PEFA eCourse Introduction/Considerations

Introduction

For Wisconsin's students to be prepared for their future and Wisconsin's communities to remain strong in our global economy, it is imperative all students graduate [college and career ready](#). As Wisconsin's student population becomes increasingly diverse, the persistence of disparities in the educational system becomes a challenge to individual student opportunities and our collective economic progress. **These gaps are persistent - but not insurmountable.** The Department of Public Instruction designed this eCourse, using a combination of original content and existing quality resources to promote equity -- Promoting Excellence for All, or PEFA -- to assist educators across Wisconsin in successfully closing these gaps. You can access the full report PEFA A Report from the States Superintendent's Task Force on Wisconsin's Achievement Gap [here](#).

The PEFA eCourse is organized into three modules: Understanding Race in Education, Exploring the Data, and Implementing the Strategies. While this overview addresses the PEFA eCourse as a whole, the Facilitator's Guide focuses on **Module 1: Understanding Race in Education.** It is incredibly important educators explore racial achievement gaps in education and how our own unconscious bias can influence the way we treat others.

Facilitation Considerations - Guiding Hard Conversations

It is critical facilitators know how difficult it can be to have, and more importantly, guide difficult conversations. Discussing potential evidence of *marginalization* and *institutional discrimination* in the local setting requires courageous, skillful, and resilient facilitation. "Things to Keep in Mind" (Appendix A, below) is designed to help facilitators prepare effectively for such discussions that align with Module 1 of this eCourse; keeping all participants safe; and cultivating a willingness to stay engaged and learn more despite the discomfort participants may be feeling through the conversations.

It is also important there is a common understanding of the meaning of key terms referenced throughout the eCourse. To assist with this, a variety of terms are bolded and defined in the facilitator's guide for each session, and can also be found in the glossary at the top right hand corner of the PEFA eCourse. Additionally, there is a [glossary](#) of terms included in this facilitator's guide which includes key terms from Module 1.

Coaching Considerations

It is strongly recommended the learning in this module includes the presence of a coach. Joyce and Showers (2002) completed a meta-analysis on the effects of training and coaching on teacher implementation of strategies in the classroom. If participants

attended professional development with opportunity to practice the skills and receive feedback, they would demonstrate a high level of knowledge and ability to replicate the strategy within the course of the professional development, but only 5% of educators would replicate the strategy with fidelity in the classroom. When, however, this professional development was followed-up with coaching, use in the classroom rose to 95%. Similar results have been reproduced by other coaching leaders in the field, such as Elena Aguilar (2013) who states, "*Coaching can build will, skill, knowledge, and capacity because it can go where no other professional development has gone before: into the intellect, behaviors, practices, beliefs, values and feelings of an educator.*"

Some districts in Wisconsin have recently hired equity coaches, but any experienced coach who feels comfortable engaging in conversations about race and equity may access the coaching resources hyper-linked at the beginning of each session. When considering coaching entry points, keep in mind the Courageous Conversation Protocol (Adapted from Glenn E. Singleton & Curtis Linton, 2006. pp.58-65; Accessed October, 2018), including the four agreements, six conditions, and compass to engage, sustain, and deepen interracial dialogue about race. Keep the first condition, "Focus on personal, local, and immediate," at the forefront of every possible conversation. This applies to not only the coachee, but also the coach who should attend the module alongside his/her colleagues.

This model of coaching is favored because a coach will be able to "lean in" as a participant if, during the course of the module, they are personally engaged in the learning or experiencing discomfort. They will also be able to view the module with a coaching lens; paying attention to responses and interactions and taking note of coaching entry points. A Coaching Notes Sheet, found in the Unit 1, Session 1 coaching resources, may provide a coach with one place to capture their coaching plan based on PEFA's four focus areas. It is recommended a coach is always transparent and ask permission of their coachees when using a coaching tool.

In preparation for your work as a coach, please familiarize yourself with several key resources. The Coaching Competency Practice Profile (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction) describes the essential functions that allow coaching to be teachable, learnable, and doable in educational settings. Wisconsin's Model to Inform Culturally Responsive Practices (Wisconsin RtI Center) describes the beliefs, knowledge, and practices Wisconsin educators, schools, and districts need to reach and teach diverse students within their culturally responsive, multi-level systems of support." Appendix A and the Readiness Guide for the PEFA eCourse, found below, both provide further guidance in preparing to engage with colleagues on equity work.

