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# TRANSFORMATIVE SYSTEMS THROUGH EQUITY— WHAT ARE YOUR POWERS?



**DR. NIKOLE Y. HOLLINS-SIMS**  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR  
**MIDWEST PBIS NETWORK**

**MARCH 20, 2023**

11:00AM - 12:30PM PST / 1:00 - 2:30PM CST / 10:00 - 11:30AM AKT



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**TTC**  
Technology Transfer Centers  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

**Session 1 | March 20, 2023**

**Transformative Systems Through Equity: What Are Your Powers?**

*Dr. Nikole Y. Hollins-Sims*

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The UW SMART Center and Northwest MHTTC acknowledge that we learn, live, and work on the ancestral lands of the Coast Salish people who walked here before us, and those who still walk here.

We are grateful to aim to respectfully live and work on these lands with the Coast Salish and Native people who call this home.





# EQUITY-CENTERED MTSS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH

Northwest Mental Health Technology Transfer Center and the UW SMART Center are pleased to present the 2023 Virtual Speaker Series to the school mental health workforce. The three-session series features national leaders discussing the importance of implementing MTSS with an equity focus. Through this series, we are spotlighting evidenced-based strategies for developing equitable learning environments for all students.

All SESSIONS 11am-12:30pm PST, 10am-11:30am AKST, 12pm-1:30pm MST  
Certificates of completion and Washington State clock hours available for attendees of the live sessions.



## SESSION 1 | MARCH 20

**Transformative Systems through Equity - What are your powers?**

### OBJECTIVES

- Participants will identify the ways MTSS, as a framework for systems change, can be leveraged from a human-centered approach.

**Dr. Nikole Y. Hollins-Sims**  
Technical Assistance Coordinator  
Midwest PBIS Network

Register > [Here](#)



## SESSION 2 | APRIL 17

**Doing the work! Ensuring Equity and Cultural Responsiveness in Urban Implementation within the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Framework**

### OBJECTIVES

- Explain the importance of educating the educator on student mental health.
- Discuss the importance of disaggregating data for disparity.
- State the importance of involving stakeholders in making decisions to action plan.

**Tynara Blount, M.S**  
Director of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)  
The School District of Philadelphia

Register > [Here](#)



## SESSION 3 | MAY 22

**The Climate of Educator Bias-based Beliefs Effect on MTSS Implementation**

### OBJECTIVES

- Understand bias-based beliefs present in educational practice.
- Understand ways to interrupt bias-based beliefs.
- Understand ways to improve MTSS implementation through interruption of bias-based beliefs.

**Dr. Eddie Fergus**  
Professor of Urban Education School of Arts and Sciences at Rutgers University Newark, New Jersey

Register > [Here](#)



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### Northwest Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network (NWMHTTC)

### University of Washington School Mental Health Assessment Research & Training Center (UW SMART CENTER)

Be sure to sign up for our mailing list to receive notifications about the next series. Please contact [uwsmart@uw.edu](mailto:uwsmart@uw.edu) if you have any questions.



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- We have made every attempt to make today's presentation secure. If we need to end the presentation unexpectedly, we will follow-up using your registration information.
- All attendees are muted, and videos are turned off.
- Have a question for the presenter? *Use the Q&A feature.*
- Need technical help? *Use the chat to message panelists.*
- We will leave a few minutes at the end to make sure you have all the links and resources you need and to allow time for an evaluation.
- Certificates of attendance and Washington in-service forms will be provided after you complete the evaluation.



**PLEASE NOTE:**

The recording and slide deck will be posted on our [event page](#) as soon as possible.

## ABOUT THE UW SMART CENTER

A national leader in developing and supporting implementation of evidence-based practices (EBPs) in schools, including prevention, early intervention, and intensive supports.

- Research & Evaluation
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Community Partnering and Outreach



UNIVERSITY *of*  
WASHINGTON

The overarching mission of the School Mental Health Assessment, Research, and Training (SMART) Center is to promote high-quality, culturally-responsive programs, practices, and policies to meet the full range of social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) needs of students in both general and special education contexts.





