Karen Pittman Discusses Quality, Readiness, and Equity at the 2019 MyCOM OST Professional Development Symposium

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Karen Pittman:	00:00:00	Excellent. So I really am delighted to be here. As I told folks, we had a dinner last night and as I told folks last night, I actually went to college just 30 miles down the road from here at Oberlin College. So used to come into Cleveland occasionally, to get my flute repaired. And sometimes I had fun, was hard to get a car. You had to rent a car from the college and get into town. It wasn't as easy as you would think. But I'm delighted to be back. Hopefully this is not the last time you'll see me or folks from the forum just because of the amount of exciting work that you're doing.

We really look for opportunities to just get grounded in the complexity of what it really takes to change the odds for young people. This is not easy to do and we understand that. So I'm really delighted. If you all would give me some time today. So let's get started. Let's talk first about this idea of readiness. We've got a good idea of what it means when we say Early Childhood Readiness. We've been using that term for a while so people understand that.

But let's just talk a little bit about what we mean by readiness when we apply it to adolescence. So, and I think you've actually got copies of the slides on your deck, on your tables. So you can have those available as well. So you see up on the screen and on your slides some data that's a little bit disturbing when we think about the idea of readiness, not just did young people graduate from high school, but did they graduate ready to do the next thing, whether that next thing is to go onto college, that next thing is to get gainful employment, to go into the military, to start a family.

Did they actually graduate with the skills and competencies that they need to do the next thing? Because that's what readiness is about. And unfortunately, even in this place of going to college, the answer was no. So ACT, the folks who developed the test decided that they would really look ahead to see what it took for young people to not just get a cutoff

score on ACT. But actually to figure out what it took for getting people to really succeed in college and come out the other end. And unfortunately, when they did that and they looked at what it took for young people actually show strong readiness for doing their coursework at the college level.

What they found was that really only one in 10 African American students was ready. And that doesn't mean we don't just graduate one in 10 but imagine the gap between we're graduating young people, they think they're ready, they go to college, they don't succeed, right? We get the same story from employers. We graduate young people, they think they're ready, they show up at jobs. But we have employers telling us, four out of 10 employers tell us, "Young people who show up for entry level jobs aren't ready."

They don't have the workforce skills that we need them to have. So we have to really think more broadly than just are we helping young people graduate from high school. We have to really understand more deeply what we mean by readiness. So if readiness is more than a diploma, what is it? What was the definition that was developed, I'm a take this out of the flux and walk around a little bit. Hang on a second.

Speaker 2:	00:03:27	Here we go.
Karen Pittman:	00:03:29	That's better. So if readiness is more than a diploma, what is it? Well, the National Research Council in 2002 part of the National Academy of Sciences did a big consensus report, and they came back and basically said, "No, for young people to be ready, to predict about success, we have to think about their physical development. We have to think about their intellectual development, we have to think about their psychological, and emotional development, and we have to think about their social development." So it's not just academics, it's all of those things.

And it's building a broad range of skills and competencies. So these days we're sort of in the SEL craze, a Social-Emotional Learning craze. And so we're much more familiar with sort of naming all of these skills in San Dieg... People need to have these skills, but we've known this for a long time. Employers know it, but one of the most important things that we need to recognize is parents know it. When you just stop and ask families, "What are the skills and competencies you want your deaf people to have." So a group called Learning Here. I've interviewed families across the country. This is what they found. Just take a look at the list.

How many are those are skills that you all talk about, when you're thinking about what you're doing in your Afterschool

programs. Talk about when you're talking to parents, your parents talk to you about awkward. I want my young person to come to this Afterschool program because I need them to be more confident. I need them to learn how to work in a team. I need them to think about time management. Are these skills, the kind of things that you all name and discuss in your programs. Talk to me. Come on. Yes

Audience: 00:03:29 Yes.

Karen Pittman: 00:05:06 Thank you. Maybe have a little bit of acting there. And again, these are also skills that employers say are important. So part of talking about readiness is talking about what the skills and competencies and attitudes and values that deaf people need to have to be successful and then making sure that we're really not just talking about them, but offering young people opportunities to really do them. So we knew that these skills develop across settings, not just in school.

Yes, clearly in families that's where they start and certainly in the kind of organized activities that you all provide. We know that, and this is a frame that I like to use because it doesn't, it gets us out of the sort of language morass of naming the different skills and saying, "Well, we're doing problem solving. Well, we're doing grit, we're doing this, we can call them." There's a whole range of skills as you just saw on that page. But the point is if we think about the end when a group at you in Chicago, University of Chicago looked at this, they said, "The end game for young adult success is if they have a full range of competencies that they have an integrated identity."

They have a sense of identity, that they can move from place to place. They don't have to change thinking about who they are. When they go from school, to family, to work, to a peer group. They've figured out how to present themselves and they have a sense of agency. They have a subset they can get things done. That's all agency means. I've got the confidence that I have the competencies to be able to do the things that I set out to do. Those are the basic things that young people need to be successful.

Getting those, means that somebody has to help them build, we talk a lot about this now. Build that to the Fundamental Foundation Ability, Foundational Ability to self regulate, right? To know how to come into a room and stay in a room and be in a room. Then they have to build that broad set of skills, and competencies, and knowledge, and skills. They have to have the right kind of mindset. We talk a lot about growth mindset now, they're the local language.

But they have to have mindsets that allow them to understand how to fail forward, how to persist, and then we don't talk about enough, they have to have values. Whether you're teaching values, you're reinforcing values, you're talking to families about values. Values are an important part of what young people have to build. It's not just skills. So what I like about this frame is, it's simple, but it really names the important things that are the components.

