EDITOR’S NOTE
Inclusive and equitable education empowers every student to thrive, regardless of background. This Spotlight will help you identify gender and racial disparities in districts’ top positions; evaluate the key factors that influence retention of teachers of color; examine how to improve the pipeline for black teachers; review survey data highlighting district plans to diversify their staff; analyze the difference between equity and equality; and more.

Racial and Gender Disparities In the Superintendent’s Office, In Charts .................................................. 2

The Role Mentors and School Leaders Play in Retaining Teachers of Color ............................................ 4

Improving the Preparation Pipeline For Black Teachers: 5 Ideas From Experts ........................................ 6

The Perception of Suburban Schools As White and Wealthy Needs To Change, Researchers Say .............. 8

Districts’ Strategies to Diversify Teaching Staff, in Charts ................................................................. 10

What Helps Black Female Superintendents Do the Job? The Sisterhood. ............................................. 11

OPINION
3 Solutions for the Black Male Teacher Shortage ................................................................. 13

There’s a Difference Between Equity And Equality. Schools Need To Understand That .......................... 15
There's a growing body of research detailing the deep gender and demographic disparities that persist in school districts’ top positions. Not only have men long made up a disproportionate share of school superintendents—especially when considering that the vast majority of teachers are women. They’re also more likely to make higher salaries as district leaders and be appointed superintendent earlier in their careers.

A new study—which analyzed data about superintendents in Texas between 2010 and 2021—documented a longer professional trajectory for women and people of color before they end up in districts’ top jobs, and pay disparities for equally experienced superintendents.

The study builds on previous research that has found much of the same across the country.

Here are some key findings from the study out of Texas:

Superintendents don’t reflect the state’s student population

There’s a big gap between the demographics of students in Texas and the superintendents who lead their districts.

Although 73 percent of students in Texas identify as people of color, only 21 percent of superintendents do. The disparity is largest in rural areas, where Black and Hispanic students make up about 50 percent of the population, but 90 percent of superintendents are white.

Women are a minority of superintendents, but a majority of principals and teachers

In the 2020-21 school year, women accounted for decisive majorities of both teachers and principals in Texas schools, but just about a quarter of superintendents.

There’s been a small increase in the percentage of superintendents who are women over the past decade in the nation’s second largest state—the number grew from about 20 percent in 2011 to 27 percent in 2021—but big disparities remain.

That’s likely due, at least in part, to structural barriers that work against women—who are generally expected to prioritize their families and are less likely to have professional networking opportunities—and implicit biases that favor white men, said David DeMathews, an associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Texas at Austin, and the lead researcher on the report.

Women, Black, and Hispanic leaders take longer to get to the superintendent role

Women and people of color are less likely to be promoted from a principal position directly to superintendent, often having to hold several positions in the district’s central office before receiving a promotion to the district’s top position, according to the research.

It’s more common for men and white leaders to be promoted from principal to superintendent, the study found.

Women tend to earn less than male superintendents

Women superintendents, on average, earn smaller salaries than men in the state, even if they have the same level of experi-
Superintendents don’t reflect the demographics of students, teachers, or principals

Hover over or click on each point for data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>All other races</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: All other races include American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and multiracial.

SOURCE: Texas Education Research Center

ence. In fact, the gap tends to grow with more experience.

The only exception is for superintendents with more than 30 years of experience. At that experience level, women, on average, make about $3,000 more than men.

**Women, Black, and Hispanic superintendents are more likely to lead the highest-poverty districts**

In Texas, Black and Hispanic superintendents were more likely than their white counterparts to lead the highest-poverty districts, where more than 90 percent of students are economically disadvantaged.

High-poverty districts were also more likely than affluent districts to have repeated superintendent turnover in the study period.

Twenty percent of high-poverty districts had four to seven different superintendents during the 11-year study period, about double the proportion of districts where less than 10 percent of students are economically disadvantaged.
# ACCELERATE LEARNING
with online, Research-Based PD

Success By The Numbers

ESL Reading and Math Level Study PASS RATE %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Without Be GLAD Strategies</th>
<th>With Be GLAD Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Pass rate %**
- **Growth %**

---

Approved Funding Sources:
Title I, II, III, VI, VII, LCAP, LEA, ELL, Dual Language, Equity

---

A U.S. Department of Education Program of Academic Excellence
Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBELMA)

---

For more information visit BEGLADTRAINING.COM

---

Free t-shirt with every enrollment, use coupon code 'edweek' at checkout.
The Role Mentors and School Leaders Play in Retaining Teachers of Color

By Ileana Najarro

Research suggests that when teachers share an ethno-racial background with the growing population of Black, Latino, and Asian American students, these students are more likely to succeed academically, accumulate fewer suspensions, and be more motivated to pursue higher education.

Travis Bristol, associate professor of teacher education and education policy at the University of California, Berkeley and chair of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, says that white students have also expressed a preference for teachers of color in past research surveys.

Recognizing those benefits, many schools are looking to grow their ranks of teachers of color.

But even as states, districts, and individual schools invest time and money into hiring such educators, retaining them within the profession—or even at a single school—requires paying attention to the quality of induction support they get, ongoing mentorship, and how well prepared school administrators are at retaining their employees, experts said.

In a nationally representative survey of 1,000 full-time teachers, conducted in 2022 by Educators for Excellence, a national group that advocates for educators, 82 percent of Black, Indigenous, and other teachers of color said professional support and leadership opportunities would most likely keep teachers in the profession. Seventy-eight percent of white teachers agreed.

When it comes to keeping teachers of color at a specific school, Bristol points to an old adage: “Teachers leave their principals, not their students, because principals create working conditions in their schools to get teachers to stay or leave.”

What professional support teachers need to stay in the profession

To ensure that newer teachers of color stay in the profession, schools, and nonprofits leading recruitment efforts must ensure those teachers get induction support, Bristol said.

Often these beginner teachers are placed in some of the most challenging schools, so they need access to tools and resources to best support their students.

But all teachers of color could also stand to benefit from quality mentorship that attends to their career trajectories and social-emotional experiences. For instance, mentoring could help Black teachers learn how to navigate anti-Blackness in schools, or help LGBTQ+ teachers navigate heteronormative school contexts while also providing regular feedback and tools for them to improve their practice, Bristol said.

In an EdWeek Research Center survey of educators in October, a little more than half the district and school leaders who participated said that they offer mentorship programs and high-quality professional development as incentives or benefits to teachers. Twenty-two percent of these respondents said they introduced or improved mentorship programs in response to staffing challenges in the past two years.

