



# **FURTHERING SCHOOL INTEGRATION EFFORTS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES: A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MANUAL FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT STAKEHOLDERS**

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## About the Centers

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Great Lakes Equity Center (Center) is an educational research and service center located in Indiana University's School of Education at IUPUI. The Center engages in equity-focused technical assistance and related research with educational and community agencies focused on systemic improvements to serve all learners with particular focus on educational access, participation and outcomes for those who have been historically marginalized. Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center is a project of the Center and provides technical assistance related to educational equity based on student race, national origin, sex, and religion at no cost to public educational agencies throughout its 13-state region in the Midwest and Plains.



## Introduction

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Nearly 70 years after one of the most important U.S. Supreme Court rulings was handed down in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) declaring segregated schools unconstitutional, the promise of desegregation has remained unfulfilled. Indeed, in many communities across the nation, school districts have been resegregating and students are attending schools where the majority of students look like them (Orfield & Jarvie, 2020; Orfield & Lee, 2007). However, there are still actions that can be taken to address the extant disparities in schools that exist in large part because of the inequitable opportunities provided to children attending schools that are predominantly comprised of low-income students and students of color (Scott et al., 2020). Moreover, there is still a desire by many at various levels of government to address the existent racial and socioeconomic segregation and work to increase diversity in public schools (Potter & Burris, 2020; Strength in Diversity Act, 2020).

School districts' experiences with desegregation varies widely depending on their geographic and sociopolitical contexts (Diem, 2012). Additionally, in an educational context that is much different than the one that existed when *Brown* (1954) was decided, where now the majority of students attending public schools are students of color, school choice has expanded, and attacks on public education have sharpened, school integration continues to be one step among many that is necessary in achieving equity across our public school districts. This *Equity Tool* seeks to further school integration efforts in school communities by offering a professional learning session that provides resources and activities for district stakeholders to engage in, better evaluate where their school communities are in the school integration process, and where they would like to go in the future. Each activity in the professional learning session is specifically designed to build off the previous one with the final activity of the session leading to action that can occur in the school community that attends to school integration.



## About this Tool

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The purpose of this *Equity Tool* is to provide a template and resources for a professional learning session focused on educating school district stakeholders about how to further school integration efforts in their local communities.

The **goals** of this session are:

- To educate school district stakeholders about the benefits and challenges associated with school integration.
- To teach school district stakeholders how to support and advocate for school integration in their local communities.
- To encourage school district stakeholders to commit to school integration in their local communities.

The **objectives** of this session are:

- To facilitate discussion regarding the importance of school integration by introducing vocabulary, language, data, and policy tools.
- To provide school district stakeholders with information so they have a better understanding of the many facets involved in designing and implementing school integration plans.
- To assist school district stakeholders in implementing actionable steps that will lead to more integrated and equitable school communities.

The **anticipated outcomes** of this session are:

- School district stakeholders will be prepared to address the challenges associated with school integration in their local districts.
- School district stakeholders will be prepared to design and implement equitable school integration policies.
- School district stakeholders will be prepared to advance equitable school integration policies in their communities.



## Preparing for the Session

### Session Schedule

**20 min:** Introductions, Setting Expectations, & Initial Thoughts

**45 min:** Vocabulary

**15 min:** Facts & Fictions

**45 min:** Connecting with the Community

**10 min:** Break

**35 min:** Policy Analysis

**45 min:** Action Planning

**10-15 min:** Wrap Up & Reflections

**5-10 min:** Feedback

**Total time: 4 Hours**

### Setting Up

1. This professional learning session should be facilitated by a school district staff (e.g., student assignment director, magnet school director, chief equity officer, etc.) or community member who is knowledgeable about school integration at the local, state, and federal levels. Specifically, the professional learning session facilitator should be someone who is familiar with the local historical school integration context but can also connect local efforts to efforts at the state and federal levels.
2. The session should take place on a day/time when the most people are likely to participate. For example, if the session is geared toward teachers it should occur during a teacher workday. If the session is geared toward school board members, it should occur later in the afternoon/early evening during the week, perhaps during the same time as a typical school board meeting.
3. Given the design of the activities for the session, it would be best to set up tables for small groups (up to four chairs per table) around the room. It would be helpful to place materials for the day (e.g., markers, sticky notes, etc.) at each table prior to the beginning of the session. It will also be helpful to have participants bring appropriate personal electronic devices (i.e., laptops or tablets) for research purposes. Specifically, in the second half of the session, participants could use electronic devices to reference relevant policies. Readings and handouts could be printed ahead of time, or if electronic devices will be accessible, they might be better distributed electronically. Some facilitators may find a projector appropriate as well. Access to



technology during the session should not impede participation in this professional development.

4. Participants will be asked throughout the day to share their thoughts on school integration. It would be helpful to set up the materials for this activity, particularly the sticky flip chart pages placed around the room, prior to the start of the session.
5. Be sure to save some time at the end of the session to allow for participants to evaluate the day's activities. Feedback is critical to improving future sessions.

## Introductions, Setting Expectations for Time Together, and Initial Thoughts (20 minutes)<sup>1</sup>



**Materials:** Sticky flip chart paper, markers, sticky notes (green, yellow, red), Recommended Group Norms handout (Appendix A)

**Introductions:** It is important to introduce yourself and allow everyone in the room to introduce themselves to create a warm and engaging learning environment.

1. Introduce yourself, explain your role and why the topics today are important and meaningful to you and the school community.
2. Have participants briefly introduce themselves, one at a time, to the group. Write out the main topics they should share about themselves on sticky flip chart paper (e.g., name, role/position/connection to the community, preferred pronouns, one hope they have for the day).
3. Model how the participants should share their information and then choose one person to start. Guide participants if needed to ensure everyone around the room has an opportunity to share.

### **Setting expectations for time together:**

1. Discuss how addressing issues of segregation and integration in public schools will not occur in one professional learning session, acknowledging the historical, legal, and political legacies of these issues in the United States. Instead, today will be an important first step in learning what schools and communities can do to address these issues moving forward.
  - Share the goals and objectives of the session with participants to provide a vision for what they will be learning.
2. Frame the activity. For example, “Before we continue, we want to introduce group expectations that will ensure this day will help us make meaningful progress toward understanding, advocating for, and implementing integration-focused policy and practices within our school community.”
3. Hand out Appendix A to the participants.
4. Explain that this is a list of recommended group norms for engaging in dialogue centered in equity, justice, and anti-racism. Ask participants to read through the list on their own, underlining or circling specific norms that feel particularly important to them.
5. After a few minutes, ask people to share which guidelines stood out to them.
6. Once people have shared, open the floor to any norms that need to be edited or added. Adjust listed expectations as necessary.

