# Leading for inclusion and equity

Pat Thomson

# Equity

Generally refers to **outcomes** and the processes needed to achieve them.

- "**Thin equity**"– the distribution of student performance on a narrow range of measures across groups, schools and school systems. The problem is generally perceived to be inadequate teaching, curriculum, leadership, system structure etc. Additional targeted resources may be given to students and schools in order to achieve better results.

- "**Thick equity**" - Inequity is understood to be societal and systemic, schools can't do everything. Nevertheless, all children are entitled to schooling which provides the knowledges, dispositions, skills and habits so that they can make informed choices about "a life worth living in a world worth living in" (Wiradjuri wisdom).

- Redistribution, recognition and representation are key foci for changing the odds for children and young people who historically have missed out.

# Inclusion

Gives purchase on what needs to happen for ALL children- is integral to "thick equity" .

- Focuses on changing schools not students.

- Centres on creating environments where all students feel welcomed, valued, and able to participate fully - removing barriers and providing additional bespoke support to ensure that diverse students (regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics)can engage meaningfully in school life.

- Inclusion emphasises belonging, representation, voice, negotiation, flexibility- and professional inquiry, reflection and innovation.

# What ELMA research suggests

- **Leading for Education:** Leaders ensure their curriculum reflects diverse perspectives and experiences, and that teaching practices are culturally responsive. They support teachers in using varied assessment methods and teaching strategies.

- **Professional Development and Culture Building:** Leaders invest in ongoing staff learning and inquiry. They model inclusive behaviour and create systems for staff to examine their own practices and assumptions. This includes establishing clear expectations for equitable treatment of all students and families. The school's experiences and inquiries are shared with other schools.

- **Community Engagement and Voice:** Leaders actively seek input from diverse students, families, and community members. They create multiple pathways for participation, recognising and redressing language barriers, work schedules and/or cultural differences.

- **Resource Allocation and Policy Review:** Leaders examine how resources are distributed and ensure funding, staffing, and programs are allocated based on student needs rather than tradition or convenience. They regularly review policies for potential bias, such as discipline codes that may disproportionately affect certain groups, admission criteria that create barriers for underrepresented students or appointment procedures that favour White Western staff.

- **Continuous Improvement:** Leaders establish clear values and goals, regularly measure progress, and adjust strategies when initiatives aren't working. They create systems for ongoing feedback and maintain focus on equity even when it requires difficult conversations or systemic changes. To this end, they regularly collect and analyse disaggregated data on student outcomes, disciplinary actions, and participation rates across different demographic groups. They use this information to identify gaps and track progress over time, making adjustments based on what the data reveals about which students are thriving and who needs additional support.