



Quarterly Report

Year One: Quarter Three

Camille Warren



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
IUPUI

IMPACT:

Educate, Engage, Empower — For Equity

Transformative oppression
Equitable Race Education
disproportionality Social Justice Policy Systemic Diversity
Collaborative Inquiry prejudice Civil Rights
Sexual Orientation Culturally Responsive
harassment **Inclusive** Culture Research
Desegregation marginalized System
English Language Learners Context-Driven Diversity
hate crimes **Technical Assistance** Practitioners
Students **Safe** discrimination
bullying **Professional Learning** Gender

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Timeline

Quarter Three

April

- 04/05 Site Visit: TA Case 01 (N)
- 04/19 Wisconsin Indian Education Association Conference (attendee)
- 04/26 Site Visit: TA Case 01 (IN)
- 04/26 CREATE Conference (attendee)
- 04/30 Presentation by Dr. Elizabeth Kozleski at IUPUI (Center sponsored event)

Two Requests for Assistance

June

- 06/05 First Advisory Board Meeting
- 06/05 Site Visit: TA Case 01 (IN)
- 06/13 Mid-West Common Core Consortium (Invited "Knowledgeable Other")
- 06/14 Region IV PTAC Conference (Presenter)
- 06/15 Indiana Disproportionality Committee Meeting (member)
- 06/30 Juneteenth Celebration Event: What Great Parents Need to Know (Center and NAACP co-sponsored event)

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

May

- 05/04 Site Visit: TA Case 01 (IN)
- 05/05 Educational Equity Conference (presenter)
- 05/10 Site Visit: TA Case 01 (IN)
- 05/18 Indiana Disproportionality Committee Meeting (member)
- 05/21 2-Day Site Visit: TA Case 03 (WI)

October 2011

December 2011

April 2012

July 2012

October 2012

Year One



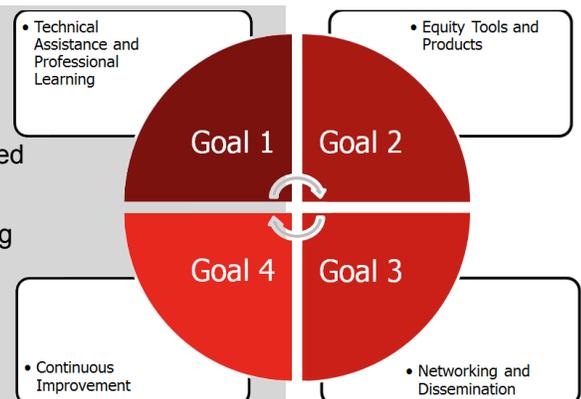
Introduction

The Great Lakes Equity Center is one of ten regional Equity Assistance Centers (EAC) funded by a \$2.2 million grant awarded by the Department of Education (DOE) under Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. EACs were established to address the unique problems occasioned by desegregation within the public education system, particularly to facilitate the resolution of civil rights conflicts and promote social justice.

Each EAC serves as a resource to the public educational agencies (e.g., schools and districts) in its assigned region, the Office of Civil Rights, and the Department of Justice. Upon request, the centers provide technical assistance and support to state and local educational agencies in the areas of civil rights, equity, and school reform to address and prevent discrimination, exclusion, or denial of opportunity on the basis of race, sex, and national origin.

The Great Lakes Equity Center (Center) serves the six states comprising Region V: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The mission of the Center is to ensure equity in student access to and participation in high-quality, research-based education by expanding states' and school systems' capacity to provide robust, effective opportunities to learn for all students, regardless of and responsive to race, sex, and national origin, and to reduce disparities in educational outcomes among and between groups. The Center's work is guided by and organized around the following four goals:

- **Goal 1.** Provide on-demand, context-driven technical assistance and professional learning to school districts, public schools and state educational agencies in the Region V states.
- **Goal 2.** Identify existing and develop new research- and practice-based educational equity tools and resources (products).
- **Goal 3.** Develop and maintain a comprehensive system for networking and disseminating information related to the Center's work.
- **Goal 4.** Engage in practice-informed, collaborative inquiry and continuous improvement to ensure that the Center's efforts to assist Region V states are effective and appropriate as they relate to educational equity.



