



## **Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute's Cohort III Preparing for Impact:**

Using an implementation evaluation to guide Wisconsin Urban  
Leadership Institute Impact

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## **The Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute**

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The five largest Wisconsin school districts began working with the Urban League of Greater Madison and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to develop strategies for promoting equitable educational opportunities for students of color. Their efforts resulted in the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute. The Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute seeks to disrupt the status quo that promotes inequitable educational opportunities for students of color and thus bring about transformational change in Wisconsin. School administrator participants engage in professional learning, facilitated by 4AM Consulting, along with equity coaching provided by Cooperative Education Services Agency (CESA) 2. During the professional learning series, school administrators learn from activities, videos, and readings, engage in group discussions and role play, and identify an equity problem of practice within their schools to address with an action plan. School administrator equity problems of practice and action plans serve as the year's "capstone project," for which they present the results to other participants, for feedback, after the professional learning series. The primary outcomes intend for school leaders to

1. Increase their understanding of racism in education,
2. Examine their implicit biases,
3. Build a learning community,
4. Practice leading conversations about racial equity,
5. Learn to identify inequitable practices and policies and strategies for addressing them.

## Evaluation Questions

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The Office of Socially Responsible Evaluation in Education (SREED) at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee is conducting an ongoing, independent evaluation of the implementation and impact of the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute. The evaluation applies a formative, responsive approach to studying activities, participation, and impact during the 2020-21 initiative. The evaluation focused on the following questions throughout its work:

- Who participated in the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute?
- To what extent was the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute implemented with quality?
- To what extent was the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute implemented with fidelity to antiracist, culturally competent, community-centered principles?
- What did participants learn about equity? What impact did participants have on equity in their school?

We used several methods to explore these evaluation questions. These included: participant observation, surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Methods are described in more detail in Appendix I.

## Who participated in the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute?

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Initially, 27 school administrators signed up to participate in Cohort III of the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute. Ultimately, 23 completed the training, 18 principals and five assistant principals. Of these, 15 identified as White, one as Native American, one as Latinx, and six as Black. Ten identified as female and 13 as male. Participants were primarily veteran educators, with all but three having worked in Wisconsin public education for more than ten years. All but two had earned a master's degree in education.

### Participant selection

Principal participants were selected based on criteria set by the Department of Public Instruction. Schools represented in Cohort III needed to have been labeled as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) sites, or schools with an “overall performance (summary score) in the bottom 5% of all Title I-receiving schools in the state and/or they have a graduation rate below 67%”<sup>1</sup>. In line with prior evaluations of participant selection processes, many principal leaders expressed a lack of clarity regarding why they were selected for the program. Some perceived it as an indication of honor while others mistook it as a signal of reprimand. Turnover in Department of Public Instruction administration may have impacted the ways school administrators were informed of and initiated into the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute. To alleviate this possibility moving forward, DPI and district-level administrators will work hand-in-hand with 4AM facilitators to include descriptive, supporting information on participation in each principal's written agreement and onboarding.

### Racial representation in schools served by Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute participants

Regarding racial representation among teachers, in the three years prior to their administrator's participation in the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute, two schools had no teachers of color, an additional two schools had no Black/African American or Latinx teachers, and two additional schools had no Latinx teachers but did have some Black teachers. **Across most schools there existed a large teacher-student racial representation gap** (Table 1). The average school served by participants was served by 89% White teachers, while only serving 33% White

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<sup>1</sup> ESSA Categories – CSI, TSI, ATSI ([link](#))

students. Regarding teacher retention, historically 94% of teachers were retained in their school each year. Of the 18 schools with some Black teacher representation, 91% of Black teachers were retained each year. 94% of both White and Latinx teachers were retained each year.

Table 1: Racial representation in schools served by the 2021 Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute

	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Latinx percent of teachers	0.0%	16.2%	4.1%
White percent of teachers	76.3%	100.0%	89.1%
Black percent of teachers	0.0%	17.9%	4.4%
Latinx percent of students	4.7%	72.2%	26.4%
White percent of students	2.1%	74.7%	33.3%
Black percent of students	2.8%	79.5%	26.8%

### **Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute attendance**

Participants in the third cohort experienced one introductory session, eight learning sessions and a capstone presentation. Eleven of 23 administrators attended all nine sessions. Nine attended eight of nine. The other three attended five, six, and seven sessions, respectively. Participants were invited to attend both capstone presentation sessions but were only required for the one which they were to present.

## To what extent was the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute implemented with *quality*?

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**Nearly all participants felt the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute was organized and facilitated well.**

Monthly content was guided by one of two facilitators or the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute coach. Content presentation was followed by an activity that either required small group conversation or solo work.<sup>2</sup> Nearly all participants indicated in the end-of-program survey that the facilitation was clear and well organized (Figure 1). This was despite the challenge for facilitators to implement the Institute entirely online for the first time.

The overall sentiment that the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute was implemented as well as it could be given the circumstances is reflected in the following open-ended survey response:

*“The in-person learning is vital to this project. I know circumstance didn't allow for this. However, I wasn't able to make connections with others as they might not have been in my breakout sessions. The facilitators did a great job. I just feel face-to-face meetings work better.”*

Since the COVID-19 pandemic and state-facilitated budget constraints did not allow for the use of physical space, facilitators elected to host training sessions for about three hours instead of the six hours used in prior cohorts. This change recognizes the difficulties in each participant's sudden increased screen time as well as giving participants three more hours to work on their year-end capstone projects. Each three-hour session began with a Google slides presentation detailing daily goals and program objectives that facilitators updated as the Cohort's progressed.

As a response to the needs being presented by the pandemic, facilitators adjusted their practices after each session to better accommodate each participants' facilitation preferences. One facilitator mentions:

*[We facilitate] on the fly customization based upon feedback. [If we heard a theme, based upon their conversations, like [...] we're struggling to grow relationships with our teachers, we took a whole session [...] gave them opportunity to talk and brainstorm about what [...] what they're doing to build relationships with teachers.*

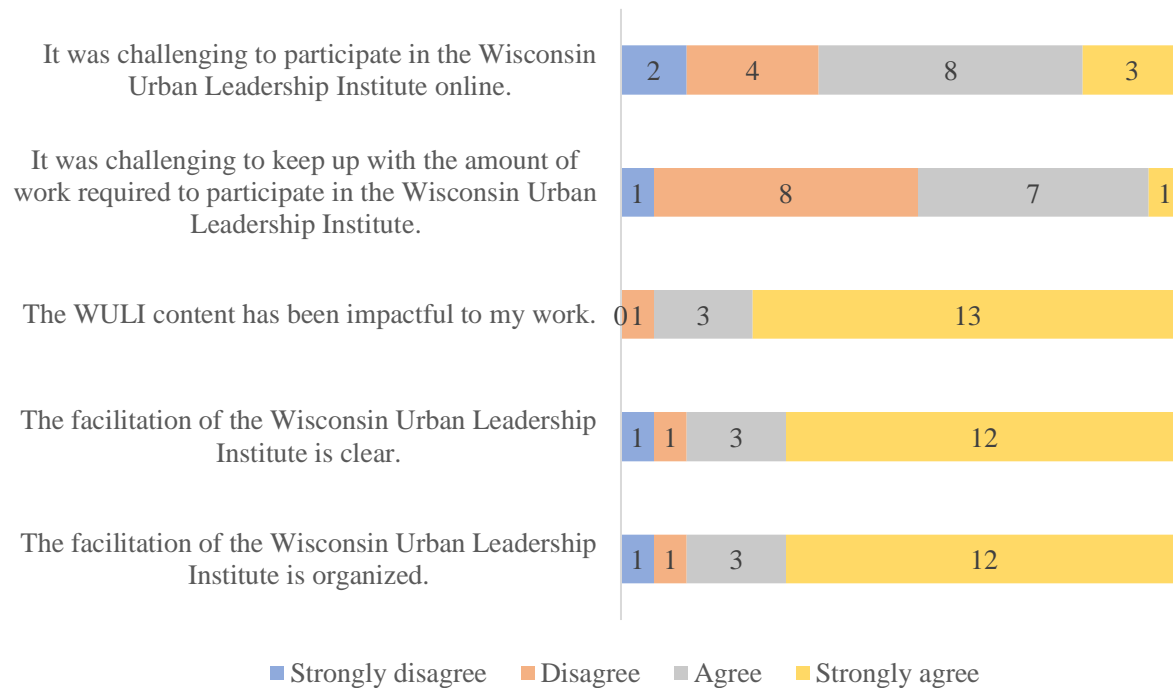
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<sup>2</sup> More detailed description of the program content and delivery is included in the next section.

Without in-person interactions, many participants cited not being able to involve themselves in the work of improving their practice fully, despite never having experienced an in-person Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute session to draw comparison. When asked, “Do you have anything to add for how the WULI project could be improved; or anything you need to continue improving racial equity next school year,” Seven of nine participants who provided suggestions indicated a preference for the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute moving back to an in-person format. Responses varied between commenting on the difficulties of using an online platform for the material while others commented on the virtual teaching strategies used by facilitators. When asked to respond to the question, “It was challenging to participate in the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute online,”, a majority (65%) agreed or strongly agreed. As one principal explains:

*“I thought everyone involved did a great job in the midst of a pandemic. I for one participated in any extra socializing events as well. I have no suggestions for improvement aside from getting back in person, but that was no one's fault.”*

Figure 1: Participant perceptions of Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute facilitation





**Some participants felt the required online work was difficult to complete.**

Facilitators adjusted the time frame for the program to adjust for workload and online fatigue. Prior to Cohort III, participants shared a physical space for six hours in a Milwaukee-based site bimonthly. Again, since the COVID-19 and state-facilitated budget constraints did not allow for the use of physical space, facilitators typically held sessions for about three hours, giving participants three more hours to work on their year-end capstone projects and meet 1:1 with coaches and facilitators. Within those three hours, facilitators combined their content and activities with opportunities to complete capstone work alongside their peers. However, in contrast to Cohort II results, many (47%) reported that it was difficult to keep up with the work. This may be related to the online program delivery used on Cohort III. It seems likely that even though participants were provided three additional hours each session to complete the work, remaining in their building likely resulted in participants having to address school issues instead.

**Nearly all participants felt their coaching was clear, supportive, and helpful (Figure 2).**

In addition to the instruction, the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute provided participants with coaching to plan their approaches to problems of practice and capstone projects. A change from prior years, one coach served all participants. Previously, coaching was provided by a group of retired district principals. In addition to being clear, supportive, and helpful, all respondents also felt they were able to be honest with the coach.

