NCSI General Soup Podcast Episode 4
Transcript

SARA DOUTRE (00:08)
Welcome to The General Soup Podcast, a podcast about all things related to special education, accountability, and support systems, also known as general supervision. I'm Sara Doutre.

SUSAN HAYES (00:19)
And I'm Susan Hayes, and we will be your hosts from the National Center for Systemic Improvement, or NCSI, on this exploration of general supervision systems—and also the world of soup jokes.

SARA DOUTRE (00:30)
Hi, this is Sara, and Susan and I are glad to be with you all again.

SUSAN HAYES (00:37)
We typically begin by dishing on our favorite soup recipes of the moment, but today, we want to do something a little different and introduce you to our two wonderful guests, so you get to know them a little bit. They're really going to dig in with us on the focus of our episode today, which is disproportionality and equity in special education. But they're also going to share their favorite soups. David and John, welcome. And can you please share with our listeners today a little bit about you, so your name, your background, maybe something that you appreciate about the work that you do? And of course, this is The General Soup Podcast, a soup that you are enjoying at this moment. David, do you want to go first?

DAVID LOPEZ (01:19)
Yeah, thank you so much for having us. Both of us are really excited to be here, it feels like an honor, so I appreciate it. My name is David Lopez. I guess I'll start with my title; although folks say if you have to introduce yourself just with your work, you might have to figure out who you are. But I'm David Lopez. I'm a senior technical assistant specialist at WestEd on the Talent Development and Diversity team. I'm from the Bronx, New York. I'm coming to you from my home office in Brooklyn. Still a Bronxite, if there's any New Yorkers listening, that's still home. At WestEd, I do a lot of work around culturally responsive and sustaining education in both providing technical assistance or consultancy to districts and state education agencies. I develop tools, research, and resources. I do it all.

I think what is key to the work that I do, I think there's often a lot of fancy words to the work that I do, but I like to borrow from Dr. David Kirkland and really say that my work is really around supporting educational institutions. We all say we love our kids. I hear that so often when I'm out in the field. So I say, “how do I support educational institutions to have systems that reflect that love?” It is really what I aim to do in my work and in particular for those students that our systems
historically haven't loved, for our Black children, our indigenous children, our Latinx children, and then those children at the intersection of other marginalized identity, whether it's LGBTQ, youth of color, whether it's women of color. How do we have a system that really loves them as much as we say or purport to do? And prior to this, I was, and a big shout out to my work prior because I think that's, where I am today is because of the legacy of the work at New York University's Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools.

SUSAN HAYES (03:40)  
Thanks, David. We're so glad to have you with us and are excited to talk with you about all of the things that you just shared. Way less important than the work you've done to improve systems across this country and institutions, tell us what your favorite soup is please.

DAVID LOPEZ (03:57)  
Yeah, I don't know if it's my favorite, but the one I'm going to highlight, because it's one of my favorites, is called sancocho. And we're not the only ones. I'm going to say it's a Puerto Rican soup, but the Dominicans have it too, and the Cubans as well. It's our version of a beef stew. It has vegetables, it has patatas, yautías, these kind of other root-type things. The Puerto Ricans, my Latino folks are going to be ashamed of me when I say that I usually knock those things out of it. That's the Bronx in me, I think. But I really enjoy it. It's really hardy. It's usually served with white rice or avocado. And I think really the origins of that meal is supposed to serve as a really heavy meal that nurtures the body for a full day of work. That's where that really comes from, why it's such a heavy stew for us.

SUSAN HAYES (04:58)  
Well, thank you.

DAVID LOPEZ (04:59)  
So check it out, try it, sancocho.

SUSAN HAYES (05.01)  
Yeah, we'll have to-

DAVID LOPEZ (05:02)  
[inaudible 00:05:02] go to a restaurant first, before you try a Google recipe.

SUSAN HAYES (05:07)  
We'll have to put a recipe in the show notes, so folks can check it out. Well, thanks again, David, for being with us, and we're excited to have this conversation with you. And we're also excited to welcome John Jacobs to the podcast today. Welcome, John. And if you can tell us a bit about yourself and your background, what you enjoy about the work that you do, and also your favorite soup.