The Center was established on October 1, 2011 by Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis' (IUPUI) Dr. Kathleen King Thorius (Principal Investigator), Dr. Brendan Maxcy, and Dr. Thu Suong Nguyen (Co-Principal Investigators), and is guided by an Advisory Board composed of practitioners, state and district leaders, teacher educators, and scholars in the fields of education and law. The Center addresses a range of equity issues by providing assistance that promotes the understanding of equity and use of viable, research-based, and context-driven solutions. Central to this effort is the inclusion and involvement of all key stakeholders within the systems engaged in change, including families, community members, administrators, policy makers, practitioners, and students.

By supporting organizational learning and improvement in Region V schools and districts, the Center hopes to realize outcomes in four primary arenas: practitioner skill and ability, policy, practice, and student outcomes. More specifically, the Center strives to strengthen practitioners' capacity to be culturally responsive, and facilitate the transformation of systemic policy and practice in order to foster safer, more inclusive, and equitable educational systems and, in turn, increase positive educational outcomes for traditionally underserved and/or marginalized students. What follows is a summary of the Center's stance on educational equity, the tenets of which ground every facet of the Center's work.

SAMPLE TARGETED OUTCOMES

- Increase in development of culturally responsive and inclusive policies
- Increase in knowledge and implementation of culturally responsive and inclusive practices
- Improved school environments
- Decrease gaps in student educational outcomes among and between groups

Philosophical Stance

Equitable educational systems facilitate student excellence in academic endeavors by valuing and using students' culture, language, heritage, gender and experiences to facilitate and inform their learning and development, and by providing access to high-quality teachers, programs, and resources (Gay, 2000; Klingner et al., 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1994). In order to be truly transformative, the work of educational equity must move beyond superficial diversity awareness and cultural proficiency trainings (Gorski, 2011) and attend explicitly to long-standing disparities in opportunities to learn for students of racially, ethnically, linguistically and economically diverse backgrounds, as well as on the basis of gender and dis/ability (Battey, Kafai, Nixon, & Kao, 2007; Tan & Barton, 2008; reference). In addition, efforts must facilitate the creation of educational systems that acknowledge groups' histories of access and participation, dismantle deficit thinking about students, families, and communities, and respond to needs in ways that respect the values, language, and experiences of diverse groups. These foci of equity and learning propel the Center's endeavors to facilitate and stimulate system reform and renewal.

With a diverse staff of eleven, representing more than 60 years combined experience in educational reform initiatives, the Great Lakes Equity Center is well positioned to facilitate this type of systemic and transformative change in Region V. This report summarizes the Center's activities and accomplishments during the third quarter (April – June 2012) of Year One, and projected areas for continued growth in the final quarter of Year One and the beginning of Year Two.



Summary

Year One: Quarter Three

“ Equality is not in regarding different things similarly, equality is in regarding different things differently.

- Tom Robbins

As noted in the previous quarterly report, work in the first two quarters of Year One focused primarily on establishing and building the Center’s infrastructure and capacity, as well as increasing awareness of the Center within Region V. Although these efforts are ongoing, the Center’s third quarter was marked by a shift in focus to the delivery of services and products, and ramping up outreach efforts. A number of unanticipated changes tempered the Center’s robust growth; more specifically, the Center experienced transitions in leadership and staffing.

In June, the Assistant Director of Technical Assistance and Professional Learning transitioned into the position of Interim Project Director and will continue to transition into the role of Project Director. Recruiting efforts to fill the vacant Assistant Director position are ongoing. In addition to changes in leadership, the Center experienced anticipated turnover in its graduate assistant staff at the end of the spring semester (i.e., April). Accordingly, some time and effort in the third quarter were devoted to recruiting and hiring three new graduate assistants.

In addition to recruiting and hiring efforts, the Center experienced robust progress and development during the third quarter of its first year. What follows is a comprehensive compendium of the Center’s work and accomplishments during Quarter Three of Year One, as well as future directions, organized by goal area. Each section opens with a brief description of the goal area being addressed then, progresses through key activities and achievements, and concludes with a summary of future directions. Given the natural intersection between the Center’s four goal areas, distinctions about work that falls into multiple goal areas are noted as appropriate.



Technical Assistance and Professional Learning

Goal One

Provide on-demand, context-driven technical assistance and professional learning to school districts, public schools and state educational agencies in the Region V states.

- Collaboratively design and provide on-site TA and PL based on comprehensive needs assessments, ongoing consultation, and feedback from the client.
- Support partner districts in strengthening and building new networks to support systemic equity work.
- Design and provide a variety of online platforms (e.g., Podcasts, Webinars and Video Conferencing) for delivering virtual TA and PL.
- Plan, coordinate, and host PL opportunities for stakeholders and clients.

