Equity Partners
The Role of Equity in
Board Policy Making & Oversight

Paramount School of Excellence Board Meeting

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During our time together we will:

Define Educational Equity

Explore the Cultural Nature of Learning

Discuss the Characteristics of Culturally Responsive Education

Take a Look at PSoE School Improvement Areas of Focus

Discuss Considerations for Board Policy Making & Oversight

Beliefs about school and schooling

Charles Darwin

"The students that have the ability will achieve at high levels."

Field of Dreams

"If we teach it … they will learn."

Henry Higgins

"We can teach any child … and we will use every strategy, tool and practice to help him or her meet high standards."

Skelton, SWO SERRC, 2009

How do I know school is a place for me … a place where I can achieve?

Can I be successful in school and still be me?

Do my teachers, principals and other adults in my school believe I can achieve to high standards? How do I know?
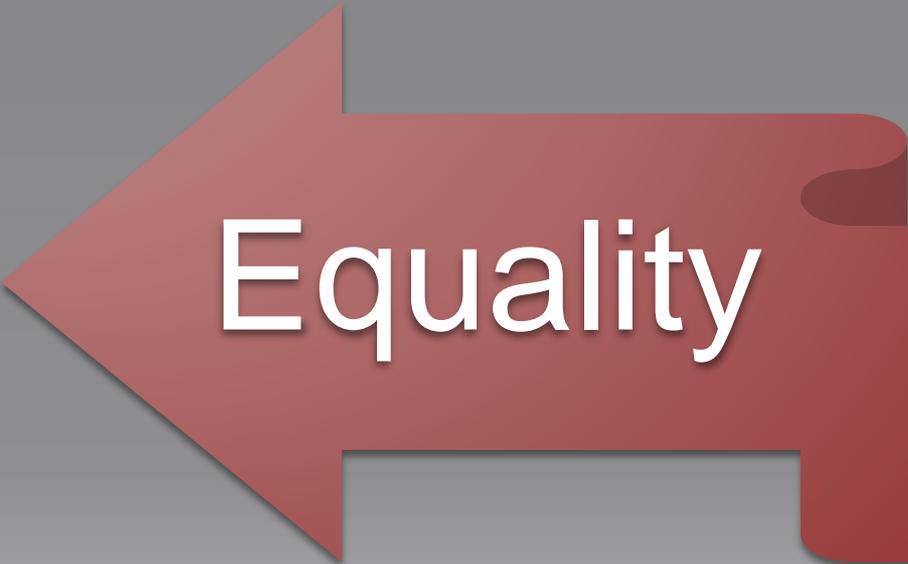
Equality

- ..... is derived from the concept of fairness as uniform distribution, where everyone is entitled to the same level of access and can avail themselves if they so choose. . But when a society is stratified into poles of advantage and disadvantage, with the inevitable consequences of privilege and exclusion, the promise of equal access to the discourses necessary for democratic participation rings hollow.

Nancy Kranich; Based upon Jorge Schement, "Imagining Fairness: Equality and Equity of Access in Search of Democracy," in Nancy Kranich, Libraries and Democracy, Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2001: 15-27.

Equity

- When some are excluded or lack the knowledge, income, equipment, or [resources]necessary to participate fully in public discourse, they must overcome obstacles to access in order to ensure fairness. In other words, fairness also demands remedies to redress historic injustices that have prevented or diminished access in the first place ….

  in order to maximize opportunities for access experienced by certain groups, a good society commits resources in order to level the playing field.

Nancy Kranich; Based upon Jorge Schement, "Imagining Fairness: Equality and Equity of Access in Search of Democracy," in Nancy Kranich, Libraries and Democracy, Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2001: 15-27.

Educational Equity is …

when educational practices, policies, curricula, resources, and school cultures are representative of all students, such that each student has access to, participate and make progress in high quality learning experiences, regardless of her or his race, ses, gender, ability, religion affiliation, national origin, linguistic diversity, or other characteristics.

