

# **LISTENING, ENGAGING, ADVOCATING AND PARTNERING (L.E.A.P):**

## **A FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGED EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

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# OUR POSITIONALITY



# The State of Educational Leadership

1

“Despite acknowledging these benefits, the educational leadership field has too often ignored the potential leadership contributions of youth, parents, and community members, particularly their potential to advance equity in our schools” (*Bertrand & Rodela, 2018, p. 10-11*).

2

“The role of principals also merits further study in understanding the joint work of districts, communities, particularly how principals engage and develop teacher as key players and leaders in such collaborations” (*Ishimaru, 2014, p. 212*).

3

“Educational leaders may benefit from a deeper understanding of community-based approaches to educational change that can challenge the notion that greater power for organized parents constitutes loss of power for district and school leaders” (*Ishimaru, 2014, p. 212*).

## COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEADERSHIP: A DEFINITION

**Community-Engaged Leadership-** leverages the expertise of students, families, and community members to critique forward current systems.

This leadership orientation expands traditional notions of community engaged leadership by **intentionally partnering with communities for school improvement efforts**; examples include addressing policies, structures, and practices that reproduce school-community inequities along the lines of race, class, gender, and ability (*Stanley & Gilzene, 2022*).



# INSTITUTIONAL FOCUSED TO COMMUNITY FOCUSED ENGAGEMENT

1

## INSTITUTIONAL FOCUSED ENGAGEMENT

practices led and initiated by  
school/district-based leaders to  
engage the community with the  
school and on the school's terms.

2

## COMMUNITY FOCUSED ENGAGEMENT

practices facilitated by the  
educational leader intended to  
share school decision-making  
processes and leadership actions  
with community members

# UNDERSTANDING PRAXIS OVER PRACTICE



## WHAT IS PRAXIS?

**Praxis** involves an active approach to community engagement which moves beyond passive parental engagement and school improvement plans; leaders actively engage in self-reflection, model reflection and necessary shifts in practice, and lead alongside the school community toward “new possibilities” (*DeMatthews, 2018, p.147*).

# THE BARROW HILL SCHOOL: A LEGACY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGED EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP



# FRAMEWORK

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# Precursor To L.E.A.P.

**1**

**Reflect on your identities, privileges, biases, and assumptions**

**2**

**Asset-based mindset**

- View communities as partners with valuable knowledge

**3**

**Decentering Whiteness**

- Center communities' own values
- Share power with communities

**4**

**Act on community input**

- Ignoring feedback breaks trust
- Institutional support

# LISTENING

## 1 ACCOUNTABLE

- Consider institutional support
- Center & amplify community perspectives & voices
- Hold meetings in community spaces

## 2 AGENTIC

- Recognize the capabilities and assets community members already have
- What is working well balances with identified needs
- Work with the community, not *for* the community

## 3 BIDIRECTIONAL

- Follow through is everything
- Communication through multiple modes and languages
- Share updates & share in the decision making (draft policies).
- Acknowledge the historical and present asymmetry of power

# ENGAGING

1

## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

- Proactive, reciprocal and ongoing communication about school-based processes
- Hiring staff that reflect the lived realities of the students, families, and community

2

## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- Being present in community-based affairs, events and understanding community context
- Connecting with families and communities on their terms
  - Report Card Deliveries

# ADVOCATING

## 1 CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

- Intentional focus on the intersection of community members' respective identities and institutional oppression
- Disrupt policies and practices that are dehumanizing and invisibilize identities of adult and youth community members

## 2 SELF-SUSTAINING ADVOCATING

- Community members are seen as arbiters of truth and knowledge
- Shift from high stakes testing to working on community hopes & needs

# PARTNERING

1

## SCHOOL AS A SPATIAL ASSET

Schools should operate as a hub for community

- Hosting community, cultural, civic and other non-school centric events
- Intentionally partnering with other local organizations (e.g., higher education, community centers, neighborhood associations)
- Co-building and co-sustaining community gardens and other community based supports

2

## COMMUNITY BASED PARTNERSHIPS

Students, families and community members should be involved in co-design and co-leadership of the school

- Co-evaluate school policy and hire new teachers
- Participatory budgeting
- Community based equity audits

# ASSET MAPPING

## DEFINITION

“An opportunity in geography perspective, low-opportunity neighborhoods of color simultaneously have both inequalities and assets, which challenges either/or conceptions of these spaces. Thinking about low-opportunity neighborhoods from this lens can more richly enhance our understanding about such places and provide useful knowledge to address concerns within them”  
*(Green, 2015, p.719).*



# ASSET MAPPING



## ACTIVITY

- Take a moment to visualize the geographic space where your school/district is situated. Think about the communities served by your school or district; think about the bus routes. Where are students and families located?
- Now, take about 5 minutes to identify and jot down the spatial assets in the community. Who is there? What is present? What are the opportunities?
- More specifically, how might these spatial assets/knowledges influence and/or improve the school/district context? Jot down your immediate thoughts next to the identified spatial asset.