# ROLE OF THE SMART CENTER

## Set the context

Basic research on SMH

## Generate evidence

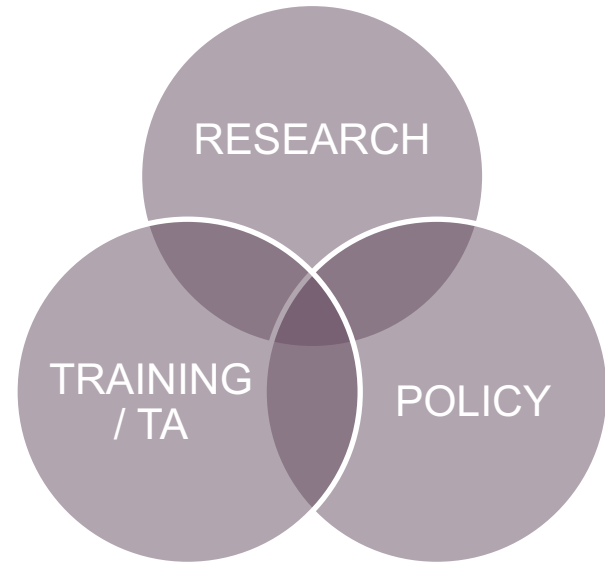
Develop and test models that “work”

## Mobilize evidence

Provide research-based training and TA  
Conduct research on implementation and technical assistance strategies

## Build political will

Disseminate information broadly  
“Be at the table” with funders and policy-makers



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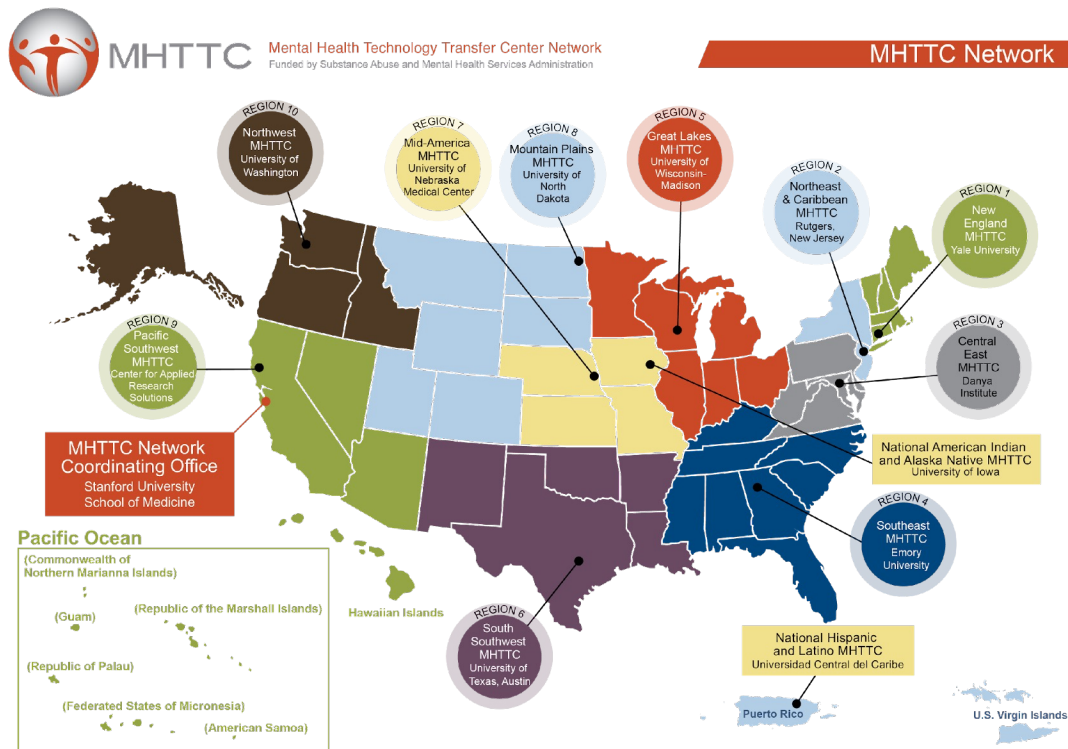
@SMARTCtr



# NATIONAL MHTTC NETWORK

## GOALS OF MHTTC NETWORK:

- **ACCELERATE**  
Adoption and implementation of evidence-based practices and use implementation science to inform training and TA strategies
- **HEIGHTEN**  
Awareness, knowledge, and skills of the workforce
- **FOSTER**  
Regional and national alliances
- **ENSURE**  
Availability and delivery of publicly available, free of charge, training and technical assistance





## Northwest MHTTC School Mental Health Center (NWSMH)

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# **Transformative Systems Through Equity: What Are Your Powers?**

— Dr. Nikole Hollins-Sims —

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# Welcome!

