

Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

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MISSOURI PROUD



Volume 7

Kansas City Equity Leadership Conference

The Kansas City Equity Leadership Conference was held on June 3rd on the campus of Metropolitan Community College at Penn Valley. Focused on the theme of “Ensuring Equitable Access to Excellent Educators,” the conference served to

- provide an overview of the Missouri Equity Plan;
- share perspectives on current patterns of educational inequity in urban academic settings;
- discuss environmental, institutional, and workforce factors that affect teaching and learning in urban school communities; and
- gather stakeholder input on viable solutions for ensuring equitable access to excellent urban educators.

Dr. Etta Hollins, Kauffman Endowed Chair for Urban Teacher Education at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, served as the keynote speaker. During her presentation, “What It Takes to Achieve Educational Equity in Urban Schools,” Dr. Hollins emphasized

1. teaching from the center;
2. teaching with purpose;
3. teaching for unity; and
4. teaching to restore, as a viable means to transform urban schools and communities.

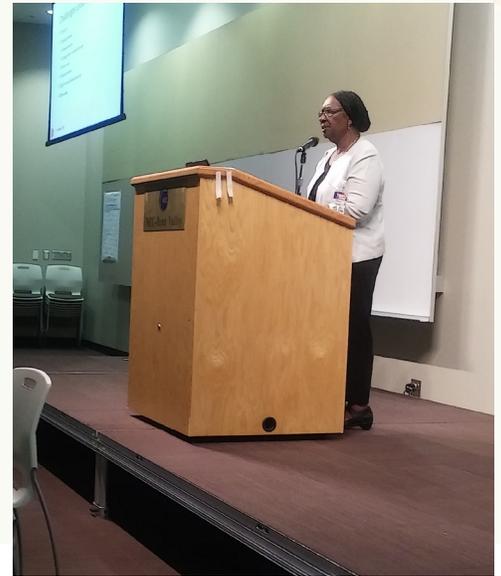
Conference attendees participated in small discussion groups focused on specific equity issues that exist within local school districts in the Kansas City metropolitan area. In addition, educators shared insights on statewide goals addressing teacher shortages, diverse educators, urban education and teacher incentives.

As a welcome addition to this urban-centered conference, a Youth Panel gave area youth the opportunity to share their perspective on educational equity issues. The panel discussion, moderated by a representative from the Midwest Equity Assistance Center, featured the following questions:

- What does equity mean to you as a current student or recent high school graduate?
- If you could tell educators three things they could do to increase student engagement, participation, and achievement, what would you say?
- How can educators form better relationships with students?
- Have you ever felt excluded, or as if you didn't belong, in some aspect of your school experience? Please explain.
- What do you wish educators knew about you that would make your school experience better?

Educators and students alike were empowered to continue the equity conversations within their respective higher education institutions, urban school communities and educational organizations.

The conference was a collaboration between the Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education's Office of Educator Quality and its technical assistance providers, including Midwest Equity Assistance Center, Central Comprehensive Center, the Kansas City Regional Professional Development Center and Metropolitan Community College.



Dr. Etta Hollins, keynote speaker