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<sup>1</sup>Section inspired by and adapted from Blackburn and Thomas (2020).

## Introductions, Setting Expectations for Time Together, and Initial Thoughts (20 minutes) (cont.)



7. Remind participants that noticing feelings and reactions to the discussions will help each person to cue into how they are experiencing this professional learning session. For example, “Today we will discuss various concepts and policies that might present challenges or resistance. We invite you to be observant of your feelings and reflective on your thoughts. Continue to check in with yourself, especially when you are feeling uncomfortable. We welcome the pause of noticing, acknowledging, and feeling.” Also remind participants that for marginalized and minoritized communities, safe spaces in which to engage in racial dialogue do not exist (Leonardo & Porter, 2010). Leonardo and Porter (2010) note, “A comfortable race dialogue belies the actual structures of race, which is full of tension” (p. 153). Welcome the tensions and challenges that can occur when engaging in race dialogue while also suspending judgement and staying engaged (Kyser et al., 2016).
8. Consideration before proceeding: The facilitator may face resistance from participants during this professional learning session. Resistance can sometimes lead to the silencing of marginalized voices and/or perpetuation of harm. Below are some common ideas and beliefs that may be brought up during the session.
  - a. **Why is this the school district’s issue?:** remind participants that school districts have significant influence over policies that can and do impact segregation and integration rates in schools, such as the management of attendance zones, transportation options, resource distribution, and school choice approaches.
  - b. **People choose to segregate themselves:** throughout the history of desegregation in the U.S., this false belief has often overshadowed the multitude of ways that policy overtly and covertly segregated schools. Share with participants that the session will focus on these policies to avoid continually framing the issue of school segregation as one caused by individual and group choices.
  - c. **Parents/community members are going to be upset:** while conversations about segregation, desegregation, and integration can be difficult, it is important to remember people today are not being provided equitable educational opportunities due to school segregation. Instead of focusing on who is going to be upset if things change, ask participants to consider who will continue to be disenfranchised if change does not occur.

## Introductions, Setting Expectations for Time Together, and Initial Thoughts (20 minutes) (cont.)



- d. **Racially coded language such as “bad/good school” or “bad/good district”**: these phrases are often based on incorrect and harmful assumptions about students’ races, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, nationalities, etc. Instead of continuing to categorize schools in this way, encourage participants to consider how issues such as racial/socioeconomic isolation and resource allocation, influence the way schools are perceived.
- e. **This will never work**: there are many barriers that will arise when working to integrate schools, but fortunately there are many changes that districts can practically implement to address segregation. Ask participants to be open to possibilities, as there are districts around the U.S. that have successfully made progress toward integrated schools.
- f. **Participants staying silent/not participating**: silence is a phenomenon that can sometimes occur as a reaction to racial discourse and conversation (Mazzei, 2008). Most importantly, do not ignore silence (Ladson-Billings, 1996). Ask participants, “what is not being said?” Encourage conversation. Remind participants to note their own feelings. It is important for participants and facilitators to be aware of silence. When silence occurs, try an alternative pedagogical practice such as journaling or role playing.

### Initial Thoughts on School Integration:

1. Frame the activity. For example, “The purpose of this activity is to gauge everyone’s thoughts about school integration.”
2. Emphasize that there is no right or wrong answer in this activity but rather for people to be honest with what they think about and how they view integration, and how it is being addressed in their district.
3. Title a page on the sticky flip chart paper, “School integration: Beginning of day.” It might be helpful to have this prepared prior to the beginning of the session.
4. Instruct participants to take a moment to consider what they think and understand about school integration in general. Based on their self-reflection around school integration, participants should choose either a red, yellow, or green sticky note.
  - Red means “Not Sure.” Yellow means “On My Way.” Green means “I’ve Got It!”

## Introductions, Setting Expectations for Time Together, and Initial Thoughts (20 minutes) (cont.)



- On the selected sticky note, ask the participants to write one word describing how they feel about school integration. Participants can even write questions that they may have about school integration. Explain to participants that they are welcome throughout the session to post how they are feeling on sticky notes and share at any point.
5. Invite the participants to post their sticky note onto the sticky flip chart paper. Let the participants know that the group will begin to explore school integration in the next activity with vocabulary.



## Vocabulary Activity (45 minutes)

**Materials:** sticky flip chart paper, markers/writing utensils, sticky notes (green, yellow, red), printer or lined paper, computer, projector, *Vocabulary* handout (Appendix B), list of vocabulary words (see Appendix B) without definitions in a format that can be displayed for the room

**Preparation:** Place three pieces of sticky flip chart paper around the room. Write the phrase “Not Sure” at the top of the first one, “On My Way” at the top of the second one, and “I’ve Got It!” at the top of the third one. Place a red sticky note next to “Not Sure”, a yellow sticky note next to “On My Way”, and a green sticky note next to “I’ve Got It!”

### **Process:**

#### **Warm-up: What is integration?**

1. Frame the activity. For example, “Today’s main topic is school integration, but before we move forward it is important to pause and think about the terminology we are going to work with today.”
2. Provide directions for the activity. Participants will do a 1-minute “quick write” defining the term “integration” in their own words. Share with participants that all may come to this session with different backgrounds and understandings about today’s topic, and that is okay.
3. Bring the group back together and share the definition provided in Appendix B (without handing out the document - that will occur later). Ask what the participants may notice about this definition as compared to the one they wrote during the quick write.



