Webinar Presenters

- **Susan Mundry**, Senior Program Director, WestEd
- **Susan Villani**, Senior Program Associate, WestEd, Center for Education Equity at MAEC
- **Dawn Bentley, Ed.D.**, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, MA
- **Dana Labb**, Principal, Blanchard Memorial Elementary School, Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, MA
- **David Green**, Social Studies Department Chairperson, Acton-Boxborough Regional High School, Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, MA
- **Heather Haines**, K-6 Mathematics Curriculum Coordinator, Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, MA
Webinar Facilitators

**Nyla Bell**
Senior Education Equity Specialist
Center for Education Equity at MAEC

**Pamela Mac Dougall**
Research Assistant with Learning Innovations (LI)
WestEd
CENTER FOR EDUCATION EQUITY (CEE)

CEE is a project of MAEC, Inc., in partnership with WestEd and the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

CEE is one of four regional equity assistance centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Center for Education Equity (CEE) is committed to the sharing of information regarding issues of equity in education. References to any specific publication, person, or idea is for the information and convenience of the public and does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of CEE. The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (S004D110021). However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.
REGION I EQUITY ASSISTANCE CENTER
CENTER FOR EDUCATION EQUITY

CEE’s goals are to:

• Improve and sustain the systemic capacity of public education systems to address problems caused by segregation and inequities.

• Increase equitable educational opportunities for all students regardless of race, gender, religion, and national origin (English Learners).

Whom we serve:

• CEE provides technical assistance and training to states, districts, schools, and community-based organizations within Region I at the request of school boards and other responsible governmental agencies.
Exploring Equity Issues

CEE publishes a monthly Exploring Equity Issues digest that includes personal, practical, and research perspectives on an important topic related to education using a variety of formats.

Formats include:

- Equity Briefs
- Webinars
- The Practitioner Perspectives Blog
- Communities of Practice

Find them online
www.cee-maec.org/exploring-equity-issues
Webinar Etiquette

- Use the **Q&A box** if you have any questions.
- Use the **chat box** to share your comments or to engage other participants during the webinar.
- Complete a **brief survey** after the webinar.
- On the occasion when a website is referenced during the presentation, a link to the website may be posted in the chat box for you to copy and explore after the webinar concludes.
- **Closed captioning** services can be accessed using the box on the right hand side of your screen.
Goals for Today

Participants will learn:

• About processes and tools to use to identify equity issues and problems and generate effective solutions;

• How to access and use The Data Inquiry Guide for Exploring Equity Issues and Solutions that is available from the Center for Education Equity; and

• About the journey of a regional school district in Massachusetts that is using the CEE Data Inquiry Guide to examine data through an equity lens and act on their findings to improve equity outcomes for all students.
Making the Case for Using Data Inquiry with an Equity Lens

Better Serve All Students

- Strengthens capacity for problem identification and problem solving
- Deepens understanding of what is an equitable school and classroom
- Uses data, including student and family voices and other qualitative data to identify inequities that persist
- Presumes positive intentions
- Opens eyes to hidden inequities
- Builds ownership
Strengthen Capacity for Problem Solving

- **Data Teams work together using the Data Inquiry Process**
  - Identify potential issues or problems regarding student experiences and/or outcomes
  - Identify questions about the problems
  - Identify multiple sources of data to answer the questions and learn how school conditions may be contributing to the problem
  - Explore: what conditions that the school or district has some control or influence on can we change to improve student experiences and outcomes?
  - Set specific goals to address the problem
  - Create a plan and engage in a cycle of improvement as the plan is implemented
Deepens understanding of what is an equitable school and classroom

What are the practices one would see in an equitable school?

