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Significant Disproportionality SUMMIT

Call to Action: Cultivating Robust Significant Disproportionality Stakeholder Teams

Significant Disproportionality Summit
November 9, 2021

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Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Cultivating robust significant disproportionality teams
- State sharing—West Virginia
- Preparing and sharing data with stakeholder teams
- State sharing—North Carolina

Introductions

- Amy Bitterman, IDC
- Fred Edora, IDC
- Angel Goodwine Batts, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
- Dreama McCoy, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
- Amber Stohr, West Virginia Department of Education

Cultivating Robust Significant Disproportionality Stakeholder Teams

Purpose of Significant Disproportionality Stakeholder Teams

- Convene individuals with diverse experiences and knowledge who have a vested interest in achieving positive change
- Gain insights into real problems to create a shared vision and goals
- Co-create action plans that reflect the vision and goals
- Review progress on implementation of improvement strategies

Who Should Be Part of the Team?

- District or school leader(s) with authority to make change
- Family members and students who represent the group of students experiencing the disproportionality
- General education and special education professionals who can provide and interpret the data
- Community partners with an interest in supporting the group of students experiencing the disproportionality

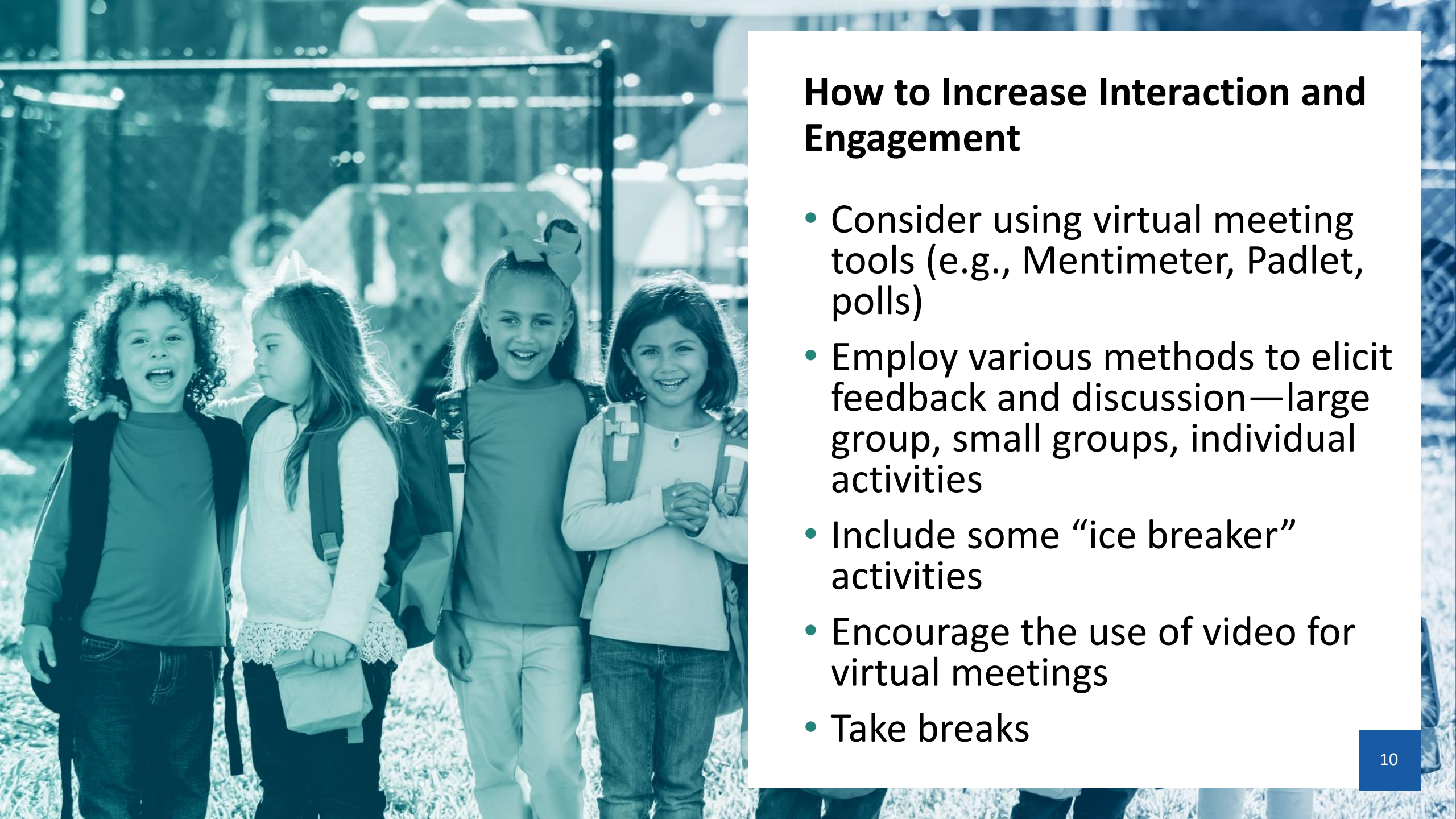
Strategies for Establishing Robust Teams

- Offer different dates, times, and formats for engagement
- Provide accommodations/incentives (e.g., stipends, reimbursements, childcare, food)
- Connect with other departments within the agency (e.g., English learners and Native education) and state groups (Parent Centers) to leverage relationships
- Go to the stakeholders to seek participants
- Share the importance and purpose of the team

Building a Positive and Effective Team Culture

- Support members to talk freely, without judgment, about the issues
- Encourage members to share personal thoughts and opinions
- Communicate through attitudes and behavior that each member is valued
- Create common terminology so that all members have a shared understanding
- Establish and enforce agreed-upon norms of behavior

WHEN YOU TALK, YOU ARE ONLY REPEATING WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW. BUT IF YOU LISTEN, YOU MAY LEARN SOMETHING NEW.
- DALAI LAMA
QUOTESPEDIA.ORG



How to Increase Interaction and Engagement

- Consider using virtual meeting tools (e.g., Mentimeter, Padlet, polls)
- Employ various methods to elicit feedback and discussion—large group, small groups, individual activities
- Include some “ice breaker” activities
- Encourage the use of video for virtual meetings
- Take breaks

The West Virginia Experience

West Virginia by the Numbers

- Total population < 2 million
  - 93.5% White, 3.6% Black, 1.8% Multiracial, 1.7% Hispanic/Latino
- Public school enrollment > 250,000
  - 89.3% White, 4.0% Black, 3.8% Multiracial, 2.0% Hispanic/Latino
- Students with disabilities < 45,000 (over 17% of enrollment)
  - 89.6% White, 4.5% Black, 3.7% Multiracial, 1.8% Hispanic/Latino
- 57 local education agencies (LEAs) (55 are county based)
  - SY2020 three LEAs identified as significantly disproportionate with three additional LEAs identified as at-risk