As demographics have changed within school communities and as the differences between the backgrounds of teaching staff and the students and families they serve continue to increase, educators have struggled with addressing the behavioral and learning needs of diverse student populations for a variety of individual and systemic reasons.

Many school improvement efforts have focused on "fixing" the problem

"Fixing" the numbers

"Fixing" the teachers

"Fixing" the students

We need to stop trying to "fix" the problem and focus on *transforming* schools and schooling

Creating schools and learning communities where:

Cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, are acknowledged both as legacies that affect students' dispositions and approaches to learning *and* as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum.

Meaningful bridges are built between home and school experiences, as well as between academic abstractions and lived sociocultural realities.

A wide variety of instructional strategies are used.

Gay (2000)

Creating schools and learning communities where:

Students are taught to know and praise their own cultural heritages and the cultural heritages of others.

Multicultural information, resources, and materials are incorporated in all subjects and skills routinely taught in schools.

All students are affirmed and supported to meet high expectations

Gay (2000)

An understanding of the cultural nature of learning – that is social and historical contexts related to learning

A continual examination of identity and the influence our own cultural backgrounds and filters have on the way we approach our work

The act of honing our craft to embed culturally responsive practices into everything we do

A change in the way we think about change

Transformation

Understanding our Cultural Identities

Culture is dynamic, contextual and socially mediated. Cultural practices are learned, as we are socialized to behave according to traditions established over generations

Learning and work communities influence how people see themselves and therefore there is a need to understand and validate people's backgrounds

The cultures of institutions may or may not be in harmony with the culture each person brings.

Adapted from the Equity Alliance at ASU, 2011

The Cultural Nature of Learning

Cultural Histories

What people bring with them

What's already there

The work people do together

Institutional Culture

The Culture We Create

Adapted From The Equity Alliance at ASU, 2011

The Culture We Create

The work people do together

Adapted From The Equity Alliance at ASU, 2011

Achieving Educational Equity

Reframe deficit thinking

Create opportunities to learn

Dislodge deficit discourse

Demonstrate a valuing of diversity and use the language of possibility

Revising Stratifying Discourse

Negotiate agreements for cultural practices that create inclusive, respectful, supportive and responsive learning environments.

Briscoe, Arrizaza & Henze, 2009

Equity is the vision!

