



## Equal Opportunity Schools Excellence in Equity Newsletter

# Save the Date!

## EOS' National Symposium on Equity, Access and Opportunity

### March 1-3, 2020

## Atlanta Marriott Marquis

Don't miss out 3rd National Symposium on Equity, Access and Opportunity. Add yourself to the [symposium mailing list](#) for updates on conference registration, hotel reservations, keynote speakers, session topics and more!

Please take 60 seconds to complete our four-question survey.

[Survey: Topics of Interest](#)

Did you know? You can use Title II funds for travel and hotel expenses for symposium 2020.

### Equal Opportunity Schools Named as a Leading Education Equity Organization

Amid the college admissions scandal, [MarketWatch](#) named Equal Opportunity Schools one of the top five organizations working to reduce barriers to higher education for underserved students.

And [People Magazine](#) recognized EOS' decade of work to expand college preparation and readiness for students of color and low-income students. [Read the full press release here.](#)

### EOS Featured in a Podcast on "Equity in Education"

[Dr. Nicholas Wahl](#), EOS Superintendent-in-Residence, was recently interviewed by Dr. Sonya Whitaker, host of a podcast series called: [What's Really Going On – A Spotlight on Solutions for Improving Student Achievement in America's Schools.](#)



During the conversation, Dr. Wahl offers concrete strategies for ensuring that students of color and low-income students have equal access to the most rigorous high school programs in America.

Dr. Sonya Whitaker,  
Achieving the Dream

Dr. Sonya Whitaker is a published author, national speaker, and educator who served as superintendent in two districts.

Access  
Episode #5



Alison Gazarek, Regional Director of EOS and Olive Savoie, Student

## Student Paper Features Equal Opportunity Schools

The April edition of the *Lincoln Log*, the student newspaper at Abraham Lincoln High School in San Francisco Unified School District, features an article exploring the EOS partnership work.

The article, written by Olive Savoie, dives into the inequitable enrollment practices found throughout the nation's high schools, and specifically discusses the practices found at Lincoln.

### Lincoln is Working to Close the Race and Class Gaps in AP Classes

Hotly debated in our society today is the topic of academic opportunity: who has it and who doesn't? How can our school systems justify giving access to some students and not others?

Lincoln student Angel Romero describes her experience of being one of the few students of color in her AP classes as, "feeling like a fish out of water." She says she feels "unwanted" in those [AP] classes, because there's a certain demographic of people that take up the majority of classes, and it makes others feel unwelcomed. No student of color I know would ever feel comfortable joining AP classes."

Data from the Lincoln IT Department reveals that 6% of students are Black and 21% are Latinx at Lincoln. Of the whole student body, 40% of the Lincoln student body takes AP classes. Of that 40%, only 3.4% of AP students are Black, and only 12% are Latinx. This data proves the lack of racial diversity in our AP classes, one of the reasons Romero states she feels out of place.

"With more support, they'd be more comfortable joining these classes. It's the school's obligation to support students in any way they can and push them to succeed", says Romero of the students of color she knows.

Lincoln Log

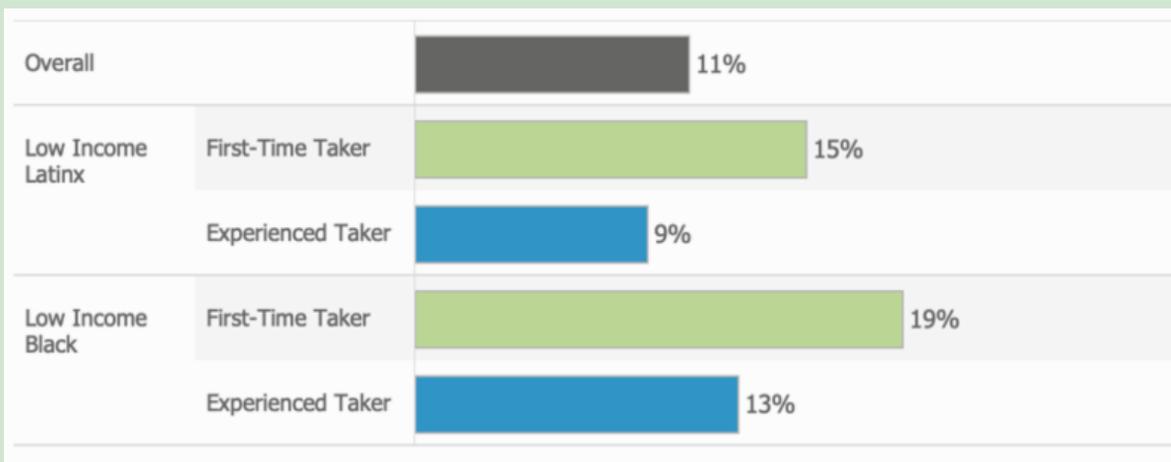
## Don't Let Summer Attrition Undermine Your Efforts to Create Equitable Access to AP and IB!