The need for personalized professional mentorship among teachers of color to keep them in the profession is what sparked the creation of Edifying Teachers in 2021. A national network of teachers and researchers, Edifying Teachers partners with school districts to offer mentorship that can support and retain teachers of color, said founder Rudy Ruiz.

Through collaboration with Digital Promise, a nonprofit launched in 2011 by then President Barack Obama, Ruiz and his team—of six leadership members and a dozen other extended team members—formed partnerships with school districts that enable teachers to virtually access their own mentors for a variety of professional concerns.

Since its launch in 2021, the network has worked directly with districts in Maryland and Texas with plans to soon solidify partnerships with districts in Minnesota, Kansas, and Nebraska next year, Ruiz said.

The personalized mentorship goes beyond instructional coaching, said Katie Caster, director of mentoring for the group. It’s about helping teachers navigate career trajectories and relationships with other adults—whether that is fellow teachers, administrators, or even students’ parents.

Edifying Teachers has also begun pairing mentors with pre-service teachers and has co-hosted various events, including a conference in October where middle, high school, and college students seeking to become teachers, current teachers, and some state and district leaders all learned more about how mentorships can support teachers and how national affinity groups offer another pathway for this, Ruiz said.

The hope is that by offering mentorship to teachers across all experience levels, and getting the buy-in from administrators for this,
the pipeline for recruiting and retaining teachers of color can be fixed.

“Every system is perfectly designed to get the results that it gets, and so, what we’re trying to do is redesign the system in a more productive way to get the outcomes that we’re shooting for,” Ruiz said.

Caster added that policymakers play a role in supporting district-level recruitment and retention of teachers of color by updating the narrative of what it means to be a teacher both in terms of the impact teachers have on students and the related salaries that impact teachers’ quality of life.

“It’s the narrative of making sure that we support teachers, that they feel like this is a path to the middle class and above,” Caster said.

**What school administrators can do to keep teachers of color**

When it comes to retaining teachers of color at specific schools, principals can make or break efforts.

“We place the most novice teachers in the most challenging schools. We also place the most novice principals in the most challenging schools,” Bristol said.

“So teachers are leaving their principals because their principals don’t have the tools, the resources, the skills, the expertise, to create working conditions to retain the very teachers that we’re spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to recruit,” he added.

This is why Edifying Teachers makes sure to fully include school leadership in their mentorship programs. Mentors work with school leadership teams to help them to both convey a strong sense of support to their teachers and build capacity to actually provide that support when needed.

For instance, mentors say that they often hear teachers of color talk about challenges around school climate and culture that school principals can control. For instance, some mentees have expressed a need for support in basic skills including lesson planning, as well as with drawing on best practices to better support increased numbers of English learners.

“One practical strategy we recently introduced to foster collaborative learning and collective efficacy ... is a system for ensuring regular peer observations, visiting fellow teachers’ classrooms to spur meaningful discussion, professional learning, and common language and expectations,” Ruiz said.

“We know that no matter how good of a job we might do as mentors and as mentorship support, unless we have those interactions with the school leadership team, teachers say some support from their building may not actually change,” he added.

An effective principal has enough knowledge to know how to best support a teacher with their instruction, or can point them in the direction of where they can find support around instruction, Bristol said.

They’re also aware of social and emotional challenges that may be unique to a given teacher of color based on some of the demographic characteristics at play in a given school and the principal must attempt to run interference.

For example, a principal can intervene when white teachers send Black students to a Black teacher to address misbehavior as they have typecast that teacher as a disciplinarian, Bristol said. The principal can help white teachers practice strategies to address misbehaviors themselves and can make sure not to further perpetuate the stereotype of the disciplinarian Black teacher by assigning them to guard the cafeteria or be a hallway monitor.
A healthy, effective preparation pipeline would value Black teachers for the ways their physical presence, life experiences, racial knowledge and ways of doing things all help schools better serve students.

This “influential presence” is widely acknowledged to have a profound positive impact on Black students’ educational lives. Black educators encourage persistence, cultivate a sense of possibility, and aid students in times of duress, going so far as to provide food, housing, and transportation for students who are in need. Black educators also influence the professional practices of adults from other backgrounds, pointing out and challenging low expectations and advocating for students to receive more rigorous instruction. They also frequently give Black caregivers information about which classes their children should take (and avoid) and a heads-up on the teachers who treat Black students in demeaning ways. Black educators see all of this as part of their work. But they are rarely recognized or paid for taking on these additional responsibilities. That’s why attracting and retaining Black teachers requires a clear message from the field: Your presence is not only influential, but sorely needed and highly valued.

At minimum, this message can be demonstrated by simply recognizing the tremendous value that Black educators’ additional labor adds to schools. Ideally, Black educators who engage in these practices should be compensated accordingly.

Keilani Goggins
Director, Black Educators Initiative, National Center for Teacher Residencies

A healthy, effective preparation pipeline would lower financial barriers by offering stipends, scholarships, emergency funds, and other financial supports. This is especially important to ensure that aspiring teachers of color have access to high-quality, clinically based preparation that honors the complexity of teaching and values their humanity and racial identity.

Currently, many teacher-preparation experiences aren’t quite so comprehensive, don’t provide a culturally affirming environment, and don’t provide much-needed financial help. Research shows that not only do Black teachers earn less than white teachers, but that Black borrowers shoulder more student loan debt. This can contribute to aspiring teachers of color feeling isolated and poorly prepared, as well as carrying significant financial burdens.

To change that, we should invest in what is already working. In our BEI study, we found that financial support to help with barriers such as childcare and test licensure was especially critical to retaining Black teacher candidates. Scaling innovative new models, like providing a living wage stipend to teacher candidates—as we do in the residency model—while also expanding such strategies in traditional teacher preparation programs would dramatically expand access to the profession.

This matters because research clearly shows that both teacher quality and teacher diversity matter. All students benefit from having a teacher of color, and Black students who have just one Black teacher in elementary school are more likely to graduate from high school and consider going to college than their Black peers.

Desiree Carver-Thomas & Cathy Yun
Researchers, Learning Policy Institute
Multiple-choice exams do not accurately and consistently predict teacher effectiveness.