JOHN JACOBS (05:29)  
Hello, hello. Good day, good morning, good afternoon, depending on where you are. My name is John Jacobs. I am also honored to be here and to share space with folks. It's a privilege to be here, especially with my friend, David. For folks who
don't know, David and I go back to grad school together, and so I've been able to spend some time learning with, learning from David and doing important work with him too. I'm really pumped to be here and do this with David.

My official title is Senior Technical Assistance Associate with Talent Development and Diversity, and I do really similar work to David. I provide coaching; professional development; and technical assistance to state, local education agencies around cultural responsiveness, equity, anti-racist education throughout the country.

I guess a little bit about my background, I entered into education, I was always really into history and I majored in social studies and went to Marshall for that—go Herd! But I got into education with a disposition toward understanding how educational systems, teachers, schools serve some students and don't serve other students. I had had siblings who had IEPs. Both of them were pushed out of school, and that was my disposition going into school. And so, after having gone through undergrad like that, I spent most of my time in the classroom, in spaces working with kids who were systematically excluded and not welcomed and often didn't feel safe.

I was an alternative ed teacher in a middle school in Virginia, where I had students who were placed by the school board in a self-contained setting, and then spent most of my time in the classroom, teaching young adult literacy and high school equivalency in the Bronx, which was really one of the most important—I miss it, and one of the most important experiences that I had, where I was blessed to be able to be a part of so many different people's journeys, but learned what it meant to be a White man doing work in systems that worked for me, for people who the systems don't work for. Right?

And I guess that's, I haven't always had language or the reflective lenses to apply that, but that's what I think is what I like the most about what I get to do, is I get to do work that I find valuable and is important and that helps people. Because when I think of myself, I think of myself as a helper at my core. I want to make things better and so education was a natural fit. And doing work around equity and culture responsiveness, I think, flows naturally out of that for me.

Similar to David, after leaving the classroom I was lucky enough to be able to join the Technical Assistant Center on Disproportionality [TAC-D] at the Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools at NYU Steinhardt (I just had to repeat the super-duper long names as well), where I provided technical assistance to districts throughout the state who were cited for disproportionality. Oh, and my soup?

SUSAN HAYES (08:51)
Can't forget the soup.

JOHN JACOBS (08:54)
Cool. The soup that we make as a family ordeal, I have a four-and-a-half year old and she likes to help cook. We have this really great learning tower that takes up a lot of room in our New York City apartment, but it's worthwhile. It's a veggie soup.
It's a pretty simple veggie soup with onions, celery, green beans, potatoes, carrots. But one of the things we've picked up to add to it. And by we, I mean my wife and four year old, is sourdough. It's best with fresh homemade sourdough bread. We have a sourdough starter. I'm using “we.” I don't partake in the process of it. I'm not the scientist using the sourdough starter, but the sourdough starter has a name. Their name is “Jan,” and Jan is an important component of the vegetable soup meal for us.

SARA DOUTRE (09:47)
That is amazing, John. I feel like I have to disguise vegetables in soup, so you're doing something right if your daughter enjoys making and eating vegetable soup. I feel like that's a hallmark for good parenting or something right there.

JOHN JACOBS (10:03)
I think she likes the process of making it more than eating it, but she'll definitely get down with it, especially with some buttery bread in there in that yummy veggie broth.

SARA DOUTRE (10:12)
Yeah, that sounds amazing. Thank you so much to both of you. We are very excited to have you join us today to dig into the topic of disproportionality and go a little bit beyond the technicalities of disproportionality. And as a reminder, as if one is needed with me and Susan, this is our General Soup podcast, short for general supervision. And as we do for each episode, we start with setting the table and setting up the topic for the day. I am going to turn it to Susan who is going to set the table for us.

SUSAN HAYES (10:45)
Thanks, Sara. And again, welcome, John and David; we're so glad to have you both with us. And as Sara said, the focus of our conversation today really will be on disproportionality and equity and moving beyond a technical approach to disrupting systems that are not working for all children in order to ensure equity and success for all of our students. And we are really glad to have you both with us to unpack this topic.

