



COLORADO
Department of Education

Advancing Equity for Students with Disabilities in Schools

A Community of Practice

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

- 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

Today's Agenda

- Introduce this Community of Practice (CoP) as a forum to discuss research-based strategies to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Introductions
- Community of Practice Introduction
- CDE Representative Discussion Regarding the Creation of the CoP
- Reflective Activities
- Closing



Setting the Context

This CoP will explore strategies to address the question:

- What are the key problems of practice impacting equitable outcomes for students with disabilities?
- Potential Topics:
 - 1st: Using Data to Dismantle Educational Inequalities
 - 2nd: Equitable Family, Community, and School Partnerships
 - 3rd: MTSS to Advance Equity
 - 4th: Advancing Equitable Evaluation Practices
 - 5th: Promoting Equitable Discipline Practices

Member Introductions



- Introduce yourselves!
- Name, preferred pronouns, role, district/region/BOCES.
- Where are you joining from in Colorado?
- What brought you to this CoP?

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

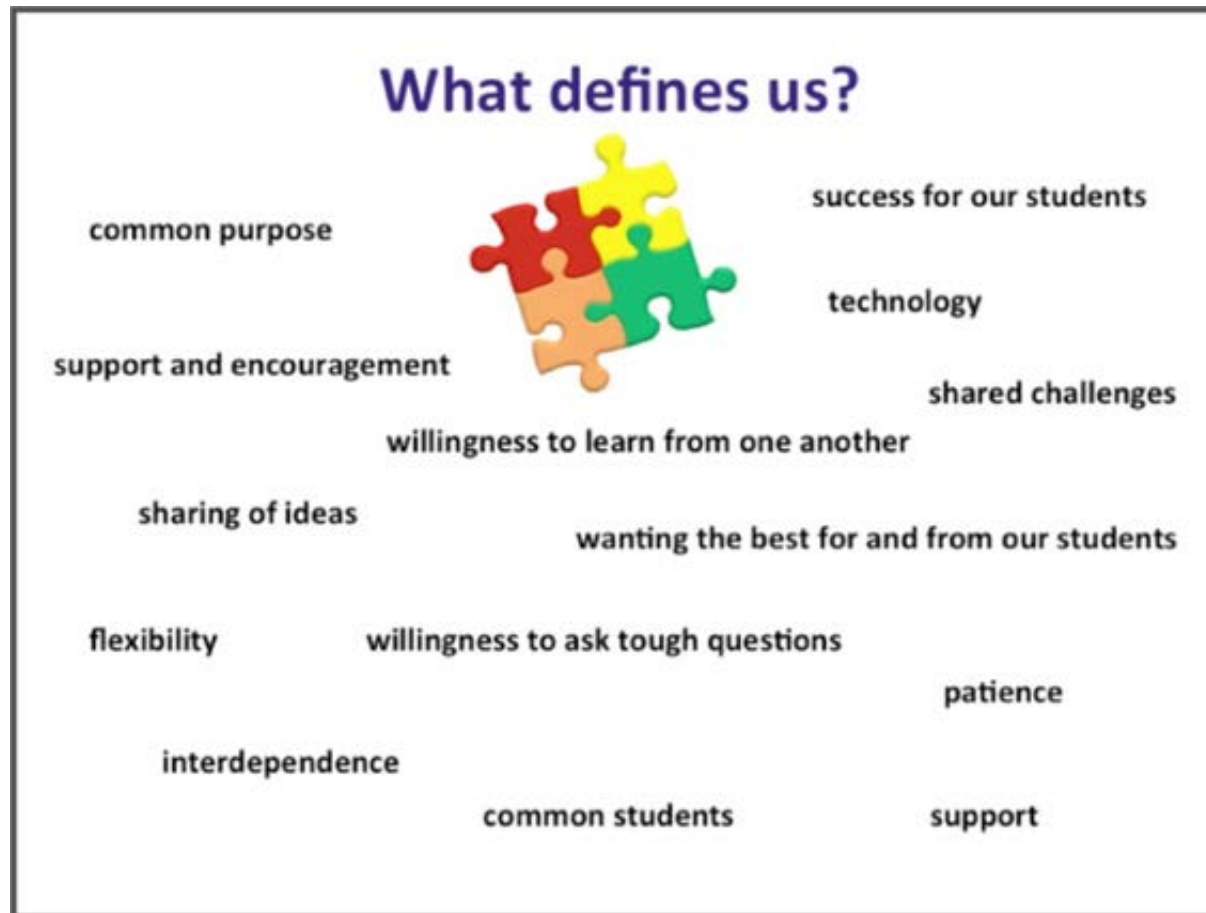


Introduction to Communities of Practice (cont.)

- **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.



Communities of Practice (cont.)



Reflective Activity #1 – Diving into Equity

1. How do you define equity?
2. What does equity mean in your own context?
3. Are the definitions different among professionals? Why might this be the case? What commonalities exist across definitions?
4. What are your current successes and gaps related to equity in your own context? How have you learned about these successes and gaps? What successes and gaps may be unknown at this time?
5. How would you answer question 4 in regards to students with disabilities?

Reflection Activity #2 – Forward Thinking

1. As you complete the school year, what specific successes did you encounter pertaining to equity this school year? Why do you think these are successes?
2. What specific challenges did you encounter pertaining to equity this school year? Why do you define these as challenges?
3. What would your context look like if these challenges did not exist? How would the context feel? How would school staff feel and perform? How would students, parents, and community members be impacted by this change?
4. What is one thing that you can advance over the next two months that would influence equity in your own context by the beginning of the academic year? Why is this issue of importance to your context? Who needs to be part of this? Set a mini-action plan for advancing this issue.

Culminating Thoughts



- Share verbally or in the chat 1-2 things that you hope to get out of the CoP and/or what topics you are most eager to discuss in the future.
- How can CDE support your engagement and participation in this CoP?

A Vision Toward the Future



Register for Future Sessions at:

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

(Two weeks before the Meeting)

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





Advancing Equity for Students with Disabilities in School

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

Contact Information



- Bryn Harris, Ph.D.
- University of Colorado Denver
- School of Education and Human Development & Department of Pediatrics (Developmental Pediatrics)
- bryn.harris@ucdenver.edu
- 303-315-3899
- Michael Ramirez, Ed.D.
- Exceptional Student Services Unit
- Colorado Department of Education
- Ramirez_m@cde.state.co.us
- 720-460-6251

15