California Center for School Climate (CCSC)

What we offer

- School Climate Data Use Webinar Series

- Virtual Learning Sessions

- Professional Learning

- Resources

  - briefs, tools, audio gallery

- Technical Assistance and Coaching Supports

California Center for School Climate

Who we are.

Amber Valdez, Senior Associate

Lan Nguyen, Program Associate

In the chat, share a word or two about how you think this image connects to... Leading systems change.

In the chat, share a word or two about how you think this image connects to... Leading systems change in ways that are participatory.

In the chat, share a word or two about how you think this image connects to… Leading systems change in ways that demonstrate and lead to equity.

WestEd
WestEd.org

Participatory Systems Change for Equity:
An Inquiry Guide for Child-, Youth-, and Family-Serving Agencies

---

California Center for School Climate

CENTER TO IMPROVE
Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety
WestEd

Participatory Systems Change for Equity

An Inquiry Guide for Child-, Youth-, and Family-Serving Agencies

Amber Valdez, Rebeca Cerna, and Shazia Hashmi

Systems-change efforts have the potential to transform inequitable conditions that perpetuate oppression and, ultimately, harm young people, families, and communities. In a time of growing disparities and exponential change, system leaders are increasingly seeking opportunities to partner with communities in order to transform systems that have consistently fallen short in promoting the well-being of the people they are intended to serve. Although those most impacted by systemic oppression—including Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC); people with disabilities; and people who identify as LGBTQ+—are regular recipients of services and supports offered by child-, youth-, and family-serving agencies (e.g., education, health, workforce, housing), typically they have inequitable access to, experiences with, and outcomes from these systems. Further, they are often excluded as active participants in transforming systems.

The agencies and organizations—including those in the nonprofit, for-profit, government, and philanthropic sectors—that impact the lives of marginalized communities are heavily influenced by hierarchical practices, largely make decisions about how to improve inequitable systems without the input of the very people who are impacted by these systems, and are often led by people who do not represent the lived experiences of the communities they serve. These conditions can create and reinforce oppressive systems, causing enduring harm to young people, families, and communities.

Whether and how systems-change efforts are done in partnership with communities can determine the potential for liberating and lasting change. Drawing on participatory methods, community cultural wealth, liberatory design, and complex systems change frameworks, *participatory systems change* is an approach to change that centers community wisdom and collective action in order to dismantle oppressive systems and generate conditions for equity, opportunity, and well-being.

A note on terms…

- Participatory: Emphasizes participation and action by members of a community affected by research, evaluation, systems transformation, or social change *(adapted from Organizing Engagement)*.

- Systems Change: Both a process and an outcome; involves shifting the component parts of a system – and the pattern of interactions between these parts – to ultimately form a new system that behaves in qualitatively different ways *(adapted from FSG and World Resource Institute)*.

- Equity: To treat everyone fairly; everyone has what they need to develop to their full potential and thrive *(adapted from National Equity Project)*.

- Leadership: A set of behaviors used to help people align their collective vision, to execute strategies toward this vision, and to continually renew an organization *(adapted from McKinsey & Company)*.

Continuum of Participation

Non-Participation
• Manipulate
• Decorate

Tokenism and Extraction
• Placate
• Inform
• Consult

Degrees of Participation
• Involve
• Collaborate
• Lead Together

Adapted from Hart's Ladder of Children's Participation and CFJ Student Voice Continuum

