***FINDING YOUR WHY!***

***Sample Leadership Statements***

***Dr. Darlene Sampson***

***(Some Sample Bullet Points)***

***Leaders: Begin to craft your equity leadership statements utilizing the suggestions below. This is a personal statement that should be infused with vulnerability and transparency. These statements can be intrusive and emotional. Pace yourself as you write, and give yourself permission to thoughtfully reflect on your past experiences.***

* *Discuss why equity and culturally responsive practices are imperative in your district/program/school and in general, and personally to you (This is a personal exercise-not entirely intellectual-what does equity mean to you/Why is it important?)*
* *Discuss your own race, culture, difference, (Name you) .*
* *Talk about the expectations from Leadership*
* *Discuss your specific population and role, and your commitment to your students to increase their cultural self-efficacy, relationships with you, social skills, academic proficiency, etc.*
* *Why must you pay special attention to specific populations?*
* *How does social justice and the current climate inform your leadership?*
* *What are your greatest disproportional challenges? Why would it be important to pay attention to these challenges?*
* *Acknowledge that this work can be difficult- but imperative*
* *What are your expectations as you and your staff engage in Culturally Responsive/Equity practices?*
* *Think about the areas that may be a challenge for you (Personally & Professionally)*
* *Reiterate that culturally responsive and equitable work is a trajectory that takes a lifetime—but we must start somewhere*
* *How will you model equity and culturally responsive practices in your current role?*
* *What anxieties do you struggle with embedding equity in your current role?*
* *What if you aren’t ready to move toward an equity trajectory?*

***A Sample Personalized Leadership Statement***

***Sal DiMarco, Principal/Lena Archuleta Elementary/Denver, Colorado***

I do what I do to support the child I see in me that needed someone to believe in him or make him believe in himself.

I do what I do to remind myself of the language I hear first and to remember where I came from.

I do what I do to remind everyone that we can make it even when many say we won't.

I do what I do to see the eyes of children understanding a small part of their world and start to see a world beyond theirs.

I do what I do to make sure I pay back what someone gave me; the ability to be a learner.

I do what I do because I am blessed to surround myself with those that believe, hope, and wish for our future.

A Sample Personalized Leadership Statement from Dr. Barbara Cooper/ Former Assistant Superintendent/Huntsville, Alabama

Hello Everyone: Today we will begin a series of equity workshops with the Western Educational Equity Assistance Center. Our goal is to make sure we are leading with an equity lens, and that we are paying attention to all students, but especially to our most challenging and vulnerable learners. When we talk about equity, we must pay closer attention to where our children are coming from, and what their needs are. No child’s destiny should be determined by their zip code or their skills. We want every child to reach their potential, and we will have to consider how we can make sure that we reach that important charge and commitment for EVERY CHILD.

I haven’t been as focused as I should have been on the challenges we faced as a District. I apologize, and I must now bring you along as we make this important shift. I promise to be transparent and as thoughtful as I can while we move closer to focusing on equity and the importance of academic performance, high expectations and authentic student engagement. Are you with me? I am learning too, so we will do this together.

A Sample Leadership Statement from Wayne Workman/ Superintendent/ Lyon County Schools

**Lyon County School District**

**Superintendent Wayne Workman Equity Leadership Statement**

The mission of the Lyon County School District states that we will “Provide relevant learning opportunities that develop adaptable, persistent, and self-directed learners capable of creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking necessary to overcome complex challenges”. Perhaps the most complex challenge our human race has ever faced throughout known history is how to coexist with each other. Our finite minds continually look for patterns, categories and even boxes in which to place things, or even people, as a means of making sense of our environment. Unfortunately, this has led to a perpetual focus on differences as opposed to similarities.

I am a 45-year old white American male who has developed a variety of implicit biases as a direct result of exposure to my environment. Although I believe I have made great strides in understanding and recognizing my implicit biases, I also recognize that I have a great deal to learn about how they impact my perceptions and actions. Regardless, I own some fundamental beliefs that motivate me towards continual improvement in providing an equitable educational environment for all students, staff, families and community members.

* All children have the right to a positive, safe and respectful learning environment.
* All children have the right to the best we have to offer every day.
* All children have the right to our patience and guidance as they learn to navigate this confusing world.
* All children have the right make mistakes and the opportunity to learn from those mistakes.
* All children have the right to work with adults who believe in their individual dreams and are committed to helping them fulfill those dreams.
* All children have the right to work with adults who love them for who they are individually.

I am committed to providing our students the best possible learning environment. I know it will require a lot of hard work and even difficult conversations as we journey towards this goal. However, we will all be able to stand with gratitude in our hearts knowing that we changed lives for the better every single day. The only way we can begin to solve one of the most complex challenges in human history is by first recognizing our own need to change. After all is said and done, we may just find that it was our own life change that made the biggest difference.

**A Sample Statement from Tracy Cheatman, Higher Education Leader**

Hello Team: I was asked to write a leadership statement as we embark on our equity work together. I must admit I was a little afraid at first because I simply haven’t spoken to all of you consistently about the work we must do. I am afraid because I do not have the knowledge. I am afraid because I am a white woman who does not fully understand all of the privileges I have utilized in the past. I am afraid because I don’t want to say the wrong thing. But, today, I am pushing through this exercise because if I am truly an ally, I must name what I see and see what I name. I have committed to this work knowing that we all start at different places. I am right there with you as we begin to look at and scrutinize our division. We will make some mistakes; that is okay. We have to do better, think better and get better as we work on behalf of students who are already marginalized. Can we do this? Will you work with me to do this work? I totally appreciate all of you. Let’s go!

***A Sample School-based Mission Statement***

**Denver School of Science and Technology:** The Denver School of Science and Technology is dedicated to providing a diverse student body with an outstanding liberal arts high school education with a science and technology focus. By creating a powerful learning community centered on core values and a shared commitment to academic excellence, DSST will increase the number of underrepresented students (women, minorities and economically disadvantaged) who attain college science and liberal arts degrees. DSST graduates will be responsible, engaged citizens who are prepared to be leaders of the future. (The Denver School of Science and Technology).

