Leadership Considerations for Fostering a Thriving, Diverse, Culturally Responsive Educator Workforce

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TRANSCRIPTION

Dr. Skelton: Our work this afternoon has been a, a project of not just the MAP Center, but also our great and wonderful colleagues who have formed our Technical Assistance Center Equity Advisory and Network work group. So, I'm gonna ask each of our members to introduce themselves. If you wouldn't mind introducing yourself and then your organization, that would be great. Thank you.

Dr. Miller: I'll start. Hi everyone. Dawn Miller from the SWiFT Education Center housed at the University of Kansas.

Natalie Walrond: Hi, everybody. I'm happy to jump in next. I'm Natalie Walrond. I am at WestEd. The, the incorrect logo is on the slide. I'm not part of NCSI, but I was the Director of the Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety at WestEd.

Dr. Skelton: Thank you, Natalie.

Nelsinia Ramos: Hi, my name is Nelsinia Ramos, and I work for the Parent Technical Assistance Center for the Region C, which cover most of the states covered by the MAP Center, and I also the Parent Center Director for the Wisconsin Parent Training Information Center.

Dr. Harvey: Good afternoon or good morning, depending where you are in the country. My name is Alexandria Harvey. I am from WestEd. I do work with the National Center for Systemic Improvement, and I am also

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the Deputy Director of the Data Center for Addressing Significant Disproportionality.

Christina Kasprzak: Hi everybody, I'm Christina Kasprzak and I co-lead the Early Childhood TA Center, and we're here at the FPG Child Development Institute that's part of the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

Sophia Farmer: And a colleague of Christina's is me, Sophia Farmer. I'm also at FPG with Christina, but I am co-leading the National Implementation Research Network and directing the State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center. Nice to see everyone.

Dr. McCray: Hi everyone, I'm Erica McCray, faculty member at the University of Florida and Executive Director of the CEEDAR Center.

Dr. Skelton: Thank you to everyone. OK, thank you. So, our key objective today is to discuss key considerations that leaders must address to create sustaining conditions where culturally responsive and diverse educators can thrive. Before we, before we get too much further into our discussion, just a note about participation. Again, make yourself comfortable during this hour and a half that we're together. We, we know that we're all, you know, that can get sort of webinar, kind of, overwhelmed or just…so if you need to stand up, move about as needed. Please take care of your own physical needs and, and, and, and do so.

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Dr. Skelton: We will be…as you can see, we are using caption to increase universal accessibility. We will be engaging in breakout room activities, and we will also be taking a group photo at the end of our time together. We would ask that you mute your mics so that we won't have background noise that would be distracting and, and if you…we would like to see you on camera. So, if you're so inclined, please enable your…or…your camera, but if not, that is OK as well. Again, as stated at the end of our session today, we will be taking, I like to call it a group, a class photo. And if you would not like to be in the photo, we would ask that you disable your camera at that time, and we will give you a cue to do so.

Dr. Skelton: Today's agenda. So, we're in the middle of our welcome and introduction now. We will be followed by a dynamic panel presentation, and then you will have a chance to preview a tool that our work group has developed, the *Leadership Framework for Fostering the Conditions Where Diverse, Culturally Responsive Educators Can Thrive*. You will have a chance to preview that framework, and to discuss and give feedback on that framework that we would then take and incorporate in the final version. And then we will come back together for closing remarks.

Dr. Skelton: Just some notes in terms of engaging in Courageous Conversations. Stay engaged. Express your truth and, and allow others to express theirs. Know this work is about stretching and, and, and contending with tensions. So, we, we ask you to lean into any discomfort you may be experiencing. And then of course, this is ongoing life work,

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so we expect and accept non-closure, although we do expect progress in this work of equity.

Dr. Skelton: So, about 1 in 10 of all teaching positions nationally are either unfulfilled, unfilled or, or filled by teachers not fully certified in their assignments. And so, we know we've been contending with this issue of a teacher shortage for quite some time, and it's only been exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. We also know that we've been dealing with, or contending with the issue of the lack of representation of our teaching field in relation to the students that are in our schools.

Dr. Skelton: So, we know that the teaching field is about 80%...our teachers are white and female, where we know that almost half of our students in our public schools are students of Color. Many states have created and invested a significant amount of resources and pathways to recruit teachers, and while the recruitment is a focus of many states, to a smaller extent is their focus on explicitly using these strategies to attract more diverse teachers into the workforce. We also know however, that there is a persistent turnover rate, particularly with educators of Color, when compared to their white peers.

