

Black Lives Matter at School_ A Discussion with Educators on the Intersections of Activism and Pedagogy

Nyla: [00:00:00] Hello, I think we're alive. Welcome everyone. My name is Nyla Bell and you are joining us for a webinar titled Black Lives Matter at School: A Discussion with Educators on the Intersection of Activism and Pedagogy.

Next slide. As we go through this webinar, I'm just going to go over some brief etiquette. Please use the chat box to pose questions and engage with panelists and other participants. We recommend that you click on the chat icon, for those of you not familiar with zoom, on the bottom or top toolbar on your screen and keep that chat box open at all times.

We will be asking the polling question, so please respond as quickly as possible when that appears. And we also will be asking an open ended question for you to respond in the chat box as well.

Joining us for a webinar's support today is our Director of Communications, Kate Farbry, she'll be our tech support. You can see her name listed as one of the panelists. If you have a problem or tech issue, you can message her directly. Supporting us with chat, with our chat box is Nikevia Thomas she's our ALIVE Program Director. And then also we are going live on Facebook and supporting us with that is Kathleen Pulupa, she is our Communications and Administrative Coordinator.

And today's moderators are me. I'm Nyla Bell, I'm a Senior Education Equity Specialist at MAEC my colleague Karmen Rouland. She is the Associate Director of Technical Assistance and Training, and also the Program Manager for our Family Engagement Center called CAFE. And last, but certainly not least Daryl Williams, who is also Senior Education Equity Specialist.

Next slide. So who are we? We are MAEC, which stands for the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium. Our organization was founded in 1991 as an education nonprofit, dedicated to increasing access to a high quality education for culturally, linguistically and economically diverse learners. Our vision is that one day all students will have equitable opportunities to learn and achieve at high levels.

And our mission is to promote excellence and equity and education to achieve social justice.

We at MAEC run several large centers and take on a number of big projects. The oldest and biggest of which is our Center for Education Equity. The center for education equity CEE is a project of MAEC and is one of four regional equity assistance centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education under title four of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

We work in partnership with WestEd and AIR to improve and sustain the systemic capacity of public education, to increase outcomes for students, regardless of race, gender, religion, and national origin.

So for today's webinar, we want to talk about our goals and the purpose, right? So we are here today to learn about the work of one group of extraordinary educators and education activists who are part of the effort to organize the Black Lives Matter at School project. And in doing so we hope to raise educator awareness and deepen educators understanding of the complex topics of systemic racism and racial inequity in schools. And also to build the capacity of educators and education leaders to teach and respond to systemic racism and racial inequality.

And also to note, you know, we don't want to ignore the context, right? So if you go back to overview and goals in the previous slide. All of this is in a course, we would be remiss not to say that this is the urgency around doing a webinar on this topic is in response to the recent killing the Ahmead Arbery, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, Manual Ellis, George Floyd, and countless other black people who have left communities, that have left, the killings of which have left communities across the globe outraged and in mourning. And their deaths have led to massive global Black Lives Matter demonstrations that can condemn the police violence against black people.

And so many of us have been captivated by the protests. Some educators might be wondering whether or how they should address these issues with their students.

Next slide. So important things we want to point out as we move forward and acknowledge, one is that our audience is diverse in it's understanding, beliefs and opinions on race, racism, Black Lives Matter and protests. So we want to know we don't all have the same opinions, and values necessarily, on these topics. And we come from different levels, places and levels of comfort and understanding and talking about that.

With that said, we also want to acknowledge that discussing this topic might be difficult for some in the audience. And hopefully we will, and embrace this discomfort and learn and grow from the dialogue.

And then lastly, this is not the last conversation we will have on this. This will be one of a series of online events, where we address the topic of race and racism, particularly as it pertains to the current moment of Black Lives Matter protest and the pandemic.

Next slide. So now it's my pleasure to introduce you to our panelists and speakers. First is Tamara Anderson. As I go through these names, if you would just, please state a little bit about your background. So Tamara would you wave and say hello to everyone.

Tamara: [00:06:24] Hello, hello, welcome. My name is Tamara Anderson and basically my background is, I am a classroom, former classroom teacher in Chicago, New York and Philadelphia. I currently work in department of education, La Salle University supervising student teachers, and I'm an adjunct at Harcum College, member of racial justice organizing committee here in Philadelphia. The Opt-Out movement that started, that started, that we did work on here in Philadelphia. And I'm a parent educator organizer, and I'm a part of the national steering committee for Black Lives Matter at School.

Nyla: [00:07:09] Thank you, Tamara. Welcome. Next up is Awo Okaikor Aryee-Price.

Awo Okaikor: [00:07:18] Hey everyone. Yes. You said Awo is perfect. But I go by Okaikor, pronouns. Are she, her, hers. I am a former classroom teacher, education organizer. I started my career as an education organizer, it was something that I thought that educators were supposed to be. You're supposed to be educated. You're supposed to be organized doing this work.

I am a co-founder of MapSO Freedom School, and I'm a core trainer with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond that does undoing racism training. And so I am, that's my account. Those are the people that I'm accountable to, like those are the communities that I'm accountable to. I'm accountable to people that I also organize with here locally, in my own personal community that I live in.

Grew up in Newark for some part of my life and have been deeply rooted in just kind of looking at how I can see education or how we can see racial justice work and pushing back against the systems of oppression that make it difficult for black students to succeed and progress and access opportunities, in the ways that will help them thrive at all levels of society. I'm happy to be here, I see there are a lot of Jersey folks. I just want to lift up the Jersey folks that I see already here. So thank you.

Nyla: [00:08:33] Welcome. Thank you Okaikor.

Next up is to Denisha Jones.

Denisha: [00:08:40] Hi everyone. My name is Danisha Jones. I'm currently the Director of the Art of Teaching, graduate teacher ed program at Sarah Lawrence College in New York. I have seen some folks from New York. I know Mary is in the house. I've also seen a lot of my folks from DC, which I was at before I came to New York.

So I have been on the national Black Lives Matter steering committee since we got started and I'm now, I'm also part of the New York City Black Lives Matter steering committee. And I'm basically, you know, just doing, I work with a lot of other organizations, but we'll name those too is really who I'm being accountable to today, in the work that I'm doing with all of the folks on this panel, in many different ways, whether it's nationally or locally. So I'm really excited to talk to you about this work today.

Nyla: [00:09:24] Welcome. Thanks Denisha.

Next up is Ismael Jimenez.

Ismael: [00:09:31] Hello everybody. My name's Ishmael Jimenez. I'm a teacher in Philadelphia. I teach African American history, which is a required course in Philadelphia. I've been doing that for over the past decade. I also am involved in rewriting the social studies curriculum for the Philadelphia school district with a team. I've been doing that for about the last three years. But my work also extends to Black Lives Matter week. I was part of the original organizing committee that, you know, began in Philadelphia. But I also am involved in other activities along with the Racial Justice Organizing Committee, which I'm a part of the Corps. Also helped co-found the Melanated Educators Collective and Philly Hub for

Liberatory Academics, which seeks just to house resources in the Philly centric way to apply kind of more critical pedagogy.

Nyla: [00:10:23] Awesome. Thank you Ismeal.

Next up is Charlie McGeehan.

Charlie: [00:10:30] Hello everyone. My name is Charlie McGeehan. He, him pronouns. Also from Philadelphia. I'm a humanities teacher and a union building rep at the U School in North Philadelphia. I was involved with Tamara and Ismael in the first Black Lives Matter week of action in Philadelphia, helped to plan that. And from there for the past two or three years, I've been involved as a founding member of Building Anti-Racist White Educators or BARWE. We really seek to white folks to take a more active role in combating racism and white supremacy while keeping our work accountable to our folks of color, especially black folks. So I'm excited to be here today and excited to see so many Philly folks on the call.

Nyla: [00:11:17] Thank you Charlie. Last, but definitely not least M atthew Vaughn-Smith.

Matthew: [00:11:22] Hello everyone. I'm Matthew Vaughn-Smith. Pronouns, he, his and him. I'm a reading specialist in Howard County, Maryland currently. I'm one of the organizers who brought the Black Lives Matter at School week of action to Howard County, Maryland. And I continue to serve on the steering committee.