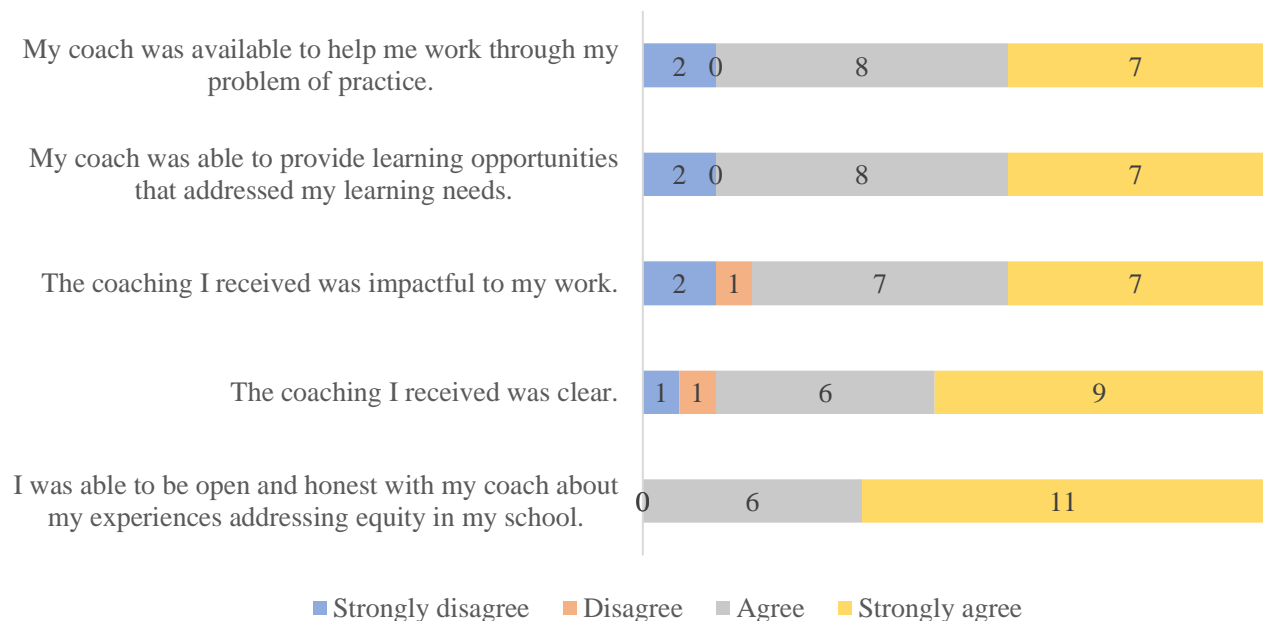
Two participants did express some dissatisfaction with coaching however. That the one coach was White, may have limited their usefulness to some participants of color. Although survey responses were anonymous, respondents had the option of sharing their contact information. From this, we were able to identify one of the two participants who held a more critical impression of coaching as a Black educator. The identity of the other is unknown. This participant suggested that having BIPOC coaches is “incredibly important” to leaders of color.

*“I also think that coaching conversations could be beneficial with coaches who have are familiar with BIPOC leaders' experiences leading for racial equity in an environment where the majority of staff are not BIPOC persons. The unique experiences of trying to talk about equity in direct ways as a person of color often doesn't mirror the experiences of white leaders. Being able to dialogue about this during coaching, while strategizing about moving racial equity work forward, is incredibly important in supporting leaders of color.”*

If funding allows, given that the Institute continues online, there is an opportunity to access additional coaches from across the state with varying social backgrounds to support school leader participants.

Adjusting to the additional needs of the participants, Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute facilitators often created opportunities during and after monthly sessions to provide impromptu coaching with participants. One facilitator indicated they had worked with White participants to address their reluctance for opening up during the Institute.

Figure 2: Participant perceptions of coaching



**Despite the limitations for networking caused by COVID-19 most respondents still valued the learning community that the Institute developed.**

Finally, regarding implementation, as has been the case consistently with the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute, Cohort III participants expressed a strong appreciation for being given the opportunity to connect and work through issues centered on racial equity with other school administrators (Figure 3).

The Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute was mostly successful in creating a safe space where administrators were comfortable sharing their personal experiences about racism and where they could effectively learn from each other. Despite the several challenges in community-building

posed by the COVID-19 outbreak, administrators expressed appreciation in both the year-end survey and post-session feedback on their abilities to build connections with their colleagues. One particular connection arose during the peak of social unrest in the face of state-sanctioned violence in Kenosha, Wisconsin. A facilitator describes how two principals, whose students and families were directly impacted by the violence, built community:

*“I have had extensive conversations with both those principals in particular around all the social unrest, [and] the trauma that has happened in Kenosha and the trauma that happened right at their school, and how exciting it is to see them build those connections [with each other].”*

Inherent in the need for programs like the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute, school administrators are typically not given the opportunity to network, support, and learn from each other. Reflecting this, **seven participants indicated they did not expect the networking they engaged in during the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute to continue after to program ended.** One participant explained the challenge of future networking:

*“Having that opportunity to meet and work collectively together is important. But what's difficult is the timing, especially when you get all the administrators with the, all the day-to-day things, you know, you really have to make sure that you set time aside for that. And I'm hoping that at a district level, we'll be allowed to do some of that with our administrative teams to work collectively and make sure that we're continuing to keep this initiative at the forefront, because it is what we say all the time at the district level is equity is at the heart of everything we do. And I'm hoping that we can make sure that's not just something we say.”*

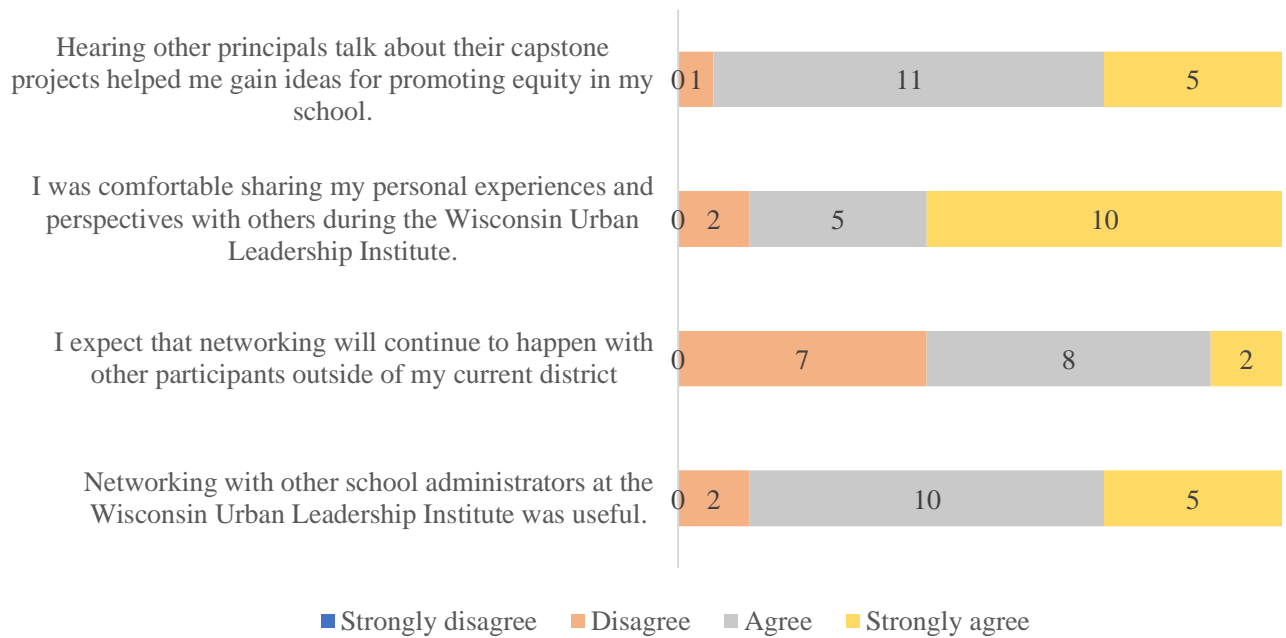
After receiving this feedback, facilitators questioned the ways in which they are able to modify or adapt their program to an online environment that maximizes the ability of school leaders to build partnerships and collaborations with each other. The organizers appeared to actively recognize the difficulties with executing a program like the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute online alongside the possibilities for growth and improvement. Going forward into a post-pandemic world may open up opportunities for in-person networking that goes hand-in-hand with online instruction.

Although participants ubiquitously valued the opportunity to connect and work with other school leaders, some did feel that this was somewhat mitigated by the challenges caused by moving the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute online.

*"I do wish we could have been meeting in person. I think it will be difficult keeping in touch with cohort colleagues."*

*"This year's class did not have any in person meetings. I do not feel like we got the full experience. The opportunity to build relationships with those outside the district was very limited."*

Figure 3: Participant perceptions of networking



## To what extent was the implementation of the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute done with *fidelity* to antiracist, culturally competent, community-centered principles?

To meet the needs of the moment in Wisconsin schools, the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute needs to be implemented with fidelity to antiracist, culturally competent, community-centered principles. In order to move beyond the established habit of blaming students and families for the results of systemic inequities, the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute attempts to challenge principal leaders to question themselves, their staff, and their district's leadership. It is through these approaches, described below, that administrators learned how to truly work to make their school more antiracist and inclusive.

In each session, participants focused on one of the program's four primary components, as outlined in the theory of action (Figure 4), in order of its execution:

1. Discovering self as an equity champion
2. Developing cultural competence
3. Building a school culture of excellence with equity
4. Designing a school improvement strategy for results

Figure 4: Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute Theory of Action



## **Introductory Session – Introduction to the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute – August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020,**

The first session was an opportunity to orient participants to the Institute, answer questions, start introducing topic of race, racism and bias in schools, and gauge commitment of participants for completing the training. School leaders were also introduced to their cohort's shared Google Drive and their Participant Folders. Going forward, school leaders could find the content from each session including professional development materials to immediately use with their school staff. Contents included: Identity Wheel<sup>3</sup>, a Racism Scale<sup>4</sup>, narrative story-telling organizers, a Best Practices Toolkit<sup>5</sup> and many others.

## **Session 1 – Discovering Self as an Equity Champion I – October 2, 2020, via Zoom**

In this second session, participants learned of the program components listed above, established group norms, discussed the many facets of personal identity, and briefly talked over the history of race and racism in Wisconsin schools. Participants appeared to walk away from the session with a better understanding of why they were asked to join the program – a point of confusion from prior years – as well as surface-level understandings of the diverse identities represented in the cohort. Since three administrators left, the program facilitators expressed concern about retention going forward. This concern was further amplified by needing to deliver content online.

## **Session 2, Discovering Self as an Equity Champion II – October 20, 2020, via Zoom**

The third session gave participants the opportunity to revisit the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute core values, learn about and create their racial affinity focus groups, and practice crafting their “racial narratives,” or statements that describe their histories with interacting and understanding race and racism. **Participants engaged in critical conversations around the importance of racial affinity groups, particularly amongst the group for school leaders of color.** Despite the understanding among participants that racial and ethnic affinity groups provide intragroup support to make sense of their roles, the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute affinity group for leaders of color combined all minoritized racial and ethnic groups

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<sup>3</sup> Smith, D., Frey, N., Pumpian, I., & Fisher, D. (2017). *Building equity: Policies and practices to empower all learners*. ASCD.

<sup>4</sup> Cristlin. (2019) *Racism Scale*. <https://www.museumassociation.org/download?id=1264286>

<sup>5</sup> WULI. (2019) Best Practices Toolkit. [https://uwm.edu/sreed/wp-content/uploads/sites/502/2019/12/WI\\_ULI-Best-Practices-Toolkit-final-November-2019.pdf](https://uwm.edu/sreed/wp-content/uploads/sites/502/2019/12/WI_ULI-Best-Practices-Toolkit-final-November-2019.pdf)

(Latinx, Black, etc.). Participating schools may benefit from facilitators exploring ways to create more specific racial and ethnic affinity groups, perhaps across cohorts.

### **Session 3 & 4 – Developing Individual Cultural Competence – December 7-8, 2020 via Zoom**

Administrators from the first two WULI cohorts presented their experiences using the skills learned during their time in the program to Cohort III participants. District-level representatives also joined this meeting with the intention of sparking conversations about current and forthcoming equity efforts within each district. Afterward, participants role-played how to address microaggressions with and between staff, students, and families. One Black administrator spoke to the challenge of addressing microaggressions among school staff:

*"It's been, a way to deliver the message to staff who may not quite understand the journey that some of our students and some of our teachers who are from different backgrounds, it's giving a way to try to enlighten them. One of the questions that came out was when did you know, um, that you were different? When was it, when did you notice the difference? A lot of the African-American people kind of earlier in life, where I had, we had a couple of people in that group who didn't really understand [...] until they were at college-age and older, that it really was a big difference and the way other people live and how they, how their life were different than [...] people of color."*

### **Session 5 – Building a School Culture of Excellence with Equity - February 5, 2021, via Zoom**

Facilitators shifted to encouraging participants to think explicitly about their equitable school practices with the intention to “ensure equitable access, opportunity, and outcomes for all learners.” Using the “Danger of a Single Story,” TED Talk from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie<sup>6</sup>, participants began to process the ways in which their school and district’s reputation within and outside of their community influences how school leaders approach more equitable practices. Principal leaders took the opportunity to share the perceptions of education within their district and explained how those perceptions impact their students:

*I think our group ended on a similar notation of by the time students get to high school, they have developed this perception of themselves and what kind of student they are based on teacher feedback and just helping me reflect as an elementary admin. You just see the joy and love for learning and kinder and first grade and second grade, and then all of a sudden, you just get to the older elementary grades, and something shifts and*

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_ngozi\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en)

*just wondering like, what is that shift? And how are we playing a role in that shift as educators? It's really hard to undo a lot of that.*

### **Session 6 -Building a School Culture of Excellence with Equity - February 22, 2021 via Zoom**

Facilitators introduced participants to the equity walkthrough tool, the process of conducting an EdCamp,<sup>7</sup> and the importance of self-care practices. The EdCamp approach requires structuring small groups based on the participants' desires. As a result of using this approach, there appeared to be increased engagement as participants moved through the process. Participants were also introduced to an equity walk through tool. Administrators expressed appreciation for it but had difficulties conceptualizing how to use it during COVID-related online instruction. Further, others cited staff relations and potential district pushback as challenges when thinking about how to apply the tool to their own school and community.

