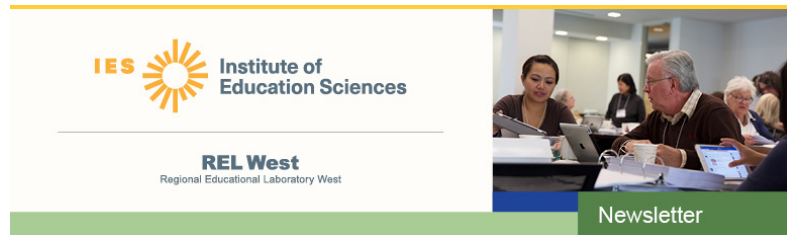


October 2022

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Over the past several years, there has been much reflection, examination, and discussion around issues of equity in the education system—both at a national and local level. It didn't take long before the consequences of the pandemic put a spotlight on the pre-existing inequities within our communities and systems. Existing disparities in housing and food security, education, and health care, for example, grew wider between socioeconomic and racial groups. At the same time, a racial reckoning across the nation was a reminder that systemic racism and injustices persist.

For REL West, advancing equity continues to be a key focus area as we serve diverse populations in our four states. Through work that has been completed and work that is currently in process, we are being intentional about discussing inequities and identifying systemic barriers to equity that we help address in order to improve outcomes—learning, socioemotional, and others for traditionally underserved and minoritized students. This newsletter highlights REL West's "Equity in Action" work and points to resources for district leaders, school leaders, and classroom teachers to create systems that will ensure that all students receive what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential.

Take care,

John Rice
Director, REL West

Advancing Equity

As the COVID pandemic compounded stress and trauma, vulnerable students and families became more at risk for disengaging from school and the school community. Many school and district leaders sought to create safe and healthy environments for their students and families, who were feeling increasingly disconnected mentally, emotionally, or physically. [Learn More](#)

New Resources

Equity in Action—Tools

[Building a District Equity Team](#): A worksheet with guiding questions for forming a

[Bias-Based Beliefs Resource](#): A reflection protocol to guide individuals or a team through examination of bias-based beliefs and behaviors.

[Communication and Engagement Plan](#): A two-part tool containing a framework, guiding questions, and worksheets for developing a communication and engagement plan with different stakeholder groups.

Spotlight on Our Work

Creating Equitable Educator Practices and Improved Discipline Outcomes for Black Students

One of our equity-focused partnerships currently underway is a partnership with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). The goal of the partnership, *Creating Equitable Educator Practices and Improved Discipline Outcomes for Black Students*, is to reduce racial discipline disparities for Black students. REL West and SFUSD will work collaboratively to examine and dismantle structures that drive racial disparities in disciplinary practices affecting Black students in the district. The partnership will conduct rigorous research to test evidence-based policies and practices that address these challenges. Together, REL West and SFUSD will undertake continuous improvement processes to implement, test, and refine approaches to solving racial discipline problems. The partnership will also engage in strategic dissemination efforts, communicating lessons learned from the implementation of evidence-based strategies.

The **Creating Equitable Educator Practices and Improved Discipline Outcomes for Black Students** partnership aims to adopt evidence-based approaches such as empathic discipline practices—which emphasize relationships and perspective-taking over punishment—and strategies that shift adult and student mindsets to address perceptions of stereotype threat and encourage students' feelings of belonging.

[Click here](#) to learn more about this and other REL West partnerships.

More Equity in Action Resources

Presentation Slides: [Targeted Improvement Efforts Toward Racial Equity in Five School Districts](#)

This slide deck was prepared for a virtual session for the Arizona Teachers' Institute and Leading Change Conference in June 2021. REL West presented a comprehensive look at how the district teams, involved in the Equity in Action project, engaged in equity-centered processes to improve engagement of Black and Latinx students and families in their districts.

Webinar: [Creating Culturally Affirming Spaces—School and Classroom Practices](#)

This webinar expanded knowledge and provided practical, evidence-based examples of systems, policies, and practices that are culturally affirming—what they are and what they are not—to inform instruction, school climate-related practices, and everyday decisions that shape the academic and social-emotional well-being of students and their families.

Webinar: [Creating Culturally Affirming Spaces—A Systems Orientation](#)

In the second webinar of a two-part series, presenters and practitioners discussed the practical knowledge and leadership skills necessary to begin creating culturally affirming spaces to make schools more safe and supportive environments for culturally, linguistically, and gender-diverse students. The webinar expanded on how

leadership approaches and strategies for implementing culturally affirming environments.

Upcoming Event!

Join us for REL West's upcoming webinar "Defining and Measuring Progress: Aligning Data and Measures to Outputs and Outcomes of Logic Models" on November 17, 2022. The webinar will discuss how to align data in the development of a logic model. The presentation will be based on work that REL West has done with the Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG) in helping them walk through a logic model and aligned measurement process for their Head Start program. [Click here](#) to RSVP.

Resources for Educators

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), in collaboration with REL Southeast, recently released a webinar for educators on evidence-based recommendations to help students improve their literacy skills. The webinar and accompanying handout of resources are available on the [WWC website](#) under "Resources for Educators" and "About Practice Guides." This webinar has been prerecorded and is available for viewing at any time.

Connect with us!

Visit our [website](#) to learn more about our work. Follow us on Twitter at [@REL_West](#) or email us at RELWest@WestEd.org.

If you are not already subscribed, please [click here](#) to sign up for our quarterly newsletter and share with others who may be interested in learning more about how to make evidence-informed changes to improve student success.

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Our mailing address is:
REL West at WestEd
730 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107

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