*"[Summer camp] definitely made the first day of school easier, knowing who you can go to. Just felt more comfortable walking in 'cause we'd already met the teachers and even most of the kids that would be in the class"[1].*

Each Spring we celebrate our partners' hard work to increase the number of students of color and low-income students who request an AP/IB class for the following year. And, each Fall we find some of that hard work undone as some students who requested an AP/IB class in the Spring don't actually enroll in the class.

### Summer Attrition Across EOS Partner Schools in 2018-19

Summer attrition disproportionately impacts students of color and low-income students. Across our school partners in the 2018-19 school year, the average summer attrition rate for all students was 11%; the rate was highest among low-income Latinx and Black students (13%-15%), especially those taking AP or IB for the first time (15-19%) [2]. These patterns illustrate how easy it is for inequities to manifest if not attended to at the school level.



### **Best Practices**

EOS partner schools that have substantially reduced summer attrition among Latinx and Black first-time AP/IB class takers remove non-supported summer requirements, host a summer experience, and revise drop policies.

**Remove non-supported summer requirements:** Research on belonging-rich environments highlights the need to support student transitions into new academic environments and normalize challenges that are a part of these transitions as early as possible [3]. We frequently hear from first-time takers that summer homework has the opposite effect, priming them to feel overwhelmed or incapable even before they begin.

*"First day I knew [I was going to drop]. She said 'Four page essay due today!' I was like what?"*

**Offer summer "camp" experiences:** In focus groups, students noted that meeting peers, particularly other students of color, who will be in their classes, seeing the physical classroom and envisioning themselves there, and getting a sneak-peek of their schedules were the most valuable aspects of these experiences [4].

*"I liked it in the beginning when they made us pair up with other kids that had similar schedules that we did, because then we feel like, 'Oh, we're in the same exact class. Oh, we can help each other'".*

**Review and revise drop policies:** Effective EOS partner schools require a one-on-one conversation with an adult (teacher, counselor, or principal) to better understand students' concerns and offer support and resources.

### **How does your school address summer attrition?**

As you move toward the summer, we encourage you to consider the following:

- Do you know your school's attrition rate, particularly how summer attrition is impacting students of color and low-income students in your building?
- What steps are you taking to prevent summer attrition?
- How do you evaluate whether your work to prevent summer attrition is effective?

[1] Focus groups with 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students of color in AP & IB programs at EOS partner schools were conducted during the 2018/19 school year.

[2] Summer attrition rates compare Spring 2018 course requests and Fall 2019 enrollment data for 99,664 students in EOS partner schools.

[3] Steele, D. M., & Cohn-Vargas, B. (2013). Identity safe classrooms: Places to belong and learn. Corwin Press.

[4] See the EOS spotlight series [video](#) for ways to build an effective summer experience.



## **AP Café: A Lake View HS Recruitment Program**

Lake View High School's Assistant Principal Melissa Resh, and the schools' Equity Team, recently added 'AP Café's' to their recruitment efforts for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students of color and low-income



Melissa Resh, Assistant

Resh and her team designed the cafés with guidance and support from Alison Gazarek, Regional Director of Partnership for Equal Opportunity Schools. “After reflecting on their AP informational assembly in their first year, the team decided that a more intimate, student-led environment might have more impact,” said Gazarek. “They organized a diverse group of current AP students to talk with students in small groups, along with staff representatives, about the benefits of AP.”

Lake View High School, in Chicago, is currently in the “Experience Success” phase with EOS. Last year, the school found and enrolled 70 students of color and low-income students into their first-ever AP course.

