



**July 24, 2014**

**A Process for Examining and Addressing Systemic  
Inequities within State Education Agencies**

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Great Lakes Equity Center**

**NASTID Summer Conference**

# Great Lakes Equity Center

One of the ten regional EACs funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The Great Lakes Equity Center provides assistance to state education agencies and public school districts in the areas of race, gender, and national origin equity.



# Today we will

Discuss the importance of cross-departmental dialogue to explore the extent to which existing patterns of beliefs and practices, as well as established policies, procedures and structures contribute to the marginalization of students and their families, thus limiting students' opportunities to access quality learning experiences and outcomes

Outline elements of an equity-focused process of practice and policy review and strategic planning to redress systemic inequities and advance culturally responsive educational systems

# Challenges faced by Pre K-12 Systems



Performance  
Gaps

Opportunity Gaps

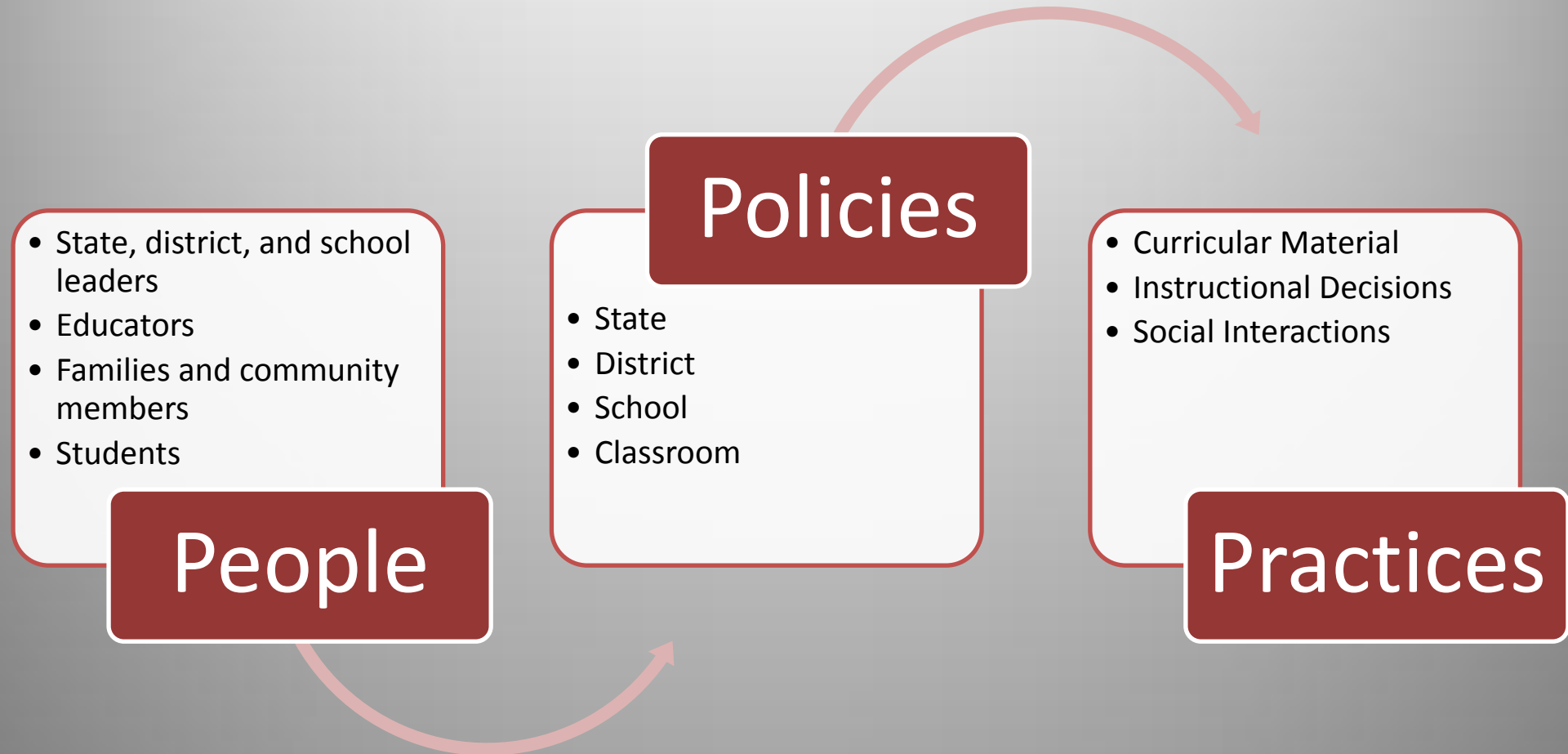
Disproportionality

**Educational improvement efforts should focus on *transforming* school systems into equity-oriented learning organizations.**

# What is Transformative Change Towards Equity?

**Systemic** change that **disrupts** and **dismantles** historical legacies of normative **assumptions, beliefs, and practices** about individual characteristics and cultural identities **that marginalize** and disenfranchise people and groups of people.

