



An Equity-Focused Approach to TSI/ATSI School Improvement

Lunch and Learn Highlights – January 12, 2021

Each month, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the Region 11 Comprehensive Center are hosting interactive, content-focused sessions as a part of the year-long “An Equity-Focused Approach to TSI/ATSI School Improvement” Virtual Learning Communities. Following each session, a Lunch and Learn is hosted where colleagues participating in the Learning Communities network continue the conversations from the previous content session.

In the December Learning Community session, Heather Krause, Datassist founder and head of the [We All Count](#) project, shared her Data Equity Framework for considering the ways that our biases, assumptions, and worldviews may unknowingly influence how we examine data. During the Lunch and Learn held on January 12, we engaged in two activities.

Activity 1. The Perspective Microscope

The purpose of the perspective microscope activity is to identify perspectives, motivations, and data sources for school improvement using focus questions shared in the “Understanding Data” Learning Community session (September). One question examined was: *What is the relationship between in-person attendance and remote learning with regard to learning outcomes for students with disabilities?*

- We began by exploring whose perspectives were being considered with the focus question. A list of stakeholders was generated including teachers, principals, students, families, and school boards. Next, we considered the motivations the stakeholders would have for answering the focus questions such as providing additional resources and supports to schools, families, and students; having a better understanding of the differences between in-person and remote learning; and learning more about available teacher evaluation models. Last, data sources for exploring the focus questions were identified (e.g., assessments, perceptual data, and school processes). This activity enabled us to gain a better understanding of the way perceptions may shift depending on whose viewpoint is being considered.

Activity 2. Fitting the Puzzle Pieces

We looked at sample school improvement questions and considered whether the questions place the onus on our student subgroups to “fit the puzzle pieces” or if the questions should be revised to reflect a more asset-driven approach. For example, we considered the question: *How can we get our English learners who aren't on track for proficiency to perform as well as our English learners who are on track through our current service delivery model?*

- We determined the assumption was that the delivery model is working well and that the students not on track need to change. The suggestion was to reframe with the emphasis on whether the systems and processes we have in place ensure success for all English learners (e.g., proficiency or growth in proficiency): *Are the processes and supports with the current service delivery model supporting the academic growth of English learners?* One participant shared a relevant quote from Dr. Ron Hanson, a Nebraska leader, “100% proficiency is the target and continuous improvement is the goal.”

Participants shared two resources they use to support student growth and reduce learning gaps:

- » [NWEA's MAP Growth Goal Explorer](#) tool for identifying meaningful and realistic academic goals.
- » [“How Talented Low-income Kids are Left Behind”](#) conversation starter on education gaps for gifted students who are also economically disadvantaged.