

## **JFYNet Podcast – January 2021: 'How teachers adjusted in 2020' Compilation**

*Produced by Greg Cunningham, JFYNet Learning Specialist*

During this past year, we have explored relevant and topical educational issues each month. In today's podcast, we'll take a look back at some of the memorable moments from our 2020 podcasts. Our focus will be on how teachers adjusted to the school shutdown.

*This compilation podcast features:*

### **ADMINISTRATORS:**

**DR. MICHAEL MARRAPODI**, *Dean of Online Programming at Cambridge College*

**DR. JAMES WEAVER**, *the director of performing arts and sports from the National Federation of State High School Associations*

**KEVIN MCCASKILL**, *Executive Director, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, Boston*

**JORGE SANTANA**, *Executive Director of the PACE Career Academy Charter School, Pembroke, New Hampshire*

**KENNESHA KELLY**, *co-founder and Executive Director of Kingsman Academy, Washington, DC*

### **TEACHERS:**

**RACHEL SILVA**, *English Teacher, Durfee Academy, Fall River*

**LISA HONEYMAN**, *Math Teacher, Newton South High School*

**CHARLOTTE BOCCUZZI**, *Special Education Paraprofessional, Ashland Public Schools*

**SETTENAH WRIGHT**, *English as a second language teacher for English Language Learning students, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, Boston*

### **STUDENTS:**

**JARIN**, *Durfee Academy, Fall River*

**EVAN**, *Durfee Academy, Fall River*

**HENRY**, *Needham High School*

**MAGGIE**, *Needham High School*

**SASHA**, *Needham High School*

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**Greg:** *JFYNetWorks is dedicated to helping young people prepare for the future by engaging teachers, students, and parents in achieving grade-level and college-ready skills. We strive to help all involved in the education process attain equitable achievement and readiness for post-high school education and careers through best practices for teaching and learning in hybrid, remote and in-person modalities. We offer high quality online core instruction augmented by extensive supplementary resources, all supported by training and coaching by our experienced learning specialists. For more information, go to our website, [jfynet.org](http://jfynet.org).*

**Mrs. Honeyman:** *There's a weekly schedule, and each teacher has an hour set aside for office hours for each of their courses. Then we also have two days, Thursday and Friday, that have 1/2-hour class meeting time...*

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**Greg:** *The frustration felt by students forced into online only classes during the spring school shutdown:*

**Sasha:** ...that's all being like that opportunity is being taken away from me, and it feels almost fake to have these classes on zoom...

But also how educational progress continued even while in-person learning was delayed:

**Kennesha Kelly:** Our proposed competency based academic program is an evidence-based alternative to a traditional Carnegie unit credit earning system.

**Greg:** *And how issues of social justice require further focus:*

**Kevin McCaskill:** During this pandemic, using Boston as the litmus test, how many families didn't have their own pieces of technology let alone the Internet service? So now your child is getting further and further and further behind...

**Greg:** *This podcast was created by JFYNetWorks, a Boston based nonprofit provider of online learning programs to schools, students, and parents. JFY's individualized, self-paced curricula help raise individual and school performance measures by maintaining grade level skills and combating learning loss. JFY provides online ELA and math curricula aligned to state and college standards from grade 5 through high school, with personal support online and via telephone from friendly learning specialists like yours truly. For JFYNetWorks, I'm Greg Cunningham.*

*The Covid-19 virus dominated the news during 2020, and the JFYNet Podcasts reflected this focus. When schools first shut down in March, we interviewed Dr. Michael Marrapodi, Dean of Online Programming at Cambridge College, and asked how teachers could adjust from the physical front lines in the classroom to a remote online platform.*

**Dr. Marrapodi:** I recently read an article about the fact that we're probably not doing classic online education right now, but we're doing crisis education. So moving things into an online platform does not, in effect, establish an online course...that takes quite a bit of energy and the work of learning designers and assessment designers, content experts. It can take five or six months or more to develop a well put together online class. What we're asking instructors to do now is to move enough of their information and enough of their material online. Keep the students engaged in the short term. We're not asking them to record lectures were not asking them to create interactive elements or simulations. All of these things would be present in a well-designed online class. At this point, what we're asking from our instructors is that they produce some information for the students to respond to whether that's reminding them of a chapter of the textbook to read, perhaps a PDF of a journal article, a video that they can watch that supports the learning objectives and then to craft a discussion question and then a

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follow up assignment. Very, very basic elements. And as long as the instructor is comfortable using the learning management system, they shouldn't have any problem with the content.