The Great Lakes Equity Center's approach to technical assistance and professional learning is based on an organizational learning theory that situates learning in practice-based experiences and wherein innovations are informed and shaped by the learning community's unique context. Thus, understanding the local setting empowers stakeholders to identify and leverage assets and resources, as well as potential barriers within the system. Using research-grounded content and providing guidance aimed at stimulating critical inquiry about the status quo, effective tools, and practices are developed in and by the community of practice; the Center facilitates the inquiry by introducing these tools into the system.

Technical assistance cases are characterized by short or long-term partnerships between the Center and an educational agency to address a specific equity-related issue. Technical assistance cases may include professional learning experiences. However, the Center also contributes to and hosts discrete professional learning opportunities. The following section summarizes technical assistance cases and discrete professional learning events.

“ The essence of our effort to see that every child has a chance must be to assure each an equal opportunity, not to become equal, but to become different - to realize whatever unique potential of body, mind and spirit he or she possesses”

– John Fischer

Technical Assistance Cases

At the end of the second quarter of Year One, the Center was involved in a total of 11 active and pending TA cases. During the third quarter negotiations on three new cases began and three pending cases became inactive and did not result in the signing of a memorandum of understanding . Hence, at the end of the third quarter the Center was actively engaged in three cases and had another eight pending cases – for a total of 11 active and pending cases.

Of the Center’s eleven active and pending cases, seven are with local educational agencies, including one charter district, three are with state educational agencies, and one is with a regional integration district. The cases are distributed across five of the six Region V states, Ohio being the only state in which the Center does not currently have a case. Although, the Center continues to remain on standby to provide support to an Ohio district in the midst of a DOJ investigation related to student racial harassment that will most likely result in a consent decree. As demonstrated in Figure 1, the majority of cases (63%) originate from Minnesota and Indiana, with an equal distribution across Illinois and Wisconsin.

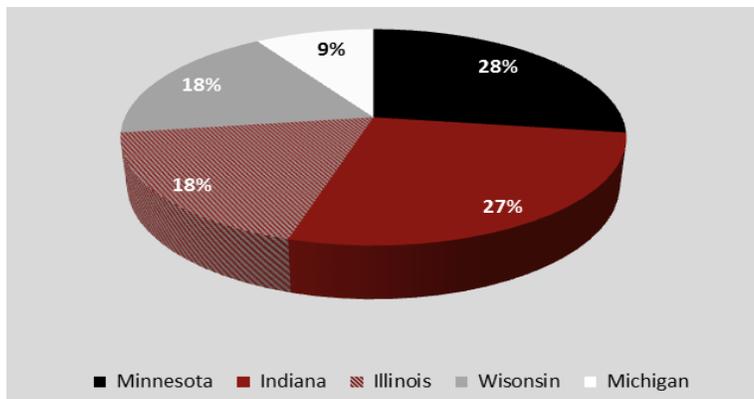


Figure 1. Geographic Distribution of Technical Assistance Cases Across Region V States

The Center’s TA cases represent a diverse range of areas for support that include: creating safe and inclusive schools, particularly linked to bullying and harassment related to gender-identity; narrowing the achievement gap, with a focus on students of color; and supporting school improvement efforts related to culturally responsive practice and educational equity.

In addition to the intensive process of negotiating and drafting MOU and scope of work documents for pending cases and engaging in collaborative planning, the third quarter was marked by a flurry of activity and service provision related to the Center’s three active TA cases. Center staff members conducted a total of seven site visits, 10 distance TA events, and delivered 13 products in association with the three active cases. Site

visits included activities such as conducting district-wide focus groups, facilitating discrete topic-specific learning experiences, providing presentations to boards, and participating in a state-wide think tank. Products developed in association with the cases included deliverables like a policy review guide, a staff questionnaire, reports, and presentations.

A number of initial outcomes have emerged that evidence the impact of the Center's service provision on shifting policy and practice to reflect more equitable and culturally responsive principles. For example, in one case, revisions reflecting more equitable policy were made to district-wide bullying and harassment policy documents based on feedback and recommendations from the Center. In another case, an all-staff questionnaire was collaboratively developed with the partnering agency to examine dispositions and awareness of educational equity and culturally responsive practice. Results from the staff questionnaire will be used as a baseline to guide ongoing school improvement efforts; the Center intends to use data from multiple administrations of the staff questionnaire to examine shifts in dispositions and awareness over time.

