

Inclusivity & Belonging Program Review

Rose Tree Media School District



Empowering Partnerships For Education

Conducted by Delaware County Intermediate Unit (DCIU)
March 10, 2022

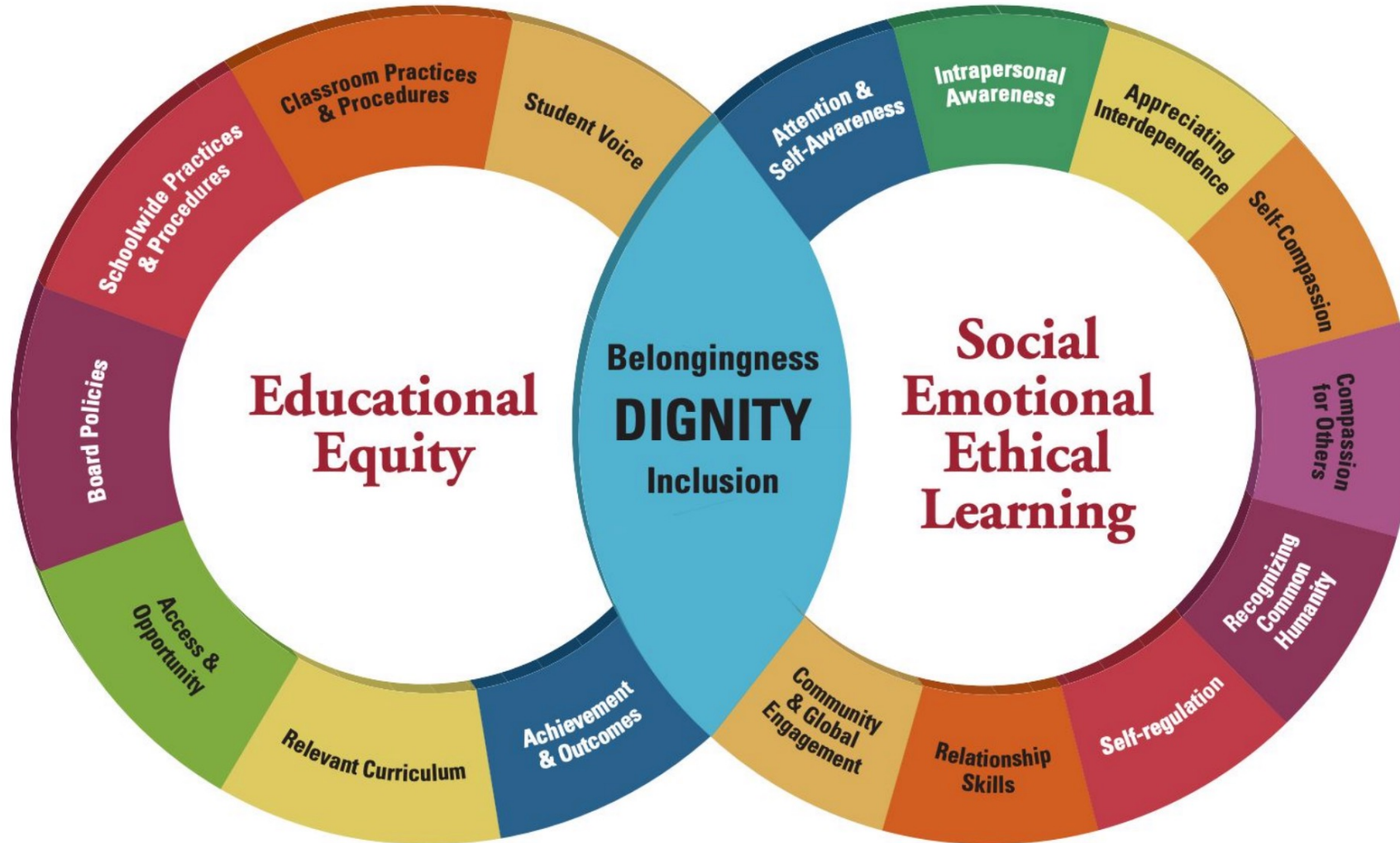
Vision & Principals

For Inclusivity and Belonging at Rose Tree Media School District

“The Rose Tree Media School District cultivates and supports an inclusive culture where everyone belongs and each person’s inherent dignity is honored.”