**Greg:** *Educators found ways to connect with students, as featured in our April podcast. Teachers Rachel Silva and Lisa Honeyman and special education paraprofessional Charlotte Boccuzzi discussed moving classroom help and instruction to an online platform:*

**Mrs. Silva:** I think with Google Classroom, what's been really great about it is that they don't have to respond to me as if they would face to face, you know. So, they're so used to texting and what I liked about it so far is I have been having some really great conversations with them through Google Classroom like, even just leaving messages back and forth to each other. They had to write a reflection on how this particular time of their life has changed them, and some of them were really sad. And I feel really bad, you know, for what they've been going through, and I feel like the time has been flying, but I also have a house and a yard to go out to. You know, the kids. I live in the apartments here; I feel really bad for here. They feel like they're stuck, you know, and I think hearing from them...them hearing back from me like a few of them have been super nice and we miss you. And like, you don't get that in person sometimes at the high school level, you know? So, I think they really do miss school. I found it really interesting to read a whole bunch been saying, I never thought I'd say this, but I really must school. And they just miss the interaction with people. So, I feel bad. And at the same time, I think that the technology is helping keep that communication. If we didn't have any, I think it would be a lot worse. So, for those of them, that have communicated, it's been really good for them too, not just us but for them.

**Mrs. Honeyman:** There's a weekly schedule, and each teacher has an hour set aside for office hours for each of their courses. So, I have two hours set for office hours, one hour for my junior honors class and one hour from AP Statistics classes. Then we also have two days, Thursday and Friday, that have 1/2-hour class meeting time for each course, and it's structured the same way our schedule is during the school year when we were physically present, and the reason we have Thursday and Friday is many of our classes meet four times a week. But we also have elective classes that meet twice a week, and we elective classes will meet either Thursday or Friday and then the full-time classes, ones that meet four times a week, the teacher can pick whether it's going to meet on Thursday or Friday, and in some cases they're choosing to meet both, especially for like AP classes.

**Mrs. Boccuzzi:** They're definitely taking more responsibility for themselves. They are learning time management because they have certain things they need to get done. A lot of them tend to get their work done in the morning so they're able to go outside play on the trampoline, go for a walk, go bake brownies with their grandmother or something

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like that. They can structure their day so that they do get to have those break times in the afternoon. But that definitely depends on the parental rules in the house, so that seems to be working well. They're definitely in charge of their learning. They're in the driver's seat, I guess, in a way. And they are...they're learning how to structure their day and they're learning process.

**Greg:** *While students made the best of a challenging situation, they were frustrated at times, as these students from Needham and Fall River indicated during our early April podcast:*

**Jarin:** I don't say, I'm not going to say it's not completely right for them to be assigning work for us. Obviously, we need to be getting something done. But the way, the way that they should be more coordinated. So, we should have some math. English. A lot of it now is every teacher has their own. They submit their own stuff, so you could have six assignments and there will be days when you have six assignments and there'll be days they'll be like four days in a row when you will have nothing

**Henry:** Senior year. You know, we go through Senior fall and I hate...I don't want to like be a fear monger, but in my opinion it was as bad if not worse than you and your spring, at least for me. And then, you know, we get through all the hard stuff and basically right when it's supposed to get, you know, right when everything we did for the last four years, it's supposed to, like, be okay. And we can just, you know, enjoy being with our friends. That's when the pandemic happens. So I think the general mood for a lot of people in my grade is just sort of, you know, sadness mixed with bitterness. We did everything that everyone else did, except we don't have...We'll probably won't have a prom. We will have a traditional graduation. We won't have a bunch of senior events that typically make all that other stuff okay,

**Evan:** It's been quite difficult. I still have contact with the teachers by the app called Zoom. It's a video app, but it's just once a week, and most of the times I'm not available at that time that they are available. Ah, and when I do, I don't understand that much of the work and it's been challenging. So since we do not have a term four going, there's not going to be a term four this year. It's just extending from three all of the assignments that they put out they are required, and if you just don't do them, then it's going to really affect your grades and possibly graduate. Other teachers, they post work every day, and it's due by the end of the week.