Dr. Skelton: So, usually these efforts to address this teacher shortage focus on the retaining of teachers that are already in our schools, the recruitment of new teachers, and the hiring of those, those new teachers. And so, we know that this retain, recruit, hire cycle is really

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important, but we suggest…we will offer, there's another important aspect of this work.

Dr. Skelton: When we look at things from the literature regarding teachers who embody minoritized identities and the experiences that they're having, and we focus on teachers of Color, teachers with disabilities, and teachers who identify as LGBTQ+ these things are highlighted from the, from the literature. The data emphasizes the importance of diversity for in-teaching for not only our students, but also for our educators in terms of retaining educators, diverse educators, and also creating supportive environments for all educators, including those with disabilities of educators of Color and career teachers. So, in order to create these environments, we need to make sure that we're focusing on diversifying these environments as well.

Dr. Skelton: Teachers with disabilities, educators of Color, and educators who identify as LBTQ+ encounter unique challenges that leaders in school systems must address and lean into. Despite facing adversities, however, teachers from minor—mi-- from marginalized communities and groups are motivated by a desire to create positive experiences for students who look like them and have similar lived experiences.

Dr. Skelton: They believe in their effectiveness as educators due to their own lived experiences, the empathy that they have, the dedication to all students but particularly students of minoritized identities, and a commitment for student well-being. We also know that there's

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systemic issues such as heteronormativity, discriminating policies and practices, and lack of support that can impact the well-being of, of these educators, their satisfaction in their job, and ultimately the retention of these educators in the education field.

Dr. Skelton: Therefore, we need leaders and administrators to focus on not just recruiting and retaining, but implementing supportive policies, providing resources, professional learning experiences to address systemic barriers, and to intentionally create inclusive and affirming school environments for all educators. Ensuring that students have access to culturally responsive teachers is important. Ensuring that all students have access to these teachers who embody diverse social identities is also important, and it takes more than the focus on recruiting, hiring, and retaining. We suggest that educators and education leaders should also focus on creating conditions where these educators are sustained and can thrive.

Dr. Skelton: So, what do we mean by sustaining conditions? These are conditions that affirm and uphold the worth of all, all educators with specific emphasis on educators who embody minoritized identities, nurturing their physical, mental, emotional, social, and financial well-being alongside fostering their professional growth. So, we're gonna hear by…a panel of our esteemed work group leaders discussing very important issues that leaders need to think about and consider in creating the…such environments. I'm going to hand the mic, so to speak, over to Kathleen, who's going to be our moderator of our panel. Kathleen.

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Dr. King Thorius: Wonderful. It's great to see everybody today. And Seena, were we going to display the PowerPoint? Are you able to display the PowerPoint while I'm moderating? Yeah, thank you. It's wonderful…I, we have the treat to hear from folks who've been leading technical assistance centers across different contexts, as Natalie reminded us. Sometimes we are, we have experience across multiple centers over time. And then all of us have had experience in some way or another as educate, as educational leaders often in k-12 context as well. So, I'm really excited to share and to hear from everybody today about bringing those experiences to bear.

Dr. King Thorius: And so, we have a wonderful group of folks. I want to make sure that we have time for everybody to chime in and then also have time for our discussion. But…we've had a chance to pull these questions together on the basis of a number of planning sessions, and we'll look forward to hearing what folks have to share. I'm going to start with Alexandria. So, I'm gonna kind of give you a heads up that I'm gonna ask you to chime us off, start us off with this first question about specific strategies that leaders can implement to ensure that educators who embody marginalized identity, such as teachers with disability, educators with…of Color, and LGBTQ+ teachers feel supported and valued within their school communities. So specific strategies that leaders can implement.

Dr. Harvey: Yeah. So, I think one of the specific strategies that is really important to me is really, really being community-focused in the ways that you are centering some of the things that you're doing in your school.

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Often times we think about having professional development opportunities. We have in-person trainings, some of these, and these are great ways to learn and keep learning moving. But I think it's really important that if we want to create conditions for teachers to be able to thrive and to be able to grow, communities should be a part of this process within the schools.

Dr. Harvey: Many times, the only times we interact with our communities is when students are in trouble, or we need to get a hold of parents for some reason or another, and it's often in a negative aspect. So, bringing these folks into the community, into the school environment, I think creates environments that allows for the thriving of not only the students, but it creates this cohesiveness between staff as well that is really needed and is often missing in various contexts.

