

>> Before I--it's my pleasure to introduce Chemay Morales-James. She is the senior project associate for the Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality in the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education at New York University. She's a former special education teacher and is a lead creator and implementer of the TACD culture response in a four-part training series and has been a contributing writer for practitioners produced by TACD. In addition to working on TACD, Chemay has over 10 years experience working with students from vulnerable populations--sorry about that. That's on camera. Her interest in working with TACD was inspired by her desire to take part of creating systematic change in the way all children are appropriately educated especially those who have been disenfranchised. She has her bachelor's degree in special education. Her supervisor of education program is from the Teacher's College of Columbia University. Please welcome, Chemay.

>> So good afternoon. I hope you all had a first good session. Yes?

>> Yes.

>> Good. We're amped up, because we have lots of chocolate in our systems. I was talking to the group before and I was asking, "Does it really smell like chocolate in the hallway or is it just my mind playing tricks on me?" It really smells like chocolate from the hallway. Okay. I popped up. All right. Not because this is Hershey or something right now. So welcome. I'm assuming you all are here because you're interested in investigating what disproportionality is, what may be some of the indicators that impact disproportionality or factors that impact proportionality. And so if this is what you came here for, you're in the right place. If not, I will not be offended if you need to get up and find another session that fits what your needs are for today. So I do have to end about 10, 15 minutes earlier, I hope that's not a problem. I have to try to get back to New York City today and get back to Connecticut, so it's going to be a long ride for me today. Okay. So I'm hoping that I can give some information today that will be helpful that you can bring back to your schools that you work at nights when you work in school districts or that you service schools of some capacity. So before we get--got started just very quickly, we did a name game activity earlier where we had this small group. This is a larger group. Sorry. I don't--I don't--I don't want to spend too much time on that, but with the raise of hand, how many of you all are teachers in the classroom currently? How many building leaders do we have attending today? District leaders? Okay. Of those district leaders, are you all directors of Special Ed?

>> Curriculum.

>> Curriculum. Curriculum. Okay. All right. Any TAPD providers? Okay. Anyone that I did not mention that's--yes.

>> School psychology.

>> School--I was going to say speech pathology, school psychology. All right. Wonderful. All right. So I'm going to give you just a very brief history of the center that I work with, so that you understand sort of

the context behind this work. So I work for the Metropolitan Center formerly known as for urban education, but now we are known as the center for equity research and school--and school transformation. We recently--I was away and returning not too long ago. So when I came back, I found out we had a new name. So I'm adjusting to our new name. I've been at the center now for seven years. And our center, we primarily focus on addressing equity issues and education which is a very broad topic, so then we have different arms of the center that have--that focus on very specific areas of equity. And so I work for TACD which is known as TACD, the Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality. And so we are one of the larger branches of the metro center where we work with school districts that have been cited with disproportionality, meaning that they've been disproportionately suspending and/or classifying racial and ethnic minority students in special education. So that sounds familiar in some of your school district which I assume most of you all work MPA. Okay. Yes. So our work really focuses on placing vulnerable populations in the center of examining and improving practices and policies. So our center, we work with 16 school districts. And school districts, typically what happens is they get a letter from the state, a department saying you've been cited for these particular indicators. It's your responsibility to remedy these issues, how you choose to do so is up to you. So school districts will often connect with us to provide services, technical assistance, and professional development services. We are able to write those services for free since we are grant--appointed by the state. And then there are some districts that the state department will ask us to specifically work with, because the issues of disproportionality have been so persistent over a long period of time. Typically, we have a two-year commitment, minimum of a two-year commitment, but we've been with school districts up--school districts up to five, six years. So there's a district that I'm currently working in that I've been with for five years. So you can sure--I'm sure imagine the level of work in a five-year district. Addressing the issues is very different than a district that we're only able to stay in for two years. So we've learned a lot in the 10 plus years of doing this work. We've learned a lot around what disproportionality means, what it looks like from district to district. And we just worked in New York State, the TACD does, but the Metropolitan Center, the other branches that we have, for example, we have an arm that's called School Change. We have one that's called Center for Strategic Solutions. And so they would work with school districts outside. They're contracted with districts all over the country in different states. Some states may come looking specifically to address issues of disproportionality and can't do that through TACD, because we're state-funded only for New York, but they'll do it through CSS. And then some of them will connect with CSS for operations and may be holding issues, achieve the gap issues. So today we're just--I'm going to very briefly define, look at defining disproportionality, what that means. I'll give you an overview of our technical assistance process, how we do that, how we--what are the particular areas or the ways of work that we focus our work on and the sample product. So I--to simplify, it's pretty self-explanatory. They're in your--there's a link to our website for different specific sample products that you can access for free through our website. And I'd be more than happy to give you more information. You can email me if you want specific information on that. Any questions so far? Okay. So I'm going to--I mean I'm jumping

