

Building a Student-Centered Culture of Excellence Through Equity

1.11.22

Dr. Tammy Campbell, CEO, The Scholar First, Inc.

Current Challenges for School Districts...

- What are the current challenges you are facing as you are ensuring every student's success?
- How is equity intersecting with this challenge?
- Unpack the Mckinsey article in breakout rooms.

It Starts with CULTURE

“If you get the culture right, most other stuff will take care of itself.” Tony Hseih

Learning Goals for Our Time Together

- Make the case that building a culture for equity and excellence is foundational to leading for equity
- Unpack the research on what effective districts do to ensure student success and to stitch these findings to leading for equity and excellence
- Provide a framework for how districts lead this work

Stitching the Red Thread of Equity Across The Organization During the Pandemic...



Four Benefits (4 B's) of Embedding Equity for our Scholars

Create a Deep Sense of **Belonging**

Broadcasting Scholar Voice

Demonstrate a **Belief** in the limitless
potential for EVERY Scholar

Removal of **Barriers**



The Scholar First

Equity as the Foundation

© Dr. Tammy Campbell, 2021

Looking Within... *Racial/Cultural Autobiographies.*

A critical activity to engage in with your leadership team, department team to identify your filters, what shapes them and your blind spots.

- ✓ Think about your K-12 experiences, what did you learn about the contributions of people of color? Your friend groups? Books, histories, etc.
- ✓ Blind spots-- Implications for your efforts in creating a culture of belonging and student success?
- ✓ Discuss in your breakout groups. Each member shares. Reporter comes prepared to share themes with the whole group.

Your Community

What are the histories of the cities and communities surrounding our schools?

How might these histories be shaping the perceptions of our families? Families of color?

DEI Learning

- ✓ Individual
- ✓ Interpersonal

Schools

Finance

Teaching for Learning

Communications

Operations (Trans/Nutrition

Human Resources

Finance

Policies

Lasting Change

- ✓ Individual
- ✓ Department
- ✓ School
- ✓ Structural
- ✓ Systemic
- ✓ Institutional
- ✓ Policy

Systems Design for Equity

Phase I, II & III: Systems/Deepening the Work

- HR (interviews, job postings), finance, transportation
- Curriculum (mirrors and windows)
- Analysis (audits) of systems for bias and barriers
- All school approach
- Data and practice reflection systems for monitoring school improvement efforts
- Onboarding system for teachers, support principals, administrative staff
- Celebration of gaps closing and focus on areas of growth

Phase II : Structural, Institutional, Systems

- External venues for communicating areas of success and growth
- Ongoing professional learning and loop-outs
- Vision for Equity and Excellence for organization and look-fors in the classroom
- Equity policy and audit of policies with an equity lens
- Clearly outlined TOA w/goals, metrics, strategies in strategic plan with specific and coordinated action
- Every department focuses on equity with work plans linked to TOA
- Whole district approach

Phase I: Culture and Shared Commitment to Equity (Individual & Interpersonal)

- **Learning**--Reading, learning, 3-5 year professional development plan on race & equity at every level - classified, certificated, administrative, and the governance team
- **Visioning**--Co-constructing widely known, specific, descriptive **vision of equity and excellence**
- **Strong belief** in the limitless potential of ALL students, and our ability to improve outcomes
- **Scholar voice** and family voice is activated and leveraged
- **Leading with the WHY**--Establishing and broadly communicating the “**WHY**”-- the data revealing student outcomes
- **Modeling, signaling** the importance of equity—Board, Superintendent, District Leadership
- **Calibration**--Shared community use of vocabulary, protocols, and knowledge of diversity, equity and inclusion content

Reflecting on our Work...

Year 1: Focus on Culture

Learning

- ✓ Racial Equity, diversity, inclusion (Individual/Interpersonal)
- ✓ Personal Experiences
- ✓ Blind spots
- ✓ **Fostering Belonging**



- ☐ Racial autobiography
- ☐ Videos, shadow scholars for a day, articles,
- ☐ Analysis of regional history of social justice
- ☐ Consistent PD on DEI
- ☐ Consistent micro-sessions with all staff and departments

Visioning

- ✓ Vision of Equity and Excellence (structural)
- ✓ Threading Equity
- ✓ Setting the stage for shared vision of the future



- ☐ Create a Vision of Equity and Excellence
- ☐ Using the Vision of Equity and Excellence, create Classroom Look-fors
- ☐ Phase I Success Criteria

Strategic Action

- ✓ Artifacts of practice
- ✓ Co-construct a coherent Theory of Action (structural)
- ✓ Scholar voice/panels (structural)
- ✓ Launch or revise strategic plan to align with vision and TOA



- ☐ Central Office TOA Creation
- ☐ Belonging artifacts and classroom look-fors
- ☐ Assess progress against success criteria at least three times during the year