## Vocabulary Activity (45 minutes) (cont.)

### Activity: Creating a Shared Vocabulary

1. Frame the activity: For example, “Although school integration is the main topic for today’s workshop, there are also other important words that will be used throughout the day. We want to create a shared understanding of this terminology to ensure that everyone here can fully engage in the work ahead.”
2. Provide directions for the activity:
  - a. Display the main vocabulary words for the day on a large screen or sticky flip chart paper.
  - b. Participants will write down each word on a separate sticky note.
  - c. Participants will then place their sticky notes on the three large pieces of sticky flip chart paper around the room that best represent their current level of understanding for each word before returning to their seats.
  - d. Remind participants that it is okay and expected for people to come to this session with different understandings of school integration. The more honest you are about your familiarity with each word, the more the facilitator can adjust the session to fit your needs.
  - e. It should take 1-2 minutes for participants to write the words on the sticky notes and 2-5 minutes for participants to place their words on the corresponding sticky flip chart paper depending on the size of the room.
  - f. Bring the group back together for the discussion. This should take about 15-20 minutes depending on the group’s knowledge of the terminology.
    - i. Scan the three pieces of sticky chart paper and note the words that participants appear to be more or less familiar with.
    - ii. Provide the Appendix B handout to each participant.
    - iii. Encourage participants to take notes on the handout as the group goes through each word.
      - You could provide guided note options, such as draw a star next to definitions they were familiar with, a question mark next to definitions they need clarity on, and an exclamation mark next to words that they thought they understood but in fact did not or only partially understood.
      - You could encourage participants to underline or circle key words in each definition that captured the overall meaning most effectively.



## Vocabulary Activity (45 minutes) (cont.)

- iv. Read through each word and definition, spending extra time on the terms that appear to be least understood by the participants and the ones that are commonly muddled, such as desegregation and integration.
  - v. Encourage questions from participants while going through each word.
  - vi. Occasionally ask for individuals to share moments of clarity or moments where they realized their previous understanding was potentially wrong or limited.
- g. After all definitions have been reviewed and discussed, ask participants to choose either one word from the list that they now understand better after the discussion *or* one word from the list they hope to engage with/learn more about throughout the rest of the session. Then give participants 2-3 minutes to share with a partner or small group what word they chose and why.



## Facts and Fictions Activity (15 minutes)

**Materials:** *Facts and Fictions* handout (Appendix C) for small groupings of 2-4 people, sticky flip chart paper, small baggies or paper clips, tape for small groupings of 2-4 people, marker, computer, projector

**Preparation:** Cut the “facts” from Appendix C before the session. Ensure that each group has a full set of “facts” by placing them in bags or paper clipping them together for easy storage and distribution. On each piece of sticky flip chart paper, draw a large t-chart with a marker. Above the left heading write “Facts” and above the right heading write “Fictions.”

### **Process:**

1. Frame the activity. For example, “Now that we have a shared vocabulary around the topics we will be discussing, it is important to dive into the realities we face in regard to school integration, both in the past and today.”
2. Provide directions for the activity:
  - a. Groups of 2-4 participants will be given a set of “facts” about school integration along with one sheet of sticky flip chart paper.
  - b. Remind the participants that not all of the “facts” are accurate. Each group will be tasked with identifying which “facts” are true and which are fiction.



## Facts and Fictions Activity (15 minutes) (cont.)

- c. In 5-8 minutes, each group should sort the provided “facts” into two categories: “fact” and “fiction.” They should tape each “fact” and “fiction” on the sticky flip chart paper under the corresponding heading. Encourage discussion and collaboration within the groups.
  - d. After each group is done sorting or time has run out, bring the whole group back together for discussion. Read each piece of information and share whether it is fact or fiction (see Appendix C). You may share this document with participants either individually or projected on a screen for the group. Answer questions and provide clarifications throughout.
  - e. It may be helpful to have participants note the accuracy of their sorting by drawing a check on the facts they placed correctly and an “x” or exclamation mark on the ones that they placed incorrectly.
  - f. Some of the “fictions” are based on assumptions that are actively harmful to marginalized and minoritized communities, so we encourage explicit transparency about how and why they are harmful to decrease the likelihood that they will be assumed and perpetuated after this session.
3. Once all of the “facts” have been discussed, have participants share any they were either surprised about or miscategorized. This can be done in the whole group or back in their small groups for 3-5 minutes.



## Connecting with the Community (45 minutes)

**Materials:** Member(s) from the community who are working on and involved with school integration efforts in the community, *Questions for Connecting with the Community Panel Discussion* document (Appendix D)

**Process:**

1. Invite member(s) from the community to share their experiences working to advance school integration. You can choose to either invite one person or a panel of community members. We would suggest inviting individuals working in different sectors of the community (e.g., lawyer, grassroots organizer, nonprofit director, member of the local NAACP chapter, official from the city’s housing and development department, etc.). Provide your participants with the list of questions for the discussion ahead of time so they can prepare accordingly (Appendix D).
2. Frame the activity. For example, “Now that we have discussed the important terminology around school integration and have learned some facts and fictions about when it comes to the current and historical context of school



## Connecting with the Community (45 minutes) (cont.)

integration, we are going to learn more about what is happening in our community from those engaging in the everyday work of integration.”

3. Begin the discussion by asking the person or panel members to introduce themselves (e.g., name, affiliations, how long they have been engaged in school integration efforts).
4. Next, ask the questions (see Appendix D) provided to the person or panel members (take about 5-7 minutes per question).
5. After all of the questions have been asked by the facilitator, ask the larger group if they have any questions for the person or panel members (10-15 minutes).
6. Wrap up the discussion by asking the person or panel members to suggest one step the school district can do to help move forward school integration in the community.

### *Middle of the day thoughts on school integration:*

Before the participants are released for a break, invite the group to revisit their thoughts on integration with the red, yellow, green sticky note activity during the break.

**Materials:** Sticky flip chart paper, markers, sticky notes (green, yellow, red)

### **Process:**

1. Frame the activity. For example, “Before we break, let’s revisit where everyone is when we think about school integration.”
2. Title a page on the flip chart paper, “School integration: Middle of day.” It might be helpful to have this prepared prior to the beginning of the session.
3. The participants should repeat their self-reflection sticky note activity from earlier in the session. Instruct participants to take a moment to consider how they feel/ what they understand about school integration. Based on their self-reflection around what school integration is, participants should choose either a red, yellow, or green sticky note.
  - Red means “Not Sure.” Yellow means “On My Way.” Green means “I’ve Got It!”
  - Then, on the sticky note, participants may write one word describing how they feel about school integration at this point in the session.
4. The facilitator will review what participants shared to get a pulse of the participants’ progress at this point of the session.



