hoed all that cotton just because I loved you, then you have done something to yourself. You are mad.”*

James Baldwin, “A Talk to Teachers”

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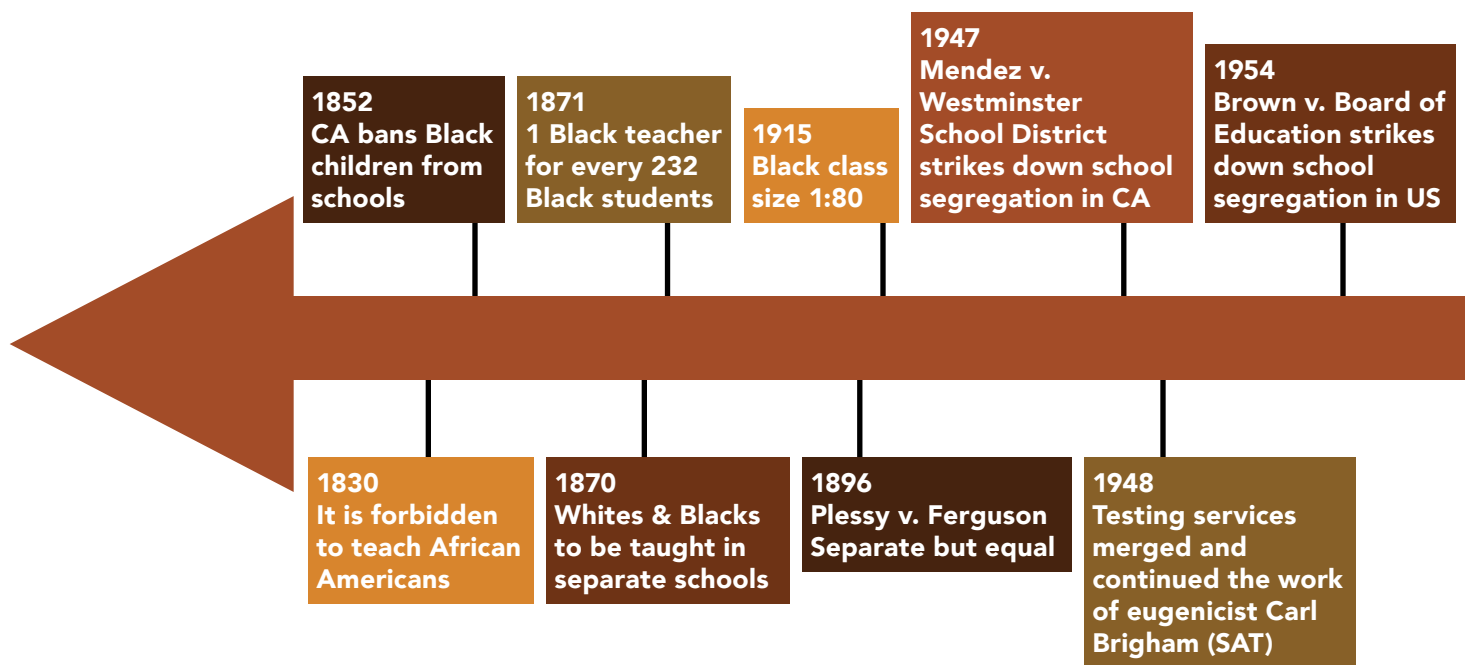
Since the first ship containing enslaved Africans descended on this land, injustice after injustice has been and continues to be enacted upon African Americans. Throughout history, the inescapable reality of the devastating impact of these injustices on the African American community is clear and present, not only within the community, but in students and the data associated with them. The historical context for a work such as **Supporting the African American Learner** centers around the importance of understanding the role that the history of education has played in creating the schooling of African American students today, and connecting practitioners to the “why” of implementing this document.

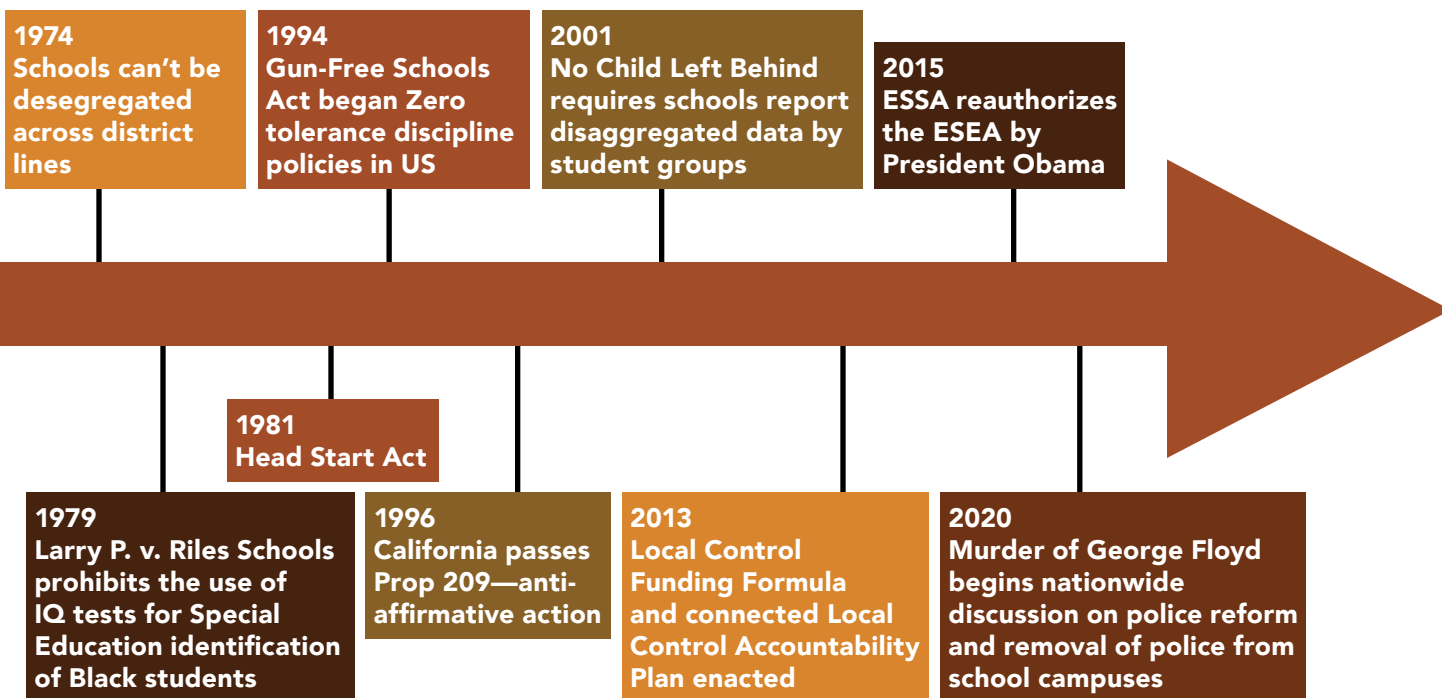
Since the inception of enslavement in America, educating the enslaved was literally against the law. When the Civil War ended, efforts were made in African American communities to organize schools, but few students actually received an education at all. Eventually the poorly funded and underserved schools were “assisted” with the Jim Crow laws of the 1870s, and then further cemented by the Supreme court decision of Plessy v. Ferguson.

This court decision established separate public schools for Black and white students, and permanently put in place educational disadvantages. Black schools received little to no funding at all resulting in high student ratios across a wide range of ages.

Through the work of organizations such as the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and individuals like Olive Brown, who pushed for a more equitable school system, the U.S. Supreme Court decision of Brown v. Board of Education overturned Plessy v. Ferguson, and specifically called out separate facilities as being inherently unequal. After this decision, groups like the Little Rock Nine entered all white schools and desegregation began. Though desegregation began, little to no effort was placed in establishing culturally responsive, sustaining, and revitalizing practices and pedagogy, in order to repair the inequities set forth in the beginning. As time has evolved these inequities have resulted in continuously widening equity gaps for African American students.

## Timeline: Education of African American Students





To examine the timeline of the history of the education of African American students, one can see the system has been designed to create exactly the results it continues to create. Since the inception of No Child Left Behind, the disparities have been highlighted through the disaggregation of data by student groups. These glaring disparities resulted in a focus on students of color and English Learners. In 2007, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell convened a research group specifically to examine the achievement gap and in 2008, the Closing the Achievement Gap: Report of the Superintendent Jack O'Connell's California P-16 Council, was released. This led to the creation of the African American Advisory Committee by the California State Board of Education. And, in 2015, the California State Assembly created the Select Committee on the Status of Girls and Women of Color.

Over the years, these initiatives have resulted in little change for African American students. It is doubtful the latest efforts to remove school police from schools will either unless educators begin to put research into practice. What is needed is a meaningful and purposeful approach to teaching that embraces and reflects the lived experiences, culture, and socioemotional elements that these students bring to the classroom. As Dr. Ladson-Billings

**Citation:**

Paris, Django, and H. Samy Alim, eds. Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world. Teachers College Press, 2017.

put it, "we teach what we value," and it is now time for educators to value and teach that which reflects the African American student population. Through the acknowledgement and nurturing of these elements, which are central to students' lives both within and outside of the classroom, educators can simultaneously demonstrate their commitment to educational equity and social justice (Paris & Alim, 2017). Implementing culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy is essential to African American students' success and the success of all students as it places the student at the center of the learning experience and meets them where they are in their learning process. By approaching African American students from a more human and assets-based approach, they are more likely to feel valued and safe in the classroom. This security in turn brings about a willingness to engage in and embrace the learning experience rather than resist or reject it outright thus bringing about a more equitable and fulfilling experience for all.

**Supporting the African American Learner** combines both research and practice to provide educators with guidance and support on their journey to actively engage in abolishing the disparities and inequities caused by the historical impact of our nation's past.





# Foundational Knowledge: Cultural Proficiency and Culturally Responsive Teaching

Changing an entire educational system, one of America's most important institutions, will not happen overnight. Centering teaching and learning around traditionally marginalized students, especially African American students, will require a new mindset and new approaches to ensure all students, not just some students, receive the education that they deserve and that is necessary to live in an increasingly multicultural, multilingual society. Switching from a deficit-based approach to an approach which encompasses an equity lens for the instruction of African American students will be critical in transforming what schooling should be for them and all students. Two concepts, cultural proficiency and culturally responsive teaching, could create the foundation for an educational system that addresses the educational needs of Black students and therefore, truly addresses the educational needs of all students.

**Cultural proficiency** includes the policies and practices in an organization or the values and behavior of an individual that enable the person or institution to engage effectively with people and groups who are different from them (Lindsey, Robins & Terrell, 2009).

The five key elements of cultural proficiency are as follows:

- **Access Cultural Knowledge**—Being aware of what you know about your and others' cultures, about how you react to others' cultures, and what you need to do to be effective in cross-cultural situations.
- **Value Diversity**—Making the effort to be inclusive of people whose viewpoints and experiences are different from yours will enrich conversations, decision-making, and problem solving.
- **Manage the Dynamics of Difference**—Viewing conflict as a natural and normal process that has cultural contexts that can be understood and can be supportive in creative problem solving.

- **Adapt to Diversity**—Having the will to learn about others and the ability to use others' cultural experiences and backgrounds in educational settings.
- **Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge**—Making learning about cultural groups and their experiences and perspectives as an integral part of your on-going learning.

The cultural proficiency continuum allows schools to examine both where they currently are on the cultural proficiency journey, and where they ideally want to be. *The continuum represents a shift in thinking, from tolerating diversity, to transformative action for equity.* Schools can begin to frame the decisions about teaching and learning using data-focused conversations rather than blaming students' cultures for the inequities that exist in the school system. The adoption of culturally proficient policies and practices can shift the roles and responsibilities for everyone in the educational community and create an educational culture that is known, supported and sustained by all in the community.

**Culturally responsive teaching** is an approach that emphasizes using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of references, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them (Gay, 2010). Simultaneously, educators understand the importance of being in a relationship and having a social-emotional connection to the student in order to create a safe space for learning. (Hammond, 2015). Why is it important to approach teaching and learning with this foundational concept? Culturally responsive teaching will strengthen a student's sense of identity. It will help all students, especially students who have not seen themselves represented in the curriculum, see themselves as part of the educational setting. This sense of identity will also help promote equity and inclusivity in the classroom.

Culturally responsive teaching, like cultural proficiency, will take a continuous investment in time and effort. Classroom teachers, with professional learning and collaboration, can develop their practice over time. One example of the approach may be educators encouraging students to draw on prior knowledge when teaching literature from a diverse selection of authors instead of defaulting to only the widely accepted classic authors. Educators may also tie lessons in the curriculum to the students' social communities. For example, a chapter in history class can include a discussion on why the

topic matters today as it relates to school and the community. A project can be created that enables students to draw parallels to their experiences. This approach to teaching and learning can begin now in classrooms with appropriate and continuous professional learning and practice and it will begin to address the learning styles of all students, especially African American students.

Cultural proficiency and culturally responsive teaching can be the foundation for a district, school and classroom. In other words, these concepts should be the floor on which other practices and professional learnings are built. These approaches can be utilized in the educational system now to create a foundation for the ongoing work that is needed to create an equitable system that meets the needs of Black students. The principles in this document, however, will make the case for the additional work that is needed to build on these foundational concepts. Beliefs will need to be examined, a systems approach will need to be established, teaching and learning will need to evolve into culturally sustaining/revitalizing approaches and the mitigating circumstances which have created the current educational system will need to be addressed. The hope is that with this structure and a strong foundation, the result will be an equitable educational system that meets the needs of African American students, and ultimately, meets the needs of all students.

#### **Citations**

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Hammond, Z. *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, A Sage Company, 2015.

Nuri-Robins, Lindsay D., Terrell, Lindsey, R. "Cultural Proficiency: Tools for School Leaders, accessed May 2020, <https://www.aesa.us/about/Resources/CulturalProficiencyforLeaders.pdf>



# Principle 1: Explore Belief Systems to Begin the Work

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*“Deconstructing our unconscious bias takes consistent work. We can’t address it once and be done. We need to recognize these unwanted, deep rooted beliefs and limit their influence on us. Then our actions will match our intentions.”*

*-Sarah Fiarman, *Unconscious Bias: When Good Intentions Aren’t Enough**

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## **Purpose**

In order to begin the work of supporting Black students, an acknowledgment of the pervasive racism that exists in our society must be made, including the impacts on our educational system, as referenced in the background section of this document. The educational system has produced exactly what it was designed to produce, and dismantling practices that impede Black students’ success necessitates a commitment to becoming antiracist educators. It is not enough to simply say, “I am not racist;” instead, we must become antiracist.

New York Times bestselling author, Ibram X. Kendi, in his book *How to Be an Antiracist* asserts, “What is the problem with being ‘not racist’? It is a claim that signifies neutrality: I

am not a racist, but neither am I aggressively against racism. There is no neutrality in the racism struggle. The opposite of racist isn’t ‘not racist’—it’s antiracist” (p. 9). Educators must strive to become antiracist and aggressively pursue equitable and effective instruction for Black students.

Crucial to becoming antiracist is the practice of exploring belief systems. Belief systems are touchy subjects that most would rather not discuss, especially at work. However, within our school systems, belief systems affect everything, from how the governing boards develop policies, to how district executive leadership implement policies, to how school leaders translate the policies into actionable steps to manage the schools and for teachers to follow, to how a teacher delivers instruction and classroom management, which all influ-

ence the quality of relationships with families and community partners. Belief systems then, impact both the individual and the system. Both must be addressed.

It is important to understand what constitutes the notion of “belief systems.” Belief systems are interconnected sets of values that guide a person’s everyday life. They are the invisible force that drives behavior. Individuals accumulate beliefs from parents, friends, television, media, religious instruction, and a host of other influences. And within that construct, lies an inevitable set of biases. Everyone has them.

[Ohio State University’s Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity](http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias/) defines *unconscious bias* or *implicit bias* as “the attitudes and stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.” Implicit associations can cause people to have feelings and attitudes about other people based on several factors such as race, age, and appearance. Some characteristics of implicit bias are described as the following:

- Implicit biases are **pervasive**. Everyone possesses them, even people with avowed commitments to impartiality, such as judges.
- Implicit and explicit biases are **related but distinct mental constructs**. They are not mutually exclusive and may even reinforce each other.
- The implicit associations we hold **do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs** or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse.
- We generally tend to hold implicit biases that **favor our own ingroup**, though research has shown that we can still hold implicit biases against our ingroup.
- Implicit biases are **malleable**. Our brains are incredibly complex, and the implicit associations that we have formed can be gradually unlearned through a variety of debiasing techniques. (<http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias/>)



No one wants to believe that they are biased, especially educators. Teachers devote their lives to helping children and don’t consider themselves to be biased. But even the best teacher or most effective leader has biases that impact the school community. It’s an unavoidable part of human nature. Teachers often say, “But I love all of my students! I am nice to everyone.” Niceness is not a remedy for racism. Author, Austin Channing Brown, in her book, *I’m Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness* states, “When you believe niceness disproves the presence of racism, it’s easy to start believing bigotry is rare, and that the label racist should be applied only to mean-spirited, intentional acts of discrimination. The problem with this framework—besides being a gross misunderstanding of how racism operates in systems and structures enabled by nice people—is that it obligates me to be nice in return, rather than truthful.” Seeking the truth in ourselves, our classrooms, and our schools is imperative if any real change is to be made.

Educators must individually delve into their own implicit biases to create equitable schools and reach all children. And historically, it is clear that African American children have been the recipients of many biases, as evidenced by higher than normal disciplinary actions, persistent lower-than-average reading scores, loss of interest in school, and low college prep course access. Again, implicit bias impacts all children, but it impacts Black children at a higher degree, and it begins early in their learning experience. For example, young Black children are more likely to experience preschool suspension or expulsion and their families put on a trajectory of academic struggle. The empirical evidence is clear—preschool children are expelled at higher rates than children in K-12 and the majority of these young children are African American boys (Gilliam, 2005). A 2014 report by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights showed that African American children represented 18 percent of public preschool enrollment, but 48 percent of preschoolers receiving multiple out-of-school suspensions (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Therefore, early education learning is more often disrupted for young boys of color as compared to their white classmates. *Why is this occurring?* One study suggests that “implicit racial bias among early educators as a likely source of the disproportionate punishment received by [B]lack boys. Implicit biases can be understood as automatic and unconscious stereotypes that influence judgments and decisions regarding others” (Gilliam et. al., 2016). These findings also suggest that the underlying causes of preschool discipline practices may not be exclusively rooted in child behavior, but rather in adults’ decision-making.

It is also time for the educational system, which includes governing boards, districts, and school administrators, to have courageous conversations with and among staff members, and for educators to take the brave step of examining policies and practices which may negatively impact the success of African American students.

Doing this work involves two key practices. The first is adopting a **willingness to shift mindsets and practices**. *Shifting mindsets is at the heart of this work*. Mindsets are the invisible influencers of behavior and cannot go unchecked. According to the University of Wisconsin at Madison Psychology Professor, Patricia Devine, three elements are required to shift mindsets:

- 1. Intention:** You have to acknowledge that you harbor unconscious biases and are motivated to change.
- 2. Attention:** You have to pay attention to your triggers and know when stereotypical responses or assumptions are activated.
- 3. Time:** You have to make time to practice new strategies designed to “break” your automatic associations that link a negative judgment to behavior that is culturally different from yours. (<https://ualcreative-mindsets.myblog.arts.ac.uk/implicit-bias/>)

In addition, questions that all educators must consider in terms of their instructional practices include: What do I really believe about my Black students and their ability to learn? How is my belief impacting my instruction and the way I interact with students? Am I approaching my instruction from an asset or deficit-based approach? How does our school community support Black students and ensure their success? What policies and practices might be hindering the achievement of our Black students?

