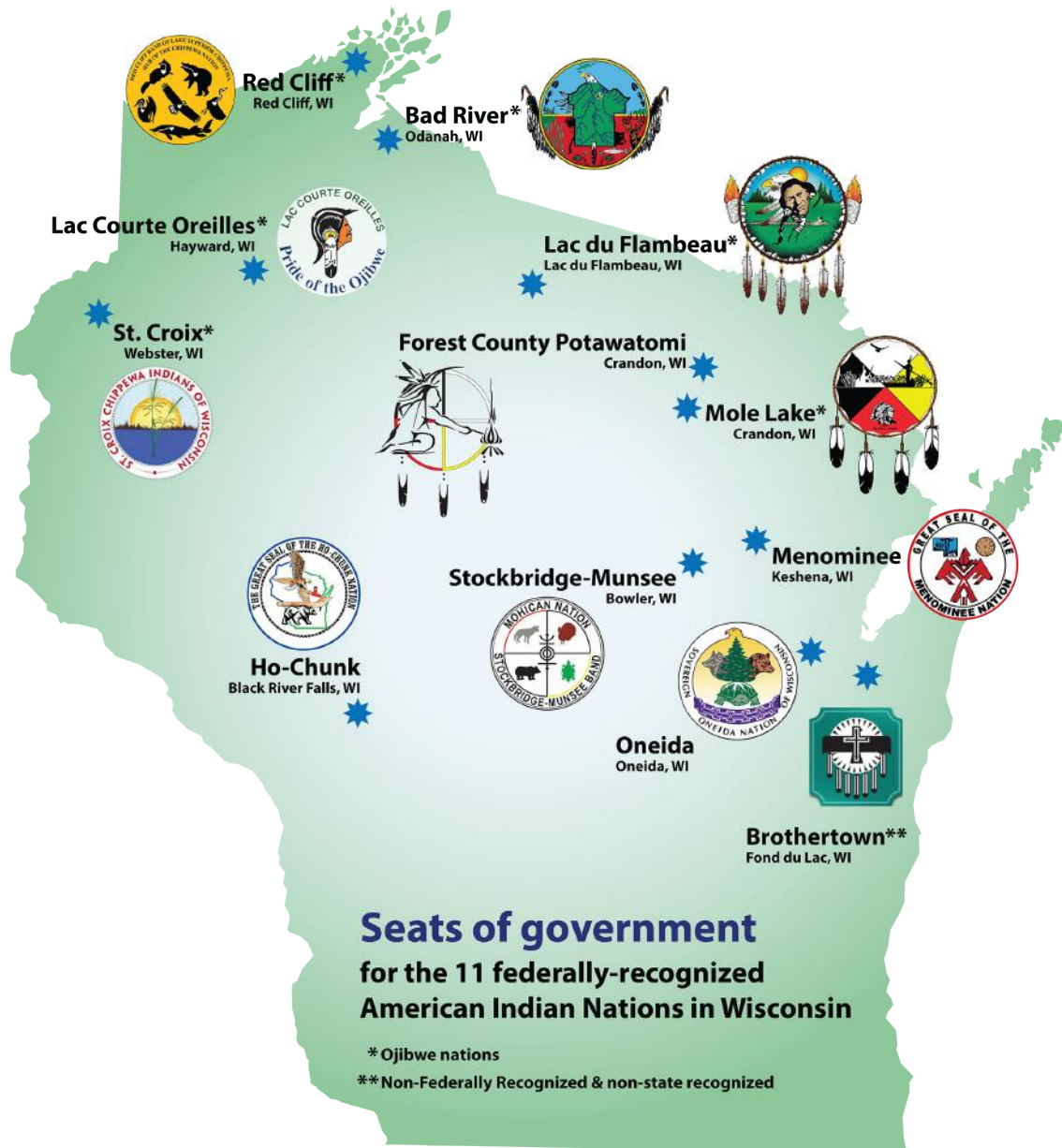




# Disparities in Special Education: Overidentification of Students of Color





# Disproportionality Technical Assistance Network

## Overarching Purpose

The Network provides training to **develop and strengthen a belief framework** that pays attention to race and values culturally responsive practices. The goal is to strengthen educator **commitment** to equity, diversity, and justice necessary to eliminate race as a predictor of success in Wisconsin schools.

# Preview

There are multiple ways in which inequities manifest in our schools. One of them is in special education identification.

Every year many school districts are identified for their disproportionate representation of students of color in special education.

How the state of Wisconsin has committed to supporting our schools and what can parents and guardians need to know.

# Disproportionality in federal special education law

[http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/sped\\_spp](http://sped.dpi.wi.gov/sped_spp)

## Indicators (Reported annually via a Performance Report)

4B

Racial  
disproportionality in  
disciplining students  
with disabilities

9

Racial  
disproportionality in  
special education

10

Racial  
disproportionality in  
specific disability  
categories

## Separate, but related, identification that triggers a reservation of 15% of IDEA funds (“significant disproportionality”)

- Discipline
- Special education
- Specific disability categories
- Environment

# Special Education Identification

- ❑ Are certain groups of students identified for special education or identified with particular types of disabilities at different rates?
- ❑ Are students of different racial groups placed in more restrictive class settings, like separate classrooms or schools, at different rates than others?
- ❑ Are students of different racial and ethnic groups disciplined more often and/or more harshly than others?

