

**Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard**

Quality superintendent leadership occurs when the superintendent's ongoing analysis of the context, and the superintendent's decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality school leadership, quality teaching and optimum learning for all students in the school authority. *Alberta Education Ministerial Order #002/2020*



- ✓ Building Effective Relationships
- ✓ Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning
- ✓ Visionary Leadership
- ✓ Leading Learning
- ✓ Ensuring First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education for All Students
- ✓ School Authority Operations and Resources
- ✓ Supporting Effective Governance

**Leadership Quality Standard**

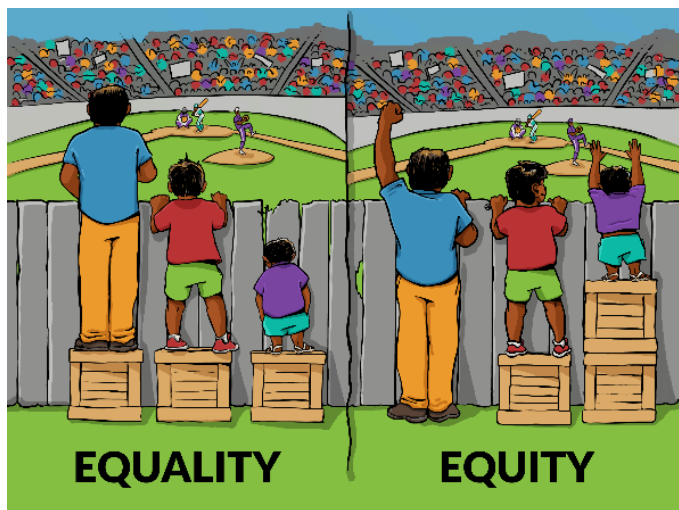
Quality leadership occurs when the leader's ongoing analysis of the context, and decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality teaching and optimum learning for all school students.

*Alberta Education Ministerial Order #002/2020*

- ✓ Fostering Effective Relationships
- ✓ Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning
- ✓ Embodying Visionary Leadership
- ✓ Leading a Learning Community
- ✓ Supporting the Application of Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit
- ✓ Providing Instructional Leadership
- ✓ Developing Leadership Capacity
- ✓ Managing School Operations and Resources
- ✓ Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context

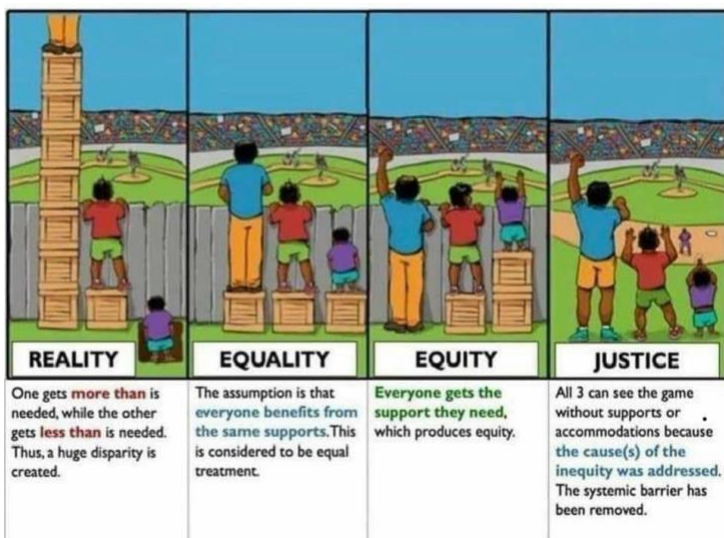
## Alberta System Education Leadership

### Leading Us Forward Conversation Starters: Leading for Equity



Many of us will have seen this, or other versions of an image meant to portray the differences between equity and equality. In the first image, the demonstration is about how things are inadequate when we have a “one size fits all” system. Different students need different supports to access the same quality learning environments. Recent versions of the image have extended the illustration and have brought forth the issues of systemic barriers that exist to impede the learning for all children as we move beyond equity to include justice.

