

# 2025 Oregon Equity Summit Breakout Sessions

Thursday, September 25, 2025 | 2:45 to 3:45

## **2 Part Series: Navigating Conflict and Context of Common Equity Issues (part 1)**

Speakers: Zinnia Un, Director of Equity, Inclusion, and Multilingual Services, Tigard-Tualatin SD  
Rob Parness, Teacher/Building Equity Coordinator, Tigard High School  
Jacob DeGraw, Parent and Chair, Educational Equity Advisory Committee, Tigard-Tualatin SD  
Carol Kinch, Directors of Student Services, Tigard-Tualatin SD  
Lisa McCall, Assistant Superintendent, Tigard-Tualatin SD

Part 1 – Framework & Foundations: This session introduces the Conflict and Context Framework for Equity Leaders, focusing on how to set the right conditions for collaborative problem solving. Participants will explore core Equity Moves and protocols to address conflict with care, calibrate understanding, and align solutions to the unique context of the challenge. Through interactive practice, leaders will learn how to prime teams for constructive dialogue and resolution.

## **The Power of Systems: Building Literacy Equity Through Collective Action**

Speakers: Lisa Corricello-McDowell, Literacy Consultant, Lexia Learning  
Lory Reddel, National Literacy Consultant, Lexia Learning

In a time when trust in public education is fractured and the emotional toll of equity work is high, this session explores how districtwide literacy systems—rooted in the Science of Reading—can serve as a foundation for rebuilding trust, restoring hope, and advancing justice. Participants will examine how structured literacy, data-driven decision-making, and inclusive professional development can transform fragmented efforts into a unified, courageous movement for educational equity. Through the lens of “The Power of Us,” we’ll explore how systems can hold us, support us, and move us forward—together.

## **Title IX and Athletic Access**

Speakers: Lauren Brownrigg, Assistant Executive Director, Oregon School Activities Association  
Kate Hildebrandt, Title IX and Civil Rights Specialist, Oregon Department of Education

This webinar reviews Title IX’s requirements to ensure equitable athletic access for all students. Participants will learn about the history of Title IX and athletics as well as Title IX’s two main equity requirements for Oregon K-12 schools. Topics include:

- The history of Title IX and athletic access
- Athletic opportunities and benefits equity requirements: the three-part test and the laundry list
- Resource, support, and reporting options at schools

## **Pushing Through the Turbulence: Leaving A Legacy for All Kids**

Speaker: Paul Coakley, Superintendent, Multnomah ESD

Oregon schools are navigating unprecedented challenges as federal and state budget reductions cut deeply into resources, staffing, and essential programs. Yet the needs of our students remain unchanged. In this session, the Superintendent of the Multnomah Education Service District shares lessons from his leadership journey—how to lead with purpose, expand opportunity, and dismantle disparities even in times of scarcity. Participants will explore practical strategies and tools to maintain focus on equity, foster hope, and create lasting impact despite adversity. Through interactive discussion, attendees will connect with peers, reflect on their own educational contexts, and leave with actionable approaches to block out the turbulence and build a legacy for the students they serve.

## **Transformation: Our Purpose as Equity Leaders**

Speakers: Francesca Sinapi, Equity, Access and Engagement Officer, Hillsboro SD  
Jennifer Williams, Equity Access and Engagement TOSA, Hillsboro SD  
Susan Acosta, Equity Access and Engagement TOSA, Hillsboro SD

In a time when equity work is often reduced to checklists, compliance, and isolated initiatives, this session invites educational leaders to reimagine their role, not just as implementers, but as cultivators of human-centered change.

We’ll explore the tension between transactional and transformational approaches to equity leadership, asking:

- Are we responding to mandates or to mission?

- Are we centering processes or people?

Through key leadership anchors: Courage, Connection, Consistency, and Creativity, participants will reflect on how to lead with heart and purpose, even within systems built for efficiency over empathy. Rooted in the theme "The Power of Us," this session offers practical tools, grounding metaphors, and collective reflection designed to shift the focus from what we're doing to who we are becoming. Leave with renewed clarity, critical questions, and a shared commitment to lead equity work with integrity, vision, and care.

