

TRANSCRIPTION

- Tiffany Kyser:** Good afternoon, everyone. We're going to go ahead and get started. Welcome to the Region III Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center Communities of Care Virtual Coffeehouse Series. This series is intended to provide a space to virtually land as we discuss and reflect on our students and families and how we're aiming to support them in the wake of and in response to COVID-19 as well as ongoing violence in our community.
- Tiffany Kyser:** As we work to pursue our consistent stance on realizing educational equity, we want to use this time as an opportunity to share what is going well, as well as our struggles. To be clear, the Region III Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center Communities of Care Virtual Coffeehouse Series, its intent is to center the perspectives of participants. We encourage all of us to come together today in this virtual space, share our experiences, and use dialogue and conversation just as you would in your local coffeehouse.
- Tiffany Kyser:** Session Four of our Virtual Coffeehouse Series is focused on advancing our community care amongst each other by sharing our stories, our approaches, lessons learned. This is not a didactic, instruction-based experience. This virtual engagement aims to acknowledge the need for us to come together in a virtual community to discuss challenges, to discover and be encouraged by what we've learned collectively as we all work to meet the demands of teaching and learning in the wake of COVID-19 and ongoing violence in our communities.
- Tiffany Kyser:** This is an opportunity for us to learn and dialogue together, to fellowship, and to provide collegial support. Please be ready to take notes, grab your cup of coffee or tea or beverage as we engage in conversation today. We are thrilled to welcome participants from 13 state departments of education today, 66 districts and schools, 55 education-based organizations, service centers, foundations, and 16 institutes of higher education. This represents over 26 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
- Tiffany Kyser:** My name is Tiffany Kyser, and I serve as the Associate Director of Engagement and Partnerships with the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center, or MAP Center I'll refer to us moving forward. I have the privilege of serving as your host for today. Joined with me are Erin Sanborn, a Graduate Assistant at the MAP Center, who will serve as a cohost. I'll give Erin an opportunity to say hello.
- Erin Sanborn:** Hi, everyone. Thank you for being here.

- Tiffany Kyser:** Thanks Erin. I'm also joined by Nickie Coomer, a Graduate Assistant who will serve as our technical director and chat moderator. Nickie, I'll give you a chance to say hello.
- Tiffany Kyser:** Thanks, Nickie. Additionally, Kathleen King Thorius, Executive Director and Principal Investigator of the MAP Center and Executive Director of the Great Lakes Equity Center, as well as Seena Skelton, Director of Operations at the MAP Center, are joining as critical contributors to dialogue along with each of you.
- Tiffany Kyser:** Kathleen may not be able to make today's session, so I want to send my welcome on behalf of her. I'll also give Seena, Director of Operations of the Center, a chance to welcome everyone.
- Seena Skelton:** Good afternoon everyone, and welcome.
- Tiffany Kyser:** Thanks, Seena. I also am really, really thrilled and excited for this fourth session to have a new set of conversation starters which join us each session. Our conversation starters not only represent state departments and/or districts that the MAP Center currently partners with but also will support in providing their perspectives and insights to break the "virtual ice" as pepper in three reflective prompts throughout today's Virtual Coffeehouse session.
- Tiffany Kyser:** We're joined today by Dr. Derald Davis, Dr. Laura Slee, and Dr. Markay Winston. I'll give an opportunity for them to each introduce themselves starting with Dr. Davis, then Dr. Slee, then Dr. Winston. Dr. Davis?
- Tiffany Kyser:** Dr. Derald Davis may be coming off of a meeting, so I'll move forward with Dr. Laura Slee, and then Dr. Markay Winston. So, Laura?
- Laura Slee:** Hello. Hi my name's Laura. We're located in Michigan, so that's a fun fact. Super happy to be here.
- Tiffany Kyser:** Thank you, Laura. Then just in case Derald comes on later, Derald is the Assistant Superintendent of Equity, Inclusion, and Innovation with Kansas City Public Schools in Missouri. So we have representation from Missouri, Dr. Laura Slee, Laura, is in Michigan. Then, Markay, I'll hand it over to you to welcome everyone.
- Markay Winston:** Thank you so much, Dr. Keyser. My name is Markay Winston, Assistant Superintendent in Monroe County Community Schools here in Bloomington, Indiana. So very happy to join the conversation today.
- Tiffany Kyser:** Thank you. As Derald jumps on, Erin, if you wouldn't mind just notifying me, and I'll make space to honor Derald so he can say hello to everyone as well. One of our goals at the MAP Center is to engage participants in

Copyright © 2020 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.

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 personal reflection and growth.

Tiffany Kyser: To this 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 platform. We encourage participants to consider this disclaimer as they share and engage today. I'll now turn it over to Nickie to give us a little bit more guidance in terms of access for today.

Nickie Coomer: Great, thank you. So, today's session, our Virtual Coffeehouse, is meant to be interactive. We hope you join the discussion. You can join here through speaking through our video, you can also engage on the chat, and that's where I'll be spending a lot of my time today. So please participate. But to that point, to reduce noise distraction, we do ask that you mute your microphone when you are not speaking. Then, as Tiffany just mentioned, a recording will be available on our website after the session.