through, because the last book, we spent quite a few--sometimes I miss them. They want us to really get to the mean of the work. But I always like to start with the story of the typical classroom situation that you all have an opportunity to read this sentence dilemma. Yeah. Essentially a teacher who's frustrated with the child in her classroom who comes in fidgeting and is always off task and the teacher is frustrated, doesn't know what to do and is always asking, "What are we going to do with this kid? I need help." Right. Does everyone have a copy of this? Yes? No? Okay. So I see some faces. So why don't we do this? We'll take a couple of minutes. I'll read it aloud. We'll take a couple of minutes and maybe with someone next to you, we'll--I have some questions for you guys to think about in the situation. So we have [inaudible] class to check in to see with their kids who--because she used to have difficulty in [inaudible] draws her attention away from helping these students with the commotion in the center of the room. While [inaudible] papers over the floor and he stands in the middle of that [inaudible] do something with this child. After all, he's constantly disrupting class and prevents me from teaching all of other--all of the other kids [inaudible] administration or something. When Andy engages in class discussions, the topic is usually with these comments and contribution is reflected during the reviewing of education programs on TV, but his behavior is erratic and uncontrollable and [inaudible] but what are her options? She decides to refer him to the office for disciplinary action. She sees this as her only option. So with a partner, I want you to think about what are Ms. Sutton's options? Who knows if you're familiar to Andy and what are his problems and what's going to happen? We all probably can identify with his teacher at some point, right? So I'll give you a couple of minutes to reflect with a partner and then you're up.

>> [indistinct chatter]

>> Yes. We all know an Andy. So what are--we don't have time to hear from everyone, but are there some folks who would like to share some of the discussion they were having in terms of Ms. Sutton's options for Andy? Yes.

>> Well, we were saying that one of the options could be it might be a personality problem where Andy might need a teacher who can deal with this type of energy. I was also stating that perhaps a differentiated instruction would be a proper response to his behavior. He may just be bored in the classroom, so he needs to be further engaged and challenged in the classroom or having an orbital or some sort of an activity that he can stay busy than stop wreaking havoc at classroom.

>> Uh-hmm. Okay. Any other thoughts? Different thoughts?

>> This somewhat links to what she was saying is that those activities should be [inaudible] it seems like right now, the teacher is, you know, going--you know [inaudible] and that's the problem so to speak, what he has to contribute, but [inaudible] and we also thought [inaudible] psychologist, but maybe we should collect some data and get a more objective viewpoint about what's going on as far as those antecedence and how frequently, you know, on a day, what's the activity and come up with maybe some [inaudible]

>> Uh-hmm. Was there any point in your group discussions or conversation around what kind of supports we need to provide towards the teacher versus what's for the child? What may be an example for some of those supports? Yeah.

>> Well, we should collect data also, but we were thinking about collaborating with other people, so an opportunity to pull information from the nurse and [inaudible] that'd be my first step. And then beyond that, how about teachers [inaudible] what's his mom and dad say has just been an issue, what does his records say, so that opportunity and accessibility of the records and other people's experiences with speech, language, what else that we have.

>> Okay. Good. So there are lots of questions that we can ask, lots of options, right? If those options are available is another question, right? So you can come up with lots of options, but not all schools may actually have those options available or have them accessible for teachers and students. So I asked a very specific question around did any groups talk about supports or what kind of supports would be available for the adult, for the teacher, because oftentimes, when we work with school districts, there's this tendency for folks to want to, you know, put this fire out right away, right? We need to fix this child and we have to do something to--there must be something wrong with this child. And then what happens is we miss an opportunity to have a conversation around how can we build or improve instruction at the classroom level. These are always opportunities for us to always or they should be opportunities for us to reflect on [inaudible] delivery room instruction, how teachers are building positive relationships with students that maybe are difficult to build relationships with given their personality. Okay. So we can pass that a little bit more today. What was that?

>> I'm not sure how to say this...

>> [indistinct chatter]

>> I guess that I'm just--his personality given a rich personality.

>> Oh, given a--uh-hmm. Oh, the student or the...

>> The teacher, the teacher, yeah.

>> Yeah. So in the work that we do on TACD, we obviously are looking at the organizational capacity of the school district, right? How does the organization operate, what are the features and the components that add or subtract to student outcomes. And then we come in with this equity lines, right? So there are the common questions we ask that most providers are asked when they're coming in to do what needs assessment or what we cause analysis. And then there are the equity questions around an organizational gap, so universal, why do they disproportionately affect racial and ethnic minority and when it comes to the populations? Okay. So I'm saying--and they often hear me say when I refer racial and ethnic minority students and that's just because most of the districts that we work with in New York that are experiencing disproportionate student outcomes, the suspension and Special Ed typically are black and

Latino students and even in many cases, male, black male, and Latino students, but that doesn't necessarily mean that's the case in every school district. We do work sometimes with school districts upstate where Native American students are being disproportionately placed or classified or we may find that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds of any race or ethnicity are disproportionately being suspended or classified. So just keep that in mind. I don't want you to think that I'm assuming. I know what your disproportionality looks like because I don't. But you can sort of replace or fill in the gaps as we're having this conversation. So disproportionality, what does mean? Anyone want to share your definition of disproportionality? As you all are reading it on the slide.

>> Statistically, the proportions of subgroups in the larger population should look the same in substance.