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- Who am I?
  - Technical Assistance Coordinator – Midwest PBIS Network
  - PA School Psychologist of the Year (2021)
  - Wife
  - Mommy
  - IUP & Millersville University Alumnae
  - Former Cheerleader
  - Who did I want to be when I grew up: Janet Jackson
  - Disney Fanatic

**How do we transform systems with an equity mindset?**





# Language Matters!

# What is Equity?

Every learner has access (& opportunity) to the educational resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, family background and/or family income.

[www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org)

[www.aspeninstitute.org/education](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/education)

**In schools, how is  
this possible?**

Equity is when every student has what they need to succeed.

**EQUALITY**

**EQUITY**

N A P E  
National Alliance for  
Partnerships in Equity  
Education Foundation

National Alliance For Partnerships In Equity | [www.napequity.org](http://www.napequity.org)  
[info@napequity.org](mailto:info@napequity.org) | [www.napequity.org](http://www.napequity.org)

## What does the field say?

- “Equity does not apply to me...we are a rural district and don't have racial diversity...”
- “This is just a new buzz word....”
- “We aren't doing equity, we're focused on trauma and mental health...”
- “Here's one more thing, where can I get training to check this off....”

# Educational Inequities

- Societal Inequity
- Socioeconomic Inequity
- Cultural Inequity
- Familial Inequity
- Programmatic Inequity
- Staffing Inequity
- Instructional Inequity
- Assessment Inequity
- Linguistic Inequity



Approximately 25% of all K-12 public school students did **not** have access to an Internet connection or an adequate device to access online materials at home (Kelley & Sisneros, 2020).

# Historical Context

- Prior to the 1950's – Segregation
- The 1950s – Desegregation
- The 1960s – Integration for equal access and equal rights
- The 1970s – Equal benefits and multiculturalism
- The 1980s – Diversity
- The 1990s – Cultural Competence
- The 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Cultural Proficiency -- Are we there yet?

**Why do we need to detect disproportionality?**

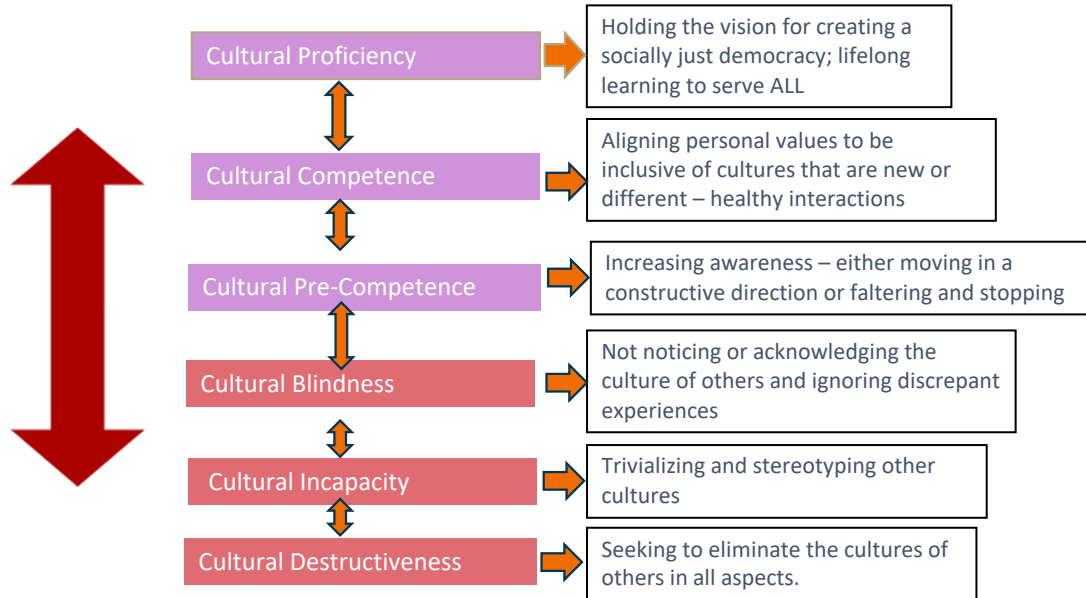




# Disproportionality Is Complex



## The Cultural Proficiency Continuum



*Adapted from: Cultural Proficiency for School Leadership by Lindsey, Robins & Terrell, 2019*