We'll first set the table and provide a little bit of context around the topic and why we think it's important for our listeners and our general supervision community to discuss this topic and have an entire episode devoted to it. And then we're going to move into what we call our soup du jour, which is our conversation with John and David. We'll then digest and reflect on the conversation that we have today, and then we'll end with our dessert or cheese plate, which is always a resource or resources that we think are relevant to our episode that would be helpful to folks who want to dig a little bit deeper.

I'm going to turn it back to Sara to just provide a little bit of context about why we want to focus on disproportionality as a general supervision community and how we really think this fits into the landscape of general supervision for state education agencies.
SARA DOUTRE (11:57)
Susan, I think it's important—I'll try to keep this brief, but I've been thinking about where are areas that are ripe for moving on to results and thinking about things with more of a results focus. And I think disproportionality is one of those areas. We've been doing the compliance piece of it, and the numbers, long enough that I think we're feeling pretty confident with that. And I think we know we have to keep those compliance pieces going and the technical piece of doing the data and making those notifications. Most states now have a system in place for doing that pretty well and districts understand what it is, so I think this fits really nicely into the area of work we do at NCSI about shifting our systems to focus on results.

Because at this point, it's not just fixing the data, it's not just making people aware of the data that are going to change behavior. I think states are looking to take it one step further. What do we do to have those next conversations that all of this work just looking at the data and building awareness has led us to. I think this is something that's crescendoing to a nice place of doing something more than just what's required and just the numbers. So, I'm really excited to get into this because I think states—a lot of states are ready for this—and have a nice working system to do the basics.

SUSAN HAYES (13:17)
Here, here. And I'll add onto that briefly to say, just as Sara said, we receive questions from states with some frequency now about how do we truly support LEAs to transform their systems. And I think that's where we are as a community is really pivoting to think about what kind of technical assistance and support can move the needle. And again, we're so glad to have David and John with us, because they've been doing this work for years and have worked directly with schools and districts on these issues.

So, let's dive right in. To kick off our conversation today, we could start with the technical definition of disproportionality as outlined in IDEA. But I think, big picture, through this discussion that we're going to have with David and John, we really want to move beyond a technical orientation. So, rather than unpacking the requirements of indicators for B9 and 10 in the SPP/APR (State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report), we really want to hear from David and John how they think about and frame and define disproportionality in the context of their own experience and work.

With that, David, can you share with us the way that you tend to think about this topic today?

DAVID LOPEZ (14:24)
I think what I want us to be grounded in—back to our work at NYU Metro, we did a project with some students and we created what was called the Youth Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality [YTAC-D]. Shout out to Dr. Hui-Ling Sunshine Malone, who is now a professor at MSU. But, we partnered with her; at that time, she was a doctoral candidate and TAC-D partnered with her to do what is called a Youth[-led] Participatory Action Research, or YPAR, project with students from NYC DOE. And this partnership was really strong and our students went out and did their own research while doing their own political learnings around how the
segregation contribute, how there's redlining, what are all these other political implications that impact on the experience of students of color today.

And I want to situate a conversation less in how the feds have either defined—or not—disproportionality, but root this conversation in how our youth have defined disproportionality. I'm going to read that. And again, this is from the students that participated and founded YTAC-D. And they define disproportionality as, "The outcome of institutionalized racism and bias that result in discriminatory beliefs, policies, and practices, which negatively affect historically marginalized groups in contrast to privileged groups." I'm going to give that to us one more time because our students are brilliant and they keep showing us that they can do the things better than us. So, again, they define it as, "The outcome of institutionalized racism and bias that result in discriminatory beliefs, policies, and practices, which negatively affect historically marginalized groups in contrast to privileged groups."

And I want to situate our conversation from their definition. As, Sara, you mentioned, how do we move beyond compliance? Our students are begging us to do that and to hear their experiences. And I think that's where I want us to ... where John and I will push to live as we continue our conversation.

SARA DOUTRE (16:49)
I love that framing. And I think that's where we want to push our listeners to live. Help us make that connection then, David, back to IDEA. If that's the definition, how does that fit together with IDEA when we have this framing?