>> Right. So we do have, let's say, 20% of your students are Hispanic, for example, then when you're looking at students that are for example being suspended or being classified as special ed, that percentage rate should look similar, right? If you--if you have 30% or 35% of your Hispanic population that are being suspended, then they are disproportionately being suspended given their composition makeup, makes sense? Okay. Now when we--in fact, we also define disproportionality as not just over representation, but also under representation, because that by default, if you have over representation, you have students, the same subgroups of students that are under represented in your rigorous academic programs. Okay. The state doesn't look at your representation, but when we work with school districts, we will often also look at that. So disproportionality doesn't just happen, you have root cause, you have these root causes, the initial start of the problem. And then you have compounding factors which are your policies, your practices, beliefs that magnify, maintain, or fail to address the root cause. And then together, you have disproportionality, right? Disproportionality is not a special ed issue. Usually, when I say that, you see like directors specially going, "I did not see. I've been trying to convince my district of that, but nobody wants to listen to me." Okay. If it's--if we've gone to special ed, it's because the issue has become a monster. It's become out of control that we now had to--have to resort to special education. Okay. So disproportionality is a symptom of a deeper issue, so when we go in and provide technical assistance, we spend the first half to a full year doing a needs assessment. And I mentioned earlier, we call it a root cause analysis, but it's the same thing. And in that root analysis, we are digging deeper. We are helping a district or a team of folks in a district to understand sort of how they got there according to the state, but also to take the time to dig deeper at examining the picture and examining the factors that contributed to those--to that symptom. So disproportionate--or the issues of disproportionality when we talk about the root causes exist in the general education tier one setting. Okay. So we're not looking at what's going on in tier two or tier three that has caused disproportionality, we're looking at what is going on or isn't going on in tier one that has impacted students to the point where worsening achievement gap in disproportionate student analysis. So there are two ways of looking at disproportionality. There are the types of causes or which also are our solutions and those are our policy related disproportionality, our practices and our beliefs, we call those the PPB, policies, practices, and beliefs. We're always looking at policies, practices, and beliefs, types of causes within those areas. And

then there's the locations or the domains of the causes that the policies, practices, and beliefs and our intervention systems, the way they're setup, the way they deliver our PPBs in terms of how instructional staff capacity is built, our policy, practice, beliefs around the type of curriculum and instruction we had and how that's implemented and the policy, practice, beliefs around how external community is accessed and brought into conversations and how we build relationships with that. I will also add that another domain or two other domains that we look at is--or that we're beginning to look at, I should say, because we're always going through our work is around leadership, so the capacity of leadership to sustain the work and also school climate. So let's just briefly define each of those areas. We all--so we all what that means, right? So when we look at intervention services, AIS stands for New York Academic Intervention Services. Okay. We all know what PBIS is, right? IST, Instruction Support Teams. I heard from the previous group that you guys in Pennsylvania had that, but they're now becoming RTI teams, is that correct? Is that my correct understanding? Okay. It's the same thing in New York. We started with these Instruction Support Teams and then they are now being called, in some places, RTI teams. So all of these domains interconnect. It's just like with students, you can't separate academic and behavior, right? So when we talk about response to intervention, we should always be considering when there's an academic outcome of a child that we're trying to change, we also should be thinking about what are the behavioral outcomes that a child needs to employ in order to change those academic outcomes, right? Studying is a behavioral outcome, right? Being on task is a behavioral outcome. And we can't have that conversation separate from talking about improving academic achievement. So it's the same thing with all of these domains. So we have all of these domains of work. And I was asking the group earlier this morning which domain--if you had to focus your attention on a domain that you think would get you more--get you immediate results in terms of addressing issues specific to disproportionality, what do you think that domain would be if that exists? Which do you--which domain or domains you think might have the most impact? Immediately, most immediate impact versus long-term. Any guesses?

>> Instruction.

>> Instruction? I remember, we're missing leadership there too. Yeah.

>> I would say staff, because you're talking about a belief system, so you've got to get to the belief system of the staff before you're really going to have that impact.

>> Uh-hmm.

>> I was thinking I also accept that when you said immediate, I know that that's the most difficult one to change. You can't change people, but I can change the curriculum and I can change the instruction, but changing adults' mindsets of behavior is very difficult.

>> Uh-hmm. It's really hard, right? It's hard to be able to say it's one more than the other. And so although in the work that we do, we may start with one place, you--in doing that work, at some point, we begin to then tie in the other domains because let's say we begin with even intervention services, helping

a district frame up their response to intervention model. Okay. How teachers are accessing that, what are the interventions that are in place, what interventions do we need to add in place? We can't have that conversation around leadership, how--who's the leadership that's responsible for supporting that work, leadership that believes in that work, right? You can't have that conversation without talking about how do we develop partnerships with the community and families. If we're talking about kids, then the family's going to have to be part of that conversation, right? You can't have that conversation on intervention services and also talking about curriculum and how instructions are being delivered in the classroom, because the fidelity in which the curriculum is being implemented may have an impact on that student's performance. So you see how all of these, it's very messy and there's no sort of clear starting point all of the time. This is why it takes years to do this work and this is why I might say I've been working for one district for five years that looks very different than our year--one year to a district. So there are all of these other factors, these contributing causes, right, that exist in these different domains. There's classroom management, instruction, fidelity of interventions, referral process, discipline policies, teacher expectations, misconceptions, and cultural [inaudible] all of these factors, right? All of these factors play a role, all contribute to the root cause. Makes sense? It can get complicated, right? Any questions so far? So disproportionality is a result of the interaction between these policies, practices, and beliefs. So how do we address them [inaudible] so our focus is really helping schools become that protective factor. Oftentimes, schools get so caught up in so many different initiatives that they don't build the time, not because they don't care, but because they're just so busy, busy trying to catch up with what's the new thing, train the teachers on the new thing, persuade people on believing in the new thing, right? And then by the time we convince them, we've got a new name to call it. We've got a new name and we start all over. Okay. So you can see that it can be very easy to lose sight and focus on what's really important at the heart of our work. And most importantly, I'm making sure that we are having equitable student outcomes, so when we talk about disproportionality and just being impacted, we're talking about vulnerable students that are being impacted. That means students that probably have high risk factors in their lives. What are some high risk factors in a student's life? We need a school psychologist for that. What are some examples of high risk factors in a child's life?

