



TRANSCRIPTION

Dr. Tiffany Kyser: My name is Tiffany Kyser and I'm so thrilled to have you all join today in this virtual space and welcome to this morning or this afternoon, depending on what time zone you're in—today's *EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*. I'm thrilled to welcome 114 participants that comprise 12 different unique states, as well as the District of Columbia. So welcome. Our participants range from an attorney's office, 3 consultant groups, 1 not for profit, 4 governmental agencies outside of their state department of education or public instruction. Six institutes of higher education, 5 corporations, 10 technical assistance and dissemination centers, 18 unique schools and/or districts, and 20 unique state education agencies, department of public instruction or education service centers. So welcome.

Dr. Tiffany Kyser: During today's *Equity Connect!* session, our guest state education agency, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, will discuss with us how they've leveraged the partnership with the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center, highlight tools and resources that strengthen their work, and approaches they took to build staff and leadership capacity through the development and/or cultivation of critical consciousness. So again, welcome, welcome everyone. My name is Tiffany Kyser. I have the great pleasure of serving as the Associate Director of Engagement and Partnerships with the MAP Center. I'm thrilled to be joined by co-host and Products Lead and doctoral research assistant, Robin Jackson, who will serve as our technical director. Robin Jackson will be in and out so, if you have any issues with technology don't hesitate to chat directly to Robin or to myself.



Dr. Tiffany Kyser: In terms of a reminder of how we'll engage with each other today's session, we want to encourage you to make yourself comfortable in whatever that means for you as you need to, in your embodied self, be comfortable for this hour of really engaging conversation. Move about and how you feel comfortable on how you define moving about for you. Take whatever breaks that you need. And also, we wanted to make it known that alternative text is used on slide images for this presentation. If you want to leverage that as well. I'll also add that there is a close caption feature if you prefer to have live captioning as well as we engage today.

Dr. Tiffany Kyser: Additionally, this session is intended to be interactive. And so, we asked participants interact in real time via this Zoom format. We ask that persons enable both their audio and their camera function to the extent that you're able, and you desire. To reduce noise, we ask that all participants mute their microphone when not speaking. And again, please always feel free to use that mute when not engaging in direct conversation. Finally, we aim to make this unique learning experience available to others across our Region III center in our Region III states, by providing a recording and transcription of the series on our website, as well as posting group pictures on our social media platforms. So, we just request that you consider that in light of your sharing today. And also, should you feel comfortable, disable your camera if you do not want your image out and we will take that photograph at the end of our session today. I just wanted to provide that disclaimer.

Dr. Tiffany Kyser: So, a little bit about the series for those who may be unfamiliar. This series is intended to provide further insights to public schools, districts, and state departments broadly. Additionally, to support teacher and leadership education programs for students and faculty, and advancing their learning



regarding authentic practice-based equity obstacles and avenues experienced by our partners. Within this virtual convening partners will introduce the rationale for partnering with the MAP Center, outline goals of the partnership, highlight one key resource they have utilized in their equity work with the MAP Center and present some key approaches or some recommendations of how to optimize transformative change towards equity. And also, in leveraging the partnership with the MAP Center. Without further ado, I'd like to now hand it over to our two representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. They will lead us in a virtual roundtable discussion, beginning with some upfront framing and context, some peppered points of reflections and consideration, followed by time to engage in questions and answers from each of you. So, I'll turn it over to Lynn and Courtney. Thank you again for being here.

Courtney

Reed-Jenkins:

Good afternoon, everyone. We are in Central time. We are in Madison, Wisconsin and so glad to see you. I want to make good on Tiffany's invitation that this is an interactive session. And so, what I'm going to invite you to do as Lynn and I introduce ourselves and why we said yes to Tiffany, I am wondering, I'm wondering, I'm inviting you to put in the chat your name, where you're from and why you said yes to this session and why you're holding this time off. So, if you could go ahead and put that in the chat, we'll do some call-outs, congregates, but this is just an opportunity to warm up as we create community together for this next hour. Thanks Tiffany from modeling that.