Dr. King Thorius: Yeah. And I appreciate you bringing up that point too, because, you know, many times, most times our communities are reflective of our schools and the students—

Dr. Harvey: Yeah.

Dr. King Thorius: —in particular in schools. And so, if we have those deep connections, then we're able to ensure much more robust partnerships, right.

Dr. Harvey: Right.

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Dr. King Thorius: OK. I'm going to ask if Natalie would chime in there, building on the, the, the response that, that Alexandria just gave us about specific strategies that leaders can implement.

Natalie Walrond: Sure. I'd be happy to. Thank you so much. And everyone, I'm really delighted to be here with you. I'm excited about this tool that we're gonna be sharing with you. So, what I would say, as I was thinking about this question, was really the importance for this question and for the whole conversation we have today, to think about the fact that this conversation sits inside of complex systems, right? We know the education system is complex and it includes the technical dimensions of policies, practices, routines, structures, as well as the adaptive components of a complex system, the mindsets, beliefs, relationships.

Natalie Walrond: So, my headline just about this question is that, in thinking about a specific policy or strategy or, or something like that, it's fundamental to think about the way it interacts with other parts of the system. So, what I mean by that is, you know, just attending to one part of the system often isn't enough for equitable and sustainable outcomes. And you know, the example that we talk about at WestEd is like, you can't just tell your teachers, "OK, you go…yoga is gonna address your stress and burnout." Because if the systems and policies within which they work aren't actually also supporting well-being and belonging.

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Natalie Walrond: And so, particularly as we're focusing on like, what are the experiences of minoritized staff, as leaders, it's on us to really think about what are the root causes of what minorities-- minoritized staff are experiencing, right? Like, what is, what is underlying the experiences of feeling unsupported or undervalued? And so, what I wanted to share was this idea around the strategies. I was…I returned to a guide that my Deputy Director on the SEL Center authored called *Creating a Culture of Care*. And I'm happy to share that and put that in the chat. I won't do it now 'cause I'm not good at multitasking.

Natalie Walrond: But she really thinks about this idea of strategies for educator well-being in the context of educational systems. And it's grounded in, you know, the science of learning and development, and equity and systems change is the frame. And so, she thinks about the strategies in terms of three tiers. You can almost think about them as like Maslow's Hierarchy, where she thinks about there's the, there's the strategies that you have around safety and security as sort of the foundational, individual level; strategies around promoting connectedness and belonging, thinking about the collective. And then finally, strategies around helping educators with, you know, finding meaning, and purpose, and agency, and growth in their work.

Natalie Walrond: And so, a couple of strategies, a couple of examples are she talks about in this, in this article, thinking about things like all-gender bathrooms, and nursing rooms, and accessibility support. She talks about making inclusive language the norm by inviting all staff to

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share their personal pronouns. My pronouns are she, her. And by…when everyone is expected to share pronouns, it makes it safer and more comfortable for some, for everyone, for each person to be able to do it. She talks about, in the article, and other strategies developing for strengths-based community culture by learning about and highlighting and rewarding the varying strengths, and the diverse strengths of staff. So those are just three that I will share.

Dr. King Thorius: Thank you so much. Yeah, thank you so much Natalie, and thank you for the resource. And one of the things I really appreciate you pulling out is this idea that often there are add-on approaches, or approaches that really place the onus on the staff to take care of themselves. Like that self-care sort of perspective, without really focusing on communities of care, and communities that need to be changed. Policies and practices that need to be refined and addressed, so that people are able to take care of themselves. But when we ask people to just, like you said, do yoga or do, do breathing exercises in the midst of chaos and a lack of support, there are so many things wrong with that, that, that just don't, in any way, build toward a sustained work environment or employing-- employees. So, thank you so much.

Dr. King Thorius: We're going to move to Erica McCray, Dr. McCray, for the next question, and we're going to ask you to talk more about mentorship and professional development. So how can state, district, and school administration provide mentorship and professional development opportunities that are specifically tailored to the unique challenges

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faced by educators who embody minoritized identities? You know, we want to make sure that we're enhancing job satisfaction and retention rates, and of course other positive outcomes.