- Rose Tree Media School District website

INCLUSIVITY & BELONGING



Objectives for the Work

- Ensure all students have **equitable access** to programs in our schools
- Encourage and support **culturally responsive teaching**
- Ensure that **beliefs, mindset, and practices** are grounded in principles of equity
- Sustain a healthy, respectful, caring, safe and inviting learning environment to foster a **sense of belongingness for all students**

Strategies to Guide the Work

- Provide staff with **professional development** to increase awareness and offer strategies to promote equity and inclusion for all students
- Fully implement a **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)** model K-12
- **Engage staff and community** in supporting district- and building-wide equity work

Systems to Support the Work

- Establishment of building- and district-level **equity teams**
- Expansion of the **Family Alliance for Respect and Equity** (FARE)
- The development of a **Social Emotional and Ethical** (SEE) learning curriculum
- Designation of a **Board Ad Hoc Committee** to review and support the adoption of district policies with a connection to equity practices
- Inclusion of students and **student voice** in a variety of ways

Purpose

For conducting a program review on Inclusivity and Belonging

A program review is a process that evaluates the status, effectiveness, and progress of academic programs and helps identify the future direction, needs, and priorities of those programs



Empowering Partnerships For Education

Purpose of RTMSD Program Review

- Equity work since 2018 has been multi-faceted, robust, and embedded in district initiatives
- Opportunity to pause, reflect, and evaluate
- Incorporate the voice, experience, and perspective of all stakeholders
- Analyze Youth Truth Survey data through an equity lens

Current Research

On Best Practices for Educational Equity

- +
 - - The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) defines equity as

“every student having access to the educational resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income.”