Courtney



Reed-Jenkins:

So, my name is Courtney Reed-Jenkins. I said yes to this invitation because I believe that equity work is joyful work. I also believe that equity work is heart and hard work. And for both of those reasons, I have connected with Tiffany and the MAP Center, and I'm so excited to share with you what that journey has looked like over the last 11 years. And what one of the things I've learned on my equity journey, particularly as a white, anti-racist equity leader, is that I say yes when people ask. And so I want to be really clear that the other reason that Lynn and I said yes, and the state education agency of Wisconsin said yes, is because 87% of the staff at DPI look like Lynn and I. They identify as white. And we knew that government is hard to change, period. It's a slow sector, it's a stable sector and there are many awesome things about that. And we also knew that we wanted to look at folks who were ahead of us in terms of equity work.

Courtney

Reed-Jenkins:

So, I am a white woman doing racial equity work in Madison, Wisconsin. Wisconsin is the worst state in the nation in particular for our Black children and as a white mama to two white girls that are growing up in a multiracial extended family, it is a place of great pain and responsibility for me to move this work forward. And with that, I will hand it over to Lynn to do a brief introduction before we dive into content.

Lynn Winn:

Hello everyone. My name is Lynn Winn and I am an Assistant Director at the Department of Public Instruction here in Wisconsin. And in addition to all the reasons that Courtney said, yes. I said yes because truly, the work that we have engaged in with the MAP Center has been a cornerstone. And I would say a cornerstone to our success with that, that wouldn't entirely be accurate, but it has been a cornerstone to our journey because I don't



consider us in Wisconsin successful yet. But they have been a cornerstone partner in this journey with us as we work to eliminate race as a predictor of success and failure for our kids here in our public schools in Wisconsin. And I am so honored to have been asked to have this conversation with you today. Thank you.

Courtney

Reed-Jenkins:

So, we have, as I've shared, been in partnership with the MAP Center for over a decade and I want to share with you a couple of the ways in which we've conceptualized our partnership with MAP that is represented, and sort of represented well by the two goals that we have for this year. And that is that we've partnered with MAP to, on what we know, and we've partnered with MAP to improve things that we know that we are where we want to grow. And we also have partnered with MAP because on things that we don't even know yet, what we don't know. And I think that that's a really important way to think about the partnership with MAP— with MAP in, in that we can have, we've had a deliverable as narrow as partnering with us as a critical friend on a particular event. That's a conference that is required by all federally identified schools and districts under the Every Student Succeeds Act and under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. And in that role, MAP Center served as a member of the planning committee. They attended the event and served in some ways as the MC and critical friend. The person, the people on stage who wove together themes and ideas who pushed us on our thinking, who provided some grounding and framework than connections to other ideas, and then afterwards provided very specific information to us around a debrief in terms of how we could do things better. And they also partner with us on this big goal of equity and inclusion and belonging in the agency, right?



Courtney

Reed-Jenkins:

So, we have this equity and inclusion plan in Wisconsin. This plan is required by all state agencies. At the state education agency, we want to be very intentional that this is not that this is that this document and this plan reflects very deeply held beliefs around equity, diversity and inclusion, and the role of state government in achieving those goals. Both in terms of the reflection of our staff, as well as in terms of outcomes for our students. And so we've partnered in multiple ways with the MAP Center and really have had— am I—have had an opportunity to grow together as we work from very discreet and defined to, holy cow, there isn't, there is not a state government agency in this entire country that is hardwired for equity. That is truly, as Dr. Kendi would say, “anti-racist”, that has found a way out of white supremacy and toward a place where they're truly a multi-cultural, multi-racial organization with outcomes to demonstrate that commitment. And so, as we say that that's what we want to do. We've invited MAP to be partners in that effort without having a really clear roadmap, without knowing what it looks like on the other side, but trusting that we'll, we, that our expertise within the state agency, their expertise, the other side can really yield results that we wouldn't be able to imagine. So those are some of the ways in which we partnered with MAP. And with the next slide, I'd love to share with you some of the things that we've learned in our partnership. And the first is that—and this goes exactly to the equity and inclusion plan. Because many of us who are reaching out and asking for support from MAP don't quite know what we don't know. Leveraging MAP for that initial conversation or expertise around this is where we are and we just, what are some, what are some initial thoughts that you have around ways in which we might partner. So, you don't need to approach MAP with a specific deliverable or,



end, or output, output in mind. But certainly, the idea of partnership and recognizing that equity can only happen in beloved community. And that, that's the spirit in which the MAP Center was created. And that's the spirit in which we reach out to collaborate with the MAP Center.