# Transformative change is enacted through...



Equity-oriented learning organizations examine the extent to which patterns of beliefs and practices, and established policies, procedures and structures contribute to the marginalization of specific groups of students and their families and engage in continuous improvement efforts to redress these inequities by ...

- Participating in cross-department dialogue about race, equity and education
- Focusing on systemic change efforts
- Utilizing critical collaborative inquiry
- Engaging in equity-oriented strategic planning

# ENGAGING THE TEAM IN CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL DIALOGUE

## What we bring


- our perspectives, beliefs, assumptions, questions and expectations relating to student learning and adult practice.

## What we see

- patterns by asking questions about the data in order to find patterns, discover surprises, and add new thoughts.

## What we think

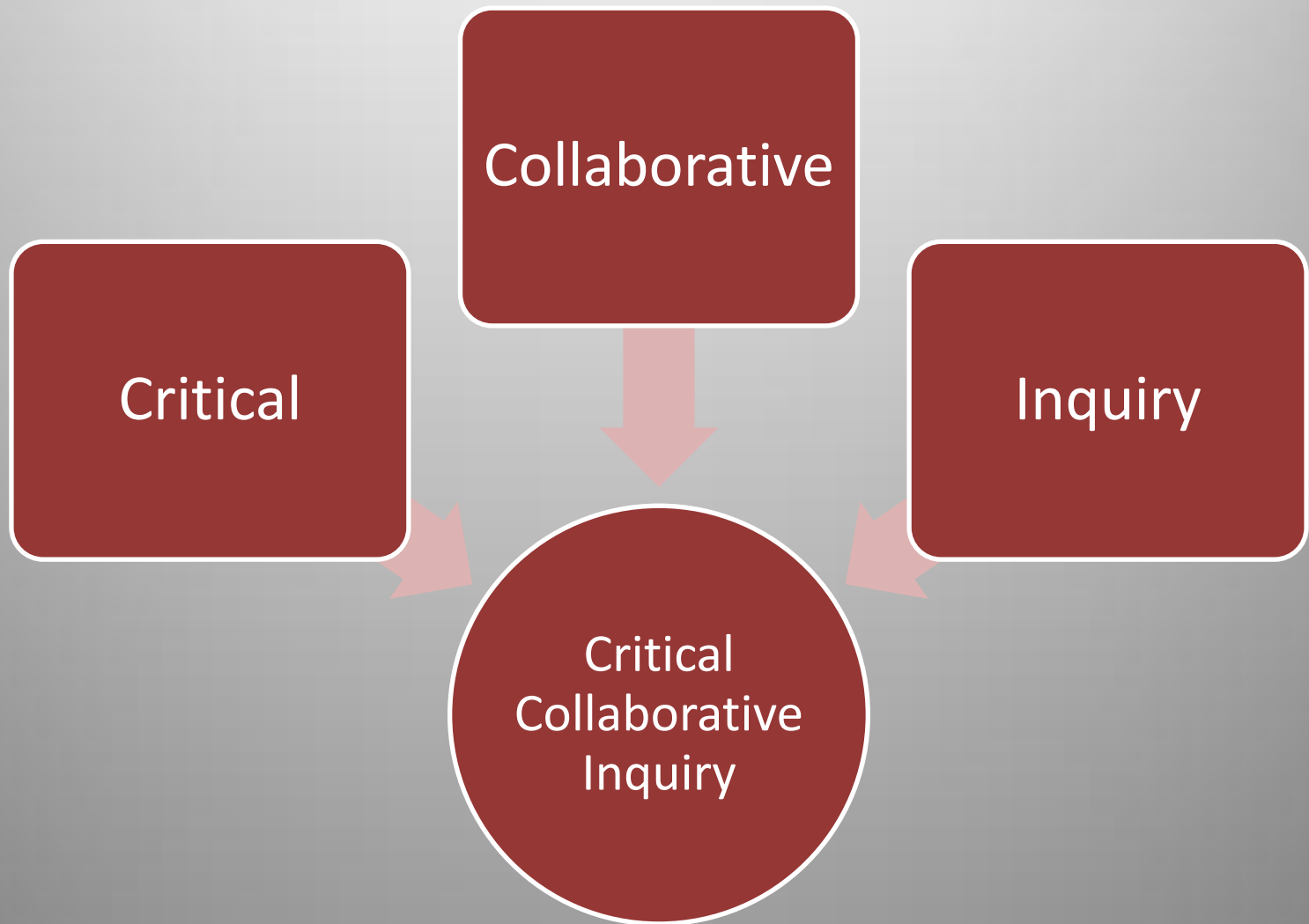
- together and create or revise a plan of action based on the shared understanding of the collected data.