One result is that teachers of color are less likely to receive high-quality preservice preparation that includes supportive student teaching. Instead, they are more likely to enter the profession on emergency or temporary permits that require little to no preparation. Research shows that teachers with the least preparation are two to three times as likely to leave the profession as those who are comprehensively prepared. Indeed, turnover rates among teachers of color are about 30 percent higher than the rate among white teachers.

Some states now give teacher candidates multiple opportunities to demonstrate competency, including through coursework or performance assessments that authentically evaluate readiness for teaching. Performance assessments typically require portfolios, videos of instruction, evaluation of student work, and written reflections explaining teaching decisions. Candidates’ scores on such assessments often predict their students’ academic gains. Compared to typical multiple-choice tests, pass rates on performance assessments also show less severe disparities between white teacher candidates and candidates of color.

Strong preparation and practice-oriented licensure requirements are needed to ensure that excellent teachers of color are not excluded from the profession.

Niral Shah
Associate Professor, University of Washington

A healthy, effective preparation pipeline would provide race-focused education that is rooted in practice. Many teachers believe racism is real and requires urgent attention. What they wonder is how to change what they do in the classroom.

Teacher education typically tackles these problems in the wrong order, starting with raising awareness of how racism operates in the classroom, then hoping that awareness translates into instructional strategies. But there is little evidence this happens at scale. That’s why we should start with practices, then focus on awareness. When I work with teachers on a practice like orchestrating class discussions, for example, we first analyze the kinds of questions they specifically ask Black girls or emergent bilingual students, and then that inquiry becomes a catalyst for deeper engagement with concepts like whiteness and misogyny.

The emphasis should be on practices, while explicitly naming race, racism, and intersections with other social markers like disability, language, and gender.

This vision applies not just to white teachers, but to Black, Indigenous, and other teachers of color as well. These educators bring rich lived experiences to classrooms, but that doesn’t mean they automatically know how to design anti-racist learning environments. Through strategies such as coaching and ongoing collaboration with colleagues, a focus on race-explicit teaching practices can support teachers over the span of their careers, not just in one-day workshops.

Sharif El-Mekki
Founder & CEO, Center for Black Educator Development

A healthy, effective teacher preparation pipeline would acknowledge that Brown v. Board of Education is the linchpin of our current staffing crisis. Tens of thousands of Black educators lost jobs after the Supreme Court’s 1954 ruling that segregated schooling is unconstitutional. To course-correct and repair that loss requires fundamental change.

We can begin by improving the climate in the school systems we claim we want Black students to return to and teach in. Absent this, experts like Christopher Emdin describe efforts to recruit more Black teachers as tantamount to asking someone to revisit the scene of a crime in which they were the victims.

We must also ensure that those whose job it is to prepare, support, and manage Black teachers are culturally proficient. Having an anti-racist mindset and showing evidence of effective implementation of anti-racist practices is crucial. From school boards to human resources directors, district leaders to college faculty, everyone involved in this pipeline should be held accountable for the recruitment, support, and retention of aspiring Black educators.

Listening to Black students and educators is also a must. You can start by reading our recent report, To Be Who We Are: Black Teachers on Creating Affirming School Cultures

The message is clear: If the entire ecosystem isn’t addressing the anti-Blackness that remains rampant inside our K-12 teacher pipeline, just as it was in 1954, it will be harder to attract and retain the teachers our children need.
Suburban schools have become notably more diverse over the past decade, to the point where they roughly mirror the racial composition of the nation’s public school students.

But the view of suburban communities as wealthy, white enclaves persists.

That view has to change if suburban schools are to equitably serve their students, according to a group of researchers who spoke Wednesday at a conference on suburban schools at Johns Hopkins University’s new Bloomberg Center here. If educators and policymakers maintain this traditional view of suburbs, they risk not serving well the student body that actually attends suburban schools, they said.

“Suburban schools as being immune from some of the challenges present in urban and rural schools doesn’t apply, either. Suburban schools have experienced challenges with chronic absenteeism, declines in academic achievement, student mental health problems, and staffing shortages in recent years, just as schools in other settings have. In some cases, the challenges in suburban schools have been more pronounced.”

While all students saw a historic decline in math and reading performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress in 2022, suburban schools saw a particularly steep drop in math achievement, with their students’ average score dropping by five points from the 2019 assessment. That placed suburban schools at the same level as rural schools, which they previously outperformed.

The shifting demographics can’t be ignored, and they could have massive implications, researchers said during the conference.

What diversity means for the future of suburban schools

Since the creation of suburban neighborhoods, views of the suburbs have been tied
to the prosperity of white people, said Karyn Lacy, a sociology professor at the University of Michigan and a conference panelist.

That has led to some tension in suburban communities as they grow in diversity. For example, in one community Lacy has studied, she witnessed white residents argue that the school district should ban curriculum and instruction related to critical race theory and the 1619 Project, a curriculum tied to a New York Times Magazine initiative that makes slavery central to the teaching of U.S. history.

“Many of the white residents who spoke out really spoke about Black people and Latinx kids as sort of guests in their space, not as legitimate members of their community,” Lacy said.

As people continue to operate under preconceived notions of suburban schools as mostly white and wealthy, students of color feel abandoned, said James Earl Davis, the chair in urban education at Temple University.

“Where there’s this kind of dream and nostalgia of achievement, what suburbia means to people in suburban schools, that same dream is not being experienced by many Black families and Black students in the classroom,” he said.

Schools and policymakers can combat racial divisions in increasingly diverse suburban schools by being aware of their growing diversity in the first place, the researchers said.

Policymakers also need to commit to strategies to increase the diversity of teachers in suburban schools, Davis said.

“There’s a kind of perfect storm around achievement that we’re seeing, where schools are becoming more diverse and the teaching workforce is becoming less diverse,” Davis said.
Fostering Inclusion and Equity:
Transforming Classrooms for a Diverse Learning Experience

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive classrooms begin with inclusive professional development. It ensures that all educators, regardless of their background or experience, have access to opportunities for growth and learning. This promotes equity within the educational system by providing equal chances for development to all teachers.

Be GLAD training promotes inclusivity in education by providing educators with the tools, strategies, and mindset necessary to support the diverse needs of all learners in the classroom. It empowers educators to create inclusive learning environments where every student has the opportunity to succeed. This will support educators to meet the differentiated needs of their students who vary in levels when it comes to reading, writing, speaking, and social-emotional intelligence. It equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to create inclusive and accessible learning environments that cater to students with various abilities, backgrounds, and learning styles.

