

# **Integrating White Spaces: Building Cultural Competence in Public School Systems**

**2022 CABE/CAPSS Convention**  
**Saturday, November 19**

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Partners  
for Educational  
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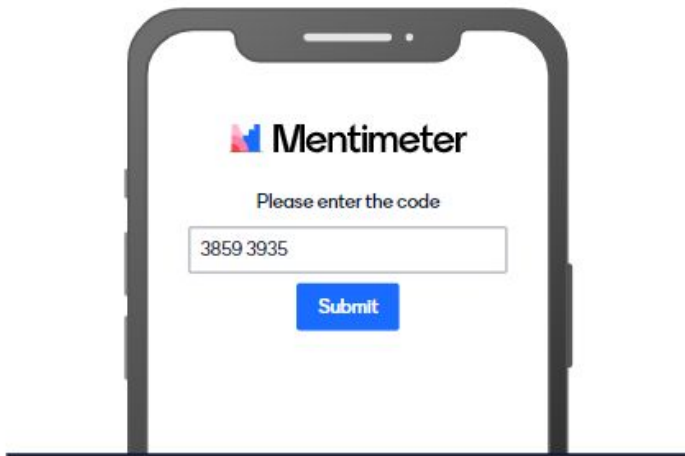
DIVERSIFYING TEACHERS. TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS

# QUESTIONS



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## After today's journey, you will...

- *Understand the role of desegregation and the loss of the black teaching force*
- *Understand the importance of creating inclusive communities.*
- *Recognize the language of microaggressions*
- *Address racial stereotypes and identify cognitive biases*
- *Learn best practices for welcoming diversity*
- *Plan ways to increase cultural competence for all staff*

**Stop and Jot-** What are the factors that contribute to a lack of diversity in teaching?



In your assigned group, you will have three minutes to visit each poster, read and discuss the quote as a group. Each group will report out on the last poster they visit.