Data sources: US Census Bureau, West Virginia Department of Education (WV Education Information System & December 1 Child Count)

Setting the Stage for Identified and At-Risk LEAs

- Communication with all LEAs prior to identification
  - Emphasized the importance and impact of Significant Disproportionality in year+ leading up to identification
- Leveraged resources available to us
  - Sought TA from IDC, joined peer groups, utilized IDC and other state's resources
- Sent LEAs pre-work to review policies, procedures, and practices
- Convened first (and only) face-to-face meeting with the 6 LEAs
  - Requested IDC on-site TA
  - Recommended LEA team membership: Special education director, county treasurer (IDEA fiscal), curriculum director, general educator, school level administrator, special education teacher, school psychologist, data expert
  - One to two WVDE coordinators, who support these LEAs, sat with each team

WV's Stakeholder Teams

Motivated ☑

- 15% of IDEA funds set aside for CCEIS

Committed ☑

- Over two years to implement and spend funds

Analyze and use data ☑ ☒ ?

Perform root cause analysis ☑ ☒ ?

Develop action plans ☑ ☒ ?

Can stakeholder groups overcome deficits in these areas? What can we learn about the importance of diversity within groups?

Diversity Within LEA Teams

- Every team had special education director in attendance
- Most teams had district- and school-level representation
- Many teams had special and general educators
- Some teams had school administrators
- Some teams had school counselors/psychologists
- Some teams had gender diversity
- Few teams were ethnically diverse

Analyzing and Using Data

More diverse teams

- Were comfortable and confident in using their data
- Reviewed their data beforehand and identified specific schools for team membership
- Accepted their data and moved forward in root cause analysis faster

Less diverse teams

- Spent more time questioning validity of data
- Were not as likely to have reviewed their data to target specific schools
- Did not accept their data and took more time to move forward

Performing Root Cause Analysis

More diverse teams

- Tended to be more open in considering root causes
- Were more comfortable addressing hard issues
- Contributed more ideas about root causes and potential solutions
- Saw value in root cause analysis

Less diverse teams

- Took longer to drill down to root causes
- Were not as comfortable examining issues such as implicit bias
- Tended to focus on a particular group of students as area of contention
- Took longer to find value in root cause analysis

Developing Action Plans

More diverse teams

- Were more likely to have completed the pre-work at a deeper level
- Were more comfortable using data to inform decisionmaking
- Seemed to have more ideas re: alleviating significant disproportionality

Less diverse teams

- Pre-work of policy, procedure, and practice review was surface level
- Sometimes circled back to questioning data or focusing on one group of students
- Needed more assistance in developing appropriate action plans

Lessons Learned

- Diversity at all levels (role/responsibility, work location, gender, race/ethnicity, etc.) appeared to help teams work through this process faster and more efficiently
- Less diverse teams
  - Took additional time storming before norming
  - Required additional technical assistance
  - Struggled with topics such as implicit bias
  - Had difficulty in reconciling significant disproportionality data with their perception of the LEA's policy, procedure, and practice review
  - Found it more challenging to complete the root cause analysis

Ready, Set, COVID

- Additional support helped each LEA finalize action plans with appropriate budgets

THEN COVID-19 HAPPENED

- Some LEAs were able to move forward with portions of their Action Plans, but many activities had to be postponed or cancelled
- Two of the three identified LEAs were still significantly disproportionate in the following year
  - More LEAs were identified as at-risk

Other Challenges

- Difficult for some districts not to be identified due to lower enrollment and use of alternate risk ratio
- Data indicate gaps between policies, procedures, and practices
- Action plan implementation fidelity
- Diversity among educators not reflective of student diversity
- SEA, with limited staff, providing 2+ years of support to each identified LEA
- Continued impacts of COVID-19 (on data and implementation efforts)

Moving Forward

- In process of identifying and notifying districts now
- Tiered support to LEAs
  - Identified LEAs receive 2+ years of targeted support including quarterly meetings with the SEA
  - LEAs at-risk for two consecutive years receive targeted support from SEA
  - LEAs at-risk for one year receive notification and SEA monitors the data
- SEA will continue
  - Including IDC tools and adapting resources from other states in support efforts
  - Providing resources on WVDE website - https://wvde.us/special-education/significant-disproportionality/
  - Encouraging LEAs to form stakeholder teams with diversity
  - Building capacity among LEAs re: owning, analyzing, understanding, and making informed decisions using their data

Thank you!

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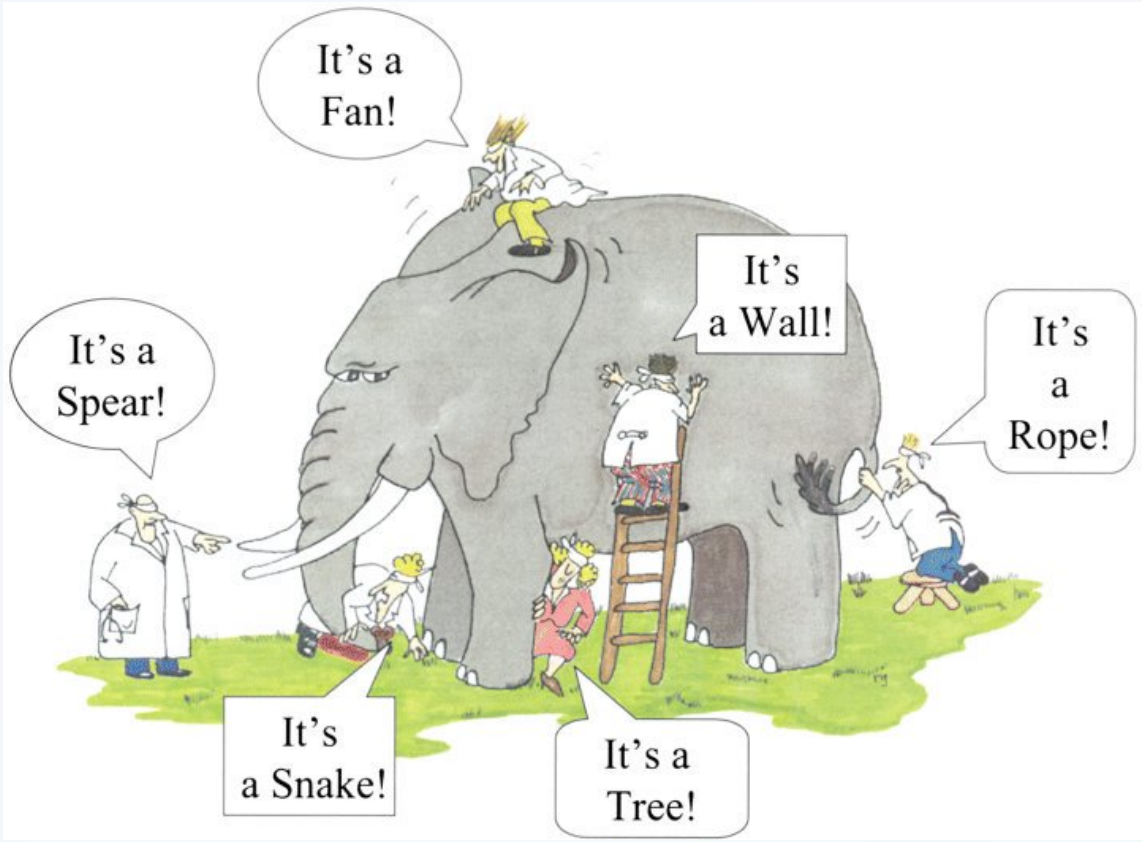
Special thanks to those who have been pivotal in this work:

