Overview

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Transcript

MATT EIDE: All right. Hello everyone and welcome to today's webinar on improving civic readiness through research, policy and practice. My name is Matt Eide and I'm joined today by several colleagues from REL Central and some panelists from Wyoming, Nebraska and Oregon. The goal of today's webinar is to share a civic readiness resource that REL Central has developed, and to learn from our panelists, who will share their perspectives on how to define, develop and measure civic readiness in our students.

So you'll get a chance to meet our panelists here in a minute, but before we start, let's get a sense of who's in the virtual room with us today. So Angela is-- just put a Zoom poll up, so on her Zoom participant list, she is listed as tech support. So please take a few seconds to respond to the poll as we move through the next couple of slides here.

We also have a live captioning option available for this webinar. So if you're interested in accessing the live captioning feature, go ahead and copy and paste the link that Angela has posted to chat. All right, so we've all probably become Zoom experts over the last year and a half, but we'd like to highlight how we're going to be using some of the Zoom features today.

First, if you're having trouble connecting the audio, click join audio in the Zoom toolbar. And if you need a little help connecting, please send a message to tech support through the chat. And speaking of chat, during today's webinar, we'll be using both the chat and the Q&A boxes. So

please use chat to introduce yourself, access resources, or ask for help on some technical issues. But let's use the Q&A box to submit questions for our presenters and panelists. We'll be monitoring the Q&A box for questions, and we'll have the panelists address as many of those as possible at the end of today's webinar.

Now as I noted at the beginning, this webinar is brought to you by REL Central. If you're not familiar with the regional educational laboratory or REL system, we're one of 10 federally funded applied research centers, and we help educators and policymakers use data and evidence to improve outcomes for students. And we serve the seven states in the central region, hence the name REL Central.

And all of our work is done in partnership, partnership with educators and policymakers, and this webinar and the resource that we're going to share in just a minute are part of the College and Career Readiness Research Alliance. All right, with all of that front matter out of the way, let's take a look at the results of the poll and see who we have in the virtual room.

So it looks like we have a few teachers, some workforce development and post-secondary education leaders, some state administrators, or officials, or policymakers, and a lot of other. So that's who we have in our room with us today. And now that we have a sense of who all of you are, let's meet our presenters.

We'll start with our REL Central representatives. As I noted at the beginning of the webinar, my name is Matt Eide. I'm a senior education improvement specialist at REL Central, and I'm going to be moderating today's webinar. So Steven, could you tell us a little bit about yourself?

STEVEN TEDESCHI: Hello everybody. My name is Steven Tedeschi, I'm a researcher at REL Central, and I am one of the co-authors on the civic readiness tool that we'll be sharing today.

MATT EIDE: Thanks, Steven. Marc, can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

MARC BRODERSEN: Thank you, Matt. So I'm Marc Brodersen. I'm a managing senior researcher at REL Central and Marzano Research, and I'm also one of the co-authors on the tool that we'll be talking to you today. So I'm excited to be with everyone today.

MATT EIDE: Thanks, Marc. And we are super excited to have three panelists joining us today. So our first panelist is the state superintendent at the Wyoming Department of Education, Jillian Balow. So superintendent Balow, can you tell us a little bit about yourself and why you're interested in civic readiness?

JILLIAN BALOW: Sure. Thanks, Matt, and it's great to see everyone today. Thank you so much for pulling this panel together, more importantly, thank you for pushing this tool out with such a wonderful framework for us for context. So my name is Jillian Balow, I'm the-- I'm Wyoming's elected state superintendent of public instruction, and I underscore elected because as such, I get to travel to every community.

And I will tell you, across communities in Wyoming and other states, civics education, civic readiness is on everyone's mind. And-- so there are genuine concerns, genuine elation for what's happening in the neighborhoods and the communities across the state, and I'm just a true believer in that the best examples and opportunities for civic readiness really exist in the classroom, in our neighborhoods, in our communities. So it's been an initiative and a passion of mine from day one.

MATT EIDE: OK, thank you, superintendent. Next, we have Ebony McKiver, the social studies specialist at the Nebraska Department of Education. Ms. McKiver, tell us a little bit about yourself.

EBONY MCKIVER: Yes. Again, my name is Ebony McKiver. Thank you all so much for having me as a participant on the panel today. So my job within the Nebraska Department of Education is really to provide that statewide leadership and guidance to post-secondary institutions, our educational service units, school districts, and educators around social studies content.

And why this conversation about civic readiness is really important, one given the current political climate, there's state legislation here in Nebraska and with some measures to improve school-- school improvement measures is really push civic readiness to the forefront. And so we like to kind of pat ourselves on the back with some of the partnerships and tools that we've created. And really also, working with our educators to make sure that they're effectively

teaching those civics standards. And this is all in an effort to really empower our student body as they matriculate from high school into the working world here in Nebraska. Thank you.

