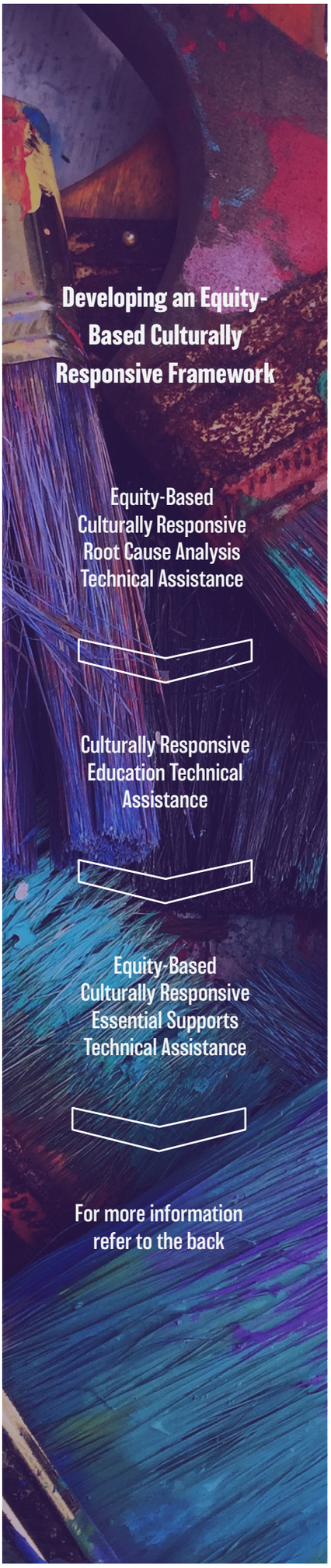
Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality (TAC-D)



Mission

Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality (TAC-D) at the Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools at New York University provides regional Professional Development and Technical Assistance to school districts throughout the state of New York. Our mission is to disrupt, dismantle and eliminate disproportionality by building the capacity of educators to implement Culturally Responsive Equity- Based Systems that meet the needs of all students and families.

Why: Importance of the Work

+ To address disproportionality beyond compliance
+ To incorporate culturally responsive education into beliefs, policies and practices system-wide
+ To develop a systems thinking approach to resolving root causes
+ To embrace differences in service of rejecting a deficit model
+ To ensure equitable outcomes for all students in school, home and community

How: Principles of Practice

+ We embrace all types of differences
+ We set high expectations for all stakeholders
+ We adapt systems to be responsive and ensure success for all stakeholders
+ We build transformational relationships with all stakeholders
+ We integrate Emotional Intelligence, organizational learning and reflection mechanisms into strategic solutions

What: Phased Approach

Phase 1

+ Secure school district support to address disproportionality
+ Develop Relationships
+ Assess Readiness

Phase 2

+ Identify Root Causes of Disproportionality
+ Develop Culturally Responsive Mindset
+ Develop Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and 5-year Multi-Service plan

Phase 3

+ Provide Customized Technical Assistance and Professional Development
+ Implement QIP
+ Changes in Policies, Practices and Beliefs related to Disproportionality

Phase 4

+ Evaluate Changes in Beliefs, Policies, Practices, and Procedures and prepare Sustainability Plan
+ Measure Progress based on QIP Goals
+ Develop Long-term Plan

Culturally Responsive Practice-based Toolkit

+ School Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) Walkthrough
+ Adapting district, school and classroom data systems
+ Curriculum Unit Review
+ Book Inventory Review
+ Reframe Problem Solving Teams
+ Intervention Audit
+ Classroom visits and implementation of CRE teaching strategies
+ Reviewing Family Engagement Plans
+ Create CRE Turnkey Teams

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Root Cause Process

The root cause process entails technical assistance sessions with a school district root cause team. The team collects and reviews school district data to identify the possible causes of disproportionality, as well as possible solutions for addressing disproportionality and equity gaps.