Leading for Equity Requires LEARNING

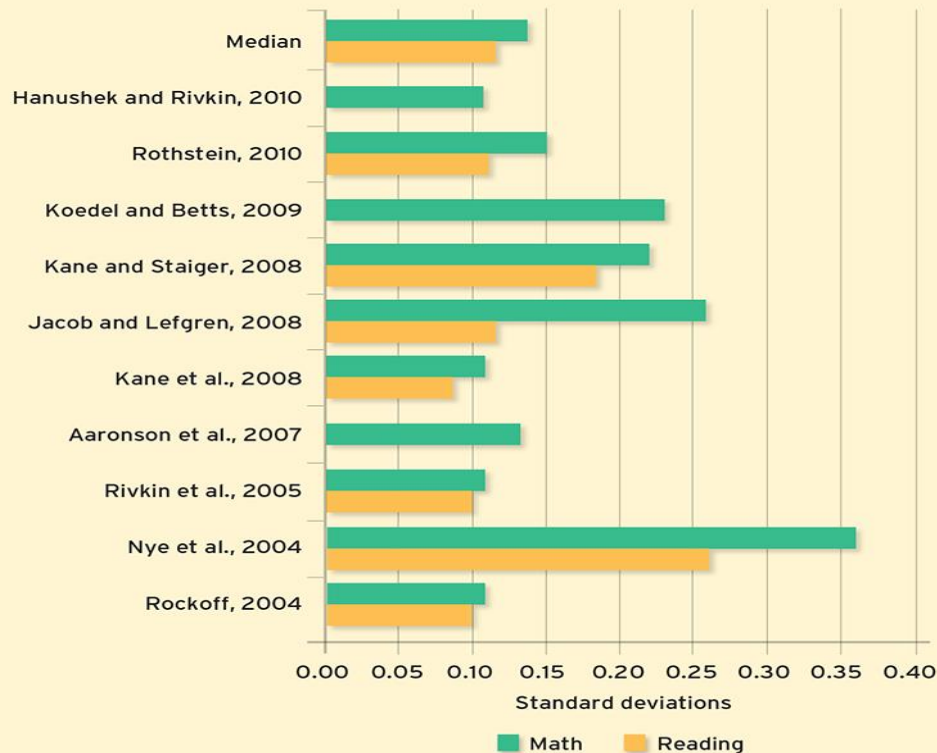
Learning	Learning about YOURSELF
Learning	Learning about your blind spots
Learning	Learning about your story, the district's story, the community's story and our nations story
Belonging	When we know our blind spots, we create powerful relationships with scholars and families that promote belonging.



Multiple Studies Reveal The Impact of an Effective Teacher

An Effective Teacher's Impact on Learning (Figure 1)

The median finding across 10 recent studies indicates that an effective teacher (one at the 85th percentile) produces additional learning gains for students of 0.14 standard deviations in math and 0.12 standard deviations in reading as compared to an average teacher.



NOTE: All variances are corrected for test measurement error and, except for Kane and Staiger (2008), are estimated within school-by-year or within school-by-grade-by-year.

SOURCE: Eric A. Hanushek and Steven G. Rivkin, 2010. "Generalizations about Using Value-Added Measures of Teacher Quality," *American Economic Review* 100(2)

Collection of Research

- The Teacher is the single most important factor in improving student learning
- The Principal is second only to the teacher in improving outcomes for students.
- Coherent and effective district teams have the ability to improve student learning by an impressive .25 effect size.

These effects are large

- Principal effects are nearly as large as estimates of teacher effects summarized in other work (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010)
 - Replacing a below-average teacher with an above-average teacher increases the average student's achievement growth by about 4 months of learning.
- Importantly: these are **average student-level** effects
 - Average elementary teacher's effect is felt by **21 students**
 - Average elementary principal's effect is felt by **483 students**

Principals' effects are large in magnitude.

Principals' effects are large in scope.

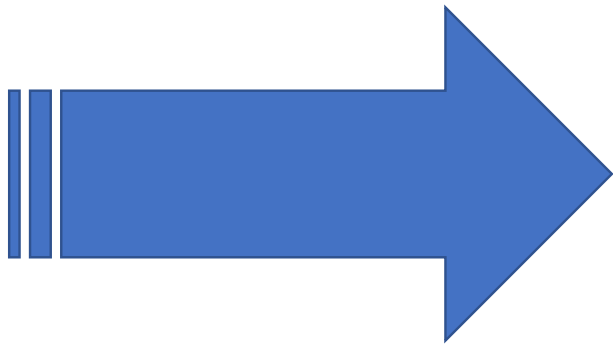
Comparisons between principals and teachers not “either/or”—principals’ effects on student achievement come largely through ensuring students have effective teachers

Collection of Research

- The Teacher is the single most important factor in improving student learning
- The Principal is second only to the teacher in improving outcomes for students.
- Coherent and effective district teams have the ability to improve student learning by an impressive .25 effect size.

In sum: Principals *really* matter

Given the **magnitude** of the impact of an effective principal
and the **scope** of their impacts
across a **range of outcomes**



It is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership.

Consider this...Districts Matter!

- No Individual teacher can address the needs of their class alone.
- No group of teachers can rally an entire school staff towards continuous and dynamic improvement.
- No individual principal can address their school needs alone.
- Groups of principals can't rally together to steer a district toward continuous improvement.
- We MUST have coherent, aligned, goal oriented, equity minded DISTRICTS to ENSURE EVERY SCHOLAR SUCCEEDS!

Research on Districts That Succeed--University of Chicago Consortium on School Research...