### **Session 7 – Designing a School Improvement Strategy for Results – April 13, 2021 via Zoom**

As schools returned to in-person instruction across the state, facilitators used most of the time to discuss principal approaches to emphasizing equity in their school after their participation had ended. The importance of data collection, analysis, use, and reflection prompted several small group conversations on the political nature of some data collection and the inaccessibility of many district-based survey methods. This led to participants and facilitators thinking about their community-based networks and how those connections can be used to gather, understand, and use data. It became evident that many school leaders are limited in who they can collaborate with, especially considering the difficulties COVID-19 and looming vaccine availability poses.

### **Session 8 – Designing a School Improvement Strategy for Results – April 30, 2021**

In the final session, facilitators encouraged participants and visiting district leaders to think about their school's relationship with their districts as well as how each district perceives and acts on equitable practices. Participants used these small group conversations to talk about their district's lack of clear frameworks for moving toward equity or the ways in which current initiatives are purely performative.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://digitalpromise.org/edcamp/>

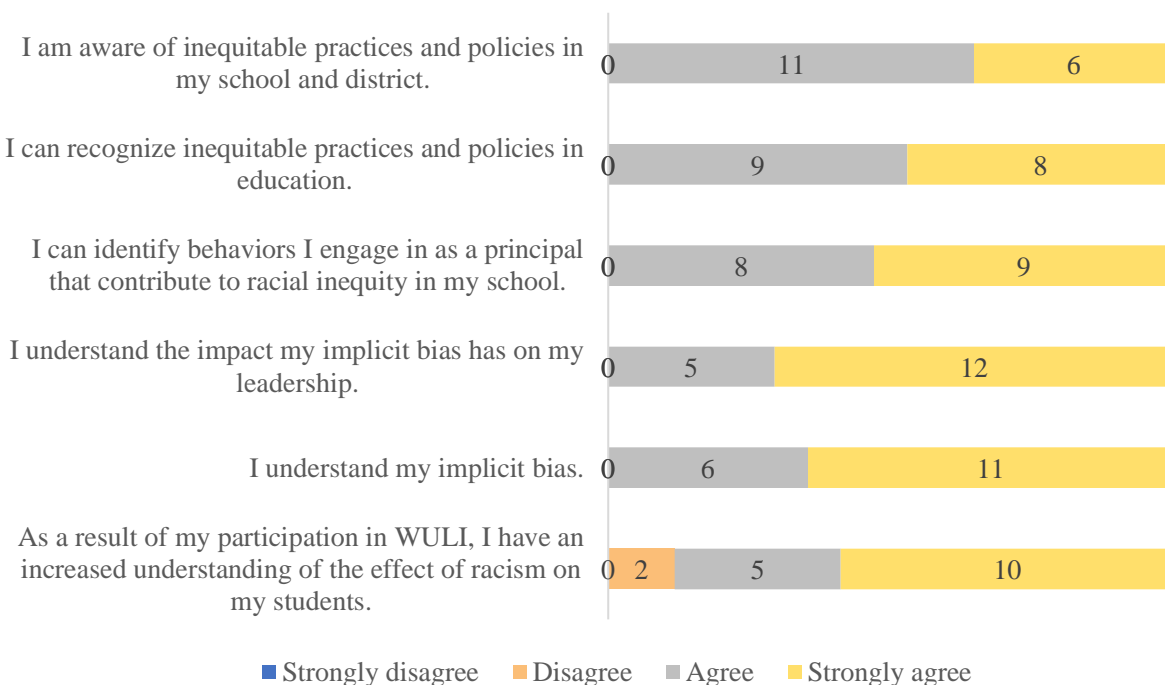


## What did participants learn about equity? What impact did participants have on equity in their school this year?

Nearly all participants felt the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute positively impacted their practice. Specifically, **16 of 17 responding school leaders agreed with the statement, "The WULI content has been impactful to my work."** Regarding aspects of self-growth and awareness regarding bias, racism, and equity, all participants felt they were leaving the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute understanding their implicit bias, how implicit bias impacts their leadership, how racism affects their students, how their own behaviors contribute to racial inequity, and how their district's and school's policies and practices that cause inequities (Figure 5).

*"I learned a lot about myself, biases, social injustice, and how to address the needs in my school."*

Figure 5: Participant perceptions of the impact of the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute on their understanding of implicit bias, racism, and equity

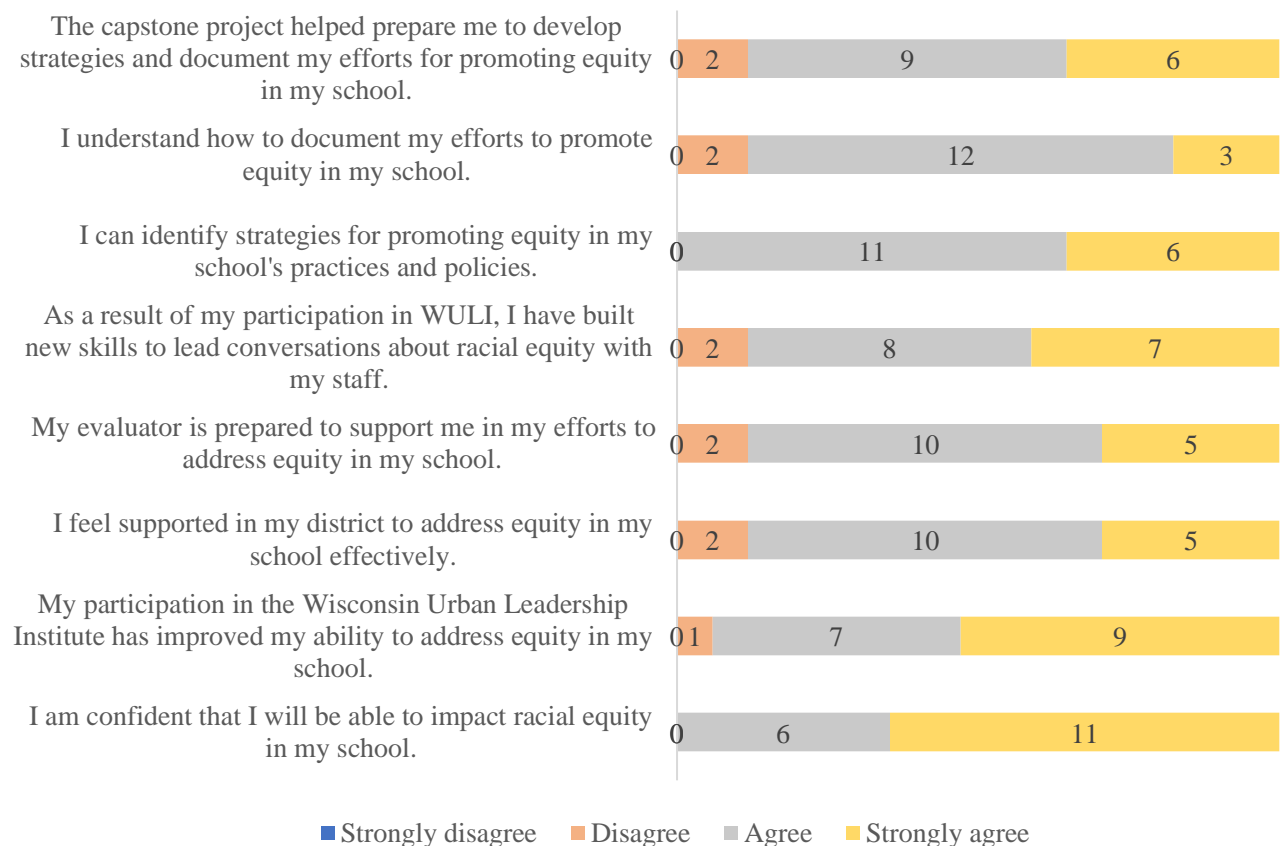


Regarding the skills and systems necessary to implement an equity-focused agenda in their school, **all participants felt they were now able to impact racial equity in their school and**

**identify strategies for promoting equity in their school's practices and policies** (Figure 7).

All but one felt that their participation in the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute helped prepare them to do so (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Participants perceptions of their efficacy for addressing equity in their school



Reflecting this understanding, participants reported:

*"We're able to listen to what we had to say and our shared experiences and also the different experiences of others around them. One thing that came out of conversations is we need to do a better job of listening to our students as it relates to this work. And we need to focus on creating safe spaces, open conversations about where each of us are and developing an understanding that this is our lane and we're going to stay in it."*

*"I think there's gotta be a connectedness between our school improvement plan that we live on a daily basis and what our objectives are as a staff in terms of not only our instructional values but how do we, um, you know, there's a key component in there."*

Critical for a school administrator's ability to promote equity in their school is that their district must support the work. Reflecting the efforts of the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute to engage district administration in the initiative, **more participants felt they were supported by their district (88% compared to 73%) and their evaluator (88% compared to 82%) to address equity in their school than had been the case with previous Cohort participants.**

Regarding what participants are doing in their school to promote equity, **all reported having led conversations about racial equity with their staff, most multiple times this year.** These conversations focused on many aspects of the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institutes such as:

**Microaggressions:**

*"Microaggressions. That was new learning for me that I plan to share with my staff."*

**Race, racism, and bias:**

*"My next step is to plan time/space for on-going conversations around stereotypes, race and bias. I want to give staff the opportunity to engage and struggle with these difficult conversations like I have. However I don't want to "force" everyone in at once. I will let these spaces be voluntary with the hope that a few "sparks will ignite a fire" across the school (eventually, not right away)."*

*"I held a conversation with the staff regarding implicit bias using the materials that were shared within WULI. This conversation opened the door to deeper conversations in small group and one on one settings. The biggest takeaway was that there was a sincere interest by many of the staff to dive deeper in impactful work."*

*"I have ongoing conversations about racial equity with my staff. I believe the conversations had their intended impact. My staff responded by changing their behavior. From each conversation I takeaway that the work is never done."*

**White fragility:**

*"We were planning on having a book group of White Fragility this year with some staff members, so there are some great reflections that we can use with this with the book study."*

**And changing school practices to better create equitable conditions for learning:**

*"As we revamp our school success plan to incorporate this equity work into SLO/PPG and school goals."*

*"My learning has already prompted me to start a CLR Monthly newsletter at my school to inform our teachers about what we are doing to be culturally responsive."*

*"What I did ask my staff to do this year was I asked each staff member to identify where they were and where they in reflection over the still learning. Were they ready to bottle when they were ready to leave? Were they ready to confront bias? So no matter where they were as an ethical, I asked them to create their own personal activity, leadership plan. And then as the administrator, what can I do to support you?"*

