




Standardized ↘

Testing, an  
inequitable system ↙

How can schools innovate to create learning experiences that promote inclusivity and equity over systemic racism and classism?





# 01

## Objective

You will be able to express your thoughts on how we can replace our current systems with more equitable ones.

# 02

## Outcomes

Thoughtful conversations among school communities about better systems, leading to implementation of improvements.

# 03

## Process

Presentation of information, then discussion

# 04

## Resources

# Systems (Tools) that can cause harm

## Standardized Tests

They were designed to sort students rather than actually measure their skills



## The Standards Themselves

Were they designed to help us progress?

## Grading

Teachers tend to grade the way they were graded.



## Discipline

School discipline policies were considered during Teacher Institute Week in February

“For some college officials, an aptitude test, which is presumed to measure intelligence, is appealing since at this time (1926) intelligence and ethnic origin are thought to be connected, and therefore the results of such a test could be used to limit the admissions of particularly undesirable ethnicities.”

—Erik Jacobsen, a New Jersey writer and math-physics teacher based at Newark Academy in Livingston, N.J.

"Standardized tests have become the most effective racist weapon ever devised to objectively degrade Black and Brown minds and legally exclude their bodies from prestigious schools."

-Ibram X. Kendi,  
Testimony in Support of the Working Group  
Recommendation to #SuspendTheTest,  
October 2020

# Systems (Tools) that can cause harm

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# Social Justice Policies

Are there policies that seem to disenfranchise, discriminate, or disparage?

List on a sticky note if we wait to get started.

Not having cultural relevant curriculum, or including figures that represent and reflect our students

referring to Hawai'i as "50th state" as the norm without teaching the evidence for different sides of the argument

Less focus on encouraging special education and students of lower socio-economic status participate in extra-curricular activities.

Each person sharing their pronouns as a norm. Could we discuss more whether having this as a norm is helpful or unhelpful? I was intrigued by the presenter saying not to insist upon this.

Not honoring bilingual students, but looking at them in a lower way because their English skills are still developing.

Charging for period products

Universal Screeners

low standards in rigor

Lack of period products in bathrooms YESSSSS (or in classrooms)!!!

Standards based testing

Greater numbers of certain ethnic groups in SPED

Not hiring educators that represent/reflect our students

Gendered classroom organization/assignment

credit recovery options

Attendance policies for military families that may have to leave for long periods of time due to family death/ issues.

Statewide testing

Educate teachers and staff of new ways and policies

Hi

Field trip payments

Dress codes are discriminatory against women in particular

requiring the purchase of school uniforms

Not letting children draw pictures of themselves/parents as Marines, Police Officers, Soldiers, etc because their pictures include guns. They might want to be like one of their parents. Part of their culture.

Statewide testing

Not necessarily policy.... but lack ramps/ elevator: students with physical disabilities in ALL school buildings (rather than one building)

requiring families to purchase their own school supplies

ACT test

Pic espe

Not recognizing students home languages in the classroom or mistreating students for using slang or home language in class INCLUDING ACCENTS

NJHS requirements via our school

Aloha everyone

Dress codes: doo rags come to mind; both culturally significant and tied to black hair care

Gender specific bathrooms

Inclusion in sports, "male/female" teams

using email/electronic communication this year to communicate with parents and no other way.

Honors & AP classe

In order to be on the Robotics team, you have to be invited by the coaches. Unclear how The Chosen are chosen, but it's certainly not lottery.

Use of pronouns



Are there policies that seem to disenfranchise, discriminate, or disparage?  
List on a sticky note while we wait to get started. Continued from slide one.

Boy/Girl Lines  
(esp. when it's a school-wide norm)

Our school policy states that the students have to turn on their camera safe... for attendance.

Library late fees

Requiring SpEd/ELL and vulnerable students and their teachers to be in school face to face even when other groups are still on DL. Counselors call and encourage parents to bring their kids to school, stating it is safe....

Telework policies (as it varies by complexes/schools)

Standardized Testing esp. in qualifying for SPED services

Lunch debts. Jelly sandwiches for those with large debts.

inconsistent "return to school" policies in different districts

avid/leadership classes requirements and recommendations

EL and SPED ohana bubbles

Late policy. Some students from cultures with nonlinear relationships to time.

SPED in general - inconsistencies - some are integrated with gen ed population, others are not - who decides? Schools? Teachers?

Not honoring bilingual students, but looking at them in a lower way because their English skills are still developing.

# What does respect look like to you?

Apologizing when making a mistake.

acknowledge all our different worldviews

Listening openly to opinions without interruptions

Recognize everyone's 'ohana has strengths.

Recognizing our own blindspots.

Seek first to understand, then to be understood

Getting to know the ethnic culture of your students

Giving students grace, especially with distance learning

Appreciate families, and acknowledge all they do for their child(ren). Also to welcome and encourage students home language(s) in classroom and that celebrate diversity

accepting everyone's differences

Acknowledging that the challenges of COVID-19 are not the same for everyone - just logging on for class might be harder for some students than others. Applying that to fair grading policy.

