



Improving educational equity through cultural responsiveness in schools and educator preparation programs: A virtual workshop series

Webinar #3: Implementing District and School Policies and Practices to Support Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

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Workshop transcript

Webinar Producer: Hello everyone, and thank you for attending today's webinar. Before we begin, I want to cover a few housekeeping items. At the bottom of your audience console are multiple applications which you can use. You can expand each widget by clicking on the maximize icon at the top right of the widget or by dragging the bottom right corner widget panel. Additional resources and materials are available on the resource's widget indicated by the green file icon on the bottom of your screen. If you have any questions during the webcast, you can click on the purple Q&A widget at the bottom of submit your questions. We have a question-and-answer session throughout the end of the webinar. You can submit questions throughout the webinar at any time, you don't have to wait to the very end of the session. If you have any technical difficulties, please click on the help widget. The question mark icon covers common technical issues. You can also submit technical issues via the Q&A widget. Please note, most technical issues can be resolved by pressing F5 or command+R on Macs to refresh your player console. Finally, an on-demand version of this webcast will be available one day after the webcast using the same audience link used to access today's event. Now I'd like to introduce Amy Johnson. Amy, you now have the floor.

Amy Johnson: Thank you Brian and thank everyone for joining us for today's webinar, culturally responsive practices, a primer for schools and school districts. Today's webinar is sponsored by the US Department of education's Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Lab. And I'm Amy Johnson from Mathematica which leads the work for this Regional Educational Lab. This is the third webinar in our four-part series which began with a look at a broad framework for educational equity, then examine the research base for culturally responsive practices and what's needed to create systemic change. Today, we'll take a look at what culturally responsive practices look like on the ground from the perspective of schools and school districts. And then in the final webinar in this series, we'll look at educator preparation programs and how those programs can support the development of culturally responsive educators.

Our goal for this series is that it will prompt audience members, either individually or ideally with a team of colleagues to put what you hear into action in one way or another. We think of this four-part webinar series as a workshop that will provide you with valuable guidance on how to create more equitable education environments that include culturally responsive practices. Before I introduce today's speaker, I want to point audience members again to an action plan that you all should have received electronically via email. The action plan is intended to be a starting point for the critical conversations and strategic planning that we hope each of you and your – feel free to jot down thoughts, ideas or questions related to the prompts in the action plan throughout the webinar. Please do something with the information you hear today. Our speaker today is George Guy who is a principal at Rose International Middle School in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. Thank you very much George for joining us and I will turn it over to you.

George Guy: Thank you so much Amy. And welcome ladies and gentlemen to culturally responsive practices, a primer for schools and school districts. Let's get started. When we talk about culturally responsive practices in schools and school districts, it's important for us to be able to understand data. Data is nothing more than information. So, there is critical data that that we can access within our schools and our school districts no matter where we may find ourselves. But the key is to interpret the data in ways that can uncover access and opportunity gaps. So, we're going to talk a little bit about that today. We need to be able to understand that schools and school districts are made up of individuals and collectives. And both individuals and collectives have their own different assumptions

about achievement, about access, about opportunities, and about how culturally responsive practices should be enacted. We're going to speak very briefly to understanding the differences between what individuals bring with them because they don't leave their values and belief systems in their cars when they park at their perspective schools. So, what they bring individually and then, what is it that we do and in a system collectively as it relates to our assumptions around achievement.

We also want to talk a bit about how is it that schools and school districts began to take a more disciplined approach to diagnose and tackle equity issues. For schools and school districts, there are so many things that are on the forefront of what it is that we must do to make sure that children arrive at our doors safely and leave safely. And security being the utmost right now in our country that we are most concerned about and at the forefront. But how is it that we use a discipline inquiry approach to begin to look more critically at what it is that we can diagnose based on our resources? And how can we specifically tackle equity issues in a manageable way so that we are seeing progress? And we need to make sure that our shared commitment to an equity agenda is something that everyone agrees with. We talked specifically about individual and collective assumptions. What is it individually that we think our equity agenda needs to be? And then as a collective, what is it that we can agree upon that is absolutely essential for all children to know and be able to do as it relates to access and opportunity in a culturally responsive environment? So, we hope to cover these four things in a very, very specific way to open up the door for conversation for the culturally responsive practices that you'll find in your own environments. So, we're going to take a look at the value of data today.

