

Student Well-being: A Collective Responsibility

Stephanie Fearon

Equity, Well-being and Achievement

STEPHANIE FEARON: Everybody needs different things to feel like they belong, different things to support their sense of spirit, their positive sense of self, their belonging. And I don't see equity and well-being and achievement as different. We need these three things to support ourselves, not just as students, but even ourselves as human beings as we walk and move through the world. So, equity's really finding out, what does that person need in order to achieve their fullest potential? And what can I do, in my position of power, to help ensure that those conditions are there, so that they have that opportunity to dream whatever it is they want to dream and achieve, whatever they want to achieve. So, that's how I view equity in the simplest form, at its core, and how it is connect to well-being, and how it's connected to achievement. I cannot expect a child that is experiencing racism, or a child that is experiencing sexism, for example, feel that, you know, expect that their well-being is perfect, and expect that they feel a sense of belonging if this is what they're feeling inside my classroom. So, that's what I mean. It all impacts one another. I work in, exclusively in inner-city schools. And we cannot separate them. They are intertwined. The research supports that. We see it on the ground. We always say, if a child comes to our school hungry, if a child comes to our school and experiences racism, sexism, if a child comes to our school and feels alienated because of their ability, whether it's physical, emotional, or mental, we say that our school needs to work on creating equitable spaces. And only when we truly create these equitable spaces for the most marginalized children in our system will they feel a positive sense of self, a positive sense of spirit, and of belonging. And these are all components of well-being. And once we get the child, you know, in equitable spaces, well-being is there, then we see the child flourish academically. So, that's why, for my role, we see all three are intertwined. In fact, when I'm working with educators, as well as system leaders and principals, we, in fact, make three goals. And these three goals are intertwined in well-being, equity, and achievement. And we don't see them as separate.