MATT EIDE: Great, thank you so much. And finally, we have Jenoge Khatter, a social studies specialist with the Eugene 4J district. So Dr. Khatter, tell us a little bit about yourself.

JENOGE KHATTER: Hey, folks, Jenoge Khatter here. And-- pardon me. I have had the honor of being named by the Oregon legislature five times as a civic scholar for my region. And a big part of the work I did with my middle schoolers was have them engage in social public issues of concern to them. We would do a lot of anonymous voting to arrive at that, and then they would eventually write policy recommendations and present it to real world audiences.

So we're even invited after the gun control project to speak to the Oregon Senate. And as a social studies specialist for Eugene 4J now, we have a lot of legislation, I'll mention more later. And I think we're the only state in union with published ethnic studies standards to align with. So more on that in a bit, but civic readiness is a big part of how we're trying to help students understand their own transformative capacity.

MATT EIDE: All right, thank you. Now as you can hopefully tell, our panelists have a lot of really great civic readiness experience and expertise. And I know that I can hardly wait to start the conversation with them. But before we dive into those panel discussions, we thought it would be helpful to provide a little context, and describe the factors that led us to begin examining how to measure civic readiness, to describe the tools that we developed, and set the stage for the panel discussion. So with that in mind, Steven, why are we talking about civic readiness today?

STEVEN TEDESCHI: Thank you, Matt. So why this civic readiness resource? Well first, our work as a REL is in response to what our stakeholders identify as need. And over the past few years, there has been an increase in interest about civic readiness for several reasons.

First, the environment following the adoption of the Every Student Succeeds Act-- many of you may know that as ESSA-- in 2015 led to a renewed effort to transform education systems and broaden the definition of college and career readiness. Under ESSA, state agencies have been redesigning their school and district accountability systems to account for those factors that are beyond academic achievement. And one of those emerging factors is civic readiness. And some

of the trends in the data and the implication of those trends suggest there's good reason for this renewed interest.

Before looking at those trends, it's important to briefly say that research has shown a correlation between the skills developed in civic education and post-secondary outcomes. For example, political participation, and 21st century skills such as critical thinking, communication, information literacy have been associated with post-secondary outcomes such as degree attainment and employment status. Again, good reason for the renewed interest in civic readiness.

So what are these data trends? Well first, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, many of you may know it as NAEP, has a civic assessment component. And the scores on that civic assessment component have raised concerns because the percentage of students performing at or above the proficient level has remained low since the first administration of the assessment in 1998. In fact, less than a quarter of students demonstrated solid academic performance and competency in civics and government, based on the NAEP standards.

Moreover, scores have been fairly stagnant since 1998. You can see that here in the figure. We've only seen a statistically significant difference since 1998 beginning in 2014. But as you see here, it was a small increase. Two important notes, one, there has been some progress. In comparison to the 1998 scores, civic scores were higher in 2018 for lower performing students. Second, it's important to note that the NAEP civic assessment provides a limited assessment of whether a student is receiving a well-rounded civics education. In fact in a moment, you'll see there are a variety of ways in which civic readiness is defined, and the NAEP really only focuses on knowledge and not necessarily behaviors and actions that some would contend are part of being civic ready.

However, the NAEP civic assessment is the only nationally publicly available measure of civic education, so it's worth noting the data trends. And not only have the scores been low and stagnant for the majority of students who took the NAEP civic assessment, when you look closer at the data, you'll see a piece of what some have coined the civic empowerment gap. For example, scores on the NAEP civic assessment show that the vast majority of students who scored the highest typically come from more affluent households.

Additionally, trends over the past few decades have suggested lower levels of civic participation such as voter turnout among some subgroups of adults. Now I will note that this past 2020 election cycle, we saw an increase in voter turnout. But as we all know, an outlier in data doesn't necessarily mean a change in the trend. And while the 2020 election may very well be a change in the trend from what we've seen over the past few decades, we won't be sure about that until 2022 and 2024 in the elections moving forward.

And then lastly, there's just a limited-- there's just limited information on instruments in general that measure of civic readiness. So with the renewed interest in civic readiness, educators are looking for ways to measure it. When we started this work to develop this resource, we hoped to gather a variety of instruments, thereby offering users of our tool a menu of assessment choices.

We ended up with survey instruments, since other instruments were not publicly available. For example, NAEP only shares a sample of assessment questions. And when we fully understand the limitations of survey instruments, we truly hope and believe that this resource will support civic initiatives, but it will also be a jumping point, or an opportunity to jump start conversations about developing additional, and for lack of a better word, more rigorous instruments.

So now that you have the why for why we developed this instrument, Marc is going to talk about what it is.

MARC BRODERSEN: Thank you, Steven. So first we keep referring to civic readiness, but we understand that civic readiness can be defined a variety of ways. And frankly, you'd probably get a different definition for each person you ask. So before we go on and start really talking about this tool that we developed, we'd like everyone to take a moment to think about how you or your organization defines civic readiness. As you're thinking about it, what does it mean for a student to be civically ready? And if you feel like sharing, please post your definition in the chat box and then we'll come back to this in just a moment.