WestEd
WestEd.org

Participatory Systems Change for Equity

Please refer to the handout to follow along.
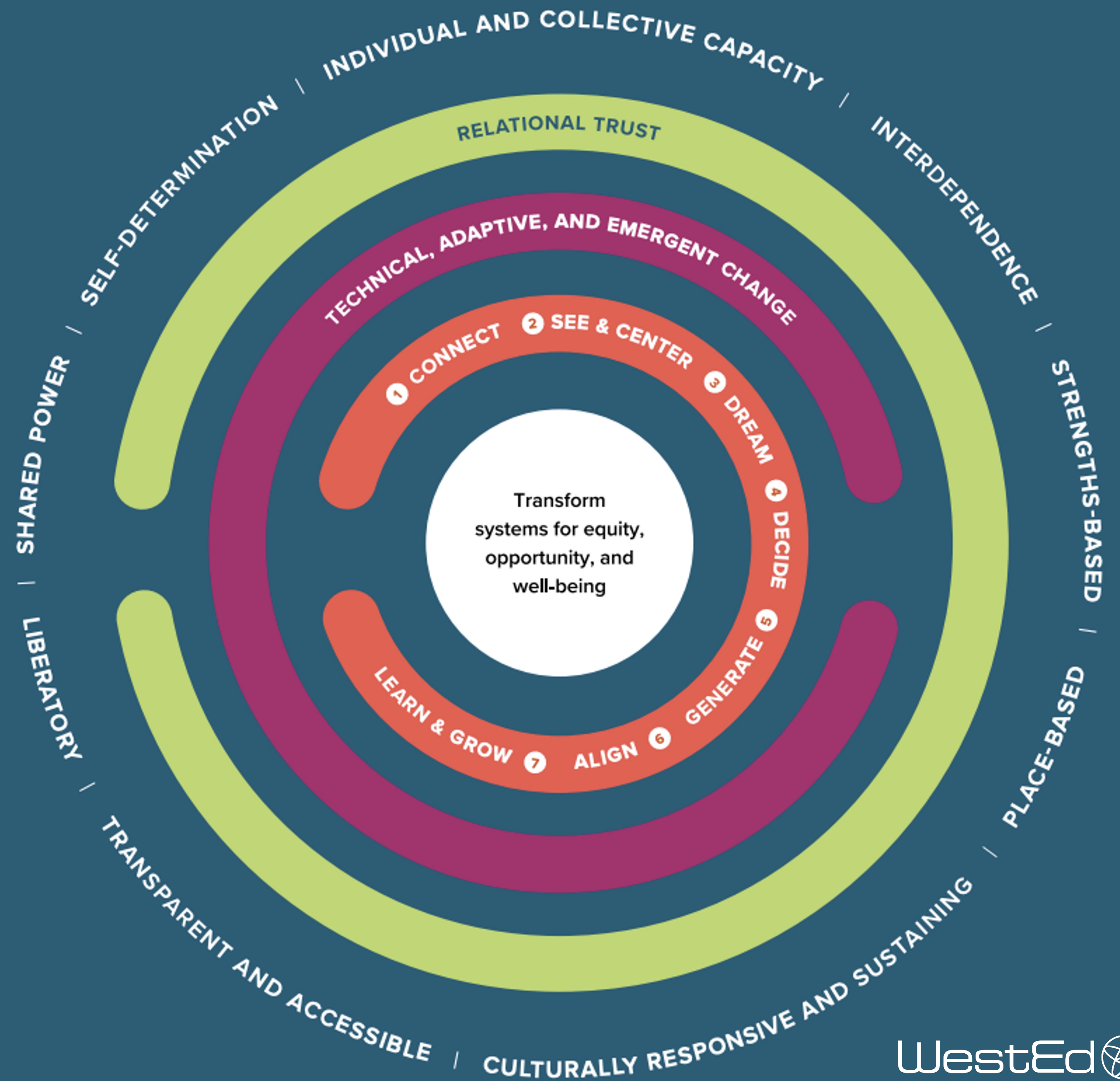
Valdez, A., Cerna, R., & Hashmi, S. (2023). *Participatory systems change for equity: An inquiry guide for child-, youth-, and family-serving agencies*. California Center for School Climate & Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety. WestEd.

Working Definition

Participatory Systems Change for Equity is an approach to systems change that centers community wisdom and collective action to dismantle oppressive systems and generate conditions for equity, opportunity, and well-being.

Valdez, A., Cerna, R., & Hashmi, S. (2023).

WestEd
WestEd.org

The Why

Transform systems for equity, opportunity, and well-being

The Elements

1. Connect in Community

2. See the System and Center Community Experiences

3. Dream a Vision for the Future

4. Decide Priorities and Goals

5. Generate Change Approaches

6. Align to Hold Change

7. Learn Together and Grow Change

Valdez, A., Cerna, R., & Hashmi, S. (2023).