How do you do that? Again, one of the things I like, I liked frames that are just pictures. It just to get to the point quickly. We do that by giving young people ample opportunities to act and reflect, act and reflect. If all I'm doing is sitting and listening, I'm not acting, I'm not reflecting. We have to give them chances to act and reflect. What does that look like? They put up 10 [banners 00:08:24]. I just want you to take a second, especially since you have these in front of you and just look at those.

If we were to come into your programs and ask the young people in your programs how often they get to do those things, what would you say? Do they have enough time to encounter new things? Are you giving them enough time to play, to tinker around, mess around, not to go right to the assignment, but to really use their imaginations? Are they enough choices, are they getting enough time to practice? If we're asking young people to build skills, they actually have to have time to practice.

Doesn't have to be the 10,000 hours that it takes to become a master of something, but they have to have time to practice and on the other side, what the research tells us, and we often forget, is that, "If I'm actually not just going to build a skill to use it with you, but I'm going to build a skill to take out and use it someplace else, I actually have to think about it." I have to have time to reflect. Otherwise, I know I do this when I come here, but I don't necessarily know how to do it when I go into another setting. Does that make sense?

Audience:	00:09:34	Yes.
Karen Pittman:	00:09:35	So when you look at those words, is there more you could be doing in your programs to make sure young people have time to do all of those things, to act and reflect? How do people think you're doing a perfect job and doing all this? Put your hands up. I got have one bold person, all right. How do people think you could have a little bit of room for improvement? All right. Anybody in the room bold them to say, "Why?" When I look at all those verbs, I need to do a much better job. Thank you sir. Courage. I love it. So practical words that you can take and really just take them back and have a conversation.

Put them up on the wall. It's important, If you're working with preschoolers, it's important if you're working with teenagers all the way through the developmental stages. The final thing I like about this Foundations for Young Adult Success and you can download this, they have posters, they have everything that you need to sort of use this because it's very accessible, it's easy to use with your staff, it's easy to use with parents and families. It helps us understand if we're going to get to that end game of young people being ready, having all the skills and competencies, having that tensive agency, having that identity that they need to be successful.

It starts at early childhood and it moves forward. And developmentally we're starting with making sure that they have those foundational self regulation skills and then we're moving forward. So it also helps us in a bit, but as a whole book behind us. You can download the whole thing. But it just reminds us that we always have to keep, we're people on developmentally in mind, as we do with their work. How many of you were working with high school students? About middle school? All right. Elementary school, got any preschoolers?

All right, great. So we've got the range. So again, lots of different ways that you can think about these frames. Easy to get lost in the language of which skills are we building? We'll talk more about that in minute, but the main point is there's a range of skills and competencies young people need to have. It's important for us to talk about them. It's important for us to name them and say, "Why they're important." It's important for young people to have chances to act, to practice them, to reflect on them if they're going to take them and use them at other places, not just in our programs.

So with that overall frame about readiness, one of the things that I sometimes do, and since I'm here close to Oberlin College, I thought I'd take aside to do it here. Just reflect a little bit personally about why was I ready? Because demographically I grew up in Washington, D C. I went to DC public schools, from a single parent fair and family, low income working class family. All those things would say, "I was one of those kids who went to college but wasn't ready."

Those are all pieces of the demographics that would say, "Yeah, we let her into college, but she's going to need some work." But that wasn't the case. So I started to think about why. So again, born in Washington DC, not quite nice street, but that's kind of what it looks like. The youngest up by far. And you can have a little one in the middle. The youngest by far, three girls. So my sisters are 10, or were 10 and 12 years older than I am. And I went to the DC public schools, but I

went to the DC public schools at a time when they were in what was called the [Relavised 00:13:23] period.

So they had, my oldest sister went to a segregated high school. My next sister was in the class that integrated her high school, and by the time I was in school, DC was really trying to actively combat white flight. So we're figuring out innovative educational things to do to make sure that they weren't losing students. And I got to take advantage of many of the educational practices that we do now. Block classes, project based learning, team teaching, all these wonderful things that we do down looping all those fancy words that we had an education. I did all of those things and I'm old.

| Speaker 3: | 00:14:03 | So old. |

| Karen Pittman: | 00:14:06 | I am old. So that was a long time ago. But the most important thing that helped me get ready was for me, my other school, Afterschool activity was the DC Youth Orchestra. And I joined that in middle school through high school and then up, performing on the White House Lawn, as the Youth Orchestra. And then I went off to college, Oberlin college ready with those skills and competencies. What that sense of agency and identity at Oberlin as you probably know, is a historic college for all the reasons that we do want to talk about. |

When I got there, the thing that I won't say, Annoyed me." Probably did annoy me a little bit, certainly surprised me, but got me thinking was the fact that, again, people were surprised that I was as ready as I was. No, you get advisor when you go to college. I sat down with my advisor, looked at the SAT scores, looked at my high school record Diploma, and said, "Wow, you're really ready to be here." And I said "Yes." So that sort of surprise factor would crop up all through my professional career.

"Wow, you're really ready." "You're really ready to do this." There's some mismatch between what you look like and what your demographic background is and how you're showing up. And that got me thinking that there's this difference between beating the odds and changing the odds. And let me talk about that for a minute. You heard that in the sort of the introduction, that phrase. So by the time I left college and there's another reason I'll talk to you about why this happened.