Tiffany Kyser: Thanks, Nickie. I'm going to turn it over to Erin, who's going to kick us off with our first prompt. But since Dr. Davis may be coming off of a meeting, we're going to go back to this question and actually jump to the second question. So Laura can go ahead and kick us off, and I'll turn it over to Erin.

Erin Sanborn: Hi, welcome again. To start our conversation today about how to best support new teachers, we are going to begin with the prompt: "In what ways would you encourage educators to prepare themselves to engage in teaching and learning that acknowledges and is responsive to the inequitable impacts of both COVID-19 and the continued violence against People of Color and ongoing demonstrations and protests occurring in our country?" We're going to lean on Laura to go ahead and kick us off with that discussion.

Laura Slee: Such a small, easy to answer question. I appreciate the question actually because I've been thinking a lot about this very issue with our own district. I work in a small district, and I think as I read the question, I feel like one of the key components is how educators can prepare themselves as part of that critical consciousness piece.

Laura Slee: We found that we have a lot of informal conversation happening right now. It was happening before, I guess pre-George Floyd and the protests that have happened--the demonstrations that have happened after that. But part of that is we found that we can't have some of the conversations we need to have around some of the disproportionate data without people doing a little bit of the work on their own and a lot of the work about

privilege, power, the history of our own district that came... Redlining was a huge component of how our district looks today, demographic. So that preparing yourself, I think, is pretty key.

Laura Slee:

I guess in terms of teaching and learning, when we're thinking about a classroom, I think another key component is actively listening to your students and their families, especially now. We're going into this really weird, new, somewhat exciting, somewhat terrifying, terrain and I think it's going to be even more important than ever before to build these relationships with our students, whether it's online or in-person, probably more online. But really looking for ways to connect with our families that we maybe haven't had the opportunity to do before.

Laura Slee:

In that building of the relationships, looking for the strengths and assets of our kids, our students, and their families. I guess I've been trying to shift conversation with our staff here, how might students and their families have grown during this time rather than looking predominantly at what they've lost. We want to clearly deal with learning loss or however we talk about it, but also what are some things that may have been gained during this time and how can we build on that to get some of the things that maybe were lost in the midst of collective trauma and personal trauma?

Laura Slee:

I think just the last piece is that helping prepare yourself and preparing students for engaging in teaching and learning is to cultivate that learning environment where there's space for dialogue, there's space for students to be themselves, for families to contribute. A huge thing I think is in providing choice in how students demonstrate what they know and what they're good at, especially now. I think people feel like they're really out of control, things are out of control in their lives. Are there opportunities in the classroom, to provide ways to empower students and their families in the learning instead of adding another thing that they feel helplessness around?

Laura Slee:

So that's my short answer to that question. But just some things to think about. Doing the work of preparing yourself, actively listening to your students and their families, and then trying to be responsive to the needs of the people in front of you.

Erin Sanborn:

Yeah. Thank you so much, Laura, for kicking us off. Some of the things I heard were just really honing in on the idea of preparing oneself and increasing critical consciousness both personally on your own, in your own time, in your own space, but also then having that translate into your professional work, then actively listening to students and families. Claudine, thank you for jumping in with the idea of listening objectively and removing judgment from what you're hearing in the experiences, and that tied into the idea of asset-based.

Erin Sanborn: Really, I appreciated the point of moving away from what have students and families lost during this time versus what opportunities are there? What ways have our students and families grown in this space? What have they gained and how can we cultivate a co-constructive learning environment based on the assets that our students and families are bringing into this space and not just mandating, if you will, what this new phase of teaching and learning will look like but really making it co-constructive and meaningful.

There are a couple questions in the chat. Feel free anyone to put your questions in the chat or come off mute if you have something to add to the conversation. So one, if it's okay, Laura or whoever, I'm going to read some of these questions out. So one is, "How can we support our new teachers regarding navigating ongoing grief experienced by them, their students, and their families due to COVID-19 deaths?" Which ties into the previous series that we had.

Tiffany Kyser: Erin, is it okay before we connect to Mrs. J's question and maybe pull out some things we discussed in our Death, Dying, and Loss Series? Is it okay for me to continue to unpack what I heard from Laura to mirror back? Is that okay?

Tiffany Kyser: Okay, I also in addition to this idea of listening to students and families, Laura, you let me know if I'm misinterpreting. What I infer from that is when students and families, particularly those who have been historically marginalized in our school communities, share with you as an educator or a stakeholder in the community what's going on with them and their experiences and their requests. Listen to them, but also believe them.

Laura Slee: Absolutely. I think a lot of times we're moving so fast and we're so conditioned to, "Uh-huh (affirmative), uh-huh (affirmative). Yup. Check," checking it off on my list of things I'm listening for and then moving on. But actually connecting and believing in their experience, for sure. I think that's something that as somebody who sits in my seat, I'm the Curriculum Director and trying to get people to realize that's important is tough as something we need to convey. But if you're not already there yet, I think it goes back to that critical consciousness piece.

