

DLRT Steering Team Notes—2/22/2021

TNTP shared first the proposed scope and sequence for the CRTL PD trainings. They shared that there is a lot of overlap within the standards and so they have been broken up into three foundational training sessions, with a wide range of resources that districts can choose from to tailor what is right for them and their area. Everyone is in a different place, so we need to meet them where they are. We want to make sure we honor the fact that there are already great trainings out there and we don't want to "reinvent the wheel" with these. This was shared with the Network last week and their concerns include the fact that these trainings are not mandatory. That's a point of concern and frustration for members. This is an opportunity to build engagement and buy-in. Members felt strongly that these should be aligned with how EPPs are incorporating these into their programs. And also need to emphasize that this is a journey with no end point.

How can we engage districts around the state if these aren't mandatory? Time will be important. NEIU hasn't even discussed how these will be incorporated. This year is pretty much over so it's probably not feasible soon. More like the fall. The timing might be off for the trainings and EPPs to have their alignments be similar. Perhaps we can find a way to help them evolve as time goes by. There is consideration to create trainings for EPPs on how to incorporate these into their programs.

The superintendents and principals are critical to getting these trainings off the ground. That would be the place to start. Is there particular messaging around this work that would be compelling to them? Yes, because these are folks who want to see their students and teachers do well, see good culture in their buildings and districts, etc. Some have been following this pretty closely.

Would make sense to go to school board trainings as well, so that it's higher than the superintendents. Those members are the heart of the community and their charge is to hire the right people. When there is a board member or a few who have the understanding of these impacts on the students, then they are the best champions for such work.

One thing that will be key is resources. How do you operationalize these things? What does it mean in practice? How would our school/district do things differently? Could be things to read, tools, rubrics, guidelines, etc. Everything from curriculum to hiring expectations and guidelines to ongoing PD. They will need support past their buy-in.

Once we have provided this kind of training, if there a staff member in a district that is feeling that they're experiencing that there really is no actual cultural shift or change, is there any thought of ability to let folks know that there are steps to take, training has been offered, but someone feels as though that there isn't a shift. Is there a way for them to reach out to submit their concerns to someone? Something we talked about in the Network meeting was what this might look like as a "train the trainer" delivery and how to have check-ins with the facilitators and hearing from teachers and students about what is shifting in the school. How can we assess the effectiveness of this work? How do we teach people to deal with microaggressions? How can we find a way to have "learning communities" around this work? There should be a group I can discuss things with if I feel that way.

One thing EPPs use all the time is case studies to provide context for analysis of situations and how people respond. They can be really important learning tools and may have a place here.

TNTP presented a possible strategy for EPP recruitment and retention plans based on Network feedback. This included various steps like establishing a diversity council within the institution to lead some sort of audit at the local level to see what the barriers and opportunities might be. Then they would set targets, then compile some strategies to see through and analyze. An implementation plan over the next few years may start with a pre-pilot with just a few EPPs already doing this work to begin, then expanding out to others who want to opt-in over the next year, then pulling in the rest of the institutions within the year after that to begin implementation. The Network generated some ideas on how accountability for all of this might look, and chart was shared with the Steering Team.

Universities right now are paying attention to the IBHE strategic planning process. That is important because of the emphasis that IBHE has now on equity and inclusion as a key theme for their plan. Campuses are also facing their own overarching equity and inclusion initiatives. Some are hiring a DEI officer and there will be a committee to work with that officer in how these things relate to the College of Education. These are all multi-faceted and layered initiatives that all need to be pulled together into a strategy. The plan of operation will have to be consistent and coherent. Funding streams coming out of the Legislative Black Caucus and other initiatives will need to be known too.

Current plan over the next months is to create guidance and resources to make it feel more like EPPs have expressed that there are challenges, so this is ISBE responding. In the first year, we would set up those supports and connections with the Network to make this happen. How would this be received by EPPs? Institutions are going to see that they need help because Candidates of Color may be decimated in retention because of Covid. And they might be yelling for help after all of this for plans like these. EPPs are now planning what fall will look like with Covid, so a lot of this may be really difficult to get up at this moment, especially when putting yet another committee together. So that timing for all of this may inundate institutions when they are already dealing with everything else they already deal with. Their focus right now is what the landscape is currently looking like and what may change in the fall to transition back. Many are exhausted by what they are doing right now. Would like to think that people would want to take this up right away, but it's hard to get people interested, though this may be different, but it's still a consideration.

What kind of funding sources can EPPs tap into? Are there particular grants or appropriations? Would be important to find out what resources IBHE is looking to put into their strategic plan.