Without this step, true equality and access cannot be achieved. Policies can be put into place, but that alone does not guarantee any real change in schools. *Educators must believe that Black children can achieve at high levels and deserve instruction that takes them there.*

The second key practice, which will be detailed in-depth, is **developing an understanding of power and privilege structures**. These constructs set the foundation for creating equitable schools and successfully serving the needs of African American students.

## Background

Understanding power and privilege structures and how they function are critically important to consider, especially when it comes to issues of equity, access, and social justice. Power, simply defined, is *having the ability and resources to control systems, organizations, and groups*. It directly influences the attitudes, beliefs, mindsets, and outcomes of *others*. On the other hand, privilege is a form of power that allows one to develop attitudes and viewpoints that support the notion that they are entitled to things simply by virtue of belonging to a particular group or achieving a certain positional status within society.

Kathleen Ebbitt, in her article, ["Why It's Important to Think About Privilege and Why it's Hard,"](#) explains, "Having privilege does not mean that an individual is immune to life's hardships, but it does mean having an unearned benefit or advantage one receives in society by nature of their identity." This is true in schools and districts as well. She outlines some practical examples of privilege in schools:

- My skin colour is the same as that of people in a position of authority within the school administration.
- I can easily identify role models within the field of education from my ethno-cultural group.
- I feel included in my workplace and community interactions. I don't feel isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, ignored, overlooked or kept at a distance. Nor do I feel like an object of fear.
- When I participate in staff meetings or trainings, I am not asked to speak on behalf of my ethno-cultural group.
- I convey a sense of authority. My students take me seriously and they listen when I speak.
- My cultural holidays are recognized by the government and I am not obliged to work.
- I am seen as a person who is an expert in my field and I am rarely underestimated.
- I have the same skin colour as most of my colleagues.
- When I was younger, my teachers and guidance counselors all encouraged me to go to university and I intend to do the same with my students.

- I can work as easily in rural as an urban setting.
- I never really notice the composition of ethno-cultural, racialized or aboriginal groups in my school.
- I teach a curriculum that focuses on my ethno-cultural group in school books or teaching programs and guides.
- I rarely witness discrimination against people like me because of their skin colour, their place of birth, their citizenship, their beliefs or their faith group.
- I can speak about my culture and my religious beliefs without worrying about others' reactions.
- I rarely think much about my identity, or about the ethnic, religious or cultural group to which I belong.

(Source: [https://www.safeatschool.ca/sites/all/themes/safeatschool/files/white\\_privilege\\_in\\_school\\_system.pdf](https://www.safeatschool.ca/sites/all/themes/safeatschool/files/white_privilege_in_school_system.pdf))

The point is not to feel guilt over inherent privilege. As Ebbitt says, "Each of us is able to undermine the system of oppression by refusing to live with unchecked or unacknowledged privilege. Simply by reflecting and challenging our privileges, and working to change the system of discrimination through direct discussion, we can help to shift the status quo."

In her seminal work, *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*, Lisa Delpit provides another clear understanding of the ways in which power can be understood within the context of education. In the chapter, "The Silenced Dialogue," Delpit argues that the traditional politics of educating students from non-dominant communities perpetuate the achievement gap through the delivery of instruction in language arts classrooms. Delpit writes, "It was when well-intentioned white liberal educators introduced 'dialect'. These were seen as a plot to prevent the schools from teaching the linguistic aspects of the culture of power, thus dooming Black children to a permanent outsider caste," (Delpit, 1986, 29). And while Delpit's sentiments lie in the teaching, learning, and instruction of language arts, her insights must be applied universally in support of the position that all children can learn at high academic levels and must be given the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and tools required to be able

to identify and develop their critical thinking, reasoning, and evaluation skills to both address, challenge, and work to dismantle all forms of oppression. Therefore, having access to what Delpit describes as the “culture of power,” along with developing critical reasoning, is something that all students deserve regardless of their race, class, gender, or socioeconomic background. If educators are not encouraged to be culturally sensitive to the diverse needs of non-dominant and children living in poverty, then this will continue to perpetuate stereotypes that students of color in poor communities cannot learn “Standardized” English. Consequently, these mindsets are also responsible for pushing poor students into unjust circumstances such as incarceration or exploitation as laborers, primarily because they were not provided with the tools associated with the culture of power that would otherwise enable them to navigate efficiently.

Thus, equity work is directly linked to mindsets and belief systems. The needs of Black students can never be fully met until educators first examine these and take conscious steps to shift biases.

## Implications

Many factors contribute to the inability of educators to shift their mindset from a deficit-based approach to an asset-based approach to teaching and learning. One factor is the reluctance to consistently examine their own biases and how that impacts their belief that all students can learn. Critical consciousness, the ability to recognize and analyze systems of inequality and the commitment to act against these systems, is not consistently developed during teacher preparation and not pervasive in professional learning once a teacher enters the profession. Sometimes when professional learning does occur, it can be met with a lack of urgency or an uncomfortable stance among educators. Self-reflection on the subjects of implicit and explicit biases is often met with resistance in the form of *colorblindness* (unwilling/unable to acknowledge race and/or ethnicity as significant to teaching, learning, and student access and outcomes) and/or *colormuteness* (unwilling/unable to engage in conversations about race and ethnicity in schools) (Carter Andrews, Brown, Castillo, Jackson & Vellanki, 2019).



In education, we must examine the use of pervasive deficit language in describing students of color. Terms like “achievement gap,” “majority minority,” “low performing students,” “struggling readers,” “loss learning,” “at risk”- to name a few, aren’t asset-based references for the students who are taught in the public school system. Students internalize the negative verbal and nonverbal messages adults at school send to them in the form of low expectations, unchallenging remedial content, and an overemphasis on compliant behavior. Research on teacher expectation regarding Black students emphasizes the need to examine bias. (Gershenson, Holt & Papageorge, 2015) found that non-Black teachers of Black students have significantly lower expectations than do Black teachers for the same student group. Teacher expectation, especially the expectation of white female teachers for Black male students, can play a key role in Black students’ educational experiences and beyond. Based on this study, some educators are now emphasizing a new term in education, [the belief gap](#), which is the gap between what students *can* achieve and what others *believe* they can achieve. This is a narrative in public education that needs much exploration along with implicit bias. This narrative reinforces the deficit-focused approach to learning instead of focusing on the assets that students of color bring to the classroom

setting. The belief gap prevents teachers from seeing the true potential of students of color. Educators must start with a belief that students, despite their background, can succeed.

Educators must also recognize that they help maintain the so-called achievement gap when they do not teach advanced cognitive skills to students who are labeled as “disadvantaged” because of their language, gender, race, or socio-economic status (Hammond, 2015). This lack of a culturally relevant/sustaining/revitalizing approach to teaching and learning has maintained the so-called achievement gap and has created the epidemic of dependent learners. During No Child Left Behind, the emphasis was on helping students become better test takers rather than on looking at the interplay of social and institutional practices that negatively impact African American children, so they didn’t develop the skills to do independent learning or higher order thinking, both of which are needed to excel on standardized tests. Over time, we have seen a new type of intellectual apartheid happening in schools, creating dependent learners who cannot access the curriculum, and independent learners who have had the opportunity to build the cognitive skills to do deep learning on their own (Hammond, 2015).

Teaching and learning must be centered on an equity lens approach. Referring to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kerner Report in the article entitled, “Centering Racial Equity Is Key to

Righting Historic Injustices,” Dr. Ebony Green states that we must recognize that our educational institutions currently produce exactly what they were created to produce-opportunity gaps. She continues by stating schools were not designed to adequately address the needs of students of color, nor has there been a legitimate attempt to systematically change the inequities that were illuminated by the report over 50 years ago. There must be an acknowledgement that all educators have been socialized and educated in systems that normalize and perpetuate white supremacy and settler colonialist ideologies and practices. There are some socially just, critically conscious teacher educators making an effort to prepare future educators for the profession. They are trying to raise preservice teachers’ critical consciousness regarding the historical and contemporary inequities in the P-12 educational system and equip them to embody pedagogies and practices that counter those inequities. However, the curricular and field experiences that are provided often reinforce the deficit mindsets that students bring to the teacher education classroom (Carter Andrews, Brown, Castillo, Jackson & Vellanki, 2019). There must be an urgency to disrupt this cycle of teacher preparation and to continue professional learning centered with an equity lens. Gloria Ladson Billings stated, “We cannot continue to run teacher education programs that create fear and trepidation in the minds of teacher candidates about the students for whom they have responsibility.” (Paris and Alim, 2017)





## Practical Application

It is clear that policy makers and educators must first look inward and examine their own belief systems before any real change can happen. Change begins with the individual. Becoming an antiracist educator takes work and a commitment to consistently examining one's beliefs and actions. This is a journey.

In addition, a collective reckoning also needs to be done on the mindsets, beliefs, and practices that impact Black students in schools and communities. Understanding issues surrounding power and privilege are equally important in beginning the work. It is critical to acknowledge that one training will not produce antiracist systems and teachers. This is work that must be continually revisited and reexamined.

**What follows are suggestions for opening dialogue, exploring biases, and learning more about the influences that guide actions and policies for both individuals and the school community.**

To Do Individual Work:

- Educators can take and discuss the [Implicit Bias Test](#).
- Teachers can complete the **Teacher Self Reflection** (Appendix) to examine where they are in the journey towards antiracist education.
- Teachers can examine classroom practices and consider:
  - Do I begin with strengths and interests as a starting point or what I perceive as deficits?
  - Do I believe my Black students are capable of high achievement?
  - How do I intentionally support my Black students?
  - How might my instructional delivery and content be harming my Black students?
  - What does my data tell me about how Black students are progressing in my classroom? Have I adjusted instruction to better support them?

- Staff can read this article and write individual reflections: [Understanding Privilege and Why it Matters](#).

To Do Whole Staff/School Work:

- Learn more about implicit bias. [Watch this TED Talk as a group](#) and discuss.
- Create a safe space for open and honest dialogue. Here are some guidelines on how to make a safe space: [Click this link](#).
- Hold an ongoing book study to raise the knowledge of all staff and promote healthy dialogue. A few suggestions:

[Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students](#) by Zaretta L. Hammond

[The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children](#) by Gloria Ladson-Billings (2nd Edition)

[Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom](#) by Lisa Delpit (2006 Edition)

[We Want to Do More Than Survive](#) by Bettina Love

- Read articles monthly to keep the learning and conversation going:

[Prioritizing Mindsets: What New York State's Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework Gets Right](#) by Pamela D'Andrea Martinez and Evan M. Johnston

[Culturally Responsive Teaching: What You Need to Know](#)

[Teacher Bias: The Elephant in the Classroom](#)

[Why Teachers Must Fight Their Own Implicit Biases](#) by Melissa Garcia

- Have discussions around these issues in small groups and as a staff. What follows are sample guiding questions to facilitate the dialogue:

## Essential Guiding Questions

### *Academic Achievement*

- How do you support the belief that all students can learn at high academic levels?
- Who are your students and their families?
- Where do they come from? Where do they live?
- What assessments do you use to guide your instruction?
- Do you allow students to express their feelings and share what's going on with them personally? How do you measure their growth and development?
- How do you create opportunities in your classroom/school for students/adults to feel empowered and successful in your classrooms and in their professional roles?

### *Cultural Competence*

- How do you share your cultural background with your students/staff?
- What are some of the strategies you use to help students share their cultural background and heritage?
- How do you use their "funds of knowledge" when planning and executing your lessons?
- How do you help students think about race, class, gender, inequality, differences?
- Do you create time within your lessons and instruction to discuss these issues?
- How do you create a safe, welcoming, and nurturing environment where students are encouraged to take risks especially when discussing sensitive issues like race, class, gender, sexuality, inequity, etc.?
- How do you integrate culture into your content area?
- What is your understanding of differentiated instruction?

### *Socio-Political Consciousness*

- How do you help develop your students critical thinking and reasoning

skills? What skills do you explicitly teach them?

- What are some examples of systems of oppression?
- What is the culture of power and why does this matter to me as a teacher and administrator? What is deficit thinking?
- How do I combat deficit thinking?
- Do I challenge my students to think differently with respect to issues of justice, race, class, gender? If so, how do I do this?
- How do you plan to discuss these issues within your content area? How do you assess them?
- What type of literature (subject matter content) and resources do you have that helps ground your pedagogical and instructional delivery?
- What are the elements of critical pedagogy?
- What can we learn from the academic researchers and theorists (i.e. Paulo Freire, Donald Maceo, Django Paris, H. Samy Alim, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Lisa Delpit, Jeffrey Duncan-Andrade, Tyrone Howard, Geneva Gay, Luis Moll, etc.) who critique schooling and institutional power relations?

These are certainly not an exhaustive set of next steps, but a starting point to begin the work. It is up to all educators to take the first step of examining their own belief systems, so that the real work of supporting Black students and creating equitable schools can be fulfilled. As mentioned, this is a journey and making a commitment to continual learning and self-examination is the first step in ensuring the very best for Black students.

Next, in building upon the examination of belief systems and power and privilege constructs, Principle 2 will apply the systems lens to creating a comprehensive framework of support for Black students, as a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) dictates. Educators will be asked to examine policies, practices, resource flows, relationships/connections, power dynamics and mental models in their current systems.

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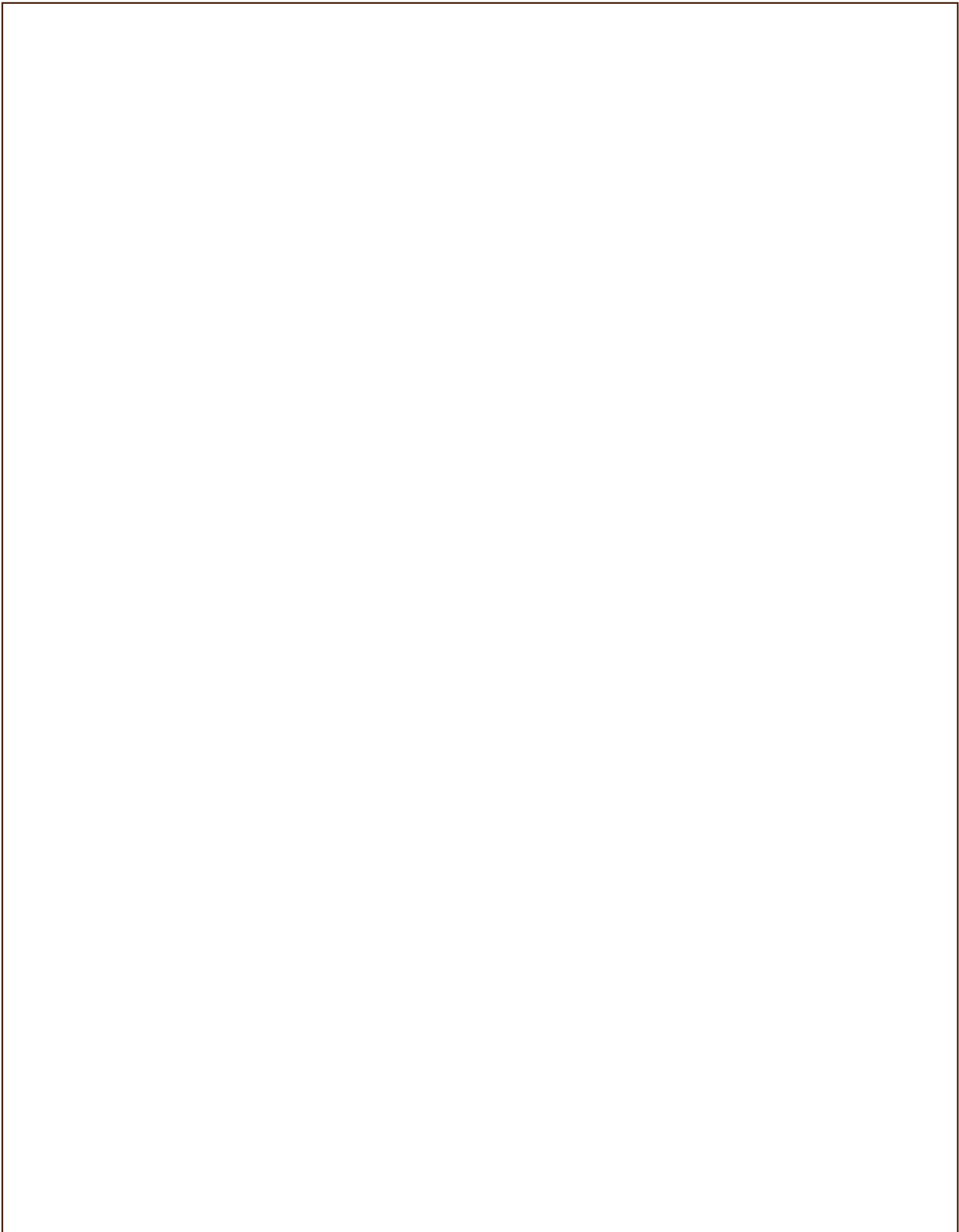
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## Principle 2: Create Educational Systems that Facilitate and Support Learning

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*"Courage is simply doing whatever is needed in pursuit of the vision."*

-Peter Senge

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### **Purpose**

Sustainable change must be addressed at the systems level, by bold school and district leaders who are willing to examine policies and practices through an equity lens. For more than 150 years, our educational system has produced exactly what was intended—inequitable, inadequate, and unacceptable conditions for Black students. From the very beginning of public education, following the Civil War and Reconstruction, the Freedman's Bureau schools that were established for Black children were poorly funded, rarely given supplies, and largely ignored. The Jim Crow laws in the 1870's ensured that segregated schools would endure for nearly another hundred years. Separate was never equal and is still not. The unfortunate reality is that even today, Black students are more likely to be segregated in high-poverty, low-perform-

ing schools. And in schools that are racially diverse, Black students are four times more likely to be suspended than their white peers. In California in 2018-19, [Suspension rates](#) for Black students were at 9%, well above that of their white peers at 3% (CDE, 2019).

Even our system for determining achievement is based on racist policy. Ibram X. Kendi, author of *How to Be an Antiracist* (2019), discussed this idea in a [recent interview](#), stating:

"Achievement in this country is based on test scores, and since white and Asian students get higher test scores on average than their Black and Latinx peers, they are considered to be achieving on a higher level. And then because we connect achievement to intelligence, we think that white and Asian students are intellectually superior to Black and Latinx ones. People who think this way

then point to the test scores as empirical evidence of their claim.

'We're fundamentally saying that the problem is the test takers, as opposed to the test,' Kendi said about that argument. 'And we're completely ignoring things like the multibillion-dollar test prep industry that's concentrated in white and Asian neighborhoods. We're completely ignoring the massive amount of disparities between schools in terms of resources. And that's why more and more educational scholars are talking about the opportunity gap instead of the achievement gap.'"

California achievement data in 2018-19 indicates that 33% of Black students met standards in English language arts and only 20% met standards in mathematics. In the same year, the number of Black students earning a Golden State Seal Merit Diploma was a paltry 2,673, compared to White students at 31,585 and Latinx students at 35,496. The Golden State Seal Merit Diploma recognizes public school graduates who have demonstrated their mastery of the high school curriculum in at least six subject areas, four of which are English language arts, mathematics, science, and U.S. history, with the remaining two subject areas selected by the student. The Golden State Seal Merit Diploma is awarded jointly by the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. So the question becomes, where are the Black students? Why are the numbers for these honors so outrageously disproportionate? Clearly Black students are equally capable of achieving such distinctions, yet the system has done little to foster it.

