

## TRANSCRIPTION

**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** Good afternoon and welcome to the second session of the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center's new EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable Series, Equity Connect!

**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** During this session our guest district, Metropolitan School District, Pike Township, located in Indianapolis, Indiana, will discuss how they leverage their partnership with the MAP Center including a resource highlight that strengthened their work and supported them and leveraging what they learned from their participation in cohort one of our Equity-Oriented Strategic Planning Academy, and how that afforded them opportunities to value add in systemic level decision-making to advance educational equity in their school community. So welcome again we're thrilled to have you here.

**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** The participants are from a broad intersection. We are happy to welcome 126 participants that represent 4 research centers, 2 divisions with the United States Department of Education, 5 various municipal government entities, this is outside of state agencies. One school board, state school board, 9 community organizations that are non for profits, 9 technical assistance and dissemination centers, 5 education consultants, 8 institutes of higher education, 13 state agencies, and 32 public schools and districts culminating and representing 22 states, the District of Columbia, and we also have a participant from Indonesia. So welcome.

**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** My name is Dr. Tiffany Kyser and I serve as the Associate Director of Engagement and Partnerships with the MAP Center. I have the great privilege to be co-hosting with Product's Lead and Doctoral Research Assistant, Robin Jackson, who will serve as our technical director. Also,



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Diana Lazzell, Outreach and Engagement Coordinator will be supporting today as well. Robin.

**Robin Jackson:** Thank you, Tiffany. Thank you all for being with us today for today's Equity Connect! Virtual Roundtable Series. As a reminder for today's session, we would like you all to make yourselves comfortable, move about as you need, take breaks as needed, and, as a reminder for those of us with visual impairments, alt text is used on slide images.

**Robin Jackson:** Additionally, the session is intended to be interactive. Participants are asked to interact in real time via our teleconferencing format. We ask that person's enable both their audio and camera functions if able, but to reduce noise, we ask that all participants mute their microphones when not speaking. We will use various Zoom tools to facilitate group interaction and decision-making. Again, please don't forget to mute your microphone when not speaking. And finally, one of our goals at the MAP Center is to engage participants in well-defined, content rich technical assistance such that knowledge and expertise are shared in a way that results in transformative systemic change, as well as a personal reflection and growth. To the end, we aim to make this unique learning available on our website via recording and transcription. Additionally, sharing photos of today's conversation on our social media platforms, we encourage participants to consider this disclaimer as they share and engage today.



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**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** Thank you, Robin and I just want to also add before introducing our special guests from the Metropolitan School District of Pike Township that the Equity Connect! Series is intended to provide further insights to public schools, districts, and state departments broadly.

**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** Additionally, to support teacher and leadership education programs students and faculty and advancing their learning regarding authentic practice space obstacles and avenues experienced by our partners. Within this virtual convening, partners will introduce their rationale for partnering with the MAP Center, outline goals of the partnership, highlight one key MAP Center resource they have utilized in their equity work, and present key approaches to optimizing transformative change towards equity.

**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** Without further ado, I'd like to introduce our guest speakers to provide some upfront framing pepper points of reflections and consideration, followed by time to engage in questions and answers for each of you. I'm thrilled to introduce you all to Dr. Flora Reichanadter, the Superintendent of Metropolitan School District of Pike Township, located, again, in Indianapolis, Indiana, and Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education, Dr. Larry Young. So please join me in welcoming them. Dr. Flora, Dr. Young.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** Well, thank you so much Tiffany! We are absolutely thrilled to have an opportunity to share with you, our journey. It's been a journey that we have been on for quite some time, but more aggressively, I would say in the last few years as we are really focused on what we call disrupting the status quo. So just a little bit about myself. I'm a Chicago native and a transplant to Indianapolis. Equity education and equitable learning spaces has been a lifetime passion of mine and so I'm excited about some of the things that we're doing, some of the accomplishments we've made in the last three years in particular. I've been Superintendent here in Pike Township for four years.

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The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021).

However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.



A Superintendent for 10 and have been in education for quite some time. I'd like to introduce to you my Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Young.

**Dr. Young:**

Thank you, Dr. Reichanadter and I want to echo your sentiment. Thank you to the MAP Center, one for your continued partnership and for the invitation today, and greetings to everyone on the conference call. I'm actually working in the school district that I grew up in. I was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana. I went to Pike Township schools K to 12. I'm also a current Pike resident, Pike parent, I've been in Pike Township as an employee for 23 years. As an employee I served as a teacher, assistant principal, principal. I've held multiple directors' positions and I've been in my current position as Assistant Superintendent for I don't know maybe 7, 7 to 8 years so I've lost track so that's a little bit about me. Thank you.