Initial feedback from TA clients related to service provision was strongly positive, further demonstrating the quality and impact of the Center's work. All respondents (n=3) to a post-session questionnaire unanimously agreed that the overall quality of a Center-facilitated session they attended was excellent. Respondents were also asked to complete a retrospective (i.e., after the session) pre/post assessment in which they rated their perceptions of their understanding of five concepts on a scale of 1 to 4 (4 being the strongest understanding). Collapsed retrospective pre- and post-scores for each of the five stems were calculated and then an average pre- and post-score derived for the sample. Respondents' overall score increased almost an entire point from 2.9 to 3.8.

Professional Learning Opportunities

As noted above, in addition to providing targeted technical assistance, the Center offers and contributes to an array of on-site and distance professional learning opportunities¹. During quarter three, planning for the provision of experiences such as Equity Institutes and webinars was completed; work on implementing those plans is ongoing and substantive progress in this arena is projected for Year Two.

Future Directions

The Center maintained its portfolio of technical assistance cases and began intensive service provision to its three active TA partners. The increasing workload associated with the Center's TA cases necessitates the development of a strong strategic plan moving forward. The Center's leadership is currently engaged in universal strategic planning for Year Two which will guide ongoing and future service provision as pending cases become active. The Center anticipates that one TA case will close in the final quarter of Year One, but that case has resulted in a larger potential collaboration between the Center and a consortium of charter schools. Additionally, the Center leadership continues to recognize the need to facilitate more professional learning opportunities and will be attending explicitly to development in that arena as Year One draws to an end and Year Two begins.

¹ Center staff participated in a number of meetings, conferences, and committees for the purpose of networking; those occurrences are reported as part of goal 3.



Equity Tools and Products

Goal Two

Identify existing and develop new research- and practice-based educational equity tools and resources (products).

- Design and develop products that build knowledge and increase understanding of the Center's work and equity.
- Design and develop products that assess and address equity needs to facilitate the implementation of more equitable and inclusive practices.
- Develop and apply a set of criteria for reviewing and selecting extant products that adhere to best practices in supporting positive outcomes for ALL students.

The Center is committed to keeping educators, families, and community members up-to-date with the most current information related to creating safe, inclusive, and equitable learning communities. In addition to developing a number of publications and equity tools, Center staff regularly harvest and re-distribute high-quality, research- and practice-based products developed by other agencies. Resources and information are disseminated via an array of platforms including an email marketing service and a custom-designed online Equity Library.

Center Publications

Five types of publications are produced by the Center to meet a continuum of diverse learning needs. Publications include monthly newsletters (Equity Dispatch), periodic e-bulletins (Equity Now!), bi-annual practitioner briefs (Equity by Design), annual Case Studies, and Podcast series'. The Center's publications are sent to individuals who subscribe and are also archived on the Center's website. Center publications are written or produced by experienced practitioners and top researchers in the fields of educational leadership, special education, and educational equity. The publication process involves theme and content selection, the development the content, an extensive editing process, and finally, dissemination of the publication.

During the Center's third quarter, two newsletters and three e-bulletins were developed and disseminated. The newsletter topics were: *Education as Fundamental Right* and *Gender Equity*. The e-bulletins addressed a variety of themes including, announcing the launch of the Center's online Equity Library, disseminating a link to a resource for self-assessing one's practice related to gender equity, and summarizing undocumented students' rights.



Formal feedback about the quality and relevance of the Center's publications was collected from a random sample of eight publication subscribers. Overall, feedback from respondents was strongly positive, as the following two comments reflect:

I admire how well you [the Center] are representing issues of diversity.

You [the Center] are making resources and multiple perspectives quickly accessible. I like what you are doing and presenting.

The majority of respondents (63%) indicated that the Center's publications were above average or better and most (87.5%) indicated that they found the publications valuable enough to share with at least one colleague or friend. Moreover, all respondents agreed that Center publications are: easy to read, visually appealing, well written and organized, deal with timely and relevant issues, and provide information that is pertinent to them. A majority of respondents (71%) also agreed that the information presented in Center publications is accurate; the remaining 29% of respondents noted that they were unable to comment about the accuracy of information. Data related to the quality and relevance of the Center's publications will continue to be gathered and aggregated over time.

Online Equity Library

The Equity Library is a searchable online database, housed on the Center's website, offering an assortment of equity-related resources and tools. On a weekly basis, relevant extant resources are identified and gathered to be reviewed for potential posting in the library. For inclusion in the library, products must adhere to basic criteria; quality indicators used in the review process include: strongly aligned with the Center's work and values, well-written and organized, and connected to recent and relevant research.