*So when we looked at what we're going to be the next actions, it was really to emphasize and implement, equitable instructional practices across, and that included equitable practices when it came to not only the classroom instructional pieces, but what was happening in terms of, um, some of the classroom culture pieces as well. And so we were, well, this part here is about developing my own individual.*

*"We started developing a plan of like, how do we take this, this knowledge, these conversations that we're having and turn it into school-wide practice...throughout the course of the second semester of our school year, we really wanted to focus all of our professional development around those equitable practices in the classroom."*

***In what ways did participants build skills to lead courageous conversations about racial equity?***

While building a school leader's cultural competency is essential for building equitable schools, it is only the first step. Moving beyond self toward others creates the potential for impacting Wisconsin staff, students, families, and communities. In the case of the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute, school leaders are encouraged to replicate the activities conducted in their monthly sessions with their staff members. Some of these instances were recounted in 2020-2021 Cohort III sessions:

*"How do we turn some, the learning into a classroom practice? And so we had ended with, um, doing some cultural relevant pieces with our own staff. Um, and then over the summer had had a book study with some of the learning team members of how this work right. And like the, the piece around joy and infusing joy into that classroom space was something that like, we all largely agreed, like this is, this is missing."*

Some school leaders appear prepared with the language to describe their ideas with less concrete mentions of their actions:

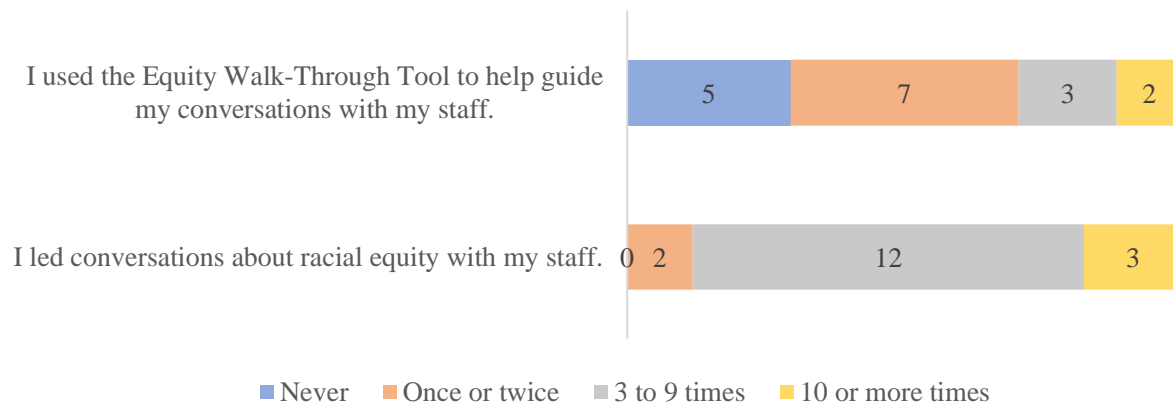
*"It's not my duty to change people's perspectives. In my sense, it's my duty to move people along, to ask those, to ask those great stories stations and to be true, to be honest conversations, to be had and understand that, understanding all of these all, when it come to, you know, the staff and also affecting kids, how was it? Did it raise this person's learning? To school needs? To recognize each student are unique? [So we] structure the plans, um, to make sure we are building resources, to be positive learners and also positive relationships with our teachers, our students and our teachers staff are intact on race and equity."*

Similarly, in this example, school leaders are well-equipped to identify problems of equitable practices to move into professional development opportunities. With time, school leaders should be reengaged to understand how these plans panned out in the long term:

*“We started developing a plan of like, how do we take this, this knowledge, these conversations that we’re having and turn it into school-wide practice. I just got to check around there. [T]hroughout the course of the second semester of our school year, **we really wanted to focus all of our professional development around those equitable practices in the classroom.**”*

*“So the districts as have been shared previously has been really phenomenal in setting the foundation of that reflection piece for staff. But again, staff are only taking out what they’re putting into it. **So if they’re just completing a required professional learning, that deeper understanding may not come out. So at my building level, that is where my leadership will come through in that following in the year to come.**”*

Figure 7: Participant application of Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute learning in their school.



## Reflections and recommendations

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### **The Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute was implemented with quality.**

The Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute elevates the importance of developing self-awareness, cultural competency, and antiracism in schools by using structured reflection exercises and political education in the face of political tension and dubious contexts. Participants expressed general approval for the ways in which the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute was organized and facilitated. Most participants responded favorably to questions about their experiences with one-on-one coaching.

### **The Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute was implemented with fidelity to antiracist, culturally competent, community-centered principles.**

Using the theory of change framework as a guide to their pedagogical approach (Figure 4), it appears that the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute organizers were successful in their goals of implementing the program with antiracist, culturally competent, and community-centered pedagogy. When guiding discussions on *Discovering self as an equity champion*, facilitators were intentional about creating safe yet critical environments for school leaders to reflect on their identities. In *Developing cultural competence* sessions, facilitators made concerted efforts to understand each participant's own racial identity to create tailored reflection opportunities like racial affinity groups.

### **The Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute realized its goals of developing equity-focused school leaders.**

Findings from participant observation suggest Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute participants gain the ability to critically examine their own understandings of race, racism and biases. Over time, participants appear to also complete the program with an increased ability to identify school and district practices perpetuate harm to students and families in schools. All responding participants felt they were leaving the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute understanding their implicit bias, how implicit bias impacts their leadership, how racism affects their students, how their own behaviors contribute to racial inequity. Further, all participants felt they were now able to impact racial equity in their school and identify strategies for promoting equity in their school's practices and policies.

**Although the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute successfully developed participant awareness of racism and racist systems, it is not clear what type of impact it can have given other structural barriers.**

While building a school leader's cultural competency and leadership efficacy is essential for building equitable schools, it is only the first step. Moving beyond self toward others creates the potential for impacting Wisconsin staff, students, families, and communities, and through that, challenging the racism inherent in the education system. The challenge facing the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute to change schools to be more antiracist is exacerbated by, among other things, the lack of racial representation among teachers in participating schools, challenges with engaging families and the community, and by the increasing attrition of former participants over time (Appendix H), and by conflicting district and school policies.

**The move online caused some participants to feel less engaged and connected with the work.**

Many Cohort III participants expressed disappointment that the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute had moved online. They regretted how the online format affected the learning community built by the Institute. Further, during training, participants were sometimes pulled away from the Institute to address issues in their school. It was sometimes difficult to find space for administrators to focus on their training. In general, participants did not understand that the Institute was moved online for reasons other than COVID-19. As such, their general disappointment with the state of things affected by COVID-19 included the Institute. Future participants would benefit from clearer expectations about how they will engage in the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute and be prepared to delegate during their participation in the Institute.

**Documenting changes beyond the individual will allow the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute to better plan for and understand how to have an impact beyond the individual.**

Although the Institute is meeting its objectives at the individual administrator level, it is important to begin measuring change and growth beyond the school leader participant. Future data collection should focus on mediating "foundational factors" that could disrupt or amplify the impact of the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute on racial equity (Appendix K). Further, data collection needs to include educator, family, student, and community perspectives of their school and its practice. This could involve conversations with these stakeholder groups to gather

feedback about the changes occurring in their school. It could also involve participation in statewide surveys developed by SREED, such as the Wisconsin Educator Development Support and Retention (WEDSR) survey<sup>8</sup> and the Equity-Focused School survey<sup>9</sup>. Participation in these surveys would allow participating schools to locate their professional culture within schools across Wisconsin and the Institute to track its progress moving toward inclusion and antiracist ideals.

**The Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute should explore the possibility of providing participants experience engaging their local stakeholder groups to develop and execute a shared equity-focused agenda.**

The Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute should consider inviting other stakeholders, such as students, staff, families, and community members to training sessions. These could focus on building collective vision-making and planning. School leaders working alongside their students, staff, families, and communities when developing their capstone projects and action plans would provide administrators critical experience and practice listening to and engaging stakeholders in the process of reforming their school's culture.

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<sup>8</sup> [www.wedsr.org](http://www.wedsr.org)

<sup>9</sup> <https://uwm.edu/sreed/wisconsin-equity-focused-surveys/>



## Potential long and short-term outcomes

	MORE INFORMATION NEEDED	MEETS SOME EXPECTATIONS	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS	SIGNIFICANTLY EXCEEDS
<i>Empower principals as equity champions</i>		Cohort III expressed strong appreciation to connect and work through racial equity with other administrators.			✓
<i>Develop culturally competent leaders</i>		Participants cite their increased self-awareness as the most impactful element of the WULI.			✓
<i>Build a school culture promoting equity</i>	✓	Cohort III lacked processes for measuring change and growth beyond the principal due to COVID-19.			
<i>Design school improvement strategy</i>		✓	Each cohort member produced a school improvement plan through the capstone. More data is needed on implementation.		

## Appendices

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### Appendix A – Protocol for focus groups

From the time of December 2020 until April 2021, this evaluation aims to conduct multiple semi-structured focus groups with stakeholders. Below, we use the Evaluation Questions & Focus to develop the following numbered questions as conversation guides:

#### *Warm-up questions*

1. Tell us about yourselves and your connections to the ULI.
2. On a scale from 1-10, how comfortable were you talking about race, racism, and racial disparities before WULI? How about now? Explain why.

#### *Self-awareness and introspection*

1. How often do you think about race, racism and racial disparities between your staff, students, and families? Tell us a story about when you recently had to pause and think about race as it pertained to your leadership?
2. What do your reflection processes look like? Who do you choose to speak with? Who are the colleagues you trust?
3. Tell us about a time when you had to lead a tough conversation about race and racism. How did you prepare?

#### *Moving ideas to action*

1. Define what equity means to you and how it fits within your approaches to leadership.
2. Tell us about a time when you developed plans based on your definition of equity in your school?
3. How prepared do you feel to lead other school leaders in disrupting inequitable practices in schooling?

#### *Planning and implementation*

1. In an ideal world, what is the perfect program for professional development centered on equity and race? What does it look like? Why?
2. Thinking about your time with WULI, what were the strengths of the program? What is something you remember most fondly?

**What are some challenges you faced while in WULI? In your opinion, what would be the best way to address those challenges for future cohorts?**

## Appendix B – Protocols for cohort interviews

From the time of December 2020 until April 2021, this evaluation aims to conduct multiple interviews with stakeholders. Below, we use the Evaluation Questions & Focus to develop the following numbered questions as conversation guides:

### *Warm-up questions*

1. Tell us about yourselves and your connections to the ULI.
2. On a scale from 1-10, how comfortable were you talking about race, racism and racial disparities before WULI? How about now? Explain why.

### *Self-awareness and introspection*

1. How often do you think about race, racism, and racial disparities between your staff, students and families? Tell us a story about when you recently had to pause and think about race as it pertained to your leadership?
2. What do your reflection processes look like? Who do you choose to speak with? Who are the colleagues you trust?
3. Tell us about a time when you had to lead a tough conversation about race and racism. How did you prepare?

### *Moving ideas to action*

1. Define what equity means to you and how it fits within your approaches to leadership.
2. Tell us about a time when you developed plans based on your definition of equity in your school?
3. How prepared do you feel to lead other school leaders in disrupting inequitable practices in schooling?

### *Planning and implementation*

1. In an ideal world, what is the perfect program for professional development centered on equity and race? What does it look like? Why?
2. Thinking about your time with WULI, what were the strengths of the program? What is something you remember most fondly?
3. What are some challenges you faced while in WULI? In your opinion, what would be the best way to address those challenges for future cohorts?

## Appendix C – Protocol for coach, coordinator and facilitator interviews

From the time of December 2020 until April 2021, this evaluation aims to conduct multiple interviews with stakeholders. Below, we use the **Evaluation Questions & Focus** to develop the following numbered questions as conversation guides:

### *Warm-up questions*

1. Tell us about yourselves and your connections to the ULI.
2. On a scale from 1-10, how comfortable were you talking about race, racism and racial disparities before WULI? How about now? Explain why.

