

## Equity Accelerator

### Liberatory Design for Equity in California's County Offices of Education

**Christina Pate:**

All right, welcome back everyone. We're delighted to have you join us again today. If it's your first time, welcome. This is our fourth event in our Professional Learning Series. My name is Christina Pate, my pronouns are she/her, and I serve as the lead for the Equity Accelerator at WestEd. And today we are talking about systems, we're talking about alignment and really a coherence to a vision of equity. And today we're really gonna be elevating the National Equity Project's Liberatory Design Process and the voices of leaders from a few of our California County Offices of Education and facilitated by a young person who is an emerging education leader.

So, if you haven't done so already, please enter your name, your pronouns, your county office, and any other affiliations you might have, like a tribe, into the chat now, and we're gonna go ahead and get started. All right, as part of the COVID Education Equity Response Collaborative, WestEd is leading a yearlong Equity Accelerator to support the California County Offices of Education in improving alignment of whole child and whole school efforts that really cohere to a vision of equity. And we use a two-tiered approach with the Equity Accelerator.

We have a statewide Professional Learning Series for all 58 county offices, which is what you're all here for today, and we have an intensive fellows program for eight county offices of education. So, the Equity Accelerator explores a lot of equity-related topics, including but not limited to adult mindsets and biases that really underlie our education policies and practices, stakeholder agency, voice, and choice and thinking about co-design and co-leadership, environments and relationships, and alignment of whole person, whole-school efforts, and a coherence to a shared vision of equity.

These are all covered really broadly in our Professional Learning Series to all 58 county offices, but we really dive deep into these topics as well as the personal transformation and the professional change management that has to occur in order for all of this work to actualize. So, you can see here, this is our list of participating county offices in the fellowship. So, a shout out to our fellows in Butte County, Del Norte, Placer, Sacramento, San Diego, Santa Clara, Sonoma, and Tulare. You're gonna meet a few of

them today, we're really excited. The 16 fellows from our eight county offices are doing some really intensive work right now, so really a shout out and thank you to all of you.

That's a little bit about the Equity Accelerator and our Fellowship program. This is our wonderful team with whom I have the privilege of working. Our equity coaches, Dr. Rachelle Rogers-Ard and Terna Tilly-Gyado, and from WestEd, we have Cherry Hannah, Laura Buckner, Jenny Betz, and Lauren Trout. And in just a few moments we're gonna welcome our incredible panelists and our facilitator. But first, what we wanted to do today was provide a little primer on Liberatory Design. So, as my colleague Lauren always says, our systems are designed, perfectly designed, to get the results that they get.

And we know, or we're at least starting to realize, that our training really hasn't sufficiently prepared us for the complex adaptive challenges of today's world. Whether it's systems change, design, or equity work, too often our efforts are really ineffective or they're unsustainable, and sometimes we have a lot of unintended consequences occur that can be quite harmful. A lot of times we're left feeling frustrated or fatigued, and all of that can really lead to hopelessness, it can lead to cynicism, and it certainly can lead to burnout. So as the creator's note, Liberatory Design was built for these times.

Liberatory Design is the result of a collaboration between Tania Anaissie, I hope I pronounced that correctly, David Clifford, Susie Wise, and the National Equity Project's Victor Cary and Tom Malarkey. So, while NEP was unable to join us today, they gave us both permission as well as really encouraged us to provide some foundational information that is based on the course that a few of our colleagues took a while back, as well as the content that they have publicly available for free online. You can access all of the information in this primer here today at [www.liberatorydesign.com](http://www.liberatorydesign.com). And I think they've already put that into the chat. If not, they will do so soon.

So, according to the creators, Liberatory Design is a creative problem solving approach and a practice that centers equity, and it supports us to design for liberation, and it's made up of what they consider mindsets and modes. We're gonna dig into those in a few minutes here. So, mindsets essentially invokes stances and values to really ground and focus our design practice, and then modes are really intended to provide process guidance for our design practice. Liberatory Design generates self-awareness, to really liberate designers from all of the habits that we have that really perpetuate inequities. It helps us to shift relationships between the people who hold the power to design and then those who

are impacted by those designs. It helps us to foster learning and agency for those involved in and influenced by the design work, and it creates conditions for collective liberation.

According to the creators, Liberatory Design builds on the legacy of best practices from many fields like design thinking, complexity theory, organizing, equity, restorative healing, and many other things. They say that the power of Liberatory Design really comes from its ability to help us better understand challenges in these highly complex, interconnected systems, county offices are no exception, see ways that systems of oppression are impacting our context, to really root our decision-making in our values, and to combat status quo behavior with really deep self-reflection and learning and changing in fast-moving meaningful ways.

So, in situations as complex as equity challenges, especially in education, the way forward is really led by noticing, experimenting, learning, reflecting, and then repeating. Liberatory Design is really structured to build your leadership, your equity leadership capacity, to create real change with the communities that you care deeply about. And the process itself, as well as the outcomes, are really building towards greater collective liberation. This is originally based on the five hexagons of design thinking, you've probably seen these before, they span across disciplines.

And so, the most recent visual representation of Liberatory Design is inspired by a flower with petals that converge in the center. The flower exists among others within an ecosystem, and then the practitioners of Liberatory Design really create connections through pollination. In this graphic, the notice and reflect modes are placed at the center of the flower. And that's really to encourage you to return to this center each time you pivot to a new mode. Again, we're going to talk about mindsets and modes here in a minute. The creators also emphasize that the graphics nonlinearity is really important. Those petals can be visited in any order to really support your unique context.

Okay, so the mindsets for Liberatory Design, as I said, they really provoke particular stances and values to ground the Liberatory Design process. And they're intended to catalyze creative courage, conversation, reflection, community building, storytelling, and action. So, the mindsets really aim to bring self-awareness and intention to our design practice. They're really intended to help us recognize oppression in how we live and work and then realize alternate ways of being and doing, and really expand our frame of reference for what is possible and to inspire creative courage and set a foundation for liberatory collaboration.

So, they encourage us to use them creatively, combine and sequence and embody them in whatever ways to support our processes. Okay, so for the sake of time, we will briefly describe mindsets, but in the PDF, they're gonna drop that link in the chat, but you can find that information on why you use a particular mindset and how you can use a particular mindset. So, we'll just briefly overview them today. The first one is build relational trust. We really wanna invest in relationships with intention and especially across difference. We wanna honor people's stories, honor systems' stories, and practice empathetic listening.

The next one is practice self-awareness. So, who we are determines how we design. Really looking in the mirror, it helps us reveal what we see, how we relate, and how our perspectives really impact our practice. And then the next one is recognize oppression. So, we wanna learn to see how oppression in its many forms has shaped designs that lead to our current inequities. And we also want to embrace complexity, so really recognizing that equity challenges are complex and they're super messy. We wanna stay open to possibility, not be bothered by the mess, right? Really powerful design emerges from the mess, not from avoiding the mess.