Gloria Ladson-Billings *"From The Achievement Gap To The Education Debt: Understanding Achievement In U.S. Schools"* introduces the term "education debt" as a critical tool for interrogating the achievement gap phenomena. In her critique, she unpacks the inherent inequities within the education system as a whole and concludes that equality under our traditional system is akin to an assimilationists mindset that inherently creates a caste system that replicates the demands of capitalism with respect to needing to categorize, sort, and divide students. Ladson-

Billings also suggests a need for embracing an equity-based approach: a mindset shift from the traditional ways in which policies, procedures, and systems are implemented and evaluated to fostering and developing systems around the belief that everyone has not been given equal access. The end goal, according to Ladson-Billings, should be centered on meeting individuals (students in this case) where they are and working to mitigate any educational and learning gaps they have and adjust accordingly. More importantly, the issues and impact of race and racism that beset Blacks in the larger society are socially reproduced within the education system. ***If these conditions are ever to shift, systems in our schools and districts must change precisely because our current system of capitalism requires inequality and racism ensures it.***

What are systems and why are they so important? There are many definitions used, but at their most rudimentary level, systems are considered to be a collection of parts, that through their interactions, function as a whole (Ackof & Rovin, 2003; Maani & Cavaana, 2005; Foster-Fishman et.al; 2007). School systems in particular are comprised of many parts working together: policies, practices, resources, relationships, power dynamics and mental models. These parts are intended to work together to create opportunities for *all* students and ensure academic success. For Black students, this is not always the case.

It is essential to focus on the conditions of effective systems and the crucial role that educational leaders play in cultivating systemic change. Effective systems require bold, courageous, and innovative leadership within a shared environment. A system cannot change without leadership that is committed to a shared mission and an unapologetic intent on implementing it.

Finally, systems need to be equitable, not colorblind. Ignoring the issues of race and culture in a system, in terms of generic statements like, "We value ALL students," is to negate the culture and experiences of the students within them. Yes, all students are "valued," but are they seen and heard? Acknowledging who students are, with all of

their cultural experiences, and recognizing what they bring, allows for systems to attend to their educational needs. Black children are frequently overlooked in the educational setting, particularly when they excel, for example, Black children are less likely to be referred to Gifted and Talented Education Programs (GATE), even when they excel academically. The disparities that create inequitable learning outcomes for Black students begins at an early age. According to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, Black children make up 18% of preschool enrollment, but 48% of preschool children suspended more than once. Boys receive three out of four out-of-school preschool suspensions. USDOE, Office of Civil Rights (2014). Clearly the inequities within the school system have failed our Black students and continue to create opportunity gaps. This education debt must be addressed.

## Background

Since the onset of California's new accountability systems and its accompanying Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), LEAs have begun to implement systems approaches to change. The state initiated the approach as the California Way, highlighting the following as a framework California educators will use to make decisions:

- Equity-focused—Prioritizing equity in opportunities, support, and outcomes for all students (LCFF policy citation, SBE);
- Evidence-based—Utilizing evidence-based decision-making that works toward continuous improvement; meeting accountability requirements; focusing efforts and monitoring progress; and developing community through organizational learning (Goldring & Berends, 2009)
- Increase informed engagement—Engaging a wider set of more informed stakeholders to expand decision-making authority and responsibility outside the key leadership circle (OECD, 2012)

These decisions must be made with deliberate and intentional focus on the needs of Black students.



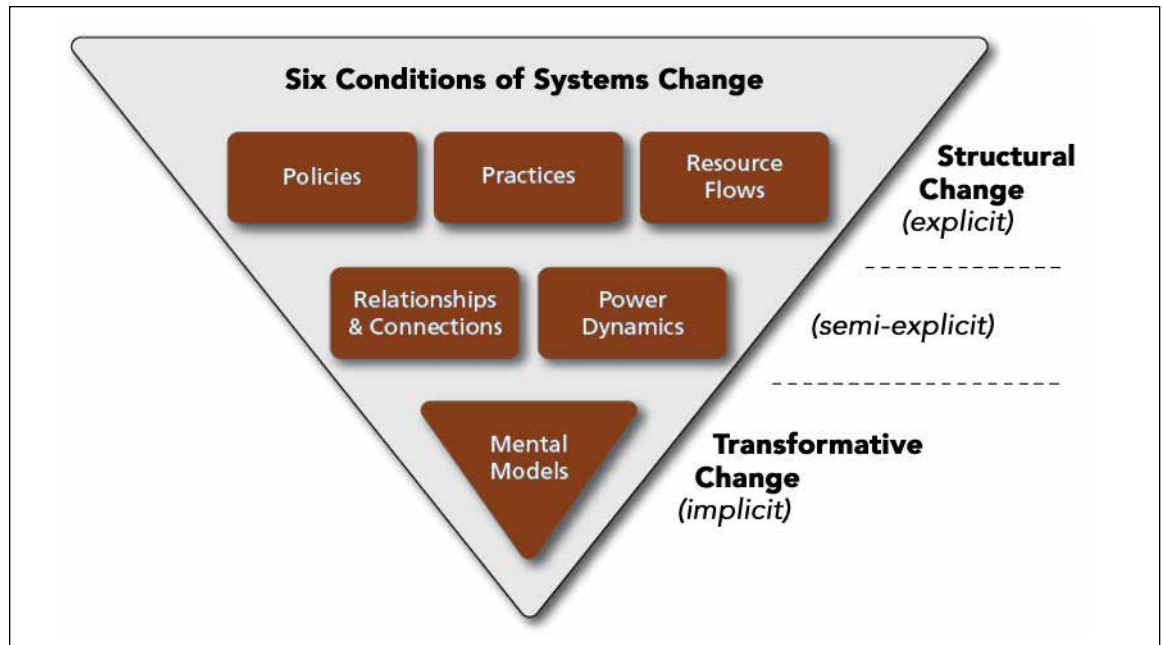
## Using Systems Thinking to Support Black Students

[The Waters of Systems Change](#) (Krania, Kramer, and Senge, 2018) provides an actionable model for institutions interested in creating systems change, particularly those who are working in the pursuit of a more just and equitable future.

In this framework, water is a metaphor for system conditions:

*"A fish is swimming along one day when another fish comes up and says, "Hey, how's the water? The first fish stares back blankly at the second fish and then says, "What water?"*

The first step in systems change is actually seeing the water, because after long periods of time swimming in the same water, there is a tendency to not feel changes in temperature, depths, obstructions, etc. Blind spots develop that totally block a clear vision of the water and the entire eco-system. To see the water, all of the systemic forces at play must be illuminated. Institutions involved in systems change can increase their odds for success by focusing on less explicit but more powerful conditions for change while also turning the lens on themselves so from an organizational perspective, this is an internal and outward-looking process.



Waters outlines the six conditions of change as detailed in the chart above.

Figure 1 shows six interdependent conditions that typically play significant roles in holding a social or environmental problem in place. These conditions exist with varying degrees of visibility to players in the system, largely due to how explicit, or tangible, they are made to most people.

The definitions of each condition are as follows:

**Policies:** Government, institutional, and organizational rules, regulations, and priorities that guide the entity's own and others' actions.

**Practices:** Espoused activities of institutions, coalitions, networks and other entities targeted to improving social and environmental progress. Also-within the entity, the procedures, guidelines, formal or informal shared habits that comprise their work.

**Resource Flows:** How money, people, knowledge, information and other assets such as infrastructure are allocated and distributed.

**Relationships and Connections:** Quality of connections and communication occurring among actors in the system, especially among

those with different histories and viewpoints.

**Power Dynamics:** The distribution of decision-making power, authority, and both formal and informal influence among individuals and organizations.

**Mental Models:** Habits of thought- deeply held beliefs and assumptions and taken-for-granted ways of operating that influence how we think, what we do, and how we talk.

It is important to note that, while these conditions can be independently defined, measured, and targeted for change, they are also intertwined and interact with each other. The interaction can be mutually reinforcing (e.g., a change in community and legislator mental models may trigger a policy change). The interaction can also be counteracting (e.g., scaling effective practices may be thwarted by poor relationships between players in the system). Moreover, since the less explicit conditions are the most challenging to clarify but can have huge impacts on shifting the system, changemakers must ensure that they pay sufficient attention to the relationships, power dynamics, and especially the underlying mental models (such as racism and gender biases) embedded in the systems in which they work.

On the **explicit level** of the inverted triangle, policies, effective practices and human and



financial resources must be directed toward the goal that the leader is trying to achieve, which in this case, may be providing high quality education for Black students.

The **semi-explicit level** emphasizes that transforming a system is really about transforming the relationships and power dynamics between people who make up the system. Effective work at this level may necessitate the consideration of power and politics, including the dynamics of working with school boards and other bodies.

At the **implicit level**, are Mental models, the foundational drivers in any system, as outlined in Principle 1. Systems must address the widely held beliefs of both the individuals and the collective. Changing mental models often means challenging the structures that have defined, influenced, and fostered tenets of racism or other social injustices and inequities. The implicit level is the most challenging – and is a level that is often excluded from systems change work. Unless institutions can learn to work at this third level, changes in the other two levels will be temporary or incomplete.

This level is also challenging because it's about changing the narrative. So, while the narrative changes in broader society; it must also change within. Mental models and social narratives work in a bi-directional way, each influencing and driving the other. The authors note that shifts in system conditions are more likely to be sustained when working at all three levels of change. Systems change without mental models or cultural lens, can lend to the creation of improved systems that continue to perpetuate the status quo. Consequently, those most in need would continue to be unseen and underserved.

## Implications

Each of the conditions in the systems change model have implications for Black students and their educational outcomes. In order for systems to effectively address the needs of Black students, each of the conditions must be examined through the lens of equity and scrutinized in terms of the impact on their success and achievement.

### Condition 1: Policies

The systems change conversation is critical to a focus on existing policies and the adoption of policy changes that address the needs of African American students. As detailed in the Education Trust, West publication entitled, *Black Minds Matter* (2015), over the past 165 years, federal and state laws have played a role in shaping educational opportunities for African American students. However, school system leaders (school boards, superintendents, district and site leaders, and teacher unions) have direct and powerful influence over what policies will be adopted or denied. Historically, policies relative to a variety of critical concerns, e.g., school funding, school suspensions and expulsions, and identification of students for special education programs have not served Black children and children in other vulnerable groups such as foster youth, homeless, students with disabilities, well. *The important factor in policy making is to consider how district policies impact Black students and to determine which policies hinder or help student learning.* Leaders need to consider if policies are formed and enacted with an equity lens.

### Condition 2 : Practices

The routine practices of school sites and districts have an impact on Black students. Who qualifies for the gifted and talented program? Who qualifies for advanced placement and honors classes? Who qualifies for services through special education? Which literacies, languages and cultures are valued? Which voices contribute to the decision-making process? These are just a few questions that can begin the dialogue about a school's culture and practices. For African American students, and, by extension, their parents and community, the answers to these questions and many more can determine if the practices are created with an equity lens in mind. While assessing Black students, teachers should implement a balanced assessment system which incorporates multiple measures including formative assessment practices and other assessment procedures that consider students' linguistic and cultural identities.

For example, many schools have relied on teacher recommendation or standardized test scores to determine who qualifies for gift-

ed and talented programs which can lead to underrepresentation of Black students in the program. These educational outcomes, along with many others, are systems of classification that can either benefit or harm students to whom they are assigned. When these systems of classification track students' race and ethnicity, it is described as racialized tracking or categorical inequality. (Shores, Kim and Still, 2020). Schools create these socially relevant categories, and teachers and school leaders sort students into them. For this reason, categorical inequalities are distinctly within the purview of schools. Looking at school practices and making adjustments can be a game-changer in terms of equity and access for all students.

### **Condition 3: Resource Flows**

African American students are not explicitly identified as a targeted student group in the allocation of funds pursuant to the LCFF; however, it is expected that the academic and behavioral needs of African American students will be addressed by school/district use of base funds. The fact that African American students are not explicitly identified as a student group in the unduplicated student count of the target student groups becomes a conversation of significant consequence for African American students because the system renders Black students as invisible by LEAs and their needs are not addressed.

By extension, the development of the LCAP could provide meaningful opportunities for schools to engage their parents and communities. However, since African American students are not explicitly named as a target group, African American parents may feel disconnected from the LCAP process.

It is imperative that funds be specifically allocated in the LCAP to address the learning and social-emotional needs of Black students, along with strategies and practices that will be utilized.

### **Condition 4: Relationships and Connections**

A discussion of relationships and connections must begin with acknowledgement of the importance of relationships between students and their teachers and the impact that those relationships, whether positive or nega-

tive can have on student outcomes. Students have better outcomes in classes in which they believe their teacher likes them; conversely, negative student outcomes are more likely when students feel they are disliked or unseen/unknown. Teachers' perceptions of and relationships with their students is by necessity, of absolute importance and necessity in making connections between teachers and students.

Parent and community engagement are also of utmost importance. Engaging community allows systems the opportunity to contribute, invest, and participate in children's academic, emotional, and social achievements. It's important for community partnerships to exist because they illustrate long-standing commitments that they're in it for "the long haul" particularly as related to investing in African American learners. The broader community provides resources, perspectives, and experiences that contribute to the rich tapestry of the total school/community environment. Communities help define the values in the neighborhood and the culture. Particularly in African American communities, community engagement extends far beyond the school setting. This is important to note, as the school system has not always been welcoming to Blacks, and therefore, the Black community has searched for and fulfilled its need for the sense of belonging through the church, community events, sororities and fraternities, family businesses, hair salons, barbershops, bid whist neighborhood tournaments, pick-up basketball games and more. Having schools and communities engage with each other forms bonds that promote equitable policies, as well as the opportunity to implement those policies and practices. The formulation of effective educational policies and design of services are needed to address issues pertinent to the education of African American learners. School and district decision making must incorporate voices of the community, an indication of true partnership, as the entities are invested in each other's safety, well-being, and success.

Engaging the parents of African American students contributes to the capacity to improve students' outcomes and contributes to the overall richness of the school com-

munity. Families envision a pathway to trust and care when the outreach is sincere, their “funds of knowledge” are valued, and their cultural values are respected. This ultimately gives a sense of fulfillment for families to “remain involved and engaged in their children’s learning” inside and outside of the school environment (Clark-Louque, et al, 2019). The more students and parents know about the impact and connection learning have on their students’ future academic life, the more they can make better-informed decisions. Building community partnerships and including student and family voice in decision-making also improves mental models in the systems change process. This facilitates change in beliefs and facilitates learning from students, families and community.

#### **Condition 5: Power Dynamics**

Who has the power in schools? This is a question that requires examination through an equity lens. Is shared leadership a practice of the system and are all voices acknowledged? Systems with shared leadership ensure that the power and voice of the individual do not outweigh the power of the collective. For school leaders, raising the voices of all students, and African American students in particular, can empower students and contribute to a healthy school climate and build mutual trust among Black students and teachers. Dana Mitra, an associate professor of education at Penn State University, who studies the impact of student voice on schools, states that effective student voice efforts should seek input from often overlooked and at-risk student populations. “If you ask kids for whom the system has failed ... they have a very different perspective, and they are also braver about calling out issues of equity and sorting out the elephant in the room,” she said (Mitra 2015).

Leaders must ensure that teachers are prepared to address the unique needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students in order to empower students to have ownership over their learning. One of the major challenges facing public education today is that many teachers have not been adequately prepared (e.g., with relevant content knowledge, experience, training (Au, 2009; Cummins, 2007) to address learning needs of this student group.

This inadequate preparation can create a cultural and power gap between teachers and students (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009) and can limit educators’ abilities to choose effective instructional practices or materials.

#### **Condition 6: Mental Models**

Mental models are the deeply held beliefs of an organization. These beliefs permeate every aspect of the community and are the undercurrent of how school systems operate. It is imperative that leaders, both at the school and district level, facilitate courageous conversations with staff on issues of race, culture, and implicit bias, as outlined in Principle 1. Further, as stated earlier, all of the conditions of change interact with and bear an impact on each other. This work must be continual and embedded in the vision of the school and the district, as the issues of power and race are never finished. Healthy systems will encourage individual and collective self-examination of beliefs around culture and race, and move to co-create a teaching and learning environment which is conducive for all in the system. For Black students, this intentional approach to creating an ever-evolving vision of what an educational system should be will result in greater connections to the school community and higher investment in their own learning.



## Practical Application

Effective systems are the mechanism for ensuring equity in schools, regardless of the adults who come and go. Ensuring systems that effectively support the needs of Black students takes *intentional work*. What follows are recommendations to address this systemic work:

### Policies:

- Examine the current policies that guide the hiring practices in the district through an equity lens. Are Black administrators and teachers represented in the workforce?
- Examine current policies and requirements relating to mandatory training for early educators as well as K-12 teachers relating to implicit bias training and social justice practices
- Examine the instructional policies including requirements and preparation for music, athletics, clubs, AP courses, the Arts, etc. Are Black students well-represented in each area and if not, why not?
- Analyze suspension data for overrepresentation of young Black children in preschool to grade 12 students. Is the discipline policy supporting or harming the social-emotional growth of Black students?



### Practices

- Consider the opportunity gaps for Black students. Are Black students achieving at high levels? If not, why not? What gaps in instructional programs and practices have created this?
- Examine grading practices, which can often be an equity issue. For example, if homework is weighed too heavily, students with limited educational resources at home are placed at a disadvantage.
- Evaluate student support policies which are often implemented with disparate outcomes. Black students may be more likely to be identified as needing Special Education services, while white students receive 504 plans or other educational supports without a Special Education label, which can block access to other services.
- Ensure a system of culturally responsive teaching and assessment practices through ongoing professional development and monitoring.
- Investigate instructional materials in discipline specific courses for historical accuracy, rigor, and relevance to Black students. Are Black role models in literature, math, science, history, the arts, etc. highlighted and explored?
- Continually analyze assessment data through an equity lens-what is it indicating about how Black students are doing?

### Resources

- Allocate financial resources to specifically target the needs of Black students and write it into the LCAP and other site plans, along with the identified support strategies.
- Regularly monitor the allocation and use of resources — staff, time and materials. You cannot change what you do not measure.
- Leverage human resources-create highly qualified, culturally responsive teachers, instructional assistants and leaders to provide the best teaching and learning experiences for Black students.

- Set aside time for professional learning, self reflection, and discussions on issues of race and culture.

### **Relationships**

- Facilitate ways to foster caring and inclusive relationships among teachers and students.
- Include Black students and parents in school/district work to strengthen and deepen relationships through committees, the school board, extra-curricular events, career days, and mentoring and tutoring programs.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to learn from Black students and families. This is an important component of building a cultural context for an effective system.
- Marshall the resources of community members and business leaders to provide mentoring and job opportunities, and connect students to the larger community in which they reside.

### **Power Dynamics**

Identify your location on the Continuum on Becoming an Antiracist Multicultural Organization (Appendix) and actively work to move your organization towards “fully inclusive”.

Practice shared leadership to keep power dynamics in check. Include Black parents and students on site counsels and decision making bodies.

Create a social justice task force at school sites to keep a continual eye on issues of equity for all students. Include staff, students, parents, and community members.

### **Mental Models**

- Lead staff through [Courageous Conversations](#) and professional development (PD) on belief systems and implicit bias, as outlined in Principle 1. One-and-done PD’s will not create equitable schools, it must be a journey of continual examination and self-reflection.
- Don’t be afraid to be anti-racist and strive to call out injustices as they arise.

In this section, systems change was explored as a process that requires leaders to consider a broad range of interrelated conditions such as policies, practices, and resources, along with the interplay of varied relationships that include school and district staff, school boards, parents and community members to create a foundation of support for Black students.