OK, so to support civic readiness of our students, REL Central conducted a project where we gathered, reviewed, and summarized all of the survey instruments currently available to measure students' civic readiness. The resulting tool was developed to support educators in identifying, comparing and contrasting relevant survey skills so they can construct their own measure of civic readiness. Educators might use the resulting tool to evaluate the effect of a service learning or

civic education program in their school, or to gauge the general attitudes of their students, for example. You can go to the next slide.

So the tool describes 183 survey scales measuring various aspects of civic readiness. It includes six general categories of civic readiness we identified in the available scales. It also includes worksheets that guide users through selecting and evaluating potential survey scales. Information provided for each of the scales includes the scale name, the civic readiness category or definition the scale measures, the number of items included in the scale, a sample item, grade level of the students the scale has been used with previously, a summary of the available information regarding the scale's reliability and validity, and the citation for the document where the scale items can be found. There's a lot of information provided in the tool for each of the survey scales that we've included.

The tool's appendices provide more detail regarding the methods used to develop the tool, as well as additional detail for each individual scale, including links to the original source documents. And to help you wade through all this information, we also include an Excel scale selection tool that you can use as a supplement to the worksheets as you go through the scale selection process, and help navigate through all the different scales. Next slide.

So the worksheets that I referenced included in the tool walk you through a step by step process to identify scales that are a good fit for your goals an intended audience. It guides you through clarifying the purpose and audience for your civic readiness instrument, prioritizing the categories or subcategories of civic readiness you're most interested in, and then identifying and selecting the survey scales that best fit your need. Next slide.

So in reviewing the content of the survey scales, we found a variety of topic areas or categories of civic readiness they were measuring. As I quickly review these categories, ask yourself how these may be similar or different to your own definition of civic readiness. And I do want to be clear that this is by no means a definitive list of categories of civic readiness. We have not developed a formal definition of civic readiness. Rather, these were categories that emerged through an inductive process of working with the survey items. So these are just kind of are the themes that we saw when we were looking at the items across all of these different scales.

So first, we have civic attitudes and civic behaviors. These scales are more community focused and include items such as feeling a sense of responsibility for one's neighborhood, likelihood to

volunteer in the community, or caring about the well-being of others. Political attitudes and political behavior scales are obviously more politically focused, and include things like intention to vote, contacting, endorsing representative, ideas on what it means to be a good citizen, and so forth.

A number of scales measure civic related skills, or character traits research has shown that are related to civic readiness or civic engagement such as leadership skills, or having a future oriented mindset. Finally, a few scales assess civic or political knowledge, such as knowledge of political processes and policies. So again, these are the six kind of categories that emerge from this, and they are certainly not a definitive list of the definition of civic readiness. So I think we have a one or two minutes left here. Steven, I know you've been looking at responses in the chat. Has there been anything that jump out as being particularly similar or different folks' definitions, compared to the categories that we were describing here?

STEVEN TEDESCHI: We actually haven't received any feedback from participants yet, so we encourage you to share your definition of what civic readiness means to you. We can give folks maybe another 20 seconds or so and see if those pop up. We're interested to hear what you say, what you think.

MARC BRODERSEN: And we can certainly come back to this later. So as we progress through, please feel free to share your thoughts in the chat. But in the interest of time, because I know we have some very interesting people to hear from, I just want to restate, a link to the tool's been provided in the chat box for you to learn more about the survey scales. Again, there's way more information in there than we're able to cover during this time.

So now that we've very quickly got over some of the civic readiness trends, a tool that you can use to help measure civic readiness, we're going to transition over and hear a little bit about policies, programs, and practices some are using to develop or support civic readiness in our regions.

MATT EIDE: Great. Thanks, Marc. So now for the really fun part of today's webinar. So with the context that we just reviewed in mind, we're now going to ask our panelists to share their perspectives on how to define, develop, and measure civic readiness. And we have three sets of questions. The first set focuses on how our panelists conceptualize civic readiness. The second

set relates to policies and practices designed to develop civic readiness, and the third set brings us back to the question of how might we measure civic readiness in our students.

We also encourage you to submit questions for Marc, for Steven, and our panelists in the Q&A box. We'll address as many of these as we can at the end of the webinar, and also follow up with responses in the packet of material that you'll receive after the event. All right, so let's get started. First set of questions is about defining civic readiness, and we're going to start with Superintendent Balow. So superintendent, how does the Wyoming Department of Education define civic readiness, and then what is your hope or vision for civic readiness in Wyoming?

JILLIAN BALOW: Thanks so much for asking that question. And prior to today's meeting and webinar, we talked about which was more fun, being state superintendent or a middle school teacher. And emphatically I said, it was more fun to be a middle school teacher. And you said, now we get to the fun part of the webinar. So I'm not sure how to put all of that together.