Besides linked resources at the beginning of each session, the reflection questions embedded throughout each session may be modified and act as great starting points for initial coaching conversations. Also, please note the coaching strategies are only samples. Nearly all coaching models acknowledge the fact each coaching conversation is unique and requires a relationship of trust between the coach and coachee; the topics of race and equity will only further enforce this axiom.

Strategic Considerations

The equity work included in the PEFA eCourse should be aligned to other elements of a school's continuous improvement. This eCourse should both inform the development of the strategic considerations and be a strategy included in the continuous improvement work, including:
1) School Improvement Plan
2) School-wide Learning Objective (SLO)
3) Strategic Plan (for the district and/or school)

Equity Considerations

Regardless of how much racial diversity exists in your district, it is imperative all districts employ the contents of this eCourse. Disparities exist within the composition of each student body. Because racial achievement gaps are often the largest statewide gaps in Wisconsin, the eCourse is structured to address that gap which is in need of the most attention. It is important to note disparities between subgroups are equally as important to address; whether there is little diversity in your district or if your district is highly diverse.

Consider additional achievement gaps existing in your school or district and approach the eCourse with these gaps in mind as well. For many Wisconsin schools, there will also be a gap between students with disabilities and those without; or English Language Learners and native English speakers. If you are not certain of your local achievement gaps, the Exploring the Data module (Module 2) will walk you through that identification process.

Marginalization affects more than students of color. Marginalization occurs for students on the basis of a variety of identities including race, gender, language, ability, sexual orientation, and religion. The marginalization of students of color often happens in unintended ways, and ends up permeating institutions such as the K-12 educational system. More often than not, institutional discrimination happens under the radar and is only acknowledged when courageous individuals see it, are able to identify it, and act to correct it. In general, our schools have been designed to support the success of white, non-disabled students from financially stable homes. There are many forms of inequity

that can be found in our schools. The eCourse is a tool that can help educators who are ready to correct institutionalized inequities.

Here are two ways the materials can be used, and facilitators may highlight, depending on local circumstances:

First, the changing demographics of Wisconsin indicate most students will live and work in a more diverse world. While the primary intent of these materials is to improve student outcomes by closing achievement gaps, this course also provides support to teachers eager to better prepare their students to be successful in a diverse world. This is particularly true for the first module, Understanding Race in Education.

Second, although these materials are specifically intended to address race-based achievement gaps, they are valuable in helping schools identify and address any high priority gap, such as gaps based on economic or disability status. Utilization of these materials can help schools design systems to address any achievement gap.

Professional Development Considerations
The PEFA eCourse is abundant with information, resources, and activities in which participants can meaningfully engage. In order to maximize impact of the course, course facilitators are encouraged to consider important local decisions beforehand, which may include:
1) The readiness of the participants to receive the learning of the course and ways the facilitator can prepare for the varied perspectives that will be presented.
2) The amount of time available for facilitated staff learning and support. (e.g. Will your staff explore the eCourse as a series of professional development events over the course of a year? If so, are there other professional development offerings that would be prioritized over the eCourse?) To assist with scheduling decisions, the Facilitator's Guide has divided each unit of Module 1 into 1-1.5 hour professional development sessions, organized by topic. This is to account for typical time allotment for professional development. Consider combining or dividing sessions according to your/your staff's schedule, needs, and readiness.
3) The delivery method. (e.g. To what degree will the course learning and work occur face-to-face versus online? Will you employ a blended approach?)

<u>Getting Started with the eCourse</u>
Access the eCourse from the following Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction webpage: https://media.dpi.wi.gov/excforall/ecourse/story.html

Once there, click the "Welcome" module to access basic information that will be helpful to you in your facilitation and, in many cases, for participants in general. Some key messages in this opening module include the following:

- The PEFA eCourse is free content, with no passwords required.
- We encourage PLCs to work in teams through the eCourse. At the same time, the course is personalized to each educator, and each individual will track his/her work individually. There is no team "secretary."
- The focus of this facilitator's guide is Module 1:
  - Understanding Race in Education.