## Announce a Break (10 minutes)



## Policy Analysis (35 minutes)

**Materials:** Computer, projector, sticky flip chart paper, markers, *Policy Analysis Group Work* handout (Appendix E), *Equity-based Framework for Achieving Integrated Schooling* document (Appendix F)

**Preparation:** Each district should consider how to best prepare for the second half of the professional learning session based on where the district is at in their work on integration. Every district will be at different points in this process; one district might have a longer history of desegregation while another might be new to considering the topic. Any point that the district begins to engage with this work is an important place to start. For the facilitator, an awareness of the district's current state will influence how materials are organized and activities are planned for the rest of the session.

Ask the participants to analyze four policy areas in their district: Transportation, Resource Equity, Teachers and Teaching Quality, and Attendance Zones. Depending on the specific circumstances of the school district, the facilitator will decide how best to engage with these policy areas. The facilitator may choose to prepare a list of policies that the district/community wants to consider in each of the four policy areas as well as the respective documents or resources needed (e.g., specific policies, any relevant handbooks, maps, budgets, teacher and leadership demographics, professional development plans and records, residential demographic histories/projections/trends). The facilitator could share reports, stories, and/or op-ed pieces from local news media about the policy areas if appropriate. We encourage the facilitator and participants to be transparent and include/acknowledge criticism of the district. Don't avoid or evade stories of this nature. It would undermine the efforts you are making in the session! If the district is very new to this work, there may not be as many resources the facilitators will be able to provide for this activity. The groups will begin where they are with the information they have available to them. This is a meaningful process and will point the group in the direction of future work. Questions are included in the activity to help guide participants that are newer to this work. The facilitator can use the questions that are helpful and appropriate.

### **Process:**

1. Frame the activity. For example, "In the first half of this professional learning session, we built a shared vocabulary and learned about the facts of school



## Policy Analysis (35 minutes) (cont.)

integration. We also heard from experts in our community. For the remainder of our time together, we will be examining this district's work with integration and planning for action steps in the future." This might also be a good time to bring in or notice some of the feelings on the sticky notes that participants made before the break.

2. Build background. Direct everyone to read the definition of public policy, either on the vocabulary activity handout (Appendix B) or displayed on a projector. Public policy is "the dynamic and value-laden process through which a political system handles a public problem" (Fowler, 2013, p. 5).
  - Ask the participants why they think we should consider policies today. Ask them if they have any particular policies in mind. Discuss generally and specifically why policies are important to the work of school integration and equity.
3. Instruct participants to open the *Equity-based Framework for Achieving Integrated Schooling* (Appendix F). First read aloud or silently page 2 and then invite any comments from the participants. Next, discuss the visual framework on page 3. Again, read the text aloud or provide time for individuals to read silently. Invite participants to comment on what they see, notice, or even question.
4. Instruct the participants that the activity will focus on "Component 1: Inclusive, Co-constructive Planning," and acknowledge that the other two components will be important for the group's future work after the professional learning session. Next, ask the participants to turn to page 8 where "Potential Policy Implications" are described. Read the text at the top. Explain that each group will be assigned a policy area to analyze. For example, "Within your groups you are going to engage in analyzing one of the four policy implication areas that will contribute to a more integrated school district. Group 1 will analyze 'transportation,' Group 2 you will analyze 'resource equity,' and so on." Assign each group (make sure at least two people are in a group) one of the four policy areas from the document: 1) Transportation, 2) Resource Equity, 3) Teachers and Teaching Quality, or 4) Attendance Zones. Note that there can be more than 4 groups with multiple groups assigned to the same policy area.
5. Define policy areas. For example, "First, you will read about the policy area your group was assigned on page 8 of the *Equity-based Framework for Achieving Integrated Schooling* (Appendix F). Then, as a group you will define what you know about the policy area at this point. Finally, list what you still need in order to analyze the policy area."



## Policy Analysis (35 minutes) (cont.)

- a. Brainstorm the elements of the policy area in the district. Write these elements on one piece of sticky flip chart paper.
    - i. If there are specific areas or documents the facilitator wants to provide or use for this activity, guide the participants to those documents.
    - ii. If the facilitator is leaving the activity more open-ended to participants, assist the groups with some guiding questions. For example, ask the transportation group, "What are the relevant transportation policies in the district? Where do people in the community go to find the policies? Specifically, what are the bus routes? What are the policies for students who walk? Is transportation an issue in making the district more integrated? How so?" Further, the facilitator may ask if there is specific language around the policies to analyze. This might lead naturally into the next task of the group work: "Do we have the specific policies? Do we need to find maps? Do we need more information?"
    - iii. Reiterate to the participants: At this stage, the group has to depend on the positionalities and expertise of everyone in attendance. Every stakeholder is important as they bring a distinct perspective and experience to understanding the various policy areas.
  - b. On another piece of sticky flip chart paper, the group should create a list about what is still needed.
    - i. Again, guiding questions can assist the groups with this task: What are the elements that they need more information about? What resources do they wish they had today that would help them to understand the existing policies better? What data/statistics would be useful? Where can they get the information? Who might better understand the information?
6. Analyze for equity. Bring the whole group back together and direct them to the analysis questions in the *Policy Analysis Group Work* handout (Appendix E). Remind participants that individuals and group members bring their own expertise and resources to analyze the policy area. If the group feels they need more information to move forward or they need to speak with stakeholders not represented in the group, the group can indicate that in their analysis as well. Give the groups 10 more minutes to answer these questions and record responses on another piece of sticky flip chart paper.



## Policy Analysis (35 minutes) (cont.)

7. After 10 minutes, have each group share out what they found, perhaps asking them to consider sharing only one item or the most important conclusion of the group's analysis. The facilitator should take notes on large sticky flip chart paper that highlight the conclusions for each group. This information will be used in action planning during the next activity.
8. Transition. Invite participants to keep reading the *Equity-based Framework for Achieving Integrated Schooling* as the two remaining components will be beneficial in future work. For example, "In this activity, you analyzed one policy



## Action Planning (45 minutes)

**Materials:** sticky flip chart paper, markers, sticky notes, *Action Planning Domain Questions* handout (Appendix G), *Group Action Planning* handout (Appendix H), *Individual Action Planning* handout (Appendix I)

**Preparation:** It would be a good idea to make groups in this activity different from the previous activity. By "jigsawing" the groups, you will distribute "experts" from each of the four policy areas into the action planning groups. You can do this easily by telling the participants in this activity they need to form groups with at least one member from group 1, 2, 3, and 4 from the last activity.