It was clear to me that people thought I had beaten the odds. They thought I was the exception. Wow. And then they will know, "What did you do? How did this happen that you ended up being so well prepared?" I couldn't name any particular thing that stood out, well I could say, "Why", but it didn't feel

like it was just done for me. I like DC Orchestra was open to every kid in DC, it was a Public Orchestra. If you didn't have an instrument, they got you an instrument. If you didn't have an instructor, they got you a private instructor.

If you had a promise, and you wanted to practice. Those schools were all public schools. I went to school with kids from all over the city. I didn't think there was anything special going on in my life. But somehow when I showed up at college, I realized that those experiences that I had, those high quality experiences in school, and out of school, those were the exception. Those were not the norm. There were not the norm for people who came from my City, people who look like me, people who came from my Zip code, they were not the norm.

And so that started me thinking. And then I had the luck as I was both thinking and looking for a summer job. And I went off to school thinking I was going to be a math or Junior High School Math Teacher. That was my goal because I loved Math, I watched teenagers. I met David Weikart. David Weikart is Oberlin college graduate. He started the HighScope Educational Research Foundation. He's responsible for the Perry Preschool Project, which showed us, showed this entire country that investments in quality Preschool can change the trajectory, the life trajectory young people, that's responsible for the expansion of head start.

But he and his wife also started an educational camp for teenagers in Michigan down the road from Detroit, about 45 minutes. And he would come to Oberlin every year to recruit folks to work at the camp. And I was lucky enough to be recruited. So, that's me at the [inaudible 00:18:30]. I spent my college summers not knowing what I've fallen into. Learning from one of people who really was one of the founders of Youth Development. This whole concept of active learning and how you really help young people learn, and grow, and develop, but specifically how you do this in a way that advantages disadvantaged teams.

So his whole idea was to ask the question, "What can we do to accelerate the learning and development of young people who for reasons not of their own making are behind in school, are behind in their skill building, are wavering in their sense of identity and agency. What can we do to support that?" And that's where he went off to do. And so the book Learning Comes to Life, which if you sort of go on Amazon, you can still find it. It's out of print, but you can still find it and download it is a concrete sort of write up of what happened at that camp.

And there's going to be a session afterwards. If we want to talk more about what quality looks like when you really do it intentionally. And this was eight weeks of young people, 1218 coming in, who didn't know each other, who were coming every place from France and Germany to the Mississippi Delta, the Arkansas' coming together to form a community for eight weeks. All of them leaving much better off than when they came, in all those dimensions that we talked about. So that experience certainly meant that I wasn't going go down and be a Math teacher with the public schools, because now I knew what education looked like, and I knew it wasn't what was in the schools where I was doing my student teaching.

Well, we also know from that camp experience, Dave was able to get the Perry Preschool Project started with Ypsilanti Public Schools. It took him 20 years to get the schools to understand that we could do the same thing for teenagers. So by the end of his career in the 1990s, he was able to get to Detroit Public Schools to basically identify what they call Sort of Talented but Underperforming Students and let them spend their last, there's their last summer, last month of eighth grade, at the camp. As their last year, and then move through a transition and go on into High school.

And the data show that again, we can change the trajectory of young people if we really give them a chance to re-imagine who they are as learners by giving them that kind of experience. So there's another book that talks about that called Challenging the Potential. And what that study found was that what you really have to do is facilitate positive multi-ethnic, and this is the language out of the book, which was done in the 1990s, multi-ethnic relationships. It was really important to give young people deep chances to learn how to interact with people very different from them.

It was important to broaden their students' positive sources of excellence. They were immersed in an environment in which everything went as long as we were learning, that was the goal. Learn something, produce something, make up something. As long as we were doing that, we were fine. The parents were involved, this is good in the Preschool. It was good for our childhood, our parents were involved in this work. So all of this, I won't read all of these things to you. All of this was really important to helping young people really sort of really just reset their identity as learners because again, as you have on the cover, we have to figure out how we break the whole of Zip codes.

And those things that Dave was able to do with that residential camp clearly did that. We took people, their legal, out of their neighborhood, out of their comfort zone for eight

weeks, immerse them in an incredibly intentional educational experience. They came back to the same neighborhood. They came back to the same schools, but they came back with a sense of agency and competence that allowed them to succeed. We helped them change the odds with that experience.

Now, we don't have to take every young person away to an eight week summer camp, but we have to think differently about how we create these experiences in an intense enough way, diverse enough way, and intentional enough way that we are helping, all of them people change the odds because we're changing the environments in which they collectively spend their time. We're not just handpicking the young people that we think can be successful in getting them extra attention.

That's the point that we have to be thinking about. So I've talked a lot about this idea of changing odds, so I want to take a few minutes to make sure we know what the odds are because one of the things that we often have to encounter, especially if we're talking about teenagers, is the misconception that it's too late, right? If we didn't get to them in early childhood, if we didn't get to them by third grade, their path is set, their destiny is set. So we might as well just be investing in the little kids and trying to get them to be successful. And that's not true. So let me talk a little bit about why that is.

I was an advisor about a decade ago on a project called The Social Genome Project and this was a big, hugely fancy, hugely complicated effort to create a simulation model to basically piece together data, longitudinal data, from different data sets to sort of give you people to put, have files for mythical people from when they were born up until their thirties with all the detailed information about what happened to them. Did they go to preschool? Did their parents get divorced, were they on welfare? All of those things that you want to have attached was a massive, massive undertaking to build this model.

The idea was to basically ask the question, SO this was their big question and this is how they phrased it, "What public interventions does it take to make sure that every child is middle-class by middle age?" By middle age it means, every grade threes. Right? The beginning. That was the question. What does it take?