We're going to make sure that when we talk about the value of data. We're going to talk a little bit about being data rich and information poor. We certainly do not want to be drippy in working with our data. We want to talk about the difference between change versus improvement. From what I understand, there's a whole lot of change that's going on in schools and school districts. But, how are we actually measuring improvement? We want to make sure that the forgotten thing that we really deal with when we talk about improvement is monitoring. And what is it that we decide to monitor? And are we monitoring for effective outcomes? And do we all have a shared understanding of that term effective as it relates to equity, access and opportunity? We want to make

sure that we understand what barriers exist, whether they are mindset barriers, whether they are values and belief barriers, whether they are systemic barriers in our schools and school districts. But we want to make sure that we understand what those barriers are and that we put up some things in place to begin to overcome those barriers so that we can enhance culturally relevant practices in our schools and school districts. Some folks say that we should come up with best practices as they relate to culturally relevant or culturally responsive practices. I tend to use the term wise. These are things that we know can be replicated in rural environments, in urban environments, in suburban environments, in metro urban environments. Things that we know, based from our research standpoint and a practitioner standpoint that have been done in all three or all four of those environments that we want to call wise.

I would hesitant to say that they are best practices because they are not necessarily replicable in all four of those aforementioned environments. So, many of us have seen this picture before and I think we have seen equality. And we've seen equity and we've seen reality. But we haven't talked very much about liberation. So let me delve into a picture that we have if you are unfamiliar with it. We see the equality frame where every child in our school and our school districts gets the same box, but every child isn't built the same. And every child doesn't start their raise at the same point in life. Then we see the equity frame or the reality frame right below it which is – there is a certain level of advantage or dare I say privilege that some of our students are coming to unprivileged and advantage is not a negative term. It just means that there is some inequality that some of our students coming from different parts of our communities share and they can be all sort of things. But that privilege will put one of our students or some of our students at an incredible advantage while others are at an incredible disadvantage.

If we go to the top right block, we'll see the equity frame which is using the same three resources, the same three crates to provide an equity module so that all three of the children can see the baseball game and to take Paulo Freire's work around liberation, we know that when we talk about equity and equality and culturally responsive work, we really want to move toward liberation. Liberation is removing the crates, removing the obstacle of the actual sense so that we're empowering learners to see that educational equity should only be the baseline. But liberation or

cognition – and when I talk about cognition, I'm talking about the ability of one to engage within their own solution making. That's the continual process that schools and school districts should engage with each and every one of their stakeholders. And hopefully, we can talk a little bit more about that as we go through this webinar. So, for those of those of you who don't know Mike Schmoker, one of his most famous books that I'm really in love with is Focus. And as I took this quote from the book on Focus, "Things get done only at the data we gather can inform and inspire those in a position to make a difference." And everybody on this webinar is in a position to make a difference and that's why we're here. So, we really need to begin to talk about the data that we're reviewing in schools and school districts. We certainly are reviewing data that deals with student achievements and student achievement gaps. And we are dealing with data that deals with access and opportunity. But, are we dealing with data that is really impactful?

Right now, in many of our school districts, whether we're in rural, urban or suburban school districts are historically underserved students. I will take African-American male and females for example; may find themselves in the minority in their schools, but they find themselves in the majority as it relates to discipline data. Whether that is a lunch or recess, detention, an in-school suspension and afterschool suspension, a Saturday suspension. We see disparate numbers for those demographic groups even though they may be in the minority. Are we looking at universal data from the office of civil rights to begin to question what it is that we are doing with this disparate discipline for those two demographic groups? Are we looking more critically at our code of conduct as it relates to how we are applying discipline with those groups? I had mentioned the data rich and information poor syndrome. We have incredible amounts of data no matter what state we may find ourselves in. We are getting state data, and then we are getting standardized data. And then in many of our school districts, either we create formative or summative assessments or they are created for us and we are going through that data every 4 to 6 weeks, yet we are still dripped. Because we are finding out that we're not using the information to help drive instruction, to help drive culturally responsive practices back within the classroom.