And then we also really wanna focus on human values. Get to know the community we're designing with in as many different ways as possible, and then really anchor all of our decision-making in those human values. We also wanna seek liberatory collaboration, so recognizing the differences in power and identity to design with instead of design for. We wanna power with instead of power over, right? Really, this one is encouraging us to design for belonging. This next one is really common and really normal and really important. It's work with fear and discomfort. Fear and discomfort are anticipated parts of our equity design work. Identifying the sources of our feelings really offers us a context to work through and really continue to design.

Also important, attend to healing. The effects of oppression are super complex, and they often hinder our ability to really take action. We wanna integrate ongoing healing processes when we're designing for equity. We also wanna work to transform power. We wanna explore those structures and those opportunities for interactions and connections in which power can be shared, not exercised. Now we wanna exercise creative courage, so every human is creative. So, creative courage really allows us to push through all of our self doubts and all of that creative fragility that we might have so that we can design bravely against oppression.

And then we wanna take action to learn. The complexity of oppression has to be addressed with courageous ongoing actions. So, we wanna experiment as a way to think and learn without attachment to outcome. We're always hearing about what metrics we're achieving. Can you imagine, here we're encouraged to really take action for the sake of learning while we're detaching from the outcome. It's a different mindset. Then we wanna share, don't sell. Really need to practice transparency and non-attachment when we're sharing our ideas with collaborators. So, those are the mindsets.

One of the LD moves that we're gonna kind of look at here today, is to notice and set intentions. So, before we jump into teamwork, we can really build awareness about what feels important to everyone on the team. And so, you can use the Liberatory Design Mindset Cards, they're freely available online. You can also order hard copies of them, but they're really intended to name the intentions that each person wants to guide their work. So, you can either have individuals choose the mindsets and the intentions, or you can do that with a team. Okay, so that's it for the mindsets.

We're gonna go on to the moves, so I'm going to turn... I'm sorry, on to the modes, so I'm gonna turn it over to my colleague Jenny Betz to wrap up our primer, and then we'll move into our panel conversation for today.

**Jenny Betz:**

Thanks, Christina. The complexity and humanity is also like Katniss, he's really interested in Liberatory Design today. So, sorry about that. Thank you for talking about that, Christina, I think it's so important. The mindsets are really what sets Liberatory Design apart from some of the other really great design processes and tools that are out there. The mindsets really are the spirit, right, the things that often go unnamed or untalked about. And then there are the modes, and the modes are really about the guidance through the process. So, Christina mentioned that there are cards. That's what the link is that Laura shared, that longer link in the chat.

Basically, the link is a PDF of these cards. And if you go to the shorter link, like [liberatorydesign.com](http://liberatorydesign.com), you could purchase them or buy different sets and packs of them, but that's where all the images come from. And then on the back of each one it has more information. So, just wanted to sort of give a heads up on that. And so really, when we're talking to NEP, the creators really noted that Liberatory Design emerged from the addition of two steps, and Christina talked about this a little bit, two like traditional design thinking processes, and that's really putting notice and

reflect. And those are the two things in the purple and black in the center, right in the center of that flower.

And those are the things that really help us to pause and interrupt the dominant cultural habits that contribute to inequities. So, the notice and reflect are really at the heart of all of this. And they're not just one piece right there, they're meant to be part of every single step of the way, every part that you utilize, which is a helpful reminder and helpful when we're working with other people who maybe are newer to the process and we're trying to help them sort of see the way. And, you know, in the cards everything's described more, and again, they're free or you can purchase them.

And we're gonna do a little bit of a deeper dive, both by our panel is gonna share how it's used in the real world, like what they've really done with it or things that are related, but briefly for the sake of time, just wanted to point out a few things, right? So again, the notice is really practicing self-awareness, seeking to understand the system, exploring the history of oppression and all those sorts of things that are always part of the complexity of any situation. Then reflecting is on not just our intentions and our impact, but also the health of our team. How are we doing, how are we working together, how are we individually being impacted by the process?

Because this is hard work and keeping ourselves as humans at the center of it is really important. Then in the blue background you see, it says, "see the system", and that is just so huge. Seeing the system really allows us to identify potential equity challenges. And then what about the system is actually creating these challenges, and then what we might need to learn more about if we're going to engage in this work and try and do some work around empathy. So being able to really see the system and the system that's at play is really important. And then we have the petals.

So, you know, these are in no particular order. And actually, the creators are very adamant about that, that you may need to do, if you're gonna utilize it, utilize it however it's gonna work, in whatever process, whatever flow, whatever order. The petals that are really important, right, so empathize, so really trying to understand the experience, not just of the folks in your group and maybe colleagues or whatever, but also really understanding the community that you're designing with and for. And really coming from a heart space, which is so really fundamental to the Liberatory Design way of doing things or way of being.

And then define, developing a point of view about what are the challenges or needs in the community, and then looking together,

working with community to find some patterns and insights, and hear stories about what this really looks like, what those challenges really look like. And then inquiry. So inquire, when the way ahead isn't clear and to help better understand and define the challenge and to provide clear direction for anything you're doing later and gonna try out, is really to ask questions. Ask people about their experiences and try and be open to understanding and asking along the way. Sometimes we just focus on numbers, right?

Like we'll see some data and have lots of ideas about why we think the numbers say what they do, but Liberatory Design really asks us to talk to people, figure out really what the human side of that is. Then it's really about imagination and imagining, creating time to brainstorm and dream and think what if, which is really such a big piece of it. And then there's things that are really, really, key to it, which is prototyping and trying. Just being experimental, being creative. You don't have to have your plan, all of it set before you do anything. Sometimes it's just taking little steps, trying things out, trying things out on a less stressful level with lower stakes and then see how it goes, and then maybe you bring it to a larger group or something like that.

So, really making sure that you are testing things out, you're asking people how it's going and getting feedback. So, I know that's a lot, but those are like all the different layers of process. And in the cards, whether it's the PDF or online, it has more examples of how and when you can do those things. And then really, the last piece that the Liberatory Design sort of a set of resources about are the moves. Like, where do we really go from here and what is the next step? What do we need to think about? What are we gonna do to move forward and really what pieces are gonna work the best?

So again, this is not about a particular sequence. It's really about finding the pieces that make the most sense and having a team come together to figure out really what you wanna focus on. And that's what's nice about having whether you cut them out and print them, or having them here, is that one of the ways you can use Liberatory Design, like the concepts, right, is to actually bring out some of the physical cards into a group at a meeting and talk through what some of that is. Sometimes just having that physical, tangible thing helps focus. So, with that, I'm really, really, really excited to get us to the heart of today's session, and that's really about our panel.