I'm also founder and president elect of a pending nonprofit, the Anti-Racist Education Alliance Incorporated, which works to dismantle white supremacy in schools, and to decolonized classrooms. And a shout out to all my D M V folks. And I am happy to be here today.

Nyla: [00:11:55] Thank you. Welcome Matthew.

So what will appear on your screen is a poll question that looks like what's on the webinar, I'm sorry, on the slide right now. That poll question should come up momentarily. When it does, please respond. Take a moment. We'll wait about maybe, less than a minute to respond.

We want to know who you are.

And I see folks posting their roles into the chat box as well.

Okay, Kate, I can't tell from my end.

Kate: [00:13:05] So there's still a few rolling in just, okay. Let's wait about 10 more seconds.

Okay. I'm going to end it.

Nyla: [00:13:29] Okay. So I believe you can see the results. If you can see what I'm seeing, then you'll see that we have a lot of elementary teachers, a lot of teachers. And a lot of district and school administrators. And then a lot of folks who aren't, who are in the other category and looking at some of what was posted in the chat box, it looks like there are

school counselors, folks who work at schools and districts that aren't necessarily teachers or administrators that might fall into the other category.

Okay. Great. So in addition to this poll question, we'd also want to know, and I know some of you started doing this in the chat box. If you haven't already please post where you're from, what part of the country are you in? What district or County or city are you in? So we get a sense of where the geography of our audience.

Oh, wow. We see people from Virginia, Maryland, Michigan, Maine, North Carolina, Oregon, St. Louis, Aviston, California, Massachusetts, Alaska. Wow, Houston. [chuckles] inaudible.

Kate: [00:14:59] I see LA represented.

Nyla: [00:15:03] South Carolina, Pennsylvania,

Kate: [00:15:06] Minnesota, and other Philly in the Q and A.

Daryl: [00:15:11] Yeah, I think this is pretty exciting and cross representation of our country. Rural, suburban, urban areas. States in the mid-West, States in the North-East and the South. I think maybe one of the things we might want to do is take a poll next time, just to see what the largest representation is in the country, just to, just to get a sense of, you know, where people are, the global participants in this webinar. Just to see, you know, who's representing what area of the country the most. I think that would be an interesting factor.

Nyla: [00:15:47] Agreed, maybe we can do that...

Daryl: [00:15:49] To the real interests around Black Lives Matter at Schools as well, you know, it may be, you know, we maybe assume that everybody that's interested or knows about this is from one part of the country and the interest to know more maybe from another part of the country.

Nyla: [00:16:10] Yes. So let's keep it moving. So at this point we want to, we want to spend as much time as we can engaging in dialogue with our panel speakers. But before we do that, we need to know and our audience, for those who don't know, need to know what is Black Lives Matter at School. So to answer that question, I'm going to turn it over to our speakers to give us an overview.

Tamara: [00:16:42] Well, hello hello. So welcome again. I'm going to actually, we're going to actually give you kind of a brief overview of the history of Black Lives Matter in Schools. How the movement went national. Some of the work that's going on in local city. How these have developed into coalitions with community organizations.

One of us is going to actually talk about working with unions at the local level. And then, if we have time, we will talk a little bit more about some additional resources and things like that. And of course if we don't have time, we are making this slide show available as a deliverable after this. Which should be shared in the next couple, in a few days.

So, can we go to the next slide please?

So the, oh, I actually, I just talked about all of this go to the next slide after this. [chuckles] Okay. So now we're going to be, I'm going to be talking about the 13 guiding principles. So why is this important? So the 13 guiding principles were developed by Black Lives Matter Global Network in 2016.

And I think that's really important to mention because, when we discovered these guiding principles, they quickly became the pillars for the entire movement, curriculum, work. Everything is based on that. So as you can see here, restorative justice, empathy, loving engagement, diverse, to be globalism, trans-affirming, queer-affirming, collective value, intergenerational, black families, black villages, black women and unapologetically black. And each of these together, each of these separate provide these wonderful lessons and steps for how we should move in this life. If we are really respecting humanity and even more so if we really respecting black and brown bodies.

So, and I think sometimes it can get remiss. You know, sometimes people are like, well, what is this about? But this basically gives you kind of a space to really house where all the work kind of comes from. Now next we're going to have Ismael talk about the brief history of how we came to be.

Ismael: [00:19:06] So hello everybody once again. And when you get the slides, you'll be able to click on the link on this slide that would actually take you to the article that talks about kind of the beginning. And it all began in Seattle, where, educators and some community members agreed to wear Black Lives Matter shirts at the first day of school, when greeting students. At one of the schools, a bomb threat was called in. And it upset everybody and educators along with some community members decided to have a day of action where everybody would wear the BLM shirt in solidarity. And from that, that kind of inspired our conversation in Philly.

Could we go to the next slide, please? So inspired by, not just wearing the tee shirt and centering the Black Lives Matter conversation in a larger community context, in Philadelphia, we were doing already a lot of racial justice work. And when we saw what happened in Seattle, it inspired some of us to start to have a conversation about doing a similar action in Philadelphia to show solidarity. Or to, move it a step, take it a step further. And, obviously we chose the latter. Inspired by the events, and also the 13 principles, we developed what became known as Black Lives Matter Week at School. And the focus would be to go over principles, but also encourage teachers to teach it in the classroom, but also extend that conversation to the larger community with events after school hours. And also, opportunities for community members to be involved in the larger discussion.

Next slide please. So, that first year we found ourselves primarily in Philadelphia. We definitely reached out to the folks in Seattle that organized their action and told them what we planned to do, how we were inspired by them. So they picked up some of the idea we're doing that during that first year. And so did Rochester, New York.

But, in Philly we were primarily just moving it and we didn't know that would extend further. So that following summer after our first Black Lives Matter at School week, which happened in January 2017, we actually were at a [Free Minds](#) Free People Conference, in Baltimore,

Maryland, with several other educators around the country. And when we're presenting about what we did during that first week, several folks from around the country indicated that they would like to replicate it. And it was mentioned that maybe we can start a national network to make sure that we can coordinate efforts and also make sure that it's handled with fidelity.

When we moved into that second year, and this is so important because it shows how people develop kind of things organically as they go along. Next slide please. So from that, we didn't have demands the first year. We actually ended up developing demands that second year as a national collective. We actually only started off with three demands at first. End zero tolerance policies definitely with a focus on restorative justice. Mandate black history and ethics studies. Even though it is mandated in Philadelphia, we know that across the nation, that's rare. And hire more black teachers.

The second year we went international, we added counselors, not cops. And all these are just kind of natural things that came out of our discussion on the national level.

I'm going to pass this off to Charlie to speak about our curriculum.

Charlie: [00:22:38] Yeah. So from the very beginning, in Philadelphia, and even in Seattle, we tied this work to curriculum that teachers could use in their classrooms for all grade levels. So I saw that there was a lot of elementary folks here and we have, really a good wealth of curriculum from the elementary level, as well as all the way up to the secondary, postsecondary levels.

So, the curriculum is connected to the guiding principles. And so the curriculum is deeply intersectional. It addresses multiple injustices, just like the principals do as well. It encourages students and educators to think about solutions and action rather than just sort of grounding ourselves in oppression and thinks about how we can take action. It's really intended to open conversations around truth, justice, activism, healing, and reconciliation. Conversations that we need to be having in our classrooms from a very early age.

And then finally get students to think about dominant historical narratives and ask questions, and probe them. Next slide please. And so the curriculum source guide is available online, through Google drive. This has been growing since the we've started and we've just built on the curriculum that was created from the early years.

There's also a book published by Rethinking Schools called *Teaching for Black Lives*, which has connected to the movement and really provides a wealth of resources. And so some of the things that the curriculum includes are writing prompts for all grade levels. There's a wonderful coloring book, that centers on the guiding principles.