>> I know it could be the problems in adolescence. We have economic status [inaudible] prenatal factors, you know.

>> So we can go on and on with the list, so we know what those can be. What are examples of protective factors? Because--just because you have those risk factors in your life, should those define what life trajectory you take in your life? Should they ever--should your race, ethnicity, your gender, or your socioeconomic status, your health, your family history, should that define what pathway you take? It shouldn't. If you look at student outcomes, for some kids, it is defining their pathway. Okay. It shouldn't. It should never--any of those factors, those risk factors should never be an indicator in terms of what kind of life a child is going to have. So if we're trying to change a child's potential life trajectory, we change that by providing protective factors into life. So what are some of those protective factors? Uh-hmm.

>> Providing a supportive environment, information for students...

>> Information is something that [inaudible] providing information to students, to families. Yeah. What else?

>> Equal access to original curriculum and supports.

>> So making sure students all have access to rigorous quality curriculum instruction and supports.

>> Positive relationships.

>> Positive relationships. I'm glad that you said that, because I think a lot of times you forget about the significance and the power of relationships, right, because we know that you can have a struggling student in one class, right? The kid is struggling really hard to keep up in one class or to follow directions, but has really good relationship with teacher being across the hall and that teacher can get that student to do anything, right, which has nothing in that moment to do with the curriculum, but more to do with the type of relationship that is built with the child and the adult, so relationships are really powerful. So the question is, how are we providing those protective factors in schools? And so with our TA work, a lot of our work is helping districts to helping schools to one, identify where the gaps are in terms of what factors are not being--what protective factors don't exist and then how do we help them build that. In part of doing that in our root cause analysis, we help them to identify what are some of the risk factors that exist here that you may not be aware of. So we help districts to develop this equity lens, that we call an equity lens when they're doing their work. Okay. It's doing what you're doing it, but now, putting on a different set of lenses in doing your work. Are you--have you asked or considered these sets of questions, have you considered the outcomes of these particular groups? Have you considered these possibilities or these factors as potentially contributing to those outcomes? So for example [inaudible] protect--it's protect--it's not a protective factor, it can be a risk factor in school. The school may not even realize that these factors exist, but they do. And they're impacting students. What does that mean stereotype [inaudible] anyone know? Yeah.

>> Just a belief or a feeling among the people that maybe children from a certain, you know, economic status or, you know, racial group that aren't able to--aren't as smart, don't happy saying, you know, intellectual gifts or abilities as that are maybe from white middle class factors.

>> Okay. So it's--when [inaudible] who's done a lot of research around stereotype threat, he would say it's a psychological phenomenon that happens, right, that we may internally--we recognize that there are stereotypes about certain groups that we identify with. And we may try to not fit that stereotype. Sometimes, we may find ourselves fitting that stereotype and try not to fit that stereotype if that makes sense. And so this happens with kids and sometimes, we create situations or we set up schools in way that perpetuate these negative stereotypes. Okay. And then they--and that sends a message to kids. So for example, tracking, right, or when you think about who is present [inaudible] classes versus those that

are not. We could clearly see in any classroom, there's a different racial and ethnic makeup and [inaudible] classes versus your low level track classes. Okay. Very subtle, you know, there's no policy around or we're going to deliberately put these kids in this class and deliberately put these kids in the opposite class. No one does that in school, right? We don't try to do that in schools, but it happens. It's a reflection of systemic--deep rooted systemic issues in schools that again, we get so busy, busy that we never stop to really pay attention to what's going on, how we've setup classrooms for so long, the message that we've been sending, the messages that we continue to perpetuate at the classroom level. All right. So when kids don't see themselves in a certain group or class, at some point, they start to believe it. They start to believe the stereotype, they start to believe, "I don't belong there or if my teacher believes I should, I don't believe I can. I don't want to act. I don't want the opportunity to be there." Okay. And that can be real, that's a life--that can be damaging for someone's life. So in doing this technical assistance, we're helping districts to see this put on that lens, are you paying attention to these indicators, what are you going to do now, now that you see these factors? The absence of understanding racial and ethnic identity development. All right. So, we talked about in the last new concepts in grooming, there was a school that--in Long Island, actually, I'll show you a few different story. There was a school--it wasn't in Long Island. I think it was a school in upstate New York that--and it was high school. One of our former directors was kind of doing a walk through in the building. And he was there because they were--they were having issues in terms of over suspending their black male students in this particular high school. And so they were working with our former director, trying to figure out, "What can we do differently? We don't understand why this is happening?" And so he noticed--my former director noticed a wall that they had the school rules up. It was like in the cafeteria and one of the rules was, "No do-rags." Okay. When he went back and looked at that student data in terms of what students were being suspended for, there were a high percentage of white male students. It wasn't the only area they were being highly suspended for, but one of the areas was no do--because they were coming to school wearing these do-rags and so they were being disciplined for wearing these do-rags. So what's wrong with that? Somebody maybe thinking what is wrong with that? Somebody maybe thinking there is something wrong with that. So what [inaudible] potential issue of that?