Well, first of all, what they found was that starting off track doesn't mean that we stay off track or vice versa. So they went through this data and they determined the key

determinants at each developmental stage on whether you're on track or off track, and again, you've got the pages, so I won't read them to you. They didn't set, At any, if any developmental stage, how many kids are off track and on track. Again, you've got this in front of you, you're between 50 and 60% at any stage.

We've got usually more kids on track that are off track. So if you look at those criteria over on the side and any developmental period, No, 55 to 65% of young people are on track. The others are off track. Okay. You can say, "Well, no, we're doing better than average with our kids." But the interesting part is that nobody stays on track all the time and nobody's off track all the time. There's movement back and forth. That's the thing that we need to know.

And if you download and look at, there's more and I'm going to show you a couple of more slides in this very complicated set of I want you to take away and think about how you talk to people about the fact that at every stage it's possible for there to be interventions that help young people go from off track to on track. And other thing I want you to think about is that at every stage it's also possible and if we don't pay attention to the kids who were on track, they go off track because we forgot that.

We think about going that way, but we don't think about the fact that this is all pretty fragile stuff, right? A parent gets arrested, you have a death in the family, a friend dies, you move. Anything can disrupt a young person and they begin to go off track. One of the things that Youth Organizations do well when they're doing what they do is that they notice, they notice small changes in young people's behavior and they have the time to ask questions and often that's really all that's needed to stop a young person from quietly slipping from on track to off track.

If you're looking at your Daily Esteem, where is it that we have the most sort of even kids going off track, on track. Kids who are on track going off track, where is that happening? Where's the worst space? Anybody looking at the data? Middle childhood, middle school, right? We say, we call that the latency period and then we forget about them and that's what happens. Movement in both directions. They should be doing fine, but we let them close and we've got movement going in both directions, so we need to pay attention to that.

Let's talk a little bit more about this data. Another point to take home as you're thinking about the importance of the work that you do, being on track is more important than being advantage. I'm saying that because they're different things.

There's a correlation between them. Obviously you're more likely to be on track if your family has assets, but that is not the determinant of success. So what you're seeing in here is at the bottom, you're seeing for less advantaged families, that's the dark blue. More advantaged families, that's the light blue.

But that small percentage of young people who have never been on track, but they're the reason they stayed off track the whole time. Being an advantage doesn't help that much. Right? For young people who are always on track, somehow, somebody changed the odds for them and they managed to get through always on track the differences are great. So what we need is to make sure that we're paying attention to young people, whenever there's Zip code, whenever there's family income, our job is to keep them on track. That's where success comes from.

Now, the challenge of course is that young people from less advantaged families are only half as likely to be on track all the time, and that goes pretty much all the way down. So they're much more likely to be off track, much more likely to be on track, but what we know is that if those factors that keep your people on track, right? Are they doing well in school? Are they building strong social skills? Are they getting part-time jobs? Are they connecting in their communities, those things that keep young people on track? If we can somehow make those happen regardless of where they live, regardless of their family's status.

Usually by involving family, extended family and such, I'm not ignoring them. If we can do that, we can change the odds, the second [legged 00:31:10] room. Again, kids born to less advantaged families are less likely to be on track of each life stage. What I want you to zoom in on here is that little, the biggest gap is in adolescence. That's where we see the biggest gap. Maybe one more then we're going to talk a little bit about why. I'll get you talking about why, you look at young people of color.

We do pretty well in early childhood. I'm not having huge differences. You hit those adolescent years and the differences between white, black and light likes kids goes up. Again, there's clearly, are correlations between race, and ethnicity, and class, and how well young people are doing. But those correlations have to do with opportunities and they have to do with opportunities that we can help young people find. That's the point we're trying to make. This is not about destiny.

So having talked a little bit about what the odds are, let me just talk to you quickly about the fact that we really can change. No. So we go back to that list. You got to remember the things that it says, "Are important for helping young people move forward." These are up on the screen. These are some of the interventions that they looked at, they have public funding to think about, that seem to make a difference or that certainly were put in place, to support, to support young people's success.

Notice before I clicked the slide, when you have the pages, when we get to adolescence, our interventions tend to focus around juvenile justice and diversion, pregnancy prevention. And yes, some around school quality, but just notice that because when I looked at the next slide, this is a slide that says, "If we invest in early childhood, does it matter?" The answer is, "Absolutely, It matters in early childhood." That the hashtag area is the difference that we get in the number of young people who were on track once they've had that intervention in early childhood.

If we just invest in early childhood, however it doesn't last. Right? You can see that, that investment, that early investment starts to fade. If, however we do multiple things on that page of interventions, we get a pretty good return on our investment in early childhood. The kids even doing a little bit better at the end of childhood, in middle childhood, and early adulthood, even as young people are moving into their twenties but look at their adolescence.

I want to make sure everybody's just looking at that and focusing on that page. Huge study. And again, this is a study done on data is now 15 years old. So think about the kinds of programs we were doing 15 years ago, right? We were doing Dare. We were doing Scared Straight. We were doing Just Say No, you don't, think of those programs they do those things we're investing in. We're doing Gang Diversion, didn't make any difference.

The data says, the simulation model will say, "We were making investments in that age group, but we were making the wrong investments, we're making the wrong investments. We were not moving the needle and the way that we were able to in the other age groups." And again you see the same thing here when you look at it by race, I won't keep belaboring the point. You've gotten the point.

