

Operational Definition for Intentional Inputs

Intentional Inputs are equity-centered, proactively designed conditions that are the foundation for implementing supportive, culturally responsive, and inclusive practices that advance students' social, emotional, and behavioral growth. These inputs include:



1. Partnering with Families and Students

Intentional inputs begin with co-construction. They are shaped with and not for families and students, recognizing their lived experiences, cultural knowledge, and community values as essential assets in learning environments. This aligns with family engagement literature emphasizing relational trust, shared power, and culturally responsive decision-making (Ishimaru, 2019; Mapp & Kuttner, 2013). Practices include:

- Family-student-educator collaboration in classroom norms and supports
- Feedback loops (e.g., surveys, co-design groups)
- Asset-based communication strategies



2. Culturally Sustaining

Building from Paris & Alim's (2017) work, culturally sustaining inputs affirm and extend students' cultural, racial, and linguistic identities in sustained ways—not merely recognizing difference but integrating it into daily practices. Culturally sustaining considerations include:

- Practices that reflect and value students' languages, histories, and identities
- Curriculum and classroom materials that challenge dominant narratives
- Continuous staff reflection on positionality, power, and bias



3. Inclusive & Safe for All

Intentional inputs foster physically, intellectually, socio-emotionally, and culturally safe environments for all students. These inputs are guided by principles from the SISF Equity Tool (Great Lakes Equity Center, 2015), emphasizing the need for inclusive design across classroom and schoolwide experiences. Inclusive and safe inputs:

- **Physical Safety and Accessibility:** Schools ensure all environments are physically safe, accessible, and equitably arranged, supported by proactive systems and transparent reporting procedures.
- **Intellectual Safety:** Students are supported to engage in rigorous, inclusive learning where diverse thinking is welcomed and instruction reflects universal design and co-construction.
- **Socio-Emotional Safety:** Students experience belonging and empowerment through affirming relationships, emotional freedom, and policies and practices that support identity expression and civic agency.
- **Cultural Safety:** School cultures and policies sustain and affirm students' identities, lived experiences, and cultural practices as foundational to learning and equity.

References

- CAST. (2018). *Universal Design for Learning guidelines version 2.2*.
<http://udlguidelines.cast.org>
- Great Lakes Equity Center. (2015). *Creating safe and inclusive schools: A framework for self-assessment*. IUPUI School of Education. <https://glec.education.iupui.edu>
- Ishimaru, A. M. (2019). *Just schools: Building equitable collaborations with families and communities*. Teachers College Press.
- Mapp, K. L., & Kuttner, P. J. (2013). *Partners in education: A dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships*. U.S. Department of Education.
- Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world*. Teachers College Press.