

C!E System Transformation Framework

***What roles do equity seeking leaders
play in the transformation of
education systems?***

System Innovation Framework by [Center for Innovation in Education](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#). Please cite this document as “C!E System Innovation Framework”

Placing Leadership in context... What is your view of learners? How would you define the key behaviors of an Equity Seeking System...

The Instructional Core drives everything else, and it is defined by the system participants' beliefs about learners, learning and readiness. At CIE we have defined an equity seeking vision for the instructional core in the following way.

All children are capable and curious people with multi-dimensional identities who belong to local and global communities, who learn in different ways, and who need to be prepared for a wide range of societal, civic and professional possibilities.

Although we hope that this has been sufficiently informed by others to ring true for each of our partners, we expect that each community or system of communities will define their equity seeking instructional core somewhat differently. The process of interrogating beliefs about learners, learning and how you would define readiness is something that must be done locally, and when doing this work in a specific place, the product is more specific to context and granular than what we can express as a grounding vision for work we do with partners across the country.

Key behaviors, mindsets and processes of an equity seeking system are in symmetry with the instructional core. With this view of an equity seeking instructional core, and based on patterns of successful endeavors we have observed in systems with similar views at the center of their system, CIE believes the key behaviors of an equity seeking system are as follows:

Equity seeking systems...

- Recognize the historical origins of the system and seek to help individuals reflect on their personal histories and experiences and move to productive action based on what they see
- Seek to help all actors build relationships across lines of difference
- Seek to help each learner build academic and essential skill competencies
- Seek to help each learner build identity as an individual and member of local, connected and global communities
- Seek to help each learner grow in their agency

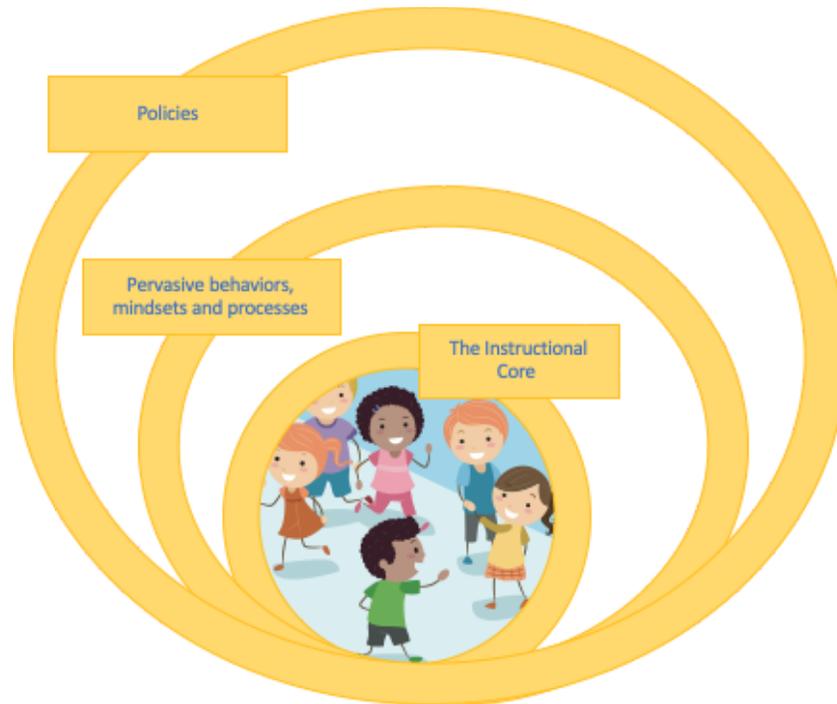
Education systems are complex. The instructional core is encircled by formal and informal influences that transformation leaders must understand and address. Unaddressed, they will undermine and unravel investments in transformation of the instructional core. Only when there is symmetry among the instructional core, informal and formal influences will the system perform well.

Policies are the formal declaration of the system values and processes. They define priorities and sometimes dictate what is possible and not possible. They reflect public beliefs, prescribe governance and finance parameters, and establish expectations and consequences.