We have to think differently about how we support all young people from preschool all the way through young adult life. But what we really have to do is think about adolescence. If you're being honest. How many of you think your work actually

gets stronger when you think about the programming that you do for adolescence? We've got a couple of kind of hands. I wish we had time to get off. I've got a bolder hand.

Speaker 4:	00:35:57	[inaudible 00:35:57]

| Karen Pittman: | 00:35:57 | Okay, we got a bolder hand here. Anybody else? We are just rocking it with adolescence. I got one hand. All right, so let's see if we have time to hear how you're rocking with adolescence, but this is the point that we have to make. We're in this for the long haul, which means we have to pay attention to cost, all of developmental stages, which means we can't change the odds. If we don't acknowledge that by six or seventh grade, our kids aren't coming back to our programs anymore.

We can't go, "Oh well we serve younger kids." Well where are they going? Where are they going? Has to be your question. If they're not coming to your program, whose program are they going to? Are you doing a handoff or are you just letting them slough off? What is going on that we are not working with our adolescence? That's a question we have to ask, which I could take a step and tell us what you're doing with your adolescence. |
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Speaker 4:	00:36:58	Yeah. No I mean[inaudible 00:37:03]
Karen Pittman:	00:36:58	Come take the mic.
Speaker 4:	00:36:58	You don't want to give me the mic.
Karen Pittman:	00:37:03	I do, If they're going hear you, you got a minute to take the mic. Go for it.
Speaker 4:	00:37:08	Yes, all right. Good morning.
Audience:	00:37:08	Good morning.
Speaker 4:	00:37:12	So what adolescence is, it's all about voice, and it's all about understanding Youth culture. If you don't, if we don't take the time to meet our adolescents, where they're at, understanding what their experiences are like, whether it's race, whether it's class, whether it's gender, whether it's their experiences, if we don't get an opportunity to listen and to learn and to respect, and to honor the middle school students, and our programs are not fun and engaging, they're going to go to each other because that's the age where they start liking each other. Right?

The hormones start, and if our programs are not as engaging as the neighborhoods, and the streets and it's going to be an easy choice. So again, like you've [corkers 00:37:54] as not liking Youth culture. We get caught up in like, and dislikes not about morality. It's about understanding the population that we're working with, removing all personal feelings about it and getting onto their level and having a good time. Peace.

Karen Pittman: 00:38:11 I couldn't have said it better and I'd love your jacket.

Speaker 4: 00:38:14 Ooh.

Karen Pittman: 00:38:14 That's wonderful. All right, so we're sort of at the halfway mark. So let's shift over and talk a little bit about equity... So, if this country has talked a lot about, equality and this, how many people have seen some version of the fences and the boxes and the, right, so lots of them up on the web. We ended up making our own and I'll show you why, but we've got this idealistic version of equality, which is basically everything is fine and everybody needs the same thing.

We certainly have done a lot in this country from a language perspective to move towards the concept of equity, which is basically we need to make sure people have what they need to be successful, not pop out, everybody gets the same thing that we have to assess and supply. What kind of people need to be able to be successful. So the more numerous definition of equity.As we look at the graphics up on the website, we noticed a couple things that basically we're just sort of showing what was often happening in the graphics on the website, if you see them, is to get the point of equity across.

They were changing the height of the kids. So they were sort of showing you some kids needed more boxes and others they were saying, well that's not quite right cause that's the same something about the age of the kids. We said, "The problem, if you're really wanting to get to equity and put it into a simple slide. We have to have a definition of equity versus equality because the playing field isn't even, and the barriers aren't the same." Right? So the fence goes up, the playing field goes down, and if we're going to figure out how to change the odds for young people who were coming from neighborhoods, which don't have the same resources. And need to walking daily into institutions that have structural barriers to their success begin.

Speaker 4: 00:40:40 That's right.

Karen Pittman: 00:40:41 To the policies of those institutions. We have to acknowledge that. All right, so I'm acknowledging it right now, given the limited amount of time we have a picture, but we have to

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acknowledge that. And so we put together a graphic that more explicitly says, "We can't have a conversation about equity if we all start with those two basic points." But we're trying to get from equity to readiness.

And so you started to ask the question about all of these graphics, about young people looking over the fence at the game to say, "Well, why don't we just take the fence down" I mean, what? Why are they in the game? Why are they watching the game? Isn't the point to get them ready to be in the game, and get the point is to get them in the game. Is reducing the barriers enough or do we actually have to get there ready to be in the game? Right?

Do we just take the fence down and then suddenly they walk into the game again, go back to that first slide that I put on. The fence is down, I'm walking all puffed up. I don't know how to play this game. Nobody taught me how to play this game, but here I am and now I'm a failure. Or maybe the fence is down and I realized I don't like that game. I don't want to play Baseball, right? I want to play Polo or something else. I want to play a different game.

So we have to be having conversations with young people in which we're connecting our commitment to equity, not just to be a commitment to take down the barriers, not just a commitment to address the uneven playing field, but an active commitment to talk to young people about where they're going. So we make sure as we're, well, first of all, we make sure they help us take the fence down. Let's go back to your point, the best people to take the fence down are the young people, the best people to come back to their communities, to level the playing field, are the young people.

So those investments in young people have a double payoff if we're not just thinking about doing things for them, but as the gentleman just said, "Doing things with them." So we don't just have an achievement gap, we have an opportunity gap. And you know this, you know from the basic data on poverty and health and education, you know that If you track the Afterschool Alliance that we have it in our own field, you don't have equal access to Afterschool programs for young people.