Nancy O'Hara, Fred Edora, Amy Bitterman, Renee Ecckles-Hardy, and Traci Tuttle

Preparing and Sharing Data With Your Stakeholders

How Are You Seeing the Elephant in the Room?



Why Do You Need to Communicate Significant Disproportionality Data Well?

Calculations and formulas are difficult

Results can significantly affect funding

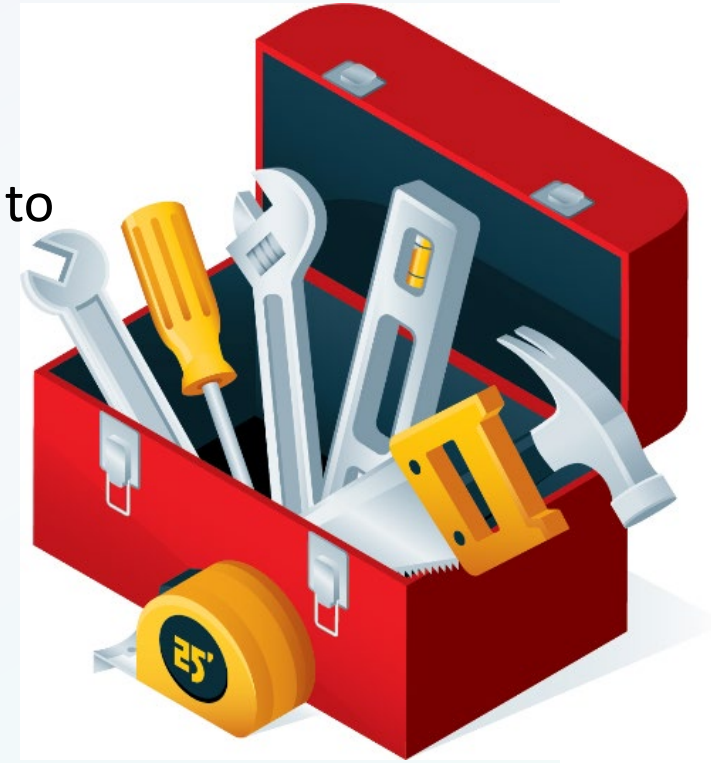
Substantial context is required for understanding

Decisionmakers must be able to use the data

Stakeholders have passion around equity

Preparing and Sharing Data With Your Stakeholders

- The key goal for sharing data is to **build understanding**
- To achieve this goal, data leaders must
  - Prepare and examine multiple sources of data
  - Carefully consider the types of data available, how they need to be broken down, and why those data are important to use
  - Have the data available in advance
  - Ensure all team members will have the opportunity to review and interpret the meaning of the data for themselves
  - Allow diverse perspectives on the data



Why Is It Important to Prepare Your Data Well?

- Data quality is a **high priority**
- Stakeholders need **accurate and understandable** information to provide meaningful feedback
  - Bad or inaccurate data = incorrect, incomplete, or illogical interpretations
  - Unprepared, complicated or irrelevant data = stakeholder frustration

Preparing the Data: What Do I Look for?

Consider the Following When Preparing Your Data

- Where are the gaps in your data?
- How does district data compare to the state data and/or school data compare to the district data?
- Where do you see differences by grade, gender, race/ethnicity, or other demographics?
- What other data may be related and available about the disproportionality?
- Who is my audience? How can I help them understand the answers to these questions?

Sharing the Data

Sharing the Data—Use the WH Questions

Who?	What?	When?	Where?	Why?	How?
• Who are my audiences? • What is their data comfort level? • Have they seen these data before? • Do they need context?	• What data do I need to share? • What data should I not share? • What data do I need to present to each audience? • Are the data related to Sig. Dispro.?	• How much time do I need to prepare the data? • When is it best to share these data? • When do decision-makers need these data?	• What meetings do I need to participate in? • Where are the best places to communicate these data? • Will I be sharing these data virtually and/or in person?	• Why does the audience need to know about the data? • Do these data address potential root causes? • Do I need to explain how the data are collected?	• How do I share the data (PPT, webinar, etc.)? • How will I receive feedback on the data? • What visual data displays do I need?

How Can Data Visualization Help?

- Many of us are visual learners
- Data visualization can make it easier to process and analyze complicated data
- Data visualization can make it easier to highlight important information
- A well-created data visualization can enhance understanding of the data and encourage meaningful discussion