Tiffany Kyser: Thanks, Laura. Then that's the second one I heard was this idea of critical consciousness and you pulled out some sub-words, some phrases to continue to define critical consciousness. You talked about power, you talked about privilege, and you talked about redlining outside or historical policies that have created inequitable allocations of resources. In this case, in housing and access to particular resources around housing, you mentioned redlining.

- Tiffany Kyser:** I also wanted to extend that if I could, Laura, to this idea of being aware of self. You mentioned starting with the self and your identities, examining how those identities are afforded certain advantages as animated by underpinned structures of power. This idea of recognizing that we are all operating with multiple identities and some of us have multiple oppressed identities, identities that are not dominant identities. What does that mean in responding to supporting new educators, or if you are a new educator, when negotiating not only a global pandemic but inflated realizations for some of ongoing violence against People of Color?
- Tiffany Kyser:** So, I just wanted to be really explicit in pulling out, I think, some of those key things that you mentioned, Laura. Then the final thing is this idea you talked about, collective trauma. Do you mind expanding what you mean by collective trauma, what that means to you?
- Laura Slee:** What it means to me, just from where I'm sitting as a white educator, I'm seeing colleagues and students of historically marginalized communities just watching on TV, reliving violence through TV. Watching all these experiences where the police are doing terrible things and people are responding in terrible ways that are racist, and homophobic, sexist; predominantly racist. Watching that, it's horrible for me to watch, but it's not my truth necessarily.
- Laura Slee:** I don't know how to say this without sounding like a jerk or something, but it affects me in a very different way than it affects my Colleagues of Color, my Students of Color. Me, as a white person trying to understand that it's traumatic in ways for that community in ways that I can never understand, but I need to listen to that and believe it and find ways to support my students who have experienced that community-wide trauma of racism.
- Laura Slee:** But also knowing that, individually they may have had some experiences, racism, or COVID, or the intersection of those two things, at a very personal level. So how can I help the educational community that I work in understand that there's this collective trauma, but also the personal trauma, and try to provide supports around grief, around mental health, around on a more individual one-on-one basis? Does that make any sense? I don't really know how to...
- Tiffany Kyser:** Thank you, Laura. I appreciate your reframing both from a deficit perspective to an asset. What is it that we can rely on in terms of assets and strengths of our communities at this time? Then extending that to this idea of collective trauma that in fact often, I know as a former classroom educator and the space that I'm in now, I'm working with educators, this idea of trauma-informed care, or trauma-informed care in our practices, often situates trauma squarely from a deficit perspective of locating trauma only and solely in historically marginalized communities.

Tiffany Kyser: Interpreting and negotiating that trauma in ways that individual is growing up without this, or this individual or those students are experiencing this, as opposed to recognizing that systemic forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, classism, in and of itself create trauma within our school system. So how is it that our policies and practices and the ways that we're welcoming new educators, in the ways that we're creating opportunities for veteran educators to support new educators, or vice versa, disrupts perhaps patterns of practice that situate trauma in particular ways that squarely put the onus on particular groups?

Tiffany Kyser: So, I appreciate that. That does connect to Mrs. J's question. I don't know, Mrs. J, if you feel comfortable sharing your question whole group around this idea of the impact of death, dying, and bereavement?

Mrs. J, if you are speaking, you may be muted as well. I think that's all I had to share, Erin. I'll turn it back to you if anyone else has other thoughts.

Erin Sanborn: As you were speaking also, Tiffany, Barry put a question in the chat, and I also what you were saying resonated and connected to the question he asked. So I was going to offer space, Barry, if you want to pose your question to the group as well.

Barry Thomas: Sure. What I put in the chat as I was listening as the conversation was going on is: what do we have as far as new teachers who are walking into a new experience, walking into a new community, a new neighborhood if you will and may not have access or may not be connected to that institution or that neighborhood prior to going into that school? What can schools do or what do schools have that might be able to provide not just, "Here read about, here's some data, here's some demographics, here's some graphs," or whatever, but also just some experiences that can be provided to connect our educators to our new educators, to the communities that they are going to be serving?

Barry Thomas: Again, not necessarily just handing, "Here, read this," but here **do** this. What can you do as a performative measure to ensure that you are creating a connection. Again, I think that takes away a little bit of that layer of misconception of just that deficit mindset that you were just talking about, Dr. Kyser, just giving them an opportunity to see richness through struggle or richness through perseverance. So just thought about how to frame that a little bit differently for how schools might be doing that.

Mrs. J: This is Mrs. J. I'm concerned about the cycle of death and grief that the students will be dealing with as well as the staff. I'm also concerned with the expectation of being connected and having access to the internet in order to use devices for those districts that are doing a hybrid online type

of situation, as well as just being fully online right now, because along with the death, I hate to sound so dire, but along with the death and the grief and the sickness that everyone is going to be dealing with, they're also going to be dealing with transitioning out of their homes because there's going to be a huge wave of evictions coming.

Mrs. J: There's going to be a lot to deal with, and I'm wondering how we're going to be able to support our teachers in dealing with that because we don't even know how to deal with that, and I'm a seasoned teacher.

Seena Skelton: Yeah, hi, this is Seena. I want to just echo Mrs. J, your contributions, and opening this up to the whole group. What are the structures that are already in place where you're bringing, you're convening educators, both veteran educators and new educators, to have some of these critical conversations?

