

*Connecting students, teachers, and communities in dialogue
across difference and collaborative problem solving.*

March 2022 Newsletter



Screenshot of session 4 of the Erase the Space cross-community adult exchange. Participants discussed Glennon Sweeney's "The Making of Metropolitan Inequality" presentation.

Yes, Erase the Space is finally sending a newsletter to our subscribers! You deserve an update on our flurry of activity over the past year. Thank you for sticking with us. It is tough to keep our social media up to date, run this nonprofit, and fulfill my duties as a teacher, father, and husband. But, we have come to a point when there is so much happening, I have to write about it.

Student Exchanges:

Our first classroom exchanges in two years have been underway since October 2021 and will culminate in in-person meetings for our students in early May. Our high school exchanges will meet at Otterbein University to collaborate on their solutions to the shared social issue impacting both groups of students. New Albany and Whitehall students will be collaborating on strategies to address the mental health of students in schools; Olentangy HS and South HS will be collaborating to investigate and reimagine school and the ways it serves (or fails to serve) student needs. We can't wait to see what these young people dream up together.

Adult Exchanges:

At the end of February, we wrapped up the inaugural Erase the Space adult exchange open to teachers, parents, and other stakeholders in communities across Central Ohio. We had 20 consistent participants make it through all six sessions. The shared learning for our participants through these sessions was to understand the current state of education and how we got here to better answer the question, “What future do we want for our children in Central Ohio?” It was a great opportunity to continue our partnership with Dr. Melissa Crum at the [Mosaic Education Network](#) and with the [Kirwan Institute](#) through Glennon Sweeney. Dr. Crum presented on Critical Race Theory to clarify what it is and what it isn’t, and she followed up that session with how to address conflict within ourselves and in our communities. Sweeney shared a version of her presentation “The Making of Metropolitan Inequality” that specifically connected to participants’ school districts.

Collaboration with Move to Prosper:

Erase the Space also brought in a new partner to present on how they reimagined a solution to a social issue. [Move to Prosper](#) supports single-mothers living in poverty to move to high opportunity areas as a way to escape the poverty that often is defined by zip code. Their session gave our participants an example to springboard their conversations about the problem they wanted to address and imagine a solution to. In the end, our participants came up with wonderful ideas to “swirl” feeder patterns in school districts, ways to educate citizens about the history right in front of them, and simple ways to bring people with different life experiences together over food and art.

Teacher Exchanges (NExT Hub):

Erase the Space continues to facilitate the building of cross-district teacher networks through [NExT Hub](#), part of our partnership with Otterbein University. This school year we brought together teachers from across the metro area to critically think about our practice as we considered Gholdy Muhammad’s concept of Historically Responsive Literacy in her book *Cultivating Genius*. EtS also facilitates a monthly support group for teachers engaging in social justice work in their schools. This spring and summer EtS will be launching a network of teachers, students, and parents seeking to collect an oral history of their school district in an effort to make the larger history of Central Ohio education more visible and accessible. For a full schedule of NExT Hub activities click [here](#).

HB 327- Ohio's "Divisive Concepts" Bill:

On March 21, through NEXt Hub, we facilitated an informational session on [Ohio HB 327](#). We collaborated with [Honesty for Ohio Education](#) to provide teachers and parents with information about the "divisive concepts" bill in the state and local government committee of the Ohio House of Representatives. This is the second effort of this bill, as there were two separate ones introduced in 2021. Erase the Space attended the in-person testimony and [Derek's written testimony can be found online](#). With this second effort of this bill, we are hoping to organize teachers and parents to make their voices heard in opposition to this bill and in support of honest and brave education.

Meet our Intern: Michael Ward

Michael is a senior at Olentangy Orange High School. He joined Erase the Space in October and is working on interviewing our teachers involved in student exchanges. Michael believes strongly in fighting injustices that affect our society and contradict the promised ideals and values of this nation. He plans on pursuing a public policy degree at The Ohio State University with the intention of pursuing a career in public interest law. He is excited to work with EtS because he believes addressing the inequities in the education system are essential in breaking the foundational obstructions of opportunity in underserved communities. He also is proud of the cross-community interaction EtS has promoted and loves contributing to forming those interactions.

Check out the article about us in the NEXUS newsletter!

EtS is excited to return to in-person exchanges, and your donation will help us implement them. We are still seeking funding for upcoming spring exchanges.

- Fund t-shirts for all student participants \$500
- Lunch for an entire exchange (around 50 students) \$250
- Pay for busses for one school \$100
- Buy lunch for one group (around 4 students) \$20
- T-shirt for one student \$10

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