And what Liberatory Design and Liberatory Design adjacent activities actually looks like at the county office of education level. How can this be helpful? What is really the day to day, 'cause the cards are cute and nice,

but really how is this gonna be useful to you all? So, first we have to start with our amazing moderator. I'm really, really excited to have Aniah Francis with us. Aniah is Afro-Trinidadian and is a senior who's majoring in sociology with a concentration in criminology, law, and society, and also a triple minor in African American studies, legal studies, and public service and community engagement at the University of San Francisco.

That's a lot of things. And at USF, Aniah also serves as accountability partner with the PAC Program, a sociology ambassador and mentor, and a research assistant for Dr. Stephanie Sears. Aniah is a teaching assistant for the Community Empowerment Activism Program and also has been an intern at California Department of Ed, has some other side, like, personal activist projects and is just amazing all around. Aniah really hopes to continue to assist in creating more equitable society in which all voices are heard.

With that, I'm gonna turn it over to a Aniah who's gonna introduce our panel and then really share questions so that we can hear some experiences, have a conversation. And then we'll also be watching the chat to see what questions you have along the way. So, thank you all, and I am going to turn it over to Aniah.

**Aniah Francis:**

Thank you so much for that, Jenny. Good morning, everyone. So, my name is Aniah, and I'll be moderating today's panel on Liberatory Design with our lovely panelists from the different county offices of education. I'm incredibly grateful to WestEd for reaching out to me to be a part of this. Liberatory Design as a concept that exists, there are different names, but the meaning remains the same. It is a concept that seeks to address equity challenges, increase opportunities for the most depressed, transfer power, and increase agency for those involved in equity work.

It's a concept that can be operationalized at every level to improve equity work. For example, I've personally seen it used in higher education. I've had the pleasure of being a part of two programs at my school, the University of San Francisco. The first being the Esther Madríz Diversity Scholars program, or EMDS for short. This is a program that looks at the intersection of sociology and the emergence of hip hop. During this program, my professor, Dr. Stephanie Sears, made it very clear that we were not going to do the traditional banking model as spoken about by Paulo Freire when it comes to education.

But rather this was going to be a space in which power was balanced between educator and student to build a curriculum in which our voices are heard and our experiences were validated. This is a program that believes in calling people in and respecting our identities and positionality

in the world. And it was my first time seeing something like this happen. The second time I encountered this was in my Community Empowerment Activists program, CEA for short, that also followed a similar model. These programs were especially important for my development as a student, leader, activist, and person navigating a world that is layered with different forms of oppression that all intersect and affect our experiences in society.

And it's because I've been components of Liberatory Design that I do believe in the importance of it and furthermore would love to learn more about how it is utilized at a county level, hence why we're here today with our panelists. Each of our panelists within their county offices of education have utilized components of Liberatory Design in their equity work. And today we'll be focusing on their process with that. Today we'll be hearing from four panelists, all of who not only work in their local county offices of education, but are also members of the Equity Accelerator fellowship. We are grateful to have them share some of their work with us today.

First, we have Ma Bernadette Andres-Salgarino who is a Mathematics Coordinator for the Santa Clara County Office of Education. Prior to joining the SCCOE, Ma Bernadette has taught AP Calculus AB/BC and AP Statistics among others as a mentor and instructional coach at the East Side Union High School District. She's a National Board Certified Teacher, a member of the Mathematics Curriculum Framework and Evaluation Criteria Committee for 2013 and 2021. She's a board member of the TODOS: Mathematics for ALL, an AP Calculus reader and an SBAC item writer and reviewer. Her classes have been videotaped for NBCT, and they look at learning featuring instructional practices, sorry, instructional practices that develop and strengthen mathematics literacy, and numbers advocate teaching mathematics for social justice.

She was awarded the Texas Instruments - STEM Teacher of the Year in 2012 and East Side Union High School District Teacher of the Year in 2013. Next, we have Dr. Anisha Munshi who is the Assistant Superintendent of Professional Learning and Instructional Support at Santa Clara County Office of Education. She is guided by a strong conviction that all students must have access to high quality and culturally relevant learning experiences that are provided by well-trained educators.

Dr. Munshi leads professional learning initiatives in all content areas, educator preparation programs, positive school climate and youth wellness programs. Dr. Munshi considers herself to be a transformational leader and has served in several leadership roles at a district and county

level in her 20 plus years as an educator. She is dedicated to creating educational systems that provide equitable learning opportunities for all students.

Next, we have Javier Garcia who serves as the Data and Analytical Coordinator for the Tulare County Office of Education. Previously, Javier served as a Mathematics Staff Development and Curriculum Specialist for the County and as a middle school mathematics teacher. Additionally, he has served on committees with the California Mathematics Council and the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics. And last but not least, we have Felicia Singleton who is the Director of Systems of Support in the Student Services and Programs Division of San Diego County Office of Education.

Felicia has been in education for over 30 years and has a deep commitment to dismantling inequitable and harmful systems and structures preventing all learners from fully accessing their education. She's currently a doctoral candidate at the UC San Diego. Her research is understanding restorative justice through the lived experiences of black young adults. Thank you, Ma Bernadette, Anisha, Javier, and Felicia. Let's get started with our first question today. Can you provide examples of how you practice Liberatory Design within county offices of education?

**Jenny Betz:** And with that, we're gonna start with our friends, Anisha and Ma Bernadette.

**Anisha Munshi:** Good morning. Thank you so much for inviting us to share some of our work this morning. So, what we thought, Ma Bernadette and I, instead of sharing separately, we prepared a slide deck where we'll be sharing some of the work that we're doing. So, Ma Bernadette and I work pretty closely together, so this was thought through together. Before we start, I would like to point out that as a county office of education, there are four principles that drive all the work that we do and those are equity, diversity, inclusion, and partnership. And these are four strengths that you will see through Liberatory Design as well. So, we try to make sure that everything that we do has these four at the forefront.

And then what you see in front of you, these are the three goals that we have as an office, which is to improve access to inclusive, equitable, high-quality education, provide quality systems of support to districts, schools, students, and communities, and be a premier service organization. Next slide, please. Ma Bernadette, would you like to share our journey?

**Ma Bernadette Andres-Salagrino:** Yes, thank you so much Anisha. So, our equity journey is full of opportunities to grow individually and as a team. And so, this

image in itself is actually in our equity playbook that was developed by our Inclusion Collaborative Team. And we have been very intentional in the way that we are focusing on our intent to truly serve the students who are within our county and beyond. Next slide, please, Jenny, thank you. And here's just a visual representation of how we started. And I know Anisha and I and a team of us have gone through several of these different trainings.

