TRUE INTEGRATION: STRENGTHENING COMMITMENT TO COLLABORATIVELY IDENTIFY INTER-DISTRICT BEST PRACTICES

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Today’s Conversation

- How do we talk about race?

- Understanding true integration

- What true integration looks like
  - ... in the classroom
  - ... within a school
  - ... within a district

- How to achieve true integration
  - Legal considerations
Perceiving Race

- Racial categorization occurs automatically, regardless of any efforts to divert attention from race.

- Within moments of perceiving someone, we automatically judge that person in terms of in-group favoritism
  - Is that person is an “us” or a “them”? 

- We unconsciously think about race even when we do not explicitly discuss it.
  - Drew Westen’s *The Political Brain*
  - Implicit Association Test
Context: The Dominant Consensus on Race

White privilege

National values

Contemporary culture

Current Manifestations: Social and Institutional Dynamics

Processes that maintain racial hierarchies

Racialized public policies and institutional practices

Outcomes: Racial Disparities

Racial inequalities in current levels of well-being

Capacity for individual and community improvement is undermined

Ongoing Racial Inequalities

Adapted from the Aspen Roundtable on Community Change. “Structural Racism and Community Building.” June 2004
Implicit Bias

- People have multiple networks that may be activated without our awareness.
  - Depending on the situation, one network becomes dominant over the others.

- Even though we may fight them, implicit biases reside within us...
Unconscious Operations

Is your baby more likely or less likely to be a racist if you talk about race with him/her?
Talking About Race - Don’t

- Present disparities only
- Frame action as ‘robbing Peter to pay Paul’
- Separate out people in need from “everybody else”
- Glide over real fears, shared suffering, or the fact that people are often internally divided
- Dismiss the importance of individual efforts

Photo source: Lester, Julius. *Let’s Talk About Race*
Talking About Race - Do

- Anchor the discussion to narratives that resonate with your audience
- Make sure everyone can see themselves in the story
  - It’s about “us,” not just “those people”
- Acknowledge that individualism is important – but that the healthiest individual is nurtured by a community invested in everyone’s success
Understanding Framing

- Framing is about how people think, and how they interpret information and process arguments.

- Frames are ‘set paths for interpreting information’ that operate subconsciously.

- All words are related to conceptual frames. These frames are ways in which people perceive and filter issues.
Effective Messaging

- Everyone needs help now and then; we all want to do better
  - We share deep values, concerns, and hopes

- Addressing the problems that have a racial footprint has implications and benefits for all members of society, not just marginalized groups
  - Linked fate – everyone benefits

http://www.equaljusticesociety.org/2008/12/talking-about-race-in-the-obama-era/
Underscore shared deep values

Unity        Security        Opportunity

Community    Mobility        Redemption

Fairness     Liberty
## Transformative Discourse on Race

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<tr>
<th>Not constructive</th>
<th>Constructive</th>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t frame issues around “what’s fair”</td>
<td>Reinforce the belief of opportunity for all</td>
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<td>Assert that system flaws hurt everyone</td>
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<td>Don’t focus on who or what is responsible for present inequities</td>
<td>Steer the conversation toward the results being sought (i.e., a quality education for everyone)</td>
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<td>Don’t focus on exceptional individuals</td>
<td>Talk about where systems we all rely upon break down and how we can fix those systems</td>
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Frameworks Institute Message Brief: Framing Race
Integration

Integration is not just about representation; it’s constitutional.

- It constitutes the structures we inhabit and who we are.

- “The table, and the people at the table.”