Our resources are now multi-lingual, so they include Spanish and Arabic resources and hopefully more of the future. Content on African American studies, mathematics content, adaptations for special education students. But in general, these are really just a pathway for educators to better engage with social justice and racial justice in their curriculum.

Next slide please. So something else we added after the early years was a creative challenge. So to encourage students from across the country, we've had this for the past two years to submit work around a central problem. And so, you know, this has been one of the ways that we've continued this curriculum to grow and look forward to keeping it growing in the future.

So I'm going to turn it back over to Tamara, who's going to talk a little bit about some of the wins and successes of the movement.

Tamara: [00:25:07] Next slide please. So we've, we've had tons of national wins. I mean, the major national wins is that we continue each year to see more endorsements from local unions and local city governments. We also have more cities join the national network each year.

The curriculum, people have been asking about that does span from early childhood to higher ed. And there are materials constantly being added, local school districts adopting the curriculum, and demands and pathways to change. And just continuing to increase youth voices and participation, which also then increases our engagement with our communities, our networks, and our schools. Next slide, please.

This is pretty much just a highlight for Philly. So we had some wins that, this is how our calendar looked for this year for the 2020 February. The school board gave a soft endorsement in the press, the city council not only passed a resolution supporting Black Lives Matter week in schools for 2019, but they also did it for 2020.

We currently have an anti-racist training. It was a shorter version, it was presented in new hire orientation. We have a 20 hour training, and demand for more black educators has resulted in more conversations with our school district and has actually resulted in the state of Pennsylvania as a new program, Aspire to Educate that it starting here in the fall. That the whole purpose of that is to increase the numbers of black educators and POC educators in the classroom, by providing some sort of pathway for them to college.

Now, we're going to have Denisha up to talk about what's happening, what does it look like for work in other local cities.

Denisha: [00:27:00] Thanks, Tamara. Thanks Ismael, Charlie, and everyone for talking about the history. So being a part of, so the work happens in two ways. We have a national steering committee of black educators across the country who do the national work. But then there's work in each local city that decides to participate.

So you can, start a group in your school, get another teacher who wants to do this with you and you're on the map, right as a city, as a school that is participating in the week of action. And so the work around the cities looks different, right, in every city because they focus on different things. But the idea is the same.

The first week in February, we do the week of action, typically. And then and most cities create like a calendar of what that's gonna look like, right. Because they create events to kind of speak to either the demands, right, the four national demands that we mentioned,

sometimes cities have specific demands related to their work that they also engage around or around the principals as well for the week of action.

And so what I'm going to do is show you just a couple of different calendars and events from a few of the different cities that have participated in multiple years.

Next slide. So New York City, of course, has been doing this since the beginning. This is their 2019 week of action. They put together a Google slide calendar each year, so that you can see the different events that they're going to do. They have their own t-shirts, so they, we actually liked their idea. So what they started doing was having a student design contest for the t-shirt logo for each year. That was their winner for that year.

Nationally, we also did the same thing. So last year we had our first nationally student divine t-shirt. And the winner was of course, a high school student from Queens, New York. But it's open across the country. And so we're looking for students of all ages to participate each year.

And so their events, are again around the demands, different types of things. They'll have youth led events, which are really important, because they do a lot of work in New York city with different youth organizations like Teens Take Charge and Integrate New York City they'll do events for educators, holistic events, self care events, celebrations, happy hours.

I think around 2019 or maybe 2018, we started asking cities, as possible, to think about planning a rally and an event that might work around the demands. And so New York City has done that typically on Wednesday or Thursday. They do a rally on, at the steps of Tweed City Hall where the school board of education as well.

You can go to the next slide. This was our, partly from our 2019 event as well too. At the people's forum, they did their youth event kicking off there. So one of the ways to prepare for the rally that they decided to do is to have a big youth event, to kick off first.

And so this year, in actually 2020 was fully youth led. Meaning the youth organized all of the workshops. The youth came to our planning, the meetings, and then they took over the planning for that. All of the workshops, all of the events was fully done by high school youth across the five boroughs of New York City, which was great, right. They're not all going to school, they don't all know each other, but they came together. And they did the same thing in 2019. And it allows the youth to then get a sense of how the week's going to unfold. They get to prepare for the rally, because we want the rally to also be youth led as well.

And I think it's there... what's the next slide?

So that's it for talking about the different cities, of course, DC has done their work. Boston, LA, Seattle, Edmonds, Washington, Chicago, a lot of different cities. But I just wanted to highlight a little bit about New York and now Okaikor is going to talk to you about MapSo Freedom School in New Jersey.

Awo Okaikor: [00:30:23] Awesome. Okay. Thank you. Denisha. So I am Okaikor Aryee-Price again, one of the cofounders for MapSo Freedom School here in New Jersey. We are the

organizing arm for the statewide Black Lives Matter at School. And so, we, you know, as Denisha mentioned, you know, some of us will meet with the national team. I'm a steering committee member on the national team, and then we come back and we organize for the state of New Jersey. So MapSo is that organizing arm for the state.

But I'm just going to speak specifically to what MapSo's doing, although there are folks who are doing work in New Brunswick. There are folks who are doing work in Pennsauken and Camden County and Camden. There are folks who are doing work in North Jersey in Hackensack and Bergen County. Shout out to, I think I saw Raquel James on the call. And so here for MapSo, because we're also just doing the same kind of work, where we decided that we were also going to have like a curriculum fair for folks. Right. So how do we help acclimate people around the principles around our demands, right. How do we help them design curriculum and lesson plans that are going to be centered around the week of action and preparation for the week?

And so we often hold that every year. And we also do what we did last year, too, as well is we had, because we are a organization that was also founded because of students who were explicitly assaulted by police in the community. And MapSo stands for Maplewood, South Orange. So even though it's Maplewood, South Orange specific, we are actually, you know, throughout the state.

And so, because it was founded on the work around the stuff that we were doing with students who had been assaulted by the police, we are really heavily focused on how do we get police out of schools. We are also heavily focused on how do, you know, defund policing, SROs, and all that, whatever acronym or whatever, you know, different manifestations that the police take on in our schools. Right.

So we also I'll hold like a week, a day long workshop, or I'm sorry, evening workshop on using the advancement projects we came to learn, police free schools action kit. Which actually allows us students to learn, like, what is the history around policing in the U.S. Why are people calling for police free schools? And so that also helps ground them in that work.

And then we also, you know, had a big book talk too, as well. You can go to the next slide. But the book talk was also about the understanding of how black educators are also being pushed out of schools and how, what was happening with the scandal in Atlanta that, you know, that criminalized black teachers, and the teaching and all that took place.

More recently in preparation for what's building up to a week of action that we're going to be, we're actually starting the planning process in right now we had a teacher for Black Lives, we helped sponsor a teacher for Black Lives rally and march, that took place on the 15th.

And so this was, this was held in South Orange and Maplewood. And we had over a thousand people attend the rally and march, and this was, you know, an amazing event that helps spark what we're going to be hopefully moving into as we move into this, this next planning year.

And then after the march and rally, which was actually hosted by the teachers, we have TJ Whitaker here, Nagla Bedir, we have Gabby Gomez and Stephanie Rivera, just a host of other teachers who are part of this work that were organizing this, who held a virtual info session after, on the next day to help create space for students also share what their stories would like to as well. So for educators to learn, but also to teach, for students to have a voice and share their stories.

And now we can move to the next slide, which is actually pushing us into this next place where we're having, a book study using this book as our entry point into understanding the history around policing. Right. And so Who Do You Protect, Who Do You Serve? Is the book that we're going to be focusing on this summer. And also having working groups that centered the demands of the teacher for Black Lives rally and march, right. And the demands align right along with the national demands, black Lives Matter at School national demands.

And so this work, these working groups, we're hoping that we'll come together to study, learn and create. And what that means is like, what are they're learning a little bit more around the statistics that center these issues, and then understanding what they can create in terms of pushing policy and pushing change, true transformational change within their districts in schools.

The last thing is that we did was organized a virtual webinar. That was a couple of weeks ago that. That was a coalition work alongside an immigrant rights organization called Wind of the Spirit, as well as Black Lives Matter, Morristown, a local Black Lives Matter arm here in New Jersey, which was the work that we've been doing. So, that's just to sum it up.