Iterative Categories Schools Consider in Establishing Relevant Curriculum



Status Quo



Food, Festivals, and Fun



Intercultural Teaching and Learning



Human Relations



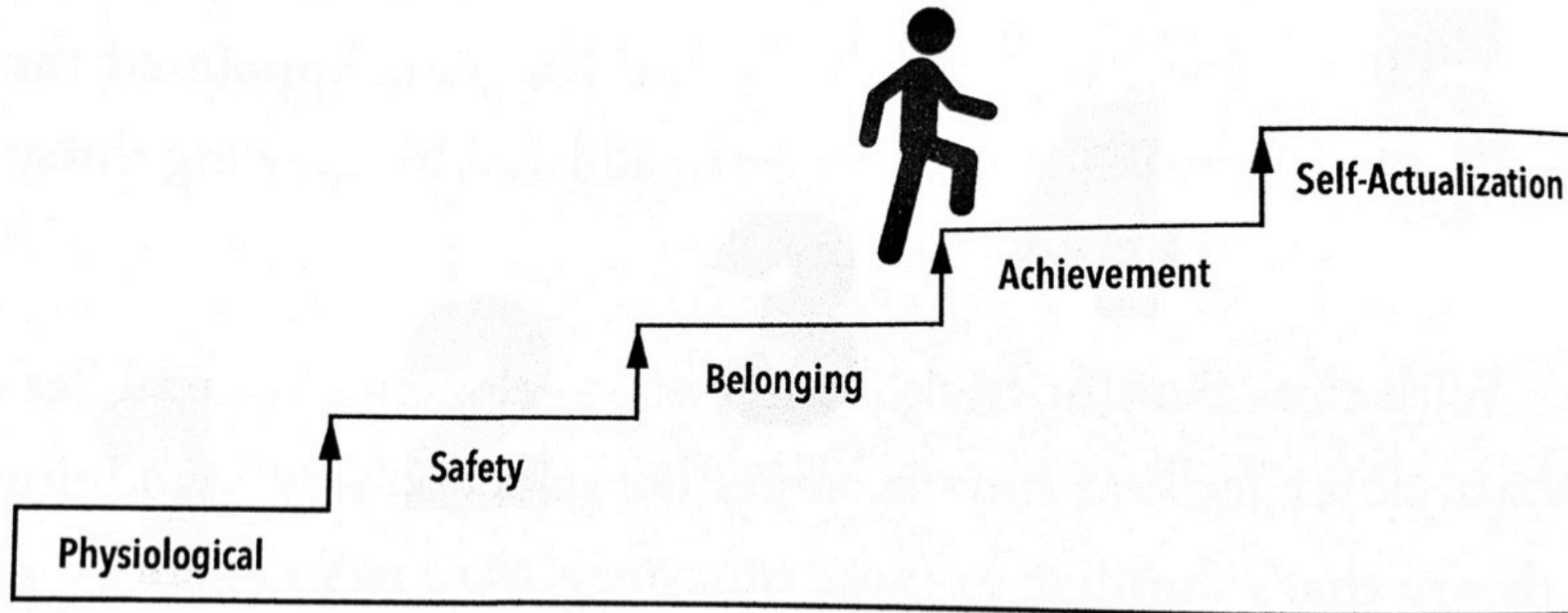
Selective Education



Transformative Education

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Figure 3.1 Stairs to Fulfilling Potential



“Belonging has been neglected in the name of achievement, which is an environment where only the achieving belong.”