As organizations engage in continuous improvement and refinement of their current system of support (MTSS) the questions above can be utilized to reflect and improve your current system.

That foundation is requisite for creating the climate, culture, curriculum and other components of an equitable learning environment that enables Black students to thrive.

In Principle 3, the spotlight is placed on strategies for creating culturally sustaining and revitalizing high quality instruction. Such strategies require the existence of the right systems conditions for maximum realization -- including necessary and appropriate resources, parental engagement and support and culturally sustaining curriculum taught by teachers who have the passion and the will to lead change.

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## Principle 3: Ensure Culturally Relevant, Sustaining, and Revitalizing High Quality Instruction

*“The answer to improving our schools is not to settle for ‘pretty good’ or to create newer and ‘better’ options. Instead, we need to invest in our current schools and deconstruct the systems we have established that do not meet the needs of teachers and marginalized students. We need to create opportunities where every single student is treated with dignity and respect, held to high expectations, and supported academically, behaviorally, and social-emotionally. This change does not require new buildings or new frameworks but instead involves an acknowledgment of and alignment to the evidence-based ideas about equity and race that are endorsed today that are being ignored.”*

(Chardin, 2020)

### **Purpose**

Ensuring culturally relevant, sustaining, and revitalizing high quality instruction is of utmost importance in supporting African American students. It is not enough to simply respond to students’ cultures and languages but to sustain them by ensuring that the students, their languages and their cultures are at the center of the teaching. Carefully crafting a strong tier one learning environment in

the classroom that includes all experiences and uplifts all voices will help to ensure that African American students’ culture and language are not devalued or seen as a deficit. This also helps to create empowering environments for students, showing them that their thoughts, culture, and identities matter and that the classroom, community, and world are richer for their inclusion. So often, African American students are viewed as being on a predetermined course, but the truth is those

tracks have been laid down by the system that the society of the United States has helped to build. Therefore, it is incumbent on us to dismantle that system and ensure that every student is allowed full access to their potential. Ultimately, educators must embrace their role: “to challenge the current system and what [they] consider as acceptable” (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 166). The success of educators depends, largely, on the system that supports them, as discussed in the previous principle. This principle, however, does a deeper dive into the mindset and practices that educators can employ in their classrooms to support Black students.

## Background

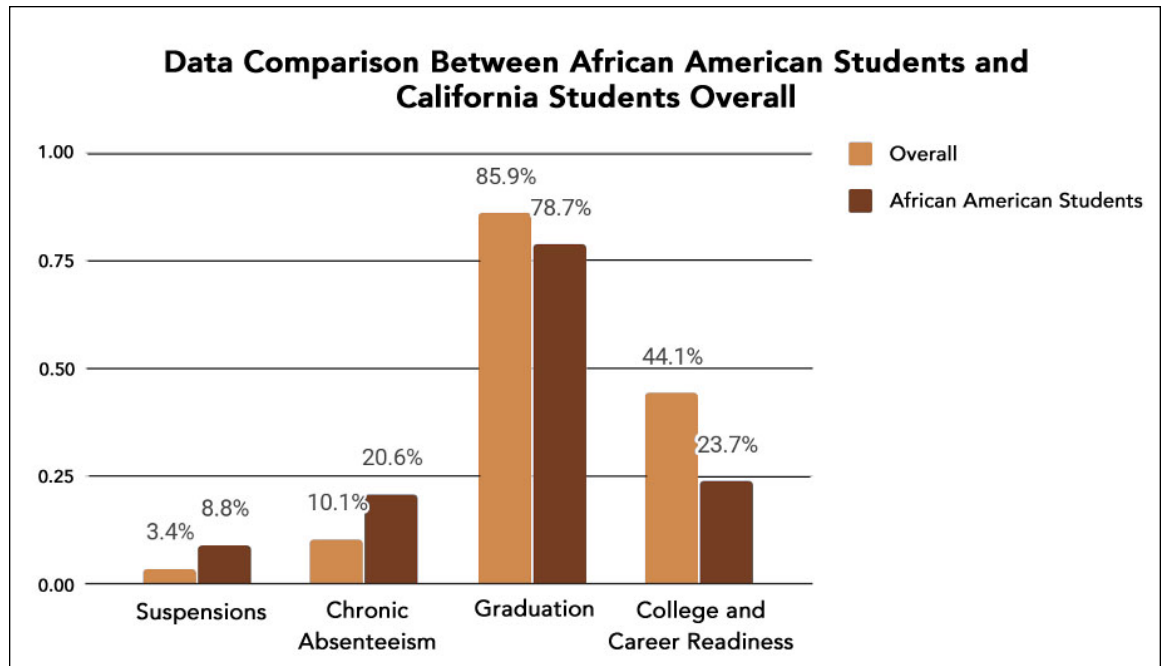
As described previously in the Foundations section, cultural proficiency and culturally responsive teaching are the foundations of high quality instruction for African American students. Culture is how the human brain makes sense of the world, which is why “everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity, has a culture” (Hammond, 2015, 22). In fact, people have multiple cultures -- consider the different cultures based on age, gender, etc. Consequently, leveraging students’ cultures and languages is key. Unfortunately, even though Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings wrote on the needs of culturally diverse students in 1990, followed by many other authors, we do not have widespread implementation.

Designing a culturally responsive and sustaining system takes time. To accomplish the development of a culturally sustaining environment, educators must begin by developing cultural competence. Cultural competence goes beyond simply knowing about students’ cultures and multicultural education as Ladson-Billings explains. It requires that educators look within themselves and examine their own biases and preconceived notions that may creep into their interactions with Black students despite their best efforts to avoid it, as outlined in Principle One.

Culturally responsive teaching focuses on leveraging students’ cultures to foster a deeper understanding of the curriculum and themselves. Culturally responsive teaching utilizes an assets-based mindset and leverages relationships and students’ culture in order to develop content knowledge, information processing and student agency in a rigorous and relevant environment that perpetuates students’ self-awareness and learning. “An educator’s ability to recognize students’ cultural displays of learning and meaning making and respond positively and constructively with teaching moves that use cultural knowledge as a scaffold to connect what the student knows to new concepts and content in order to promote effective information processing. All the while, the educator understands the importance of being in a relationship and having a social-emotional connection to the







student in order to create a safe space for learning.” (Hammond, 2015)

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy takes this concept one step further and “affirms and respects the key components of the Asset-Based Pedagogies that preceded it. Instead of just accepting or affirming the backgrounds of students of color or connecting to students’ cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and frames of reference as we see in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy; Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy views schools as places where the cultural ways of being in communities of color are sustained, rather than eradicated.” (CDE, 2020)

All educators must travel through the journey of cultural competence to culturally sustaining pedagogy and the time to begin that work is now.

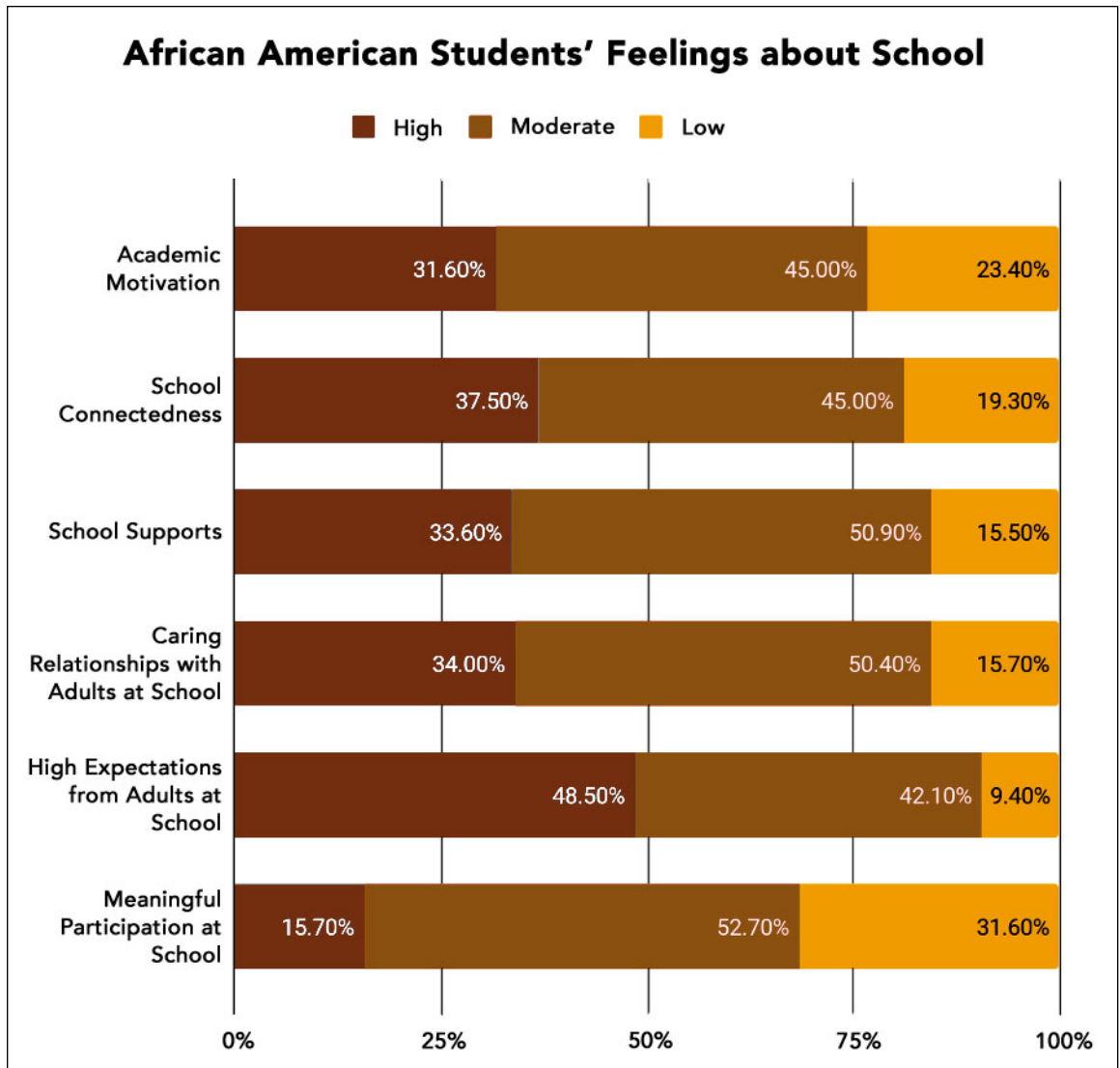
### Implications

The data has always painted a vivid picture of the inequities in the educational system. For too long education has looked at that data picture with limited response. For the purposes of this document, California data will be shared, but these inequities are echoed across the nation.

The 2019 California School Dashboard provides a quick snapshot of the state of education for African American students.

The data are clear. In each category African American students are either over or under-represented when compared to California students overall. They are overrepresented in suspensions and chronic absenteeism. They are underrepresented in graduation and college and career readiness. And when looking at English language arts assessment scores, overall California students are 2.5 points below standard, whereas, African American students are 47.6 points below standard. For math, one sees the same pattern. Overall California students are 33.5 points below standard, but African American students are 87.9 points below standard. And African American students are often overrepresented in special education as well. They are more likely to be taught in separate classrooms or schools than other students, leading to lower expectations, limited curriculum, social stigmatizing, and more (NEA).

These disparities start early. In California, as of 2016, 38.8 percent of African American students were not enrolled in preschool, as compared to 31.8 percent of White students (CalMatters). And when African American students enter the K-12 system, they are taught by teachers who do not look like them. Only



1.2 percent of teachers in California are Black men ([CalMatters](#)). A recent story in the [New York Times](#) and another from [NPR](#) both argued for the importance of having teachers look like their students. Students generally felt more cared for and were more interested in their schoolwork when they had a teacher of the same race. Ultimately, “students do better in school when they can view their teachers as role models. ... And if that teacher looks like you, you might perceive them as ... a role model” ([NPR](#)).

In analyzing the chart above of self-reported student data, it is easy to see how students feel about their school: how supported and connected they feel, and if they feel driven to participate or pushed with high expectations from the adults around them. In the chart below, few students report that they have a high

level of academic motivation or meaningful participation. And in fact most students also see a lack in school connectedness, supports, and don’t feel cared for by adults at school ([KidsData](#), 2015-17).

Again, the data are clear. African American students are continually sidelined, punished, left behind, and not given adequate support. Despite the research on the importance of placing African American students at the center of the classroom with culturally sustaining pedagogy, the data does not reflect that actually happening in schools and districts. But this does not mean that it *always* must be like this. The recommendations below cover key practices that educators can implement in the classrooms and administrators can support to create an environment that is culturally relevant and sustaining.

## Practical Application

The goal of this principle is to “reverse patterns of underachievement for students of color. Culturally Responsive Teaching requires teachers to recognize the cultural capital and tools that students of color bring to the classroom and to utilize their students’ cultural learning tools throughout instruction” (CDE, 2020). In order to do this, schools must be organized to meet the needs of the students they serve. Pedro Noguera argues that educators “expect kids to adjust to the schools and if they can’t, we say something is wrong with the child - instead of focusing on engagement and nurturing the love of learning in kids” (Noguera, 2016). That is, instead of examining the school system itself and the ways in which it does not support students, the students themselves are blamed for not adapting to a system not designed to serve them and their needs. While there is no one size fits all for African American students, or a definitive list of strategies that can be used, it is imperative to ensure culturally relevant, sustaining, and revitalizing (CRSR) high quality instruction for African American learners. In order to achieve this, there are three key practices that should be used with great intentionality and purpose:

1. Focus on connection with learners through relationships and empowering student voice and agency
2. Create a welcoming and inclusive environment for African American students and their families
3. Create empowering environments for learners by designing rigorous, flexible, and engaging learning experiences

The information below provides examples of how these practices might be implemented.

### 1. Connection with Learners through Relationships and Empowering Student Voice and Agency

#### **Start with Connections**

The connection between teacher and learner is paramount to student learning. Students must be willing to embark on the learning journey with the teacher and their classmates and a learning partnership must be established (Hammond, 2015). This connection

begins with understanding the learners. Educators must intentionally learn about their students, their history, the different elements of students’ culture, their community, their language, and their stories. This understanding is not built overnight. It takes intentional effort and goes beyond “getting to know you” activities. It all begins with listening and learning.

#### **Implementation Examples:**

- Study the history of African American students and learn about their culture. Take time to talk and connect with students and families. Learn about the community, the students’ elders, the stories, and experiences.
- Find out what students are interested in and relate to. How do they identify? What are their hopes and dreams?
- Continually collect feedback from students and families. Find out what is/is not working. What are their needs? What are their viewpoints? These personal connections convey that their voices are heard, and that people care about them.
- Commit to an ongoing, deep study of students’ culture and shift the classrooms according to who the students are. As students change, classrooms should also change. That is, not only will educators have to evolve their classrooms to match the needs of new students at the beginning of the year, but also teachers may find that they have to shift the classroom in the middle of the year, depending on the needs of the students.

#### **Advocate for Students**

High expectations matter. Students learn best from people who believe in them. Never underestimate the effect of a caring adult who believes in a student. Students respond when they experience a combination of high expectations, opportunities for meaning making, feedback, and a supportive environment (Hammond, 2015). Culturally and linguistically underserved students are all too frequently seen as deficient, deviant, defiant, disruptive, and disrespectful. What they bring to the classroom culturally and linguistically is not seen as an asset but as a liability (Hollie, 2017). An assets-based approach can radically change a student’s learning experience. Students respond well to teachers they know believe in them and care.

### Implementation Examples:

- Reflect on beliefs, assumptions, practices, decisions, and language used to describe students and the subtle message sent to African American students. What assumptions do you hear on campus when describing Black students? Refer back to Principle 1 for more information on the importance of beliefs.
- Challenge the assumptions made about learners based on the color of their skin, especially when looking at performance and behavior.
- Respectfully address other educators when they use non-assets based language when describing Black students.
- Ensure schools and classrooms are not offering watered-down curriculum and assignments to Black students.
- Analyze policy and practice that limits Black students' access to rigorous, high quality instruction. Are your Black students proportionately represented in AP classes? Honors? Gifted and Talented Education? Advanced math and science? What does the access data say? Review your systems as outlined in Principle 2.
- Examine policies around placing students into special education. Are you placing African American students at a disproportionate rate? Are your practices trauma informed?



### ***Design Learning Experiences Embedded with Student Voice and Choice***

Creating an environment that is rich with student voice must be intentionally designed. Student voice and perspective should be actively sought and opportunities to amplify students' voices must be intentionally planned.

### Implementation Examples:

- Ask students how schools should be designed. How do they learn best? What is relevant? What helps them be engaged? What is their ideal classroom or school? Ask students to co-design the learning.
- Regularly survey students and conduct focus groups regarding school climate and culture, inclusiveness, and their perspectives on the learning environment.
- Consider including students in the analysis and response to the data collected, as appropriate. Ask them to be part of the solution.
- Develop student leadership programs that include co-planning and problem solving.
- Design learning experiences that provide students with choice on topics, resources, learning environment, expression, and learning partnerships.
- Ask students what electives they are interested in and offer them.
- Provide opportunities for students to explore social justice and community topics they are interested in.
- Utilize student-led conferences to bring student voice into school/family partnerships.
- Hold a Black student dialogue circle where students are able to engage in discussions around the culture and community of the school as a whole as well as the Black sub-culture.

## **2. Create a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment for African American Students**

### ***Respect and Value African American Students' Culture and Language***

Respecting and valuing African American students means respecting and valuing them as they are and not a white society's idea of what they should be. For centuries, "White middle-class norms of knowing and being ... continue to dominate notions of educational

achievement. To truly respect and value African American students means thinking about what our pedagogies would look like if this [White] gaze ... weren't the dominant one" (Alim and Paris, 2017, 2). Culture and language are critical to identity and selfhood, which is why "there is a vital need for pedagogical practices that sustain students' language and culture in classrooms and other learning contexts" (Alim and Paris, 2017, 45).

#### **Implementation Examples:**

- Create regular opportunities to represent and celebrate students' culture and language. This must go beyond cultural days, Black History Month or addenda to curricula of a handful of diverse authors.
- Represent students' culture and language in the school environment. Do students see themselves in the environment, methods, materials, and assessments (Chardin, 2020)?
- Give students opportunities to develop their identity. This can be done through journals, discussion prompts, personal projects, art projects, and reflection opportunities. Create time and space for them to develop their identity and an understanding of their culture.

#### **Utilize Restorative Practices**

The aim of restorative practices is to develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and restoring relationships (Wachtel, 2009). Many school and classroom practices can leave African American students feeling "othered" -- that is, the placing of students' family, community, and racial identities, linguistic practices, and cultural and intellectual traditions outside and apart from the dominant school culture (Kinloch, 2017). The use of restorative practices strengthens relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities. Restorative practices change the perception of modifications of behavior happening to the student to one that they are helping to create and build themselves, ensuring that their culture and identity are not marginalized in the process. Restorative practices are essential because they help develop connection and belonging. (Wachtel, 2009)

#### **Implementation Examples:**

- When harm is caused, utilize strategies and practices to address the harm that was caused and repair and restore so that individuals are back in community with each other.
- Involve individuals in decisions that affect them by asking for their input and allowing them to refute the merit of one another's ideas, ensuring everyone involved and affected understands why final decisions are made.
- Use affective questions and statements, impromptu conversations, circles, and conferences.
- Use restorative practices as a proactive approach to student well being.

#### **Teach, Integrate, and Model Transformative Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**

All students, of course, benefit from developing social and emotional skills. In particular, transformative social emotional learning "is a process where students and teachers build strong, respectful relationships founded on an appreciation of similarities and differences, learn[ing] to critically examine root causes of inequity and develop collaborative solutions to community and social problems" (Jagers, Rivas-Drake, Borowoski, 2018). Social emotional learning can empower both students and teachers through strong relation-





ships and critical examinations of system and community, leading to positive progress and change.