**Dr. Reichanadter:**

Great! Thank you, Dr. Young. I'm, we're going to focus on an article, one particular resource from the MAP Center that talks about the paradoxical habits and some traps that we especially found to be very helpful for us to pay attention to because one of the things we wanted to be very cautious of that was that we were putting in place processes but at the same time not inadvertently having things in place that was signaling differently. And so it was something that we really wanted to spend some time at watching and paying attention to and this particular resource is really quite to the point, gives examples, and so as you're going to see throughout our presentation we're going to have our gold boxes here appear when this was something that was important to us, but I would like to start by talking a little bit about what these habits to avoid are and I'm going to start with the first one.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** So, the first one is the selective rationalization, and really what it is, is what are some things that we need to pay attention to so that we don't unintentionally do things that make it sound like white is normal. And so some of the things that we often in outside of schools, within schools say is we're really looking for a diverse candidate, and that's an example of selective racialization, so it really is making it making sure our language isn't saying that white is normal and there's an exception when we don't mean race by saying diverse when we mean something a little bit different.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** The other one that I'm going to cover is the desirabilizing whiteness, I think the MAP Center might have made that up, just kidding, but actually this article was written by Sharon Radd. And really this is this sorting of systems. It was something that we found really early on in our data collection is that we had these systems in place of sorting as compared to whiteness or white beliefs and it was really evident in our high ability programming in how student selection was made. Because of the disproportionate numbers, we realized that the assessments we were using were definitely putting into category of whiteness.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** The next one is the burden of the protected. So this example would be an example in this article, for example, was if I was a disabled individual and I came to a building and I needed access, I'm the burden one that has to figure out how to get in, right? So how do you keep that from happening? In our work with equity, we think about that too in some of our earliest conversations with our equity council was we need, we need allies and in particular, when we were talking about racial equity, we needed white allies that it wasn't the burden of our Black and Brown children, families, staff members to take on our equity journey.

It was something that we all needed to do together. Dr. Young is going to talk a little bit about the next three.

**Dr. Young:**

Thank you, Dr. Reichanadter. Including and further discussing habits that we wanted to avoid and that were addressed in the article. Leading technically. So that focuses on actions and technical solutions. An example that was shared in the article was a particular school might identify disparities in achievement in reading for certain groups of students so the solution being that they implement a new curriculum. Do it suggests that the gap, the disparity is tied to the actual technical approach in teaching, reading. The next one, centralized control, requiring compliance. So this practice suggests that that school leaders in a central office can mandate specific practices and approaches that will adequately address inequity. So the article provides an example pertaining to discipline disproportionate discipline. For example, in a particular school district when we look at African American males so the solution being that schools will then have to submit their discipline data whether it's quarterly or annually and that somehow is going to fix the problem.

**Dr. Young:**

Another example shared in the article is the standardized testing movement, whether at the federal or state level, and the idea behind that is greater accountability, so more testing, submit your test, we're going to hold you accountable, and that is going to fix the challenge or the problem. And then the last one excusing institutional failures. So, this occurs when school personnel identify important and reasonable equity goals, but then fall short of achieving them. An example shared in the article pertains to a school district that perhaps want to change their hiring practices so that teachers and administrators more reflect the population that they serve.

However, when they don't reach that goal because they continue to hire primarily white, female educators, the fallback is well there's just not enough qualified candidates of Color. Thank You.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** Alrighty, so as we continued on our journey, we began with an equity council which I'm going to share a little bit later with you, but one of the things that we knew was definitely important for us was how do we leverage our partnership with the Great Lakes Equity Center. And I say that because this is hard work and we're okay with that hard work, but it also meant that we needed some additional support and maybe organizing where we were and where we wanted to be, and how do you tap into some experts that can help you on that journey? And so we sought out to look for that support, and fortunately for us, we host a summer workshop every summer for our staff. As we were discussing ways to integrate more professional development, we got in touch of the Great Lakes Equity Center and we had some professional development, and then it was like, *Wait, we don't need to do some of this alone. Let's find some additional partnership.*

