**Action for Equity (A4E) Framework**

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Over the last 8 years, we’ve earned a reputation as the go-to solution for the desegregation of high school advanced academic pathways, with particular focus on AP and IB courses. Since 2013, we’ve supported schools and districts to add over 50,000 students of color and low-income students to AP and IB courses. This year, we have partnerships with over 400 schools across the country.

Through our partnership, schools and districts receive real-time, actionable data and insights that they use. We support schools to extract themselves from the post-mortem data of the past by transporting them into the bright light of real time insights. Together, we use the data to craft school-specific action plans to aggressively tackle the problem of inequitable access. As we reconstitute a fully functioning school system, our tools are uniquely positioned to humanize students, center racial equity, and provide reliable data and analysis.

Our Action for Equity (A4E) Framework provides three foundational supports to operationalize school and district commitments to equity: Dynamic, real time data analytics to propel equity and excellence; Student identification methodologies to ensure student placement in the most advanced academic pathway possible; Professional learning and coaching structures to build the skill, capacity and possibility of school and district leaders.

Our A4E toolbox provides real time analytics to understand and interrogate school equity eco-systems, along with the requisite coaching and relationships to turn these insights into knowledge and action. We utilize student and staff surveys, and demographic, enrollment and achievement data to identify individual students of color and low-income students who are often right across the hall from more advanced academic opportunities yet demonstrating readiness to succeed. Our revolutionary too, the Student Insight Card has 42 data points on each student in one place, including teacher recommendations, student mindsets and reported barriers, open responses, and provides a powerful and consistent way to make students visible amidst the profound gaps that currently exist.  The Student Insight Card provides a set of valuable insights for schools into student perspective and can serve as a foundational tool upon which they (re)engage with them. Our identification methodology ensures students who are often overlooked are provided with the academic acceleration opportunities they deserve to achieve their aspirations.

Access to AP courses is a necessary but insufficient proposition. It will not, on its own, reverse decades of underinvestment. Advanced courses are rungs on the ladder to college that students of privilege access almost automatically, and from which marginalized students are excluded in alarming numbers. In fact, our system has built a fortress around these classes, guarded tightly by GPA, test scores and unnecessary prerequisites. We’ve told ourselves these things predict success and have embedded these assumptions across the entire system. The reality is different.

This past fall, we surveyed over 250,000 students. Only 15% reported feeling challenged or very challenged by their current coursework and 72% of students indicated it had been hard to feel motivated. Under 50% of students reported having high quality engagements with their counselors, administrators, or staff other than teachers. We also asked 39,000 school staff across the country:­­­ “what best predicts success in advanced academic pathways?” They were nearly three times more likely to select growth mindset, perseverance, and motivation than they were GPA, test scores and prerequisites. In fact, the latter 3 were ranked last on a list of 20 choices. Take a minute and let that sink in – students overwhelmingly report feeling underchallenged, and the three things most often used to keep them out of more challenging courses are things that the stewards of the system don’t believe are predictive. Access isn’t the easy part.

We’ve tolerated segregated educational environments and opportunities. We’ve defaulted to stereotypes, labeling students as deficient and underprepared, deflecting the biases of adults directly onto young people. Our partnership with AP for All, and the success of schools like Sinatra, shows a more equitable way out and forward. Waiting isn’t an option. Together, we should insist that every student be made visible and that they are immediately provided with the educational opportunities and experiences they deserve. We are the ones we have been waiting for.