1. School and district organization drives improvement, and individual initiatives are unlikely to work in isolation.
2. Puts a premium on organizational structures and systems that work together to improve student learning and overall success.
3. If **EVEN** 3 of these five essentials were **consistently** in place at a **high level, and one was effective leadership, then schools were 10 times more likely to succeed:**
 - ✓ **Effective leaders**
 - ✓ **Collaborative teachers**
 - ✓ **Involved families**
 - ✓ **Supportive environments**
 - ✓ **Amitious instruction**

More Research...

University of Washington and University of Minnesota studied 180 schools across eight states and six years and concluded...

“We have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership.”



ity
ion

- Our vision of the future for all students



of
OA)

- Clear statement of how WE will behave as leaders and what we must do to accomplish the Vision of Equity



egic
n

- Detailed plan to enact the TOA, identify goals, metrics, strategies, and timelines

The Structure for Focus, Coherence and Success!



The Scholar First

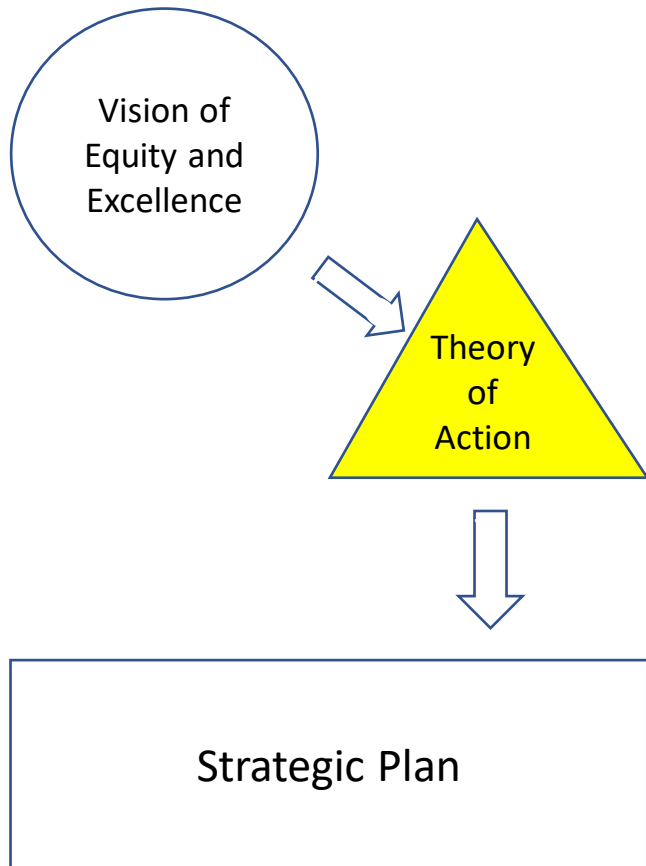
Equity as the Foundation

Why Do We Need a Theory of Action?

*A theory of action **helps us be intentional in accomplishing our Vision of Equity and Excellence.** In the process of creation, we're pushed to become clear and focused by articulating a particular set of actions and naming the results we expect to see for students. Through this collaborative process we outline actions steps/strategies that must be taken at every level to accomplish the student outcomes.*



The Key to Accomplishing the Vision, Co-constructing a Theory of Action



- The Theory of Action (TOA) is simply an if, then, statement that identifies **how leaders will be behave** and act and what you **must do** to ensure you achieve the vision.
- If the Vision is the foundation, the TOA is the FRAMEWORK that outlines what you will do to achieve the vision in broad strokes. Providing a bridge from the Vision for Equity to the Strategic Plan. These two steps ensure you red-thread equity throughout the strategic plan.



Vision for Equity and Excellence

FWPS believes that each and every scholar has limitless potential and is committed to ensuring that all scholars, of every race, class, linguistic background, disability, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, and other exceptionalities, thrive and achieve at high levels. We will engage in antiracist and inclusionary practices to identify and eliminate the barriers that cause disproportionality.

Each and Every Scholar will:

- Know they have limitless potential and can achieve at the highest levels
- Actively engage in rigorous learning and coursework
- Own and influence their learning
- Engage in culturally sustaining conversations and interactions
- Be seen, heard, valued, and celebrated for who they are
- Be socially and emotionally safe at school in the educational environment: curriculum, instruction, school and classroom culture, and activities

Each and Every Staff will:

- Value and incorporate representative scholar voice
- Commit to integrating culturally responsive, data-informed anti-racist practices and removing barriers to improve scholar learning leading to increased achievement
- Facilitate culturally sustaining conversations and interactions
- Feel seen, valued, and heard as professionals and individuals
- Welcome, communicate, and partner with families for scholar success
- Live out our district's values and beliefs

Each and Every Family will:

- Know they are seen, heard, and valued as partners in their scholar's education
- Feel welcomed, connected with, and have a sense of belonging to our schools and district
- Feel empowered to communicate with staff around scholar academic and social-emotional goals and progress
- Be provided the information and resources necessary to support their scholar's success