**Greg:** *As schools extended the shutdown through the spring student anxiety increased, especially about college acceptances when more and more SAT testing dates were cancelled:*

**Maggie:** This is obviously not an ideal scenario, definitely not like everything that's happened. I feel like as a junior, this is supposed to be the time when we're kind of really doing the most work. It's supposed to be one of the most stressful times of high

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school, and it's kind of weird because it's really not stressful in the traditional ways. Like we're not stressed about AP exams because they're kind of irrelevant at this point. I know for me like I had spent a lot of time prepping for the march SAT, like a lot of time. And when that got canceled, that was like, honestly, one of the things that bummed me out the most because I felt like I put a lot of time and effort into that. I don't get to show my effort there. I had tons of college tours canceled. I'm actually supposed to be seeing Northwestern right now, like on campus right now, but obviously I'm not there, so that kind of stinks because we won't get to see as many schools, but hopefully we'll get to see them next year.

**Sasha:** I, like Maggie was supposed to take the March SAT. And I definitely didn't study as much as Maggie did. But I still needed to take that test because for obvious reasons, like college admissions, and then it got cancelled, seeing that the June SAT also got canceled and being so uncertain about how that's going and seeing that the SAT maybe online now, it's just freaking me out so much because as Maggie mentioned, college admissions is a huge thing for all the juniors. And a lot of schools haven't gone test optional yet. Some schools are, but it's a lot of uncertainty around that specific area of like the college admissions process. Also, Maggie touched on this to junior spring, especially this really intense, really hard part of junior year, and you're supposed to get a ton of work done, and I was really looking forward to that and just seeing all of this effort that I'm going to put into junior spring payoff in the end. And now that's all being like that opportunity is being taken away from me. And it feels almost fake to have these classes on Zoom And, like, do this work that doesn't feel as real and see 45-minute-long AP exams, replacing three our tests that were supposed to take. And I feel really bad for kids who paid a ton of money for AP exams and now aren't going to be able to take like the real deal tests. So, all of that just makes it feel like we're not ending up in a place where we're supposed to be because we're not putting as much effort in and classes are definitely super, super weird right now.

**Greg:** *In August, when it became clear that schools would still struggle to return to full in-person learning, we spoke to Dr. James Weaver, the director of performing arts and sports from the National Federation of State High School Associations, about the importance of finding a way to continue extracurricular activities when in-person options were limited.*

**Dr. Weaver:** Really on the athletic side, we're looking at a lot of modifications to the scheduling. What can we do to push this back until you get better control of it? What can we do in the golf setting, can we just do instead of foursomes in golfing, to do twosomes in golfing and spread those students out farther to kind of keep those programs going?

In our world of the performing arts area, we have speech, debate, music---theater is a little bit trickier. But in those other three, what can we do to get them virtual? Because,

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for example, I live in Indiana. Indiana has tens upon tens of thousands of students participating the music programs...the state level programs. What can I do to continue that? And how does that work in a virtual format?

And then we get into what copyright issues we have to deal with, which is a thing. What do we do to make sure students have a safe, online environment to compete in? All those thought processes we need to go figure out. That's what we're seeing in a lot of performing arts activities when they are going online. But it's working for them so far, and they're trying to keep their schedule intact as much as they can.