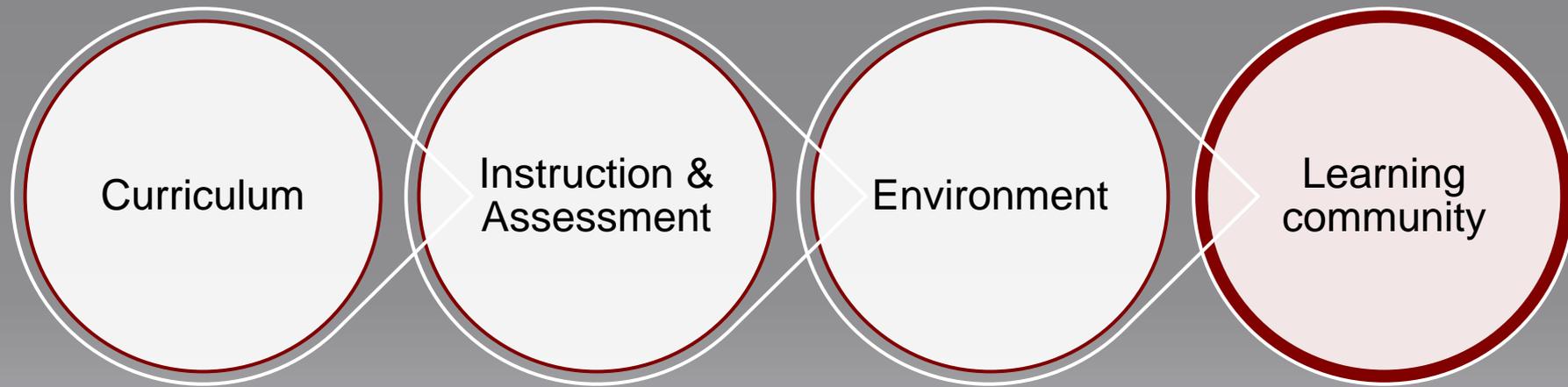Culturally Responsive Education is the Strategy.
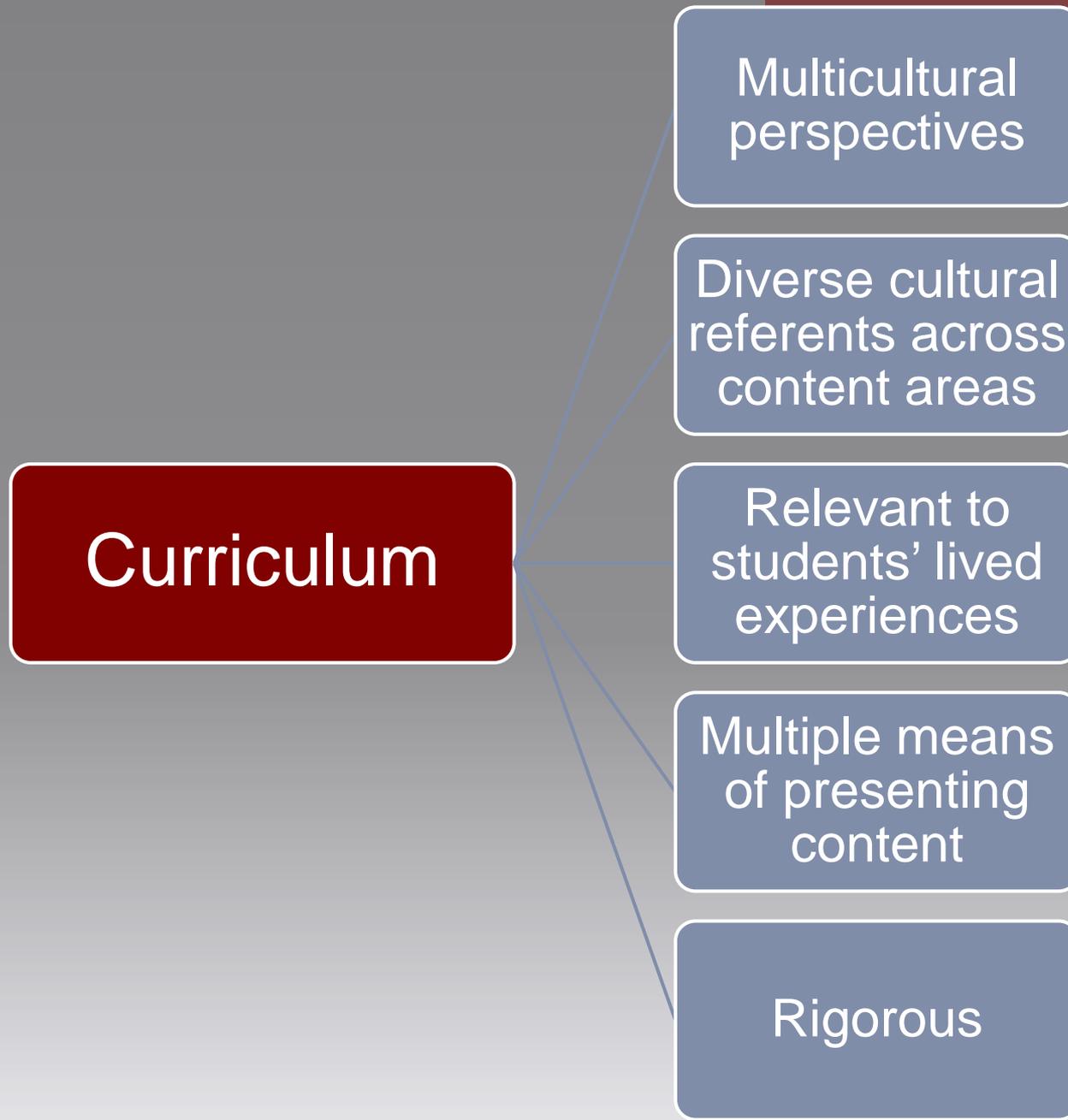
Culturally Responsive Education is...