Figure 1 Source: Interaction Institute for Social Change, [interactioninstitute.org](http://interactioninstitute.org) | Artist: Angus Maguire, [madewithangus.com](http://madewithangus.com)



Educational justice is defined many ways but, in its core, justice embraces racial equity and states that these are the conditions we achieve when a student's racial identity plays no role in their academic and social/emotional achievement. Working within finite public resources, policies and structures often have not changed substantially over the years and across Canada. Research consistently shows that systemic inequities within our educational systems still abound.

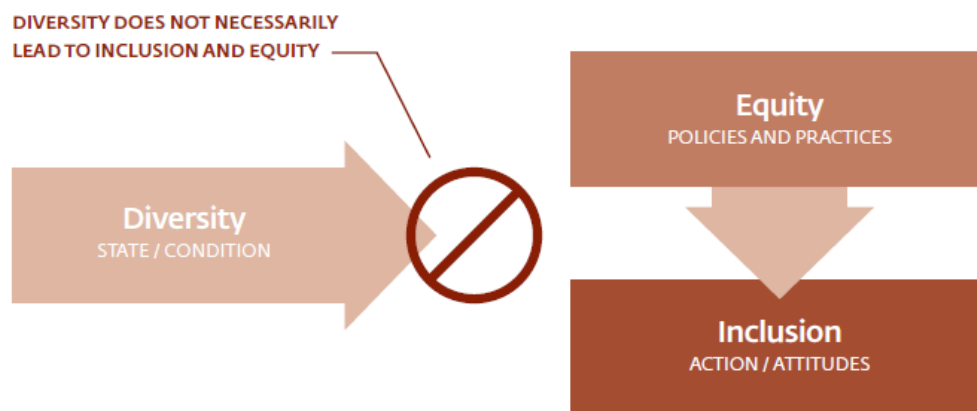
Figure 2 Source: Interaction Institute for Social Change, [interactioninstitute.org](http://interactioninstitute.org) | Artist: Angus Maguire, [madewithangus.com](http://madewithangus.com)

Numerous reports have been published across Canada highlighting many initiatives in an attempt to respond and to highlight the levels of inequity.

In July 2022 the Alberta Government published their Anti-Racism Action Plan. In this plan they specifically highlight the things that schools, and society can be doing in schools to develop or maintain safe spaces for people to talk about racism and inclusion. This report comments about “those who face systemic, historic or cultural barriers, including Indigenous Peoples, racialized communities and newcomers to our country” (p.4). The report asserts that from a moral standpoint, “there is simply no place for racism in Alberta” (p. 4) and that “Living free from violence is a basic human right, and we cannot allow people of our province to continue to be targets of racist actions” (p. 5).

Such a report and action plan is a commitment to this work, and without question, schools will play a key role in this journey. The action plan is intended to address what we all know exists, which is a longstanding history of systemic racism in many forms. The Edmonton-based Centre for Race and Culture (CRC) has authored many reports on the status of racial equity in schools. They state that “anti-racism education provides knowledge, skills, and strategies for educators to examine racism critically in order to understand its origin and to recognize and challenge it.” They also help clarify the differences between diversity, equity, and inclusion.

“While equity may result in equality - fair and equal treatment - unlike equity, equality presupposes that everyone is starting from the same place. Thus, the key distinction between the two is that equity recognizes that racism exists, that it is systemic, and that policies and practices must take action to address race-based, systemic discrimination that positions non-white people at a disadvantaged starting point. In anti-racism education inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can feel welcomed, respected, valued and able to fully participate in the school and district by both contributing to and benefiting from its continual development. Quite differently, diversity is a state of the environment that includes people from different racial backgrounds but that is not necessarily inclusive.”



