Facilitation Guide for Designing a Shared Vision of Equity

Years of data show many students exit the U.S. educational system unprepared for college and career. In response, the White House launched the "My Brother's Keeper" (MBK) initiative, calling for the closing of opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color. SWIFT Center assembled a national task force to determine how SWIFT can improve outcomes for boys and young men of color. The task force identified four recommendations, including encouraging sites to develop a shared vision of equity. The purpose of this document is to provide leadership teams with a guide for designing a shared school or district vision of equity.

Process for Designing a Vision

Designing a vision is one of six SWIFT Technical Assistance practices. Visioning involves engaging in dialogue about shared values and goals for the future. These conversations help create collective ownership of the transformation process. The Visioning process can help schools, districts, and states create a shared understanding of equity and a shared vision for fostering equity in the future.

- **Prepare participants to engage in the process**: Invite a variety of stakeholders to participate in the process. Inform participants in advance about the purpose of the process.
- **Set the Stage:** Provide an overview of the process. Agree on a plan for developing, engaging in dialogue, and adopting a vision.
- **Develop Statements:** Collectively develop statements that represent hopes and dreams and describe the context, systems, and structures that support them.
- **Engage in Dialogue**: When discussing the generated statements, consider the commonalities, differences, and anything that may be missing. Poll participants to narrow down statements that are collectively agreed upon.
- **Adoption:** Determine a voting, revision, and agreement process. Then, conduct a vote to formally adopt a shared vision of equity.
- **Wrap-Up and Follow-Up:** Document the process and follow up to review the vote and consider methods for dissemination.

Considerations for Equity

When designing a shared vision of equity, consider the following topics while engaging in dialogue:
- **Become culturally self-aware:** What factors influence your cultural identity? Consider how your family, community, education, and experiences have shaped you. Be aware that others may have differing values and beliefs. Think about what biases you may have.
- **Seek input from various groups:** Determine the various racial, ethnic, and cultural groups that are represented in your community. Seek their input and

ensure each group's voice is represented in the development of a shared vision. Encourage groups to share their values, points of view, and perspectives.

- **Be prepared for cross-cultural differences:** Each culture brings a unique set of beliefs, customs, languages, and norms for communication. These can differ from the norms you hold. Resist the urge to judge individuals or behaviors that differ from yours. Instead, seek to understand each person's perspective and consider how your differences can be mutually celebrated in your community.
- **Address barriers to equity:** Financial, political, and programmatic policies can inadvertently work as a barrier to equity. Engage stakeholders in open dialogue to address existing disparities and negative impacts.

Additional Resources

Cultural Competence and Equity
Culturally Responsive Teaching Matters
SWIFT Webinar: Using Data to Promote Equity in Portland
SWIFT Webinar: Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Practices for Teaching and Learning
SWIFT Partner Examples of the Visioning TA Practice

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References

1. Zion, S. & Kozleski, E. (2005). *Understanding culture*. National Institute for Urban School Improvement.
2. *Diversity Toolkit: Cultural Competence for Educators* from http://www.nea.org/tools/30402.htm
3. *Racial Equity Lens* from Portland Public Schools