CONTEXT OF PROPOSAL

In July of 2017, Illinois began requiring schools to provide implicit racial bias training with the passage into law of Public Act 100-014. However, according to a 2020 study conducted by Advance Illinois (with 158 responses from superintendents, regional superintendents, and directors of HR), of the districts that responded, 35% of district administrators reported that their district did not offer an implicit bias training, and of those that did offer such training, 34% offered an hour or less per year. To address this concern, the Illinois State Board of Education, in its 2020-2023 strategic plan, set a goal of piloting a new evaluation tool to "assist districts in selecting implicit bias professional development providers" during the 2021-2022 school year.[1] As Teach Plus Illinois Policy Fellows, we are a group of educators who are dedicated to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in education. We chose to research evaluation tools from other states, consider them in the Illinois context, and propose a rubric that could be used as part of ISBE's pilot. We have submitted the rubric below to ISBE for consideration in the new pilot.

We are a diverse group of educators who come from many different regions of Illinois, from various cultural backgrounds, and who teach multicultural student populations. We see a need to address many different racial disparities in education, and teacher implicit racial bias is often the culprit. We feel that boosting the stringency of the Illinois statute on implicit racial bias training would address that need. Given the historical context of how we have treated non-white individuals, and the mounting evidence of how bias can impact children's education, we need to strengthen schools' ability to choose and implement high-quality training.

Schools need to understand what high-quality diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training opportunities and implementation looks like. Additionally, there is a need for a tool to help support the selection process for districts' individual needs. While the implicit bias training mandate is there, quality should now be our focus.

RATIONALE

Research shows that persistent opportunity gaps and disproportionate disengagement among Black and brown students in the current system of education are driven in part by systemic racism and implicit racial bias.[2] Students of color continue to be underrepresented in AP, gifted, and talented programming, score below their white peers on standardized tests, and are three times more likely to be suspended compared to white students.[3] A similar story persists with low-income students, ELL students, and students with IEPs. Meeting a renewed urgency for change in our society, some states have recently mandated implicit racial bias

training in various public sectors; this is true in Illinois, New York, Michigan, New Jersey, California, Connecticut.[4]

This national data, coupled with data about the realities of how our education system can perpetuate white supremacy, reveals that high-quality DEI Professional Development (PD) is critical to confronting and changing systemic racial inequalities in education.[5]

It will take work to achieve these desired outcomes. Neuroscientist David Amodio says that the brain can overcome initial responses to race. He writes, "While studies have shown that people are generally unable to deliberately turn down the intensity of a feeling or a stereotypic thought, people are quite effective at responding to those thoughts or feelings in a way that blocks the actual expression of bias. In other words, people can overcome racism by keeping their eyes on the prize."[6]

Knowing that it is possible to make change is important, but how educators go about this will decide how impactful DEI PD is on changing processes and systems. EdWeek contributor Sarah Sparks contends, "In some cases, diversity and anti-bias training can paradoxically lead to more stereotyping, if participants come to think of biases as common and uncontrollable, and can lead white participants to feel threatened without yielding benefits for participants of color. Rather, evidence suggests staff training can be helpful, but only as part of a comprehensive strategy that includes identifying specific problems and strategies to address structures that perpetuate bias in a school system."[7]

As we see these mandates happening across the country and an increased desire for change in education, data has started to emerge that gives guidance on best practices and supports the idea that implementation is key. A new study from Harvard Ph.D. student Mark Chin and his coauthors provides data that teacher, specifically white teacher, implicit racial bias results in inequitable student learning. While this is just preliminary data, Chin writes, "For an intervention to be useful, we would want to know that it actually leads to lasting changes in behaviors. Otherwise, the intervention may not be a useful investment for schools to spend money on." Creating and nurturing lasting changes and addressing structures that perpetuate bias are key to successful DEI PD. If schools desire to confront inequities ingrained in the current education system, simply mandating DEI training is not enough; the implementation of mandates matter.[8]

PROPOSED EVALUATION

Echoing this nationwide desire for professional development that results in lasting behavior and systemic changes, we created this DEI Program Evaluation Tool to aid districts in the provider selection process through identifying high quality DEI training practices indicators.