Nonetheless, thanks so much for coming to me first. I mean simply, civic readiness is really preparation for democratic life. And that's very broad, I realize that. You asked, how does the Department of Education define that? And I think more importantly is how does our how does our culture, how does our state, how does our nation define civic readiness, which therein maybe lies part of the issue?

From our perspective, and we've spent actually a fair amount of time working on this definition and what is encompassed, and not ironically it or not surprisingly, it looks a lot like the list that the researchers presented in the last few slides. But it's maybe most importantly engagement, early and often engagement in civic life. It's a knowledge of foundations, principals, history and processes about our country, about our community, about our neighborhoods. It's a shared ethos, and an appreciation and an understanding of both how important diversity is, and how important unity is.

And civic readiness is really all about the art and science of practicing civic readiness, or practicing civic life before applying, which sometimes goes hand in hand. When you're a student, maybe you're able to, as Jenoge will attest to when he speaks, maybe they're one and the same when they're students. But giving students lots of opportunities to practice what it means to be engaged in civic activity.

As Wyoming state chief, I really think specifically about civic readiness initiatives, and how those might take shape, and how I might lead some of those efforts and some of those initiatives. Specifically at the Department of Education, we give a lot of thought to our standards, to how we can support schools with professional development and high-quality curriculum choices, how we can create a policy framework around this definition or this expectation that we have for students to be ready for civic life. And it's really the reason that I'm excited to be here today.

We're mostly on the same place in this issue, I think, as education leaders, as researchers, as community members, even though in today's political environment it doesn't feel that way. But decoupling civic readiness from politics and from division is really, really important for us to land on when we have these types of discussions, when we examine these types of instruments and tools that you're presenting today, and when we move forward with the important work in our states. So again, just to underscore sort of that general definition of preparation for democratic life, and how that fits in to our school culture. Thank you.

MATT EIDE: Thank you so much, superintendent. So now let's go to Ebony. So how does the Nebraska Department of Education define civic readiness, and what's your vision for civic readiness in the state of Nebraska?

EBONY MCKIVER: Absolutely. So I think first, I agree with Superintendent Balow. We define it in many of the same ways that have already been presented. So we take a look at attitudes, we took a look at behaviors, and we take a look at the knowledge that one person possesses, and how they use that knowledge to inform their role within society.

And I will also say that as a department, we are still working towards really a standard and universally accepted definition of what civic readiness means. And I think that as we start continuing to work towards that definition that we will accept as a department, we're really going to be drawing from two areas to come up with the definition. And the first area that we're going to draw from is our state standards, right? Because our state standards have those civic standards already embedded within them that our teachers are using within our schools.

And so if we were going to look at our state standards to really define civic education, then we're going to be talking about the forms and functions of government. We're going to be talking about policies, and we're going to be talking about how students can participate in those policies, and what that looks like. The other area that we're going to draw from is really state legislation.

And so state legislation also plays a role in social studies education here in Nebraska, and if we're looking at how state legislation then would define civic readiness, they're talking about the responsibilities to be a patriotic and civil citizen here in Nebraska. And they're also talking about how to make informed decisions for the good of the public. And so I think we have to consider all of-- both of those options when we're talking about how to come up with that standard definition for the state of Nebraska.

And then as we start talking about what the hope in the vision is, I think that breaks down into three areas here in Nebraska. And I think the first area that really breaks down to is one, making sure that that includes civil political discourse, right? And so we've seen a kind of a breakdown of civil political discourse recently, but hopefully if we continue to teach it and instill it in our students, we'll start to see a change and really, I think, what the [? fore ?] founders really agreed upon, and that was to have people with differing views being able to come together and compromise for the good of the whole.

The second one is-- the vision or the hope that I have is that civic readiness seems less daunting, right? We've always talked about civic readiness and civic participation, and the areas of that means that you have to vote, or you have to start a letter writing campaign, or you have to run for office. And really, civic readiness are things like watching the news and reading newspapers, it's paying your taxes, it's just being a good neighbor. And so if we can start relating civic readiness to how that influences and looks and affects our everyday lives within our students, I think will go far.

And I think the last thing that I want to talk about in terms of vision and hope for civic readiness is that it just isn't a social studies thing, right? We always like to think that it resides in social studies alone, but I think that if we start making civic readiness a priority for all content areas, we really will go far in being able to make sure that our students have the necessary skills that are associated with being civic ready once they leave high school.

MATT EIDE: Thank you so much. So Jenoge, our first two panelists have shared a state education agency perspective. And so we're really thrilled to have you on the panel, someone who can share sort of a district and a school perspective, but has also been involved in state level work around sort of civic readiness and social studies. So with that in mind, how does the Eugene 4 James school district define civic readiness, and what's your vision for civic readiness in your district and for the state of Oregon?

JENOGE KHATTER: Well I'll be honest, at the district level, we don't talk about civic readiness hardly at all. I am the facilitator of a social studies committee, and we talk about it some. It has a lot to do with the theoretical prism that we are doing our work through. So long story short, here in Oregon, we have ethnic studies standards recently legislated as a mandate. They are only for social studies, and they are K-12.