DAVID LOPEZ (17:08)
Yeah. I often think about IDEA as sort of ... I want to, one, position that IDEA comes, really, out of Civil Rights legislation. There's a lot of power in having that. It allows for the creation of a TAC-D to go in and do this and for NCSI to have a reframe and really begin to do the deep work needed. I want to highlight that along with the understanding in the ways in which, in practice, it may not be doing that. But I think IDEA offers us the what, if you will, and YTAC-D is offering us the why and how.

SARA DOUTRE (17:55)
Yeah.

DAVID LOPEZ (17:56)
Fine, there's these disproportionate measures. I'll give you—and I often talk about this out in the field with practitioners—we can look at data all day. Folks are like, "Show me the data." But the problem is that one of the pieces that YTAC-D, and really TAC-D in general, and the work that John and I continue to do is that focus around beliefs. I can tell you that Black children are three times more likely to be suspended than all other children in a school district. For folks, like myself and my own social identity and my own belief systems, that rings to me as there's a systems problem. There's something going on of us mistreating our Black children. Why would they be pushed out?

But for folks who believe that Black children misbehave or there's something wrong with Black children, they might see "three times more likely" and say, "Yeah, I'm
not surprised." And that can reaffirm their bias. We often look at the data as if that's supposed to be some miracle to have people believe that we need to treat Black and Latinx and Indigenous children better. That's not always the case. And we have to begin to interrogate why. Either we believe, on one hand, Black children are worse than all other children or what's really happening. When we begin to dive into institutionalized racism and the role that that plays in our systems, we begin to see there's no pathology or anything wrong with our Black children, our Black children with disabilities, our Latinx children with disabilities. There's a problem with our system.

Part of the ways in which we approach that work here, John and I and the larger TDD team, is that we always say that part of our starting place is that we're not here to fix children or communities—because they're not broken. We're here to change adult practice and to fix systems that are harming us. That switch is really hard for folks. We have a tendency to blame communities, to blame families, to blame all these other things—out-of-school factors—that don't really allow us to take accountability for our role in the harm that we've perpetuated against marginalized communities since schooling’s inception. I think that’s what folks really need to grapple with before—not before—while simultaneously working on the policies and practices.

SARA DOUTRE (20:43)
David, I think that’s so important. And we usually reflect later on, but I don't want to miss this opportunity that I think what you've just given us is a really easy baby step to get started with is changing our language, how we talk about this. Because what I hear you saying is instead of saying, “Our African Americans students are overidentified.” We just have to switch that language. Flip it and say, "Our system is underserving this group of students, and thus forcing them into a situation where they end up.” The overidentification is being done to them. Because we often don't talk about it that way, right?

DAVID LOPEZ (21:25)
Yeah. I appreciate that. And I think another step ... And John, I know I got to give you some space here, too, as well, but as we think about some of those steps, I think you're absolutely right, Sara. That reframe becomes really important. We should be talking about, also, the ways in which culturally responsive and sustaining education can really support our educators. When I mean educators, I don't just mean our teachers, I don't just mean—every person that plays a role in our educational system, including TA providers. I think sometimes we think we're outside of it. I’m talking to us, right here. But the ways in which we begin to interrogate self to make those changes. But then when we even think about IDEA, sort of, and we've been talking about data, the data that IDEA asks us to capture really doesn't respect the folks that are being harmed, right? Nowhere in there do we ask, "Well, what are our communities saying about their educational experience? What are they saying are the solution?" It's all about, and I've seen many places that adults lose that these numbers are actual people, and families, and their lives; that disproportionality isn't just this how do we fix the numbers situation. It's that we are harming communities. We're taking away their right to a free and appropriate educational experience, right? This is a civil rights issue.
JOHN JACOBS (23:02)
So, first, I want to say to emphasize, because I think building off of what David said, I want to emphasize that in spite of the technical nature, at times of IDEA that David said, it's about kids' lives. It's about their fundamental right to an education. And it's about acknowledging that our kids aren't broken, that the systems are broken. And I think it's important, when I think about our systems—often beliefs, policies, practices, and procedures. We only locate that in schools, often, as the system that needs fixed, and those systems fixed. And we think of the health of the broader system, including state education agencies, and their health, how well they're functioning, right? Because there's a lot of work out there and I'll rely heavily on—well, I do rely heavily in my sensemaking of this issue of IDEA and how well it actually moves us toward equity versus how well does it facilitate the continuation of racist systems.