the overall **approach** one takes to delivering instruction, using curricular materials, making educational decisions, including student discipline; and interacting with students and their families.
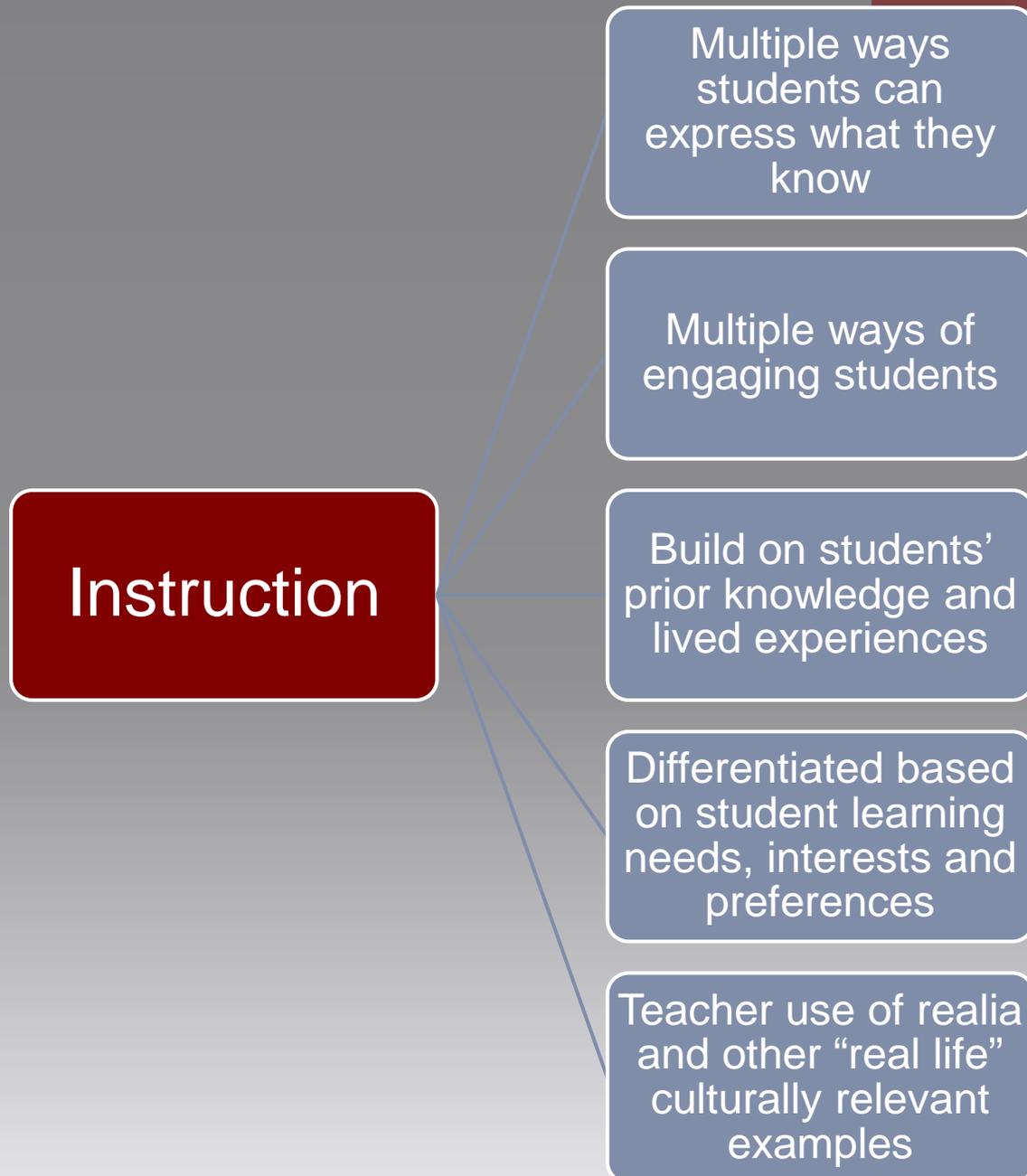
the **lens** through which teachers see their students and their students' learning.