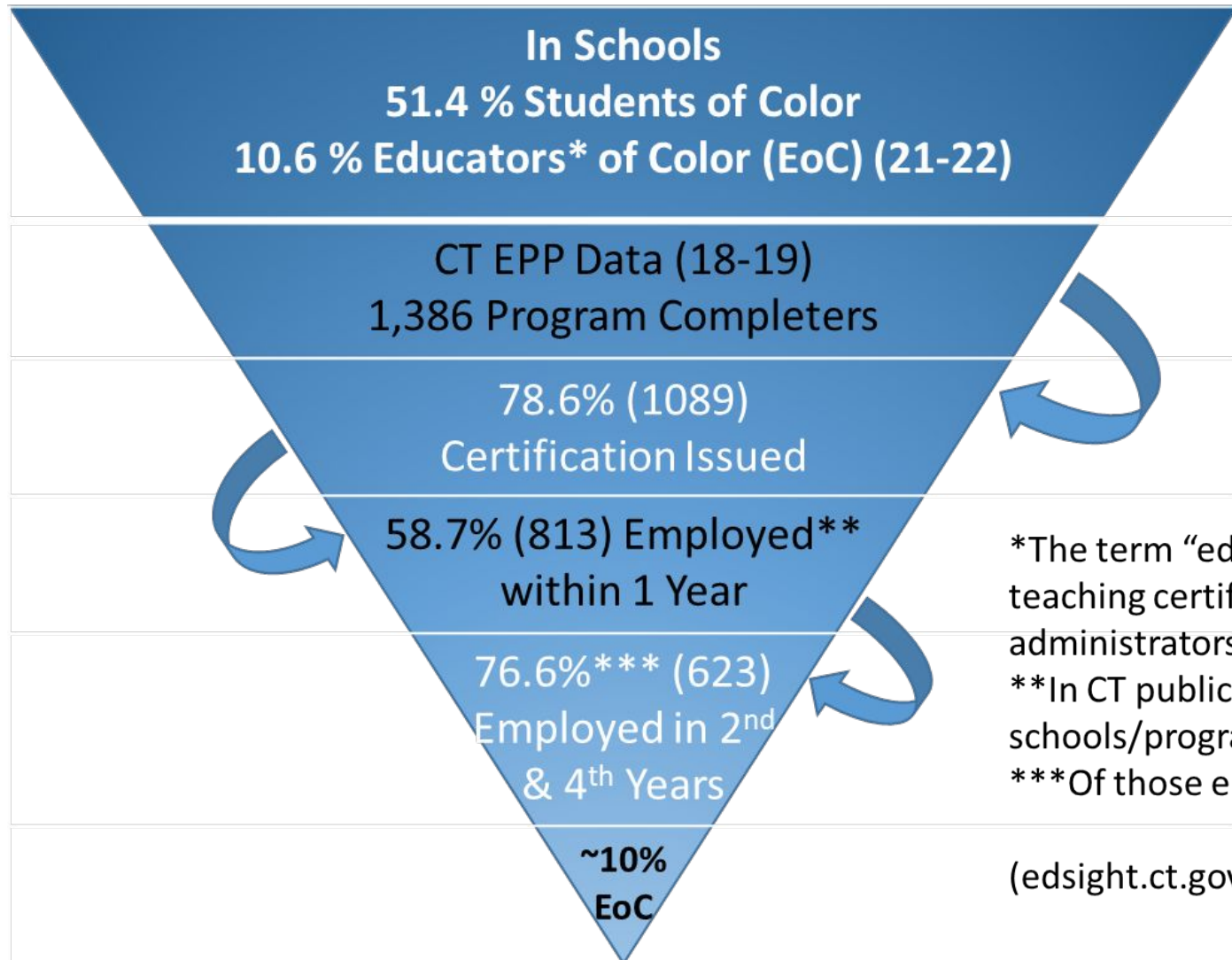


What was new learning for you?

How has your thinking shifted?

What questions does this raise for you?

# The CT Teacher Prep Funnel



\*The term “educators” includes non-teaching certified staff and administrators

\*\*In CT public & private schools/programs

\*\*\*Of those employed within 1 year

(edsight.ct.gov)

# Jim Crow's Pink Slip (Dr. Leslie Fenwick)

- Highly qualified Black educators displaced during integration efforts
- ~100,000 Black educators dismissed or demoted
- Public school system experienced 4 traumas
  - Loss of a generation of exceptionally credentialed & effective educators
  - Black students in schools without models of intellectual authority (teachers of leadership)
  - Economic trauma as the loss of jobs created an estimated \$1 Billion economic cut in the Black community
  - Implications on future generations – not having examples of education as a field and working service to community
- Desegregation without integration



# The Challenges of Integration



# Making the Case for Culturally Competent Systems

Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency, or professional and enable that system, agency or professional to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

The word culture is used because it implies the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thought, communication, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group.

The word competence is used because it implies having the capacity to function effectively.

A culturally competent system of care acknowledges and incorporates—at all levels—the importance of culture, the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs. (Terry Cross 1988)

## CULTURAL COMPETENCE CONTINUUM - CHARACTERISTICS

*(Adapted from Terry L. Cross, et., at., 1989), Coleman/Pellitteri 2000 & Updated 2/4/13)*