In quarter three 92 resources were harvested, increasing the total pool of resources harvested from 122 to 214. By the end of the third quarter 182 of the total 214 resources had been reviewed and an additional 61 resources were published to the library for a total of 102 published resources (see Figure 2). An additional 49 resources were approved and are pending posting to the library².

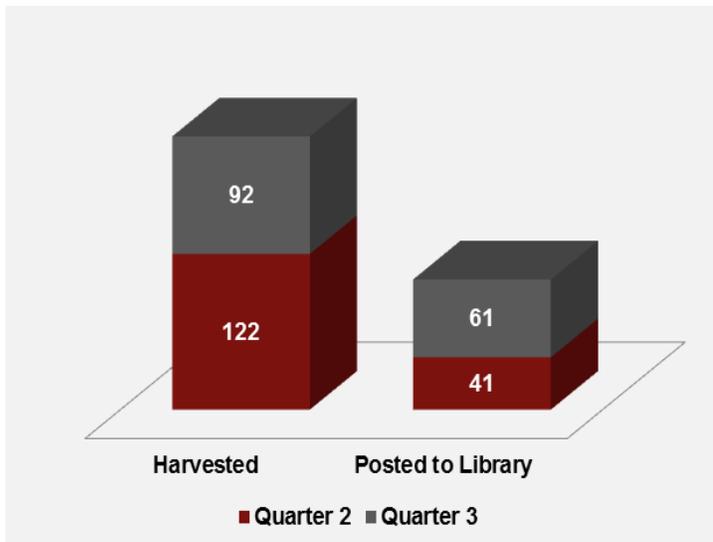


Figure 2. Summary of Resources Harvested and Posted to the Great Lakes Equity Center Online Equity Library for Quarters Two and Three of Year One

Future Directions

The Center is on track for continuing to regularly develop and harvest equity-related products. Before the end of Year One the Center will publish its first practitioner brief and case study. Moreover, two equity tools developed in conjunction with TA cases are in the process of being modified and reviewed for broader dissemination.



² Information about Equity Library usage is reported in the next section, Goal 3.



Networking and Dissemination

Goal Three

Develop and maintain a comprehensive system for networking and disseminating information related to the Center's work.

- Design, develop and maintain a communications and technology infrastructure for the Center.
- Design, develop and maintain a clearinghouse of resources including an online searchable library of tools, resources and links to other organizations.
- Develop and maintain a strong network of other TA providers, educators, community and professional organizations, and families engaged in equity work.

The Center's products are primarily web-based and requests for service are contingent upon high visibility within Region V. Hence, the nature of the Center's work necessitates an elegant networking and dissemination plan as well as a diversified and innovative technology infrastructure. The Center's plan includes a variety of systems, strategies, and platforms intended to increase the Center's visibility, grow its network by reaching new audiences, and disseminate its work. The plan addresses three fundamental objectives: (1) Establish a strong online presence (website and social media); (2) Utilize proactive and creative promotional strategies including, electronic and hard copy materials (e-marketing, email campaigns and brochures); and (3) Offer and participate in networking and stakeholder events. The strategies and platforms utilized by the Center often concurrently address both arenas of networking and dissemination and continue to emerge and evolve as the Center's needs change.

This section summarizes efforts and accomplishments related networking and dissemination including the extent to which these efforts have been successful related to increasing the Center's visibility and engagement with stakeholders.

Website

The Great Lakes Equity Center website is an axial tool for disseminating and communicating the Center's work. The site provides basic information about the Center and offers potential affiliates the opportunity to submit a request for assistance, contact the Center, subscribe to the Center's publications, and/or to download resources either from the Equity Library or the archive of Center publications.

As demonstrated in Figure 3, in the Center's third quarter the number of unique visitors to the website nearly doubled (88%) as compared with the second quarter - from 231 to 435. Accordingly, the total number of visits increased also from 742 to 1,263 (70%). Despite the substantive increase in traffic, the average number of page views per visit decreased from four and a half to just fewer than four between Quarter Two and Three; similarly, average visit duration decreased from less than five and a half minutes to about four minutes.



Figure 3. Comparison of Traffic to the Great Lakes Equity Center Website for Quarters Two and Three of Year One

Several factors may illuminate this apparent trend of increased visitation to, but decreased engagement with the website. First, during the second quarter, Center staff members were busy refining and working on the website just after its launch which likely inflated the second quarter numbers. Also, it is possible that visitors are becoming more familiar with the site and know exactly where they would like to go for specific information when they visit; a conjecture supported by the fact that 69% of the visitors during the third quarter were repeat visitors to the site.