And for folks who are interested and organizing in New Jersey, please feel free to, connect with us. We do have a website it's MapSoFreedomSchool.org or you can contact us on our email, which is MapSofreedomschool@gmail.com.

Thank you. And I think we're going to go to Howard County.

Matthew: [00:36:00] Hello, everyone, again, this is Matthew Vaughn-Smith. I'm just going to do a brief overview. Howard County has been a part of this movement and now, we're going into our fourth year. And all of our events, this has already been shared, align with the four demands and are overlaid with the 13 principles.

We too have a Google calendar that's posted on our social media page. So some of the major events that Howard County has done, annually we hold a restorative justice and school to prison pipeline informational with a student panel. And so participants are given information on what is the school to prison pipeline and what a restorative culture looks like in public schools.

And then the students on a panel share their stories of microaggressions and anti-blackness that they experienced while attending schools in Howard County. This event is open to the whole community.

Another highlight has been our events during the school day, which are led and run by students. And these, we mostly get participation from the high schools and these events are

held during their common time and they do everything from mindfulness coloring activities from the Black Lives Matter at School week of action curriculum to spoken word and singing to celebrate.

Finally we have held county-wide events with politicians, students, activists, and other stakeholders to discuss the state of black Howard County. And also that evening we lift black owned businesses, making sure that they're centered and highlighted. This year we held our first curriculum fair so that people got the opportunity to interact with the curriculum resource guide, as a part of the Black Lives Matter at School week of action.

There's also a picture here from, BMORE caucus, Baltimore's movement of rank and file educators. They have been an inspiration to Howard County, have really helped us get off the ground. And they've been able to organize events organically and have been able to sustain success with them without having to navigate some of the bureaucracy and politics. And so one of the events that, I found most interesting that they held, was a curriculum audit. And they actually went through the current Baltimore City curriculum and checked it for equity and whether or not it centered the experiences of black indigenous and people of color. And this of course aligns with the mandates of black and ethics studies.

Next slide. Just to talk a little bit about how Howard County had to organize and mobilize folks in order to bring the Black Lives Matter at School week of action to the County. We faced some institutional challenges when bringing it to our district. Our initial obstacle was getting union buy-in.

So in 2017, I had formed a caucus for black indigenous and educators of color from a grant I had secured from the National Education Association. And one of their first actions was to support the Black Lives Matter at School week of action. We knew that we would have to then go to our local affiliate to get approval.

And so in January of 2018, we submitted a new business item to our local for that purpose. And then after contentious debate, the NBI was sanded down to say that the union gave a soft endorsement, but will not put any money towards it. And that equated to them sending out links to their membership at the bottom of an email.

So then in 2018, we did not have a formal resolution from the the board of education at the time supporting Black Lives Matter at School. And so then we had to hold events off school property, and we had to incur rental fees and luckily they were paid by one of our partners, one of our community partners.

The following year because the union administration was successful in dissolving the caucus, they did not take up an NBI support for the week of action. And so our newly formed Black Lives Matter week of school, Black Lives Matter at School week of action coalition, then took model language from other resolutions as a part of the movement, namely Prince George's County, Seattle and we submitted it straight to the Board of Educations chair. The Board of Educations chair, then put the one page resolution on the right agenda to be voted on.

As you could see there's a picture, an image, this black box with the resolution passed five zero to three. Three board members abstained from voting citing that they didn't have

enough time to read the one page document indicating whether or not Black Lives Matter. We sent out a press release. It's also pictured here. And in effect, press release kind of called out those board members who abstained. The final press release was a little kindly, more kindly worded than I had initially written it, because I can be petty at times, but, we were able to foster a partnership as a result from Racial Justice Now, a nonprofit that does racial justice work and the community organizing.

And then finally this year we were able to get a resolution to the Board of Education a month before the vote, we added a petition to kind of push for unanimous support. After overruling some objections from the union, they did pass it without debate, and it was a victory because we were able to add a provision to the resolution that would allow educators to participate in the week of action without reprisal. And that the County, and that we could use County resources to further the movement. So that meant that we could use their building spaces. We can make copies in their buildings, and we can do those types of things in order to further the movement in our County.

And it, it made for greater attendance because people felt comfortable and they knew that Black Lives Matter was supported by the board. And it wasn't just something separate that would get them in trouble. The County curriculum office just even attempted to create lessons for teachers to access to teach during the week of action. And through their processes they cleared a lot of the curriculum resource guide, that was created by the national movement.

So our coalition continues to have momentum. We, in light of the recent murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmead Arbery, Anton Black in Maryland, and then of course, George Floyd. We've been holding spaces for black educators and antiracist white educators and we're working to make the demands, not just focal during that week of action, but throughout the year, leading up to the week of action. And we wish to build stronger connections with our movements in Maryland, including Prince George's County, DC, Baltimore, and the light.

So thank you.

Denisha: [00:42:36] Thank you, Matthew. I don't know someone else want me to jump in here, but we're noting the time. So we just want to let you know, these slides will be available. These talk about a lot more work that happened in Philly, and the work that they did. How it grew from the Black Life Matters at school week of action to a lot of other things so you'll have links to this. You can watch the videos, but I think we're gonna go through them. So that we can get to the other stuff.

Yeah. You'll be able to learn about the Melanated Educators Collective and all the work that they did. I don't know if someone from Philly wants to say anything as we're going through these, [inaudible] slide advancer. [chuckles]

Daryl: [00:43:09] So I think, I think right now, what, thank you so very much. I think for our audience, this was a great wealth of information to share with us, you know, we didn't want to make the assumption that everyone knew what Black Lives Matters at School is. We know

that there are some thoughts and ideas and perceptions and misperceptions. People are wondering, you know, does this connect to the larger movement of Black Lives Matter?

Just what exactly, you know, are we looking at for schools? Individuals who work in rural communities and in other kinds of communities that don't necessarily have that level of diversity may be considering, well what does this mean to me? And so we want to engage in broader conversation now with the panel, with some questions that we have designed for the panel, but also going to be looking at your comments in the chat room and your questions in the chat room. To engage and really learn more about what this resource is and what it can be.

I'm so glad there are so many educators on this panel, whether you were a classroom teacher or a university level, because this is a critical time for our nation. And it's a critical time for education, particularly as we're in this COVID environment. But also as we look at the injustices, and race and gender, et cetera.

So let me go to a question and I want to start real big. I want to start real big because people are going to be wondering. I heard several of you mentioned the word anti-racist and so let's talk about. Let's just start it off what it is, you know, people may not know.

So what is the anti-racism in education and how did you become an anti-racist educator? So I'm going to look to my panelists, to raise their hand, to see who want to take a first look at this? And then , and Denise, are you smiling? So I'm going to go to you. You're smiling. I'm going to go to you.

Denisha: [00:45:21] I'm smiling because you start with the big question.

Daryl: [00:45:21] The big question. Let's just put it out the upfront. Okay.

Denisha: [00:45:26] I mean, yeah. I don't know if I'll just, I'll go to the second part, how I came to this work as what I consider anti-racist education. I was a kindergarten teacher. And I always wanted to be a teacher, always wanted to be a kindergarten teacher. And I finally became one and I really, that the system was set up for black children.

I mean, I was in Washington DC and it, I just couldn't believe what was happening in front of my eyes. We were at the time Michelle Rhee was the superintendent of school. If you know anything about her, you know what I'm talking about. I left right after that year, but, you know, we were being forced to prepare five-year-olds to take practice exams. Right.

It was, it was just that kind of thing. I sent two boys to the principal's office fighting and I didn't know that well, then suspended them in kindergarten. So here I am trying to control my classroom and keep the peace and I reach out for help. And you then punish my children by suspending them. Like it was just, there was just so much happening.