#### **Implementation Examples:**

- Explicitly teach the social emotional competencies as well as provide resources and additional supports for students not mastering these skills.
- Provide opportunities for students to reflect on strengths, goals, identity, core values, and culture to build self awareness.
- Teach students the importance of respectful relationships based on the appreciation of similarities and differences.
- Engage students in how to use empathy when addressing social issues and create opportunities for them to develop collaborative solutions to social problems.
- Use current topics to develop social awareness.
- Implement the 3 signature practices from CASEL:
  - Welcoming/Inclusion Activities
  - Engaging Strategies, Brain Breaks, and Transitions
  - Optimistic Closings

### **3. Creating Empowering Environments for Learners by Designing Rigorous, Flexible, and Engaging Learning Experiences**

Be an equity warrior. One must make an important distinction between equity and equality--it is not enough to ensure that all

students have the same access to the same resources. Rather, educational equity pushes educators into ensuring that “each child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential” (National Equity Project). African American students deserve a rigorous and engaging curriculum and access to a relevant course of study. The question becomes what can educators do in the curriculum or environment to ensure all can have success?

#### ***Design Instruction with Culturally Sustaining and Relevant Curriculum***

Culturally sustaining and relevant curriculum is designed with students’ culture and backgrounds in mind. What is relevant to them?

#### **Implementation Examples:**

- Ensure the curriculum intentionally develops students’ content knowledge and provides opportunities to engage in creativity and critical thinking.
- Create opportunities for students to engage in design thinking and science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) topics.
- Ensure the curriculum covers African American history as American history and is representative of the students’ background. Culturally sustaining and relevant curriculum goes beyond Black History Month. It highlights, elevates, and celebrates the contributions of all members of society and their perspective.
- Provide opportunities for students to explore different perspectives. Topics related to social justice and current societal issues should be incorporated as appropriate.
- Offer an ethnic studies curriculum.
- Provide a robust focus on literacy. Provide literature and texts written by African American authors.
- Offer electives that represent the culture and background of students.

#### ***Design Instruction Using Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Pedagogy***

Learning begins with relevance and engagement. The chronic achievement gap and opportunity myth in most American schools has created an epidemic of learners unprepared to do the higher order thinking, problem solv-

ing, and analytical reading and writing called for in the California State Standards. Hammond writes that “our ultimate goal as culturally responsive teachers is to help dependent learners learn how to learn. We want them to have the ability to size up any task, map out a strategy for completing it, and then execute the plan. That’s what independent learners do” (Hammond, 2015, 122). All students can become independent learners; the support that educators provide them is key to ensuring that happens.

#### **Implementation Examples:**

- Deepen your understanding of the brain research and how learning occurs.
- Intentionally connect all learning from prior knowledge and schema learners have. Connecting to African American learners’ background knowledge and using examples that are relevant to their culture and community strengthens understanding.
- Ensure that the cognitively demanding tasks are aligned with grade level standards.
- Provide students with multiple opportunities to interact and digest learning with supportive feedback in order to solidify important concepts. Invite students to share learning with each other.
- Use inquiry projects or problem-based learning to deepen engagement and learning. Ask students to engage in critical thinking and problem solving.
- Explicitly teach academic language and focus on vocabulary development.
- Teach students how to use cognitive routines.
- Incorporate elements of youth culture and the arts to increase relevance and connection. Include practices such as storytelling, hip hop, collaboration, and technology integration. Use what the students connect with.
- Use discussion protocols to ensure equitable participation.
- Provide different options for expressing/communicating learning.
- Engage students in learning cycles with productive struggle and regular, high quality and supportive feedback. Assist students with achieving their goals and developing cognitively independent learners (Hammond, 2015).

- Bring what engages students into the classroom. What are they talking about? What are they interested in? What do they connect with?
- Most importantly, “Stay Fresh” (Ladson-Billings, 2020).

#### ***Design Learning Experiences using the Principles of Universal Design for Learning***

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a “research-based set of principles to guide the design of learning environments that are accessible and effective for all” (CAST, 2018). Based on the premise that one size-fits-all curricula, designed with white middle-class students in mind, creates unintentional barriers to learning for many students, including the mythical average student, UDL focuses on designing instruction to meet the varied needs of students. Everyone learns differently and a one-size-fits-all curriculum does not work for most learners. The UDL framework recognizes learner variability and is a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone—not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches to teaching and learning. Each person is unique in how they learn, and creating options for each person’s learning journey can contribute to creating empowered learners.

#### **Implementation Examples:**

- Have clear flexible goals with flexible pathways for students to achieve them.
- Focus on teaching students to make decisions about their learning. Assist them with goal setting and reflection.
- Design learning activities that provide different pathways to learning goals that are relevant and meaningful to students.
- Provide student choice on how they can participate and/or complete a final product.
- Design learning activities that chunk content and provide opportunities to engage in discussions and meaning making.
- Provide clear guidelines, rubrics, checklists for assignments and show them how to use these tools.
- Design learning experiences for adults utilizing the UDL principles.

### **Engage in Continuous Improvement**

To address the achievement gap for African American students, educators must continually challenge the status quo. For too long schools have accepted current levels of performance as just the way things are. Educators must conduct regular equity audits and explore the differences that are occurring between different student groups. Principle 2 discusses in detail the ways in which to examine the educational system to uncover and challenge the ways in which students are not equitably served. So, challenging the status quo is internal work, but it is also individual work.

#### **Implementation Examples:**

- Conduct empathy interviews and focus groups to understand the experience and perspectives of students and families within your organization. Ask them what is working and what is not working.
- Examine data to recognize unconscious patterns in the interactions with students and use it to challenge traditional practices and structures. Hammond suggests that educators “take an inquiry stance. Collect some data on a small group of students rather than trying to assess the class as a whole all at once. Focus on one or two students we commonly call focal students, to get a more intimate view.
- Use the data to illuminate unconscious patterns in your interactions. Spend about a week or two tracking the quality of the interactions with your learners, especially those that are culturally and linguistically diverse” (Hammond, 2015, 82). This may be a different way of using data than some are used to -- the data gathered is to be used in reflection on one’s unconscious practices to see the ways in which biases against students may be present.
- Engage in regular reflection regarding what is/is not working. Reflect on your practices and mindsets that may contribute to outcomes. Dr. Hollie reminds educators that “with the journey to responsiveness comes changes and shifts in your mindset, which are recognitions of your dispositions, perspectives, biases, prejudices, ignorance, misunderstandings, and misgivings about the cultures and languages of others” (Hollie, 2017, 20). Changes to

one’s mindset and practices *should* occur as new information is learned and behaviors and thoughts are reflected on.

### **Be Committed to Being an Antiracist Educator**

The foundation of this principle is challenging one’s own beliefs and actions and a commitment to tackling the policies and the inequities within the system. Antiracist educators, as described in Principles one and two, systematically tackle bias and needed systems changes. The definition of an antiracist is “One who is expressing the idea that racial groups are equals and none needs developing, and is supporting policy that reduces racial inequity” (Kendi, 2019)

#### **Implementation Examples:**

- Be committed to the work of social justice and engage in the personal reflection needed for this work.
- Be committed to learning about African American history and how the system has marginalized students.
- Be willing to reflect on your own feelings, assumptions, and biases and continually challenge your thinking and viewpoint about African American students.
- Commit to implementing culturally relevant and sustaining practices.

Being a culturally relevant and sustaining educator is individual work. Remember that “while ‘caring about’ conveys feelings of concern for one’s state of being, ‘caring for’ is active engagement in doing something to positively affect it” (Gay, 2010, 58). The root of this work throughout this document is in engaged action. Many, perhaps, have thought on the ways in which injustice and inequity is pervasive throughout society, but it is not with mere thoughts that the course of history is changed. Educators touch many lives; it is time to ensure that the lives touched are nurtured and sustained in a positive way.

Students’ lives are, of course, touched by many more factors than schooling. Principle 4 will discuss the ways in which other circumstances impact students’ well-being and how families, communities, and other stakeholders can understand and collaborate with those elements to further their equity work.



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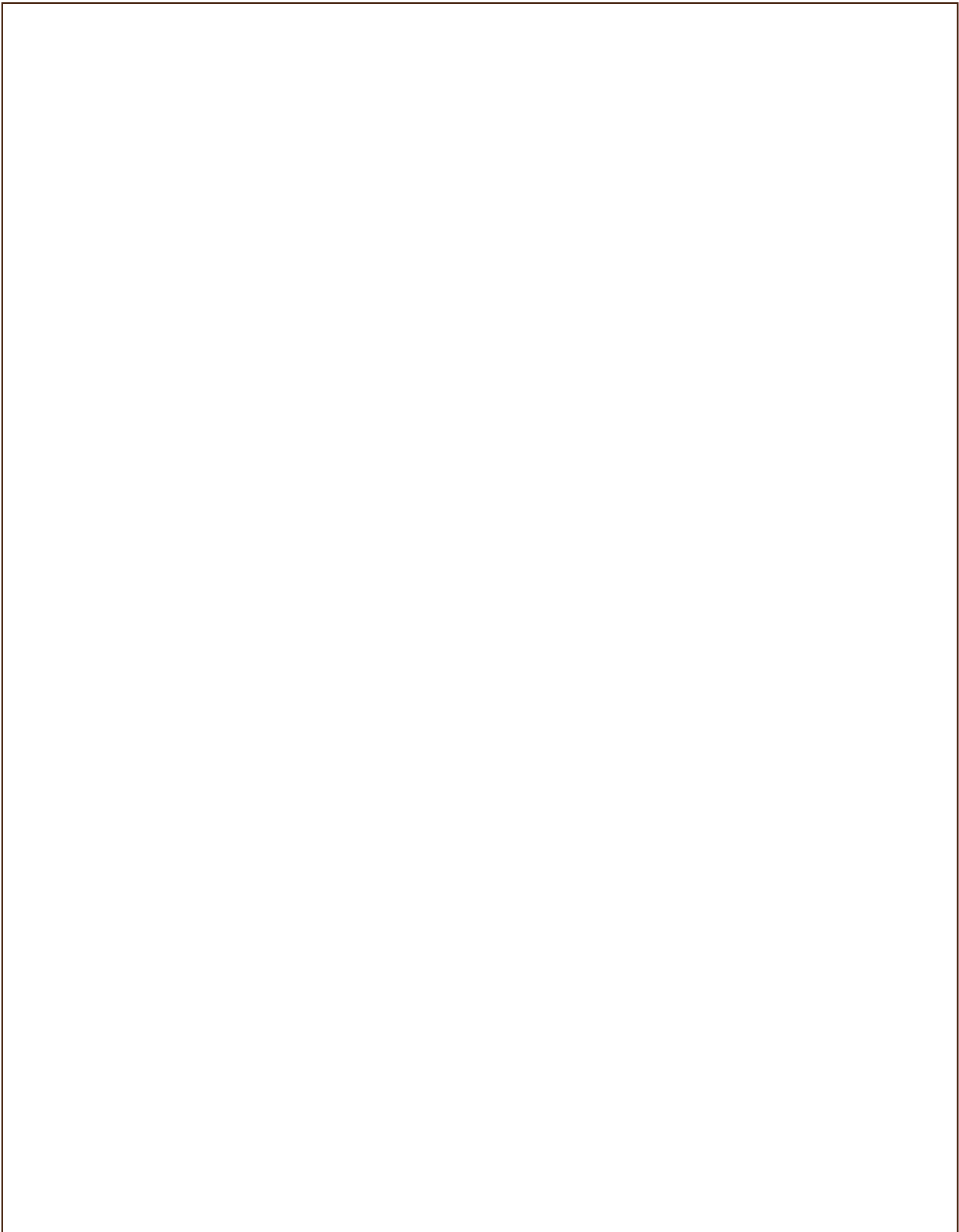
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## Principle 4: Mitigate the Accumulation of Disadvantage

*“Our kids deserve a “new year, new me” opportunity, too. They deserve to go to school and sit in front of teachers who believe in their ability to succeed. To be represented by elected officials who are committed to advocating for their best interests. They deserve to be prepared for college and have access to the same opportunities as White students and students of any color. They deserve a chance. And that’ll only happen if this school system changes its ways and invests in their potential now.”*

-Taneesha Peoples, [Education Post](#)

### **Purpose**

To mitigate means to make less-severe, serious or painful. The African American community today faces challenges directly connected to the ripple created through time from the enslavement period, into Jim Crow and beyond. Schools were designed to be the center of the community and as such, are directly impacted by the well being of the community. Thus, having an understanding of the harm done to Black students and how their educational performance and social emotional well being is inextricably connected to understanding the harm done to the entire community, is critical to making a difference for these students (Noguera, et.al, 2019).

Our current system is failing the majority of Black students. While there are several factors that contribute to students’ success or failure, beginning the process of examining belief systems and mindsets, as outlined in Principle 1 is imperative. Additionally, as stated in Principle 2, effective systems thinking can be an essential tool in mitigating the current trends in African American student learning and achievement. By adopting and implementing culturally responsive instructional practices and pedagogy, described in Principle 3, many of the in-school challenges can be addressed. But there are still other external issues facing Black students that impede their educational progress.

The purpose of this section is to provide practitioners an understanding of the vast accumulated disadvantages experienced by African American students, and provide some insight into the implications and recommendations for mitigating them. This understanding begins with a discussion on intergenerational poverty and traumatic experiences that call for a systemic response for students. These issues have several implications and key questions educators should seek to answer as they go about serving the needs of African American students. Lastly, this section will end with recommendations and best practices for mitigating the accumulation of disadvantages African American students experience, not only in the community but in schools.

## Background

Many of the economic, social, educational, and health related issues impacting Black students, their families, and the communities they live in are directly related to systemic racism and structural racist policies. The relationship between racism (institutional and systemic), intergenerational poverty, and traumatic experiences that many Black students (and their families) face due to environmental conditions and health disparities must be given careful and critical attention especially when examining their academic and behavioral performances.



In the context of schooling, one must also consider and examine the ways in which Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) like homelessness, students in the foster care system, those experiencing food insecurity, and other external traumatic experiences shape the overall health, wellness, performance, and social outcomes for Black youth. There is a growing body of research that students who have experienced various forms of trauma during childhood often experience difficulties in their ability to learn. Toxic stress is described in the research literature as a recurrent form of trauma that is typically attributed to exposure to violence or other adverse childhood experiences (Morsy and Rothstein, 2019).

Research shows that toxic stress often contributes to a variety of difficulties that students may experience in school, including: an inability to focus or concentrate, disruptive and defiant behavior, and general disengagement from learning (Sigler, 2016). It should also be noted that not all children respond in the same way to adverse childhood experiences (CDC, 2018). However, we do want to draw attention to the fact that Black youth are significantly more likely than other groups to experience certain hardships and multiple adverse childhood experiences that result in chronic absenteeism, lower graduation rates, and disciplinary sanctions that are related to the various health and social hardships disproportionately experienced by Black youth (Noguera et al, 2019).

## Implications

The implications of the response from the education system to mitigate the accumulation of disadvantages of African American students resulting from poverty and other systemic social issues, are vast. The issues impacting African American students begin in their community where a number of issues impact their well being, from poor access to food, to lack of access to health care, after-school care and other resources. This same lack of resources spreads into the schools where students do not have access to rigorous instruction, high quality teachers, and necessary learning supports.

LCFF and LCAP policies have provided schools and districts with a means for ensur-

ing resources are targeted to the students who need them the most, but *these resources must be intentionally allocated*. Before allocating funds and redesigning our programs, it is important that educators deeply understand the issues impacting students and families such as poverty, health disparities, access to early learning and preschool, access to after-school care, homelessness, foster care, special education, gender issues, social emotional needs and punitive discipline practices. Knowledge of these issues can help inform decision-making regarding the specific needs of the students we are serving. The information below describes and highlights these issues, deficiencies, and increased support areas.

## Poverty

In California, roughly 60% of the student population is socioeconomically disadvantaged. Strategic disruption of intergenerational poverty for a quarter million Black children living in severe poverty requires an approach that empowers parents to provide for their children financially. Various studies have shown the disadvantages of students who live in poverty, the least of which is a deficit of exposure to language, meaning students in poverty are spoken to less than their peers. Children from low income families have experienced half of the language of those from higher income families (Hart & Riley, 2003). Poverty has also been linked to poor access to health services. Another such disadvantage is access to preschool. Families in poverty often find themselves homeless, creating a compound issue for homeless African American students.

## Health Disparities

The history of African Americans in the United States has led to some factors that have created great health disparities. Whether these factors are a matter of culture, access, or lack of structures to support health, there are many concerns that impact the health of African Americans (Hammonds & Reverby, 2019). These disparities refer specifically to risk of disease, number of occurrences, prevalence, death rates and longevity.

Access to health care rises to the top of most research on the matter. Once access is acquired, it becomes a question of quality which

is connected to socioeconomic status. Two issues directly related to African American children are infant mortality and asthma. African American babies are three times more likely to die compared to non-hispanic white babies (Bediako & Griffith, 2020). Asthma, in particular, is the leading cause of chronic absenteeism for children. Asthma related absences affect 59% of students with asthma and is linked to low achievement as well. Health disparities for students in poverty can be a life or death situation (Hsu, Joy et al., 2016).

## Access to Pre-School

While many Black children in California grow up in homes in which they are nurtured and regularly read to by parents and other caregivers, many young Black children do not have access to early learning opportunities and high-quality preschool. The result is that the achievement gap begins early, well before children reach school age. By age 2, low income children—regardless of race, are already six months behind their higher income peers in language development and by age 5, they are more than two years behind. One of the biggest predictors of early school success is a child's vocabulary upon entering kindergarten.

Black children are also less likely to attend preschool with 60% of California's Black 3 to 5-year-olds enrolled in preschool or kindergarten, as compared to 66% of white children (Heath, 1982). Moreover, this trend has worsened over the past three decades. In 2016, an estimated 38.8% of African American/Black children in California ages 3-5 were not enrolled in preschool or kindergarten, (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey microdata files (Dec. 2017). Marginalized neighborhoods often have significant limited preschool options. And, while many low-income families have access to Family Child Care Centers, Head Start Centers, and early education programs offered through local school districts, the quality of these programs varies considerably. In addition, oftentimes the eligibility requirements and protocols for determining enrollment are closely tied to parent cooperation with documentation and validation of income. These factors can sometimes deter parents from solid school readiness programs that can benefit their children.

The task becomes even more daunting for children with disabilities or suspected exceptionalities. Access to preschool program options must always keep these potential barriers in mind when recruiting for early learning programs.

## Access to Afterschool Programs

Stagnant state funding, rising costs and possible cutbacks in federal support are threatening the viability of California's subsidized after-school programs, which serve 859,000 low-income students in 4,500 schools across the state. Besides offering a safe and free place for children while parents are working, after-school and summer programs provide homework help, hands-on science and arts projects, field trips, sports, social-emotional support and meals.

Although research studies have found mixed test score results, the potential effects of participation in after-school programs "on academic attitudes, work habits and social development should not be overlooked," noted researchers from the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing, or CRESST, at the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. CRESST's study of LA's BEST after-school program in 2007 found the primary positive effect of the program was the prevention of juvenile crime.

Access to these programs for African American students is critical according to 4 out of 5 African American parents (Afterschool Alliance, 2016). In fact, in the America After 3PM report by the Afterschool Alliance (2016) reports that 25% of African American students participate in an afterschool program compared to 18 percent of children overall.