Collaborative inquiry provides a shared context for the process on on-going dialogue, identifying issues related to equity, proposing and testing solutions, and (de)constructing individual and collective knowledge.

Rogoff, 2003

# Critical Collaborative Inquiry: Building Capacity for Systemic Change



# Critical Inquiry Questions

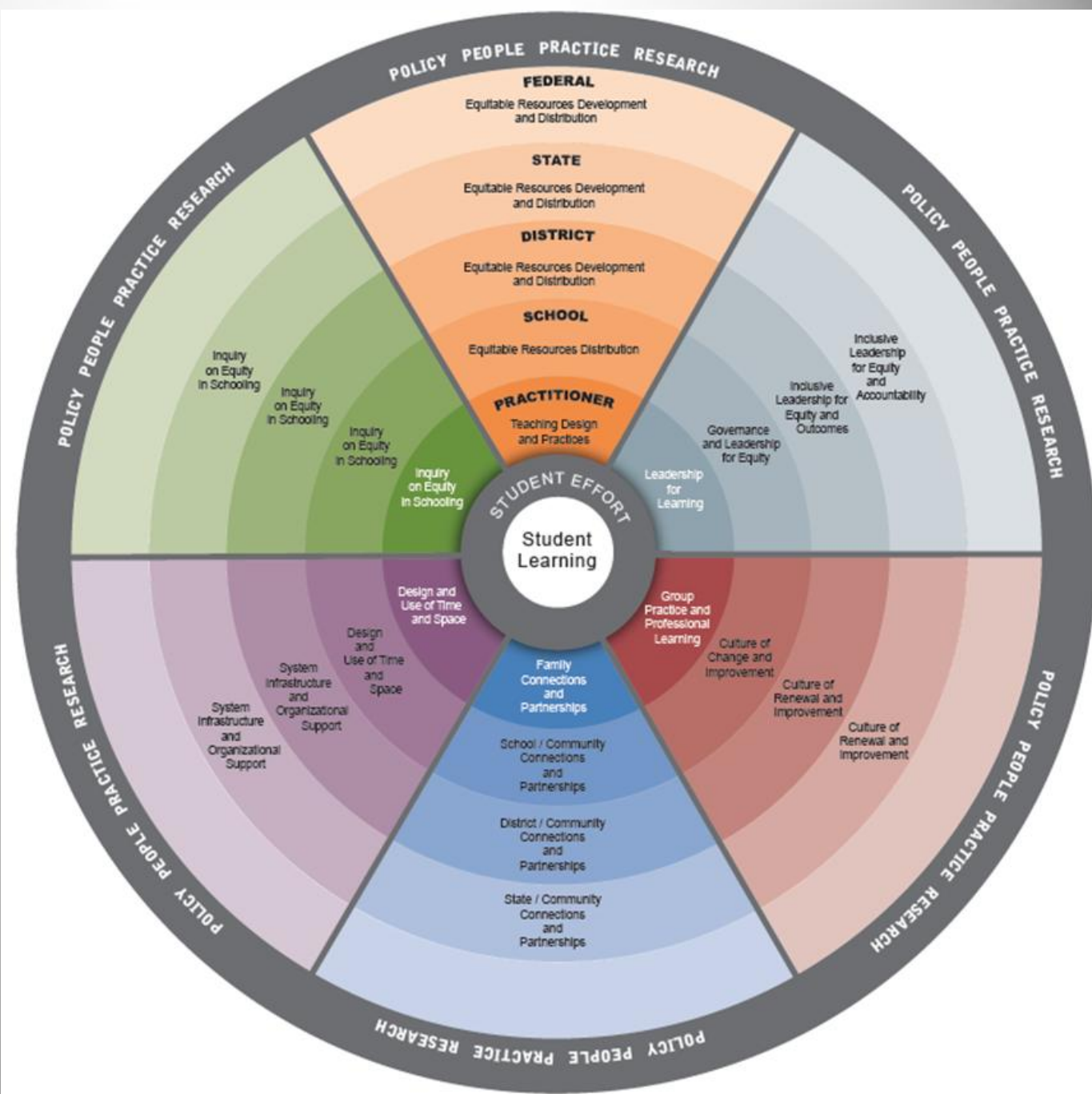
Whose interests are being served well by our system and whose are not?

