



# Disproportionality Root Cause Analysis

## Level 0: Gathering Background Information



Developed by the Technical Assistance Partnership for Equity at Bank Street College of Education

*Last Updated: 2022-01-24*



New York State Education Department  
Office of Special Education  
**Educational Partnership**

# Disclaimer

The resources shown are designed to provide helpful information. Resources are provided for instructional use purposes only and do not constitute NYSED endorsement of any vendor, author, or other sources. To the best of our knowledge, the resources provided are true and complete.

# Our Team



# Today's Facilitators

# Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities



## Self-Advocacy

Students engage in self-advocacy and are involved in determining their own educational goals and plan.



## Family Partnership

Parents, and other family members, are engaged as meaningful partners in the special education process and the education of their child.



## Specially-Designed Instruction

Teachers design, provide, and assess the effectiveness of specially-designed instruction to provide students with disabilities with access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.



## Research-Based Instruction

Teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.



## Multi-tiered Support

Schools provide multi-tiered systems of behavioral and academic support.



## Inclusive Activities

Schools provide high-quality inclusive programs and activities.



## Transition Support

Schools provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities in career development and opportunities to participate in work-based learning.



# Learning Objectives

- Connect previous disproportionality work to current priorities and efforts within the district/school.
- Explore the root causes of disproportionality in disciplinary actions and special education services.
- Understand the initial practice and policy shifts that can contribute to successful and sustainable outcomes for students.

# Norms and Community Agreements

- Participate to the Best of Your Abilities
- Speak your truth- Use “I” statements
- Ask clarifying questions and provide feedback
- Listen with respect
- Honor Confidentiality (What’s said here stays here, what’s learned here leaves here)
- Expect and Accept a lack of closure
- Push your growing edge





Section 1

# Gathering Background Information

Looking Back to Move Forward

# ACTIVITY: Gathering Background Information

**PURPOSE:** To reflect upon previous efforts to address disproportionality through root cause analysis and action planning.

- Problem of practice
- Data points and activities
- Root cause(s)
- Shift(s) in beliefs, policies, procedures, practices
- Challenges and successes
- Next steps

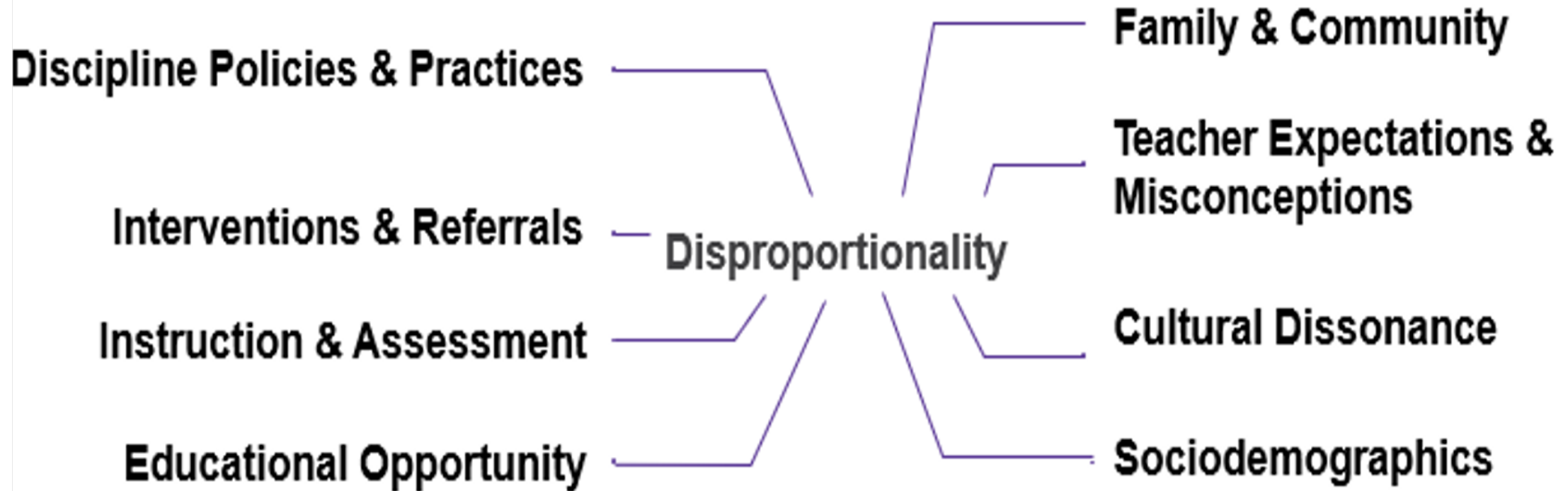
# TAKEAWAYS: Gathering Background Information

What stands out as the strongest factor(s) motivating your participation in the TSG?