the **filter** through which teachers **listen** to how students express their needs and desires.

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What does this mean for ….

| Curriculum | Instruction & Assessment | Environment | Learning community |

Curriculum

- Multicultural perspectives
- Diverse cultural referents across content areas
- Relevant to students' lived experiences
- Multiple means of presenting content
- Rigorous

Environment

- Culturally relevant and respectful environmental cues
- Supportive, affirming and responsive interactions
- Rigorous and highly engaging for all students
- Predictable but not rigid
- Highly communicative

Taking a look at PSoE School Improvement Areas of Focus

Framing SI areas using an equity lens

How are we using curricula, instruction and technology to actively engage students in rigorous learning that is relevant and responsive to their educational needs?

Percentage of students meeting academic standards under ISTEP

Percentage of students meeting AYP

Attendance rate

How are we encouraging family and school partnerships?

Were contract goals met
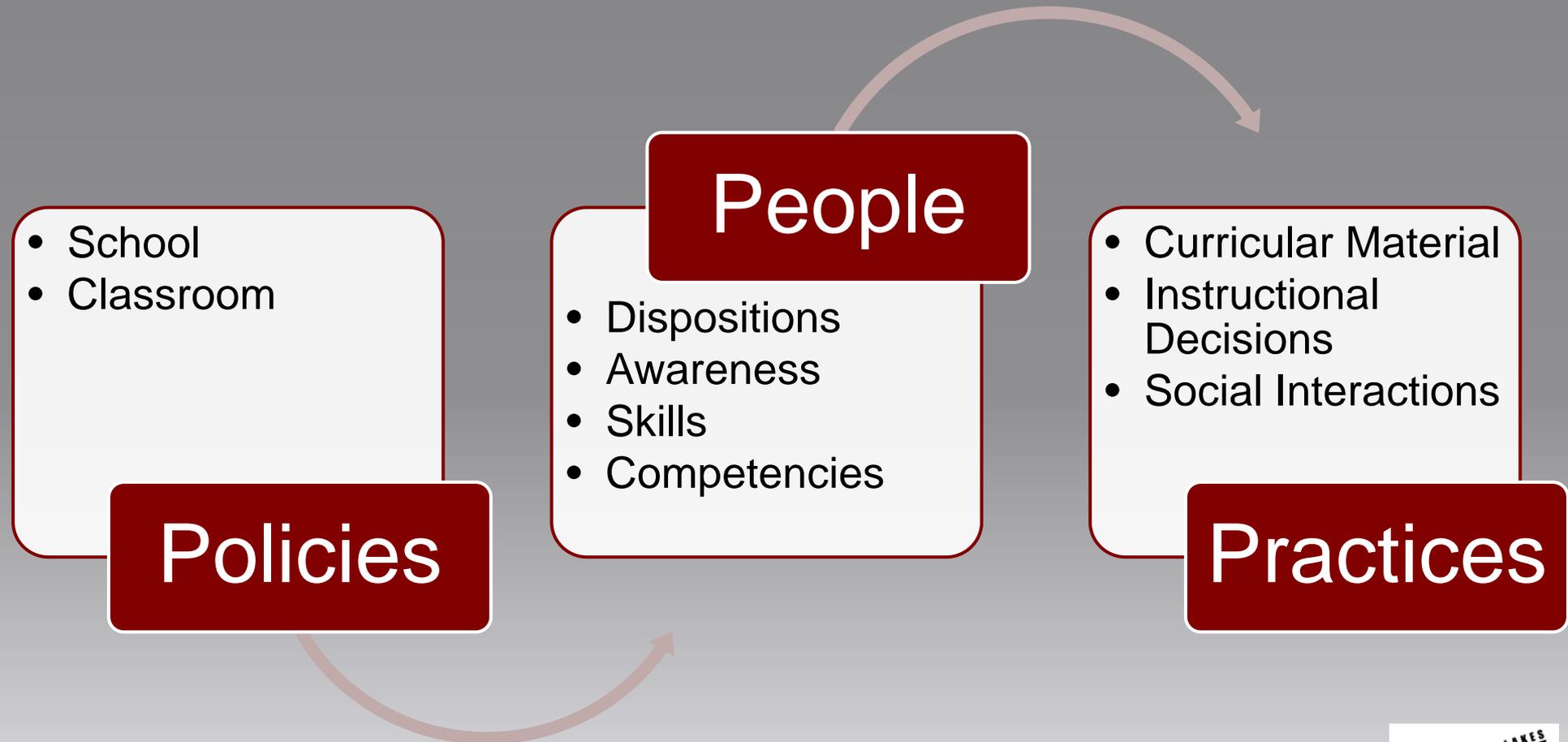
Framing SI areas using an equity lens