### *Preparation and planning*

1. What are your coaching/facilitation strengths? In what do you want to improve for later cohort or similar training experiences?
2. How did you prepare for facilitation every month? With whom do you feel most comfortable sharing your plans for feedback?
3. Were there times when you self-reflected on your own awareness of race, racism and racial disparities? What does your introspection process look like?

### *Building a learning community*

1. What are the most important factors in building a learning community? Which factors most influenced your time as a WULI coach?
2. Tell us about a challenge you faced while building a community for the current cohort. How did you go about addressing? What was the outcome?
3. Tell us about a highlight from this year cohort coaching experience.

## Appendix D – Consent

### Consent for Interview

Dr. Curtis Jones, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee - Principal Investigator

Marlo Reeves, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee – Lead Evaluator

We are asking you to participate in an interview about the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute program. We want to hear from you about your experience as a 2020-2021 cohort member.

We would like you to participate in an online interview. This interview will take about 30-60 minutes.

All information we collect from you will remain confidential.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time, without negative consequences.

There are no foreseeable risks or benefits to you for participating in the study.

If you have any questions about this project, please call Dr. Curtis Jones at (312) 421-0277 or email at [jones554@uwm.edu](mailto:jones554@uwm.edu).

Please check off the box to provide or NOT provide your consent to be in this study.

☐ Yes, I agree to participate.

☐ No, I do not agree to participate.

We would like to video record the interview. We use these to make sure we understand what you tell us. After our study, the recording will be destroyed. May we record the interview?

☐ Yes, I consent to allowing the interview to be recorded.

☐ No, I do NOT consent for the interview to be recorded.

By electronically signing this form, you agree to be in this study of the WULI.

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Signature

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Name (please print)

---

Date

## Appendix E – Evaluation Questions

The following questions and associated sub-questions are the focus for this evaluation:

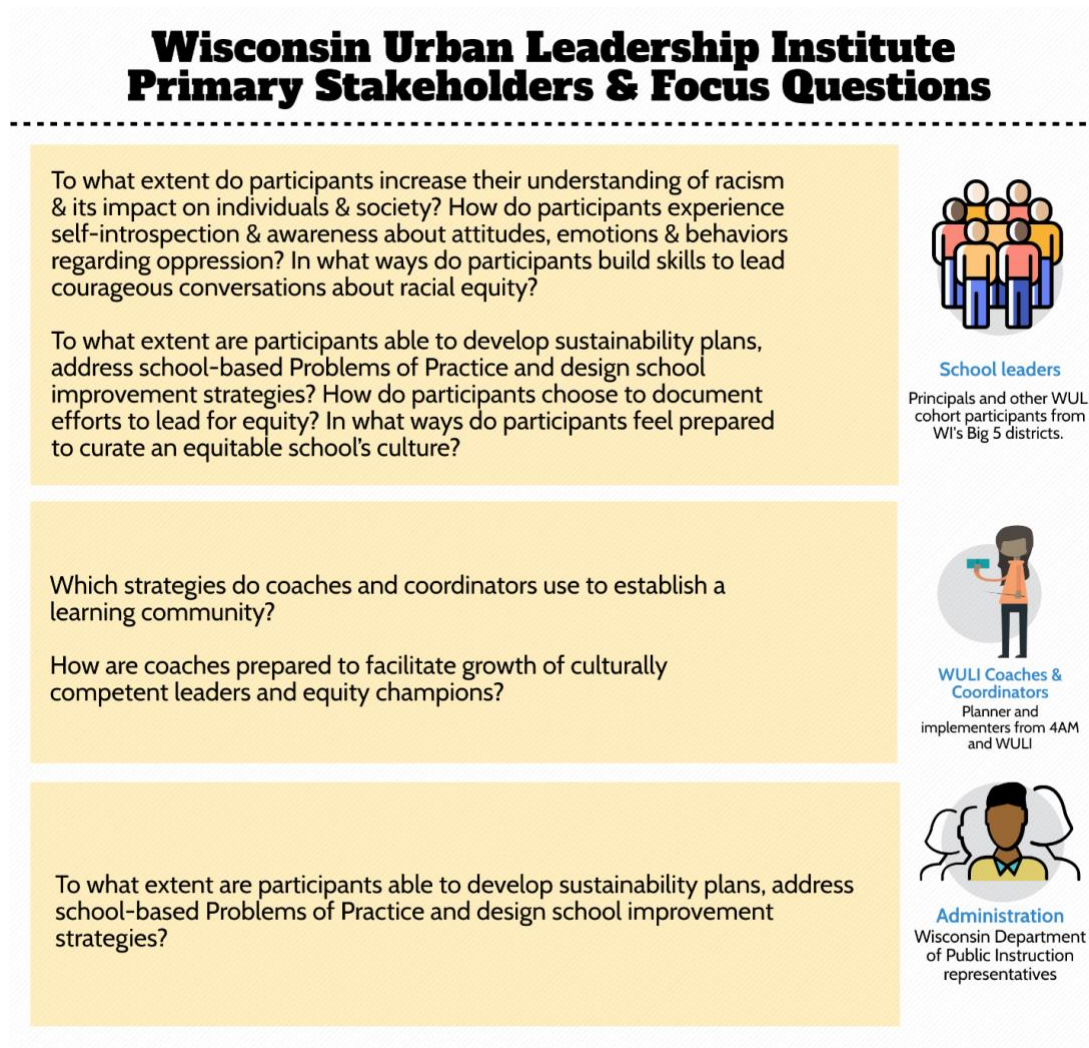
Evaluation Questions	Focus Questions
<i>To what extent are the needs and assets of the persons who participated in the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute aligned with its goals?</i>	To what extent do participants increase their understanding of racism & its impact on individuals & society?
	How do participants experience self-introspection & awareness about attitudes, emotions & behaviors regarding oppression?
	In what ways do participants build skills to lead courageous conversations about racial equity?
<p>To what extent can participants develop sustainability plans, address school-based Problems of Practice, and design school improvement strategies?</p>	
<i>What did participants learn about equity? What impact did participants have on equity in their school this year?</i>	How do participants choose to document efforts to lead for equity?
	In what ways do participants feel prepared to curate an equitable school's culture?
<i>To what extent is the implementation of the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute done with fidelity and quality?</i>	Which strategies do coaches and coordinators use to establish a learning community?
	How are coaches prepared to facilitate the growth of culturally competent leaders and equity champions?

## Appendix F – Stakeholder Involvement

The stakeholders for the WULI evaluation include these priority groups:

- Participants – including school leaders and other leaders from the "Big 5 Districts" of Milwaukee, Racine, Madison, Green Bay, and Kenosha.
- Coaches and coordinators – including all WULI representatives and facilitators.
- Administration – including from individual districts and the Department of Public Instruction

The graphic below details the significance of each group in relation to the evaluation plan as well as the ways each group can contribute to each evaluation question.

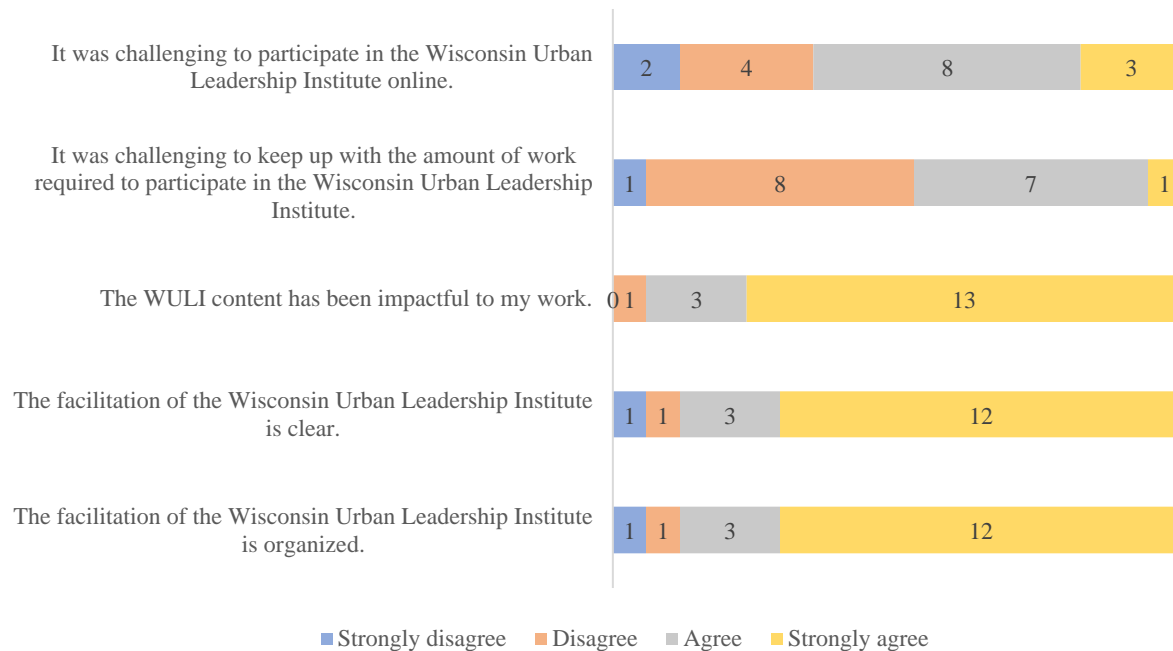


## Appendix G – Survey results

### Facilitation

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The facilitation of the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute is organized.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The facilitation of the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute is clear.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The WULI content has been impactful to my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was challenging to keep up with the amount of work required to participate in the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was challenging to participate in the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