**Dr. Reichanadter:** It's just the task is so big how do we move it into smaller pieces because one of the most important things to us was to not have a plan to check a box and put it on the shelf and say that's great we're doing different equity initiatives. We wanted it to be real, we wanted it to be seen, we wanted it to be in the classrooms and so we knew we needed some type of an organized structure to help us get from point A to B. And starting with that strategic plan. So we knew we wanted to plan we just thought we need a little bit of help on where some of the best places to start. So as we talk throughout the presentation today, we're going to talk about three things



that we found to be extremely important with our partnership with the MAP Center

**Dr. Reichanadter:** One is the importance of really creating a strong team from the beginning. It was important to me, it was important that I was a part of the team, but it was also important we develop from leadership inside the team as well. And so, you'll hear throughout that I don't lead everything nor should I. It's really part of having a strong team. But it also includes having shared leadership. You know, if we really want to make sure that something is going to be sustainable, it can't rely on a single person. And so it meant we were going to have to really look at how do we continue to build capacity? How do we make sure this wasn't something that was being pushed from the top down or that centralized compliance? And so, but how do we tackle it, right?

**Dr. Reichanadter:** There's some grassroots things happening and then there's some things that needed to happen at the top. And so, we thought, let's go from both directions. Let's go from the teacher and the community, our students and staff, as well as the leaders in the district. And so, we also knew and we knew from day one and we all agreed to this when we started was that we absolutely had to have the ability to have a safe space for courageous conversations, and create a climate in which courageous conversations could occur. So that led us to of course our tier three partnership with the Great Lakes Equity Center. So, Dr. Young tell us about the demographics of Pike.

**Dr. Young:** Of course. So, for those people on the call who may not be familiar with our school district; here's a quick snapshot of what you might see in Pike Township. We'll look at our student population close to 70%, excuse me,



close 61% of our students are African American or Black, around 25% are Latinx, multiracial about 5.3%, close to 8% of our students identify as White. Nearly 66% of our students come from lower income or under resourced families. You see our English language learners are close to 20%, and then students with disabilities at 14%.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** Thank you and you know you may notice on this chart that there's some words in here that are a little different because these are pulled from the Department of Education, and we're very sensitive to the words that we use and so for under-resource students, you know, the state calls them economically disadvantaged, and we find that to be a deficit use of language and so we're very conscientious about that along the way.

**Dr. Young:** Alright, again, looking at Pike at a glance, we're really proud that we have had a high school that has been rated by the state of Indiana as an A high school. When you think about a traditional public high school with a large majority population of historically marginalized population to be an A school for multiple years, that's something that you don't see very often. So, we're proud that we've been able to breakdown some of those barriers. You step on our campus; you'll hear over 80 languages spoken every day. Our enrollment, it is just over 11,000. We have 14 schools, 9 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, our high school. We have an enrollment around 3,300 students at our high school. We also had an alternative high school and middle school. Again, quick snapshot of our high school some of the things that we've been recognized that we've accomplished here in recent years.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** Alright, so I'm going to talk a little bit about where our journey has become and where we are today, and so of course this could take quite a long time,

so we've really shortened it up and in a summary version, so Dr. Young tell us about what it looked like in Pike before I joined in 2017.

**Dr. Young:**

Yeah, right well I had the great pleasure starting my career in Pike Township back in '98. And around 2003, Pike Township hired a new Superintendent, Dr. Nathaniel Jones, and when he got to Pike high school one of the things, he did is he raised the bar. High expectations and one of our mantras was “the next level of excellence”. There was a focus on increased student graduation at the high school and our graduation rate hovered around 94% every year and was pretty remarkable when you think about some of the graduation disparities across the nation. Our graduation rate for African American or Black students was at 93% and in 92% for Latinx students. That's also around that time you can see that we launched our own alternative high school/middle school and that was an opportunity for credit recovery, also smaller class sizes, and a little bit different schedule. There were the onset of different mentoring programs, dual credit, and then the hiring of staff members that looked like the population that we served.

**Dr. Reichanadter:**

So, in 2017, when I joined Pike Township, I started a series of community meetings. Visiting every school in the evenings to allow parents, families, staff to come and talk about their celebrations of Pike Township and share areas in which they would like me to focus, and one of them that was that came up frequently was the continuation of our work towards equity. So, when I was hired here in Pike Township, one of the things that the school board was looking for was somebody who had experience in equity, but more importantly for them it was somebody who had a lot of experience in curriculum instruction, and that's my background is in curriculum instruction. And so you'll see on here some of the things that we have done in the last four years. Now, we have lists this long in all the previous years but I was

