
Equity through Systems: A School District Case Study

COSA 2020

— Dr. Gustavo Balderas, Edmonds SD, WA —
Superintendent Cydney Vandercar, Eugene SD
Dr. Iton Udosenata, Salem Keizer SD
Dr. Karen Perez, Education Northwest, Portland



Background

Introductions and personal background

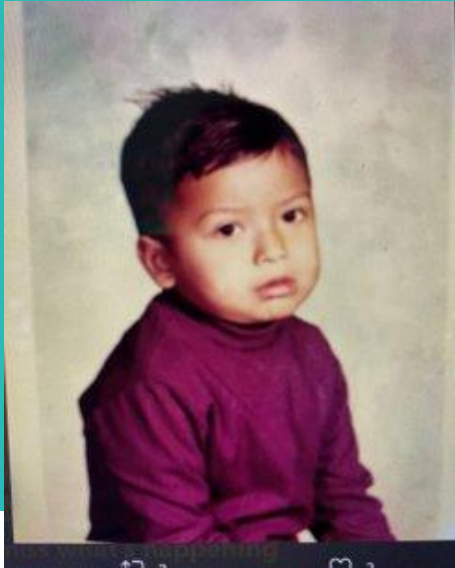
Eugene case study

- Human Resources
- North Eugene High School
- Equity Department
- Systems Work

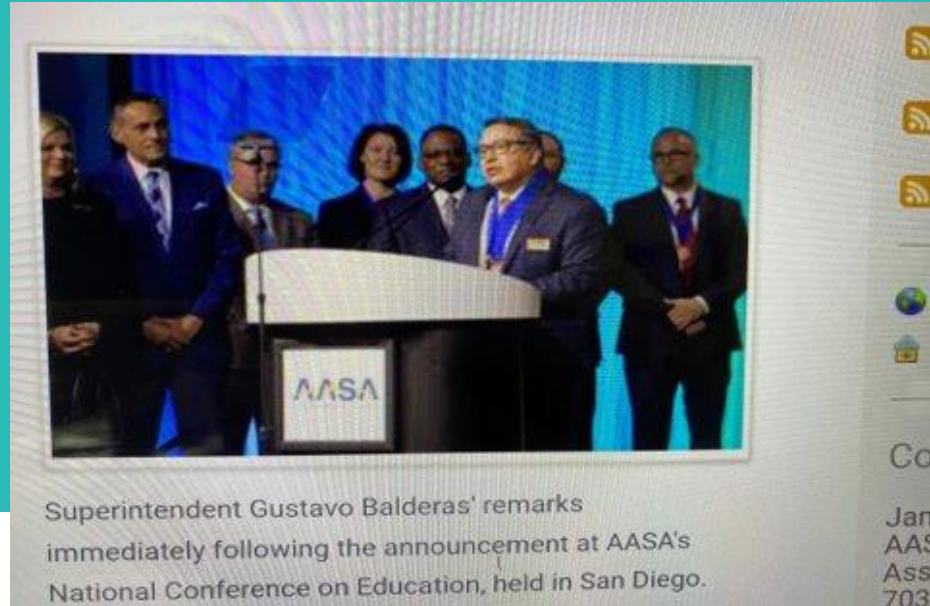


Then and Now...Dr. Gustavo Balderas

Kinder Photo



2020 National Super of the Year - AASA



Superintendent Cydney Vandercar

-Second Woman to lead the Eugene School District

-From school substitute to Superintendent of Schools in Eugene

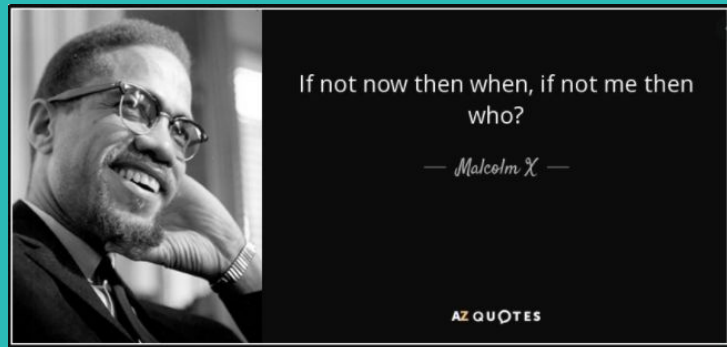


Assistant Superintendent Dr. Iton Udosenata



Leader in System Improvements- Dr. Karen Pérez

Equity, Migrant Education, Dual Language Programs, English Learners & Diversifying the Workforce



EQUITY WORK IS THE WORK!