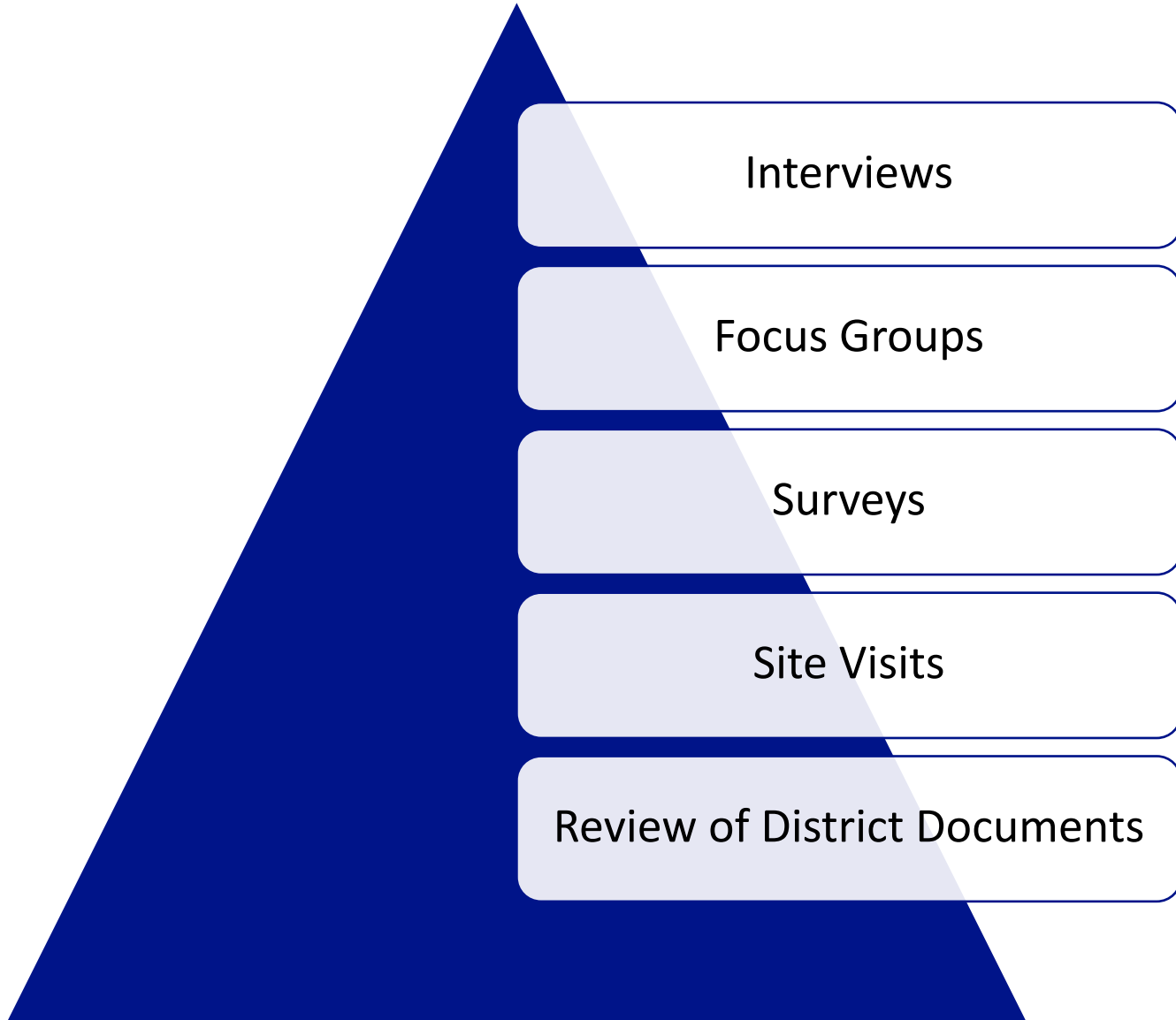
Cobb and Krownapple, 2019, p. 41

Collective Agency: *“When some of us are brave”*

- Can leave people feeling unsupported
- Produces “gendered justice – that is the feminization of peacemaking and making things right”
- “This strategy does not hold the entire school community responsible for finding ways to be in relationship with one another.”

Process & Scope of Review

Stakeholder Engagement Activities



Data Collection Methods

Stakeholder Participation

- **211** interviews, focus groups, and classroom walkthroughs
- **1,500+** individual data points (not including Youth Truth survey data points)
- **7** full-day site visits to school buildings
- **10** virtual parent/guardian focus groups
- **1** full-day of virtual focus groups led by 12 facilitators for district administrators, teachers, and building-level equity teams

Report Findings

Priority Areas for Consideration



Priority Area 1 Continued Progression from Theory to Action

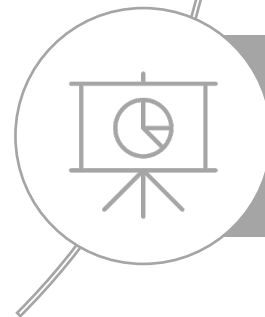


Explores extent to which the research-based, theoretical Inclusion and Belonging Framework has grown from theory to action



Probes examine:

- Implementation of the Framework
- Activities at the school, district, and community level
- How stakeholders use theory to change practices, policies, and actions



Assesses not just understanding of what and why (theory), but why and how to get results in a systemic way (action)

Continued Progression from Theory to Action

Strengths

- Asset-based framework
- Inclusion in Strategic Plan
- SEE Curriculum

Needs

- Systems and structures to articulate academic purpose
- Move from “some” to “all” own the work
- Resume strategic plans impacted by COVID

Priority Area 2

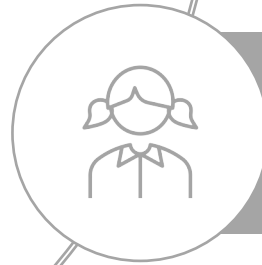
Beyond Holidays and Heroes



Explores how materials, perspectives, and voices are woven seamlessly with current frameworks



District staff dedicate themselves to continuously expanding their knowledge base through exploration of various sources representing unique perspectives and share that knowledge with students



Students learn to view events, concepts, and facts through various lenses cohesively rather than through differentiated activities

Beyond Holidays and Heroes

Strengths

- Increasing understanding of and learning experiences that highlight diversity
- Increased focus on relationships, social and emotional growth, and connection

Needs

- Clarity and Intentionality (Celebrate + Educate)
- Need for consistent practices and articulation of the why when decisions are made

Priority Area 3

Collective Agency



Much of the work that Rose Tree Media School District has engaged in since 2018 has focused on increasing capacity and agency in the work of equitable communities



There have been a multitude of efforts that have effectively increased advocacy by individuals, stakeholder groups, and schools



This section examines how the work of individuals and groups has synchronized to increase organizational capacity and achieve systemic change

