



COLORADO
Department of Education

Advancing Equity for Students with Disabilities in Schools

A Community of Practice

Remember to Sign- in

*"Advancing
Equity for
Students with
Disabilities in
Schools"*



24-25 Michael Ramirez Sign-in



Facilitator Information

- Michael Ramirez, Ed.D. (He/Him/His)
 - Exceptional Student Services Unit, Colorado Department of Education (CDE)
 - Supervisor, Equity Projects Specialist
 - Facilitative Leader and Coordinator for IHE CoP
 - Adjunct Faculty at Colorado Christian University
 - Background:
 - CDE Leadership (RtI, PBIS, Building Bridges MH Grant, Restraint / Seclusion Rules)
 - Supervised CDE's initial implementation of MTSS
 - Founder of a Facility School's flagship program (Shiloh House, Inc.)

Facilitator Information, Continued

- Bryn Harris, PhD, NCSP (she/her/hers)
 - Professor - University of Colorado Denver
 - School of Education and Human Development & Department of Pediatrics (Developmental Pediatrics)
 - Background:
 - PhD - Indiana University
 - Licensed Psychologist (CO) and School Psychologist (CO)
 - Bilingual in Spanish
 - Practicing School Psychologist (part-time) - Denver Public Schools
 - Research focuses on identification of autism in culturally and linguistically minoritized populations



Grounding in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- One person's idea about equity may not be the same as another's
- We encourage you to be courageous while remaining measured in your approach
- Lean into uncomfotability
- Every day is a new beginning on an uncharted journey toward equity

Today's Agenda



- This Community of Practice (CoP) is a forum to discuss research-based strategies to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Introductions
- Community of Practice Introduction
- Discussion Regarding “MTSS to Advance Equity.”
- Reflective Activities
- Closing



Setting the Context

During SY 2024-25, this CoP will explore strategies to address the question:

- What are the key problems of practice impacting equitable outcomes for students with disabilities?
- Topics:
 - ✓ 1st: Using Data to Dismantle Educational Inequalities
 - ✓ 2nd: MTSS to Advance Equity
 - 3rd: Advancing Equitable Evaluation Practices
 - 4th: Promoting Equitable Discipline Practices

Member Introductions

Introduce yourselves in the chat!

- Name, preferred pronouns, role, district/region/BOCES.
- Where are you joining from in Colorado?
- What is your favorite Thanksgiving side-dish?

Introduction to Communities of Practice

- Coined by Drs. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger-Trayner, CoPs are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Three defining characteristics:
- Domain
- Community
- Practice



Introduction to Communities of Practice, Cont.

- **Domain:** CoP members share a commitment to the domain and a collective understanding of each other's competencies and basic understanding of their shared concern or passion.
- **Community:** CoP members engage in joint activities wherein they learn how to improve their similar programs, share best practices, and discuss areas of growth. These joint activities are foundational for building the "community" in a Community of Practice.
- **Practice:** CoP are practitioners; they develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short, a shared practice.



Defining this Community of Practice

We share:

- Common purpose
- Technology
- Sharing of ideas
- Flexibility
- Support / Encouragement
- Common Students
- Interdependence
- Access for all
- Shared challenges
- Willingness to learn from each other
- Wanting what is best for our students
- Success for our students
- Advocating for systems change
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Two Rounds of Breakout Discussions

- Both rounds will have 4 simultaneous breakout rooms.
- You will be assigned to a breakout room.
- Questions will be placed in the chat, please copy and save for your breakout session.
- You may want to adopt and adapt the questions for your meetings.
- Session 1, ~15 minutes, & Session 2, ~12-minutes.
- Appoint a scribe and reporter.

Reflective Activity #1 (15 Minutes)

(Re)defining MTSS

In breakout groups, Read and compare the two [MTSS definitions](#).

Deconstruct each statement. Questions to discuss:

- What stands out in each definition? Are there any terms that need to be defined or further deconstructed?
- How can you reconstruct a definition of MTSS from these two?
- Based on these definitions, what are the goals and outcomes of a successful equity-based MTSS program? What do these words mean in practice?