Centre for Race and Culture (2013)

Alberta is not alone in their challenges. This is a pan-Canadian issue. In 2017 Manitoba published a report highlighting systemic racism and calling on all divisions to engage in critical and courageous conversations about race and racism in education. The authors stated that while Indigenous and non-

Indigenous groups experience racism in similar ways, through Colonialism and the Indian Act including the residential school system, Indigenous students face a “dual track” of racism that is “distinct among First Nations, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI) people.”

In 2017, Saskatchewan began the initiative “Following their Voices” intending to build on the success of New Zealand’s Te Kotahitanga. This was an initiative targeting teacher professional development and engaging teachers in a Critical Learning Cycle.

In British Columbia, a 2016 report by the Ministry of Education and the First Nations Education Steering Committee highlighted ongoing systemic racism and recommended that school districts need to self-assess their own status regarding racism. This launched a series of “Equity Scans” across the province, many of which are still in process today.

Towards Race Equity in Education (2017) reported that Black students, compared to other students, were twice as likely to drop out of school, were underrepresented in gifted programs, and over-represented in basic level programs in schools throughout Ontario.

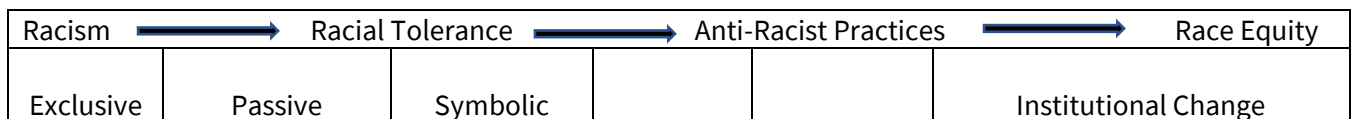
These issues are well known and deeply rooted in our society and in our schools. What steps do we take? How do we assess our successes and challenges, and how do we begin a new narrative?

A framework introduced [by Khalifa, Gooden and Davis](#) (2016) is useful to examine ways for systems to address systemic racism. They suggest four major strands of demonstrating culturally responsive school leadership. The strands are:

Critical self-awareness	Culturally responsive curricula and educators
Developing and sustaining culturally responsive and inclusive environments	Engaging parents, students and the community

Another tool to use when unearthing current barriers that exist within our organizations is [the Pratt Race Equity Continuum](#) (2017) which is a way for systems to examine their own status based on the profile, culture and people within the organization. The continuum is a useful self-assessment tool with targeted language to shape how we all can work toward inclusive equitable and just systems.

The Pratt Continuum asks organizations to consider the following framework and how a self-assessment would reveal where your current views lie. The full continuum contains explicit descriptors, the following diagram is a general representation of how the continuum is organized.



			Identity Change	Structural Change	
Descriptors of organizational behaviours including the culture, policies, practices, decision-making. Board, Management and Human Resource structures including hiring, training, recruitment and retention.					

Regardless of the tools you use, and the research that supports what we all experience in our systems, the path to educational justice likely begins within. In our work as system education leaders in Alberta, and as we consider the complexity and moral imperative of systemic racism, we will continue to ask, when will what we know change what we do?

### Questions for Dialogue:

- Share your reflections on the differences between diversity, equity and inclusion. Describe how your leadership has demonstrated a personal commitment to equity and inclusion.
- Share explicit strategies you have used to engage with staff and/or the community about racial equity in your school. What were the outcomes and tangible actions that followed?

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### **CASS resources to support system education leader growth**

<https://cass.ab.ca/resources/> And specifically:

*Alberta Teachers' Association and College of Alberta School Superintendents: Report on Indigenous teachers and leaders in Alberta's public school system.*

<https://cass.ab.ca/share/?url=https://cass.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ATA-CASS-Report-on-Indigenous-Teachers-and-Leaders.pdf>

[2023 CASS Indigenous Gathering Keynote](#)

[Gebhard, A. \(2022\). \*White benevolence: Racism and colonial violence in the helping professions\*. Fernwood Publishing.](#)