Indicator categories include:

+ *Support and Connection:*

    Research shows that stand-alone training, not aligned to school goals, does not yield long-term impacts on bias.[9] Consequently, high-quality DEI PD should be aligned to individual district goals. Additionally, the PD should go beyond mere alignment, but also support leaders in the implementation of those goals, connecting PD content to existing district systems and structures.

+ *Implementation:*

    On-going implicit racial bias training is proven to have more long-term impacts on student achievement.[10] One-time training, which is common practice in many schools, is not proven to have a significant impact on student achievement. Training should be participatory, on-going, address systemic changes, and include all school stakeholders—from the school bus to the district office.

+ *Resources:*

    Many times, "language detours," such as cultural competency, are used to circumvent difficult conversations around systemic racism.[11] As a result, DEI PD providers should include content that is explicitly anti-racist and anti-biased. The content should be applicable to all participating stakeholders and provide resources to engage in on-going anti-racist work. These resources should also be developed by an interracial group of credentialed content-creators, as a recent meta-analysis found interracial leadership of conversation surrounding race results in the biggest impact on counteracting biases.[12]

+ *Understanding Data:*

    Effective DEI PD should include clear outcomes that are measurable and developed with knowledge of current district DEI needs. In fact, research shows that DEI training is only impactful "as part of a comprehensive strategy that includes identifying specific problems and strategies to address structures that perpetuate bias in a school system."[13]

TOOL USAGE

This rubric has been designed to be used by all levels of stakeholders when evaluating DEI PD. It is intended to be a tool for anyone—from a school community just beginning their DEI journey and looking to understand what PD is effective and valuable, to a community that is deep into their learning and is looking to reflect on next steps for PD in DEI.

This rubric can be used when:

+ Districts or teachers choose a provider by utilizing the criteria to ask providers of professional development questions about the programmatic details.

+ A district would like to reflectively evaluate outside provider PD programs that are currently being offered.

+ A school is creating a plan for in-house professional learning for faculty and staff.

+ Providers or districts evaluate past or already-developed PD.

+ Providers need to align or develop DEI PD for specific district needs.

By laying out the criteria of outstanding DEI PD focusing on anti-racism and anti-bias work, this DEI PD Provider Selection Tool can support school districts in finding the opportunities for growth that are right for them.

Support and Connection				
	Not Apparent	**Approaching**	**Meeting**	**Exceeding**
Support for Implementation	The PD provider does not require that leaders provide any supports to implement this professional learning.	This PD provider suggests that leaders provide, but does not actively encourage, some planning time and/or other supports to implement the professional learning.	This PD provider encourages leaders to find ways they can support systems and structures that assist implementation of this professional learning and increase student learning.	This PD provider requires that leaders create and/or connect to existing support systems and structures to ensure the successful implementation of this professional learning and increased student learning.
Connection to Goals	The PD provider does not require that leaders create goals that are aligned with school, system, and state goals, including Part 24 of Illinois Administrative Code. There are no opportunities to reflect on the learning process nor progress toward specific goals.	The PD provider suggests that leaders create goals that are aligned with school, system, and state goals, including Part 24 of Illinois Administrative Code. This PD provider furnishes an opportunity to reflect on the learning process.	The PD provider encourages leaders to create goals that are aligned with school, system, and state goals, including Part 24 of Illinois Administrative Code. This PD provider furnishes multiple opportunities to reflect on the learning process and/or progress toward specific goals.	The PD provider requires leaders to consistently create goals that are aligned with school, system, and state goals, including Part 24 of Illinois Administrative Code. This PD provider also consistently furnishes opportunities to reflect together on the learning process and any progress made toward specific goals.

Implementation				
	Not Apparent	**Approaching**	**Meeting**	**Exceeding**
In-Depth and Continuous	No anti-racist implicit racial bias training hours that meet quality standards are complete through the district-guided PD.	At least two hours of anti-racist implicit racial bias training completed annually through district-guided PD that meets quality standards. One session is provided.	At least three hours of anti-racist implicit racial bias training completed annually through district-guided PD that meets quality standards. Multiple sessions are provided.	Over three hours of anti-racist implicit racial bias training completed annually through district-guided PD that meets quality standards. Multiple sessions are provided and building upon one another.
Participatory Element	The fully asynchronous training is labeled implicit racial bias training with little to no outcome of the training. Staff does not feel engaged.	The fully asynchronous training is labeled implicit racial bias training with minimal feeling of being engaged. Includes at least one opportunity for self-assessment.	The in-person or synchronous training creates meaningful conversation and engages critical thinking and self-reflection skills. Includes at least two opportunities for self-assessment.	The in-person or synchronous training creates meaningful conversation and engages critical thinking and self-reflection skills. Includes more than three opportunities for self-assessment. Staff in that building lead implicit racial bias training and include students.
Inclusive Participation	A few professional staff are included in the training; not all teachers participate.	Some professional staff are included in the training; all teachers participate.	Most professional staff are included in training; all teachers and administrators participate.	All professional staff are included in the training; all district employees participate.