When educators receive training that is inclusive and tailored to diverse student populations, it leads to improved learning outcomes for all students. Inclusive teaching practices have been shown to enhance engagement, participation, and academic achievement across the board. Let's delve into a summer school program for English Learners in Marysville, WA, where Be GLAD strategies were implemented with English Learners over a four week period of time.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATORS

Be GLAD, a research-based model, offers professional development services to states, districts, and schools, emphasizing equity through effective teaching strategies and fostering language acquisition. With a commitment to achieving academic excellence and preparing students for college and career success, Be GLAD provides training for educators to create inclusive classroom settings for ALL students. This training serves as an instructional model that seamlessly aligns with existing district initiatives and offers flexibility through three different formats: Online (self-paced), Facilitated Webidnar, or In-Person sessions. Many districts have found the Online Training particularly advantageous, as it allows teachers to complete the training without disrupting classroom routines or relying on substitutes. These diverse options promote equity in professional development, empowering educators to select the format that best suits their needs and preferences.

Marysville School District trainers Cassandra Clark and Diana Parker conducted Be GLAD training sessions online for teachers, aiming to enhance students' WIDA scores across all domains. The goal was to implement a model with strategies that were focused on fostering student language development and boosting engagement for ALL learners.

BEGladTraining.com
The summer program consisted of 32 students, all of whom were identified as Multilingual or qualified under Title III criteria. Among these students, 10 attended exclusively online throughout the academic year, spanning from Kindergarten to 5th grade. Notably, 70% of the attendees spoke Spanish, 10% were Tagalog speakers, 10% Vietnamese, 5% Urdu, and the remaining 5% were English-only speakers.

During the four-week summer program, there was an impressive 97% average daily attendance rate. Each classroom had one teacher, maintaining a student-teacher ratio of 1:10. Additionally, there were two reading/math support teachers, along with a principal and a secretary overseeing the program. Importantly, all teachers involved in the summer program held Be GLAD certification.

In order to maintain an inclusive and equitable learning environment for the diverse student population in their classroom, the teachers implemented Be GLAD instructional strategies. These strategies encompass integrated and designated English Language Development (ELD) instruction for both whole-class and small-group settings, differentiated teaching methods, scaffolding techniques, and a gradual release of responsibility to students.

Throughout whole-group direct instruction, the teachers employed Be GLAD strategies to collaboratively build knowledge with the students. Engaging students as active participants in the learning process, they encouraged oral practice of academic language, utilized hand gestures to aid comprehension, and facilitated peer discussions to process new information, thereby fostering academic discourse within the classroom.

Teachers integrated comprehensible input into every lesson, employing various strategies such as color coding and shape coding, encouraging students to repeat the academic language, incorporating abundant visuals, utilizing hand gestures for comprehension, and implementing additional techniques to enhance understanding.

During Learning Logs, students showcased their understanding through various means, utilizing a note-taking approach tailored to their individual learning preferences. Some students opted for sketching, while others preferred writing. Building upon this activity, teachers formed small groups and applied Designated English Language Development (ELD) strategies to customize instruction based on students’ unique needs.

In addition to academic instruction, teachers seamlessly incorporated strategies for social-emotional learning, fostering an inclusive environment for all students. Among the Be GLAD strategies utilized, the T-Graph was employed to teach teamwork and collaboration skills, along with social academic language. The implementation of the 3 Personal Standards aimed to instill habits conducive to lifelong success both inside and outside the classroom.
Be GLAD strategies and UpLevel provided scaffolding for our students to be able to access content at a deeper level and gave them opportunities to interact with information through charts, expert groups and chants. The students were so engaged with these strategies. This really deepened their understanding. We started to notice a change happening in our classrooms. Using the pictorial input charts in addition to songs and chants, we really started to see our ML students come out of their shells. Some of our ML students who were more quiet and reserved were asking to lead the poems or chants.

—Cassandra Clark, Multilingual Learner Specialist

**ACADEMIC OUTCOMES**

In May, students completed a STAR assessment as their spring evaluation, followed by a subsequent assessment at the conclusion of the three-week summer program in July. The purpose was to gauge their progress from the end of May to the end of July, showcasing their growth over the summer period.

30 students participated for 16 or more days. On average, students who attended for 16 or more days experienced a growth of 95 scaled Score Points on the STAR assessment from Spring 2021 to Summer 2021. Additionally, they demonstrated an average growth equivalent to 0.4 Grade Equivalency, equivalent to four months of growth on the STAR assessment, over the 4 week summer program.

**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL OUTCOMES**

In the realm of social-emotional outcomes, notable progress was observed among students. There was a noticeable uptick in their confidence levels, particularly in their ability to express themselves and engage in sharing experiences. Additionally, efforts were made to foster the rebuilding of peer-to-peer relationships, especially for those who remained in online learning environments during the 2020-2021 academic year. Notably, enduring connections were forged between students and building staff, highlighting the importance of supportive relationships within educational settings.

**CONCLUSION**

It is imperative to maintain consistent check-ins on students who participated in Summer School, ensuring continued monitoring of their personal and academic growth. The commendable efforts of the dedicated team of educators and staff from the previous summer should serve as inspiration for future endeavors. There is a need to perpetuate the provision of Be GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) training to incoming staff, while also offering refresher courses for those already trained, ensuring ongoing professional development and support.

“The Multilingual (or at the time English Language Learner) Learner Be GLAD Summer School Program gave our multilingual students an opportunity to grow both academically and socially with peers who spoke the same language as them. Students felt safe and valued for the gifts they brought with them to the program and proud of their accomplishments. The team of educators who designed and implemented the program believed in providing multilingual students with engaging and rigorous learning experiences that would ignite a passion for learning and they successfully lit that fire!”

—Nancy Smith, District Administrator

Inclusive classrooms begin with inclusive professional development. This is essential for creating an educational environment where every student feels valued, supported, and empowered to succeed. It supports educators in developing the skills and knowledge they need to effectively meet the needs of all students, promoting equity, diversity, and excellence in education.

For more information visit [BEGLADTRAINING.COM](http://BEGLADTRAINING.COM)
Research suggests there are tangible benefits from a more racially and ethnically diverse teacher workforce for the growing number of students of color in America’s public schools. District and school leaders seem aware of those benefits. New EdWeek Research Center survey data shows how they plan to go about boosting the diversity of their teaching corps.