We are not using that data to use the enclave of social emotional learning as a backstop to begin to support some of the things that we need to support for our students and our staff. Do all staff

across the school district devote equal attention to data that support equitable, educational outcomes? If you are on this webinar and you are listening and you don't have data teams that could be a thing that you could begin to have conversations about on October 16. What are those data teams studying? Are they studying access and equity opportunities for gifted and talented students? And as they study, are they looking at historically underserved students? Students who speak a second language? Students who have an individual education plan. Students who are coming to us from low socio-economic backgrounds and are partaking in our free and reduced lunch programs. Are those our students in our gifted and talented programs? Are there ways in which that data team is looking at access and opportunity so that we can have more of those historically underserved students in those programs? And then, how are we repurposing the data? Because a lot of the data that we will get if we expand our stakeholder group to include students and to include family members and to include the community, we need to repurpose that data so that it makes sense to them so that we're just not coming at them with acronyms around the New Jersey student learning assessment.

But what does that assessment mean as it relates to English language arts achievement for a specific demographic group and mathematics achievement for a specific demographic group. So if we begin to repurpose that data and put it in a language so that all of our stakeholders understand the data, its value and where we might see access and opportunity gaps, then we can certainly start to plan more critically about the steps that we are going to take to provide equitable educational outcomes and thereby becoming more culturally responsive as schools and as school districts. So, I give you an example when I talked a bit about the office of civil rights. And I talked a great deal about analysis and the code of conduct. And are we having conversations as we look at our code of conduct within our schools?

First of all, do we have a code of conduct within our school in our school district? And is it being followed judiciously? Does it have things within it such as administrative discretion after the first offense? Are there opportunities within our code of conduct to be able to implement more restorative practices coming to us from restorative justice models? Are these conversations being had by our data teams? Are they being had by our central office staffers? Are there opportunities for discipline disparities and the work

around that to be presented to our Board of Education with potential action plans. Are we having conversations with the students who are part of these discipline disparities and asking them simple questions like, "How many times have you been suspended this year? What were the causes? How did that lineup? What kind of restoration did we do as a school or school district to try and engraft you back into your classroom or your school setting?" These are examples of repurposing of data and looking at data to make decisions for more equitable outcomes.

Liz City from Harvard Graduate School of Education really talks a great deal about focus. And she says that you need to get your focus really, really small in order to get any traction. And that is problematic for those of us who are in schools and school districts. Because there are so many focus that are in front of us and so many priorities that we have to begin to evaluate from a resource standpoint and a priority standpoint where are we going to put our focus? How are we going to get this traction in a very small granular way so that we are actually seeing improvement versus change? And I give an example of one particular school district that took this with gifted and talented education. They are now using multiple measures for all of their second-grade students no matter what and what school district they're coming from in all 12 of their elementary schools.

They are using the Naglieri test which is not your more standardized test to be – talk about their portfolio assessment. They also take teacher recommendation and parent recommendation. And then they have gifted and talented units so that kids might find themselves entering into mathematics, but maybe not in the social studies. They may find an entry way into science, but may be not English language arts. And they're taught in 4 to 6-week blocks. And what they are finding is that more individual education plan students are finding their way in any one of these four areas of gifted and talented education. More English language learners and English as a second language learners are finding their way in. More low socio-economic standard or free and reduced lunch students are finding their way into these gifted and talented education. And Latino and African- American students are rotating in and out of these areas because they are showing a left – a level of giftedness to steal from one of my favorite gifted education educators, Joseph Renzulli at the University of Connecticut. When we talk about monitoring, if it's not getting measured, it's not getting done. So, how do we decide what it is

that we are measuring? We need to make sure that when we look at our goals and we can bring this down at the most granular level for our teachers, for our building level administrators, for our central office staff that we can talk about specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented and time bound goals.

Our goals have to be smart. And if we are not creating goals that deal with equity and equitable outcomes in a very small way that we can find traction and picking one of our priorities, then we – it's all for naught. We will make these goals; they will sit on our websites. They will sit on papers somewhere that we will present once or twice a year to our boards of education and they will find no traction. So, I give you an example of a school district that has combined culture, proficiency, equity, and character education. And they make sure that their goal statements have clear, smart goals that they're time bound and that every month, people are reporting on those goals as they are results oriented.