A book I'll refer to a lot is Does Compliance Matter in Special Education? IDEA and the Hidden Inequities of Practice. It's by Dr. Catherine Voulgarides; she's a professor at Touro College, I believe. But what I was going to say was that often what happens is we get bogged down in the compliance and the technical components of IDEA, and that procedural compliance acts as almost a way for folks to launder their racist—either passive or active—belief systems by checking boxes, and in doing so, separate IDEA’s explicit anti-ableist, anti-racist intent from the actual impact, because folks are able to check boxes, make sure they completed the right grant form. They did their check, their IEPs, and their FBAs, right? And all of those procedural, technical, scientific approaches detach IDEAs intent to ensure kids have a right to an education, to ensure that we’re centering their lives, in particular our Black students, our LGBTQ students, our students with disabilities. And it means, then, that any attempts within the system, the bigger system of state education agencies, to address those things when we solely focus on the technical-, compliant-based approaches around IDEA—anything around cultural responsiveness; anything around bias-based beliefs; anything around more equitable practices is often, it's been my experience, framed as "outside the scope" of what our mandate is with IDEA. When in reality, they're exactly what the mandate is in IDEA, when we're centering the intent of it, as opposed to relying on the procedural pieces to give the appearance of moving us toward equity. We assume that if we get a citation for 4B—here I go using technical language again. If we're cited for oversuspending our Black students with disability, which is most often where we are, we don't do the actual work of addressing the health of that system and understanding that is an indicator of what's happening in the system—yes, at a local level, but also all the way up to the state, and what the state is requiring and providing to districts and schools.

SARA DOUTRE (26:29)
That is so powerful. John, thank you and David both so much for reframing this conversation, and we'll talk in a bit about how to support districts to move beyond a compliance orientation to addressing the issue. And I want to pick up on something that you said about, and that David said as well, about if we see disproportionality as a reflection of a system failure versus a reflection of some sort of deficiency in children, or families, or communities, what does that tell us about the underlying health of the system? So, if a district is identified as having disproportionality in its identification practices or in its disciplinary practices, in your experience, having worked with schools and districts, what does that tell you about the underlying
health of that system and the experience that children are having within it or not having?

DAVID LOPEZ (27:23)
What it tells us is—I grapple with this, I have my own sort of tension around this—is that I do believe that our systems are operating as intended. And so by intention, it's healthy. Because we produce our system to behave this way, to exclude these students. And I think that's important, because we sort of skip that step and become ahistorical. As if like, "Oh, well we have some folks who don't like that and don't think that's okay, so it's an unhealthy system." No, it's operating as intended. But what it tells me is that it's not safe for Black, Brown children, indigenous children, that it's not serving these students. And I think it's also a major indicator that there's a larger issue within the system. I think all too often, I think John sort of alluded to this in what he offered earlier, we see the citations as an outcome, not as the root cause of the problem. I've been to very few districts where they're not cited for the oversuspension of a particular group, and when we look at what's happening overall, that it doesn't mirror. So, if we're oversuspending Latino, Latinx children in a district, I haven't been to a place where we're not oversuspending Latinx children in general. And to John's point, what we do is when we offer that work to actually look at your actual system beyond special education, folks often will weaponize IDEA to say, "Well, no, you're not doing that work that we said you're supposed to be doing. You're not doing disproportionality work." But disproportionality isn't solely a special education issue. Even why we see the overrepresentation of Black children in categories like emotionally disturbed or Latinx children overclassified for learning disabilities for being LD, right? Or Other Health Impairment—OHI, we could talk about that how that becomes a catchall for often, as a former special education director, for folks to say, "Well, I don't know, we just can't deal with this kid. Don't know what to do, OHI, let's kick him out, and put him somewhere else." So I don't know if that answers it quite... Answers your question, Suse, but I always say, you think as a Latinx adult, I want to send my child to your school knowing what's going on to your school system. That's what it tells me as a parent.