WestEd
WestEd.org

Relational Trust

Guiding Principles ❯

- Share power and center self-determination

- Elevate community strengths, and attend to place

- Build individual and collective capacity, and recognize interdependence

- Promote culturally responsive and sustaining change

- Prioritize transparency and accessibility

- Illuminate oppression and take liberatory action

Valdez, A., Cerna, R., & Hashmi, S. (2023).

Leading Participatory Systems Change for Equity

Mentimeter

What actions or behaviors come to mind for you when you imagine leading systems change in ways that are participatory?
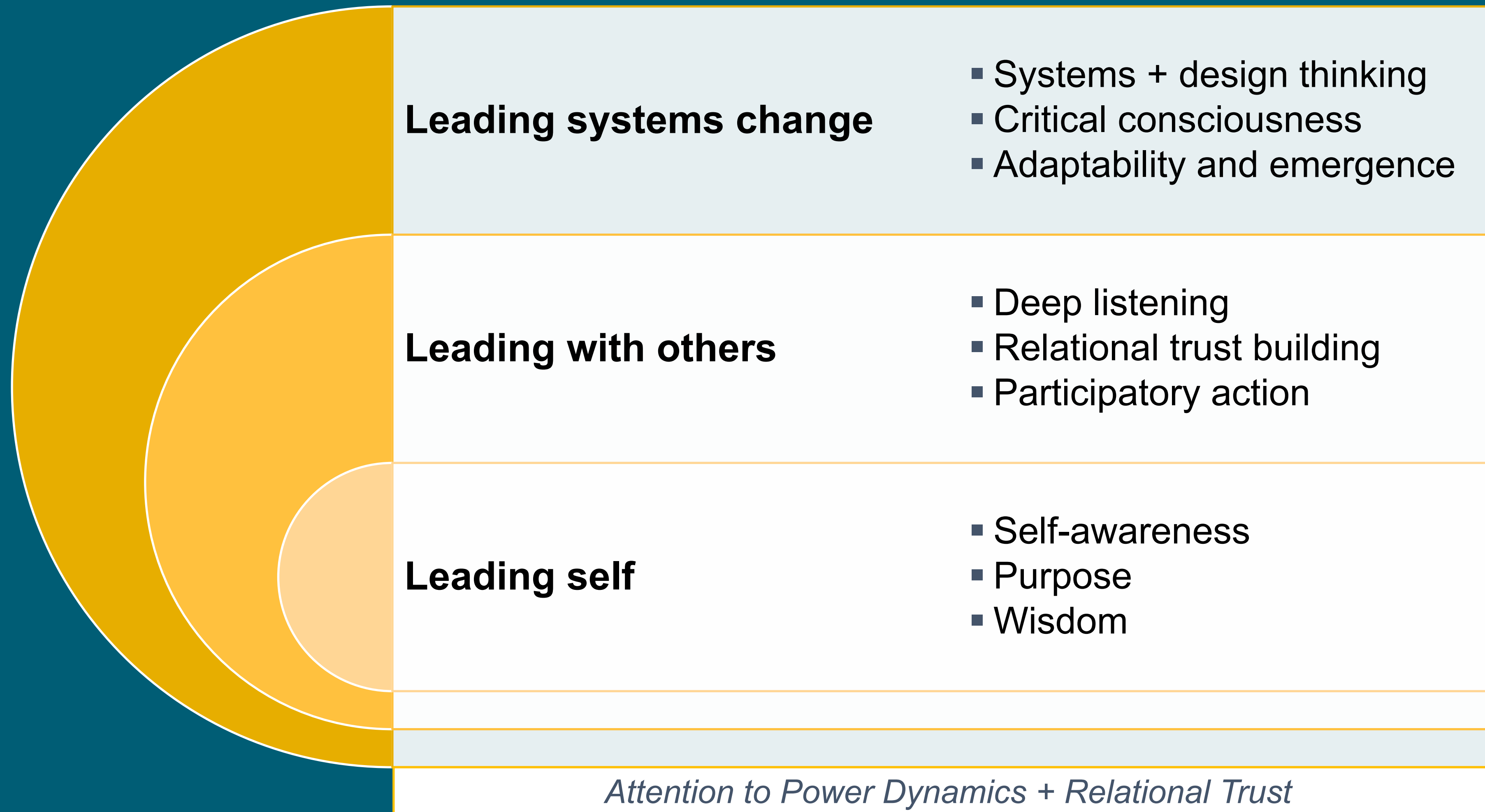

WestEd®
WestEd.org

Guiding Research Questions

1. What leadership competencies are necessary to lead systems change in ways that are participatory, and that demonstrate and lead to equity?