What is it about our people, policies, and practices that is advancing some and not others?

What can we do differently to better serve all people within our system?

How do we ensure the voices and perspectives of historically under-represented groups are included?

# Systemic Change Framework



# Arenas of Systemic Change for Achievement & Equity



*Leadership for Equity & Outcomes*



*Culture of Renewal & Improvement*



*District/Community Connections & Partnerships*



*System Infrastructure & Organizational Support*



*Inquiry on Equity & Outcomes*



*Equitable Resource Development & Distribution*

# Leadership for Equity & Accountability

- Agency leadership understands the ways decisions are made has a strong impact on agency culture, its potential to support LEA achievement, and that the interaction between leadership and accountability help determine success. Leadership asks, “How is input from diverse perspectives elicited in the achievement planning processes and in decision-making, in general?”

# Culture of Renewal & Improvement

- The agency is explicit in its professional development initiatives informed by the current context of state-wide supports and challenges, and driven by the way things could be if all children and families had equitable access, participation, and outcomes. To do so, they utilize current data about how LEAs, children and families are served, and to what outcomes, to inform professional development improvement plans.

# SEA/Community Connections & Partnerships

- The agency forms mutually beneficial relationships with community and family organizations, to ensure that they represent and incorporate the knowledge and resources of all those they serve.

Kozleski & Thorius, 2013; Thorius, 2014

# System Infrastructure & Organizational Support

- The functions of agency structures/ departments are organized in such a way that efficiency and individualization are accommodated. Thoughtful supports provide coherent, continuous opportunities for improved practices.

Kozleski & Thorius, 2013; Thorius, 2014

# Equitable Resource Development & Distribution

- The agency considers how the allocation of financial and human resources are distributed not equally, but equitably and flexibly, so that all professionals are provided with what they need to provide high quality curriculum and instruction that result in favorable and proportionate educational access, participation, and outcomes for all learners.

