

January 12, 2022 #EquityChat

Earl Buford (@CAELnews), President of Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (@CAELnews)

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Welcome to #EquityChat sponsored by @CollegeFutures -this is our first live session of 2022 and we are so pleased to have Earl Buford, Pres. of @CAELnews - Welcome President Buford!

[@CAELnews](#) Nice to "see" everyone, and great to be here!

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q1. @CAELnews Our education, background, and experiences make us who we are. Please share three things that we should know about you. @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[@CAELnews](#) 1) My background is in workforce development, where I've spent 20+ years. 2) I'm motivated by connecting workforce development to social & economic mobility, which is why I joined CAEL. Linking learning and work is key.

[@CAELnews](#) 3) I believe serving adult learners is to serve underserved learners.

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q2 @CAELnews. What is your definition of equity? How is equity-minded practice embedded in your work? @SDMesaPrez @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[@CAELnews](#) I think equity is what allows every person to become the best version of themselves. Challenges facing adult learners intersect w/underserved learners in general, so CAEL has centered equity since pioneering how to recognize diverse, non-classroom learning as college credit.

[@CAELnews](#) Last year, we issued a research brief that examines equity issues surrounding CPL. CPL has great potential for boosting completion while saving students time and money <https://bit.ly/3fhZs5B>.

[@CAELnews](#) We also recently completed two three-year equity-centered initiatives, LASS and IDN. <https://bit.ly/3zSr7na>

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q3 @CAELnews. Tell us about @CAELnews, and your work as President @CAELnews. @lamkeithcurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[@CAELnews](#) CAEL helps organizations succeed by supporting adult learners as they navigate on/off-ramps between education and employment. Our partnerships span the adult learner ecosystem to help create actionable career pathways along the journey of lifelong learning and meaningful work.

[@CAELnews](#) To keep up to date with the latest at CAEL, please follow us here and subscribe to our blog and newsletter <https://t.co/PZWdAJNtYn>

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q4 @CAELnews. From your perspective, what have been the biggest challenges adult learners have faced as a result of the pandemic? @SDMesaPrez @CollegeFutures #EquityChat

[@CAELnews](#) I'll flip this a bit and note a silver lining: the pandemic has forced us to reassess how to meet learners where they are, e.g. online classes and other flexibility. But shutdowns have decreased hands-on learning opportunities, and a lack of child care has forced tough choices.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q5. How does @CAELnews support DEI efforts within the educational setting and our communities?

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[@CAELnews](#) CAEL's legacy is built on affirming the lived experiences of adult learners by recognizing its academic value. #CPL saves time and money, and skills-based hiring also has equity advantages in the workforce. <https://t.co/edySYwTXpt>

[@CAELnews](#) For example, our Inclusive Development Network focused on partnerships within communities to close equity gaps. True to its name, the IDN furthers this goal through inclusive workforce and economic development strategies to reach underserved adults.

[@CAELnews](#) The inaugural IDN cohort included: Cleveland, Ohio (Greater Cleveland Partnership); Corpus Christi, Texas (Nueces County); Spokane, Washington (Greater Spokane Incorporated);

[@CAELnews](#) Northeast Oklahoma Region (Northeast Oklahoma Regional Alliance); and Pensacola, Florida (FloridaWest Economic Development Alliance).

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q6 [@CAELnews](#). What are adult learners' most urgent needs that postsecondary institutions should attend to in order to more effectively support student success? [@SDMesaPrez](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) [#EquityChat](#)

[@CAELnews](#) Work-relevant coursework and honesty about the labor market outcomes it delivers is a must. Flexibility in accessing them, from badges to certificates to traditional degrees. ROI clarity and accessibility help adult learners and the colleges who depend on enrolling them.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Q7 [@CAELnews](#) We can never have enough book recommendations. What are you currently reading and what book(s) should we consider reading? [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) [#EquityChat](#)

[@CAELnews](#) I recommend [#WorkforceRx](#), by [@WorkforceVan](#), and I recently began rereading *Connecting People to Work: Workforce Intermediaries and Sector Strategies*, by [@conway\\_maureen](#) and Robert P. Giloth.

[@SDMesaPrez](#) We love our [@WorkforceVan](#) !

[@LAeducationnews](#) 1619 Project

[@lamkeithcurry](#) Q8 [@CAELnews](#). We're on our last question for the evening - let's end this [#EquityChat](#) on a positive note. What gives you hope? [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@CollegeFutures](#)

[@CAELnews](#) I think the possibilities are endless when educators and employers collaborate on community workforce needs. The common denominator is an appreciation for experience, and I think that bodes very well for equity. When we value different experiences, we are valuing diversity.

[@CAELnews](#) What are others on this chat thinking when it comes to the future?

[@CAELnews](#) We couldn't do it without our members. If you haven't already, explore the benefits of joining the CAEL community in advocacy of adult learners <https://cael.org/membership>.

[@CAELnews](#) Thank you so much for joining the chat. It has been my pleasure to take part in this event. Please follow us at [@CAELnews](#).

[@SDMesaPrez](#) Thanks so much to President Earl Buford of [@CAELnews](#) for joining us on [#EquityChat](#) and sharing how CAEL is addressing equity issues in this space. Join us next week- we will post our guest in a few days...stay tuned!

[@CollegeFutures](#) [@lamkeithcurry](#) [@equityavengers](#) OUT!