>> [inaudible] there's a certain population of your students. In addition, it's not an area where it's preventing them from learning or preventing the others from learning, so now what you're doing is you're taking a certain population of your students are moving into a school environment and therefore take away their opportunity to learn for something that is aesthetic and one--or one segment of our populations believe about what's socially acceptable and what's not.

>> Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm. So, you can see--now the school probably set it up for what reason? What do you think listed [inaudible] do you think they were saying, "We're going to target our black males students, because we see they're the only ones wearing do-rags, so you know what, we're going to get them. We're going to put this policy." This rule that took place, do you think that's the school was thinking? What do you think they were thinking, potentially, so guessing, or assuming?

>> Were they looking for conformity or...

>> Maybe conformity.

>> [indistinct chatter]

>> Respect maybe. There--was it perceived by staff, if you have something on your head and you're wearing it in class, that's a sign of disrespect, could be.

>> Potential gang affiliation.

>> Maybe potential gang affiliation, it might be a belief that it's a hat, some form of a hat and while we have a rule that says no hats, therefore the do-rag is a hat. So you see how all of these misconceptions could--you know, can occur when you don't have a dialogue. When you--one don't recognize how a policy can be directly impacting one very specific group, so now we send a message to those kids that we're targeting even though that's not the intention of the school at all, but that's the interpretation of the students. And we know when high school students, right, adolescents interpret that, what do they do? "You're trying to get me? You think you're tough, right?" And so then you actually exacerbate the issue. Okay. So then what that school had to do is then have a conversation around, well, what is a do-rag? What we believe a do-rag is versus what the students actually use their heads for, because, you know, they're not hats. Okay. Because once the school is able to understand it, then they were able to change their policies and practices around that. Now, the relationship between them and those students, that may have--may take time to change, because they've already broken that relationship. That policy in practice broke the relationship between school staff and black male students. Okay. So, that was going to take years to repair. But you see how we can set up our school policies and practices and procedures not even be aware that we are perpetuating negative stereotypes that we are perpetuating historical inequities in a school setting. Truth and labeling, if you haven't already downloaded or looked at it, it is on the website. It's a good resource for you to get some more information particularly around disproportionality and special ed. And I just want to make sure I mentioned that before I forget. So, I've been talking about our TA, so let's take a closer examination at the TA. So, I mentioned earlier that we spend in our phase one, we used to call it stage one, but now we're calling it phase one where we do a root cause analysis. We start based on a data that the state gives us, but we know that that data gives us a very tiny snapshot of a school district. There is a story behind that data. We know that data is a symptom of a deeper issue with the school and so we spend a lot of time in the school district trying to unpack the different layers of, again, in figuring out what else do we need to know, what else is going on? Quantitative and qualitatively, what do we need to be looking at? That might be in surveys, conducting surveys with staff in terms of--around policies, practices, and beliefs, doing focus groups, looking at student records, so we do spend some time doing--taking a random sampling of student records where we actually try to track the history of a child that has been, for example, classified as special ed, so what led them there before they were special ed and what grade that the teachers begin to document that they

were--they saw issues, what levels of interventions and supports were provided for students? Did that vary depending on the students whether they came from a different socioeconomic background, whether they were English language learners, whether they were black, etcetera, because you'll be surprised--or maybe you wouldn't be surprised, because when you look at that student data, you'll find that there are some student groups that access special ed for different reasons. And there are other student groups that may not even purposely access special ed, but is accessed for them by staff personnel for completely different reasons than what parents would access it for. So then our phase two is a technical system. This is where then we--our root cause develop service plans, now, we're implementing that plan. And that plan again is going to focus around those domains of work. Is it going to focus on all of those domains? No. Not necessarily or not immediately, because it's impossible to try to do all--to do work in all of those areas all at once. But what typically we do is, after we've looked that data, we will focus on one domain of work and begin to build that work. And as we're building that work, we slowly begin to build the other domains as we're doing that. So, if you are familiar--and then of course you're doing this for our culturally responsive ones. So for example, one domain of work that we have developed a lot or two areas is the intervention and instructional [inaudible] now, we don't [inaudible] really pick those areas. There's research to back up our decisions, okay? So, I don't know if you guys are really reaching that Klingner's work, K-L-I-N-G-N-E-R and Todd Gravois, G-R-A-V-O-I-S. Okay. Klingner, she recently passed away. She had done longitudinal studied with various districts that had been cited with disproportionality, investigating, you know, what's going on here, what processes, what--you know, what is the props of these work? And so her findings showed was that--and not just hers, but even Todd Gravois's work around teams, they call them different names, whether they'd be instructional constituted teams, IS teams, RTI teams. Well, we call the culturally responsive problem solving teams. Schools that have problem solving teams, teams that teachers would go to when they're experiencing behavioral and/or academic issues with the child, they turn to these teams as a resource to help them provide interventions for these kids. But what Todd Gravois and Klingner had found is that these teams--these teams that are successful are not only successful in identifying interventions and supports for kids, but interventions and supports for teachers, that these teams also function as a resource in terms of building some capacity, so you see how those two domains now, they've connected. It's not just about--you can't separate interventions this--at capacity, we have to connect the two. And these teams can serve as a place where they can do that given the right training and support. Okay. So, that's why we will often--in terms, when we're talking about disproportionality, we will spend a lot of time looking at, okay, what are your problem solving teams, let's take--let's go and observe, see how they're currently functioning, how you define it versus how they're actually functioning, how should they be functioning if you--if you want to improve the outcomes for kids and the outcomes for adults? Sounds simple, but it's complex and controversial, because now you're talking about something that most of these teams are--have never talked about or are not comfortable talking about what is that. What was that?