Courtney

Reed-Jenkins:

The second way-thing that we would encourage folks to consider and that we've learned on our journey with the MAP Center is that there is certainly a benefit, and a great benefit to having some partnership with the MAP be internal. So, what we recognize that DPI, which I'm guessing you all recognize in your-wherever you are, is that there are folks who are willing and ready to commit to equity and may not have the skill set. There are folks who are leading for equity and this, and we leverage the MAP Center to support the folks who are leading for equity, the folks who are really leading the agency in deep thinking around belonging, around inclusion, around diversity and equity work. And so, targeting the supports if you are in education and, and come from a response to intervention framework, the one of the ways in which we've really leveraged the MAP Center is to say, these are the supports for the folks who are really leading. The agencies work around equity. And this is a place to-to have the opportunity to have the MAP Center accelerate difficult conversations and difficult decisions that are moving us away from an institution that's embedded in white supremacy and toward an equitable organization, the equitable organization that we want to be.

Courtney

Reed-Jenkins:

And when I say that Midwestern nice is hard wired into our agency as a form of whiteness and privilege; it is difficult to root out with our external



partners by your side, helping with that. And finally, another lesson that we've learned and would offer to share with folks is that we have also brought the MAP Center in as critical friends to our external partners. So, there are times when we are not ready as an agency to say things that need to be said in the state. And so sometimes having MAP as our partners and having an agreement in place that they're serving as critical friends allows messaging to get to folks who need to hear it before the agency. Because like all of you, like all of you government agencies we're slow to respond. That we may not be able, we not be, be ready or able to go yet. They also model what it looks like to be future forward and serious and intentional about equity to the state in a way that sometimes when the state sees someone that they see in other contexts, they may miss.

Courtney

Reed-Jenkins:

And finally, the partnership with MAP on external projects gives authentic and real feedback to us as a state that can be helpful in deciding where we want to make future investments. And the example I would give is that we partnered with MAP on a project that was specifically focused on strategies to accelerate learning for students served by IEPs. And we're very grateful, although hurt in the moment by some of the harsh and necessary feedback from MAP that our state wasn't where we wanted it to be, and I'm not sure we would've admitted that without our partnership with MAP. And so, I really appreciate their willingness to share what they have learned with us and share with us in a really loving way to move all of us forward. And with that, I'm going to turn this over to Lynn to share how our partnership with MAP has intersected with some of the resources that they—that MAP has developed.



Lynn Winn:

Thanks, Courtney. I have— it was hard it was hard to identify a key resource. There are so many resources, amazing, research-based resources that the, that the Center provides. And ultimately, we selected one that I think represents sort of our current and our evolutionary focus as a state agency. And that is "Avoiding the Traps: Identifying and Disrupting Six Paradoxical Habits of Equity Leadership" by Dr. Sharon Radd. And in this, in this particular resource, Dr. Radd describes habits of equity leadership that are common and continue to perpetuate systemic inequities. And like many organizations, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction is devoting a tremendous amount of resources, time, money, people to address what Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings refers to as the "education debt" owed to current and previous racialized learners due to our—our historical marginalization of them. And despite our best resources, are good intentions, even some really great ideas, we continue to perpetuate that debt in Wisconsin. And Dr. Radd has described six, what she calls equity traps that are barriers to changing adult beliefs and behaviors, to advancing educational equity that, that we're finding to be particularly poignant at this point in our journey. Dr. Radd describes equity traps as quote, "patterns of thinking and behaviors that trap the possibility for creating equitable schools for children of [C]olor. They stop, hinder, they stop or hinder our ability to move toward equity and schooling. They are both individual and collective, often reinforced among us in education through formal and informal communication, assumptions and beliefs." End quote.