Thursday, September 25, 2025 | 4:15 to 5:15

## **2 Part Series: Navigating Conflict and Context of Common Equity Issues (part 2)**

Speakers: Zinnia Un, Director of Equity, Inclusion, and Multilingual Services, Tigard-Tualatin SD  
 Rob Parness, Teacher/Building Equity Coordinator, Tigard High School  
 Jacob DeGraw, Parent and Chair, Educational Equity Advisory Committee, Tigard-Tualatin SD  
 Carol Kinch, Directors of Student Services, Tigard-Tualatin SD  
 Lisa McCall, Assistant Superintendent, Tigard-Tualatin SD

Part 2 – Application & Practice: Building on Part 1, this session deepens participants' skills by applying the Conflict and Context Framework to real-world equity challenges. Participants will engage in case studies, role-play, and facilitated analysis to navigate complex situations while centering equity, care, and context. By the end, leaders will have practical tools to manage conflict, align stakeholders, and design context-responsive solutions that strengthen systems and relationships.

## **Queer Voices Shaping Equitable Schools**

Speaker: Byron Bethards, Director of Student Growth and Experience, Corvallis SD

This presentation, drawing from a qualitative study of queer educational leaders in Oregon, explores their lived experiences, challenges navigating political scrutiny, and the transformative impact of their identities on school leadership. It highlights the systemic obstacles and biases they face and their commitment to creating safe and affirming environments for all students and staff. By understanding these experiences, K-12 leaders can gain insights into fostering more equitable and inclusive school cultures, directly aligning with COSA's commitment to equity and the success of every Oregon student and staff member, particularly those from historically marginalized groups. The presentation underscores the importance of authenticity, visibility, and building support systems to ensure that success in Oregon schools is no longer predicted by identity.

## **Take a look at Equity in David Douglas**

Speakers: La'Shawanta Spears, Assistant Superintendent of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, David Douglas SD  
 Shane Burchell, Assistant Administrator of Multilingual Programs, David Douglas SD  
 Andreina Velasco, GYO Navigator, David Douglas SD  
 Gabie Mbenza-Ngoma, Equity TOSA, David Douglas SD

During our time together, we will share an overview of what equity looks like within DDS. We will discuss equity teams in each building, including their priorities and how we engage parents and caregivers. In addition, we will highlight our current efforts with our Grow Your Own (GYO) initiative, Staff of Color affinity space, and our newly restructured strategies to support Multilingual Learners (MLL) at every level.

## **Building Capacity to Support Recently Arrived Students through a trauma informed lens**

Speakers: Nat Jacobs, Mental and Behavioral Health Education Leader, Oregon Department of Education  
 Gloria Espitia, Multilingual and Migrant Education Leader, Oregon Department of Education

This workshop will provide participants with shared language around trauma, and the fundamentals of what it means to be trauma-informed as strategy for supporting newcomers and recently arrived students through workshoping, self reflection, and identifying which practices may support students by focusing on student's lived experience. A focus on trauma informed practices is rooted in anti-oppressive ideals and one goal for this conversation is the identification and creation of frameworks that resonate in the diverse and unique contexts across districts and schools and are inclusive across the diverse student experiences of our recently arrived students and simultaneously contribute to support for all students.

## **Equity-Centered Data-Driven Decision-Making**

Speaker: Shelly Reggiani, Associate Superintendent, Beaverton SD

An equity-centered data approach requires applying an equity lens and mindset throughout the entire data decision-making process to recognize, comprehend, and tackle disparities in student experiences, opportunities, and outcomes. This involves intentional planning regarding how data is collected, analyzed, interpreted, shared, and utilized in decision-making. Equity-centered data-driven decision-making aims to recognize and address historical and systemic biases and barriers while developing more equitable policies, practices, and systems.

Friday, September 26, 2025 | 10:30 to 11:30

## **Discourse, Dignity, and Determination: Reframing Support for Elementary Students with Behavioral Challenges**

Speakers: Carol Kinch, Directors of Student Services, Tigard-Tualatin SD  
Zinnia Un, Director of Equity & Inclusion, Tigard-Tualatin SD  
Casey Petrie, Principal, Alberta Rider Elementary

When students exhibit challenging behavior, the way we talk about them shapes how we serve them. In moments of stress and uncertainty, staff discourse can shift from problem-solving to blame—leading to exclusionary mindsets and placement-seeking rather than support-building. This session explores how language, beliefs, and systems intersect to impact the educational trajectories of elementary students with behavioral needs.