- Module 1 is divided into four focus areas:
  - <u>Effective Instruction</u>: Exploring identities, stereotype threat, and the power of high expectations
  - <u>Student and Teacher Relationships</u>: Exploring implicit bias, microaggressions, and colorblindness
  - <u>Family and Community Engagement</u>: Exploring racial anxiety, deficit-oriented thinking and assets-based engagement
  - <u>School and Instructional Leadership</u>: Exploring habits we need to continue our practice as race conscious educators

- Each module includes activities to support learning. Participants may wish to use relevant work from this eCourse as artifacts for Educator Effectiveness.
- The course contains a downloadable course notebook, available in both Word and pdf options. Participants can use the notebook to record reflections, thoughts, and other activities throughout the module.
- Upon completion of this eCourse, participants may elect to receive a Certificate of Completion, which may act as recognition within one's school or district, or within an institute of higher education.
- Course navigation is made easy through the navigation tools on the left margin of the screen and on the top right of each slide.
- In the event of difficulty downloading a resource in the course, slide 13 provides troubleshooting resources specific to each of the following options: Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, and Firefox. Chrome is the preferred platform.

Module 1: Understanding Race in Education
Estimated Time Commitment (~14-15 Hours)

Unit 1: *Let's Start* **(~45 minutes)**

Unit 2: *Effective Instruction* **(~5.5 hours total)**
- Session 1:Understanding Racial Identity and Identity Salience (~1 hour, 15 min)
- Session 2: Critical Consciousness (~1 hour)
- Session 3: Reducing Stereotype Threat (~1.5 hours)
- Session 4: The Power of High Expectations (~2 hours)

Unit 3: *Teacher-Student Relationships Unit* **(~ 4 hours total)**
- Session 1:Understanding and Recognizing Implicit Bias (~1.5 hours)
- Session 2: Microaggressions and Reducing Implicit Bias (~1. 5 hours)
- Session 3: Color Blindness (~45 min-1 hour)

Unit 4: *Family and Community Engagement* **(~2.5 hours total)**
- Session 1: Exploring Racial Anxiety (~1 hour, 15 min)
- Session 2: Moving Away from Deficit-Oriented Family and Community Engagement (~1 hour, 15 min)

Unit 5: *School and Instructional Leadership* **(~1 hour, 45 min total)**
- Session 1: Critical Reflection on Policy and Committing to a Practice of Racial Consciousness (~1 hour, 45 min)

Before you Begin:

Before starting Module 1, review data that highlights the achievement gaps existing within your school/district. As you begin Module 1, ensure that everyone understands the reality of your school's/district's achievement gaps, as well as the critical importance of addressing these gaps. Module 2 is focused on exploring data, should you need assistance with this process. As you look at the data, consider the following:
- School/district demographics (demographics listed here align with those in WISEdash): disability status, economic status, English Language Learner (ELL) status, gender, migrant status and race/ethnicity
- Disparities within these demographics
- Supports currently in place to address these disparities

Things to Keep in Mind (Appendix A)*

Facilitating productive race-based conversations is the most critical factor influencing the success of the eCourse. Preparing yourself is an important prerequisite to supporting this work with others. Here are things to consider as you prepare for the role of facilitator or coach for the PEFA eCourse:

1. <u>Know Yourself</u> - Deeply examine your own views about racism and its role in education and the workplace before you facilitate a conversation about it with others. We all have "buttons" related to race that can be triggered unexpectedly. Knowing where your own areas of vulnerability are related to race can help you maintain your role as facilitator or coach, and prevent you from being pulled off course or unable to intervene effectively on behalf of the group.

2. <u>Know your Co-Facilitator/Co-Coach</u> – If you are co-facilitating the eCourse, or co-coaching to extend learning, become familiar with the strengths and "triggers" you each have. Prepare in advance which portions of the content will be led by each facilitator and coach, and the role of the non-lead person during these times (observer of participants, interjecting when appropriate, providing support, etc.).

3. <u>Know the Research</u> - Become versed in the research on the connections between racism and educational and workplace outcomes before you facilitate the eCourse, or coach to extend learning. This will help you build your own confidence and be able to bring what's known in the research to the conversation at key times.