Significant Disproportionality Data Visualization Strategies

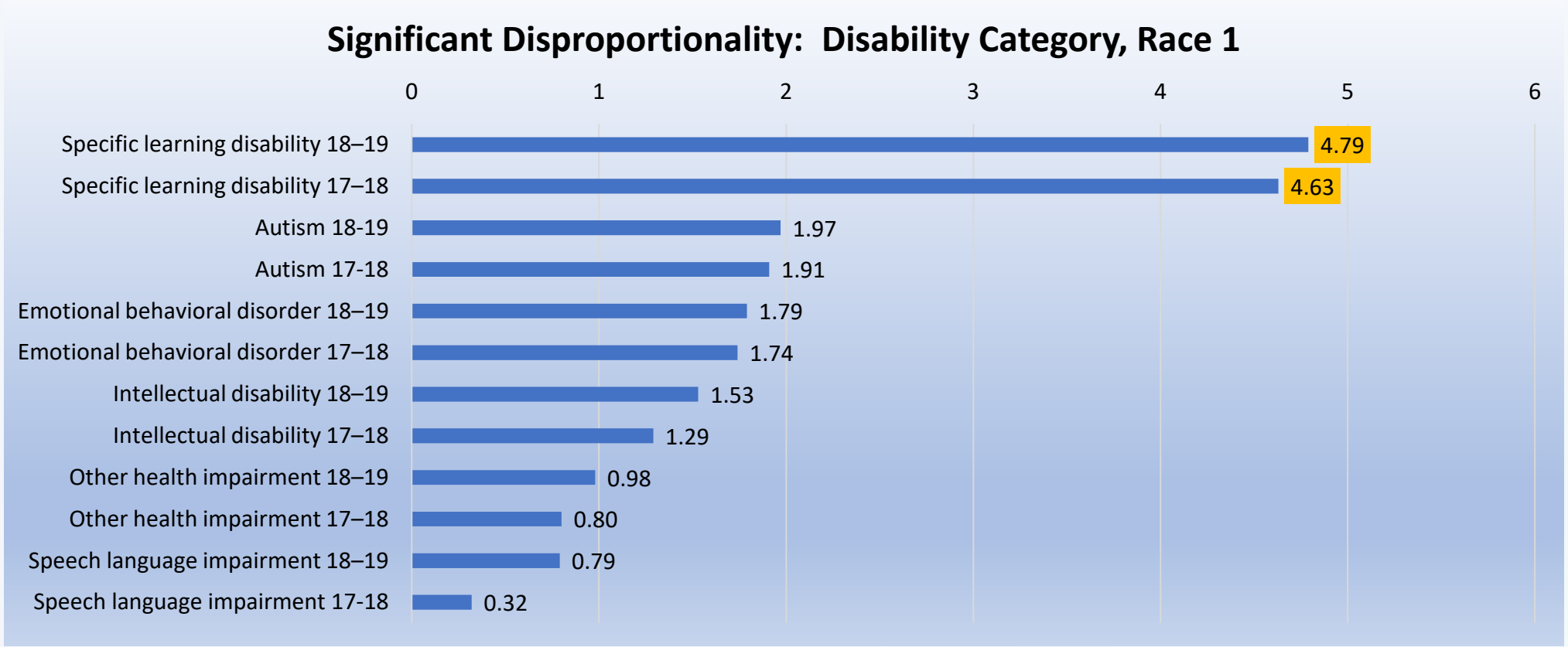
1. Providing context
2. Making comparisons
3. Seeing the standard
4. Revealing what is under the radar
5. Emphasizing extremes
6. Highlighting the point
7. Starting the discussion

An Example for Data Analysis

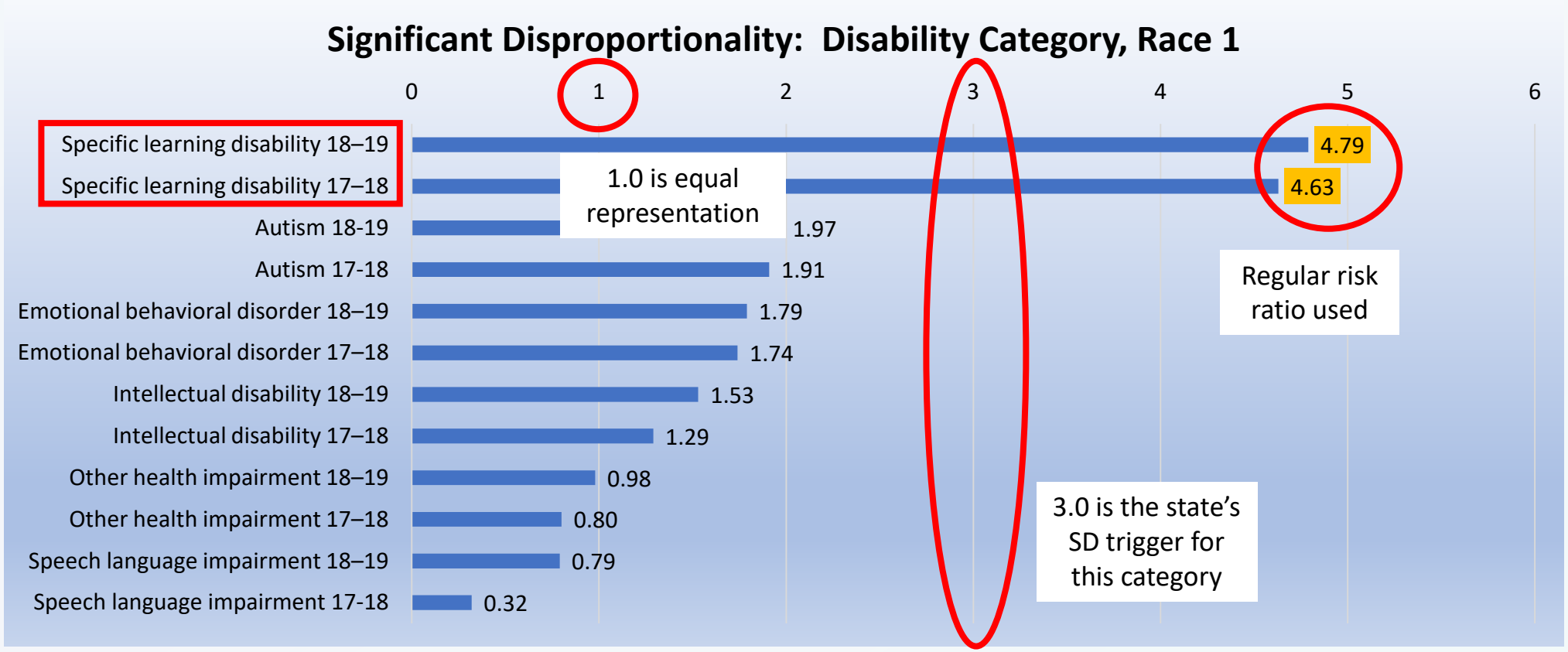
Disability and year	Race 1	Race 2
Specific learning disability 18–19	4.79	0.35
Specific learning disability 17–18	4.63	0.34
Autism 18–19	1.97	0.95
Autism 17–18	1.91	1.12
Emotional behavioral disorder 18–19	1.79	0.88
Emotional behavioral disorder 17–18	1.74	0.62
Intellectual disability 18–19	1.53	1.21
Intellectual disability 17–18	1.29	1.41
Other health impairment 18–19	0.98	0.67
Other health impairment 17–18	0.80	1.14
Speech language impairment 18–19	0.79	1.31
Speech language impairment 17–18	0.32	0.89

Disclaimer: Data used in this section is not real and not associated with any real state or district data.