Grounded in equity and inclusion, we will share a collaborative model that begins with a simple but powerful question: “What will it take for this student to be successful in their home school?” Participants will learn how we convene teams to design individualized supports rooted in shared responsibility, collective action, and unrelenting belief in each student’s potential. Join us to examine how adult discourse either sustains or disrupts systems of exclusion—and how persistent, team-based approaches can foster belonging, dignity, and success for every student.

## **Solidarity and Hope**

Speakers: John Lenssen, Director, John Lenssen and Associates  
Carmen Gelman, Principal Coach, Inflexion

We are confronted with the federal government’s anti-DEI movement and cuts to vital programs and policies that serve migrant students, non-white students, multilingual students, students in poverty, LGBTQ+ students, and students with disabilities. This movement is mobilized to silence us and to create fear among us and the communities that we serve. We need spaces of connection based in solidarity to provide direction, support and hope. A primary source of hope comes from our intergenerational relationships with students and elders. These community connections are grounded in histories of resistance and collective wisdom. We will highlight multiracial solidarity. We will share our own stories and resources as we strengthen our paths of resistance and hope for ourselves, our students and our communities.

## **When Bias Incidents Occur in School Sports and Activities: Preventing, Responding, and Restoring**

Speakers: Peter Weber, Executive Director, Oregon School Activities Association  
Kelly Foster, Assistant Executive Director, Oregon School Activities Association  
Christy Perry, Consultant, Coalition of Oregon School Administrators

OSAA and COSA have teamed up to develop a Resource Guide for School Administrators, Athletic Directors, and Coaches to support schools with readiness to prevent and respond to incidents of bias and restore when an incident of bias has occurred.

## **SB 13: Tribal History/Shared History Update**

Speaker: Brent Spencer, Operations & Policy Analyst, Oregon Department of Education

Provide an update on TH/SH progress which will include an introduction to the new TH/SH lesson plans created for K-3. We will take a short dive into some of the lessons and share new information added to the lessons. We will also provide an introduction into the new professional learning modules that were created in collaboration with WestEd. We will also touch on SB13 requirements for implementation as well as ORS 329.493 “Curriculum Relating to Native American Experience in Oregon”. A portion of this conversation will include best practices or strategies to ensure TH/SH lessons are effectively implemented within classrooms across all content areas.

### **More Than a Moment: Sustaining Equity Through Collective Practice**

Speakers: Sharif Liwaru, Senior Director of Equity & Family Partnerships, Northwest Regional ESD  
Dan Goldman, Superintendent, Northwest Regional ESD

How do we move from good intentions to institutional transformation in ways that affirm identity and cultivate true belonging? This session introduces participants to the Northwest Regional ESD's updated Anti-Racist Multicultural Continuum (ARMC) — a dynamic, student-centered framework for evaluating and advancing equity in schools and a powerful tool to move school communities from symbolic inclusion to systemic belonging. Participants will explore how affirming identity, cultivating collective leadership, and embedding equity in curriculum, policy, and relationships can disrupt long-standing inequities. Through student-centered examples, real action plans, and collaborative reflection, attendees will build the capacity to lead courageous, anti-racist change within their schools and districts. This session empowers educators to engage in courageous, collective action that centers historically marginalized voices and embeds anti-racism into the fabric of school culture and systems.

Friday, September 26, 2025 | 12:30 to 1:30

### **Ready to Welcome: Building Systems of Belonging for Immigrant, Refugee, and Undocumented Students and Families**

Speaker: Carmen Xiomara Urbina, Chief of Staff, Eugene SD

This session will prepare educators, leaders, and community partners to strengthen their readiness to support immigrant, refugee, and undocumented students and families with equity, dignity, and care. Participants will explore strategies that go beyond compliance—centering belonging, safety, and access to opportunity. Together we will:

- Identify systemic barriers that often prevent families from fully engaging in schools.
- Learn practical tools for building culturally responsive and trauma-informed environments.
- Explore how schools can partner with community organizations to address legal, linguistic, and social service needs.
- Develop action steps to create welcoming practices that honor student and family identity while safeguarding privacy and rights.