And Anisha, would you like where we started when you were, first, your position at the HR Department before the PLISD, when our GARE commitment started?

**Anisha Munshi:**

Sure, so prior to moving to the Professional Learning Division, I worked in Human Resources for five years and I just moved last July, so it's been a year. And as part of working there, we really started thinking about, how do we build culture? Again, we've talked a lot about how do you break down those systems? How do you look at the larger system and try to see where exactly do you start to make those changes? And so, in 2018, we had a team of about 12 people. We went for training for nine months through GARE, which is a Government Alliance on Race and Equity.

This was a powerful experience for all of us because we sat with other partners, all from government agencies. In fact, we were the only educational agency there initially, and then later we were joined by a team from CDE, but it was a lot of other government agencies. But what we learned is that all agencies have the same issue. It is, how do you make changes in system, the retention, how do you retain people? Because you train people, you try to change mindset. And with the Liberatory Design, we've talked about the 11 mindsets. How do you change mindset when people are shifting?

So, after that training, we are a fairly large county office. We have 1600 employees. And we had to start thinking about how do we make this change now in the system? And we basically made a decision to start with our leadership, because unless we change some mindset in leadership who don't see the system or any flaws in the system, it's hard to have those conversations with your team and be more intentional in the work that you do, or the meetings that you hold, or the words that you say. So that's where our journey began. And through the proposal, we decided to basically start the training with our leadership group.

And Ma Bernadette is very involved, she's part of the planning group for our leadership meetings. So, Ma Bernadette, do you wanna walk us through that?

**Ma Bernadette Andres-Salagrino:** Yes, and so as a member of the leadership planning committee as well, we were so intentional to have some steps that will, again, ignite the opportunities for being mindful about our goal towards equity. So, as you can see, we've partnered also with the National Equity Project to have some sessions around, not much about Liberatory Design, but again, it's developing those mindsets that we have to undergo shifting the ways that we do our work for our districts.

And all throughout the years, last year and this year, we also decided on doing some book study to further, again, invite our leadership team to be very, very intentional in the steps that we do for the services that we make. And so, in the next slide, would you like to talk about this, Anisha?

**Anisha Munshi:** Sure, and I think Jenny and Christina already, so we're not going to walk through this again because they did such a nice introduction of introducing the 11 mindsets. And as Ma Bernadette mentioned, we may use different, like we do design thinking a lot when we work with districts and how we coach them and all the work that we do together as a team, but these are the mindsets, especially some of them. And the next slide we'll talk about which ones we are intentionally focusing on. So, building relational trust. I think when you talk about systems or changing systems, the first thing, you have to start with relationships.

That's really, building relationships or having that trust with another person is really at the core of any work that you do, whether it's with your teams, whether it's with districts. And so, we believe strongly that that is where we start making the change, is by building trust. By knowing more about people, by the narratives, by learning the stories, by really knowing more about people than just the work they do, but really who are you? So, we do that a lot at our meetings. Practicing self-awareness. We as a county office of education are also a strengths-based institution.

All our employees have taken the strengths assessment. So, when we onboard employees, they take the strengths assessment, and this is a Gallup-based assessment. And what it is basically is, every human being has strengths and which are our top five strengths that we operate with mostly on a daily basis, but the others are still there. The reason we wanted to go in that direction is because again, a lot of your self-awareness and self-reflection comes when you start thinking about, how do I present myself in any space? But also, when I'm in meetings with other people, what are they bringing to the table that I can capitalize on?

It's really not about me knowing everything, but it's really, how does everybody contribute to the work that we are doing or the project that

we're working on? Ma Bernadette, do you wanna talk about a couple more then we can go to the next slide?

**Ma Bernadette Andres-Salagrino:** Well, we can move to the next slide also, Anisha. In the next slide is just us being mindful about the modes. And in the next few slides, we're going to show you how we have applied these with the mindsets that Anisha has mentioned. And in the next slide, Jenny, well, that's us, the Professional Learning Instructional Services Division. And we're just so happy to share with you, in the next slide, Jenny, that throughout our coaching with Rachele, we were actually grappling how we can bring it within our division.

And thank you so much, Rachele, for helping us, because it started with this question of defining who we are, right? What is the collective meaning of our work? And in a session or five hours, Anisha, and so on and so forth, we were able to come together as a team within the Professional Learning Instructional Division to define it. So Anisha, would you like to?

**Anisha Munshi:** Sure, so the Professional Learning and Instructional Support Division, our division, we are almost 60 people strong and still growing. By the end of this month, we will have 90 people in our division. That's a pretty large division. And the work that we do, it's really broad. So, we do all the content areas. We train, provide coaching, professional development to districts. So, we have all of those, the STEAM, and EL/ELD, History-Social Science, we have all of those, arts, but we also have our Educator Preparation Program. We have Tobacco Prevention Programs. We have foster youth and homeless in our division.

We have BBIS, we have a usefulness, so really the scope of work is so broad. So, sometimes when we talk about our impact, we talk about that a lot. What is the impact of her work? Why do we even do what we do? And what change are we making? Whose life are we changing? And it came down to, it's like our work is so different. How do we find that common... what holds us together? You know, equity is a big strand for us, right, that's the focus area, but how does it look in all of the things that I just described for you? So we, the consensus workshop that Ma Bernadette was talking about...

So again, bringing 60 plus people to agree on something, and we wanted everybody in the division to be part of that, so everybody was invited. In five or six hours we brainstormed, our workforce development team helped us facilitate. Because again, for us also, part of liberatory work is we've talked about breaking down those silos, right? The power, who pulls the power. So for us, it was really important that the facilitation be

done by somebody else, so that everybody, including me could be a participant. Everybody had an equal voice. There was no power in one person facilitating and saying, I think this is the direction we should move in.

So, we were very proud that after five or six hours of coming together and, we worked really hard. And next slide, please, Jenny. This is what came up with, this is what everybody agreed to. And it took many, many hours and many conversations of creating these titles, but then also the subgroups. And one of the things everybody on the team was very intentional about is, we wanted equity to be a standalone column, which is what you see on the left hand side, but we also wanted equity to be flowing across. So, we were very intentional in doing that, because otherwise it becomes like equity is over here, and then this is what we do, and oh yes, we should do something for equity also.

So, we tried to weave it through the work that we do. And we are actually using this document in our team meetings when all our smaller groups meet, to really talk about what does it look like in our work? So, yes, this was, again, when you talk about design thinking and Liberatory Design and how you come to an actual output, what is the result of some work together, the prototype, this is what the prototype looked like. Next slide, please. On a larger organization-wide also, we have used the same way of approaching different projects. So, for several years, and this was, again, even when I was in HR, we started talking about what does a good leader look like? What characteristics do they have and what should their focus be?