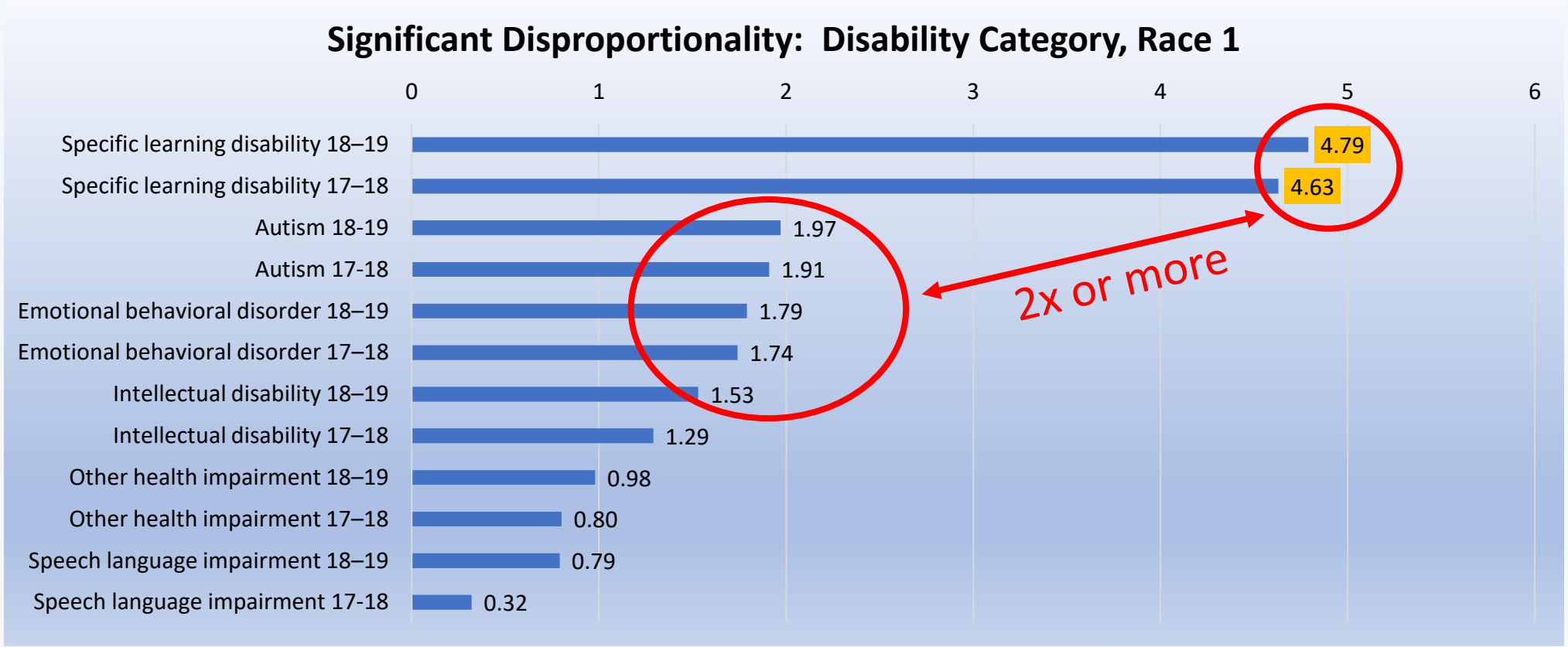
Using Data Visualization



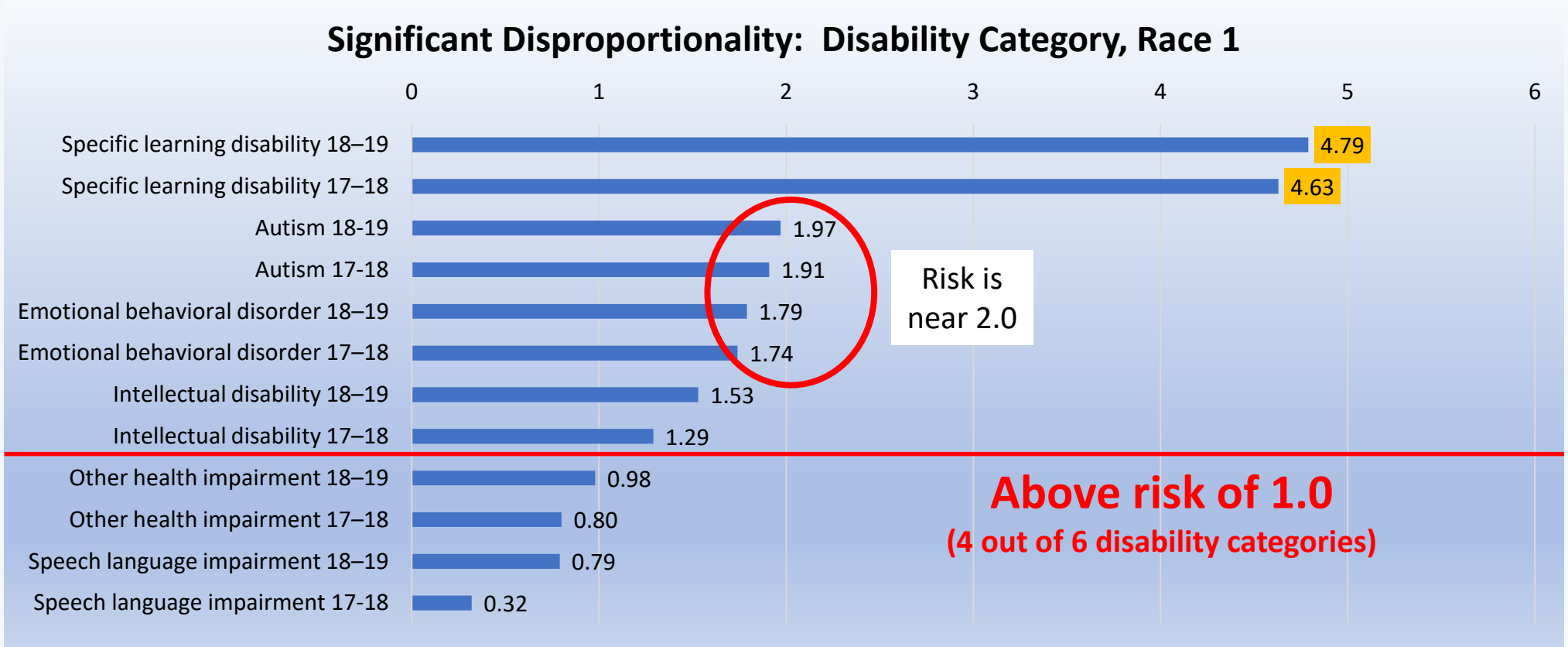
Using Data Visualization: Providing Context