And so to me, anti-racist teachers recognize one that the system is designed, the public education system, is designed to, to harm black and brown children. It is not designed in their best interest and never has been. And we then say, what can we do on every level to change that? Whether it's the curriculum, whether it's our interpersonal interactions with

children in their families. Whether it's how we structure the social cultural environment so that they learn to get along with each other. Right. But it's that whole big picture. And look, I benefited from public education. I get that. I'm the exception, not the rule. Those of us here who benefited from public education with black and brown skin are the exception, not the rule.

And we work to make sure that we, that we changed that. Right. So that the more children benefit from public education, because we know that they don't. Right. And if that's intentional and so I know that's a lot, so I'll just stop right there and see if anyone else. [chuckles]

Daryl: [00:47:12] Yeah. That, that, I think that's a fantastic way to get an audience to get an understanding because you've given that real live experience. What you saw in schools, what you saw in classrooms, how you saw that disconnect between policy and practice and how it really worked to the disadvantage of black and brown kids.

And anybody else quickly want to just jump in on that? Go head, Okaikor.

Awo Okaikor: [00:47:38] Okaikor, yes so I'll add. And so I would say even just to build on, cause Denisha is spot on, like to build on what she was saying, an antiracist educator is, so what does it mean to be anti-racist?

It's really ultimately what it means to be humanizing. Right. Cause that's actually really, really, as it's really looking at how do we rehumanize? And I often talk about designing and creating or designing for critical reach humanization, right? There's this, how do we look at how we individually have been impacted, how we also create policies and practices based on how we as individuals have been impacted and how we also and project it on others, right? So it's a multilayer, right. And so if we're talking about being anti-racist is examining our internal ways that we've been impacted, structurally and institutional is looking at all those levels and saying, Hey, what can I do to undo this now?

Here's the thing. I didn't just learn this on my own. I am going to again, get back. Give full honor and credit to the people who helped raise me up in this movement, and this work from the People's Institute for Survival and beyond. We've got Ronald Chisom who is an organizer outside of New Orleans. We've got Dr. Jim, who is now the executive director of the organizing group.

So I, as an educator, came to this because I entered education as an organizer. And that also came from family. So my, I have an uncle of mine who was well known in Newark as being one of the, he was a teacher at the time and he ran for, he was one of the first people to run for, black men to run for mayor of Newark ended up serving under Kenneth Gibson who was the first black mayor. But he was an educator who was also an organizer. So he went into the community saying that I was organizing with my people in my community and was instrumental in bringing the community back together after the Newark uprising.

And so that was the construct of a teacher that was I knew I was supposed to be. However, I did not have a full analysis until I got an understanding of what, like what I was impacted by and what I could also do to undo it. So it was a multilayer process. It also involves elders

raising me up. Right. It also, it also required me organizing, so I can't be just talking in the classroom, talking about being an anti-racist, if I'm not engaging in community, because I'm not putting my theory, my practice into action.

So it's not, being an anti-racist educator is not limited to the classroom. That also means that you're also getting, digging deep in the community and working alongside with the people that are most impacted, including our students, the people, even if they're not students there just lay people in the community, we should all be, it's an interconnectedness. It's an interconnectedness of how we all can become rehumanized in this process. Right. And I often think of critical rehumanization, cause this is something that I've been thinking a lot about, is how we develop a critical intellectual wellbeing. How do we develop a critical communal and community wellbeing?

And then also, how do we develop a critical spiritual, social, emotional wellbeing. Ultimately coming, becoming how we become rehumanized stuff.

Daryl: [00:50:49] Yeah. So thank you. I, I know, I just want to make sure that, I want our panelists to really engage our audience. I want to keep my eye on the time. But also make sure that we get those questions in from the chat room, but I think that was very powerful. Powerful emotion, that powerful experience, that powerful learning. So thank you for sharing it. I'm going to turn this over to my colleague, Karmen Rouland, I always get your name wrong.

Karmen: [00:51:21] Rouland [laughs]

Daryl: [00:51:21] Why do I always do that? But anyway, I'm going to turn it over to Karmen for our next set of questions. And we're going to keep it moving.

Karmen: [00:51:27] Awesome. Awesome. So, and as we, I want to build off of what Denisha and Okaikor were sharing. And as you talk about, how do you talk, talk and teach about the historical moment o, massive Black Lives Matter protesta and uprising and rebellion with your students? And how do you do that in a way where you're wearing the educator hat and also an activist hat, right.

What does that, what does that look like? How do you, how do you navigate those roles? Negotiate those roles? Ismael.

Ismael: [00:51:59] Thank you for that question, cause that is important. Well, you know, I'm one of those few blessed educators that teach something that goes right into explaining the concept of the uprisings.

I think that having honest conversations with the students within the classroom, but also showing the continuity of how that uprising just didn't happen out of thin air. I can speak specifically about Ferguson because a lot the uprising recently occurred after schools were closed. But I know after Ferguson, I did a lot of work around exploring kind of like, you know, how 17 out of 19 people bitten by a police dog we're black, you know. 89%... you know, so like going over, not only just on the surface, but also the deeper context of the locality of where ever the uprisings happened, but also connected to a long history of resistance, and

also airing out grievances in a way that some people within our society might not seem to be the right way to do. But also prioritize what is the right way to do? Because obviously if we still have these uprisings every couple decades, continuously based on the same issues. Obviously we're not really truly addressing the root causes, which create the conditions that produce the uprisings in the first place.

So the way I expose that to my students is just having those larger conversations and then also having them being able to refer to the historical record. And be able to put those pieces together and realize, you know, this has happened as a result of many other things that have been accumulating over generations and it just didn't happen out of thin air.

Karmen: [00:53:40] Thank you.

Matthew: [00:53:41] May I?

Karmen: [00:53:41] Yes

Matthew: [00:53:41] Hi, I would agree with Ismael. I think it's first, it's holding space to have those conversations and then infusing it with the information that the students need to know to be critical thinkers. I don't believe that educators can be neutral in this fight. I don't believe in a neutral educator.

I think that you, as an anti-racist educator, have to take a stance. And so you provide them with the context, as my brother shared. You make sure that you show them that, Hey, this wasn't an isolated incident. This is something that is systemic, is something that's institutional, is something that's been going on for a very long time.

And then I always like to tie it to an action item. So, because I work with, you know, younger children, you know, what is something that you can do in your community, to change this, or to work to change this? And I think that's important to give them that autonomy and it gives them that voice though.

Karmen: [00:54:41] Thank you. Would anybody else like to share?

Denisha: [00:54:45] I just want to add one thing. I'm come from early childhood background and what I want people to recognize is that be careful what you're doing with really young baby. Right? I hear so many people like, please don't be talking about slavery to, don't teach slavery to kindergarten, like please full stop.

Like the whole idea of the principles is that it lays foundation to affirm blackness in children, especially young children that needs to happen before we even get to America's history of slavery, black children need to understand black villages, black families, intergenerational, loving engagement, right? We need to focus on that stuff. It is not appropriate for really young children that they only hear about black history through a lens of slavery and civil rights. That is the problem that we are trying to solve. Right. So think about what age you're working with, as you think about how you're going to do this work and whether you should be addressing that with those ages.

I just, I just have to say that. Thank you.

Karmen: [00:55:41] Denisha, thank you so much for that. Just a reminder of self love, and I see a lot of folks in the chat box are agreeing with you. Nikevia, can we look at the chat box and maybe pull out some questions for our panelists there? Oh, Charlie.

Daryl: [00:55:54] And yeah, let's make sure we go to Charlie. Charlie had his hand up.

Karmen: [00:55:58] Sorry, Charlie.

Charlie: [00:55:59] Yeah, I just, I mean, I just want to just echo a lot of what everyone has said so far. I think Matthew and Ismael, I totally agree on the pedagogy side with what they're talking about. For me as a white educator, I think, you know, I've had a lot of learning to do, I still have a lot of learning to do. I'm thankful for all the teacher networks and for everyone who has helped in that process. And I've, I think, you know, on racism and anti-racism, I think **Ibram X. Kendi** has done a great job of putting words to this idea that a lot of us have known for a long time and that there is no not racist.