Dr. McCray: Thanks for that question. I'll actually borrow, or extend, some of Natalie's comments about thinking systemically, and how the system needs to support mentoring as a part of a thoughtful induction program. So, states can set up structures for induction programs that then support LEAS or school districts, and then those school districts can then support schools to do that work. One of the, the challenges that I know many states are facing, because in our work with the CEEDAR Center, we're working with over 20 states, is the need to have high-quality mentors, with retention being an issue not just in the early years, but we're also seeing it at other phases of teaching careers, is to really think about mentoring as a part of a system of support, as you mentioned, Kathleen, but also thinking about where we go to find mentors.

Dr. McCray: One of the, I think the bright spots that the pandemic showed us is that we can do a lot of things virtually. We can tap into uses of technology. And it might be that a beginning teacher has a mentor in their building for the orientation pieces, for the logistical pieces. And they might have social support that they receive from a teacher at another school or in another district.

Dr. McCray: And I think in order for that to even be a part of the conversation in terms of possibility, states have to create infrastructure for that to be

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able to happen and to think contextually, not only at the state level, but within the communities where they are. So how do we make sure that multiply-marginalized teachers, supporting multiply-marginalized students, are in a system that supports and recognizes the identities that they bring to work, and that those students are bringing into the classroom, which then leads to Alexandria's point about the community being a part of the support system.

Dr. McCray: So, I think we have to think bigger and beyond the problem, to some of the more systemic solutions that we can create, and policy can provide guidance. One of the, the state-level personnel that we work with always says, "What gets measured gets done." And so, how do we use policy as a lever to make sure that their accountability…there's accountability in place so that all of the professionals involved in that induction and mentoring process are supported. They have the resources to do it, but then they're also held accountable for that.

Dr. McCray: On the other side of that, I think in my role, in my faculty role and in thinking about educator preparation as a part of a professional learning system through CEEDAR, it's how do we ensure that educator preparation providers who tend to do the early work are a part of this sort of seamless process of preparation? Because we know whether teachers or leaders go through a traditional program or an alternate route program, they've had some interaction, typically, with an educator preparation provider.

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Dr. McCray: So how do we make sure that those partnerships are in place so that if a, a graduate leaves an educator preparation program, that they aren't just dropped into the abyss until a school district picks them up? But there's this conversation about, "Here's how far we got them, here's what their foundation is, here's where the district can pick up with state-level support." So, I think it's thinking about all of the complexities and how we can use the strengths of each partner.

Dr. King Thorius: Absolutely. So many points there. You know, you raise the point about professional development. Sometimes can be about looking deeply at policy, and ways in which we hold ourselves accountable. Not that policy's the only way, but policy… and then, policy as practice as well. What are the routine practices that afford or constrain opportunities for people to, to be mentored in true supportive ways? So, thank you so much. Lots of points there.

Dr. King Thorius: You know, many of us may be involved with, and have connections with, teacher preparation programs at our own universities or at local universities as well. So those continued dialogues are very important. And often we have direct relationships with mentor teachers in, in school districts as well. So, thinking about how professional learning opportunities extend to them as they're supporting our next generation of educators entering into the classroom and school. So, thank you so much, Erica. I appreciate that.

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Dr. King Thorius: All right, we're gonna go to Sophia. We're going to go to you next. And we're thinking now about policies and practices. So, what are some of the inclusive policies and practices, and how can leaders promote them? Policies and practices that address discrimination, that address isolation and lack of agency, that can be experienced by educators who embody minoritized identities. And as a reminder, we're talking about educators of Color, teachers with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ teachers, as well as others in relation to religion, perhaps national origin language. Thank you, Sophia.

Sophia Farmer: Yes, of course. Thank you. So, when we're working with leaders, first I wanted…

Dr. King Thorius: Sophia, I'm sorry, I'm going to cut in just for a sec. I'm having a harder time hearing you than the other panelists. So, we'll have you try again. And maybe you can also just speak louder if you're somewhere where you can do that.

Sophia Farmer: OK, let's try it.

Dr. King Thorius: Thank you.

Sophia Farmer: Is that a little better? We'll try that.

Sophia Farmer: So, for our leaders, when, when we talk about leaders in our work at SISEP and at NIRN, and in the conversations I've had with the colleagues in the development of this tool, we want to make sure that

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when we, when we reference leaders that we're talking not just about those with positional authority, but those that are leaders among colleagues, right, leaders in their communities, leaders in their field, right? So, not…but so, expanding that conversation to again, like Natalie and Dr. McCray have said this, how do we, how do we think of this in a community sense, in an organizational sense and who leads this work?