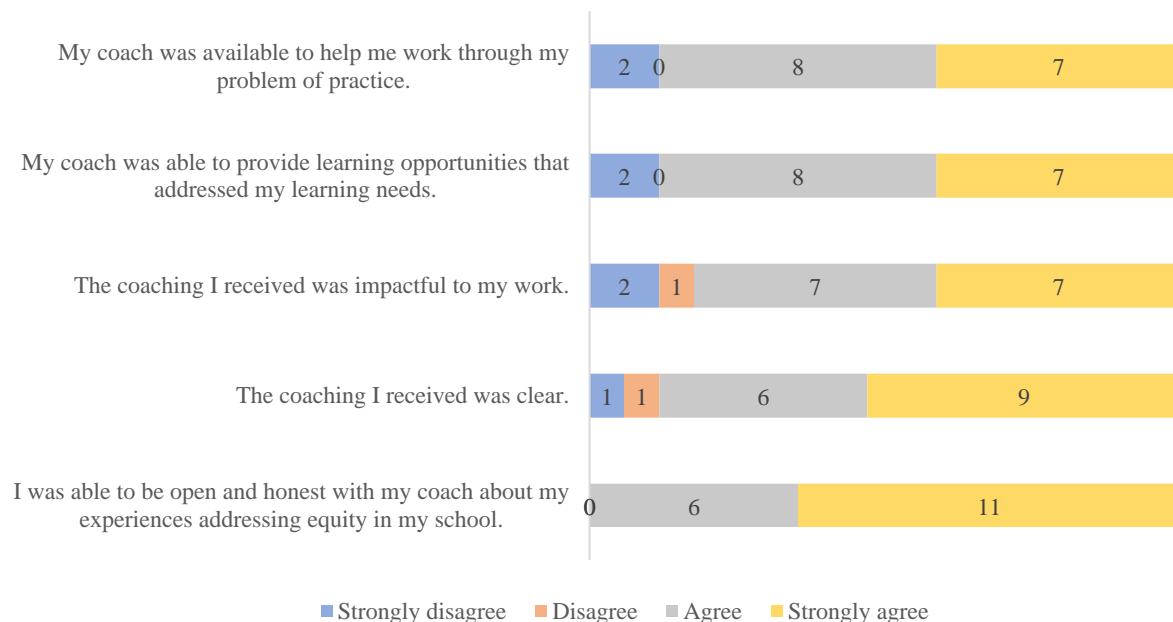




## Coaching

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

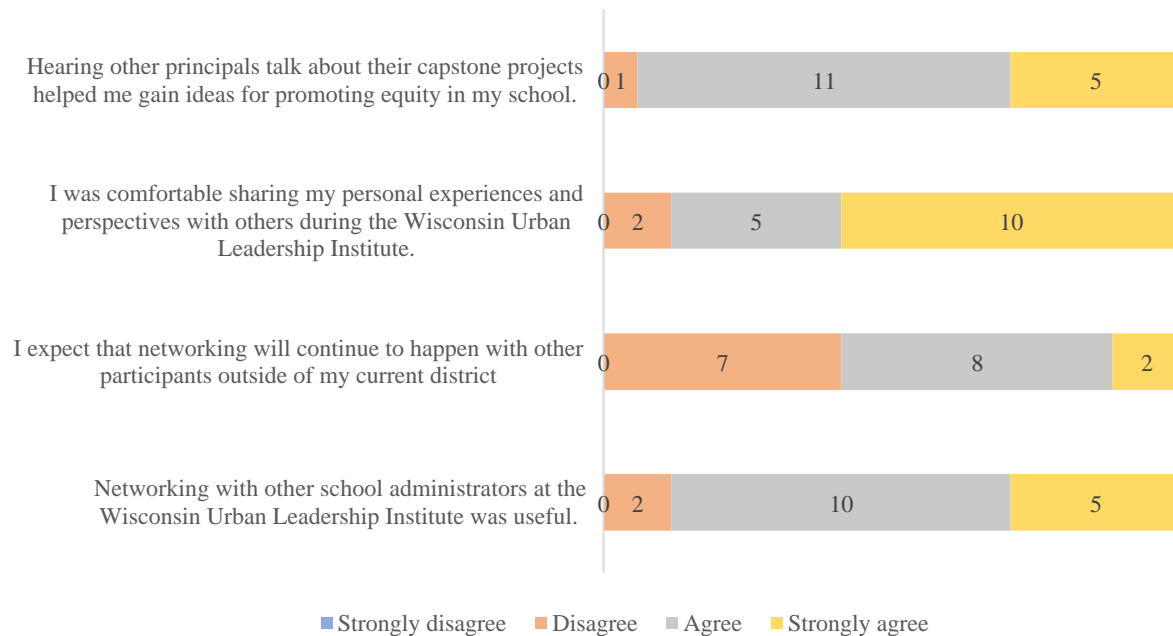
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I was able to be open and honest with my coach about my experiences addressing equity in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The coaching I received was clear.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The coaching I received was impactful to my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My coach was able to provide learning opportunities that addressed my learning needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My coach was available to help me work through my problem of practice.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Networking

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

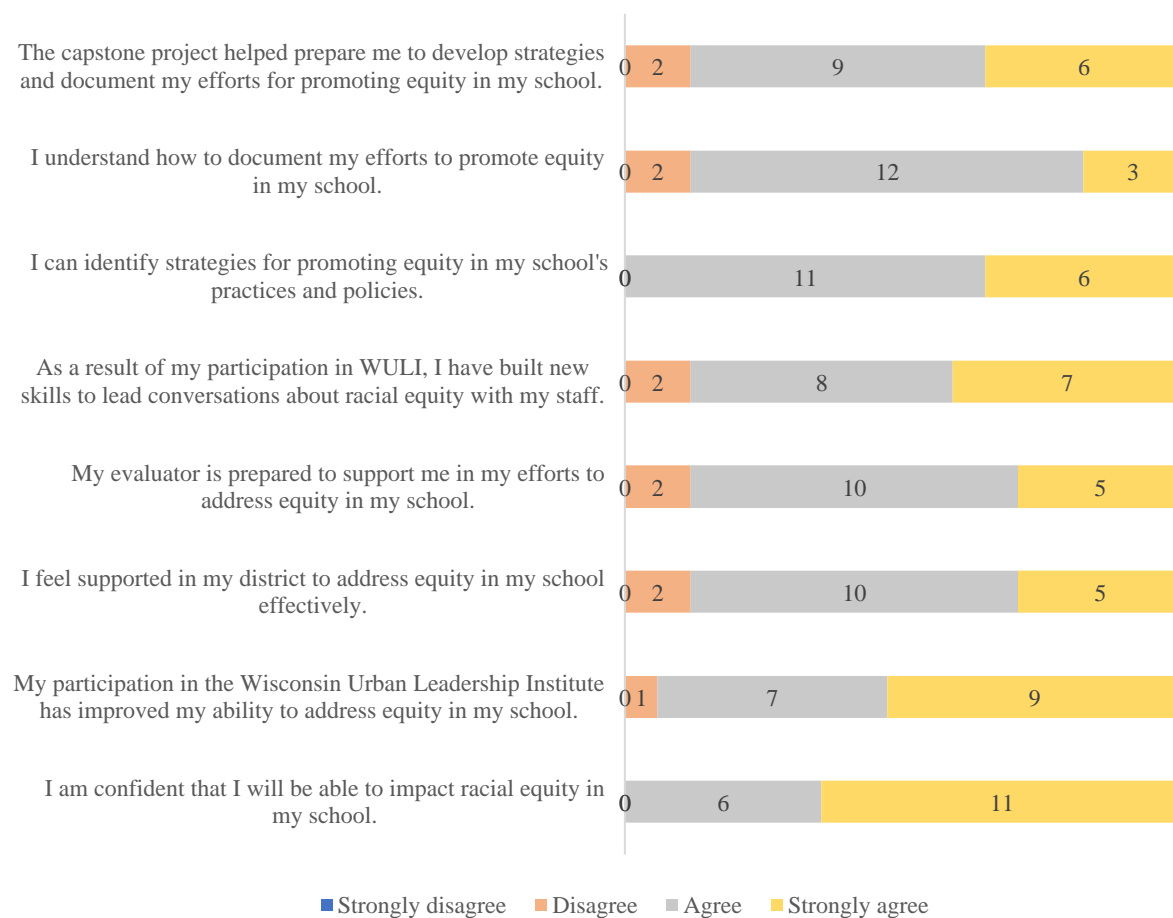
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Networking with other school administrators at the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute was useful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I expect that networking will continue to happen with other participants outside of my current district	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was comfortable sharing my personal experiences and perspectives with others during the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hearing other principals talk about their capstone projects helped me gain ideas for promoting equity in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Efficacy

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

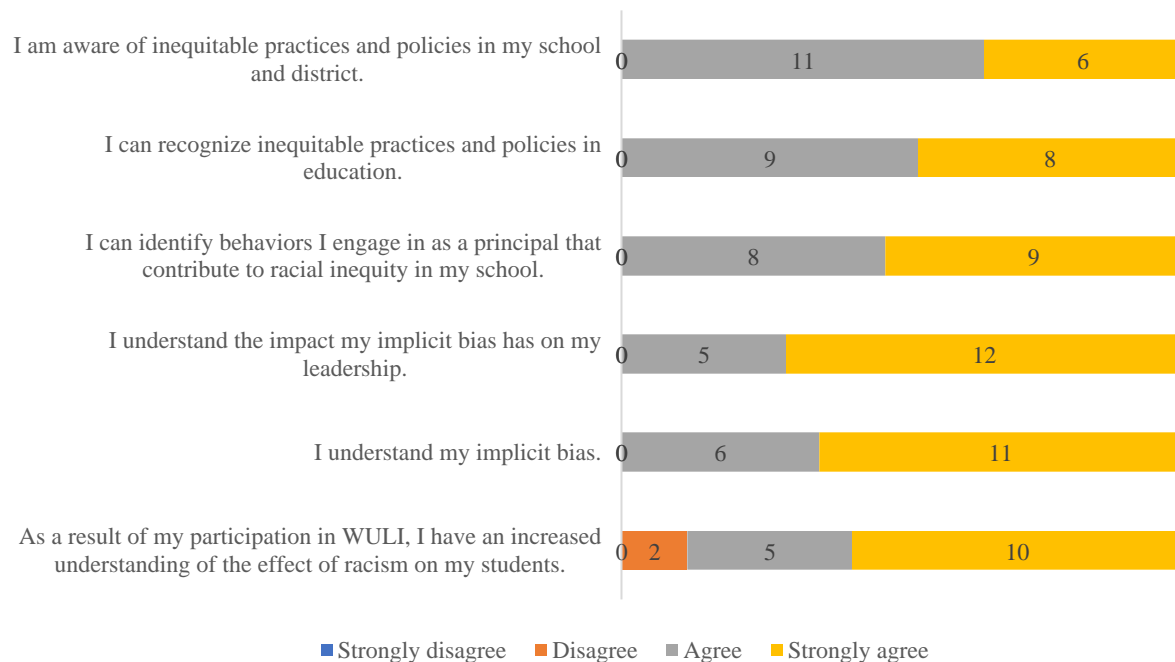
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am confident that I will be able to impact racial equity in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My participation in the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute has improved my ability to address equity in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel supported in my district to address equity in my school effectively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My evaluator is prepared to support me in my efforts to address equity in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As a result of my participation in WULI, I have built new skills to lead conversations about racial equity with my staff.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can identify strategies for promoting equity in my school's practices and policies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand how to document my efforts to promote equity in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The capstone project helped prepare me to develop strategies and document my efforts for promoting equity in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Awareness and understanding

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

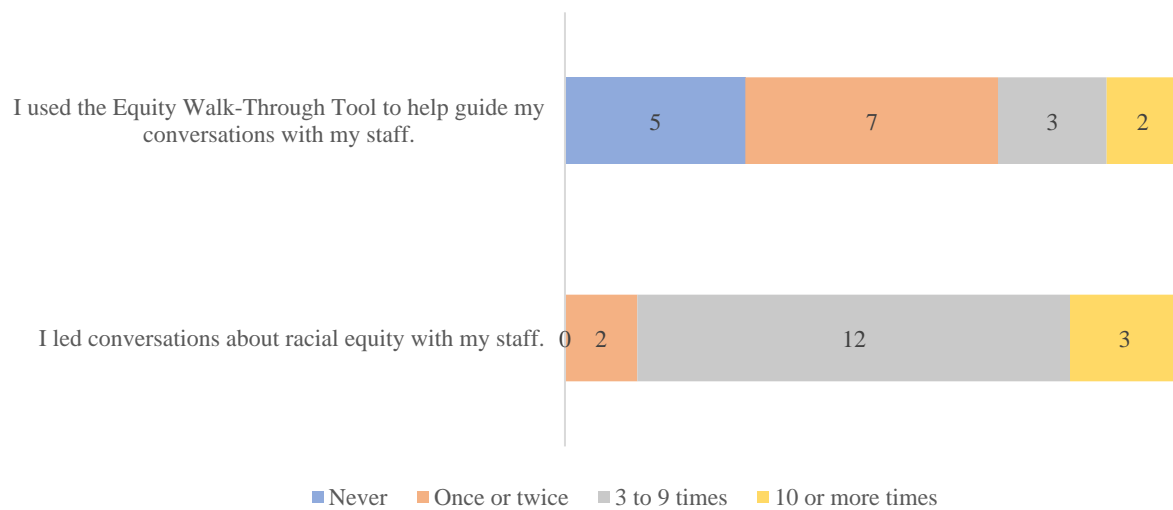
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
As a result of my participation in WULI, I have an increased understanding of the effect of racism on my students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand my implicit bias.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I understand the impact my implicit bias has on my leadership.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can identify behaviors I engage in as a principal that contribute to racial inequity in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can recognize inequitable practices and policies in education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am aware of inequitable practices and policies in my school and district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Staff engagement

How many times did you engage in the following this year?

