SECTION 2

FOUR DIMENSIONS OF AN EQUITY LENS

HISTORICAL LENS

MAINTAINS OPPORTUNITY GAP

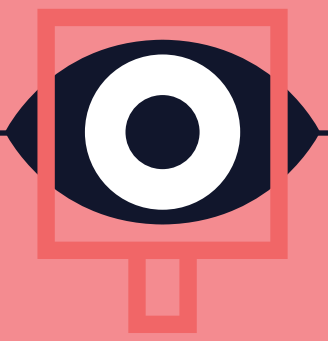
Engages in conversations about others' limited abilities.

Prioritizes voices of loudest & powerful.

Allocates resources based on potential highest # of students impacted in school.

Creates barriers by setting criteria to access opportunity.

EQUITY LENS



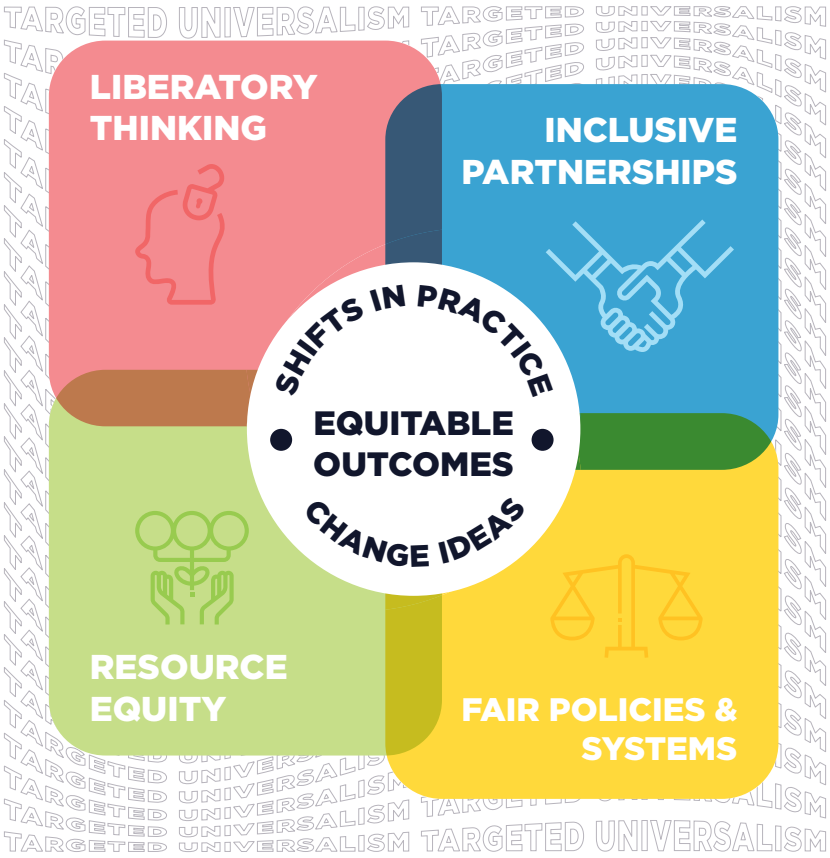
MITIGATES OPPORTUNITY GAP

Engages in conversations that create fairness, liberation, no matter background.

Prioritizes least served & under-represented group(s).

Allocates resources based on greatest needs of schools & student groups in schools.

Creates opportunity by eliminating barriers that inhibit access.



To become a more equitable school district, we must adopt a new way of understanding the work of equity. Shifting from a historical education lens that upholds structural racism to an equity lens that creates fair access and opportunities for all requires a theory of change for re-imagining what our district could look like and do.

The dimensions of the equity lens provide a descriptive, conceptual understanding of what equity work requires of individuals and groups, and how we can think and act in service of our students, especially those most impacted by inequity and historically underserved. The equity lens is an important tool because it helps us create the conditions that enable students to advance toward the universal goal. **The lens questions and unpacks the current situation, and reimagines it in a supportive and inclusive way that prioritizes those who are furthest from opportunity.** An equity lens using targeted universalism will help each of our schools and administrative offices have a clearer understanding of the student groups they are serving. Each of us must analyze, reflect, and strengthen our practices in these areas to better serve our students.

"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."
- Maya Angelou

(USE) LIBERATORY THINKING

"People would say 'Who is a leader?' A leader is a person that does the work. It's very simple. It's a personal choice for people who choose to put in their time and their commitment to do the work. It's a personal choice."
- Dolores Huerta

DEFINITION

Liberatory thinking is the re-imagining of one's assumptions and beliefs about others and their capabilities by interrupting internal beliefs that undermine productive relationships and actions. Liberatory thinking goes beyond simply changing mindsets to creating concrete opportunities for others to experience liberation. The opportunities provides cover for and centers underrepresented and marginalized people. It pushes people to interrogate their own multiple identities in relation to others and to think about the consequences of our actions, especially for students of critical need. It explores how mindsets can impede or ignite progress in the classroom, school, and district.