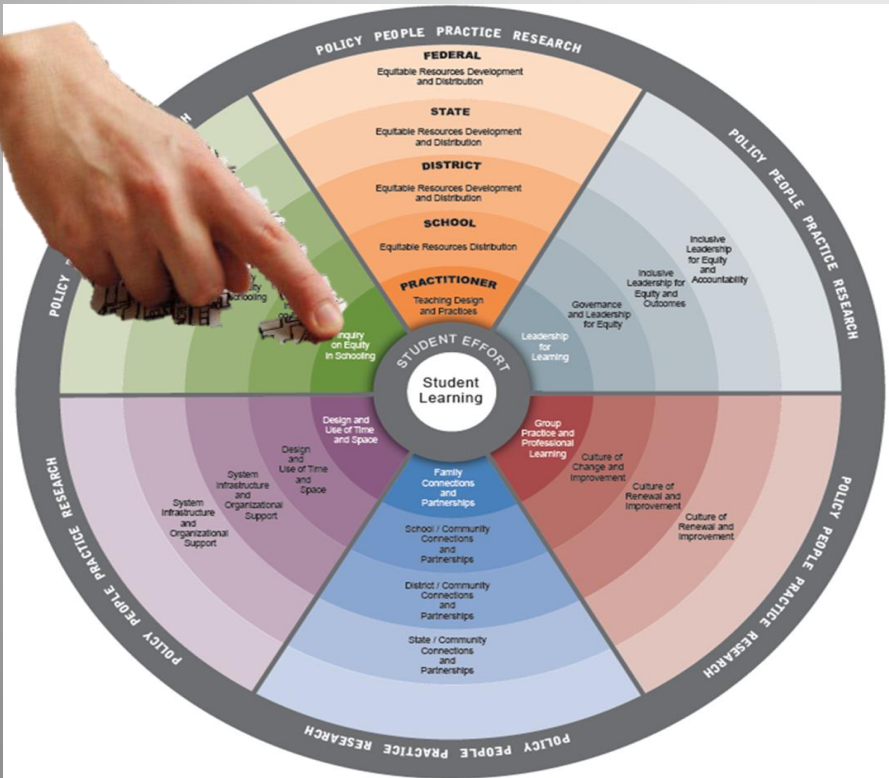
Kozleski & Thorius, 2013; Thorius, 2014

# Inquiry on Equity in Schooling

- The agency supports inquiry on equity, which uses real data as a source of information and makes explicit the links between data, policy and services, to improve these data. Three essential questions ground work in this area:
  - ~Who benefits from the way things are?
  - ~Who does not?
  - ~What needs to change to balance power and privilege for all students and families?

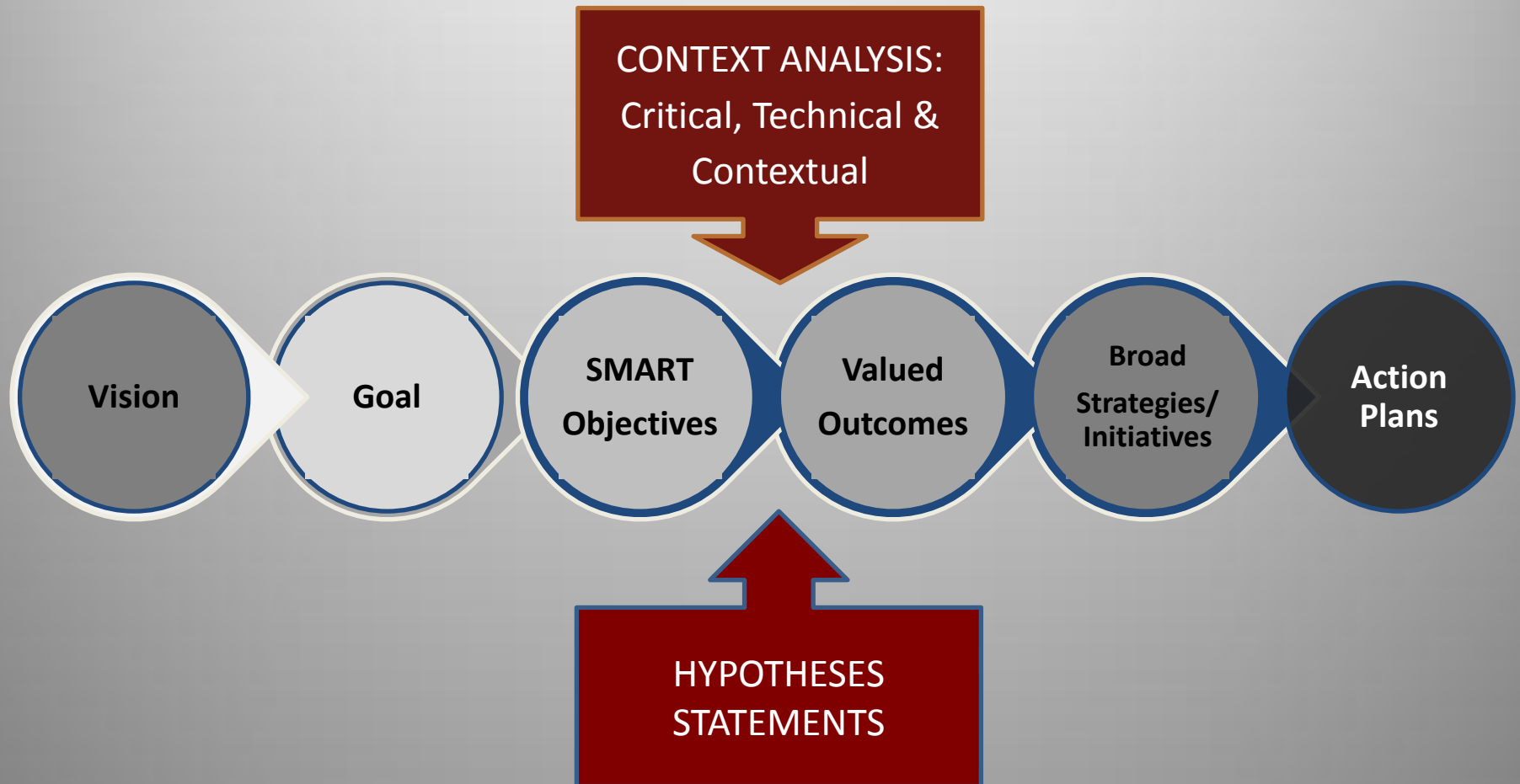
Friere, 1970; Kozleski & Thorius, 2013; Thorius, 2014

