

Black Leadership Panel

July 21, 2020

6 to 7 p.m.

Opening: Dr. Paul Gothold, Superintendent of San Diego County Office of Education

Facilitator: Dr. Fabiola Bagula

Panelists:

- Dr. Shirley Weber, Assembly Member California District 79
- Dr. Joi Spencer, Interim Dean/Professor, University of San Diego
- Dr. Cynthia Larkin, Principal Morse High School, San Diego Unified School District
- Dr. Joseph Johnson, Executive Director, National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST)
- Timothy Shaw, Board Member, Lemon Grove School District

Dr. Fabiola Bagula: On behalf of San Diego County Office of Education Equity Department in conjunction with AAAE, we are honored to host this Black Leadership Panel. We do this service of our students. Audience members have been muted but may use chat box for questions. We will be monitoring those questions. Dr. Goldman is a moderator there. If we have time or will answer or ask some of the questions, but we will also hold them so that we continue this dialogue in the future. So, if we don't get to your question, it's going to be okay. Thank you for joining us again. This session was designed to discuss the exacerbated inequities and the disproportionate ways both COVID and our current civil rights movement has impacted our black population across the county. To begin our program, I would like to introduce our San Diego County superintendent, Dr. Gothold.

Dr. Paul Gothold: Good afternoon or evening everyone. It's an honor and privilege to have you here tonight. On behalf of our Board of Education I want to welcome you to tonight's discussion, that's put on by our Equity Department. These are actually a series of webinars. Most recently we had a black student webinar last week. And we are trying to encapsulate the student voice or black leaders in a way that we can make this meaningful, make these learning experiences for our districts and schools and educators. And you know, just to give you a little background and context of our Equity Department. A few years ago, Dr. Shirley Weber our assemblywoman, championed and was able to secure money in San Diego County Office of Education and other agencies. We were the only two agencies in the state selected

for this. And even know that grant money has expired, this continues to be a priority for our office. We have enjoyed a partnership with AAAE and providing meaningful development for educators across the county. As well as Joe Johnson in NCUST [National Center for Urban School Transformation] and doing equity works, getting into the school buildings, working together with principals and teachers to identify barriers to eradicate some of those systemic problems that prevent our kids from achieving at the desired levels. I am going to quickly mention that in our student webinar we had 10 African American young people from our, from our schools all across the county. And some of the things that they said we're about their experiences in school were as follows. They said they felt disregarded. They said they felt disrespected and invisible at school. They experienced microaggressions. They also said they wanted the adults on campuses to listen, to learn more about them, and to speak up on their behalf. There is no way any of our children should have to experience coming to school in that type of fashion. They also mentioned that the forum provided an incredibly powerful outlet. That gave them space to talk and to heal and to talk about some of their experiences. And one of the things that we notice as an agency when we work with school districts during the times of unsettling during COVID and everything else, is a lot of, a lot of the educators we spoke to weren't comfortable providing these spaces and having these conversations. So, our work is even more intentional, more grounded and what we need to do to protect our kids. I want to thank our students who participated in this webinar for their courage and honesty and everything else because this was a webinar that the kids spoke candidly about their experiences at schools and the audience were our teachers. They were our educators. Where this ties into the work that we've been doing in our office, we've had an active African American Advisory council, started in partnership with AAE for over a year. We're working to put together a blueprint for success based on research and evidence-based practices. And as soon as that is complete that will go to our board of education for approval. It's something that we are going to expect all 42 districts to reference in their LCAP, about expenditures, about programs, about professional development to ensure the success of our historically underserved kids. I know that we've been talking about this work for decades and one of the things that I challenge our staff to do is to stop admiring the problem and get to solution. We don't want this to be a one-shot webinar where we just talk about what it is that we need to do. I'd be remiss if we didn't bring up the fact that we lost an incredible legend and champion and civil rights activist in John Lewis. Everything that it, that I've heard, that I've seen no matter what the circumstances, no matter what he was faced with it and you know, you always saw thread in a message of hope with everything that he did and all of his work. So, I'm hoping that we take that, the spirit of that and his legacy and make sure that we not only adhere to the things that we know that can change the lives of kids but more importantly, the gaps, the experience that our kids have to this day are unacceptable. Our agency is willing to do whatever it takes to eradicate those gaps, leverage all the resources and support if we can, to move the needle so that our kids leave our program with options. What I mean by that is I believe that every child should be treated with dignity, respect, high expectations and surrounded by loving and caring adults so that

they are prepared to do whatever it is they want when they leave our program. Whether they want to go to college or not it's our responsibility to prepare them. It's your choice but not the system. And too often the system is created with pathways for our young people. So, having said that I want to just make sure that I thank the panelists tonight. We have some incredibly esteemed folks. Dr. Shirley Weber, for your continued advocacy and in work, we can't thank you enough for what you've done not just for our community that you represent but also Statewide and everything you do to advocate for historically underserved children. I know you're going to be properly introduced later but I needed to say that because of the work that she has done so profoundly from a state level. Joe Johnson, of course and NCUST. We have an incredible partnership there. We're doing the work together in many of our schools as you'll probably hear later today. So that, Dr. Bagula, I hand it back over to you. Thank you for our distinguished panelists and I look forward to the conversation tonight. Thank you.

