

Courageous Conversation



A Tool to Assist Us In Our Efforts to
Eliminate the Racial Gap



Why Focus on Race?

- Nationally, students of color under perform academically compared to their White peers regardless of economic status.
- TTSD students of color under perform academically compared to their White peers. This trend has become a predictor each year.
- Templeton students of color, (namely our Latino students who make up approximately one quarter of our student population) on average, score 15-30 percentage points lower in the assessed areas of reading and math as compared to their White peers.
- If we are truly educating every child and leveling the playing field for all of our kids to succeed and access college and careers, then we must focus on **race** when we look at our current systems, curriculums, and our teaching strategies and actions in eliminating the gap that exists between our Latino and White students, erasing predictable outcomes based on the color of one's skin.



The Commitment

Year One (2007-2008)

All TTSD Administrators trained in “Beyond Diversity” which equipped educational leaders with an equity foundation that included not only a big picture focus and vision but a personal journey as well.

Year Two (2008-2009)

Administrators and selected teachers from all schools trained in Beyond Diversity together and Templeton creates an Equity Team (E-Team) to train Templeton staff in Courageous Conversation protocols. (Ongoing work)

Year Three (2009-2010)

Administrators and other selected teachers trained in CARE (Collaborative Action Research for Equity) which led to focused work identifying and understanding culturally responsive strategies that engage all students in rigorous learning, especially our Latino students.

Year Four (2010-2011)

Administrators and selected staff continue training with Equity leaders and create PASS (Partnerships for Academically Successful Students) Teams which consist of seven Latino parents, one bilingual staff member and principal. This effort begins the process of bridging the cultural gap and providing our Latino parents a forum to have their voices heard and provide the missing perspective.

Year Five (2011-2012)

- Templeton E-Team continues to work with staff.
- Three new teachers on CARE team are being trained in culturally relevant teaching strategies.
- PASS team continues work with specific goals to empower parents of color and reduce the cultural gap.



Defining Courageous Conversation

- Utilizing the agreements, conditions, and compass to engage, sustain, and deepen interracial dialogue about race in order to examine schooling and improve student achievement.
- Specifically, a Courageous Conversation...
 - *engages* those who won't talk.
 - *sustains* the conversation when it gets uncomfortable or diverted.
 - *deepens* the conversation to the point where authentic understanding and meaningful actions occur.



Understanding The Need For Dialogue

- If we understand the need for dialogue about the racial achievement gap, the question becomes how we open ourselves up to have a Courageous Conversation about these questions...

Q: Why do racial gaps exist?

Q: What is the origin of the racial gaps?

Q: What factors have allowed these gaps to persist for so many years?

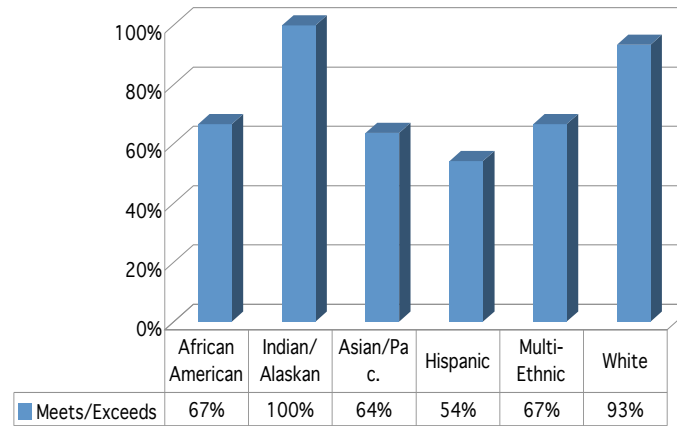
The challenge is to move beyond a basic awareness of the racial patterns found in student achievement data, to ask why the data show a gap and finally what can WE DO to change this trend.

Data: National / District / School

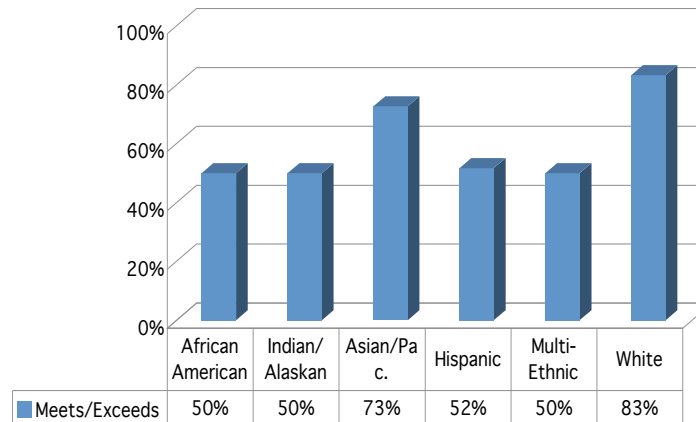
The most troublesome achievement gap is the ***racial gap*** - the difference in student achievement between White and Asian students and their Black, Latino, Native American, Southeast Asia, and Pacific Islander counterparts.