>> Themselves.

>> Themselves. So, you're telling us that now we have to give feedback to our colleagues? Most people think of it as [inaudible] we have to evaluate--no, we're not evaluating, right? We're writing constructive feedback. It's a paradigm shift in education. The research supports this type of work, but we've been slow in terms of changing to what the research is saying that we should be doing. Okay. So, when I say I've been working in the school district for five years, we have been doing this for five years. The first year was bumping heads, there was a lot of people leaving the team. And I think that that was a--it was not a bad thing. Okay. A strong leader who supported the beliefs, so you have to have--this is where the leadership domain comes in, you have to have a leader that believes in this work and is willing to push buttons, is willing to ask the really difficult questions, and hold people accountable, so when we start talking about where does culture fit in the problem solving process of a culturally responsive problem solving team, she didn't, you know, sit back in terms of having those conversations. She pushed those conversations forward even though people didn't want. People were saying, "What does culture have to do with this?" We were problem solving. Any team that's problem solving, when you have an issue with a child, whether it be behavioral and/or [inaudible] and are there even questions around what will culture place? Is there a never ever consideration that there could be cultural conflict or disease between the teacher and the child, right? Most teams doing think about that, don't go to that level of thinking. Either one, they don't--never thought to, or two, are too uncomfortable to have those conversations for fear of how staff might take those kinds of questions. So there was a lot of work involved in training staff, so that meant us and our technical assistance going in, observing, provide any feedback on how they're talking to each other giving them some starting points to begin those dialogues, help in practice, so we did a lot of practice within the group with case studies, how to have the conversation, what not to say or what to say. It sounds tedious, but it was necessary for people who never--who just never knew how to do this kind of work. Makes sense? Questions, thoughts, comments? Oh, yeah.

>> [indistinct chatter]

>> I would like to say is that this is about a comment is that I never have worked with new teachers who have relocated from different state, they're coming to work here with students in Philadelphia school district. They had a very difficult time just understanding their culture of the children, working with the young people who are very vocal, verbal, you know, and also--and they even know, if they don't want to learn this, so they want to try this and do something different, but those teachers found it very difficult, because they were used to that setting from the State of Connecticut or another location in our country where the students come into the classroom, they sit down, and they're ready to go. They're not--they were turned off, you know, ready to leave their profession, because they didn't understand the culture of the [inaudible]

>> Uh-hmm. Yeah. So, not considering that you can see something very small that you think is very small can have a huge impact in terms of the relationships that are built or not built between adults.

>> So with that, I guess I would ask you as part of the school district of Philadelphia, is there a mentor program or a way to really expose teachers to the culture all from very beginning, so that they can better embrace and understand the culture?

>> Well, they had created a position called the new teacher coach. And I was one of them along with my colleague. And we went into classrooms and we supported different teachers. We discussed it in our new teacher induction program. And we--and it was the hottest topic out of all of them, you know, and I believe that that's where they were able to really share their thoughts and their beliefs that what happened with them in the classroom that day or last week, you know, so they were able to reflect and also to--I guess more just like just getting out, you know, and felt safe, because I let them know that whatever you say is going to stay in here, but we need to hear it and talk about it, so we can better understand each other.

>> I want to say though as a teacher and you're urban district [inaudible] it's also [inaudible] are just issues that non-urban teachers are having coming to urban areas, but it's such an issue in our district that I complete my dissertation on the disproportionality in our district. And the teachers--because we had children coming into our district from Philadelphia, these teachers, they're trying to shove the culture of the district down these families' throats. And it doesn't work. And then you had the clashing because they--well, they should act just like everyone else here. Well, the middle class [inaudible] structure that we have here is changing, because the district is now--the majority, African-American. It's no longer a white Jewish district. So what we need is a changing of our approach to our students. And if you want to hold onto old value structures, then you're not going to reach a certain population of the students.

>> Yeah. And that's the belief piece when we talk about looking at policies, practices, and beliefs. That's the belief piece, right? That's the common belief piece that we struggle to work with in schools. And we've recognized in our work and lessons learned, I think, initially we came in too strong and we said, well, beliefs is the root cause. It's the glue to everything that, you know, what you believe impacts the policies and the practices that you developed and that you implement, that's what holds it together. And so, if we don't--if we don't go in and try to get them to reexamine their beliefs, we can't get them to change their policies. We can't change their practices. So, we--lesson learned was that you can't go full flight to say, "We'll just going to look at beliefs." And because what ends up happening, beliefs are so personal that people just shut down. So, even if you're saying something that is a value and is of truth, if people feel personally attacked, they are going to withdraw. And so we realize, okay, we need to obviously identify the policies and practice and so that we can begin to help districts identify that need to be modified or transformed. But while we're doing that work, pepper in those conversations around. What are the beliefs that drive this? What are the--what are the questions that we need to ask that challenged those beliefs of our staff? And so it was through that pepper--peppering or that integration of the--our culture of responsive work that used to be separated that then we realized needs to be integrated in our teamwork. And that became more powerful. Yes.