- What makes a school equitable?
- How equitable is our school?
- How do we know?
## Criteria for Assessing Equity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity Area</th>
<th>Sample Questions/Criteria</th>
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| **School Policy (9 criteria)**    | • Does the school/school system have a specific policy regarding educational equity?  
• Has the school developed an equity plan of action based on the policy, mission statement, and analysis of its current equity needs?                                                                                      |
| **School Organization/Administration (9 criteria)** | • Is data regularly collected, disaggregated, and analyzed in the following areas and by different ethnic groups?  
  ___ Course-level enrollment  
  ___ Grade point average/achievement scores  
  ___ Standardized test scores  
  ___ Student discipline, suspensions, expulsions  
  ___ Cross-cultural friction or harassment  
  ___ Participation in school activities and honors |
| **School Climate/Environment (10 criteria)** | • Do bulletin boards, displays, hall decorations, classrooms, and offices show males and females, members of varied racial or ethnic groups, and people with disabilities in a variety of roles?  
• Is the student code of conduct applied fairly and equitably?                                                                                  |
## Criteria for Assessing Equity

| Staff (12 criteria) | • Is the composition of the school staff representative of the racial/ethnic/gender/disability composition of the student body and larger school community?  
|                     | • Are all staff members familiar with the varied demographic groups |

| Assessment/Placement (5 criteria) | • Is all assessment data analyzed according to individual student progress as well as disaggregated patterns and outcomes by race, gender, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, and geographic location?  
|                                  | • Are all levels of classes, including special education, vocational |

| Professional Learning (11 criteria) | • Are relevant equity issues infused throughout all professional learning activities?  
|                                    | • Is professional learning delivered in ways which model techniques |

| Standards & Curriculum Development (13 criteria) | • Are all students held to the same standards?  
|                                                 | • Does the curriculum suggest ways to examine the perspectives and |
Uses data, including student and family voices and other qualitative data to identify inequities that persist

**Multiple Data Sources**

- Student performance data
- Attendance data
- Family and Student Surveys
- Teacher reflection data
- School Finance: Do all schools have adequate funding? Do funds flow to schools according to need?
- Access to courses: Who takes high-level curriculum e.g., high-level math from Algebra I to calculus, and science from biology to physics?
Uses data, including student and family voices and other qualitative data, to identify inequities that persist.

Multiple Data Sources

- Workforce data
- Discipline data: How do overall discipline rates compare to other districts?
Improved Student Outcomes

- Schoolwide team inquiry practices are associated with improved student learning outcomes. (Copeland, 2003; Gallimore et al., 2009)

- Sustained inquiry leads team participants to explore underlying assumptions, question current practices, and revise their conceptions of teaching and learning over time (Achinstein, 2002; Stokes, 2001; Timperley, 2008).

- A Randomized Experimental Study of the Using Data Collaborative Inquiry model was shown to improve teachers’ outcomes after one year, and improves the outcomes of their students in high-needs schools after two years. (Cavalluzzo et al., 2014.)
Data Inquiry Teams

• Presume positive intentions
• See and act on hidden inequities
• Build leadership and ownership for addressing inequities
Questions

Please type your questions in the Q&A box on the right hand-side panel.
About the Guide

A Data Inquiry Guide for Exploring Equity Issues and Solutions

Susan Villani
Lead Author
# About the Guide

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Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

Our **vision** is to provide high-quality educational opportunities that inspire a community of learners.

- WELLNESS
- EQUITY
- ENGAGEMENT

Our **mission** is to develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Team

Our vision is to provide high-quality educational opportunities that inspire a community of learners

WELLNESS • EQUITY • ENGAGEMENT

Our mission is to develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships

- **Dawn Bentley, Ed.D.**, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services
- **Dana Labb**, Principal- Blanchard Memorial School
- **David Green**, Social Studies Dept. Chairperson, Acton-Boxborough RHS
- **Heather Haines**, K-6 Mathematics Curriculum Coordinator
Tell us about your district demographics.
**District Demographics (2017-18)**

**Enrollment:** 5600 students PK-12

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>% of District</th>
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<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>% of District</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>L1 not English</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Learners</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
District Demographics (2017-18)

