

## TRANSCRIPTION

**Crystal M.:** On March 19<sup>th</sup> 2020, COVID-19 forced schools to abruptly close and shift to online and hybrid learning, uprooting the lives of caregivers, students, and all school personnel. This podcast series will center the voices of caregivers, students, and school staff members as they discuss their online and hybrid learning experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this podcast series, multiple stakeholders will gain first-hand insight into the various ways caregivers, students, and school staff members navigated and continue to navigate schooling during a pandemic.

**Crystal M.:** The goals of this podcast series are to provide stakeholders first-hand accounts of caregivers, students, and school staff members experiences during online and hybrid learning, and provide opportunities for stakeholders to better understand caregivers, students, and school staff members' challenges and triumphs so they can support caregivers, students, and school staff members during the continuing pandemic and beyond.

**Crystal M.:** We would like to thank the students, caregivers, and school staff members for taking the time to share their experiences with us. We appreciate you all.

[Transition music]

**Caregiver:** Well, it has been difficult. Certainly, online was better than nothing at all. Well, not really. It was...everybody was learning. Everybody had the same learning curve at the same time, and it's hard to teach somebody if you're also steeped in your own learning curve. So, learning the program, the software, trying to get the schedules to work, trying to get everything to move in a smooth pattern, while also dealing with children who were

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

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 PROJECT OF EQUITY  
CENTER

## I. In the Midst of Chaos: Schooling Experiences During a Pandemic: *Persisting Through the Chaos* *Equity Spotlight Podcast Series* Crystal Hill Morton, MAP Center Equity Fellow – Indiana

learning how to use the equipment, and learning how to use the software. And children who were having a hard time transitioning. It was a lot of chaos.

### Caregiver:

There were many days when her equipment failed, when we couldn't get logged on, when we spent the better part of a morning talking to tech support or waiting for tech support. All of that was very uncomfortable and difficult, especially if you have a child who gets frustrated easily and wants to quit. When you have roadblock after roadblock...you know, we set our password, put the password in and it doesn't work. Then they send you a password, and then that doesn't work. It's just... It was very, very...I keep saying, chaotic. Because that's what it felt like.

### Caregiver:

As it started to smooth out some, it was, as I said, better than nothing. But it was still very difficult for students to get the attention that they needed, while there were students who were who wouldn't mute their mics, and who didn't know how to mute their mics, or parents who are fussing the kids in the background, or I walk past. Now, I make sure I'm not seen in her video, but she...you could see other parents just doing all kinds of things behind the kids and it's just...

### Caregiver:

Kids who were definitely still sleeping, kids who were in their pajamas in... you know, just so, it was like corralling kittens. You just couldn't do it. So, then there was a reset, and they seem to get a better handle on it. By the time they opened the...her school for in-person learning...you know, I told her I was gonna pull up and slow down. You gotta jump out. I'm not even stopping. But she needed that in-person instruction. There is something about face-to-face. You get face-to-face on Zoom or through the electronic version, but you're competing... No, I don't want to say competing with. The

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

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.

## I. In the Midst of Chaos: Schooling Experiences During a Pandemic: *Persisting Through the Chaos* *Equity Spotlight Podcast Series* Crystal Hill Morton, MAP Center Equity Fellow – Indiana

person who is instructing you has so much that's tugging at their attention when you have 17 kids online. And all the time, they're not breaking up into small groups, they're not. They're just all right there.

### Caregiver:

So, by the time, right before they went to in-person, they did figure out how to get groups, and how to break kids up and separate them. So, it was running better—as long as the teacher showed up on time. Sometimes there was kids sitting there waiting on the teacher to come, to show up. And they were doing whatever they were doing, just waiting. They seem to be doing it better now that they have the in-person. They have a hybrid; they have some kids in the classroom, and some kids are online, and that seems to be working better. So, I don't know if I answered your question, it was terrible is what I can say. It was very difficult. We were very committed to it, and even with being very committed to it, it was very difficult.

### Crystal M.:

Did you feel like you got the supports you needed from administration and teachers on this time?

### Caregiver:

I got a lot. There was a lot of understanding, because again, they were as frustrated as we were. So, there was a lot of, "We understand," there was a lot of, "Well, you know, this first six weeks everybody's learning, so you don't have to worry about the grades. You don't have to worry about, you know... It's not going to count against them," but it does. My thing is, yeah, it does count against them because if they don't get it, that's going to put them a semester behind, until they catch up on this stuff. And so, I keep...I, I still hear some of that, "Well, you know, she's doing really well." And then I'll say, "But she's not grasping this math concept and she really wants to, and is frustrating." They're, "Well, you know, we're playing, we're catching up and we'll get her caught up. Don't worry about it." And it's not a worry, it's

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

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.