<p><b>I. Cultural Destructiveness</b>  I make a conscious effort [use my power] to destroy cultures that are different from my own or from what I think will work best for others.</p> <p>..... "We are all that is important."</p>	<p><b>II. Cultural Incapacity</b>  I am unwilling to be useful or helpful to other cultures.</p> <p>..... "We take care of our own."</p>	<p><b>III. Cultural Denial/Indifference</b>  I believe that culture/color and dimensions of diversity are unimportant.</p> <p>..... "All people are the same."</p>
<p><i>Characteristics include and are not limited to...</i></p>	<p><i>Characteristics include and are not limited to...</i></p>	<p><i>Characteristics include and are not limited to...</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believe I (my family, my group, etc.) is superior to, and have extreme biases against, those who are different.</li> <li>• Overt message to those who are different is that they are not valued or welcomed.</li> <li>• Others are perceived as nonentities, expendable and/or undeserving.</li> <li>• Harm to others is acceptable, appropriate, and/or justified.</li> <li>• More of an absolutist worldview that highly values winning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual/group is not consciously deciding to be incapacitated, they are simply taking care of their group. However, if the group reflects the dominate culture, the process alone results in institutional or systematic bias.</li> <li>• Stuck in a mindless position; simply not aware of our behavior that maintains this incapacitated state, however outsiders will experience subtle messages that some cultures (groups) are neither valued or welcomed; at best may be tolerated.</li> <li>• Disproportionately apply resources to benefit their own group.</li> <li>• Residual effects of incapacitation may be lower expectations for some cultural, racial, ethnic groups (and/or other dimensions of diversity such as gender, sexual orientation, age, etc).</li> <li>• Those who are different are segregated for their good.</li> <li>• More of a relativist worldview, (I'll take care of my own) that highly values maintaining the status quo.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages assimilation and the suppression of difference.</li> <li>• Discomfort recognizing difference and ignores (or unaware of) cultural strengths.</li> <li>• Denies that culture and dimensions of diversity (gender, ethnic group, sexual orientation, etc) are significant.</li> <li>• Beliefs, policies, actions that assume world is fair and achievement is based on merit: "should pull oneself up by own boot straps."</li> <li>• Institutional attitudes that refuse to take responsibility for the impact of their behavior/actions on others and often blame individuals/families for the perceived failures.</li> <li>• Does not recognize the reality of power/privilege.</li> <li>• Believes what is useful for the dominate group is universally applicable and applies as such (one size fits all).</li> </ul>



<p><b>IV Cultural Pre-Competence:</b> I realize that my responses to cultural difference are more often than not culturally destructive and I am trying to understand how to respond culturally competently/proficiently. <i>"Often have nice written policies, but limited action." The operative word is "trying."</i></p>	<p><b>V. Cultural Competence</b> Cultural Competence: Cultural competence is characterized by a commitment to social and economic justice. <i>"Foster mutual adaptation to difference to create environments that are useful for all."</i></p>	<p><b>VI. Cultural Proficiency</b> Cultural proficiency means that I hold culture in high esteem and that it is my organizing frames of reference and the foundation by which I understand relationships between individuals, groups, organizations, systems, etc. <i>"Optimal, universal, inclusive and proficient."</i></p>
<p><i>Characteristics include and are not limited to...</i></p>	<p><i>Characteristics include and are not limited to...</i></p>	<p><i>Characteristics include and are not limited to...</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressed commitment to valuing diversity but no clear plan for achieving organizational cultural competence.</li> <li>• Works at being inclusive.</li> <li>• Ceases to expect those who are different will suppress their difference and at same time is not sure what to do when difference is expressed – resulting in movement towards the status quo.</li> <li>• Recognizes the need for consumer/family involvement and at same time often not sure how to integrate this voice/involvement.</li> <li>• Expressed commitment to human/civil rights and social justice, as we define them.</li> <li>• Beginning to realize ethnocentric beliefs distort one's vision about those who are different.</li> <li>• Beginning to question the validity of segregation and/or assimilation.</li> <li>• Recommends the need for improved services to specific poorly served populations, with no action.</li> <li>• Maintains a parental attitude towards the marginalized group; positive outcomes are associated with how close the marginalized group can approximate the dominate group in terms of language, appearance, values and beliefs.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Effective plan and demonstrated actions of individuals/organizational cultural competence, which includes and is not limited to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mindfully behave in a manner that demonstrates a value for diversity.</li> <li>• Participants in rigorous/on going self examination into the manner in which culture/heritage influences perceptions, attitudes and behavior about (and towards) those who are culturally different.</li> <li>• Works at being inclusive.</li> <li>• Ceases to expect those who are different will suppress their difference.</li> <li>• Willingness to stay engaged with others to integrate their values, beliefs and associated needs into decision-making and action.</li> <li>• Demonstrated commitment to human/civil rights, social justice, as defined by the marginalized individual/group.</li> <li>• Actively develops cross-cultural knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• Continuously looks outside of one's own worldview to gain a more accurate understanding.</li> <li>• Mindfully engages in a mutually adaptive process, rather than segregate and/or require assimilation.</li> <li>• Actively seeks input from specific poorly served populations and takes action to meet the defined needs.</li> <li>• Adapts service delivery to meet the needs of a multi-cultural community.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Realization that we (as individuals/groups) are both separate and also connected, which requires the following understandings.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Worldview</b> shifts from absolutism/ethnocentrism [separateness] ...to universalism [both separate/connected].</li> <li>• <b>Attitude</b> shifts from judgments, cruelty, unforgiveness, selfishness, etc. [separateness] ...to compassion (kindness, generosity, gentleness) to self/others [both separate/ connected].</li> <li>• <b>Relationships</b> shift from stereotyping [separateness] ...to authentic [both separate/connected].</li> <li>• <b>Policy</b> shifts from exclusionary [separate] ...to inclusionary [both separate/connected].</li> <li>• <b>Practices</b> shift from destructive [separate] ...to constructive [both separate/connected].</li> </ul>