Reflection Activity #2-(12 minutes)

MTSS as a Team Process, Not a Checklist

Discussion Questions,

- Who is a part of the MTSS process in your context?
- How are different voices and perspectives included? What voices might be missing or may add important additional information about the child and the school context?
- What are the benefits to having a robust team for the MTSS process? How does this benefit both at the systemic/program level for the school and at the individual level for students being supported in Tiers 2 and 3?
- How are parent/family voices and student voice included in each case? What is the benefit of this?
- What strategies or practices have worked for strong MTSS teamwork in the past?
- What barriers have you encountered in strong MTSS teamwork?

Reflection Activity #3: Future Opportunity

MTSS For the Whole Child

Discussion Questions

- Where are the strengths and gaps for MTSS in your setting?
- Who are the populations most benefitting from MTSS and who are the most under-resourced?
- How can your MTSS program better support students with exceptionalities?
- How can you help to better ensure that your MTSS program is considering and supporting the needs of the whole child?
- How is data being collected and used to inform MTSS planning *and* to monitor progress?
- What action steps can you take to fill the gaps in your setting?

Final Reflections and Commitments

In the chat,

1. Share relevant breakout notes in the Chat.
2. List your top takeaways from today's discussion.
3. How will you use Reflection # 3, with your team?
4. Identify one commitment, goal, or next step, based on today's learning.

A Vision Toward the Future



This session will be posted on the website.

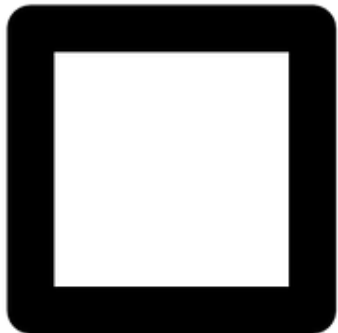
Register for Future Sessions at:

[Increasing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities](#)

(Registration closes two weeks before the Meeting)

- ✓ September 10, 2024
- ✓ November 12, 2024
- February 11, 2025
- May 13, 2025

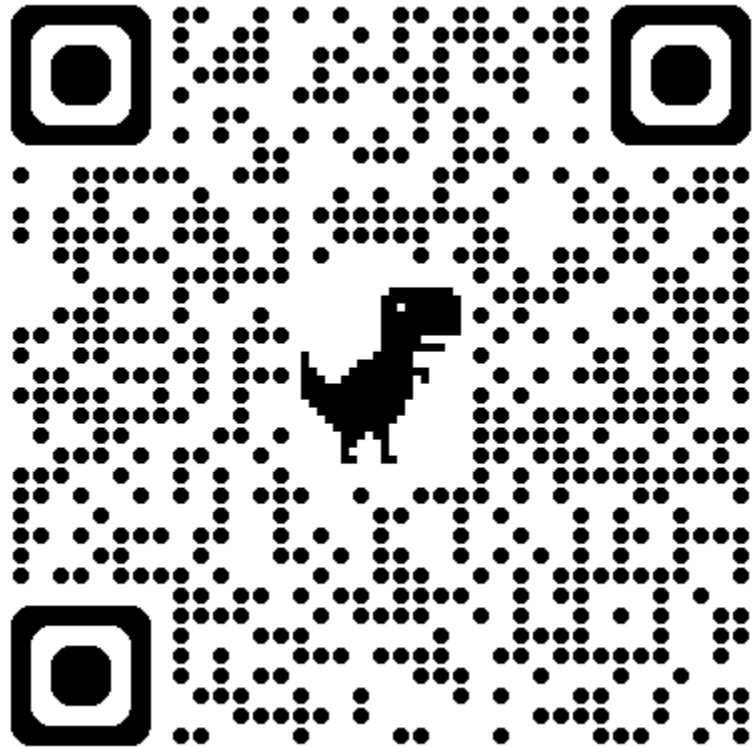




Topic for next meeting:
“Advancing Equitable
Evaluation Practices”

**Look for pre-meeting
assignments to be
shared before the next
meeting.**

Evaluation and Certificate



- *CoP of Practice for Advancing EDI for Students with Disabilities: Using MTSS to Advance Equity.* Nov 12, 2024, Evaluation link,

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