

Minority Student Achievement Network
MSAN Monthly, September 2017

Welcome to the new school year, MSAN Educators!

As we launch into the 2017-2018 school year, it is [important to consider](#) how we will bolster our educational equity work, as students return from summer vacation so soon after the August events in Charlottesville, Virginia. [Click here to read the statement that I shared with MSAN's Superintendents and members of our Research-Practitioner Council on August 18.](#) As I noted in my letter,

For many of us, the next few weeks will involve a natural flow of back to school routines... registration, orientation, workshops, welcome sessions, etc. etc. etc. I hope all of us will pause and practice naming the racism embedded in our language, our expectations, our priorities, our school culture, our decision making strategies, and more. All of it. Pause and practice naming the ways white supremacy culture works to the detriment to people of color and then seek out opportunities to act against it.

Over the past 18 years, our network has developed resources and supports for educators to use while they work to ameliorate the impact of racism on our students and families. MSAN districts have had a lot of practice engaging in hard conversations about racism, bias, white privilege, and oppression. If you are feeling unsure about how to begin, take a look at the resources [at the end of this letter]. Or email me and I will put you in contact with MSAN colleagues who want to support you. Because at the end of the day, it is you who will decide how your district moves forward after Charlottesville.

[Read the entire letter](#) for more. Please share your resources and approaches with us at msan@wcer.wisc.edu.

In closing, as we gear up to support our students, our families, and each other in what is a tenuous moment for our country, I implore you to believe. Believe in the power of our network and your MSAN colleagues. Believe in our shared beliefs and commitments. I believe in you and look forward to hearing about the incredible work you are doing to dismantle institutional racism one policy, one process, or practice at a time.

-Madeline M. Hafner, Ph.D.
Executive Director-Minority Student Achievement Network

MSAN STUDENT CONFERENCE

Registration Closes September 15

Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District is excited to be hosting the MSAN Student Conference this October 18-21. This year's theme is **F.O.C.U.S. - Fighting Our Cause Unified in the Struggle**. Registration closes September 15. Please see the [MSAN Student Conference website](#) for the agenda, pre-conference materials, and more details. Each year, conference delegates create an Action Plan. **Think about how you will support your district's MSAN Scholars in implementing their Action Plan when they return from the conference!**

EQUITY IN ACTION

In the Wake of Charlottesville: Resources for Educators

The Atlantic contributing writer Melinda Anderson created the hashtag [#CharlottesvilleCurriculum](#) on Twitter to serve as an ongoing list of resources to teach responsively to August's events in Charlottesville. For articles that frame and discuss the hashtag, see

- [The first thing teachers should do when school starts is talk about hatred in America. Here's help.](#) (*The Washington Post*)
- [Resources For Educators To Use In The Wake Of Charlottesville](#) (*NPR*)
- [Teachers Share Resources for Addressing Charlottesville Hate Rally in the Classroom](#) (*Education Week*)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sharing the MSAN Monthly with Your Colleagues

Feedback from MSAN member districts indicates that the MSAN Monthly email can be an excellent resource for professional development resources. In this regard, we hope you will join us in working to **increasing the reach of the MSAN Monthly** this school year. Do you share the MSAN Monthly with colleagues in your district? Each month, Cheryl Robinson, Cultural Competency Coordinator for Alexandria City Public Schools, forwards the MSAN Monthly to all staff, with the following introduction:

ACPS is a member of the Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN), a national coalition of school districts that focuses on reducing disparities in education. The email below features the most recent newsletter, which may have information that is of interest to you. MSAN also offers online resources that include a clearinghouse of best practices in responsive education, research briefs and resources for staff, families and students. Visit the [MSAN website](#) for more information.

Are you sharing the MSAN Monthly? **Please share your strategies at <http://go.wisc.edu/282azf>**

RESEARCH YOU CAN USE

The Power of Ethnic Studies Programs

Despite reports from teachers and students about the power of ethnic studies programs, some policy makers and educators have created barriers to these programs in schools. A recent research study calls for removal of these barriers--outlining ethnic studies programs as a powerful tool for closing achievement gaps. The results of the study, which used a quasi-experimental design, are unequivocal: **participation in ethnic studies courses positively influences variables that lead to high school persistence, such as attendance, GPA, and credits earned.** Read more about the study in the American Educational Research Journal.

<http://inid.gse.uci.edu/files/2011/03/DeePenner2016AERJThe-causaleffectsofculturalrelevance.pdf>

For a comprehensive overview of the power of ethnic studies courses, take a look at Christine Sleeter's "The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies: A Research Review."

<http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/NBI-2010-3-value-of-ethnic-studies.pdf>

LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

MSAN Leader from Amherst Regional Public Schools Honored

Over the summer, longtime Amherst educator and MSAN leader, **Mary Custard**, won the 2017 Louise Gaskins Lifetime Civil Rights Award from the Massachusetts Teachers Association. Mary embodies the "humility, leadership and tenacity" at the heart of this prestigious award. Check out

[this article recognizing her achievements](#) from her alma mater, UMass Amherst. Congratulations, Mary! Thank you for your leadership!

Minority Student Achievement Network
Wisconsin Center for Education Research
467 Education Sciences Building
1025 W. Johnson St.
Madison, WI 53706
608.263.1565
msan@wcer.wisc.edu
msan.wceruw.org