# How does this sound in schools?

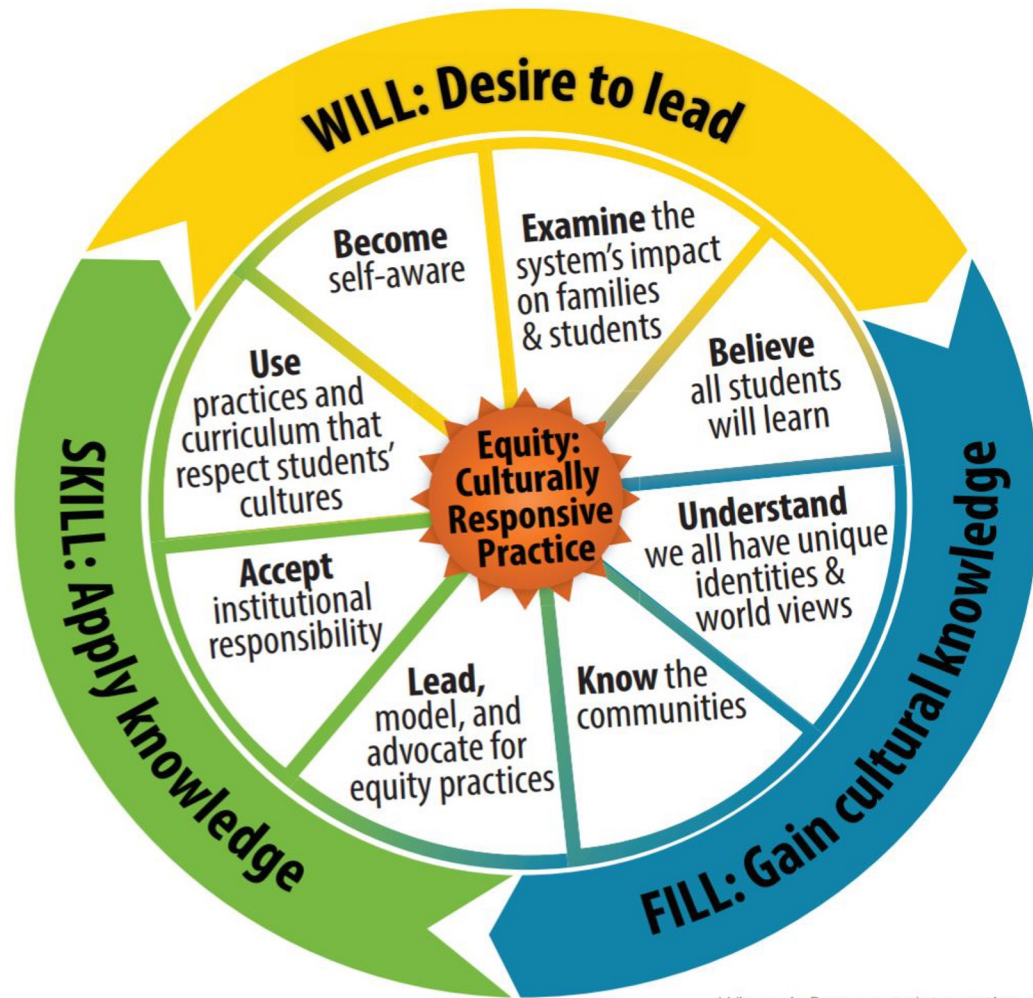
- “Their parents won’t come to parent conferences because they don’t care about the education of their children.”
- “Why try to help them? They will just end up in jail, just like their dad!”
- “Don’t put these kids in my class. I’m not a special ed teacher.”

Source: *Cultural Proficiency for School Leadership* by Lindsey, Robins & Terrell, 2019

# What is Belonging?

Experiencing **appreciation, validation, acceptance,** and **fair treatment** within an environment. When people feel that they belong, they aren't distracted and worried about being treated as a stereotype or a singular part of their multidimensional personhood.