[Read the Article](#)

## Leyden Summer AP Program

Leyden High School district began working with EOS during the 2015-16 school year. After identifying and enrolling more than 75 first-time students of color and low-income students, the district created an AP summer Transition Week to give students an idea of what to expect in their AP classes. First-time AP takers have the opportunity to meet their peers and some of their future AP teachers, participate in team building, mindfulness, time management activities, and engage in a rigorous, introductory AP work.



Julian Muñoz  
LHS Student

[Video: Students Speak](#)



Mike Tazic  
Social Studies  
Teacher

[Video: Teachers Speak](#)

## Student Experiences: Profiles



Hannah - 11<sup>th</sup> Grader  
Ventura County District

*“[My English teacher] was encouraging me to take IB Literature and explaining a little bit more about the creative freedom I would have. I ultimately chose it and I am really happy.”*



Elliana, 11th Grader  
Northern IL High School

*“...She showed me the apple on my profile...[where] a teacher said they thought I could take it [an AP class]...that was the point where I was like, 'If they think I can take it, maybe I can', and that's what got me to sign-up.”*



Catalina - 11th Grader  
Chicago Metro HS

*“At first, I thought AP classes weren't for me because I have heard it's really hard, but then I decided to challenge myself and take an AP [class].”*

## Funder Experiences: Supporting Equity Work in Education



Education has the ability to uplift and inspire. Education creates the opportunity to help individuals achieve great results, families to thrive and communities to flourish. Our benefactor, Jack Murdock, believed in the intrinsic value of education to improve and

solidify communities through their citizens which is one of the primary reasons why the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust has invested heavily in identifying and partnering with organizations and programs that seek to engage and inspire modern youth in the classroom in innovative and sustainable ways.

No group better exemplifies this approach than Equal Opportunity Schools. In less than a decade, EOS has enrolled tens-of-thousands of students in AP and IB courses who otherwise may never have been exposed to this important educational opportunity. A rapidly growing organization, EOS is uniquely positioned to reach populations that have historically been underrepresented in advanced course pathways, such as students of color and students with socioeconomic challenges, on a large scale and introduce them to the potential impact of advance course enrollment, including increased earning potential and a wider range of employment options after graduation. This educational investment can help lead to lifting families out of poverty through continued study and career growth while also helping whole communities flourish and thrive through development and investment by citizens. This form of engagement has the potential to dramatically improve the quality of life for countless individuals and families in the Pacific Northwest and we are grateful to be a partner in this mission.

### Equity Resources

#### NWEA Invites Applications for Educators for Equity Grant Program

[NWEA](#), a not-for-profit provider of assessment solutions headquartered in Portland, Oregon, has announced the launch of its Educators for Equity Grant Program, a new initiative aimed at helping schools foster academic growth and achievement for pre-K-12 students who face systemic barriers to academic opportunities. The deadline to apply is June 30, 2019.

EOS now lists grant and scholarship resources for districts, schools, counselors, students, and parents on our [website](#).

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### Equity Case Studies

Equity case studies highlight districts' reasons for engaging in this work and lessons learned.

- [District 211](#)
- [Leyden CHSD](#)
- [Lebanon Community School District](#)

To have your district included on our website, download and answer these [questions](#) and submit for inclusion.

### Upcoming Events

July 18-21, 2019 – Dolores Caamano, of Equal Opportunity Schools, along with Kristin Ward, of West Charlotte High School, will present on *Using Student & Staff Voice to Shift a School Culture* at the [AP National Conference](#), Orlando, FL  
July 18-20, 2019 – Dr. Nicholas Wahl, of Equal Opportunity Schools has been selected to present at the [NASSP National Conference](#), Boston, MA

Contact [marketing@EOSchools.org](mailto:marketing@EOSchools.org) if interested in co-presenting at future conferences.

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### EOS in the News

For updated articles on EOS and district partners, visit the [EOS News Page](#).

- [Video: Guilford County Schools details their Partnership with EOS](#)
- [8 Organizations Supporting College-Bound Students](#)
- [Amid the College Admissions Scandal, Here Are 8 Organizations Helping Disadvantaged Students](#)
- [This Week in Greensboro, NC | Advanced Placement Pep Rally](#)
- [5 legitimate charities that help low-income students get into college](#)

If you have an interesting student, staff or administrator story you would like to share with the EOS community, tweet us at @EqualOppSchools or @EquityLeaderLab.

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