Detours: Statistical Sophistry

- Blaming small cell sizes or cherry-picking alternate methodologies / calculations as evidence that there isn't a problem.

Example of the detour: “Racial disparities may appear high in our district, but that is because we have so few students. A single student of color drastically changes our numbers.”

Why is this a detour?

- Wisconsin currently uses the highest minimum cell/n sizes allowed by federal guidelines (10 / 30).
- A single year of data may be an aberration, but the same finding across multiple years is a pattern.
- Wisconsin currently uses the maximum number of years allowed by federal guidelines (3).

Detours: Correlated Causes

- Claiming that an observed racial inequity is the result of other factors, not race.

Example of the detour: "Positive outcomes for Black student are low because of the higher rate of poverty in Black communities, not because of racial inequities."

Why is this a detour?

- Acknowledging race's effect does not mean that other variables are irrelevant.
- Racial inequities consistently have the most pronounced effect on student achievement.
    - *Example*: non-economically disadvantaged Black students have slightly lower ELA and math proficiency rates than economically disadvantaged white students.

Detours: Passing the Buck

- Shifting responsibility or blaming another source for an observed inequity.

Example of the detour: “These inequities aren’t our fault, it’s the fault of the [student’s family / previous school / student / etc.]”

Why is this a detour?

- It doesn’t matter whose ‘fault’ it is. Our obligation to address it remains.
- Accept the things you cannot change and focus on implementing strategies and solutions that can improve students’ achievement and opportunities.