Resources

	Not Apparent	Approaching	Meeting	Exceeding
Anti-Racist and Anti-Bias Content	Pre-work, post-work, and live resources do not reference anti-racist/anti-bias research and are not explicit in the confrontation of racism and bias. Resources do not define key vocabulary nor provide critical guiding questions grounded in current research.	Some of the pre-work, post-work, and live resources reference anti-racist/anti-bias research yet they are not clearly explicit in the confrontation of racism and bias. Resources attempt to provide definitions of key vocabulary and begin to provide critical guiding questions grounded in current research.	Pre-work, post-work, and live resources reference anti-racist/anti-bias research and are explicit in the confrontation of racism and bias. Resources provide definitions of key vocabulary and provide critical guiding questions grounded in current research.	Pre-work, post-work, and live resources reference anti-racist/anti-bias research and are explicit in the confrontation of racism and bias. Resources also include student voices. Resources provide definitions of key vocabulary and provide critical guiding questions grounded in current research.
Diverse Facilitators	The PD sessions were not created or facilitated by a diverse group of individuals.	The PD sessions are created by a diverse group of individuals but facilitated by a single person, or majority representative group.	The PD sessions are created and/or facilitated by a diverse group of individuals with experience in leading diverse groups of people through anti-racist and anti-bias work.	The PD sessions are created and facilitated by a diverse group of individuals with experience in leading diverse groups of people through anti-racist and anti-bias work. The facilitators are representative of and participatory in the larger community.

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Resources (continued)				
	Not Apparent	**Approaching**	**Meeting**	**Exceeding**
Post-Session Activities and Reflection	The PD provider does not provide follow-up activities.	The PD provider does not provide resources for ongoing reflection and implementation post-session.	The PD provider provides resources for participants to engage with post-session to guide ongoing reflection. Follow-up activities provide practical connections to the school environment that can be incorporated immediately in the school.	The PD provider provides resources for participants to engage with post-session to guide ongoing reflection. Follow-up activities provide practical connections to the school environment that can be incorporated immediately in the school.
Target Audience	Resources are not applicable to all participants' roles and perspectives at the school.	Resources attempt to provide nuanced perspectives and are relevant to the entire school community.	Resources provide nuanced perspectives and are relevant to the entire school community.	Resources are specifically curated and targeted to the unique perspectives and roles of all school community members.

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Understanding Data				
	Not Apparent	**Approaching**	**Meeting**	**Exceeding**
Planning Needs Assessment	No needs assessment inventory was taken of the specific school's needs and demographics; PD was not tailored to the building.	An needs assessment inventory of the specific school was attempted, but the PD was not tailored to the building.	A needs assessment inventory was taken of the specific school's needs and demographics to plan PD tailored to the building.	A needs assessment inventory was taken of the specific school's needs and demographics to plan PD tailored to the building and is kept to build on needs that arise in the future.
Measurable Outcomes	Does identify specific outcomes that can be measured.	Identifies outcomes, but does not identify how they are measured or outcomes are not clear and specific.	Identifies clear and specific outcomes and how they will be measured.	Identifies clear and specific outcomes that can be measured; allows time for reflection around how to reach/improve desired outcomes.
Participant Feedback	PD providers do not include specific time for feedback to be given to participants or time to reflect on their own practice.	PD providers sometimes include specific time for feedback to be given to participants and reflection on their own practice so they can apply learning.	PD providers include specific time for feedback to be given to participants and reflection on their own practice so they can apply learning.	PD providers include ongoing, specific time for feedback to be given by participants and reflection on their own practice. Feedback to participants includes identifying strengths and weaknesses in application of material to their own practice.

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ENDNOTES

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