Collective Agency

Strengths

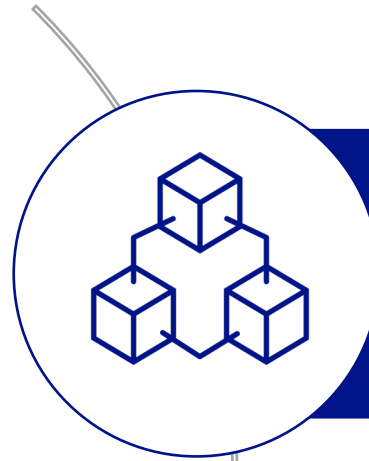
- Dignity and belonging is a core value that is demonstrated
- Increasing the involvement of groups at all levels
- Strategies to increase agency are varied and effective

Needs

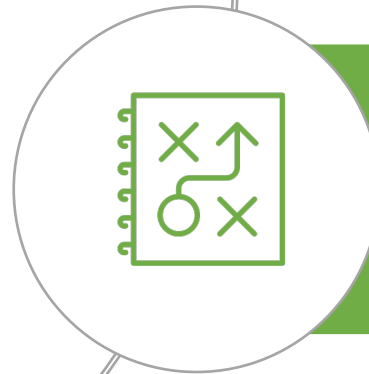
- Consistent practices related to dignity and belonging are important
 - LGBTQ+, Race and Ethnicity, Religion, Socio-Economic Status, Language, Special Education
- Inclusion of all staff groups in the school community

Priority Area 4

Fostering Connection to Support Belonging



Examines the ways that Rose Tree Media School District values and prioritizes a sense of belonging within its school community with a comprehensive approach that incorporates a range of strategies that help to build a collaborative and inclusive community for learning



Strategies to consider include:

- Encouraging positive relationships with teachers and school staff
- Creating a positive peer culture of belonging
- Emphasizing engagement and value in learning
- Taking proactive steps toward mental health
- Including parents in the educational experience.

Fostering Connection to Support Belonging

Strengths

- Positive relationships with teachers and school staff
- Adults at school can support students in need
- Belonging with peer groups
- Individual resilience of students