SARA DOUTRE (30:16)
So, David, I want to keep going a little bit with this thread of disproportionality being a sign of something that is lacking in the whole system, and not just special education. And I'm curious, I think that's another place where it would be really lovely to do some disrupting. And I'm wondering if you've seen any state agencies or even local education agencies successfully shift that responsibility, so that the whole system... What have you seen? What does it take to make that happen to help it become everyone's problem and not just a special education problem?

DAVID LOPEZ (31:02)
Yeah. I think, for me, and I have seen districts in particular take that on, because supporting them in partnership, we let them know that that's what they need to be doing. And often, as TA providers, what I'm finding all too often is that we shy away from what's best for our children because we claim that our client doesn't want, or our client isn't able, or our client is going to give pushback. And I think when you are in partnership that, even when I work with districts in terms of determining readiness, we are very explicit about this is the larger work that needs to be done. Now, I don't want this to come off, there are our children with... as if we're demonizing special education as a whole, either, right? There are places
where our children need those additional services, where special education and its intent is a really good thing, that they're students with different abilities that do need different supports. But what happens when special education is a way to push out Black children. And how then—I think the difficult part is how do we delineate between the harm and the weaponization of special education as sort of a placement for kids that we don't want to work with, right? That's why we continue to see Black children, Latinx children being suspended and missing so many days of school versus our children who need those supports.

JOHN JACOBS (32:43)
I think, the idea that we can distill down systemic racism and ableism to the “what works clearing house list of effective interventions” for students with disabilities around behavior, and not take into account whether, I'll use my social identity now, like the big loud White dude from Virginia who came into the Bronx to teach isn't negatively impacting that student's experience because of my own lack of understanding of my culture and identity and power of and privilege in that classroom. In other words, it's all going to fail without happening on a foundation of a bias- and stereotype-free environment and sincere, genuine, and real relationships. Teachers that like children, like to be around children, like to build relationships with children, not ones that will go through the process of documenting. "I got the evidence-based intervention. The book said it should work. I did it. It didn't work. There's something wrong with the student. Not that there's something wrong with me the teacher." Right? Shifting the paradigm of how we think about classroom practice toward a much more critical awareness of how our identities impact that practice is something that we have to do, and if we continue to move along with MTSS models, that don't address that, we'll continue to get the same results. If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten. Right?

SUSAN HAYES (34:17)
I want to thank you both for offering just some incredibly important concepts for us and our community to reflect on as we engage in this work, thinking about—as David said, crediting Dr. Seena Skelton—refocusing our gaze, thinking about how this proportionality data reveals to us the health of the system and not any failures in our children and communities, thinking about how critical it is to center race in any of our evidence-based practices designed to improve systems and ameliorate these data trends; really encouraging us to think beyond special education, and IDEA as we look at these problems and recognizing them as a reflection of overall system health and not just special education health. So much for us to digest and think about. I think, as we close, in addition to saying thank you all for sharing your insights and experience and perspectives and your vulnerability with us, too, in talking about your own experiences as students. We'd love to hear what you see for the future. What is one hope you have for what's on the horizon for the future of disproportionality work moving forward? How do you hope that we engage in this work in the future to really make a difference?

DAVID LOPEZ (35:34)
Yeah. For me, I think one piece of advice that I like to give: I've seen too many systems that begin to do the work around culture responsive education, centering equity, centering the voices of our BIPOC students and families, and not see shifts in outcomes in a year, and say, "This doesn't work. Oh, I don't see anything changing in the first year or the second year," right? I think just for our color-
Evasive research around implementation, we know one or two years is not enough. So I think it's really about folks staying the course. But I think staying the course for a couple of reasons: staying the course when we're uncomfortable; staying the course when we get pushback, because whenever we see advancements in this country—in particular for Black communities, but for other communities of color—there tends to be an intense pushback. If we think about the conversation around critical race theory, the banning of books, this is after folks have risked their lives, in particular Black folks, after the murder of George Floyd, we're seeing this extreme backlash. And this is not just recent. We see this after Civil Rights Movement. We see this continuously. We see it in Buffalo, when magnet schools were changing outcomes for Black children. We saw legislation to stop those efforts. So how do we have brave enough leaders that really stay the course and continue to center our experiences as people of color? I'll give this quote from Dr. King. He says, "First, the line of progress is never straight, for a period of movement may follow a straight line, and then it encounters obstacles, and the path bends. It is like curving around a mountain when you are approaching a city. Often, it feels as though you are moving backwards and you lose sight of your goal. But in fact, you are moving ahead, and soon you will see the city again closer by." So that's what I like to leave, especially our system leaders who have the power to stay the course. I hope they can situate with Dr. King's voice around really staying that course for us. For us, I mean, for communities like mine.

