
Equity Panel: STRIDES

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Overview

Joleigh Honey: I am a first-generation college graduate. My mom was 15 years old when she became pregnant, 16 when she gave birth to me. I grew up with “generational poverty.” I have three brothers and yet I am the only child in my family to graduate from high school. I am a woman who experiences white privilege. My mission: promote equitable math opportunities by changing how people engage with and view mathematics.

Fred Uy: I am a male, lifelong learner of Asian descent. Staying with the stereotype, I do like mathematics. However, liking it came to me at a later date when I was a sophomore in high school. It was during this time that I was told by my teacher that there are other ways to arrive to the solution, if any, to a mathematical problem, and boy, that statement did light up the sky for me. I excelled the rest of high school, struggled in college, and shone again during graduate school. My mission: make students find mathematics useful and enjoyable.

1. *What are the equity issues/challenges that impact or relate to your RAC's work toward the Aim statement?*

The equity challenges that relate to the STRIDES RAC for Recruitment include the following:

- Prospective candidates not seeing themselves as mathematics teachers.
- Not enough students with risk factors are supported/mentored in a way that allows them to identify as a math teacher.

Additional issues and challenges for the STRIDES RAC include the following for new teachers:

- New teachers may not be properly trained to understand equity issues and not be aware of how to properly differentiate to ensure all students are receiving high-quality instruction.
- New teachers have many new things to take into consideration, and are often not aware of unconscious bias or recognize that students have a lot to offer, resulting in more direct instruction as opposed to focusing on student thinking and reasoning.
- Often, students with risk factors are the ones placed in a “slower” track, which is also what the newest teachers are assigned to teach. This, ultimately, is an equity issue for both students as well as the new teacher.

2. *How is a focus on equity reflected in your RAC's work?*

Support for teachers through:

- Virtual networks to connect new teachers with positive, professional mentors
- Professional organizations
- Lesson studies
- “10 minute chats” with mentors
- Learning cycles
 - Mentor modeling teaching practices
 - Breaking down implementation of teaching practice
 - Rehearsal and reflection

- Repeat

3. *In what ways have you begun to collect data about these equity issues/challenges? What have you learned and what new questions have arisen?*

STRIDES RAC has created a survey for new teachers that include the following ideas:

- What is most important to them to be successful in their new role?
- What are the greatest challenges they face as new teachers?
- What type of support do they value/need/want?

Results of survey highlight the following:

- New teachers WANT and need support. There has to be a mechanism of support and interventions to keep them in the profession.
- Equity issue: New teachers often lack skills to help students overcome identity issues in mathematics and yet, we frequently place students and teachers who both need the most support together in a room.

Note: One of the unexpected results that the STRIDES group realized is that we explicitly must make known the need and importance of selecting and creating good mentors.