- Problem of practice
- Data points and activities
- Root cause(s)
- Shift(s) in beliefs, policies, procedures, practices
- Challenges and successes
- Next steps

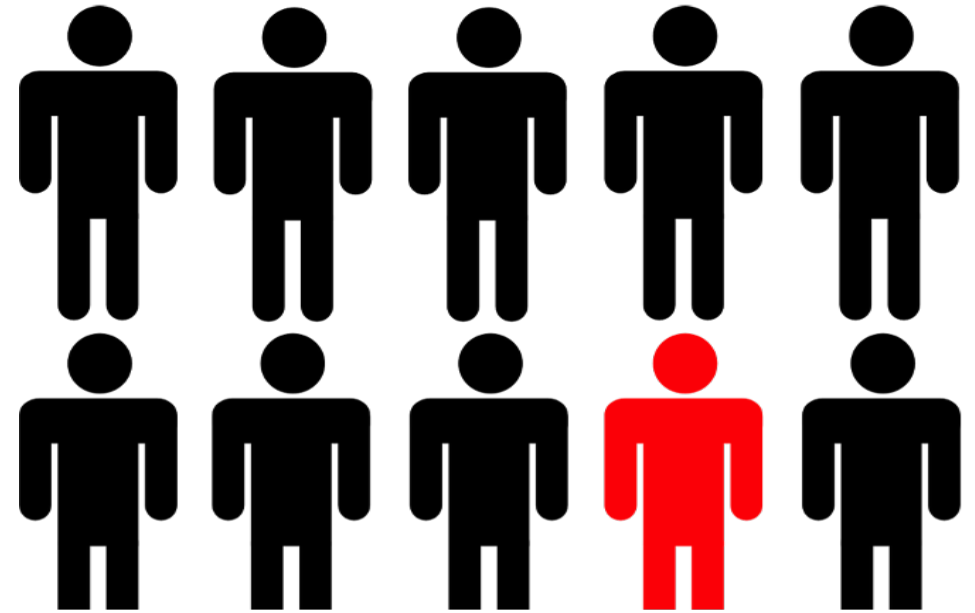
# Exploring the Root Causes of Disproportionality

# Disproportionality is Complex



# Sociodemographics

- Likelihood of identification for special education
- Demographic diversity as a predictor for student engagement and perceived ability

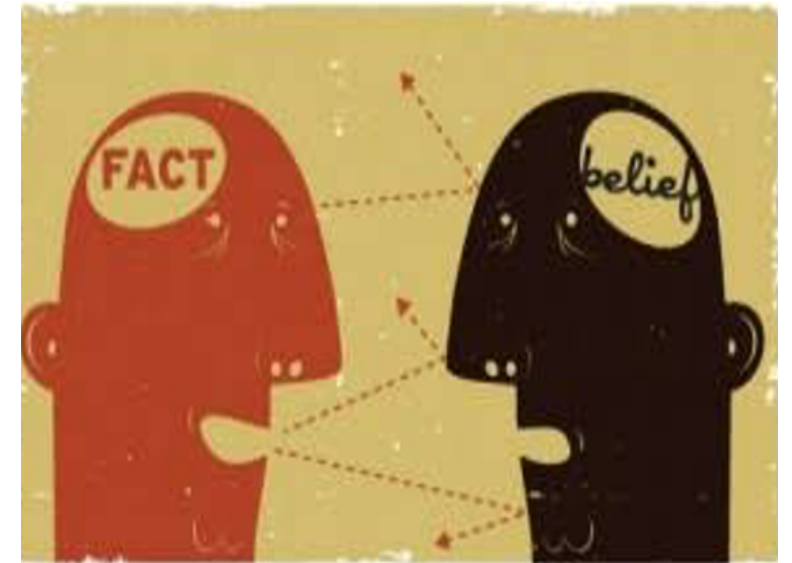


# Cultural Dissonance

“A sense of discord or disharmony, experienced by participants in cultural change where cultural differences are found to occur which are unexpected, unexplained, and therefore difficult to negotiate and which inhibit behavioral adaptation” (Macdonald, 1998).

Cultural Mismatch Theory:

When institutions promote the norms of the dominant mainstream culture, they create barriers to the performance of underrepresented groups.



# Teacher Expectations & Misconceptions

- Low expectations and preconceived notions
- Problematic beliefs about inclusion
  - “Traditional instruction”
  - “Inclusive schooling”



# Family & Community

Practitioners' interactions, as well as the quality of services and education they deliver, are profoundly influenced by students'/families' race and class.