Without question, poverty and wealth impact student achievement as well. Statistically, however, even within the same economic strata, there is an achievement gap based on race.

Templeton ES OAKS Reading Performance by Ethnicity



Templeton ES OAKS Math Performance by Ethnicity





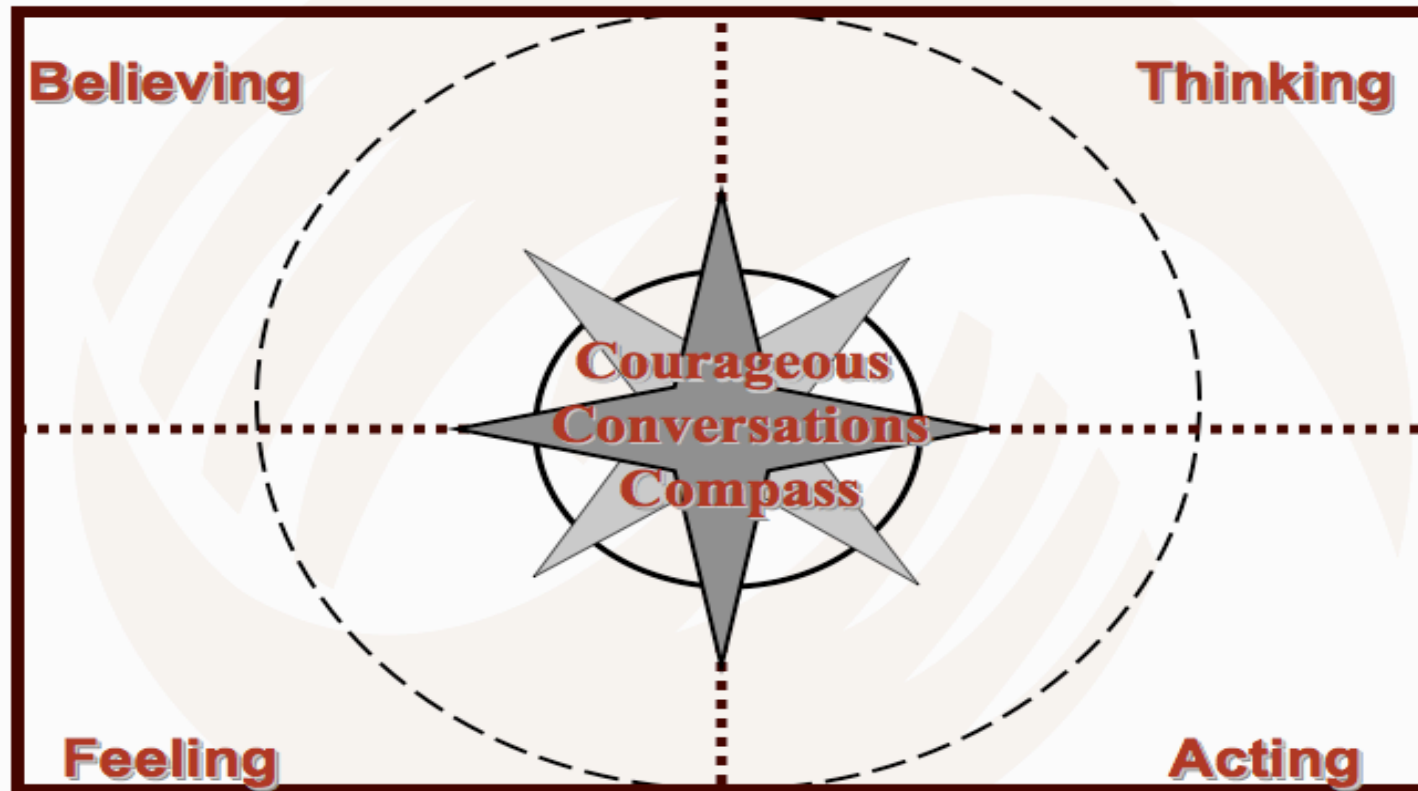
Four Agreements of Courageous Conversation

- To participate in *effective* interracial dialogue about race, the first step is to commit to the Four Agreements of Courageous Conversation. By committing to these, participants agree to...
- Stay engaged
- Experience discomfort
- Speak your truth
- Expect and accept non-closure