# Why disproportionality is a problem?

- ❑ Students must receive the appropriate support based on their needs
- ❑ All students should learn free of negative stereotypes
- ❑ All students should feel they belong in our classrooms and schools



# Disability Categories

## Racial Disparities

Emotional Behavior Disabilities  
Specific Learning Disabilities  
Intellectual Disabilities  
Speech/Language Impairment  
Other Health Impairment

## Proportional Data

Hearing Impairment  
Visual Impairment  
Traumatic Brain Injury



# 2018 Data Statements

- **8** districts were identified with racial **disproportionality in disciplining** Black and African American students with IEPs.
- For the past 3 years, Wisconsin has identified an average of **35 districts with disproportionality** in special education.
- Out of the identified districts, **21** of them show disproportionality in **learning disability**, **5** of them have disproportionality of **Native Americans** students.
- Of the school districts identified annually almost half have been **identified for 6 or more years**.
- In 2015 Wisconsin has identified 2 districts with disproportionality in special education of Latinx students. In 2018 that number increased to **8 districts**, three of them with disproportionality in discipline.
- **15 Districts** have been identified with disproportionality in **more than one racial group**, **3** of them were identified for **Black, Multiracial and Latinx students**.
- Districts are **twice as likely** to identify Black, African Americans, Multiracial and Native American students with Emotional Behavior Disturbance.

# The WI Network

The Network works with preK-12 educators, schools, districts and other community partners to reduce racial disproportionality in special education. Each member of our staff is committed to racial and social justice, striving to honor those who came before us while transforming current systems to ensure a hope-filled future for all.

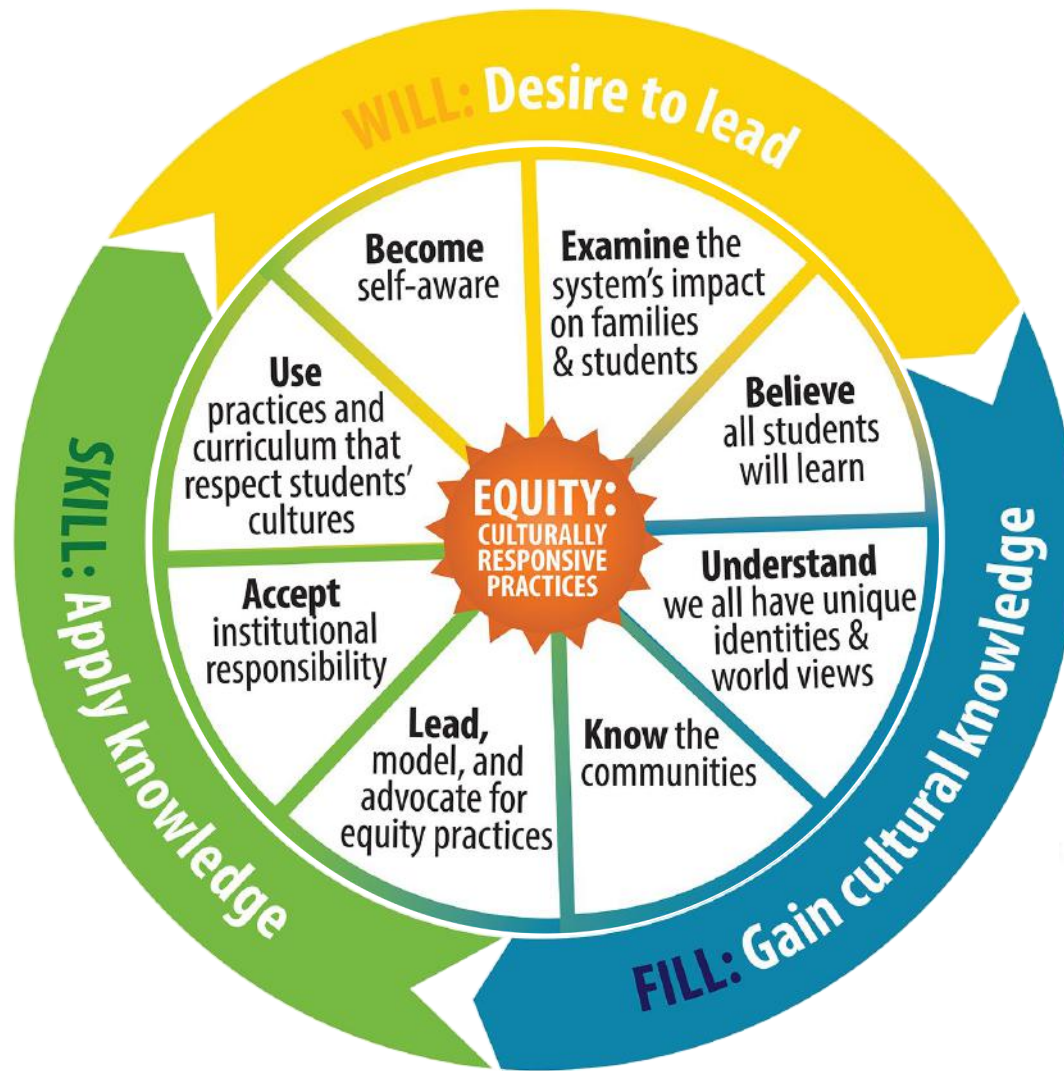
<http://www.thenetworkwi.com/>

# Resources

[Special Education Family Engagement](#)

[Information Especially For Parents](#)





**Sources:**

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- State of Washington Professional Educators Standard Board. (2009). *Preparing teachers for schools as they are: Recommendations for cultural competence for all teachers in Washington State*. Olympia, WA: State of Washington Department of Public Instruction.

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