Liberatory thinking lifts up and institutionalizes culturally relevant and sustaining opportunities that celebrate students' identities and offer positive developmental experiences.

> ***Liberatory thinking pushes us to think about what we want for students as a result of equity - beyond only working to stop the negative consequences of inequity.***

Liberatory thinking requires working toward a common vision for equity and racial justice. Liberatory thinking appreciates and honors the differences among people, which includes but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, learning path, accessibility needs, family background, family income, citizenship, or tribal status.

(USE) LIBERATORY THINKING

IN-PRACTICE

Those who use liberatory thinking:

Broaden how they interpret data to be inclusive of student experiences instead of creating exclusionary practices.

Engage in deep reflective work to understand their biases, multiple intersecting identities, and personal stories.

Examine how they have been impacted by structural racism or systematic oppression while considering how they might be unintentionally perpetuating these conditions.

Disrupt historical ways of using data on assessment outcomes to compare students to dominant groups.

Develop individual and systemic equity purpose statements to guide decision-making.

Build relationships in affinity and across difference to lead change toward greater equity.

Advocate for fair treatment and opportunities for others.

Engage in courageous conversations on racial equity, internal biases, systemic inequities, and system redesign, including rethinking how they use data and how data impacts student experiences[7].

Manage privilege* and bias by acknowledging and mitigating their personal bias.

Set conditions for safe/brave spaces where both healing and interruption can occur.

Push to include diverse affirming (positive) traditions, cultural lived experiences and culturally relevant curriculum in school life

Liberatory Thinking Tool is available at: https://equity.cps.edu/tools/cps-equity-framework-liberatory-thinking-tool

(CATALYZE) INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS

"We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community. Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own."
- Cesar Chavez

DEFINITION

Inclusive partnerships (IP) value and prioritize the diverse voices of students, families, caregivers, and communities when making decisions that affect their lived experiences. This relationship requires the people and institutions who hold power to account for past inequities and to create conditions for healing and co-design* an equitable future. In the process of creating inclusive partnerships, an equity leader will always acknowledge and publicly recognize communities and cultures, and their solutions and ideas will be leveraged for shared benefit. The outcome will be both authentic engagement and diversity*, as well as more equitable decisions as a result of the engagement process. We prioritize three key stakeholder groups:

- People with institutional or historical memory,
- People most impacted by inequity, and
- People responsible for implementing and driving change.

Prioritizing the voices of those with the most critical needs by providing accessible authentic and collaborative experiences in schools, communities, online, and beyond furthers transparency and power sharing. Inclusive partnerships bring together a diverse array of stakeholders to engage in authentic, collaborative experiences and co-design* community-centered solutions to complex and challenging issues caused and upheld by systemic oppression. Internal partners include students, caregivers, school, district staff, and volunteers External partners include community organizations, research organizations, and funders, among others. All partners must remain committed to sharing power and responsibility as they move toward greater equity.

This requires inviting and allowing students[8], families[9], caregivers, and underrepresented employee groups to speak about their needs to inform improvement efforts.

(CATALYZE) INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS

IN-PRACTICE

Those who catalyze inclusive partnerships:

Prioritize the perspectives and voices of stakeholders with institutional and/or historical memory, those most impacted by inequitable decisions, and those responsible for implementing and driving change.

Shift from competition to cooperation mindset to productively address conflict, promote healing, and rebuild trust, using tools like meeting norms and the Equity CURVE, with much greater transparency in service of students.

Listen to diverse stakeholders to understand how culture, differences, and lived experiences can be leveraged as assets.

Engage in ongoing, inclusive partnerships with those most affected by structural inequity to design and implement a more equitable education system that empowers underrepresented students and adults.

Elevate student voice data and opportunities for student input across the district and city to understand students' lived experiences in order to make decisions that are made with students for students.

Embrace families across Chicago community areas as allies who engage and inform student learning opportunities, including continuous dialogue about allyship and anti-bias and how to leverage the community's strengths and assets inside and outside of school.

Set high, clear expectations for all parties to promote trust and transparency.

Finds ways to include voices and ideas that may have been previously ignored.