Courageous Conversation Compass



PACIFIC EDUCATIONAL GROUP



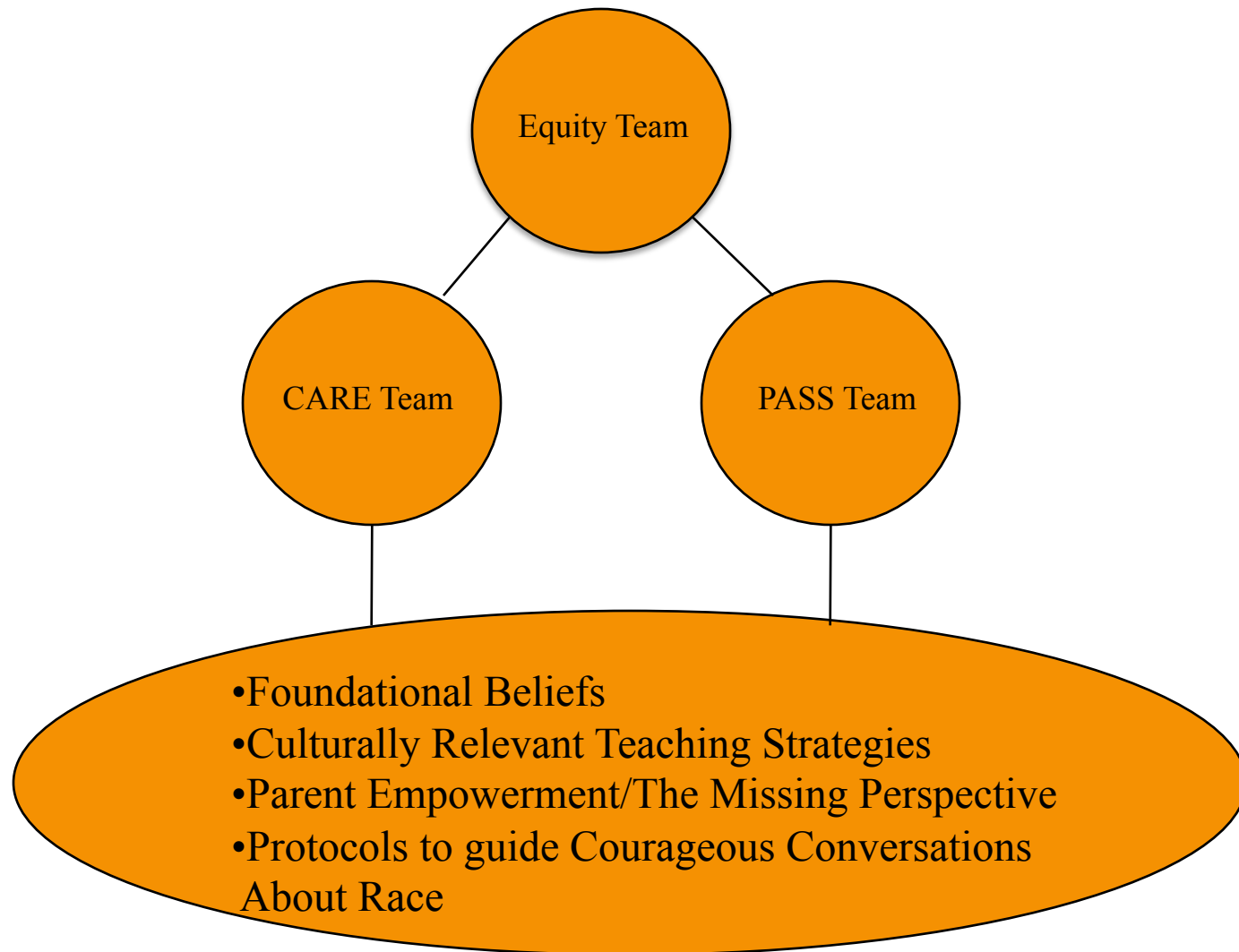
In a sense, emotional responses are seated in the heart, intellectual in the mind, moral in the soul, and social in the hands and feet. This compass together with the Six Conditions and Four Agreements fulfills the complete definition of Courageous Conversations.




Six Conditions of Courageous Conversations

- When we engage in dialogue about race as it pertains to our students of color, the data, our systems, in general, etc., we practice utilizing these six conditions...
- 1) We keep our statements and thoughts Personal, Local, and Immediate... Use “I” not “they”
- 2) Isolate Race... address race explicitly and intentionally
- 3) Normalize Social Construction and Seek Multiple Perspectives
- 4) Monitor the Agreements and Conditions... hold each other to the protocol during conversations about race
- 5) Use a Working Definition of Race... we’re talking color of skin
- 6) Examine the Presence and Role of Whiteness

Continuing Our Work and Commitment to Reduce and Eliminate the Racial Achievement Gap





Of all the civil rights for which the world has struggled and fought for 5000 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental. We must insist upon this to give our children the fairness of a start which will equip them with such an array of facts and such an attitude toward truth that they can have a real chance to judge what the world is and what its greater minds have thought it might be!

-W.E.B. DuBois (1949)