Sophia Farmer: So, when we're thinking about leaders, what are those behaviors, if you will, those skills that, that…those abilities we want those leaders to have in order to promote the policies, and policy as practice that you've heard mentioned? So, some of the things that, that we see or try to promote or foster in our leaders are the skills of really being knowledgeable, and mindful, and aware, right, and reflective of both policies throughout both the country in connection that they have with others. But policy and understand…and understanding the different types of policies and procedures that are effective at all.

Sophia Farmer: So how deep is their knowledge, right? And are they reflective and aware of what they know and don't know about policy and, and procedures and, and how it is affecting the adults in their building in all kinds of ways? And then in order to do that, in order to build that knowledge, right, both internally and without, how available do we, do we foster a sense of availability and support in our leaders, right? Do they make themselves present, truly present in a listening sense, in an awareness sense, in an awareness of how they show up into spaces so that people feel comfortable coming to them and talking

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about what we need or what we need to put in place for policy or practice?

Sophia Farmer: And with that, we want to foster in them a sense of being proactive, right? So, how are we really knowing and becoming aware and understanding our space and positionality so that we can be proactive in other people's experiences, so that we can be proactive and not react, right? Not wait for people to be hurt, right, not wait for people to feel that way, but how and, and chances are that experience is, is happening. So, how do we really be proactive in our, in our sense of promoting these policies and promoting these practices that can help.

Dr. King Thorius: Yup, yeah. Excuse me.

Sophia Farmer: And then persevering. There's lots of, no, persevering because we know that there's a lot of political pressure, right? We know that there's a lot of systemic pressure. Or policies, right, that may be harmful, even. So, how do we persevere in the face of those conditions in ways that, that really allow us to, to, to be allies, to be supportive, right, and to foster greater connection and belonging?

Dr. King Thorius: Thank you, Sophia. I'm just going to take two bookends. If you know policy and law, and then you're in the face of maybe newer policies that are…you're having to navigate, it's really important to understand, as leaders, that there are lots of federal laws, in particular related to civil rights, that protect our commitments to

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diversity, equity, and inclusion, and particularly the Civil Rights Act and, and a number of other Titles within that Act. So, I really appreciate you, you raising those points.

Dr. King Thorius: All right, I'm going to go back to Alexandria, and then we're going to close with Christina. So, Alexandria, a question for you is related to initiatives leaders can undertake to challenge…this is specific to challenging stereotypes and misconceptions about educators who embody minoritized identities. Stereotypes and misconceptions, like assumptions about effectiveness or professionalism, or the impact of their identities on their teaching abilities.

Dr. Harvey: Oh, you know, so, I love this question because…so listening to the other panelists, we've been talking about systems, we've been talking about policies, we've been talking about practices. And so, something that I noticed is that regardless of the system, there are people who make up the system. And the people within the system: they make up the policies, they make up the practices, and they make up the procedures.

Dr. Harvey: So, when we're thinking about leaders, I think one of the biggest initiatives would really be for leaders to personally work on their own mindsets if they truly want to work on challenging how their biases impact how they view those who don't look like them. You know, it's easy to say that leaders can provide training for their staff around things such as implicit bias or cultural competencies, and then their workplaces end up continuing a status quo with working conditions

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for those who are minoritized, continuing to be unsafe and very volatile.

Dr. Harvey: But if a leader takes the time to really challenge themselves and begin to change their assumptions, which are often rooted in white dominant culture, and that bleeds over into the policies and practices that we have discussed today, those under their leadership will have a really bold example of what it looks like to accept and embrace the differences of others. In most organizations or institutions, leaders have tremendous impact and influence over those they lead. So, if a leader displays traits that accept folks for who they are and highlights and celebrates the, the diversity as well as the great teaching of an of a, of an array of individuals, this really provides a path for them to begin to provide their staff with various trainings such as implicit bias and cultural competencies, to really be taken in, in a place where they see that their leader is doing it. So, they're going to do it to really embody what it means to truly be accepting of others.

Dr. Harvey: And I think another initiative, it seems simple, but I think another initiative that leaders can really take to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about educators who are minoritized is to simply hire them. I mean that…it seems basic. And I can frankly say that this is something that I'm working on personally: really thinking about like who are we hiring in various positions? And so, I think we need to really think about thinking outside of the box in terms of recruitment, and where we are looking, and also…and who are we missing when we provide opportunities for employment? And so, I think it's very

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important for the field of education that we begin to recruit in the communities in the, in which the schools are located, and also provide opportunities to cultivate individuals into great teachers. So, that piece that we've been talking about around retention.