## Homeless Youth

The California homeless population is a serious issue. Roughly 4% of the California student population is homeless. While Black students are only 5% of the total student population, they are 9% of the homeless population. (Bishop, 2020). Homelessness causes severe trauma to children and youth, disrupting

their relationships, putting their health and safety at risk, and hampering their development. Homeless children are more likely than other children to experience hunger and malnutrition, and to develop physical and mental health problems.

Emotional distress, developmental delays, and decreased academic achievement are also more common among this population. Many of these children and youth experience deep poverty, family instability, and exposure to domestic violence before becoming homeless, and homelessness increases their vulnerability to additional trauma. In addition to the risks faced by homeless children, including increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation, youth without homes are far more likely than their peers to be infected with HIV and have other serious health problems. At some point, families in poverty and homeless suffer from the separation of family, and students may end up in foster care.

## Foster Youth

California's foster care system, responsible for about 63,000 children and youth who have been removed from their homes because of maltreatment or neglect, has made some remarkable advances in the last decade. Foster care is an exceptionally sensitive component of the state's child welfare system because it can mean the removal of a child from a family. So, the goal of the foster care system is to safely reunite children with their own families under improved conditions or to provide stable and beneficial home environments elsewhere.

Data show that the state has made great progress in moving children out of foster care. Since 2000, there has been a 45 percent drop in the share of California children in the system, a reduction achieved largely through shortening the time that most children spend in foster care. The decline has been most pronounced among Black children, who have long been overrepresented in the child welfare system. According to the Kids Count Data Center (2018), nationally African American students represent 23% of our nation's foster youth population. The impact of foster care on students is significant. The Ameri-

can Society for the Positive Care of Children (2020) reports students in foster care often perform low on standardized tests; are more likely to attend low performing schools, and are less likely to graduate from high school.

## Students with Disabilities

Students with Disabilities are most often eligible to receive Special Education services. The disproportionate representation of African American students in Special Education has been long recognized. Disproportionality has no one cause but is rather the product of a confluence of contributing factors. These factors provide the conditions and environment in which disproportionate outcomes for students of color occur.

When exploring the root causes of disproportionality in a district, there are a number of complex relationships between interacting factors to keep in mind. There is a complex relationship between discipline, achievement, and ability. Research suggests that when students are excluded from the schooling process, via a suspension or expulsion, they are less likely to be engaged in learning (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). Research also suggests that students of color are more likely to be harshly disciplined and interpreted as having a disability than their white peers (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). Teachers may hold implicit, preconceived notions about particular racial and ethnic groups of students that they may subconsciously apply to students (Elhoweris, Mutua, Alsheikh, & Holloway, 2005; Irvine, 1990; Tobias, Cole, Zibrin, & Bodlakova, 1982; Zucker & Prieto, 1977). Thus, research on teachers' dispositions towards students' demographic characteristics, such as race and ethnicity, show they may shape their perception of student ability.

## African American LGBTQ+ Students

According to the Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law (Choi et.al., 2017), over 10.3% of California's students in public middle and high schools identify as LGBTQ+. Notably, African American females make up about 63.3% of the population. These youth report having



more social emotional issues in school like fewer caring adult relationships, low expectations from adults, and low levels of school connection. In addition, these students have lower grades and higher absenteeism. Most importantly these students have higher rates of verbal and physical abuse and subsequently feel less safe at school. African American LGBTQ+ students are not only racially discriminated against, but they also are more subject to homophobic and transphobic people resulting in feeling of isolation and despair. And as if that wasn't enough African American LGBTQ+ students face an increased lack of social support and acceptance from their biological families, communities, churches, schools and healthcare systems (Hailey, Burton, and Arscott, 2017).

Sexual orientation and gender identity are integral aspects of a person's individuality and should never lead to discrimination or abuse. LGBTQ+ students often face unique challenges in schools. Numerous studies including the NEA Ed Justice have reported dire social emotional needs for LGBTQ+ students. And Black LGBTQ+ students even more so. This is one of the most vulnerable populations and yet few resources are allocated to intentionally support them.

## Social Emotional Learning and Equity

The promise of social and emotional development as a lever for increasing educational equity rests on the capacity of educators to understand that all learning is social and emotional and all learning is mediated by relationships that sit in a sociopolitical, racialized context – for all children, not just those who are Black and brown.

Social emotional learning offers the possibility of acknowledging, addressing, and healing from the impact of racism and systemic oppression and to create inclusive learning environments in which students of color and students living in poverty experience a sense of belonging, agency to shape the content and process of their learning, and thrive. This potential will only be realized if we intentionally prioritize educational equity and belonging as a primary goal of social-emotional learning and strategically apply what we know from research on the effects of race and racism, the relationship between culture and learning, and the neuroscience of healthy brain development. However far too often African American students are targeted with harsh disciplinary actions often resulting in interaction with law enforcement.



## Disciplinary Practices

The fact that African Americans suffer racism and discrimination is a fact of life. Black males and females experience subtle and overt forms of bias from preschool all the way through college. School discipline continues to be a part of an administrator's role and responsibility. A most common form of school discipline is still suspensions. As we're all aware, suspensions continue to be disproportionately used with African American students more than any other student group. Administrators spend time making decisions based upon policies and procedures that have supported inequitable consequences for African American learners.

In recent years we have begun to focus on a myriad of issues faced by Black girls, ranging from sexual exploitation and abuse, to body and self-image issues, mental health crises and feelings of being unwanted, unloved, and ignored, especially at school. The recent publication, *Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Overpoliced and Underprotected*, a policy report highlighting both the increased use of disciplinary practices and the pushing out of Black girls from the educational system, notes that, "all too often girls are struggling in the shadows of public concern. For instance, the suspension and expulsion rates for Black girls far outpace the rates for other girls – and in some places, they outpace the rates of most boys. Yet, efforts to understand and respond to these disparate disciplinary patterns are few and far between." (Crenshaw, 2020).

In order to mitigate the accumulation of the issues described above, educators must understand each of these factors and provide intentionally allocated resources based on the needs of students. All Black students are not the same. Consequently, much consideration needs to be given to an organization's system of support and their fiscal priorities. Understanding the factors students and families are experiencing will contribute to more precise decision making and can contribute to a more equity based system.



## Practical Application

Our schools often lack the resources and expertise needed to respond adequately to the needs of Black students. School systems' leaders must adopt an unapologetic mindset shift, centered on addressing deficit-based theories while simultaneously developing equity-oriented systems that advocate, foster, and support the overall well-being and efficacy of Black youth. As an organization continues to refine their Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), the following cross-cutting recommendations have been developed to mitigate the accumulation of disadvantages faced by Black students and are offered as a reimagination of what a more humanizing and effective approach can look like in engaging and supporting Black students.

### **Create Culturally Responsive Systems That Address Antiracism and Actively Counter Structural Racism**

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (2020) passed a unanimous decision to address systemic racism and begin the process of developing antiracist systems and practices throughout the county. This action should and must extend to school systems and organizations. To mitigate the impact of antiracism in policies, practices, procedures, and the delivery of services, it will be important for County offices LEAs/school districts to strategically develop antiracist frameworks to begin removing existing barriers.

In doing this work, those in leadership positions must seriously and critically consider the following questions:

- To what extent is institutional and systemic racism manifesting itself in your organizations (county, districts, schools)?
- How does institutional and systemic racism manifest itself in your organization with respect to policy making, leadership, curriculum and instruction, human resources, fiscal management, child welfare and attendance, and school safety?
- How does institutional and systemic racism in your organizations impact and influence services?
- Are you strategically and deliberately targeting and investing in the lives, safety, health, and overall well-being of Black stu-

dents and their families in ways that empower and show that they matter?

- Are you exploring non-traditional service delivery options (e.g. mobile services) to hard-to-reach populations that bring services and supports to the Black community?

### **Ensure State, County, and Local Fiscal Policy Explicitly Includes Black Students In Need Of Targeted Support**

Effectively answering the questions above will require adequate funding. California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is working to address the needs of historically underserved students. Now, educators must:

- prioritize Black students as one of the groups in need of targeted support and NOT grouped with all vulnerable students due to the multiple hardships that they are beset with and in schools/and communities that are under-resourced.
- use data to identify and target Black students' needs and write concrete academic, social, emotional, and behavioral goals directly into the LCAP.
- determine measurable outcomes and regularly monitor and assess along with appropriate interventions.
- engage in stakeholder engagement to ensure family and community perspectives are shaping decision making.

### **Invest in Community School Models To Mitigate Accumulation of Disadvantage**

Naturally, this will require a plethora of resources ranging from educational, health, social, emotional, and developmental services. School systems leaders must:

- engage with county officials, nonprofits, social services, businesses, health, civic groups, faith-based, and community-based organizations to mitigate the accumulation of disadvantage by developing partnerships.
- facilitate and leverage additional resources such as community counseling, mental health services, youth development programs, small businesses, jobs-creation, and affordable housing.
- employ social workers and counselors to address the social and emotional needs of students.

### **Create Access to Quality Preschool Options**

There are a wealth of resources and pathways to secure quality preschool options for marginalized groups. Programs are available, but preschool access to enrollment and participation continue to be historic barriers for Black families. School systems must:

- explore partnerships with federal, state and private preschool programs that are aligned with California's approved quality indicators to ensure Black parents have available information needed to make good decisions for choosing and enrolling their children in high performing preschool options.
- engage families to promote the importance of early education and the ongoing participation of very young children birth to age 5 in early learning settings.
- explore teacher preparatory models to increase the number of Black teachers and administrators where these teachers are underrepresented in early learning settings and programs.
- expand requirements for the hiring of early educators to include Black parent interviewers and raters.
- recognize and analyze the district differences in African American preschool enrollment data in early education in terms of key academic and school climate indicators; the intent here is to strategize how to meet the groups specific needs.

### **Create Culturally Responsive Social and Emotional Development and Behavioral Systems**

Meeting students where they are also means understanding where they've been. School leaders and teachers must:

- engage in professional learning rooted in trauma informed practices and critical wellness, including strategies for LGBTQ+ students.
- understand the role that intergenerational poverty plays in the conditions facing Black youth and their families and work to integrate these mindsets into their schools.
- establish intersectional affinity groups (BSA, Gay Straight Alliance, etc...) for Black students, including Black LGBTQ+ students.

- keep expectations high. Trauma informed does not mean lower academic rigor and expectations.
- include coordinating services with health, social workers, mental health professionals, and mentors.
- As described in Principles 1 and 2, explore existing bias in your social emotional and behavioral systems.

### **Dismantle Punitive Discipline Systems**

As highlighted by social justice protests and calls for reform, traditional forms of discipline have not proven effective in creating safe and orderly learning environments. Schools need assistance to replace punitive discipline methods with humanizing and culturally affirming practices. This can include:

- implementing restorative justice circles
- building a school culture and climate to include social workers, counselors, and mental health professionals who can directly respond to the ACES, low Human Development Index (HDI) numbers, and other traumatic issues that Black students and their families are challenged with. This is especially critical with school safety policies and procedures.
- Implementing a culturally responsive PBIS system
- reducing school police budgets and redirecting resources for mental health professionals, social workers and counselors.

## **Conclusion**

Principle 4 has offered educators an understanding of the harm done to African American students over time along with some implications and recommendations for practitioners. As educators know, there is no quick fix, no out of box solution to mitigate the vast accumulation of disadvantage suffered by African American students. Educators should think of these accumulations in a very physical sense. Students right now-today- are walking around with this accumulation on their backs. The call to do something about it is an urgent call. As John Lewis said, "When you see something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say something; you have to do something."

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# A Call to Action: A Note to the Reader

The late U.S. Representative, John Lewis, said, “Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime,” (2018). Striving for racial equity in our schools, our communities, and our world is an ongoing pursuit that requires intentional, deliberate reflection and action. Being an antiracist is not a passive state of being but a series of choices one makes every single day. This work is not easy. Sometimes it is met with resistance. Sometimes this endeavor may seem overwhelming; even so, we are not without the power and the responsibility to commit ourselves to this work. When we fight for our students, our educators, and our communities, keeping Black voices at the center rather than on the margins, we are working to ensure a more just and inclusive world. Alim and Paris write that our work must be “centrally about love, a love that can help us see our young people as whole versus broken when they enter schools, and a love that can work to keep them whole as they grow up and expand who they are and can be through education.” The root of this fight, and what

helps us shoulder the power and responsibility to effect positive change, is love for our Black students--for who they are, what they bring to the classroom, and everything they will become as they grow.

Black students and their families, as well as educators and communities, must be loved and valued, not with mere words, but with dedicated and intentional actions. Reading this document is a good first step. Acting on the information contained within is a necessary next step. Continuing to center racial justice in everything we do, both in and out of our schools, is a critical step in a trek that will last a lifetime, and there is none more worthy to undertake than one that is motivated by love and the desire to promote racial justice. For some, the journey will have just begun; for others, it is one step in a journey long since started. For all of us, as we travel together, reaching towards the same goals, the collective impact of our voices resounds in a powerful call for meaningful change.

## **Citation:**

Lewis, John. Facebook: Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble. #goodtrouble. June 28, 2018

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# Appendix

**Glossary of Terms**

**Resources for Further Study**

**Self-Reflection for Teachers**

**Self-Reflection for Administrators**

**Continuum on Becoming an Antiracist  
Multicultural Organization**

## Glossary of Terms: Race, Equity and Social Justice

**Achievement Gap:** Evokes a deficit model, suggesting that students from certain communities are incapable of achieving the same level as their white counterparts.

**African American:** (also referred to as Black Americans or Afro Americans) are an [ethnic group](#) of [Americans](#) with total or partial ancestry from any of the [Black](#) racial groups of [Africa](#). The term *African American* generally denotes descendants of [enslaved Black people](#) who are from the United States, while some recent Black immigrants or their children may also come to identify as African American or may identify differently. (Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African\\_Americans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Americans))

**Agent Groups:** Social identity groups that are advantaged, afforded agency, and hold an unearned privilege in society. \*

**Ally:** A member of the agent social group (in a power role) who takes a stand against social injustice directed at target groups (non-power role) and intervenes on their behalf. (*Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, M. Adams, et. al., 1997)

**Antiracist:** One who is expressing the idea that racial groups are equals and none needs developing and is supporting policy that reduces racial inequity. (Ibram X. Kendi)

**Belongingness:** The human emotional need to be an accepted member of a group. Whether it is family, friends, co-workers, a religion, or something else. People have an inherent desire to belong and be a part of something greater than themselves. In the workplace, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, also known as DIBs refers to the combination of diversity and inclusion with belonging. (Pat Wadors, President of Talent at Linked In). Creating a wide sense of belonging can become the competitive advantage for any company." Author and academic Priyamvada Gopal wrote, "If we don't choose to have difficult and urgent discussions openly, then 'diversity' will remain a meaningless buzzword where people's bodies are included in institutions, but their voices are silenced."

**Black:** Black people refers to a [racialized](#) classification of people, usually a [political](#) and a [skin color](#)-based category for specific populations with a mid to dark brown [complexion](#). Not all Black people have [dark skin](#); in certain countries, often in socially based systems of [racial classification](#) in the [Western world](#), the term "Black" is used to describe persons who are perceived as dark-skinned compared to other populations. It is mostly used for people of [Sub-Saharan African](#) descent and the [indigenous peoples of Oceania](#). Indigenous African societies do not use the term *Black* as a racial identity outside of influences brought by Western cultures. (Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black>)

**Black Lives Matter:** #BlackLivesMatter was founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer. Black Lives Matter Foundation, Inc is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate improvements in our lives. (Black Lives Matter post)

**Co-Responsibility:** Moving beyond one's own self-interests to share in problem-solving responsibility; embraces community-building and stewardship for others. Co-responsibility means speaking out for social justice and systemic change. \*

**Cultural Proficiency / Cultural Competence:** A framework created by Terry L. Cross (1989) and developed by Lindsey; Lindsey; Nuri-Robins; and Terrell (1999 etc.) for understanding the systems, policies and practices in an organization or the values and behavior of an individual, that enable the person or institution to engage effectively with people and groups who are different from them. The Framework has four Components: The Guiding Principles, The Continuum, The Barriers and the Essential Elements. The Barriers, systems and attitudes that undermine the cultural proficiency journey, include institutional-

ized systems of oppression and privilege and the misuse and abuse of the power that accompanies privilege. (Nuri-Robins)

**Culturally Relevant, Sustaining, and Revitalizing high quality instruction (CRSR):**

The foundation of effective classrooms. “Effective classrooms don’t just happen. They are led by teachers who deeply understand their craft and the essential nature of the interaction between student, teacher, and context. (Engagement by Design, Corwin, 17). In order to ensure culturally relevant, sustaining, and revitalizing high quality instruction, there are several key practices that must be used with great intentionality and purpose:

- Focus on connection with learners through relationships and empowering student voice
- Create a welcoming and inclusive environment for Black students
- Empower learners through rigorous, flexible, and engaging learning experiences

“While “caring about” conveys feelings of concern for one’s state of being, “caring for” is active engagement in doing something to positively affect it.” (Geneva Gay, [Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice](#)); CA Roadmap Principle 3 (Draft)

**Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT):**

Culturally Responsive Teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning ([Ladson-Billings, 1994](#)). Some of the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching are:

1. Positive perspectives on parents and families
2. Communication of high expectations
3. Learning within the context of culture
4. Student-centered instruction
5. Culturally mediated instruction
6. Reshaping the curriculum
7. Teacher as facilitator

The Education Alliance, Boston University

**Culture:** Patterns that predict group outcomes. The integrated patterns of human socio-technical behavior that includes the thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, technical systems, leadership, reward systems, environmental, political, educational and institutional behaviors of any cohesive group, including racial, ethnic,

religious, social and organizational groups. One shorthand definition of culture is “the way we do things”. Culture supports ethnicity. (*Doman Lum, 2003*).

**Discrimination:** To discriminate is to make distinctions based on preference or prejudice. It involves any situation in which a group or individual is treated differently and sometimes unfairly, based on something other than individual reason, usually their membership in a socially distinct group or category. Categories may include: race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation or disability. \*

**Diversity:** The range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs. \*

**Educational Equity:** Ensures that every student regardless of race, culture, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, family income, or zip code has access to a high-quality education that prepares them for a meaningful career, postsecondary learning, and engaged citizenship. This is what every child deserves. (National Equity Project)

**Educational Justice:** Justice in terms of distribution of quality instruction, equitable access to educational resources, advanced courses, opportunities and privileges, and a focus on restorative justice to ensure that all students graduate high school ready for career or college.

**Empathy:** The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

**Equality / Equity:** *Equality* is the measure of sameness; being treated in the same way. *Equity* is a measure of fair treatment, opportunities and outcomes across race, gender, class and other dynamics. \* This distinction is important. We are told that to be fair we must treat everyone the same (equal), however, when we recognize the legacy of institutionalized and structural racism, we understand that differing people and communities **need** different resources (equity). Sameness is not always fairness if the oppressed group remains disadvantaged.

**Ethnicity:** Social and cultural forms of identification and self-identification. Membership in a group is identified by connection to a place or lineage (ancestry). \*

**Explicit Bias:** Consciously *accepts* prejudice in favor of, or against one group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

**Gatekeeper:** Anyone in an institutional / organizational role or position who can grant or deny access to institutional resources or equity. Gatekeepers are, by structural design, accountable to the institutions they work for, and not the people they serve. They function as buffers between their institutions and the community. \*

**Implicit Bias:** Consciously *rejects* prejudice and stereotypes and supports anti-discrimination efforts but also holds negative associations unconsciously. \*

**Inclusion:** Refers to the intentional, ongoing effort to ensure diverse individuals fully participate in all aspects of organizational work, including decision-making processes. It also refers to the ways diverse participants are valued as respected members of an organization and/or community.\*

**Individual Racism:** Prejudgment, bias or discrimination by an individual based on race.

**Institutional Racism:** Policies, practices, and procedures that work better for white people than for people of color, sometimes unintentionally or inadvertently.