4. <u>Know your Audience</u> - Familiarize yourself with the work of the team you'll be facilitating or coaching through the course. Identify ways to connect the work they do with equity to ensure that every student is college and career ready. This will help them see the relevance of this learning to the work they do within their own role. Notice the racial makeup of the team and pay attention to common patterns based on that makeup

5. <u>Study the eCourse Content</u> - Review the eCourse thoroughly so you can speak to the content comfortably, anticipate your "triggers" related to it, and focus your attention on the conversation rather than the content.

6. <u>Be Current </u>- Review recent events related to race at a local, state and national level. Be prepared for participants to bring these into the conversation (Black Lives Matter, Standing Rock, immigration, the presidential election, etc.) and for some with strong emotions attached to them.

7. <u>Understand Intersectionality</u>- Identities based on social dimensions, such as race, gender, class, religion, national origin, sexuality, etc. do not exist in isolation. Acknowledge and be prepared to navigate conversations as they naturally extend to these and other identities.

8. Be Curious - Engage in dialogue with a genuine desire to understand and learn from the participants as much as to share the content in ways that are meaningful to them. This will help you anticipate and respond effectively to the needs and reactions of the participants.

9. Choose Words Carefully - For example, while use of the term "racism" may be intended to inspire change, it implies an intention for some that can trigger an intense emotional response and derail the conversation. Many of the racist outcomes we experience are unintentional and all are tied to a system of beliefs, policies and practices of which we are all a part. Focusing on bringing awareness to the system and ways our beliefs and biases (both explicit and implicit) contribute to it may be more effective.

10. Know Your Role - Key elements of successful facilitation/coaching for race-based conversations include:

   a. Maintaining a safe environment for every person. Safety needs for people of color and white people in race based conversations differ.
   b. Staying neutral by resisting the temptation to insert your own viewpoints or judging the contributions of participants.
   c. Serving the group as a whole by making sure no one person dominates the conversation during the eCourse or while coaching to extend learning.
   d. Maintaining sufficient flexibility to make adjustments as needed based on the flow of conversation.
   e. Preventing and resolving conflicts that may arise among participants respectfully, allowing for multiple viewpoints and focusing on areas of common interest.
   f. Recognizing and preparing to respond to common responses from participants when talking about race. Long-time facilitators of race-focused conversations have experience we can learn from regarding common comments and facilitator strategies.

Getting Started

Creating a sense of safety and belonging is critical to productive race-based conversations. While this is cultivated throughout the eCourse content, consider the following as you introduce yourself to the group and set the stage for collective learning:

1. Cultivate a sense of belonging among group members by getting them talking authentically to one another early. Because many of us haven't yet had an opportunity to practice interracial race-focused conversations, facilitators need to build fluency, skill, and confidence by providing multiple, low-risk opportunities to practice. Always start with a dyad (think-pair-share, elbow partner, etc.) or triad. Move to larger or large group activities only after you've observed colleagues at least three times and assessed they are comfortable moving to a larger group based on evidence of engagement.

2. Set working agreements based on the Four Agreements for Courageous Conversations:
   a. **Stay engaged**: guard against the learned tendency to disengage emotionally, intellectually or socially. Stay present.
   b. **Experience discomfort**: acknowledge that discomfort is inevitable, especially in dialogue about race, and invite a commitment to bring issues into the open by being personally responsible for pushing yourself into real dialogue. Discomfort often leads to real growth.
   c. **Speak your truth**: share honest thoughts, feelings and opinions and not just what you think others want to hear. Take risks.
   d. **Expect and accept non closure**: "hang out in uncertainty" and resist the urge to rush to quick solutions, especially in relation to racial understanding. Focus on opportunities rather than answers.

3. <u>Establish confidentiality as essential for trust</u>. Even with the best intentions, something said in the conversation shared outside the conversation can be taken out of context. Set the ground rule that who said what about anything during your time together doesn't leave the room. Clarify the goal is to have the participants continue the conversation after they leave, however sharing personally identifying information about anything said will compromise everything we're working to create.

4. <u>Use of personal stories</u>. Modeling the sharing of personal examples of the concepts being shared is a powerful tool to reduce vulnerability and increase learning for participants. Consider sharing these occasionally throughout facilitation of the course.

*This appendix is adapted from: Cable, L.P. 2012.