focusing on the years in which that took us to the journey with the Great Lakes Equity Center. So after meeting with community members and staff and students, families, I continued to visit schools and I started to find some people who I thought had a really strong passion as well, and I created a core team of people that we originally called our diversity council and then we realized that well wait a minute, time out: what we're really talking about is equity and we need to make sure that our council reflects and so we spent time with getting to know each other having extremely courageous conversations to speak our truth, and it led to us being able to put into place some of the things that now further takes our journey on the next level of excellence because that is something that we just have truly embedded in the culture here at Pike.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** So, in the equity council, we started with this core group of people that were very passionate about the same things. We, I wanted to make sure that we had a very intentional focus on all aspects of equity, and we wanted to also at the same time leverage some support from other people to join us in this journey because, as you know, it's hard work and so we wanted to have more on the journey and then create all of the continuing things that could sustain on any date should I retire or not here. I, nothing should be able to operate only on the central office people and so we created our council and as an example, I put our council members on there and there's a few that joined us in year one they made a one-year commitment. These are current ones and you can see that we have representatives of teachers administrators community members local organizations these are people that are very actively involved in the conversation and when we spent that time together that year of getting really getting to know each other and really being feeling safe to be able to say things that we didn't have to worry about somebody might take the wrong way. You'll also see on here that

we've leveraged quite a few partnerships as well so, for example, we work with the Peace Learning Center. That's another organization that supports equity education is here in our backyard right here in Pike. We work with the NAACP. We work with local universities. We work with the Indiana Youth Group, and so what we wanted to have was a very diverse thinkers and people who could guide us in starting this strategic plan, and so as we moved forward what we realized was the partnership was going to be extremely important with Great Lakes Equity council because we needed some better direction on the strategic plan we were, we knew how to write a strategic plan we had a process in place, we just we just didn't know where to start. So, Dr. Young talk about the top and the bottom.

**Dr. Young:**

Happy to do that. I just saw a question pop up. There's about 23 in my view and I don't dare click on that afraid that I messed something up but one of the questions just inquired about student voice and yes, there was student voice. We didn't list their names on the list but there was, and definitely not to the degree that we would have hoped for. We were looking to have some of our older students, high school students, and in Pike Township, like I'm sure in many school districts, it was very difficult for them to commit to being at every single meeting so some would kind of come, and fall off, but to that question, I think that's vitally important. Now going back on to this slide, Dr. Reichanadter really hit on this already so I won't spend a lot of time, but and by no stretch of the imagination that we arrived we still have a lot of work to do, but I believe that we are in a really, really good place in ramping up as we continue to do this work.

**Dr. Young:**

I believe because we had leadership that was on board the highest level from our school board to our Superintendent, sandwiched by our teams at

the building level. I'll just share you know quickly that I can recall having conversations as Dr. Reichanadter and I embarked on this journey with the MAP Center, and some of our partnering schools and school districts, that were individuals that didn't have a support at the highest level and it was, it was tough for them. They were very honest and open, so I feel very blessed and fortunate that in Pike Township we do have a good core group of individuals that are prepared and ready to do this heavy lifting at every single level.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** Yeah, absolutely and I think one of the things that we that we were very cautious on is are included here in is our habits. We wanted to make sure that this wasn't a mandate that was dictated at the top and pushed down because it was something that had to be important with shared leadership; it had to be part of helping people get through some courageous conversations, and we needed to build capacity and so having that capacity at the school level meant we had to have strong leadership and people who were willing to take on the journey. And there was absolutely no room to allow for any type of technical language or going through the process or, sometimes what I would say would be we're not doing this to put it on a shelf. We are going to say what we're going to do and we're going to get it done, and so we wanted to make sure they were realistic and so forth.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** So, one of the first tasks that we had was that we had a human dignity policy and when I arrived here in Pike I was so excited that we had this policy because it's not a policy that some of my previous schools had but it's such a powerful policy. It really talks about how people should be acting around each other and really it boils down to how we talk and act towards people and treat people the right way and when we reviewed this, we notice that