So, they are providing results for goals that deal with how teachers are providing more equitable outcomes, educational, equitable outcomes for their students, how are we providing educational outcomes for student's pre-K to 12 with using things like student voice and other areas? How is it that we are looking at our board goals and our administrative procedure to provide more equitable outcomes? So, this is on a monthly basis, these are smart goals that are being reported on so that we can have an opportunity to see where those results are taking hold and what kinds of modifications and adjustments do, we need to make on a monthly basis? What more resources do we need to bring in to be able to support those equitable educational outcomes in a culturally responsive way?

We can't talk about culturally responsive practices for equity if you don't talk about things that inhibit culturally relevant practices and schools and school districts. You have to talk about the barriers. So I'm going to talk about – I'm going to bring up two barriers that I think are absolutely critical. Most research tells us that our values and beliefs and our assumption really, the culture that we bring with us, how we were raised, what environment. We've come to be able to understand and see our values and beliefs and assumptions be cultivated within. One of the critical barriers that inhibit equitable educational outcomes in culturally responsive practices. So I give you one of the barriers, being unaware of the need to adapt.

Many of us are in schools and school districts that look very different than they did 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 years ago. But we are still using a value and belief system and we're still making assumptions about demographics even though demographics have changed drastically in New Jersey and in Delaware and around the country. We're still using a belief system that says we can use things like tracking in our upper level mathematics classes and in our science classes and in our social studies classes and English language arts classes to begin to justify a barrier that despite data realities and despite data realities in tracked environments that says, "Historically underserved students do not do well when they are tracked within classes." So that's an example that we would look at as it relates to data realities and not being able to adapt to those data realities as it relates to values, beliefs and assumptions.

We talked about one particular school district who has cultural proficiency and equity teams in all 19 of their schools. One of their beginning of the school year activities that they did for three hours was to help people unearth personal values, personal beliefs, personal assumptions. And they did that in all 19 of their schools with folks taking personal artifacts that they have brought with them; jewelry, things that were in their wallets or their purses, things that were on their cell phones and began to talk about their own personal values and beliefs and why those things were meaningful to them. And how that in turn, affected their classroom culture, their grade level culture, their school culture, their district culture. And how does that play a role in what we do or don't do as we are trying to provide educational outcomes for historically underserved students and all students?

As we continue to have a conversation about barriers, we come up with the term entitlement and who's entitled and who is not? And when we talk about that term; entitlement; it can bring about a number of – myriad of emotions that aren't always positive. But when we talk about entitlement, we really should start with the data. And the data is showing us that students who are coming from higher socio-economic backgrounds get – tend to have more schema developed. That's a fancy name for background knowledge because of the exposure that they have. Students coming to us from lower socio-economic backgrounds do not have that schema.

There's research that shows us that kids coming to us in our pre-K environments from urban and rural areas who have lower socio-

economic status than our students who were coming to us perhaps in some of our more affluent suburban areas are coming to us with five to 10,000-word gaps in their speech. That's because their parents could be working two jobs and they are not interacting with their children the same way that other folks are. So, that is a level of entitlement. That's a level of background and exposure that we have to make adaptations for within our schools. Who benefits from inequitable system – systemic practices and who doesn't? When I talked about tracking, who benefits?

When I talked about gaps as it relates opportunity and access, gaps as it relates to our honors and advanced placement classes within our high schools and our upper-level classes within our middle schools and our junior high schools, who benefits? If you look at those students who are taking honors level classes, taking advanced placement classes and taking the AP exams, and you look at socio-economic status or if you look at race and ethnicity and gender, there is a stark difference between students who are getting the fours and the fives and the students who are getting the threes.

That's an area of privilege that some of our students have. How do school districts make up the difference for that level of privilege and entitlement? What is it that we are doing within our school day that can begin to bridge that gap as it relates to entitlement? Are there things that we could be more creative about within our schedules in our junior or middle schools or high schools that we could begin to talk about AP pre-course teaching? Pre-teaching of higher-level math and science classes. Are these examples that we can use that can begin to combat entitlement and inequitable practices? Are we looking at pilot programs to open up access and opportunity for those honors and AP classes? Have we flat-out said to our boards of education and revised our administrative policy around entry?