Dr. Harvey: And so, with this, there is a bit of historical knowledge needed from leaders to really understand some of the challenges and barriers that minoritized individuals face in specific contexts, and really think about how to dismantle those barriers to be more inclusive when considering those who are educating our children. So, if you understand in your specific context that historically, you don't have teachers of Color in your classrooms, but your community is comprised of people of Color, you should really begin to examine and learn from the community why folks are not represented in schools in various positions.

Dr. Harvey: And not only that, you should not just listen to them, but take what they say and make those changes, and create those environments based on the community, and those potential teachers' lived experiences, and not what you assume as a leader should be done.

Dr. King Thorius: Thank you so much. And, and just in the interest of time, I'm not going to add some additional comments, but I'm going to take that last point about listening to communities and, and kind of bridge us over to the final question for Christina, which has to do with how our, our leaders, our educational leaders are taking to ensure that educators, excuse me, are that…leaders are collaborating with

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constituents, including community organizations and policy makers, to create supportive and affirming environments for all educators, especially educators who embody minoritized identities. So that collaboration. Thanks, Christina.

Christina Kasprzak: Yeah, thank you Kathleen. And I was thinking the same thing. This builds on so much of what Alexandria was talking about with… involving the community in really building the school environment. So, one of the things I thought might be like an early step for a leader is really to just think about reframing their work as co-creation, and not collaborating to create, but really co-creating. So, embracing this concept of shared responsibility, shared authority, and shared decision-making with the educators and communities impacted. I think that is exactly kind of what Alexandria was talking about.

Christina Kasprzak: So, reaching out…identifying and reaching out to the educators, the community organizations, others, especially those who've been traditionally marginalized to really invite them to co-create this environment. Think about educators with disabilities, educators of Color, educators who identify as LGBTQ, and really build those authentic relationships that respect the, the context, their lived experiences, their culture.

Christina Kasprzak: So, I would also say on the opposite is: be really cautious and intentional not to fall into some of the traditional leadership patterns that are very centralized, control, and authority. You know, there have been, for many years, very inauthentic ways of gathering input

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and hearing from advisors, that hasn't really listened to and incorporated all of the experiences from the community into the solution, into the environment we're creating. So, I would talk about a leader trying to empower and center the voices of those who have been most marginalized. So, hear their experiences, let their needs drive the process and the solution.

Christina Kasprzak: And part of that, I think we should remind people that a leader can help intentionally create, like, places, and environments, and opportunities, where individuals can share their stories and experiences in psychologically safe ways. Not everyone always feels that way. And trying to create those environments where you can explore how the current policies and procedures impact these individuals, what barriers they're experiencing, what solutions they would recommend.

Christina Kasprzak: And, and then the last thing I was wanting to share is I really, I think this builds on what Alexandria was saying as well, but a leader really sets the tone, can be an example, and sets the expectations. So, if the leader is expecting that policies and procedures, professional development, funding standards, all of those aspects of the system are going to be examined and changed to make sure they're supporting the…creating supportive environments for all educators, then that's what the tone of the entire system will be. And others will participate in that.

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Dr. King Thorius: Thank you, Christina. And that will bring us to the presentation of something that I think, in some ways, exemplifies what you were talking about in terms of coming together to co-create. And this idea that, you know, for those of us who have been in special education spaces, you may understand this sort of phrase of "the meeting before the meeting." And sometimes, you know, in, in poor practice, the special education there, there may have been meetings prior to meetings with families in which decisions are already sort of being made, and directions are already being set for a child's education, or particularly individualized education programs. So, Christina, you're talking about doing away with that sort of culture.

Dr. King Thorius: And so, in this case, this wonderful group here, this brilliant group here has come together to, to develop a tool for you that Seena facilitated and, and, and Ruthie has been a part of that as well. And so, we've got a treat for you. And then for about 17 minutes or so, I know that we're gonna have Dawn, Nelsinia, and Ruthie who are going to be presenting that tool to you. So, we'll transition to that next. Thank you, and thanks to all the panelists.

Dr. Skelton: Thank you, Kathleen, and thank you to our, again, thank you to our panelists. I'm hoping that you're seeing the…our group that's now going to preview the tool for you. Thank you. And so, I'm just gonna just give the mic over to who's gonna really kick us off with our presentation team. Who should I hand the mic to? The virtual mic.