there was some missing language specific to gender identity and representing our LGBTQ community, and so we thought okay let's start here, this is our first step. We need to re-examine our human dignity policy to make sure it's inclusive of everyone and so there was a lot of words missing, a lot of deciding on how we want to say things, and so as you can see in the red, this is the portion that we changed because we needed this to be our foundation for change.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** Another thing that over the time that that I have done, and I will tell you for people who are new to equitable conversation, is it can be risky, you can get in trouble, and you just have to decide the space in which and your readiness to make bold statements. I call these you know the importance of having courageous conversations so as a white woman leading a district that has the majority of our families that are Black African American followed by Latinx, I had to make sure that I was helping the community see that my role in moving things in, and in towards equity was genuine. Because when I first came in one of the first questions I had at a community meeting was: *Why is a white woman have an interest in being in Pike Township?* and so I was able to provide information about the passion I have and the ability for me to be a white ally and so throughout the last few years I have been very vocal about what I feel. I sent out information, for example, as you can see about the disruptions that we saw with the George Floyd incident, and I was very honest in my feelings about saying that we have to actively name and dismantle conditions because that's what we're here to do, that's what we are saying when we say disrupt the status quo. You know, same when we were talking about some of the violence that we're seeing within the Asian community recently.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** To be able to remind our mission of the schools is to really disavow hate and racism and prejudice and so forth. The one that I thought was most interesting was a comment that I had put out in the letter to our families about the Capitol insurgence, and the reason I say that I found it interesting is and my use of language in white supremacy really likes to ruffle people's feathers, And, I'm sure many of you may have experienced that too so I thought it was really interesting when I was asked by a local paper whether or not they could publish my letter about the insurgents so I'm like, *This is awesome, good.* I want people to hear, and we need to speak about these inequities that we see, and they published it but they took out the words white supremacy and so I found that it's so disheartening, so then I spent just as much time trying to identify the ability that a group could have within a community to mute some of the things that I wanted to share because this was so important to our work. So that leads us to our goals and so we're going to really touch just the surface level because I know we only have probably about 5 or 6 minutes so Dr. Young if you could briefly share goal one because this is the goal that you are part of the support system for.

**Dr. Young:** Alright. I'll try this is a lot of information about can talk about but in a nutshell this goal really kind of encompasses culturally sustaining practices and this goal was birthed like our other goals out of discipline and we look at more specifically, disparities in the achievement for African American male students. So, we're looking at the experience for our children in the classroom. One thing that I think was really exciting that we are doing is we have developed equity facilitators, is the title we've given these individuals in our elementary. middle and high schools. These individuals are partnering with our school administrators in deploying professional development, but also to ensure that those practices that we want to see



are happening in the classroom, so they'll help teachers with setting up their classroom. Provide those learning opportunities, but then going and being an extra set of eyes as well. We have professional development days that are built into our counter for teachers those have had a focus on equity, and I think later on our presentation hopefully we get to it you have an opportunity to see some of the people that we brought in to help lead that effort. You know one thing too that we're developing is a rubric for teachers to actually have. This is not an evaluation tool, but it looks add instruction environment all these different indicators that they can then use to plan their classroom to ensure that is culturally sustaining. Now what's coming down the roll is an actual tool that will use to evaluate and ensure that those things are happening so again training, expectation, but eventually there's going to be a level of accountability as well.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** Alright so I'm going to just share an overview of the next, rest of our plan. One of the things that we've also put in place is what's called the "Six Enduring Principles of Effective Pedagogy". So, this is something that we really focus on how to transform inequities through the curriculums with conversation with students by making decisions about the content in which we teach. In goal number two, two and four are really close to each other because two and four really are about accessibility. So, in when we mean accessibility, we mean two things: one, is accessibility to the programs that we have so that we are inclusive of people who all children who should be participating in all of our programs. In addition to that, we have our goal four which really was when we had to go remote, were we sure that our learning availability was for all, and not just people who had happened to have a device or Internet at home.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** Goal number three had to do with our population related to discipline and the disproportionality that we had, and so this led to us having action plans and

continuing to monitor our data. Although the pandemic has caused us a little bit of a challenge with getting data, one of the things we said from the very beginning of closing schools with COVID that this will not stop our work with equity we will adjust, and we will continue but it will not stop it because we cannot pause our work. So, as we continue to move forward we did a lot of professional development and continue to have plans with that. We've now had not only outside people, but we're doing a lot of professional development internally with the capacity that we have built and so, in conclusion, I just wanted to share with you that we, equity is part of everything we do. And so, no matter what department, no matter what facet in education we have in our community, equity is something that is just part of us, and now we want to refine it even better for our students.

**Robin Jackson:** Dr. Flora and Dr. Young, there are a couple of questions in the chat. One is asking about the job description for the equity position, and the other is wondering if your strategic plan is on your website.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** So, we don't have an equity position. We believe that equity belongs to everybody, and so we don't have an individual position that's called that. It's the work of everybody. The building facilitators are current teachers or staff members and they do that in addition to their regular job and we could provide that, and this portion of our strategic plan is not yet on our website because we have the rest of our plan that hasn't yet been board approved and so it won't probably get on there for a bit but we can definitely share this as well as a resource.