Dr. Bagula: So, one of the reasons why we also came together especially in pandemic times is we started to note how racialized on both COVID-19, were exasperating the inequities. We started to curate a long list of press items and some of the things that we noticed. Here's just a clip of this. When the Atlantic published the article called the Black Plague in April, we started to pay very close attention to the racialization of the pandemic. According to all of the six paged long list document that we now have of articles, we noted that black Americans get COVID-19. They have higher rates of death, higher risk of getting COVID. They have higher job loss. They have lost their employer provided healthcare. Their businesses have closed. They have lost their savings, their retirement. Their fear of not being able to pay for rent. Access to healthcare has been comprised. The list goes on and on. One of the things that we're advocating for is that schools that serve our communities pay attention to the disproportionality in the ways that COVID is impacting our students and our families as we proactively lead forward. This was the case and then our current civil rights movement, our Black Lives Matter movement also began. Our black students are experiences two very different historically traumatic items that are happening right now. We wanted to make sure to gather a panel of distinguished panel members to discuss these inequities, to discuss our current state, but also to much like Dr. Gothold stated, what's our call to action? What is going to be our hope? What are we going to work toward?

I want to formally introduce this beautiful panel. First of all, we are joined by assembly member Dr. Shirley Weber, who represents California 79th assembly district. This includes Bonita, Chula Vista, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City, and San Diego. Dr. Weber chairs the assembly budget subcommittee on public safety and serves as a member of the assembly standing committee on education, higher education, elections, budget and banking and finance. She has also taught at the university level and served as a mayor's appointee and chair on the Citizen's Equal Opportunity Commission. Dr. Weber is known for her advocacy

for closing the achievement gap and the higher standard of excellence for all children. I know that she's championed a lot of the work that our department is currently doing as well.

Secondly, Dr. Joi Spencer. She's the interim dean and professor at University of San Diego. She is a champion for improving mathematic education. Her work sits at the intersection of mathematics education, teacher education and educational equity and seeks to interrogate, investigate and improve the mathematics learning opportunities for African American and other minoritized youth. Dr. Spencer developed a PhD in education for social justice program at the University of San Diego. which welcomed its first cohort in fall 2019. Her most recent publication, Access, Power and Participation in Mathematics Classrooms captures the role of observation in advancing equity and the teaching and learning of mathematics.

Trustee Timothy Shaw is the board member from Lemon Grove, serves as a high school counselor for the San Diego Unified School District in Crawford High School. Mr. Shaw also serves on the advisory board of San Diego state's enrollment manager committee and is an annual presenter at the East County Young Men's Conference. He's a member of the PTA, serves on the calendar committee, serves on the DBAC LCAC committee of Lemon Grove School District.

Dr. Joe Johnson is a founding executive director of the National Center for Urban School Transformation at San Diego State University which identifies, studies and promotes the best practices of high-performing urban schools and districts. Dr. Johnson has also served as professor, dean and interim provost and senior vice president at SDSU. Earlier in his career he served as a teacher, school and district administrator, a state department official, a researcher and a senior executive director at the US Department of Education.

We are also joined by Dr. Cynthia Larkin, the principal of Morse High School. She strives to make the curriculum relevant, rigorous and engaging for all her students. Dr. Larkin designed and taught new course in the district, American literature, taught through the America, African American perspective, excuse me, which was featured in the San Diego Union Tribune and the California Educator. Dr. Larkin is a national board-certified teacher in English language arts, adolescents and young adulthood who believes that all students can thrive and achieve the success when students are surrounded by nurturing and supportive stakeholders.

So we welcome you. Thank you so much for spending your evening with us. We have an offering of questions. We have an offering of three questions. However, I do want to stay that we're not in these spaces very often where right now we have a panel of distinguished black leaders from our county. We want to have this opportunity to witness you discussing your own leadership, your own expertise and then the call to action for ourselves. All of the

practitioners across the county that really want to lean in and do this work for our students. I will try to MC a little bit here and there, but overall it is our discussion to have, your discussion to have and for us to listen and learn from.

So, the first question and I'm going to stop sharing, is how are you proactively addressing the disproportionality of COVID-19 and our current civil rights movement with the community that you serve? Dr. Weber would you like to begin the conversation?

Dr. Shirley Weber: You know, I can. One of the things that I hope I'm unmuted. I am, I think. One of the things that we address with the governor as we began to look at the data when it first came out. We sent him a note before our agenda saying that when black, when the rest of the world catches a cold, black people get pneumonia. And it's really evident during any type of crisis of pandemic as we are experiencing. Whether it's our students in schools not having the necessary equipment they need or the computers or the internet connections, or whatever it might be. Whether is looking at folks being able to find a place to get tested because of the virus. Being in an essential worker category, where they're working more than anyone else and getting infected, living in housing that is so overcrowded, not having the necessary resources to be able to survive. So, it goes on and on. We made a commitment at that point to say and that when we recover, we will recover not as we were but better than we were. That we have to begin to do the things that make a difference and we have to recognize the fact that this tremendous poverty gap, this tremendous resource gap that we have in California, the richest state in the nation and the fifth largest economy in the world. We have the ability to do things. So, we have begun to talk about equity at the state level. The unfortunate thing is that we talk about it, but we don't act on it. That's the problem with me, always is that everyone has learned the definition of equity, can give you examples of it, talk about it and yet when the money comes down from the Cares Act, Cares Act and we look at the money that is designed for education loss, which really affects the kids of colored more than anyone else and poor kids. That money is not being equitably distributed across the districts of students at the greatest amount of loss. People see it as oh we have less budget than before, that's not the issue, education loss. We've been, I've been and the governor was battling it, but it's interesting that the members of the assembly who, who supposedly are in favor of equity and bringing justice and equality and equal opportunity cannot find it in themselves to let go of the dollars and make sure that those students are heard and that they're represented. We're fighting, of course to make sure that the bill that makes everyone accountable for the money that they get through LCFF for those categories that that money is accounted for, that it has to be used for those children and rolled over. We fought several districts who wanted to say trust us we will, we will do right by the children this time. And fortunately, the committee said no. If you have lots of money you don't do right. There's no question in mind of when you have less money that you going to do right. So, there're a number of things that were trying to do to try to create a greater sense of equal opportunity and access. One of those things out that