	Never	Once or twice	3 to 9 times	10 or more times
I led conversations about racial equity with my staff.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I used the Equity Walk-Through Tool to help guide my conversations with my staff.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Open-ended questions

*Please share your experiences having racial equity-related conversations with your staff this year. Did the conversations have your intended impact? How did your staff respond? What did you take away from the conversations?*

- There are some staff that still struggle with their own implicit biases and the work in front of them was difficult because of that.
- It was a great experience. I learn a lot about myself, biases, social injustice, and how to address the needs in my school.
- The data does not lie. The discussions were open, honest and lively. I tried to change the narrative of staff telling me, "I can't do" to asking them, "What can you do?" Staff response revolved around their mindset. The conversations need to continue, no matter how uncomfortable they may be.
- I do wish we could have been meeting in person. I think it will be difficult to keep in touch with cohort colleagues.
- I held a conversation with the staff regarding implicit bias using the materials that were shared within WULI. This conversation opened the door to deeper conversations in small group and one on one settings. The biggest takeaway was that there was a sincere interest by many of the staff to dive deeper in impactful work.
- I facilitated each staff member creating their own personal equity leadership plans.
- My staff appreciated the conversations and were motivated by them.
- Most of the responses to these conversations were positive. It helps to have strong relationships with people prior to engaging in these types of discussions (although not necessary). Some didn't realize what they were saying/doing and how that could negatively impact kids.
- The conversations I had with staff this year were very surface-based. I was sharing my experiences and my journey thus far. I also promoted and continued the conversation from our district-level PL around equity. The conversations had an impact I accepted. Staff who wanted to hear me did and those who didn't want to didn't. My one big

takeaway from the conversations was that I can push a bit harder with the conversations because I believe my staff is ready.

- The staff seems guarded at times and reluctant to share. My staff is very cautious when choosing to engage in conversations as it relates to racial equity. The conversations that we had do go well but these are the staff members were open to it.
- Our conversations this year have been about understanding ourselves and our own personal biases. Much discussion was around understanding the human part of that and to move forward to change rather than using anger and denial as the response for guilt.
- I have ongoing conversations about racial equity with my staff. I believe the conversations had their intended impact. My staff responded by changing their behavior. From each conversation I takeaway that the work is never done.



*Please share details of any resources or tools you used to help guide your conversations with staff about racial equity? How helpful were they? What else might have been helpful?*

- The tools to start racial conversations.
- We used excerpts from White Fragility and So You Want To Talk About Race, school data - grades, attendance, policies and procedures, and high standards and opportunities for all students.
- Used the values activity and the personal narratives. Very helpful in opening eyes to racial issues.
- The implicit bias tools were utilized within our staff development. In addition the resources related to equitable classroom practices were used.
- Equity walkthrough tool, CLR book by Dr. Hollie, River of Life. They get people thinking about racial equity from a different perspective. Time and back in person will be helpful.
- I found some online resources/activities around equity that were good places to start these conversations. Most of my work this year was done in a small group format so that the discussions were authentic and staff felt comfortable with their surroundings. As we continue this work into the 21/22 year, we will do more in small groups as we transition to more whole group work. Unless I missed it in the Google Drive, a shared folder of activities and resources that we can print and use would be helpful. If I missed it I apologize.
- I used the following resources to guide my conversations: speak up strategies, racial narrative. These two were the most helpful. I hope to use the equity walk through tool this come school year.
- The conversations that occurred during our meeting seemed to be most valuable. I feel that these conversations would have been more valuable if the group meet in person.

*Please provide an example of a practice or policy in your school or district that inhibits equity. What would be the first step to begin to address this issue? What barriers do you see getting in the way of addressing it?*

- Grading policy. The power of the letter grade F. Data and conversations. The mindset about grades.
- Students can't go to any school they'd like in the district unless their parent provides transportation. Transportation is the barrier and I'm not sure how to address it. We already work with city transportation.
- We are currently are rethinking our school wide discipline plan as well as our PBIS plan. We are moving to a more restorative and equitable form of discipline.
- Non equitable allocation of resources. lack of movement
- School messengers utilize google translate and the translation can be off putting to some families. Have a real translator in the district would benefit the messaging that goes out to families. You really have to plan ahead to make sure you respect the time the translators have and need to get translation completed.
- We really need to work on the effective implementation of our tier 1 instructional model. Tier 2 and 3 will help, but we can't solve all the challenges we face if we don't fix tier 1.
- The RUSD has formed a cohort of WULI trained administrators that are working on district level professional learning for all staff. Misperceptions of this work can be a barrier to progress, as some feel as if they do not need to participate in equity work.
- Discipline within the district has inequities. Educating staff to understand the root causes of the behavior. The barrier would be staff not yet on their equity journey.
- To build into the student's schedule for time for not only interventions but for enrichment as well.

*Do you have anything to add for how the WULI project could be improved; or anything you need to continue improving racial equity next school year?*

- Thank you for allowing me to participate in this cohort
- The in-person learning is vital to this project. I know circumstance didn't allow for this, however, I wasn't able to make connections with others as they might not have been in my breakout sessions. The facilitators did a great job I just feel face-to-face meetings work better.
- We may want to consider making the cohort a 2-year process where the first year is about learning and implementing and the second year is about supporting the new cohort and sustaining the work started in year 1.
- In-person if at all possible.
- This year's class did not have any in person meetings. I do not feel like we got the full experience. The opportunity to build relationships with those outside the district was very limited.
- I thought everyone involved did a great job in the midst of a pandemic. I for one participated in any extra socializing events as well. I have no suggestions for improvement aside from getting back in person, but that was no one's fault.
- Hopefully you can go back to an in-person delivery model. The virtual setting diluted the experience for me. A virtual setting made it too easy for some to not be completely invested in the material.
- It was difficult to engage this year in the middle of a pandemic through the virtual format. Not because zoom is not an effective way to participate, but the facilitation was not clear and the flow seemed to be off. I also think that coaching conversations could be beneficial with coaches who have are familiar with BIPOC leaders' experiences leading for racial equity in an environment where the majority of staff are not BIPOC persons. The unique experiences of trying to talk about equity indirect ways as a person of color often doesn't mirror the experiences of white leaders. Being able to dialogue about this during coaching, while strategizing about moving racial equity work forward, is incredibly important in supporting leaders of color.
- It was difficult engaging in WULI virtually.

## Appendix H – Participant retention in their school

One of the challenges and threats regarding the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute positively impacting schools is administrator retention and mobility. The Institute is time intensive, and in the time when school administrators are participating in it, they are not administering their buildings. The cost to schools is justified since administrators who complete the training may be more effective and a greater asset for their school. The cost may not be justified if school administrators leave their school. To explore this issue, we examined state human resources data to determine if participants from the first two cohorts of the Institute, from 2018-19 and 2019-2020, had remained in their school for the 2020-2021 school year. As Table 1 shows below, as of the 2020-21 school year, 13 administrators (27%) had left the school they were in when they attended the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute. Of the 13, two were no longer working within a Wisconsin public school district. This rate is not higher than would be expected given that participating administrators serve schools with a history of staff turnover. However, given this level of staff turnover, it will be more difficult for the initiative to realize its long-term objectives. It will be important to continue to monitor administrator mobility in subsequent school years.

Table 1: Mobility of Cohort I and Cohort II participants

		Principals	Assistant Principals
Cohort I	Still in school	18	1
	Changed schools	5	0
	Left Wisconsin public education	1	0
Cohort II	Still in school	11	6
	Changed schools	3	3
	Left Wisconsin public education	1	0
Total		39	10

## **Appendix I – Methods**

SREED evaluators leveraged a variety of evaluation methods to provide stakeholders with actionable information that documents implementation, identifies facilitating and inhibiting factors for effective implementation, promotes more effective implementation, and greater potential impact on equity for students of color. These include the following formative activities with school leaders participating in training during the 2020-21 program year:

### **Interviews & focus groups**

The 2020-2021 evaluation includes three interviews with Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute participants. We also conducted 3 focus groups with large groups of Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute participants, past and present, as a part of another evaluation on professional learning communities (PLC). Special attention was given in each focus group to parse PLC data from the data used in this evaluation. Both the focus groups and interviews provide rich content on several aspects of the initiative, including the impact of the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute processes. We learn to what extent these processes have resulted in changes to schools, which practices are implemented in schools, and what factors are either inhibiting or promoting their implementation.

### **Participant surveys**

All 23 Cohort III participants who completed the training were invited to respond to online surveys about their experiences in the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Initiative. Of these, 17 completed surveys. SREED administered surveys online in the summer of 2021.

### **Participant observation**

This evaluation also includes data collection and analysis of participant observation data. With each Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute session, a SREED representative participates in planned activities alongside school leaders in hopes of gathering a greater understanding of the ways WULI impacts leaders, coaches, and administration. Throughout the course of this year's evaluation, we collected observational data on 10 occasions including each session and capstone project day.

### **Document analysis**

Finally, this year's evaluation includes document collection and analysis. As Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute participants complete projects intended for review and greater consumption, SREED representatives save relevant documents for analysis in Spring 2021. SREED estimates collect around 75-100 artifacts throughout the course of this year's iteration.

## Appendix J – Selected session feedback

### Session 1 – Discovering Self as an Equity Champion I – October 2, 2020, via Zoom

#### **What: What part of this month's learning resonated most with you?**

That there is a ripe participation to learn from the group

The connection between this work and the RACE Challenge in which our schools are involved.

The River of Life

The river conversation

The River activity

The River of Life

The identity wheel

Really enjoyed the history of education activity

The discussions around the impact race relations have had on us individually.

The 'Identity and Equity' piece.

Enjoyed hearing about others' story. That was helpful and inspiring.

Self reflection

History of education

The personal reflection and getting to know other participants was very valuable.

breakout sessions

The reading of Chapter 2 in Race Talk

The reading was clarifying and reinforcing. Also, the opportunity to "meet" with other participants was helpful in making this experience better for me personally.

I appreciated the river activity.

The discussion of the reading assignment.

the identity wheel and the conversation with other participants

Reflecting on my personal journey and reflecting on the History of Race resonated with me the most.

History of Race in Wisconsin Education

**So What: Why did it resonate with you? How does that learning connect to or have implications for your work?**

Community building was great. The self awareness was good.

I keep "hearing" and reflecting that I need to move to the next step of "Personally Act" or "Call to Action" and 'Confront Bias"

Allowed me to hear another's personal story and share mine. It was inspiring to see someone still on their path and trying to figure things out.

Connecting with another educator grounded in the work.

It helped me to think more deeply about when, and how I started my journey to equity-which was different than I thought.

It reignited my Why? It felt good talking about my journey.

It was eye opening to consider how I identify vs. others.

Just to see how my past has influenced me and how people my age might view the world.

It provides context and opportunities to discuss pressing items and ideas for us to use with our staff.

I appreciate not only being able to center myself on the areas I most often identify with, but also those areas I least identify with. This allows me to check my biases.

We all have our own story and it is great to hear similarities and differences to how we got to where we are. That is inspiring.

If I have identified my growth thus far and areas to continue to grow. By knowing this will help create opportunity in my building to talk about race, to have staff self reflect and grow with me.

To see how far we have come - which is not far - being part of WULI hopefully we can speed up the process

I think getting to know the other participants helped me reflect on my experiences and opened my eyes to others experiences.

you get to know people and are more vulnerable to your strengths and needs

As a leader and builder of teaching staff how classrooms can be powerful culture shockers if the platform is truly for everyone.

What resonated with me is the historical and current facts about racism that help to put a perspective on how race is viewed today in the US.

It really forced me to notice what caused me to make major life changes along the way. I loved hearing people share out the inspiration they drew from the stories of others. It made me realize how important it is that I create space for my team to reflect and to share their own rivers.

The analogy of the birdcage was stunning. It gave me fuel to answer questions and support arguments

it was interesting to know what parts of the identity wheel participant in the group consider important to them.

I recognize that being a leader in the same district that I matriculated has its benefits and challenges. I have biases that have been instilled in me as a child that I still working to disrupt. Decolonizing my mind from white supremacy is a work in progress. Reflecting on my journey brings me back to why I chose to become an educator.

There were two dates that I was actually part of and experience, 1975 - Horlick and 2019- Tyrese West. I asked myself, have we really changed our practices?



**Now What: How might your learning inform future work (i.e., an action step you might take to apply what you have learned)?**

Bring the personal reflections to others who I work with.