The other interesting part of that, too, is what do you do, which I think it's something that's important to think about, what do you do when we have schools in session, and we want to host a state marching band or a one-act play festival or a debate tournament? Kids can go to their school, but we have no host school to host these festivals and contests. That's why we're seeing some of the focus on the online aspect and what that looks like. Can we figure out a way to broadcast all the different components? So that way adjudicators can see what these things are doing, get them adjudicated, get the state assessment levels which a lot of states rely on, and get those evaluations back to the schools and then continue the cycle, what we normally do. We're trying to figure out some of those things as well.

**Greg:** *While Covid-19 was having a major impact on education, 2020 also saw a rebirth of involvement in the issue of social justice. In February, in honor of Black History Month, we were honored to speak to Settenah Wright, an English as a second language teacher for English Language Learning students at Madison Park Technical Vocational High School in Boston, about how she incorporated into her lessons great African- American leaders who have a local connection:*

**Ms. Wright:** And the first American, the first black American that we're focusing on, is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his time and experiences here in Boston, and one of the things that the students are learning is the address where he lived. He resided in an apartment at 397 Massachusetts Avenue in the South End of Boston while he was attending Boston University as a theology major studying to receive his PhD.

He visited Roxbury in his time as well. Once he graduated, he visited Roxbury. He visited the State House because he wanted to speak against segregation, and he spoke against segregation in the Boston Public Schools.

One major factor of his time here in Boston, besides receiving his education, was that he met his wife here, Coretta Scott, who was also a student. She was studying at the New England Conservatory of Music and they met through a mutual friend and got to know each other and decided to go to Alabama and get married. Then they returned to Boston to both complete their studies. And then after that, they closed up shop, went on back.

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So. That was something to me that was really crucial to have my students who I need to know about American history and about black history, because they are not from this country, and I still actually have a few students who have never heard of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr They were not studying him in their countries before they arrived here. They're newcomers to the country. So, the information that they're receiving is something to me that is important to their learning, important to American history and important to local history.

Because this is where they live. This is where their families have chosen to settle. And there has been a lot of historical events that have happened in the places some of the places that they've probably frequented themselves, and they just had no idea. And I like to be able to give my students something that they can connect to. You know, if I say that he lived on Mass Avenue next to Mass at train Station, then that's something that they is very relatable to them. You know, they can pass by there, and maybe they can tell others about it as well.

**Greg:** *The street on which Madison Park High School is located is Malcolm X Boulevard. This was a significant factor when Ms. Wright decided to highlight his local connections for her students.*

**Ms. Wright:** And the second black American that we are focusing on is Malcolm X, and our school is located on Malcolm X Boulevard. And that's a reason why I chose the next black American to study to be Malcolm X. I've felt that also they needed to know the local history about his time here, where he lived.

He lived in Roxbury, on Dale Street. He was in Dudley Square very often, which is now Nubian Square is where he hung out. He did have a life of crime in the beginning of his young life. He served time in Norfolk, and it was inside there as he was serving his prison time that he started to connect with someone inside there who was a practicing Muslim and a member of the Nation of Islam. And they he told him about honorable Elijah Mohammed, and he sparked his interest, and by then he was cleaning himself up and getting more knowledgeable about himself.

And so, when he got out, he had already had connections to meet the honorable Elijah Muhammed in person and start his journey, and he left, if I'm Not mistaken, left Boston by that point to go and pursue other things that they had planned for him at the Nation of Islam.

And so, I want the students to be able to take from that that there is a reason why their school's located on Malcolm X Boulevard. And there's a reason why there is a major park called Malcolm X Park in Roxbury, and that park is actually on Martin Luther King Boulevard in Roxbury as well.

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And there are reasons why these names are here because, you know, they made an impact in a very small community, and there were a lot of people that are black Americans that maybe our senior citizens at this point they have firsthand experience of these things.

Also, Malcolm X was a person that got when he got out of jail, he spent time in the Nation of Islam a little bit here with the members here and would get his hair cut in Roxbury also adds my grandfather's barbershop, which was Beau Brummel, a Nubian Notion Inc. It had two names, and inside there that barbershop provided a safe space for a lot of the black Americans in that time period and Nation of Islam.