we're doing it in terms of the caucus is one we're doing is ACA5, which will open up a tremendous amount of opportunity once we get past this whole clamp down on affirmative action and have an opportunity for district to then to have money and resources specifically targeted for groups of kids who have need and be able to legitimately do that without feeling that you're going to be sued every time you put together a program that helps black students or helps Latina females or whatever it may be. We did that back in the 90s, in the early nineties in city schools. All that has stopped with proposition 209. Passage of a proposition 16 this time we'll hopefully open up those floodgates for opportunities for not only the kid's families but for programs that can help those students. We're also putting forth AB3121 which is reparations bill. No group has suffered as much as African Americans in this country and not receive one penny for reparations. Nothing to try to bring them forward in terms of that of economic development or education development. Working three, free in this country for almost 300 years and then have been set free without even an effort to give land or opportunity or education to that group. So, we now have a reparations bill that's in the assembly. It's particularly focusing on African American children and families. And that bill will then form a commission whose task will be to basically develop a plan to talk about the damage done to African Americans in California and develop a plan to talk about the loss in terms of education, economic development, opportunity. Those kinds of things and begin California on the road to try to repair the damage that was done. So those are some of the things we are doing. I know we have a short period of time and I'm not going to go any longer, but we're doing those things because we recognize if there's a tremendous gap and doing nothing only makes a gap get worse. We have to do something extraordinary. Everyone gives lip service, but everybody's not willing to sacrifice because giving extraordinary service means at a sacrifice for some in order to be able to make sure that we close the gap for us. So, thank you very much.

Dr. Bagula: And that was a beautiful proactive leadership stance that you're taking on behalf of students. Dr. Johnson I'm curious about your proactive stance and how you're starting to address this disproportionality from your perspective.

Dr. Joseph Johnson: I think that, first of all thank you and thanks to the San Diego County Office of Education for hosting this event. I think that all of the events of the past few months underscore the power of systemic racism within our society. Maybe for the first time for many there is this clear visceral understanding of the impact of that systemic racism in ways that are affecting people's lives. And so, while there are so many things that need to be addressed in our healthcare system. There are so many things that need to be addressed in our policing systems. So many things that need to be addressed in so many aspects of American life. What occurs to me most powerfully is that we should be hearing the horns blasting that this is our call as educators to address the systemic racism that has been for years influencing the hugely disproportionate learning results for children in our schools. And so, to me this is a call for much greater urgency. The time is now. The time has been

now for a long time but if we don't respond now then it's like we're missing the opportunity. And so, that means that we have to be asking ourselves how do we articulate that all the things that we have acted as if they were acceptable before, where we can show that it is clearly not acceptable. And where we push ourselves and we push our organization, our institutions in ways that we moved to a new normal where we have a commitment to make clear and positive changes. One last thing to say when I when I talk about systemic racism I'm not simply talking about the individual personal racism, I'm talking about the things that we don't even notice, the things that we have come to accept, the things that we have come to think, oh that's just part of the way we do business that are doing violence to our children and doing violence to our society. So, to me it's all about accepting the urgency or action that responds to the systemic racism within education.

Dr. Bagula: Thank you. Dr. Spencer same question to you, proactively leading and you're on mute.

Dr. Joi Spencer: Thank you for inviting me to be part of this panel. Just to jump right in, I want to start off by saying that part of what I'm doing is with what I've always done, and I feel like we have to do this work in season. We have to do it out of season. We have to do it in 2020. We have to do it in 2021 and we have to keep doing this work because it's clear that the work isn't finished yet. So, the first thing I want to say is that higher education has a huge role in helping to undo and to address the issues affecting African American children and families in San Diego. I am a Californian by birth. I was born and raised here. I grew up in Los Angeles, north of here. What I've noticed by being in San Diego over the last decade is that there's a real resistance to naming issues that actually use the word African American, actually use the term black. And to me, if you don't name something you cannot actually fully address it. Some of the things that I have been engaged in are actually having named scholarships for black students. Actually, having named activities and programs that are specifically for black students that understand the challenges that black students face and the nuance ways in which they face those challenges. I'm going to specifically just share quickly about in mathematics education. It was clear to me as a very young person growing up in California that math was really shaping who had opportunities past high school and who did not. We all know, we all know the stories about the achievement gap and how mathematics serves as this gate keeper, but I have yet, yet to really conquer this problem. When I was able to see by spending years in schools is the way in which, early on African American kids are pegged as unable to achieve in mathematics, mathematically illiterate, not engaged. I would hear this message over and over again about black students. And as a former speaker just said, it's gotten to the point where we just see it as normal. We walk into a school that is 60% black or 40% black and the higher math class it has one black student in it and no one has called attention to it, that we sit there in that school for an entire you know decade or two decades and no one calls attention to it. This is a travesty and it is a norm that is unacceptable. And so, one thing I have been engaged with for many years is something