And we decided that this year, in fact, we just released this, our coaching for continuous improvement for our leadership group, the evaluation tool that we use. Instead of using evaluation to be a once-a-year checkbox, what we want to do is introduce the coaching model. Next slide, please. And the question, again, we started with the question, right, the inquiry, what knowledge, skills and abilities should be required of every SCCOE leader. Next slide, please. Ma Bernadette, do you wanna talk by the Consensus Workshop?

**Ma Bernadette Andres-Salagrino:** Thank you. And so, we have these Consensus Workshop that happened to be able to address that, and just be mindful of a bigger organization with multiple divisions and departments. We were able to come together and brainstorm individually, brainstorm as a team, having small group discussions in Zoom, via Zoom, all of these are via Zoom, and then have a large group discussion for a consensus, to be able to address that question. And in the next slide we are so happy after six sessions, multiple hours, hundreds of ideas came together to identify the

leadership competencies that will be in our coaching for continuous growth, which will be prototyped this year.

And we now have started to use this and try to iterate if needed, to be able to, again, address the questions that we would like to have it done for the whole leadership team. So, that was our journey.

**Anisha Munshi:** I think that was the last slide, Jenny, right.

**Jenny Betz:** Yes. My goodness, thank you all. I mean, really thank you for giving us such a broad sort of sense of how it can be done, really at the systems level. And I want us to go ahead and move to Javier, and then Felicia, to talk more about some of the... a deeper dive into some individual pieces of work. So, Javier, I'm gonna actually stop sharing at this point.

**Javier Garcia:** Okay, and I don't have slides, so I'll just kind of talk through a few things. I think, thank you, Anisha and Ma Bernadette, for sharing that. I think that's super helpful to kind of get a sense of somebody who's kind of gotten pretty deep into that process. Our process at Tulare County started a couple of years back, slightly before the pandemic hit. Not to say that there weren't equity efforts happening at our county office prior to that, I think our Math Department had some pretty deep commitment and other departments as well. But a few years back, our then deputy superintendent kind of really, kind of gathered a group of us and started this effort to establish some equity principles, some equity core beliefs that would kind of span the whole organization.

The opportunity there was that at the same time, we have a new superintendent a few years ago as of the last election cycle, who really wanted to kind of establish like some equity, or some core beliefs for the organization. And so, this was kind of an opportunity to make sure that equity was kind of built alongside that. We reached out to the National Equity Project as well and have actually had a pretty nice partnership with them since. And that's how we were introduced to the elements of Liberatory Design.

For us, some of the things that have kind of come out of our process is we have our equity foundations, is what we've called them, which are like four broad principles with some supporting documents that kind of articulate some specific actions people can take that kind of go along with the core values that were developed at our county office. So, our core values are build trusting relationships, communicate with care, grow and empower, and commit to serve. Our equity foundations, again, are kind of supposed to be side-by-side, embedded in like a recognition that diversity is an asset and that there is like an imperative to include that

diversity whenever decisions are made, that equity is the responsibility of everybody, not those people that are kind of assigned to that committee, or what have you.

That people, all people should get what they need, and that this is something that we have to continually work at. So, those were like a product that emerged from that. Aside from that, we've had like some structural things that have been kind of interesting to see play out. We have an equity design team that meets monthly and has met monthly from the beginning, where we're constantly trying to puzzle through, how do we reach more and more people? How do we make sure that this is permeating through the organization?

And whereas these things can be kind of easy to happen in those spaces where you are meeting as an equity team, like how do you get it to happen in like the rest of your work, too, which is a lot more difficult. We have another layer of folks that we call the equity ambassadors, they used to have a different name, but those are folks from all departments across the entire organization. They meet pretty regularly with us as well. And that's when we kind of just talk shop, work through some things, and people kind of share how it's going in terms of just sharing with their individual departments, depending on the opportunities that exist.

Like, a recent example of something that kind of came up for us, is we have, as you guys know, like, COEs are a place where action and policy meet. And so, recently we had a few leaders who reached out to us and were like, all right, there's a committee meeting for ESSER funding and I don't know what ESSER stands for, but I know that there's money that the state's given to schools. And part of the requirements is making sure that you're reaching out to the community. And so, our department kind of helped develop a survey that went out to the community members.

And one of our processes was to try to collect and summarize all of that information in a way that made sense to, and kind of put the decision-makers in the right frame of mind in terms of what they might do with all of that community feedback, 'cause we got about 600 responses from throughout the community. A layer that we added to that was making sure that we desegregated the feedback by any kind of group, like racial groups, special education, EL groups, just to see like are different communities asking for different things? And lo and behold, they were.

Now if we would've gone with just the majority of the votes, we would've seen that like, yeah, people want this money spent on more academic opportunities to kind of stave off what they feel they might have kind of lost during the pandemic. But there were certain communities within our

broader community, like our African American students, our special ed population, and several others that were asking for, that was on their list too, but that wasn't at the top of their list. At the top of the list were health and socio-emotional supports. So, that was something that we thought like, this is a good thing to highlight.

As far as Liberatory Design is concerned, I think one of the things that is most helpful about it is that they aren't, the things are named things. It's a lot easier to deal with something that has a name. I think making sure that you focus on human values is something that people kind of genuinely feel we'll get it, too, but unless it's kind of named, it's hard to kind of call back attention to it. Unless everybody in the room is aware of like, oh, that's a thing that like...

We all kind of know that that's something that could and should be done, but when we're not doing it, it's sometimes hard to kind of like pin it down, unless we kind of remind ourselves like, hey, like, I don't know, like, are we like really... Like, right now we're kind of like all the way over on policy and like kind of losing the humanity of what this policy is doing. Some of these principles have been really useful and easy. Like it is really easy for everybody to do agree on building relational trust and centering that. And others, I think everybody kind of agrees to abstractly, but they're a little bit trickier.

Like it is hard to kind of ensure that you can pull that one back into the room. I'm looking at you, recognize oppression. That one can be kind of a tough one to call attention to in a way that everybody kind of sees in the same way, because everybody doesn't see things in the same way. And I think that's another element that's really nice about some of the principles here in Liberatory Design is that it is very human centered. And so, like, I really appreciated that aspect of NEP, is just you kind of start with, like, you get in the room and you look, like, you do things that allow folks to see each other as what they are, which is human beings that are complex.

Because I think we have a very strong propensity in education, but I think in all areas of life, to recognize that we are looking at a complex system, but pretending that it's complicated, because complicated things are solvable and then trying to solve those things. And so just being able to kind of call back and recognize that we're working in a complex system that has a lot of unique challenges, some of which are within our control and some of which aren't, is helpful. And I'll pause there. So, I'll turn it over to Felicia.