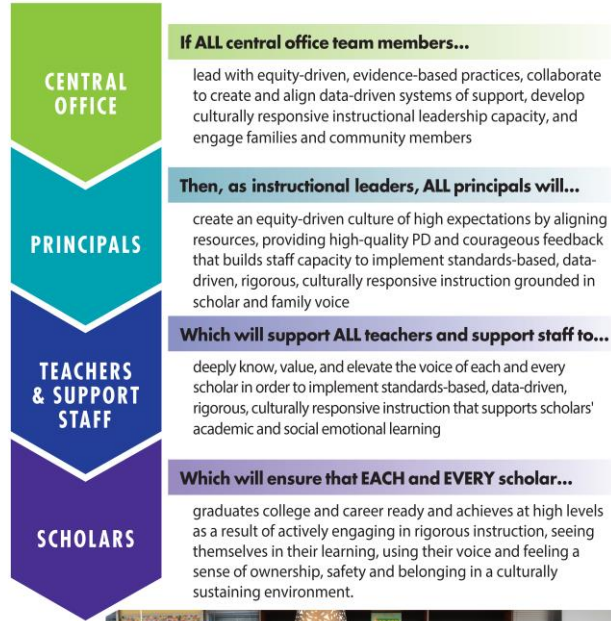
EQUITY & EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

Take a moment and read our vision for equity and excellence in FWPS.

As you reflect on the vision, identify 2-3 words or phrases that stand out for you and be prepared to share why. Why these over others?

Theory of Action

Our Theory of Action



Revised: June 17, 2021

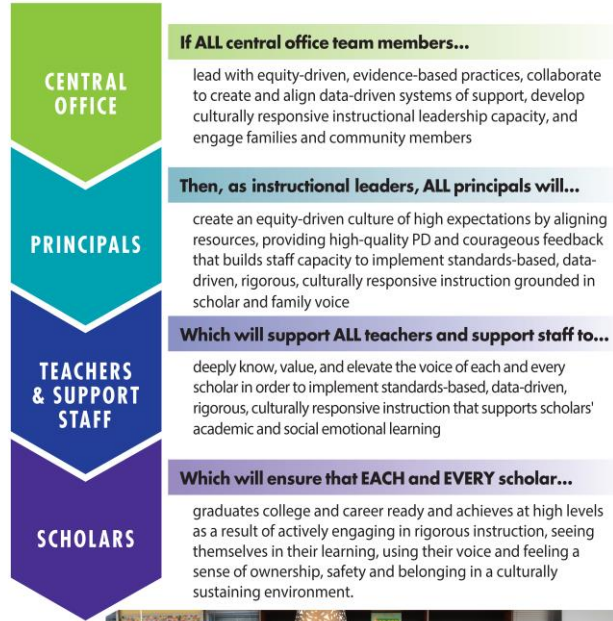


Which will ensure that EACH and EVERY scholar...

graduates college and career ready and achieves at high levels as a result of actively engaging in rigorous instruction, seeing themselves in their learning, using their voice and feeling a sense of ownership, safety and belonging in a culturally sustaining environment.

Theory of Action

Our Theory of Action



Revised: June 17, 2021

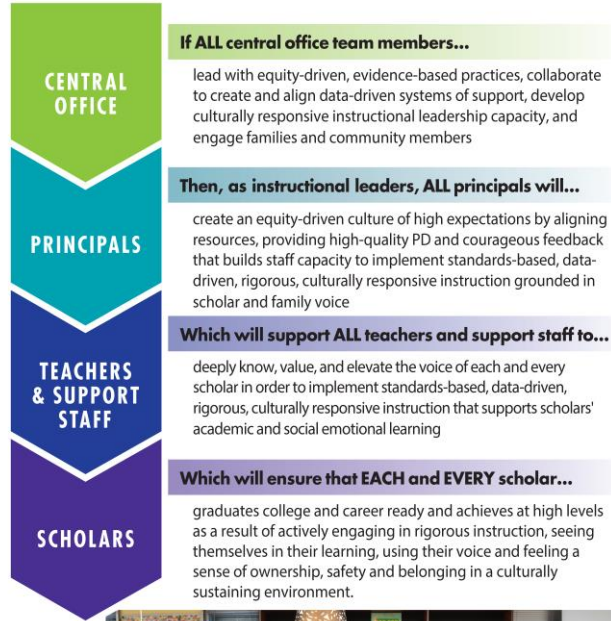


Which will ensure that EACH and EVERY scholar...

graduates college and career ready and achieves at high levels as a result of actively engaging in rigorous instruction seeing themselves in their learning, using their voice and feeling a sense of ownership, safety and belonging in a culturally sustaining environment.

Theory of Action

Our Theory of Action



Revised: June 17, 2021

If ALL central office team members...

lead with equity-driven, evidence-based practices, collaborate to create and align data-driven systems of support, develop culturally responsive instructional leadership capacity, and engage families and community members

Then, as instructional leaders, ALL principals will...