Behaviors, mindsets and processes are the persistent informal influencers of the instructional core. Whether consciously or unconsciously, these pervasive patterns reinforce views about students, communities, teachers, the purpose of the system, and how learning & change happen. In an equity

seeking system shared leadership strives to align all of these to be in symmetry with the instructional core, to bring alignment and integrity to what the system believes and how it behaves.

The Instructional Core, those practices and mindsets so common that they come to define most of a learners day, year and education experience. In an equity seeking system they are interrogated and implemented with intention to ensure alignment of the instructional core with shared vision of learners, learning and graduate profile.



We are too used to thinking that policy drives habits which drive instructional practices. In this frame, we believed that if the policy was right, outcomes would automatically follow. In reality, those leading the implementation of policy have tremendous informal influence over how the field comes to understand the intention and also implement the policy. In equity seeking systems, partners from across these circles work together to create room for original innovation, systemic learning, storytelling, and to facilitate scaling through approximation. **The system then responds to systemic learning by making changes in policy to continue to promote alignment and symmetry across the system over time.**

In the CIE interstate learning community, we work together to learn how to use deep partnership to radically shorten the distance between these three circles – to lead initiatives to the place where these circles intersect, to practice radically inclusive leadership to create equity seeking systems.

This framework is the living document in which we capture our shared understanding of the high leverage roles to play and implementation strategies to positively contribute to changes in pervasive behaviors, procedures, beliefs, and mindsets at all levels of the system. It isn't enough to be permissive of innovators in the instructional core, or to invite the input of people whose voices haven't been

welcome before. Coordinated shared leadership is required to transform systems into equity seeking systems.

Key Roles and Strategies for Equity Seeking Leaders

We will say more about each of these in the subsequent section of the document, by using case studies to illustrate them in practice, but we wanted to begin by just listing them as broad roles and strategies for leadership partners to engage with and respond to.

Play a leadership role in influencing mindsets, behaviors and processes across the circles

- Model and reinforce the mindsets and behaviors that need to become pervasive while being willing to identify the mindsets and behaviors that are pervasive and need to change.
- Call in peers and colleagues who are intentionally or unintentionally demonstrating equity limiting behaviors or holding onto equity limiting processes.
- Foster partnership by sharing leadership with voices and perspectives that haven't typically been welcomed into the conversation, process, or work.
- Seek to bring boundary spanning individuals and organizations into the work as much as possible, either through hiring or partnership.
- Openly pursue one or more equity seeking learning agendas, which includes making the learning agenda known, engaging people across lines of difference in the learning agenda, sharing findings both positive and negative, and explaining why changes are or are not made as the result of learning.

Play a leadership role in ensuring the flow of learning and system symmetry

- Work together to ensure channels of information and learning flow across the system so that when original innovations yield compelling ideas, or when students and communities express new needs, the system knows and is able to respond.
- Use storytelling, awards/grants, and networking to elevate and connect equity seeking innovators and leaders from across the system
- Use the introduction of new work & shared innovation endeavors to explicitly practice inclusive behaviors: working with new people, building new partnerships and reaching out across historical boundaries.
- Develop expertise in the process of approximation and help others learn to use the deep study of strong examples and their home contexts to create their own approximations of high quality work aligned with the instructional core.
- Develop expertise in facilitation of learning communities that simultaneously build capacity in the instructional core AND practice essential mindset, behavior and process shifts to enact the core shifts with symmetry. Then, in partnership, facilitate a number of these communities focused on high leverage aspects of the instructional core.

Play a leadership role in influencing the policy circle

- When patterns of learning dictate that it should be done to drive the symmetry of the policy circle with the instructional core, play whatever is the appropriate role in helping drive that policy change.
- When we aren't sure what strategies to try, and we need policy to invite and fund targeted emergent practice from field innovators, use what we know about quality public inquiry to shape policy to give sufficient room and resource for innovation, but require sufficient

partnership, planning and documentation to ensure the risks taken are likely to be fruitful and that the system will learn from the investment.