Black Americans also that frequent in that place, to be able to get their haircuts, to be able to discuss things safely, to be able to bring their families there and just connect and network. And it was very much an institution there as far as civil rights, as far as you know, anything that was going on in the black part of Boston or residence in Boston who were black. There was a lot of information that got exchanged there, and everybody could safely come together there and talk and get together and then leave and, you know, see you next week or so you next every other week or whenever they came.

That was something that was also a part of his life. My grandfather actually cut his hair. Deval Patrick also used to go in there and get his hair cut by my dad. So, it was just a lot of times with between the mid-sixties on to about, I want to say maybe the early nineties where and Nubian Notion. But Beau Brummel was a place where a lot of Black American males would come and gather and get their haircut.

**Greg:** *Conversations concerning social justice continued throughout the year. JFYNet Executive Director Gary Kaplan interviewed Kevin McCaskill, the Executive Director of Madison Park Technical Vocational High School, the only vocational high school in the Boston Public School system. They discussed the history of social justice in the American education system.*

**Mr. McCaskill:** Well, I want to see what with Brown vs. Board of Education, if I can digress a bit. I think the intentions of Brown were good, but there was a residual consequence that occurred, because as the schools were supposed to integrate with students, it didn't integrate the educators. And thousands upon thousands of educators did not work. They weren't integrated into schools. And so, when we talk about today about why aren't Blacks and Latinx individuals getting into teaching? Well, that's a residual effect, because after you've lost your job, if I was a principal at a black school and all of a sudden my school, all the students are leaving because of integration, I don't have a job anymore. And white schools weren't quick to hiring us. So now, what's the taste in educators' mouths right now, what's that taste about their kids coming up? Don't be an educator because they won't take you. They won't take you. We lost



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generations of future and perspective Black and Latinx educators. And it wasn't, trust me, that wasn't the intent, but it occurred.

**Gary:** *Are there data that support that?*

**Mr. McCaskill:** I mean, there are books, it's a book that I'm reading. It's by Derrick Bell. Silent Covenants. He wrote it back, I want to say 2005 or 2006, but he mentions it. But I mean that stuff, you can look it up. It's documented.

**Gary:** *That is very interesting. I have never heard that before. I've never thought of it before.*

**Mr. McCaskill:** But again, it's an unintended consequence. Sure, it's a great thing, but what happens? The educators didn't come with it, and so now when we talk about why we don't have individuals of color in this field. Well, that was set up...

**Gary:** *66 years ago*

**Mr. McCaskill:** ...That was set up by this. I know when I said that I would have some interest in teaching, I'm going back to when I was in college, I thought about it. It was quickly dismissed by folks around. You don't want to do that. You don't want to do that. You're not going to make any money doing that. I mean, my first salary. I could tell you my exact salary in 1988. \$19,192. First salary. It's like it was yesterday.

**Gary:** *That's more than you're making today,*

**Mr. McCaskill:** If you put it by an hourly rating! Now we fast forward and Brown was supposed to be that litmus test of integration and mixed schools, but schools are more segregated now. I mean, it is well documented schools are more segregated now than they ever were, and it's so unfair. We look at some of our urban schools and not just here in Boston or Springfield or Hartford where I've been. But you look across the country, our neediest kids go to "those schools that aren't good." It's because the needs are so high. The needs are just so high. And we don't address the needs as opposed to here in Boston, I mean everything is great with Boston, with the exam schools and the pilot schools and how they operate. But you look at our neighborhood. You look at our open enrollment high school, so you have the highest need students with the most need. But yet you don't always get the resources, and so you're juggling between, Do I get a counselor, or do I hire a math teacher? Well, MCAS assessment school accountability isn't going any place. So, what do you do? Well, social emotional effects go out the window, which is what these kids need. So, you're caught in the conundrum every single day, every single week, month, and year about what to do. And it's always, "Well, these schools are terrible." Well, no, it's about why are they always concentrated in X number of schools, X number of school district's and X number of urban centers across the country? So that's where the inequities fall and you know, I believe in accountability. Don't make any mistake, testing is important, but testing shouldn't be a

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determinant on a student's level or a school's ability to operate. And so those are some of the inequities that I see that are still going on today, and it's so unfortunate. And it's just so unfortunate. And the kids and their families are the ones who pay the price.