TAC-D conducts a five part series that identifies root causes to disproportionality. The goal of the root cause analysis is to: (1) identify the possible root causes and compounding factors of disproportionality, (2) examine and identify beliefs, policies and practices that contribute to disparate outcomes, (3) explore how race, culture, and privilege, as well as, other social identities perpetuate disproportionality, and (4) develop a plan designed to address these identified causes. TAC-D will achieve these goals through an iterative process of facilitated meetings, data collection, and analysis.

Session 1: Understanding Disproportionality.

Session 2: Examining Disproportionality

Session 3: Getting to Root Cause

Session 4 and Session 5: Root Cause Report and Action Planning

Culturally Responsive Education

TAC-D's Culturally Responsive Education series has its foundation in Critical Race Theory and the Eight Principles of Culturally Responsive Education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson- Billings, 1994). Through the marriage of theory and practice educators critically examine the racial and cultural components of their school district's beliefs, policies and practices, and how each shapes an educator's everyday interactions with students and families. The series works towards cultivating a workshop experience where educators: 1. Begin to develop mindsets that eliminate opportunity gaps (Milner, 2010); 2. Begin to embrace asset-based pedagogy (Paris, 2012); 3. Begin to develop into educational leaders that can use race and culture to improve educational outcomes (Howard, 2010); 4. Engage in a process of self-transformation in order to ensure equitable outcomes for all (Banks, 2007); and 5. Reach an understanding that literacy is a social experience that requires both cultural responsive dialogues and relationships to develop (Powell & Rightmyer, 2011).

The process begins with targeted 5 workshops to provide the background of culturally responsive education and then followed by application of these principles in daily educational practices and the implementation of the Culturally Responsive Systems Toolkit.

Session 1: What is Culture and what Relevance does it play in Schools Aiming for Equity?

Session 2: What do we need to know About Ourselves In Relation to Identity and Power?:

Session 3: How Does Racial and/or Ethnic Identity Impact Racially and Ethnically Diverse Students?

Session 4 and Session 5: What Policies and Practices will be Changed, Given our New Perspective?

Essential Supports

TAC-D promotes interventions leveraging supports in the classroom, school, district and community for addressing disproportionality (Adapted from Bryk et al., 2010).

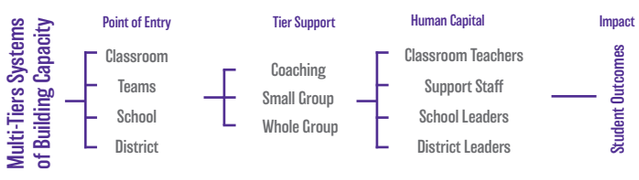
School Leadership: School leaders are the catalysts of change, setting the vision, mission, and philosophy that drive school culture.
Professional Staff Capacity: High quality human resources are fostered through professional development and a collaborative and supportive environment that allows for critical dialogue.
Instructional Guidance: Rigorous curriculum and instruction is driven by high expectations for all students and follows a scope and sequence that is both horizontally and vertically aligned.
Student Centered Learning Climate: Students feel safe in the school environment and supported academically. Positive and respectful relationships are developed and fostered between students and staff.
Family and Community Ties: The school environment is welcoming and supportive of parents' needs. Communication is deliberate and responsive and parents are given a voice in decision-making.

Equity Teams

TAC-D works with school districts to develop an action plan to establish Guardians of Equity both at the district and school-level.

This data-driven system is to have practitioners work together in small groups to transform policies and practices around instruction and/or organizational structures that are perpetuating current inequities. Participants will be able to engage in three primary acts: (1) Design a strategic plan to implement equity-based culturally responsive systems; (2), Identify authentic ways to make stronger connections with students and families that are racially and culturally different than they are through reshaping of curriculum, lesson development, and/or other instructional policies; and (3) Practices examining sample district and school level data and/or program outcome data (e.g., discipline referrals, academic referrals, course failure rates by content areas) and apply culturally responsive principles in the examination of these outcomes.

Culturally Responsive Systems Of Building Capacity

TAC-D works with school districts to build capacity at multiple levels.

The graphic highlights the point of entry for TAC-D supports after an upfront agreement has been signed by the superintendent. In addition, it includes the levels of support provided, which is determined by tailoring frequency, intensity and duration.