Needs

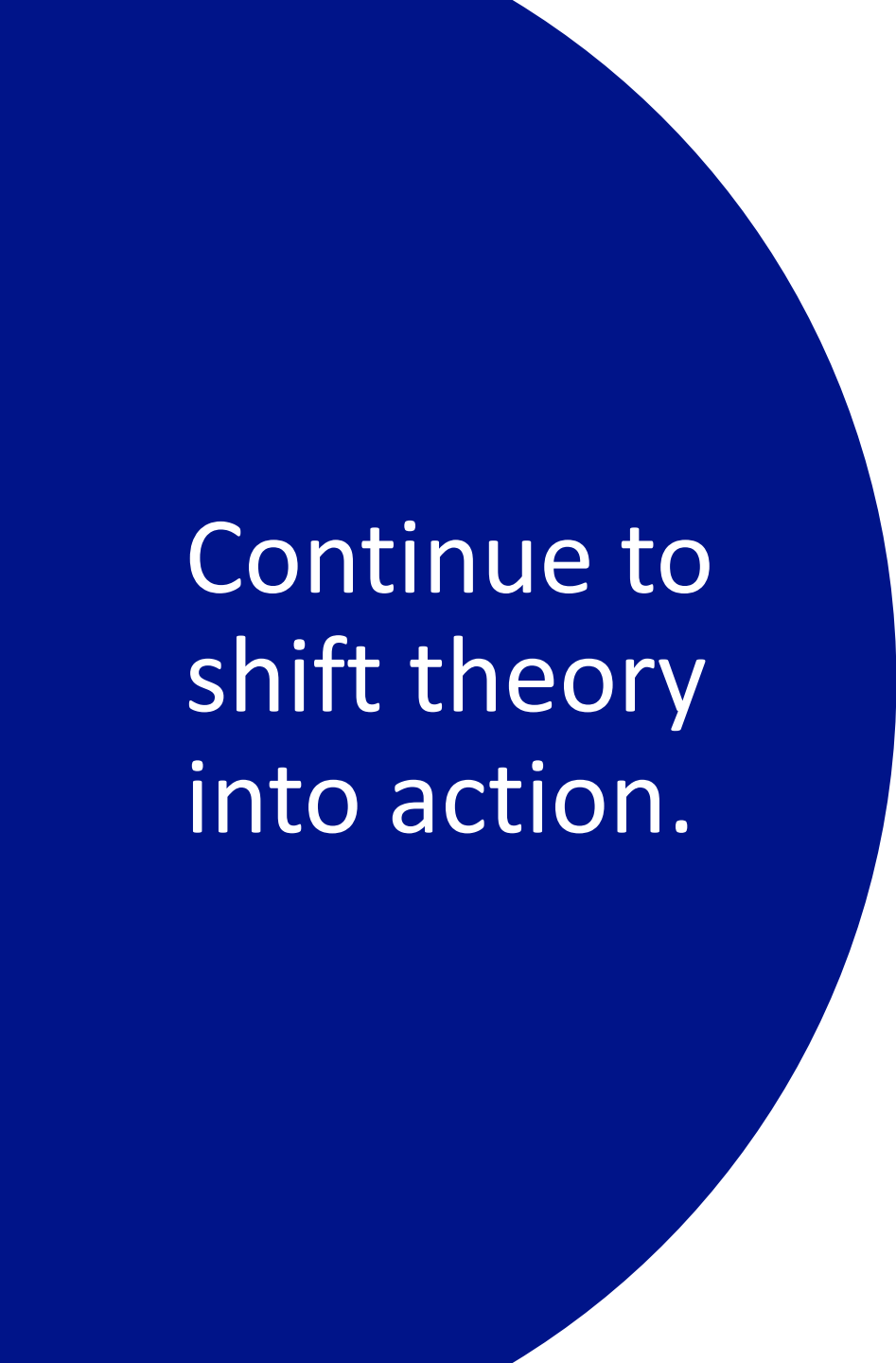
- Understanding students outside of academic needs
- Resources for mental health support
- Belonging for groups of students versus overall perception (LGBTQ+, special education, race and ethnicity)
- Gender norms

Recommendations

Overarching Recommendations

The recommendations in this section are designed to frame the next level of work and establish stronger consistency and alignment across schools and levels.

- Continue to **shift theory into action**.
- **Establish feedback loops** or mechanisms to address needs in real-time for students and adults.
- **Prioritize “what to do”** versus “what not to do”.
- **Establish the non-negotiables** to move forward and give permission for people to engage in the work.
- Systematically evaluate how the regular curriculum is inclusive for all students and **make decisions to formally integrate relevant academic resources** and materials.



Continue to
shift theory
into action.

The district has been extremely effective at building a solid foundation, clear expectations, and policies to support equity. Take the theory and structures and determine action steps to implement deeply in all pockets of the district.

Diversity fails to offer a vision or articulate a goal to work toward. Inclusion, on the other hand, is about the response to diversity in all its forms. When we embrace inclusion as a goal, it means a commitment to “change our culture to ensure all people feel that they belong, not in spite of their differences but because of them” (Cobb and Krownapple, 2019, p. 30).

Establish feedback loops or mechanisms to address needs in real-time for students and adults.



Successes are evident. This work is iterative and requires constant learning and growing.



Establish more authentic means for dialogue when issues arise.



Student voice is critical to this work. Create systems for ongoing feedback loops and response structures.



Prioritize “what to do” versus “what not to do.”