That again, by sixth grade, middle class kids have spent 4,000 more hours in Afterschool summer learning opportunities in low income students. Even though low income families spend proportionately more of their income trying to get their children those opportunities, it doesn't come out. And we haven't even talked about quality or diversity. We're talking about hours here. So we haven't even added that in yet. So we know that we've got inequalities and often

in our field those inequalities are hidden because Afterschool and Summer is supposed to be optional.

We can always say, "Well, they didn't want to or they wanted to go home or they didn't like the stuff." But we have huge gaps that we have to figure out how we make more visible. But let's go on down. We'll speed up the pace a little bit on dialogue on this topic of quality. So what do you think of when you think of the word quality? Is it well-equipped facilities? That's certainly is a commitment to quality, right? I mean sometimes they have to start there.

There's a, If people want an interesting fun light book to read, there's a book called Wild Flowers. It's a quick read written by a former superintendent in the Sacramento public schools, and he tells a story about it in his first year of being the superintendent, he got through his first year, he got through the Summer, he went out to the schools and he was horrified to see all of the schools they had locked the fences, right? They just shut the schools down for the Summer, including the playgrounds.

And he said, "What are we doing?" They said, "Well, they'll come on and mess stuff up." Open the buildings, open the playgrounds. This is where young people should be. So we know we have these challenges, so we can't take for granted that we have accessible well equipped facilities. Another definition of quality, stable, competent staff. We know staff turnover is a problem with, I don't know, is that a problem here in Cleveland? That's a problem in most cities, right?

Audience:	00:45:42	Yes.

Karen Pittman:	00:45:42	But they've turnover is a problem. And the staff turnover is a problem. Staff competence is a problem because they're not there long enough for you to train them and get them the experience that they need. So we know we have that. This is not to discount that. Diverse, rigorous content. We've got to make sure we don't just, we're not just babysitters, so what are we offering and we're not just homework help providers.

Speaker 4:	00:46:10	That's right.

Karen Pittman:	00:46:10	Are we offering young people the kind of information that piques their interest, that taps into their own capacities, that lets them sort of show off what they're good at. Are we exposing them to new things? We know we need that and that's often a struggle. How to get that, how to get people to come into our programs who have that kind of expertise. These are not small tasks, but the big question and what we know now, more and more from the brain science and all the

signs about how learning happens is those other things are absolutely critical, but they're not enough.

Because if we up all of those things in place, but we haven't figured out how to create an intentionally supportive context where young people feel they are safe, they are heard, they belong, they have choices, they matter. The other stuff doesn't stick. And in programs like ours, it doesn't stick because they leave, right? So four components to what we have to do to make sure we really are talking about quality.

It's not any one of those things. It's all of those things. And you've got this page, this just comes, I won't blame it. For real work that we did with the boys and girls clubs of Richmond, so we put this, we talked about quest, the words across the top quality. That's the cue you gets to engagement, gets you skills, and gets you transfer outcomes. Young people build those skillsets and mindsets with enough robustness that they can take them back into school.

They can take them back into the other environments that haven't changed, they're better able to navigate those other environments. So quest quality, engagement, skills, transfer, and we work with them to say, "That's your theory of action." "That's your logic model." Whatever you want to call it, what are you doing to actually, know not just that, no, I've decreased staff turnover or I've got some new programming, but that it actually is making the difference.

So we can have a conversation about that at some point. What was great, you mentioned this commission on Social-Emotional Academic Development. That was a commission really focused on K-12. They had a work group called The Expert, like the counselor, distinguished, educators and they went back to the drawing board five times, where they got this picture right. In part because some of us sent them back to the drawing board to say, "Get the picture right."

But when they came back, they came back with a picture that pretty much is the same as quest. This is a group of educators who said, "You, really need to be honest." And say, "We have to start by naming a learning setting as the thing we are responsible for doing." We have to then say, "If we got the learning setting right, we know it because we can gauge students' experiences." Now again and I feel, especially by the time you get to adolescence, we gauge if it they doesn't know come, right? In schools, They have to sit there but they don't have to engage.

And so we need something to just not mark kids precedent. We need schools to actually know that young people really are

engaged and then we get the outcomes. So I will take the time to build through this since you had, but it was a really big deal to get this commission to develop a theory of action that acknowledge the importance of not just thinking about the content. You go back to those definitions of quality, not just saying are we providing more rigorous content, but asking that first question, "Are we creating safe, supportive, inclusive environments where young people feel like their safe, and they're heard."

So let's talk a little bit about if we actually focus on this idea of the learning setting quality, doesn't matter. Of course the answers guess, well, let's give you some tools to think about why that you could use with your staff. You could use with young people, and you could use with families. How many people have seen some version of Alerting Pitt Graphic before? Couple of folks, right? Again lots of the, I didn't make these up.

Lots of things just on the web. This one I just grabbed because I liked it, but the basic idea about learning, anybody's learning. If you're trying to, that learning is hard. If you're trying to learn something new, you will fail before you succeed. And so the idea of Alerting Pitt is really to just understand. Yeah, from an experience perspective, what is it that young people are experiencing?

What we're exposing them to challenging rigorous things that we want them to actually try, but they're going to fail. Well, "I don't understand this." "It's too hard." "I want to quit." They hit a wall. I love this room because they literally hit a wall. What does it take to get to the other side of the wall? It takes those skills. It takes those mindset. It takes coming out the other side to say, "Maybe I can get some help." "Maybe I can think about this differently." Right? "Maybe if I work hard."