**Felicia Singleton:**

Thank you, Javier, and hello everyone. Again, my name is Felicia Singleton, and I'm from the San Diego County Office of Education. I have a couple of examples. One, I have slides, but we don't have to use them. We can just have the conversation. So, the first example is our SEL work. And when I look at the Liberatory Design, we've had a lot of conversations about Liberatory Design, and I spent a lot of time just trying to understand what it is. I really love the fact that it's not linear, and I also love the fact that the work that I'm doing, I can circle back and connect it to those petals, if you will.

So, one example is the transformative SEL work that we're doing in San Diego County Office of Education. Like Javier, I'm in the Student Services and Programs Division of San Diego County Office. So, we don't technically hold the equity work in our division, but it's our commitment that all of us are equally responsible for lifting the work. So, one thing that we've done, when I look at these Liberatory Design mindsets, is I think about self-awareness. And SEL is the flavor of the month, right? COVID-19 came and all of a sudden it's SEL everywhere, but it's not enough to just say you're doing SEL without introducing it and doing the work with the adults in the system.

So, I'm all about adult work. So, if I were to pick one, it would definitely be self-awareness because that provided the opportunity for our participants to look in that mirror and look at how they're showing up, because we know that if we're not tending to our biases, if we're not recognizing our blind spots, then we can do more harm than good, even in the name of SEL, if we're not really taking care of those concerns. So, all of our SEL trainings this past year started with adults. And even when we moved into school-wide or district-wide or content, we continued to circle back on the adults and how we're showing up and how do we continue to recognize those blind spots?

Another area is building relational trust. So, my department, we do a lot of work around restorative justice and restorative justice practices, but in order to be able to have those conversations, you have to develop those trusting relationships that make people feel safe. We also know that SEL, restorative justice, PBIS, all of those acronyms that are thriving in education cannot be done in isolation or in silos. You have to link arms with your departments and divisions throughout your organization to be able to move that dial, especially in the name of equity.

So, when you can ground those conversations, and if you can slow down just enough to build that trust, identify commonalities, be able to listen to understand, then you can start to have some of those very necessary conversations that we need to be able to disrupt those barriers that we

know existed long before COVID-19 illuminated learning loss. Like, learning loss was already a thing, it's just that it was more so for those communities that are historically marginalized and underserved. So, those are two that I would highlight.

And then the third one I would highlight is a collaboration that my team did with our equity department. And that is our Student Voice Series. And I'm really proud of that work, and then in coaching with Rachelle and my colleague, Barbara Higgins from SDCOE, when we thought about how are we showing up in this COVID time, and what can we really anchor ourselves in, it's allowing the students that we serve to have a voice, have a seat at the table. And for this work, if I were to pick, it would be take action to learn and also be prototype.

So, what that means is as a result of COVID-19 and the racial reckoning that was happening in 2020, our equity department put together amazing resources, but we also ideated and said, who are we not hearing from? And we all agree that we weren't hearing from the students that we serve or the clientele that we serve, which is our students. So, we put together a student panel, and we didn't have intentions of doing more, but we recruited black students, we brought them together using restorative philosophy and principles. We built community; we shared that power. We created the conditions and the space where they could truly tell their story and their lived experience, and then we put together this panel.

And the overwhelming response was, we need this, we need more of this. And you may think, oh, that's easy, you're hearing from students, no big deal. But another thing that I really learned in my work in systems of support and which has been enhanced being a fellow is that there's a continuum of student voice, there are these rungs. And you have the most sanitized and prepared message, all the way to allowing students to share their truth, and then using that to plan and move forward. And I'm really proud of the fact that we didn't sanitize that message. We didn't make it easy on the ears.

One thing we did do was we recruited students from every area of our county. We also did not have them disclose their district or their school or their last name. And that was important because we didn't want educators in certain regions to say, oh, that's those folks over there in the south, or that's typical up there in the north. What we really wanted to show is that what students are feeling is a thread throughout education, not just in San Diego. So, the reason why I would pick prototype is because from that student panel, it blossomed, right?

So, we were able to end up doing panels for the Latinx community, the American Indian, or Native American community, Asian community, Middle Eastern and Northern African, LGBTQIA, and students with disabilities. So, what started as one opportunity to take action and learn turned into, it was a prototype that turned into a series that we've been able to use over and over again. And the response has never been, "I'm so embarrassed," or "I recognize my students," or "How did the county do this?" The response has been, "Yes, and we wanna do better. "We need your help. "So, how do we link arms and work together?"

So, those were just a couple of examples on how we're actually, for me, I'm working backwards again, right? Because I really wasn't aware of Liberatory Design mindsets, but once I started engaging in it and learning about it, it was really awesome to see that we're doing this work already. But it was super beneficial to be able to anchor it in research and anchor it in a framework that is endorsed by an organization as powerful as a National Equity Project.

**Aniah Francis:** Thank you so much for that Felicia. And thank you, Javier, Ma Bernadette, and Anisha, for your answers so far, they've really been enlightening. And I really wanna uplift the fact that, you're, actually, emphasis on doing the work, not just at a surface level, but actually getting in the this and gritty and realizing that you're working with different identities, you're working with students. You're also protecting their identities while still empowering them, because those things are incredibly important to me. For our next question, anyone could answer it, but considering equity work can be challenging and emotional, how do you center humanness and healing in your equity work?

**Felicia Singleton:** I'm just gonna jump in and you say human and humanness?

**Aniah Francis:** Humanness and healing.

**Felicia Singleton:** Really.

**Aniah Francis:** Yeah.

**Felicia Singleton:** Well, in our work around MTSS, we start before any district, or once they sign on and they wanna do that deep interrogation of their system, we give them a belief survey. We really wanna know how they are showing up to the table to shift their system and then build this framework. But that belief survey is not used as an indictment, it's not used as a weapon against folks. It's used as an opportunity to create that healing on that team, but also create the space for these conversations. You know, you

used to hear, "Check everything at the door and come in and just teach our children," we know that's not a reality.

So, when those beliefs surveys, when the data's turned in, some stuff comes up. And we might not be able to get to content right away. We have to be able to acknowledge that, so people feel seen, they feel heard, they feel validated. And again, that strengthening that trust. So, that's on the outward facing side, but on the inward facing side, our leadership at SDCOE has found it very important that we do our own equity work. So, we're in trainings, and I really wouldn't call it trainings, it's more of an experience where outside folks are coming in to hold space for us to talk about our experiences as employees, as community members of color or not, but really understanding what it's like to be in an organization and how we show up.