# Why Cultural Competence Matters

## The Findings (EDTrust)

- Black and Latino teachers believed they could **better connect with same-race students**. They could empathize with their experiences, build relationships because of perceived cultural similarities, and motivate those students differently than white colleagues.
- Black and Latino teachers embraced these connections, feeling that they needed to **support and advocate for the whole student** — to not only teach curriculum, but to help students manage discrimination and poverty. But this added work could be severely taxing on teachers, particularly emotionally.
- Black teachers often had a **distinct ability to manage “difficult” students**, and colleagues often asked them to supervise and help these students during planning periods or after school. But because of this work, black teachers felt they were often seen as enforcers rather than educators — that they were overlooked in opportunities to advance professionally.

# Why Cultural Competence Matters

- Latino teachers often wanted to **explicitly value Latino culture**, encouraging students to speak Spanish and working to provide culturally relevant pedagogy. Colleagues, though, often criticized them for deviating from curricula.
- Latino teachers also often took on the **extra work of being a translator**, translating orally between families and school officials or providing written translations of school policies. While these teachers considered it important to make all students and families feel informed, they also felt overworked by, and undervalued as an educator for, translating.
- Both black and Latino teachers continually **felt they had to prove their worth as educators**. They felt they were overlooked for advancement, undervalued as experts in their subject area, and had to prove their qualifications to parents.



# Ways to Create Welcoming and Inclusive Communities



# Changing the Questions is not Enough

## What is your Why?

- Reframe “Fit”
- Define Diversity for your Organization
- Develop a Theory of Action



## Table Talk:

Why is diversity important to you and your organization?

What outcomes do you hope to achieve?

Who are the stakeholders and how are they involved?



# Strategies to Hire and Grow

## **Grow Your Own**

- Partner with a Teacher Prep Program
- Engage with Community Partners
- Implement a Pipeline Program for Students

## **Recruit Diverse Staff**

- Write Attractive Job Descriptions
- Network and Market Positions Strategically

-

# Strategies to Hire and Grow

## **Employ New Techniques to Interview and Hire**

- Select and Train Diverse Interview Committees
- Check your Bias
- Use well articulated rubrics
- Use Scenarios that include and respect diverse candidates and students

