Framing the Equity Conversation for Today and the Future

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Learner Outcomes:

- Receive examples of helpful norms to have in place for racial equity discussions.
- Gain an understanding of current system inequities in the context of Oregon’s history.
- Develop a common understanding of terminology used in racial equity discussions.
- Increase participants’ ability to apply an equity lens to this work.
Norms for Racial Equity Discussions:

- Speak Your Truth
- Stay Engaged
- Experience Discomfort
- Refrain from Pivoting to Other “-isms” (Sexism, Classism, Ageism, etc...)
- Be Aware of Intent; Own Your Impact
- Accept and Expect Non-Closure
- Maintain a Learner Stance and Remain Open to New Thinking
- Recognize This is About Enhancing or Gaining Your Equity Lens
Smarter Balance Results by Ethnicity:

African Amer.: 33% 32%
Asian: 59%
Hispanic: 43% 41%
Mixed Race: 65% 58%
Native Amer.: 39% 26%
Pacific Is.: 46% 48%
White: 76% 73%

3rd Gr. ELA, 7th Gr. Math
Disproportionate Discipline
Student Suspension Rates (Grades 6-12)
Impact of Income and Race
Percent Meeting Standard in Mathematics (Grades 3-8 Combined)

NOT Low Income (FRL),
NOT Student of Color

Low Income (FRL),
NOT Student of Color
Student of Color,
NOT Low Income (FRL)

BOTH Low Income (FRL)
and Student of Color

2014 Distribution

7%
16%
25%
51%
“The racial composition of any American city is a product of its history.”

(Matt Novak, *White Utopia: Oregon’s Racist History*)
Article 1, Section 35:

“No free negro, or mulatto, not residing in this State at the time of the adoption of this Constitution, shall come, reside, or be within this State, or hold any real estate, or make any contracts, or maintain any suit therein; and the Legislative Assembly shall provide...for the removal...of all such negroes, and mulattos, and for their effectual exclusion from the State, and for the punishment of persons who shall bring them into the State, employ, or harbor them.”
A referendum asking the public whether to exclude Black and mixed race people from the state passed with 89% of the vote.

Language related to this vote was incorporated into the Constitution.

Oregon became the first state admitted to the Union with an Exclusion Law written into its state constitution.

The law was repealed in 1926.

The language in Article 1, Section 35 was not removed until 2001.
The 14th Amendment

- A referendum to reject slavery was passed in 1857 by 75% of the popular vote.
- Technically, Oregon’s Exclusion Laws were superseded by federal law when the 14th Amendment was adopted.
- The State ratified the 14th Amendment, granting citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the US, including former slaves, in 1866.
- The State rescinded it’s ratification in 1868 (the year it was added as an official Amendment by Congress) when there was a change in state government.
- Oregon did not re-ratify the 14th Amendment until 1973.
The 15th Amendment

- The 15th Amendment, outlawing voting discrimination based on race, is added to the US Constitution.
  - It failed to pass in OR and CA.

- The 15th Amendment superseded a clause in the Oregon Constitution that explicitly banned Black suffrage.

- The constitutional language banning Black suffrage was not removed until 1927.

- The 15th Amendment was not ratified in Oregon until 1959.
1867 – Salem: William Brown’s children are refused access to public school because they are Black. The district agrees to fund Little Central School, after Mr. Brown filed a lawsuit, to serve the 16 Black, school-age children.

1867 – Portland Public Schools institutionalizes segregation.

1906 – Taylor vs. Cohn: Oregon Supreme Court decision that Blacks could be legally segregated from Whites in public places.

Ruling struck down in 1953.

1922 – Passage of the Compulsory Education Act: Made it mandatory for every child to attend public school (goal: shut down every Catholic and other private school)

1925 – Supreme Court rules the law is unconstitutional.
“Through most of the 20th Century, racial discrimination was deliberate and intentional. Today, racial segregation and division often result from habits, policies, and institutions that are not explicitly designed to discriminate. Contrary to popular belief, discrimination or segregation do not require animus. They thrive even in the absence of prejudice or ill will. It’s common to have racism without ‘racists’.”

(Richard Benjamin, Searching for Whitopia: An Improbable Journey to the Heart of White America)
The State of Black Oregon Today
(The Urban League of Portland 2015 report)

- On-time graduation rates: Black (57%); White (71%)
- Drop-out rates: Black (21%); White (10.6%)
- Discipline rates (1st-12th grade): Black (14.4%); White (6.1%)
- State Benchmarks (11th gr.): Math – Black (40%); White (72.8%); Reading – Black (64.6%); White (88%)
- Median Income: Black-headed households ($33,000); White-headed households ($50,882)
- Family income below the poverty line: Black (30%); White (11.7%)
- Home ownership: Black (32.3%); White (65%)
- Food insecurity: Black (44%); White (18.7%)
- Unemployment rate: Black (16%); White (9%)
- Black incarceration rates are 6 times that of Whites
- Black babies are 50% more likely to be born with low birth weight and suffer infant mortality than White babies
****ACTIVITY****
Applying an Equity Lens to Your Work:

**Success Strategies:**
- Unpack the norms, their purpose and your intent in using them.
- Do your own work regarding race, stereotypes and bias.
- Be prepared to facilitate and give guidance when micro-aggressions occur.
- Prevent the “poverty pivot” from sidelining discussions of race.

**Be aware that:**
- Each individual has their own experiences and history around equity.
  - Help them find their access point.
- White privilege is **always** in the room.
- It’s essential to develop a common understanding of race and equity (terminology).
Resources:

- *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* (Caprice Hollins and Ilsa Govan)
- *Courageous Conversations* (Glenn Singleton)
- *Race Matters* (Cornel West)
- *Whistling Vivaldi* (Claude Steele)
- *Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools* (A. Lewis & J. Diamond)
- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (Michelle Alexander)
- *Other People's Children* (Lisa Delpit)
- *Critical Race Theory* (Richard Delgado & Jean Stefancic)
- White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack
Oregon-Specific Resources:

- White Utopia: Oregon’s Racist History: [http://gizmodo.com/oregon-was-founded-as-a-racist-utopia-1539567040](http://gizmodo.com/oregon-was-founded-as-a-racist-utopia-1539567040)
***QUESTIONS?***