Geographic distribution of visitors to the site increased from seven to 11 countries and 27 to 36 states within the continental United States between Quarter Two and Three. Almost all (98%) of the hits to the site came from within the US, the majority (87%) of which originated from Region V states and, more specifically, from Indiana (68%) (see Figure 4 on next page).

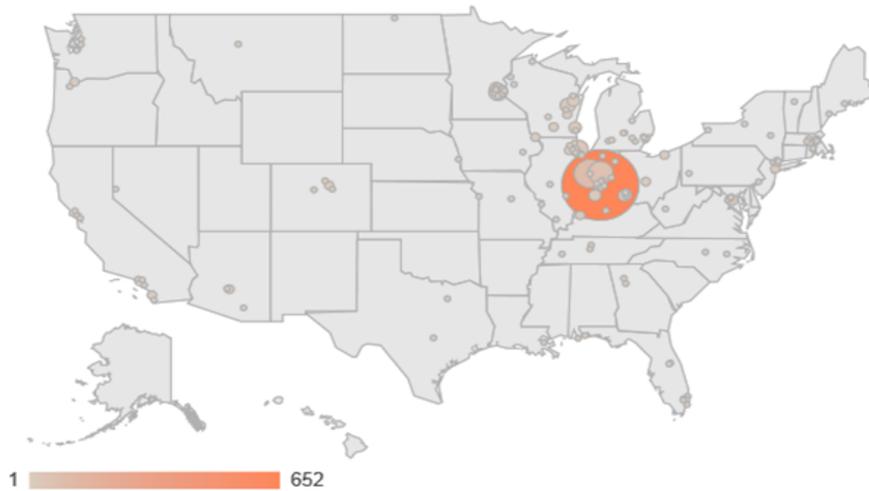


Figure 4. Geographic Distribution of Guests to the Great Lakes Equity Center Website for Quarter Three of Year One

All of these website visitation data suggest that that awareness of the Center is increasing. We hope to continue to see increased interaction with the Center’s website and will be exploring a number of strategies for increasing the Center’s reach through the website as Year One ends and Year Two begins.

Equity Library

The Equity Library is a virtual database housed on the Center’s website through which high-quality, research- and practice-based tools and resources are disseminated (see Goal 2). In the third quarter 32% of all website page views related to the Equity Library. Moreover, a total of 28 different products were downloaded from the library 76 times across 55 visits. Because the library had just been launched at the end of the second quarter, there is no reliable comparison data from the second quarter; in future reports trends will be highlighted.

Publication Dissemination

As previously noted, the Center authors a number of subscription-based publications. To support the development and dissemination of those publications, the Center enlisted the support of an email marketing service. Efforts to enlist new publication subscribers in quarter three included, providing a sign-up sheet at every event in which Center staff members participated, the sign-up form posted on the Center’s website, and sending emails to Center affiliates inviting them to subscribe. Over the third quarter, the total number of publication subscribers increased by 40% from 139 to 194. Moreover, 20% of all webpage views related to Center Publications.

The overall open rate across all five publications disseminated in Quarter Three was 24% with a range between 19 and 28%; these rates are on par with industry standards. Furthermore, one of the e-bulletins disseminated contained a link to a self-assessment resource in the Equity Library, the Equity Challenge. A total of 23 individuals accessed that resource from our library, and 15 of those individuals downloaded the resource a total of 18 times.

Social Media (Facebook and Twitter)

In addition to dissemination and networking efforts via the Center's website, the Center uses its Facebook and Twitter accounts to provide timely news and announcements and to connect with other individuals and organizations engaged in similar work. Center staff members made regular posts to Twitter and Facebook throughout the third quarter. The Center increased its number of Twitter followers from 6 to 14, and its number of Facebook page likes from 53 to 76 between the second and third quarters. Although these numbers demonstrate some growth, the Center leadership continues to recognize a need to increase its social media presence and be more strategic in leveraging social media platforms to expand its network. By the end of Year One, we expect to have a social media action plan that will be informed by targeted research into effective social media outreach strategies and will guide continued social media campaigns.

Networking and Stakeholder Events

Another important way the Center stays connected, contributes to a larger community of research and practice, and builds its network is by hosting, contributing to, and participating in professional conferences, stakeholder meetings, and committees. During this reporting cycle, Center staff members continued to engage regularly in three committees and councils, and participated in six stakeholder and networking events (enumerated in the timeline at the beginning of this report).