And if we're saying there are no prerequisites for these classes, then what are we doing with teachers who will teach a very different demographic that will now be coming to them in honors and AP classes? And what is it that we're doing with students who may be somewhat behind as it relates to supporting them in those honors and AP classes? How do we catch them up within the school day because the research says that the majority of our interventions that are going to make a difference and effect size? And John Heidi is great with this, is what we can do during the

course of that 6 to 6 and a half-hour school day to make up the difference for those who are entitled and don't necessarily need that help as it relates to their background knowledge and their level of entitlement? So, here are some wise culturally relevant practices that we can talk about as it relates to schools and school districts.

First of all, when we talk about any of those things that we've mentioned prior to this point in the webinar, we've got to make sure that we have a safe space for all stakeholders to begin to pullout that one small chump that we think we can get traction in and to try and find things that we agree upon. It doesn't matter if you're in a rural, urban, or suburban school district. Your board of education is always going to agree that all children need to be making as many gains as possible. And that's a great place to start to have conversations around culturally relevant practices. If you're a parent or a guardian, you understand equity and equitable practices as it relates to your children. You do not treat all of your children the same. You have an equity paradigm in your home.

So, we should have the same equity paradigm as it relates to culturally relevant practices. But we have to provide safe spaces for people to have this dialogue. And a safe space doesn't mean that it's conflict free. But how do we manage that conflict? We can certainly go from something called storming in which we are very very excited and amped up and sometimes irritated about the values and beliefs and assumptions that different stakeholders may bring to these conversations around culturally relevant practices. But how do we become good facilitators ourselves so that we can go from storming to norming? So that we can agree upon culturally relevant and equitable practices that are within the framework of our resource allocation no matter where we may find ourselves and move forward with these practices.

As we take a look at more culturally responsive practices, we know that change is possible through discipline inquiry. And what I mean by discipline inquiry is, what questions are we asking? And are we asking very specific germane questions to areas that we know are problematic? Discipline disparities are problematic. Access opportunities for gifted and talented education are problematic. Our English language learners and our English as a second language learners are coming to us later in their careers. But they will only be with us until their 21 years of age. What kinds of conversations are we having about discipline inquiry as it relates to policy, procedure and intervention with some of those three areas

that we know are problematic in terms of equitable outcomes for all students?

Then, we need to get really, really specific about the things that we want to address. We need to be able to know what is it that we are trying to accomplish. What change might we introduce and why? And how will we know that that change is actually an improvement? And as we talk about those three things that I mentioned, we can certainly understand that the discipline inquiry with these three questions helps us understand the scale of the problem and how we're going to approach the problem. And making sure that we're not overreaching beyond our resources, or are we repurposing our resource allocations. Because sometimes, our communities are an incredible resource that are untapped. Our students are an incredible resource that are untapped. Our families are incredible resources that are untapped.

So, we want to make sure that as we ask these three questions, we are trying to be disciplined and that we're not overreaching. So, I bring to bear and many of you are familiar with the plan, do, study, act model. And for those of you who need more information on this, we have some resources from – that we'll – I'll go into a little bit later on. But one of the gurus of this is Anthony Breck who does some great work with plan, do, study model. And as we look at this model, you see the three questions and you see the four areas that we want to work on. And I want to use an example of my own district in which we are planning and starting small.

Three years ago, we said that there was an access and opportunity gap as it related to students who were historically underserved; African-American, Latino and low socio-economic status students getting to algebra in the eighth grade and thereby hampering their opportunities for getting to calculus in the 12th grade. So with did some research and we found out that they if they get to calculus in 12th grade, the majority of the research showed us that that would give them a high level of probability of being successful in a college and career setting while also being successful in a postsecondary setting, whether that's a community college or a four-year college. So, we said, we needed to do something about this and we started small.

So, as the building principal, I had the opportunity to make some adjustments with the pilot program, do some different things with prerequisites for students and take a very small set of students,

provide supports for them in the summertime. Talk with them and their families about what their supports would be needed to be able to do that. And we were able to, from the sixth grade to the seventh grade, put them in a pre-algebra class. And then from the seventh to the eighth grade, we were able to put them in an algebra class. So, by starting small, by using some discipline inquiry, by using the plan, do, study, act module, we were able to, from that point, three years ago in 2016, make modifications around the act portion of the plan, do, study. So that this pilot program has now been implemented in all three of our middle schools and we are tracking the progress of our students who are now in geometry and algebra two. And we will continue to provide or their high school colleagues will provide supports for them to try and make sure that they're baselining out in calculus.