There is no non-racist, you're either contributing to racism or you're pushing against racism. And so you're either contributing in a racist way or you're doing anti-racist work and that's been a big process for me. And I think that comes into the activism and education. And I think for me, I came into the early years of my teaching with a real savior complex. And I think that many of us as white educators, we do that. And I think unlearning that and dismantling that and working against that, is part of the work for me and part of the work of my classroom.

Matthew: [00:57:08] Oh, and I just want to piggyback off what Charlie's saying about the idea of networks, teaching networks. And the importance of how colleagues speak to one another and sharing these resources and having these in depth conversations.

I know, you know, me and Charlie have a lot of conversations after the Ferguson uprising about how we can approach it in class, and what does that look like. And I think those networks are just so important and also just the ability for professionals to collaborate with other professionals. Too much in education, now in the education system, it has become a siloed field of a lot of paperwork and isolation. And I think we need to move back towards, you know, adding that creativity, adding a little bit about radical imagination and the collaborative structures necessary in order for folks to really develop these types of things.

And that freedom as a professional to be trusted that, you know, you're going to be handling it fidelity. You know, there's a famous quote that talks about, you know, what is left out of the curriculum is just if not more important than what you include. And I think not having these conversations, by not being purposeful on how we approach it, even on our individual interpersonal selves and interpersonal selves, I think were co-signing current structures that co-sign the status quo, which by default is by definition, not anti-racist, that actually produces and perpetuates.

Karmen: [00:58:38] Perfect. Thank you. Nikevia, I think you may have a question from the chat box.

Nikevia: [00:58:45] Yes, it seems like the most liked question is, what work is being done to throw out existing history in social studies textbooks and rewrite new ones tomorrow?

Karmen: [00:59:01] I'm going to call on Tamara, I saw you go like this, so. [chuckles]

Tamara: [00:59:05] I would say that the ongoing work is to make sure that we provide opportunities. So one example is the Philadelphia Black History Collaborative and Philly Hub for Liberatory education. So the thing is, if we wait for textbooks to catch up with the truth, we'll be waiting and dead. So what we try to do is make sure that we train teachers in the correct history, the correct history channels. We also try to make sure that we have a book discussion. That we also engage, like even books, like *Evicted* by Matthew Desmond, talk about housing inequality in Milwaukee. Or that the *Half Has Never Been Told*, which really connects capitalism to slavery. And so people can understand what those terms are.

Or even, Bettina L Love's book, that really talks about abolitionists educating, like, and then going back to the classics because I work with student teachers. So I can tell you that, oh, that was my inside voice. I can tell you is that, you know, people forget about it, Lisa Delpit and bell hooks and, Gloria Ladson-Billings.

So like I read in the attendees somebody talking about culturally relevant pedagogy and it makes me cry. Cause I was like, she wrote that in the nineties, like, do we really have to rewrite it? Like. I have the illegal PDF. I have to share with my poor little broke student teachers who can't afford to buy an extra book, cause it's not included in what they have for their core classes or teaching to transgress or teaching them, you know, *A Letter to Teachers* by Jane Baldwin.

Like we make these assumptions that these things are out there and that they are being circulated and they're not. And I just want to say that while we're in this season of feeling ourselves and being like, we want to make sure that everybody gets this. If you want to make sure this is not a phase and that you want to make sure that this is not just simply something for today and something for simply in the now, you will invest in those books and you would invest in having conversation.

Cause that's another thing I want to say is that if you really want to be an activist teacher, you have to also engage your friends and colleagues in your building. You have to find your tribe in your building and have kind of secret meetings cause we all know that not all buildings are, you know, not all buildings love this type of work. Find your secret network and meet and have these conversations and connect it to your curriculum, connect it to your lesson plans. And most of all, connected to black joy. This is a lot for our students to have, and it's a lot for our instructors and educators to deal with.

So please balance the trauma and the truth with some adequate black joy and some unapologetically black. Like that's why it is the most fearsome principle, because it's saying that you can be yourself in your black skin, in your space and live in your truth. And I just want to make sure that that's a part of it too.

Karmen I don't know if you're going to go to the chat box again, but I just want to make sure we acknowledge, we have another panelist that joined us, Erika Strauss-Chavarria, did I

pronounce it correctly. I have a hard time with names. But, thank you Erika, for joining. We knew you had a scheduling conflict and now you're on the panel, so welcome. Introduce yourself. And then I'm going to turn it back to Karmen. Sorry. I wanted to do that, Karmen.

Karmen: [01:02:43] No, that's fine. Hi, Erika!

Erika: [01:02:46] Hi, everybody. Thank you for welcoming me late. I'm Erika Chavarria. I teach Spanish in Howard County, Maryland, and in high school and I'm a close colleague of Mr. Matthew Vaughn-Smith. And we have been working together for the past three years, since the Free Minds, Free People conference in Baltimore to bring Black Lives Matter at School to Howard County. So thank you for welcoming me and I appreciate being here.

Karmen: [01:03:13] Thanks Erika. Thanks for joining us. Nyla, did you want to okay. Turn over the mic.

Nyla: [01:03:18] Yeah. I'm excited to see you, Erika, wasn't sure you were going to be able to make it so glad you joined us. So, a lot, you guys talked about a lot, a lot of a really important and critical things coming up. And I just can't even imagine what some of our audience members might be thinking. But there are a couple of things that have, that came up that I wanted to go back to. In your journey, you know, in your evolution as anti-racist educator and activist, we know, and, that's it, you don't just get to where you are overnight, right? It's a process, it's a learning journey. Can you talk a little bit more about some of the tensions and the cognitive dissonances that you had to have to navigate through and your journey to where you are now? And I know one of those things as mentioned earlier, was this idea of neutrality and objectivity and teaching, are there any others that you can speak to? Who has, who wants to jump in? Denisha?

Denisha: [01:04:22] I mean, I think I can, I can do that for a minute too. I mean, just along that lines, when I think about my first year of teaching, you know, there was an experience where I realized in that moment that I didn't want to be that kind of teacher. Right. I had a young boy coming in late, hungry, you know, I tried to solve the problem and getting him some food and other people try to resist that. And then I realized in that moment, no one started out that way.

No one started off saying I going to denial a five-year-old food because he didn't get himself to school on time. Because we all know five year olds are not in charge of their schedule, right. But at some point along the way, this adult thought that that action was justified. And I realized that if we're not very careful, school environments set you up to become that person. Right.

Because she wasn't alone in her thinking everyone else agreed with her. I'm the only one over here, like, can we feed this little boy? So I think the problem in schools have a culture that can be very much, change who you are if you're not consciously trying to push back against that. Right. And as I prepare teachers, I constantly tell them that. You have to watch, you know, I'm not saying don't go and be friends with people at school, but identify who are the people you want to be in community with, because you're going to need their support on this journey. And who are going to bring you to a side you don't want to be, right.

Because that happens a lot. Right. And it's, and it's a group mentality thing that happens sometimes. So I think for me, that's part of it, is recognizing what you don't want, who you don't want to be an educator, and then finding people who, who don't embody that. Right. And aligning yourself with them because as we know, teaching is isolating and it's lonely. Right. But if it's very dangerous, when I've seen teachers get caught up with people who don't share their values. Right. And so I think that's part of the work as well, too.

Erika: [01:06:07] I'm just gonna...

Nyla: [01:06:09] Charlie...

Erika: [01:06:09] Oh, I'm sorry.

Nyla: [01:06:10] Go ahead, Erika, and then we'll go to Charlie.

Erika: [01:06:16] Okaikor, do you want to, you were, you were about to speak, it's okay.

Awo Okaikor: [01:06:21] You haven't been here and I spoke, so go ahead and I'll go after you.

Erika: [01:06:25] I think for me, I had to come to a very conscious choice in my career about how much I was really willing to risk, to with the potential of getting fired.

Because I live by these two moral codes as an educator. And one is that the educator has the duty of not being neutral, which a thing by Paolo Freire. And the other is this idea of the **educratic** oath, which is that you first do no harm to students. And that means for me actively participating in anything or not actively not participating in anything that harms students and then actively fighting against anything that harms students.