Sharing this information with the schools and decide as a team our next steps

Using the River of Life with my staff as a community building activity.

All good learning is put into practice.

Take the River activity back to an admin meeting

I will definitely use this with my staff.

Consider how others identify and allow it to guide our work,

I would like to use a couple of these activities with my staff. Thanks!

Begin to include elements of this work into staff meetings monthly as a start, then include in other meetings as we move forward.

I plan on working with my staff on this process now.

I think the River of Life activity would be wonderful to share with staff. Probably not all in one shot, but a few each staff meeting would be a great way to get to know each others' stories.

Find professional learning time to embed resources and opportunity to promote staff self reflection

The use of the river so my staff can see how different yet the same we are

We were planning on having a book group of White Fragility this year with some staff members, so there are some great reflections that we can use with this with the book study.

River of life great activity

Model tough dialogue with teaching staff through PD.

In the immediate future, I am happy to be back in a think tank, of sorts. When speaking specifically about the reading, it gives me another piece of information to provide credibility to conversations that I have.

I will replace a team task that perpetuates old ways of working with a space to do the river walk activity.

I will use this analogy in my explanations of why this work is so important

I would like to try some of the activities(the river path) with my staff.

I am curious what the data shows from the ELI survey. Once I receive it I will review my areas for improvement and make a plan.

The work of our policies and procedures. Discipline being the forefront.

## **Session 6 -Building a School Culture of Excellence with Equity - February 22, 2021 via Zoom**

**What: What part of this month's learning resonated most with you?**

ED Camp

Ed Camp! Being able to discuss issues I needed help with was great!

Creating space to collaborate with leaders.

Ed camp power

I liked listening to ideas from my break out room partners.

Sharing out what others are doing. The EdCamp feature was good.

I got the most out of sharing "planning for covid" in the last part of the meeting. I'm going to take an idea shared and put that into effect immediately as we plan for return.

A part of one of the breakout rooms led to personal responsibility and how to grow that in staff.

The learning that can occur from the EdCamp

The pair-share

overall discussion- Having to share my concealed story and then the ed camp

**So What: Why did it resonate with you? How does that learning connect to or have implications for your work?**

Another tool to use

Being able to get ideas to help me resolve different issues was very helpful

Intentionally putting equity into EE observations.

Using Ed Camp as a strategy to get the equity conversations going with staff

Practical

Hearing what others are doing and then being able to replicate those things was helpful.

It was a way to "get the job done" but create community buy in as well. As a leader, i firmly believe in "shared leadership." The more you get to people to "buy-in" the better chance that the initiative will sustain

I was just having this conversation with the leadership team this morning regarding a survey with conflicting information. There is some need, identified by the leadership team, to address what the team feels is a lack of ownership in responsibility of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and actions.

There is always someone who does something different than you, and we don't have a patent on the best ideas, even when something is a really good idea. The Edcamp can provide learning opportunities for everyone involved, but you need an open mind. When we were in person I had rotations set up for staff meetings as I hate sit and get. I have really kept virtual meetings with staff quick and really watched the time but this is another way to create that "world cafe" approach.

I didn't come up in this district as a teacher, but I have been an administrator longer than Duane- I don't know him very well, but this was an excellent opportunity to really look at the secondary side of things and understand the challenges there as opposed to elementary. It was there that we started really talking about student teachers and the equity challenges surrounding TEPs

The overall discussion was great and I was able to see how others are using things that I struggle with - they have prompted my thinking and how to move forward

**Now What: How might your learning inform future work (i.e., an action step you might take to apply what you have learned)?**

Use this tool with the staff

Moving forward with family engagement ideas

As we revamp our school success plan to incorporate This equity work into SLO/PPG and school goals.

Build an ed camp into a staff meeting to help move forward change in our counter-story at my building.

Interesting to listen to and collaborate on what each school is trying to get better at.

I plan to start a CCC group at my school.

Well, it's the concept, not the actual task that will sustain, "giving ownership to the team."

We are creating a survey for staff, but I'd like to have the staff address the "questions" using the ED Camp format. The benefit gets voices heard and will start conversations in the open instead of a survey as the only route.

Try Edcamp with staff once students are back, only a week away)

I really leaned into my personal challenge which was to question practices that my district promotes, and so I was glad when Haithcock brought up the grow your own initiative. Privately, I asked questions about if we even understood what the university philosophies of the partnership school- what texts did they use, how did they present them alongside other scholarly works, how was critical thinking promoted to help students to understand how they will need to move along a continuum to develop their own professional persona. It's clear none of this was explored at the outset- I think this might be a critical piece!

The use of some of the formats used in my discussions

## **Appendix K - Foundational factors necessary for establishing educational equity**

The Foundational Factors were identified from a review of school turnaround strategies that focus on promoting equity. Information about the Foundational Factors is presented below. Many of the factors were borrowed from the literature on Community Schooling (<http://www.communityschools.org>) and Wisconsin's Framework for Equitable Multi-Level Systems of Supports (DPI, 2017).

In Wisconsin's Framework for Equitable Multi-Level Systems of Supports, equity in education is defined as a system in which "every student has access to the educational resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background and/or family income (DPI, 2017)."

### ***Continued Title II funding or transition to Title I funding***

Sustained funding will be necessary for the initiative to continue to train school leaders to be equity champions each year to reach all school leaders with the participating districts. Currently, Title II funds are allocated for this purpose. It may also be possible to transition to Title I funds if empirical evidence suggests the initiative is positively impacting student outcomes.

### ***Supportive state and district policies & procedures***

The Educator Effectiveness process is one example of a state and district policy that can either promote or inhibit racial equity. At the state level, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction promotes teacher and principal evaluation processes that emphasize growth rather than accountability. Ultimately though, districts decide to what extent the processes on educator learning. When the process is focused on growth, educators have the space to work to address the needs of all students and families. When focused on accountability, there is a tendency to try to explain away students' lack of success as individual or family deficits. When this happens, schools move away from equitable practices.

### ***School Board support***

School boards determine the policies schools have to implement. In that way, school boards can represent a facilitating or inhibiting agent for equitable access to educational opportunities for students of color. Related, if changes are needed, school board members would have to buy in to the purpose of the changes. As such, school boards should be engaged in the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute so that members better understand its goals and the opportunity they have to promote equity in their district.

### ***School leader evaluator support***

School leaders participate in the Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness evaluation system. As part of this, a district administrator provides both formative and summative feedback to each principal about their leadership and practice. As such, it is critical that district administrators both understand the goals of Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute and understand what changes they should be observing in school leaders and their schools resulting from their participation. Principal evaluators have the opportunity to consolidate school leader learning from the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute and to support principals' continued development and their efforts to improve equity beyond their participation.

### ***Shared school leadership that includes families, students and communities***

Schools that share leadership are more democratic and inclusive. This is critical when trying to develop partnerships across racial and ethnic lines. Community Schools have a common vision with organizational structures that create the broad participation of families, students, teachers, school leaders, and community partners for shared responsibility, decision-making and ownership of making progress toward that vision (Maier, et al., 2017).

Wisconsin's Framework for Equitable Multi-Level Systems of Supports defines strong shared leadership as representative teams with responsibility to lead and oversee implementation of an equitable multi-level system of supports at the school and district levels (DPI, 2017).

### ***Development, recruitment & retention of effective & racially diverse teachers***

Students perform better academically when they are matched with an educator of the same race or ethnicity who can serve as a role model and advocate, can leverage shared culture in the classroom and hold high expectations for students (Egalite, Kisida, & Winters, 2015). However, in Wisconsin we have a shortage of teachers of color; fewer than 5% are teachers of color. Even in schools comprised entirely of students of color, only a small percentage of teachers are nonwhite. Any comprehensive effort to improve equity in educational opportunities for students of color must also address equity in the teacher workforce.

### ***School funding parity***

Although the system of education funding allocations in Wisconsin was already an inhibiting factor for addressing educational equity in Wisconsin, due to the emphasis of local funding sources, over state funding sources, the passing of ACT 10 further exacerbated the problem. After ACT 10, the burden to fund public schools was placed even more on local communities. To better meet the needs of all students across the state, the Blue Ribbon Commission on School

Funding released recommendations to the Legislature in January 2019 to improve school funding in Wisconsin, including to increase funding for special education students and for students from low-income backgrounds. Ultimately, any system where poorer schools receive less funding will result in continued equity imbalances across the state.

### ***Availability of services all students & families need to succeed***

Community Schools establish partnerships with community organizations to provide comprehensive services to address the individual student and family academic and nonacademic needs, such as health services, early childhood education, employment services, transportation assistance and housing and food assistance (Maier, et al., 2017).

Wisconsin's Framework for Equitable Multi-Level Systems of Supports defines a continuum of supports for students that includes "high quality instruction, collaboration, and strategic use of data of varying intensity to equitably address the needs of every learner (DPI, 2017)."

### ***High-quality instruction***

High quality instruction requires teachers to meet students and families where they are and build supports and learning opportunities that challenge all students regardless of race. Wisconsin's Framework for Equitable Multi-Level Systems of Supports defines high quality instruction as "curricula, teaching practices, and learning environments [that] are standards-based, evidence-based, engaging, differentiated, culturally responsive, and data-driven (DPI, 2017)."

### ***Culturally-relevant curriculum & practices***

One of the defining elements of equity in Wisconsin's Framework for Equitable Multi-Level Systems of Supports is that schools "use practices, curriculum, and policies that respect the identities and cultures of learners and families served by schools (DPI, 2017)." DPI also offers a model for becoming culturally responsive that includes making a commitment to equity, gaining knowledge about cultural differences and acting as a leader to promote practices that respect students' cultures (DPI, Sept. 2017).

### ***Positive behavioral practices***

As one characteristic of Community Schools, positive behavioral discipline practices emphasize restorative goals and support rather than punishment. It is no secret that students of color are typically disciplined at a greater rate and more severely than white students. Thus, the more punitive-minded a school's discipline policy and practice, the more it exacerbates inequity.

Systems that promote equity focus on restorative justice and social and emotional supports, which promote student growth, safety, and a positive school culture and climate (Frankl, 2016).

### ***Integrated student supports***

The Aspen Institute defines social and emotional development in Pursuing Social and Emotional Development Through a Racial Equity Lens: A Call to Action as being comprised of “specific skills and competencies that people need to set goals, manage behavior, build relationships, and process and remember information (2018).” Furthermore, social and emotional skills and competencies develop within organizational contexts and relationships and so depend upon the culture and climate to facilitate development (Aspen Institute).

### ***Communities are engaged in schools***

Community Schools establish partnerships with community agencies to expand learning time and to provide services to families and students. Communities organize and advocate to improve schools and to reform school and district policies (Maier, et al., 2017).

One of the defining elements of family and community engagement in Wisconsin’s Framework for Equitable Multi-Level Systems of Supports is that schools “partner with community agencies to create more comprehensive and accessible supports for learners and families, beyond the limits of the school day and school year (DPI, 2017).”

### ***All families are viewed as partners in supporting student learning***

Community Schools partner with families in a variety of ways including giving families the information they need to support students academically at home, communicating frequently about student progress, asking families to volunteer for school activities, and providing family members access to services at the school to promote their own well-being (Maier, et al., 2017).

In Wisconsin’s Framework for Equitable Multi-Level Systems of Supports, family and community engagement is envisioned as “families and communities are active partners and key collaborators in achieving the goal of success for every learner (DPI, 2017)”.

### ***Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute-trained school leaders remain in their schools***

For Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute-trained school leaders to build a culture of equity, they will have to remain in their schools. However, it is common for the most effective school leaders to be promoted to other district positions. School leaders may not stay in their building long enough to realize their equity goals. For the Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute to impact school equity, school leaders will need to be in their schools long enough to realize their goals.



However, given that some school leaders invariably will retire or move on to other positions, Wisconsin Urban Leadership Institute will need an on-boarding process for new school leaders that position them to continue equity work.