Graduate School of EDUCATION

Data for Equity Protocol

"Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced." ~ James Baldwin

"Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets." ~ Edward Demming and other smart people

Purpose: To **identify equity gaps** in our system, **reflect on the conditions** that create and perpetuate them, and move forward with **concrete steps** for understanding and interrupting inequities. *You can use this protocol with multiple small groups, each unpacking a different piece of data, and then sharing out to the group. Or you can use this protocol to have everyone unpack the same piece of data (in this case, modify Stage 3).*

Questions to ask before engaging in this protocol:

- *What data do we need to look at? Who decides?*
- *How can we display the data to illuminate and understand disproportionate experiences and/or outcomes?*
- *What is the purpose of looking at this data? (To identify gaps, to check progress, to identify bright spots, etc.)*
- *What are the data's blind spots? What/whose perspectives are missing?*
- *Who needs to be in the room to ensure multiple perspectives are considered and movement is made?*

Roles:

- *Facilitator* guides the group through the process and ensures that the protocol and norms are upheld.
- *Notetaker* captures notes from the discussion and is prepared to share out for the group.

Norms: Conversations about data and equity issues can make people feel vulnerable. This is not a bad thing. A structured protocol helps maintain focus and constructive dialogue.

- **Share the air**… step up, step back, invite others in
- **Lean into discomfort**… we can't improve what we do not face
- **Embrace "we," not "they"**… to unpack how our systems/processes can perpetuate and interrupt inequity
- **Own your intent and impact**… resist defensiveness/blaming/avoidance, and seek to understand
- **Stick to the Protocol**… it helps people be in their brave space and move forward

Phase 1: Getting Oriented (10 minutes)

Participants take 5 minutes to review the data individually or in pairs. The facilitator then leads a quick check-in: *Does everyone understand what is being presented*? *What clarifying questions do we need to ask so that we can make sense of the data?*

Clarifying Question(s):

Phase 2: Discussion Rounds (25-30 minutes)

Round 1: Equity Observations (share around)

- Each person shares **one thing they noticed that illuminates an equity issue/gap** (i.e. disproportionate experiences and/or outcomes). During this portion it is important to just describe what you see as objectively as possible. (e.g. "I notice that Latino boys are twice as likely to be suspended as White boys.")
- Resist the urge to interpret or pose questions. Helpful sentence frame: **I notice....**

I notice:

Round 2: Questions (share other direction, start with a different person)

- Each person shares a question that emerges for them from the data.
- Helpful sentence frame: **I wonder...**

I wonder:

Round 3: Hypotheses (facilitator reads the Equity Pause below and then leads a discussion)

EQUITY PAUSE



Take a moment to consider: ***How might we be making assumptions, engaging in deficit thinking, or blaming others rather than taking a critical eye to our system and our own practices?*** *Remember, every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets. What forces in our system may be contributing to the inequities we see? How might our current processes/practices/beliefs be contributing to inequity? Bravely focusing on the system and our own contributions helps us identify what is in our locus of control/influence and where we can target our improvement efforts.* ***Embracing "we" vs. "they"*** *is a helpful disposition!*

- Participants share possible hypotheses or explanations for the equity issues/gaps they identified, *careful to identify multiple alternative explanations and interrogate our systems/processes (vs. blaming students and families).*
- Helpful sentence frames: **This could be because we... Or it could be because we...**

This could be because <u>we</u>:

Round 4: Next Steps (facilitator facilitates a discussion)

- Participants share what they might do next to address the equity issues/gaps given their understanding of the data.
- Helpful sentence frames: **One thing we could do next is...**

One next step:

Phase 3: Share out (optional, but recommended if you have multiple small groups or groups looking at different data*) The *notetaker* from each group has **1 minute** to share highlights from their group's discussion of the data. Please focus on sharing:

- 1-2 equity observations
- 1-2 questions/hypothesis that emerged
- 1 potential implication/next step

*If groups are looking at different data, you may find it helpful to build in time for a jigsaw discussion. Have people get in groups of 3-4 where each person has looked at a different piece of data. Then each person has 1-2 minutes to share highlights from their group's data conversation. The group can then discuss: What themes are we noticing across our data conversations?

Phase 4: Process Debrief (5-10 minutes, with your team)
The facilitator leads the group in reflecting on this *process*. Resist the urge to return the conversation to the data.

Helpful Guiding Questions:

- What was this process like for you?
- How did it feel to look at data through an equity lens?
- Where did we get stuck, or unstuck?
- What adjustments would you make, and why?
- What are we learning about how to display data so that we can engage in productive conversations about equity gaps in our system?

This protocol has been created by the HTH GSE Center for Research on Equity and Innovation. For more protocols visit:* ***https://hthgse.edu/crei/protocols*