- Are our structures doing the work we want them to do?
Cumulative disadvantages interact within systems

The Newtonian Perspective:

Linear causation

Systems Thinking:

Causation is reciprocal, mutual, and cumulative.
Cumulative Disadvantages for Students of Color

- High crime levels
- Environmental pollutants
- Inaccessibility of health care
- Poor housing stock
- Lack of quality early childhood education programs
Cumulative and Mutual: Cycle of Segregation

School Segregation

Lower Educational Outcomes for Urban School Districts

Neighborhood (Housing) Segregation

Increased Flight of Affluent Families from Urban Areas
Housing is a critical intervention point into the complex web of opportunity. Housing is a part of a larger set of interrelated structures that are both affected by housing and have impacts on attainment of safe, stable housing.
Where children live determine their access to schools....
playgrounds, parks, arts...
These cumulative disparities place students of color at an early academic disadvantage.

One study found that African Americans entering kindergarten already performed 34 percentile points lower than their white counterparts.
Community Dialogues

Gauging and Building Support for Integration
Desegregation ≠ True Integration

- Simple desegregation efforts often result in:
  - assimilation,
  - in-school segregation, or
  - tracking.

- Debates about integration often focus on Assimilation and Segregation instead of Integration and Segregation.
Other Terminology Concerns

- Segregation is not just exclusion of people; it’s also the limitation of their opportunities and resources.

- Integration is often equated with black kids, excluding Latinos and others.
Confusion Over Integration

- What is Integration?
- Why is it Important?
- How do we effectively integrate?
- How do we build support for it?
Excellence and achievement are often posed as competing with integration.
Confusion in Legal Discourse:

- Chief Justice Roberts: “The Constitution is not violated by racial imbalance in our schools.”

- Justice Thomas: “Racial imbalance is not segregation, and the mere incantation of terms like resegregation...cannot make up the difference...Integration is merely racial balancing.”
Confusion in Civic Discourse:

- We no longer think of education as a public, democratic function; it is not viewed as a private and trade function.

- We conflate integration with desegregation, diversity, affirmative action...

- We ask whether race can be used today or whether we are not a post-racial nation.
How Can We Move From Confusion to Understanding and Action?

**Stress the Importance of Integration**

- Segregation makes it very difficult to develop effective citizens and social cohesion.

- Bringing together students from different backgrounds should remain a central objective of American education.

- In a globalizing world, if we fail at this, our country fails.
How Can We Move From Confusion to Understanding and Action?

Understand what True Integration is:

“Although the terms desegregation and integration are often used interchangeably, there is a great deal of difference between the two. Desegregation is eliminative and negative. Integration is the positive acceptance of desegregation and the welcomed participation of [nonwhites] into the total range of human activities. Integration is genuine intergroup, interpersonal doing. Desegregation...is only a short term goal. Integration is the ultimate goal of our national community.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.  
The Ethical Demands for Integration.
How Can We Move From Confusion to Understanding and Action?

True Integration also:

- Improves critical thinking.
- Raises academic achievement and graduation rates.
- Fosters inter-group contact.
- Avoids tracking and disproportionate discipline and special ed designations.
- Increases parental involvement.
- Reduces residential segregation.
How Can We Move From Confusion to Understanding and Action?

Learn about how Implicit Bias impacts how we think about integration.

- We have made great progress toward outward equality, but we still harbor implicit bias.

- Implicit biases can lead to internal conflict, active resentment, and unwillingness to change.
How Can We Move From Confusion to Understanding and Action?

Talk about academic excellence and integration in new ways.

- **Framing** matters.

- It satisfies our need to make sense of the world, particularly when we are conflicted over issues like integration.

- How we talk about integration can entrench or uproot and reconfigure policy preferences and attitudes.
True Integration

- True integration is creative and respects inter-group relations based on mutuality, equality and fairness.

- It is transformative rather than assimilative.

- It both transforms and enriches the mainstream.
  - In contrast, desegregation, at best, attempts to assimilate “minorities” into the mainstream.

Benefits of Diverse Educational Settings

- Children in diverse educational settings are...
  - more comfortable with people of other races as adults
  - better able to function in our multi-racial and multi-cultural world
  - potentially able to ease racial tensions as adults and help work for a democracy that embraces diversity
  - important to the position of the United States in an era of globalization and global economies
The Benefits of Racial Diversity in Education

- “Helps students avoid or overcome stereotypes by providing a range of experiences and viewpoints...;"

- Promotes cross-cultural understanding and helps students develop interpersonal skills for a multiracial world;

- Prepares students for a racially diverse workplace;

- Trains and educates a diverse group of leaders;

- Contributes to better decision making on issues affecting our multicultural society;

- Fosters diversity among civic and business leaders.”