And then our larger question will be, what is it that we're doing as we have conversations about tracking of students in mathematics in grade 7 to 12? Now that we have the pilot and we have some research and we found some success with that; we can start to have larger conversations. But they wouldn't have happened if we didn't implement the plan, do, study, act module and begin to make modifications and begin to expand those modifications not just from one building, but into three middle schools. So, as I conclude, Dr. King out of why we can't wait when he was in prison just talked about, a social movement that only moves people is merely a revolt. But a movement that changes both people and institutions is indeed a revolution. So, we need to talk a little bit more about data. That data is always meant to point people in the right direction as it relates to access and opportunity gaps. If it is not pointing people toward access and opportunity gaps, then we are data rich and information poor. If we don't unearth our individual and collective assumptions about why some children achieve higher levels and others do not, we will inadvertently reinforce inequity within our schools and our school districts. And I use the example of tracking.

If you take a look at tracking and we all have tracking in all of our school districts and how we track students depending upon the content. If you just look at one indices; socio-economic status, and look at the amount of socio-economic status students who are on free and reduced lunch in your higher – in your upper-level classes versus the students who are not on free and reduced lunch. That is the data that should cause you to say, "We need to do something different." The question will become, "what is that something

different as it relates to access and opportunity?" This discipline inquiry always helps you frame the problem. The question should come before the answer. So tomorrow on October 16, what is it that you're going to question as it relates to access and opportunity with some of the examples that are prolific in all of our rural, urban and suburban schools and school districts. What is it that you're going to ask questions about? And make sure you are asking these questions.

You're framing the problem in light of the resources that you are able to enact toward making significant improvement upon the problem. And then finally, what is it that educational outcomes that are equitable – well how is it that we zone in on a high leverage point with a singular focus that we can begin to put our specific, measurable – attainable result, sorry, and then time bound our smart goals toward as it relates for access and equity. So, we have given you some questions to consider which are part of your action plan that talk about your data teams within your school districts because we don't really need to reinvent the wheel. There are things, and these are very specific. Some of them, the SciP team, the student improvement team on bullet number one is specific to New Jersey. But there are other leadership teams throughout the country for professional learning communities and multi-tiered system of support, response to intervention and intervention and referral services use those teams and refocus and repurpose what their singular focus will be. What are the mechanisms that you have in place to monitor? What kinds of things do you need to put in place to monitor those areas that specifically deal with access and opportunity gaps? How do you begin to create those safe spaces for these conversations within your school community and the larger community? And are we using discipline inquiry to allocate resources in culturally responsive ways that support the most underrepresented of our educational communities?

Because believe it or not, those underrepresented areas of our educational communities from a demographic standpoint, whether you're in a rural, urban or suburban environment, especially in a suburban environment, those are children of color. Those are low socio-economic status students and those are students who are speaking a different language than we are. We need to make sure that we are focusing our resources to address concerns in that way. Before we get to our questions and answers, I've given you a lot of resources as it relates to schools and school districts, some around discipline inquiry. And then I've given you three school

districts that have actually put this either in their board policy or their administrator process and procedure linked to policy that relates to cultural efficiency, equity or equitable outcomes in Cherry Hill public schools, Montclair and Cincinnati public schools. So, I've had a lot to say, I want to turn this over to Amy for the next portion of our Q&A.

Webinar producer: Amy, I believe you're muted.

Amy Johnson: Sorry about that, I was muted. Okay. Thank you, George. We're going to start the Q&A session and I just want to remind folks there's the Q&A widget at the bottom of your screen, so go ahead and begin adding your questions. George, we're going to kick this off with a question for you. What steps can a school and district take toward implementing the safe conversations that you talked about among teachers to, you know, identify their assumptions and what not?

George Guy: So, I think that's a great question. I think the example that I used in the webinar was the opportunity that the one school district used in order to talk about values and beliefs. Everyone has professional learning opportunities, whether they are at faculty meetings, department meetings, whether they are full day professional learning opportunities. And everyone usually has something on their person that will represent their values and belief system. Have people at a meeting talk about their values and belief systems in small groups; in pairs so that you're building trust. And they can have A and B conversations. And they can represent their partner's value and belief system and then begin to shift how those values – you will hear values around family and marriage and religion, how those things can be pushed into our classroom, culture, in terms of our values and beliefs and assumption that we make about the students that come to us and where they're coming to us from so that – And then we can talk about a grade level. We can talk about an actual schools, values, beliefs and assumptions. So, it can start – it can start at that very small granular level about, what is culture? And what does culture?