Source: Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity, Cobb & Krownapple, 2019



# What is MTSS?

A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is a proactive and preventative framework that integrates data and instruction to maximize student achievement and support students social, emotional, and behavior needs from a strengths-based perspective.



Source: <https://mtss4success.org/essential-components>



# Core MTSS Foundations

## Equity is Tier 1

**Standards-Aligned Core Instruction**

**Shared Ownership**

**Data-Based Decision Making**

**Professional Learning**

**Universal Screening**

**Family-Community Engagement**

# Moving from Systems to Classrooms

At the classroom level how do we ensure:

- Culturally relevant pedagogy
- Culturally responsive practices
- Equitable instruction (academically, behaviorally, & social-emotionally)
- Safe and positive learning environments for brave conversations.

# Engaging Instruction to Increase Equity in Education

Chaparro, Nese, McIntosh (2015)

<b>Instructional Strategy</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Questions to Consider?</b>
Use Explicit Instruction	Clarifies student learning expectations and teaching objectives	Did I lead students through doing it on their own?
Build and Prime Background Knowledge	Creates shared foundational schema to optimize student learning	Do I have a basic understanding of my students' cultures and how that might affect their background knowledge, participation, or understanding of new knowledge?
Increase Opportunities to Respond	Provides high-degree of student engagement and practice	Did I provide an equitable # of opportunities to respond for all student groups?
Provide Performance Feedback	Structures teacher knowledge of student progress and provides opportunities to correct misunderstandings	Am I providing performance feedback to students in multiple ways that are appropriate for their needs?

# Equity in a Tiered Behavior Framework

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Honors student strengths through student voice</li><li>• Staff engage in self-awareness</li><li>• Use the values and norms of students, families, and communities when determining school-wide and classroom expectations.</li><li>• Use equitable acknowledgement systems.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access to Tier 2 interventions is consistent across student groups</li><li>• Tier 2 increases instructional opportunities, feedback, and positive home-school communication with students' families</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individualized and contextualized.</li><li>• Meaningfully include students and families in goal-setting and intervention design.</li><li>• Trust</li><li>• Two-way communication</li><li>• Limit assumptions about home life and family values</li></ul>

# Foundational Elements

- Collect, Use, and Report Disaggregated Discipline Data
- Implement a Preventative, Multi-Tiered, Culturally-Responsive Behavior Framework
- Use Engaging Instruction to Reduce the Opportunity Gap
- Develop Policies with Accountability for Disciplinary Equity
- Teach Strategies for Neutralizing Implicit Bias In Discipline Decisions

How can you **TRANSFORM** your universe?



Put on your Infinity Gauntlets.....

# Mind

- What's your/our "why?"
- What's the mission, vision, ultimate goals?





# Space

- What are the conditions? Current landscape?
- What's the data story?
- How to establish the foundations and solid rock?



# Audit Tools

Assess the health of the current system through an equity mindset.

- Who do we need to engage?
- How do we find & determine our priorities?
- What's our roadmap?

How can we be  
data rich AND  
information rich?

