CalAPA
California Administrator
Performance Assessment

Step 2: Plan

Contributing Factors and Problem Statement Template

Directions: Respond to the prompts below (no more than 5 pages). Type your responses within the brackets following each prompt. Do not delete or alter the prompts. NOTE: When citing relevant research, embed your citations directly within your written responses. Do not provide citations in a separate list.

I. Institutional/Structural Factors

1. What potential contributing factors are suggested by the data you have collected and analyzed that may have created or added to the equity gap you identified for a student group at your school?

[Looking at the data that was collected, there were 4 main contributing factors that emerged:

1. There is currently a cultural shift in the population in the city that AHS resides in. In recent years, there has been a large increase of new families migrating to the city from the nearby metropolitan cities where housing prices are rising too quickly for people to keep up with. People are migrating from urban areas to the rural city that AHS is in. Cultural norms, rules, and expectations often differ heavily between the school systems that students are transferring from to AHS.

2. The staff population does not match that of the student body. While student of color comprise 77% of the student body, people of color only comprise 15% of the teaching staff. As well, the administration team at AHS is a 4 member team, 3 of which are White and 1 of which is two or more races (Asian and White).

3. When discussing how the administrative teams analyzes data, it was indicated that they do not look at subgroups. They do not analyze the data in a granular way in which they take ethnicity, socio-economics, foster status, etc…in to account when looking at the data. When asked why, it was stated that "the rules are the rules, ethnicity and other factors don't matter." (Discipline VP interview)

4. Throughout AHS' Local Control Accountability Plan goals, Western Association of Schools and Colleges report, mission, visions, etc…are suspension rates specifically addressed nor is there any mention of cultural responsiveness other than references to English Language Learners. With no goals or mention, there is a lack of specific supports and interventions for any sub-populations on campus.]

2. How do these specific contributing factors, including institutional and/or structural factors, impact student learning or well-being for the student group?

[To begin, there are the obvious factors:

1. Time out of school results in lower achievement. When students miss school, they miss the opportunity to learn and succeed. Missing work and school puts students at

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a disadvantage because it is harder to keep up with current work while also trying to make-up missed work.

2.   In addition to this, the school views suspensions as an unexcused absence and a large majority of teachers will not allow students to make-up work that is missed during an unexcused absence. If a particular cohort of students is being suspended at a higher rate and they cannot make-up the work, it also puts them at a disadvantage over their peers.

In addition to the obvious, there are a number of factors and questions that this raises:

1. The suspension rate over the last three years as a while is declining, however, for the African American population it is growing. If there is no sub-group analyzation of suspension rates the school may be overlook information that is vital to the success of students. If the why behind this phenomenon is not investigated, it will not get fixed and the learning of African American students will be affected for years to come.

2. As a community sees itself marginalized, cultural rifts can begin to occur that lead to larger issues needing to be addressed later.]

3. Cite research related to your findings regarding contributing factors that may have created or added to the equity gap you have identified for the student group.

[In a study titled "Principal Attitude Regarding Zero Tolerance and Racial Disparity in School Suspensions" (Heilbrun, Cornell, & Lovegrove, 2015) the authors discuss how principal views toward a zero tolerance policy effects suspension rates. Principals who view zero tolerance policies favorable tend to have higher suspension rates that principals who take a different approach. As the Discipline Secretary at AHS explained in her interview "well, our suspension rates are higher because we follow the rules and consequences where other schools in our district do not…when our former Vice Principal was here, our rates were much lower. He'd always say 'they just need another chance' or 'they just need some time' and there were no consequences. This speaks directly to the research done by Heilbrun et. al.. The suspension rated over the years have been directly tied to the Principal in charge of discipline.

As well, in a study that appeared in the July 2019 issue of *Education and Urban Society* entitled "Teacher Racial Composition and Exclusion Rates Among Black or African American Students," researcher Dorothy Cheng concluded that raising the representation of black teachers by even a single percent lowered black suspension rates. Given that AHS has only a single black teacher among a teaching staff of over 70, this research could be helpful in examining some of the contributing factors at AHS.

Additionally, studies on alternatives to suspensions show a structure to discipline that help reduce time out of class. In a study by Gregory et. al., "An Examination of Restorative Interventions and Racial Equity in Out-of-School Suspensions" researchers suggest that alternative to suspensions may benefit students. By focusing on restorative practices which focus on community and helping student to understand that their actions affect more than just themselves many schools saw a drop in suspension rates and suggests that schools should focus on their structural supports to decrease the disparity in suspension rates.

While restorative practices have been seen by some researchers as helpful, Hilary Lustick discusses in her article ""Restorative Justice" or Restoring Order? Restorative School Discipline Practices in Urban Public Schools" that the success of restorative practices rely heavily on the staff members who coordinate the restorative practices. She found that restorative practices were more effective when run by coordinators who share a similar background and ethnic make-up of the student body they server. This circles back to, and compliments the research above about the principal being a large factor in suspension rates. In fact, a great deal of the research I conducted suggest that staffing is a major factor in suspension rates.]

4. Identify areas of educational need related to the single equity gap for a group of students (e.g., the school needs additional supports or materials, necessary specialists or counselors, after-school programs for students).

[At AHS, there are two main needs based on the identified gaps and the research that accompanies those gaps:

1. AHS lacks specific and intentional structural supports for its students of color. Our colorblind, quasi-zero tolerance policies lack cultural and community needs. In our approach that "the rules are the rules" and the idea that "most students have what they need and when we hear they don't we help" (Discipline VP Interview) we have become complaisant in our analyzation of how we can best support our community.

2. The diversity of AHS' staff is severely lacking. Students of color lack positive role models on our campus, and lack adults who can relate to the community which they serve. AHS' disparity in diversity lends itself to allowing for unintentional biases to seep into the work that is done and leave our communities of color in a precarious place.]

II. Problem Statement to Address Student Group Area of Need

Directions: Prepare a problem statement that culminates from your data collection and equity gap analysis. Your analysis may have revealed several contributing factors that impact the equity gap you identified for a student group. Some of these factors may be larger societal issues while others may be related to specific practices at the school. Select from the areas of educational need you have identified for the student group that could be addressed at the school level and develop one problem statement.

5. Problem Statement: Describe the equity gap that needs to be addressed by a problem-solving team at the school for the California state indicator and student group area of need (achievement or well-being) that you have identified.

[Over the last three years, AHS has seen a decline in overall suspension rates. However, suspension rates for African American students has seen a 20% increase. As well, in the 2018-2019 school year, African American students were suspended at a rate that was seven times higher than their white counterparts. Additionally, AHS has no formal analysis protocols or systematic supports in place in regards to suspension. Research shows that time out of class can have a significant impact on the achievement and wellbeing of students. Additionally, research shows that systematic supports and restorative discipline practices can help to reduce suspension rates among African American students. In order to address the issue of a racial disparity in suspension rates, AHS should explore systematic supports that can be put in place to ensure that all students have an equitable educational experience.]

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