**Institutions / Systems:** Institutions/Systems are stable arrangements and practices through which collective actions are taken. Examples of institutions are government, business (e.g. insurance providers), unions, schools, churches, hospitals / clinics, media, courts and law enforcement. \*

**Internalized Racism manifests in two forms and evolves from thought into action:**

**Internalized Racial Inferiority:**  
A process people of color go through of believing, accepting, and internalizing inferior and subordinate images of themselves and their people, resulting in fear, anxiety, and

uncertainty about challenging the institutions that have disempowered them.

**Internalized Racial Superiority:**

A process whites go through to develop a sense of superiority over people of color, accepting and internalizing negative images and beliefs about people of color, and positive images and beliefs about themselves. \*

**Intersectionality:** The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, gender as they apply to a given individual or group, creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. \*

**Multiculturalism:** The acceptance and celebration of many cultures within one group. All cultures are recognized and contribute to the creation of a hybrid culture that becomes the norm for the group.

**Opportunity Gap:** refers to social and institutional structures that do not provide equal opportunity to every student to succeed in public school systems. \*

**Oppression:** A form of economic, social, and/or political exploitation, often portrayed as "good for everybody." Affirms a two-category system hierarchically arranged as agents (superior) or targets (inferior). There exists a gross imbalance of power in this system. \*

**Power:** Access to resources, the ability to influence others and access to decision-makers to get what you want done. (Adapted from H.P. Newton, *To Die for the People*; The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond; and Asante, Adair, Aal, *Tools for Change*)

**Prejudice:** Learned prejudgment about members of social groups to which we don't belong. Based on limited knowledge or experience with the group. \*

**Privilege:** Advantages, rewards or benefits given to those in the dominant group (whites, males, Christians, heterosexuals, etc.) without their asking for them. Privileges are bestowed unintentionally, unconsciously, and automatically. Often these privileges are invisible to those in the dominant group. (*The Exchange Project Peace Development Fund*)



**Race:** Race is a social, political construct. It is based on a theory of specious classification of human beings that assigns human worth and social status using skin color and other visible characteristics for the purpose of establishing and maintaining privilege and power. (*The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, Race: The Power of an Illusion*).

**Race vs. Ethnicity:** Race is a social construct developed by eugenicists to support the colonization and enslavement of people of African descent and is based on the physical differences of people often a mixture of physical, behavioral and associated with cultural attributes. Ethnicity recognizes differences between people mostly based on language and shared culture.

**Racial Disparities:** Differences in measurable societal outcomes based on race. These disparities are rooted in unfairness and injustice and are perpetuated by policies and practices with racial bias (either implicit or explicit). \*

**Racial Equity:** When social, economic and political opportunities and outcomes are not predicted based upon a person's race. \*

**Racial Inequity:** When a person's race can predict their social, economic and political opportunities and outcomes. \*

**Racial Justice:** Working to eliminate racial disparities resulting from individual, institutional and structural racism. Equitable outcomes for all are central to racial justice efforts. \*

**Racial Microaggressions:** Brief, commonplace, subtle or blatant daily verbal, behavior, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color. \*

**Racism:** Racism is the marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities. (Ibram X. Kendi) Race Prejudice + Institutional Power = Racism

**Racist:** One who is supporting racist policy through actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea. (Kendi) Bias based upon beliefs or presumptions that the white race is superior to others. Racial bias is the attitude. Racism

has personal and institutional power to subjugate the targeted race (Nuri-Robins)

**Representation:** This term refers to the numbers of people representing various racial or ethnic groups. The goal is to have parity with the communities' population so that the ratios within the organization are the same as the ratios in the community. More importantly, the representation of people of color is throughout the organizational hierarchy not clustered in lower level positions. (Nuri-Robins)

**Restorative Justice:** Focuses on repairing harm to relationships instead of assigning blame and dispensing punishment. Framework for building community and for responding to challenging behavior through authentic dialogue coming to an understanding and making things right.

**Slave vs. Enslaved:** Slave connotes a type of person; it imbues a permanent and inferior status, as in "former slave." "Enslaved people" places the onus of the status on the oppressor. To be a slave, one must have a slave master, a slave maker. Enslaved spotlights the oppressor and requires the noun "people" to remind the user that slaves were not things, but rather were oppressed people. (Nuri-Robins)

**Social Justice:** Justice in terms of distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society for all social identity groups. \*

**Stereotypes:** A fixed, over-generalized belief about a group or class of people that is assumed to be true. \*

**Systemic Racism:** The history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions. This combines to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color. \*

**Trigger:** Words or phrases that stimulate an emotional response because they tap into anger or pain about oppression issues. \*

\**Racial Equity Glossary-University of Washington, 2018*

## Resources for Further Study

### Principle 1: Explore Belief Systems to Begin the Work

Book Talk- interview with author Ibram X. Kendi, on his bestselling book, *How to Be an Antiracist*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A13Dimiqdus>

How to Beat Stereotypes by Seeing People as Individuals: (article) [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_to\\_beat\\_stereotypes\\_by\\_seeing\\_people\\_as\\_individuals](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_beat_stereotypes_by_seeing_people_as_individuals)

Why Teachers Must Fight Their Own Implicit Bias (article) [https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2018/07/25/why-teachers-must-fight-implicit-biases.html?s\\_kwcid=AL16416!3!266402628863!b!!g!!&cmp=cpc-goog-ew-dynamic+ads+recent+articles&ccid=dynamic+ads+recent+articles&ccg=recent+articles+dynamic&cckw=&cccv=dynamic+ad&gclid=CjwKCAjw1K75BRAEEiwAd41h1OUipgpbmqGiQ3qUoVuWgh9Foj81whzISwMKi\\_BeLtmzclbn\\_zFpRoCzpEQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2018/07/25/why-teachers-must-fight-implicit-biases.html?s_kwcid=AL16416!3!266402628863!b!!g!!&cmp=cpc-goog-ew-dynamic+ads+recent+articles&ccid=dynamic+ads+recent+articles&ccg=recent+articles+dynamic&cckw=&cccv=dynamic+ad&gclid=CjwKCAjw1K75BRAEEiwAd41h1OUipgpbmqGiQ3qUoVuWgh9Foj81whzISwMKi_BeLtmzclbn_zFpRoCzpEQAvD_BwE)

How to Stop the Racist in You: (article) [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_to\\_stop\\_the\\_racist\\_in\\_you](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_stop_the_racist_in_you)

Teacher Bias: The Elephant in the Classroom (article) <https://www.thegraidenetwork.com/blog-all/2018/8/1/teacher-bias-the-elephant-in-the-classroom>

How to Fight Racism Through Inner Work: (article) [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_to\\_fight\\_racism\\_through\\_inner\\_work](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_fight_racism_through_inner_work)

How Mindfulness Can Defeat Racial Bias: (article) [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_mindfulness\\_can\\_defeat\\_racial\\_bias](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_mindfulness_can_defeat_racial_bias)

Implicit Bias 101: An Introduction: Implicit Bias and Microaggressions (article) <https://www.edutopia.org/article/look-implicit-bias-and-microaggressions>

### Principle 2: Creating Educational Systems that Facilitate and Support Learning

National Coalition on Equity Initiatives Report: [https://1303197b-6e91-48cc-9169-7e3f96db.filesusr.com/ugd/2651b4\\_36090bbaf9c7421b8382a9b85eaa8197.pdf](https://1303197b-6e91-48cc-9169-7e3f96db.filesusr.com/ugd/2651b4_36090bbaf9c7421b8382a9b85eaa8197.pdf)

Why We Need More Black Teachers Now More Than Ever: (article) <https://education-first.com/spotlight-on-teacher-diversity-why-we-need-black-educators-now-more-than-ever/>

Historical Timeline of Public Education: (article) <https://www.raceforward.org/research/reports/historical-timeline-public-education-us>

Who's to Blame for the Black-White Achievement Gap? (article) <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/01/08/whos-to-blame-for-the-black-white-achievement.html>

5 Ways to Have Better Conversations Across Difference: (article) [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five\\_ways\\_to\\_have\\_better\\_conversations\\_across\\_difference](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five_ways_to_have_better_conversations_across_difference)

Identity Affirming Schools Need Race Conscious Educators: (article) <http://www.ascd.org/ascd-express/vol15/num04/identity-affirming-schools-need-race-conscious-educators.aspx>

Avoiding Racial Equity Detours: (article) <http://www.edchange.org/publications/Avoiding-Racial-Equity-Detours-Gorski.pdf>

A District Profile: Black Lives Matter at School: (article) <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/summer-2017/a-district-profile-black-lives-matter-at-school>

Taking a Stand Against Discriminatory School Policies: (article) [https://www.edutopia.org/article/taking-stand-against-discriminatory-school-policies?utm\\_content=linkpos6&utm\\_campaign=weekly-2020-08-12&utm\\_source=edu-legacy&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.edutopia.org/article/taking-stand-against-discriminatory-school-policies?utm_content=linkpos6&utm_campaign=weekly-2020-08-12&utm_source=edu-legacy&utm_medium=email)

### **Principle 3: Culturally Responsive and Sustaining High Quality Instruction**

Why English Class is Silencing Students of Color: (video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4dc1axRwE4&t=145s>

Culturally Responsive Teaching: What You Need to Know: (article) <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/for-educators/universal-design-for-learning/what-is-culturally-responsive-teaching>

Don't Say Nothing: Silence Speaks Volumes. Our Students are Listening: (article) <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/fall-2016/dont-say-nothing>

[Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students](#) by Zaretta L. Hammond (book)

What Antiracist Teachers Do Differently: They view the success of black students as central to the success of their own teaching: (article) <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2020/06/how-be-anti-racist-teacher/613138/>

Dear White Teachers: You Can't Love Your Black Students If You Don't Know Them: (article) <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2019/03/20/dear-white-teachers-you-cant-love-your.html?cmp=eml-eb-sub-love-02132020&M=59035111&U=2816436&UID=6c9ce78023916ae6eba2f53877f22735&print=1>

Should I Talk About Race in My Mostly White Classroom? (article) <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/how-should-i-talk-about-race-in-my-mostly-white-classroom>

Using Culturally Responsive Lessons to Boost Engagement: (article) <https://www.edutopia.org/article/using-culturally-responsive-lessons-boost-engagement>

27 Mistakes White Teachers of Black Students Make and How to Fix Them: (article) <https://educationpost.org/27-mistakes-white-teachers-of-black-students-make-and-how-to-fix-them/>

Culturally Responsive Teaching Matters: (report) <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520957.pdf>

An Open Letter to Well-Meaning White Teachers (article) <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/08/17/an-open-letter-to-well-meaning-white-teachers.html>

Lessons on Culturally Responsive Teaching from Black Churches (article) <https://www.edutopia.org/article/lessons-culturally-responsive-teaching-black-churches>

Here's What I Wish White Teachers Knew When Teaching My Black Children: (video series) <https://educationpost.org/heres-what-i-wish-white-teachers-knew-when-teaching-my-black-children/>

9 Things Every Educator Should Know When Teaching Black Students: (article) <https://educationpost.org/9-things-every-educator-should-know-when-teaching-black-students>

Say Their Names: A toolkit to help foster productive conversations about race and civil disobedience (lesson unit from Chicago Public Schools) [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eNpj8hR7q\\_XZljgcC8XM5oZVUA72\\_h51HmNH0FCLO14/preview?pru=AAABcppQp\\_4\\*We0IGbnGBZOr5NEb-5dUbw](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eNpj8hR7q_XZljgcC8XM5oZVUA72_h51HmNH0FCLO14/preview?pru=AAABcppQp_4*We0IGbnGBZOr5NEb-5dUbw)

74 Interview: Researcher Gloria Ladson-Billings on Culturally Relevant Teaching, the Role of Teachers in Trump's America & Lessons From Her Two Decades in Education Research: (article) <https://www.the74million.org/article/74-interview-researcher-gloria-ladson-billings-on-culturally-relevant-teaching-the-role-of-teachers-in-trumps-america-lessons-from-her-two-decades-in-education-research/>

Culturally Responsive Teaching: What You Need to Know: (article) <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/for-educators/universal-design-for-learning/what-is-culturally-responsive-teaching>

Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework: (web page) <https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ee/responsiveteaching.asp>

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching: (web page) <https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ee/responsiveteaching.asp>

Zaretta L. Hammond "Culturally Responsive Teaching" at the San Francisco Public Library: (video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ME8KjyqthM>

Zaretta L. Hammond: Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain Webinar. Interview with Zaretta Hammond Part 1: (video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2kzbH7ZWGg>

Dr. Geneva Gay and Dr. Valerie Kintoch Interview: (video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsyMbSiphTo>

Equity and SEL: (web page) <https://schoolguide.casel.org/what-is-sel/equity-and-sel/>

Oakland Unified SEL: (web page) <https://www.ousd.org/domain/143>

Reality Pedagogy: Christopher Emdin at TEDxTeachersCollege: (video) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Y9tVf\\_8fqo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Y9tVf_8fqo)

CASEL 3 Signature Practices: (playbook) [https://schoolguide.casel.org/uploads/2018/12/CASEL\\_SEL-3-Signature-Practices-Playbook-V3.pdf](https://schoolguide.casel.org/uploads/2018/12/CASEL_SEL-3-Signature-Practices-Playbook-V3.pdf)

UDL Guidelines: (web page) <http://udlguidelines.cast.org/>

Creating a Culturally Responsive Community with Dr. Sharroky Hollie: (video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rYfp9A7uAQ>

Intro to CLR DR Hollie: (video) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXRqmL\\_r\\_OA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXRqmL_r_OA)

Validate and Affirm: (video series) <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeshEHwGq-eOZvgeF8wO3UQ/videos>

Book Talk with Ibram X. Kendi on "How to Be an Antiracist": (video) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=27&v=A13Dimiqdus&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=27&v=A13Dimiqdus&feature=emb_logo)

Elevating Student Voice in Education: (web site) <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2019/08/14/473197/elevating-student-voice-education/>

Ibram X. Kendi (author of How to Be an Antiracist) at the FYE Conference 2020: (video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doHhMjudb3c>

How to be an Antiracist: (video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzuOlyyQlug>

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (web page) <https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ee/culturallysustainingped.asp>

What Anti-racist Teachers to Differently (article) [https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2020/06/how-be-anti-racist-teacher/613138/?fbclid=IwAR1nZOzCDi16pFLgHrkcj2Bpz\\_BB-YeYh2Wmk2uXsi9WFsGIC4ugr-No7Os](https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2020/06/how-be-anti-racist-teacher/613138/?fbclid=IwAR1nZOzCDi16pFLgHrkcj2Bpz_BB-YeYh2Wmk2uXsi9WFsGIC4ugr-No7Os)

Anti-Racism For Kids 101: Starting To Talk About Race: (web page) [https://booksforlittles.com/racial-diversity/?fbclid=IwAR3hoGwYvU2hMisEaarjkLk64NFxJiTmBO\\_oYU3m1qC\\_Po8Yk4v0gx9wF-k](https://booksforlittles.com/racial-diversity/?fbclid=IwAR3hoGwYvU2hMisEaarjkLk64NFxJiTmBO_oYU3m1qC_Po8Yk4v0gx9wF-k)

Baldwin Hills Elementary: (web page) [https://abc7.com/education/baldwin-hills-school-thriving-academically-after-curriculum-revamp-/5987438/?fbclid=IwAR3Mce\\_IL\\_EjYZac-u40FSQ0L5QlxLQqQq\\_6DIU6BKSpOlfdauijBHfB5fE](https://abc7.com/education/baldwin-hills-school-thriving-academically-after-curriculum-revamp-/5987438/?fbclid=IwAR3Mce_IL_EjYZac-u40FSQ0L5QlxLQqQq_6DIU6BKSpOlfdauijBHfB5fE)

Transformative SEL Practices: (article) <https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Transformative-Social-and-Emotional-Learning-SEL-Toward-SEL-in-Service-of-Educational-Equity-and-Excellence.pdf>

SEL as a Lever for Equity: (web page) <https://casel.org/lever-for-equity/>

Oakland Unified Social Emotional Learning: (web site) <https://casel.org/partner-districts/oakland-unified-school-district/>

Social Emotional Learning in California: (document) <https://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/selresourcesguide.pdf>

Toward Transformative Social and Emotional Learning: Using an Equity Lens: (document) [https://measuringcasel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Framework\\_EquitySummary-.pdf](https://measuringcasel.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Framework_EquitySummary-.pdf)

Six Ways to be an Antiracist Educator: (video) <https://www.edutopia.org/video/6-ways-be-antiracist-educator>

Sharing Stories: Antiracism and Universal Design for Learning with Andratesha Fritzgerald: (video) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuDel5m26-g&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuDel5m26-g&feature=emb_logo)

#### **Principle 4: Mitigating the Accumulation of Disadvantage**

Study: Black Students Face an Accumulation of Disadvantage <https://www.educationdive.com/news/study-schools-must-address-accumulation-of-disadvantage-facing-black-stu/564676/>

Beyond the Schoolhouse Policy Report: (article) <http://transformschoools.ucla.edu/beyond-the-schoolhouse/>

Making SEL Culturally Competent: (article) <https://www.edutopia.org/article/making-sel-culturally-competent>

What Will it Take To Bridge our Differences? (article) [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/what\\_will\\_it\\_take\\_to\\_bridge\\_our\\_differences](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/what_will_it_take_to_bridge_our_differences)

*Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World* by Django Paris and H. Samy Alim (book) [https://smile.amazon.com/Culturally-Sustaining-Pedagogies-Teaching-Learning/dp/0807758337/ref=smi\\_wwww\\_rco2\\_go\\_smi\\_g4368549507?\\_encoding=UTF8&%2AVersion%2A=1&%2Aentries%2A=0&ie=UTF8](https://smile.amazon.com/Culturally-Sustaining-Pedagogies-Teaching-Learning/dp/0807758337/ref=smi_wwww_rco2_go_smi_g4368549507?_encoding=UTF8&%2AVersion%2A=1&%2Aentries%2A=0&ie=UTF8)

Community Schools Resource: Coalition for Community Schools: (website) [http://www.communityschools.org/aboutschools/what\\_is\\_a\\_community\\_school.aspx](http://www.communityschools.org/aboutschools/what_is_a_community_school.aspx)

Community Schools Resource: (website) <http://www.nea.org/communityschools>

Building Community Schools: Removing Barriers to Success: (article) <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2018/08/22/454977/building-community-schools-systems/>

Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy: A Review of the Evidence: (article) <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/community-schools-effective-school-improvement-brief>

Community School Playbook: A Practical Guide to Advancing Community School Strategies: (policy and implementation guide) <https://communityschools.futureforlearning.org/>

Community School Models: Oakland Unified: (web page) <https://www.ousd.org/CommunitySchools>

Community School Models: Hartford Public Schools: (web page) <https://www.hartfordschools.org/community-schools/>

#### **Resources for Parents**

How Adults Communicate Bias to Children: (article) [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_adults\\_communicate\\_bias\\_to\\_children](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_adults_communicate_bias_to_children)

Helping Kids Process Violence, Trauma and Race in a World of Nonstop News: (archived webinar) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhjMyOqu2G8>

Rubbing Off: How Kids Learn About Race: (article) [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/rubbing\\_off/](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/rubbing_off/)

How Adults Can Support the Mental Health of Black Children: (article) [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_adults\\_can\\_support\\_mental\\_health\\_black\\_children](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_adults_can_support_mental_health_black_children)

How to Raise Kids Who Are More Tolerant Than You: (article) [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_to\\_raise\\_kids\\_who\\_are\\_more\\_tolerant\\_than\\_you](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_raise_kids_who_are_more_tolerant_than_you)

'Raising White Kids' Author on How White Parents Can Talk About Race: (podcast) <https://www.npr.org/2020/05/31/866426170/raising-white-kids-author-on-how-white-parents-can-talk-about-race>

## Self-Reflection for Teachers

	No Awareness	I'm aware, but not focusing on it	I'm working on it, but it's not fully there	It's a strength in my instruction
<b>Pedagogical Knowledge</b>				
1. I understand cultural proficiency.				
2. I can explain the tenets of cultural proficiency to others.				
3. I can name the features of culturally responsive teaching.				
4. I know the difference between "not racist" and antiracist.				
5. I can identify elements of systemic racism in educational systems.				
6. I can identify things in my school that inhibit the achievement of Black students.				
7. I can explain power and privilege and the impact on education.				
8. I can see areas in my own life where power and privilege have had an impact.				
<b>Examining Belief Systems</b>				
1. I understand that we all have bias.				
2. I look at my own bias and work to acknowledge it and shift my views.				
3. I am aware of my own stereotypes and the harm they can cause.				
4. I consider myself antiracist and actively work against racist policies.				
5. I instruct my Black students with an asset-based approach.				
6. I believe my Black students can do rigorous work.				
7. I believe that my Black students are as smart as white or Asian students.				
8. I believe that Black students deserve instruction that meets their needs.				
9. I believe I can provide effective, culturally responsive instruction for my Black students.				
10. I see this is a journey and realize that I will need continuous self-reflection.				

