

Press Release

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New Book Based on 25-Year Study of Schools Reveals the Conditions for Educators to Close the Historic Achievement Gap

"Where Equity Lives" provides practical guidance for dismantling deeply rooted disparities in education among our schools and districts and under-resourced students.

Santa Ana, Calif. (February 7, 2024): This announcement kicks off the official launch of "[Where Equity Lives: Eliminating Systemic Inequity Traps in Schools and Districts](#)," a new book by Orenda Education Founder and President Dr. Robin Avelar La Salle and professor emeritus Dr. Ruth S. Johnson.

Drawing upon their decades of dedicated research and firsthand experience, Avelar La Salle and Johnson have distilled their insights into a groundbreaking blueprint using the five most common systemic "inequity traps" identified through a 25-year longitudinal collection of school data. Their work lays out achievable paths of possibilities for education leaders to reverse decades of academic struggles among traditionally marginalized and under-resourced students.

"Avelar La Salle and Johnson's careful study of actual schools and districts allows us to dissect and understand the levers of greater equity and to get inside the problem with the goal of finally turning around this pernicious and relentless trend," shared Dr. Michael Fullan, educational researcher and Global Leadership Director, New Pedagogies for Deep Learning, in his forward for "Where Equity Lives."

Each chapter is enriched with equity hooks — memorable, succinct cues that encapsulate the complex takeaways derived from the authors' extensive research. These hooks serve as practical tools to guide educators as they navigate the path towards academic excellence for all students in their schools and districts. In addition, online templates accompanying each chapter provide actionable strategies for applying the insights gleaned from the book to readers' specific contexts.

"Too often our education system is looking for a quick fix to a deep-rooted problem. The strategies proposed in this book will guarantee better student outcomes for those adults who have the courage to implement them," shared Dr. Paul Gothold, Superintendent of San Diego County Office of Education. "My personal experience with the philosophy shared in this book resulted in tremendous gains for historically lower achieving students, not just academically but also with students flourishing past graduation."

Notable case studies for Avelar La Salle and Johnson's approach include Whittier Unified School District, which was cited in the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy "Data for Social Change" story, [Changing the Odds in Whittier Union High School District](#). Orenda Education (formerly Principal's Exchange) is known in California education circles for its data-driven equity approach which has turned struggling districts around, improving grade-level standards mastery, graduation rates and A-G completion (college-readiness) rates.

This is the third book by the partnership of Avelar La Salle and Johnson that focuses on solutions to close gap in student outcomes by designing school systems that provide every student with the premium education that is historically afforded more often to some student groups than others. The first book, *Data Strategies to Uncover and Eliminate Hidden Inequities: The Wallpaper Effect* was published in 2010 by Corwin Publishing, and *Shattering Inequities: Real World Wisdom for School and District Leaders* was published in 2019 by Rowman & Littlefield.

Also published by Rowman & Littlefield, "Where Equity Lives" has the potential to reshape the landscape of education, offering an accessible pathway to a more true, right, and just future for all students. Avelar La Salle and Johnson's invaluable contribution invites educators, policymakers, academics and social justice advocates alike to embark on a journey of meaningful reform and embrace their role as architects of change. Available now on [Amazon](#), "Where Equity

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Lives” is for educational leaders ready to begin the transformative journey towards educational justice and academic excellence for every student.

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About Orenda Education

A [Think Together](#) affiliate since 2014, Orenda Education’s primary focus is to support schools and districts to provide the right conditions for all students to experience a premium education, so they are prepared for every life option after graduation from high school. The Orenda team comprises experienced educators with experience in key school and district positions, from the classroom to the district office. The dynamic team is representative of the diversity of the students in most need of support. Orenda’s proven Acceleration Formula dramatically improves student outcomes and changes the odds for our most vulnerable students. For more information, please go to orendaed.org.

About Think Together

Think Together partners with schools and communities to pursue educational equity and excellence for all kids. As a nonprofit organization, Think Together innovates, implements, and scales academic solutions that change the odds for hundreds of thousands of California students. Think Together’s program areas include early learning, afterschool, school support services and leadership development for teachers and school administrators. For more information, call (888) 485-THINK or visit www.thinktogether.org.