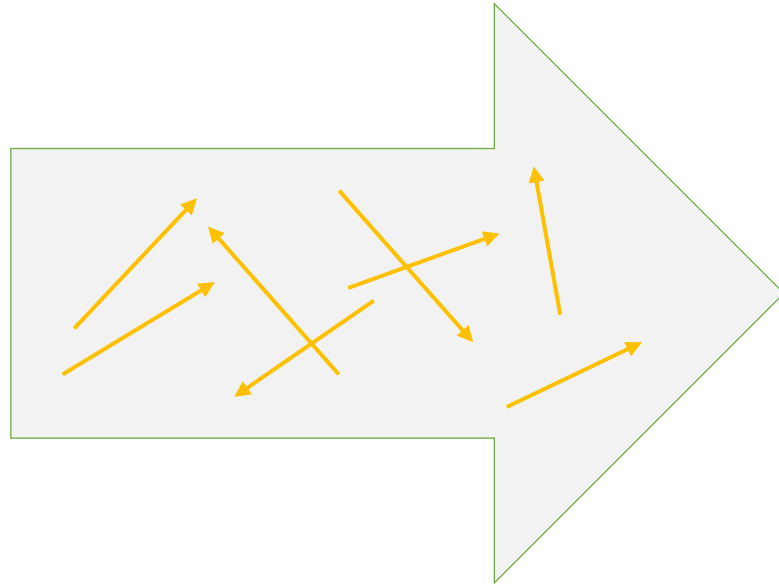
create an equity-driven culture of high expectations by aligning resources providing high-quality PD and courageous feedback that builds staff capacity to implement standards-based, data-driven, rigorous, culturally responsive instruction grounded in scholar and family voice

Which will support ALL teachers and support staff to...

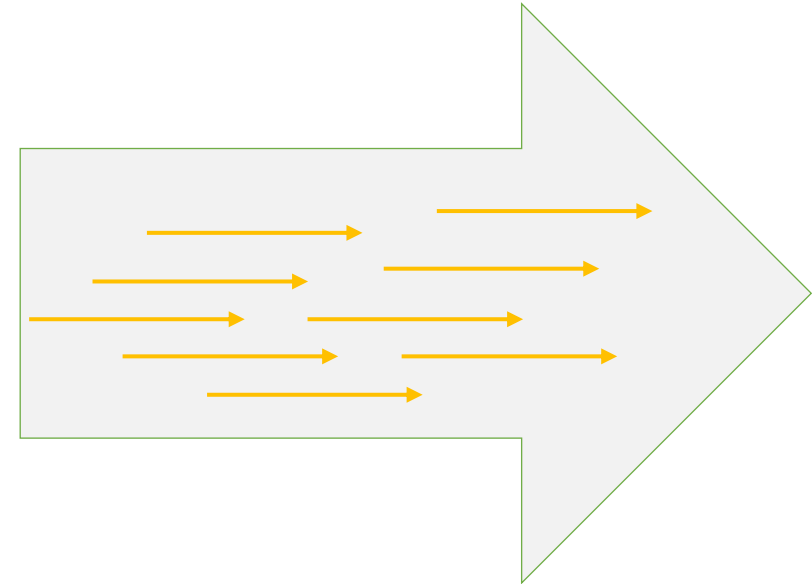
deeply know, value, and elevate the voice of each and every scholar in order to implement standards-based, data-driven, rigorous, culturally responsive instruction that supports scholars' academic and social emotional learning

Visioning For Equity and Excellence and TOA creation **PRIOR** to strategic planning
is **ESSENTIAL** in BRAIDING EQUITY in your strategies

Misalignment



Alignment with Equity Embedded



These leadership moves allows for a disciplined framework to bring people, programs, processes and resources together in an aligned fashion, working towards a common aim.

Alignment: Visioning, Theory of Action, and Strategic Planning

Visioning for excellence and equity is the foundation. This allows the organization to pause and gaze to a better future. When you embed equity in this process, you mitigate for the blind spots that leave traditionally underserved scholars behind

The Cabinet's work in crafting a theory of action **built off** scholar portion of the vision statement is CRITICAL. Now you are "HARD-BAKING" equity in your strategic plan.

Using the TOA, you are signaling your values, metrics, and goals within the strategic plan that is TETHERED closely to the vision for excellence through equity.

Learning is Essential to Building a Culture for Equity

- Everyone in the organization must be engaged in learning so they see their blind spots
- Learning creates connectedness, shared understanding, shared vocabulary
- Learning illuminates blind-spots so that you can see how we might be causing harm and distancing scholars from their dreams
- When we act upon our learning, we create a culture of belonging for scholars, families and staff
- But learning about yourself, your experiences is NOT Enough, we must move to SYSTEM actions...

These effects are large

- Principal effects are nearly as large as estimates of teacher effects summarized in other work (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010)
 - Replacing a below-average teacher with an above-average teacher increases the average student's achievement growth by about 4 months of learning.
- Importantly: these are **average student-level** effects
 - Average elementary teacher's effect is felt by **21 students**
 - Average elementary principal's effect is felt by **483 students**

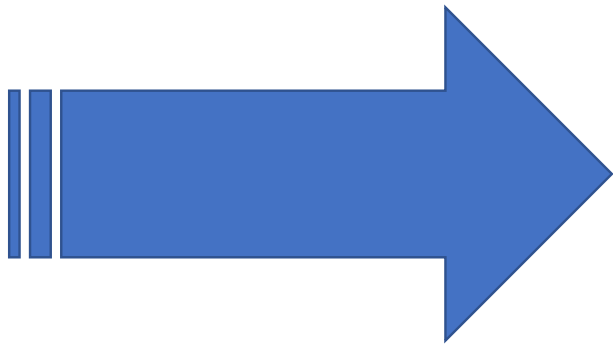
Principals' effects are large in magnitude.