# Mapping Your Efforts

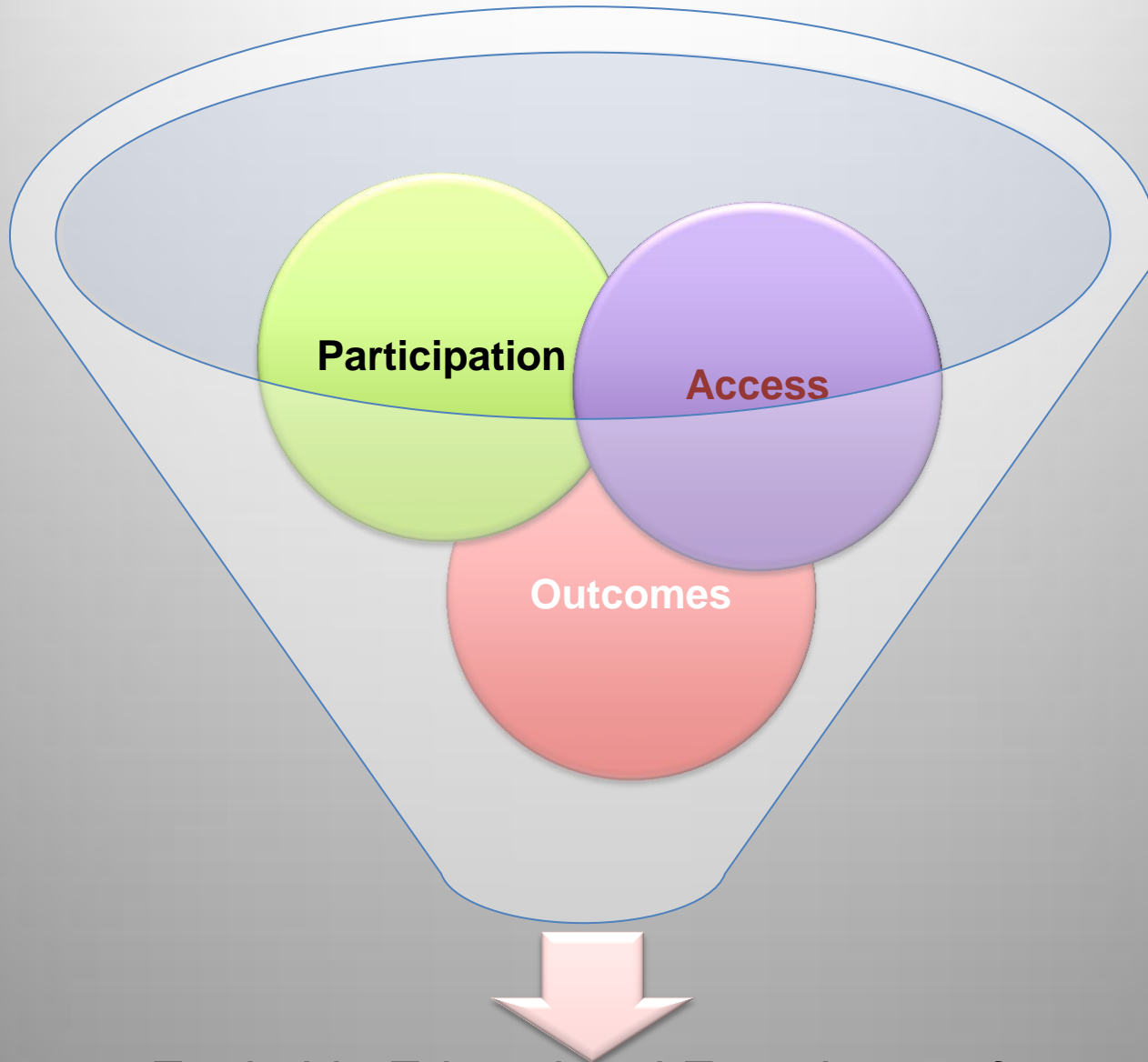


- Reflect
- Discuss
- Note

# EQUITY-ORIENTED STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



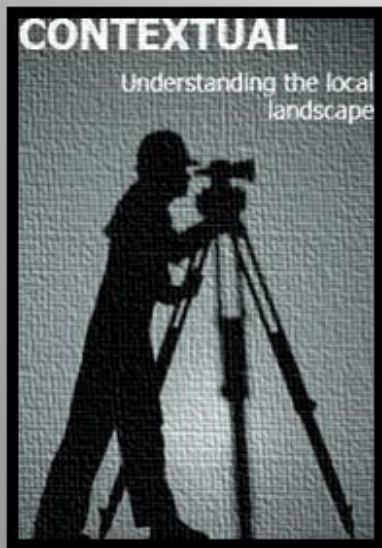
# Vision & Goals



*Equitable Educational Experiences for  
Historically Underserved Students*



- Related to solving specific and direct programmatic or problems of practice in the organization



- Related to the underlying beliefs, patterns of practice, traditions and norms.



- Underlying beliefs and practices that marginalize specific groups and privilege others.

# Maximizing Efforts: Integrating Initiatives

## Alignment

- Purpose
- Goals
- Targets

## Coherence

- Combining Efforts
- Logical Connectedness

# References

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# Post Session Questionnaire



Help us improve our practice by sharing your feedback!

# Tools, Products & Learning Opportunities



## Equity by Design: Engaging School Communities in Policy Critical Reflections on Policy


Erin M. Macey  
Kathleen K. A. Thorius  
Seena M. Skelton



## Podcasts



## Semi-Annual Report Year Two: Quarters One and Two (October 2012 - March 2013)

**Credit Flexibility: Equity Implications** 

Educational equity can be viewed in terms of the following three concepts (1) access, (2) quality and (3) representation. From an equity standpoint there are a number of questions that can be raised about credit flexibility and competency based learning.

In considering your credit flexibility policy, reflect on the extent to which the policy address the following factors that influence representation, access, and quality of educational experience for racial and ethnic minority students, English Learners, students with disabilities and students living in economically depressed communities.

(Place a check mark to indicate your level of agreement with each item prompt. Please also write some comments regarding how these issues could be surmounted)

|   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| <b>1. Language</b><br>The policy addresses how:<br>Differences in language ability among learners will impact access to programs that confer flexible credits   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| Differences in language ability among learners will impact the quality of engagement with programs that confer flexible credits   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| Differences in language ability among learners will lead to unequal representation of learners who receive flexible credits   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| List some of the supports, policy or personal inputs that could promote proportional representation of all students considering that for some students their home language is not English.                          |                   |          |         |       |                |
| <b>2. Disabilities</b><br>The policy addresses how:<br>Access to competency based learning (CBL) experiences can be affected by learning, speech, intellectual, visual, hearing, emotional or physical disabilities | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| The quality of learning in CBL programs can be affected by learning, speech, intellectual, visual, hearing, emotional or physical disabilities  | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| Learning, speech, intellectual, visual, hearing, emotional or physical disabilities can lead to unequal representation of learners who receive flexible credits   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| What are some supports, policy, or personal implications that should be considered in order to promote proportional representation of students with disabilities?   |                   |          |         |       |                |

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## STEM Education Needs All Children: A Critical Examination of Equity Issues – Part I

### Start Time

May 9, 2013 - 3:30 pm, EST

### Session Goals

Part One of this two part series surfaces and addresses broad equity issues in STEM education. We will:

- Examine through an equity lens the relationship between K-12 STEM education and STEM-related careers;
- Explore equity issues in STEM education, including issues of access, representation, and rigor of STEM curricula and instruction for underserved populations; and
- Critically examine systemic structures, policies, and practices that affect student participation in STEM-related courses and co-curricular activities

*Session recording coming soon!!*

[Download Presentation Materials](#)

Want us to host a repeat session of this webinar so you can participate live? [Click here.](#)

**For questions regarding the  
tool and or process contact:**

[Website: www.greatlakesequitycenter.org](http://www.greatlakesequitycenter.org)

[Email: glec@iupui.edu](mailto:glec@iupui.edu)

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