In a nationally representative October online survey, 1,509 educators—including 254 district leaders, 110 school principals, and 1,145 teachers—were asked how important they believe it is to have a racially or ethnically diverse teacher workforce in their district or school.

A large majority, or 84 percent, said it was at least somewhat important, with 16 percent saying otherwise.

In a January survey for EdRecruiter, conducted by the EdWeek Research Center, 403 recruiters from traditional public schools, charters, and private/parochial schools across the country were asked how race and ethnicity factored into districts’ hiring processes.

Forty-seven percent said that while they try to find racially and ethnically diverse candidates, they don’t get enough applicants regardless of what they do. Yet only 20 percent said they take concrete steps to ensure that candidates for jobs are racially and ethnically diverse.

In the new October survey, district leaders and school principals were asked about the major challenges involved with recruiting a racially or ethnically diverse staff.

The top two challenges these leaders identified were too few diverse candidates (33 percent) and trouble getting anyone at all to apply for their available jobs (44 percent).

Recognizing that there have been staffing challenges overall across the country in the last two years, district leaders and principals were asked what, if any, changes their district or school had made to teacher compensation and/or benefits to address those challenges.

Seventy-nine percent said they increased salaries. The next four popular options included introducing or improving mentorship programs, offering or increasing retention bonuses, offering or increasing pay/bonuses for working in hard-to-fill positions, and offering or increasing hiring bonuses.

However, even as district and school leaders look to more pay as the solution for recruiting more teachers and administrators of color, when these leaders and teachers themselves were asked whether higher pay would attract a more racially and ethnically diverse teaching staff to their district or school, 60 percent of respondents said no.

While higher teacher pay is typically at the forefront of strategies for recruiting and retaining teachers of color, some researchers point to other factors that work in tandem with more pay, including more professional support.
What Helps Black Female Superintendents Do the Job? The Sisterhood.

By Denisa R. Superville

Black women make up fewer than 1.5 percent of the nation’s superintendents. That means that when they walk into a room with other Black female district leaders, they’re often among their mentors, current or former colleagues, or friends.

In other spaces, they may feel like “a unicorn,” according to LaTonya Goffney, a school system leader for 15 years and currently the superintendent of the Aldine school district in Aldine, Texas.

Goffney was part of a recent panel in Washington that also featured Sonja Brookins Santelises, the CEO of the Baltimore City school district, and Melanie Kay-Wyatt, who earlier this month was named the permanent superintendent of the Alexandria City school system in Virginia. She starts on July 1.

The event hosted by the Education Trust looked at the research on Black women superintendents and the traits and characteristics they bring to the job. It also explored how the skills Black women bring the job—deep instructional leadership and an ability to work with stakeholders and facilitate conversations about race and equity—could be key assets as K-12 emerges from the challenges of the pandemic.

Expertise not found in case studies

Black women have led some of the country’s largest school districts—from Barbara Jenkins in Orange County, Fla., to the late Michelle King, the first Black woman to lead the Los Angeles school system.

But the group of Black female district leaders has remained small, so much so that they’ve developed a “sisterhood”—an informal network where they share career advice, provide emotional and professional support, offer career leads, and lend an ear on how to navigate the challenges of district leadership in an environment that was not created with them in mind.

The women provide emotional support as well practical assistance to manage the nuts-and-bolts of district leadership—from transportation to school board relations—from a perspective that’s not typically captured in research or covered in a Harvard University case study, said Christina Grant, the state superintendent of schools in the District of Columbia, who runs a group chat for Black female district leaders.

“I wouldn’t exist, if I didn’t know that these women existed,” Kay-Wyatt said after the event.

As the sisterhood’s newest member, Kay-Wyatt has already benefited.

Since she was named interim superintendent last year, Kay-Wyatt checked in regularly with LaTanya McDade, the superintendent in Virginia’s Prince William County, to ensure she was prepared for the role and that she took care of her mental and emotional wellness. McDade is Prince William County’s first Black woman superintendent.

“I think that it’s important that we speak up about it and reach out,” Kay-Wyatt said on a panel in response to a question about whether she’d gotten a playbook to help her navigate being Alexandria’s first Black woman superintendent.

“Don’t wait for someone,” Kay-Wyatt said, urging Black women who are already in the roles to look out for those who are coming up.

“I think it’s also important to know that if you see another woman who is aspiring to do that—whether they have the skillset or not—it’s up to us to bring them to the table. And when we bring them to the table … we have to make sure we don’t just walk away from that table. That we come back and check on all of those women who are sitting there to make sure that not only are they OK, but that we ask the right questions. Because, ‘Are you OK? gets you, ‘Yes, I am fine. I am OK. I am good.’”

Santelises, the Baltimore schools CEO, recalled how she leaned on the unofficial sisterhood during a dark period in 2022 when Maryland’s then-Governor Larry Hogan called for criminal investigations and potential criminal charges after a state inspector general’s report found that thousands of failing grades had been changed in the city’s high schools from the 2016 through 2020 academic years.

Although the district’s lawyers told Santelises that everything would be fine, she couldn’t take comfort in their assurances.

She’d been scheduled to fly to Florida to meet a group of Black female superintendents gathered by Sharon Contreras, who is Black...
and Latina and was then the superintendent of the Guilford County Public Schools in Greensboro, N.C.

When Santelises arrived at nearly midnight, the group was waiting for her.

“Tink that’s symbolic of what that sisterhood means,” Santelises said. “On my worst day, they were my best therapy. God had them [ready] when I was a 2, and I left as a 10.”

Amid a weekend of relaxation, they visited Bethune-Cookman University, a private historically Black college in Daytona Beach, Fla. That visit included a stop to see the statue of Mary McLeod Bethune, the daughter of formerly enslaved people who founded the National Council of Negro Women and the school that later became Bethune-Cookman University.

While she had the support of the staff and lawyers, it was different hearing from a group of superintendents that everything would be OK, Santelises said.

“I had a community of people who could be real, who could recalibrate me, who I could focus on, and, frankly, connect it with the history,” she said. “My lawyers were telling me, ‘I don’t know why you’re so upset; it’s just a political stunt. He is not going to do anything to you.’ But it didn’t matter.”

‘Generational work’

The women also discussed what kept them going and motivated amid the challenges in K-12. For Santelises, it’s her desire to ensure that she sets up at least one generation of students to succeed in life, she said.

“This is generational work,” Santelises said. “I just want one generation in [my] leg of the race. I am not going to get them all. I can’t dig back in the past, and I can’t predict the future. But on my watch, I want a generation. … I am very clear about legacy. I am very clear about the excellence and the potential that is unrealized.”