How are we creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students? How do students learn appropriate ways of solving conflict and self-regulation skills that are contributing and/or restorative to the learning community?

Safety and discipline goals

How are we creating a learning organization where all stakeholders participate in continuous improvement, collaborative inquiry and professional learning that support growth in both individual and group practice?

Professional development goals

Ways the work gets done.

Policies
- School
- Classroom

People
- Dispositions
- Awareness
- Skills
- Competencies

Practices
- Curricular Material
- Instructional Decisions
- Social Interactions

Equity-Driven Strategies for Meeting School Improvement Goals

Engaging in open and structured conversations about race, culture and achievement regularly

Continuously examining aggregated and disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data for performance trends

Engaging in **focused planning** and data-based decision making to increase the achievement of all students, eliminate achievement disparities and disproportionality

Supporting professional learning opportunities that focus on improving outcomes for all learners and reflect the cultural nature of learning

Implementing instructional and relational strategies that are culturally responsive and emphasize educational equity

Great Lakes Equity Center & PSoE Collaborative Work

Equity Dispatch

Great Lakes Equity Center's E-Newsletter and E-Publications

Professional learning for School Improvement Committee related to foundational equity principles and practices

Survey staff dispositions, awareness and comfort with equity related practices

Staff professional learning on foundational equity principles and practices

Connect current school improvement work to equity

Recommendations for the board for supporting equity-driven work

Ensure Equitable Distribution of Resources

Promote Leadership for Equity

Support a Culture of Continuous Improvement

Facilitate School & Community Participation and Partnerships

Encourage Inquiry on Equity in Schooling

Considerations for Board Policy Making & Oversight

Managing Complex Change

Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Confusion
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Anxiety
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Resistance
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Frustration
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Treadmill
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	=	Change

Thousand and Villa, 2001

" Education is a human right with immense power to transform.
On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development.
- Kofi Annan

Welcome to the **Great Lakes Equity Center**, one of ten regional Equity Assistance Centers (EACs) funded by the U.S. Department of Education. We provide technical assistance resources and professional learning opportunities related to equity, civil rights, and systemic school reform throughout our six-state region of **Illinois**, **Indiana**, **Michigan**, **Minnesota**, **Ohio**, and **Wisconsin**. Please explore our website to learn more about what we do and how we may serve as a resource for you. We look forward to hearing from you!

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ED.gov   Office of Elementary and Secondary Programs

Thank you for your participation!

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