

CENTER FOR EDUCATOR PARTNERSHIPS AND STUDENT SUPPORT

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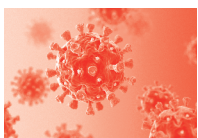
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PARTNERSHIP

CENTER FOR EDUCATOR
PARTNERSHIPS AND
STUDENT SUPPORT

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The Center for Educator Partnerships and Student Support (CEPSS), housed in the College of Education at Minnesota State University, Mankato, was established in 1988. The mission of the Center is to interconnect, enrich, and sustain learning communities of students, staff, faculty and citizens from the University and P-12 schools who foster human development, professional growth, and optimal learning opportunities through research, reflection, and practice.



MINNESOTA STATE

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Letters From the Acting Director and Editor

Greetings to All!

My name is Dr. Teri Preisler. During the Spring 2021 Semester, I have been supporting and facilitating portions of the position of Director of the Center for Educator Partnerships and Student Support (CEPSS).

I am also in my first year as an Assistant Professor in the K-12 and Secondary Programs Department. Prior to this, I had the honor to serve as a Minnesota K-12 educator for 34 years in various roles and most recently as the Superintendent for Tri-City United School District.



Dr. Teri Preisler
Acting Director

Throughout these years, I learned about the value of the partnership with Minnesota State University, Mankato and our Minnesota Educators Partnership districts by serving as an administrator in four of the eight districts. These PreK-12 districts include Centennial, Faribault, Le Sueur-Henderson, Mankato Area, Owatonna, St. Peter, Tri-City United, and Waseca.

Our Minnesota Educators Partnership (MEP) engages school districts with Minnesota State Mankato to enhance teacher preparation, provide professional development and advocate for improvements in the education system in Minnesota, from kindergarten through college.

This MEP has navigated changing times in education over the decades, but none larger than this past year with the Covid-19 pandemic. Recognizing that the pandemic impacted all aspects of life since March of 2020, the focus on racial equity and social justice has been necessary for a much longer amount of time and now more than ever.

This Partnership Magazine focus is on how our PreK-Grade 12 and Minnesota State Mankato have continued to grow and support our future educators and provide professional development in the most challenging of times. We can all be proud of and thankful for the solid commitment to high levels of teaching and learning – especially learning throughout our Minnesota Educator Partnership districts and Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Unique Partnership – Unique Impact

Take Care and Be Well,

Dr. Teri Preisler
Acting Director, Center for Educator
Partnerships and Student Support

Dear Reader,

My name is Sherwin Bothello, and I am the current Graduate Assistant at the Center for Educator Partnerships and Student Support (CEPSS). Originally hailing from the United Arab Emirates, I currently reside in Minnesota and am pursuing my master's degree (MSc) in Information Technology and a Professional Science Master's (PSM) in Cybersecurity and Risk Management. I appreciate the opportunity to work within CEPSS and helping create noteworthy educators that will benefit students' lives.



Sherwin Bothello
Editor

Through this magazine, we hope you gain some insight as to how CEPSS is actively involved in supporting students by acting through the lens of racial equity and social justice. The articles and information presented will help guide you in understanding our vision and mission on how CEPSS seeks to build relationships that connect schools and communities to our students, faculty and staff from the University and P-12 schools. Additionally, you will also experience several testimonials from staff, teacher candidates and educators from our partner districts on a wealth of different topics ranging from professional development and training to creating optimal learning opportunities as we pace through the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, we must remember that the foundations that we establish today in trying to meet the needs and concerns of our students and teachers is pivotal to achieving success in the long run.

Pax Et Bonum

Sherwin Bothello
Editor

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COMMON GROUND



Monde Schwartz

Started in Spring 2020, *Common Ground* was a concept that was proposed by Monde Schwartz, Principal of Prairie Winds Middle School in the Mankato Area Public School District in collaboration with Dr. Beth Beschorner from Minnesota State University. Prior to Monde being appointed as the principal in 2019, she

engaged in equity training that has helped define and fuel this unique collaboration.

The purpose of Common Ground is to create a safe and healthy environment for students to have conversations about race, racism, and topics that are important to everyone. Already this year there have been 30 students and 6 mentors involved. The students are in sixth, seventh, or eighth grade and assigned into race and gender alike groups of five students each.