Lynn Winn:

What I'd like to do is take each of those six habits, just give a brief description of, of our understanding of what they are and some ways that we're leveraging that understanding to encourage greater critical



consciousness here at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. And the next slide—there'll be two per slide. And in Selective Racialization, people or people of Color are thought of as having a race and white people are not. This allows race to be used to grant certain privileges and rights to white people while at the same time marginalizing or excluding people of color for those same rights and privileges. For the WDPI, this offers us an opportunity to look deeper into the rationales that we have when we choose to examine data based on race and whether in doing so, we are normalizing whiteness and making other races just that, other.

[Crosstalk]

Lynn Winn: Go ahead, Courtney.

Courtney

Reed-Jenkins: Can I jump in with an example that just came to mind for me and also invite folks to-to put their own examples in the chat. So, as I was reflecting on this right now in Wisconsin we do this by-by talking about Milwaukee rather than about race. So, we do this because Milwaukee is our only city of first-class. And folks are genuinely surprised when they—when we show data or talk about the race-based patterns that exist outside of Milwaukee. So, in Wisconsin, it's by saying— using the word Milwaukee as our code word.

Lynn Winn: That's a great example. Thank you. And when we keep in mind that race is a social construct created by white people for the purpose of giving rights and privileges to white people and denying them to people of Color, it becomes critical, critical that we consider selected racialization to avoid perpetuating the inequities that are existing here in Wisconsin. You'll notice



that the slides offer some questions that we are hoping that you can consider. Ask yourselves, maybe ask of your colleagues in meetings where you are making decisions, where you are planning initiatives to uncover ways that you too are caught in these traps and invite some shifts in thinking and behaviors. You may notice that I didn't say if you're caught in them or if are caught in them. Part of moving the conversation around new ways of thinking and behaving for Wisconsin requires us to focus on understanding these traps so that we can, so that we can make much needed change rather than conversing about whether or not they're true for us.

Lynn Winn:

“Desirablizing Whiteness”. This occurs when we assume that this experience of white people is the desired state. An example referenced in the article is how we have integrated learners of Color, how learners of Color into schools that are attended by all white people as though that's the preferred place to be. And when you really think about that, it's-it's astounding. We seek to have every learner of Color meet academic standards as an indication of successful learning. Standards typically constructed entirely from a white perspective. And we did this without giving it a second thought. So, in essence, we perpetuate racism by presuming that whiteness is the desired state. At the DPI here in Wisconsin, we are increasingly considering whiteness and how that plays into our ideas, our decision-making, and intentionally disrupting narratives that presume whiteness, privilege whiteness, and suggests that the experience of whiteness is that desired state. Asking ourselves how a solution or a decision centers whiteness—like literally in a meeting saying, "Hey, let's pause for a minute and let's have a conversation about how this decision maybe centering whiteness rather than disrupting a current system and the



distribution of power.” And those conversations are occurring more and more at the W DPI. Not as often as we'd like, but I do see an evolution towards that. That is beginning to peel back the role that whiteness is playing in the perpetuation our inequities.

Lynn Winn:

The next slide, “Burdening the Protected”. “Burdening the protected” is a trap that describes when people in power consider racialized individuals and groups as deficient, while at the same time burdening those very groups to fix the circumstances and the systems of inequity. School desegregation as an example, in this particular resource whereby our solution to segregation was to make racialized learners leave their families and communities, travel oftentimes great distances, to go to a more generously resource school that was serving predominately white learners. Rather than providing equal resources to all the schools and allowing kids to attend school near their families, and near their support systems within their communities. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has created an equity decision and policy tool. And I want to give credit specifically to Courtney around leading that effort. And not unlike the questions that are posed in the slides here, it invites specifically and intentionally, invites questions as we make policy and funding decisions on behalf of racialized learners in our state. Questions like: *What unintentional consequences on educational equity could result from this decision that you're making? How have we engaged stakeholders who are members of communities impacted by this work in the decision that we're about to make? Asking, How the proposal or decision being considered requires those who have been marginalized to take extra steps the question will satisfy? To take extra steps to access equitable circumstances?* These are the kinds of questions that are helping us begin to uncover where we are



burdening the protected and begin to make decisions that truly have equity at the center.