Principals' effects are large in scope.

Comparisons between principals and teachers not “either/or”—principals' effects on student achievement come largely through ensuring students have effective teachers

In sum: Principals *really* matter

Given the **magnitude** of the impact of an effective principal
and the **scope** of their impacts
across a **range of outcomes**



It is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership.

Measuring What Matters...Equity Indicators

Individual Metrics of Academic and Social Emotional Success

- ✓ Kindergarten readiness
- ✓ K-12 learning, engagement and belonging
- ✓ Educational attainment

Opportunity and (Access)

- ✓ Program segregation (race, ethnic, economic)
- ✓ Access to high quality curricula and instruction (dual credit, culturally sustaining instructional resources, etc.)
- ✓ Supportive school and classroom environments (culturally sustaining instruction materials, belonging, voice/choice, safe and structured)

Research on Districts That Succeed--University of Chicago Consortium on School Research...

1. School and district organization drives improvement, and individual initiatives are unlikely to work in isolation.
2. Puts a premium on organizational structures and systems that work together to improve student learning and overall success.
3. If **EVEN** 3 of these five essentials were **consistently** in place at a **high level, and one was effective leadership, then schools were 10 times more likely to succeed:**
 - ✓ **Effective leaders**
 - ✓ **Collaborative teachers**
 - ✓ **Involved families**
 - ✓ **Supportive environments**
 - ✓ **Amitious instruction**

More Research...

University of Washington and University of Minnesota studied 180 schools across eight states and six years and concluded...

“We have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership.”



ity
ion

- Our vision of the future for all students



of
OA)

- Clear statement of how WE will behave as leaders and what we must do to accomplish the Vision of Equity



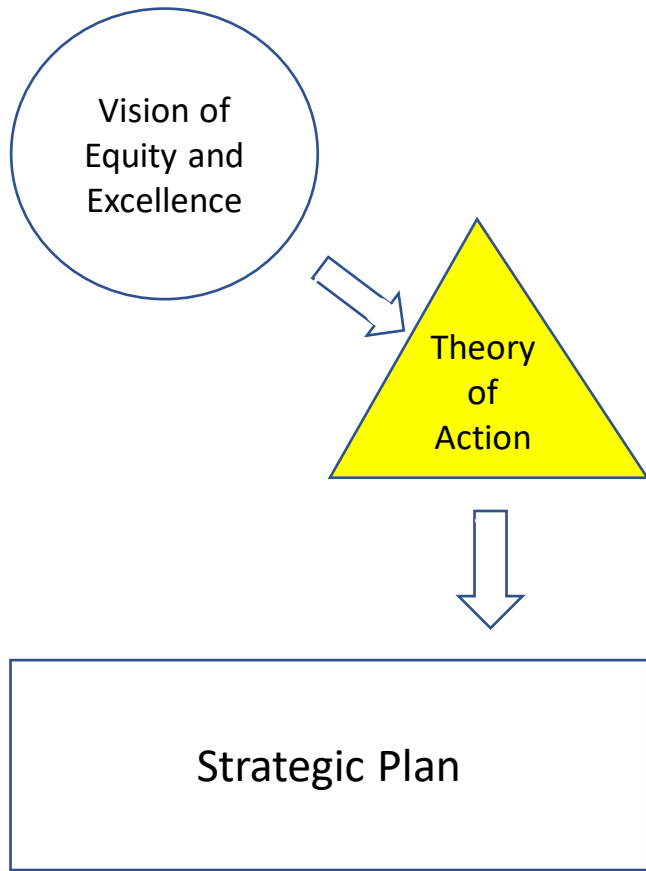
egic
n

- Detailed plan to enact the TOA, identify goals, metrics, strategies, and timelines

The Structure for Focus, Coherence and Success!



The Key to Accomplishing the Vision, Co-constructing a Theory of Action



- The Theory of Action (TOA) is simply an if, then, statement that identifies **how leaders will be behave** and act and what you **must do** to ensure you achieve the vision.
- If the Vision is the foundation, the TOA is the FRAMEWORK that outlines what you will do to achieve the vision in broad strokes. Providing a bridge from the Vision for Equity to the Strategic Plan. These two steps ensure you red-thread equity throughout the strategic plan.



Vision for Equity and Excellence

FWPS believes that each and every scholar has limitless potential and is committed to ensuring that all scholars, of every race, class, linguistic background, disability, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, and other exceptionalities, thrive and achieve at high levels. We will engage in antiracist and inclusionary practices to identify and eliminate the barriers that cause disproportionality.