called the STEAM Academy. There's a lot of other work that I do but I'm going to call attention to this because myself and my colleagues at the University of San Diego, we have been intentional with developing STEM and STEAM outreach specifically to black families, black churches, black mosques. We are not, we don't just sort of put a blanket. We are looking for the general student of color. Well, we are but we also are being very deliberate and saying if you see an issue you have to address it, not skirt around it. We hire counselors who are African American who themselves got educated in California, who experienced all the challenges of nuanced racism that blacks experience in a space like California because blacks experience a unique racism in California that is pernicious, yet different. It has lasting huge effects, but their invisible, but at the same time we see the impact of it. So, one thing we the STEAM Academy, we hire African American counselors to run programs so that when black students come into our program, they can see folks who look like them. A number of issues, a number of other activities I'm engaged in, for example I just started a Ph.D. program in education for social justice. Why? Number one we need more people of color who have Ph.Ds. in the state of California. When you have educators of color who have Ph.Ds., they're going to be able to have positions of power that are going to be able to turn the wheel that needs to be turned. And we have a problem with actually awarding Ph.Ds. to African Americans in this state and to other folks of color. This program is specifically about folks who are committed to education for social justice. We have been, the outpouring. I cannot tell you how many, the outpouring of folks who want to get into our program and it's not just any old Ph.D. program. When they come here, they are educators and we are educating them about the story of African American people, the story of the indigenous communities here in California. What's the end result, in my opinion is you cannot educate a child who story you do not know and whose people you do not respect. When you do and that's what I think is happening in many schools. Black children show up in and folks don't know their story. They don't know their history and we are teaching the history of our people in this Ph.D. program and what that's going to do is produce the educators who can actually exchange and respect. My heart breaks when I hear young people say they don't feel respected. They feel invisible. That is heartbreaking and so we are doing work to change that, to change our educators so that they can see our children, name our children, love our children. Call to say something is black. Black is beautiful. This is an African American program. We're proud that this is an African American program. So, I'm going to stop there Fabiola. You know I can talk about this all night.

Dr. Bagula: I appreciate because one of the things that I know we heard very clearly from our student panel was that they said all we learn is about our role as slaves and that's the only bit of history that we talk about. And there's so much more breadth and depth and beauty on our history and we need to learn all of these things as well, so I appreciate that. Board trustee Shaw, what are the some of the proactive ways you're leading?

Mr. Timothy Shaw: Well thank you again for this opportunity, but first off, allow me to respond as a trustee but sometimes I also have to respond as a high school counselor. And so, first off Lemon Grove, let me talk about Lemon Grove what we did with this pandemic. The first thing that Lemon Grove did was sent out Chromebooks to our students because Lemon Grove has 16.6% African American students and if I am correct that is the highest percentage of African American students in the entire San Diego County. And so we have to be proactive making sure that they have what they need and for those who we were not able to reach as a group, Lemon Grove also provided packets in English and language arts as well as mathematics for our students who did not have that internet connection. As a high school counselor, I am always talking to our students and trying to push them into AVID, into advanced classes, honors classes, AP classes as well as the city college classes that is offered on our campus. Those who know me know that I'm not afraid to have those courageous conversations. I'm not afraid to have those little talk on Facebook. I will think about a question. I will formulate it because I know that those who are Facebook friends with me come from my high school, back in on Dr. Spencer mentioned Los Angeles. I was also born in Los Angeles, raised in Pomona, Garey High School. I'm putting that out there and I have those conversations with Garey High School. Our former students of Crawford High come in a variety of phases or races I should say and I'm not afraid to have those conversations with them. And anyone knows that I'm always reading the Union Tribune. I'm reading, looking at something. And those readings engage me with questions. I'm not afraid to have those conversations and with our students, our staff, our friends, our neighbors and that's what we continue to do.

Dr. Bagula: And Dr. Larkin of course you're also out there doing the work and we want to hear about your proactive leadership ways.

Dr. Cynthia Larkin: So, thank you. I want to first start off by saying that is really been like challenging as a principal like shifting leadership gears during this pandemic. So, as I share my thoughts on leadership actions it's really important to me to say that I do not have it all figured out. I am literally leading through this pandemic with just a focus on improving and really realigning my leadership actions in support of what's best for Morse and our community. 77% of Morse's population are considered low-income. While African American students are definitely disproportionately impacted so have several other subgroups of student population, like our latinx population, our students with disabilities, English learners. So, as I've been leading through this pandemic, I was about all my students. So, based on what's been happening with this pandemic in our society and a civil rights movement I really been preparing myself for different type of return because I know that I simply cannot return back to my school site whether on person to person or online conducting business as usual. It's just not going to work. I am someone who really is a life-long learner and I believe I will be attending PD and in just ways in which to improve my own leadership so I've been taking like and attending numerous online Zoom trainings and webinars offered by my district, by the San Diego County Office of Ed, by the National