**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** Thank you, Dr. Flora and I think we are segueing quite nicely into question and answer, and we wanted to offer that everyone feel free to enable your video cameras to fully engage to the extent you prefer, and then also feel free to unmute your microphones if you have a question. So, there's a couple that have been in the chat, but feel free to reflect those back out to the extent you want to share to the whole group. And, Robin make sure to pepper those questions out if we don't hear from each respective author of the questions. So, feel free to open it up now for Dr. Young and Dr. Flora on any questions you have.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** Well, I am going to go ahead and answer some that I see here.

**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** Go ahead.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** You know the question about academic achievement and how it's been impacted so as Dr. Young shared earlier in our presentation, our graduation rates were really proud of those, but when we look at our instruction that is K through 8, we see a lot of areas for improvement and so we're really focusing in on those, those areas when it comes at the from kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup>, and then our middle schools and part of that is through our literacy initiative so when it comes to looking at our data what we've been doing is working, I can tell you that we've seen significant changes in our data in the schools that are that are fully embedded in the six enduring principles, and we have seen an increase in our achievement based on NWEA data. The state of Indiana has changed the state tests too many times that we don't really have a good baseline yet, but we are starting to see some of those changes.

**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** I don't know if Lori or Joe if you wanna ask your questions, but I'll start with Lori's. Lori is just curious if a district plan was available on the website?

**Dr. Reichanadter:** Yeah, the current district plan is there. The updated one with the equity piece is not yet there because although it's been board approved our

district's one is not there but we'd be happy to share it with anybody.

**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** And then Joe Zachary I want to hold space if you want to share yours out to the whole group, I'll give some space and if not, already I'll repeat your question in the chat. Okay, I'll read Joe's and then we can go to Sharon, I saw your hand up. So, Joe says students sometimes feel isolated or don't feel coming forward when they have issues. Do you have a safe space or area where students that have issues would feel comfortable and visiting to get assistance?

**Dr. Reichanadter:** We rely very heavily on our social workers and counselors, and so we have quite a few things in place related to that, but we're also in the process of examining some practices for next year. For example, last week the equity council spent quite a bit of time talking about gender identity and what we were talking about was the possibility of like putting a little rainbow sticker on the teachers name plates outside their doors if if they were comfortable having a student come talk to them. Our social workers really do an amazing job as well, and so they get more embedded, of course, and being at home and stuff like that. The other thing that works out really well for us is we have our own Police Department, and I know you know right now there's just so much tension with that, but our police officers are really community focused and we have a lot of students that will go and talk to our police officers especially our students, our disabled students will often go and speak to them and so as we have continued develop some of our processes, we've added spaces in the buildings that are kind of that quiet



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space to be, to sit and relax and reflect, and are counselors help support that as we have one in each building.

**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** Thank you, Dr. Flora. I'll keep the space open for those to share out. Again, feel free to enable your mics to share your questions.

**Sharon Goins:** Hi. Very good presentation both of you. Very informative. I saw that rich, robust PD in one of your slides. If you could share how you determine priority for PD? What data points did you use? Was there any focus groups or any surveys? Or whether any self-reflective tools that were used by teachers to say what the needs were to get what you need out of them or how to drive the professional development? I will be really interested in hearing that.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** Yeah, so we have a, we have a district strategic plan that we that we had in place before we also added this equity piece to it, and so it's all going to be combined together. It needed to be updated, but part of that was the initiatives that we had in place so, for example, our literacy framework that we put into place we of course end support to that technology we added support to that we give teachers that opportunity. We also have a built-in professional development day each week in our schools, and then we do the summer. But we also found that we needed more time so this calendar year school calendar year, we added two days of remote learning so that we can have full days, but when we look at, at what's the best fit, we've been starting with a keynote that does, talks more about the districts' initiative, and then we have breakout sessions so teachers can select where they're at. For example, on our March day, we had a full day of

professional development, where the students were working remotely, teachers were participating. We had Paul Gorski was our facilitator followed by you could go to a breakout session with Adam Sayings, who talked a little bit more about the social emotional piece. We had we've had Paul Gorski do a breakout session, we've had our equity facilitators do a breakout session. We had a principle do a breakout session about restorative justice. And so, you choose we don't make you go, and so we want to meet people where their needs are. And so as we continue that process, they'll be more advanced workshops and then the beginners, but it's all self-choice.