Each and Every Scholar will:

- Know they have limitless potential and can achieve at the highest levels
- Actively engage in rigorous learning and coursework
- Own and influence their learning
- Engage in culturally sustaining conversations and interactions
- Be seen, heard, valued, and celebrated for who they are
- Be socially and emotionally safe at school in the educational environment: curriculum, instruction, school and classroom culture, and activities

Each and Every Staff will:

- Value and incorporate representative scholar voice
- Commit to integrating culturally responsive, data-informed anti-racist practices and removing barriers to improve scholar learning leading to increased achievement
- Facilitate culturally sustaining conversations and interactions
- Feel seen, valued, and heard as professionals and individuals
- Welcome, communicate, and partner with families for scholar success
- Live out our district's values and beliefs

Each and Every Family will:

- Know they are seen, heard, and valued as partners in their scholar's education
- Feel welcomed, connected with, and have a sense of belonging to our schools and district
- Feel empowered to communicate with staff around scholar academic and social-emotional goals and progress
- Be provided the information and resources necessary to support their scholar's success

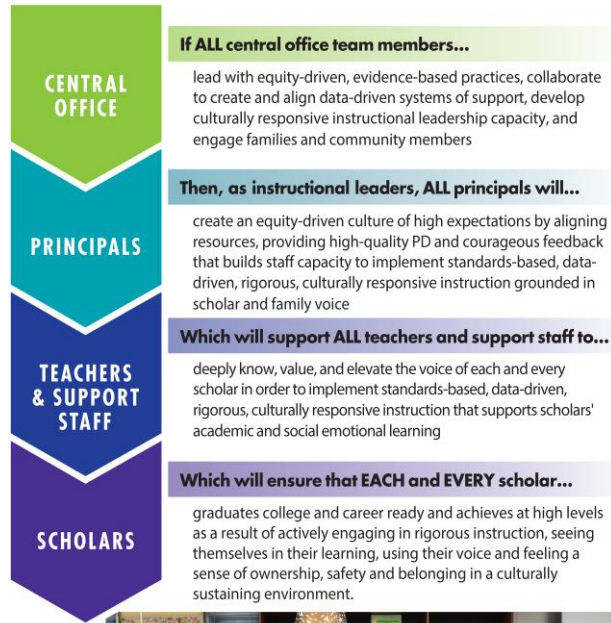
EQUITY & EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

Take a moment and read our vision for equity and excellence in FWPS.

As you reflect on the vision, identify 2-3 words or phrases that stand out for you and be prepared to share why. Why these over others?

Theory of Action

Our Theory of Action



Revised: June 17, 2021

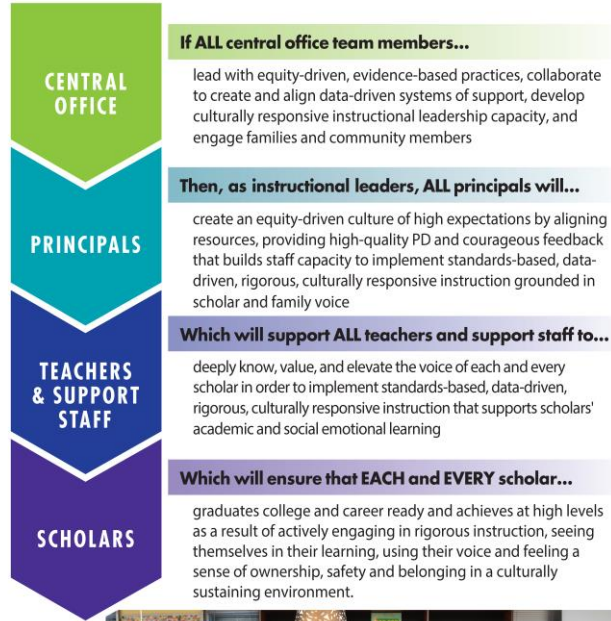


Which will ensure that EACH and EVERY scholar...

graduates college and career ready and achieves at high levels as a result of actively engaging in rigorous instruction, seeing themselves in their learning, using their voice and feeling a sense of ownership, safety and belonging in a culturally sustaining environment.

Theory of Action

Our Theory of Action



Revised: June 17, 2021

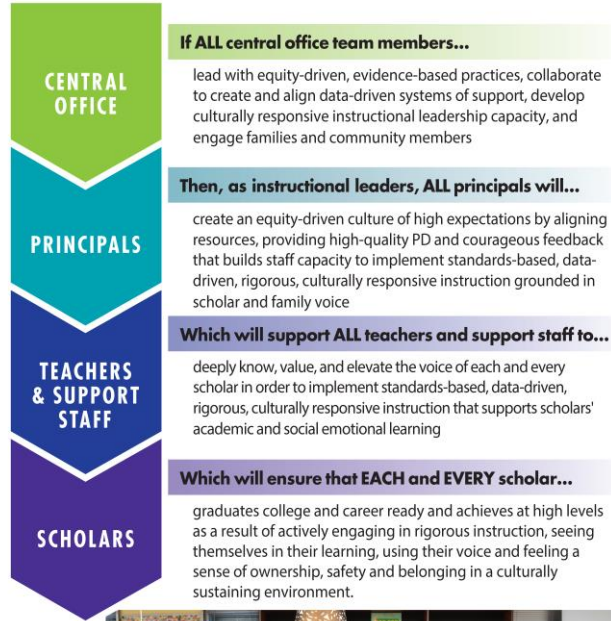


Which will ensure that EACH and EVERY scholar...

graduates college and career ready and achieves at high levels as a result of actively engaging in rigorous instruction seeing themselves in their learning, using their voice and feeling a sense of ownership, safety and belonging in a culturally sustaining environment.