Lynn Winn:

The fourth trap, “Leading Technically,” this is a trap that focuses on technical solutions to address deep systemic issues grounded in inequity and inequitable mental models. The standardized testing movement is a great example of leading technically where we rebuilt this idea that testing students regularly in schools would result in higher scores, which is reflective of improved reading skills. It's illogical. It's been ineffective. It had, and still has a tremendous amount of national support. Even though it pretty clearly based on the data, it's not working and disproportionately disadvantages further, racialized individuals in schools. At the, at the Wisconsin Department, we're working to alter the agency narrative from one of compliance primarily, to one of compliance through best practice.

Lynn Winn:

So, for example, we've tied our required compliance and monitoring for federally identified schools to research base supports that are offered and funded by our agency and providing clearer paths for our districts so that they can do more than check forms on boxes to meet technical demands that support our inequities. And doing this has also created a shift in our understanding of our need to re-prioritize our resources to, to specifically to racialized learners. To move beyond, if we're going to move beyond compliance and check boxes, we need to focus on effective implementation of research-based strategies, particularly directed towards those students who are most in need in our state. And those are students who are racialized, as well as students who have individualized education plans.



Lynn Winn:

And then the last two, “Centralized Compliance and Control”. This is one that suggests that central office can mandate practices that will address inequity. When I was an elementary school principal, before I came to state service, the district that I worked in had a long, long-standing data that showed that racialized students were highly disproportionate, in terms of the rates of school discipline and suspension. And at that time around 2014, our, our superintendent and school board issued a policy to fix that, that basically said the district will no longer suspend students in grades K-2. Well, this made a significant adjustment of our data on paper and what got reported out to news outlets and put on state and federal requirements. But not only didn't advance equity for racialized learners, it generated increased frustration in educators that was directed towards racialized learners. And so, getting away from the idea that you can, you can write a policy and mandate practice that has been, that has been a— erase inequities is a trap that many of us fall into. At the DPI, we have historically been focused heavily on meeting federal accountability requirements. All state agencies have to have an element of being a regulatory body. And that there's a very legitimate and important place for that. But what we have begun to do in the last year or so is to install what we're calling a statewide system of support. And that system is designed specifically to provide targeted resources to federally identified schools and districts to improve outcomes for our racialized learners.

Lynn Winn:

And then the final one, “Excusing Institutional Failures.” This is the trap that when we identify an important or reasonable equity goal or strategy, and then we don't meet it, we kinda shrug our shoulders and say, “well, you know, it doesn't work, or it can't be done.” Rather than taking responsibility and finding the means to keep those goals. That like many state agencies



that WDPI has a long track record of false starts related to racial equity. Much like our schools and districts do, we, like many, have been seeking a silver bullet. Then when it doesn't produce, we move on to that next shiny idea that has promise. Blaming the failure on the idea, or worse yet, on our, on our educators or our families, rather than our failure as a state agency to execute it well, or to devote, to devote the actual time and resources needed for it to succeed. So that, that's part of our effort to begin to focus more specifically on identifying research-based supports that we know improve learning, particularly for racialized individuals. And then providing the resources, the support, the state infrastructure to help make sure those get implemented effectively implemented with fidelity so that we can begin to achieve the outcomes that we are hoping.

Lynn Winn:

One additional thing I want to say that for me, in my work at DPI-WDPI, which has been about the last seven years, a significant and direct impact on the MAP Center has had on our agency has been establishing—helping us to establish an agency wide, equity centered on-boarding professional learning suite. We're an agency of about 600 employees. And to get, to be able to sort of require and encourage and insist and support every one of those people getting to a floor of fluency as it relates to racial equity is a daunting task. And with the help of the MAP Center in some of our early work, we were able to move through the idea of creating a suite of learning that is specifically focused on equity.