And so our committee decided to make ethnic studies our prism, not just something that we're attaching to through these new standards. And so we did a lot of background work on what is ethnic studies pedagogy, also what is culturally sustaining pedagogy? There's a lot of overlap between those. So that's on the one side. And on the other side, we are collecting information from students and their experiences with the different curriculum that we are piloting as part of an adoption process that we're in.

So for a lot of that, we have ended up using Antonia Darder's theory of critical bi-cultural pedagogy. She talks a lot about the purpose of education being around the emancipation and empowerment of students. And her definitions of emancipation and empowerment have a lot to do with having the ability to critique and disrupt inequities in society, and having the wherewithal, savviness to be able to act on one's knowledge about how the system works. And a big part of her theory is also about how students historically, particularly students of color and other marginalized populations, have been kept from civic power.

And so her theory explains different attributes of what an empowered or emancipated curriculum would be like, and a lot of that overlaps with the definition of civic readiness in the tool, but has just a little bit more of a culturally enriched perspective, perhaps. And along these lines, civic readiness in different environments can look really different.

There's a scholar here out of the University of Oregon in Eugene, Elias [INAUDIBLE], who critiques how many civic approaches or civic education approaches really don't work for tribal people in tribal contexts. So there's a lot to potentially unpack with what my hope revision would be, and to think about the diverse stakeholders that need to be taken into account in order to consider what are some community goals, or what are some different goals of different pockets [INAUDIBLE] and populations within our community.

So my hope is that, I think as Ebony was getting at, just that teachers would be more willing to engage in active civics instruction, and that instead of holding our breath sometimes around teaching controversy, instead, the controversy would be avoiding controversy. That we need to have students explore their positionality on different value and belief spectrums as a part of school, and that just needs to be normalized and systematized.

MATT EIDE: Great, thank you. Thank you, Jenoge, and thank you to all of our panelists. And as a reminder to our participants, please feel free to pose questions in the Q&A box. We're going to try to come back to those at the end of the webinar. OK, so our next set of questions is about the types of programs, policies, and practices that can help to develop and nurture civic readiness in our students. And for this round of questions, we're going to start with Ebony. So Ebony, what policies, programs, and practices is NDE implementing or supporting to nurture civic readiness, what are schools and districts in Nebraska doing, and how is all of this aligned or integrated with other educational priorities at the Nebraska Department of Education?

EBONY MCKIVER: All right, so it's a lot to get through. [LAUGH]

So first, I'll start by talking about the policies and practices. So I think one of the things that is very key in any department of education is the cross collaboration within the department. And so I have been working with the director of accountability and AQuESTT, and AQuESTT stands for accountability for a quality education system today and tomorrow. And through AQuESTT, that is a way that we can measure for school improvement. And AQuESTT has six tenants. And the sixth tenant is post-secondary career and civic readiness. And so through that civic readiness lens, we are able to work and actually use the REL tool to help develop our own tool specific to Nebraska that will help us really with some state specific ways to measure for civic readiness when students are exiting high school.

The other thing that we're really doing is working directly with educators in the state, and I think it was mentioned before where there's citizen science projects. It's sort of in the same vein, it is a citizen science project, but with social studies flair to it. And so we were able to receive a grant to help our educators work directly in creating lesson plans, and then they're going to pilot those lesson plans in the classroom. But those lesson plans really focus on civic readiness.

And so one of the aspects, not only are we looking at, again, the forms and functions of government, but how can students participate? And the goal is to actually have students eventually create mock legislation that they can submit to state senators, and if that mock legislation turns into real legislation, we can have students participating in the whole legislative process, and being present to be able to testify and give their opinions about some of the things moving through our state unicameral.

One of the other things that we're talking about as well is really placing an emphasis on partnerships with state and national organization. So for instance, the Nebraska Department of Education works closely with civic Nebraska in some of the issues and goals that align with both the department and the state organization in how we can move forward together.

And so as we move to the next one, so what are some of the schools doing really to promote civic readiness? I think that schools are really doing a lot. Schools are being creative now in the ways that they teach civic readiness, and that includes using a lot of the digital platforms like TikTok and Instagram that are really familiar with students to get them to be able to one, rally behind a cause, and be able to show their participation in it.

Schools are also using before and after school programming that are focused on civic readiness and being able to really employ those skills, and implement those skills that students will learn. And then we are also working with the instructional shift, and this is a big push across the state. And an instructional shift really is focused around inquiry. And the process of inquiry really helps with our students in how they develop, not only how they develop and ask questions, but the process of research, how students will evaluate and use evidence to tackle those current and past issues that we deal with as a society.

And then the last part is about how is that work aligned to our educational priorities. Well we know with COVID, the last 18 months have kind of been a whirlwind within education. And right now, the state of Nebraska is really focusing on what student success looks like for the 2021, 2022 school year. And so you know, we don't subscribe to the idea of learning loss. But really, we want to talk about unfinished learning, and how we can help to build that unfinished learning within students.