Equity = intentional actions to ensure we are providing access, inclusion, and opportunity for ALL students and having intentional outcomes for ALL students.



Results in Eugene School District 4J: 2015-2020

Student results

14% Increase in overall graduation rate

24% increase in graduation rate for students in special programs

20% increase in graduation rate for Latinx students

20% increase in graduation rate for students navigating poverty

Higher on track rates at 9, 10, 11 grades



Results in Eugene School District 4J

Systems results

Aligned curriculum K-12 for the first time throughout district

Standard expectation for schedules/calendars by level

Passed largest bond in county history

School successes (SEHS named #1 high school in state. 8th grade assessments scores rank the second highest in the state)

Restructured the District Office

Human Resources Pool Hiring



Results in Eugene School District 4J

People results

85% of building principals shifted positions - right seat/right bus

40% of building principals were leaders of color

Graduation rates increased

Community support

School administration felt supported



How a department responded...

Human Resources was restructured

Pool Hiring

Holding people accountable in an asset-based manner

Hiring plan for licensed staff

Pathways for employees



North Eugene High School

In two years, the school increased graduation rates by 16%

It is truly about systems and people...It can add and speak to the transformation.



North Eugene High School

“You have to find a way”

-Principal Udosenata Fall 2017



Putting NEHS into context





Problem of alignment



Simplicity and consistency



Inventory of assets

Pros

Care and connection

Extensions

Diversity

District Support

Will of staff

Cons

Deficit thinking

Cohesive Vision

Systems of accountability

Using data to admire
problem



Leading with an Equity Lens

Three Frames

Systems matter...

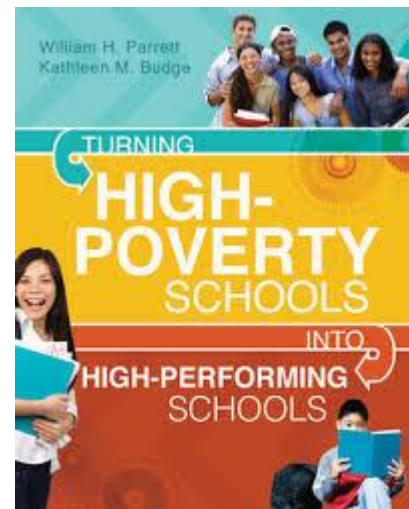
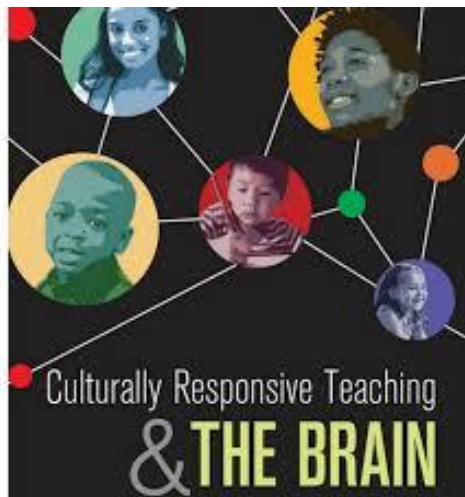
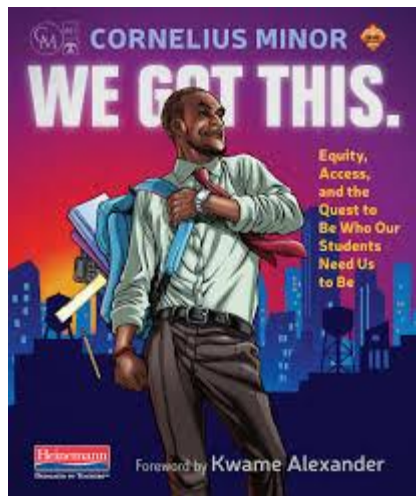
Curriculum