>> What I'm thinking that that's still dealing with the problem when the problem exists. So, if we identify the teaching preparation, we could be able to be more proactive, what's your culture, what are you perceived, your outlook is going to be when you're placed in diverse populations or any culturally conscious, those kinds of things that people could look at their own identity and background, so that they're more prepared to be open-minded where they are getting involved.

>> Uh-hmm.

>> So we're proactive instead of waiting for identity problem and then...

>> Absolutely. Absolutely. So, you can see here--this is not the best diagram and I'm still trying to figure out how to--how to claim this. But here's two phases, right. So, we talked about our root cause. We've talked about cultural response of education. We talked about our technical assistance. So, at one time, what we used to do was, okay, we do this for cause analysis. They only have some exclusive direct conversations around race and we roll that race claims in terms of student outcomes, because if we're having racial student outcomes, that means we have the conversations around race, right? If we have genderized student outcomes, we wouldn't have a conversation around those outcomes at all talking about what are the implications in general. So, it's the same thing with race. The problem is that we're not--we're comfortable with talking about gender conversation. We're not comfortable with having the race conversation. And so we recognize, okay, schools need to have these conversations, so we would have very exclusive direct trainings. They were--we call them the Culturally Responsive Education four part series, right? When we did an introduction, we actually had trainings, ethics are exclusively titled. Let's talk about race part one and part two, because we knew the conversation. We have to continue. And then we started to do--then we felt like if we challenged this, so we begin to address them with this then we get people prepare to then--to detect a [inaudible] because we've begun to challenge some of the mindset. What we've realized is that this, if I can take this pink and we'll need it into these two areas, that's how I would describe the work today. Okay. Because we realize that although maybe in some some instances, this isn't necessary to do separately and I still think that sometimes you do have to have those separate conversations, but I don't necessarily think it may have to come in this order. In fact, sometimes, I think it may happen later. So, like if you're a five district, right? We didn't have these very explicit conversations until year two. Once I developed a bond and relationship with folks that they were prepared already. Okay. Now, we are ready to transform our instruction support team. Then, I was able to challenge them here, because I've developed a relationship strong enough that they were willing to take on the challenge. Okay. But it didn't mean that in year one, we've already getting to have some of those conversations, right? So, in year one I was still pushing that and throwing in some of those questions, but not as explicitly or direct as I would in a separate training. Does that make sense?

>> Uh-hmm.

>> Okay. So the--this is definitely integrated more so than it was when we first started doing RTI work. So, why culturally responsive? Well, our overarching goal was to develop a culturally responsive [inaudible] the most reportable practitioners and guide them in using the slides to make--I'm going to set up practice in policy changes in schools and then and dealing with the focus on early warning systems because that might be the domain that we're working on which will fall under interventions. Makes sense? So, then we would replace whatever domain is in that area or in that statement. These are sessions separately and I'm not going to go through them, but they are--they are--if you have questions about it, let me know. And it's not to--I'm not trying to disregard them because they are vital and important. But again, I don't want people to think that this work is separate. I think what happens is we go into schools and with all cultural responses stuff, that's another thing we have to do. And so--and as we've improved in our technical assistance, like I said earlier, we've realized that, yeah, we need to be direct and explicit in terms of who we're talking about. But it doesn't mean there has to be a separate conversation. We can have that conversation while we're talking about what needs to change policy-wise, practice-wise here. Okay. What's the lens that we're putting on as we're making those changes? That's where CR fits. That's the glue. CR is a glue. So I see we have all these domains. Cultural responsive education isn't a separate domain. It's the glue that connects all of those domains, right? So, these are just some of the questions that we would ask typically over the process from the beginning. What is culture? What relevance does it play in school, taking [inaudible] what do need to know about ourselves relative to race and power in order to better understand our kids and our families? How does racial and ethnic identity impact racial and ethnic minority students? What policies or practices will be changed given our perspectives? And then, of course, addressing policies and practices to produce and maintain good outcomes. Okay.

>> [indistinct chatter]

>> Yes.

>> Do you--do you control those processes before you can then look at the policies to see the policies from that lens of what maybe fostering this disproportionality versus going in and having the formula of this policy? It's really about getting that group to talk through that.

>> It just has to be simultaneously. So we're identifying what are some of those policies and procedures and practices that maybe impacting some important task. While we're identifying those policies and procedures, we're then asking those challenging questions around what will culture place in the development of this policy. Whose perspective have you developed this policy from? Right. Who's to say how did we come up with this definition around disobedient behavior or disruptive behavior? Why is it disruptive for you and why is it not disruptive for this person or this teacher?

>> So, you might go through the disciplinary...