And so as it was mentioned before, I think once we start making sure that all educators again, not within just social studies, really promote civic readiness, we start promoting all of those skills

that are associated civic readiness. So you have decision making, you have critical thinking, again, civil discourse, listening, collaboration, organization. And all of those things really help to drive the student success that we're going to be looking for when we're looking at how to measure for achievement. And so that's just some of the things that we've got going on here in Nebraska.

MATT EIDE: Thanks for that, Ebony, and really appreciate this notion that civic readiness isn't just a curriculum. But rather, it's a set of skills and dispositions that are the responsibility of everybody in the educational system to help students develop and apply. So now, let's hear from Jenoge. So what's happening in Eugene to promote civic readiness, or what have you done in your classrooms, and how is that work aligned with your district's priorities?

JENOGE KHATTER: So in social studies, a common experience a lot of teachers have had is teaching lots of hard history and not really knowing what to do with that. And so a big part of our current scope and sequence work as we prepare to purchase new materials and revise all of our courses, essentially creating new courses 6-12 throughout our district to align with not just the standards, but also this ethnic studies prism.

It's making whatever we teach actionable to the greatest extent possible. So if we're going to study genocide, or we're going to study stages or rhetoric of genocide as they have occurred in virtually every era of history, what are students going to be able to do with that, and how is student voice going to be maximized as part of the decision making about what to do with that?

So we are rolling around lots of different ideas, but one example might be that students study what our change makers and activists who are also happen to be about their age, what are youth doing in other parts of the world, if they're studying other parts of the world, in response to current issues going on there. And how does that inform or inspire in them thoughts about how they might act in their community, or at a larger level? And then there's more active approaches that we're hoping to figure out where to sort in.

As I mentioned, maybe I didn't mention actually yet, that we recently had a Senate bill released in Oregon and get approved for civics requirement in high school, that students would have a standalone civics course here in the state of at least a half year, half credit. And so in a district that has not consistently or really anywhere provided access to legitimate civics education, we are creating that class and looking at youth participatory action research as a way to engage in

active civics so that it's not a course-- certainly the legislation is aimed at it's not just a course where students are learning how government works, but students are being equipped with real world skills to respond to real world scenarios, and even engage in active civic projects where they're in contact with community members, policymakers, et cetera.

We also have in Oregon three other big things going on right now. We have the ethnic studies mandate, we have a renewed focus on teaching about Oregon's tribes and about indigenous people generally, and to have a more focused and significant genocide Holocaust curriculum in each district.

And so a lot of ethnic studies, especially if you read into the theory of ethnic studies and ethnic studies pedagogy, so much of that has to do with engaging in transformation, engaging in liberation, like where is there disparity, where is there oppression, where is there a power dynamic that is not in service to the community, is not in service to the situation? Problematizing situations and interactions in these ways to help students engage critically in critical thinking and consciousness raising around what are some of the different possibilities here as to why this is happening in the first place, and what the root causes might be, and then how we might respond.

So ethnic studies and youth participatory action research and Darder's theory of critical bi-cultural pedagogy give a very complimentary but also different lens to how to engage in civic readiness. Again, one of the priorities being knowing that there's been systemic historical removal of access for some students and communities to their full civic potential. How are we showing, modeling-- showing and modeling, representing diverse forms of transformation and civic engagement, and then how are we empowering students, and hopefully helping them feel expressive of their voice and of their civic capacity.

We are working closely with the Oregon Department of Education, but I feel like they are learning as much from us as they are-- as we are from them, because they are very much also assembling the plane. Like all these new mandates are coming through the legislature, and the Department of Ed wasn't really ready for them. Like, we adopted ethnic studies back in 2018, 2019. Oregon Department of Ed says they will not be ready to offer training about how to implement those standards or legislation until 2025. And maybe some of the other state leaders here can attest to similar issues that come up, similar frictions that come up.

But yes, to the last question, how is this work integrated or aligned with other educational priorities, it's a part of our every conversation in regards to how we're doing scope and sequence work across the district. That students are not just having a civics course, but are having access to civic engagement and civics education throughout their secondary experience, mostly conversations I'm a part of. And I think the Oregon standards, it really starts in grade 3 where there begins to be that emphasis for us.

MATT EIDE: OK. Thanks, Jenoge. So Superintendent Balow, you've now had the chance to hear about what's happening in Nebraska and Eugene, so tell us what's going on in Wyoming.

JILLIAN BALOW: Well I really love how both Ebony and Jenoge put the students at the front and center of their responses. And unfortunately, sometimes policy work gets a little bit far from the students. But I'll start with just sort of a laundry list of really great things that are happening in our state across school districts. We have programs that include civics, and we have great professional development programs through our one and only four-year university in Wyoming, the University of Wyoming has just recently taken on an effort through a foundation, through a nonprofit foundation, to provide professional high quality professional development, and some micro credentials of sorts to teachers regarding civic readiness and civics education and US and Wyoming history.