Seena Skelton: We've talked a lot about the kinds of conversations that need to occur, the level of consciousness that needs to be cultivated. I'm wondering, though, what structures are in place, either maximizing or leveraging already occurring structures that are already there, or the possibility of creating new structures where you're bringing folks together and you're having these conversations, you're engaging people, opportunities to learn about the history of the communities in which they're teaching? So just open this up to the group for some ideas.

Tiffany Kyser: I know, Lisa, you provided an approach in the chat if you wouldn't mind sharing, as did Laura. Anyone else who would like to share in response to Seena's prompt.

Lisa Pennington: Sure. This was a district I used to work for. I was a Social Studies Specialist, so this was several years ago, but we took all of our new teachers each year on a bus tour of the city. Many of them were new to the district, many of them lived outside of the district, so we wanted them to see the city beyond just the neighborhood immediately surrounding their school. We wanted them to have a better idea of where their students were coming from and to give them a general history of the city.

Lisa Pennington: I certainly, if I could go back, because, of course, as a Social Studies Specialist I was one of the people that got to help provide that overall history, certainly I would be more explicit in the history in some of these things like redlining and things like that that have been brought up rather than general overview that we provided. But the new teachers did appreciate getting to see where their students were coming from because who typically just goes and drives around their new district to check it out?

Lisa Pennington: I think that's a good start as long as I think you're very conscious providing those explicit connections, and that useful and relevant history for the new teachers that you're giving the tour to.

Tiffany Kyser: Thanks, Lisa. I appreciate that avoid the trap of not having explicit and critical conversations when engaging in a district to where that was something for me as a new educator, that I got on a school bus and took a tour of the first district that I taught in. But the critical conversations were lacking, so the tour actually unintentionally reinforced deficit narratives and perspectives.

Tiffany Kyser: Even gawking or watching others othering, and it provided a space to learn and inculcate new teachers into othering others. So I appreciated your reframe of that and suggesting that real authentic critical conversations are needed. I would even extend that and say centering some of those stories and histories, those oral histories, redistributing the power to various community groups who have been the most adversely impacted negatively as well as who's benefited.

Tiffany Kyser: Having hard conversations and providing a space to have courageous conversations for new educators, I think, is important as a companion piece to that, to the tour you're suggesting. So I appreciate that, Lisa. Lisa, do you mind sharing what state you're located or what organization?

Lisa Pennington: Oh, sure. I'm in Illinois right now, but this is when I was in Virginia.

Tiffany Kyser: Thank you, Lisa. Any other thoughts or shares?

Markay Winston: Dr. Kyser, I would probably also echo some of the things that Mrs. Lisa was sharing and that you were sharing in terms of making sure that we're having critical, authentic conversations. I think it's the authenticity that really is going to matter. One of the things that we've begun doing probably over the last two to three years here is as part of our new teacher orientation, we have mandatory introductory equity training.

Markay Winston: You can only do so much at an introductory level, but that's become a real vital component of how we bring new teachers on board. During those sessions, they're usually a half a day, while we can't cover a lot of content, we've really structured them to make sure that we're having the types of conversations that you're describing. That's it's not just merely looking at just the data for the sake of data but really having a better understanding of why it's important and what does it mean in terms of bringing different perspectives into the classroom.

Markay Winston: We talk a lot about student voice and why and how that is important, and as a new educator, how do they incorporate that? Then, of course, looking at instructional practices and figuring out ways in which we can

pair them up perhaps with teacher mentors who can also help them also understand how best to deliver instruction, culturally sustaining practices, and such.

Markay Winston: So that's just one of our efforts to move in that direction, and then we've had ongoing subsequent trainings and support throughout the course of the school year specifically designed for those new teachers. So that's just one example of some things we've attempted.

Tiffany Kyser: Any other thoughts or shares as we're concluding this prompt and moving to our next?

Latasha Rowley: Yeah. This is Latasha Rowley, IUPUI, and I work with pre-service teachers, so they're not even in the field yet. But we do an asset mapping of the community's strengths, and then they present out, so that just helps them have a positive perspective because all of our spaces are urban spaces. Instead of having a deficit lens of seeing the organizations and agencies and community members, they have to see the strength and highlight those great things that are happening in the community.

Tiffany Kyser: Any other thoughts or shares? All right, as you're writing down and recapping, Erin, if you could transition us. I'm going to go back to our first prompt. We can just open this up to the whole group, and as you're queuing up this first prompt, I just want to summarize some additional things I heard as takeaways. So for those, if you're like me, who like to write these takeaways down.

Tiffany Kyser: In response to how can we as educators and educational leaders acknowledge and prepare new teachers to be responsive to the inequitable impacts of COVID-19 and continued violence against People of Color. Some things I heard were starting with self and really developing inner-cultivating critical consciousness, authentically listening to families, particularly those on the margins, which includes creating spaces and conditions that are accessible. Not just available but accessible to students and families.

Tiffany Kyser: Heard a couple of times repositioning supporting educators and understanding the inequitable impacts of COVID-19 and violence against People of Color through a strengths-based approach. So not pathologizing deficit or pitying individuals or positioning oneself to save certain groups, but really understanding, recognizing, and readying your preexisting structures. As Seena talked about, and Markay talked about, this idea of how do I already inculcate educators, and how do I re-examine those pre-existing structures?