Grounded in both national research and local implementation, this presentation will share lessons from practice in Oregon and beyond. Participants will leave with a framework, resources, and replicable strategies that can be adapted to any school or district context.

### **Division Defiance: Building Cross-racial Solidarity**

Speaker: Sarah Yee, Educational Consultant, CultivatED Consulting

This interactive workshop explores how the Model Minority Myth and Anti-Blackness serve as tools of racial division, perpetuating a hierarchy that undermines collective liberation. Participants will unpack and analyze these harmful narratives, reflect on their own experiences within systems of oppression, and engage in practices that foster cross-racial solidarity. Designed for educators and advocates of educational equity, the session offers a space for building shared understanding and cultivating strategies for dismantling racial hierarchies in pursuit of cross-racial solidarity.

### **United and Collective Action: Supporting Students Through Policy, Practice, and Partnership**

Speakers: Claudia Núñez, Culturally-Responsive Coordinator-Tualatin High School, Tigard-Tualatin SD  
Brooke Mayo, Associate Principal, Tigard-Tualatin SD  
Kristin Cwirla, English Teacher & GSA Advisor, Tigard-Tualatin SD  
Pedro Marquez, Spanish Teacher & Athletic Equity Coordinator, Tigard-Tualatin SD  
Meagan McBride, School Counselor, Tigard-Tualatin SD

This comprehensive session empowers educational leaders to take collective action in creating inclusive environments for students. Participants will explore evidence-based strategies across five critical areas: family engagement, risk mitigation planning, student identity supports, equity policies, and athletics inclusion. Through interactive breakout sessions featuring role-plays and scenario discussions, attendees will collaborate to develop practical tools, templates, and resources for immediate implementation. By providing practical tools, legal frameworks, and collaborative strategies, this presentation empowers educators to dismantle institutional barriers and create sustainable, inclusive practices that support students across all school environments.

### **5701: Transformative SEL Comes Alive in Oregon**

Speakers: Xylecia Fynn Aikins, Social Emotional Learning Education Specialist, Oregon Department of Education  
Beth Wigham, College and Career Readiness/School Counseling Programs Education Specialist, ODE

Senate Bill 5701 Section 304 (2024) provided one-time funding for the Oregon Department of Education to contract for the implementation of the Transformative SEL standards and framework adopted in 2023. The workshop will present how this contract was fulfilled through the partnership between ODE and WestEd. School leaders and administrators will interact with resources, materials, and tools developed to build statewide capacity for TSEL. Transformative SEL centers our shared humanity and seeks to be responsive to the dynamic needs of diverse student and adult communities. The presentation will explore the Guiding Principles of the Transformative Social and Emotional Learning Framework: Culturally Responsive, Community Responsive, Strengths-Based, Trauma Informed and Grounded in Neuroscience and how these principles lead to practices that result in more equitable outcomes for all members of the school ecosystem. School leaders will learn how Transformative SEL can help address various forms of inequity and empower students and adults to co-create thriving schools. This session will be interactive, informative, and inspirational.

### **Equity in Action: White Leaders Reflect, Respond, Reimagine**

Speakers: Francesca Sinapi, District Equity, Access and Engagement Officer, Hillsboro SD  
Brooke Nova, Assistant Superintendent, Hillsboro SD  
David Nieslanik, Executive Director of Schools, Hillsboro SD  
Amanda Bethune, Principal, Hillsboro SD  
Jennife Williams, Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), Hillsboro SD

In this candid and courageous panel, white leaders from Hillsboro School District step into a space of reflection and accountability, guided by a moderator of color. Together, they will explore how equity shows up in their leadership, decision-making, and daily practice, across roles from the classroom to central office. This session intentionally flips the traditional power dynamic, modeling role reversal and reflective practice as tools for systemic change. Attendees will witness vulnerability, growth, and the ongoing journey of equity-driven leadership, with the goal of inspiring all leaders, regardless of identity, to take bold, informed action in their spheres of influence.

