complexity of creating positive learning environments for all students. Rather, sustained change requires addressing the interactive effects of students, schools, families, and communities.

Intersectionality

Many students experience complex adversity when they identify with multiple groups that have historically been marginalized against a concept known as intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality is a framework for conceptualizing a person, group of people, or social problem as affected by a number of discriminations and disadvantages. It takes into account people's overlapping identities and experiences in order to understand the complexity of prejudices they face. Intersectional theory states that people are often disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression: their race, class, gender identity, native language, sexual orientation, religion, and other identity markers. Intersectionality recognizes that identity markers (e.g. "female" and "Black") do not exist independently of each other, and that each informs the others, often creating a complex merging of oppression.

Intersectionality: Academic Achievement and Social Emotional Learning

Matters of educational inequity have historically impacted students of color, students exposed to trauma, and students living in poverty (Simmons, Brackett, & Adler 2018). While achievement gaps have been the primary focus in education, more recently research has revealed gaps in social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies based on student demographics (Hough, Marsh, & McKibben, 2018). Public education has a role in addressing the societal needs of children of color and those living in poverty that have fewer resources and experience more societal challenges than their affluent peers. Public schools can leverage anti-racist policies and an anti-racist framework in order to improve the impact of societal challenges on student's social and emotional wellbeing.

A just and equitable educational system employs an anti-racist lens and calls for action in many areas addressing the inequality in resources and opportunities, including academic achievement and SEL. According to Darling-Hammond (2017), a just educational system includes opportunities to foster social-emotional and academic skills and personalized learning. Considering Montgomery County's diverse student demographics, identifying factors that impact achievement and social-emotional wellbeing is a complex issue that cannot be described with a single cause. Exposure to multiple factors related to poverty significantly impacts the mental health of populations facing adversity, including children of color and those living in low socioeconomic conditions (Dashiff, Dimicco, Myers, & Sheppard, 2009). Additionally, many students experience compounding adversity when they identify with multiple groups that have historically been marginalized. Strengthening the social and emotional development of marginalized student populations can serve as protective factors against this potential impact (Jones & Kahn, 2017). Understanding and recognizing the importance of SEL for outcomes and prevention raises the following important question: To what extent is MCPS supporting the development of SEL with intersectionality in mind? Educational systems are uniquely positioned to identify inequities and implicit biases to ensure all students, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, native language, disability, sexual orientation, or social-economic status, have the opportunity to develop their social and emotional skills and learn in an environment that is culturally responsive.

Intersectionality: Teaching Staff and Multiple Identities