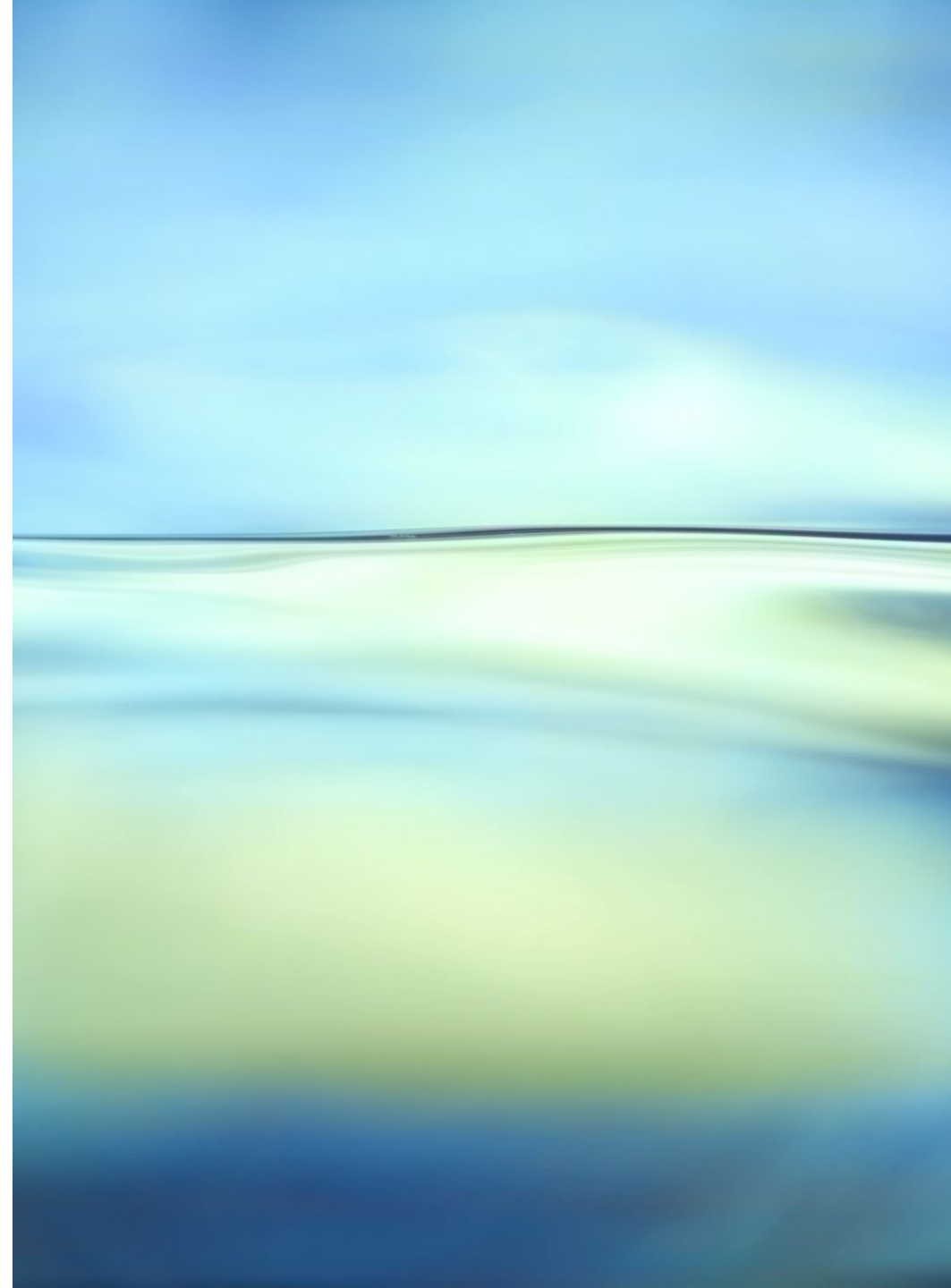


All own the work

Because people are opting in, the work is not getting systemic traction. Establish non-negotiables and give permission for people to engage in the work.

Clear and measurable action steps and non-negotiables with defined roles and an accountability mechanism will assist the shift to a model in which all take part.

Include groups who may not have participated in the current structures.



Resources for Educational Equity

Systematically evaluate the curriculum and make decisions

Formally integrate relevant resources and materials aligned with skills and standards

Communicate purpose and content as new resources are implemented

Training and support for teachers in culturally competent instruction

Consider access for all through a framework like Universal Design for Learning

Thank You!

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