

## IV: In the Midst of Chaos: Schooling Experiences During a Pandemic: *A Teacher's Perspective* *Equity Spotlight Podcast Series* Crystal Hill Morton, MAP Center Equity Fellow – Indiana

### 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]

**Support Staff:** My first question to you is, in August when school began, was your school total virtual...was it total virtual learning at that point? Or was it a hybrid?

**Teacher:** Our school was virtual for the first few weeks.

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.

## IV: In the Midst of Chaos: Schooling Experiences During a Pandemic: *A Teacher's Perspective* *Equity Spotlight Podcast Series* Crystal Hill Morton, MAP Center Equity Fellow – Indiana

- Support Staff:** Okay. And give me your experience with that as it relates with parents, scholars, working on the platform that you were working on, and getting students motivated to work.
- Teacher:** For parent communication, or having contact with their parents, it was a lot easier than it had been in previous years to contact and speak with parents. Because we were virtual, a lot of the parents were home, which made that school to home connection, transition for a new school year, a lot easier. However, motivating students was another battle. I think students, I think they were unmotivated from the previous school year, so trying to motivate them to work...well actually, even work harder than they did the previous year to fill in academic gaps, I mean, it was close to impossible. But we just kept trudging along. And finally, you know, actually, once we got in-person, it was a lot better.
- Support Staff:** So, let's go back to online really quickly.
- Teacher:** OK.
- Support Staff:** Was it harder to motivate them to do the work once you were offline with them, or was it difficult online *and* offline?
- Teacher:** I would say the students were engaged maybe during conversations, or when it wasn't necessarily a lecture. However, working independently did not happen. If we were not online, they did not work.
- Support Staff:** Okay. So, you have a hard time getting homework assignments turned in?

## **IV: In the Midst of Chaos: Schooling Experiences During a Pandemic: A Teacher's Perspective**

*Equity Spotlight Podcast Series*  
Crystal Hill Morton, MAP Center Equity Fellow – Indiana

- Teacher:** Yes. Or even in class assignments. If anything was independent, and I wasn't watching, which a lot of the apps you couldn't necessarily...they weren't live instruction, then it was hard to get them to work or turn in assignments.
- Support Staff:** Okay. And so, you said your communication with the parents seemed to go smoothly online. Did you ever reach out and communicate with them in any other ways? And if so, what were they?
- Teacher:** Emails and phone calls were the other two major avenues. But I did talk to a lot of parents virtually, just seeing them walk past the camera or having the students grab them and bring them to the camera.
- Support Staff:** Okay. Let's fast forward a little bit. That was August. We are now in March, and we have a little bit less than a month and a half left of school, I believe, for you.
- Teacher:** Yes.
- Support Staff:** And so now you have... your students are in class with you every day. What kind of growth have you seen, if any, and how is this different than when school first started?
- Teacher:** I think they've grown tremendously, academically, being back in school. I forgot. I'm sorry. What was the rest of your question.
- Support Staff:** And how has their growth been?

## IV: In the Midst of Chaos: Schooling Experiences During a Pandemic: *A Teacher's Perspective* *Equity Spotlight Podcast Series* Crystal Hill Morton, MAP Center Equity Fellow – Indiana

### Teacher:

Their growth has been...I've been proud of the growth or the achievement that they've made since they've been back. I am able to motivate them so much more being in-person versus virtual. And then it's like that...I think just having that close proximity motivates them so much more because they can...I mean, just human nature, you know, having that relationship. I guess in-person helps them so much more to work hard, because they want to be successful. So, in-person they don't have any escapes that they can run to or do so. I don't know.

### Support Staff:

Okay. And as it relates to your administration, either here in the building where you are, or the administration for your district, how were you supported as an educator? One, beginning in August and then you can like bring us up to this point.

### Teacher:

Okay. I am not necessarily the happiest with the way that the district supported us. I think technology wise, they always offered a lot of support once we were back in school. But for myself, I think I needed trainings. I could have done trainings maybe over the summer, or at the beginning of the school year, to kind of get me more acclimated to the technology that I needed to use to continue to teach virtually. I understand that during the pandemic it was different to...I mean, nobody knew what was going on. So, to try to prepare us it was difficult. So, we were transitioning into e-learning, but the amount of skill required, and the knowledge required, in order to successfully teach virtually: I don't personally feel equipped. And so, I just felt like the district could have done more to equip us as teachers, to even another school year virtually.

## IV: In the Midst of Chaos: Schooling Experiences During a Pandemic: *A Teacher's Perspective* *Equity Spotlight Podcast Series* Crystal Hill Morton, MAP Center Equity Fellow – Indiana

**Support Staff:** Okay. Last question. Thank you so much. We're going to put you in a perfect world, in a perfect place as an educator. What would be your perfect world with the pandemic and being hybrid, being in-person, all the back and forth, and like you said, you wasn't feeling real comfortable with all the electronics, but what would be a perfect world for you as an educator?

**Teacher:** I think a perfect world would be able to merge the amount of technology necessary to be a successful citizen in 2021, along with just some of the traditional teaching styles and teaching methods that would help our learners the best. Because they are visual learners, they're very tactile. However, I know technology, that's the direction that we're going in, but there has to be balance, I think, in both worlds for the students to be successful. So, I would just like to see more balance.

**Support Staff:** Alright.

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



**IV: In the Midst of Chaos: Schooling Experiences  
During a Pandemic: A Teacher's Perspective**  
*Equity Spotlight Podcast Series*  
Crystal Hill Morton, MAP Center Equity Fellow – Indiana



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.