### Process:

1. Frame the activity. Connect the final action planning activity with what has transpired during the professional learning session. For example, "We began our work today by creating a shared vocabulary and understanding about integration. We have also heard from experts in our community. We began reviewing particular policy areas for equity. Next, we will develop a plan to help make our district and community more integrated and equitable. In this activity, we will audit policies and practices that need to be refined or revised, prioritize first steps for an ongoing action plan, and consider who must be involved in these decisions moving forward."
2. Provide directions for the activity:
  - a. In small groups of 4-6 individuals, begin by answering the domain questions listed on the *Action Planning Domain Questions* document (Appendix G). The answers to the 6 domains will help the group to decide where work has been done and where more attention must be paid moving forward.



## Action Planning (45 minutes) (cont.)

- b. Individuals and groups should answer these questions based on their own experiences in the community, conversations from the previous activity, and any additional resources or documents that the facilitators included in the preparation for the session.
    - c. Based on the group's answers to these questions, determine which of the domains would be the priority for the next step of this working group. Be prepared to share with the large group the reasoning for the identified priority.
  3. Share out. Remind participants that doing this work cannot be contained or completed on a checklist. Reiterate that these questions are synthesized and provide the group with a starting place; however, much research has been done on equity audits and we are building this activity off of that work (see e.g., Green, 2017). We are asking for a snapshot based on the knowledge and experiences at this point. Ask the groups to share what they identified as the priority for the next step and invite participants to discuss their reasoning. After each group shares out, you might consider taking a vote or a poll to indicate consensus around a selected priority.
    - a. If there is no consensus, creating a consensus for next steps should be the first priority for the next working/planning time after the session.
    - b. If there is consensus, the groups will all make action plans for the one identified priority in the next step.
  4. Back in the groups, have participants brainstorm actionable steps for the domain priority they have chosen (or they can change domains if needed). This might mean that the larger group has selected one domain as a priority and everyone is brainstorming actionable steps around this priority. If there is no consensus, each group can brainstorm actionable steps for their separate domains as needed. The groups can brainstorm on the sticky flip chart paper.
  5. As groups are brainstorming, distribute the *Group Action Planning* handout (Appendix H). Ask each group to fill out the chart by writing the three most important actionable steps the district should be working towards next.
  6. Continuing on the *Group Action Planning* handout (Appendix H), ask the groups to come up with a list of people who need to be involved in the ongoing action planning in this community. Use the questions to encourage the groups to think deeply and meaningfully.
  7. Synthesize the list of "Ongoing Action Planning Members" as a large group. The facilitator could write all of the ideas on a new piece of sticky flip chart paper.
  8. Distribute the *Individual Action Planning* handout (Appendix I). Ask each



## Action Planning (45 minutes) (cont.)

participant to fill it out individually. Give them 3 minutes to begin with the first reflection question. Before giving them 5 minutes to write individual action steps, consider giving some examples or asking for some ideas from the group. This modeling can help individuals imagine actions they can commit to doing tomorrow, this week, or this month. After individuals have silent time to write their action steps, give each participant a moment to share their ideas with a partner.

9. Transition. Thank the participants for their commitments and contributions. Summarize some of the action steps the groups have written and ask for any individual volunteers to share their action steps as well. Tie in these action steps to activities or dialogues from earlier in the day. Also, consider noting specific things that will be done. For example, “Thank you for participating today. We appreciate all of your work and dedication to the district’s efforts towards integration. The group action plans you have written will be given to [school leader/committee leader] to make sure that our work will continue. We are each accountable to make sure actions are taken to make the school district more equitable and integrated.”



## Wrap Up & Reflections (10-15 minutes)

*End of the day thoughts on school integration:*

**Materials:** Sticky flip chart paper, markers, sticky notes (green, yellow, red)

**Process:**

1. Frame the activity. For example, “Before we end our session today, let’s revisit where everyone is with their feelings about school integration.”
2. Title a page on the sticky flip chart paper, “School integration: End of day.” It might be helpful to have this prepared prior to the beginning of the session.
3. The participants should repeat their self-reflection sticky note activity from earlier. Instruct participants to take a moment to consider how they feel/what they understand about school integration. Based on their self-reflection around what school integration is, participants should choose either a red, yellow, or green sticky note.
  - a. Red means “Not Sure.” Yellow means “On My Way.” Green means “I’ve Got It!”
  - b. Then, on the sticky note, participants will write one word describing how they feel about school integration at this point in the session.



## Wrap Up & Reflections (10-15 minutes) (cont.)

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4. Put the three sticky flip chart papers from the day on display. Ask the participants what they notice or observe. For example, “what do you notice as you look across the reflections from today? How have your thoughts changed and/or stayed the same from the ‘Beginning,’ ‘Middle,’ and ‘End’ of the session?” Ask participants to share reflections on the progress/changes/development of the group as well as their own personal experiences reflecting on the day.
5. Discuss final thoughts from the day. Ask some open-ended questions, such as “What are you taking away from this session? What are you taking away from a particular activity? What did you learn? What worked about the process today? What work is still necessary for the district? Looking back at your individual action plans, how are you going to take back what you learned today into your various communities?”



## Feedback (5-10 minutes)

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**Materials:** *Program Evaluation* sheet (Appendix J)

**Process:**

1. Thank participants for their engagement and offer closing remarks/reflections from the session.
2. Remind the participants that the session was just a start to furthering school integration efforts in their communities. This Equity Tool will hopefully spur action in the school district among all stakeholders—school board members, administrators, principals, teachers, staff, students, families—and should be used in conjunction with other efforts in the district and community to support school integration.
3. Ask the participants to use the remainder of the time to complete and turn in an evaluation of the professional learning session.