Apologizing to students **WHEN YOU ARE WRONG**

make space for each other to share our feelings and listen

nonjudgement

Encouraging and cheering on your classmates

Understand that we are all different and that we celebrate each others differences.

**Inclusivity**

listening sharing and being honest with our students.

helping kids build a culture of intellectual safety

Thoughtful engagement with students, not just surface level

honesty

Allowing students to have a voice, especially when that voice is saying other teachers are being disrespectful towards them. Then facilitating a safe space to share their thoughts and feelings for them and the teacher they experience harm with.

Learning about each other

Asking students for their forgiveness

**EMPATHY**

Taking responsibility and owning up to your own mistakes--as a teacher, as a colleague, as an employee.

Respect means student acknowledge my place in the classroom as well as theirs (aka, they're here to learn and grow in any way they can and I will help them do that). We respect each others time, knowledge, and presence and how they benefit our classroom.

Everyone has an equal voice.

In a respectful classroom, students and teachers speak to each other kindly and take responsibility for their actions with apologies. My goal is to create a classroom of inclusions.

**Equity**

Respect looks like people taking care of each other. Respect looks like conversations happening and all parties listening and working to understand.

# What are the next steps you could take?

Share resources with colleagues: Teaching Tolerance has many lessons/activities that are engaging and valuable

Put less emphasis on cameras as showing engagement. Focus more on actual real time work

I will be submitting someone for the Pono award - recognizing a teacher I know who fights for equitable education for Hawaiian Immersion students, even when her position is not popular to the "powers that be"!

With distance learning: working more to have those conversations about student comfort with having their camera on with coworkers. Talk to them about possible reasons why the students don't have cameras on and to encourage them to talk to their students about their comfort

Speak up when amongst colleagues

Continue to encourage students to develop their voices

Share the benefits of bias-resistant grading (standards-based)

no late work penalty, grades reflect accurate skill levels only

Empower students to speak up.

Listen more

Create opportunities for student/faculty voice and advocacy.

Be aware of my implicit biases and check myself when needed. Continue to educate myself on racism. Teach my students about celebrating-- not just being aware of-- diversity.

Have a student-led social/racial justice club/organization within the school

Have multi-cultural fridays (like aloha friday) in the classroom where the students share about them.

relationships over curriculum: ex. student wants to express personal experiences to educate class, cease the lesson

Be open to students turning their cameras off

Keep a safe distance, but still show I care, to show respect to my students.

Want to get involved more on the union level!

I will get more involved with the union going forward.

Examining my own classroom to consider ways I can celebrate students' diverse cultural backgrounds.

Encourage more "talk story". The more we know about each other, the better we can connect.

Organize teacher at my school to be more involved.



# Exhibit shows ongoing racism hinders Hawaiians

By Ku Kahakalan, Ph.D.

**A** new exhibition at the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum acknowledges that a research project supported and funded by the museum in the early 1920s helped perpetuate scientific racism as it concerned Native Hawaiians.

According to exhibition co-curator Jillian Swift, Native Hawaiians are still dealing with the damage these racist ideas have caused — and the social, political and economic consequences of inequalities justified through false notions of race and racial hierarchy. But racism is not a thing of the past here in Hawai'i.

During a recent keynote address at the Ka Waiwai No Na Kupuna Conference, attended by more than 2,000 Hawaiian and Hawai'i educators, I talked about the harmful effects of ongoing institutionalized racism on Hawai'i's native student population, who make up not only the largest ethnic Department of Education (DOE) population, but also the most under- and uneducated major ethnic group.

Since Hawai'i was among the top three literate nations in the world at the time of the U.S.-supported overthrow of our Queen Lili'uokalani, it clearly cannot be that we are less intelligent, less motivated, less industrious, or less educable than other ethnic groups.

In fact our low achievement levels and the fact that at least since 1981, Native Hawaiians have consistently scored below parity in education, are a direct result of ongoing systemic racism, exhibited by the collective failure of the DOE to provide appropriate, i.e., culturally-based education to Native Hawaiian students that assures a baseline for success.

According to research, institutional racism originates in the operation of established and respected forces in a society, like Hawai'i's public education system founded in 1840 by Kamehameha I. This initial system integrated Hawaiian language and culture into Western education, with Hawaiian teachers teaching Hawaiian children.

This changed with the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, first through the 1896 outlawing of

## ISLAND VOICES



*Ku Kahakalan, Ph.D., is CEO of Ku-A-Kanaha LLC, a Native Hawaiian social enterprise based in Hilo.*

Hawaiian as a medium of communication in the public schools, and then in 1906, when a Programme for Patriotic Exercises focused the entire education process on Americanizing Hawai'i's school children.

Since then, systemic discrimination in education against Hawai'i's native students has continued, despite countless data that point to the success of culture-based education for Hawaiian students.

However, because institutional racism is subtle in nature, thus far there has been little public condemnation by Native Hawaiians, our supporters, or others of the ongoing failure of the DOE to meet the needs of its native student population.