Dr. Payno-Simmons: I will take that on.

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Dr. Skelton:	OK. OK, great, Ruthie. So, I'm gonna just…you tell me how to advance the slides, and I'll do so.
Dr. Payno-Simmons:	I appreciate that. If you can pull up the next slide, I'm going to start talking. You can just pull the whole slide up. It has a few animations. We don't need the animations. I want to just talk through this, and then hand it over to Nelsinia. So again, it's so great to see you all, and we're really thrilled to share this tool with you, and talk about this topic. We're going to introduce the tool and the framework, and it's designed to really support educators as we've been talking about, who embody minoritized identities. We're gonna explain the purpose of the tool, and provide some instructions for you to get into breakout rooms where you will have the opportunity to interact with the tool and consider how you might use this tool, and provide us with feedback as we move to finalize the tool.
Dr. Payno-Simmons:	So, the name of the tool is *The Leadership Framework for Fostering Conditions Where Diverse, Culturally Responsive Educators Can Thrive.* This is a comprehensive tool that aims to equip leaders with the knowledge, skills, and practices needed to foster inclusivity and equity for all educators, and especially educators as we've been talking about who embody minoritized, minoritized identities. There are standards that will prioritize the well-being and the professional development of diverse learners as we've been talking about.
Dr. Payno-Simmons:	We spent some time really looking at national data, and analyzing state-by-state factors that influence teacher shortages,

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supply/demand, and equity using the Learning Policy Institute's interactive website. And we really looked at two areas, and then looked across the analysis of those two areas around teacher attractiveness and around equity ratings. And then leveraged the Holistic Leaders' Critical Reflection Framework to organize things that we were able to see from the data and from the lit review that we…the findings from lit review that we looked at, to generate ways of knowing, valuing, being, and doing for leaders, creating sustaining conditions for culturally responsive and diverse educators. So now, Nelsinia's gonna come and talk about those domains and walk, walk you through the tool.

Nelsinia Ramos: Thank you, Ruthie. So, you can see on the side that there's technically a preview of what the tool looks like in the document itself, but I want to briefly tell you what you may expect from it. So, the, the document itself, it's about 5-6 pages, and it provides the four different areas. So, it is organized, technically, in four domains, that will be like what the leaders should know, what the leaders should value, what leaders or how leaders should be, and what leaders should practice.

Nelsinia Ramos: So, under each of these four domains, technically, they outline the descriptions of the leadership characteristics and actions to guide the school leaders in culturally-informed knowledge, recognition and appreciation, data-informed action, also equity and fairness in cultural responsiveness in leadership practices. So, in other words, this document outlines the four data-driven, research-informed

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practices, and standards that leaders can use to create inclusive and supportive working conditions for educators from minority backgrounds. So, these standards prioritize the well-being and professional development of diverse educators.

Nelsinia Ramos: So, I wanted to mention that, so you can see it a little closer here. So, just again, a preview of what you will be looking when we do the breakouts to get some of your feedback on how to improve the tool, and make it more meaningful to all of us that will be looking for it. But you will see the heading in the four domains. Then you will see the standards, which we have many. The first three standards will have about six or seven of them. But they…then you'll find the description of it and more, you know, like where the strategy is. And perhaps with the combination of strategies that we heard before, that's what, you know, you will have more ideas for providing us feedback during the breakout rooms.

Nelsinia Ramos: The thing that I love about the tool itself, too, is where the last domain, which is practices, what people should practice. We have, technically, about 13 of those standards available. So about 32 standards that were available to you. So why don't we then? That said, we're going to be moving into breakout rooms.

Dr. Miller: Thanks, Nelsinia. I can take that as a transition, because now I think it's a real fun part for the tool. We cannot wait to hear what you think of the tool, and what your thoughts are around not only what stands out to you? What do you like about the tool? What are ways that you

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might use the tool or the resource in practice? What's floating in your head? As well as things that might come up around how you might improve it.

Dr. Miller: And I was meeting with Ruthie and Nelsinia yesterday and I, I shared with them, I said, "Well, there's already an opportunity that I have a week after next in New Mexico with some rising principals." And I said, "Oh my gosh, I'm so glad that the resource is now out because I can't wait for them to see the tool, and be thinking about like, what does this present to them as aspiring principals? What are currently things that they've experienced that may be impacted by some of these standards? What are strengths that they currently have as leaders, and are there any of them that are making them think differently about their role that they're aspiring to move into?" So, that's a way that I'm already thinking about using it, and hearing from them.