For Kay-Wyatt, it’s about impact—the impact she can have on others, as well as the impact others can have on her.

“When I wake up in the morning I have my little routine and I say, ‘OK, today, what impact I can have on just one person?’ Or I am hoping that one person might have an impact on me. Sometimes, it’s small. We don’t always identify what that is. But that’s what I want to make sure that I do when I am talking about my ‘why’: It’s to remember that every day I have a chance to make a change, and impact [someone’s] life. … It could be a student; it could be a parent; it could be a colleague; it could be a bus driver. Just knowing that you wake up with that opportunity, then why not? Why not do this work?”

Students keep Goffney going. But she’s also cognizant that she’s following in the footsteps of Black women before her, who’ve always taken care of others, Goffney said.

The grandchild of a grandmother with a 5th grade education, a grandfather who couldn’t read, and the daughter of a teenager mother, Goffney said there’s nothing in her past would suggest that she’d be where she is in life today.

“Education—teachers—[that] is the reason I’m sitting here,” Goffney said. “So every day, I show up in the midst of these challenges, excited about the opportunity to be able to make a difference for so many who are depending on me, just like I was depending on the educators who came before me.

“I know where there’s unity, there is strength. But I recognize, too, that we are called for such a time like this. I believe that Black women are called to do this work, especially during these tough times.”

Sharing educational expertise

The relationship is also reciprocal. When Baltimore was changing its high school curriculum, Santelises asked her staff who else had done something similar. Goffney, the Aldine superintendent, they responded. So Santelises sent her staff to Goffney’s district to learn from the early adopters.

Goffney did the same later when her district was changing its approach to literacy instruction. She’d followed Santelises’ work for years, before they met in person. (Goffney is a member of the governing board for Editorial Projects in Education, the nonprofit that publishes Education Week.)

When she first became a district leader, there were only four other Black women serving in that role in Texas, she said.

“To be in a room and in a space where you can authentically be yourself and you can relate, it’s powerful because you feel like a unicorn,” she said. “You do at times, and people treat you like that. But there is power, I think, in the collective experience of all of us.”

There’s an authenticity, Goffney said, in being part of the group.

“I don’t have to be strong; I don’t have to be fake,” she said. “When I walked into the room, Christina [Grant] already knew how I felt. … We can get past the pleasantries and get to the raw, authentic person that you are and say, ‘How you are, and what [do] you need?’ And so that’s what I appreciate about the sisterhood.”

More Like This

2 Billion People Celebrate Lunar New Year. Your Class Can, Too

Will the Ban on Affirmative Action Hurt Diversity? Look to California

Quiz: What Are the Challenges and Strategies To Diversifying School Staff?
3 Solutions for the Black Male Teacher Shortage

I was well out of college before my mentor persuaded me to become a teacher

By Sharif El-Mekki

We often hear about the dearth of Black, Indigenous, Latino, and brown men teaching. We hear about the problem, the barriers, the obstacles, but not the constructive path forward. Black male educators account for less than 2 percent of the total teaching population despite volumes of studies that demonstrate how much of a game-changer they can be for not just Black male students but all students.

Despite this popular framing, there are several ways that school leaders can make progress and push for solutions. The fact is, there is ample energy for change that can assist such efforts. I see the commitment and passion for that progress daily in my own work.

In my home city of Philadelphia, last month was Black Male Educator month. It’s a big deal for me, for my fellow Black male educators, and for the organization I lead, the Center for Black Educator Development. To be recognized in this way is validating for our work, including our now-annual event, the Black Men in Education Convening, which will be held later this month and is already sold out. We’ve maxed out on our capacity now multiple years in a row, demonstrating a powerful desire among Black men in education to connect with and be sustained, inspired, and educated by their peers. It also shows that there’s a demand for solutions to the very real challenges of recruiting and retaining more Black male educators.

But if you aren’t able to attend, here are three ways that you can meaningfully improve your ability to recruit and retain more Black male educators.

1. Learn from the experience and legacy of historically Black colleges and universities.

HBCUs produce fully half of all Black teachers nationally. They are also a key partner in addressing teacher shortages that continue to result from the mismatch between the supply of teachers and the specific needs of school districts.

HBCUs possess a combination of a culturally affirming curriculum and an environment that values Black learners and educators. Our schools can take a page from that combination; they can be places where Black men can be seen in their totality and heard authentically. That’s not just a sentiment but a deep reality. I recently had the chance to spend some time on the campuses of Spelman and Moorehouse. The sense of what is possible when an institution nurtures and supports Black excellence was palpable. Schools and school districts like that are better positioned to both retain and recruit Black men into teaching.

2. Stop “typecasting” Black male teachers.

It’s time that Black men were seen for the diversity of skills that they can bring to schools rather than limiting them. Black men can be more than disciplinarians to “police” the students who look like them. They can be extraordinary educators in their own right and inspiring figures for all students. The talent is there, but it needs to be seen, recognized, and elevated.

Teacher talent among Black men also needs to be uncovered from where it’s often hiding in plain sight. Black men are everywhere in our schools, but they’re usually outside of or adjacent to classroom-teaching roles. There are countless Black men with college degrees who are behavioral-support specialists, climate and culture aides, and in a host of other paraprofessional roles. Removing barriers to entry into the teaching profession for these future educators is a must.

3. Recognize that the Black boys sitting in your classrooms today are the Black men leading your classrooms tomorrow.

Too often, we’re not seeing Black boys as potential educators in the first place. I myself was well out of college before a soon-to-be mentor, Martin Ryder, persuaded me and a cohort of Black men to pursue a career in teaching. Meanwhile, I’ve heard stories aplenty of white women who received the proverbial tap on the shoulder from the profession as early as 3rd grade.
At last year’s Black Male Educators Convening, we gave Ryder the inaugural Liberator’s Award, which publicly recognizes people who have had a tremendous impact on the Black teacher pipeline. Ryder spent more than 43 years as an educator and professor of education. He taught high school math and chaired education departments at Rollins College and Norfolk State University.

More than that, though, he convinced my group of peers, all of us young Black men, that we could not only be teachers but great teachers. These meetings were a part of partnership between the nonprofit Concerned Black Men, Cheyney University, and the Philadelphia district that aimed to hire 500 Black men to teach in the city’s public schools. Our cohort ranged from people like me, fresh out of college, and others who were career changers. I left those meetings understanding that the purest form of activism was teaching Black children well, and that is what I committed to doing.