**Dr. Young:** Dr. Flora Reichanadter can I add that----

**Dr. Reichanadter:** Absolutely.

**Dr. Young:** When you look at a lot of the professional development that we've deployed for our administrators, our teachers, or even our equity facilitators right? We are taking them through a yearlong professional development before they ever really provide any PD for the staffs and their ability, our focus is being critical consciousness and implicit bias. We understand that before our teachers can provide the environment that we want our children to have all day, every day that we have to work on ourselves. So, for this first year that those have been our focus through the first semester, and now we're wrapping up some of our some of our practices in order to provide that PD at the building level for this upcoming school year.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** I'll take one of the questions that are in the, in the chat and that is *How has your overall curriculum changed to reflect the student population?* That's evolving you know, it's one of the areas because the first step for us was to make sure that our staff understood critical consciousness, but what we have been doing is, for example, we in our literacy framework, we are very

intentional to make sure that at the elementary level, for example, we have our leveled readers reflect the students in our community. We also have been looking at the high school and middle school literacy curriculum and trying to move away from, you know this is what you always teach in 9th grade and this is what you always teach in 10<sup>th</sup>, so for example are our English Department remapped some of their curriculum to include the Harlem Renaissance. We are very intentional in making sure that we're talking about stories and including literature and experiences where children can see themselves and I would say that as we continue to move forward it's an area that we're being a lot more intentional, but it is an area we do need to continue to work on simply because we're still not at the level we need to be with critical consciousness. So, a lot of the changes that are happening with our mapping processes and so forth are not as involved with, to the level to which we want yet, to be at which would be to have a representative from each school at the elementary, at each grade level looking at the curriculum, and then each middle school and, of course, the whole own department. We're still in the beginning stages at looking at that critically that's part of our six enduring principles of effective pedagogy that our curriculum projects more than just we say is a white, middle-class curriculum.

**Dr. Young:**

And if I can piggyback on that and when we speak about curriculum, that is a very broad term. It's what we teach, when we teach, and it is what resource we use so you know so I'll like to give kudos to Dr. Reichanadter. She's made us, and she is making a substantial investment at the elementary level for school and classroom libraries and there is obviously a focus on groups that have been historically marginalized so that's one thing that's happening at the elementary level that I believe will be very impactful long-term.



**Dr. Reichanadter:** Yeah, and you know as far as you know accelerating learning, we look at a quite a bit different and we're pretty vocal about it. We don't look at it as lost learning, we look at it as lost opportunities, because we have to assume that the learning has been had in order to say it has been lost, but our students have not had enough opportunity, and we are really focusing on how do we give more students opportunities. We are full in person here in Pike. We've been in class face-to-face at the elementary for a good portion of the year with the exception of November to December. I'm sorry till January we opened up for the first 2 weeks virtual. Our middle school/high school have been face-to-face for about 50% of the school year roughly, but at the same time we know that there is lost opportunity so we're doing some things in the summer that make it fun. So, we're running a summer camp, in the whole idea is, it's just fun. It's not coming sit in a traditional classroom kind of style, is a fun camp which will all be project-based learning an inquiry and it's going to be held at every school so we're excited about that. It comes in June and so we're hoping that we'll get as many students who are able. We're providing transportation as well, and providing meals.

**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** Dr. Flora and Dr. Young I want to move us as we transition into closing to pose sort of one finalizing question, but I also want to share with the participants that Dr. Flora and Dr. Young have, gave us permission to share their email addresses and so Diana, our Outreach and Engagement Coordinator, will place those in the chat. We want to recognize and acknowledge that there have been a lot of questions in the chat. Every question that has been asked we've also attempted to read those verbally you be responsive to the different ways we all perceive information. We also will be providing an addition to recording with closed caption to this recording, a transcription of the chat for participants as well, but we just want to acknowledge that we won't be able to get to all the questions in the chat but you will have the opportunity to reach out directly to Dr. Flora and

Dr. Young, in addition a recording of this really rich conversation and presentation, will be provided in 2 to 4 weeks from today. With that, Dr. Flora and Dr. Young, would you mind closing us out with kind of a final question around your reflections of your participation in the academy coupled with all the great work and all the create partnerships you discussed of any kind of significant or salient shares for the participants around how your understanding of equity- orientated strategic planning versus perhaps traditional strategic planning or of the status quo that you mentioned, Dr. Flora, How does equity orientated strategic planning, and I think you touched on this, but just to give a space to make that as explicit as possible for participants who either are thinking about engaging in this idea of equity-orientated strategic planning or maybe we have cohort members who you all are in cohort one members, we have folks from cohort three and cohort four who are in the midst of either starting or concluding, what would you share maybe one or two key things Dr. Flora and one or two key things Dr. Young about this shift from traditional strategic planning to equity-oriented strategic planning before we wrap up.