Theory of Action

Our Theory of Action



Revised: June 17, 2021

If ALL central office team members...

lead with equity-driven, evidence-based practices, collaborate to create and align data-driven systems of support, develop culturally responsive instructional leadership capacity, and engage families and community members

Then, as instructional leaders, ALL principals will...

create an equity-driven culture of high expectations by aligning resources providing high-quality PD and courageous feedback that builds staff capacity to implement standards-based, data-driven, rigorous, culturally responsive instruction grounded in scholar and family voice

Which will support ALL teachers and support staff to...

deeply know, value, and elevate the voice of each and every scholar in order to implement standards-based, data-driven, rigorous, culturally responsive instruction that supports scholars' academic and social emotional learning

Akron Public Schools believes in the uniqueness and potential of all scholars regardless of race, class, socioeconomics, gender, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cognitive/physical ability, diverse language fluency and religion.

We believe in the power, potential and collective efforts of everyone supporting our students to dream, persist and thrive.

We are committed to identifying and eliminating inequities through intentional design. Therefore, **we will always** hold high expectations that are evidenced (*and supported*) throughout the educational environment.

Our Scholars



1. Are seen, heard, included and valued as assets and agents within the school and community
2. Are empowered to collaborate and share in decision making
3. Experience success that builds confidence in their future
4. Experience culturally responsive, real-world learning opportunities attentive to their learning styles
5. Are actively engaged and experience rigorous teaching and learning
6. Present their learning to peers, educators and relevant community members enabling their culture, interests and individuality to be affirmed and accentuated
7. Take an active role in using their authentic voice as architects of their own learning
8. Are challenged, supported and engaged in their learning socially, emotionally, and academically
9. Feel safe and loved with a sense of belonging

Our Families



1. Are seen, heard, included and valued as assets
2. Are viewed as essential to student development and learning
3. Are empowered to collaborate and share in decision making
4. Access resources to support and enhance student and family success
5. Are informed and knowledgeable of options and opportunities
6. Have a sense of belonging

Our Educators



1. Contribute to the scholars learning through **all** roles
2. Are seen, heard, included and valued as assets
3. Are empowered to collaborate and share in decision making
4. Intentionally ensure our scholars see themselves in curriculum and leadership
5. Look for inequities and actively seek ways to remove barriers
6. Ensure the space for scholar voice to be practiced, strengthened, utilized and amplified
7. Know and implement culturally responsive practices
8. Seek to know and understand our scholars
9. Make learning accessible and rich for all scholars
10. Actively support a positive learning culture to support all scholars and colleagues
11. Work collaboratively with all stakeholders
12. Have a sense of belonging and support as we strive to meet the needs of our scholars

Another District’s TOA

Central Office Support

- If the central office team leads the vision of excellence through equity across all schools and departments with a focus on enhancing systems of equity that focus on teaching and learning by: (this can be written in sentence form if appropriate)
Establishing a strategic focus on equity centered leadership and supporting culturally responsive schools.
Using data, information and feedback to drive action and to lead the vision for excellence through equity,
Creating ongoing professional learning opportunities to model district cultural norms.
Hiring and retaining equity minded leaders and staff.
Ensuring professional development for standards based cycles of inquiry across departments and schools,
Establishing the space for innovation for excellence through equity,
Providing for equitable distribution of resources and ensuring accountability
Authentically engaging staff, scholars, families and community
Creating a collaborative culture across departments and schools

Principal

- Then principals will lead all staff in the development of an equitable, culturally responsive-sustainable environment emphasizing scholar voice as a focus, using feedback and monitoring as a strategy, modeling expectations, designing systems and structures of collaboration and accountability. Principals will select and retain equity minded staff, create ongoing professional development and use data to drive action and increase scholars’ learning.

Teacher

- Then all teachers and support staff will create safe space and cultivate equitable, culturally responsive-sustainable environments employing research based, standards-based cycles of inquiry with systems of accountability for learning that empower scholars to become agents of their own learning.

Scholar

- Then our scholars are seen, heard, included and valued in culturally responsive environments where they are challenged, supported and actively engaged with rigorous teaching and learning. Scholars are agents of their own learning and achieve at the highest level academically, socially, and emotionally so they are college and career ready graduates and future leaders.

⋮

Theory of Action Design



If ALL central office team members...

lead with equity-driven, evidence-based practices, collaborate to create and align data-driven systems of support, develop culturally responsive instructional leadership capacity, and engage families and community members

Then, as instructional leaders, ALL principals will...

create an equity-driven culture of high expectations by aligning resources, providing high-quality PD and courageous feedback that builds staff capacity to implement standards-based, data-driven, rigorous, culturally responsive instruction grounded in scholar and family voice

Which will support ALL teachers and support staff to...

deeply know, value, and elevate the voice of each and every scholar in order to implement standards-based, data-driven, rigorous, culturally responsive instruction that supports scholars' academic and social emotional learning

Which will ensure that EACH and EVERY scholar...

graduates college and career ready and achieves at high levels as a result of actively engaging in rigorous instruction, seeing themselves in their learning, using their voice and feeling a sense of ownership, safety and belonging in a culturally sustaining environment.



Processing and Integrating...

- What did you hear that is aligned to the work you are leading?
- What did you hear that stretched your thinking?
- Your next steps.