## I. In the Midst of Chaos: Schooling Experiences During a Pandemic: *Persisting Through the Chaos* *Equity Spotlight Podcast Series*

Crystal Hill Morton, MAP Center Equity Fellow – Indiana

concern. It's... I need to see extra effort to do that, and I don't really see that.

**Crystal M.:** Is there any advice you would give to teachers and administrators, or administrators, from a...

**Caregiver:** Well, because now we're not talking about planning for what happened, we're talking about planning for what might happen, so now is the time to learn your processes, role-play it, practice it, learn your equipment, learn your systems, whatever you're going to be using, and really just practice those. So that if we go into this again, that is if we ever get out of it, but if we go into it again full-fledge for everybody, so that it's not such a steep learning curve. Maybe one day a week, even though the kids are in class, they all need to be on their computers anyway doing something. So, they stay up to date with how this system that we're using works.

**Caregiver:** One of the biggest problems where they use *Schoology*, and nobody really knew how to use it. They bought it, they paid, they were using it, but they didn't know *how* to use it. And so, it would crash often, it would lock-up often. Hopefully those things won't be the same kind of issue as before. Just over-communicate. I would say that. Over-communicate with your parents, with the students. A lot of kids... like I'll see a lot of times saying, "I'm raising my hand. Why didn't she see me? Why didn't she call on me? Why didn't, you know, I'm raising my hand."

**Caregiver:** All the kids need some kind of attention, at some point. I understand you call them, the ones you call on for whatever reasons. But before that class is over, before that day is over, call that kid's name out, let them have their moment in the Zoom spotlight. Let them tell you about their day or do

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

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.

## I. In the Midst of Chaos: Schooling Experiences During a Pandemic: *Persisting Through the Chaos* *Equity Spotlight Podcast Series* Crystal Hill Morton, MAP Center Equity Fellow – Indiana

something that's going to give them an opportunity to feel heard in that process. I think that would be important.

### Caregiver:

And then again, I just can't go back to over-communicate. She's working on a math thing now that I wish, and I've asked her teacher, he finally did, send home... Send me something, so that I can see what she's working on, so that I can help her with it. If it's all at school, and nothing comes home... paper-homework is like a thing of the past now; that doesn't happen. So, it's kind of hard for me as a parent to see what she's struggling with, and try to explain it from a different angle or give her some suggestions that might help. So, I am asking, I'm the one that's asking for the additional resources and not all parents are able or willing to do that.

### Crystal M.:

Now do you have... I know you talked about there's teachers saying, "We're just catching up, we'll catch her up." And so, there's that concern that she... This not learning now, will impact her later. Are there additional concerns that you have about this experience for your child?

### Caregiver:

I think that some of it is a trade-off. You know, I have her in this tutoring program that is connected to the school, but it doesn't leave room for doing like a paper, "Let's practice this math thing," because she has to be on there an hour after she gets out of school. It takes 10 minutes for her to get out of the school, into the car, and us to get on our way, another 20 minutes to get home. And then we try to get something to eat really quick, so there's no practice time. And she's on there until 7. So, then she has to eat, so it's... So even though I'm doing what is available by getting--having her in the tutoring, there are other things that she'll come home and say, "I'm really struggling with this. I don't understand this." When do we do that?

## I. In the Midst of Chaos: Schooling Experiences During a Pandemic: *Persisting Through the Chaos*

*Equity Spotlight Podcast Series*

Crystal Hill Morton, MAP Center Equity Fellow – Indiana

And so that ends up waiting until the end of the week, which seems like we're behind the...we're always catching up. We're always catching up.

**Support Staff:** I kind of understand what you're saying, too, about like the pencil and the paper. It seems a little bit... Well, it's a lot more tangible I think sometimes to some students than others. Some students can hit that computer and fly away with it, where some of them, I think the paper and the pencil in the hand all works a lot better.

**Caregiver:** Yeah. Well, I mean this is what they told us, right? If you write something down, you'll learn it, you'll remember it more. And so, when we go through it, and I write down the steps, and I ask her to review the steps and it's all right there on the paper, she can touch it, she can erase when she makes a mistake, it doesn't feel as permanent. It doesn't feel as like failing is inevitable. There's hope in that pencil and paper, but there's so little time to do the pencil and paper and then, like I said, I have to push to get the resources so that I can know what they're working on right now, instead of "Oh, yeah, we're working on long division with fractions." Okay. That could... What part of it are you working on? What portion of it is she having trouble with? So, it's just makes it...