Dr. Miller: When I saw the question that you're going to be posed on a Padlet about how to improve it, I already thought, I thought I would love for there to be a space underneath each of these as a way for people to individually reflect, as well as maybe to individually think about things that come to mind, about things that they could do differently. So, that's just my own personal example, but we are going to be moving you into an opportunity with a Padlet that's going to ask you to take one of these three areas, either ways you might use it, things you like about it, or ways that you might improve it, and let that conversation occur organically.

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Dr. Skelton:	Welcome back. As we are doing the Star Trek thing of being beamed back into the main room. I don't know how many Trekkies are in this space right now, but, but I always think about that when, when we zoom back. I had it…just a pleasure popping around in different rooms, the different rooms and eavesdropping on the conversation. Just thank you so much for your thoughtfulness, your, your feedback. Please, please, please make sure it's captured on the Padlet, or if you've captured it in a different…there we go. Rest of our team's coming back.
Dr. Skelton:	I was just saying to the group, it's so great, I was able to pop around and hear the different conversations in our different groups, and just thank you all for being so thoughtful. Make sure we get your thoughts. So, if…make sure that they're either captured on a Padlet, or if you've captured in a different document, to e-mail the document to the Center so that we can make sure we get your great thinking captured, and to finalize the, the tool.
Dr. Skelton:	I'm going to ask just for a couple of groups, because we only have a couple minutes left, to just share out any just major highlights for the good of the whole. And so, I'm gonna look to maybe two, two groups to share out. So, who would like to share a highlight from your breakout conversation? Ian, yeah, thank you.
Ian Yearwood:	Sure. Hey, everybody, I'm representing a larger group. Group number one. We talked about a couple of things. I thought one note that we made that was kind of about the use of, of the tool and I

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thought it was really valuable, was adding physical space within the document to take notes, to add, add your own thoughts and put this into the context of the work you're that, that you, the individual, are steeped in. So that could be a really, really useful and easy addition to the document.

Ian Yearwood: And then we started a, a little larger conversation about how this document could be used at multiple levels of leadership within one larger organization. And are there opportunities…does the document highlight for the leader who's reading it, not just opportunities for how you…I'm gonna use some, some phrases to simplify the conversation, but not just how you lead to the folks below you, but also how do you, at times, protect the folks below you, and push back on the folks above you?

Ian Yearwood: And so, we talked about how does this document, we use the, the term "caste system culture" within an organization. And how can this document, then, turn into one that scans multiple layers of an organization?

Dr. Skelton: Thank you, Ian. One more, just a quick share out. Yes, Steve.

Steve Meyer: Hi everybody. So, I represent group four, and just a couple things we talked about: A lot of us represented technical assistance roles in various capacities. And we've talked about how this is, you know, a lot of folks who are working in that area have a pretty good

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understanding of this, but there's a lot of kind of foundational understandings that we may take for granted.

Steve Meyer: This could be a tool for helping new staff or people who are new to this kind of work get oriented toward this. Also, as a tool for self-reflection to identify sort of strengths and gaps in, in people's own understanding of these kinds of issues and areas for improvement. And then in terms of, like, we, we just talked about how in terms of how the tool might otherwise be used, to think about clarifying, well, clarifying exactly how this document might be used.

Steve Meyer: So, what are…who are the various audiences for? It may be providing some definitions, some sort of complimentary information to understand the guide, and maybe presenting some examples and kind of non-examples of what represents, you know, good practice or what might be a, a way that things could be misinterpreted. And lastly, maybe just thinking about some of the different audiences for this, and how things might be framed differently, or there might be some, some specific guidance for different types of audiences. So, that's not strictly…the expectation isn't strictly that leaders take this on, but others in their…in the system can support these things, too.

Dr. Skelton: Thank you, Steve. Thank you.

Dr. Skelton: All right. So, just to close us out, I want to thank you so much, on behalf of the Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center, and our TA&D Advisor and Network work group. You all have…it's, it's just

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been a lovely time together. Great discussion. Thank you so much for your feedback. We will be incorporating your feedback. We will be finalizing the tool, and we will let each of you know in a separate e-mail when the tool has been published so you can access it. It will be uploaded to our website and uploaded to the website of our colleagues as well.

Dr. Skelton: With that, thank you all so much.

Dr. King Thorius: Thank you, everybody.

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