Climate
School & Community

Institutional
Practices



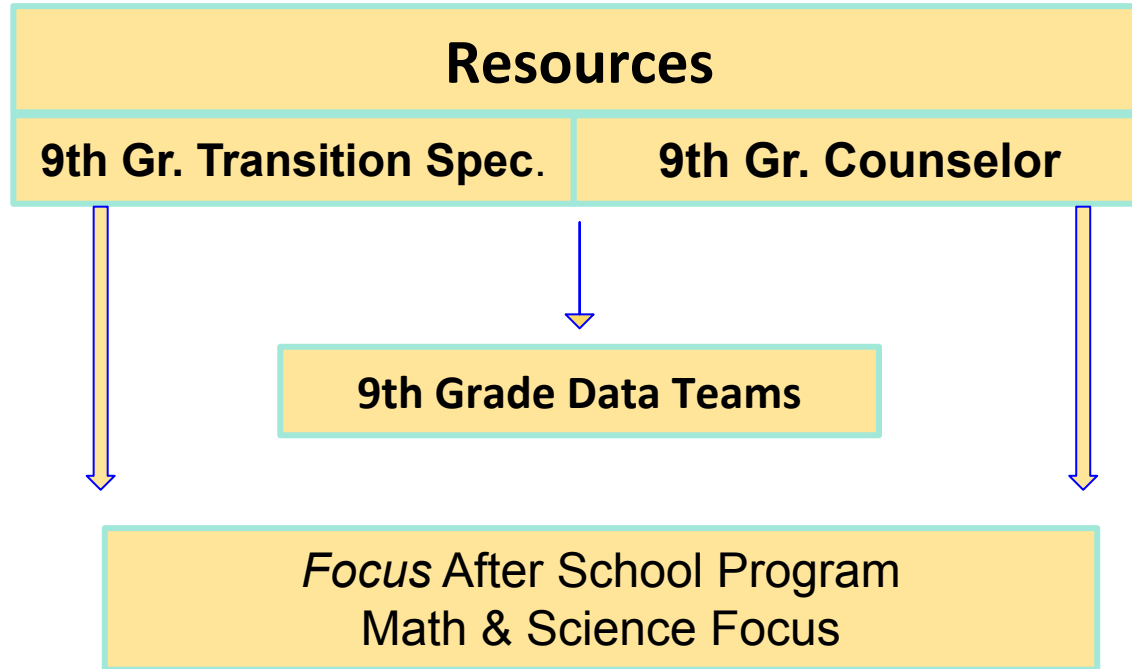
Equity Read



Building community through connectivity



Action Plan: Mobilizing moving parts



Graduation dilemma...

Systems that were absent.

- Progress Markers (9-11): on track status, credit earned, Alg. 1, enrollment vs. drops
- Seniors: Credits earned/needed, Essential Skills, Attendance
- Caring and connection was present but systems weren't



Next steps

- Develop Theory of action
 - Use data as an inquiry tool
 - Design a plan for supporting all students
-
- Develop consistent strategies for supporting students
 - Self-accountability for progress monitoring
 - Decision making and interventions



What this looked like

Transcript audit, Schedule audit

Triangulate communication

Interventions (Essential skills tutoring and opportunities for attempts)

Weekly check in (Counseling admin)

Ownership of outcomes

Leaning in on what it means to be equitable!

Outcomes

Two- year enrollment increase from 827 to 1,050

Improved graduation rates: 70-86%

Ninth grade Fs reduced by 46%



Core tenets to success

- Vision/Values/Culture/Direction/Goals
- Leadership/Governance
- Decision Making/Expectations/Accountability/Evaluations
- Staff Quality/Professional Development



Vision/Values/Culture/Direction/Goals

Strategic Planning: vision and mission

Culture: School district heading towards a North Star, a culture that is positive

Understanding your community and having people understand the “why” behind the work.

Bringing your staff and your board along to have people “own” the “why”.



Equity

Do you have a racial equity policy?

Do you use an equity lens protocol to drive your decisions?

Do you have equity be prominent in your action plans?



Leadership and Governance

Surrounding yourself with the right teammates

Continue to develop staff

Develop a strong board governance expectation

Equity

Do you have a hiring plan that is specific to your workforce?

Do you have systems/internal or with partners to enable a pipeline for future hires (students, classified, teachers)?

Is the system actively working to seek different voices in an authentic two-way manner?

Does the board have a strong sense of role and responsibility across the system? Do they stay at the balcony level and use data to inform decision making?

Decision Making/Expectations/Accountability/Evaluation

Organizational decision-making model.

Accountability structures within the system (schools, departments, direct reports).

Collective focus on the North Star as a system.

Evaluation system to help “weed the garden”.

Equity

Use of a district lens to make decision (need to train and understand throughout the system).