Dr. Beschorner shared that she has, "... contributed to the project in three ways: (a) worked through some of the initial ideas with Monde (but she was definitely the leader of this project in all aspects); (b) served as a participant by being the adult mentor for the white female group; and (c) used qualitative methods to conduct a research study about Common Ground."



Dr. Beth Beschorner

For the students themselves, they found it a little awkward at first. Over the course of the last year, these middle school students became accustomed to using race protocol and the courageous conversation model. Students of color reported to being able to share more easily. White students often were appreciative of their peers sharing their stories and engaged in a positive manner.



Angie Rogers, one of the adult leaders facilitating the meetings says this about her Common Grounds group, "This group really helped open the eyes of many members. I believe that the discussions we had during this time were very valuable. I know that the group within the group that I was leader of had many great conversations surrounding race and racism. This group should happen in all schools so all students can learn about inequalities, especially surrounding race. It was also great to see how quickly this group became a family and we were able to communicate so easily. We all grew stronger as a group the more time went on continuing with the group. This is an experience I will never forget."

Dani, a current student at Prairie Winds Middle School in Mankato says, "I liked how we had groups of each ethnicity. I also liked how we talked about how there's a lot of racist things going on and how we were able to build a community and be comfortable with each other. It was fun."

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has since made it difficult to facilitate these meetings in a face-to-face format which has been the ideal way to engage students to share their thoughts and concerns.

Currently, Common Ground has been on a hiatus. But in order to keep up momentum, faculty members have undertaken incorporating conversations on race with student bodies by including it into advisory lessons.

Students are eagerly anticipating Common Ground to resume in Fall 2021. Mrs. Schwartz plans to broaden its reach to more students by continuing to recruit adult leaders that are willing to guide and support students and to enable more platforms to boost creativity regarding this project. She hopes that by doing so she can "build muscle and stamina around discomfort for race conversations which in turn will help propel further understanding."

Mrs. Schwartz goes on to incite that "having a time and space to discuss the impact of race is so important and Common Ground has provided that. The intelligent discussions we had with these students proves that these subjects are not just reserved for adults." With sessions being wonderfully led by the adult mentors and questions creating several avenues for open discussion, she is excited to expand Common Ground to provide more students the opportunity to continue on their racial journey.



VIRTUAL COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION: **THE EXPERIENCE™**



Dr. Natalia Ortiz

In February, the College of Education at Minnesota State University, through the Pacific Education Group decided to provide a multi-day virtual seminar to train faculty and staff on using the foundational tools of the award winning, *Protocol for Courageous Conversation™*.

The main speaker at this event was Dr. Natalia Ortiz, a mother of two and a Chilena-Riqueña native New Yorker who was educated in the public schools of New York City and brings fourteen years of experience as a classroom teacher, university professor, racial equity practitioner, coach, mentor, organizer, writer, and facilitator. In addition to teaching both undergraduate and graduate students in Social Studies Education at Hunter College, she is a prominent board member of the Education for Liberation Network and works as an Equity Transformation Specialist with Courageous Conversation helping train educators in developing a racial equity practice.

This transformative seminar was aimed towards hands-on experience in engaging, sustaining and deepening conversations about race. Participants across different sectors were tasked in working together to examine the impact of race on their lives personally, professionally and organizationally. In addition to the Courageous Conversation Protocol, a few other topics and concepts were discussed:

- Racial Identity Development and Practice
- (De)Constructing Systemic Racism
- Building Racial Consciousness
- Racial Power and Privilege.

Upon interacting with a few of the attendees during and after The Experience™ it was noted that the conversations and content had a profound impact. While trying to understand the introductory question on “Why Race now?” a few participants shared some notable responses such as “its long overdue,” “no better time than the present, especially with the current happenings in the media and government,” and “there is an urgency around it.”

In addition to reflective conversations, there was a lot of media being presented to help attendees understand the depth of racism. From a timeline of historical events impacting race to pictures allowing participants to assess social conditioning and re-aligning the lens through which they’ve been raised with.



HAPPENINGS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Here are some of the notable quotes and responses on how people in different positions within the MN Educator Partnership districts have dealt with the COVID-19 happenings.

Most professionals have reported that the current pandemic has affected their area of work in a positive way. However, a few still feel that it has had an adversely negative impact.

Question 5: If COVID has impacted your area of work, please describe your response to it.

COVID-19 has in many ways forced many to respond quickly and create adaptive responses in order to engage students and inform parents. Mark Savignano, a Minnesota State Mankato faculty member explains that COVID-19 has forced him to change the way he addresses his teaching pedagogy. The responses to these challenges however have enabled him to expand his instructional methods.

Addressing health and well-being of students, is another focus of first-year Health and Physical Education teaching fellow Emma Noren at Mankato East High School. She hopes to be someone that her students can approach and talk about mental health issues especially if they are struggling. "I'm thankful that I am able to get some of my students moving throughout the day and I'm blessed to have students who are willing to be active," says Emma.

Despite some benefits however it has been a struggle for schools "to keep class sizes small enough to try and mitigate the risks of a mass COVID-19 spread" as explained by 6th grade professional intern teacher, Michael Thompson from Waseca Public School District.

Question 6: In your opinion, what are some of the positive changes that have occurred due to the pandemic?

Despite the challenges, students themselves are learning to work on improving organizational skills and independence. Michael goes on to say that "the level of difference where students are being able to be self-motivated now compared to last year is very positively different."

A general notion of increased technology understanding and adoption has been observed whereby students seem to be more socially present despite being physically distant from peers and educators.

Question 8: What changes would you choose to incorporate (post COVID-19) to better assist you perform your organizational responsibilities?

Creating a healthy balance between addressing mental health and social isolation through digital media and technology is key to moving forward. Another strategy proposed by Emma to incorporate after the dust settles from the pandemic, are weekly or monthly check-ins and goal observances.

GET TO KNOW OUR GRAD FELLOWS

Graduate Teaching Fellows serve as full-time teachers in partner school districts. They are mentored by teachers in the district serving as Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSA). In addition to their own classroom responsibilities, each teaching fellow is enrolled in a Master's program at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Yuseina Brito Lino

Faribault Public Schools

I have learned that collaboration is key to getting it all done! My colleagues have been the biggest resource I have access to. I have also learned that students are so tech-savvy and are teaching me so many things along the way.

My advice: Go for it!! This whole fellowship has opened so many resources of other first year teachers I wouldn't have met otherwise. At my school my mentor is ALWAYS willing to help me!



Joseph Byron

Waseca Public Schools

I love teaching mathematics because it can be applied to almost all aspects of life and teaching kids how to properly apply mathematics opens many doors for students in the future. I have learned how to prepare classes in the real world and digital world. I would advise them (Future Grad Fellows) to keep a detailed schedule of what needs to be completed on a weekly basis. This makes it much easier to schedule in time during the week to work on grad school while you are in the midst of constantly creating content for your students.

Lauren Britt

Centennial Public Schools

I enjoy teaching first grade because I feel that I can encourage my students to have a positive attitude on learning and school in general. By showing my students how much I enjoy learning, I can instill that love for learning in my students. There is so much learning in first grade. I love how my students get excited about learning new things and when they understand something that they were struggling with. I love seeing all the progress in first grade: socially and academically. I have learned to become incredibly flexible! I also realized how important social emotional learning is for students and building strong relationships. The amount of support and mentoring in this fellowship is amazing. I was incredibly lucky to have an amazing mentor who I felt comfortable to go to with any question or concern I was having!



Emily Hintz

Mankato Area Public Schools

I loved my English classes and teachers in high school, and I knew I wanted to work with youth. I love teaching English because it's all about learning how to think critically and finding your voice. In reference to Education and the pandemic, there is no expert in unfamiliar territory.



Kelsey Laughlin

Faribault Public Schools

One thing this pandemic has taught me is just how important collaborating with your colleagues is. Your grade level team is there to lighten the load and problem



solve together. My technology knowledge has greatly increased this year. I have used Seesaw, Google Meet, and a whole range of apps for my teaching. Plans, lists, organization, and routines are essential as a fellow. Some advice that I wish I had is to get a jumpstart on the year as soon as possible. Get into your classroom as soon as possible to get it set up. Get to know your curriculum and standards well before you start teaching. When you get behind as a fellow, it is hard to catch up so try your best to get ahead right away.

Catherine Miller

Waseca Public Schools



Previously I never thought of myself as being an upper elementary teacher because I migrated towards the younger grade levels. Now being a current fifth grade teacher, my mind has been completely changed! This age level is a complete joy to teach! The witty, humorous, and quirky personalities they are developing as individuals is incredible to see, and I absolutely love that I get to be a part of it! The biggest thing that I have learned throughout this pandemic is how much students need school. Being in school and interacting with others is vital for kids and vital to me as a teacher. I need them just as much as they need me! If you are looking for an encouraging and supporting environment for your first year of teaching while also pursuing your Masters degree, then this is the perfect fit for you!

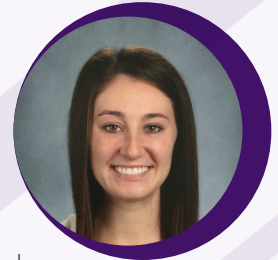
Emma Noren

Mankato Area Public Schools

I enjoy teaching health and physical education because I am able to be active everyday with my students. Physical, mental, emotional, and social health are key to living a long and healthy lifestyle and I want to help my students develop these everyday practices and skills. I have learned that connection needs to happen before content. Due to the shift to online learning, students need more support than ever to be successful. I have made it a point to connect with all of my students and understand how they are feeling before trying to introduce or teach a new concept.

Brandi O'Loughlin

Centennial Public Schools



One of my favorite things about teaching fourth grade, is the independence. I love watching them take control of their learning and be excited to become independent. Fourth grade seems to be a lot about life learning skills that are embedded into content areas. Whew!! During pandemic teaching, I learned a lot about technology and my students. Something in particular that I learned about students, is they need social conversations. Students are extremely social by nature and they truly need to be exposed to many other students to feel that sense of wholeness with friends. The advice I would give to an undergrad considering the Fellowship Program, is that it's a great way to get your foot in the door. I had considered doing my Masters Degree, however that would be a 6th year of college; in which I was sick of paying for college. It's a great incentive to get your tuition paid for, and a start at something that you won't regret. Right now, I'm able to implement what I'm learning in my courses into my classroom.

Payne Robinson

LeSueur-Henderson Public Schools



The pandemic has shown me that given enough trust and autonomy, "unmotivated" students can become ruthless self-starters. If you trust your students to meet you halfway they will surprise you in their ability to traverse complex information. I wish I had been thinking about this opportunity earlier. There are a few graduate programs that require some extra undergraduate preparation that I had not considered before taking the fellowship opportunity. Look into some grad programs at least 2 years before hand! I'm happy with where I'm at.



Nicole Schuette

Owatonna Public Schools

I have always enjoyed working with children. I knew my passion of working with children is what led me to want to be a teacher. All the new fun learning opportunities kindergarten students have. I have learned so much with technology! My kindergarten students have learned so much with technology that they definitely would not have learned if we were not put in this situation. You can do anything you set your mind to! Definitely take into consideration how this program would fit into your life. It is such a great opportunity!



Samantha Stoelk

St. Peter Public Schools

As an educator, we have the unique opportunity to interact and build relationships with the future leaders of the world. Empowering their voices and inspiring them to pursue their goals is the reason I was drawn to the teaching field. I have learned that kids are extremely resilient. They adapted to every change thrown into their year and tried to make the most of it. I also began to understand that a school building and a classroom space are much more than walls and hallways. They are the home and safe space where a student can unpack their experiences, make sense of the world around them, and discover who they want to become.



Lauren Sylvester

Tri-City United Public Schools

I have learned how to be flexible. I have had 5 first days of school this year from all of the transitions so I have learned how to go with the flow and not be a control freak although it is still a work in progress! I am surprised how resilient these kids are during a pandemic. They still are just kids being kids and are still okay with the ever-changing circumstances. Choosing a Grad Fellow position, my advice... I would say DO IT! It is a great experience because you get the opportunity to work on your Master's degree while having your own classroom of kiddos. The support I get from my mentor is something that not every first year teacher gets. I feel like I have so many people in my corner that want me to succeed and are willing to help me with anything that I need.



Jared Van Dorpe

Tri-City United Public Schools

The first thing I have learned is that building relationships with your students is the most important thing you can do. The next thing I learned is to have a support system. Being a first year teacher, I don't know what I would have done without the support of my 4th grade team, and all the other teachers in the building. The thing that has surprised me the most is how well the students have responded with the multiple changes the school has gone through. You will grow so much as a teacher and person during the Fellowship. Just remember to make time for yourself. If you don't take time for yourself, you'll get burnt out.



TOSAs

Teachers on Special Assignment:

an Innovative Model for School-University Partnership

What have you learned about yourself as an experienced teacher during COVID-19?

CENTENNIAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Lisa Cisewski
Amy Gerst

FARIBAULT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Melinda Girtz
Ann Martinez

LE SUEUR-HENDERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

LaRae Ludwig

MANKATO AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Jen Frazee
Toni Hames
Michael Johnson

OWATONNA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Jane Sorensen

ST. PETER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Lori Pierret

TRI-CITY UNITED PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Matt Flugum
Jenny Wallskog

WASECA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Kristin Guse
Sue McKay

The uncertainty in structures and learning models created by COVID-19 reinforced the need to dial into the core intent of the experiences that I create for learning. Having to navigate so many different limitations and needs drove home the importance of knowing and focusing on the "Why" of the learning to drive meaningful interactions sometimes at the cost of an external appearance of a lesson. I am reminded to look toward the impact of the experience rather than getting lost in the details of the design.

Matt Flugum

I have learned that all things don't hold the same importance. Humans matter more than the content of my message - their needs (food, belonging, safety, etc) are what matters now to them and what I thought I would be talking about or teaching about needs to wait and that's okay. I have learned to give myself grace and space and the latitude to be okay with not knowing what's coming tomorrow or next week. I've learned that everyone is in a different place with the world at any given moment and who is in front of me at that time is what's important not who I wished they might be. The conversation that we have together is exactly what is supposed to be even if it isn't what I thought or what I wanted to have happened. I've learned that I am not really in as much control as I thought and while sometimes that has been really scary in the end it is really liberating!

Jen Frazee

This year has taught me that teachers are able to rise to the challenge...no matter how unprecedented. My teaching peers shifted from learning models and teaching platforms several times. We learned how invaluable classroom and school building relationships are. We all worked together to brainstorm best practices in every scenario. These lessons will never be lost.

Lori Pierret

EDUCATORS for *Equity*

Educators for Equity (EFE) is an action-based student group at Minnesota State University, Mankato that revolves around offering varying perspectives and voices from different and diverse backgrounds through multiple mediums of engagement. Dr. David Kimori, from the department of Elementary and Literacy Education serves as faculty support for the group.

They believe that cultural competency, equity and social justice should be embedded in all areas of education through

- Implementing diversity and inclusion in all spaces of education.
- Empowering under-represented individuals.
- Promoting anti-racist practices to inspire lifelong learners.



Laki Omar

Laki Omar, the current EFE president advocates strongly for the need for equity to exist everywhere, especially in schools. She goes on to emphasize the value of EFE at Minnesota State University, "This group is truly by students for all students. It is amazing to see how many effective ideas come from just having a 20-minute conversation."



Desmond Bassett

Currently the student group is working on a proposal to have the Critical Race Theory in Education class as a pre-requisite to getting into the education program. "As an Elementary Education student, being able to join EFE has provided me with different strategies and techniques to utilize in my future classroom," says EFE communications coordinator, Regina Thep. Another student group member, Desmond Bassett, adds "EFE has



Regina Thep



Jasmine Harris

provided me with a space to learn from others' experiences, as well as my own, in order to help one another become more Equitable Educators."

