



## HERE WE GO

Suzanne Bouffard

# EQUITY IS AN ONGOING JOURNEY THAT CHALLENGES US ALL

**Whether you have been talking about equity for years or are just starting on your journey, we know everyone needs support on their professional learning path.**

**W**hen guest editor Tanji Reed Marshall and I began working on this year's equity spotlight issues (which include the June 2021 issue on Action for Racial Equity), we didn't know that conversations about educational equity would take center stage during school board meetings and in mass media. But we did know that standing up for every child's right to learn and thrive has always taken commitment, courage, and leadership. That's why we decided to dedicate this issue to the topic of leading for equity.

Equity doesn't live in a policy document or in a one-off training. It lives in the people who make it a priority every day. It is embodied in their attitudes and daily actions. As Principal Baruti Kafele says in his online exclusive interview, "Equity isn't what you do; it's who you are."

Because achieving equity is an ongoing journey, and one that challenges us all, it takes leadership from the top, experts in this issue and elsewhere tell us. System-level leaders set priorities, model their expectations, allocate resources, and monitor progress (p. 26).

But equity takes leadership at every other level, too. School leaders, coaches, teachers, professional learning designers, and community organizations can all be leaders for equity, and they must be, because it takes all of us working toward the common goal of ensuring that every child gets what he, she, or they need to succeed. So whether or not you have leadership in your title, this issue is for you. Whether you have been talking about equity for years or are just starting on your journey, we know everyone needs support on their professional learning path.

In this issue, you'll find strategies for building buy-in among your community (p. 33), cultivating equity mindsets (p. 22), recruiting and retaining a diverse staff (p. 36), examining curricula for cultural responsiveness and representation (p. 53), incorporating equity and inclusion into your SMART goals (p. 66), and much more.

You don't want to miss this issue's online exclusives ([learningforward.org/journal/leading-for-equity/](https://learningforward.org/journal/leading-for-equity/)). Baruti Kafele talks about the unique roles principals and assistant principals play in building commitment to equity among their staff. Jamila Dugan writes about overcoming barriers to systems change. And Lynne Scott from the International City/County Management Association shares lessons from a network of equity officers in local government that can inform the work of school districts' chief equity officers.

This issue — and Learning Forward's work as a whole — have benefitted enormously from the input and support of Tanji Reed Marshall of the Education Trust. We are grateful to her for engaging in the kind of collaboration and shared learning that we aim to build in the field and for embodying the Standards for Professional Learning.

As 2021 comes to a close, we want to thank the three columnists who have contributed to this year's Voices section. Jim Knight's wisdom about ongoing professional growth, Angela Ward's guidance about antiracism, and Sharron Helmke's advice about coaching have been timely and invaluable in a year that has been tumultuous for educators.

If you haven't read all of their columns, I encourage you to check out the archived versions on our website. And I assure you that all three of them will continue to contribute to *The Learning Professional* and other Learning Forward outlets in the future.

Stay tuned for the debut of our three new columnists in the February 2022 issue. That issue will also feature articles on how to foster collaboration and community in a divided world. As always, equity will be at the center.

We also want to thank you, our readers. Your passion and commitment, even in the most stressful of times, energize and sustain us, and we appreciate hearing that we do the same for many of you. ■

**Suzanne Bouffard**  
([suzanne.bouffard@learningforward.org](mailto:suzanne.bouffard@learningforward.org)) is editor of *The Learning Professional*.