Disaggregate data and use throughout the system (from board/cabinet to routing) to make decisions.

We can't hold the kids more accountable than the adults in the system.

Do a few things well with a focus on ALL students.

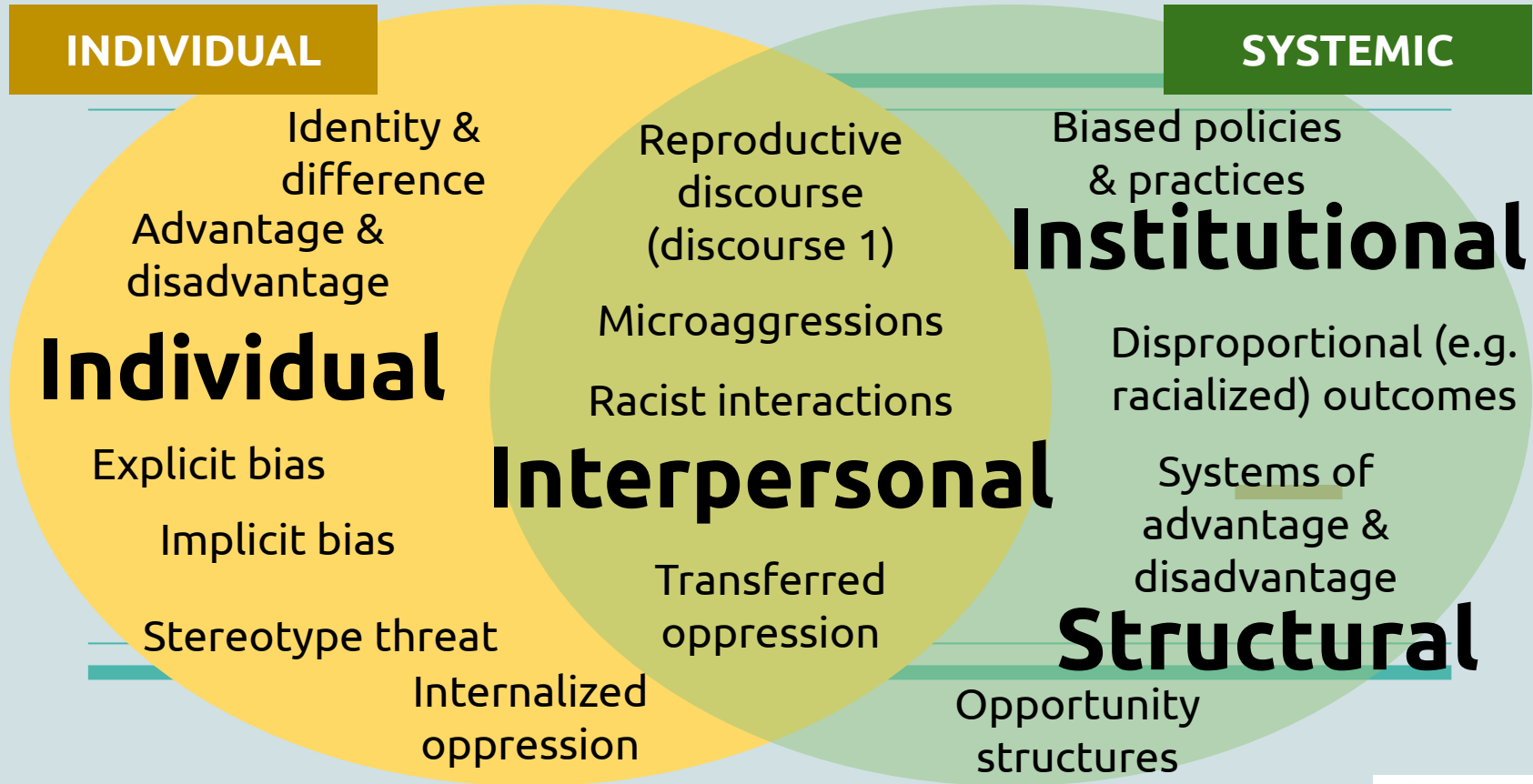
Our Equity Mindset

Office of Equity and Inclusion

- **Deconstructing & Reconstructing Systems**

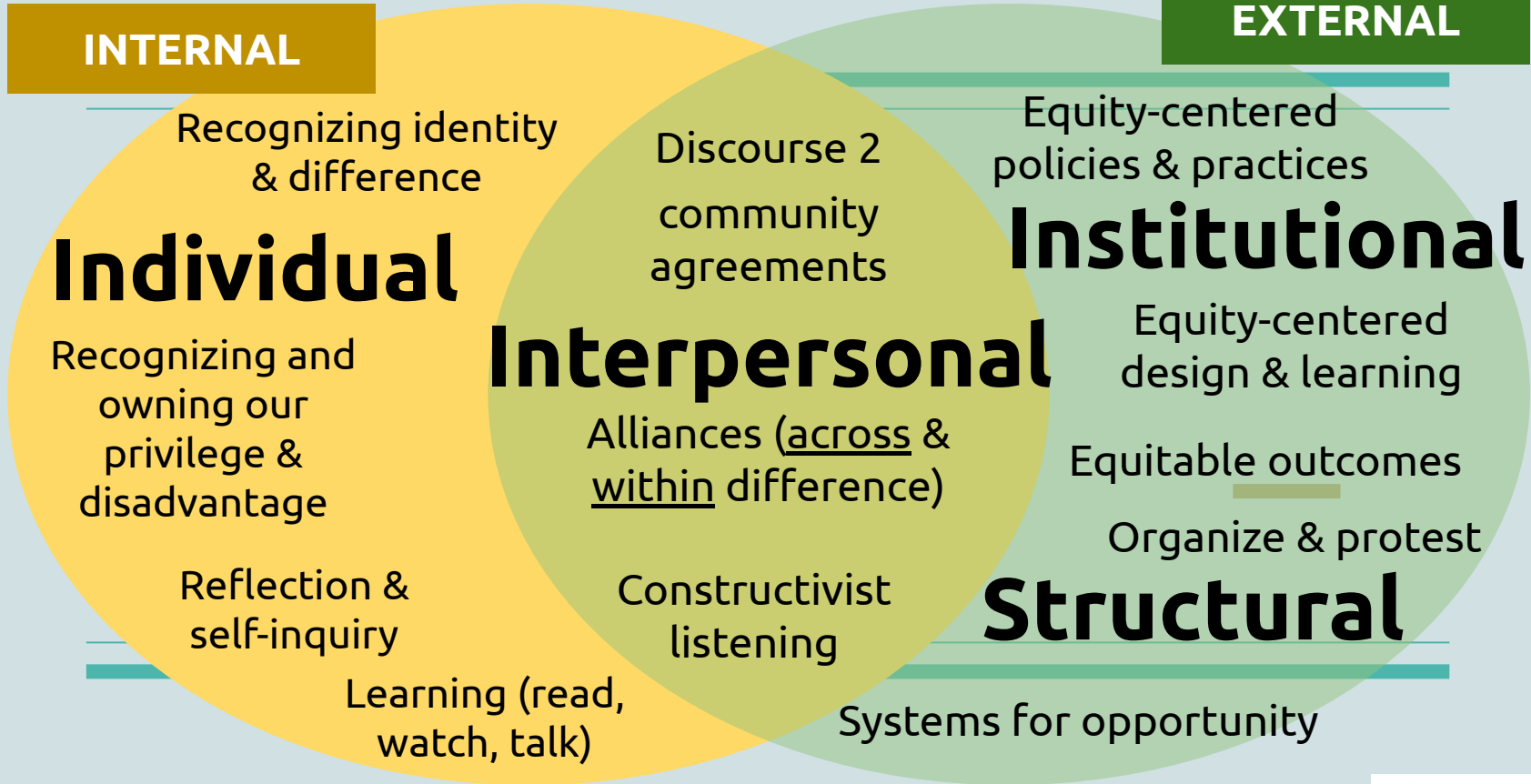


A “map” of Systemic Oppression



Blindness to the reality of systemic oppression...

A (partial) “map” of Liberation...



Awareness of the reality of systemic oppression - and agency to interrupt it...

Our Equity Mindset

Office of Equity and Inclusion

- **Deconstructing & Reconstructing Systems**
 - Instruction - English Language Learners, Migrant, Dual Language
 - Instruction - Curriculum and Pedagogy - Race, Native History, Health, CTE, AP;IB
 - Instruction - Coaching & Collaboration with principals & administrators
 - Human Resources - Classified, Certified and administrators (hiring, retention & training)
 - Affinity - students, staff & community - Town Hall symposiums, GSAs, BSU, Pacific Islander
 - Policies & Procedures - Enrollment Procedures, ICE presence, Gender/Name Changes
 - To combat discrimination, hate and bias



PURPOSE of an



A **TOOL** to support making
CLEAR CHOICES with a
CONSISTENT CHECK against
KEY VALUES and **INPUT**.