## Appendix A: Recommended Group Norms<sup>2</sup>

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- **Stay engaged:** Stay present and involved in the session. Participate in each activity/discussion the best way you can through speaking, listening, writing, reflecting, and collaborating.
- **Speak your truth:** Show up authentically as who you are and know that your perspective matters. Be considerate while speaking your “truth” to avoid making harmful statements.
- **Share the air:** Notice how much of the verbal space you are taking up. If you normally stay quiet in discussion, challenge yourself to speak out. If you have a tendency to dominate discussions, stay cognizant of how much you have spoken and provide space for others to speak up.
- **Experience discomfort:** Learning involves discomfort. Stay in this discomfort. This is different from feeling unsafe. Embrace the pause as a moment to stay engaged and continue forward as you grow from the session.
- **Expect and accept non-disclosure:** Not everyone will be able, ready, or willing to speak. That is okay.
- **Respect and trust:** Value and validate that everyone is showing up to the best of their ability. Acknowledge that everyone will be at different stages of learning on the topic. Offer the benefit of the doubt and see each individual's contribution as helpful.
- **Argument vs. debate:** We can debate issues, but it does not mean we need to argue.
- **Opinions vs. informed knowledge:** Both opinions and informed knowledge are okay and will be shared today. Acknowledge the difference and aim to lean on informed knowledge when discussing difficult topics.

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<sup>2</sup>Adapted from Iowa State University (n.d.), the MAP EAC Center, and Singleton and Linton (2006).



## Appendix B: Vocabulary

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**Anti-racism:** actively working to confront and dismantle everyday racism; racism that exists in practice, policies, and pedagogies (Aquino, 2016; Blakeney, 2005; Bonnett, 2000; Pollock, 2008).

**Consent decrees:** “settlement agreements that are included in court orders. In terms of school desegregation, consent decrees outline specific details and plans for school districts to desegregate their schools” (Diem, 2019, p. 2).

**Desegregation:** the “legal or political process of ending the separation and isolation of different racial and ethnic groups” that is “achieved through court order or voluntary means” (Ayscue & Frankenberg, 2016, n.p.).

**De facto segregation:** segregation that occurs because people choose to segregate themselves. Rothstein (2019) argues that de facto segregation is a myth. Specifically, he states, “Our prevailing patterns of residential segregation—and with it, school segregation—did not come about as the result of untold number of private decisions about where to live or who can buy one’s house; rather, it resulted from specific choices made by specific public officials working at specific public agencies” (p. 37).

**De jure segregation:** legal segregation or segregation that has resulted by law.

**Equality:** equal; ensuring that all individuals have equal rights and opportunities.

**Equity:** recognizes that not all people are treated equally or have the same opportunity and works to adjust these imbalances.

**Integration:** “a social process in which members of different racial and ethnic groups experience fair and equal treatment within a desegregated environment” that “requires further action beyond desegregation” (Ayscue & Frankenberg, 2016, n.p.).

**Policy:** “the dynamic and value-laden process through which a political system handles a public problem” (Fowler, 2013, p. 5).

**Resegregation:** when a locale (e.g., neighborhood, school, school district) that was once segregated and then desegregated, and is again segregated.

**Segregation:** “the physical separation of different groups by law or fact” (Diem, 2019, p. 2).



## Appendix B: Vocabulary (cont.)

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**Unitary status:** when school districts have been ruled to meet their desegregation mandates and are no longer under judicial oversight.

**Voluntary integration:** “school districts implementing plans/policies that seek to racially and socioeconomically diversify their schools without being legally mandated to do so (e.g., through a court order, state law)” (Diem, 2019, p. 3).



## Appendix C: Facts and Fictions

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*There are no districts currently under court-ordered desegregation orders.*

*School segregation largely happens due to “de facto” segregation, where people primarily choose to self-segregate based on personal preference.*

*Black students were not receiving a quality education prior to school desegregation.*

*Only students of color benefit from integrated schools.*

*Issues around segregation, desegregation, and integration are relevant in urban, suburban, and rural school districts.*

*Schools can be integrated based on criteria that includes more than race/ethnicity.*

*There is no support for school desegregation at the federal level.*

*We tried desegregation. It didn't work.*

*Increasing school choice options creates more equity.*

*School integration is a pressing issue today, even if many argue that it is only an issue of the past.*

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*There are no districts currently under court-ordered desegregation orders.*

- Fiction: While there is not an accurate count of how many exist, there are a number of desegregation orders still in place across the United States, with estimates ranging from 150-350 (A.P., 2019; Ujifusa & Harwin, 2018).

*School segregation largely happens due to “de facto” segregation, where people primarily choose to self-segregate based on personal preference.*

- Fiction: The false belief that “de facto” segregation is the motivation behind school segregation is a common and harmful narrative that often erases the influence of “state-sponsored” laws and policies that have created segregated schooling throughout history (Erickson, 2016; Rothstein, 2019).



## Appendix C: Facts and Fictions (cont.)

*Black students were not receiving a quality education prior to school desegregation.*

- Fiction: Even with resource disparities prior to desegregation, there were many exemplary Black schools staffed by high-quality Black teachers (Fairclough, 2004; Walker, 2000). Desegregation efforts broke up many of these spaces causing Black teachers to lose their jobs, perpetuating the false belief that Black schools were inherently lower in quality as opposed to under-resourced (Hudson & Holmes, 1994).

*Only students of color benefit from integrated schools.*

- Fiction: There is clear evidence that all students benefit from integrated schooling. For white students, in particular, attending integrated schooling environments improves their creativity, critical thinking abilities, and perspective-taking skills, all while reducing their implicit biases against minoritized populations (Wells et al., 2016).

*Issues around segregation, desegregation, and integration are relevant in urban, suburban, and rural school districts.*

- Fact: While much research in this area has been conducted primarily focusing on urban areas, suburban and rural districts continue to be influenced by issues around segregation, desegregation, and integration (Logan & Burdick-Will, 2017; Orfield & Frankenberg, 2008).

*Schools can be integrated based on criteria that includes more than race/ethnicity.*

- Fact: Other student characteristics, such as student socioeconomic status, Census tract data, and housing location, for example, can be used to help integrate public schools (Chang, 2018; Frankenberg, 2018).

*There is no support for school desegregation at the federal level.*

- Fiction: In the fall of 2020, the U.S. House of Representatives passed an amendment reinstating the Strength in Diversity Act, which focuses on incentivizing school districts to reduce racial and economic isolation in their school buildings (Strength in Diversity Act of 2020; Ujifusa, 2020).

