

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

TRANSCRIPTION

Crystal M.: On March 19th 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]

Crystal M.: All right. So, the question I have is, can you describe your experiences supporting your child online or hybrid learning during COVID-19? So, what was it like when that shift happened to being completely online?

Caregiver: It's it's, like me, I'm not really an internet guy, so really, you can say I went dark. So, when you in COVID, like a lot of school weren't in [sic]. I believe a

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lot of these people got into a pattern where they don't have to communicate with the parents. So, I would send emails, and they wasn't even getting responded back [sic]. So, it really just went dark for me. And I'm just not an internet guy. You might send me an email, and I really don't do no email-type stuff. I like to buy things cash... You know, I had to really force myself to start checking these emails. So, you know, with me, when it comes to school, I really was in the dark.

Crystal M.: Did you feel like you got support you needed from... Well, let me go back. So, you mentioned that you would email teachers, and they wouldn't email back. So, during the pandemic, when you started, when everything shut down and you were emailing teachers with COVID going on, you weren't getting responses back during that time?

Caregiver: No. I'm going to give you an example like, what's going on right now. They always feed you this pyramid thing: the parent, the student, and the teacher. That's not what's going on, that's not going on. So sometimes I took it as “no news is good news.”

Caregiver: Found out she flunked the class. So now, its's about...now I'm on this... through this IEP meeting, I found out all these assignments are missing and all that. And once again, I think I'm an old school guy. I just remember, when you miss so much, so many assignments, that teachers call home. I remember that used to be a threat: “I'm going to call home.” I don't even believe these teachers even use that tactic anymore.

Caregiver: You can't go up there. When you go up there, and you're in their face, they have to answer. But this email stuff back and forth is useless. It's really, it's

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useless. So, you know, I'm in the dark. I'm in the dark. The only thing I know to do is call a superintendent, which I've been saying I was going to do.

Caregiver:

I was going to call the superintendent, and tell him what's going on. They try to do everything online. I said, "Hey, I tried to get on that web link, I couldn't. I'm having problems. Do you got a hard copy?" This is the email I sent them. Right? You know what he sent me back? He sent me *another* link. I just told you I can't get on. He sent me *another* link. So, I was going to take that email to the...wherever that little school council thing is over there, school board people, and show them.

Caregiver:

And I even text him back, and I said, "You do realize, I told you that I cannot get on the link." These people...these people truly don't care. How I feel, they don't care. So, and like I said, I can't go up there. I can't go up to the school. They not answering the phone. Or if you do call, you might get through, the gentlemen ain't never calling you back. They got a pass. I think some of them feel like they got a pass on it. I think it's crazy that they allow, they say they love the kids and they're dedicated to their craft, but yet you'll let a child miss 30 assignments. There'll be 30 assignments missing.

Caregiver:

And, or they'll flunk four or five tests. And you won't even try another avenue of trying to help this, this, this, this child to pass your course. You know, it sound like to me, somebody's defeated. And I'm not going to let her defeat me. Are the teachers, are the teachers letting the kids defeat them, and are the kids, are the teachers okay with the kids coming in class and doing nothing? You know, I don't get it. I don't understand how it worked. I don't know how it works no more. So, I'm in the dark.



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

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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]

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