# ASSET MAPPING REFLECTION

## Post-activity reflection:

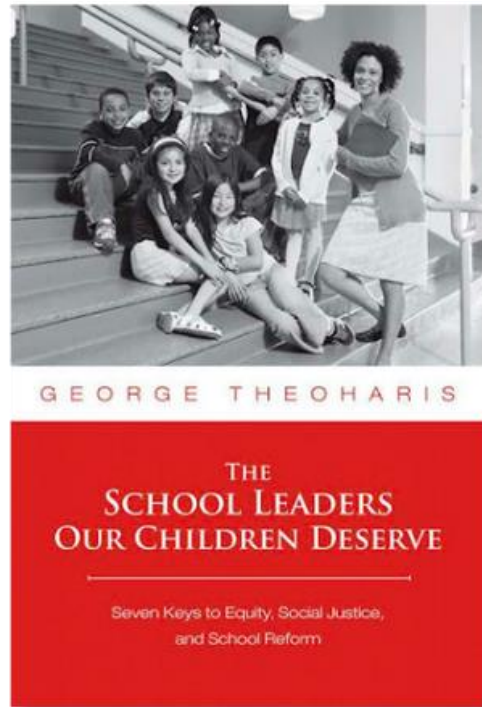
Turn and talk with a partner about any of these questions.

- *What was it like to map these spatial assets?*
- *How did you learn about these assets? Who did you learn from?*
- *What has limited your awareness of assets in your community?*
- *What will you do to continue building this map of community assets and work toward partnering with them?*

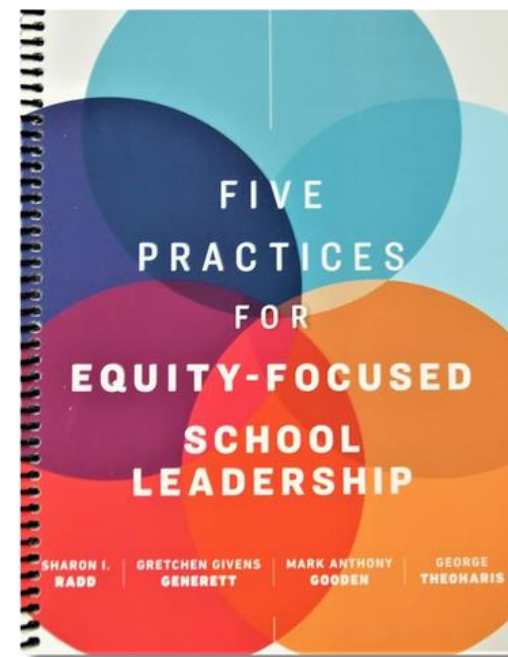


Let's  
discuss

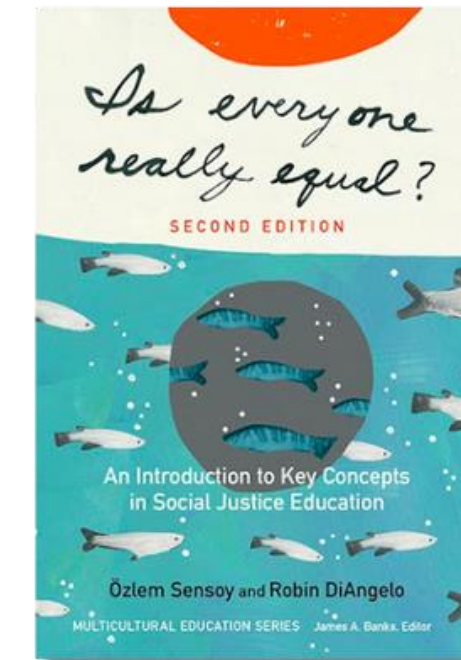
# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



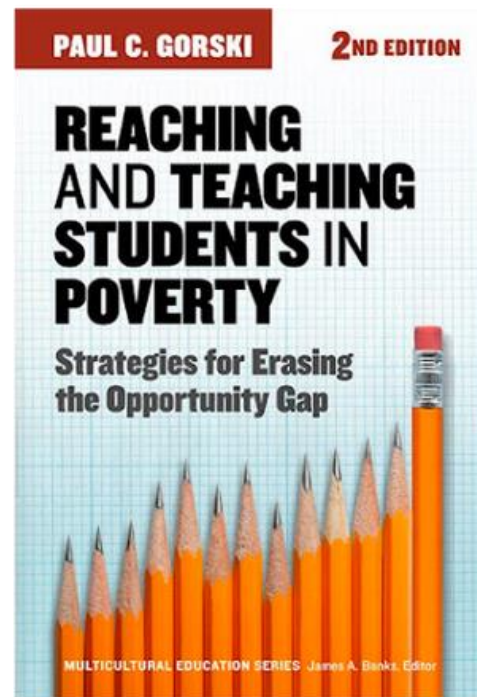
*The School Leaders Our Children Deserve: Seven Keys to Equity, Social Justice, and School Reform* by George Theoharis