Equity Project. And I wouldn't have taken these trains in order to help me figure out really how to best support Morse's community. I'm also participating in two book club with colleagues where we engage in a discussion about disrupting the racist policies and practicing at our school site. And I've also been collectively engaged in conversations with Morse's admin team and our equity team about ways to support students as they return to school next month. I really believe in the whole notion of there's a village because I cannot do it by myself. As I've been attending all of this PD and trainings I really have come down to some equitable actions, but it's important to know that the actionable items I'm going to talk about if I can speak right now is basically things that are exacerbated by the pandemic. So, these are things that I've been working on currently, but some of these things have actually been exacerbated based on the pandemic. So, number one is really we've already mentioned it. It's important to work district by district and families to ensure that our students have equitable access to technology, computer access and internet access by the time school starts on August 31st. We also are making an action to provide social and emotional trauma to support our students. Really important is making sure that our teachers are set up with the online platforms that we'll use and receive the necessary training to effectively launch online learning next month. Our online learning needs need to be more engaging and more rigorous and my team and I are working on strategies to support online instruction. Another disproportionality is really our students with disabilities. We have to, we're working on it right now providing strategies and guidance to support our gen ed and our special education specialists to ensure that our students with disabilities are receiving the supports they need to be successful with online learning. Then we really are also improving communication with our families and students. And continuing Morse's educational equity work with a greater focus. So, for the past two years, you know like Dr. Weber mentioned that we all know about equity, we kind of understand it but there's no action. So, I'm proud to say that at Morse High School with the support of the San Diego County Office of Ed we have been putting equity work in action. So, we have an equity team at our site and we have been focused on disrupting inequitable practices at our site. Practices that on some level people can attend to say they're best practices but we're trying to fight against those practices. We are doing the work and we've had several off staff PD and trainings on topics such as implicit bias, microaggressions, systemic racism and really another civil rights issue is really improving the quality of instruction in our classroom because all students do not have equitable access to quality instruction in the classroom. And so, while we've begun this work, we have been engaging in these hard conversations with our staff, but we really do have so much more to do.

Dr. Bagula: I love all the examples that you gave and the vastness of them. Right from Sacramento all the way down into classrooms and the list was relentless and a lot and I know I didn't capture all of it but I'm just thinking about how you modeled being a learner and engaging in continued learning, boldly naming and knowing our stories, having those courageous conversations, ensuring that the urgency continues that the sustainability of this

equity work continues and then also the system of accountability that we need to have as far as being citizens and being San Diego representatives. The system of accountability that we need to have and hold for our schools. So, thank you for those examples and I know I didn't capture everything that you stated but I wanted to make sure that we wrapped that.

So, the second question because you all do come with different perspectives is what are some immediate needs that are clear to you from your purview that might not be clear to all of us in the audience? Dr. Weber we would love if you would launch this conversation. What are some of the immediate needs that are clear to you that might not be clear to us?

Dr. Weber: Well I think you've raised a number of issues that are that are very, very important. What has become very clear to us at the at the state level is that there are significant number of students, a significant number that have not been touched by this distance learning. We look at the data of the number of students who have not even turned on their Chromebooks. Who have not enrolled at all and that bothers me immensely because clearly we have to have a plan and I know the superintendent I've spoken with him, the state superintendent. We need to have a plan of outreach to those families because it's not going to happen simply by saying school starts tomorrow, turn on your Chromebook and follow the instructions. If they haven't done yet, it's not going to happen. I know that we're in this COVID situation where there's no contact and so forth and so on but we are going to have to figure out a way, whether if it was by phone or whatever it is that we make contact with those kids who have not been engaged yet. That is so important because those students have already lost almost a half year of instruction. Generally, those are not the kids who can't even afford to lose a minute of instruction. So, we have to begin to do that. In addition to that and so if we're working on that the state level. I am tenacious with the state superintendent about what we have to do for these kids, but in addition to that I have also said too many of my friends who are retired teachers and educators and just retired citizens in the African American community. We're going to have to develop a system ourselves to reach out to our kids. We're going to have to be to provide the tutorial, the support, the caring, the attention they need. Many of us and when I mentioned this people oh yeah, I could do that. I could do that. We have, we're going to have two of those kids online or however it is. We're going to have to reach out to them through our churches, through whatever means, it's there. We're going to have to do the work because we can't wait to get the data that tells us again that these students are not just behind but severely behind. That this pandemic has had a tremendous impact on them. We're going to have to insist that the system develop a method by which those kids can get the information they need and catch up. It's not going to be sufficient to just run the normal race. They're going to have to run faster. They're going to have to jump higher because they're already behind and we see what's happening right now. I'm looking, I get, when looking at what we can meet to do at the state level to make sure that every child has been contacted, has a plan or program or something because just to ignore the fact that 20-30% of the kids have never turned on their