Tiffany Kyser: In what ways am I supporting veteran educators in onboarding or inculcating veteran alignment with that asset view and that are disrupting

unintentional deficit views and harmful practices. I heard cultivating more responsive environment. So, understanding how they should matriculate into the learning environment and also in curriculum instruction. Also, reframing collective trauma. Not situating trauma on particular groups but understanding that the way in which inequity in this global pandemic and violence is distributed is inequitable.

Tiffany Kyser: So how we are negotiating the pain of dying, of death, of collective trauma is different. So as we embrace this trauma collectively, understanding depending on our identities and lived experiences that will be different. So the implications for that should be varied ways that we're providing space for healing, for conversation, for sharing, for restoration. Then finally, I heard asset mapping. Latasha mentioned asset mapping is perhaps a key strategy or activity to begin to execute or operationalize some of those paradigm shifts.

Tiffany Kyser: Erin, I don't know if I missed any as you move into the next prompt.

Erin Sanborn: No. Thank you for that, Tiffany, and thank you for bringing those points in. So, thinking of everything that we discussed with the second prompt, moving now back to the first prompt: "What are some crucial considerations you would offer when welcoming and onboarding educators this academic year? Are there differing considerations for welcoming new teachers versus veteran educators or educators with various identities? What about educators new to your school and not necessarily new to the district?"

Erin Sanborn: Unfortunately, I'm not seeing Dr. Davis on just yet, so I would like to just open this question up to anybody. Feel free to come off mute and pop in or throw your responses in the chat.

Tiffany Kyser: Take your time. We'll sip our coffee or tea as you're gathering your thoughts. I'm just looking at names and would love to hear from some new voices or faces. I don't know if, Chelsea, if you have any thoughts? Or Maria, or Tom? Kristen, or Elizabeth perhaps, or Nicole?

Erin Sanborn: There's one question in the chat currently about hearing from students and really centering the voice and perspective lived experience of student that we're serving.

Marcus Freeman: Hi. Good afternoon. My name is Marcus Freeman and I'm the Director of Operations at Olney Charter High School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Hey. There are a few of us here today from Olney Charter High School. I have my Behavior Specialist team here in this discussion as well.

Marcus Freeman: A lot of the circumstances that have taken place in 2020, in general, have a direct impact on our students. Pretty much 100% of our students come

from low income, impoverished areas, so they are the subject matter that we are discussing. Mrs. Bailey, who presented the question, what about listening to the voice of our students, is exactly correct.

Marcus Freeman: When talking about the crucial considerations for welcoming staff back, whether that be new staff or even seasoned veterans, just dealing with students who are directly affected with everything that has happened in 2020. I know that there were a lot of riots that broke out in the city where our students were directly affected because it happened in their community where they live, where they wake up, where they go to work, where they go to school. So giving them a space to be able to discuss and safely say how those kinds of situations directly affected them.

Marcus Freeman: Our school is actually in the ZIP code which had the largest outbreak of COVID-19 cases in the city of Philadelphia, so many of our students and their families were directly affected by the virus. Again, putting it back on the students and giving them the opportunity to speak and be heard because a lot of the situations that we see happening from all over the country really can be boiled down to a basic principle of people just listening.

Marcus Freeman: When you look at the policing issue, that's a matter of being heard. That's a matter of the people being heard about the mistreatment that they faced for decades. When you talk about the COVID situation, our students are afraid. There is no leadership, there is no guidance on exactly how to handle this process. People are confused, they're scared, they're not sure if they should return to school. They want to see their friends, but they're being told they should stay away from people.

Marcus Freeman: People are confused, and they just want to be heard. They just want to have their concerns addressed. I think that's what the key takeaway from all of these situations is and how we should welcome back staff with that notion in mind. Give your students an opportunity to speak to you, show them that you are empathetic to the situations that they're facing. Let them know that you understand, you are also confused, you are also scared, or if you have guidance, feel free to provide it. It really boils down to the situation of just listening.

Tiffany Kyser: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mr. Marcus Freeman, thank you for being our impromptu conversation starter. I really appreciate it. [crosstalk 00:38:54]

Marcus Freeman: Yeah, no problem.

Tiffany Kyser: What's that? I'm so sorry. I interrupted you.

Marcus Freeman: No. I said, yeah, no problem.