It takes effort to come up the other side. We have too many learning settings, not just in school, but certainly in school where young people persistently, repeatedly hit that wall. Nobody notices. Nobody is surprised and nobody cares. So what happens if you're a learner and that's your experience? You hit the wall, which is a natural part of learning, but nobody noticed. Nobody was surprised. Nobody was surprised that you hit the wall and quit. Nobody came to help you. How does that make you feel about coming into a learning partner? Frustrated, scared-

| Speaker 5: | 00:46:10 | Quit. |
| Karen Pittman: | 00:52:31 | Quit. Yeah. If there's any opportunity for me to not come, I will physically not come. If I come and coming in there |

anticipating, then I'm going to fail. I'm not going to engage. Why am I going, why am I going to expose myself to that? So this idea of learning quality really does matter. Let me check the time. All right, Got 10 minutes. So, let's talk a little bit more about quality. You've got these, so I won't go over in detail, but since you've got this big slide, this is from work done in Seattle.

So Seattle Public schools had one of their folks decide that given the responsibility of running a Summer program for elementary school students who were behind in reading and behalf. All right, so let's get them caught up. He decided, because he'd actually gone through some of the youth program quality trainings. He was in the school system, but he'd also been a youth worker. He decided that he would propose that the program further than just being a half day academic program, it was actually a combined full day program.

So it's a full day Summer program. Worked with the wine, the boys and girls club. So all the schools, Elementary schools had these classrooms that were full day classrooms where the teacher, the Youth worker working together to make a full day program. The teachers are trained in the Math and reading curriculum selected for the summer to help young people accelerate their pace.

But you've got a natural experiment. Some of these people have done the PQA, some haven't et cetera. So he said, "We've got all these classrooms, let's just come in and do the quality assessment." Right? So they were trained to do it. We just came in and did the baseline at the beginning of the Summer of the Quality Assessment. So, It's an eight week Summer program.

What do you find? We put the programs, put the classrooms into three groups. Low, medium, high, that's what you see. The classrooms in which the teachers and new workers naturally somehow created a high quality learning environment. You've got five times more growth in Math skills, Math skills. I'm not talking about Social skills that broke too, but the thing that they were charged to do was activated by quality, quality defined, not just by the rigorous curriculum because that was held constant across all of the schools. All those classrooms.

Quality defined by whether those young people felt safe, felt supported, felt engaged, felt heard, had opportunities for active engagement, had chances to reflect. Those things [picked 00:55:26] in, not only made them happier, it got the learning Math better. That's what we know about quality.

That's what we know about quality. Again, some of you are familiar with the Program Quality. I won't go into that now when you're talked about it later if you're not, but this idea about readiness, it really does require a systematic efforts for us to ensure that whatever our official practices are, whether we're at school, we're at Afterschool Program.

Where did you go to Detention Center or Foster Care Group Home, whatever we are, wherever our kids are, we've got to ask whether the official practices of that program or organization have made room for what we know is Good Developmental Practice. We have to ask that question because if we do, we get the kind of results we just saw and if we don't, we don't get growth.

We also, when we're talking about where and when learning happens, this is one of the things that came out in the [Aspect 00:56:28] Commission and I'll just leave you with this thought. We also just need to ask the question of whether we're doing ourselves a service as we're trying to be active partners and changing the odds for young people. Are we doing ourselves a service by calling ourselves Afterschool or Out of school?

Because, I just basically what that says is, "We are the places where kids go when they leave school." It describes a time, it describes a place, it doesn't describe who we are, what we do, what our approaches, what our philosophy is, what our value add is. Now, there was a time when there was a reason to call us Afterschool because the push was to make sure that people really had places to go after school and in the Summer.

But if we feel like we've accomplished that threshold, I'm going to say, "It's time for us to talk differently about who we are." The lady with a couple of slides as I wrap up, because what we now really, really, really know from all this synthesis of science, and this is some of this is the New Brain Research where is just been exploding. And it's incredible and how this is stuff that we, we've known since Piaget and Montessori and do it.

It's none of this is not new stuff, but if you take all that old philosophy and you add it up with the brain experience, you've got something cool. So there's a group called The Science of Learning and Development and the forum is a part of this group and we can call it Whole Child Personalization of Learning, or we can just call it Sort of Good Youth Development. But what they've done is to basically summarize the science and there is a new website you can just type in Soulaligns.org and you'll see all the papers about

the science and the framing of what we know about how the brain develops and why having lessons is so important and won't go with all that right now.

But what they sum up, again, same themes if we're creating the conditions for optimal learning, where you're starting by building strong relationships, we're making sure that we've gotten environments in which young people feel safe and belonging. We're adding in rich instructional experiences, making sure that we know young people well enough to provide individualized supports. So you are noticing them, that whole don't slip, don't let them slip. Notice them and get them some support quickly before they slide. And we're really being intentional about the development of those critical skills and mindset.

The challenge that we have with schools when we started talking about Social-Emotional Learning is they just brought it in as a curriculum, without changing the rest of the wheel or assessing whether the rest of the wheel was there. And so we know the whole thing has to work together, starting with relationships because learning is social and emotional. That sentence clipping the words Learning is Social-Emotional conveys something very different from Social-Emotional learning.