Spectrum of Inclusive Partnerships Tool available at: https://equity.cps.edu/tools/cps-equity-spectrum-of-inclusive-partnerships

(DIRECT) RESOURCE EQUITY

"The knowledge and skills to educate all children already exist. There are no pedagogical barriers to teaching and learning when willing people are prepared and made available to children."
- Asa G. Hilliard

DEFINITION

The goal of resource equity is to create equitable student experiences in learning-ready Environments[10]. Resource equity means consistently prioritizing and allocating people, time, and money to align with levels of need and opportunity.

> ***Resource equity recognizes that providing the same amount of resources to students and schools with different lived experiences, assets, and challenges will maintain the status quo of unequal achievement.***

The resources people need vary based on their quality of life. Resource equity creates opportunities to share resources within a school or institution or across schools to meet the diverse needs of all students.[11] Advocating for resource equity involves tracking level of opportunity in relation to performance or impact and creating progressive spending patterns.

The levers that impact student experiences occur at all levels of the district, including classrooms, schools, and district departments and offices. District leaders, school administrators, teachers, and support staff engage in continuous learning to identify ways to disrupt, and design their own policies and practices to promote responsive, timely resource equity for students across the district. Resource equity balances immediate solutions with sustainable, long-term distribution of resources to close opportunity gaps for students.

(DIRECT) RESOURCE EQUITY

IN-PRACTICE

Those who direct resource equity:

Make allocation decisions across schools and within schools based on data that presents the needs and assets of each community, school, and/or student group—and where they are currently situated within outcomes—to support achieving universal goals.

Use a broad range of data, including qualitative and multi-sector data, to assess the current and future impact of resource distribution in relation to the distribution of opportunity and how each of these correspond with outcomes.

Advocate for equitable resource allocation in their context or role.

Engage in an extensive, sensitive dialogue with an array of stakeholders, building public moral, economic, and political will to provide the resources and support to co-construct opportunity and give all students access to the resources, opportunities, and educational rigor they need to succeed.

Re-organize themselves to allocate the time and resources within their locus of control to focus on students and schools in areas of concentrated disadvantage.

Facilitate opportunities for schools and networks to share resources within and between schools including human capital, materials, and promising practices to address common problems.

See themselves as resources with agency and prioritize students with the most risk factors working against them in their efforts and actions to support schools and communities.

Resource Equity Tool is available at: https://equity.cps.edu/tools/cps-equity-framework-resource-equity-tool

(DESIGN) FAIR POLICIES AND SYSTEMS

"One does not understand structures or systems by looking at intent. Instead, we have to examine what they actually do—how they operate and what the outcomes are. Certainly a system or structure could be established for the purpose of excluding or discriminating. However, most structures produce racialized outcomes without intent."
- john powell

DEFINITION

Fair policies and systems promote equitable opportunities to reach equal positive academic and socioemotional outcomes for all student and stakeholder groups with an emphasis on those who are most impacted by structural inequality and inequity. Fair policies and systems happen after examining the impact of key policies, practices, and budgets on students and communities[13] followed by recommending and implementing actions for change. All policies require systems within which to operate; not all systems require policies. A system can function equitably with or without policies and policies can be used to positively impact systems to function equitably for students.

> ***To examine policies and systems, we must ask who is burdened by past and present policies and practices and who benefits in order to chart a future plan to address the impact of inequity and promote access and opportunity.***

The impact of inequity can include, and is not limited to, racial predictability of student success and community and school push out and displacement. Because policies and systems exist at the classroom, school, district, and city level, examining connections between policies and systems is critical for transformation.

> ***All policies and systems should be continuously improved with equity and social justice at the center.***

(DESIGN) FAIR POLICIES AND SYSTEMS

IN-PRACTICE

Those who design fair policies and systems:

Examine the impact within their control and explore possible equity-based solutions.

Create conditions that foster mutual trust and understanding, and which help stakeholders at all levels to be accountable for equity.

Check to see if their efforts marginalize a group of people or cause an undue burden*.

Ensure inclusion and equal treatment of greatest needs groups* in their school context.

Find root causes and generate a plan to redesign a policy or system.

Center policy decisions within students' lived experiences.

Inform those who currently hold the power and responsibility to impact the inequity that is uncovered.

Redesign policies and systems to address the pressing need for racial equity and to meet the needs of those most impacted by inequity.

Ask a set of agreed upon questions when assessing any policy or system to reduce bias.

Monitor the impact of policies and systems to ensure success for all student groups.

Utilize the strengths of Chicago's diversity to incorporate the social and cultural capital of its communities in all decision making.

Strengthen the links between school, classroom, and home to increase access and opportunity for parents.

Framework tool available at: https://equity.cps.edu/tools/chicago-public-schools-racial-equity-impact-assessment