

# How DPI/District Collaboration Supports Indigenous Education in Wisconsin

2024 Racial Disproportionality Institute

Green Bay, Wisconsin

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LINK: <https://rb.gy/nk7sy4>

# Introductions



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# Plan for this session

- Significant Racial Disproportionality as the trigger for work with school districts/local education agencies (LEAs) with Indigenous students
- Starting with the basics - how to reduce significant racial disproportionality
  - Examining policies, procedures and systems
  - Increasing cultural representation in school and curricula
  - Strengthening family and community partnerships

# Goal of this Session

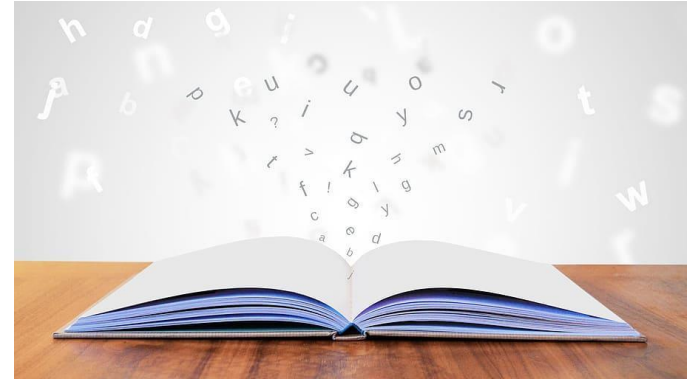
**Understanding of how Significant Racial Disproportionality can be an entry point for work with school districts with Indigenous Students**

**Understanding how to help address issues connected to Significant Racial Disproportionality meant to support school districts, students and families**

# Consequences of Racial Disproportionality

Students without disabilities can end up with unnecessary academic delays and behavioral problems because they tend to be separated and segregated from their peers.

Students without disabilities who are misidentified can end up with poor academic and behavioral outcomes.



# What is the cause?

**Evaluation issues** - subjective ratings, limited or no instruction in common subjects, focus on weakness, not strengths

**Student engagement** - not connected to school or curricula, not seeing themselves represented

**Policies** that are racially biased

**Limited educator understanding** of and valuing of indigenous history, culture and traditions




# Why is Evaluation a factor?



- Standardized test results tell you what a certain population of students will do, and there may not be enough Indigenous students in the **normative groups**.
- Some disability areas rely on **subjective information** which can be impacted by implicit bias and racial stereotypes.



# Our Process

- **Initial calls with districts to set schedule and goals for two-day visit**
  - **Spent time collaboratively examining the following:**
    - Policies/procedures/systems that are seemingly race-neutral
    - Cultural representation in school and curricula
    - Family and community partnerships
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# Examining Policies/Procedures/Systems that are Seemingly Race-neutral

Q: What is a seemingly race-neutral policy?



# Examining Policies/Procedures/Systems that are Seemingly Race-neutral

Q: What is a seemingly race-neutral policy?

A: A policy that is intended to carry out an intended educational purpose, but that disproportionately negatively affects students of color.

# Examining Policies/Procedures/Systems that are Seemingly Race-neutral



How could an attendance policy serve to disproportionately negatively affect Indigenous students and their families?

# Examining Policies/Procedures/Systems that are Seemingly Race-neutral

## Other policies/procedures/systems worth examining:

- Behavior and discipline policies (particularly zero tolerance)
- Special education referral process ([Addressing Bias in Special Education Evaluation](#))
- Incentive programs
- Homework policies
- Transportation policies
- Dress codes (e.g. hats, hoods, hair)



# Examining Cultural Representation in School and Curricula





# What does culture encompass?

## THE CULTURAL ICEBERG

SURFACE CULTURE

Food  
Flags Festivals  
Fashion Holidays Music  
Performances Dances Games  
Arts & Crafts Literature Language

DEEP CULTURE

### Communications Styles and Rules:

Facial Expressions Gestures Eye Contact  
Personal Space Touching Body Language  
Conversational Patterns in Different Social Situations  
Handling and Displaying of Emotion  
Tone of Voice

### Notions of:

Courtesy and Manners  
Friendship Leadership  
Cleanliness Modesty  
Beauty

### Concepts of:

Self Time Past and Future  
Fairness and Justice  
Roles related to Age, Sex,  
Class, Family, etc.