If you're going to define it, I will define it as values, beliefs and assumptions. And that is one modality that I have found useful in multiple school districts that is a very safe, unassuming piece. You don't want to jump to race and ethnicity immediately because everyone is not in a safe space and in a bit – and has the ability to trust to be able to move in that way. There'll be plenty of time to

talk about those things, but start with culture, values, beliefs and assumptions. And then turn it into how those values, beliefs and assumptions affect how we interact with our students, how we interact with our families and how we interact with our communities and how those things, either reinforce inequitable outcomes or support equitable educational outcomes for all students.

Amy Johnson: George, just a quick follow-up to that. Are these conversations ones that lead to or should be facilitated by somebody external or can schools take these on themselves?

George Guy: I think schools can certainly take these on themselves. I think when schools and communities talk about these conversations, it's great to have some training and an external person. But everybody doesn't have that resource allocation. I think that with the model that I talked about in a very small group, if you are a superintendent, an assistant superintendent, a director, a supervisor, or a principal, if you are a teacher in the teachers' lounge, this can be a conversation that can begin the – be had, that can be brought to the modality that already exists within your school or your school district like your response to intervention team, your intervention referral team, your student – your SciP team which is your leadership team that deals with professional learning. And if you start in that area, you will find more equity warriors that are like-minded such as yourself that have been asking these things and have just been looking for the platform to be able to have these safe conversations.

Amy Johnson: Great. Thanks. I'm just going to encourage folks to go ahead and submit your questions on the Q&A widget there. The next question George is, can you say a little bit more about the information and data you used to assess how to improve your approach to preparing students for algebra that you talked about earlier?

George Guy: Definitely. So, I think as we look at algebra, what we were finding were some conceptual gaps and some computational gaps from our sixth-grade curriculum. So, what we were able to do with our teachers and our math department was we were able to compile the concepts needed from sixth grade math to go into seventh grade pre-algebra that typically based on our summative assessment's students have not mastered. And those were concept – there were conceptual concerns. Most of them were around integers. They were around addition, subtraction, multiplication and

division of fractions. Things of that nature that they would need automaticity around to be able to move forward within pre-algebra concepts. So, what we did was, we did not want to isolate that pilot group. We gave all of that information; about four pages of that information to students at the end of the sixth-grade school year. But what we did was, we were more specific with the kids and there were about between 10 and 12 with them within the pilot program. And we said that, "You guys have to do this." These four pages we made in our – in one of our title I schools. We used title I monies in August to provide math teachers to be able to help them with these packets. And then we called upon them in July and August when you are in the doldrums and you haven't done your work at – that you needed to do in terms of mathematics to be able to support those students.

Over the past three years, we've found some success with kind of that pre-teaching of those concepts so that when they're moving quickly through the pre-algebra curriculum in seventh grade, students have a better conceptual awareness and they have a better computational awareness as it relates to those supports. We also did some incredible things with – I'll give you this resource. Dr. Joe Bose – Dr. Joe Boulder out of Stanford in her work around mathematical mindsets. And what we did was, we have been altering our formative assessments to make them much more complex and much more rigorous for students in class. We've done some flipped classroom work for students as well so that when they're coming to the class, they will already watch the lesson at home and if they – if there are issues around access, and watching lessons. We've been able to give technology out to students. And so, when they're coming in, they are just working on rigorous complex work that deals with algebra within that seventh-grade course. So those are just a few of the examples that we've been able to do over the last three years that we are trying to replicate in all three of our middle schools.

Amy Johnson: Great, thanks George. The next question for you is a little bit of a shift. But what strategies might researchers implement in order to make their studies more actionable for practitioners at the middle and high school levels? Any thoughts on that?

George Guy: Yeah. I think, you know, going back to Eric's previous presentation as it relates to research and action research. I think that researchers need to have a firm grasp on the realities that schools and school districts are facing as it relates to equity. I think

researchers often have some understandings of – that those realities as they use, you know, quantitative and qualitative measures to begin to assess access and opportunity gaps. But I think realistically, they probably need to expand that research more and more into the areas of qualitative interviews is I would say with community and community members.