- Tiffany Kyser:** Okay. Thank you to your team. Even though we visibly can't perceive you, we appreciate you all being there. Some things I want to mirror back for those that are again taking notes and I want to tease out some of the statements that Mr. Freeman made around the second follow-up question around differing considerations.
- Tiffany Kyser:** The first thing that I heard from Mr. Freeman, correct me if don't mirror appropriately, is really honoring spaces for student-led change and student-led leadership. Creating spaces, either in pre-existing structures or creating new structures, where students, and you signaled those who've been experiencing the most adversity, are able to be champions for change, for transformative change in their systems.
- Tiffany Kyser:** The second thing that I read in the chat was this idea of mentorship appearing. That this idea of having a community--be it with a veteran, a new educator, or cohort of new educators, or a mix of educators across a continuum of experience--is important. Third is policies and practices, so how we go about inculcating new teachers, what kind of conversations we're having, what guidance in these cohorts or models that we have is the third thing I've heard.
- Tiffany Kyser:** Some cautionary things that I want to extend as we get into some considerations in terms of identity. One is this idea of decision making. I think far too often, in my personal experience Students of Color, students with disabilities, students that are emergent bi-lingual, multi-lingual learners, students that are from historically disinvested communities, so on and so forth, are often tokenized or positioned in ways to be the mouthpiece for particular groups and used only when it's convenient for those in power or only when it's in vogue in that particular school community, or in the context of equity and social justice to provide a voice.
- Tiffany Kyser:** As we engage to Marcus' guidance to really leverage student voice, some things to consider: how are you setting up your school community to honor student voice that's viable and feasible long-term? That's just not in a reaction to what's happening now or what will happen in the future when we talk about systemic inequities. Two, how are student voices afforded in the power? How are we redistributing power so what they're actually saying and doing is translated into change and policies and practices?
- Tiffany Kyser:** How do we move beyond unintentional or sometimes intentional superficial exercises of listening to and in engaging in student voice to authentic partnership with students as leaders? The second thing I want you all to consider is this idea of labor, and who is disproportionately shouldering the emotional labor when we talk about work towards equity and transformative change? Far too often, those who possess more than one non-dominant identity are put in a position to be the teachers or the

coaches that have been afforded advantage or privilege because of their perceived or self-identified identities.

Tiffany Kyser: As we are propping up and lifting up the voices of historically marginalized, or what I'll say, as Taucia Gonzalez says, non-dominant youth voices, we also want to provide opportunities for our voices that are often privileged, that are often sanctioned, and allow them spaces to really scrutinize and critically reflect on how their choice to engage and change is also deeply important and requires a different type of emotional labor that should take away the common practice of disproportionately placing the work and the onus not only on Students of Color, or students with other historical marginalized identities, but also staff and faculty.

Tiffany Kyser: Another consideration is this idea of explicit grounding of what are your values when it pertains to equity and social justice in your school community? As we're engaging in student voice and mentorship and changing policies and practices, why are we doing those things? For what purpose? Is there an overarching vision and framework that explicitly commits to pursuing educational equity within one school community?

Tiffany Kyser: Finally, I heard this. I think this is a theme, it's this idea of authentic listening. Do folks have the requisite considerations, or do they have the requisite commitments to engage in conversations that are centering equity? These conversations are often polarizing, they're very hard. Are we providing enough supports and explicit guidance on how we as a school community are going to talk and engage in discourse that can be very hard to do?

Tiffany Kyser: I'll pause there and open it up and see if there are any other considerations before I turn it back to Erin.

Seena Skelton: Yeah. Hi, Tiffany. I wanted to add, I connect to some of the points you made and some of the points Marcus made. Again, Marcus, thank you so very much for your team and for you contributing to getting this part of the conversation going.

Seena Skelton: Particularly when we talk about bringing our educators back in the Fall and some of the considerations, I think this time, more than ever, this context, we need to make sure that we're creating and holding space for educators to come together and talk. So, creating opportunities for communities of practice for our educators, for ideas exchange, for collegial support, for comradery, for thinking through various different ways of engaging students in learning, and various ways of engaging students in voice.

Seena Skelton: So as we think about beyond professional development opportunities that are often traditionally put aside beginning at the start of the school year

and then throughout, what are those spaces that we're holding and creating for educators to come together and collaborate on how they're addressing teaching and learning in this new context?

Seena Skelton: To be very intentional about creating those spaces whether you call them POCs, whether you call them COPs, whatever you're calling them, but to extend it beyond maybe our typical format of professional learning communities, where we're specifically focusing on students or specific groups of students, but that we create space where educators to really focus on themselves and each other as a community of professionals and supporting each other through this very difficult time.

Seena Skelton: Many of our educators are also parents, many of our educators are balancing teaching from their home as well as working online alongside their own children and helping them through their online learning. So there's a lot going on, and to recognize that and to acknowledge that and to create spaces where people can engage in those authentic conversations just around how they're feeling emotionally and exchange ideas for support.

Seena Skelton: The second, I think, as we're talking about student voice and centering student voice, to think about the various ways and modalities that students can share their thoughts, their feelings, in a way that's purposeful and can really facilitate their sense of empowerment and agency for moving towards a more just community, whether it's a school community or beyond. As we think about this, how can we integrate these opportunities within our instruction?

Seena Skelton: As we're thinking about students learning, students engaged in lessons, how are we connecting to what the academic standards and academic objectives are of a lesson, and infuse opportunities for students to give voice and integrate it in their learning context? I think sometimes we talk about this with teachers, they think about this as an add-on or an addition to, and that can be overwhelming for teachers.

Seena Skelton: So they may be thinking, "Well, I really can't provide opportunities for students to just talk about their feelings because we have to get through this particular lesson or particular assignment, or we have this particular project that we have to get through." So, in what ways can we create experiences where students are integrating, we're integrating these opportunities within lessons, within academic experiences, where these experiences and these lessons are more than just academic exercises but really a way for voice, a way for narrative, and a way to empower students towards agency within the context and construct of teaching and learning?