And some of those experiences can get emotional because it brings up things for us, but we are able to process that. And it's sometimes in education is like, do this for the kids, do that for the kids, without taking care of ourselves. And we know hurt people, hurt people, right? So, if we're not doing what we need to do to heal ourselves and take care of ourselves, we're only perpetuating those same things that continue to push children and families to the margins.

**Anisha Munshi:**

I can go next. So, I think there wasn't anything good that came out of COVID. But I think one of the things that it did bring out to some level is the humanness. You know, just as Felicia mentioned, we were so driven by agenda, as you walk into a meeting, and everything's lined up. And what we learned in the last year and a half is outward facing with, even in our conversations, with the districts and their teams and our own teams. People were not in that space. You could not function. So, we had to create that space and provide that humanness. And yes, there were tears and there was... people who are vulnerable, they were upset, they were sad.

And you had to adjust that before we could do anything else. But the other thing we also learned last year is taking care of adults. We were so used to walking, I remember even when I was a classroom teacher, it's like, keep your baggage at the door and it doesn't matter, turn on that switch, and you know, get ready to address the kids. But unless we are there, and then we are also modeling it and showing our children that it is okay to be hurt. It is okay to need some attention at the beginning of the day before we move on to other things.

So, I think we've tried to do that last year, again, with some more intention where anytime we have meetings or we are gathering with

anybody, we're checking in. We're saying, "Let's talk business later, let's check in. "Tell me about you, how are you feeling right now?"

**Ma Bernadette Andres-Salagrino:** I would just like to share also some, all the things that the SCCOE Math Department had done. I know we've been working towards re-humanizing mathematics, but more so about last year and this year. And we've been thinking truly deeply about how we re-humanize mathematics, but more so about providing access to our students, especially our students of color. And in planning for the multiple professional development that we will be providing, and we are already providing this year, that the empathy, truly seeking the voices of the folks whom we are serving, our teachers, our parents, and our students.

And it's not just survey this time, it's also more about asking from them how we may be able to intentionally support them in ways that it's relevant. That it's going to be useful, that's going to be not another thing on top of their plate. As you probably know, the math framework division is coming and it's really is focused on teaching for engagement and equity. And we are battling to truly seek for teaching mathematics for social justice. And as we journey towards that, we are, this group and multiple other groups, with the learning that we are seeking from you, that we also are going to be strong enough to say, stop tracking, stop classifying kids, stop identifying those who can or who cannot do mathematics.

So, those are just some of the ways that, again, in my world of mathematics have been truly is a voice to share with other communities.

**Javier Garcia:** And I wanna plus one to everything that everybody said here. I think that this is another complex question because I think there have been certain spaces, like when we convene as an equity design team, those types of conversations that are supportive, that like, those are much easier to have because as soon as the meeting's over and you get back to your other work, it is a lot harder to kind of, I don't know, stay human or feel human in those instances, mainly because I know that there's a little saying, like, if you want something to get done, ask the busiest person you know, which I'm gonna guess is probably a lot of the people on this panel.

So, you're constantly busy doing stuff and getting things piled on. But to me, what I think has been fascinating is there's been a thread of like, you know, make sure you take care of yourself. But I think we have to figure out how we take care of each other, because we aren't always really good at taking care of ourselves. And that's been something that we've been trying to be mindful in some of our networks. I think the panels with

students that Felicia had mentioned are super powerful, because we tend to draw energy from seeing the fruits of our work, hearing the voices of students.

And so, one of our networks has had a couple of instances where we had district leaders do empathy interviews with students, just to hear from, from the students what that looks like. But we've also tried to be very mindful about how much we're asking them to do, because there is so much more that they're being asked to do right now. And so, usually when we're looking at how do we get things done, we look at adding things, and I think, we're also trying to be mindful of what can we subtract? What can we take the way to clear the road for the really important things?

**Aniah Francis:**

Thank you so much for all of your answers. I think what it kind of like boils down to in my head that you'll kind of touched on without saying, it's the fact that you're building a community with your students and also with your peers, who you're working with. You're centering, and the fact that we're not robots. We live in a capitalistic world that continuously tells us that our emotions don't matter, that we kind of suck it up. Or as someone was saying earlier, that we check our emotions at the door when in reality these things affect us and affect how we show up every single day.

And the fact that you are actively working against that makes me so happy. 'Cause like community is such a big thing for me, and it's the only way we're actually gonna be able to like properly engage in equity work in a way that's successful. My next question, in doing this equity work, can you talk about the challenges that have arise and how components of Liberatory Design have helped you to work through these challenges? Once again, anyone can answer this question.

**Anisha Munshi:**

I can. So, I think the biggest challenge, Ma Bernadette and I, we shared our equity journey. And part of that journey is really doing a self-assessment and a self-reflection. And I think the challenge was how, I think sometimes we don't have an accurate sense of our own ideas or beliefs, and then creating that space, it's messy, right? We talked about, one of the things we talked about, it's gonna get messy in challenging people, but also pointing out what it's not when people believe, because I can't tell you how many do, it's like, you don't have an equity problem, we are not faceless, this is a great organization, everybody treats everybody fairly.

And then as we dug deeper and deeper and deeper at our own practices, and it was like, yeah, how does that impact somebody else? Yes, let's

look at that practice or let's look at that process. So, I think that was a challenge, but again, but building trust. So, which is why even earlier on I said, the first thing you have to do is create that space where you know that the other person is challenging you with good intent. You have to assume that. So, for me personally, that's where I felt the challenge was at that time.

**Felicia Singleton:** I would like to think for me, the success is also a challenge. So, the success that I get to work in systems work, so I can make all those connections, but that's also one of the challenges because there are so many competing, I hate to use the word initiatives, but so many things are competing for our attention. And the biggest challenge is that equity work is seen as a thing, right? It's seen as, let's buy this curriculum, let's call this department, let's do this training. When in actuality, the biggest challenge is getting folks to see that equity work is everybody's responsibility and it can be woven in every... there's a connection in every single thing we do.

You know, even business services, financial, human resources, equity is there. So, the biggest challenge is having those conversations and getting people to see how they can be a part of ensuring that those inequities are challenged and disrupted.

**Ma Bernadette Andres-Salagrino:** That made me think, Aniah, about the work that we've been doing too, around multiple initiatives and multiple projects and multiple parts to make up a whole. And I think that too is a challenge among the many challenges, that our math department and our division, our department too, Anisha, around how are we going to be intentional in the way that our work is using the lens of equity and what really is equity. And so, when we also try to provide those services with districts and sites and even parents, when we do parent engagement, we try to also align it with their mission and vision.

And sometimes they have their own statement of equity. And so, we are also very mindful about that and intentional and truly using the language that they do so that it's not just another thing on top of what they're doing, but also just seeing how those are seamlessly merged together to work towards the goal that they're having. But truly that also is a challenge. Yeah, that made me think, Aniah, thank you so much for sharing that.