Average SAT Score: 1340

973 AP exams taken with a 96% pass rate

*U.S. News & World Report* ranked ABRHS 23rd in Massachusetts
What prompted your interest in this work?
ABRSD’s Interest in This Work

● District’s stated value of equity

● 2017-18 District annual goal: “Conduct an equity audit of the district, looking mindfully at equitable access for historically underserved populations”
How did your thinking shift from having CEE do an Equity Audit to forming a Data Inquiry Team, facilitated by CEE?
Our Thinking Over Time About This Work

- Initial Request: Equity Audit
- Local Capacity-Building
- Pilot A Data Inquiry Guide for Exploring Equity Issues & Solutions
- Facilitate districtwide Data Inquiry Team (DIT)
How did you form the Data Inquiry Team?
Data Inquiry Team Membership

- Reasonable number of members
- Educators and building leaders from each level
- Parents
- Teacher association leader
- Racial diversity
- Multiple hats
How did members of the DIT respond to the Data Inquiry Cycle and Data Dialogue with Acton-Boxborough data?
DIT respond to the Data Inquiry Cycle and Data Dialogue

- Long in coming
- Naming the issues
- Safety to have difficult conversations
- Structure - Slows process down
- Predictions support investment in examining data
- Variety of participants focused on improvement
Are there examples of when using the Data Dialogue and thinking of possible root causes led to new insights for consideration?
Examples of how the Data Dialogue Led to New Insights

- Defining equity
- Our community- acknowledgment of a population shift
- Focus on things we can control
- Small steps to larger goal
How did using the Data Dialogue prompt the DIT’s thinking about equity or make you think differently?
How the Data Dialogue Influenced Our Thinking About Equity

- Surfaced biases
- Structure supported, meaningful conversations
- Value of predicting
- Inequitable outcomes
- Notices and wonders
- Strength-based vs. deficit approach
- “Studyable”
- Making this work part of our “fabric”
What worked well in doing the Data Dialogue?
Data Dialogue: What Worked

- Data as a third point
- Validate observations
- Greater safety over time

- A lot of stakeholders represented
- Norms - we take this seriously

- Leadership Retreat: Additional norms, two days
- Root cause analysis grounds work in solutions, not blame
Were there challenges in using the Data Dialogue process?
Data Dialogue: Challenges

- Root Cause Analysis - necessitates a singular focus
- Definition of equity
- Ambiguity of outcome - is that ok?
- True colors - are we ready?
- Data is scary - Embrace the discomfort
- Inaccurate observations
What ways has the work of the DIT last year been shared?
Ways Our DIT’s Work Has Been Shared

● School Leadership Team (SLT)
● Proposed annual district goals:
  ○ Increase the diversity of our educator workforce
  ○ Develop greater capacity and consistency among and between evaluators to focus on Standard 2: Teaching All Students from the Massachusetts’ Educator Evaluation Rubric
● Evaluator Calibration Exercise for High-Quality Feedback
What are plans for future work of the Data Inquiry Team?
Future DIT Work

- **Continued capacity-building** with Data Dialogue Process
- **Stakeholder survey** on homework policies and practices through equity lens
- **Review existing practices** in each building around family contributions to schools and learning
What advice would you have for people beginning this process using *A Data Inquiry Guide for Exploring Equity Issues and Solutions*?
Advice for Districts Starting This Process

● Getting to know students takes work! We can’t always be implementing.
● Culture breeds climate, climate breeds culture.

● What is “equity”?
● Slow down... listen
● Your WHY
Please type your questions in the Q&A box on the right hand-side panel.
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Susan Villani
Senior Program Associate at WestEd; lead author of CEE’s Data Inquiry Guide for Exploring Equity Issues and Solutions
svillani@wested.org
781-481-1112

Get in touch with CEE
Susan Shaffer, Executive Director, 301-657-7741 x111, sshaffer@maec.org

www.maec.org  @maec4ed  @MidAtlanticEquityConsortium
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