Equity is Access

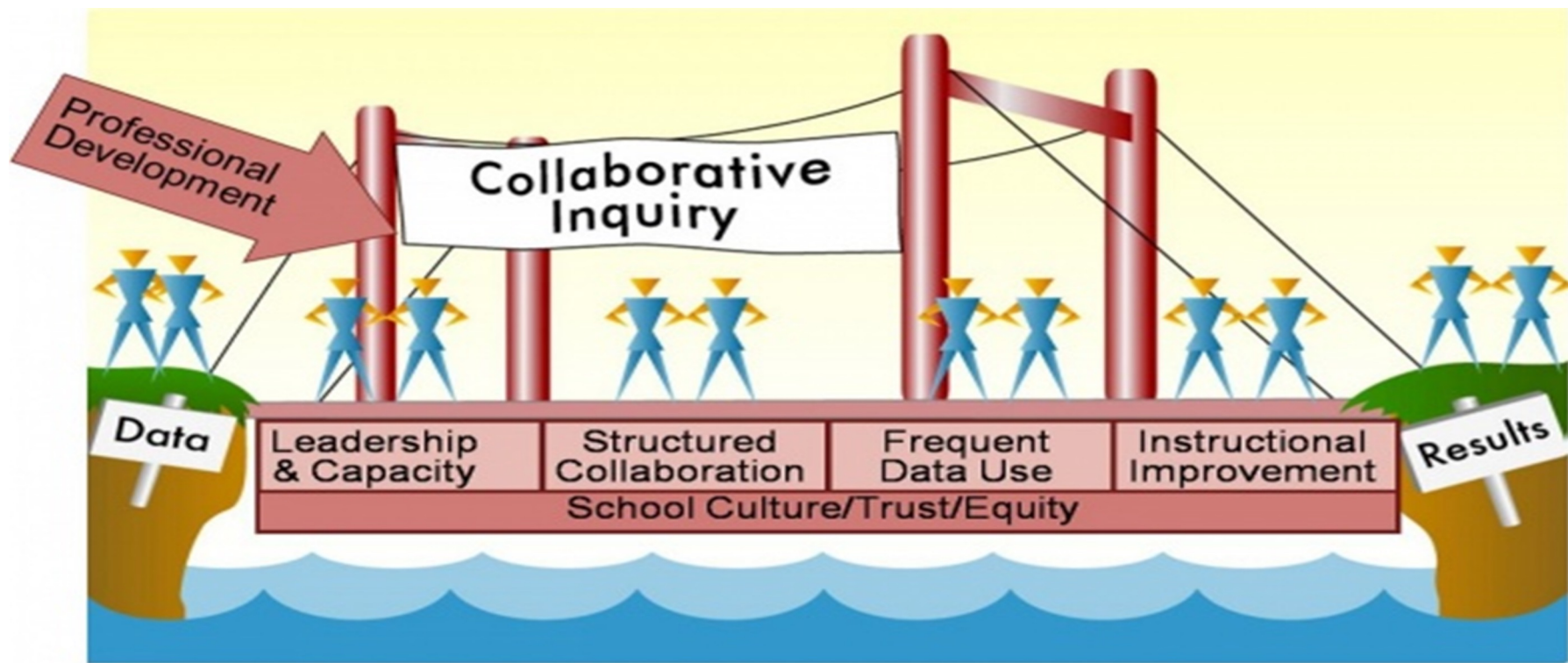
Equity is Process

Equity is Outcomes

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Batsche, 2021

# What is our data story?



# Power

- What is in our control?
- Who is our volunteer army?
- Who is our coalition of the willing?
- Do we share power?
- How do we intentionally seek buy-in/believe-in?



## Building a Guiding Coalition

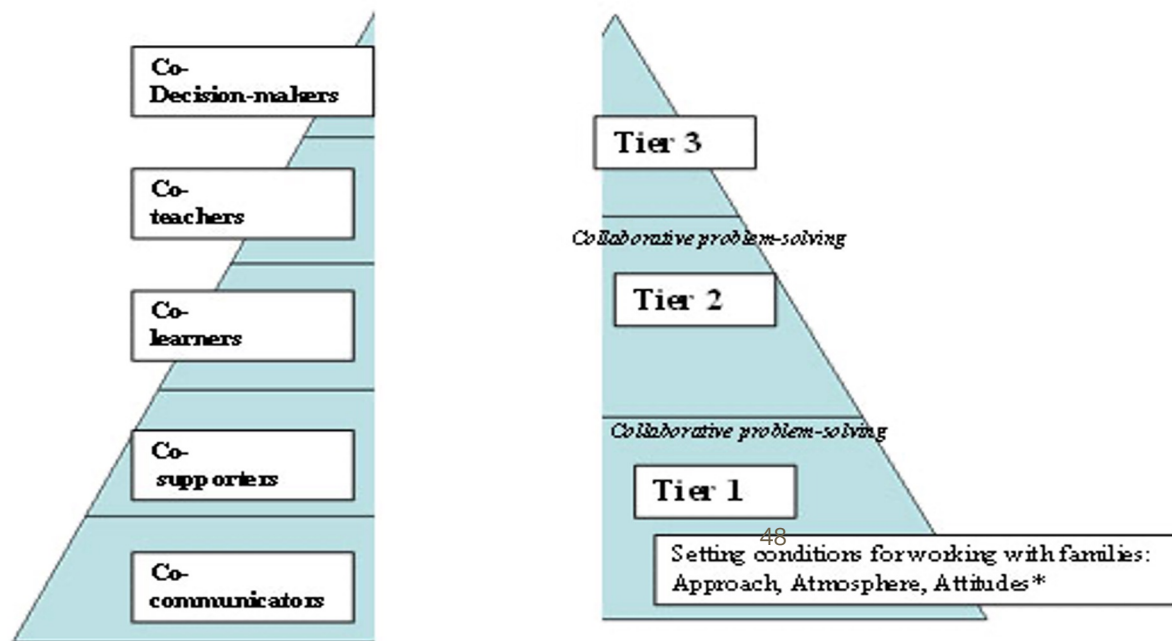
A volunteer army needs a coalition of effective people -- born of its own ranks -- to guide it, coordinate it, and communicate its activities.