- Seena Skelton:** So those are some of the things I took away as I was listening to both Marcus, and you, Tiffany, sort of underline and highlight some of the points that have been made thus far.
- Erin Sanborn:** Thank you so much, Seena, for chiming in there and thank you again to Marcus. Shout out to Philadelphia. I always have to give Philly a shout out. But thank you, Marcus, for sharing your thoughts and for Tiffany as well. As a not Center employee but also just I wanted to take that hat off and share my thought as a teacher and an educator myself.
- Erin Sanborn:** I know, Barry, you talked about this at the beginning of not losing sight of the onus, especially I'm saying this for me as a white educator. The onus I have on knowing the social-historical history of inequity in the spaces that I'm working in and my role in really analyzing my identity and ensuring that I'm doing my utmost best to disrupt and dismantle and make sure I'm not perpetuating those inequities.
- Erin Sanborn:** This connected for me, too, I think it was Monica's point of just ensuring in these initiatives that we're not tokenizing the Black and Indigenous People of Color. Students, teachers, families, et cetera, and putting that emotional burden on their shoulders. With that being said, Markay, if you will, we're going to move into the final prompt of today's rich discussion.
- Erin Sanborn:** "In what ways would you encourage school leaders to support both classroom and non-classroom educators this fall?" Markay is going to start us off, but anyone is welcome after that to share their thoughts or questions.
- Markay Winston:** I was trying to find my unmute button. I apologize. Hold on, I was going to pull up the question again. I think several people have hit on the points in terms of how we would support classroom and non-classroom leaders. One of the things we were fortunate to be able to do this Fall, we just started a few days ago, and we've had five days of professional development for our teachers, for our principals, for paraprofessionals, and such.
- Markay Winston:** We've been really purposeful and intentional in having conversations and providing resources about what's been going on with the pandemic, what's been going on with social unrest and racial challenges across our country, and the trifecta, so to speak, of all of those things in the intersectionality. I think one of the things that would be most beneficial is what we've always said, and we've heard from several people so far, in terms of creating the space. Creating space, creating the opportunity for people to express themselves.
- Markay Winston:** Early on it was really important for us to reach out and give opportunity for our students, for our teachers, for our administrators to figure out how

they were feeling. I really appreciated some of the comments. I can't see her name right now. Oh, Ms. Slee. Laura? Lara? I really appreciated your comments a few minutes ago when you indicated while it impacted you, it impacted you differently than it might have impacted your Colleagues of Color or colleagues from different backgrounds.

Markay Winston: Being a Person of Color, I know it significantly impacted me dealing with the repercussions and the grief and the trauma of what happened with Mr. Floyd and how that's impacted so many of us. I think those opportunities. I think also providing encouragement to improve ourselves to learn more. I think all of us are in a position where we can benefit from increasing and enhancing our understanding. I think what our principals have been doing is really making sure that our classroom teachers and our non-classroom educators are having those experiences to talk with one another.

Markay Winston: They've been coming together and talking, not physically coming together, but virtually coming together, and talking and sharing resources. A lot of the resources that we've been working on is making sure that we were empowering them with information to help them know how do you even facilitate this kind of a conversation in your classroom. So those would be some ways that I think would be beneficial. I think that there are probably additional suggestions and strategies that others might have.

Markay Winston: Recognizing that we're all figuring this out together. We're all in the same boat in terms of how do we support our new teachers. How are we encouraging our principals? Because we spend a lot of time talking about our students and our families are watching us, and how they see us respond I think will speak volumes to how well they trust what we're doing and what we're saying. So I think just putting the conversation on the table, listening intently. I appreciated Barry's comments, I think it was Barry who said just listen and being authentic in our willingness to listen and to hear.

Markay Winston: I think we need to listen for what's being said, but I think we also have to listen for what's not being said and figure out, how do we create the conditions within our schools that are going to be responsive and supportive to all of our families and to all of our students? Recognizing that many of our educators are impacted by the trauma of everything that's going on right now and what are we doing specifically to support them?

Markay Winston: So I think those are just some examples of ways in which many of our school districts across this country can and should be responding and recognizing that there's no wrong way to respond, unless you just don't respond at all. I think that the response is creating that opportunity and creating a safe space and making sure that we are not judging how

someone is handling it and responding to it. Does that respond to some of what you're saying, Erin?

Erin Sanborn: Yes. Thank you so much for your thoughts and your words. We had a question just come in from Claudine. "How do we affectively address this when we are in full remote learning?" Great question, Claudine. I think this will probably be, unfortunately, our last question to wrap up our discussion, so if anybody has any thoughts on this or comments or thoughts on what Markay just shared with us as well.

Anonymous: I don't know that this addresses that questions, but I was listening to what was just shared, and then I saw a comment that said, "Listen, hear, believe." I appreciate that. It made me think of how important it will be for as those who may be in a position to listen is to also accept someone's experience as theirs and not try to come up with a reason why something may have happened because it can then begin to sound like an excuse.