Networking and stakeholder events included presenting at the Region Four Parent Technical Assistance Center conference and a Wisconsin Indian Education Association conference, serving as a panel expert at the Midwest Common Core Consortium, and co-sponsoring a parent workshop at a Juneteenth celebration with the Indianapolis NAACP chapter. The Center also hosted its first bi-annual advisory board meeting in June and will host a second in September.

COMMITTEES AND COUNCILS

- National Council for the Education of Black Children (NCEBC)
- Indiana Disproportionality Committee (IDC)
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Indianapolis

Because of all of the Center's networking and outreach efforts, it closed the third quarter with a total of 615 unique contacts that have engaged with Center in some way. Approximately one third (32%) of those contacts were publications subscribers and 31% were partners associated with a TA case. Center contacts represent a diversity of district and state administrators, teachers, parents, technical assistance professionals, higher education professionals and so on from 36 states; however, the majority (57%) of contacts are from within the Center's assigned region, Region V.

Future Directions

The Center has more work to do to leverage various platforms to expand our network. Center staff members are in the process of developing a strategic plan related to networking and dissemination that will guide continued efforts in this arena during Year Two.



Research and Evaluation

Goal Four

Engage in practice-informed, collaborative inquiry and continuous improvement to ensure that the Center’s efforts to assist Region V states are effective and appropriate as they relate to educational equity.

- Design and implement an annual evaluation plan that concurrently measures key features of the Center’s processes and outcomes.
- Utilize evaluation data and findings to continually inform and improve the Center’s work including the refinement of products and services.

This goal area speaks to the Center’s fundamental and embedded effort to continuously monitor and improve the Center’s work through research- and practice-based decision making (i.e., organizational learning) and to engage in scholarly research to contribute to the broader knowledge and research base in appropriate professional and scholarly venues. Utilizing a mixed methods approach to data collection and inviting all stakeholders to analyze and discuss the data as the work emerges are key characteristics of the Center’s efforts in this domain.

The primary activities and accomplishments for this goal area relate to the development of data collection and reporting systems, methods, and tools, as well as the generation of data and research that supported and informed the Center’s work. The data and findings generated about each goal area are reported previously in the respective goal’s section of this report. However, the global methods and strategies for generating those data are here reported.

Continuous Improvement: Data Collection and Reporting

The inquiry model adopted is inclusive, participatory, and incorporates both internal and external components to ensure the Center's work is valid, relevant, and high-quality. The continuous improvement efforts address and are guided by a set of primary evaluation questions. The questions focus concurrently on measuring Center processes and outcomes. Process measures relate to what the Center does and the quality of that work. More specifically, process measures examine how productive the Center is, factors affecting productivity, and quality, relevance and accessibility of and client satisfaction with products and services (Q1-5). Outcomes measures focus on the extent to which the Center's work produces the desired changes in awareness, knowledge, attitudes, practice, policy, and conditions as outlined in the Center's logic model (Q6).

PRIMARY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

- **EQ1.** How productive is the Center in Year One; to what extent do Center staff accomplish internal tasks, benchmarks and targeted timelines?
- **EQ2.** How accessible and useful are the Center's products and services to clients?
- **EQ3.** To what extent is there alignment between identified equity assistance needs in Region V and the Center's work (i.e., relevance)?
- **EQ4.** What is the quality of the products and services provided by the Center?
- **EQ5.** What impact does the Center have on policies and practices related to equity and to what extent are more equitable examples and models collaboratively developed and presented to ALL participants in partner Region V districts and schools?

Data collection activities are embedded into the life and operations of the Center and carried out by key personnel and participants. This practice ensures that primary data are gathered by and from those closest to events and contexts and interpreted across time and participants. Suitable, sufficiently reliable and valid instruments are utilized to accommodate the Center's unique data collection needs. Data are also gathered from a variety of automated sources. Table 1 (next page) summarizes how and what data are collected to answer each of the five primary evaluation question.