Friday, September 26, 2025 | 2:00 to 3:00

### **Building Effective Student Affinity Spaces**

Speakers: Xavier Davis, TOSA for Equity and Inclusion, Springfield Public Schools  
Taylor Madden, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator, Springfield SD

This breakout will describe the methodology developed by Springfield Public Schools' Office of Equity and Inclusion to create effective student affinity groups, impactful district-wide student affinity conferences, and feature an interactive panel discussion where students share their experiences in affinity spaces.

### **Belonging Through Affinity: Building Safe Spaces for Students and Staff**

Speakers: Joseph Hatrick, Superintendent, Ashland SD  
Rebecca Gyarmathy, Assistant Principal, Ashland Middle School  
Becca Laroi, Assistant Principal, Ashland High School

Affinity groups provide powerful opportunities for connection, identity development, and support within schools. The Ashland School District has a long history of offering affinity groups as a way to ensure every student—and staff member—feels seen, valued, and safe. In this session, participants will learn practical steps to establish and sustain affinity groups, explore frameworks for ensuring they operate in supportive and safe ways, and discover how these groups can strengthen equity and belonging across a school community.

### **Amplifying Voices, Building Courage: Family Partnerships, Student Empowerment, and Proactive Response Systems**

Speakers: Claudia Núñez, Culturally-Responsive Coordination-Tualatin High School, Tigard-Tualatin SD  
Matt Kingsley, Culturally-Responsive Coordinator, Tigard High School  
Brooke Mayo, Associate Principal, Tigard-Tualatin SD

This dynamic session empowers educational leaders to amplify marginalized voices through strategic collective action. Participants will engage in three critical breakout sessions: facilitating authentic family voice groups, building student independence through behavior expectations training and bias reporting, and implementing comprehensive Risk Reduction, Awareness, and Response Plans (RRAP) for inclusive events and displays. Through role-plays,

scenario discussions, and hands-on template development, attendees will leave with practical frameworks, protocols, and courage-building strategies. By providing practical tools for voice amplification, bias interruption, and proactive planning, this presentation empowers educators to transform institutional culture from exclusion to authentic inclusion.

### **Co-Designing Equity Strategies in your Community: The Full-Service Community School Model**

Speakers: Remy Watts, Operations & Policy Analyst, Oregon Department of Education  
Karmin Williams, Director of Community Schools, Portland Public Schools

Are you an education administrator wanting to make policy choices that turn the curve for your students, but you aren't sure where to start without the budget for a consultant? Are you an education staff member wanting to make change in your school but don't know what to ask for? The Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) model is a research-based framework utilized by schools and districts across the nation that centers a community's unique assets and needs to dramatically improve workforce satisfaction and regular student attendance. The FSCS model helps education leaders understand how to cultivate, center, and operationalize community voice in decision-making, leading to equitable improvements in student outcomes and access to high-quality learning. This presentation will illustrate how the FSCS model can help you and your community understand and properly address barriers to student success by centering community voice; center equity in decision-making; highlight Oregon's progress incorporating the FSCS model; and showcase how Oregon Department of Education can support you to utilize FSCS as an equity-building strategy.

### **Implementing District Equity Committees with Care, Passion, and Purpose**

Speakers: Raeshelle Meyer, Sr. Director of Professional Learning, COSA  
Spencer Lewis, Director of Policy Services, Oregon School Boards Association

Join us for a conversation on the latest legislative changes shaping district equity committees and what they mean for your work. We'll highlight key updates from the session, then focus on how to implement (or re-energize) committees in ways that reflect both compliance and commitment. With an emphasis on care, passion, and heart, this session will provide strategies to ground the work in relationships, purpose, and sustainable practices that truly support students and communities.