Chromebook and then declare ourselves successful because the ones who turned it on probably have been turning on Chromebooks their whole life, you know. And as a result, they, you know my grandkids are doing homeschooling with their mother who's a physician and my kindergartener is already getting ready to multiplication. Now, this is this is because Mom is so focused on his education that he knows, thinks he can do algebra. He told me the other day, he's ready for algebra and he's learning it. He's doing algebra and he's moving on into the first grade. So, you know, I don't worry about them. I don't worry about them, but I do worry about those kids whose parents are nervous about school, nervous about technology, don't understand all this stuff and we see the data that they not even turned on their book and not been engaged at all or either they've had instruction. The teachers didn't know what to do and so these kids now are suffering even more loss than they already had. And no intervention much in the summer. We're getting ready to start the fall. We're not going to have school again in the traditional sense. We cannot keep marching on as if this is normal. This is not acceptable, and we have to have a sense of outrage. I've been pushing the state that they are going to have to do something. I've also been pushing my friends and my colleagues who are educators and teachers and saying to them when I meet with them, we're going to get together you guys are we going to figure out who these kids are and what we need to do for them in this community and begin to help them because we just can't sit back and say oh well you know it was a pandemic. We have to intervene immediately and to make a difference for these kids and so that's my big push. Not only for at the state level but on a personal level. You know, come September our session is over which means I'm in San Diego from September to January. You guys are tired of me. You are going to get sick of me because I'm going to be knocking on everybody's door who can read and write to say you got to help these kids. You got to do something. You cannot just ignore it because it is unacceptable because it is compounded over years and we've already lost too many kids. So, waiting for the system to do the system going to do its thing, you guys got some great folks working and what have you, but you need some help. And that help needs to come from that community that loves those kids.

Dr. Bagula: Thank you for that Dr. Weber. We're going to go to Dr. Larkin. Dr. Larkin what are some of the immediate needs that are clear to you that might not be clear to us? You're on mute. It was going to happen.

Dr. Larkin: Both you and Dr. Gothold already mentioned my need but I'm going to go ahead and say it. As we lead the equity and anti-racist work at our school sites, we need to provide space for our students to voice their experiences and tell their stories about how they've experienced racism in our schools. I actually had a chance to watch the live student panel on July 15th. Luckily it is recorded so those of you that didn't get a chance to view it live. I strongly suggest that you check it out. It is online because it is powerful. These African American students who are currently in high school and college had shared stories of how the racist policies and practices impacted them throughout their school years even as far back

as elementary school. They did share stories of feeling singled out, feeling overwhelmed, feeling dismissed and feeling invisible. Sadly, many of them expressed the lack of protection and follow through from the administrators on their site. So, as I listened to the stories, I did feel a sense of guilt because I know that as a principal on my site, I could be doing more. I'm working on it, but I could be doing more and I'm going to do more. There have been situations where an African American student has been kicked out of class, sent to the office and I found myself having a hard conversation with a student in the sense I'm trying to like teach him or her to survive in the teacher's classrooms because the teachers have all the power. But I think I'd be an African American female who is also experienced similar experiences to theirs, I found myself, kind of preparing them for life. And so, what I really should have been doing is having these hard conversations with their teachers, but I am proud to say that I have been steadily engaging in any type of conversations, but they aren't easy. As I've done this at my site, I have received pushback. I've been made to feel like I'm in the wrong. I've been made to feel like I have not supported my staff, but it's hard work. It really is hard work leading this equity work and also having those courageous, hard conversation with staff. One of Morse's equity team's next steps is to collect the stories from our students. Our staff need to hear directly from our kids. There's something powerful in their voices and when we hear them, you can't ignore their experiences and their pain. We have to do more. My most immediately need is absolutely that as adults we have to quit talking too much and we have to also invite the voice of our students to the conversation.

Dr. Bagula: Thank you for that and I appreciate the point of children are not the ones that have to change their behavior to fit into a systemically oppressive system, but we actually have to change that system and the adults that are gatekeepers to those systems. So, thank you. Board Trustee Shaw, what are some immediate needs that you're seeing under your purview?

Mr. Shaw: First off, their life in the job area say always say why are we not sending them us, them kids who are prepared for work. Colleges always say what happened in the high school level that these kids are not prepared. Well the high schools blame the middle schools and middle schools blame the elementary. Then what we need to do in my mind, we need to start at birth with training and programs for our parents to make sure that our parents are ready. We need to reorganize how we spend funding. They've been talking about the defunding the police. It's just a reorganization what they're talking about. What we need to do is reorganize and make sure that our kids before we put on that first backpack and drop them off at preschool that they're ready. I was listening to Dr. Weber and she was talking to you and talking about her kids and her grandkids and how those things are available to not just her grandchildren, but it should be available to all children. Why can't we expose them? Take them to the park, take them down to the zoo and expose them when they're young because I know when my children were younger, I kept trying to make sure that they were exposed to the opportunities that are out there. Give them awareness. I think Dr. Gothold

talked about jobs that are out there. Let them know that there are jobs out there. STEAM jobs. I keep wanting yes, I just so happen to have one who's an educator. We need more black educators. We need more black legislators, politicians. We need more black policeman for sure. We just need to change our history books. The way that they are written because yes as was mentioned by Dr. Larkin earlier, our black kids come up learning oh I'm a slave. What else have they learned? What about all the black inventors? All the black abolitionist? What happened before we were slaves? Those are things that we also need to look at. One of the programs that to my answer came yesterday in one of our California school board's magazine. And that is Dr. Nadine Burke Harris. I hope she does not mind me mentioning her, but she's our new California Surgeon General and she has a program called ACE. This ACE program helps us deal with a lot of our mental needs that we have, abuse that is a lot times affecting our children and learning. The neglect that is often been affecting our children or our household dysfunction. What I'm thinking again and again is to start at birth. Before my wife and I got married we had a booked called Before You Say I Do. We went through counseling for months before we were able to say I do. We need training program for our children. Yes, I hope this I'm trying to keep it rated G but for our children before you say yes to sex you need to think about what you're doing because yes, my mother had me 58 years ago and I'm still here. We don't disappear as children. We need to be engaged and ready to know that I have to give time and effort to my children because they are not going to make it without us.

