Equity Teams

Data, balanced with anecdotes, advocacy, and experiences to ensure that not just voice, but confluence, is at the center of our students' experiences within our school.

Who We Are

Miranda Cryns, Assistant Principal, SKSD Alternative Education

Marianne Silvestre, Instructional Mentor, SKSD Alternative Education

Intentional Invitations

Who: The people, positions, and perspectives

Where: Accessibility and human-centered meetings

When: Honoring work/life balance and making space for community and student participation

How: Pay people for their time

Where we started:

Updated Vision Statement

Original Vision: Students commit to an education plan through authentic new learning that empowers them to contribute their knowledge and skills to meaningfully influence the school and community.

Updated Vision: Learners engage in a personal education plan through authentic learning designed to empower them to contribute their knowledge, experiences, and skills to positively influence their school and community.

Objectives

1. Develop a team dynamic upon which to build positive collaborative work (norms & introductions)

2. Set a personal intention for the work to be accomplished by the team (Why Equity Team?)

3. Identify key components of our vision for equity across alt ed (Visioning)

4. Reflect on current vision statement and determine if it reflects our vision for the equity work we will do (Visioning)

Norms

Stay focused on a subject
Everyone's opinion matters
Assume the best intentions in others
Paying attention to self and others
Speak your truth
Clear communication about expectations from each other
Listen to understand
Constructive discourse that allows growth and understanding for all
Be open before being defensive
Appreciate each other's uniqueness

Then we started to fall into the same routines:

Focus on PD

We started asking "what training or book should the Equity team do?" (we looked for a program to check the box)

Admire the Problem

We started talking about barriers that are so big, we feel powerless (poverty, trauma, covid)

Reject the Data

The flaws in the data exceed the usefulness of what we are looking at and then got stuck

Experience Discomfort

We begin to avoid the hard conversations because feelings and perspectives differ so much

So we went back to Khalifa...

Include Community-Based People and Perspectives in Discussions of School Improvement

Dos:

1. Include community members and community knowledge in how schools are organized, reformed and evaluated
2. Put structures in place so that educators can go into communities and learn from community members
3. Use community-based knowledge to build school structures, teaching methods and behavior responses

Don'ts:

1. Colonize parents by "training" them to accept school-centric views as opposed to inviting authentic parent perspectives
2. Suppress community-based perspectives by limiting them to meetings organized by schools
3. Limit community engagement to school spaces or conferences
4. Rely on voices that are already are the most engaged
5. Make assumptions about communities based on your own vantage point

Permission to Lead Differently

When not knowing the answer IS the answer, and your team is willing to lead without one.

Community-Driven Process

Educators are not the experts

Transformation is the goal
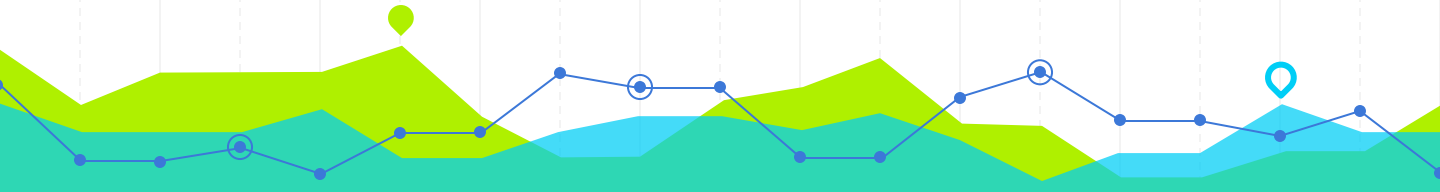
Identity drives the learning

Our New Focus

Our work now centers here:

1. We establish social and educational **networks** that are beneficial to minoritized students, families and community (Social Capital)

2. We use **community-based** (ancestral) knowledge to help staff understand and appreciate minoritized students (Funds of Knowledge)
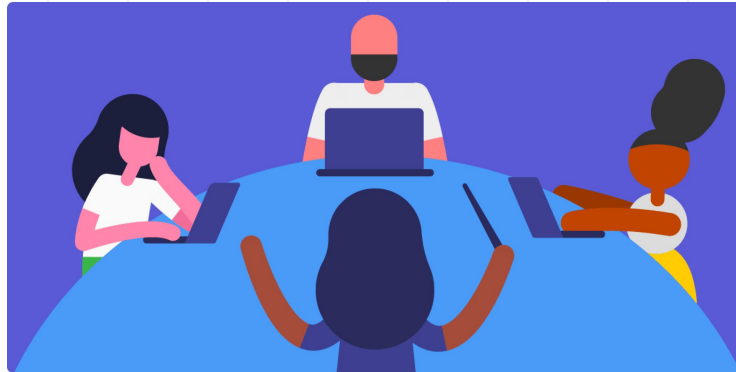
Year 1

Identify **systems** or data we want to investigate

Invest in the team as **learners**, not as experts

Identify **district** members, partners and stakeholders

Outcomes

- New perspectives from school staff on how to engage, how to listen, and when and where to act
- Networks to district staff, and for alt ed students that didn't exist before
- Identified areas of growth and improvement and the resources needed to address them
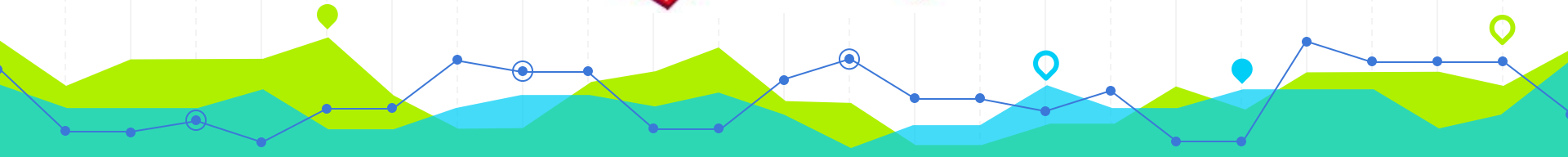
Continuing the Work

Our Community:

Establish social and educational **networks** that are beneficial to minoritized students, families and community

Our Students:

Use **community-based and student-driven** (ancestral) knowledge to help staff understand and appreciate minoritized students

Contact Us

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