I think what they're finding with these access and opportunity gaps is, this is multigenerational. You're not talking about George and George's access and opportunity gaps. But you are talking about very nuanced information that could be George's parents and George's grandparents who are all going through that system. Let me give you a prime example. One of the more nuanced pieces that I think researchers need to pay attention to especially at the elementary level is, we are finding that our English as a second language students or students who have recently passed our WETA exams and are no longer English as a second language students, but they do – but the home language is still of a different language or multiple languages. That many of those family members have literacy concerns within their own parent language.

So, there are gaps as it relates to even bilingualism. And so, we could have children in bilingual classes. But if they're going home to parents or grandparents or aunts and uncles or cousins who are illiterate in Spanish which is the predominant language that we're finding is problematic. What are we doing at – from a research perspective to talk more about adult education? Are researchers bringing us that paradigm? Are they going in and saying, "Is there an adult facility that goes along with this very, very large urban school district that can begin to offer adult literacy for many of our Spanish-speaking folks predominantly without being stereotypical?"

Predominantly what we've seen in our school districts in New Jersey is a lack of literacy in countries such as people coming to us from Mexico and that's just one example. If that lack of literacy is not coupled with an adult learning center and one of our elementary principals who's now the high school principal did a phenomenal job at this. He created his own adult learning center because our parents who were illiterate or had some literacy issues in their home language and Spanish could not take transportation to get to the nearest adult learning center. So if researchers cast a larger net within the community and begin to give us some research studies around those things. I think it would be more actionable for pre-K to 12 practitioners to begin to have those

types of conversations and put in interventions that we would use that researchers are bringing to us.

Amy Johnson: Great, thanks George. Probably have time for one more question. Here's the question. I find that most change or improvement efforts are multiyear project. However, there's always a lot of urgency around improving student outcomes. Any advice for scoping out timelines and pacing for improvement efforts?

George Guy: Definitely. So, as we – as I used the example of one of the questions around historically underserved students making progress in mathematics, what is it – these are multi-year when we're monitoring. I use a six-week benchmark assessment as a way to assess progress with our math teachers or a lack thereof so that we can make modifications in the plan, do, study, act procedures that we're working on within that six weeks. Do we need more pre-teaching of concepts? Do we need more automaticity as it relates to computation? So, within that mathematics example that I used, you are layering that every six weeks, but you do have a yearly goal for that pilot group of historically underserved students. That yearly goal could be a particular benchmark that you want them to achieve in the New Jersey student learning assessment in mathematics. That could be a compilation of six benchmarks and we want them to achieve a baseline number out of those six benchmarks which could be 80%. That goes into – so those six-week benchmarks turn into something yearly that is specific, measurable, attainable results oriented and time bound and becomes a smart goal. All of that information can be layered into a student achievement goal that your board of education and your superintendent have signed off on and can be presented incrementally or it can be presented in a larger area. But I think, you really got to start small as Dr. City said from Harvard so that that change becomes an improvement.

Amy Johnson: Great. Well, thanks George. There is one other question. But I'm going to use it to TF our next webinar in the series. The question was, how can we start the conversation of CRP in higher education and not just in pre-K-12? Which is the way in which I'm going to turn to the last slide here just to remind folks that the next webinar in this series which is going to be on October 30, we have Conrad Gist who's an associate professor of teacher education at the University of Houston. And she's going to talk about CRP in educator preparation programs. So, I hope folks will join us for that. I want to thank you George for today's webinar and a great

Q&A session. And remind audience members that on your action plan, you have the questions that George post there at the end with some space to begin developing your own responses. And I'd encourage everybody to take those and begin your own plans towards culturally responsive practices. So, that's going to conclude our portion of the webinar. Brian, I'm going to turn it back to you for final remarks to folks.

Webinar producer: Thanks Amy. As a reminder, the on demand of this event will be available one day after the webcast using the same audience link sent to you earlier today. Please, at the end of this event, there's a survey that will appear. Please take the time to fill out the survey. And when you're done, please hit the submit button. The recording, the transcript will be posted on the REL Mid-Atlantic website in the coming weeks. Thanks for tuning to today's event. I'm glad you enjoyed your time.

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