Dr. Bagula: I like that call Trustee Shaw about hiring more black teachers and I'm going to go to Dr. Spencer and then we can get them PH.D.s, right?

Mr. Shaw: That's right.

Dr. Bagula: Dr. Spencer what are some immediate needs that you're seeing?

Dr. Spencer: Some immediate needs that I'm seeing are related to mental health and related to just this idea of a housing density and the fact that when COVID hit, if you're living in a home that is crowded, if you're living in a community that has very little green space where you can't go outside and envision and look up at the blue sky, there is an impact of that on your on you, on your mental health, on the level of joy. We talked a lot about standards and learning and outcomes, but the truth is joy and love of learning, those are precursors to actually having deep engagement in your learning. If you're not in a space where you can learn with joy and learn with hope, then it's very, I understand why you haven't opened up your Chromebook. If I did not enjoy being in my classroom when you were face-to-face with me, I'm probably thinking wow I have some freedom now. Why would I tether myself to this Chromebook? One of the spaces I'm really, really thinking hard about it is how do we help African, how do we provide a space for African Americans to learn in a space of joy and love and hope, where the curriculum is one that engenders a vision, that engenders just new

insights and new hopes and new ideas about who they can become in the world? I'm so challenged when I walk into classrooms where kids are sitting there. They're bored to death. I want to go to sleep and I just walked into that classroom. So, how can a child be expected to sit through this classroom and through an entire school year. So, on my heart one of the things I'm thinking about at University of San Diego, we're thinking hard about supporting the more folks of color going into counseling, mental health, teaching. We're putting in all source of funding to make this something, to make this something that can grow in our county because our children, they are suffering because they are traumatized. They don't have a space to dream and grow.

Dr. Bagula: And lastly, Dr. Johnson. What are some needs that you see from your purview? You're on mute.

Dr. Johnson: Thank you. I will start by going back to something that Dr. Weber said a moment ago and it's just to reinforce the notion that students who are least likely to feel included, valued, supported and successful before schools closed in March are the students who are most likely to feel disconnected, disengaged and invisible now, unless we are deliberate and intentional in our outreach. So yes, it is important to do everything feasible to give students access to the technology that they need to continue their learning, but it's even more important to make sure that when they open that technology they're going to have an experience that reinforces them, that tells them that they are valued, that they are capable, that they are brilliant. If they don't find that when they open that Chromebook then we shouldn't expect them to open it again. And so, we have to challenge ourselves to not just think about what is the technology, but how can we utilize that technology in new and different ways that are going to connect and connect powerfully with our students, especially those students that we know have not been engaged before. You know I, my Center is in the process of working on it a new book. The book will be entitled When Black Students Excel. It's all about schools from across the country that are achieving amazing results for black students. And so, I've been interviewing these principals and teachers virtually because I wanted to get this thing done with or without COVID-19. One of my interviews, just yesterday was with a principal whose school is in the Bronx New York. And she has an amazing school where the population is mostly black and latino. Her black students and her latino students outperform white students in general and the New York City School District and outperformed white students in general in the state of New York. She right now, is so passionate because she's thinking we cannot lose a minute. I need us to be so ready to respond to the needs, the learning opportunities because she says, I need to make sure that my children continue to excel and she's relentless. Then I look at our systems in general. It feels like we have such a lower bar for ourselves. We've got to find that same relentless energy, that says the time is now. We've got to do this. Our children are so infinitely capable. We've just got to figure out how to transform our systems which also

means supporting great teachers, supporting great principals like dr. Larkin. Helping them so that they can succeed in making a powerful difference for our black students.

Dr. Bagula: I love that level of relentlessness that you spoke about. It's going to be the same level of relentlessness that I'm going to imagine Dr. Weber September through January here coming up. I know we're at a time boundary, but I want to make sure we get to the final question because we didn't even ask our audience for questions. Part of what Dr. Goldman is collecting from the audience is that our audience members are asking so where do we begin? What are our first steps? I know the final question I have for you, so maybe we can do a quick final answer from everyone, is what's our called to action? What is our call to action now and what does that mean? And so, maybe we can do that quickly so that we can honor the time boundary, but also make sure that we are united in our collective efforts. So, Dr. Weber what's our call to action?

Dr. Weber: Clearly, each one of us have to believe that we are the answer to the problem. That it will not be solved without us and I go to Sacramento everyday believing that if I don't stand up nobody else will. There may be others who will, but I will not sit back and wait for them to raise your hand and to move forward and to raise those issues. We have to believe that we are the answer, that we have the answer even if we don't and are not that confident that we, if you believe you're carrying the solution in your hand you going to run fast to get it to somebody. We have to believe that we have the answer. You may make mistakes along the way, but we will keep pushing because somehow another answer lies within us. That's not only the teacher, the principal, that's the community, that's the parents, that's everybody that's there that ought to be the point where they're so determined that they have the answer, but if they don't stand up for something nobody else will. And that works because you know when I go to Sacramento people tell me oh you can't do that. You won't be able to pass that bill, but I believe it did that, that somehow or another I will sit there and do this work and so I push forward with it. I bring it out and interestingly enough, people join me. So now, there's a group that getting ready in Sacramento to become an education committee, beyond policy committee, but the advocates of democrats and republicans because I've been challenging them to stop telling me this crap on the floor if you're not willing to do something about it. I go notes everyday tell me when you go meet, tell me what you want to do because we have got to believe that we have the answer and we can't keep waiting for somebody else who has as title to do the work. It is our job to do the work. And so, when you get that sense of urgency you will move.