Speaker 4:	00:59:53	[inaudible 00:59:53]
Karen Pittman:	00:59:53	You like that? I like that. You can say it again.
Speaker 4:	00:59:56	Shout back.
Karen Pittman:	00:59:57	Learning is social and emotional. All right. A couple of more things out of this brain science and then will wrap up. Very simply, and I love this phrase, I didn't make this one up. This is after I pay off candor from turnaround for children, "Adversity doesn't just happen to children. It happens inside their brains and bodies."
Speaker 4:	01:00:24	That's even better.
Karen Pittman:	01:00:25	That's even better, and I didn't write it.It can happen. It happens inside their brains and bodies. That's where all this imaging has done for us. It shows definitively that your brain is constantly changing, can constantly change up into your mid twenties and is very much affected by context. Very much expected, expected by experience. So basically what we know from the back to the front is that at the back, your Medulla is where you've got fight, flight or freeze, right?

That's just your basic, instincts, right? So again, if I've had, if I use that part of my brain a lot, it tends to be left on just for security. So if I'm not coming into an environment in which somebody is accurately signaling, I can turn off. I'm already ready, I'm ready, I'm crouched and I'm ready to get out of there.

The middle of the Hippocampus is learning and memory. That's sort of where if that other part is on, is turned off, now I can actually remember stuff. I can bring myself into the room, I'm ready to learn new things. And if I'm really get things going, and this is the part that develops last, the Prefrontal Cortex, that's where you have these [inaudible 01:01:39]thing that people call Executive Function, problem solving, critical thinking, all those words, things where I'm actually becoming the leader, right?

I'm intentionally deciding how I'm going to use this environment. I'm bringing agency into this. So that's where it is back to front, right? But what we now know, we know this from the Essay studies and other things, is that again, when the back is on, everything else is off, period! Definitively. If I'm in defensive mode, I am not going to learn. It doesn't matter how well you're trying to teach. I'm not going to learn.

Now the challenge is, we know there's lots more data on this. We know that this idea of adverse childhood experiences is really quite widespread. This is from Washington state, like not a state that you often think of is like, "High adversity state." This is a picture from Washington classroom of 30 students. I will read it to you because you've got one in front of you, but you can see how many of those have people have had one or more or even five or more adverse experiences and with every couple of adverse experiences, huge things changed to the point that if you've got five more adverse experiences that takes 30 years off of your life.

We're not talking about small things. It really does affect your brain and your vibe. Now, the good news is that the brain is malleable and we can design learning environments that correct for the impact of stress and drive healthy development. We can correct for adversity if we are intentional, right? I'm going to give you one example and we're going to call it Quiz. How many folks have heard of The Marshmallow Test?

A couple of folks, okay. This was done four years ago. You basically take Kindergartners, five-year-olds, you put them in a room. You say, "Here's a marshmallow." Literally, "Here's a plate with a marshmallow." The tester says, "But I have to leave the room for 10 minutes." So, "I'm going to leave you

here with the marshmallow. It's okay if you eat the marshmallow, but if you don't eat the marshmallow, I'll give you two, when I come back." And then they leave the room and go behind the glass and watch the kid.

And it was little, you can go online. A little funny videos of considering on our hands and doing all kinds of things not to eat the marshmallow, but the study was to say, "How long, what's the difference in how long kids can wait?" We assume what we're looking at is your ability to delay gratification and then when you actually follow those kids longitudinally, the kids who waited longer either didn't eat the marshmallow, waited longer, actually did better in school, all that stuff.

All right. Couple of years ago, a researcher comes along and says, "I'm not really sure what, that's what that test was measuring." Right? So she sets up a different tests. That same test, the kid is going to go in the room and do the test with the marshmallow, but while they're in the waiting room, an adult, a different adult comes in and says, "We're running a little bit behind. Would you like to color?" The kid says, "Of course."

They're five. Of course, they'll talk. "Would you like to color?" "Sure." Here's a coloring book or some coloring pages. Here's a box of crayons. "Oh look, the crayons are all broken. Let me go get you some new crayons." Half the time they come back with a new box of crayons, half the time they don't. What do you think happens to the kids where the person didn't come back with the crayons? What did they caplets when they go in there with the marshmallow?

Audience:	01:00:25	They eat the marshmallow.
Karen Pittman:	01:05:33	They eat the marshmallow. How much of a difference do you think it makes?
Audience:	01:05:39	A big difference.
Karen Pittman:	01:05:42	A big difference. You can see that the kids who had the positive experience that I can trust adults, that was random. It was random. I have an immediate positive experience that I can trust adults. I'm three times more likely to wait for my marshmallow. That's what we're talking. That's the immediacy that we're talking about. That's the immediacy that we're talking about. So I just want you all to know that we really can, I'm going to skip over this next part and go to the conclusion. This was what you have the slides there are sort of a conversation that I have with educators asking them, "What might look like if we redesigned education, or you read those."

Since, we're out of time. But when I go to the end here and remind us that what we're talking about today is that there is no reason why we can't make readiness a right for all young people in this country. And what that means is that we have to acknowledge that when you, when a young person walks in that door of the thing that we're calling School, that you're walking into not just one big environment, they're walking down lots of little environments.

Every classroom is different. All hallways are different. The bathrooms are different. The cafeteria, the counselors' office, the library, each of those are learning environments. Where if you think about that marshmallow test, something could happen that affects how that going. The person goes into the next part of their day. And then they come out and they come into the community. If they're lucky enough, they come to your programs and you've got to know where they were before they came into your program so you can understand them.

So I'm going to leave you with this quote. We talked a lot about school climate. Here's a quote from a teacher. "I've come to the frightening conclusion that I'm into the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather, as a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or to, I guess I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal." Exactly right. If you're probably talking with you alone, well, there's information there about how to find us, and I leave you with this idea that you have tremendous power to change the odds for young people. Please use it well. Thank you.