Lynn Winn:

Some of the concepts that we've talked about today, whiteness and the role that it plays in our agency decisions, institutional racism, and how ways that we look at the DPI perpetuate that. And at the time it was created in 2017, during that year, it was delivered to all 600 of our existing employees. And



since that time has continued to evolve and be delivered to all new hires to our agency since that time. And thanks in part to the work, our partnership with the MAP Center. I think that has offered us an opportunity to begin to create some consistency across our agency, and our understanding of and how we approach racial equity. Whew, that was a lot. I'm going to pause. Courtney, I would invite any, any additional thoughts or reflections you might have as it relates to this resource and how we've leveraged it.

Courtney

Reed-Jenkins: Sure.

Lynn Winn: And then we'll turn it back over to Tiffany.

Courtney

Reed-Jenkins: Great, thanks Lynn. I started dropping some very specific Wisconsin examples in the chat for each of the roadblocks or barriers. And I want to invite other folks to think about what they're experiencing as well as we open the conversation up. So, I'm happy, I'm going to go through the examples that I wrote in the chat. I'm going to read them out loud for folks who would prefer to hear it verbally. And then we're going to open it up for conversation and questions, and connections, and challenges. So please get ready to go in to dive deep into the conversation. So, I am going to share with you examples of the pitfalls. One of the examples of desiring whiteness is that we have a pay structure at DPI that, that pays people who have higher educational degrees or multiple education degrees more money than other folks. And with respect to our equity efforts, which are all volunteer knowing there is one person that gets paid for doing agency wide



equity work. The rest is all volunteer, and that volunteer pool is 40 percent Indigenous folks, and people of Color.

Courtney

Reed-Jenkins:

And so, there is an inequity in terms of who is burdened with moving our equity efforts forward. An example of leading technically, we require districts with race and ability-based gaps to submit improvement plans. Some districts around their 17th year of improvement with no discernible student outcome changes, that is failing entire generations of students. And so we have an obligation to do something more than requiring improvement plans. The example that I shared with respect to interrupting centralized control, one of our most exciting and innovative initiatives around equity really came from a grassroots, organic group of folks at DPI who wanted to connect around equity, and so started a weekly equity connect. And now we have about a third of our staff joining in that weekly connection. And finally, an example of excusing institutional failures, particularly in large complex government agencies is: *I don't know how to do it, right?* That we, that it is hard. It's, it's complex and complicated and sometimes that's our excuse rather than to get started to get better.

Courtney

Reed-Jenkins:

So, with that, I invite folks to drop things in the chat, to turn on their mics and if you're comfortable, your cameras. Share what's coming up for you all and what questions and connections you have. Any other instructions or guidance, Tiffany?

Dr. Tiffany Kyser: No, thank you, Courtney. And just Lynn and Courtney, thank you so much for the upfront framing of your context, your unapologetic stance



and vulnerability in terms of where you all are, versus where you want to be and what you want to realize. Thank you so much for unpacking your key tips for maximizing the partnership. For those that are either currently engaged with the MAP Center in some form or maybe are thinking about that or the organization is thinking about that. And then finally, unpacking that Tier One resource coupled with really concrete, contextually relevant examples. So, I just appreciate that, but no further instructions. This is a space we have about 12 to 14 minutes remaining for each of you to leverage Lynn and Courtney as they represent a State Department and engage them in any questions you have, or any critical friendship, or loving critique that you may want to offer to the virtual space.

Ginni Winters: I'd like to ask a question.

Dr. Tiffany Kyser: Please.

Ginni Winters: So, my name is Ginni Winters and I'm the School Culture and Equity consultant at Wayne RESA which is the largest educational service agency, in the state of Michigan, we service in the southeast corridor of the state. So, you mentioned one of the traps about leaving technically. So, as you reflect, it's huge to shift leadership thinking from technical work to adaptive work. And so, as you're thinking about the Wisconsin Department's journey, can you maybe share some insights on to the progression of consciousness and awareness that helps leadership shift, shift from technical work to the adaptive work around equity? And I asked this question colleagues, because part of my work is working with the, I'm working with about five districts who want to enact equity. And I'm finding



that there is not a high degree of agency around adaptive work on the part of leaders. So could you kind of, some insights maybe that you've noticed in terms of the progression of awareness that helps them shift, transform from technical onto adaptive work. Because that's where equity work lies. Am I being clear?