**Gary:** *Well, they're the first ones who paid the price. But eventually everybody pays the price.*

**Mr. McCaskill:** Gary, the whole community pay the price, everyone, the economic development of the city, because if you don't have informed and educated workforce...

**Gary:** *...you've got nothing.*

**Mr. McCaskill:** But what do you got?

**Gary:** *You got nothing. So, we don't have a diverse educational workforce because of the lingering effects of 1954?*

**Mr. McCaskill:** Well, I wouldn't say that. That's one of the reasons but there's a number of other factors to that, but that's important. I think it's important. One that goes overlooked.

**Gary:** *As far as I'm concerned it's always gone overlooked. I've never even heard it said before. Then, of course, we had bussing here in Boston in the early seventies.*

**Mr. McCaskill:** The effects are still going on today. How many years ago?

**Gary:** *1970? 1973?*

**Mr. McCaskill:** You're still feeling the effects of this. And it's something when we talk about inequality and inequities. I mean, it's 2020 and we haven't figured this out, and we can't keep pointing the finger at each other. How do we come together with some solutions and solutions are a team effort? I mean, there's a 2010 documentary and I'm sure everyone knows, *Waiting For Superman*. As a matter of fact, I just saw it again the other day. *Superman* isn't showing up. There isn't one educator in this country, I don't care how good they think they are, one person is not just going to come in and be the panacea for all education in one district, one state or the entire country. It is a team effort that's going to really tackle this.

**Greg:** *2020 brought unique challenges to all schools, but a few of our partner schools work with students who struggle with the traditional school setting even when in-person learning is an option. PACE Academy in New Hampshire works with students not just to improve their education, but to help the whole student grow and learn. Jorge Santana, the Executive Director of the PACE Career Academy Charter School in Pembroke, New Hampshire, explained their philosophy in our June podcast:*

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**Mr. Santana:** The number one thing is size. We focus on the fact that the school will not get bigger than 60 students. I think the other piece is our ability to individualize education. We have very small class sizes, so we can integrate a lot more project-based learning, and we also integrate workforce readiness, which includes internships, and job exposure from different places. That's the core of the school. Then, what we've been developing as well is realizing and understanding the whole child and that our young people need more support than just the academic. We've been able to set up a structure and go out into the community to support our young people in the community. We run life skills groups, ranging from conflict resolution and handling relationships to being able to work on a budget. Being able to individualize what each student needs is what sets us apart.

I feel that all youth are at risk, especially adolescents, and I think that resources can mitigate that risk. In New Hampshire, resources are sparse. I now know why there's no taxes up here, but with no taxes comes no support. There's no public transportation. The demographics are very different than what I was used to in Boston. Honestly, I remember when I first walked in to meet all of the students here, I was thinking, they're not going to get my jokes, they're not going to be able to understand me. But that wasn't the case at all. I felt like I knew them. I knew what they were going through and what they were struggling with. That was one of those lightbulb moments that made me realize it's a lot to do with social, economic. The lack of resources, whether rural or inner city, plays out the same ways.

In some ways, I find it even more challenging. In rural areas, one of the biggest challenges is transportation. I could get all of my young people amazing opportunities, but if they can't afford to get to the opportunities, then they're not going to be able to take advantage of them. I get young people who come here for a variety of reasons, from not getting the necessary one-on-one attention they need at their district schools to being bullied and not feeling safe. They want to be able to have close relationships with staff and they weren't able to get that at a bigger district school.

We have found that our young people are responding very well, and our families are also. I see how draining it is, not just on the young people, when their school placements are not working, but it's a big drain on the families as well. It raises stress and it causes a lot of conflict. When the young person starts to respond here very differently, I can just see the parents' shoulders go down. It has a really positive effect on the whole family.