# Interview Bias



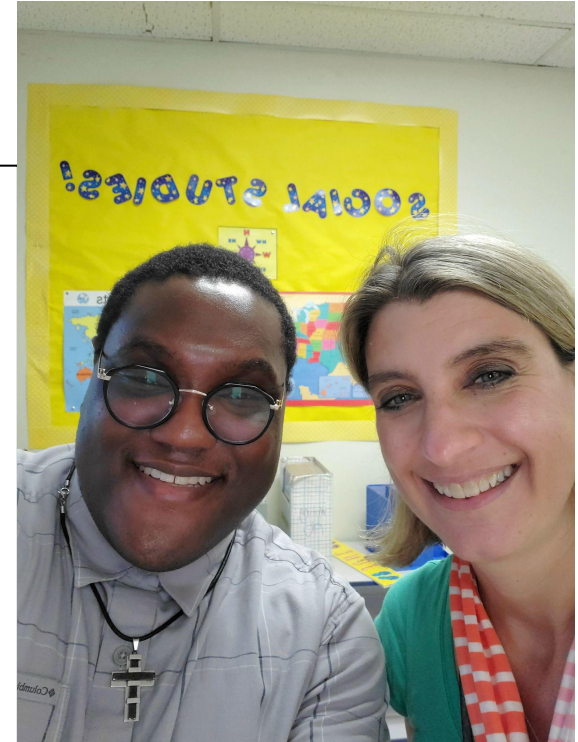
How does this  
resonate with you?

Has this happened to  
you?

How do you  
overcome this?

# Strategies to Hire and Grow

- Dedicated Mentor and Coaching Support
- Investing in Building Leadership
- Tailored Professional Development
- Articulate Paths for Advancement
- Professional Growth and Self-work in ABAR (anti-bias and anti racist practices)



# Creating Safe Spaces



*Our goal is to provide opportunities for our educators of color to share school experiences regarding race, culture, ethnicity, and systemic social change that creates educational equity.*

Affinity Groups - monthly gatherings in a casual and supportive environment help young teachers of color navigate the challenges of being in mostly white spaces (i.e. faculty).

# Be an Ally

“Authentic allyship is not about amplifying your own voice, but rather listening to the voices of people within that community and what they are saying. They need to be uplifted.”

– Graham Ball, 2021 J.D. candidate, Penn State Law



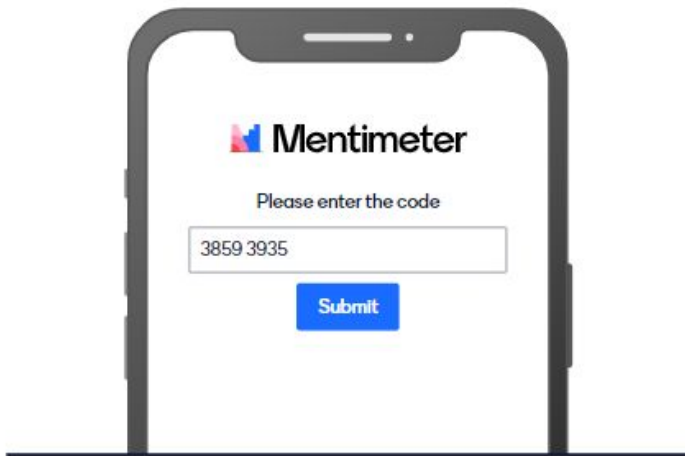
*Considering what was discussed today, what is a next step you can commit to within your sphere of influence?*

# QUESTIONS



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# Resources

[Brooking Institute Teacher Diversity and Student Success](#)

[CT TRP Executive Summary](#)

[Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color](#)

[Creating a District Plan to Increase the Racial, Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity of Your Educator Workforce: A Guidebook for Hir](#)

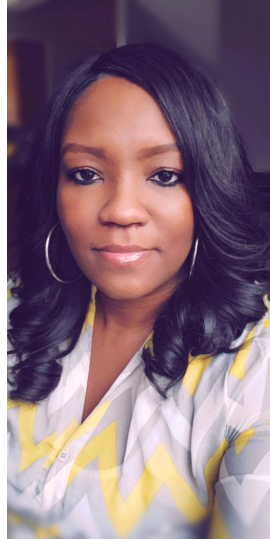
[Great Schools Partnership Equity-Pulse-Check](#)

[Why School Board Diversity Matters](#)

# Thank you for the journey today!



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