**Dr. Young:**

Yeah, let me jump in real fast Dr. Reichanadter, I'll let you close us out. Let you have the last word. The one thing I would share is this work takes courage, it is messy it is not linear, and sometimes you feel alone, so that to be in Pike Township and to have a team that is supporting you and that is helping to lift, you know do the heavy lifting, I believe is absolutely essential, but I think you have to have realistic expectations. We talk about equity, we talk about shifting power, and when you start shifting power, the people that are in power they're going speak up so I think you have to have realistic expectations. Dr. Reichanadter.

**Dr. Reichanadter:** Right, well thank you. I appreciate that and my biggest takeaway our work and our equity strategic plan is something that's embedded in every



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conversation now when we do our work. And that is who benefits? and who does not? And that has driven us, and we heard it right in the very beginning of our planning who benefits and who does not and we use it all the time.

**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** Thank you, thank you, thank you both so very much. I think I want to thank each of the participants for your really robust and wonderful engagement

and as I move to close us out, please know that this isn't a closure to the conversation is just the start, and with that we want to send you off with some resources that we felt would be complementary in support and extending your work either in equity-orientated strategic planning or your work around contemplating engaging in equity-orientated strategic planning but we want to first thank so a big thanks so very much to Dr. Flora Reihanadter and Dr. Larry Young. We really appreciate your expertise to use your perspective, their time your energy, your labor in this conversation. So a couple of resources I'll start out with some, Robin and then Diana will provide some concluding resources before we wrap up today. We have a new anti-racism vodcast series. We have two episodes the second episode Antiracism in the Age of COVID-19 discusses school communities wo are working towards disrupting racism, particularly how it impacts Black, African American students and Asian American students within the COVID-19 pandemic, but there is a whole series that you can subscribe to that will be airing episodes the third Friday of each month and so encourage you to subscribe there. We also have another Equity Connect! coming up after a little bit of a hiatus over the summer months and so our next Equity Connect! is scheduled for Thursday August 19<sup>th</sup>. It will be focusing on centering equity in school boards and district leadership. This would be complimentary Equity Connect! to what Dr. Flora and Dr. Young just

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The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Grant S004D110021).

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shared. This will be led by Ferndale Public Schools which is located just outside of Detroit Michigan in Ferndale Michigan. Again that's August 19, 2021. And we also want to encourage districts who are currently tier three partners with the MAP Center to consider applying for the Equity Innovator Award so this is an opportunity if you are currently a partner, have been either, either with the former region V Great Lakes equity Center or the current region III Midwest and Plains Center, we would encourage you to submit an application and be recognized for the Equity Innovator Award.  
Robin.

**Robin Jackson:** Thank you, Tiffany. We also want to let you all know that we have our second Families Learning From Families events coming up this Saturday at 12 PM eastern to 1 PM, and during the session we bring together parents and caregivers to discuss supporting the social emotional needs of students and families during the pandemic and beyond. The session will be dedicated to ideas sharing resources in advice around supporting mental health and needs a family and we also wanted to alert you all to a couple of new resources that were produced by the USDOE, Department of Ed. Covid-19 resources. Volume 1 is called Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools, and Volume 2 is a Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs, and I'll drop all these links in the chat.

**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** Thanks, Robin. Diana.

**Diana Lazzell:** Yeah, for our latest videos and products follow us on Facebook and Twitter. Facebook at Great Lakes equity center and Twitter a @GreatLakesEAC. And we ask you at the conclusion of the session: *How are you going to apply what you learn today?* Be sure to use a #MAPEquity and tag us in your posts.



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**Dr. Tiffany Kyser:** Thank you, Diana. We also ask, as we are a center of continuous improvement, that you take a few minutes now or sometime this weekend. An email will follow shortly after to complete our post session questionnaire. Please let us know what went well for today's Equity Connect! and what areas we can improve. We greatly, greatly appreciate and value your feedback and that informs us to make any sort of mid-course corrections or adjustments that we need to make. That link is provided in the chat. Again,

we want to thank Dr. Flora Reihanadter and Dr. Larry Young with the Metropolitan School District of Pike Township for being our special guests and representing our special guest district for today's Equity Connect! We want to thank each of you for taking your time, we know that your time is valuable, we know that you all are incredibly busy so we thank you for taking the time and so with that we want you to wish you well, we hope that you have a good rest of your day, and we will certainly keep the line open to allow you to complete your post-session questionnaire. Thank you all.