**Javier Garcia:** Yeah, that can get really tricky mainly because I think equity can sometimes become like a separate conversation rather than I think as was kind of mentioned, like the through line or like a lens with which to kind of consider decisions that are being made, policies that are being

enacted. And so, we're kind of, you know, that's part of, I think the work that we're trying to do is racking our brain trying to figure out what's the simplest clearest way to kind of make sure that through the good intentions of a lot of people who sit very far away from where the policy is actually gonna be enacted, how do you make sure that that equity consideration is kind of is taken.

That it is done with a group but not for a group. And so we've like... 'cause again, the people closest to the pain tend to have the best understanding of the problem. And so, how do you make sure that their understanding is heard and part of the decision-making process? So, it's been helpful to kind of convene with folks. Shout out Rachelle our coach who just has a really great way of kind of calling a question that really kind of gets at the heart of the matter and is the simple way that when a conversation is winding down that we can pose it and figure out like, all right, we've just decided on something, who does that change benefit. Is there another way to benefit more people to make sure that that platform is nice and big so that equity is represented in these conversations and not a separate conversation?

**Felicia Singleton:**

And if I could just say one more thing, I think one, well, not one, but a benefit for us at SDCOE is, you know, our superintendent is not just outward facing saying equity, but he's pushing and making sure that we are actually doing the work. He, along with our executive leadership team and our equity department has put together this really robust equity blueprint, but it wasn't something that was done in isolation. A lot of hours, a lot of work with the three groups that our blueprint for action focuses on is African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinx communities.

And the amount of hours that went into those conversations with those particular groups to see what it is. You can't just do an equity blueprint, put a couple of strategies in there and then say, it's gonna be a blanket for everyone. But to actually spend the time investing in building that trust and being comfortable enough to be in that complex, messy situation to hear from them, that's not always difficult, and then take that and do that back and forth. Okay, this is what we're hearing, is this correct? How can we change that? And then taking it a step further.

There are these now advisory groups for each of those demographic communities that some of us in a county office are assigned to for our student voice or community, where we can continue to engage and be able to do that work. So, I'm not trying to paint the picture, equity work is very challenging and very hard, but when you have leadership that is behind the public facing commitments and mission and vision, it is very

liberating, no pun intended, to be able to do this work, when you're not going to feel like, A, you're the only one or that someone's going to punish you because you're doing this equity work. So, I will say that has been very helpful.

**Anisha Munshi:** I would second that Felicia, because having a leader, having a superintendent that believes in this work and supports the work fully is absolutely critical. We are very fortunate to be in the same situation where we have a leader, a superintendent who is a firm believer in this work and does not see it as one more separate piece of an initiative on the side, which is why, when I said, one of our core principles is equity, inclusion, collaboration. So, she firmly believes in that and that makes it a lot more easier for us to do the work.

**Aniah Francis:** That's amazing to hear. And so, that brings us to our final question. Looking ahead to the school year, what are you most excited about as it relates to the equity work that you're doing?

**Anisha Munshi:** So, for me, what I'm seeing is the ESSER funds, I know Javier mentioned those earlier, even prior to COVID there was always, there were inequities in the system which kind of went unnoticed and unattended to. What I'm excited to see is that with the additional funding, and education hasn't always been funded the way it should be, so what I'm hoping for is that this will really put a focus, it'll put social emotional learning and equitable opportunities for all our children at the forefront.

**Felicia Singleton:** I'm excited to continue our work in student voice, but I'm also really excited that in the past, you may have to nudge a little bit around the behavior side of MTSS, why you need PBIS or restorative work or SEL. And now we can't stop the phones from ringing or the emails from coming in. So, what I'm excited about is that this year we're going to purposefully work alongside four different systems I want prototype. I want to work in a rural district, our juvenile court and community schools which is considered alternative, a large traditional school district, and a charter school to build out their transformative SEL implementation.

So, I'm excited about that because they're super excited themselves and they're invested, but more so is I wanna be able to create demonstration sites where folks who feel like, how do I get this done? It's, you read about it, but launching and reading are two different things. Going to a training and activating are completely different things. So, I'm excited to be able to get in there and roll my sleeves up and learn from actually the warriors. I've never taught in a pandemic. I've never led a school in a pandemic. So the tables are turned, right?

County offices were seen as, we have the knowledge, let us help you. But the difference now is that our educators in schools and districts are on the frontline, and how can we learn? How can this make this opportunity for a two-way street so we can learn from them, and then we can offer the support as well.

**Ma Bernadette Andres-Salagrino:** I am very excited also. In the mathematic world, they are very excited to continue our work around re-humanizing mathematics. And we have been working around this to truly be intentional of what it looks like, how it sounds like, how this can be implemented in different sites or classrooms or districts. And so, with our team, with Kirsten and Jenny, we identified five I's under re-humanizing mathematics, and we are so mindful about instruction, inclusion, identity, infrastructure, and interdependence around those aspects to, again, re-humanize math.

But also, the continued partnership between and among different county offices for Region V CCSESA, between and among the California Mathematics Council and TODOS: Mathematics for ALL. All of these are coming together to again, hopefully with our new math framework coming, if it's going to be approved sometime next year, that we are going to just be forceful enough to have a mathematics that is joyful, that is fun. That is relevant to the lives of the many kids that we serve. So, I'm just so excited about that.

**Javier Garcia:** I think for us, I'm excited to see how, as things roll out with the core values and our equity foundations, how we see those take shape and grab a foothold across the organization. I think people are doing a lot of great work, so I'm just excited to hear some of their stories. I had a chance to meet with some departments that I never get to talk to a couple of weeks ago, and just kind of hearing how behavior and mental health services are kind of working in the various communities was very enlightening to me and seeing how they named equity in their work was thrilling.

So, getting more opportunities to see and hear across the org is exciting. And I don't know, just making sure that as things happen, we are kind of attending to all of our students and all of our adults as well. And for us, I think one of the things that we'll kind of keep close is that working with the fear and discomfort, because it can often be uncomfortable to have these conversations. And making people comfortable enough to lean into that discomfort and not like kind of turn in and run the other way is I think something that we actually, we named yesterday as a goal of ours.

**Aniah Francis:** Thank you so much for your answers. I know I really enjoyed hearing them. It was really informative and amazing to see the work that you're

doing. 'Cause it actually gives me a bit of hope when it comes to education. And now I'll turn it back over to Jenny.

**Jenny Betz:**

Thank you. I wanna leave that as really our final thoughts. Thank you, thank you, thank you, to Christina, to NEP for the Liberatory Design, to our panelists, and our awesome moderator, Aniah.