### Attitudes toward:

Elders Adolescents Dependents  
Rule Expectations Work Authority  
Cooperation vs. Competition  
Relationships with Animals Age  
Sin Death

### Approaches to:

Religion Courtship Marriage  
Raising Children Decision-Making  
Problem Solving

# Cultural Representation in Schools

Examine your school environments for representation in the following areas:

- Curricula
- Book displays
- Murals, artwork, blank walls around the school and in classrooms
- School display cases
- Language written around school
- Classroom displays
- Flags
- Lunchroom
- Library
- School-wide Activities
- After School Clubs
- Outside facilities/Spaces for cultural expression





# Examining Family and Community Partnerships



# Family and Community Partnerships

**What have you found impactful in establishing strong family and community partnerships in your district?**



# Examining Family and Community Partnerships

## Ways to Strengthen Partnerships with Families and Community:

- Communicate frequently with families about what is going on at school (share the good!)
- Offer home visits for all families
- Hold listening sessions with families at Tribal Nation
- Host events at school that bring in community members (e.g. storytelling, artist-in-residence)
- Partner with other districts that serve Indigenous students from the same community or Nation
- Identify ways to bring all students to visit the Nation

# Strengthening Partnerships with the Nation



- Partner with the nation:
  - Identify Resources (e.g. books, personnel, Elder-in-residence)
  - Hold Family/Teacher conference in communities
  - Collaborate on culturally responsive teacher training
  - Promote community events to school families
  - Collaborate on Language Instruction
  - Host after- school programming
  - Meet with Tribal Nation leadership 2x per year in consultation

# Feedback from the Field

“When most educators say or hear, ‘DPI called,’ or ‘DPI is visiting us,’ the first thought is fear and concern. That is not the case with this team of individuals. They reached out to help us but also researched where we were at and then helped us create a collective vision for our process of growth going forward.”

# Feedback from the Field

“As a district, we know that if we are struggling with data or how to walk the path to growing/improving our students’ abilities and engagement, that this group of individuals will go above and beyond to help us brainstorm a process to grow.”

# Feedback from the Field

“The purpose was to gain intentional insight into all of the wonderful things that our district does do for our students as well as to provide grounded feedback pertaining to all things to consider when diving deeper into our overarching system/s. The process felt very supportive and encouraging when comparing it to years past.”

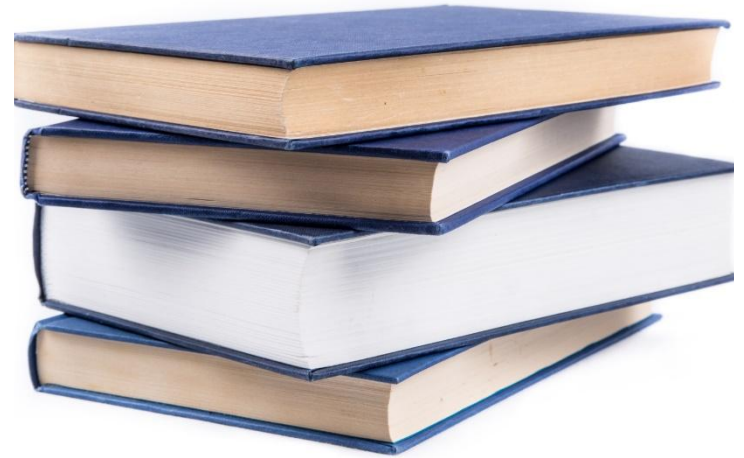
# Feedback from the Field

“The idea of actually teaming with our people in Madison versus checking boxes in a portal is refreshing. It was enlightening to have the team actually come and be a part of our schools and interactions. Their feedback was thoughtful and non-threatening. The experience was intentional, respectful and supportive.”



# But as you get to know your student

See	See the student for who they are, not what you think they are because of their race, culture, religion, etc.
Attribute	Attribute their behavior to something other than a stereotype
Be	Be better able to meet them where they are at and teach them culturally



# Final thought...

Inclusion isn't  
just *inviting*  
someone to sit at  
your table.

@miacarellawriter

It's *believing* they  
belong there.

MIA CARELLA, WRITER