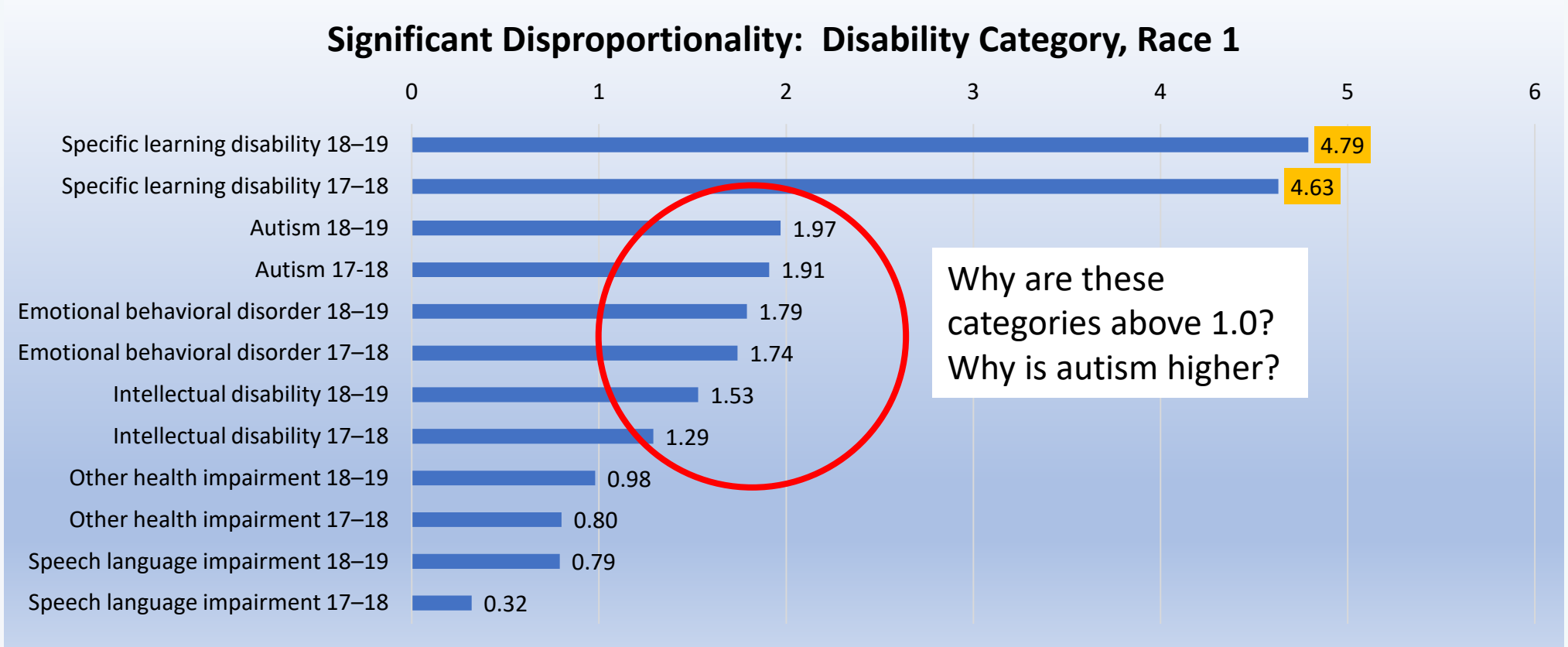
Using Data Visualization: Making Comparisons



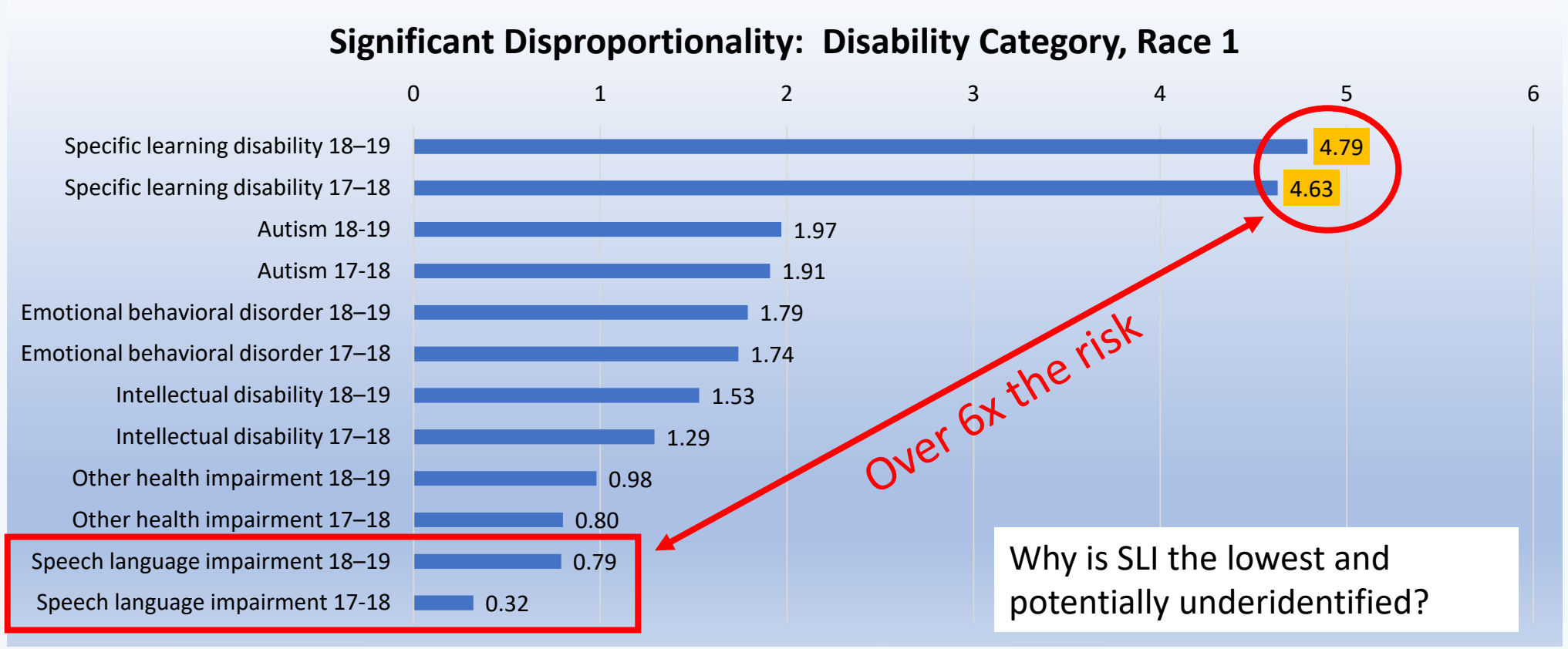
Using Data Visualization: Seeing the Standard