Anonymous: So, if someone brings up something, for example, and they talk about it from feeling like there was a racial issue and maybe the person who's listening doesn't see it that way, it's okay to not. However, in that moment, that's that person's feeling. That's that person's experience, and that's what we have to be able to acknowledge and again not try to make it into something else or again to minimize it by making excuses.

Anonymous: I think that's really huge and can go a long way. Even if it's from a remote situation where we're just looking at someone on a Zoom, it still can make a difference to show that we're listening and trying to understand.

Tiffany Kyser: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Seena Skelton: Yeah. I just want to piggyback off of that just in the word that you said it really resonated with me was the word acknowledge. I had a conversation with a colleague after the George Floyd murder and then subsequent protest, and she went back to work that next day, and it was just business as usual. None of her colleagues, none of her bosses, no one at her job acknowledged anything was going on.

Seena Skelton: She shared that was one of the most hurtful experiences that there was just no acknowledgement. It was just business as usual, just keep going without any acknowledgement that these things are happening and impacting people. I think that's one of the most important things that we can do particularly this fall, is to acknowledge that we are all trying to figure this out, we're all very emotional. This is a time where we're all experiencing anxiety.

Seena Skelton: While yes, we have to get the school year off, and we have to be about teaching and learning and creating educational experiences for our

students and supporting them, but there is an emotional aspect to this. The simple acknowledgment, the simple pause, and grace, giving one another grace and not just acknowledgment that these things are happening, but that these things are affecting us emotionally, our students, our families, our colleagues, our building leaders, our district leaders.

Seena Skelton: What I'm taking away from this conversation that I think is something that would benefit not only our new educators, but all of our educators, is that point of just acknowledging what's happening and creating space for us to talk about what we're feeling.

Erin Sanborn: Yes. Thank you so much, Seena. On that note, unfortunately, we need to move to a close due to time, but I, just in moving to close, want to thank everyone for being in this space, for taking timing out of your day, and for sharing your thoughts and perspectives on these topics.

Erin Sanborn: As a reminder, we want to make sure that if you want more information, you don't forget to stop by our website. We have an array of resources and supports related to COVID-19. Be sure to join our Flipgrid, our COVID-19 resource page, and you do have a customized, password-protected Virtual Coffeehouse Series e-forum, all of which is where we will be sharing resources and responses related to trending issues of equity and education.

Erin Sanborn: We also want to give a special thanks to our design team for putting together today's session, so thank you to each of you. Then finally, we would like to again thank everyone for joining us today. The Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center, the MAP Center, we would like to let you know that we do have an addition to EquiLearn broadcast series that will be coming this upcoming fall titled, "Advancing Caring Learning Communities Towards Anti-Racist Practices."

Erin Sanborn: This series will engage regional partners on how they can interpret... My phone thinks I'm talking to my phone. How they can interpret, frame, negotiate, and engage in their context to address racism at the intersection of other oppressions. Please stay tuned to our website and our social media, which we'll show on the next slide, for more information regarding this series, as well as upcoming events and resources.

Erin Sanborn: If you haven't already, please consider following us on social media @ Great Lakes Equity Center on Facebook, and @GreatLakesEAC on Twitter. Once you add us on Twitter, consider tweeting us today and answering the question, "How are you going to use what you learned here today?" Then finally, if I could ask Tiffany to stop sharing her screen for a second, everyone's favorite part, we are going to try and take a group

screenshot so that we can show all of our great discussion on our social media.

Erin Sanborn: If you have a cup of coffee or a drink or beverage, please feel free to bring it up. Yes, and I see, thank you to all of you who are already taking yourselves off camera. You guys are great. I'm going to minimize the chat so that's not in it. All right. I notoriously look awful in these pictures, so I'm going to countdown, and I'm going to do it twice so we can try and get everybody's shining faces.

Erin Sanborn: All right. One, two, three. Let's do one more. Oh, wait. Sorry. I have to make sure I get all of my technology ducks in a row. Sorry. Thank you all of you for giving me an extra minute of your day. Okay. One, two, three. One more. Okay, thank you so much.

Seena Skelton: Thank you everyone. Thank you so much.

Tiffany Kyser: Finally, we would ask that you complete, if you have three to seven minutes, complete our Post-Session Questionnaire. Nickie is providing a link in the chat box. The link is also available on the e-forum. You just simply click the link from the chat box and it will take anywhere from three to seven minutes to just share with us what went well today, what were things that we can perhaps improve upon. We really, really value your feedback. We're an organization of continuous improvement, so really appreciate that.

Tiffany Kyser: In closing, we want to thank each of you for taking an hour out of your busy day to engage either in conversations or just deep reflection. I know there are a lot of folks who were really active in chat or really reflecting, taking this in, and considering how this impacts the practice. So thank you for that.

Tiffany Kyser: We also want to thank our conversation starters for keeping the momentum going. I want to appreciate our impromptu conversation starter in addition to Dr. Derald Davis, Dr. Laura Slee, Dr. Markay Winston, Mr. Marcus Freeman, for providing your insights as well. With that, thank you in advance for taking the Post-Session Questionnaire and have a good, safe rest of your day. Thanks, everyone.