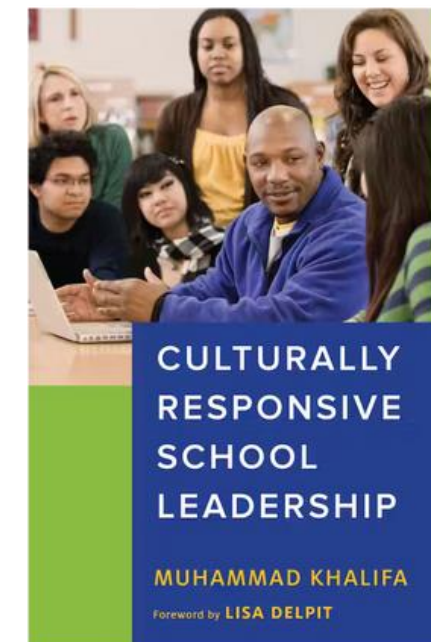
*Five Practices for Equity-Focused School Leadership* by Sharon I. Radd, Gretchen Givens Generett, Mark Anthony Gooden, & George Theoharis



*Is Everyone Really Equal?: An Introduction to Key Concepts in Social Justice Education (2nd Ed.)* by Özlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo



*Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty: Strategies for Erasing the Opportunity Gap (2nd Ed.)* by Paul C. Gorski



*Culturally Responsive School Leadership* by Muhammad Khalifa

# CLOSING DIALOGUE



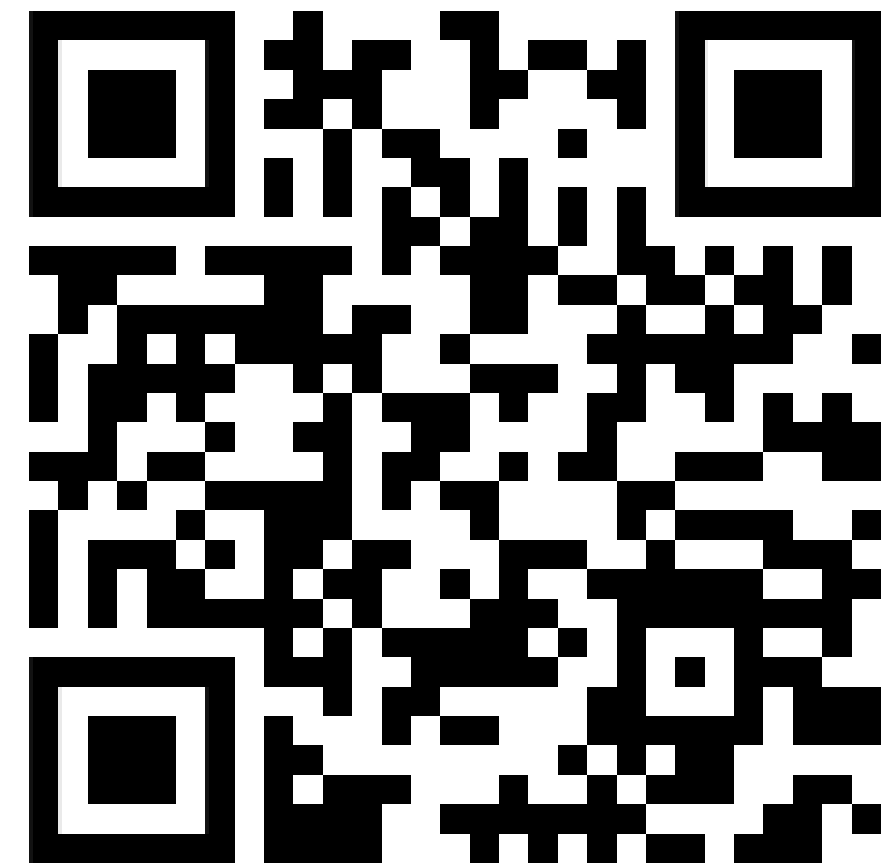
# THANK YOU

## ARTICLE SHARE

Article about the L.E.A.P. framework of community engaged leadership to be published in April in the journal *Phi Delta Kappa*

Enter your email address to...

- Receive an update when our article is published
- Ask a question about today's presentation



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