Courtney

Reed-Jenkins: You are being absolutely clear. And I'll get—point to two examples that may highlight how we've attempted to do it in Wisconsin and would certainly welcome other people's thinking around that. So, we, about a decade ago, pulled together a task force on addressing the race-based achievement gap, what— it was called the achievement gap and Wisconsin, and we released a document called, "Promoting Excellence for All." And in the document, one of the things that we were very intentional to do was to couple beliefs with the research so that it was clear that it's not just about implementing, technically implementing strategies, but implementing strategies within a belief system that's rooted in equity. So that's one resource that I'll put a link to in the chat for you to see the ways we did that.

Ginni Winters: Thank you.

Courtney

Reed-Jenkins: The second thing that we are currently doing is, created what are called Mindset Cards. And again, they are based on if folks have—know of the National Equity Project, they also use mindset cards, but they're just a way of capturing in very short order, the—the way in which approaching the issue adaptively is more important in many respects, or equally as important



as the technical. So those would be the two examples, that I would offer, Ginni that we've been trying to do here in Wisconsin.

Ginni Winters: Thank you so much, Courtney because one of the things that I'm really realizing is that we don't have a structure in place to actually do the work. So, I was just very interested in that. Thanks so much.

Lynn Winn: And I want to just add to that. Neither do we. So much of what you are hearing about has occurred in pockets of excellence, has occurred through grassroots efforts. And the way that I have approached that is well, much of executive leadership continues to have that mindset. Oftentimes in state agencies, in particular, around technical solutions. I looked for that one, that one person in executive leadership who was ripe or ready to begin to think and move differently. And then I made myself available to them on a regular basis and started to move that work that way. But what I would say is right now I'm thrilled that we are, that we have met once, and I have a follow-up meeting with some folks from the state department of Minnesota who recently installed a Diversity and Equity Center within their state agency that we are excited about and are hoping to-to maybe learn from and replicate in some way.

Ginni Winters: Thank you so much.

Lynn Winn: Thank you.



Dr. Tiffany Kyser: Any other questions? I know there were some in the chat so I want to honor some time if folks want to pose their questions from the chat whole group. If not, I'll reflect those back.

Leigh: Hi, my name's Leigh. I'm at the Minnesota Department of Education, and I think Lynn may have hit on this, but my question was, how much of this equity work was sort of top down from your executive leadership and how much was done in divisions or teams?

Lynn Winn: Courtney, do you wanna—do you wanna start or shall I?

Courtney

Reed-Jenkins: So, this effort was started at the division level. It was led by Special Education because in 2004, attention to racial disproportionality was in the federal special ed law for the first time with required actions. And so, we lead, so the Special Ed team lead that work and really created in some ways what I would call an R&D arm for the agency, they tested, we, we funded at about anywhere depending on the year, from 100 to half a million dollars for a standalone grant to provide professional learning and technical assistance related to disproportionality. And that was the place where not only did we test out a lot of the ideas that we were having, but we also then identified key staff throughout the agency to engage in that learning as well. So, we grew then the next tier of leaders across the agency. We also invested in mentoring and coaching for identified, organically identified equity leaders around, across the agency. And then we have identified ways in which to support the growth and development of leaders across the agency in very organic ways. We do not have yet outside of the



required foundational training for all staff, which is a huge win, we don't have a portfolio or a plan to grow people intentionally and formally around equity. We're in the process of doing that right now.