We hope that the Bishop Museum exhibit will not only start conversations on how the museum can better connect with and serve Native Hawaiian communities and stakeholders, but that admissions by the Bishop Museum regarding racist views and practices will open up opportunities to talk about other racism and discrimination against Native Hawaiians, which range from education, to the penal system.

Mahalo nui to Bishop Museum Director Melanie Ide and co-curators Swift and Dr. Keolu Fox for their efforts.

Honolulu Star-Advertiser  
March 7, 2021

## Digging Into Data on Equity

**Research for Action** used 2015-16 data on all schools to evaluate student access to educational opportunity, based on race, ethnicity, and poverty level.

- Worse access than all students
- Access within or equal to 1 percentage point of all Students
- Better access than all students

**Access to Quality Educators** measured the percentages of schools with certified teachers; teachers certified in STEM, experienced teachers; low teacher/student ratios; and low student/counselor ratios.



**Access to College and Career Readiness Curriculum** measures the percentage of schools that offer advanced math; Advanced Placement courses; calculus; chemistry, and physics.



\*FRPL = eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch  
SOURCE: Research for Action

# Education Week 12/11/19 issue

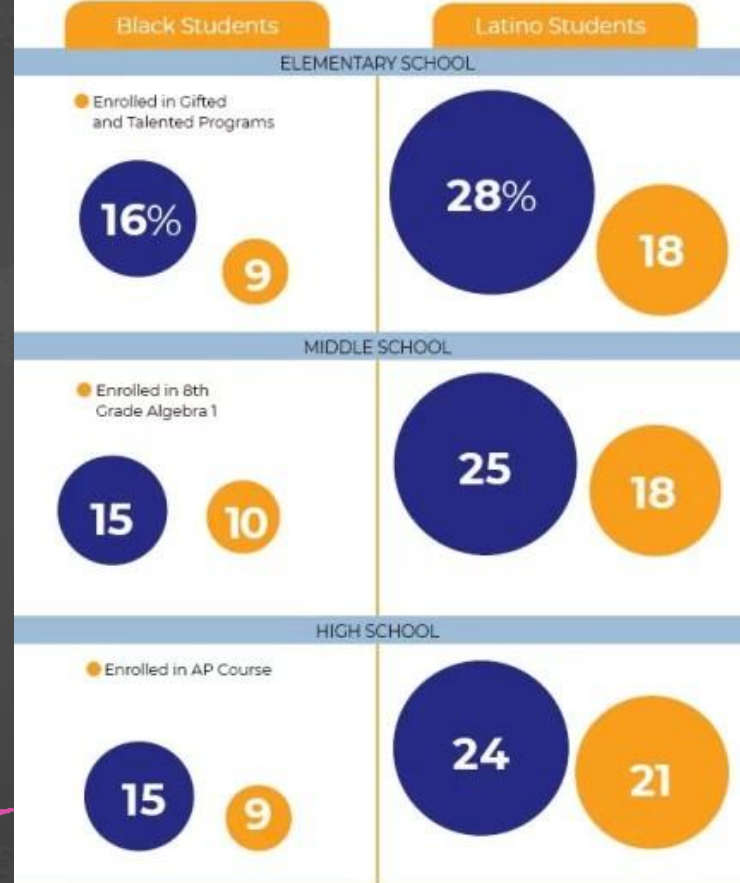




# Education Week 12/11/19 issue

The Education Trust also used 2015-16 federal data to track student enrollment in rigorous classes by race and ethnicity.

● Overall Enrollment



SOURCE: The Education Trust



# Suggested Solutions from NEA

Moving forward, the focus should be on promoting authentic assessments that reflect the broad range of students learning and skills, including creativity, leadership, critical thinking, and collaboration.

This was a conversation that drove many of the educator-led victories in the years before the pandemic. Joining forces with families and other allies, educators worked diligently to reduce the over-reliance and misuse of testing and shift the focus to fairer, more effective assessment systems that actually support the academic, social and emotional needs of their students.

[NEA Article, \*The Racist Beginnings of Standardized Testing\*, 3/20/21](#)



# Questions to Consider

1. How can we notice when some of our tools or systems are sending a racist message?
2. What evaluation methods can we use to see if our tools are being used equitably?
3. How can we reliably and equitably assess students' knowledge and skills?
4. How can we report accurately and fairly our students' progress toward becoming educated individuals?
5. How can we select standards that are fair for an equitable society?
6. How can we create learning experiences that promote inclusivity and equity?
7. How can we implement school culture in a way that promotes equity for all?

# Resources

NEA Article, The Racist  
Beginnings of Standardized  
Testing, 3/20/21

Ku Kahakalau  
Opinion 3/7/21

Unequal Opportunity: Ethnic Inequality  
In Public Education in Hawai'i

Education Week  
12/11/19 issue

Model Code of Ethics for  
Educators

Schools Our Keiki Deserve, p. 18,  
"Ending High-Stakes Testing"

# Mahalo!



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