We have a pretty robust we the people and project citizen program in our schools across the state. And just a couple of years ago through legislation that was passed, we embarked on a standards development project called Indian education for all. It gives all Wyoming students the opportunity to learn about our tribal culture in Wyoming, and the fact that we have a sovereign nation and an Indian reserve-- in the form of an Indian reservation smack in the middle of our state.

I say, and I front loaded this with it's a laundry list, because that's exactly what it is. We have a lot of fragmented good things going on in our state, but we don't have that strong policy framework that surrounds it that allows it to happen. So here are a couple of things that are missing, or that at best are fragmented.

Our standards, with the exception of Indian education for all, are lackluster at best. We're on a nine-year cycle in Wyoming, and as Jenoge and both Ebony attested to, social studies as a

subject, as a content area has become second tier in our schools. And therefore, and in Wyoming it's untested. And so therefore, we perhaps somewhere along the way didn't pay it as much attention as a content area as we did to math, and language arts, and some of our STEM subjects.

So making sure that we have robust standards that are reflective of our values, and of all that we've learned in the last decade since our standards that we currently have been put into place. And one thing that truly, literally keeps me up at night is that we lack equitable access to high quality curriculum, high quality professional development, and required coursework for our students beyond elementary school, really. We have a general framework set out, we have standards, but we don't have any way to ensure that we have equitable access to the coursework, to high quality curriculum, and to high quality teachers teaching the subject areas.

Our local engagement in civic readiness of our students is spotty at best. We have some communities that do it great, we have others that don't. And lastly, we just have not prioritized social studies as a subject. The evidence since No Child Left Behind really points to that. Our NAEP scores and anecdotal evidence that just indicates that it's become a second-tier subject.

So from the state perspective, really being able to engage all three branches of government and also being able to engage localities, communities, neighborhoods, schools in the effort to ensure that students have access to lots of experiences, whether that's mock elections, or conversations with community leaders and state leaders, visits to the state capital, et cetera. Those are all really important things that we need to have in place and again, that are fragmented right now.

But my job is as a state leader, and I know we have some staff members from our Department of Education, is really to try to help paint a framework around all of this work, and help kind of get the arrows going in the right direction, not to sound cliché-ish, but to make sure that we give students-- all students a really great opportunity to access experiences, access practice, access leaders, access opportunities, to interact and most importantly, have access to high quality teachers, high quality curriculum, and have the opportunity to build their knowledge base and experiences.

MATT EIDE: Thank you so much, superintendent, and to Ebony and Jenoge. So one of the things I just heard you say, superintendent, is that social studies has become a second tier discipline. And one of the ways that is expressed is it typically isn't a discipline that's sort of measured, right? So that if one of the ways to elevate sort of civic readiness is to find ways to

measure and assess it, that brings us to our last question. And this is what started us on this civic readiness path. How do we measure this thing that is-- some of us are struggling to define? So with that in mind, I'm going to start with Jenoge. So if you're measuring civic readiness in Eugene or in Oregon, how are you doing that?

JENOGE KHATTER: Thanks. We are using a student survey based off of Darder's theory of critical bi-cultural pedagogy in regards to her rendering of what makes a curriculum emancipatory or empowering. And those, in my opinion, very much overlap with a lot of civic readiness, civic engagement sorts of priorities. And I used research that incorporated data from that survey, as well as students' responses to curriculum engagement measure, and to a civic engagement self-efficacy scale.

And we validated the results of using this measure of empowerment and emancipation, the tools called the critical curriculum perception measure. And Dr. Eide will-- has that to provide in the final kind of packet that goes with today, at least the version-- the first version of that we used. And so we are really relying on students' assessment of kind of the extent to which they find the curriculum to be empowering and emancipating in certain operationalized ways that really have to do with, can you identify with the curriculum? Does the curriculum make you feel more hopeful about the future? Does the curriculum help you see your own ability to solve real world problems, or help build your confidence to solve real world problems?

And some of them are a bit more culturally nuanced in terms of linguistically, do the courses make sense to you and or do they-- are they similar to how language is used in your home? And it was really interesting because we desegregated by race and other factors, and it's really very interesting to see statistical significance at the item level in terms of how students do have different perceptions of what in a curriculum is or isn't working for them.

So we've done some initial piloting to get baseline data in our district around students' perceptions of the curriculum, and found that it's strongly correlated to their engagement with the curriculum, and somewhat less significantly, but also to a significant extent, what their achievement level. As we continue to roll out our adoption process, we will continue to use that measure or its next iteration to collect that information.

We're also having student-- conducting interviews with students and with teachers and with community members and focus groups, or like student affinity groups, like Black student unions. And we have lots and lots of affinity groups at our high schools and middle schools here, so lots of opportunity to get really nuanced perspective from different student groups who we know anecdotally, or from other experiences, that these are student groups that where it's very likely that these students have not particularly found themselves well represented, or found their values or interests really extant in the materials.