Table 1. Great Lakes Equity Center Data Collection Efforts by Primary Evaluation Question

MEASURE	GOAL	DATA SOURCES
EQ1. How productive is the Center; to what extent do Center staff accomplish internal tasks, benchmarks and targeted timelines?		
Count, diversity, and distribution of active and pending technical assistance cases	1	Technical Assistance Case Log
Count of professional learning experiences offered, by type and date	1	Professional Learning Event Log
Count of publications produced, by type and date	2	Document Reviews E-Marketing Analytics
Count of Equity Tools produced, by type and date	2	Technical Assistance Activity Log
Count of stakeholder and networking events, by type and date	3	Stakeholder Event Log
Count of evaluation products produced, by type and date	4	Evaluation Matrix
EQ2. How accessible and useful are the Center’s products and services to clients?		
Count, diversity, and distribution of website visits and visitors	3	Google Analytics
Count of product downloads from website and online Equity Library	3	Google Analytics
Count of Center contacts, disaggregated by type of contact and location	3	Contact Log
E-mail open and click rates	3	E-Marketing Analytics
Count of Facebook page likes and Twitter followers	3	Automated Analytics
Percent of partners reporting products and services are useful, and partner descriptions of in what ways they were useful	1, 2	Publication Questionnaire Annual Affiliate Questionnaire Summative Questionnaire Partner Interviews
EQ3. To what extent is there alignment between identified equity assistance needs in Region V and the Center’s work (i.e., relevance)?		
Partner stated needs	1, 2, 3	Partner Interviews Baseline Questionnaire
Demonstrated regional needs	1, 2, 3	Focus Group Interviews State Data Reviews Regional Resource Mapping Field Notes
Percent of partners reporting products and services met relevant need(s)	1, 2	Publication Questionnaire Annual Affiliate Questionnaire Summative Questionnaire Partner Interviews
EQ4. What is the quality of the products and services provided by the Center?		
Client perceptions of quality	1, 2	Post-Session Questionnaire Publication Questionnaire Online Product Questionnaire Annual Affiliate Questionnaire Summative Questionnaire Partner Interviews
Staff perceptions of quality	1, 2	Staff Field Notes Product Reviews
Expert perceptions of quality	1, 2	Document and Artifact Reviews
EQ5. What impact does the Center have on policies and practices related to equity and to what extent are more equitable examples and models collaboratively developed and presented to ALL participants in partner Region V districts and schools?		
Percent of participants demonstrating growth in understanding, and type of growth	1	Pre/Post-Assessments
Demonstrated changes in practice, policy, and school environments	1	Document and Product Reviews Observations and Field Notes Summative and Follow-Up Questionnaires

In order to deliver and discuss findings in a timely manner to shape the Center's ongoing work, data are analyzed and summarized iteratively in monthly metric and quarterly progress reports. Moreover, a summative report summarizing all data, findings and providing concluding reflections and considerations will be drafted annually.

The third quarter was marked by the production of a number of continuous improvement products including the Center's inaugural Quarterly Report, the Publications Questionnaire, Post-Session Questionnaire, and monthly metrics reports. Regular monthly meetings between the Center's External Evaluator and Assistant Director of Research and Evaluation to discuss the emerging data and findings were also ongoing.

Future Directions

A number of structures have been established to ensure the Center remains at the fore of current research and practice, builds shared understanding of the work among staff, and to embrace and practice equity in its own work. Each quarter, whole staff meetings are held to debrief progress and next steps; quarterly (all staff) visioning meetings are also held to discuss the Center's vision, mission, and philosophy. To foster a collaborative approach to the work, work teams were developed and meet weekly to complete tasks in congress. Also, a list of core guiding principles for how the Center approaches its work was developed and shared with all staff members. These guiding principles help define the day to day operations and culture of the Center.

Plans are currently under way to plan and deliver monthly learning opportunities to staff (e.g., lunch and learn). Themes for the internal learning opportunities will range from technology support to equity related topics, and any staff member who would like to facilitate a learning experience may do so.

Scholarly Research

In addition to measuring the quality and efficacy of the Center's work, research activities are conducted by Center staff. Data are collected, analyzed and used to explore and describe the context of the system/s the Center serves. Currently, two of the Center's TA cases are on target for having research studies embedded in service provision, and are in the early stages of planning for those endeavors.

Future Directions

Data collection efforts will intensify in conjunction with the Center's increasing provision of services and products. Data management solutions will continue to be refined, as will the reporting processes. Pending accomplishments for Year One include publishing of the annual Case Study, summative data collection for TA cases, and development of an annual needs assessment strategic plan.

As the Center's TA cases grow, research studies will be designed and conducted, with guidance from the Center's Principal Investigators, to continue to examine prevailing equity needs, complaints and ongoing contexts within Region V. Data and findings from these scholarly endeavors will be reported in appropriate, peer-reviewed publications. Moreover, to broaden the field's capacity, a number of tools and instruments developed by the Center to conduct research will be made publicly available and be submitted, as appropriate, for peer-review and validation.

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