Using Data Visualization: Revealing What is Under the Radar

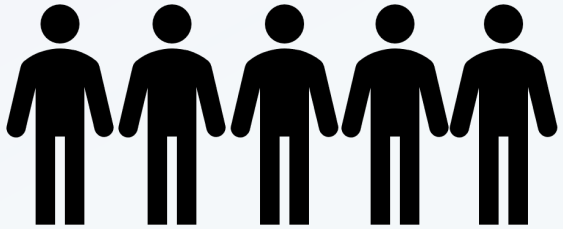


Using Data Visualization: Emphasizing Extremes



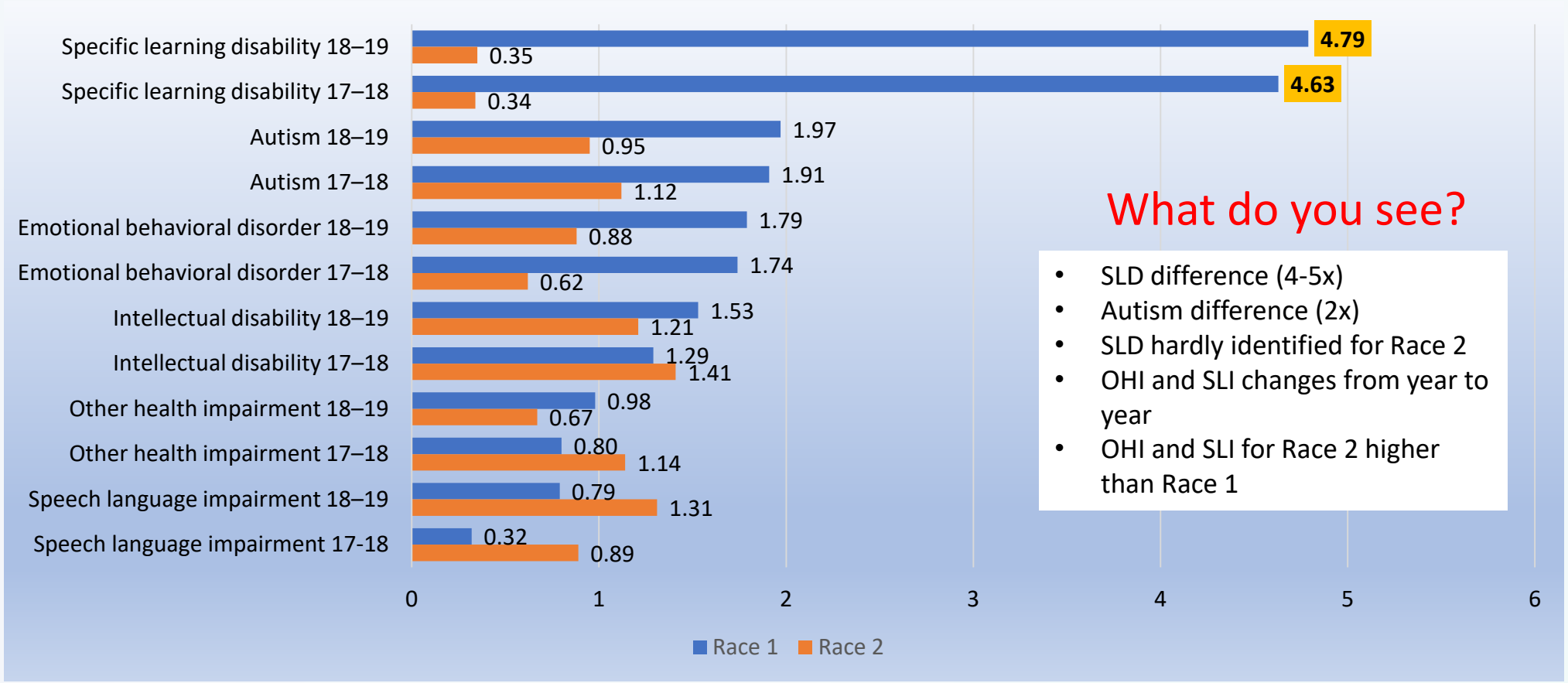
Using Data Visualization: Highlighting the Point

For every student identified with a specific learning disability in other racial categories in the district



Nearly five students are identified with a specific learning disability in this specific racial category in the district

Using Data Visualization: Starting the Discussion



What do you see?

- SLD difference (4-5x)
- Autism difference (2x)
- SLD hardly identified for Race 2
- OHI and SLI changes from year to year
- OHI and SLI for Race 2 higher than Race 1

Important Reminders

- Remember significant disproportionality is not (and should *never be*) “a numbers game”
- Take time to gather data and research to support conclusions
- Never assume; let the data speak for itself
- Encourage any and all questions
- Take COVID-19 into account

Additional Resources

- Success Gaps Toolkit: Prepare and Share Data About the Success Gaps
- *Part B Indicator Data Display Wizard*
- *IDEA Data Quality: Outlier Analyses Tools*
- *Interactive Public Reporting Engine*
- *Data Meeting Toolkit*

State Sharing—North Carolina

Leveraging NCMTSS to Eliminate Significant Disproportionality: Convening Stakeholder Groups

- Dreama McCoy, Ed.S

  NC Department of Public Instruction, Exceptional Children Division

- Angel Goodwine Batts, MS Ed

  NC Department of Public Instruction, MTSS

NC State Board of Education (SBE) Goal

1

1) Eliminate opportunity gaps by 2025

WHY

2

2) Improve school and district performance by 2025

WHAT/HOW

3

3) Increase educator preparedness to meet the needs of every student by 2025.

WHAT/HOW

Our Story

- Historically trained LEAs on data and fiscal responsibility
- LEAs self-selected their local teams
- NC State Board of Education (SBE) and NCDPI (2020)
  - Addressing racial inequities in special education (ARISE)

Learning for Equity: A Network for Solutions (LENS-NC)

- Building knowledge and understanding of ways to combat structural racism within the education system, with a focus on the identification of and support systems for students with learning differences
- Building educator understanding of equitable practices and learning environments that address bias and promote cultural responsiveness in the classroom
- Influencing systems to embrace and adopt policies and practices necessary for schools to reduce race and income disparities in educational outcomes among students with learning differences

WHY:

NC Data

- Total population > 10 million (White 70.6%, Black 22.2%, Hispanic 9.8%)
- Public school enrollment - 1,428,018 (White 47.7%, Black 25.1%, Hispanic 17.9%)
- Students with disabilities > 200,000 (White 43.8%, Black 30.3%, Hispanic 17.4%)
- 328 local education agencies - including 208 charter schools
- 10 districts identified as significantly disproportionate in 2020, 22 districts at risk for being on the list in 2021–2022 due to not making reasonable progress as defined in North Carolina's calculation of significant disproportionality

