Metro Center’s Innovations in Equity and Systemic Change (IESC)
NYU Metro Center-Innovations in Equity and Systemic Change (IESC)

The Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools is in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development of New York University (NYU). Founded in 1978 by NYU professor of education Dr. Lamar Miller, subsequently led by Dr. Pedro Noguera, and currently led by Dr. David E. Kirkland, NYU Metro Center was created to respond to educational problems that are national in scope but brought into sharp focus at the local community level. The Center’s mission is to advance equity and excellence in education, to connect legacies of justice work through research, technical assistance, professional development, and community engagement.

NYU Metro Center is nationally and internationally renowned for its work on educational equity and school improvement. It brings together scholars, educators, and innovators from diverse backgrounds to collaborate on a range of projects to strengthen and improve access, opportunity, and educational quality across varied settings, but particularly in striving communities.

NYU Metro Center has 15 years of being the contractor for New York State Education Department (NYSED)’s Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality (TAC-D). Based on best practices from TAC-D, Innovations in Equity and Systemic Change (IESC) is a restructuring of TAC-D, offering educational institutions customized systemic equity work, including utilizing a set of tools and expertise to assist districts and schools in reducing disparities in the assessment, placement, and outcomes of students across race, socioeconomic status, and abilities. Findings from TAC-D’s work indicate that after four years of implementation (with high fidelity), districts and schools achieve statistically significant results in closing racial gaps across achievement, graduation, special education placements, and school suspensions.¹

In 15 years, we have had embedded partnerships with 75 school districts in New York state and provided trainings² to 70 districts in all regions of New York state. Participants who complete the culturally responsive education sequence show positive changes in awareness of both racial privilege and institutional discrimination measured by Colorblind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS), suggesting that TAC-D influences participants’ personal mindsets (PRE Report, 2018).

Based on the 2018 evaluation report completed, five implementation fidelity indicators were identified to measure a district’s progress in shifting disproportionality and inequitable outcomes. These indicators center on logistic coordination, buy-in, dissemination and follow-up, attitudes and beliefs, and response to change.³ Based on the testing of the fidelity indicators, results indicate that logistic coordination of the scope of work is instrumental to moving districts, buy-in of district leadership is also critical, such as, having a “champion” of the work. Dissemination and follow-up are also important indicators for progress. We have found that building capacity for participants to lead the work is transformative for districts. That is, in districts/schools dissemination and follow-up is also connected to response to change from participants who have not been involved in trainings (i.e., indirect participants). When districts/schools strategically disseminate the work to indirect participants progress is made. Finally, attitudes and beliefs are centered on assessing the level of resistance to addressing disproportionality and inequitable outcomes in districts that may impact their progress. When shifts occur in these fidelity measures, changes can occur in inequitable outcomes.

1. F(1,24)=44.4, p>0.001.
2. Trainings have included 4-5 day trainings in different NY regions focusing on specific topics, e.g., CRE systems, CRE warning systems, etc. This work has not included a long-term embedded partnership with districts.
3. Logistics are centered on resources that are allotted or designated in districts/schools to facilitate the work, while buy-in refers to the degree to which participants are willing and desire to engage, learn, and implement lessons. This includes elements such as attendance, preparedness, participation, and collaboration. Dissemination and follow-up refer to the “next steps” that participants take after participating in sessions. Attitudes and beliefs refer to the worldviews and opinions that gatekeepers, direct participants, and indirect participants hold, while response to change includes the success of gatekeepers and direct participants in disseminating, sharing, and implementing changes that capture indirect participants’ responses and awareness of changes.
### What are the outcomes Metro Center-IESC measures?

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<tr>
<th>Outcome Measure</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Frequency of Measurement</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policies</strong></td>
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<td>Code of Conduct</td>
<td>Revisions in Code of Conduct</td>
<td>Annually</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equity Policy</td>
<td>Equity Policy Development</td>
<td>Annually</td>
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<td>Family Engagement Policy</td>
<td>Family Engagement Policy Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP/Honors/Gifted/Talent/IB Policies/Procedures</td>
<td>Revisions in AP/Honors/Gifted/Talent/IB Policies/Procedures</td>
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<td><strong>Practices</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Culturally Responsive Classrooms</td>
<td>CRE Classroom Visit Tools</td>
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<td>Problem Solving Teams</td>
<td>Adaptation of Problem-Solving Team Tool</td>
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<td><strong>Mind-Sets</strong></td>
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<td>Perceptions of Racial and Cultural Awareness</td>
<td>Staff Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation Fidelity</strong></td>
<td>Implementation Fidelity Indicators</td>
<td>Twice a year</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quantitative Data</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>+ Discipline Referrals/Suspensions</td>
<td>Shifts in quantitative data</td>
<td>Twice a year</td>
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<tr>
<td>+ Academic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>+ Special Education Classification/Declassification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic Plan</td>
<td>Reaching goals and implementation</td>
<td>Twice a year</td>
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Mission

The Innovations in Equity and Systemic Change (IESC) at the Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools at New York University provides professional development, technical assistance, and consultancy to educational institutions in general and special education. Our mission is to disrupt, dismantle, and eliminate disproportionality by building the capacity of educators to implement Culturally Responsive Sustainable Equity-Based Systems that meet the needs of all students and families.

Why: Importance of the Work

+ Develop equitable systems to ensure equitable outcomes for all students
+ Incorporate culturally responsive education into beliefs, policies, practices, and procedures to create sustainable system-wide structures
+ Develop a “systems” thinking approach to resolving root causes of inequitable outcomes
+ Embrace all differences and reject a deficit model

What: Phased Approach*

Phase 1

+ Secure institutional support to address disproportionality and equitable systems
+ Develop Relationships
+ Determine needs and negotiate services

Phase 2

+ Identify Root Causes of disproportionality and inequities; and develop 3-year Multi-Year plan

Phase 3

+ Implement changes in beliefs, policies, practices, and procedures related to disproportionality and equity
+ Provide customized technical assistance, professional development, and consultancy
+ Leverage implementation science in creating and supporting Guardians of Equity teams to continue problem solving and addressing root causes

Phase 4

+ Evaluate changes in beliefs, policies, practices, and procedures, and measure progress based on Multi-Year strategic plan

How: Principles of Practice

+ We adapt systems to be responsive and ensure success for all stakeholders
+ We build transformational relationships with all stakeholders
+ We integrate implementation science, organizational learning, emotional intelligence, and reflection mechanisms into strategic solutions
+ We utilize evidence-based interventions and school improvement leveraging these essential supports: Leadership, Professional Staff Capacity, Instructional Guidance, Student Centered Learning Climate, and Family and Community Ties in the classroom, school, district, and community for addressing disproportionality and creating equitable systems (adapted from Bryk et al., 2010)

Culturally Responsive Practice-based Toolkit

+ Curriculum & Instruction Observation Checklist
+ School-Wide Cultural Continuum Rubric
+ Culturally Responsive Classroom Environment Tool
+ Guidelines for Evaluating Culturally Responsive Materials
+ Evaluation of Intervention Services
+ Guardians of Equity: Culturally Responsive Equity-Based Decision-Making Protocol
+ Monthly Equity Calendar

* While we recommend a phased approach to ensure systemic change, we understand educational institutions may have varying needs, so we also customize our work to meet the needs of your institution. Please refer to the Guardians of Equity section for more information on how we might customize our services.
Why: Importance of the Work

The root cause process consists of technical assistance sessions with an educational institution’s root cause team. With the support of IESC, the team collects and reviews qualitative and quantitative data to identify the possible causes of disproportionality, as well as possible solutions to disproportionality and inequitable outcomes.