# (Differential Access to) Educational Opportunity

- Legacies of racism, classism, and ableism
- Limited availability of resources and supports
- “Student outcomes” beyond the direct educational inputs

# Instruction & Assessment

- “Opportunity to learn”
  - Time
  - Content
  - Quality of classroom instruction
- Less rigorous instruction for Students With Disabilities, English Language Learners/Multi Language Learners, racial/ethnic minorities
- Inappropriate assessments



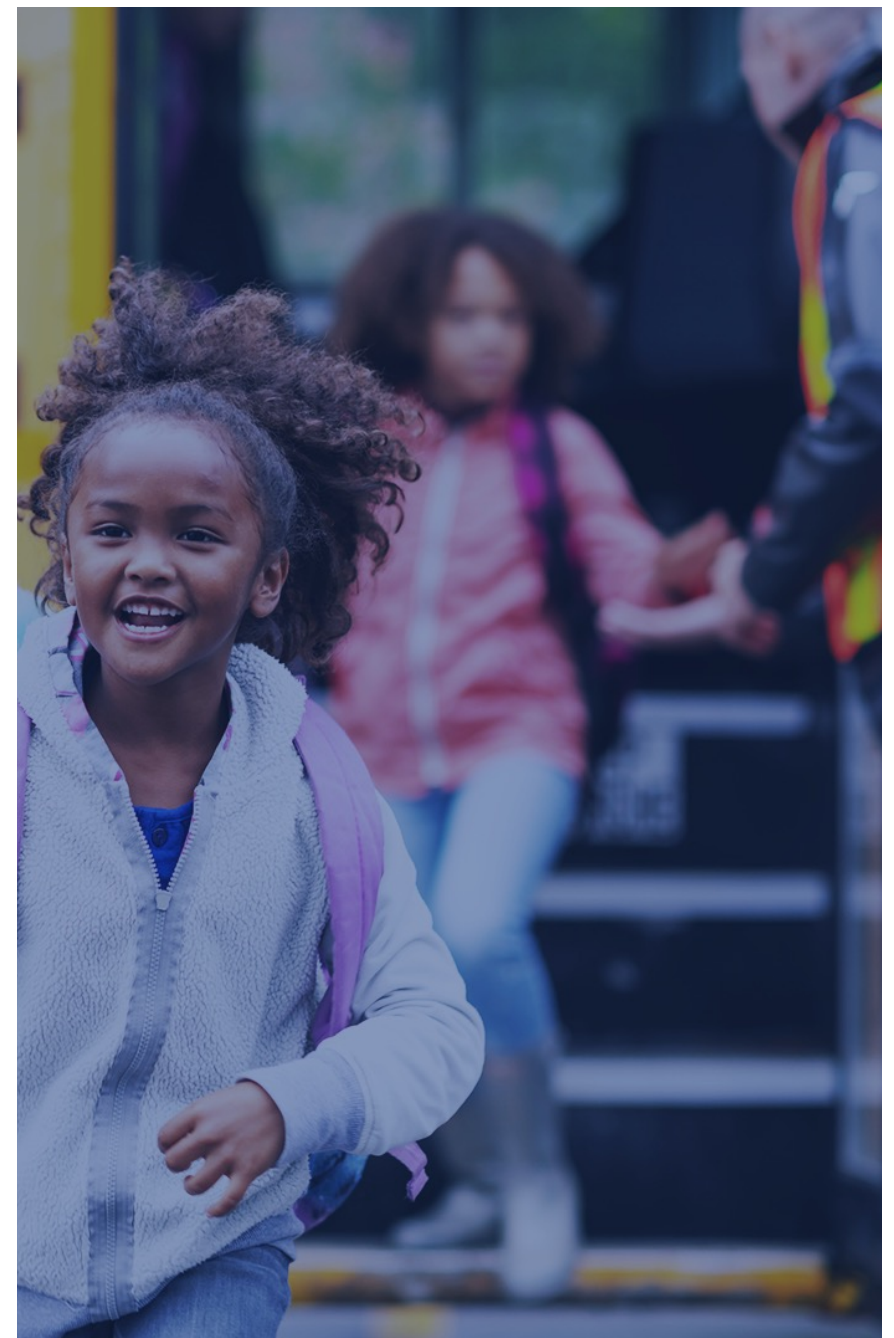
# Interventions & Referrals

---

- Cultural influence in perceptions of behaviors and needs
- Practitioners' discretion in referrals
- “The paradox of special education”

# Discipline Policies & Practices

- Limited trust in/attachment between the student and the school community
- Differing attitudes toward discipline at the administrator level
- (In)consistencies across schools



# Reflection: Exploring the Root Causes of Disproportionality



Connect Extend Challenge



# Pause & Summarize

What do you think is the primary factor contributing to disproportionality in your district or school?

# Contact Us



New York State  
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity