

MR. FERGUSON: It's about 1:30 and we've got a packed agenda this afternoon, so in the interest of staying on time, we want to get started.

The first session is Montgomery County, they have five presenters who come from the district, representing different roles that they play. They are going to go for about 45 minutes, as a group, and then we'll have the discussants and the discussion.

So, I guess Frieda Lacey, are you going to go first? You can introduce the others.

MS. LACEY: All right, thank you.

Good afternoon. I'm Frieda Lacey, Deputy Superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools and we are just delighted to be here with you this afternoon. You are going to hear from me first, then you are going to hear from Dr. Heath Morrison, a Community Superintendent. Dr. Morrison has 36 schools that he is charged with oversight for. After that, you are going to hear from Mr. Adrian Talley, he has 39 schools in our district.

You are going to hear from Mr. Jamie Virga. We were tal we think it's critical, as was stated this morning, that we have that in place in any school district. And then you are going to hear from Mrs. Carole Working, one of our stellar principals, high school principals, in Montgomery County Public Schools.

I'm going to rush through this because I have a lot of say and a short period of time. Montgomery County has 200 schools, we have approximately 138,000 students and it's the sixth largest district in the country, the sixth largest. Now, a lot of people think that we are a wealthy school district, and yes, we are, but we also have a lot of poverty and a lot of diversity. I came to Montgomery County in 1971, so you look up there, you can see what it looked like in 1971 and you can see how it's changed over a period of time.

So what do you do when you have something that looks like this and it's changing rapidly? When you see that the poverty is increasing? That you are seeing that you are getting more African American and Hispanic students? You can't do the status quo, you have to do something drastically different, and so what we did was to divide up our district into the red and green zones. Take a look at that, that's reflective of our elementary schools. In the red zone you see approximately 29,000 kids, 80 percent minority, 50 percent FARMS, 28 percent ESL. The green zone, you can see what's on the chart.

So we knew we had to do something differently, if we were going to make a difference, it was like we had two districts in one.

FROM THE FLOOR: Can you tell us what the FARLs is?

MS. LACEY: Free and reduced lunch, sorry about that. You can see, from 1990 to 2007, what the free and reduced price meals program looked like, what it looked like then and what it looks like now. When you look at our ESL enrollment, when you look at where it was in 1990 and where it is today, looking at our elementary schools because we have a lot of youngsters coming into Montgomery County that don't speak English or English isn't spoken in their homes, so you can see how that has changed over a period of time.

One of the things in any school district, you want to have a very tight strategic plan and we have just that. We have a strategic plan, we have initiatives, we have data points, we have milestones. We have so much data that you have to have some type of coherence as it relates to the data because we give it to our principals, they get the strategic plan, what do they know to really concentrate on? So our superintendent, I'm sorry he isn't here because he is quite a unique individual.

(Laughter)

MS. LACEY: If you haven't met him, you are in for an experience. He said we have to, we owe our schools some way of letting them know what's important. How we are college ready, how we shoot for the North Star, so he started with seven key data points and you'll see them reflected here. I'm going to rush

through this very quickly because I really want you to hear from the folks that have come with me, but we started with the reading bench marks in grades K through two, and one of the things Dr. Weist did was he put all the energy in the red zone. How do you do that?

When I say he put the energy in the red zone, we went from half day kindergarten to full day kindergarten, in the red zone. We went from a class size of 28 to a class size of 15. We phased in 15 schools and we put the energy there, that's where we started. Did it make a difference? Yes, it did. Look at the data. We heard Tom Payzant talking about standards-based reform and we said that we wanted kids to read in kindergarten. That was unheard of in Montgomery County in 1999.

Kindergartners are supposed to develop social skills, social skills, and Jerry Weist said they will learn to read, so 93 percent of our kids are engaged in text reading, they are reading books. We talked about the achievement gap, 87 percent of our kindergartners that are engaged in text reading are Hispanics, 90 percent for African American and 93 percent for the district. We call it level three benchmark reading, we are so high that we have to change the benchmark this fall to level four because one of the things we have found out is that you always have to

push, not over the brink, but you can never be satisfied.

We also, one of the data points you saw listed was rigorous math, fifth grade. A couple of years ago we had 196 kids taking higher level math, today we have close to 5,000. We had to train the teachers because they didn't know how to do it. And if you look at this, we disaggregate a lot by race and ethnicity but we also do it by red zone/green zone, because we have a benchmark and we want to at least get all kids to a standard, but we have to also have the rigor there.

We have a benchmark, by 2010, 80 percent of our kids will be successful in Algebra I at the eighth grade. You see where we were in 2000-2001 and you see where we are today, 2007-2008, that is, 68 percent of our kids are taking Algebra I or higher and they are being successful.

Here it is disaggregated and you see the gap. What we look for are incremental gains over a period of time and when we see it leveling off or starting to go down, what do we do? We have to do something different, we have to diagnose and problem solve, we have to have a strategy. So as long as we see the incremental gains, we are reasonably comfortable with what we are doing. Our superintendent likes to say we are the cream of the crap.

(Laughter)

MS. LACEY: They're his words, not mine.

(Laughter)

MS. LACEY: But I think it conveys a powerful message because we can never be satisfied with the work that we are doing.

AP exams, when Dr. Weist first came, kids of color, not African American and Hispanic kids, were in those classes and we had teachers to tell us they can't do it. Well, we put more kids of color into AP classes. And so we don't pay for the AP exams but if you look at the data, you see 60 percent of our kids take one AP exam.

Look at how we compare, African Americans and Hispanic kids compare to the rest of the nation. And, oh, yes, we put race on the table. There is no way you can close the achievement gap in the 21st Century without talking about race, you can't do it. More than triple the national average in terms of scoring three or better, six of our high schools were in the top 100. We have 25 high schools, six of them were in the top 100, but that's not good enough because next year we need to have eight. Again, you see our data.

We have many, many challenges, we can never be satisfied. We have to have a passion about the work that we are doing. We have to talk about race, we have

to disaggregate the data, we have to have initiatives and we have to have tools.

At this time, I'm going to have Dr. Heath Morrison to come up and talk to you about many of our challenges and some initiatives and strategies and tools we put in place in Montgomery County Public Schools.

MR. MORRISON: Thank you, Dr. Lacey.

MS. LACEY: Thank you.

MR. MORRISON: Okay, as Dr. Lacey so eloquently stated, we have a very high performing school district and we are very, very fortunate to have that, that comes with a lot of work. But how do we sustain that culture of continuous improvement? How do we remain committed to making sure that we constantly look at data to inform our instructional practice, our teaching and learning and our professional development? And then how do we ensure that we are not a school system that is about closing the achievement gap but that we are a school system deeply and fundamentally dedicated to the idea of eliminating the achievement gap, as our diversity in our school district is getting increasingly more diverse, and we want to do that by raising the bar.

And so we constantly look for new ways to go about doing our business and what we want to share with you today is our work and something that we call M-Stat. Now, M-Stat, I'm very pleased to say, actually go

its roots in Montgomery County through our partnership with Tufts and a team that Dr. Lacey was involved with came to Harvard and came back with some fantastic learnings where they had been exposed to a particular way of looking at data through the New York City Police Department that they called COMSTAT, looking at trends, looking at data through their different precincts, trying to figure out where they were doing a good job and where they could do better.

This really excited us as a way to take our work to the next level and we reinvented it and labeled it M-Stat, and it really is a way for us to continue that work, to engage in open, honest conversations, to look at our data and put race clearly on the table. It is not about gotchas, it is not about finding out who is not doing it to blame, it's about finding out who is not doing it to support. But it's also about finding out who is getting the results that really can yield best practices to inform all of our schools within the district.

We were having a conversation at lunch, around lunchtime today, and we were having a conversation with some folks in the audience about how school districts don't share from school district to school district. Well, it's a truism that many schools within a school district don't share and M-Stat is a way for us to really glean who has a story to tell and how

do we translate that and scale up, as we talked about today in the conference so far. And it is really an exciting work because it involves our central office, it involves our executive staff, it involves our outstanding principals and we have brought teachers to the table, so that whole conversation about listening to teachers, we have listened to our teachers and they have truly informed our work.

So why do we use M-Stat? In Montgomery County Public Schools we use M-Stat really as a way to take our work to the next level. As we look at our data, compared to state and national results, as Dr. Lacey said, our superintendent does refer to our results as the cream of the crap. He is absolutely opposed to two words, good enough. He hates the word complacency, it is all about doing our important work because as we have increases, we are truly doing good things for students.

And so we look at our data versus the state and nation and we are very fortunate, it often looks better than the state and the nation, and so what gets us to do the work at a higher level? As we look at our MCPS trend data over time, it is very fortunate and through the hard work of our employees and our business partnerships that our data looks better year to year, and definitely the data from before Dr. Weist became superintendent to now is just extraordinary. But M-Stat

allows us to compare our data to our rigorous data points and that is where we see our work, that is where we look at it and we are not pleased to say we still see a prevalent achievement gap that we are committed to absolutely doing something about.

Our MCPS data points are all about rigor, and Dr. Lacey was absolutely 100 percent accurate when she started talking about kindergarten. Today we are going to share with you some of our M-Stat work through the data team that I lead on PSATs and SATs and my friend and colleague, Mr. Talley, does with honors AP, but we could take these data points all the way down to kindergarten because that's really where it really belongs. When we go to kindergarten benchmark reading to level four next year, it's because that's what's going to lead our students, particularly our minority students, to be college ready, to point to that North Star.

We know that as we get more students in to take the PSAT, that that will give us better data to get more and more students, particularly African American and Latino students, into honor and IB courses. That will raise our SAT scores and that will allow us to have more students walking across the stage to have colleges and options. M-Stat really allows us to aspire to create a school system where student achievement will no

longer be predicted by race. That sounds so lofty but that is what we are absolutely committed to.

And it's the difference between where we are, which is a high performing school district, and where we want to be, and where we want to be is where we can show this graphic and have you not be able to say that the bars on this graph you can identify by race. Now, right now I would say what does this graph mean to you and right now you would say it's a bar graph but if I said this is for a school in our district and it's for SATs, and each of the bars represents one bar per African American, one for Latino, one for white, one for Asian, I think we can all probably do a good job of saying which two bars represent white and Asian and which represent Latino and African American.

That is true in our school district, which I said it wasn't but it is, and I'm sure it is absolutely true in your school district as well. If we reverse that and say these data are about suspensions, then you also will be able to do a pretty good guesstimate about which of these bars represents what group. M-Stat is about trying to change that. Make no mistake, it is about the elimination of the achievement gap.

In the interest of time, I want to take you right to what we do with M-Stat and what we do with M-Stat, we have different M-Stat teams based around our

data points. And we start again this graphic from one of our more recent M-Stats on PSAT/SATs, it shows how we are comparing with districts across Maryland. There is no nationwide PSAT data for tenth grade. Again, we are doing much better than all other districts in Maryland.

When we compare our trend data over time for PSAT participation, again we are doing much better than we were and we are having a fast acceleration with our African American and Latino students. Again, that's great, but it's when we compare our data to our targets, and in this case, our PSATs, we had a goal this year of having 93 percent of our students taking the PSAT this year and a target goal of having 17 schools meet that benchmark district, then we look at it through our M-Stat process and we find out that we didn't get there, we only had 13 of our schools reach that target, only seven reach it in African American participation and seven in Hispanic. We can and must do better.

This is our premier way that we display our M-Stat data to our schools, this lists every Montgomery County Public School and it looks confusing but it's really not. We put the data out there and we put race on the table. We say how are you in with all African American, Hispanic, white and Asian? And we say it's only a success if all students are doing well, we are not going to hide behind averages in Montgomery County Public Schools. And so as we look at these data, it's

color coded. If you are color coded in green, you met this year's benchmark for 93 percent.

If you are coded blue, you actually met next year's benchmark target of 95 percent. If you are color coded yellow, it means you met last year's target and if you are color coded red, you are two years behind. And what we find out, again, remember, when you use M-Stat to base our work on targets, we have substantive work to do, particularly with our African American and Hispanic students. We put out there the schools that meet and exceed the targets, we talk about the schools that are doing it with African American students, schools that are doing it with Hispanic students, but then we also put out the schools that are doing well, but then we also point out the schools that have work to do.

Again, not to embarrass, not to put out a negative stigma but to say what are the schools, getting back to the earlier conversation, where we can grant some autonomy? Who has best practices to share that we can share and scale up systemically across 200 schools? And who has schools that we must support for them to reach our targets?

Here are the four schools used in our M-Stat last year that we identified that needed to improve. And as you can see, compared from last year to this year, we had substantive improvement in each of the

groups. Yes, they still may not all be making the target but there is improvement. And then two schools, Northwood and Sherwood, went from the worst performing schools on our PSAT initiatives to two of our best performing schools.

What I would like to do now is to bring up my colleague and friend, Mr. Adrian Talley, who will go through more of the M-Stat process, particularly as it relates to AP/IB participation.

MR. TALLEY: Dr. Morrison talked about the process of M-Stat, I want to talk about the power of M-Stat with you today. And the power of M-Stat gives us the opportunity to have conversations with our principals, Dr. Morrison talked about that. It's not a gotcha, it's the opportunity to talk with principals about what's happening in the schools. It's to determine what we are doing well and also to determine where we need to improve. It's also to create opportunities for open and honest dialogue and it's also to use data as an entry port about discussions about race and equity within our schools.

In December, we held an M-Stat on honors and AP enrollment. Enrollment is one of our targets that we have and, at the time, we had targets as well for all of our schools. At the time though we had only twelve schools that met or exceeded our county's target for enrollment of all students in an honors or AP course

and our target is enrollment in at least one honors or AP course. We had only one school that met the target for African American students and we had five schools that met the target for Hispanic students. Remember again, as Dr. Morrison said and Dr. Lacey said, our target is higher than the national target.

We had principals discussions in December, principals met, they talked with each other about how they can improve enrollment of their African American and Hispanic students. And the reason we chose December was there was still time to affect change, because you go into the second semester in January, therefore, you could go ahead and move more children into honors and AP based upon some of the strategies that were discussed at our December M-Stat.

In your PowerPoint you'll see some of the questions that were discussed and asked of the principals during the discussion section of the M-Stat.

And then we had the answers that the principals were able to take from the M-Stat meeting and then take back to their schools and their leadership team and you can see some of the responses that they provided. What happened? We now have a June M-Stat coming up in two weeks which I'm looking forward to. Are we making target across the board? No, but we did see improvement. What we have now are fifteen schools that are making target for all students, we have three

schools that have shown improvement or are making target for African American students and seven schools that are making target for Hispanic students in enrollment.

But what's also important, Dr. Lacey talked about continual improvement and what we saw or what we have seen is we have twelve schools that show double digit increases in the enrollment of students in honors and AP, of African American students, and we have eight schools that show double digit improvement in the enrollment of Hispanic students in honors and AP courses. Again, we are not making the target, but we are seeing the improvement and we put this on the table.

And one of the things that's most important in the school improvement plans, one of the things that we really stress with our principals, you need to set a goal that's specific for African American and Hispanic students. If you aren't making the target, that should be a goal put in your school improvement plan. Another thing that's important is to look at the schools over time that are showing improvement because those are your benchmark schools and we put that out there for everyone to look at. Because if I'm a principal, I need to know who are the schools that are doing it.

Another thing that's important is if I'm a principal, I want to know what are the schools that are similar to me and so we've also included scatter plots to help us understand what are the schools that are

doing it, and therefore, if I'm a school with 20 percent enrollment in African American students, I can then see where I am and where schools are above the line, and those are the schools I need to speak with.

But if I'm also a school with, for example, we have one school here, Whitman, which is less than 10 percent enrollment of African American students, and you can see that they are way below the line, but we have Poolesville way above it. As a Principal of Whitman, you know exactly where I'm going to go, I'm going to Poolesville to find out what they are doing and how they are doing it.

The other side of it is not only enrollment because we not only have to put the children in, we have to have them perform very well. We have to have them take the exam. There was an article in the paper about a principal in New Jersey who is forcing every child to take the AP exam and the controversy that has created. And so we also have targets for participation and targets for performance on the exam. What have we found? Well we have ten schools that have met the target for participation on the exam for all students and only seven schools have met the target for performance, that's scoring a 3 or higher on AP and a 4 or higher on the IB exam.

What about for our Hispanic students? We have six schools that have met the target for

participation and we have four schools that have met the target for performance. Our African American? We have zero schools that have met the participation target and zero schools that have met the performance target that we are looking for.

In our June M-Stat, this is what we are going to spend our time talking about. We are setting time aside for principals to come together to look at what they can do because they have their leadership team meetings this summer to plan on how to address the issue of African American students' performance on exams, Hispanic students' performance on exams and also test participation.

What we are hoping for in our county because what we have is, if you look at us from the standpoint of national average, we are looking at high enrollment, high test participation and high performance, the upper box but when we think about it for ourselves, we are really not there yet. And for our African American students, we really are low enrollment, low participation and low performance. We want to move back up to the top box and that's going to take, that's where the M-Stat is coming in and it's seeing a difference with what we are doing.

The power of M-Stat leads to reflection on instructional practices. What are they doing in the classrooms? What are they doing to help the children

achieve? It also leads to discussions about what is and is not working, it leads to staff development, to broaden skills and aptitudes because if they have low expectations, then they aren't going to do what they need to do, and it leads to change in expectations and behaviors.

Now coming up is Jamie Virga who is our Director Associate Superintendent for the Office of Organizational Development.

MR. VIRGA: Thank you, Adrian.

As Adrian said, one of the keys is staff development. We are gathering all this information, how do we move from data, to information, to knowledge and then to action that will produce results? So our overall strategy for professional development in MCPS is that it needs to be based on compelling student data and the needs of staff and we have to be very strategic, we can't do everything, we have to focus. We really believe in job embedded professional development and one of the first things Dr. Weist did when he came to the district was put a full-time staff development teacher in every school.

I can tell you, being a principal at that time, it changed my life. It's ongoing and it's agile because we have to respond to the different needs of our students. We are going to come back to this slide again because this really is the focus and as Associate

Superintendent for Organizational Development, I have to be able to connect the dots between all the training and all the professional development that we are doing in helping students to meet these targets. To do that, we really see that our work is with teachers, it's with administrators, it's with our support professionals.

We've really taken a focus in the last couple of years in working with teams, schools and offices as a group and as individuals, but it's about that knowledge sharing and best practices and how can we take knowledge that we've gained in schools that have been successful and use it to help the district. One of Dr. Weist's ideas a couple of years ago, going back to 2004 or so, was he noticed in the data analysis of schools that there were three elementary schools, very different schools, that had gotten student results and been able to sustain them over time.

At that time, I was Principal at Viers Mill Elementary School and you can imagine coming to a principals meeting and saying were your ears burning? I said no. Well Dr. Weist was just talking about you and your school, and the idea was to use, again, borrowing from PELP, to use a case study process to do a case study on these schools and then use that as a professional development tool for the district. That's where the Professional Learning Communities Institute or PLCI came from.

This is ongoing professional development for school leadership teams. When we say the team, it's a big team, we are talking 15 to 18 people from each school because it's the principal, the assistant principal, the staff development teacher, the reading specialist, grade level team leaders, support services staff, parents. It's the folks who are empowered at the school to go back and actually make change happen and the goal of PLCI is to eliminate the achievement gap in the schools that are participating, so how do we do that?

Well, it's kind of a three-pronged approach. First, it's structured professional development using a case study approach. So what happens is the PLCI schools, the teams from the PLCI schools come out five or six times a year, the morning is structured professional development, case studies, working on what is a PLC, how do we work together, how do we create collaborative teams, how do we do data-driven decision making. And then the afternoon is their time to do their school improvement work and that's been a critical element of this.

Then, following that structured professional development, there is follow-up from people in my office to go in and meet with the leadership team, to meet with the whole staff, to do presentations to parents, whatever is needed for that individual school

to make the next steps in their journey. And we do provide schools for the two years that they are in PLCI, as you mentioned, that this is a two year commitment, to support interventions for students or to create collaborative planning time for teachers but then after the two years, they have to be able to sustain that without that extra funding.

I don't have time to show you a clip here from PLCI and the participants but if you go to our website, you can see that. And it's part of, again, of our overall strategy about supporting teams, schools and offices, we also have staff development specialists who work to support the staff development teachers that are in each school. We have a kind of a mini PLCI called School Leadership Institute that's more focused on particular topics and we are really committed to Baldrige guided school improvement. Because we believe if we build the capacity of staff and the teams, and the entire schools, that's going to lead to increased student achievement.

But the proof is in the pudding. Did it work? Well, this is data for PLCI and you can see that when, in terms of baseline data, when we first started with PLCI, the gap that existed in the cohort one schools, this was the eleven schools that were our original cohort, the gap was around 22 points between African American, Hispanic and white and Asian students

and over the two years in the program, that gap narrowed. At the same time the performance for white and Asian students was increasing, the performance of African American and Hispanic students was increasing, but at a greater rate, and we see the same thing not only in reading but also in mathematics.

So, the work is not done but it's promising. The work tells us that if you empower school teams, that they can make differences happen in student achievement. And I think, you know, thinking about some of the comments this morning, one of the things that we've really learned through PLCI is the importance of teacher leadership and what we've seen in the two years that the schools are participating, that teacher leadership really emerges. And through the time and the training that we give the teams, we really see teachers empowered and then they go back and make actual things happen in their schools.

We've seen schools really modify their master schedule so that there is collaborative planning time for teachers. We've seen them change their approach to what interventions are for students and increase their parent outreach, so we are very excited by a lot of the work that's happening and we have focused a lot of the work on our leaders.

In a moment you are going to hear one of our wonderful principals but I would, as an introduction

of Ms. Working, I would say one of the other things we've done as a systems strategy is we have superintendents A and S meetings, which is all principals, all central office directors five times a year.

For the last three years, the content of those meetings has been race and equity. We've had Pedro Nogero, we've had Glen Singleton, we've really focused on courageous conversations because we believe we have to get the leaders to do it first before we can ask everything to happen at the school level. You can't lead where you haven't been, so we are working on individual transformation of those leaders and that's going to be individual transformation of our system.

So, with that, I will turn it over to Ms. Working, who is going to tell you the story of Quince Orchard High School.

MS. WORKING: So now that you've heard all that, how do we at the school level get our teachers to really embrace with their hearts and their minds this work that you've just heard talked about and how do we get them to roll up their sleeves and really engage in trying to close the achievement gap in our schools?

I have been at Quince Orchard High School for two years and when I walked in the door --. There we go.

Quince Orchard is a comprehensive high school, a four-year high school of about 1,750 students and it had done a pretty good job of maintaining the status quo for the last few years and while that was going on, it was becoming increasingly diverse.

When I first began researching the school, it had a school improvement plan that wanted to improve school climate and it actually had, as its second goal, that it would identify and monitor the 40 lowest performing students in the school. And that was the springboard for me. In my first meeting with leadership team, I asked them to tell me about Quince Orchard and, in doing so, I had put all around our leadership room a lot of data that I had studied and at the end of that day, they said to me we are a walking advertisement for the achievement gap, and we were.

And from that self-recognition, we had to say how do we take this to our teachers? We needed to examine our belief system, we needed to examine our decision making process, we needed to examine the way we work. So the first thing that we thought, we have to get our teachers to look at this data too but we want to do it in a way that is understandable to them. So we began by personalizing the data and I'm going to show you an example of how we did that. Whenever we talked about data, and I am in a high school, we used pictures of our students because we wanted our teachers to

understand we are not talking about numbers, we are talking about the success of our students, these are our students.

And so this slide that I'm showing you now is an exercise that we did with our instructional leadership team to talk about what's going on with our minority students, what kind of classes are we placing them in. At this particular time, Quince Orchard High School had 28 percent of its African American students in an honors class and about 28 percent of its Hispanic students in an honors or AP class. And so we had our leadership team take a look at 25 kids, and their schedules and the grades that they were making.

Gene was one of these students, he was a straight-A student and everyone was completely content to let him stay there. This initiated a real discussion among our leadership team and our staff about who is responsible for looking at what's going on with the kids and making a recommendation?

Then we sent our leadership team out into the departments and asked them to replicate the exercise and to come back at the end of the first semester with 25 kids from each department. They did that, we moved up 150 kids at the semester and we learned through data analysis, both soft data, we had people who would come through and go, gosh, how is Gene doing in Honors Algebra II? And the teacher would go, well, you know,

it's really a struggle when you get one of those students, and they would say, well, let's look at the grade book and people would go but, you know, he's got a B.

And we learned that 80 percent of the kids that we moved up moved up without much difficulty at all, they adapted to the class, they adapted to the instruction, they were supported by their classmates. They didn't need heavy intervention from teachers and 20 percent needed our help.

So, after learning that, I think it kind of reframed, for the school, what was going to happen and at the end of the first year, we moved large numbers of students who had indicators that they were capable of doing much more rigorous work, into honors and AP classes and we entered last year with 59 percent of our African American students in honors and AP and 57 percent of our Hispanic kids moving into honors and AP, so this is just an example of the kind of data work that we did with our teachers.

When I went to the school, I had been in a red zone school for quite a few years and I had been heavily engaged in the work of bringing a school out of school improvement, and was thinking that was not going to be work that I had to do at Quince Orchard High School, but within a month of landing there, I found out that my school had not made the target. And so, once

again, I was explaining to teachers why the school had not met the target, even though, if you just looked at the average data, it looked like we did, so I was explaining about disaggregated cells, and once again, we did it with pictures of our students.

We put up big pictures of our graduating class and then in vertical lines labeled English as second language, special ed, free and reduced lunch, Hispanic, African American, White, Asian. We put up the pictures of the students who needed our help to get to graduation and it was a very powerful tool. I did no training sessions with that that members of the faculty did not get up at the conclusion of the session and go up and actually find their students on the board. And although it was not an intended outcome, I actually had made it visual which students were really high impact. They could see which students appeared in cell after cell and we really needed to help pass the test.

And so their ability to see it and visualize who needed our assistance drove how we created our intervention programs and the school was able to pass and make AYP this year and actually make great gains in all of our disaggregated areas. We also personalized the data with our teachers. At Quince Orchard High School, we actually look at data with teachers' names on it in our team alike groups and in department meetings.

And a lot of people have said to me, you know, your data is very public and I think I don't really appreciate that now as much as I probably should because it's become the way we work. One of the things we studied on our leadership team was the adaptive leadership challenge and we've worked very hard to make a safe place where we can look at individual teacher data and recognize this is our data, it's the data of our school. We are all engaged in helping our colleagues work on the data and identify what's not going right in a class.

So, as you can see, the third person down is clearly struggling with poor children, special ed children and African American, it turned out to be boys in particular, and we were able to do some restructuring things in that class, but also take a look at the way the instruction was being delivered to help make it better.

The second thing we really worked on was our leadership team because I recognized very early on that they were going to be asked to do more things than order textbooks or be responsible for administering end of semester tests in their department.

So we really began to study together and this was new for them, and the first time that I introduced that we would read together, and we were going to read about goal setting and how goals impacted

the kind of team that was created, they actually said to me in the meeting you know, Carole, if we wanted to read something we could do it at home after school. And I realized that I was going to have to, you know, work on how we did this. But before long, we were actually reading together books about professional learning communities, books about how to structure intervention systems in schools.

We have been spending the last three months reading how do you improve thinking in adults in your building, how do you lead teachers to process the things that we want them to process and to make good decisions because we are talking about now widening our circle and turning this work over to teachers. We also did a lot of data work together and all of my instructional leadership team I think feels much more comfortable about working with data. And then we have worked on empowering staff. We waited a year before we really took heavy work out to the faculty.

We spent the first year kind of doing tipping point projects, specifically identified groups of kids and smaller groups for a high school, 75 kids, 150 kids, and showing that if we targeted the work, we could make a difference. But this year we began rolling the work out to staff and the first thing we did was use a document called Equitable Instructional Practices or it's about culturally competent teaching, and we are

lucky because our county actually gives us this as part of our study of race and equity, and we took it to our teachers and had them reframe it through the lens of relationship, rigor or relevance.

And then all of the teachers formed cohort groups and began peer observing at how competent we were at using the strategies that improved student relationship, or rigor or relevance.

Now, I work in a high school where "Stand and Deliver" is a prevalent model and some of the instructional conversations or pedagogical conversations that have come out of this are amazing. We've proved that you cannot capture wait time in the wild in a high school and we even went, people are coming and saying I'm going to be observing you and your use of wait time.

And so that took us to a place where we actually went back, studied it, learned to use it more effectively, began documenting what was the impact on our classes. When we first started with relationships, we proved that we think we affirm. When we went in and really tip marked it, we weren't nearly as affirming and friendly as we thought, so we've tried to empower staff and we've seen some pretty good results.

We work our ninth grade through a statistical model and last year worked on what we call level three students, students who enter high school with a grade point average of 1.8 to 2.2. Our model

says that they should spend at least part of the year ineligible for extracurricular activities, which means they have below a 2.0, and by following our data work, we were able to hold them eligible, grading period to grading period, between 82 and 91 percent.

And doing the work that I told you about before, you can see the jump in honors and AP enrollment for our whole school for African American students and for our Hispanic students. The thing that we want our teachers to know is that when we work together, when we work in a targeted way, when we use the data to inform our decisions, that we can help create a better school, we can help make our students successful.

So that's the Quince Orchard story, it's good work, I love doing it.

(Applause)

MR. FERGUSON: Could I ask everybody to come to the table.

MS. POLLOCK: So, I'm Mica Pollack.

John Diamond and I decided, we flipped a coin and I'll go first. I was really taken by this presentation, thank you very much for giving it to us. I was thinking in terms of connecting it to our conversation this morning. I hear on the table the question of who needs to have which conversations about improving student achievement, and at the district level, we heard here we need, you know, sort of

conversations about commitment, we saw outcomes analysis, we saw we need to have sort of the level of seven benchmarks for this district's precise schools.

But then we saw the school level needing to zoom in much further than that and have conversations. I was very taken by the pictures of the young people, zooming into actual children and youth and saying what exactly does Gene actually need? And so the sort of connecting these levels of which conversation is where I think is very important.

I wanted to sort of ask, my work is about trying to sort of get people to zoom in on those everyday interactions and so I wanted to know sort of how, what if any resistance you encountered in getting people to zoom in there because I've seen a couple of things in doing professional, I saw, you said a number of times today we put race on the table, we don't sort of ignore issues of race, we put it on the table.

I wanted to know sort of what kinds of conversations you put on the table and exactly if and how you dealt with resistance that you encountered. I've done now, I used to work at the civil rights office in the Department of Education, OCR, and I have book coming out this September where I look at four kinds of resistance that people raised, that educators raised when they were accused by parents, by advocates of denying opportunity to kids of color.

You guys have a more positive spin in your district where you say who can we support how? These are people who felt blame for denying opportunity, they raised resistance to zooming in on opportunity provisions. They said we didn't intend to harm anyone, that was one big form of resisting. They said we are not racist, we have best, our intentions are the best for young people. They resisted sort of very specific remedies coming from the outside in any way. What you seem to have done in your district is sort you're developing and devising remedies from the inside, which might sort of mitigate some of that tension.

There was a lot of lack, this is coming from a sort of federal government coming in to improve a school district, it's a very different dynamic, but sort of problems with a lack of sort of inspiration, sense of possibility and will. It seems that you have managed to inspire people in Montgomery County and I want to hear more about how. We're the cream of the crap probably is not how you inspired people in Montgomery County.

(Laughter)

MS. POLLOCK: It sounds like you've moved beyond close the achievement gap to eliminate it, that seems to be inspiring people. But I heard this morning and I'm wondering from Montgomery County is even closing or eliminating the achievement gap, really what's inspiring people to do the work? What's inspiring

people in Montgomery County and have you encountered any resistance?

And then finally, I'm wondering if you've encountered any resistance that I saw working at OCR about saying, you know, this is the making a mountain out of a molehill, the everyday things teachers do really don't matter that much, it's structures, it's poverty, it's stuff outside the district.

I'm sure you've all heard this resistance in your districts, so I'm wondering if you've encountered any such resistance in Montgomery County or if somehow magically you got everybody on the same page and working towards this. So I'm wondering about those questions of will, inspiration, how you have built it there but also I'm very taken by this sort of what one superintendent recently called a sort of granular level of analysis he managed to get people doing, going far beyond we will get everybody, even beyond we will get kindergartners reading, to how do we get Gene doing X, Y and Z.

MS. LACEY: I'll start. First, I would have to say I started with Jerry Weist August the 2nd, 1999 and it was a life changing experience for me because what I most admire about him is he is not afraid to be honest, he is not afraid to disclose data. Here, today, you saw that we have a long way to go when we say we aren't meeting those targets. But he really started

by having all of us read the book results, we knew exactly what he wanted. He said let me tell you one thing, as rapidly as we are changing, we won't have these wealthy homes, we won't have these fine businesses, so he hooked up with the politicians, our community and he said if you want to create change, then you are going to have to put the resources in the most impacted area.

Now, that was about race, we just didn't call it race. So he started with reading results, he talked about the red and the green, and was there pushback when he started talking about the red and the green and putting the resources in the green area? You betcha. What I observed is that he is very strategic, he would just add on. Once he got the concept of the red and green, people accepted that. Once we went to a full day kindergarten in the red zone, smaller class sizes, but we got the what? We got the results and if you get the results, you are going to get the funding.

So it started small and he kept building upon it until we were at, and Stacey is in the back, we were at PELP and this was three years ago. We had eight superintendents there and he stood up before the group and he said I'm going to put race on the table. Every superintendent looked at him like he had lost his mind, they were numb. They were speechless, they couldn't say a thing. We came back the next year and we talked about

what we had done, and they stood up and applauded. But it started, you talked about the resistance, he just kept chipping away at it and he kept being honest.

We had said at PELP, when we put race on the table, that he had to talk with his entire leadership team and the question is how did he do it? We were all at an A&S meeting, we were all very nervous because our boss, the man that we admire, was engaging in risky behavior by putting race on the table.

He held up the *Newsweek* about Katrina and there was an African American child with a round face and a tear rolling down her eye. And he said to that audience what is this about? Is it about poverty? Is it about race? Is it about access? Is it about equity?

And he then showed us our data and he said we will have a Katrina here in Montgomery County, looking at the different demographics, if we don't do something differently. So we got results, he scared our politicians, we got pushback from our principals. We've been on the, M-Stat, when we started showing the data and called in all the high school principals, all the middle school principals, all the elementary principals and showed them the data, if you think that wasn't a buzz about, they didn't want it, but it was the right thing to do.

When you use data, how can you argue with it? We are proud to say, for those data points, we have

crafted these books. So for every time we have an M-Stat, we give them these books, but these books outline best practices. They can go, they can look at their data, they can compare their schools, but we have principals there, like a Carole Working, that's how we know what Carole is doing, talking about what she has put in place. Jerry has been talking about putting a face on every child for nine years, she did it, she put a face on every child.

So it's been a process, we've gotten the resistance but did we pushback? No, we kept persevering. There is a common language in our district, a district with 200 schools, we all talk the same talk, walk the same walk. You'll hear Carole say things that we say in central office, there is a common language there. We have courageous conversations, we talked about data-driven decision making, every principal has had the M-Stat experience but when we give them a book and give them help, that also helps too. It's one thing to have resistance but if we say we're here to help you, that helps as well.

I've done a lot of talking and I could go on and on, I want some of my colleagues to elaborate as well.

MS. WORKING: I would say that actually the culture of the central office, over nine years of building momentum for this work, does support the

building principle. But when you go in, of course there is resistance because you are challenging the status quo, and so you have to help people understand the work. And we use a phrase in our instructional leadership team, doable and inviting, how do we make the work doable, how do we make it inviting? And we do try to hold the big picture every so many months for our teachers.

I've actually done faculty meetings where I go in and what's behind me on the screen is a picture frame and then we put different things in it that we are trying to accomplish as a group together. So I think there is a moral ground in this work, we have actually, in my school now, gotten to where we are discussing whiteness, because we are reading Glen Singleton, and the first time that we did it the dialogue was almost explosive. I had a teacher say to me I will not defend my whiteness and I responded back no one is asking you to do that, we are asking that we understand that some of us have whiteness and it may impact the learning of some of our students and we need to be conscious of that.

Well, a year later, I now have faculty saying to me we need to know more about whiteness because they are coming to understand that they are asking people's parents to behave a way that may not be their culture and they are beginning to recognize they

need to learn how to communicate, how to provide education to everyone no matter what, everyone, all of our students. And that sometimes they have in their heads the students must act a certain way, or do their homework a certain way or go home and sit at a kitchen table a certain way and eat cookies, and not all of our students are in that position.

MR. VIRGA: So there is a big professional development piece to that, how do we work with our leaders and with our teachers to build some awareness of that so that that can be incorporated into their interaction with students?

Before I was in this job, I was Director of the Professional Learning Communities Institute and I remember attending a leadership team meeting and they had done an amazing job of collecting data about office referrals of students, kids sent down to the office for poor behavior. They knew what time of day it was, they knew where they were sent from, they knew which teacher had sent them, they had all these patterns and everything.

And I was just sitting there, and I just raised my hand and said have you thought about looking at this by race because they hadn't. They had gathered all that data but they hadn't looked at it in terms out of all these kids who were being sent to the office, how many of them are African American? How many are Latino?

How many are white? How many are Asian? Well, when they went back and looked at that, there was a really disproportionate number of African American kids being sent to the office. So that became something that we worked with them through PLCI, just another kind of lens that people can put on.

They also noticed, well, you know, right before winter break there is a spike in office referrals and right before spring break there is a spike, and that must be because the kids are really stressed then. And I said do you think maybe the teachers are a little stressed then too?

(Laughter)

MR. VIRGA: That might have something to do with it.

And I think one of the big aha's that we are gradually introducing folks to is the whole concept of color blindness. You have a lot of teachers who believe in the, it's what they were brought up believing about teaching and about how you treat people, teach everybody the same. Well, if you are working with a school of kids or a district of kids where the demographics are rapidly changing and you are not seeing color, and you want to work with everybody the same. And really you are expecting all of those kids to act like you are, and that's a disconnect and that leads to office referrals and it leads to poor student

achievement and some of those other things we've talked about.

So we've really been working through our leaders, we have a lot of work to do to bring it down to the classroom level. It's happened in some schools, you see how visionary principals can take that forward, but our next challenge is how do we do that systematically, every school, every classroom.

MS. LACEY: I would just like to say the whole notion about resistance is huge though. Every time we've introduced a strategy, we've had to do this push/pull. When we started with the kindergarten literacy initiative, all of our kids are tested three times a year by a teacher using a palm pilot, recording the data and it scores the data. The teachers resisted that, so there was huge resistance there. We get resistance from the teachers but we knew it was the right thing and we just kept on and kept on. Now you can't take the palms away from them.

So you do get it from staff but you know what's right. You do get it from your community, you get it from your politicians, but they can't argue with the data. One of the stories that I would like to share with you just very, very quickly is what happened at Bethesda Chevy Chase High School. This particular principal had an assembly every year for African American and Latino students, it was just to get them to

sign up for AP and IB classes. He was hugely successful and at our M-Stat process, he met every target. He met the district target, the school target, the target for African American and Hispanics on AP honors.

So he told me, he said, well, I don't know what to do, Frieda, he said there is a segment of my community that says it's reverse racism. And I said, well, let me handle it, so I called our attorney and our attorney said is it an under-represented group and I said yes. We crafted the communication to that segment of the population and they quieted down. But you have to be unrelenting. When you know you are right and you are on the right course, you cannot stop, and that's Jerry Weist, you cannot stop.

There's the book *Blink*, when you know you're right, you have to act on it, and I think that accounts for a portion of our success.

MR. TALLEY: I also just want to say I think one of the things that Dr. Morrison and I do as community superintendents, not only do we supervise principals but we help them into integrating the concept of race and equity in what they are doing by our conversations with the principals, by working with the principals to help them understand different ways to address the pushback from staff. We create opportunities for the principals not to work in silos

but to work as clusters, to work and learn from one another and I think that's what's so important.

We have a conversation about when you have individual schools, which we don't have, but if you are a district with only one school, you have difficulty talking with other colleagues about what they are doing in their buildings. We address that issue by providing those opportunities for our cluster principals to come together, to have the conversation about how they are dealing with that pushback.

Another thing we did in our office, we just did our book study. Even though Glen Singleton has been coming to our district, our office, the Office of School Performance, did a book study on his book and that has really opened our eyes about more ways to help our principals to deal with and handle the conversation about race and equity.

MR. MORRISON: The last comment on this is in terms of the supervision and collaboration with our schools. It's really important that you get all your systems and processes lined up to reach those leverage points. And in a school district of 200 schools that look very dissimilar, it's important that Adrian is not having different conversations than I am. It's the same message, it just gets delivered in different ways. We created a monitoring protocol calendar that is distributed to our schools so our principals know the

questions that we are going to ask, they are very aligned to race, equity, the M-Stat type of questions that we ask.

And then our principals have, many of them have taken those same questions that we go out to have with them and they have started to address them with their leadership teams, like Carole has at QO. And I think that the other part that's really important, in terms of your original question, is it gets back to the conversations this morning about does the accountability precede the trust and there really is a trust to verify, and that's what M-Stat is about. When we M-Stat, we see the schools that get it, we see the schools that are making substantive progress and so, for those schools, they really become the story for us to tell others.

And then we also see the schools that are struggling and our superintendent always says we're not trying to get them, we are just trying to get them to do better for our kids. And so it focuses our work the same way that Carole can look at her data and see which teachers are clearly getting it and which teachers need some additional support. So it really is about identifying where the areas of growth are, the opportunities, and they are all based around conversations of race and equity.

MS. POLLOCK: And what I'm hearing then is that you set the target, you say that you, you do allow

for autonomy and a sort of inquiry of how do we, at the school level, how do we actually, how do we actually lower our suspensions here? And if you find a good strategy, then you disseminate it to the rest of the district.

MR. MORRISON: I would like to say I don't know, lowering suspensions, what we want to say, the conversations we want to have is what are the behaviors that we are seeing that lead to suspensions, and create a better learning and teaching environment so that students aren't engaged in the kind of behaviors that are resulting in suspensions.

MR. DIAMOND: All right, so I will be hopefully relatively brief with my questions.

This was a very impressive presentation, what really struck me is the sort of moving, segueing from this morning to this afternoon, to be able to sort of think about the sort of theoretical, and this has something to do with the planing on the conference itself, sort of the theoretical framing led nicely into this discussion, but what was really fascinating for me is thinking about the district level and then moving to the level of the school, and all of the sort of structures that you put into place to make the changes happen in your district.

But also the recognition that with all the success that you have had, there is still a long way to

go. And so that the expectations don't just become, well, we are going to reduce the gap, we're going to make incremental change, it's really about eliminating it. It's really about not being able to recognize that bar graph in terms of race and ethnicity.

The few questions I have really relate to not so much these sort of broader, the broader issues that you've been talking about but sort of starting at the classroom level and trying to think about the ways that you understand what's happening inside particular classrooms or in classrooms across your district.

I've been working for several years on trying to understand how teachers actually change their instructional practices, what are the processes that they go through? Who influences them? What kind of interactions are they having that are sort of informing how they teach? And a recent book that I published with Jim Spillane talks about the concept of distributed leadership, about how leadership is distributed throughout the organization, how we can think about teachers changing their practice, starting with teacher practice and moving back to the multiple influences that you talked about.

And so one of the questions that I have for you is how do you know what's happening in classrooms? One of the questions earlier was about teachers and

instruction, so the question I have, initially, is how do you know what's happening in classrooms?

And secondly, knowing what's happening in classrooms, are you thinking about the changes that you make as based on a certain model of what's supposed to be happening instructionally? Is it based on empowering teachers to teach in ways that they think are best for them or empowering teams to figure out what to do in their particular schools or particular classrooms?

And then sort of what is the way that you think about teachers changing the way that they teach? Obviously you have some ideas about instruction as being important to what's happening, but how do you think about teachers changing over time and what the sort of theory behind those kinds of changes are for people in your district? And then the, oh, okay, go ahead.

MS. LACEY: I think Mr. Virga and the community sups can certainly answer the question, but I would like to also tell you another story based on the M-Stat of how we were able to use M-Stat to identify some stellar teachers. We were having an M-Stat meeting on higher level math in the fifth grade. We were not meeting the target for African American and Hispanic students. And so we problem solved after M-Stat and said there ought to be some way, there ought to be some teachers out there that are doing it, that are making a difference with African American and Hispanic students.

So a couple of us got together and got with the research department and said find us some teachers. Look at the data and find us some teachers, they came forth with ten names, three were in bold. I called the first principal and I said tell me about Natalie Howard, true story, and he said she is the best teacher I've ever seen in my life. I've been around for 15 years, I've never seen anyone like her before. She greets the kids by name at the door. When they don't learn, she is upset with herself and she says how can I do a better job?

So for each one of those data points we shared with you, we have a project where we are trying to identify exemplary teachers and we are figuring out what we do to showcase those teachers to help other teachers. But on a daily basis, I would like them to talk a little bit about your question.

MR. VIRGA: Well, one of the things that was very interesting when we had the M-Stat where we had these three elementary teachers who had demonstrated success with African American and Hispanic kids in advanced math, one of the questions that was asked of them, tell us about how you got there, how did you develop the skills and the knowledge? One thing that all three teachers mentioned was a program that we have in our district in terms of studying skillful teaching,

and you might be familiar with Jonathan Sefere and *Research for Better Teaching*.

And we use the studying skillful teacher research as the basis of what we believe good teaching looks like. One of the other things that Dr. Weist did when he came into MCPS was he said we need a common language about what good teaching looks like, so all of our incoming teachers take Studying Skillful Teaching I and II. Our administrators are required to take Observing and Analyzing Teaching I and II. Also, the staff development teachers who are in each school are taking those courses, so we really have established a pretty clear common language about what we believe good teaching looks like.

How do we then work on implementing that in the classroom? Well, in addition to the principal who has obviously had the teaching and this instruction, and the staff development teachers, we have staff development specialists who also work with the staff development teachers and everybody is pushing that same message. So different schools are going to do it different ways. There might be a walk-thru process, there might be peer observation, there's different things and the community superintendents work with individual schools about how they are going to implement that.

But there is a real focus on we just believe good teaching is going to get results, so how do we clarify what that is for teachers and then support them in it? I think a real important part of that too, and then I'll stop, is that those concepts are clearly reflected in what we call our teacher professional growth system. We don't have a teacher evaluation system anymore, we have a teachers professional growth system, based on six standards that are, again, research-based and aligned with studying skillful teaching. And that's the document, those are the standards that we use to observe, and analyze and give teachers feedback.

One of the things that we haven't really talked about during our presentation today is our employee organizations and I think another thing you really have to give Dr. Weist credit for is the relationships he established with our principals union, our administrators union, teachers union and support services because we have professional growth systems for all three employee groups that were developed in collaboration with those employee groups to the point that we have a PAR panel process where teachers are involved in the decision to non-renew the contract of the teacher who is working below standard.

And you can imagine the pushback that our teachers union president gets when she goes around and

talks about that, but it is about a system vision of excellence and what professional growth and good teaching should look like.

MS. LACEY: And I would like to say we have that for principals too, so it's not that we are singling out teachers.

MR. MORRISON: And support services.

MS. LACEY: And support services and principals, so if you are not doing your job, then you can be referred to PAR and your peers have the authority to say let's continue to support or dismiss, and they do dismiss.

MR. MORRISON: We call--

MS. LACEY: The right people on the bus.

MR. MORRISON: We invite you to find your happiness elsewhere.

(Laughter)

MR. MORRISON: But that only comes after, that only happens with folks who don't accept and respond to the support. It's a year or two years of targeted support. Every new teacher is assigned a consulting teacher, whose job it is to help them through that first year, to help them meet the standards.

MS. LACEY: And every new principal is assigned a consulting principal, so we do want to support them.

MR. MORRISON: A couple of other things that I think is very important, when Dr. Lacey mentioned Natalie Howard, Natalie Howard chose to teach the advanced math class for the students who were being accelerated into advanced math, and just getting an opportunity to be in her classroom, our Strathmore Elementary School is one of the schools that I have the pleasure of supervising as community superintendent. We had that earlier conversation today about classrooms that are just beating the odds and you can see the skills that she is bringing.

Is she a hero/shero? Perhaps, but what she is doing on a daily basis can be scaled up, and so part of our M-Stat process is, as we identify these schools, as we identify these principals, as we identify these teachers, we are actually taking our learnings and not only putting them into the booklets that Dr. Lacey spoke to but we are also putting them onto our website so that people can work towards their own professional development. Teachers and educators who really care, they are the most able to know what they need and so they can access, they can hear about a Natalie Howard, and through our website actually see what's going on in that classroom to see what they can bring in terms of their own professional development and enhance their own teaching and learning.

I was struck earlier by the comment about most professional development just stinks, and that's probably very true across many districts in the nation, and I was particularly struck by the conversation about how our teachers come in not being able to differentiate, not being able to meet our students' needs in reading and not being able to deal with the behaviors. In a school district that is changing as rapidly as Montgomery County, that is increasingly being populated by students who public education has underserved, if it wasn't for professional development and that systemic commitment to it, we couldn't maintain the results that we've had prior to Dr. Weist, but we would be falling rapidly.

And so it's that investiture in professional development, it's the differentiated resources. Educational equity really is the same for all based on need and when we have areas of Montgomery County, all of the schools that I supervise, I have the pleasure of sup'ing those schools that are in the red zone, and so we are truly blessed to have these differentiated resources. But it really is that staff development teacher in each school, after the principal, I really believe that that staff development teacher has the greatest opportunity to move that school forward because as teachers, there is trust.

They can come and they can say, well, this is where I'm seeing my needs, how can you help me? I happen to be married to a staff development teacher at one of Mr. Talley's schools and so, on a nightly basis I see her accessing, doing his work.

(Laughter)

MR. MORRISON: I've got to say--

(Laughter)

MR. MORRISON: Which is good, it's all good. But I see her trying to meet the needs of her teachers and I actually, yesterday she was on our data warehouse and she was looking at the different certifications of all the teachers at her school because she was planning for summer leadership week, and it was that differentiation that she knows that our teachers need at one of Mr. Talley's schools that is changing rapidly that's going to be able to sustain the results that we are having and take us to that next level.

MR. TALLEY: I just want to say one more thing to respond to the question about how we see that the same type of instruction or good instructional practices are occurring. Our Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programming, working not in isolation but working with other offices, OOD being one, the Office of Organizational Development, created look-fors. They have look-fors for the what you should find when you go

into a math class, what you should find when you go into a reading class.

Equitable classroom practices look-fors were created by the Office of Organization Development and so principals, teachers have a common language that they are using as to what should be happening within their classrooms and these are really part of the curriculum guides that have been created for our teachers. And therefore, if I'm going into a classroom and observing a math lesson, if a teacher is spending 30 minutes on the warmup, we know something is wrong. If they aren't using equitable classroom practices, then we know something is wrong, and I think those look-fors help to develop that common language that we need.

MS. LACEY: I would also like to say, think about how powerful it would be if a principal put a face on every teacher, every building service person in the building and each teacher put a face on every child in the classroom. Suppose a teacher, our teachers, put a face on every child in that classroom, starting at the elementary level, and we say, you talk about autonomy? Study your own data, figure it out, and when I meet with you, tell me, tell me your classroom plan. You talk about school improvement plan. So there is more work for us to do.

MR. OGLETREE: Ron is going to ask a question in just a second. But let me just ask a small

question that I hope will be answered in the affirmative on this data-driven system, two questions related. One, I assume that the AP classes are all comparable, there is not a range of classes so you are in AP physical education, they are comparably rigorous, number one.

And the second question that I didn't see, is there any sense that the improvements is a result of the bottom dropping out. A lot of schools have suspensions/expulsions, so the worst kids aren't there, so the numbers look better over a period of time. Is that not the case in Montgomery County?

MR. MORRISON: Absolutely not. Again, going back to as Dr. Lacey quoted our superintendent, our graduation rates both in the traditional way of looking at graduation rates and the new mechanism, from the time when they are in ninth grade, either way you look at it, they are better than just about any other large school district in the country.

MS. LACEY: The third highest of the largest school districts.

MR. MORRISON: But that being said, they are still not where they need to be. But every school in Montgomery County is getting increasingly diverse, every school in Montgomery County is being impacted by poverty, and so that's why we will be starting two new M-Stat teams next year, one will be on suspensions and one will be on eligibility. And actually the work that

our superintendent has tasked our team going to PELP this year is to deal with expectations, and so I think they all come together to ensure that as we have these data points that we look at, that we are not gaining these data points. They really are reaching to a broader group of our students and to a group of students that traditionally have been under-served in public education.

MS. LACEY: Many of times I think you have to have a protagonist in the school district and sometimes I serve in that role. While we are putting kids of color in AP classes, when we peel back the onion, guess where we were putting kids of color, African American kids? Guess what AP class? No, what AP class? Psychology. Something is wrong with that picture and so that's been my message, you know, why psychology? What is it about, what, do you want us to figure out the achievement gap ourselves?

(Laughter)

MS. LACEY: They are putting kids --. But that bothers me and so what they do is they say, well, we have more kids in AP classes, but then you peel back that, are they in math? Are they in science? They are in psychology. Is that safe? Is that not as rigorous as the others? So that's why you just have to be unrelenting about the work that we do.

MR. OGLETREE: Professor Ferguson?

MR. FERGUSON: Ron Ferguson, I needed to say my name.

Let me suggest that we had a half an hour break scheduled from 3:00 to 3:30, I'm suspecting I'm not the only person with questions, so why don't we take ten minutes of that break and take a fifteen minute discussion now. If somebody has to go out, please feel free to get up and go out, but we'll maybe go until ten after the hour and then go from there to 3:30 and start the other session at 3:30.

MR. OGLETREE: And you were going to ask a question too?

MR. FERGUSON: Yeah, I do have a question too.

MR. OGLETREE: I was going to say just make sure the questions are pretty precise, given the time, to get as many on the table as possible.

MR. FERGUSON: Okay, question. There has been resistance to things like M-Stat. That's what you call it, right? There has been resistance to M-Stat because it makes people uncomfortable to have to sit and be held accountable for the numbers in their room. And for the people in other school systems who might have considered it but not done it because they didn't want to make people uncomfortable, you might want to say a word about M-Stat.

Second question, the teacher, what did you call them?

MS. LACEY: Exemplar teachers.

MR. FERGUSON: The teacher in each building that coaches the other teachers.

MR. MORRISON: Staff development teachers.

MR. FERGUSON: The staff development teacher, I assume that's very separate from the accountability system so people aren't afraid--

MR. VIRGA: They are not evaluated, right.

MR. FERGUSON: They are not evaluated.

And finally, just if you could make a comment as you go along about the question that Tom Payzant raised this morning about balancing control and autonomy and how you figure out how much autonomy to give teachers, as opposed to control, and the fear that if you give a lot of autonomy before you give training, that's not a good idea.

MR. TALLEY: I just want to talk, earlier this morning someone had mentioned, I think it was Kitty had mentioned something about fear of teachers not liking, I'm not quoting her correctly and I apologize, not liking their principals or fearing their principals, or something to that affect. With M-Stat and the question you had raised, we had talked, both Heath and I talked about the fact it's not a gotcha. It's the relationship you have with your principals, just like

the relationship principals have with their teachers, that allow you to have the M-Stat conversation.

Before M-Stat even began, we individually were having conversations about data, M-Stat made it a more district level conversation piece. And I think by having those relationships with your principals, you are able to talk about, in-depth, about their data and not make them feel apprehensive. Our very first M-Stat we had, were people somewhat apprehensive? Yes, but when they left it, they left energized and really quite excited about the process. And now schools are doing it within their own schools and clusters are doing it within their clusters.

MR. MORRISON: One of my principals, the first time we did a M-Stat, because not only did we do it on a district level but then we do it within our clusters and our principals are doing it with the schools, but one of my very high performing principals turned around, and they had just gotten their red hat from the superintendent, which is what he does at A&S to recognize when principals are doing exemplary things with our targets, and so she was quite pleased with herself, as well she should be.

But then when we did the afternoon with the M-Stat and she looked at the data, and she turned around and she said, Heath, you're going to put my business out there for everybody to see? And I'm like wait a second

now, I mean you're okay with your business being out there when you got the red hat and, you know--

(Laughter)

MR. MORRISON: So, yeah, we're going to look. But actually one of my directors of school performance had just come from a principalship and his school was one of the poorest performing schools in this particular M-Stat and he said, folks, this is not going to be easy, he said but the data is what the data is and our superintendent says we need to take our students and schools from where they are and take them to where they need to be, and that's what we are going to do, and we are going to find out together, in a true learning community, how that gets done.

So I think there was some initial apprehension, but what we are finding is that as we identify schools that need support, the next time we M-Stat, because it's a rotating cycle, all the times there's schools that we identified that need support and focus become our success stories and then they are sharing what they do.

MS. LACEY: I would like to also say that maybe it was how we kicked it off because when we did do our first M-Stat, we had the Governor of Maryland and the county exec, who were both interested in implementing some type of COMSTAT on a government level. So I think our stakeholders realized that this was

something we were doing that the governor and the county exec were also thinking about modeling, that helped. I think it also helped that when we connect the dots, we have a strategic plan, it has the data points, it has targets in it. We hold you accountable to those targets, it makes a lot of sense, doesn't it?

We identify exemplar teachers, we identify best practices, we give you those strategies. We recognize you at the superintendents meetings and then the most important thing is we have to get our funding, it is critical that we get our funding, especially today. If we don't get the results and we don't focus on those results and have a process or a tool that will help us get those results, we will not be supported by our county exec, we will not be supported by our county council, we will not be supporting by our senior citizens. Seventy percent of the folks in our county don't have children in Montgomery County Public Schools.

We have an over \$2 billion budget. Our teachers got a five percent cost of living increase that our superintendent and our unions, at the table, fought to have, because they told the politicians if you want to be re-elected, we gave you these outcomes, we want the money, we were at the table together. So it's also very, very critical, through a process like this, that you reward your stakeholders. Our teachers got a five

percent increase in their salary, but it was only because of the results.

MS. WORKING: I had the pleasure to be in the first group of high school principals to get to do this and I have to tell you I was horrified, I hated the thought of it. I was phoning every middle school principal who had been through their, I was really worried and I was called out on a data point that I did not want to have to speak to at all. But I need to tell you, I learned so much from having to prepare for that meeting that I, it's valuable and I learned things that I was able to use at school this year.

MR. OGLETREE: First question?

MS. IFEKWUNIGWE: Good afternoon. My name is Ann Ifekwunigwe, I'm a fourth year doctoral student in the urban superintendents program here.

My question is related to what you discussed about the teachers studying skillful or the studying skillful teachers program. Also, I believe you have or you are in the top twenty of national board certified teachers in the nation and I was wondering what role national board certification plays in your teacher professional development programs.

MR. MORRISON: Well, we view national board certification as one of those pieces that supports individuals first, because we really do provide a lot of support at the district level, in terms of financial

support, as well as coaching and instructors that are in place out of my office. So, yeah, we are really pleased we are in the top twenty, we have three times more than any other district in Maryland and a number of those folks who work in central office, and a number are doing great things in schools.

The studying skillful teaching course, again is something that I would guess, I would bet that most of the national board certified teachers have completed as well, but it is courses that are offered during the school year and also during the summer. It's a 36 hour course and it's, again, research-based and it's very job embedded, because part of what happens with the course is teachers are asked to take the strategies that they are learning, whether it's about mastery of objectives, or attention moves or communicating high expectations, and to go and implement them in the classroom, do a little action research, and then come back and report on it. So I think it's a very tight way of continuing to communicate that message about what we believe good teaching looks like.

MR. OGLETREE: Next question?

MR. ASH: Thank you very much. Paul Ash, Superintendent of Schools in Lexington, Massachusetts.

At ASA, Dr. Weist gave a presentation on the same topic, he talked about data teams in each school and what struck me that was very powerful about

that and I would like to have a question to you in regards to that, he said it's not enough to develop professional learning communities and have teachers with common planning time work by themselves, but embedded in each school there was a team of teachers that worked with a principal, and that they looked to the data of the school and that informed the PLCs.

But then he stopped and I didn't have a chance to ask him, could you connect, could you comment on that, the power of those teams in each school? And I also have no idea how it would work in a high school, so it's really, I would appreciate your comments.

MS. WORKING: Well, I have two teams, I have the team that really creates the data and also loves to bring to your attention what they are seeing and then I have a team of, you want to know how we really know what goes on in a classroom? And then I have a team of, the core department chairs work with me to really, monthly, we really, really look at data and we talk about data, what data pieces we want to really focus on with our full leadership team, which is about 22 people. And also we are always looking at what's happening with our school improvement plan.

I think in Montgomery County we have 14 and about to be 15 data points that high schools work with, but we have focus points within our school, ones that we think we really need to move right now and that's it's

critical, and so we really are looking at data very much around those. But recently my team has been looking at a lot of data around assessment and what's really happening between formative and summative assessment, and where formative isn't aligning with summative assessment and what are the real implications for what is happening in our classrooms.

And we have moved into a system of where the county now writes certain standardized tests for all the high schools to, in a core curricular area, say, like U.S. History. Well, when we see that the formatives are consistently non-aligning, we are going to go in to find out why. Is this something out of a file drawer from about six years ago or is this something that the teacher doesn't understand? I mean you get a lot of information from this that actually is about teaching and learning.

MR. FERGUSON: How frequently is formative at the high school?

MS. WORKING: It depends, different people do different things, which is a whole other discussion. But we want them giving a minimum of a grade a week, we want at least three summatives in a marking period and it's, there is like a really big discussion about this because we are looking for a way to get our faculty to understand that they will adapt and modify instruction, depending on the learning, and that's a big concept in

high school, if a significant portion of your faculty has said I deliver it, you learn it, you're responsible for learning it, I've done my job.

MR. OGLETREE: We have about three minutes left so I would like to get both of the questions on now and then whoever is appropriate can respond to it, so let me start here and then get the questions from both of you.

MS. ULRICH: My name is Lisa Ulrich, I'm the Chief Learning Office at Citizen Schools.

And I have two questions, the first is what impact have you seen on the students who are doing less well having more students of color in AP? Is there a higher culture of achievement? Higher motivation?

And the other question is does your strategy, how have you involved parents in your improvement strategy?

MR. OGLETREE: And the last, is there a question?

MS. WARD: Good afternoon. I'm Dr. Wanda Ward, North Park University and Director of Special Education.

My question of course is related to youngsters with special needs, I didn't hear any reference to those populations of students in your data. I don't know if you disaggregated it or where they are. I just looked at an article on the ALT Maryland

assessment for that group of students where I had a chance to speak with Prince George County personnel, who have the highest passage rate for special needs youngsters in the country. So I would like to know where they fit into your work and I think it's excellent.

MS. LACEY: I can take on that ALt point and just speak to that. You mentioned the ALT MSA and for the audience it is the No Child Left Behind assessment for the extremely disabled youngsters that are not a part of the regular curriculum. Montgomery County Public Schools had not been doing that well for that population because we found it is not a test to determine how well the children are doing, it's how well the teachers are doing and it takes a lot of time. We have, I have in my office a white paper to the state superintendent for our superintendent to share with her because we have an issue with it.

We did accelerate our training this year, the community sups know that, the principals know that. We really have to train our teachers, the teachers have to write objectives and spend a lot of time making sure. Well, you seem like you know about it, so we are concerned about that.

We do look at special education when we look at our data sets and one thing we have discovered, isolation doesn't work, integration, infusion, full

inclusion, whatever you want to call it, so we are shutting down those isolated programs and putting kids with disabilities into their regular classroom and we have co-teaching going on and the data indicates that the kids are doing much better in special ed.

MS. WARD: Were they included in the numbers that you guys had here?

MS. LACEY: Yes.

MS. WARD: Amen, thank you.

(Laughter)

MR. OGLETREE: And the other two questions, do you want to respond?

MR. TALLEY: I want to, you had mentioned about parent involvement. Every school in Montgomery County has to have a school improvement team, part of the school improvement team, and actually we are charged, our office, is to ensure that parents are involved on the team. A number of years ago involvement simply meant they signed on the line saying they approved the school improvement plan. Now the involvement must be more specific, it must be more real.

M-STAT, there are some schools that are using the data and presenting it at school improvement team meetings which at some schools is every month. When I was a principal, I met once a month with my school improvement team, which included the parent, and we looked at the data. The problem some principals had

to get over was how do you share the data with parents being there, and as Carole was doing, giving names and faces to the data? But when you work with your parents, it's about that relationship piece I talked about earlier, you can have parents who can maintain confidentiality and support the practices because when you are trying to improve or engage parents, because some of our schools are having difficulty engaging certain segments of their population, but when you have parents who are part of your team, who are from that segment of that population, they can do the outreach that you, as a principal, may not be able to do.

And that is where some of our schools are seeing their success, by having their NAACP parent rep, which every school must have in Montgomery County, by having your Hispanic parent rep call parents and get them involved. One of the techniques used to increase enrollment in honors and AP was having your NAACP rep call parents, African American parents, and talk to them about why your child needs to be in an honors and AP course, or having some of the Hispanic parents call other Hispanic parents and get them involved in having the child engaged in enrolled in such courses, so that's how we are doing it.

MR. OGLETREE: Can someone respond to the other part of the question about whether or not more

students of color taking AP courses, has that impacted the larger group, a sense of pride about the success?

MS. WORKING: That has not happened in our school, although the teachers absolutely thought it was going to happen. And we had a moment where pretty much the leadership team had to recognize that our teachers were actually telling the students that that's what would happen, but the scores, it didn't happen in terms of the scores.

The other part that you were asking, I've been in a really fascinating dialogue with my parent community because they view AP participation as a line on a resume for getting into college and therefore there should be no problem with you dropping it after you've been accepted.

(Laughter)

MS. WORKING: The school, much less take the test, but we've been in dialogue with them, as a school, saying we view this as preparation for independent and successful functioning in college and here are the skill sets we would like all of our children to have, so we are starting to see more support from our parents.

MR. MORRISON: Before Carole became our principal, she was an outstanding assistant principal for one of the schools I supervise and there was a particular department resource teacher who was not happy

about this push and talked about how it was going to end up watering down the expectations and standards for all students. I ran into this person about a month ago and we just chatted in the hallway of her school and she said, you know, Dr. Morrison, I have to say this, she said what we are doing in AP, I couldn't be prouder, and she said it really makes me think of that quote, a rising tide lifts all ships, and she said that's really what's happening in our school and what's happening in Montgomery County Public Schools.

MR. OGLETREE: We have a 14 minute break, there are books out there being sold. So please thank our panelists and our discussants.

(Applause)