We conduct a six-part series that identifies root causes of inequitable outcomes. The goal of the root cause analysis is to: (1) identify the possible root causes and compounding factors of disproportionality and larger inequities, (2) examine and identify beliefs, policies, practices, and procedures that contribute to disparate outcomes, (3) explore how race, culture, and privilege perpetuate inequities and disproportionality, (4) develop a research based plan designed to address identified root causes. IESC will achieve these goals through an iterative process of facilitated meetings, TA, data collection, and analysis.

Session 1: Understanding Disproportionality
Session 2: Examining Disproportionality and Equity
Session 3 and 4: Getting to Root Cause
Session 5 and 6: Root Cause Report and Action Planning/Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) Training:

IESC’s theory of change is grounded in the belief that in order to successfully address disparate outcomes for students of color, students with disabilities, including ELLs/MLLs, specific attention must be paid to intersecting Critical Race Theory and the Eight Principles of Culturally Responsive Education (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings & Tate 1995) and Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) Education as defined by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Thus, all of IESC’s work is informed by an understanding of the ways in which race and culture impact the educational experiences of students. We have found that when educators are equipped with explicit understanding about how race, ethnicity, language, and culture influence learning outcomes, we can significantly reduce the likelihood of disparate outcomes.

Through the marriage of theory and practice educators critically examine the racial and cultural components of their educational institution’s beliefs, policies, practices, and procedures, and how each shapes an educator’s everyday interactions with students and families. The series works towards cultivating a training experience where educators: (1) Begin to develop mindsets that eliminate educational barriers (Milner, 2010); (2) Begin to embrace asset-based pedagogy (Paris, 2012); (3) Begin to understand how to use race and culture to improve educational outcomes (Howard, 2010); (4) Engage in a process of self-transformation in order to ensure equitable outcomes for all (Banks, 2007); and (5) Reach an understanding that education is a social experience that requires both culturally responsive dialogues and relationships to develop (Powell & Rightmyer, 2011).

In addition, IESC uses research-based fidelity indicators triangulated with the data collected from the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) survey conducted in Sessions 1, 3, and 5 of the CRE trainings to assess changes in beliefs contributing to disparate outcomes.

Session 1: What is Culture and What Relevance Does It Play in Schools Aiming for Equity?
Session 2: What do We Need to Know About Ourselves in Relation to Identity and Power?
Session 3: How does Racial/Ethnic Identity Impact Racially and Ethnically Diverse Students?
Sessions 4 and 5: Given our New Perspective, What Policies and Practices will be Changed?
Session 6: Culturally Responsive Systems Toolkit

Guardians of Equity Teams:

This data-driven system is designed to have practitioners work together in small groups to transform policies, practices, and procedures that are perpetuating current inequities. Participants will be able to engage in three primary acts: (1) Design a plan to implement equity-based culturally responsive systems; (2) apply culturally responsive principles to examine data (e.g., discipline referrals, academic referrals, course failure rates by content area) and develop culturally responsive principled solutions to these outcomes; and (3) develop a customized action plan to address inequities supported by IESC (e.g, school visits, addressing one or more essential supports, progress monitoring programs and initiatives).

Youth Voice:

Through a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) model IESC has developed curriculum to support educational institutions in partnering with youth to build competency among students on disproportionality. This approach leverages youth in developing recommendations to shift beliefs, policies, practices, and procedures that are resulting in larger systemic inequities.

Additional Technical Assistance and Professional Development Offerings:

1. Culturally Responsive Data Systems
2. Culturally Responsive Curriculum and Instruction
3. Culturally Responsive Curriculum Review and Audit
4. Culturally Responsive Alternatives to Suspensions
5. Culturally Responsive Behavioral Systems
6. Culturally Responsive Restorative Practices
7. Culturally Responsive Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
8. School Walkthroughs and Feedback
The Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity & the Transformation of Schools

Innovations in Equity and Systemic Change (IESC)

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