What if, when we saw a Black boy, instead of putting a basketball or detention slip in his hand, we took his hand and invited him toward a career in teaching?

Our Center for Black Educator Development Teaching Academy offers high school courses for students to explore their interests in becoming educators. Nearly half those students are Black boys. They are committed to social justice and strengthening their communities—a powerful mix of inspiration that can be channeled through a career in teaching. The desire on their part is right in front of us, but we have to meet them halfway with the affirmation and support to connect them with our teaching pipelines.

Our convening later this month promises to be powerful and inspiring, but its spirit can go well beyond the nearly 1,000 attendees at our Philadelphia gathering place. BMEC is delivering on that front. Last year, just over 40 percent of participants entered the convening saying they felt they had the tools and ideas to increase and retain the number of Black male educators in their local ecosystem. By the end of the BMEC2022, that number jumped to nearly 70 percent. We look forward to growing that impact.

We can get more Black men leading our classrooms. We just need to be intentional about our efforts to do it.

Sharif El-Mekki, a former principal and teacher, is the founder of the Center for Black Educator Development.
There's a Difference Between Equity and Equality. Schools Need to Understand That

By Larry Ferlazzo

There was a multipart series here a few years ago on the differences between “equity” and “equality” for schools, but I’m not sure there’s been much advancement in understanding since that time.

I do, however, believe that there tends to be more “lip service”—without accompanying action—in the equity direction.

For example, even though our then-superintendent often gave speeches about it, he ignored pleas from teachers to support providing additional services to English-language learners when we were doing distance learning during COVID’s peak because he supposedly thought that all students should receive similar services.

This new series will again try to make an impact on educators’ understanding of why we need to focus more on equity, instead of equality, in our schools.

**The Unseen Layers That Students Carry**

Jehan Hakim is a community organizer, mother, and culturally responsive educator at Jehan Hakim Consulting, LLC:

I am certain everyone has seen this graphic from Angus Macguire and the Interaction Institute for Social Change. It provides an illustration of the differences between equality and equity.

The left side of the image portrays **equality**:

There are three individuals watching a game from behind a fence, and they are standing on equally sized crates; not all individuals can see the game.

The right side of the image portrays **equity**:

There are three individuals watching a game from behind a fence, and they are standing on suitable size crates, each individual can now see the game.

So, if we used this visual to understand what equality and equity mean, we could come to these conclusions:

- Equality means every individual or group of people have the same resources and opportunities.
- Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

What equality looks like in the classroom is giving every student the same material, assignment deadlines, correspondence (in English) with their families/caregivers, and so on. While these are examples of an equal classroom, it does not always benefit every student equally.

It is important to recognize that each student enters the classroom with different circumstances. This next visual helps illustrate some of the invisible challenges that students carry into school hallways and classrooms, such as poverty, homelessness, immigration status, disability, etc., and oftentimes unbeknownst to their teachers. The path toward equity begins when we visualize the unseen layers that students carry.

So how can educators strive toward equity? Consider the following three classroom recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:**

It really starts with getting to know your students, their families, and the community. This is usually referred to as family/community engagement.

Create short surveys to understand their background, invite families to engage in their students’ learning process, regularly seek input from families, and communicate regularly (correspondence should be translated into languages that reflect the classroom’s cultures).

**Recommendation 2:**

The key to academic equity is understanding the individual needs of students.

Adapt teaching methods, materials, and assessments to accommodate various learning styles, abilities, and interests. Tailor instruction to meet students’ needs.

**Recommendation 3:**

When students feel a sense of belonging, they will feel motivated to learn.

Expand your curriculum and library by including books and material by diverse authors and content, highlight visuals that reflect the diverse cultures in the community, integrate nontraditional holidays into the class and
school calendar.

The path toward more equitable educational experiences may feel like a heavy lift at first—especially as systemic obstacles continue to exist externally. Understanding the difference between equity and equality is the first step to create a real student-centered learning environment in which every student can thrive in school and beyond.

**Equity** is realized when fairness is prioritized over **equality**.

**The Distinction Is Important**

Mary Rice-Boothe, Ed.D., is the executive director of curriculum development and equity for The Leadership Academy. She is the author of Leading Within Systems of Inequity in Education: A Liberation Guide for Leaders of Color and can be found on Twitter @ mriceboothe or by reading her newsletter:

The Leadership Academy defines equity as every school and school system is intentionally built to ensure children of every race, ethnicity, language, or other characteristics of their identity have what they need to achieve academic, social, and emotional success. Equality is the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities. Here are some areas where these terms are often confused and why the distinction is important:

1. **Access to advanced courses:**
   - **Equality:** Stating that all students can enroll into advanced courses and providing the same process for all students to enroll.
   - **Equity:** Recognizing that oftentimes enrollment in advanced courses is not reflective of the student population, differentiating the enrollment process, and addressing the adult bias-based beliefs that are impacting enrollment.

2. **Hiring Practices:**
   - **Equality:** Posting an open position on the district website for any candidate to apply if interested.
   - **Equity:** Recognizing the positive impact of staff diversity, implementing targeted recruitment efforts, auditing screening postings and process for bias, and working with staff to minimize bias in hiring practices.

3. **Resource Allocation:**
   - **Equity:** Recognizing that students with minoritized identifiers such as disability, multilingual learners, neurodiversity, socioeconomic status, etc., need differentiated supports and providing the necessary resources to ensure they are academically successful.
   - **Equality:** Giving all schools the same budget based on their student enrollment to achieve academic success.

In all these examples, equality is giving the same treatment and providing the same level of effort to everyone. Unfortunately, this process puts the onus on the minoritized student or staff person to navigate an inequitable system. When we leverage systems and practices of equity, we are creating multiple avenues of entry while also targeting multiple root causes, all at the same time. Complex issues require complex solutions. Any other approach will get us the same results.

**Using Metaphors**

Jennifer Cárdenas, M.Ed., is a WIDA fellow and a multilingual-learner-program specialist in Columbia, SC. She is pursuing her Ed.D. in curriculum studies, focusing on equity for language learners:

Equity, equality, what is the difference? As a multilingual-learner-program specialist, I encounter this discussion often. Initially, I became frustrated and defensive when educators confused the terms. However, these feelings were exhausting and unproductive.