The Educators for Equity student group meets every second Tuesday of the month from 7:30-8:30 P.M. virtually via Zoom. For more information, please contact laki.omar@mnsu.edu

As an Elementary Education student, being able to join Educators for Equity has provided me with different strategies and techniques to utilize in my future classroom. EFE is an action-based group where we can come together in a safe space to discuss and brainstorm ideas to promote equity within the classroom and our communities. In today's world, equity is necessary for success, and it begins with groups like EFE to advocate for it.

-Regina Thep
EFE Communications Coordinator

"EFE has provided me with a space to learn from others experiences as well as voice my own, in order to help one another become more Equitable Educators."

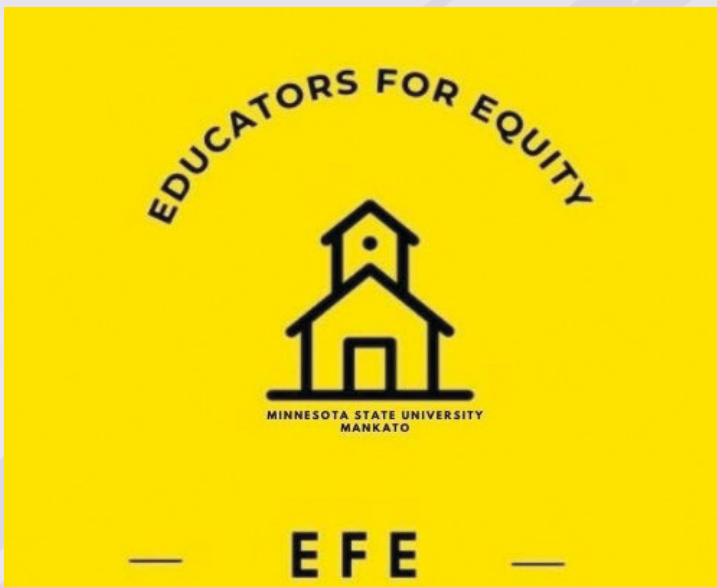
-Desmond Bassett

Educators for equity are a group of individuals who understand that equity needs to be present everywhere, especially in our schools. It is so important to model how effective teachers should be in implementing cultural competency and equity in the classrooms. This group is truly by students for all students. We are a group of people from diverse cultures and all different walks of life. It is amazing to see how many effective ideas come from just having a 20-minute conversation. Educators for equity are truly a space that inspires growth and change not only in classrooms but for society as a whole.

-Laki Omar
EFE President

Educators for Equity is a group that allows me to grow my knowledge and experience with working towards a more equity based school system. This group pushes me to think outside the box and come up with new beneficial ways to take action in the fight to becoming a more diverse and equity based society.

-Jasmine Harris



MN GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY EDUCATION RELIEF (GEER) Grant

– Equitable Teaching in the era of COVID-19

Key Members: Rebekah Degener, Chelsea Mead, Linette Manier

The Governor's Emergency Educational Relief Fund (GEER) grant was awarded this past year to Minnesota State University and Normandale Community College. This grant is a three-year, three-pronged initiative aimed towards funding unique classroom experiences and support for Indigenous students, professional development opportunities for teacher candidates and establishing an online support initiative.

Some of the opportunities provided to students included, but were not limited to:

1. Providing funds for guest speakers in American Indigenous Studies education courses to facilitate increased effectiveness of teacher candidates and providing a foundational understanding on the history of Indigenous people, including an elder-in-residence who met with students for an opportunity to connect with Dakota culture.
2. Giving scholarships to students majoring in education who take the Dakota or Ojibwe language courses.
3. Hosting *Native 101*, which was slated as a 2-hour workshop that brought together 80 educators, students and community members to learn how to better support their Indigenous students and create supportive classroom spaces and experiences.

To foster better connections with teacher candidates and teachers in partner schools, a new Facebook group was created that focused on equitable teaching in the era of COVID-19. This group has been aimed towards sharing relevant information and developing resources to better deal with ongoing challenges that teachers encounter.

As part of the GEER Grant, emergency grants in the amount of \$2500 can be provided to College of Education students who demonstrate a need for it. The grants are specifically for students who find themselves in urgent situations due to COVID-19, such as becoming ill themselves, having to take care of family members, loss of employment during the pandemic, and other high levels of need.