So we're hoping to really have enough time and to have enough data to shift out of past practice in a variety of ways, knowing that past practice has consistently led to under service of many of our stakeholders in many of our student populations.

MATT EIDE: Thanks, Jenoge. And as the moderator, it's my job to worry about time. So I am now worrying about time, so thank you for that. Superintendent Balow, so you talked about how WDE defines and supports civic readiness, and in like one minute, have you been able to find a way to begin to measure civic readiness in Wyoming?

JILLIAN BALOW: You got it. I'll tell you, I'm going to give a yes but response. So statutorily, we require students to be assessed, but it's a check mark. It's an assurance that they've been assessed, and we don't have any prescription for what that assessment needs to be. Legislation has tried and failed, and what I love is the impetus that sort of started this whole project in terms of looking at the citizenship test that some states have adopted and saying, OK, that's a test, but it really wasn't intended for this. What else is out there?

So you know, that's where I think that this instrument will be really profoundly important for our state as we undergo a standards revision, and as we continue to have the conversation about how best to measure civic readiness in our students. I think that there are a lot of places inside of this tool to find sort of the values and the ethos of our state, and where it best fits with our standards in our schools. And I'm hopeful that moving forward we can find that space. So there's my one minute, yes but response.

MATT EIDE: Thanks, superintendent. And Ebony, you know the drill by now. So have you been able to make any progress measuring civic readiness in Nebraska?

EBONY MCKIVER: All right, so here's my one minute, and it's going to sound very similar to superintendent Balow, we have a yes, but. And so, there's a couple of ways that we get to measure civic readiness, right? Through our state standards, K through 12, civic readiness is embedded in all of our grade standards. The other one is through legislation. There are graduation requirements for our students to meet, and they can do that one of three ways. They can do that through a completion of a project on a holiday, they can do it through participation in a public body, and the last one is they can take the USCIS naturalization test.

But to sort of echo the sentiments of superintendent Balow, it's the problem of how do we know that that is really accurately measuring civic readiness? Which is why again, this REL tool will be excellent because it will allow us to really find those that effective and appropriate measures for civic readiness.

And as we move forward, I want to say that one of the ways that we can start doing a better job of measuring civic readiness is just by making sure one, that all of our students are reflected in those scales of measurements for civic readiness. And then also ensuring that the professional development that we are providing, really make sure that provide the necessary resources and skills that the teachers will need to be able to implement a strong civic readiness program. And so I am confident that we are well on our way to being able to do that here in Nebraska. So I hope I did it in under a minute.

MATT EIDE: Thanks so much, Ebony. And it looks like we have time for maybe one question from the audience, which means Marc, I get to put you in the tricky position of deciding which question we're going to pose to our panelists.

MARC BRODERSEN: OK. Well, we have a couple. So this is out of my wheelhouse now, but I think Tara posed an interesting question. Has anyone implemented and measured authentic civic learning programs, and more specifically, school participatory budgeting? It sounds like this is something they're starting to do in Arizona. So I'm not familiar with these terms, but I'm curious if others might be.

JILLIAN BALOW: I am going to jump in because I hate pregnant pauses, and I am just not familiar with this. But I love that we have a jumping off point to start having these discussions. And again, the instrument really gives us that.

EBONY MCKIVER: And I was going to say, I don't know of a specific school district in Nebraska that is doing it, but it looks like just the amount of stakeholder involvement in that school participatory budgeting process seems like it would do so much to not only again, bring in stakeholder involvement, but really help create civic readiness, and just the participation from all standpoints. Because I'm assuming that students would be able to participate as well as parents and community members.

So it seems like it's something that would be ripe with, I guess, passing on those civic readiness skills that we all want to have our students learn.

JENOGE KHATTER: I love the question, and I agree that if we had more common ways of measuring or even just talking about these things, it would really be a major boon. So thanks for inviting the thought.

MATT EIDE: All right, well thanks so much for the question mark. And unfortunately, that's all the time we have for that. So here on this slide, you see the full citation for the civic readiness resource. No need to write it down, Angela posted a link to this resource in chat earlier in the webinar. And you're going to get a copy of the slides, along with some of the resources that we've discussed today, along with the link of the recording via email here in a couple of days.

Which means that all we have left to do today is to say thank you. Thank you to all of you for being such an engaged audience, and a special thank you to our three panelists who took time out of their busy days to share their perspectives on how to define, develop, and measure civic readiness. And look, we love talking about this stuff.

And we welcome follow up questions about civic readiness and about the civic readiness resource. So please do not hesitate to reach out. We're putting Steven's email in chat, so please send him lots and lots of emails. Also, please note that as you exit the webinar, you're going to be asked to respond to a brief survey about today's event. So we take your feedback very

seriously, so please consider taking a minute to respond to the poll. So with that in mind, thank you again to everyone, thank you to our panelists, and have a great rest of your day.