1. How are leaders being called upon in a time of exponential change, and what do they need to meet the moment and thrive?

2. How can leaders and teams engage in honest and deep reflection about their leadership strengths and opportunities?

Valdez, A., Nguyen, L., Cerna, R, Walrond, N., Hashmi, S. *Leading Participatory Systems Change for Equity. (in press)*

WestEd®
WestEd.org

Leading Participatory Systems Change for Equity: Emerging Competencies

Leading systems change
- Systems + design thinking
- Critical consciousness
- Adaptability and emergence

Leading with others
- Deep listening
- Relational trust building
- Participatory action

Leading self
- Self-awareness
- Purpose
- Wisdom

Attention to Power Dynamics + Relational Trust

Valdez, A., Nguyen, L., Cerna, R, Walrond, N., Hashmi, S. *Leading Participatory Systems Change for Equity. (in press)*

WestEd
WestEd.org

Leadership Reflection

WestEd
WestEd.org
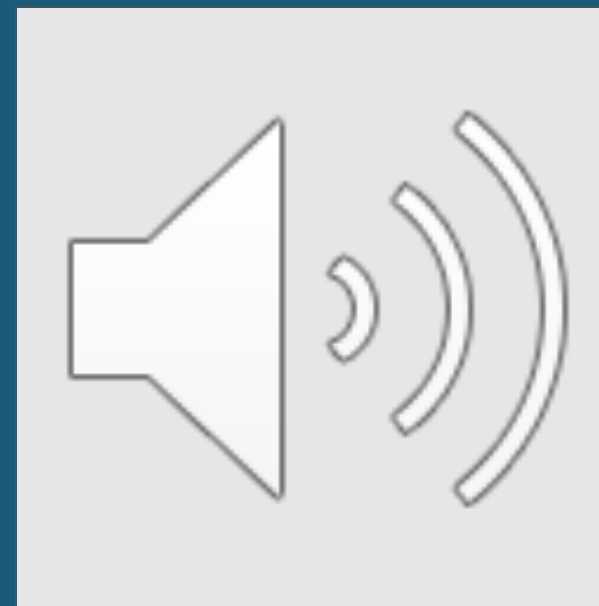
Audio Story (1)

Padlet Reflection

Find a competency that you're interested in.

1. How did it show up in the story?

2. How would you describe this competency to someone?

3. What advice would you give to another leader looking to strengthen this competency?

Audio Story (2)

Padlet Reflection

Find another competency that you're interested in.

1. How did it show up in the second story?

2. How would you describe this competency to someone?

3. What advice would you give to another leader looking to strengthen this competency?

WestEd
WestEd.org

As you head out…

- **Learn** – Review this webinar that goes deeper into the PSCFE framework.

- **Reflect** – Reflect on some of the questions offered in this inquiry guide on PSCFE

- **Act** – Share some of your reflections from today with someone you know. Discuss opportunities to strengthen your leadership or the leadership of others for participatory systems change.

Stay Connected with the CCSC

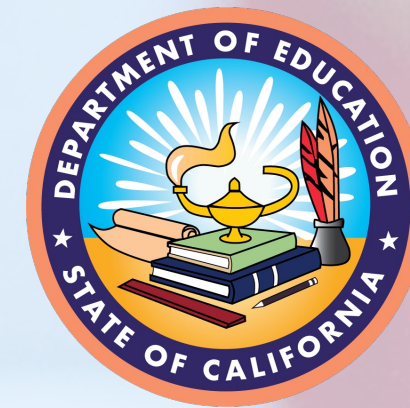**To learn more about free school climate and data use supports and resources we offer, visit our website:**

https://ccsc.wested.org

California Center for School Climate

Department of Education — State of California

Thank you for joining us.