Dr. Tiffany Kyser: Great question, Leigh. We've got time for one or two more questions. Feel free to use the reaction button if you wanted to virtually raise your hand, place in the chat, or if you feel comfortable, you can enable your mic and camera. Well, as folks are processing, I know there's a little bit of clarity in the chat. Thank you, Courtney for providing that. I just wanted to offer this question that Ginni posed because I think it threads throughout the resource, around the six ways to avoid equity traps in leadership. This notion of, Ginni, you mentioned moving from technical to adaptive. And I just want to build on that. This notion of leading from technical to adaptive to critical. And how deeply important it is to take a step back and understand that we all as educators are leaders within our organizations, have been trained, enculturated in a way where we have strength in the technical. Because it's easier to sort of situate the root cause of particular issues away from ourselves, to divorce who we are from the problems that we perceive and the narratives we use to cast particular deficit perspectives are onus on to others in our community. And so, this idea of situating a critical, which is to say, who has historically benefited from the organization that I'm leading in and who has not, is a very important, necessary, and very difficult commitment to make on a daily basis if your goal is to lead for equity, which by proxy suggests that you must commit to being an equity oriented leader.



Dr. Tiffany Kyser: So there, there's a distinction between engaging in equity work, or doing equity work, versus being an equity oriented leader engaging in equity work. Being an equity-oriented leader who's leading for equity within their, their organization. And so, I just wanted to offer that as an extension in your question and hopefully for the entire group is that if we're thinking of solutions and strategies within our organizations, divorced from the idea that we ourselves are deeply connected to what we are articulating are issues our problems spaces. If we do not situate ourselves and why we are framing things the way we frame them, then we are prone to sort of repeat practices and decisions, and policy, and guidance documents in how we provide capacity development to our teams in ways that re-inscribe, and reify the disparate and predictable patterns that Lynn opened up the conversation with.

Dr. Tiffany Kyser: So, I just wanted to kind of offer that as as you all are either taking notes or reflecting or maybe you have some loving critique or push back, and so I wanted to offer that into the conversation as well. So, any final thoughts or conversations? Again, offering, holding space for the chat as well, if anyone wants to lift up anything in the chat. Okay, well I'll move us to wrap up. And I'll share my screen here and some presentation slides just to kind of cover some resources that we thought you all may be interested in. So, we encourage you to check out a dedicated webpage for our new vodcast series entitled "The 20-Minute Talk." Episode 4 is recently been released with a focus on anti-racism at the intersections. So, how to engage and understand and define anti-racism at the intersections of other historically marginalized identities.



Dr. Tiffany Kyser: You can subscribe to our YouTube page and also subscribe to the 20-Minute Talk channel. You can also follow us on social media platforms, including Facebook, if you want to be prompted of when the new episodes will be released. We also want to ensure that you all are aware of The US Department of Education has published two new COVID-19 related guides to equitable school reopening. The series provides tools to aid educators in implementing the CDC's operational strategy for K-12 schools through phase prevention by addressing common challenges and providing practical examples. This series will be updated as additional scientific evidence becomes available. Volume one is entitled *Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools* and volume two is entitled *Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting Student's Needs*.

Dr. Tiffany Kyser: So, we encourage you at the Center to check them out in order to keep your students safe. And again, these are guides are updated as new information comes out from the CDC. And I'll ask Robin to post those in the chat as well. Also, we want to ensure that you join the conversation on social media. If you feel like this conversation, was beneficial, was rich, was a value-add, we encourage you to follow us on Facebook at the Great Lakes Equity Center or Twitter @GreatLakesEAC. And you can kick off joining us and subscribing by answering the question, how are you going to apply what you learned today using the hashtag #MAPEquity.

Dr. Tiffany Kyser: So, with that, I want to provide a-an offering of gratitude to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction a special thanks to Lynn Winn and Courtney Reed-Jenkins for joining us, for leading us in a wonderful



Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WDPI)

Equity Connect!

EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

Ensuring My State Agency is a Critically Conscious Learning Organization

September 14, 2021



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conversation and a rich discussion around the importance of critical consciousness to sustain and advance equity-oriented efforts within state agencies and organizations broadly. I want to thank Robin Jackson, our Technical Director. And each of you, finally for taking time out of your busy schedules to engage in this dialogue, to carve out space, to do some really hard thinking, to reflect. So, with that, we'll move our session to close and thank you. Thank you again. I'll follow up with as well with an email to remind you to complete our post-session questionnaire. And I believe Robin has placed that in the chat as well. So, with that, have a good rest of your day. Thank you so much.

[End of Audio]