Educational Benefits of Integration: Research Highlights

- **Raises achievement and graduation rates**
  - Diverse schools have smaller achievement gaps than racially isolated ones
  - Low poverty schools out-perform high poverty schools by 24:1

- **Builds social skills and networks** needed in a global economy; *breaks down stereotypes* harmful to citizenship in a multi-racial democracy

- **Enhances critical thinking and problem-solving** by placing students of diverse experiences in learning teams
Support for Diversity – Beyond Schools

- 65 Fortune 500 companies and the U.S. military submitted amicus briefs in Grutter stating their need for employees who had “exposure to widely diverse people, cultures, ideas and viewpoints.”

- The Supreme Court ruled that integrated, equitable education is a necessity for the American economic system and national security.

What True Integration Looks Like

Classrooms
Schools
Districts
“In assessing integration efforts, we too often look at the racial composition of a school, and not at what happens in the school.”
What a Truly Integrated School Looks Like

- A truly integrated school must employ teaching and techniques that address the multitude of student learning styles and utilize materials fashioned by and about people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

- Work toward transformative diversity

  - The work of creating a diverse institution does not end with a diverse student body
“Integration then is both an external and an internal process; we need to integrate not only the students inside the building but the hearts and minds of the students as well.”

john powell
“A New Theory of Integrated Education: True Integration

Truly Diverse Schools

- Harness the genuine benefits of diversity within and across the school
  - Teachers, administrators and staff must share diversity goals and be culturally competent
  - Teachers must have the skills and knowledge to create a safe, supportive, and inclusive space
  - Curriculum should be challenging, engaging, and culturally relevant
Creating Culturally Relevant Curriculum

- Teachers should be able to articulate why students should learn particular aspects of the curriculum
  - “What am I trying to accomplish by having my students read this text?”

- Culturally relevant teachers think about students’ long-term academic goals
  - Instead of focusing on next week’s lesson plans, think about semester- or year-long goals
  - Students should have a sense of why they are doing what they are doing

Creating Culturally Relevant Curriculum

- Culturally relevant teachers use many real-life and familiar examples
- Help students “honor their own cultural beliefs and practices while acquiring access to the wider culture” (p. 36)

Achieving True Integration

Navigating *Parents Involved*
Context for *Parents Involved*

- Prior to *Parents Involved*, many districts concerned that the reversion to neighborhood schools and local control would result in rapid resegregation implemented *voluntary integration* plans.

- These plans included redrawing attendance zones, student transfers, magnet school programs to retain diverse schools amidst a backdrop of residential segregation.

- Parents of non-minority students sued the Seattle and Jefferson County school districts, claiming that the student assignment plans denied their children the equal protection of law under the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution.

- In 2007, the Supreme Court sided with the plaintiffs and declared, in a 4-1-4 decision, that the Seattle and Louisville school districts used impermissible racial classifications in student assignment in violation of the Constitution.

- The Court found that the plans at issue were not narrowly tailored. The use of the racial tiebreaker within a particular +/- range was Constitutionally infirm.

- However, the Court also allowed for the use of race in some circumstances and affirmed maintaining diverse schools—as well as the prevention of racially isolated schools—as compelling state interests.
What Can School Districts Do Post-Parents Involved?

- School districts are free to pursue socioeconomic integration, using indicators such as income, wealth, parental educational attainment.

- Districts can also be “race conscious,” according to the Supreme Court, when they drew school boundaries, chose sites for new schools and directed money to particular programs. But they are limited to taking into account the racial composition of a neighborhood rather than the race of an individual student.