SUSAN HAYES (38:01)
Thanks so much, David.

SARA DOUTRE (38:04)
David and John, thank you both so much for sharing so much with us today. We like to close out our podcast by sharing some resources, kind of our coffee and dessert course of our meal we've had together, and make sure people have something to take away that can help them revisit this topic later. That's a good resource. Would you both be willing to share your favorite resource that you think would be good for someone who's listened to this and is ready to take that next step in moving toward more disruptive approach to disproportionality?

DAVID LOPEZ (38:39)
Yeah, I think there's so many, and I hate to leave folks out. So maybe John and I could also work on a resource list, but I think as we started, I always like to shout out for the foundation to Dr. Eddie Fergus. So I think his book: Solving Disproportionality and Achieving Equity: A Leader's Guide to Using Data to Change Hearts and Minds, is a great place to start. I would recommend that as a start, but also check out his articles. Check out anything by Dr. Alfredo Artiles, out of Stanford. I think there's so many other places. I am going to do a shameless plug, I am going to be coauthoring a book with my former colleagues from NYU Metro. So be on the lookout for that as well, and that'll give us four case studies. So actual case studies of things that have happened out in the field in our efforts to address disproportionality as we partner with districts, and the other authors are Dr. Maria Hernandez and Rich Weir.

SARA DOUTRE (39:42)
Great. Thank you so much. John, how about you? Do you have a favorite resource that you'd like to share with us in closing?
JOHN JACOBS (39:51)
I do. I mentioned one of them already. It is a really important book that's been foundational to my thinking around IDEA, how it can be leveraged toward equity and how the opposite can happen as well. It's called, Does Compliance Matter in Special Education? IDEA and the Hidden Inequities of Practice, and that is by Dr. Catherine Voulgarides. She's written a couple of articles on this same topic, so if you're interested in reading more about that, one of them is called “Pursuing Equity: Disproportionality in Special Education and the Reframing of Technical Solutions to Address Systemic Inequities.” As always, I have to shout out Dr. Fergus, too. He's a coauthor on that article as well.

One more resource I'll share, if I can tag three into one here, is if anybody is looking for a different way to think about positive behavioral interventions and supports that really is equity-centered and centers the voices of those most impacted, checkout CRPBIS.org. Dr. Aydin Bal’s work. I think, is really, really, really important reframing, and, in the era of using MTSS to address disproportionality, I think it is foundational to how we should be thinking about multitiered systems grounded in family voice.

DAVID LOPEZ (41:14)
Don't be afraid, we are resources, too, right? John and I are resources as well. We do a lot of work around systemic equity reviews, root calls analysis, and we're always looking for districts that are really ready to engage in their disproportionality to support and partner with.

SARA DOUTRE (41:32)
Great. Well, for our listeners that enjoy podcasts, we'll have to sense how much they like book clubs, because I heard several potential opportunities for an RBAS book study in some of those resources you shared. So we'll definitely follow-up on some of those.

SUSAN HAYES (41:50)
Maybe we could say here, too, that David and John have been instrumental leaders in crafting a systemic equity review process for state education agencies that were in the process of piloting with one state now. But I think for states who really do want to dig deep and critically evaluate their systems in partnership with stakeholders. Stay tuned, we're hoping that we'll be able to engage more states in that process in the years to come. So thanks to David and John and others on that team for their leadership in that space as well.

SARA DOUTRE (42:23)
Yes. Thank you so much, David and John, and thank you to our listeners for tuning in. We hope this has given you some food for thought about ways to promote equity and disrupt disproportionality through your general supervision system. The resources we discussed and that John and David shared will be posted in the show notes.

SUSAN HAYES (41:49)
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SARA DOUTRE (42:58)
Thank you to our producer and audio editor, Sanjay Pardanani. See you next time when we get together again to dish on