*We tried desegregation. It didn't work.*

- Fiction: There are important “success” stories in regard to desegregation that are often overlooked in public discussion, such as in Louisville, Kentucky and Hartford, Connecticut. Yet, there are also examples of “failed” desegregation.



## Appendix C: Facts and Fictions (cont.)

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It is important to remember, however, that many of these “failures” were due to issues that could have been addressed, such as undue burdens placed on Black and Brown families and resistant district leaders actively working to make school integration an impossibility (Erickson, 2016, 2019; Quick, 2016).

*Increasing school choice options creates more equity.*

- Fiction: Incorporating “choice” options in districts does not guarantee educational equity. In fact, there is clear evidence that uncontrolled school choice leads to further segregated schools (Jennings, 2010; Shaffer & Dincher, 2020).

*School integration is a pressing issue today, even if many argue that it is only an issue of the past.*

- Fact: While current school segregation rates are still being debated in research, there is general consensus that racial isolation and segregation is a pertinent and urgent issue in U.S. education today (Johnson, 2019).



## Appendix D: Questions for Connecting with the Community

### Panel Discussion

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Suggested questions to pose to an individual or panelists:

1. How do you respond to those in the community who argue that school desegregation is a thing of the past and we have more important things to worry about in the current sociopolitical context?
2. What types of partnerships, collaborations, and/or coalitions should community members be working on creating/building that will assist in school integration efforts? What individuals and entities should be involved in these efforts and why?
3. School choice is a growing part of the education landscape. How has this impacted school integration efforts in your local community?
4. Cities across the United States are experiencing gentrification, which can have direct impacts on public schools. What are the potential challenges and opportunities of gentrification for school districts seeking to provide integrated school settings?
5. What types of efforts have you been engaged in that have helped to improve integration in the community? What challenges and/or successes have you experienced in these efforts?



## Appendix E: Policy Analysis Group Work

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Discussion Question: Why are policies important to the work of school integration?

Key Framing Questions:

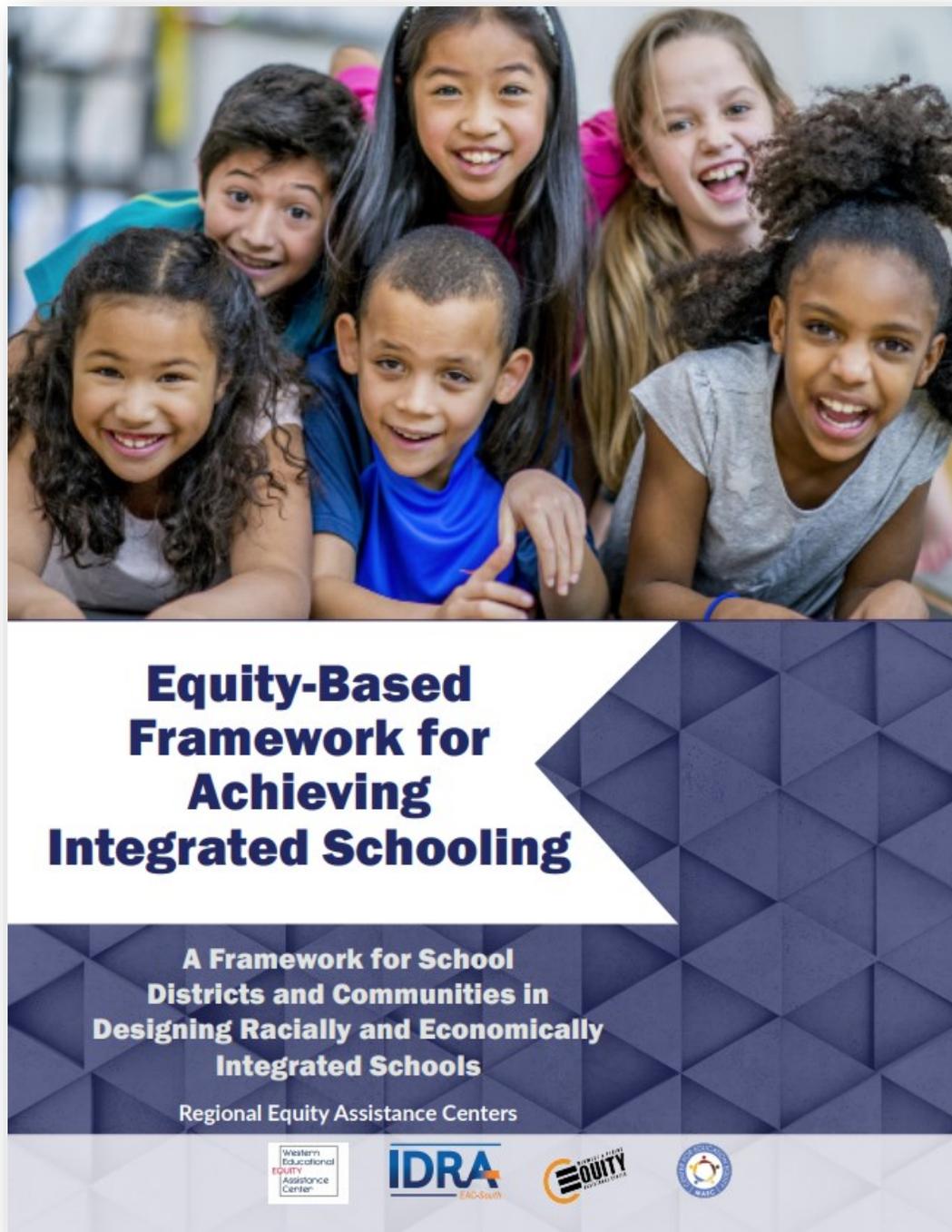
Discuss the framing questions below about your group's policy implication area. The questions are inspired by the Policy Equity Analysis Tool (Kyser et al., 2016, p. 6). See resources in the manual if you wish to access the tool.

1. What is the intent behind the specific policy as it currently exists?
2. Social constructions are ideas or concepts that society agrees upon or assumes. What social constructions does this policy embrace?
3. Who benefits from the way things are? Who does not?
4. What actions will redress the inequities in our policies?