It was not until I reflected on my practice, personal biases, and the inequities in my building that I became a self-aware, knowledgeable advocate. I learned that to grow others, I first needed to look within. Once I took the steps to become a reflective practitioner, I could tackle the potential uncertainties and apprehensions of others.

Equity looks different depending on the situation and is not always straightforward, potentially causing confusion, as mentioned above. Therefore, the subsequent steps may require numerous attempts to alter an individual’s mindset. In my experience, it is helpful to have some examples ready. Initially, you may need a general approach to explain the terms.

I use metaphors because they are a great way to conceptualize a complex concept. One metaphorical strategy is to use an audience-specific comparison, and, in many instances, the explanation is enough to end the dispute. For example, you may say to teachers, “Imagine sitting in a faculty meeting, stomach growling, patiently waiting for a person holding a basket full of snacks to come your way. As they approach, you hear what each person is requesting, chips, pretzels, and crackers, but the individual serving the snacks only hands out peanuts, and you are allergic.”

As I lead the discussion, I ask participants to discuss equality and equity in the scenario, and if they would make the accommodation. The answer is usually “yes,” they would, but what if we were not talking about snacks but access to information? How could that affect the success and happiness of the future generations of your family? Consequently, the argument becomes, why would teachers, districts, and school systems supply identical resources to all students when we have the resources to make schooling equitable?

Still yet, a simple metaphor may not be enough to explain your meaning. In this case, you may need a more participatory approach. When people feel they can empathize with a situation, they are more willing to make accommodations. For instance, if a person were deaf, you would unquestionably provide an interpreter because you understand the need. Yet, equity for language learners is not as explicit for districts, administrators, and teachers.

To help shift individuals’ perspectives regarding multilingual learners, I use an example that requires participants to consider another’s point of view. The following is an illustration of how I place my faculty in the shoes of my learners. My building is composed almost exclusively of monolingual faculty members. However, my language repertoire includes some Spanish. Therefore, to demonstrate the difference between the terms, I begin the first meeting with teachers by greeting them in Spanish without a visual display or use of body language. At this point, I usually receive blank stares of confusion. I then turn on my presentation (first slide in Spanish, with visuals) and accompany my spoken Spanish with hand gestures to indicate, with a pen and paper, that I would like them to please place their signatures on my sign-in sheet.

After the demonstration, I lead a discussion on the impact of the presentation with and without accommodations, how they felt as participants, and how it might make a multilingual learner feel. In this example, accom-
modations provide language learners with the necessary scaffolds to make content comprehensible. However, equity comes into play when those accommodations create access to the curriculum.

Although I direct these examples toward teachers, you can create activities for any audience to match your need. Just remember, feel confident in your ability to explain the difference before confronting the issue with others, cultivate trusting relationships with the individuals to whom you wish to explain the terms, and be ready to tackle tough conversations around equality and equity. Identifying and understanding the specific inequities in your building is the first step in fighting the systematic injustices that pervade school systems.

‘A Distributed-Leadership Approach’

Shaun Nelms, Ed.D., is the vice president of community partnerships and the William and Sheila Konar director for the Center for Urban Education Success at the University of Rochester:

**Introduction:** In 2014-15, I embarked on a remarkable journey as the Educational Partnership Organization (EPO) superintendent at the East Upper and Lower schools (East) in collaboration with the University of Rochester. The task at hand was to uplift schools in distress and demonstrate that with the right resources, structure, people, and unwavering commitment to change, even the most challenged systems can flourish.

Addressing the Systemic Injustices: At East, I found an opportunity to tackle the very systems that once limited my community, hindered my parents’ pursuit of higher education, and deprived my grandparents of completing their high school education. Through a distributed-leadership approach, we transformed the lowest-performing school in New York state’s lowest-performing district, raising the graduation rate from a mere 33 percent to an impressive 85 percent within our initial seven years. This transformative work is now being examined and shared by the Center for Urban Education Success at the University of Rochester, where I assumed the role of director in 2018.

Challenges of Cultivating a Transformational Culture: While the progress achieved at East is commendable, creating a culture that truly believed in our ability to shape the academic, operational, cultural, and structural conditions of the school proved to be the greatest challenge. Often, people mistakenly equate equity with equality, leading to harmful consequences. When school boards and policymakers confute the two, scholars and their families bear the tragic brunt of such misperceptions.

Investing in Change: To effect transformation, the cost of resources was inevitably higher than in previous years. This increase was primarily attributed to extending the school day and implementing mandatory summer professional learning sessions for staff. The additional time required additional compensation for deserving staff members. Moreover, funds were allocated to remodel crucial spaces such as the gym, cafeteria, and community-gathering areas, which should have been addressed prior to the EPO. These necessary expenses naturally elevated the per-pupil allocation for the school.

Per Pupil Allocation and Return on Investment: Per-pupil allocation is a measure of the financial resources assigned to educate each student. In urban centers, this allocation is often inflated due to the additional resources required for school safety, special education services, English-language-learner support, and mandated behavioral-health services.

As East began to excel academically, some policymakers and community members questioned the higher cost per pupil compared with other schools. However, we must question why the budget wasn’t scrutinized earlier, when our graduation rate languished at a mere 29 percent. Did we adequately assess the return on investment when 71 percent of students failed to meet graduation requirements? When schools achieve success, it is imperative that we invest in understanding their effective practices and replicate them elsewhere. Stalling progress and waiting for other schools to catch up perpetuates inequality and limits the potential of children (equality based on a low standard of excellence). Creating systems where all schools fail and claiming those results as equitable is troublesome when in fact those results are equally harming generations of children.

Embracing an Equity Standard: To achieve equity, we must establish clear goals for our efforts (efficacy). Rather than focusing on equality as the standard, we should strive for excellence and ensure that our systems and structures are designed to not only meet but exceed that standard. Embracing an equity standard shields us from the harmful effects of low expectations and prevents sacrificing success in order to amplify failures within the same system. Even within pockets of success, we must work toward holistic improvement.

**Conclusion:** The journey at East has taught us valuable lessons about the importance of embracing equity in education. By challenging misconceptions and investing in transformative change, we can create a brighter future for all students. Let us foster a culture that celebrates excellence, learns from success, and continuously seeks to improve our education system, leaving no child behind.

Thanks to Jehan, Mary, Jennifer, and Shaun for contributing their thoughts!

Larry Ferlazzo is an English and social studies teacher at Luther Burbank High School in Sacramento, Calif.