And in so doing, that comes in the form of making sure that the, the, the curriculum is matters and that you can't be neutral. Like you just cannot be neutral. It's impossible. And if you are, then you shouldn't be a teacher. And because our kids' lives are at stake. It's not just a game.

And so I think that you have to, as an educator, like, yes, I mean, in terms of the curriculum that I've taught, I've been told on by educators who have seen my curriculum and what I teach in Spanish. One, because I, actively like intentionally incorporate and put at the forefront, the Afro Latino experience.

And so I've been, I've been taken to the principal or told on by someone in my school and said that I was racist towards white people. And, you know, there've been many things that I, that I've had to come that I've had to deal with in my actual building. But even more so on a larger structural scale, there's a lot of pushback in this particular community that I live in. Matthew and I can both attest to that.

But it's really about. Again, I agree with Denisha, it's finding your community and who, you know, we'll have your back and finding those alliances, not even just coalition, but an alliance that, you know will have your back. And deciding for yourself, as an educator, what you are willing to do.

Are you going to be part of, because we are working in a structurally racist, from its beginning, system. It's like, sometimes I feel like I'm in the, like I'm working in this concentration camp and there's the gas chambers everywhere. And I'm part of that system. And so you have to make that decision about how far you're willing to push, or whether you need to get out and do something different.

And so the, yeah, the, I mean the, the haters are real, the pushback is real and it can get to your soul, the amount of pushback that you get. But it's worth it in the end when you know, that you're doing what you need to do for your students and for your community.

Awo Okaikor: [01:08:54] Yeah, thank you both. Cause I think the linkage to is this need to have a squad. Right. And I think that also comes from the relationships again are principal. How are we developing relationship with community? How are we in community? How are we accountable to community? Right. So if you're just coming in as this lone person that I'm going to make change on my own.

You're going to the, system's going to smash you down very easily, very quickly without any second thought. Which I've experienced as a classroom teacher. I've, you know, who, yes, I understand that there is this push and there's need for us to not be neutral. And I, and there there's no debate about it, but even seeing how, even my own union, the thing that was supposed to protect me, right, the very people that should have protected me were also working against me too as well. And so there's this need for us to, and the people who had my back were actually the parents and community folks. Right. So it was, that was the ones who had my back, not my union, not the ones we're paying dues to.

And so now we're also seeing a reckoning happening at this point, because people are suddenly having this revelation that now we need to become anti-racist and now, and so unions and all these folks are putting out statements. Right? Okay. So now we want to hold you accountable to these statements then. That you're putting out right there, they can't just be words.

But the importance of having, I think, I just want to emphasize the importance of having a squad. A group of folks who are going to support you too as well, because you can't do this work alone and it's not about, and even if you think you can, that's hubristic to think you can right. To think that you can go in and change an entire system that has been around for years and is designed to do exactly what it has been doing, right.

I don't even know. And I'm going to say this, but I don't even know if this system can be reformed. I think there's something else that we have to create. Right now we're tinkering. And right now we're just trying to help people survive in this system right now. But at the same time where we're trying to figure out how do we survive in this system, there should be something that we're recreating or something that we're creating.

And that's where I'm in this place right now, thinking of like, Yeah, I'm giving you the tools and the resources to survive in this moment. But at the same time, I'm also trying to think of something that we can create, that's going to be very different. That will dismantle this.

Because you can't redesign something that wasn't designed to do what it wasn't supposed to do. Right. And so.

Nyla: [01:11:28] Thank you. Charlie, did you also want to respond?

Charlie: [01:11:32] Yeah, I can add real quick. And I think what Okaikor said is absolutely true. I think Okaikor is absolutely right, and I think it's all about, you have to find a group of people and I saw someone mentioned the chat. How do you do that? In some schools, it's going to be about starting small and then growing quickly.

But it's about finding folks who will get on board and not try and do this work by yourself. And then I think, you know, a couple big misconceptions is that, especially for us as white folks, that this work ever ends. That the work that you somehow reach anti-racism and then you can stop is just not true. And so this work is ongoing. It needs to keep going. And it needs to be a lifelong process. Not a place, a destination where you arrive.

And I think the last thing I just want to add about misconceptions is, I think another big misconception is that racism and white supremacy are not manifesting themselves in spaces that are all white. And I think that this work, anti-racist work is still essential in schools. I saw a few folks mentioned in the chat earlier, you know, that my school is entirely white. And I think in a school like that and in an environment like that, this work is also completely essential. We cannot just wait as white people for people of color to be in the room to do this work.

The work also must be accountable. But we need to be having these conversations and we need to be pushing this work with other white folks. Because that is part of the anti-racist work as well. While establishing structures to make sure that our work is accountable and that we're not just like taking control and centering ourselves. And that's the challenge, but it's really important.

Daryl: [01:13:17] Can I jump in for a minute now, cause I really want to take part of that comment from Charlie and extend that. I think that's real important where we're going right here.

So we had a question that we wanted to ask you about looking at the historical context of Black Lives Matters, in the backdrop of protests and how we teach our children about protests and rebellion.

Let me kind of pull a thread and I want to see where we can take this question. So, how are we teaching kids about, how are we linking the issues of the civil rights movements to Black Lives Matters to Black Lives Matters at School because we're talking about school change, talking about reform.

And then I want to link that to a comment that Charlie said about whites and anti-racist, that sometimes I think we may not acknowledge enough. That even in all of those movements, whites have been a part of those movements with us. And sometimes we don't put that out there enough. So how do we link it for kids, for children to understand this thread of history,

civil rights, Black Lives Matters, rebellion, protests. We're going to be talking about defunding police in schools. How do we link all of this?

Ismael: [01:14:50] I'll start real quick. That's a large question.

Daryl: [01:14:53] I like large questions.

Ismael: [01:14:55] Longer than, you know, the minute response I'm about to give. But, I definitely want to suggest everybody check out, Keeanga Taylor, she's a professor at Princeton, her book, *Black Lives Matter to Black Liberation*, and she does a good job telling that history.

Because you know, history really is only talked about from the previous 50 years. You don't usually talk about it in historical, you know, it's history right now, you know. So when we look back at the last 50 years, you're talking about 1970 now, right. And when people were formulating those constructs and how to look at that, we have to admit that you know the voting rights act and the civil rights act of 64, 65 and 68, how much did that actually mean to a poor black kid growing up in the project, building in Chicago? Right. Cause supposedly those rights were already enshrined there. Right.

So I think that the civil rights movement kind of laid bare that contradiction, that America was willing to, a little bit pay little lip service towards it, but the full implementation and the full weight of, you know, federal government and also local governments. And also just like the hearts and minds of people was not addressed. Right.

So when I know when I contextualize that history, I do talk about, you know, the white allies and the white co-conspirators who were part of those struggles, and those movements. And at the same time talk about how they were also marginalized from their own white communities by doing such. And that they took their own personal, great risk. Right. And so when we're talking about that, we're talking about, again, it's back to that humanity aspect, right? Are you going out into the world to humanize folks? Are you going out in the world with the mind of freeing people like Harriet Tubman?

Or is your definition of freedom based on what George Washington thought it was, right? Because those are two different things. And so when you put it like that, then you look at what we're talking about now, leading up to modern uprisings, you got to look at how was the narrative shaped at that point, at the civil rights movement, that led us to the point that a lot of the issues at the civil rights movement was meant to address still persist today.

And, you know, we can just point to the 2008 housing crisis. Not necessarily history, but current events. And you can connect those pieces and show that throughout time.

Daryl: [01:17:06] I knew that we'd get a great two minute answer on that. That's fabulous. Anybody else?

Denisha: [01:17:14] I just wanted to add that, because I see a lot in the chat about white teachers and their role in this. And I just want to add a little bit about the context, right? I started doing this work in DC and then I moved to New York City. And in DC, we show up for

our first planning meeting and it was a lot of white teachers and the same thing happened in New York City. And I think the same thing happens in almost every city where this work is done.

On the national level, we do keep the, we keep the steering committee all black. And we did that from the beginning because at first we weren't and we realized that, well meaning white people can derail anything if you do not keep them out of some things. Right.