>> So, we would--we would go through the code, right, the financial, I'm going through the code asking those hard questions because we see disproportionality outcomes in those very soft, vague disciplinary indicators, right? Disobedience, disruptive, defiant, that's where we see disproportional, who's not, you know, some who brought a gun or brought drugs. Those are very clear objective behaviors. But we all define disobedience and defiance very differently. And some of us may not think using foul language is a big deal, right? And some of us, you know, have a person were to said and already a referral was being written. Okay. So, different perspectives on behavior create different outcomes, often inequitable outcomes. It doesn't necessary mean that there are certain groups that are behaving better than other groups, but that there are certain groups of kids who either have been--have grown up or had learned the dominant norms in their community or their school community, so they can navigate that school community more--much more easier than a child who hasn't grown up knowing those norms or different set of norms or refuses to change because doing so means changing who they are. RTI team, whatever you want to call it for that intervention and teach your class the domain. So--and then above it are some of the culturally responsive elements that are--we are integrating in this--in this teamwork or in this conversation. So we know--we want to work with the team, get them to identify, know and understand the purpose of their team, at the same time helping with all kind of language around culture and what that means. We want to help in clearly define a problem-solving process, at the same time, recognize societal or institutional structures in schools that could impact that process and fill the capacity by the set, understandable of identity in schools and society. Do you see how the system have to be separate, how it can be meshed together overtime? So just stuff I talk about in terms of RTA. Obviously, we do data analysis, professional development training to teachers is integrated in RTA process. Summer institutes--oh, we have a summer institute, June 27th this year, if you go onto our website, TACD. And if you register as a TACD affiliate, you will not be charged. So, every year, we put on a conference with the school district set. Some of them will present at some of the workshop sharing the work that they've done to address disproportionality. What are the areas that they've improved in? What are the areas they're still struggling in? Where are they moving forward? But we also have a host of other folks that present like Dr. Thomas [inaudible] who's done a lot of work around the instructional rounds. And we have some host of other folks, if you go into our website, you can see the list of presenters. But June 27th is our date and you are certainly invited to attend at no cost. But that is one of our expected little goals is to provide this conference. So if you go onto our website, we do have some tools. So, we have a data analysis workbook. We use this workbook when we're doing our root cause analysis. So, those of you especially directors that are tasked to look at your data, student level data, this is a great tool for you to use. It will you break down that data a little further, how to desegregate it. Also, you could use some guiding questions around the data, some of those difficult or challenging questions that you can throw out to a group that maybe doing this data analysis specifically around disproportionality. So, if you have already access to PowerPoint, you may want to go online. So I know it's a long link, so, if you want, why not...

>> So, these are--these are available on--just on the website?

>> Yes. Yup. They're available on the RTI form, wherever you got the PowerPoint, it should--it should be there. We also have one specific to discipline referral analysis. So if you are analyzing discipline data, this also a great tool for you to use with your--either yourself or the team that's looking at the security for all data. We have a root cause process manual that we also walk districts through when we're doing our root causes analysis.

>> There's only a link on the first one. Does...

>> Did you try it?

>> Are they all the same--so there's no--there's a link there for data analysis, but, you know, there...

>> You know what, if you go onto--when you say about on first, did it have a Metro Centers link on the very first slide? Usually, I do have it there.

>> Then why you...

>> Yeah. If you go onto the Steinhart, yeah, and then you go--there are TAC Centers. Let me see with your--right now. I will make sure you guys get to the right thing. Oh, yeah. Uh-hmm.

>> They're all there?

>> Yeah, they're all in here.

>> Okay. So, let's go into this whole team research and then...

>> Yeah. If you go onto Metro, it's all on Metro's website under TACD, because there are other members I mentioned, there are other sub-centers, so, you want to make sure when you go onto Metro Center, you go onto TACD's link and you'll be able to access those. If for whatever reason you're struggling to access them, my email is on the first slide. Feel free to email me and I can send it to you directly.

>> Okay.

>> Okay. Any questions, thoughts, comments?

>> I just feel...

>> Yeah.

>> The strategies that our district tried with the over--under representation of black American students and the gifted and honor courses was to implement universal acceleration. So, basically it's an open door process that any child who wants to sign for [inaudible] course can do so whether they had the pre-requisites or whether they've been recommended or referred. And that child can get into that 18 course or [inaudible] course and either they're going to succeed or they're not going to succeed. And when they saw it was a great influx and the role of African-American students in those classes whereas before it had

maintained as we have a white high school and we have a black high school and they're existing within the same building. Now, we're seeing a more representative of cultural mix in those classes.

>> Uh-hmm. Interesting. Thank you for sharing.

>> [indistinct chatter]

>> Yeah.

>> So, those are definitely strategies to consider and think about how that might work in your own building. That's good to know that you guys saw a result, because sometimes when schools do that, I've seen also where they still struggle to get kids to sign up, because they've...

>> The mentality of fear.

>> Right, there's a mentality of fear. They've overlooked that mentality of fear. They've overlooked the history of the school district in terms of the perception of this--of African-American families and their parents' experiences in schools, so...

>> The district had a lot of assistance from parents about, well, now, the quality of the course will go downhill. And they stood their ground and it's been three years then.

>> Oh, that's good.

>> Very successful.

>> Yeah. Well, certainly, we would love to hear, you know, the continued success around that and what happens, that would be great. Any other thoughts, comments, questions?

>> What school--excuse me. What school district do you come from?

>> [indistinct chatter]

>> Okay. Thank you for sharing. All right. So, thank you all for your time. I hope you are staying for the next...

>> Thank you.

>> ...two days and enjoy the rest of your two days and get some good information. And I hope to hear from you if you have any questions. And hopefully, some of you guys can make our summer institute. All right. So, thank you.

>> Thank you so much, Chemay.