	No Awareness	I'm aware, but not focusing on it	I'm working on it, but it's not fully there	It's a strength in my instruction
<b>Instruction</b>				
1. I build warm and caring relationships with my Black students.				
2. The environment in my classroom is welcoming and affirming for my Black students.				
3. I create meaningful and relevant learning experiences for my Black students.				
4. I support my Black students in having a voice in the classroom.				
5. I have learned about Black cultural norms and design instruction that aligns and allows for self-expression.				
6. I know my Black students' interests, stories, and experiences.				
7. I provide learning experiences where the accomplishments of Black role models are validated and inclusive.				
8. I design learning experiences using the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).				
9. I provide rigorous instruction, with supports as needed.				
10. I consider the needs of my Black students when planning for instruction.				
11. I acknowledge issues of power, privilege, race, and racism in my classroom and encourage age-appropriate dialogue about these issues.				
12. I call out racist and/or microaggressive remarks or incidents in the classroom and use it as an opportunity for learning.				
13. I provide opportunities for my Black students to have choice in topic, mode of learning, and/ or showing what they know and co-create in the teaching and learning environment.				
14. I attend thoughtfully to the social-emotional needs of my Black students.				
15. My discipline practices are reflective of my understanding of cultural norms and do not disproportionately punish my Black students.				
16. I take responsibility for the achievement of Black students.				
17. I engage with Black parents and community members and strive to include them in my classroom.				

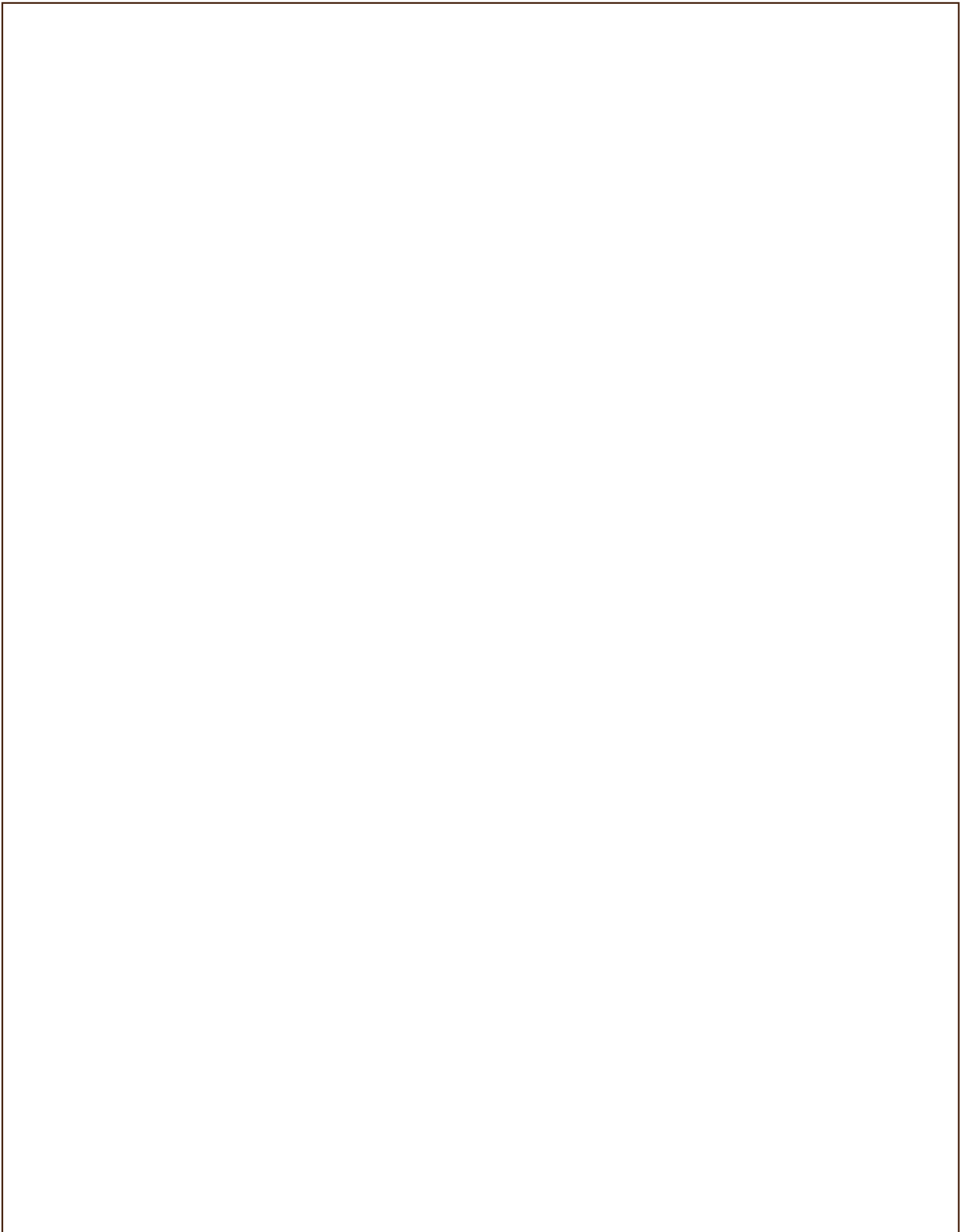
## Self-Reflection for Administrators

	No Awareness	I'm aware, but not focusing on it	I'm working on it, but it's not fully there	It's a strength in my leadership
<b>Pedagogical Knowledge</b>				
1. I understand cultural proficiency.				
2. I can explain the tenets of cultural proficiency to others.				
3. I can name the features of culturally responsive teaching.				
4. I know the difference between "not racist" and antiracist.				
5. I can identify elements of systemic racism in my school/district.				
6. I can identify things in my school/district that inhibit the achievement of Black students.				
7. I can explain power and privilege and the impact on education.				
8. I can see areas in my own life where power and privilege have had an impact.				
9. I lead courageous conversations with my staff about power and privilege.				
<b>Examining Belief Systems</b>				
1. I understand that we all have bias.				
2. I look at my own bias and work to acknowledge it and shift my views.				
3. I am aware of my own stereotypes and the harm they can cause.				
4. I consider myself antiracist and actively work against racist policies in my school.				
5. I interact with our Black students from an asset-based approach.				
6. I believe our Black students can do rigorous work.				
7. I believe that our Black students are as smart as white or Asian students.				
8. I believe that Black students deserve instruction that meets their needs.				
9. I believe my staff can provide effective, culturally responsive instruction for our Black students.				
10. I see this is a journey and realize that I will need continuous self-reflection.				



<b>Six Conditions of Systems Change:</b>	<b>No Awareness</b>	<b>I'm aware, but not focusing on it</b>	<b>I'm working on it, but it's not fully there</b>	<b>It's a strength in my leadership</b>
<b>I. Policies</b>				
1. I identify policies and practices that do not serve Black students well and change or stop them.				
2. I create and enact specific policies to support the achievement of Black students.				
3. I look at the hiring practices in my school/district to see if Black teachers are represented in the workforce.				
4. I consistently examine our instructional policies to ensure Black students are represented in all aspects of the school community-music, sports, theater, AP courses, student government, etc...				
5. I have analyzed suspension data to ensure Black students are not over-represented and implement strategies to support the behavioral and emotional health of Black students.				
<b>II. Practices</b>				
6. I look critically and routinely at the practices of my school/district through an equity lens to ensure all students receive opportunities to achieve, in a variety of courses, including Advanced Placement.				
7. I investigate issues with opportunity gaps for Black students to ensure the instructional program supports them to achieve at high levels.				
8. I have provided ongoing professional development for teachers in culturally relevant, sustaining and revitalizing instructional pedagogy and practices.				
9. I have lead my staff through an examination of instructional materials to ensure representation of Black authors, inventors, mathematicians, political leaders and other Black role models.				
10. I have lead my staff through an examination of instructional materials that are culturally relevant, engaging and include a wide worldview.				
11. I provide time for staff to analyze the assessment data of Black students and plan strategies to address needs.				
12. I provide teachers with feedback and opportunities to reflect on culturally relevant instructional practices.				
13. I create a warm and inclusive school environment for staff and students.				

<b>Six Conditions of Systems Change:</b>	<b>No Awareness</b>	<b>I'm aware, but not focusing on it</b>	<b>I'm working on it, but it's not fully there</b>	<b>It's a strength in my leadership</b>
<b>III. Resources</b>				
14. The needs of Black students are identified in the LCAP and corresponding resources and strategies are allocated to address needs.				
15. Human resources are leveraged so that Black students receive culturally responsive and engaging instruction from the most highly-qualified teachers and instructional assistants.				
<b>IV. Relationships</b>				
16. I facilitate ways to foster caring and inclusive relationships between staff and Black students.				
17. I include Black parents in the work of the school community to strengthen and deepen relationships through committees, school board, extra-curricular events, career days and mentoring programs.				
18. I have built partnerships with community members and business leaders to support Black students in career opportunities and connect them to the community in which they live.				
<b>V. Power Dynamics</b>				
19. I have lead my staff through identifying our place on the <i>Continuum on Becoming an Anti-racist Organization</i> and in determining ways to move us forward.				
20. I consistently practice shared leadership and decision making, including Black teachers, students, and parents on leadership committees.				
21. I have a Social Justice Task Force that meets regularly to address equity issues on campus.				
<b>VI. Mental Models</b>				
22. I have provided professional development for staff on implicit bias.				
23. There are opportunities for staff to engage in courageous conversations around issues of race and culture.				
24. I provide opportunities for staff to reflect on their own beliefs and expectations for Black students.				
25. I provide opportunities for staff to share successful models and practices that have helped our Black students succeed.				
26. My staff is able to call out injustices in our system without fear of retaliation.				



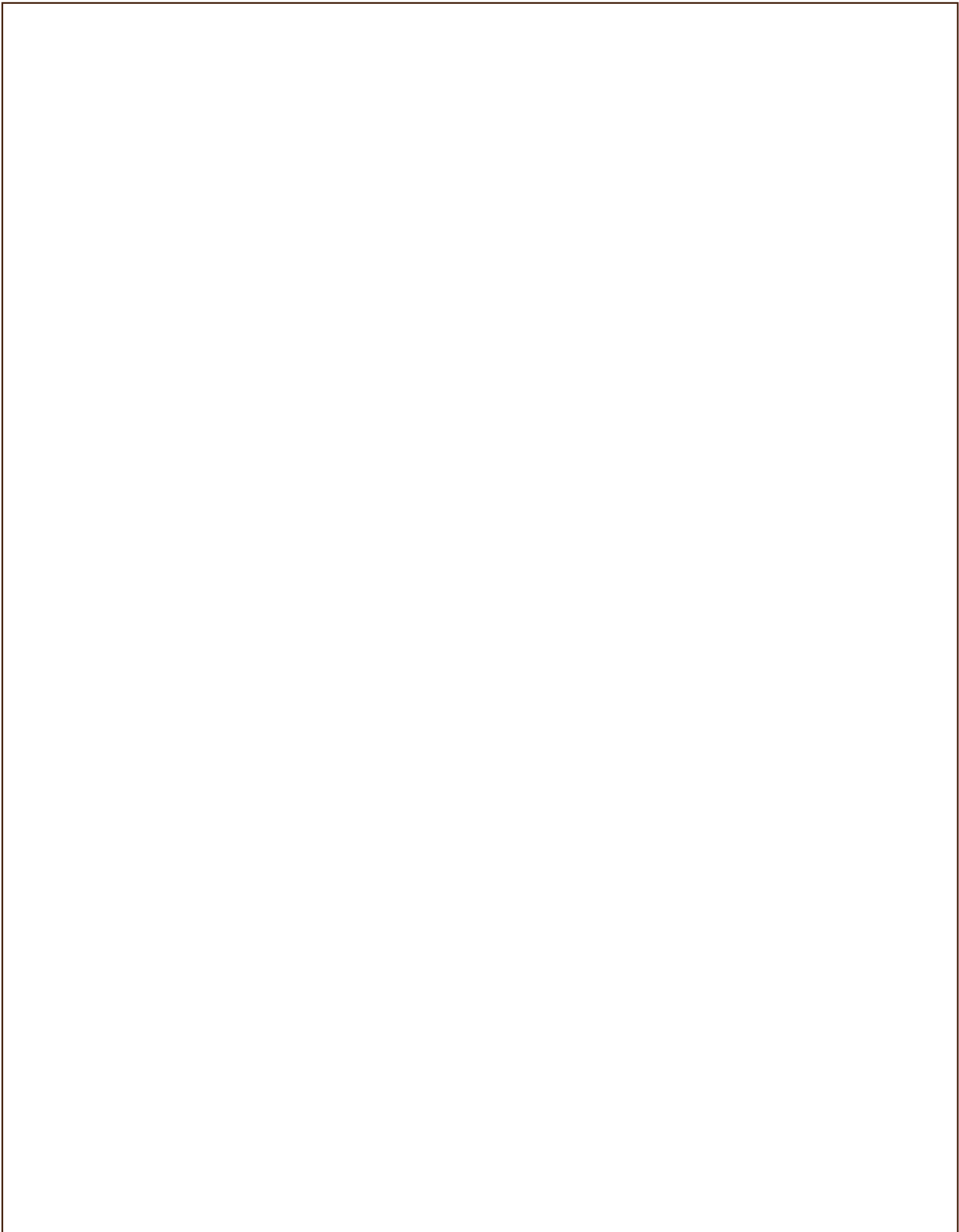
## Continuum on Becoming an Antiracist Multicultural Organization

<b>MONOCULTURAL ==&gt; MULTICULTURAL ==&gt;</b> <b>Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Deficits ==&gt; Tolerant of Racial and</b>			
<b>1. Exclusive An Exclusionary Institution</b>	<b>2. Passive A "Club" Institution</b>	<b>3. Symbolic Change A Compliance Organization</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intentionally and publicly excludes or segregates African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans</li> <li>• Intentionally and publicly enforces the racist status quo throughout institution</li> <li>• Institutionalization of racism includes formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels</li> <li>• Usually has similar intentional policies and practices toward other socially oppressed groups such as women, gays and lesbians, Third World citizens, etc.</li> <li>• Openly maintains the dominant group's power and privilege</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tolerant of a limited number of "token" People of Color and members from other social identify groups allowed in with "proper" perspective and credentials</li> <li>• May still secretly limit or exclude People of Color in contradiction to public policies</li> <li>• Continues to intentionally maintain white power and privilege through its formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels of institutional life</li> <li>• Often declares, "We don't have a problem."</li> <li>• Monocultural norms, policies and procedures of dominant culture viewed as the "right way," "business as usual"</li> <li>• Engages issues of diversity and social justice only on club member's terms and within their comfort zone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes official policy pronouncements regarding multicultural diversity</li> <li>• Sees itself as "non-racist" institution with open doors to People of Color</li> <li>• Carries out intentional inclusiveness efforts, recruiting "someone of color" on committees or office staff</li> <li>• Expanding view of diversity includes other socially oppressed groups</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>But...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Not those who make waves"</li> <li>• Little or no contextual change in culture, policies, and decision making</li> <li>• Is still relatively unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control</li> <li>• Token placements in staff positions: must assimilate into organizational culture</li> </ul>	

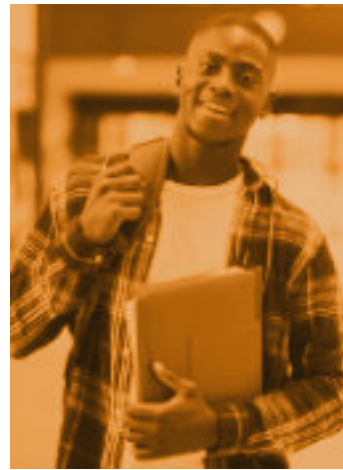
© Crossroads Ministry, Chicago, IL: Adapted from original concept by Bailey Jackson and Rita Hardiman, and further developed by Andrea Avazian and Ronice Branding; further adapted by Melia LaCour, PSES D.

**ANTI-RACIST ==> ANTI-RACIST MULTICULTURAL**  
**Cultural Differences ==> Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Assets**

<p><b>4. Identity Change An Affirming Institution</b></p>	<p><b>5. Structural Change A Transforming Institution</b></p>	<p><b>6. Fully Inclusive Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization in a Transformed Society</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing understanding of racism as barrier to effective diversity</li> <li>• Develops analysis of systemic racism</li> <li>• Sponsors programs of anti-racism training</li> <li>• New consciousness of institutionalized white power and privilege</li> <li>• Develops intentional identity as an “anti-racist” institution</li> <li>• Begins to develop accountability to racially oppressed communities</li> <li>• Increasing commitment to dismantle racism and eliminate inherent white advantage</li> <li>• Actively recruits and promotes members of groups have been historically denied access and opportunity</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>But...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege still intact and relatively untouched</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commits to process of intentional institutional restructuring, based upon anti-racist analysis and identity</li> <li>• Audits and restructures all aspects of institutional life to ensure full participation of People of Color, including their world-view, culture and lifestyles</li> <li>• Implements structures, policies and practices with inclusive decision making and other forms of power sharing on all levels of the institutions life and work</li> <li>• Commits to struggle to dismantle racism in the wider community</li> <li>• Builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities</li> <li>• Anti-racist multicultural diversity becomes an institutionalized asset</li> <li>• Redefines and rebuilds all relationships and activities in society, based on anti-racist commitments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future vision of an institution and wider community that has overcome systemic racism and all other forms of oppression</li> <li>• Institution’s life reflects full participation and shared power with diverse racial, cultural and economic groups in determining its mission, structure, constituency, policies and practices</li> <li>• Members across all identity groups are full participants in decisions that shape the institution, and inclusion of diverse cultures, lifestyles, and interest</li> <li>• A sense of restored community and mutual caring</li> <li>• Allies with others in combating all forms of social oppression</li> <li>• Actively works in larger communities (regional, national, global) to eliminate all forms of oppression and to create multicultural organizations</li> </ul>







*"Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can possibly be."*

**Rita Pierson, Educator**