**Support Staff:** Yeah. Does she know the- [crosstalk]

**Caregiver:** No, we have the-

**Support Staff:** ...from the quotient, from the divisor, when she's setting up the problem, after she solved the problem...does she know what a division problem is? I found that in working with students with division, long division, period. I found out in just teaching the kids what a division...what it... like, to name

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

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.

## I. In the Midst of Chaos: Schooling Experiences During a Pandemic: *Persisting Through the Chaos* *Equity Spotlight Podcast Series*

Crystal Hill Morton, MAP Center Equity Fellow – Indiana

the parts of a division problem, right? That helps them to solve the division problem. I had a song that I came up with the kids, we said, "Divide, multiply, subtract, bring down, repeat." So, we went through those steps and as they got faster, I sang the song with them so they can kind of under...because people learn...some kids learn with a song just like that [snaps fingers]. That repetition... So there's many different ways. That's four long days that she has.

**Caregiver:** Yeah, and they focus specifically on reading, and comprehension, and vocabulary development and all that. And that's great. Her reading scores have gone up, and that's great, but again, they're long days.

**Support Staff:** Did they ask you all for feedback? Do they do like little assessments with you all to see how you're comfortable [inaudible].

**Caregiver:** Not yet. Not yet. So, it's just trying to figure out how to balance that, and how to fit it in. So, we're continuously trying to tweak what we're doing to make it fit. And there are many weeks that go by where it's like, "I, I, you know, go to bed, you need to go to bed. I need to go to bed."

**Support Staff:** Do you think she's at grade level?

**Caregiver:** Do I think...? I think that in math... Let me say this, I think that they, "they" being these teachers, are comfortable with them being a grade behind, you know what I'm saying? They have adopted this mentality that, "Oh, well COVID." And you know, the whole year was just kind of, "So wherever they are, is where they are." So, I'm not really comfortable where she is, even though they are. Grade, her... She'll get grades, her grades look fine, but then when we sit down to do a math problem and we're doing it, there are

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

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.

## I. In the Midst of Chaos: Schooling Experiences During a Pandemic: *Persisting Through the Chaos* *Equity Spotlight Podcast Series* Crystal Hill Morton, MAP Center Equity Fellow – Indiana

comprehension issues. And so, when I say, "Okay, we need to spend the next 15 days just reviewing addition." And when you...the carrying, and we need to review that, we need to go over the fours timetables, you need to spend a week doing that.

**Support Staff:** And then when you talk about doing long division, that's all included, right? You got to multiply. You got to divide. You got to subtract. You may have to borrow in your subtraction. And you're subtracting.

**Caregiver:** Absolutely. [crosstalk 00:17:40] That's why I say while we're doing it...

**Support Staff:** Yeah.

**Caregiver:** While we're doing it, these warning lights are going off in this area or that area, but then they've moved on to fractions. It's like, "But hold on. Of course she's going to struggle with fractions, because we're still here." But they're okay with just moving on. And because she likes math, that's a wonder to me, since there are some concepts that she struggled with. She really likes math. And so, she's moving on with them and getting more and more frustrated. So, we're working on it.

**Center Announcer:** This resource was brought to you by the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center. To find out about other Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center resources, visit our website at [www.greatlakesequity.org](http://www.greatlakesequity.org). To subscribe to our publications, click on the Subscribe to Our Publications link located on the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center website.

The Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center, a project of the Great Lakes Equity Center, is funded by the U.S. Department of Education to provide technical assistance, resources, and  
Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

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.





**I. In the Midst of Chaos: Schooling Experiences  
During a Pandemic: *Persisting Through the Chaos***  
*Equity Spotlight Podcast Series*  
Crystal Hill Morton, MAP Center Equity Fellow – Indiana



professional learning opportunities related to equity, civil rights, and systemic school reform throughout the thirteen-state region.

The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

This product and its contents are provided to educators, local and state education agencies, and/or non-commercial entities for educational training purposes only. No part of this recording may be reproduced, or utilized in any form or in any means, electronic or mechanical, including recording or by any information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center.

Finally, the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center would like to thank the Indiana University School of Education Indianapolis at IUPUI, as well as Executive Director Dr. Kathleen King Thorius, Director of Operations Dr. Seena Skelton, and Associate Director Dr. Tiffany Kyser, for their leadership and guidance in the development of all tools and resources to support the region.

[End of Audio]

Copyright © 2022 by Great Lakes Equity Center

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.