Students have truly benefited from the GEER Grant funds and our Minnesota State University and Normandale Faculty and PreK-12 School Districts have gained multiple learning and growth opportunities. Thank you to Dr. Rebekah Degener, Dr. Chelsea Mead, and Director of Teacher Education Linette Manier for coordinating these efforts.

Trauma Informed Pedagogy
April 22nd
6-8PM
on zoom
The impact of Covid-19 and events of the past year have highlighted the need for trauma-informed educators, we hope you'll join us for this highly interactive session. Let's learn more about Space is limited to 40 people
More information and link.mnsu.edu/trauma-
Jeffrey Brown, Ph.D., LP (he/him) is an Assistant Professor at Minnesota State University, Mankato. He is currently on sabbatical. His research focuses on mental health and trauma. He received his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Minnesota. He is a licensed psychologist in Minnesota.

NATIVE 101: CREATING SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 17, 6-8 P.M.
Megan Heitman
Qorsho Hassan
Minnesota Teacher of the Year
Join us to learn about the journey in becoming a teacher that Qorsho experienced as a Somali student and teacher candidate to today as a teacher in Minnesota.

Earth Day A Day to Reconnect
Featuring Winona LaDuke
Tuesday, April 20
3-4pm
Zoom: <https://tinyurl.com/EarthDayMankato>
Winona LaDuke is a rural development economist working on issues of economic, food, and energy sovereignty. She lives and works on the White Earth reservation in northern Minnesota.

EQUITABLE TEACHING IN THE ERA OF COVID-19
Qorsho Hassan
Minnesota Teacher of the Year
Join us to learn about the journey in becoming a teacher that Qorsho experienced as a Somali student and teacher candidate to today as a teacher in Minnesota.

Bringing Racial Equity Professional Learning to Teacher Candidate Support Network (TCSN)

Key Focus: Candace Raskin, Melissa Krull, Elizabeth Finsness

Over the course of the last academic year, our Office of International and Field Experience and Educational Leadership departments partnered to provide deep racial equity and social justice training for our Teacher Candidate supervisors. This plan was put into action as an ongoing professional development model.

This plan is primed through regular meetings with a structured agenda; created by faculty and is responsible for over 40 supervisors and teachers in the field. This system, geared towards imparting racial equity, is very intentional and focused. The structure of the meetings can easily be adapted to multiple teacher preparation programs across the country. Currently there are over 30 such universities that incorporate a teacher preparation program.

Previously, only Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs) received training in racial equity but through the inclusion of adjuncts, all teacher candidate supervisors have access to the same resources and training material. The whole process is extensive and incorporates candidates from over 38 different school districts. A supervisor is then assigned to directly work with these teacher candidates.

Due to the support and training received, the teacher candidates are often in high demand to be hired.

Prior to COVID-19, these meetings were held in person however they have since been transitioned to an online format. There were over five planned sessions for this academic year. Each session involves self-reflection, a cycle of social interaction and about 4 hours of debriefings on various training material that is distributed in small groups.

Some of the challenges identified due to online meeting format brought about due to COVID-19 include:

- Lack of an observation and connection as opposed to the in-person format.
- Breakout rooms via Zoom (platform of choice) have been difficult to navigate and set up.
- More planning to facilitate the meetings, a lot more visual tools to share content.
- Ensuring the same quality standards are met.

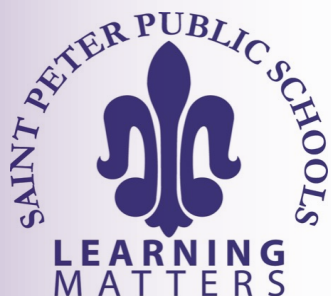


Dr. Carol Brown-Mills
Teacher Candidate Supervisor

Ongoing racial equity training for TCSN has enriched my perspective and impacted my own practice as a University Supervisor. Even more notable is how Education students at Minnesota State Mankato are finding their voice as they learn to teach through the lens of equity. I observe Teacher Candidates modeling practices for their Mentor Teachers like being intentional about ensuring content and materials represent their learners culturally and racially. By embracing cultural diversity, our Maverick educators will be the change agents in the classrooms of the future! – Carol Brown-Mills

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