## Appendix F: Equity-Based Framework for Achieving Integrated Schooling



Diem, S., Thorius, K. A. K., Skelton, S. M., Hinojosa, D., Schaffer, S., & Evanstad, J. P. (2018). *Equity-based framework for achieving integrated schooling*. Regional Equity Assistance Centers. <https://greatlakesequity.org/resource/equity-based-framework-achieving-integrated-schooling>





## Appendix G: Action Planning Domain Questions

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These domain questions are synthesized from the Districts Advancing Racial Equity (DARE) tool (Hyer et al., 2020).

1. **VISION:** Has the district made a public commitment to integration and equity?
2. **CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION & CURRICULUM:** Does every child have access to rigorous and culturally responsive curriculum and instruction?
3. **SAFETY & HEALTH:** Does the district provide a safe and supportive environment for teachers, students, and community members?
4. **RESOURCES:** Does the district distribute financial and material resources equitably across the district?
5. **COMMUNITY:** Does the district have meaningful relationships with community members and organizations?
6. **DATA:** Does the district use and communicate a range of student outcomes and supports to address disparities across race in academic achievement and social emotional growth?



## Appendix H: Group Action Planning

What domain do you and your group think we as a district should prioritize?

*In the spaces below, please write the 3 most important actionable steps that the district should be working towards next. Be specific and provide details as needed.*

What is the specific action to be taken?	Who is involved in implementing this task?	What is the rationale behind why this task is important?	What timeline makes sense? Is there an important deadline for completion?	How will we know we have completed/achieved this action/task?

### **Who [e/se] needs to be involved in the ongoing action planning in this community?**

Use these questions from “Community Based Equity Audits” (Green, 2017, p. 30) to reflect on who needs to be involved in this work in our district.

- 1. When this community has had a problem in the past what person(s) has been involved in working to solve it?*
- 2. Whom do people in this neighborhood go to for help or advice?*
- 3. Whom do children go to for help or advice?*
- 4. Who gets things done in the community?*



## Appendix I: Individual Action Planning

Begin by reflecting on your role in the work of this group. *What have you learned about what you have done in the past? What do you feel about your work to be done in the future? How do you see your role?*

*In the spaces below, please write the 2 important actionable steps that you will be working towards next. Be specific and provide details as needed.*

What is the specific action to be taken?	What is the rationale? Why is it important that you do this?	What do you need to complete the task? (data, resources, access?)	When will this action be taken? Tomorrow? Next week?	How will you know you have completed/achieved this action/task?



## Appendix J: Program Evaluation

Indicate your responses by circling the number that best represents how you feel about each statement.

	Strongly	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly	TOTAL
I now have a greater understanding of the benefits and challenges associated with school integration.	5	4	3	2	1	
I now have a greater understanding of how to support and advocate for school integration in my local community.	5	4	3	2	1	
I can apply what I learned in this session to my current position.	5	4	3	2	1	
The facilitator was able to effectively guide the session.	5	4	3	2	1	
This session encouraged me to commit to school integration in my local community.	5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Total:</b>						<b>Point /25</b>

What did you like most about the session? What did you like least about the session?

What suggestions do you have for further sessions focused on school integration?



## Resources

- Chambers, T. V. (2019). Implications of de/segregation and school choice. *EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*. Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center (MAP EAC). <https://greatlakesequity.org/resource/equilearn-virtual-roundtable-implications-desegregation-and-school-choice>
- Chambers, T. V., & Phelps-Moultrie, J. (2019). Implications of de/segregation and school choice. *Equity Spotlight Podcast*. Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center (MAP EAC). <https://greatlakesequity.org/resource/implications-desegregation-and-school-choice>
- Diem, S. (2019). What you need to know about school desegregation and integration and why it still matters. *Equity by Design*. Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center (MAP EAC).
- Diem, S., & Pinto, R. (2017). Promoting racial and socioeconomic integration in public schools. *Equity by Design*. Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center (MAP EAC).
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- Diem, S., & Walters, S. W. (2019). Understanding the housing-school relationship: Achieving integration in racially changing cities and suburbs. *Equity by Design*. Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center (MAP EAC).
- Hylar, M. E., Carver-Thomas, D., Wechsler, M., & Willis, L. (2020). *Districts Advancing Racial Equity (DARE) Tool*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/reln-districts-advancing-racial-equity>

### University-Based Organizations:

- Center for Education and Civil Rights, The Pennsylvania State University: <https://cecr.ed.psu.edu/>
- Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race & Justice, Harvard Law School: <https://charleshamiltonhouston.org/>
- The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derecho Civiles, University of California-Los Angeles: <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/>
- Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, University of Minnesota Law School: [www.law.umn.edu](http://www.law.umn.edu)
- Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, The Ohio State University: <https://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/>
- National Education Policy Center, University of Colorado-Boulder: <https://nepc.colorado.edu/>



## Resources (cont.)

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- Othering & Belonging Institute, University of California-Berkeley: <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/>

### Local, State, and National Organizations:

- Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund: <https://www.aaldef.org/>
- The Bridges Collaborative at The Century Foundation: <https://tcf.org/bridges-collaborative/>
- EmbraceRace: <https://www.embracerace.org/>
- ERASE Racism: <http://www.eraseracismny.org/>
- Integrated Schools: <https://integratedschools.org/>
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund: <https://www.maldef.org/>
- NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund: <https://naacpldf.org/>
- The National Council on School Diversity: <https://school-diversity.org/>
- Poverty & Race Research Action Council: <https://prrac.org/>
- Sheff Movement Coalition: <https://sheffmovement.org/>
- Southern Poverty Law Center: [www.splcenter.org](http://www.splcenter.org)

### Podcasts:

- Fiasco Season 3: The Battle for Boston: <https://luminarypodcasts.com/>
- Integrated Schools: <https://integratedschools.org/podcasts/>
- This American Life - The Problem We All Live With Part One: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with-part-one>
- This American Life - The Problem We All Live With Part Two: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/562/the-problem-we-all-live-with-part-one/act-two-0>
- *The New York Times* Nice White Parents: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/23/podcasts/nice-white-parents-serial.html>
- The Promise: <https://wpln.org/programs/the-promise/>



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## About the Authors

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# IMPACT:

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