So at the national level, we're comfortable, it's an all black steering committee. But at the local level, a lot of white teachers get behind this movement. Right. So I'm, co-editing a book with Jesse Hagopian, and we actually have a chapter called white teachers for black lives, authored by four white teachers, who've been doing this work with us since the beginning. I'm sorry, Charlie, I didn't know you or I would have had to write in that chapter, I apologize for it.

So it's, you know, that's what happens. But I just want to share you, this is how it works in New York City, right, because we meet as a group and there are a couple of white women who are on the steering committee. And here's their thing. They want to do the work and they want to take the lead so that the responsibility doesn't fall on black people, but they don't want to overstep. And so what ask for the black people do is they say tell us what you want us to do, and then we'll do it, right. So they make mistakes, right. But they know that you can't ask the black people, what do you want to do? And then, and forced them to do all of the work for the planning. It's a lot of work, right? So they set that up. They say, come to a meeting, tell us what you'd like to see us do this year. And then we'll do it.

And then you don't have to do that heavy lifting. So I think there are ways when I meet with folks and they want to do this work. I talked to a group of educators out of Kansas who wanna to do this work and they're new to it. And we don't have anyone in Kansas. So yay, Kansas, please join us. But here's what I told them, honestly, one, you might not be ready to teach the curriculum. So don't. Don't teach the curriculum until you're ready, because that's dangerous. You can plan a week of action around the demands. Anybody can engage themselves in the four demands. Right. If you understand what they're, what they're about.

Right. So start there and take your time to get ready for the curriculum and then reach out to black educators. Who may not have the time and the capacity to do the planning, but find out what they would, if they could, and then do it for them. Right. There are ways to be in this moment. But you have to let black people lead, right.

Awo Okaikor: [01:19:27] Yeah, yeah.

Denisha: [01:19:29] Do the work for them that they've identified that they want you to do.

Awo Okaikor: [01:19:33] Yeah. The quote that I've been using these days is, it actually comes from the disability rights folks, is nothing about us without us. Right. And so that's not something that, you know, that's, something that they've given us, they've gifted us.

And it's interesting in terms of, you know, the role that white folks play in this, in black liberation. There is a need, right. We've we know that there's a , it's across the, I mean, from

history back on, we know that there's been white folks who have been part of this movement and the work that we're, so it's not like this is new. The thing is we don't know those names because we don't, it's purposeful. Right. It's purposeful when white folks don't know these names about who these who, their white brothers and sisters are, who were part of this movement. Right. Because that keeps you from having an example, right, an example to actually model your work after.

But there was a point that I wanted to make, denisha like you spoke to in terms of, in addition to taking the lead from. From black folks, which is, I think is crucial to this moment right now, because I'm seeing a lot of sense of urgency and what I'm calling white urgency, because it's always been nurtured for us. Right. [laughs]

It's not like it's suddenly become urgent. Right. But it's white urgency. The people are moving very quickly. Right. And this happened to me, because there's so much organizing happening right now, locally, and I'm sure everyone else is experiencing this. Okaikor, we need you to do this. Okaikor, We need you to do that. Okaikor... because, and it's urgent. It's urgent. And then me also moving with that sense of urgency, but it's not my urgency, because I've always been urgent from the beginning, but it's their urgency. And then the mistakes that I've made, because I'm moving with their urgency. Right.

And so it's important for us to know as organizers who are, anti-racist organizing this and doing this work. That yes, it's always been urgent, but we have to move with intentionality. Right. And if we're moving very quickly, the impact, the mistakes that we actually make along the way are actually going to be much larger and much, much more, you know, harmful to us, right, if we're not being intentional and strategic about what we're doing.

The urgency has always been there. Yes. It's always. But the way that I'm seeing urgency play out right, now as white urgency, it's urgent for me to read all the books and consume all the knowledge. It's urgent for me to have a protest and a rally. It's urgent. And then because of the sense of urgency, they're moving without taking the leadership from black folks, or they're just moving. Right.

And so that's, I need to put a, like a highlight or asterix, right. Calm down. Bring it down a bit. Be strategic, intentional and take leadership from black folks and other people of color. Right. And just slow it down because it's always been urgent. But I need you to do this right. Right. For my life and the life of other folks who are dying in the streets, so.

Nyla: [01:22:36] Thank you. So we are just about at time. But we, we don't, we're at this point we're going to run over by a few minutes. And we want everyone to fill out the evaluation survey. But we do, there are two really important questions that we didn't get to that I'm going to throw out there and ask that panelists, particularly panelists who have not spoken or spoken very little to respond to.

And those two are, one is, in doing this work, how has this impacted your students? Right. What, you know, when being anti-racist educator, when using the Black Lives Matter at School curriculum, when being an activist, you know, what have you seen? What have you observed, in terms of how your students respond to it?

And then the other question is, and please feel free to respond to either question. And we only have time for a couple of responses.

Is what advice would you give to teachers and administrators who are new to this? Who care about the issues, but don't have the knowledge? Right. So they want to teach about systemic racism and the protest and Black Lives Matter, but don't fully understand it. Right? What advice would you give to them?

So those are two big questions. Let's take a couple minutes for a few panelists, have not spoken or very much to respond, and then we are going to close out. So who would like to go? Tamara? Tamara?

Tamara: [01:24:08] It's okay. I still love you very much. And so this, so basically I want to take it second question. The second question about preparation. If you really felt like you are coming into this, like you, your mind is blown. I would say before you engage and cause harm because of misinformation, I think it's important to kind of take a moment and get like familiar with like, at least the basics.

So one thing that's really great about the principles. If you look at the principles they're connected to like previous movements. So if you know a little bit about the civil rights movement, you know a little something about the uprising, but you're really not sure, make sure you do ask some critical questions.

There's lots and lots of baby articles and long articles on, that you can research and find, teaching for tolerance is a great resource. Also, I would say start there so that you can at least then have some sort of rubric that you're coming from. And then do yourself a huge favor, and as you're communicating with your class, make sure that you are taking their questions and you are also adding questions. And use this as an opportunity for you to learn together. Right.

Because if you come in as like, Oh, I know all of it. And then you mess up. It's not something that can quickly be peddled back and corrected. So that is definitely like my one minute, like, this is how I, this is what I tell my student teachers, when they are going into a classroom, especially a classroom that is dealing with either uprising or has talked about Ferguson and they're coming in on their 12 weeks and it's their week to teach. And they're trying to figure out how to do it. I give them that advice to get, you know, to walk gingerly, but to also have just some basic things in place.

Nyla: [01:26:19] Thank you. We might, we can squeeze in one more response?

Nope. Okay, so I think we are ready to close out.

Karmen. Next slide. [chuckles]

Thank you, everyone. This has been really wonderful conversation. It's been so rich. There's so much, so much more to talk about. There are a ton of questions posted, 37 questions posted in the Q and A, and that does not include the questions posted in the chat box. I wish we had another two hours cause we can easily keep going.

For those who, for those who asked questions that weren't answered, please know that we do keep a record of these. And again, this is the beginning of the conversation, we are kind of just taking our first dip into talking about this stuff. So the questions that you post will help inform how we plan moving forward.

And we are, behind the scenes, trying to think about how we can address some of these, answers some of these questions get some of these answered, these questions answered. Let me say that again. We are working on figuring out how we can get some of your questions answered after this is over by our speakers and panelists. So we will be following up with our guest speakers, afterwards.

Before you go, please make sure you fill out the survey monkey evaluation survey. You can, you might be able to use, take a picture of the QR code on screen. It's also, should be posted up in the chat box So please make sure that you complete that survey when we close.

Also next week we have another webinar coming up, focusing on, COVID-19, xenophobia, racism and Asian Americans and Asian Americans. So please stay tuned. You should be on our listserv. If not, we will make sure that you all get an email announcement of that event happening next Tuesday as well.

Again, thank you everyone. Thank you, speakers. This has been a wonderful conversation. One of more to come. Please, join us next time. Take care.

Awo Okaikor: [01:28:46] Thank you everyone.

Ismael: [01:28:49] Thanks.

Charlie: [01:28:50] Thank you.