- Seattle & Louisville voluntary integration plans used race of students in assignment, in an effort to approximate, in each school, the overall racial demographics of the student population.

- In 2007, the Supreme Court held that schools these plans impermissibly classified students by race, in violation of the U.S. Constitution.

**HELD:** SCHOOLS MAY NOT ASSIGN STUDENTS BASED ON THE RACE OF THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD.
What May School Districts Do?

- Use race-conscious programs (e.g., magnet schools) or attendance zones.
- Targeted recruiting of students and faculty
- Track enrollment & performance by race
- Pursue socio-economic integration
- Integration plan must tie to educational goals.
Opportunity Mapping

- While concentrated neighborhood poverty is often correlated with race, race is not reducible to income differentials.
  - A multi-factor analysis best captures more than poverty rates alone do.

- Opportunity mapping of educational opportunity looks at many indicators that correlate with educational performance.
  - Goal: identify neighborhoods that are the most disadvantaged environments for educational success, looking at a number of factors producing cumulative disadvantage for students residing in these neighborhoods.
This map displays the percentage of economically disadvantaged students in elementary schools within Jefferson County, KY with an underlay of distribution of opportunity by block group based on education, poverty and economic indicators.
Other Options: School Siting

- Siting schools in areas that would naturally draw a diverse student body was another race-conscious suggestion in Kennedy’s opinion that can be used to achieve integrative outcomes.

- *Example:* Charlotte, NC requires its school board to consider the socioeconomic diversity of nearby housing and the availability of public transit lines decisions about where to build schools.

  - This criteria could conceivably include consideration of neighborhood racial compositions.
Other Options: Inter-District Schools

- Interdistrict magnet schools are one of the remedies that Connecticut adopted in response to a state Supreme Court ruling that the state desegregate schools in the Hartford region.
  - Students are chosen from a lottery of applicants from both Hartford and suburban districts with preference given to siblings of students already attending the school.

- Inter-district transfers or the development of inter-district magnet schools could be a means of alleviating racial isolation and increasing educational performance.
Other Options: City-Suburban Transfers

- St. Louis operates a city-suburban transfer program, originally implemented in the early 1980s under court order and continued under voluntary terms since 1999. Recently, the participating districts extended the program through at least 2013-14.

- At its peak, nearly half of St. Louis children were participating in one of the interdistrict programs. St. Louis suburban districts were required to participate and to accept enough St. Louis students to meet targets for minority percentage.

- The state initially bore the costs of the program (i.e., transportation) but since 1999, the programs have been funded through a voter-approved tax increase.
Concluding Thoughts
Opting for Diversity

- A Gallup poll in 1999 indicated that 59% of respondents thought we should do more to integrate schools. This number was only 37% in 1988.

- In one poll of public school parents, results indicated that 67% would select a “good diverse school” over a “outstanding homogenous school” (26%).

Source: Divided We Fail: Coming Together through Public School Choice (2002)
Democratic Implications

- Segregation makes it very difficult to develop effective citizens and social cohesion.

- Bringing together students from different backgrounds should remain a central objective of American education.

- In a globalizing world, if we fail at this, our country fails.
Questions for Discussion

- How does your school/district stand with respect to true integration?

- What barriers in achieving true integration does your school/district face?

- What practical changes can be made at the classroom level to encourage true integration?

- What support can the district provide to reach this goal?

- Do you have any success stories/advice to share that may help others?
Minneapolis Public School System (MPS)

- Students leaving for charter schools
- Increasingly segregated by race, socioeconomic status
- Two other interdistrict integration programs in East, Northwest metro areas

Reorganizing under Changing School Options Plan

- Boundary changes, school closings, program changes
- Intradistrict choice program to minimize racial/economic isolation
Moving forward

- Surveying institutions/individuals to determine who is working on integration in the district
- Looking at the ways integration has been used by different constituencies
- Messaging and framing around the meaning of true integration
- Training that builds on the framing and messaging work
  - Using this for parents, elected community leaders, activists to promote true integration
- Linking housing to education