# Teams

- District MTSS Teams
- Core MTSS Teams
- Grade Level MTSS Teams
- Advanced Tiers Teams

## Family-School Partnership in a MTSS Framework

Figure 1. Family-School Co-Roles and Partnerships in RtI



Moles (1993) Co-Roles

\*Christenson & Sheridan, 2001



# Definition

**Family-School Partnership** – “A child-focused approach wherein families and professionals **cooperate**, **coordinate**, and **collaborate** to enhance opportunities and success for children and adolescents across social, emotional, behavioral, and academic domains”

(Sheridan, Clarke, & Christenson, 2015, p. 440).

# Best Practices – 4 A's

## Approach

- Establishes the tone, method, and manner of the school-family relationship.

## Attitude

- Underlying feelings, emotions, and positions held by family members and school personnel.

## Atmosphere

- Physical & Affective climate that exists in educational communities.

## Actions

- Strategies and practices used to work effectively with families to bring together all of the systems that support children.

# Time

- What are our action steps?
- Sense of urgency?



# Building a Plan through MTSS Teams

- Identifying your starting place
  - Has there been a root cause analysis in the last 2-3 years?
- Root cause process for identifying disproportionality
  - Qualitative and Quantitative Data
- Monitoring Equity Work
  - 3-5 years
- Progress Monitoring Tools
  - **Monthly Data Calendar** (<https://www.wisconsinrticenter.org/implementation-calendar/?assignment=school&month=january>)

# Reality

- What are your roadblocks?
- What needs adjusted?
- How are the youth and staff doing?



# Soul

- Are we seeing the outcomes we value?
- Is our system shifting?
- What are the students saying?
- How are families/communities responding?
- Are we fulfilling our mission and vision?





Mind  
Space  
Power

Time  
Reality  
Soul



**Which power(s)  
does your system  
hold right now?**



When these powers  
come together, your  
universe/system can  
be transformed!  
(Snap your fingers)





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WITH DR. NIKOLE Y. HOLLINS-SIMS

A large, stylized graphic of the letters 'Q&A' in a light purple color. The 'Q' has a yellow semi-circle on its right side. The ampersand is a simple, bold shape. The 'A' is a simple, bold shape. There are also yellow accents on the top of the ampersand and the bottom of the 'A'.



**SMART CENTER 2023 VIRTUAL SPEAKER SERIES**  
Equity-Centered MTSS and Implications  
for School Mental Health





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## DOING THE WORK!

ENSURING EQUITY AND CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS IN  
URBAN IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN THE MTSS FRAMEWORK



### TYNARA BLOUNT

DIRECTOR OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE  
POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND  
SUPPORTS (PBIS)  
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA



### TIANNA BILAL

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CULTURALLY  
RESPONSIVE PBIS  
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

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## THE CLIMATE OF EDUCATOR BIAS- BASED BELIEFS EFFECT ON MTSS IMPLEMENTATION



**DR. EDWARD FERGUS**

PROFESSOR OF URBAN EDUCATION  
SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES AT RUTGERS  
UNIVERSITY – NEWARK

**MAY 22, 2023**

11:00AM - 12:30PM PST / 1:00 - 2:30PM CST / 10:00 - 11:30AM AKT



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- At the time of this presentation, Miriam Delphin-Rittmon served as SAMHSA Assistant Secretary. The opinions expressed herein are the views of the speakers, and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), or SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement of DHHS, SAMHSA, for the opinions described in this presentation is intended or should be inferred.
- This work is supported by grant SM 081721 from the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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