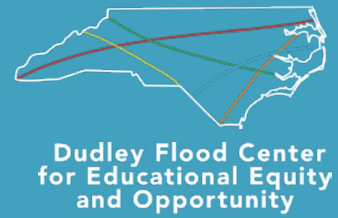


# STUDENT VOICES

Student Partnerships that Matter through Inclusion and Self-Advocacy  
for North Carolina Educators using the Framework for Change



JANUARY 2024

## Summary

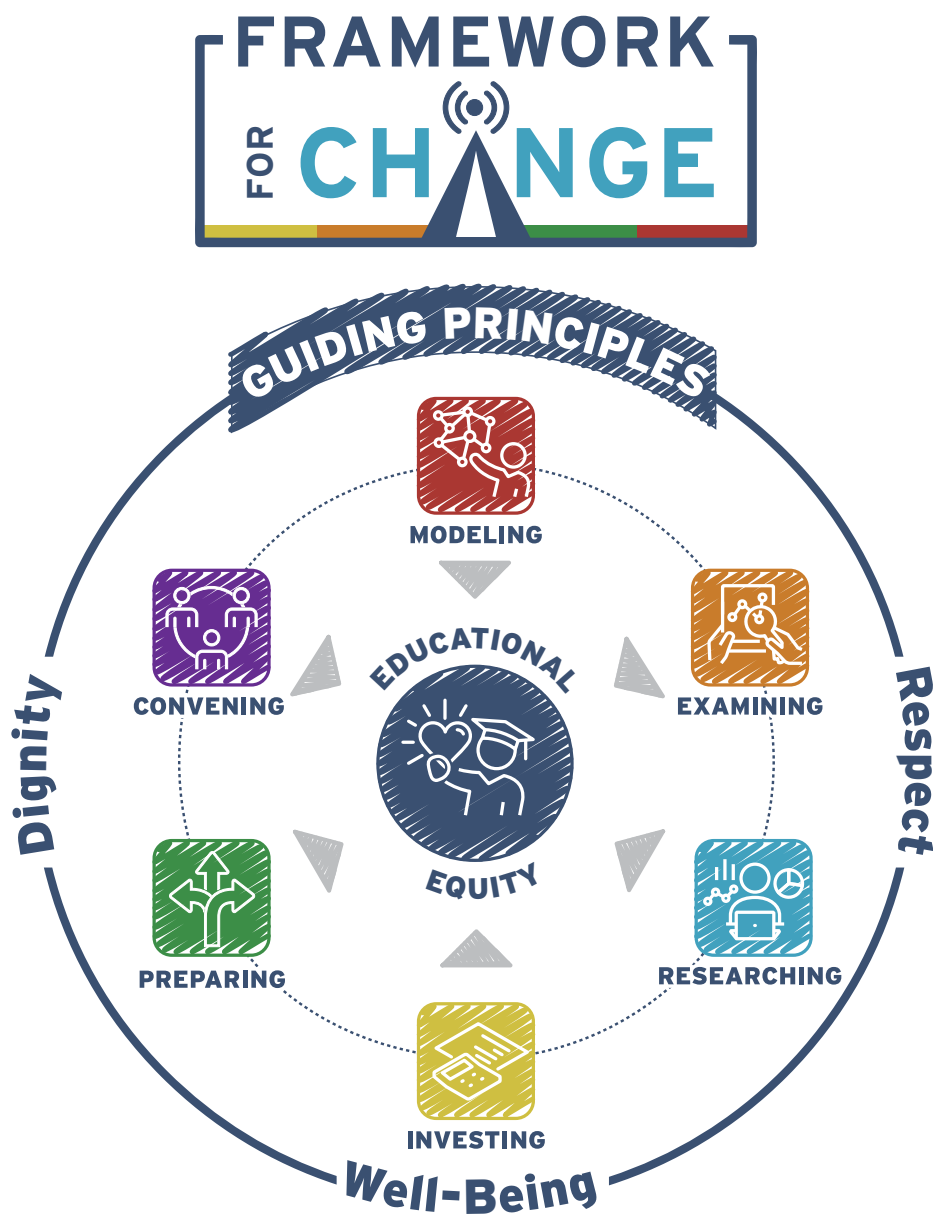
In this brief, student voices will be examined in order to emphasize the importance of student representation and the implications of decision-making when those stakeholders who are directly impacted by the decisions are included in the process. The brief uses the Dudley Flood Center's Framework for Change to show how using the guiding principles of dignity, respect, and well-being through the lens of student voices can create foundational equity shifts in educational settings. In conclusion, share steps in the pathway forward for educators and how the utilization of student voices ties directly into the rubric of educator effectiveness in North Carolina.

The Dudley Flood Framework of Change is a commitment to act and provides systematic approaches to a diverse stakeholder group within and outside education to establish collective practices to eradicate systemic inequities. This unique framework elevates care as foundational to equity. To change, we must act using shared guiding principles of **dignity, respect, and well-being** comprised of six research-based core competencies to create and contribute to building and maintaining equity. The guiding principle of **dignity** ensures that students feel worthy, respected, and valued. Student voices are a mutually beneficial collaboration between students and the adults who ultimately make decisions that affect their educational experience. In order to get the full impact of what a student voice can offer, both parties value and understand how one side benefits from the other, which results in a dignified environment. When students feel **respected** and feel they are genuinely included, it allows them to reach their full potential as 21st-century students in a learner-driven environment. The foundation of this understanding is the belief in educational equity, including seeing students as equal partners in learning. The partnership fosters mutual respect that results in establishing a safe space for students to express their feelings and strengthen their overall **well-being**. The feeling of being heard and having a sense of belonging has a positive impact on a student's mental health (Ralph, 2022).



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For North Carolina educators, the implementation of student voices in decision-making is at the center of how effective they are rated in and out of the classroom. All North Carolina educators are evaluated using the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES). NCEES is the official Home Base application used by public and charter schools of North Carolina for storing and managing educator effectiveness. NCEES offers components designed to support the ongoing professional growth of K-12 educational leaders and teachers. This tool includes an educator evaluation component and a professional development component. The educator evaluation component is designed around 12 identified 21st-century skills: **Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Information literacy, Media literacy, Technology literacy, Flexibility, Leadership, Initiative, Productivity, and Social skills.**

