Improvement Networks for Equity Reflection Tool

About the Improvement Networks for Equity Reflection Tool:

This reflection tool was created within the Building Equitable Learning Environments (BELE) Network's Improvement Network for Equity Inquiry Group (IN4E), co-facilitated by Shift Results and the National Equity Project.

It was designed to help network teams seeking to intentionally promote equity and avoid reproducing oppressive structures to do the following:

a) reflect on and celebrate the strengths of their network and

b) identify opportunities to revisit, strengthen and improve.

These reflections are intended to serve as a starting point for conversations with your wider community, and as a tool to prioritize areas of learning.

The categories in this reflection tool highlight six dimensions we seek to develop in a thriving improvement network operating with equity at its core. Please note that not all questions will be relevant for all improvement networks/ organizations. If a question feels like it is not relevant to your context, please feel free to skip it. If you feel stuck on one dimension or question, move on and come back to it at another time.

Instructions:

1) First, please complete the assessment below individually (approximately 30 minutes). Each person on your team will have different views into the different dimensions of your organization/ network. The assessment scale ranges from:

> 1 = Not on our radar

> 2 = Awareness: We are conscious of the need to address this in our network

> 3 = Exploring: We are actively reviewing approaches to address this in our network

> 4 = Experimenting: We are testing approaches to address this in our network

> 5 = Established: We have this in place and it functions well

It's okay if you don't know the answer to something or it isn't relevant to your network/ organization. If this is the case, note your questions for your team discussion, and skip that question or dimension.

It is important to remember that responses to these questions are not meant to be used to evaluate or judge individuals, or the improvement networks they support. This tool is meant to identify areas that could be further developed and strengthened in how the improvement network functions.

2) When you are done, please reflect individually on where you see your network's strengths and where you would most like to see your network grow.

3) Discuss your reflections as a team (approximately 50 minutes).   The real value in this activity is the conversation, not the number.   Rather than taking the average, please take the time to discuss each other's perspectives and agree on value that best represents the current state of your network. Some suggested discussion questions are:
- Where are your responses similar? Where are the greatest differences in experience/understanding?
- What would you most like to improve about your improvement network?

Network Dimension: 1. Shared Purpose	Current Reflection				
	1-Not on our radar	2-Awareness	3-Exploring	4-Experimenting	5-Established
Our network has a clear and articulated equity imperative statement and/or set of equity goals to which we have committed to making progress.					
Our network teams feel shared responsibility for collective success toward our shared purpose/ aims.					
Aims are set in collaboration with those that are involved or impacted (e.g. teachers, leaders, families, students, researchers).					
Our network coaches schools/districts to identify systems failures (changes in structures, practice, culture and/or policies) and to not frame problems as populations of students.					
Our network regularly re-visits our shared purpose/ aims to ensure alignment with data, experience and impact.					
Notes about priorities and opportunities for our improvement network:					

Network Dimension: 2. Community Partnership and Leadership	Current Reflection				
	1-Not on our radar	2-Awareness	3-Exploring	4-Experimenting	5-Established
Our network has a clear commitment to partnering with students and families.					
Our network has an established system to orient students and families to continuous quality improvement work.					
Our network ensures that those experiencing inequities inform priorities and co-design changes.					
There are opportunities for students, families, and community members to lead in our network.					
Our network creates opportunities for student and family leaders to meet and learn from each others' experiences.					

Notes about priorities and opportunities for our improvement network:

Network Dimension: 3. Our School Support Organization Staffing	Current Reflection				
	1-Not on our radar	2-Awareness	3-Exploring	4-Experimenting	5-Established
Our staff have a shared understanding and language for how the history and predominance of white supremacy, systemic oppression and structural racialization contribute to current inequities we are working to address.					
Our staff understand and use continuous quality improvement methods.					
We have dedicated staffing and time to manage continuous quality improvement in our organization.					

Notes about priorities and opportunities for our improvement network:

Network Dimension: 4. Network Leadership and Governance	Current Reflection				
	1-Not on our radar	2-Awareness	3-Exploring	4-Experimenting	5-Established
Network participants feel ownership of our network. There are structures for participants to suggest and lead improvements.					
Decision-making and leadership is distributed across network members.					
Participants (individuals or teams) that have demonstrated results have opportunities to grow into leadership roles in our network.					
Our network has diverse leadership that represents those that are doing or impacted by our work in schools.					
Our network has transparent decision making that fosters trust and shared commitment.					
Notes about priorities and opportunities for our improvement network:					

Network Dimension: 5. Innovation and Contextualization of Change	Current Reflection				
	1-Not on our radar	2-Awareness	3-Exploring	4-Experimenting	5-Established
Our network prioritizes practices that resonate with our community and/or shown to be effective in a relevant context.					
School/ district teams in our network have the skills to innovate, contextualize and manage change.					
Our network has a system to identify "bright spots" among individuals and teams. Our network supports them to lead and mentor others.					
Schools/ districts in our network can connect across organizational or geographic boundaries to share information with each other.					
Our network creates opportunities for schools/ districts to teach each other (eg: 50%+ of convening agenda led by participants).					
Schools/ districts in our network share successes and failures with each other.					
Schools / districts in our network understand which communities, students and/or families are least well served. We set targeted goals and monitor how well our changes serve them.					
Notes about priorities and opportunities for our improvement network:					

Network Dimension: 6. Data Sharing and Reporting	Current Reflection				
	1-Not on our radar	2-Awareness	3-Exploring	4-Experimenting	5-Established
Our network routinely engages in equity analyses to determine the extent to which our network practices and culture reproduce inequity or contribute to greater equity.					
Our network collects and reviews school/ district data regularly (at least monthly).					
Our network provides coaching to teams to interpret and use their data for improvement.					
Data agreements are in place to facilitate transparent data sharing among schools / districts in our network.					
Our network has mechanisms in place for school/ district teams to capture and share qualitative learning at least monthly.					
Our network members are supported to regularly disaggregate data to analyze who is being served, make corrections and/or share success.					
Our network shares data and learning with the students, families and communities served.					

Notes about priorities and opportunities for our improvement network:

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Building Equitable Learning Environments Network

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Acknowledgements:

This assessment tool is a work in progress to serve as a starting place for conversations and sharing in the Improvement Networks for Equity (IN4E) Inquiry Group. This draft tool draws on knowledge and experience from Shift-Results and The National Equity Project, as well as the following resources:

- The National Equity Project. 2018. Equitable Organizational Practices.

- Shift. 2018. Improvement Design Intensive.

- Quintal, H. 2017. Equitable Data Collection Working Document. Teaching Excellence Network.

- The Health Foundation. 2014. Effective Networks for Improvement: Developing and Managing Effective Networks to Support Quality Improvement in Healthcare. Document can be downloaded for free here.

- Franco, L.M., D.R. Silimperi, T. Veldhuyzen van Zanten, C. MacAulay, K.Askov Zeribi, B. Bouchet, and L. Marquez. 2002. Sustaining Quality of Healthcare: Institutionalization of Quality Assurance. QA Monograph Series 2(1). Bethesda, MD: Published for the U.S.Agency for International Development (USAID) by the Quality Assurance Project. Document can be downloaded for free here.

Feedback and Learning:

Want to share how your team used this tool, or provide feedback? Please drop us a note at info@belenetwork.org!