Equity At The Center

What equity means to me, and what promise it holds for all efforts aimed at those most in need.

Dr. Derek Mitchell
PACE Annual Conference
2/7/2020
Securing Education Resources to Finance California’s Future

Organizing Schools to Serve Students with Disabilities

Improving Quality in Early Childhood Education

Supporting Schools and Districts in Continuous Improvement

Making College Affordability a Reality for California Students
1,200 National Guardsmen Are Released from Duty; Calm Returns to West Side

Crowd watching Chicago park district crew installing portable swimming pool at 13th and Throop streets yesterday. Pool is one of 24 being installed in area on west side that has been scene of rioting.
Robert Emmet School in Chicago
Teaching students of color: Looking race in the face

Derek Mitchell, Jesse Hinueber, and Brian Edwards

January 23, 2017

Disrupting inequity through collaboration, engagement and mindset

Working together in teams to cultivate an equity mindset, and to create lessons that resonate with and equalize the experiences of low-income students

The equity rubric used by California educators to promote equity in student engagement, achievement and mindset.

Common Core: A TOOL FOR EQUITY

Although California has made progress in the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency on state standards over past years, much work remains. Only 38 percent of all students passed the California Standards Test in English language arts in 2015. Leadership has been critical to this success.

Leadership

This program aligns leadership, instruction and professional development around the goal of accelerated learning to close achievement gaps.

California’s students hold vast potential. With the proper academic support, they will become college- and career-ready and go on to help the state’s businesses, farms, non-profits and local governments succeed. Unfortunately, too many of California’s public schools are struggling to bring out their students’ talents. This is especially true among schools serving low-income students of color.

In some cases, existing support providers can help a school transform into a place where staff and students excel. Partners in School Innovation is one such provider that facilitates the transformation of underperforming schools. Using a continuous-improvement, equity-focused approach, Partners works to help schools eliminate achievement gaps and create an environment in which every student, regardless of their background, thrives. In the schools that we serve, where 81 percent of students are low-income and 94 percent are students of color, these factors are a critical part of our success.

Partners helps schools align their leadership, professional learning systems and instruction around the goal of accelerated learning. We do not address all of the factors that influence student achievement, such as parental involvement, but our approach does include explicit conversations about equity. The conversations are substantial and informed by regular monitoring of student achievement data.

To assess a school’s progress, we regularly conduct assessments called School Transformation Reviews. These reviews are done in the fall of the initial year of a partnership (which generally lasts three to five years) and in the spring of each subsequent year. They consist of interviews and classroom observations and are guided by our School Transformation Rubric.

The rubric is grounded in research and research has been refined based on our experience with fostering systemic change in schools during the past nine years. The rubric and review provide school leaders with the language needed to gain agreement on what constitutes powerful instruction for each student. They are valuable tools for promoting equity in achievement among all students.

An even more important tool, however, is the continuous, on-site support. While the rubric and school-review process are described, and a detailed example of on-site support is provided, to demonstrate the level of progress that is possible.

School transformation rubric: Equity focus

The rubric describes 36 practices deemed by researchers to be essential to transforming schools, particularly those serving low-income students of color. These essential practices are organized into those domain-specific, results-oriented leadership, systems for professional learning, and the core instructional program. Of the 36 practices on the rubric, 20 make direct links to equity. Thus, when staff members conduct a review of a school’s program, they do so through an equity lens.

The set of equity-focused items on the rubric pertain to school culture, aspects of
Developing change agents to disrupt Inequality

- Encourage use of an “equity lens”
- Emphasize relationships
- Set ambitious goals
- Provide rigorous, culturally responsive instruction
- Reflect on classroom power dynamics -- speaking time, etc.
- Distribute leadership so that the work is not overly dependent on “superhero educators”
- Strengthen educators’ results-orientation
Educators can improve at equity work
Many educators value equity work

“Being able to dive deeper into learning about Race Culture, Class & Power over the course of multiple sessions has been AMAZING!! Having a system/structure for looking at disaggregated schoolwide data has kept us accountable for doing this incredibly important work.”
Whose solution was this?

What problem were you trying to solve, exactly?

What will that child do the day after tomorrow? Next week? Next month?

Why did you rob the children of the opportunity to solve this problem for themselves?
“Your life is the sum of a remainder of a series of unbalanced equations inherent to the systems in which we operate.”