Dr. Bagula: Thank you. How about we go to Board Trustee Shaw. What's our call to action?

Mr. Shaw: Well our call to action is our children. When the position for a Lemon Grove School Board came up, when I saw it, I ran for it. It's like Dr. Weber was just saying, I have to do it and I knew going in despite the other nine interviewers. I was like this is my job. I

have this. And we have to teach our children to know that they have this. As parents, as educators we have to do that. I have rooms in my house, and I use them as work as well. And probably if you're listening you already know it. You can even think the song because I've taught you, but earn As and Bs. When I say As and Bs, I want you in AVID. I want you in that advanced classes. I want you to take those college classes so earn As and Bs. Join clubs. You want to become the leader of the club because when it comes down time to it, you want to say that I'm running it and we're not going to even talk about the scholarship that comes when you have As and Bs on your transcript and when you're the leader of your club. Earn As and Bs. Join clubs, play sports, be active. It's good to be physically active. I know that we have this virus now. In San Diego Unified we can't practice till December, but it's okay we still join clubs, play sports and last but not least give back to your community. Volunteer. So, earn As and Bs, join clubs, play sports and volunteer.

Dr. Bagula: Beautiful. Dr. Larkin, what's our call to action.

Dr. Larkin: Our collective call to action in my opinion is to really do the anti-racist work of eradicating structural racism in our schools. So, I think that we need to continue making the space to having discussions about race and inequalities in our schools, but the discussions must now begin to shift toward action. So, like for districts, I really believe that they have a call to action as well. The majority of our educators I believe have not have in depth and consistent ongoing training. We need to effectively teach our historically underserved students. I feel like in order to support this anti-racist work, they must have ongoing PD. It just can't be a one and done type of situations, right? So, I think the school districts need to provide anti-bias PD for principals and teachers. And the big caveat here is to hold principals accountable for leading this work at our site. It's one thing to offer training, throw money at it, but it's a whole other level to ensure that we're actually doing the work. And I really have a call to action also for administrators and teachers. I really feel that first we have to examine our own unconscious and conscious biases and we get uncomfortable enough to do something different. So, I feel that we are often upholding the racist policies and practices at our site and we have to do the work to have a critical conversation and hard conversations with our admin, with our teachers. We just can't be admins to the teachers. They must also be teachers having hard conversations with each other.

Dr. Bagula: Dr. Spencer. Our call to action.

Dr. Spencer: We have several. First of all be engaged with young people in your life. There are, you know we're on this panel all of us have either children or grandkids or nieces and nephews as well as the young person who lives next door to you. It is it is unacceptable if the people in my community who are right next door to me, if I'm not loving on them, if I'm not teaching them to understand who they are and where they come from. So, teach young people who they are, their history, their legacy of greatness. When you understand who you

are, you are transformed. When you understand your story, when young, the times that I have seen light bulbs come on is when I have seen young people and an older people figure out and see what their story truly is. So, teach our story. Teach our story to our young people. If you do not know the story of black people in America, learn the story. There are a million. There's so many ways for you to find out what that story is and it is transformational. So, history is transformative. I will give also a plug for do not forget the higher education space. There's a lot of opportunity and power there. I personally am happy to work on partnerships. We partner with several districts throughout the county and we have seen wonderful, wonderful movement and children's interest and children's engagement in STEM and in STEAM and in other ways as well. Do not forget our space and higher education. We are here and it is our duty and responsibility to be present and to serve in the community.

Dr. Bagula: Thank you and Dr. Johnson. Our call to action.

Dr. Johnson: Thank you. So many things I'd like to say but I'm going to just keep it to one. So, when we visit very successful schools, schools that are doing an outstanding job of educating black students, we go, and we interview the students. During those interviews we ask who here at this school really cares about you? Who here really cares about your success? Who here is determined to make it such that you will succeed at high levels? And the kids will just go off telling us about this person and that person and this counselor and that teacher and this principal. And they show us that they are benefiting from a community that has wrapped itself around them in a powerful, caring way. There's a hundred thousand things that need to be done, but if, if for now, if every educator commits to planning right now. What can I do to make it such that the black students that I have the privilege to serve that they will think wow these are adults here are committed to my success. Whether we're doing school virtually or face to face or some mix, whatever, but if we're committed to figuring out how to build that connection, how to make those relationships powerful, the rest will come, and we will succeed. We will make a powerful difference for the children that we have the privilege to serve.

Dr. Bagula: On behalf of the San Diego County Office of Education and AAAE we're really thankful for all, for all of you brilliant panelists joining us this evening and taking the time to share with us not only your expertise but also our call to action. I know that I always learn from you when I listen to you so I'm very grateful and I know that audience members are very grateful for your time this evening. Thank you for joining us. That concludes our panel but, as Dr. Gothold said this is not going to be a one-and-done we're going to hold a series of these events. I'm very dedicated to telling our story I want to conduct a black teacher panel next as well because I think it's necessary to have that narrative out in our public education system also, but I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart and committed to all of

the students here in San Diego for joining us. Thank you so much and I hope you have a good evening.