So, yes, I do think that our students are benefiting. When I started, this school had about 18 students enrolled. I ended last year with a wait list for the first time in the history of the school. Right now I have a list of young people waiting to start with us. I'm sure we will end this year with a longer wait list. So, there's definitely an awakening to

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the opportunity. I think it was just a lack of accurate information and too much misinformation about what a charter school is and what it can provide.

**Greg:** *Our July podcast featured our partner school Kingsman Academy in Washington DC, as they established a new educational model for their at-risk student population. Kennesha Kelly, co-founder and Executive Director of Kingsman Academy, explained in a presentation to the DC Public Charter School Board, that the school needed to institute a competency- based educational plan in order to best serve their student population:*

**Kennesha Kelly:** Our proposed competency based academic program is an evidence-based alternative to a traditional Carnegie unit credit earning system. In a Carnegie based credit earning system, the goal is for all students to progress the course content on pace with their age and grade level cohorts. Because the system is time based, students are expected to move the course content at a standardized pace, even if the student knows the material and is ready to move ahead, or if the student does not fully understand concepts and skills and needs additional time to learn the material.

Within our proposed competency based credit earning system, time is not the driving factor in whether students earn credits. Instead, the focus is on whether the student has demonstrated proficiency on critical course concepts at each phase of postsecondary readiness and is ready to move on to the next level. Students have multiple opportunities and ways to demonstrate proficiency. Students have voice and choice in teaching in the learning process.

More importantly, the proposed academic program allows Kingsman Academy to create multiple pathways to graduation and postsecondary readiness, with real time progress monitoring along the way. While teachers could be creative and innovative and how to teach students and meet the needs of students within the framework, Kingsman Academy has direct access to a team of national experts and a partnership with Marzano Academies, to make sure the school remains consistent in what is taught, how competency-based units will be earned, and how students would demonstrate competency in courses. Transitioning away from a Carnegie system will provide Kingsman Academy the flexibility in the ways that a student can earn credit, allows students to work on skills, content and knowledge at their current level and individualized pace, regardless of their age, academic history, prior academic performance or disability status.

The proposed charter amendment will allow Kingsman Academy to implement our academic model with fidelity and better respond to identify the needs our targeted population.

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**Greg:** *Based on their research and experiences in the first years after Kingsman Academy’s founding, Ms. Kelly determined the Marzano approach to competency-based learning was the best approach for helping their students find success.*

**Kennesha Kelly:** We spent quite a bit of time trying to figure out how to design an academic program to meet the needs of our students. We engaged in a pretty robust strategic planning process and we interviewed students, staff and families. We collected survey data. We analyzed historical academic data. We really talked to our students about what they needed in an academic program.

Once we had a good sense of what we needed, we spent quite a bit of time doing research to identify some of the best framework that we could use to implement our program, and we reached out to Marzano Research just to engage them in our ideas and that initial conversation really led us to realize that the alignment in terms of the values of Marzano Academies, and at the time Marzano Resources, was in direct alignment to what we needed to provide to our students and our families. It was just the basic components that we were trying ourselves as a school.

So how do we engage students who may not adhere to the sort of these traditional norms around school engagement? How do we make sure that we have a learning management system to track student progress along the way? How do it we identify critical course content the students need in order to progress? And then within that, how do we make sure we have a system in place, not just for accountability, but to make sure our staff received the training that they needed. There are a lot of frameworks that are out there around competency based, but Marzano Research has been doing this work for years, and they really laid the foundation for what it needs to look like, if a student, If a school implements a competency based model. They really check the boxes off in terms of in terms of what we were looking for.

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**Greg:** *JFYNetWorks continues its mission to engage and assist all involved in the education process to find and use best practices for teaching and learning in hybrid, remote and in-person environments.*

*If you have any questions or comments, please navigate to our website, [jfynet.org](http://jfynet.org), which features a wealth of commentary, dialogue, and free resources, including this monthly podcast, to support **all** educational communities.*

*We would like to thank everyone who contributed to our podcasts in 2020 and we look forward to presenting important and relevant topics each month during 2021. Thank you for joining us. For JFYNetWorks, I’m Greg Cunningham.*