



OUR EQUITY COMMITMENTS

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In 2018, the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) launched a new strategic plan. The heartbeat of that plan was a refreshed mission that explicitly named equitable schools as the desired end toward which all of GLISI's work aims. It was our intention in naming equity in our mission to make clear and public our organizational belief that schools—and the systems in which schools are nested—do not produce equitable outcomes in their current design, and that our work as a leadership development organization is to change that.

This document elaborates on our mission, clarifying what we mean when we say “equity.” These five equity commitments guide our actions, are the standards by which our board holds us and themselves accountable, and are the guides we invite you to watch and listen for in how we show up in any space and with any person or group. By sharing them, we invite you to look at how we bring these commitments to life, and hope you might be inspired to use or adapt something here as a tool for looking at your own journey across your individual, personal, professional, and organizational lives.



OUR MISSION

- > **UPLIFT** school leaders
- > **TRANSFORM** mindsets and action
- > **CREATE** vibrant cultures of innovation
- > **BUILD** excellent and equitable schools



OUR VISION

A Georgia where schools and communities pursue breakthrough success for all students—regardless of race, geography, or family income.



OUR VISION FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

Every student in Georgia experiences breakthrough success – regardless of race, geography or family income.

In support of this vision, GLSI commits to: “surface, confront, and dismantle the normalization and legitimization of cultural, systemic, and institutional inequities that routinely advantage one group while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for another.”

(Adapted from Lawrence and Keleher, 2004)

CONNECTING THROUGH MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Connection through meaningful relationships is foundational to creating the conditions for leaders, educators, students, family and the community to feel seen, heard, and valued and to unite and create an equitable world.

IN ACTION:

- Fostering mutually beneficial relationships where each person is seen as having inherent value and valid needs
- Valuing, appreciating, and respecting differences in identity (e.g. personality, experiences, wisdom)
- Using active listening to hear and engage multiple voices and perspectives
- Authentically investing in the experiences, goals and success of each individual
- Repairing harmed relationships, whether that harm is intentional or unintentional

LIVING EQUITY AS OUR CORE BELIEF

We will live, lead, and demonstrate equity as a core belief and place for action in all services.

IN ACTION:

- Ensuring all policies, practices, and procedures begin with an equity lens (e.g. hiring practices, vendor selection, and grant making)
- Expecting staff to make decisions and conduct their work in ways that prioritize and fortify equity
- Using GLISI's budget as a key vehicle for prioritizing and addressing equity
- Designing adult-learning experiences that inspire and/or push leaders to explore their beliefs and biases in the context of leadership
- Building equity and breaking bias in our storytelling (e.g. website, annual report, marketing campaigns)

LEADING COURAGEOUSLY TOWARD EQUITY

Excellent school leaders and educators are always leading toward equity, social justice, and the eradication of oppression.

IN ACTION:

- Actively examining the system, reflecting on our own practice as well as the experiences and success of all staff and students consistently asking the question, “Is this equitable?”
- Expanding our own and other’s capacity to dismantle inequity and build equity
- Engaging a broad coalition of stakeholders with intentional representation from marginalized communities to meet the needs of and create a vision for a strong equitable community
- Establishing organizational priorities and making decisions that challenge the status quo and consistently reflect an equity lens
- Advancing equitable access and opportunity for all students even when faced with resistance from our most privileged stakeholders, including allocation of resources in budgets

COMMITTING TO EQUITY PEDAGOGY

Each student, specifically those from marginalized populations, deserves an equitable, high-quality education and the timely support they need to be successful, regardless of race, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, ability, language, or circumstance.

IN ACTION:

- Holding high academic standards for all students and reflecting our shared responsibility for ensuring they attain those standards in our work with teachers and leaders
- Taking an asset-based approach to students and learning, ensuring that students are not labeled as deficient when they walk in the door based on their abilities, race, economic status, or other category
- Teaching students how and where *they* learn, instead of expecting students to learn how we are comfortable teaching
- Utilizing differentiated assessment strategies focused on student needs and skills to challenge and empower students to maximize their full potential
- Reviewing and revising curriculum, curriculum guides and canon of knowledge to ensure that marginalized students and their cultures are represented in meaningful ways

ACKNOWLEDGING AND DISMANTLING SYSTEMIC RACISM

We acknowledge that bias and racism have been intentionally designed into our institutions and, therefore, systems and institutions must be actively redesigned to change.

IN ACTION:

- Being comfortable and confident having meaningful conversations about race and naming/calling out racism
- Distributing the leadership and responsibility of driving an anti-racist agenda at all levels of the organization
- Assessing and addressing the distribution of power in an organization based on race
- Engaging in anti-racism advocacy by opening space for voice and visibility where we see systemic racism and injustice
- Analyzing and addressing policies and arrangements that help sustain systems of entrenched racism, specifically including allocation of resources in budgets