Friday, September 26, 2025 | 3:30 to 4:30

### **The Student Lens: Driving Decisions, Driving Success**

Speakers: Carmen Gelman, Principal Coach, Inflexion  
Matt Coleman, CEO, Inflexion

This interactive one-hour workshop equips educators and school leaders to place student voice at the heart of their learning environments. Participants will explore strategies for fostering student agency, implementing culturally responsive and equity-driven practices, and aligning supports with each student's strengths, interests, and needs. Through reflective discussions and practical activities, attendees will leave with actionable tools to immediately elevate student participation in decision-making, create equitable opportunities, and build a culture where students feel seen, heard, and valued, laying the foundation for deeper engagement, stronger connections, and thriving learning communities.

### **Students at the Center Creating Safe and Welcoming Spaces for Learning**

Speakers: Marcianne Rivero-Koetje, Multilingual and Equity Coordinator, Corvallis SD  
Megan Newell, SpEd Coordinator, Corvallis SD

Students at the Center: Rightful Presence aims to create safe and welcoming spaces for learning by fostering a culture of true belonging for students and educators. We will introduce key concepts such as Asset-Based Language, Neurodiversity (including various neurotypes and their strengths), and Community Cultural Wealth. At its core, "Rightful Presence in Education" seeks to move beyond traditional "inclusion efforts" to co-create environments where students, particularly those historically treated as "guests," experience genuine belonging and personal growth.

### **Early Identification, Lasting Impact: Using SB-SBIRT to Strengthen Connection and Support**

Speakers: Jenny Cary, Coordinator of Mental and Behavioral Health, Hillsboro SD  
Evan Elkin, Executive Director of Reclaiming Futures, Portland State University

This session explores how a school-based Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SB-SBIRT) model can advance equitable identification and support for students facing mental health challenges. Using the Check Yourself universal screener within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), schools can identify student needs early, often uncovering concerns that might otherwise go unnoticed. By screening all students, rather than relying solely on referrals, schools can address disparities in access to support, reduce stigma, and create a climate where mental health conversations are normalized and culturally responsive. Early identification increases opportunities for proactive intervention, helping to prevent the escalation of challenges and ensuring more students get the help they need when they need it.

Participants will learn how SB-SBIRT strengthens student connectedness and builds bridges to caring adults and resources. We will share strategies, lessons learned, and outcomes from implementation in high-need districts, with attention to reaching historically marginalized communities. Attendees will leave with practical insights for integrating universal screening into existing systems of support, using real-time data to inform equitable practices, and fostering school environments where every student feels seen, valued, and supported.

### **Together on Purpose: Collaborative Strategies for Student Success**

**Speakers:** Carol Matsuzaki, Education Program Specialist, Oregon Department of Education  
Angie Foster-Lawson, Education Program Specialist, Oregon Department of Education  
Susy Mekarski, Education Program Specialist, Oregon Department of Education  
Mujidat Saaka, Education Program Specialist, Oregon Department of Education  
April Negrette, Education Program Specialist, Oregon Department of Education  
Heidi Harless, Education Program Specialist, Oregon Department of Education

Oregon Department of Education staff will highlight success stories and key lessons learned from the African American/Black, Latino/a/x, LGBTQ2SIA+, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Immigrant/Refugee Student Success Plan grantees with the goal of sustaining and growing youth- and family-centered programs across Oregon. The session aims to inspire participants to recognize the transformative potential for creating affirming, inclusive classrooms and school environments where all youth can experience joy and belonging.

### **A Culturally Competent Leadership Framework for Equitable Feedback**

**Speaker:** Anjene Bryant, Assistant Director, Middle Grades Core Academics, ELA/SS, Portland Public Schools

This presentation expands upon the feedback models of Ellie Drago-Severson and Jessica Blum-DeStafano to introduce a comprehensive framework for culturally competent leadership. We'll move beyond surface-level diversity initiatives to explore seven key developmental approaches, from self-assessment and valuing diverse communication styles to actively co-creating solutions with your team.

The session will also tackle the critical issue of performative empathy—a superficial display of care that undermines genuine efforts toward equity by silencing voices and shifting the burden of change. This presentation makes the case that authentic leadership requires an intentional shift from symbolic gestures to structural change, using a data-driven approach that combines quantitative metrics with qualitative feedback to drive meaningful and transparent improvements in morale and engagement. The goal is to equip leaders with the tools to be truly responsive, equitable, and accountable.