Eugene School District 4J

Equity Decision Tool

01-21-2016

STAKEHOLDERS: Who are the different groups of people _____ would affect? How have they been meaningfully engaged? Who has been missed?

PURPOSE: What are we trying to achieve with _____? How would it reduce disparities and advance equity and inclusion? Are there better ways to do this?

INEQUITIES: Would _____ affect different groups differently? If so, in what ways? If we don't know, how can we find out?

NEGATIVE EFFECTS: How could _____ be bad for different groups? What could we do to prevent or reduce negative effects and unintended consequences?

POSITIVE EFFECTS: How would _____ be good for different groups? What could we change or add to increase positive effects on equity and inclusion?

ROOT CAUSES: Why would _____ affect some groups unequally? What could _____ do to address these root causes?

SUSTAINABILITY: Is _____ realistic and adequately funded? Does it have what it needs to be successful?

EVALUATION: How do we measure _____'s success? How can we share that information with people?

Adapted from Terry Keleher, 2009

Decision Tree



OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Oregon achieves... together!

Instructions: These five questions are designed to ensure the decision you are making has undergone thorough and meaningful analysis. This includes considering those most affected, assessing feasibility, and anticipating unforeseen variables. Identify the right level of attendance to each question based on the starting conditions. Arriving at "yes," can mean "enough to move forward, though not perfect."

Starting Condition

1 Have you mapped out who this decision might affect and how they should inform the decision?

No or Not Sure

Yes

Consider including a broad coalition of people that involves different racial, linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic, geographic, gendered, etc. perspectives in your process.

Consider identifying or centering the perspectives of affected leaders who understand the community to identify different funds of knowledge¹ and ways of knowing and being as indispensable input.

Sketch a first version map of community assets and perspectives that could support you.

2

How clear are you about the decision you need to make? Do you have a strong enough sense of the variables at play? Have you considered emergent or unknown variables that have bearing on the outcome?

No or Not Sure

Yes

Consider conducting empathy interviews (empathy interview protocol) with students, families, staff, or partners to better understand the problem and/or a root cause analysis.

3

Is the decision you are considering feasible? Variables to consider include timing, cost, morale, staffing and capacity, safety, and knowledge.

No or Not Sure

Yes

- Consider simpler alternatives.
- Use the consultancy protocol to test your thinking.
- Identify what are the most constraining variables and if they are changeable.
- Consider how to expand or share the workload.

4

Does this decision build relationships, bridge conflicts, and create a deeper sense of community? Will the decision uphold the sovereignty or address impacts for the communities the decision impacts?

No or Not Sure

Yes

5

Can you account for ongoing learning, flexibility, and continuous improvement processes? Is your decision nimble and responsive?

No or Not Sure

Yes

Consider using processes such as equity centered design or continuous improvement to design in room to iterate and improve.

Make and communicate your decision or use the additional tools to deepen your consideration or consult if you remain unsure or unsettled.

Use the consultancy protocol to test your thinking.

Decision Tree



OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Oregon achieves... together!

Instructions: These five questions are designed to ensure the decision you are making has undergone thorough and meaningful analysis. This includes considering those most affected, assessing feasibility, and anticipating unforeseen variables. Identify the right level of attendance to each question based on the starting conditions. Arriving at "yes," can mean "enough to move forward, though not perfect."

1. González, N., Mull, L. C., & Amantí, C. (2005). Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practice in households, communities, and classrooms. Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Equity Work = Our Daily Work

Culturally relevant pedagogy

Use data to inform decision making = budgets are moral documents

De-track course scheduling and set high bar of expectations for all

Establish a standard for all students, not comparing one ethnicity versus others

Use multiple points of measures when making decisions (be careful of over-reliance on standardized assessments)

Have an authentic two-way communication plan for ALL of your families

Race and Equity Policy 0060 ESD

Key Tenets

1. Eliminate Systemic Disparities
2. Ensure Systemic Equity
 - a. Family, Student, and Community Engagement
 - b. Leadership
 - c. Teaching and Learning
3. Implementation and Monitoring

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO OUR KIDS!

Preguntas