NC Significant Disproportionality Data

Category of significant disproportionality (2020–21)	Group impacted	Number of LEAs identified	Category of significant disproportionality Warning list	Group impacted	Number of LEAs identified
Identification	Black students	4	**Identification**	Black students: 38 Black students: 51 Black students: 29	2018–2019: 55 2019–2020: 68 2020–2021: 50
Placement	Black students	5	**Placement**	Black students: 2 Black students: 4 Black students: 1	2018–2019: 3 2019–2020: 6 2020–2021: 1
Total disciplinary removals	Black students	1	**Total disciplinary removals**	Black students: 29 Black students: 27 Black students: 34	2018–2019: 32 2019–2020: 31 2020–2021: 41

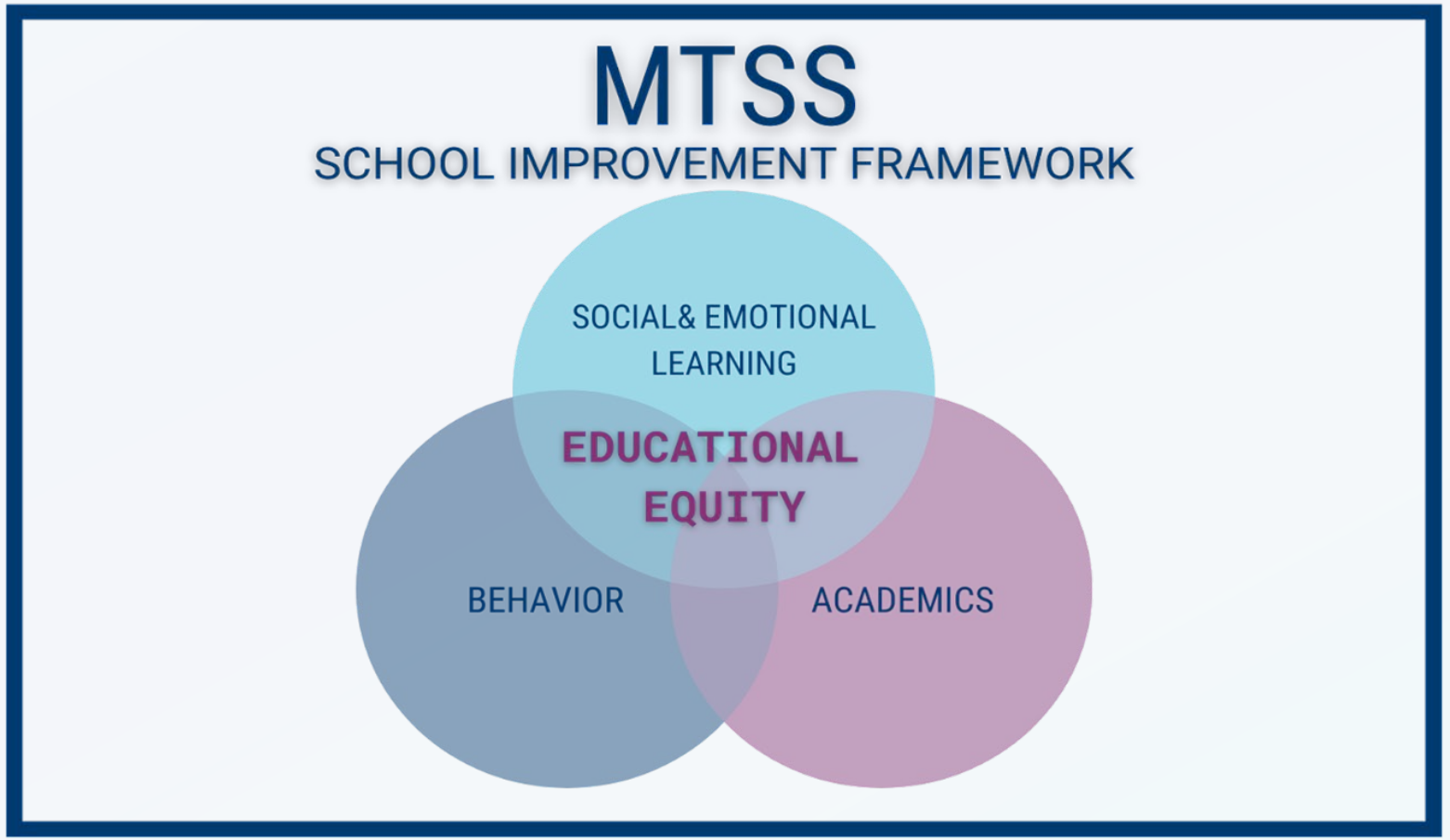
Teaming/Stakeholder Groups

Agency leadership	Makes agency connections with project goals, removes barriers, and provides feedback (deputy superintendents and assistant state superintendents)
Exceptional Children (EC) Division leadership	Reviews guidance, materials, and resources to support the efforts
Core team	Builds the capacity of our experts to support the division, state, and districts (MTSS, representation from each EC section)
Implementation team	Builds capacity of districts to increase knowledge and practices within the local context (select members from EC Division and MTSS)
EC Division/MTSS team	Builds capacity to have general support of the process (entire MTSS staff and EC Division staff)
District team	Local implementation (with key stakeholders)

Stakeholder Group or Team Could Include

- District Implementation MTSS team that includes district-level decisionmakers with expertise in the following areas:
  - Curriculum and instruction
  - Exceptional children
  - Student services
  - Educational equity
  - Data analysis

CORE and Intervention System (Supplemental)



Core

MTSS Framework

- Defined Curriculum, Instruction and Environment for
  - CORE
  - INTERVENTION SYSTEMS
- Regional Networking for MTSS Implementers
- NC SEL and Educational Equity Project (cohort 1 and cohort 2)
- Webinar series/provision of resources (in progress)

Supplemental (Core +)

- Virtual CoP (Quarterly)
- Significant Disproportionality (Comprehensive)
  - CCEIS Plan
  - Review of Policies, Practices, Procedures

Intensive (Core, Supplemental +)

- Coaching (Quarterly)
- Technical Assistance

Strategies to Support Problem Solving

Challenge	Strategy
Complex	Utilize existing teams and framework for problem solving
Race-centered topic	Explore and expand relevant resources to enhance local capacity
Emotional and personal	Establish team agreements for creating a safe space
Lack of clarity about defining the problem, contributing factors, and solutions	Utilize data relevant to the specific topic/issue
Implementation actions and outcomes not well defined	Utilize a team action plan

Challenges

- LEAs wanting this to be voluntary
- Effective action planning
- Consistent participation
- Racial climate/tension
- Lack of awareness regarding bias
- Competing initiatives/ priorities
- Virtual environment
- District not having an equity definition
- Evolving objectives for the work
- FTE/personnel

“The real voyage of discovery consists
not in seeking new landscapes,
but in having new eyes.”

—Marcel Proust

What “new eyes” might you want to develop?

Audience Questions and Discussion

Contact Us

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For More Information

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Project Officers: Richelle Davis and Rebecca Smith